



UMBRELLA DOCUMENT

for the

NATIONAL AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, IRRIGATION AND LIVESTOCK

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I. Introduction

“Donors helped us make plenty of plans for agriculture, it’s time for us to implement.”
– Mohammad Asif Rahimi, Minister of Agriculture, Irrigation & Livestock

A farmer in Helmand can refuse to grow poppy if agricultural processing provides even one job for one family member. Families from Samangan can afford to stay at home rather than migrate to crowded cities, if their agricultural productivity is increased and their earnings grow. Women and children in Bamyan can become healthier and literate if storage facilities provide a longer and more lucrative market for their potatoes. Young men of Paktika can refuse the steady meals offered by insurgent groups, if they can afford to work at home on the farm with their fathers and mothers.

When the Afghan economy is overwhelmingly agricultural, agriculture is the dominant factor in the economy, in food security, livelihoods, sustainable natural resources and national security. Agriculture will determine whether Afghanistan will succeed or fail. Fortunately, the indicators of agricultural success are promising indeed, for example in 2007 we were nearly self-sufficient in wheat.

The Bountiful Market

Afghanistan once produced 20% of the world’s raisins. In the 1970s, Afghan cut flowers graced tables from the Middle East to Europe. From India to Saudi Arabia and the Gulf, there is great demand for Afghan table grapes. There is now a large, growing and sustainable international market for pomegranate products, and Afghanistan has made a significant entry into the market with its legendary fruit.

Five hundred years ago, the first Mogul emperor, Babur, commanded that an Afghan melon be brought from Kabul to Delhi, and he wrote in his diary that the flavor brought tears to his eyes. For centuries since, Afghanistan’s famous melons enjoyed pride of place on the tables of India’s rich, and now among 400 million members of India’s growing middle classes.

India represents a nearly limitless market for Afghan agricultural produce, and there the Afghan national ‘brand’ has enjoyed unchallenged appeal since the time of the ancient Hindu holy books. Today, the Indian market for paper-shelled almonds is frankly unknown only because there has never been an adequate supply. These luxury treats earn an Afghan farmer more than US \$10 a kilo, while a kilo of ordinary almonds sells for US \$4.

One of our foreign experts tell us that much Afghan produce has “unlimited demand in regional markets,” and in terms of soil and sun, water and weather, Afghanistan “has the ideal growing conditions of California and Chile.”

Cashing in on Opportunity

Maximising our agricultural potential demands improvements in three inter-related, mutually reinforcing areas: managing our natural resources upon which agriculture is dependent; increasing agricultural productivity; and food processing and marketing that bring added value. Together – and only together – these complementary agricultural subsectors can ensure national success economically and environmentally while contributing to security.

The Agricultural Triangle

Our forests and grazing land, soil and water resources are each needed for agricultural strength. In some cases we can be satisfied by sustainability, but others demand expanding and then protecting our natural heritage. Deforestation must be reversed, not accepted as a fact of life. Water needs to be better harnessed and more efficiently provided for irrigation. Grazing lands and crop lands can each become more fertile and productive. This, the Natural Resources Management Program (NRM) is the base of the triangle, a foundation for agricultural productivity.

Modern techniques have already begun to make traditional farming more efficient. Proven to boost family incomes, they need to be expanded geographically and transformed into modern agricultural traditions. Rich wool from Ghazni and elsewhere, woven into sumptuous carpets, underscores the economic importance of modern animal husbandry. Better production of wheat and rice provides food security while fruit-growing builds a future for exports. The Agricultural Production and Productivity Program (APP) is the way to build incomes for farmers and their families.

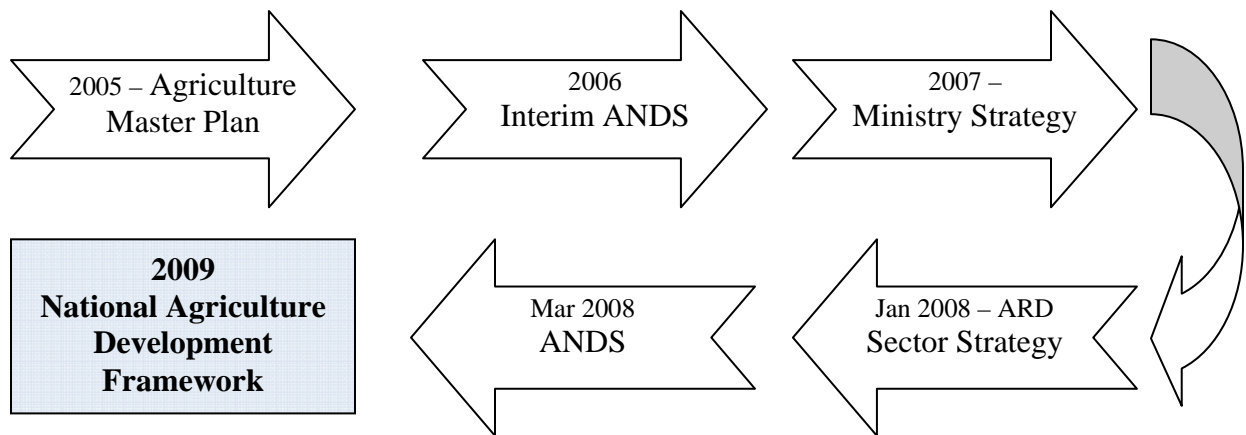
The third side of the triangle makes farm produce more valuable through processing or marketing. Once fruit becomes jam, or grapes become raisins, export markets can be developed and a whole new tier of economic activity emerges. This creates jobs off the farm, but can still employ poor families with farms too small for self-sufficiency. Improved storage extends the life of produce and increases its value, while access to credit encourages expansion. The Economic Regeneration Program (ER) strengthens the value chain linking agriculture, business development, customers and jobs.

Our ministry is large and has many overlapping responsibilities between the public and private sectors. We face a mammoth task to implement and coordinate the required programmes efficiently. Success demands an efficient ministry with capacity, talent and energy, which justifies our strong commitment to the Change-Management Programme.

II. The Strategic Development Phase

The agriculture sector has benefited from significant work on policy and strategy development, resulting in the current National Agriculture Development Framework and its associated programmes.

The importance of reviving the agriculture sector in Afghanistan was recognized at the Bonn Conference (2001), which led to the systematic development of documents addressing the needs of the agriculture sector. The timeline (below) illustrates the core policy and strategy developments over the last five years, in line with the overall strategic development of Afghanistan.



The leadership change within MAIL in October 2008 prompted the review of the ministry structure and programmes in line with the ARD Sector Strategy, and resulted in the development of four key programmes:

1. Natural Resource Management
2. Agriculture Production and Productivity
3. Economic Regeneration
4. Programme Support and Change Management

These are based on inputs from earlier documentation from the National Agriculture Development Framework.

III. FRAMEWORK OBJECTIVE

Economic growth and food security depend upon natural resource management, increasing agricultural production and productivity, improved physical infrastructure and market development. This is the path to poverty reduction, licit crops and national security. This is the mission of the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock.

IV. Implementation Principles

MAIL and its development partners will be guided by the following implementation principles while achieving the framework objectives:

Demand-driven, Diverse and Flexible: relevance and impact, efficiency and sustainability require that agricultural development be driven by local consumer and market demand, adapting to Afghanistan's changing conditions and agro-ecological, social and cultural diversity.

Inclusiveness, Defined Roles and Community: We will benefit farmers, local business and all rural citizens, by first identifying public and private sector roles in development, then building capacity. Consensus will be formed while working through Community Development Councils, Cluster CDCs, and District Development Assemblies, as well as local producer organisations.

Environmental sustainability: All agricultural and animal husbandry interventions will be designed to minimize negative environmental impact and enhance our natural resource base.

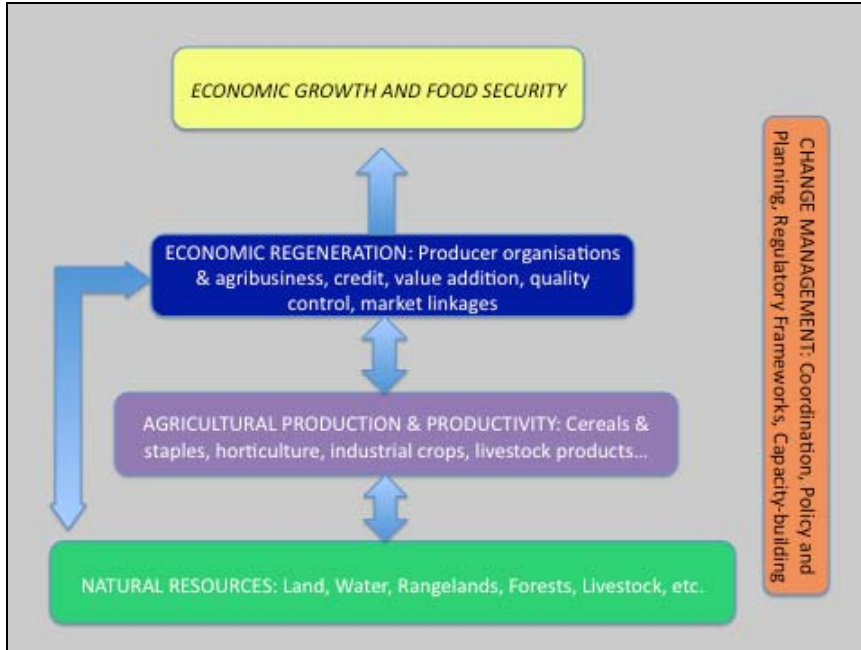
Integration: Programmes, organized by technical expertise and government functions, will be implemented in an integrated manner, through coordination at central, provincial and district levels, and through area-based implementation of field activities.

V STRUCTURE AND DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAMMES

In order to comprehensively address the identified issues in an integrated fashion, and to achieve the ARD and MAIL objectives, MAIL has prepared the four framework programmes with the aim to move towards a Sector Wide Approach (SWAp).

The four programmes are inter-related and build upon each other, as illustrated by the graph below: sustainable and efficient management of the natural resource base is the foundation for increasing agricultural production and productivity which is the basis for ensuring food security and enabling economic regeneration to take place. Emergency issues are addressed under the relevant technical programme, according to the type of emergency that is at hand.

These components, and the interactions between them, are supported by the Change Management, Public Sector Development & Programme Support process, which aims to strengthen MAIL's capacity to fulfill public sector functions and provide an enabling environment for the private sector and civil society to meet the population's needs. This Programme is inextricably linked to all institutional, organizational and programmatic structures of the Ministry. It will play a crucial role in establishing an intra-ministerial support network, which will facilitate the prioritization and sequencing of change and ensure that programme implementation and the institutional change process is coherent.



The programmes compose a road map for the agricultural sector, providing a structure with which to:

- map ongoing activities
- identify the gaps to be addressed through new projects
- identify key public sector responsibilities and functions which need to be strengthened to support program implementation

While the programmes are organized according to technical areas and/or subject matters, to support central and provincial level planning, the different need based interventions will be clearly integrated through the design and implementation of specific projects, to be defined according to the requirements of specific farmer groups and geographical areas (see programme implementation modalities below). This approach is designed to lay the foundations for a bottom-up, cohesive, sector-wide approach.

Each programme also provides guidance for establishing effective collaboration within the agricultural sector and with other sectors, by building partnerships with relevant ministries, private sector stakeholders, donors, non-governmental organizations and civil society. In addition, the Comprehensive Agriculture and Rural Development Facility (CARD) is in its final stages of development, and will start small, but eventually become the core linkage and coordination mechanism for MAIL and Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) programs.

Change Management, Public Sector Development and Programme Support

The objective of the programme is to create a dynamic, well functioning, competent and effective institution (MAIL and its Provincial Departments) through a process of reform and structural adjustment. This prepares it to meet the challenges of the 21st Century and respond to the needs and demands of the agriculture sector.

There is a need to accelerate MAIL's transition process and to rapidly transform the Ministry. The first step in the Change Management process is to identify key public sector responsibilities and functions which need to be strengthened. These include: policy and strategy formulation, legal and regulatory framework preparation, quality control and food safety, veterinary public health and plant protection, standards and certification, monitoring and evaluation and the ability to enforce the regulations and standards. The programme implementation and coordination capabilities of MAIL will require further development to meet the expected expansion of programme and project activities in the agriculture sector. Based on the identification of the future ministry functions and duties, appropriate organizational and institutional frameworks need to be created.

Natural Resource Management

The objective of the Natural Resources Management (NRM) Programme is to ensure that Afghanistan's natural resource base is rehabilitated and used in a productive and sustainable way by Afghanistan's rural population. This requires establishing a supportive policy and regulatory framework at the national level, and by combining participatory planning methods with advanced technical opportunities in natural resource planning and management at the local level.

Sustainable economic growth, through enhanced agricultural productivity and production, must not be achieved at the cost of environmental and natural resource degradation. On the contrary, it is important not only to conserve but also to enhance the natural resource base to foster agriculture-led economic development, especially in rural areas. Thus the Ministry's strategy for natural resource management will establish regimes of natural resource use (i.e. rangeland and other land use, water, forestry, wildlife and medicinal plants) in relation to: (i) systems for natural resource management; and (ii) systems of rights and access to natural resources.

The NRM programme comprises three coordinated and mutually complementing sub-programmes:

- Sub-Programme A: Natural Resource Surveillance, Planning and Regulation
- Sub-Programme B: Protection and Conservation
- Sub-Programme C: Community Management of Natural Resources

Agriculture Production and Productivity

The objective of the Agriculture Production and Productivity Programme is to sustainably increase the production and productivity of Afghanistan's farmers and herders through the provision of enhanced inputs, services and research. The goal is to move Afghanistan closer to self sufficiency in basic crops, expand production of cash crops (vegetables, horticulture and industrial crops) to meet domestic and export demands, and improve the supply of animal products for the food and handicrafts industry.

The Agriculture Production and Productivity Programme (APP) will address the challenges identified and be based on understanding the complexity of the livelihoods of the poor farmers. Assistance will attempt to ensure a consolidated impact through a multi-sectoral, broad-based effort over an extended length of time. The proposed programmes will facilitate and support the process of getting more and more farmers from subsistence farming into semi-specialized and/or semi-intensive market-based production systems while maintaining diversification for risk reduction and food security. This will be accompanied by a strong effort to introduce value adding processes and to identify and develop markets aiming at both import substitution and export. The programme will consist of the following sub-programmes:

- Sub-Programme A: Cereals and Industrial Crops
- Sub-Programme B: Horticulture
- Sub-Programme C: Livestock
- Sub-Programme D: Irrigation (infrastructure, on-farm irrigation)
- Sub-Programme E: Kuchi Support

Economic Regeneration

The objective of the Economic Regeneration (ER) programme is to foster sustainable and inclusive economic growth in the licit agricultural sector; resulting in increased and diversified incomes and employment opportunities for the Afghan population and increased revenue for the Afghan State.

In the context of MAIL's programmes, economic regeneration is defined as "The process of renovating and developing the human, technical, infrastructural and institutional resources required for generating economic growth, income and employment through the commercialization of products derived from, and/or inputs for, agriculture and animal husbandry." The ER programme is also designed to contribute to reducing poppy production through the development of alternative sources of income, reducing rural migration by increasing local livelihoods opportunities for the rural poor, and reducing reliance on imports.

The programme includes the following sub-programmes:

- Sub-Programme A: Support to Producer, Retailer and Trader Organizations

- Sub-Programme B: Financial Services for Agricultural Development
- Sub-Programme C: Value Addition
- Sub-Programme D: Quality Control and Food Safety of Agricultural Inputs and Products
- Sub-Programme E: Marketing and Market Linkages

VI. Programme Implementation

Programme Implementation and Coordination Unit (PICU)

The PICU has been formed to provide implementation and coordination support to all MAIL programs, and serve as a focal point for donors and other stakeholders. The functions of the PICU include:

- Mapping of ongoing and new projects to support collaboration between relevant MAIL departments, implementing partners, and other programs.
- Identification of gaps in program implementation, namely with regards to policies, technical areas, and geographical regions.
- Collation of relevant monitoring data, and report preparation for stakeholders.
- Coordination with Policy and Planning Department to incorporate regulatory and policy development with program implementation.

Modalities of Program Implementation

MAIL will at the very least assume a coordinating role for all development programs in the agriculture sector. The focal point for all activities will be the Ministry's Programme Implementation and Coordination Unit (PICU). Three modalities for programme implementation are envisioned as follows:

- 1) Direct: MAIL's PICU will develop program implementation capacity to directly manage programs, and coordinate with units within the Ministry that can provide additional technical and managerial support.
- 2) Partnership: MAIL's PICU will manage relationships with an implementing partner to carry out donor funded programs. The implementation side of PICU will provide dedicated staff to manage and facilitate program activities.
- 3) Coordination: MAIL's PICU will coordinate donor lead programs with appropriate units in the Ministry and the provinces. The coordination side of the PICU will also ensure that these programs are developed to complement, and not duplicate, programs outside the Ministry.

The ministry acknowledges that the weakness with development in Afghanistan has been the lack of coordinated activities and therefore has adopted the Comprehensive Agricultural and Rural Development facility (CARD-F). This joint effort of MAIL and

the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development will work with partners, provinces and localities to identify the unaddressed development issue or the ‘missing component’ that dramatically increases the impact of existing and successful development projects. CARD is a facilitator, not an implementer.

VII Conclusion

While we recognize that crises will continue to arise – such as our current and severe shortage of wheat seed – we will not neglect our greater goals of economic growth and food security. Nor will we forget the interdependence of natural resources, agricultural production and productivity and economic regeneration. Those three goals form the foundation of a vigorous, licit agricultural sector that will make its participants, and Afghanistan, more prosperous and secure.