

AGRICULTURE AND PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAMS:
ASSESSING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF
AGRICULTURAL ADVISOR PROJECTS
IN AFGHANISTAN

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ABSTRACT

AGRICULTURE AND PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAMS: ASSESSING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF AGRICULTURAL ADVISOR PROJECTS IN AFGHANISTAN, by Karisha L. Kuypers, 115 pages.

The U.S. government states that agriculture is its most important non-security priority in Afghanistan and emphasizes the importance of agricultural development in Afghanistan's long-term stabilization and reconstruction. The extent to which USDA advisors serving on PRTs contribute to the reconstruction of Afghanistan's agricultural sector is examined through analysis of agricultural advisors' final reports. These reports indicate that early operational challenges are improving and advisors increasingly promote project sustainability, suggesting a possible maturation of the USDA advisors' role on the PRT. Overall, USDA advisors are achieving their objectives of building the capacity of local officials and are moving toward better project sustainability. However, advisors' ability to conduct projects is still significantly hindered by a lack of USDA-specific funding. Also, because advisors cite only project implementation-based data, insufficient information is provided to permit evaluation of PRT agricultural projects or to demonstrate community impact. Creation of a simple monitoring and evaluation system would permit USDA advisors to demonstrate project outcomes and show progress toward reconstruction of Afghanistan's agricultural sector.

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ACRONYMS

ADT	Agribusiness Development Team
ANDS	Afghanistan National Development Strategy
ARNG	Army National Guard
CCO	Center for Complex Operations
CERP	Commanders Emergency Response Program
DOS	U.S. Department of State
FAS	Foreign Agricultural Service
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
MOE	measure of effectiveness
MOP	measure of performance
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	nongovernmental organization
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
QIP	Quick Impact Program
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
USDA	U.S. Department of Agriculture

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan are increasingly tied to rebuilding of the country's agricultural sector. The United States (U.S.) government, the U.S. Army, and the international community have identified rural and agricultural development as key components of long-term stabilization and reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan. Rebuilding Afghanistan's agricultural sector is considered by many in the international community to be an essential factor in the country's economic stabilization. In a speech on 1 December 2009, President Barack Obama vowed to focus the United States' assistance efforts on areas such as agriculture that would have an immediate impact on the lives of the Afghan people. President Obama further pledged that implementation of a civilian-military agriculture redevelopment strategy to restore Afghanistan's agriculture sector would be the United States' top reconstruction priority.¹ In a January 2010 press conference, the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, the Administrator for the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and the U.S. Special Representative for Pakistan and Afghanistan affirmed that agriculture is the top non-security priority for the U.S. government in Afghanistan.²

¹President Barack Obama, "The Way Forward in Afghanistan," White House, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/way-forward-afghanistan> (accessed 20 February 2010).

²Steven Kaufman, "Agriculture Is Top U.S. Nonsecurity Focus in Afghanistan," America.gov, <http://www.america.gov/st/develop-english/2010/January/20100108100954esnamfuak0.3285334.html> (accessed 20 February 2010).

This thesis will focus on the experiences of agricultural advisors who have served on Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) in Afghanistan since 2003. PRTs are integrated civil-military teams whose mission is to enhance security, extend the reach of the Afghan central government, and facilitate reconstruction in a designated province. PRTs include civilian representatives from a number of U.S. government agencies and generally have representatives from the Department of State (DOS), USAID, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). As part of the PRT civilian contingent, agricultural advisors and experts from USDA promote agricultural reconstruction and capacity building within their province. In Afghanistan, USDA advisors contribute to the PRT mission by planning and implementing agricultural projects that support the physical and institutional reconstruction of Afghanistan's agricultural sector. USDA advisors also try to develop projects that strengthen the capacity of the Afghan Government to rebuild agricultural markets and provide services to the agricultural private sector.³

As its primary research question, this thesis will examine whether it is possible to determine the effectiveness of agricultural PRT projects. Secondary questions will focus on the role that USDA agricultural advisors play on PRTs and the degree to which PRT structural or administrative issues influence the success or lack of success of the advisors' projects. This thesis will also examine the possibility of evaluating project effectiveness, impact, or sustainability based on available information. Agricultural advisors' final reports (created at the end of an advisor's one-year deployment) serve as the primary data source for this thesis and were compiled and analyzed in an effort to demonstrate the

³U.S. Department of Agriculture, *Guide for USDA Agricultural Experts: Provincial Reconstruction Teams Afghanistan* (Washington, DC: Foreign Agricultural Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2009), 37.

effectiveness, impact, or sustainability of agricultural PRT projects. The conclusions reached through this analysis will be used to offer recommendations for improving the effectiveness of both agricultural PRT projects and the role of the USDA agricultural advisor on future PRTs.

Agricultural Reconstruction in Afghanistan

The international community has focused on the importance of agriculture to Afghanistan's overall reconstruction because of agriculture's importance to the livelihoods of most Afghans: more than 80 percent of Afghans are employed in agriculture.⁴ However, even with the majority of the labor force involved in agriculture, agricultural production represents a relatively small percentage of Afghanistan's annual income, as only one-third of its (opium-exclusive) gross domestic product is produced by the agriculture sector. The dependence of a majority of its population on a low-productivity sector results in high levels of poverty (36 percent in fiscal year 2008-2009), low per capita income, and high unemployment rates (35 percent in 2008).⁵ Low productivity also results in a lack of food availability. USAID estimates that almost 18 percent of Afghanistan's population suffers from chronic food insecurity, even though approximately 75 percent of the country's population lives in areas in which agriculture is the main form of livelihood.⁶ The majority of Afghan farmers have landholdings in

⁴Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Factbook, "Afghanistan," Central Intelligence Agency, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/Aaf.html> (accessed 20 February 2010).

⁵Ibid.

⁶Asian Development Bank, *Rebuilding Afghanistan's Agriculture Sector* (Manila, Philippines: South Asia Department, Asian Development Bank, April 2003).

low-potential areas that do not produce sufficient amounts of food to meet the needs of an average family.⁷

Afghanistan's decimated agricultural sector and weak to non-existent government institutions have forced many Afghan farmers to pursue other, often illicit, ways to make a living. As in many countries with weak institutions, persistent conflict, and poor rule of law, many in Afghanistan have turned to opium poppy cultivation as either a coping strategy or a way to raise money for terrorism. The drug trade resulting from opium poppy was the Taliban's main income source and continues to provide income for terrorists and Afghan warlords.⁸

U.S. Efforts to Promote Agricultural Development

Because of agriculture's importance to Afghanistan's economy, donor governments, international agencies, and nongovernmental organizations (NGO) have dedicated efforts to rehabilitating and reconstructing Afghanistan's agricultural sector. Organizations from the United States are actively involved in efforts to rebuild Afghanistan's agricultural sector. While numerous U.S.-based NGOs conduct agriculture-related activities in Afghanistan, this thesis will focus on the agricultural

⁷Alberto Zezza and Mauro Migotto, "Towards A Framework For Agricultural Development And Food Security In Afghanistan," in *Reconstructing Agriculture in Afghanistan*, ed. Adam Pain and Jacky Sutton (Bourton, UK: Practical Action Publishing, 2007), 274.

⁸U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO), *Foreign Assistance: Lack Of Strategic Focus And Obstacles To Agricultural Recovery Threaten Afghanistan's Stability*, Report to Congressional Requesters (Washington, DC: United States General Accounting Office, June 2003), 45.

reconstruction efforts conducted by the various branches of the U.S. military and U.S. Federal Government agencies.

Provincial Reconstruction Teams

PRTs were first developed in Afghanistan in 2002 and in Iraq in 2006 as a way for the United States and its international partners to address the challenges of stabilization and reconstruction activities in fragile or failing states. An integrated civil-military PRT is designed to conduct military-led stability operations, such as counterinsurgency operations, security assistance, and peace operations, while also carrying out traditional civilian-led reconstruction activities that include capacity-building, improving governance, and promoting rule of law and economic development.⁹

The evolving nature of the PRT concept and the rapidly-changing security environments in which they work makes objective evaluation of PRT contributions to stabilization and reconstruction difficult. A common criticism of PRTs is the lack of rigorous assessment of their activities.¹⁰ While some studies have been done to assess the effectiveness of aspects of the PRT mission such as promoting security or increasing political participation,¹¹ to date it appears that no assessments of the long-term effectiveness of PRT mission to promote reconstruction in Afghanistan or Iraq have been completed. Civilian development agencies such as USAID and other NGOs argue that

⁹Michael McNerney, “Stabilization and Reconstruction in Afghanistan: Are PRTs a Model or a Muddle?” *Parameters* (Winter 2005-06): 34.

¹⁰Carter Malkasian and Gerald Meyerle, “Provincial Reconstruction Teams: How Do We Know They Work?” (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, March 2009), 10.

¹¹*Ibid.*; McNerney, “PRTs: A Model or a Muddle?” 34.

PRT military personnel are no substitute for development personnel's depth of experience and knowledge. These organizations argue that short-term PRTs know little about development, reconstruction, or local culture, and as a result conduct projects that are unsustainable or unwanted by their local communities. These agencies also argue that reconstruction and development work should not be involved in a counterinsurgency strategy, believing that military involvement in development blurs the line of demarcation between the neutrality of NGO workers and the combatant status of military personnel.¹² However, the few PRT studies conducted show that PRTs play an important role as a force multiplier for reconstruction activities, augmenting rather than replacing development efforts of civilian agencies because of their ability to work in dangerous, contested areas that civilian-only NGOs and agencies cannot access.

Army National Guard Agribusiness Development Teams

The importance of agriculture to Afghanistan's long-term economic development reconstruction has also led the Army National Guard (ARNG) to become involved in agricultural development activities. The ARNG now sends Agribusiness Development Teams (ADTs), units of citizen-soldiers with agricultural backgrounds and expertise to conduct agriculture projects in Afghanistan. In contrast to civilian-only teams, ADTs have both civilian-acquired farming skills and agribusiness knowledge, as well as military occupational skills and the ability to provide their own force protection.¹³ The

¹²Malkasian and Meyerle, "PRTs: How Do We Know They Work?" 36.

¹³Center for Army Lessons Learned, *Agribusiness Development Teams in Afghanistan Handbook: Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Combined Arms Center, November 2009), 1.

ARNG initiative's goal is to improve the security situation in Afghanistan by improving its economy. Because terrorists often take refuge in agricultural areas, the ARNG and Army theorize that agricultural development will help separate the people physically and psychologically from insurgents or terrorists by providing opportunities for better livelihoods.¹⁴ ADTs, which the ARNG has used in Central America for 20 years, provide hands-on training and advice to universities, provincial ministries, and local farmers.

Three ADTs are now deployed in Afghanistan and the ARNG plans to deploy an additional three ADTs in 2010 to support the redevelopment of Afghanistan's agribusiness sector. Although each ADT is deployed for one year, ADT units take responsibility for their province and continue to send newly-deployed units to the same area. Deploying ADTs from the same state to the same area allows the unit to create multi-year projects with longer timeframes. ADTs also create 3-5 year plans for the agricultural development of their province that contain short and long-term objectives, as well as plans for both large and small-scale projects.¹⁵ Long-term planning of this kind provides a level of project consistency and continuity of effort that PRTs and other structures may often lack.

U.S. Department of Agriculture

While its traditional role in national security is the protection of the United States' food supply, USDA is collaborating with the U.S. military's efforts to promote security

¹⁴Center for Army Lessons Learned, *ADTs in Afghanistan*, 2.

¹⁵935th ADT, After Action Review, *Final Report of 935th ADT: The Army's First Agri-Business Development Team, Operation Enduring Freedom* (Army National Guard, November 2008), Appendix B.

and reconstruction in Afghanistan and Iraq. USDA coordinates placement of agricultural experts on U.S. PRTs to support the United States' efforts to stabilize rural areas in both Afghanistan and Iraq. The USDA PRT Handbook for agricultural advisors states that by supporting PRTs with agricultural advisors, USDA hopes to achieve the following goals: (1) Enable, support, and foster the physical and institutional reconstruction of Afghanistan's agricultural sector; (2) Strengthen the capacity of the Afghan Government to rebuild agricultural markets and to support and provide services to the agricultural private sector; and (3) Improve conservation of biological diversity and management of forests, rangeland, and watersheds through the relevant units of the Afghan Government.¹⁶

Agriculture experts began serving on PRTs in Afghanistan in 2003 and on Iraq PRTs in 2006. These agricultural experts, who are drawn from different USDA agencies, provide agricultural expertise and technical assistance to host nation universities and government officials. Most PRTs now have a USDA expert in addition to a representative from both the State Department and USAID. Although the length of advisors' deployments was initially six months, the typical length of assignment increased to nine months in 2006 and then to thirteen months in 2009.¹⁷ In 2003, USDA deployed three agricultural experts to serve on PRTs in Afghanistan. As of May 2009, USDA had twelve PRT agricultural experts, one senior PRT agricultural expert at a Brigade Task Force

¹⁶USDA, *Guide for USDA Agricultural Experts: PRTs Afghanistan*, 7.

¹⁷Foreign Agricultural Service, "Rebuilding Agriculture and Food Security in Afghanistan," Foreign Agricultural Service, USDA, <http://www.fas.usda.gov/icd/drd/afghanistan.asp> (accessed 15 February 2010).

level, and one PRT Coordinator based in Kabul. By 2010, a total of more than 50 agricultural advisors have been deployed to PRTs in Afghanistan (table 1).

Table 1. PRT Agricultural Advisors in Afghanistan		
	PRT Advisors	Length of Deployment (months)
2003	3	6
2004	10	6
2005	10	6
2006	8	9
2007	8	9
2009	13	13

Source: Foreign Agricultural Service, “USDA Activities in Afghanistan, Rebuilding Agriculture and Food Security in Afghanistan,” <http://www.fas.usda.gov/icd/drd/afghanistan.asp> (accessed 15 February 2010).

Although its participation in military-led activities is relatively new, USDA has a long history of working with foreign countries and providing technical assistance overseas. Through several of its subordinate agencies, USDA conducts international activities such as trade-capacity building, institution building, and food aid assistance. Its primary agency for international activities, the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS), is responsible for promoting the export of U.S. agricultural products abroad, as well as for advancing national security by strengthening the institutions and economies of developing countries. FAS works with host nations to strengthen their ministerial and local institutions and encourages them to develop policies and practices that promote development, open markets, and science-based trade policies. FAS also conducts agricultural development and trade capacity building activities in conjunction with host

nations and administers two U.S. Government food assistance programs (Food for Progress and McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition programs).

Significance of the Study

The U.S. government has publicly declared the importance of agriculture to Afghanistan's overall reconstruction and pledged its support in helping to rebuild the country's agricultural sector. As part of the U.S. government's efforts to use an interagency approach in Afghanistan's reconstruction, USDA places agricultural experts on civil-military PRTs in Afghanistan's provinces. These experts advise the military on agricultural issues, plan and implement projects, and strengthen the Afghan government's institutional capacity to promote its own agricultural sector. However, to date there has been little effort made to evaluate the effectiveness of the resulting agricultural projects or demonstrate PRT contributions to Afghanistan's overall agricultural reconstruction.

By examining agricultural advisor reports from PRTs in Afghanistan, this thesis will examine the role that USDA agricultural advisors play on PRTs and the degree to which PRT structural or administrative issues influence the success or lack of success of the advisors' projects. Also, this thesis will examine the possibility of evaluating project effectiveness, impact, or sustainability based on the available reporting. This thesis will use these issues to offer possible guidance for improving PRTs in future post-conflict situations. Given the potential that future conflicts will require sustained U.S. interagency involvement in stability and reconstruction efforts, best practices derived from the advisor experiences on PRTs will hopefully be of use to Army and USDA decision-makers to help guide future efforts, increase USDA-Army collaboration, improve

training, and provide possible policy recommendations to produce better project effectiveness in the field.

Assumptions

This thesis will examine the experiences and project reports submitted by agricultural experts on PRTs in Afghanistan as a way to analyze the effectiveness of the agricultural projects conducted by PRTs. However, this objective is built upon the assumption that it is possible to determine effectiveness or sustainability of these projects. Determination of project effectiveness continues to be an inherently difficult task even for humanitarian and development agencies with a longer history of international development experience. PRT projects are often conducted in non-permissive environments during a limited time period, which could hinder their ability to demonstrate project effectiveness.

For the purposes of this thesis, the assumption is made that agricultural expert reports will contain enough information to allow for project analysis. PRTs face very different situations in terms of security, agricultural conditions, local participation, and available funding relative to their assigned province and the general status of conflict. This thesis assumes that enough similarities exist between these agricultural projects to draw conclusions about the overall effectiveness of PRT agricultural projects or to generate recommendations for current and future reconstruction efforts.

Definitions

The thesis will attempt to determine the effectiveness or sustainability of PRT agricultural projects based on an analysis of agricultural expert reports from Afghanistan.

However, terms such as project effectiveness, impact, and sustainability often have different meanings in different academic fields. In order to simplify discussions of project evaluation, all definitions used are taken from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's "Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management,"¹⁸ which is also the source for the definitions used in the World Bank's monitoring and evaluation guide for development programs.¹⁹ "Project evaluation" is defined as the evaluation of a discrete development intervention (activity) that is designed to achieve specific objectives within specified resources and timelines, generally within the framework of a larger program. Of particular importance to this thesis is the definition of "effectiveness," which is defined as the extent to which an activity's objectives are achieved, or are expected to be achieved, relative to the activity's importance. In this thesis, mission effectiveness for agricultural advisors is defined as the extent to which their activities achieve their objectives of promoting capacity building or facilitating reconstruction of Afghanistan's agricultural sector. "Sustainability" is likewise defined as an activity's continued benefits after its completion and the probability of its continued long-term benefits. Sustainability here will refer to the likelihood that a project or activity will continue after the departure of the agricultural advisor or the PRT.

¹⁸Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), "Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management," OECD Development Assistance Committee Network on Development Evaluation, <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/29/21/2754804.pdf> (accessed 23 November 2009).

¹⁹Jody Z. Kusek and Ray C. Rist, *Ten Steps to a Results-Based Monitoring and Evaluation System* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2004).

“Impact” refers to the long-term effects, either positive or negative, that are produced by a development intervention. Impact can also be distinguished from the related term “outcome” in that it typically implies long-term effects, while outcome has a short or medium-term focus.

Project evaluation is generally composed of two parts or stages: monitoring and evaluation. “Monitoring” is a process of continuous data collection on specified indicators that demonstrate the extent of progress and achievement of objectives. “Evaluation” is the systematic and objective assessment of a current or completed project, program, or policy to determine the effectiveness, impact, or sustainability of the development intervention.

The U.S. military also has its own vocabulary for assessment of its operations and activities. While its terms are geared toward the operational environment, the military concepts of assessment are analogous to those used by the NGO community for program evaluation. The U.S. Army defines “assessment” as a continuous activity that allows commanders to monitor a situation while also measuring an activity’s progress toward a desired end state. This type of assessment consists of measurement tools that evaluate an activity’s progress against predetermined criteria. A “measure of performance” (MOP) is a means of assessing progress toward the proper accomplishment of a task. A “measure of effectiveness” (MOE) is a way to assess changes toward achieving an objective or reaching a desired end state. Indicators are collectable, measurable, and relevant pieces of information that inform an MOP or MOE.²⁰

²⁰U.S. Army, Field Manual (FM) 3-07, *Stability Operations* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, October 2008), 4-13.

Limitations

The relative newness of the PRT concept and the short deployment time of PRTs both contribute to a limited amount of available information regarding the sustainability of individual PRT projects over time. The lack of follow-up information about projects may inhibit a determination of a project's long-term viability or effectiveness. Unless another PRT or agricultural expert chose to continue a previously-created project, there may be no additional information about the project after the PRT redeploys.

Additionally, information contained in the agricultural reports themselves is insufficient for a truly thorough or analytical determination of individual project or PRT effectiveness. The lack of complete reports from all previously-deployed USDA advisors may also create a type of self-selection bias in that only highly-motivated (and thus highly active) individuals submitted monthly or final reports. The effectiveness of a particular project may be hard to distinguish from the characteristics of the expert in such cases. Because of the incomplete nature of the source reports, conclusions and recommendations resulting from a review of these reports will be made with a caveat regarding the need for more information.

Delimitations

This thesis will be based solely on a review of the literature and analysis of reports submitted by agricultural experts on PRTs. The scope of this thesis does not allow for conducting interviews with previously deployed civilian or military personnel on PRTs or for analysis of security data or other metrics from Afghanistan at the time of the teams' deployments. Also, while agricultural advisors are still working with PRTs in Iraq, the majority of U.S. government resources and PRT efforts are now directed at the

stabilization of Afghanistan. For this reason, any recommendations derived from PRT experiences will predominantly be applied to the Afghanistan context and directed at future PRTs deployed to Afghanistan.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Afghanistan's Agricultural Sector

Afghanistan once had a well-developed and productive agricultural sector. As late as 1978, Afghanistan was self-sufficient in cereal grains production and had a strong export market for horticultural products.²¹ It also produced industrial crops such as cotton and sugar beets and had the relevant industrial capabilities to process them.²² However, nearly three decades of conflict, deteriorated or destroyed infrastructure, poor roads, and little or no investment or government assistance have decimated the majority of Afghanistan's agricultural sector and reduced both the amount of cultivable land and the level of crop yields.

Agricultural potential in Afghanistan is largely a function of location and water availability. Agriculture accounts for almost all water use in Afghanistan, consuming up to 95 percent of Afghanistan's available water supply.²³ However, the arid to semiarid climate and rugged terrain produces low and variable levels of rainfall, resulting in frequent and severe droughts. The lack of reliable water supply restricts the amount of land for agriculture. Only 12 percent of the total land in Afghanistan is arable, or suitable for agriculture. The low and variable amounts of rainfall makes irrigated land essential

²¹Asian Development Bank, *Rebuilding Afghanistan's Agriculture Sector*, 2.

²²*Ibid.*, 16.

²³Republic of Afghanistan, *Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) 1387-1391 (2008-2013): A Strategy for Security, Governance, Economic Growth, and Poverty Reduction*, Afghanistan National Development Strategy Secretariat (Kabul, Afghanistan: 2008), 9.

for food production. However, only about half of Afghanistan's arable land is irrigated.²⁴ In particular, the deterioration and destruction of Afghanistan's irrigation infrastructure in the last three decades has greatly reduced the amount of irrigated land for agriculture. Approximately 3.3 million hectares of land were cultivated using some form of irrigation in the 1970s, while only 1.8 million hectares are now being irrigated for agriculture. Of that land, only a tenth is now irrigated by properly-engineered and modern irrigation systems, although many of the modern and larger traditional systems still suffer from low efficiency, salinity, and seepage problems.²⁵ The agricultural sector also suffers from poor water resource management. While significant donor funding has been devoted to rehabilitating damaged or degraded irrigation systems, little has been done to increase the efficiency of water usage.

Afghanistan's periodic but severe droughts have serious implications for wheat production, the country's main food crop. Cereal grain production (mostly wheat) accounts for almost 75 percent of Afghan agricultural output. Wheat alone comprises approximately 80 percent of Afghanistan's crop production on irrigated land.²⁶ Successive years of low rainfall or drought have recently reduced the amount of rainfed wheat production with serious implications for the food security of most Afghans. Afghanistan's droughts also have a direct impact on Afghanistan's economy. For

²⁴World Bank, "Afghanistan: Priorities for Agriculture and Rural Development," <http://go.worldbank.org/0NRZAEWOT0> (accessed 23 November 2009).

²⁵Asian Development Bank, *Rebuilding Afghanistan's Agriculture*, 15.

²⁶Ian Christoplos, "Narratives Of Rehabilitation In Afghan Agricultural Interventions," in *Reconstructing Agriculture in Afghanistan*, ed. Adam Pain and Jacky Sutton (Bourton, UK: Practical Action Publishing, 2007), 169.

example, from 2002-2006, levels of economic growth in Afghanistan's agricultural sector experienced higher volatility than its industrial and service sectors, largely due to weather conditions during this period.²⁷

The Afghanistan agricultural sector suffers from a number of both institutional and systemic resource problems that reduce productivity and prevent modernization of its farming practices. Afghan farmers lack basic agricultural inputs, such as quality seeds, fertilizer, and pesticides, producing lower crop yields.²⁸ The poor condition of the natural resource base, including soil fertility, lack of vegetation, and poor water and air quality limit arable land for cultivation and reduce crop yields. Soil erosion and poor watershed management have also led to silting of irrigation channels and rivers.

Afghanistan's inadequate economic infrastructure also results in limited markets for most agricultural products. Poor roads and security fears prevent many farmers from marketing their products or seeking out additional on-farm or non-farm income opportunities. Most rural areas lack suitable market facilities for perishable goods. Farmers must sell their goods in easily accessible areas that may have limited demand, often leaving them with surplus and spoiled produce. Most areas also lack the infrastructure to add value to products through storage or value-added processing, which prevents transport of products to additional markets.²⁹ The availability of low-cost,

²⁷Afghanistan, *ANDS*, 41.

²⁸David Mansfield, "'Economical with the Truth': The Limits of Price and Profitability in Both Explaining Opium Poppy Cultivation in Afghanistan and in Designing Effective Responses," in *Reconstructing Agriculture in Afghanistan*, ed. Adam Pain and Jacky Sutton (Bourton, UK: Practical Action Publishing, 2007), 216.

²⁹World Bank, "Priorities for Agriculture and Rural Development."

consistent electricity is also a limiting factor for building value-added processing or cold storage facilities. The lack of quality control and food safety standards further hinder Afghan farmers' ability to produce higher-value crops for transport or export.³⁰ Although the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) estimates that Afghanistan's agricultural sector will grow by at least five percent per year over the next decade in order to help alleviate rural poverty and develop provincial economies,³¹ the lack of institutional capacity and physical infrastructure makes that level of growth unlikely.

Poppy Cultivation in Afghanistan

The poor state of Afghanistan's agricultural sector and lack of government institutions have led many Afghan farmers to turn to poppy cultivation to make a living. Poppy cultivation also provides funding for insurgents and warlords. While poppy occupies only a small percent of cultivable land (2.9 percent in 2004),³² opium is Afghanistan's largest agricultural product, comprising roughly one-third to one-half of Afghanistan's drug-inclusive gross domestic product.³³ In 2004, Afghanistan produced almost 90 percent of the world's total illicit poppy production.³⁴

Afghanistan's high rate of opium poppy cultivation is attributable to a number of causes. Afghanistan has the correct agronomic conditions for illicit drug crop cultivation

³⁰Christoplos, "Narratives of Rehabilitation," 169.

³¹Afghanistan, *ANDS*, 44.

³²Mansfield, "Economical With The Truth," 217.

³³Greg Bruno, "Nourishing Afghanistan's Agricultural Sector," Council on Foreign Relations, <http://www.cfr.org/publication/19478/> (accessed 12 August 2009).

³⁴Mansfield, "Economical With The Truth," 217.

(poor soils, limited irrigation, constrained access to agricultural inputs), as well as the poor socio-economic and political conditions (weak governance, poor infrastructure, conflict, abundant cheap labor with limited sources of alternate livelihoods) that characterize other drug-producing areas of the world.³⁵ However, it must be noted that poppy cultivation is not uniform across Afghanistan. Cultivation occurs both in marginal, mountainous regions, as well as in some of the most fertile and well-irrigated parts of the country.

Poppy cultivation is largely a function of Afghanistan's unique set of traditional social and economic systems. For small farmers in Afghanistan, where food insecurity and droughts are commonplace, land, labor, and inputs devoted to growing poppy usually means a reduction of inputs devoted to food production. Most farmers do not have sufficient access to agricultural inputs (seeds, water, labor) to transition quickly between different crops in response to price signals. Afghan farmers who own land will often prioritize wheat production in order to meet their household's food needs, particularly in times of drought or food insecurity, even when opium poppy prices are very high.³⁶ Poppy is also a labor-intensive crop, with labor costs accounting for 80-90 percent of total production costs.³⁷ The majority of farmers lack the resources to hire additional farm labor to tend an expanded poppy crop in response to higher opium prices.

Instead, Afghanistan's lack of institutional systems and traditional land relationships seem to be the main drivers for opium production. In Afghan society, in

³⁵Mansfield, "Economical With The Truth," 215.

³⁶Ibid., 221.

³⁷Ibid., 225.

which the market for land is severely constrained and dictated by social systems, the resource-poor are often forced into poppy cultivation in order to obtain access to land and credit. Approximately 95 percent of Afghan farmers do not own enough land to meet their household's food needs and are forced to sharecrop or rent land from richer landowners.³⁸ These farmers lack the resources necessary to finance the planting of crops or feed their families through the winter. The lack of legitimate credit systems generally forces small farmers to obtain credit from richer farmers and landowners. These resource-rich farmers often require small farmers to cultivate poppy in return for credit or access to land for food cultivation. Wealthy farmers can thus coerce the resource-poor to cultivate poppy and accrue opium at far less than market value. If the poppy harvest fails, the wealthy can claim the debtor farmers' land, livestock, farm equipment, wives, or daughters to pay the debt.³⁹ This system often forces small farmers into an unrelenting cycle of debt, as studies have found that Afghan families continue to cultivate opium poppy in order to repay their debts.⁴⁰ These small farmers typically see no benefit from higher opium prices. Rather, only the resource-rich landowners are able to benefit from higher opium prices because of their control over land and credit, further exacerbating the inequitable distribution of land and assets across Afghanistan.

Agricultural development is considered to be an important strategy to eliminate opium poppy production in Afghanistan, as it is thought that agricultural development will provide Afghan farmers with viable agricultural alternatives to poppy cultivation.

³⁸Mansfield, "Economical With The Truth," 228.

³⁹Ibid., 224.

⁴⁰Ibid., 226.

Combined with universal eradication of poppy crops, many believe that development assistance will sustain reductions in cultivation and help those who do not have other legal income alternatives. However, studies report that linking eradication with development assistance leads to unintended consequences and in some cases actually increases poppy cultivation, as assistance in exchange for eradication sends the message that poppy cultivation will attract development assistance.⁴¹ Development assistance may also disproportionately benefit the local elite (those that actually drive poppy cultivation) and provide little benefit to the resource-poor, who are most dependent on opium for their livelihoods. Additionally, short-term development assistance is unlikely to affect the systemic issues that drive continued poppy production, namely lack of credit institutions and land access. Because opium cultivation is largely the result of both traditional systems and lack of infrastructure, long-term commitments by donor governments and development agencies are crucial in order to provide the poor with access to credit, land, and off-farm and non-farm income opportunities. Long-term strategies aimed at building governance and institutions are also needed to eliminate or reduce Afghanistan's poppy production.

Agriculture and Economic Development

The international community has placed a great deal of emphasis on agriculture's importance to Afghanistan's development in part because of the large role that agriculture plays in Afghanistan, but also because of agriculture's potential to be an engine of economic growth. Agricultural development is considered to be a powerful enabler of

⁴¹Mansfield, "Economical with the truth," 233.

growth for an economy as a whole while also distributing the benefits of economic development throughout society.⁴² In addition to the potential of agricultural development to assist with Afghanistan's reconstruction, many in the international community believe that agricultural development will reduce the amount of opium poppy grown in Afghanistan by providing the impetus and means for farmers to move out the opium based-economy into legitimate income activities.

Development of a country's agricultural sector generally occurs through a combination of publicly-funded agricultural research, improved inputs, increased irrigation, education of the rural population, and sound national trade and exchange rate policies.⁴³ Development in any of these aspects of the agricultural sector, or ideally, a combination of these new technologies, is thought to contribute to the development of a country's economy as a whole through the improvement and education of rural populations. Better education will also help members of the rural labor force to find employment in nonfarm sectors of the economy. Thus, agricultural development can contribute to the education of a rural population and assist the movement of the rural labor force out of the subsistence sector of the economy.⁴⁴ Additionally, agricultural development, to the extent that it increases production, will displace agricultural imports

⁴²G. Edward Schuh, "Agriculture and Economic Development," *Chicago Policy Review* 3, no. 1 (1999): 57.

⁴³*Ibid.*, 62-64.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 63-64.

with domestic products, resulting in foreign exchange savings that can help a country lower its foreign debt or finance a higher rate of its own economic growth.⁴⁵

In poor countries, one of the first steps towards agricultural development is often the introduction of new or better methods of growing subsistence or staple commodities. By improving the available agricultural production technology (e.g., farming techniques, input quality, or equipment), the potential production of staple or subsistence goods is increased, decreasing the commodity price. While the decline in the real price of subsistence commodities will benefit all sectors of the economy, the poor will benefit to a greater extent because they spend a larger share on their incomes on food than middle- and upper-income consumers.⁴⁶

Reconstruction Strategies for Afghanistan's Agricultural Sector

Even before the 11 September 2001 attacks and the beginning of Operation Enduring Freedom, both governmental and non-governmental international actors acknowledged that revitalization of Afghanistan's agricultural sector was critical to build governance, stabilize the country, and link relief to long-term development.⁴⁷ Many of these organizations created strategies for Afghanistan's reconstruction agricultural sector. Since 2001, even more agricultural reconstruction strategies have been created, although none of these strategies were developed jointly or in consultation with the Afghan

⁴⁵Schuh, "Agriculture and Economic Development," 59.

⁴⁶Ibid., 58.

⁴⁷Center for Army Lessons Learned, *ADTs in Afghanistan Handbook*.

government.⁴⁸ In a review of agricultural strategies from international organizations, NGOs, and government sources, Zezza and Migotto contend that the existing documents are not strategies but rather ‘agricultural sector reviews’ since they all fail to provide measurable, time-bound objectives, set policy priorities, or address the practical capacity, institutional, and financial constraints to policy implementation in an emerging government.⁴⁹ They argue that these agricultural reports list the requirements of sound agricultural policy and discuss areas in which sector reform is needed but fail to give any consideration to how the Afghan government can design, implement, or fund these programs. Zezza and Migotto also state that international donor and governments typically discuss the importance of host nation participation in creating sector strategies but rarely provide for host nation empowerment, or the ability to influence policy design, in their strategies.⁵⁰

Since 2001, many donor governments and NGOs have conducted relief efforts in Afghanistan that focus on food aid assistance and agricultural reconstruction. However, the majority of these early efforts suffered from poor coordination between agencies, donor governments, and the Afghan government. A 2003 study done by the Government Accountability Office on international agricultural assistance to Afghanistan found that most of the assistance to Afghanistan from 1999 to 2002 had limited impact. While the continuing conflict and drought conditions at the time hindered the impact of agricultural

⁴⁸GAO, *Foreign Assistance: Lack Of Strategic Focus*, 3, 33-40.

⁴⁹Zezza and Migotto, “Towards A Framework For Agricultural Development,” 278-279.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, 280.

assistance, the short-term assistance provided, e.g., tool and seed distribution, had little if any long-term impact on agricultural reconstruction.⁵¹ The international community also failed to coordinate or integrate their agricultural assistance with the Afghan government. As a result, the Afghan government and international community were unable to develop a joint strategy to integrate the numerous agricultural assistance projects or to manage the agricultural reconstruction effort as a whole.

Additionally, the level of funding provided during the time period was inadequate to achieve the stated U.S. and international community's stated goals of reconstructing Afghanistan's agricultural sector. Although the international community pledged approximately \$230 million of agricultural assistance funds in 2003, this amount is small relative to the long-term funding needs for agricultural reconstruction. Preliminary needs assessments for Afghan reconstruction estimated that between \$11 and \$18 billion over 10 years would be needed for Afghanistan's reconstruction.⁵² Despite the United States and international community's statements on the importance of Afghanistan's agricultural sector, the Government Accountability Office concluded that the funding provided by international donors is likely insufficient to achieve the long-term goals for the country's agricultural reconstruction.⁵³

⁵¹GAO, *Foreign Assistance: Lack Of Strategic Focus*, 31.

⁵²*Ibid.*, 41.

⁵³*Ibid.*, 43.

Afghanistan's National Development Strategy

In 2002, Afghanistan attempted to exert leadership over international assistance efforts by creating a Consultative Group mechanism process to promote programs and objectives in its National Development Framework.⁵⁴ In 2006, the Afghan government, the United Nations, and the international donor community established the Afghanistan Compact, a five-year framework for international cooperation with Afghanistan. By early 2008, the Afghan government had also developed and published its National Development Strategy (ANDS), its framework strategy for improving security, governance, economic growth, and poverty reduction. Described as an 'Afghan-owned' set of guidelines, the ANDS sets out goals for three 'pillars' of Afghanistan's development: security; governance, rule of law, and human rights; and economic and social development. The document sets out ambitious goals for reducing poverty, meeting Afghanistan Compact benchmarks, and achieving its Millennium Development Goals.⁵⁵ Along with the 2006 Afghanistan Compact, the ANDS is meant to serve as the primary mechanism for coordinating future Afghan and international reconstruction efforts. It also addresses implementation of its development objectives and sets out a monitoring and evaluation framework for showing progress.

Agriculture and rural development are included in the 'Economic and Social Development' pillar of the ANDS. The subsector's long-term strategic vision is to ensure the social, economic, and political well being of rural communities by reducing poverty through economic regeneration. By making agriculture more productive and

⁵⁴GAO, *Foreign Assistance: Lack Of Strategic Focus*, 35-36.

⁵⁵Afghanistan, *ANDS*, v.

commercially oriented, ANDS envisions agriculture as the source of growth and means of livelihood for the rural poor.⁵⁶ The key components of the ANDS' ambitious agricultural strategy will include support for commercialized and value-added agriculture and the development of a comprehensive program to reduce rural poverty and improve rural livelihoods called the Comprehensive Agriculture and Rural Development Program. The expected outcomes for its agriculture and rural development strategy are: (1) strengthened local governance; (2) poverty reduction and food security; (3) increased agricultural production and productivity; and (4) provision and maintenance of agriculture and rural infrastructure.⁵⁷ The ANDS states it will accomplish its agriculture and rural development objectives through a combination of private investment and public sector support.⁵⁸ The Government of Afghanistan plans to work with NGOS, civil society, and the international community to set priorities for the programs, determine funding sources, and establish timelines.⁵⁹

The Provincial Reconstruction Team's Role in Reconstruction

While governmental and non-governmental organizations have created numerous frameworks for stabilization and reconstruction operations in Afghanistan, often consisting simply of lists of major types of stabilization activities (for example ensuring security, social and economic well-being, governance, civil society, and others), the

⁵⁶Afghanistan, *ANDS*, 12.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*, 92-93.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, 12.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*, 90.

question of how to conduct these operations is still largely a matter of debate. The urgent need to find a flexible means of conducting stabilization and reconstruction activities in Afghanistan and Iraq operations led to the creation of the Provincial Reconstruction Team, a concept that is now viewed as a potential model for all future stabilization and reconstruction operations.⁶⁰

The current concept of PRTs evolved in the early years of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) created the Provincial Reconstruction Team concept in mid-2002 as a way to bolster security and conduct reconstruction and stabilization activities outside of Kabul, expanding the "ISAF effect" into the provinces outside of Kabul without expanding the number of ISAF troops.⁶¹ PRTs, which began as small teams made up of Civil Affairs and Special Forces personnel, evolved into Joint Regional Teams with the stated goal of stabilizing the country in order to facilitate reconstruction efforts.⁶² The teams were later renamed Provincial Reconstruction Teams at the request of Afghan President Hamid Karzai to better reflect the teams' primary mission of reconstruction and capacity building.⁶³ The first PRT began work in February 2003 in Gardez, Afghanistan; by 2005, nineteen PRTs were operating in Afghanistan as part of

⁶⁰McNernery, "PRTs: A Model or a Muddle?" 32.

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²Craig Cobane, "Provincial Reconstruction Teams and Security Assistance: Comments on an Evolving Concept," *DISAM Journal* (Summer 2005): 92.

⁶³Ibid.

ISAF or the U.S. Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan. As of early 2010, 26 PRT teams from 14 NATO countries are operating throughout Afghanistan.⁶⁴

Consisting of 50 to 100 civil and military personnel in U.S.-led teams, PRTs are intended to be flexible organizational structures that can address the wide range of possible political, economic, and security issues and needs within their assigned province. The military personnel on the PRT conduct force protection, information and psychological operations, medical, logistics, and communication functions for the team. The civilian component of PRTs can include civilian diplomats, development assistance experts, and subject matters experts such as agriculture specialists or police trainers. PRT teams from the United States generally include at least one representative each from the State Department, USAID, and USDA; PRTs from other NATO countries also include civilian development experts. Military civil affairs officers work with the civilian experts to conduct village assessments, provide logistical support, and identify potential reconstruction projects. PRTs generally include a host nation representative: in Afghanistan, Colonels from Afghan Ministry of Interior also participate in PRTs.⁶⁵

Teams in Afghanistan are tasked with three missions: enhance security, extend the reach of the Afghan central government, and facilitate reconstruction.⁶⁶ The teams are meant to provide a visible international presence in their province, enhancing the role and mission of ISAF without large numbers of troops. The small size and relative lack of

⁶⁴NATO-ISAF Afghanistan. "Provincial Reconstruction Teams," NATO-ISAF, <http://www.nato.int/isaf/topics/prt/index.html> (accessed 30 January 2010).

⁶⁵Cobane, "PRTs and Security Assistance," 92-93.

⁶⁶Ibid.

military assets, development resources, and expertise prevent the PRTs from taking active roles in ensuring security or undertaking major reconstruction efforts in their province. The teams instead are meant to facilitate reconstruction, relying on dialogue and political liaison to bring local and provincial leadership into the reconstruction and stabilization process. PRTs are also tasked with facilitating interactions between the central and local governments in order to build the governing capacity of local and provincial leaders.⁶⁷ The involvement and buy-in of the local leadership is critical to the eventual sustainability of any of the PRT's reconstruction or training projects. In permissive environments, or those with higher levels of security, PRTs coordinate their efforts with NGOs working in the area in an attempt to unify and deconflict reconstruction efforts. In less permissive areas with greater security concerns or near combat conditions in which NGOs are unable to operate, PRTs instead undergo projects and activities that contribute to overall stabilization efforts.⁶⁸

PRTs obtain funding for their reconstruction projects generally through the U.S. military's Commanders Emergency Response Program (CERP) or USAID funding. Most of the PRT funding since 2004 has come from the CERP, a fund that requires less bureaucratic processing than most funding sources and gives commanders the ability to fund small projects quickly. PRT commanders can use \$100,000 per month on projects and can apply to higher headquarters for larger amounts if necessary.⁶⁹ PRTs can also apply for funding through the USAID Quick Impact Program (QIP) local governance and

⁶⁷Cobane, "PRTs and Security Assistance," 93-96.

⁶⁸Ibid., 96.

⁶⁹Malkasian and Meyerle, "PRTs: How Do We Know They Work?" 7.

community development fund. However, the amount of money available is less than through CERP and the approval process can be lengthy.⁷⁰

Evaluations of PRT Effectiveness

PRTs are a relatively new phenomenon for the military and few attempts have been made to evaluate PRT projects' effectiveness, sustainability, or contribution to reconstruction efforts. Most of the existing assessments of PRTs are 'Lessons Learned' documents resulting from interviews with former PRT civilian team members.⁷¹ These reports and their conclusions pertain almost exclusively to PRT structural issues such as improving coordination and generally fail to address questions of PRT effectiveness relative to its expressed mission.

The relative newness of the PRT concept, in addition to the unique set of security conditions and social, economic, and political issues facing each team makes it difficult to draw any conclusions about overall effectiveness of the PRT concept. The broad range of PRT missions and responsibilities (enhancing security, extending the reach of the Afghan central government, and facilitating reconstruction) further complicates efforts to draw conclusions about overall PRT effectiveness as each of these missions involves different activities and vastly different amounts of time needed to produce results.

⁷⁰Malkasian and Meyerle, "PRTs: How Do We Know They Work?" 7.

⁷¹U.S. Agency for International Development, *Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan: An Interagency Assessment* (Washington, DC: USAID, June 2006); U.S. Department of Agriculture, *Lessons Learned Workshop for USDA Personnel Deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan* (Washington, DC: USDA Foreign Agricultural Service and Center for Complex Operations, July 2009); Center for Complex Operations, *PRT Lessons Learned Status Report (DRAFT)* (Washington, DC: Center for Complex Operations, National Defense University, 2010).

The majority of reporting about PRTs is typically found in newspapers and military publications that often rely on anecdotes to describe PRT projects and activities in Afghanistan and Iraq. These anecdotal metrics are often the norm: McNerney reports that PRT members interviewed describe their most common measure of success as “the number of smiling Afghan children.”⁷² Some articles that attempt to demonstrate PRT effectiveness use basic metrics to detail team accomplishments, such as amount of funding spent or number of projects completed. However, simple outputs offer little insight into overall effectiveness or sustainability. This lack of rigorous assessment has been a common criticism of PRTs.⁷³

However, efforts are slowly being made to study PRT effectiveness in Afghanistan. While these studies largely rely on qualitative information gathered from interviews, a few have begun to incorporate quantitative data analysis. In one such article, Malkasian and Meyerle⁷⁴ studied PRT contributions to provincial and district security, governance, and political participation. Their report examined the activities of U.S.-led PRTs in three Afghan provinces in 2007 and 2008 to determine the effect of PRTs on security and governance in Afghanistan. Malkasian and Meyerle augmented interview data with analysis of U.S. military-produced data sets on levels of insurgent activity. They determined that, although these PRTs did not by themselves quell violence or insurgent attacks in their provinces, the PRTs’ presence and its activities prevented an

⁷²McNerney, “PRTs: A Model or a Muddle?” 39.

⁷³Malkasian and Meyerle, “PRTs: How Do We Know They Work?” 10.

⁷⁴Ibid.

escalation of violence. They also found a statistically significant relationship between PRT project spending and the security rating of the province.⁷⁵

Malkasian and Meyerle conclude that no other civilian development organization can match PRTs' ability to conduct projects and stability operations in non-permissive environments in the short term.⁷⁶ PRTs are better able to protect their personnel than civilian-only agencies, often working in dangerous areas from which NGOs have removed their workers. In fact, they found that PRTs are increasingly handing over projects in safe areas to NGOs, USAID, and other development agencies in order to concentrate on projects in more dangerous areas.⁷⁷ Because PRTs conduct projects in their area of responsibility, they are better able to monitor projects in the field. The study finds that this direct presence also helps PRTs develop disciplined processes for competitive bidding, contract enforcement, and quality control. The PRT's organic expertise and force protection element allows it to conduct "quality control missions" to project sites to ensure that major projects meet contract specifications, reducing contractor corruption.⁷⁸

Another study found seems to analyze the governance and participation aspects of the PRT mission. Using 2004 and 2005 interviews with military and civilian PRT members, McNerney⁷⁹ correlates levels of PRT relationship and capacity building with

⁷⁵Malkasian and Meyerle, "PRTs: How Do We Know They Work?" 14.

⁷⁶Ibid., ix.

⁷⁷Ibid., 29-31.

⁷⁸Ibid., 33-34.

⁷⁹McNerney, "PRTs: A Model or a Muddle?" 35.

success of the PRT mission.⁸⁰ He considers relationship building to be a key component of PRT success, as PRTs must build effective partnerships with local and provincial leaders in order to identify relevant projects and train local security forces. Capacity building of local and provincial leaders and governing organizations is also considered critical in order to promote security and good governance within the host country. Additionally, McNerney examines the amount of civil-military coordination within PRTs, as civil and military PRT members must be able to work effectively with each other to conduct activities and accomplish their mission.

McNerney's study finds that PRT efforts in Afghanistan, particularly in the early years of Operation Enduring Freedom, suffered from vague and inconsistent mission statements, unclear roles and responsibilities, ad hoc preparation, and limited resources. In an assessment of civil-military coordination in PRTs, McNerney reports that military PRT members were often frustrated that their civilian counterparts brought few resources, little authority, and insufficient technical skills to the team in the early years of PRTs. In early U.S.-led PRTs, both civilian and military personnel often had little or no preparation for working with units each other. In contrast, a PRT led by forces from the United Kingdom in Marzar-e Sharif trained and deployed together with its civilian members. McNerney believes that this joint preparation allowed the UK-led team to prioritize civilian-led missions in their province, while a similar U.S.-led PRT in Gardez resisted State Department requests for similar activities.⁸¹

⁸⁰McNerney, "PRTs: A Model or a Muddle?" 35.

⁸¹Ibid., 39-40.

In terms of capacity building, McNerney finds that PRTs successfully involved local communities in their activities, incorporated training components into their community projects, and effectively served as liaisons between local leaders and the central government. However, while PRTs became more effective in building security sector capacity, they spent little time promoting civil-sector governance and training.

Despite the inherent problems of coordination and implementation, McNerney believes that PRTs have an overall positive impact in Afghanistan. He asserts that PRTs achieved some unity of effort in the field by coordinating military and civilian activities in the provinces and working to integrate these activities with the Afghan central government. However, McNerney admits that this assessment is still inadequate, stating that better and more robust metrics are needed to determine PRT effectiveness at the project, team, and national levels.

Until such metrics are developed, McNerney recommends that PRT effectiveness can be improved by creating more PRTs to extend ISAF's operational reach in Afghanistan. These PRTs must be staffed with a broader range of development and rule-of-law civilian experts who are given more resources and a greater leadership role within the team to accomplish their activities. Additionally, he asserts that the level of civil-military coordination on PRTs must improve before PRTs can become more effective in their missions. Civil and military personnel must be trained and equipped together not just before deployment, but also over the long term in preparation for stabilization and reconstruction missions.

While these reports demonstrate that PRT assessment is feasible, quantification of overall PRT effectiveness remains an extremely difficult task given the constraints

imposed by a fluid security environment and an overall lack of data. Additionally, these reports focus only on individual aspects of the PRT mission, examining PRTs' contributions to the security environment, governance, participation, or coordination. However, it appears that so far no efforts have been made to document the overall effectiveness of the PRT reconstruction mission or to demonstrate the stated link between PRT efforts and overall development of Afghanistan. Unfortunately, the lack of follow-up reporting on PRT projects, the high turnover of PRTs, and non-permissive security environment hinder the evaluation of project sustainability or long-term effectiveness of PRT reconstruction efforts.

Evaluating International Development Programs

The few existing efforts to evaluate PRT activities' contributions toward overall reconstruction illustrate the difficulties of evaluating the effectiveness of international development projects. Economic development is a non-linear process requiring a steady input of resources, effort, and time. The long time horizons necessary to develop or reconstruct economic and social aspects of civil society make development work extremely difficult to evaluate. However, donor organizations and countries increasingly expect recipients to provide evidence that assistance and aid are being used to produce tangible results. Many donors now require organizations and recipient countries to demonstrate the effectiveness of their interventions to justify the allocation of resources.

The international development community generally uses monitoring and evaluation (M&E) processes to evaluate the allocation of resources or the effectiveness of programs. Monitoring and evaluation are separate processes that when used together can strengthen both the implementation and results of a development activity. The regular

collection and review of project data in the monitoring process is intended to improve project efficiency and effectiveness relative to the activity's stated targets. In contrast, evaluation compares the activity's stated objectives with what was actually accomplished. It also determines how those objectives were achieved. Together, M&E is considered to be a powerful public management tool that promotes transparency and accountability within the recipient group by requiring recipients to track the use of its funding and then demonstrate the impact or results of those funds.⁸² The most common type of M&E framework is implementation-focused and evaluates development interventions based on inputs and outputs. Results-based M&E, which emphasizes the evaluation of an intervention's outcomes and impact, is preferable but often extremely difficult, time-consuming, and costly to create and implement.

Conclusively proving that development interventions or assistance programs are achieving their stated objectives requires a great deal of commitment, resources, and expertise. Allocating the necessary time and resources to an M&E effort is often beyond the capacity of many developing-country governments or organizations, which may lack the technical expertise, personnel, time, or resources to create and monitor M&E frameworks. Even with knowledgeable program staff, a general lack of available data can hinder international evaluations. Without reliable baseline country data such as demographic information, attributing development impact conclusively to an intervention may be impossible.

⁸²Kusek and Rist, *Ten Steps to a Results-Based Monitoring and Evaluation System*, 46.

While measuring impact in international settings is inherently difficult, evaluation of effectiveness or impact becomes even more difficult in emergency or dangerous situations. Non-permissive environments with poor security can complicate even routine tasks such as data collection and interviews with host national participants. Insecurity may also limit access to populations or prevent regular monitoring of project progress. Even when data is available, evaluators may be unable to separate a development intervention's impact from the destabilizing effects of the local security situation.

Even large and well-established organizations in the developed world struggle to quantify and demonstrate the impact of their programs. A review of evaluations from USAID democracy and governance programs⁸³ found that most USAID evaluations lack methodological accuracy, fail to include key information about assistance activities, and focus on immediate outputs of specific activities rather than linking the results to long-term objectives. Qualitative methods, such as field observations, interviews, and document reviews were the norm; quantitative data, if used at all, was generally restricted to basic descriptive statistics.⁸⁴ They conclude that USAID evaluations' reliance on weak research methods can easily introduce selectivity bias. The authors cite other studies of development evaluations with similar results that raise concerns about the overall validity and utility of evaluation findings. In their review of humanitarian assistance practices, the Humanitarian Policy Group at the Overseas Development Institute also concludes that

⁸³Kenneth Bollen, Pamela Paxton, and Rumi Morishima, "Assessing International Evaluations: An example from USAID's Democracy and Governance Program," *American Journal of Evaluation* 26, no. 2 (June 2005).

⁸⁴*Ibid.*, 193.

impact assessment of most programs is consistently poor and typically focuses on process or output indicators instead of assessing impact.⁸⁵

Although USAID made major internal changes in 2009 in an effort to strengthen its evaluation capacities,⁸⁶ these findings demonstrate the difficulties involved in conducting useful evaluations of international development interventions. That USAID, one of the world's largest providers of development assistance, struggles to show the linkages between development projects and quantifiable impact, points to the difficulties involved in instituting M&E methods and showing program effectiveness. In fact, many organizations that conduct humanitarian assistance or international development are still struggling to create an M&E process for their programs. For example, although the U.S. Department of Defense uses MOEs and MOPs to assess the performance and effectiveness of most of its programs, it has no system in place to analyze or assess its humanitarian assistance programs.⁸⁷

To improve monitoring, evaluation, and impact assessment of development interventions, organizations must construct M&E systems that move beyond simple measurements of outputs. To improve the usefulness of program evaluations, Bollen and

⁸⁵Charles-Antoine Hofmann, Les Roberts, Jeremy Shoham and Paul Harvey, *Measuring the Impact of Humanitarian Aid: A Review of Current Practice*, HPG 17 (London, UK: Humanitarian Policy Group, Overseas Development Institute, 2004), 1.

⁸⁶U.S. Agency for International Development, *Agency Financial Report for Fiscal Year 2009* (Washington, DC: USAID, 2009), 7.

⁸⁷Col. Eugene Bonventre, "Monitoring and Evaluation of Department of Defense Humanitarian Assistance Programs," *Military Review* (January-February 2008): 66-72; Derek Joseph Licina and Kenneth Schor, "Developing a Monitoring and Evaluating Capability for the U.S. Department of Defense Humanitarian Assistance Program," *Military Medicine* 172, no. 4 (April 2007): 339-345.

his colleagues recommend that organizations conducting evaluations select better research designs, incorporate evaluations into the intervention design, triangulate methodologies, and develop standardized reporting systems that better track input and outputs.⁸⁸ However, the question remains how best to conduct evaluations or impact assessments of development interventions in complex or non-permissive environments. The Humanitarian Policy Group⁸⁹ acknowledges that a true scientific, quantitative measurement of impact in complex situations may sometimes be impossible but recommends that impact can often be demonstrated or analyzed without being necessarily measured. They suggest that observation and judgment can serve as a useful and complementary way to postulate and test logical linkages between aid activities and observed changes in complex situations.⁹⁰

⁸⁸Licina and Schor, “Developing an M&E Evaluating Capability for DOD,” 199-202.

⁸⁹Hofman et al., *Measuring the Impact of Humanitarian Aid*, 31-32.

⁹⁰*Ibid.*, 23-24.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

PRTs are commonly credited with being an effective tool for stabilization in Afghanistan and now play a major role in the U.S. government and NATO countries' reconstruction efforts. While these claims have yet to be proven definitively, some analytical studies of PRT contributions to security and governance have been done. However, if little information exists about overall PRT contributions to stabilization, even less exists about PRT contributions to long-term reconstruction. Additionally, even though the U.S. government has placed a great deal of emphasis on the contribution of agricultural reconstruction to Afghanistan's overall development, no efforts have been made to evaluate the effectiveness or sustainability of agricultural projects done by PRTs.

Analysis of Agricultural Advisor Reports

Primary Data Source

Although USDA agricultural advisors have been serving on U.S.-led PRTs in Afghanistan since 2003, there is very little information regarding the advisors' contributions to provincial reconstruction. Existing documentation regarding USDA advisors' work in Afghanistan consists of project compilations and brief lessons learned reports done by USDA-FAS, the coordinating agency for agricultural advisors on PRTs. The most recent lessons learned report was done in collaboration with the Defense Department's Center for Complex Operations (CCO). The report is a product of a July 2009 workshop to capture lessons learned from USDA advisors who served on PRTs in both Afghanistan and Iraq. The workshop included 22 agricultural advisors from Iraq and

eight from Afghanistan from six different USDA agencies. The report presents a broad overview of the challenges facing USDA advisors on PRTs and offers recommendations for improving agricultural advisors' experience on PRTs.

Other documentation consists of the agricultural advisors' monthly project reports and final reports at the end of their PRT deployment. USDA-FAS requires agricultural advisors to complete a standardized report format for both monthly and final reports. In the final report template, agricultural advisors are asked to describe their projects and answer questions regarding their interactions with the military, other U.S. government civilian agencies, the Afghan government, and other organizations. Advisors are also asked to give recommendations for improving future PRTs.

As a previously unexamined primary data source, these final reports offer a unique opportunity to examine the first-hand accounts of USDA advisors at the end of their PRT deployment. As a USDA employee with access to the relevant electronic filing system, the author was granted permission by USDA-FAS to analyze these reports for the purpose of this thesis. USDA-FAS began requiring these reports relatively early in USDA's involvement with PRTs. While not all advisors completed a final report, the existing reports cover nearly the entire period of USDA's involvement with PRTs in Afghanistan. As such, they offer an opportunity to conduct a simple longitudinal survey of agricultural advisors' experiences on PRTs.

Only final reports from agricultural advisors assigned to PRTs in Afghanistan were analyzed in this work. Monthly reports, which detail daily activities, meetings, and project notes, are intended to keep the FAS-Kabul and FAS-Washington offices apprised

of advisor activities. As such, these reports contained too much specificity for the purposes of this thesis and were not included in the analysis.

Additionally, while similarities exist between the experiences of advisors serving in Iraq and Afghanistan, final reports from advisors in Iraq were not included in the analysis because of the differences in the countries' agricultural sectors. Most of the Iraq advisor reports were from 2008 and 2009, which would complicate efforts to draw any conclusions regarding the improvement of PRTs and agricultural projects over time.

Data Selection

Agricultural advisors' final reports were sourced from FAS-Washington's electronic files. Every effort was made to find all final agricultural reports from Afghanistan within the program files. However, reporting procedures and requirements apparently varied since USDA began sending agricultural advisors in 2003, likely as a result of staffing turnover and changing procedures within FAS-Washington. For example, the standard reporting format changed between 2007 and 2009. The new report template changed the questions, and as a result, the 2009 final reports contain different types of information about the advisors' experiences. Examples of both formats are found in Appendix A and B.

Reporting and the quality of information also seem to be a function of the individual advisor. The relatively small number of total final reports found indicated that not all advisors completed final reports. Reports also varied widely in the amount of information provided, with some advisors providing brief answers to questions and no project information. Other advisors provided detailed information regarding all projects worked on during their deployment. Some advisors did not answer all of the questions

posed on the reporting format. Some caution is used in drawing conclusions concerning omitted responses or lack of detail, as these may not necessarily indicate an affirmative or positive response or a lack of advisor concerns regarding that issue.

The number of total reports found for 2005 and 2009 represents a majority of the advisors in Afghanistan at some point during those years (see table 1). It should be noted that the number of final reports found for 2005 (15) is greater than the number of advisors deployed that year, as these reports represent advisors who were present in Afghanistan at some point during 2005 and includes some overlap with 2004 and 2006 advisors. Table 2 contains the total numbers of final reports included in the analysis.

Table 2. PRT Agricultural Advisor Reports			
	2005	2007	2009
Advisor Final Reports	15	3	9

Source: Created by author.

Data Compilation and Analysis

Information from these reports was compiled into spreadsheets and coded according to a number of variables. These variables were grouped into three categories: operational or administrative aspects of the agricultural advisors’ participation on the PRT (training, administrative, funding, critical skills); interagency coordination (military, USAID, DOS, and NGOs); and mission effectiveness (capacity building, sustainability, alignment with national strategy).

Data points for each of these variables represent explicit comments or concerns raised by the agricultural advisor in their final report. As previously stated, lack of response may not indicate lack of an issue in regards to a particular issue, but for the purposes of this analysis only explicit comments were included. No additional narratives or data sets were used to corroborate the advisor comments, so comments are considered at face value and represent only the advisors' interpretation of events. All possible efforts were made to prevent interpreting advisor comments beyond what is explicitly written.

For this analysis, results were compiled into year groupings (2005 and 2009 year groups). Each year grouping was treated as a distinct set of variables and compiled into separate spreadsheets. Because PRTs are an evolving, often ad hoc, concept, PRTs in different years may have different structures, operating policies, or procedures. PRTs also faced vastly different security and political situations in different years: PRTs in 2005 worked within a slightly more permissive security situation than PRTs operating in 2007 and 2009. For this reason, 2005 PRTs are considered to be sufficiently distinct from 2009 PRTs to warrant separate analysis. Comparison of data from each year group is then used to construct a simple longitudinal analysis of advisor reports.

An insufficient number of 2007 reports were found to be statistically significant or to warrant construction of a 2007 year group. However, the 2007 reports are used to support findings from 2005 and 2009 and reinforce findings from the simple longitudinal analysis.

As previously noted, the final report templates for agricultural advisors changed between 2007 and 2009, creating some variations in the type of information provided. For example, while the 2005 format included specific questions about the nature of the

advisors' working relationships with the military, USAID, DOS, NGOs, and host nation authorities, this question was omitted in the 2009 format. However, some advisors in 2009 provided information on these topics and in many cases the information provided was within the same categories as the earlier format. For this reason, the same variables and coding methods are used to allow for analysis between the year groups.

For each variable, all explicit comments pertaining to each issue were included in the spreadsheet and aggregated to determine the presence of trends or patterns. Findings were grouped according to categories of variables: operational, coordination, and mission effectiveness. Data sets for each year group are included in Appendix C. As appropriate, the findings from the draft CCO "PRT Lessons Learned Status Report" and the "Lessons Learned Workshop for USDA Personnel" are noted when their findings corroborate trends found in the agricultural advisor reports.

Interagency Coordination Variables

Interactions between the agricultural advisor and the military, USAID, DOS, and NGOs are discussed in the section on coordination. For this analysis, advisor responses are grouped into the following categories: good to very good, poor, and mixed. "Mixed" in this case means that while some of an individual advisor's interactions with personnel from an organization might be good or very good, other interactions were poor.

Mission Effectiveness Variables

The analysis of agricultural advisors' mission effectiveness focuses on the advisors' efforts to build capacity and promote reconstruction of the agricultural sector. Mission effectiveness variables are discussed when sufficient information is present in

advisor reports. As previously noted, the amount and type of information provided varies widely according to individual advisor. In this thesis, the term “capacity building” refers to both participation by host country nationals and institution building through training of host country government officials. The goal of capacity building is to develop local officials’ skills. Capacity building is here considered a short-term outcome because the advisor conducts the training, mentoring, and advising activities during his or her deployment.

Army doctrine defines reconstruction as the process of rebuilding a country’s political, social, and physical infrastructure in order to create the foundation for long-term development.⁹¹ For the purposes of this thesis, reconstruction is considered to be a long-term outcome that will continue after the departure of the agricultural advisor or the PRT. For an activity or project to contribute to reconstruction, it must have the potential to be continued by the local community. For the sake of simplicity, “reconstruction” is considered to be synonymous with the concept of “sustainability.”

Alignment with National Development Strategy Analysis

Project information from the advisor reports are examined relative to the stated goals of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy to determine the extent to which these PRT projects are supportive of Afghanistan’s overall agricultural strategy. All activities described by the advisors as completed, in progress, or funded were reviewed and categorized according to the ANDS objectives. In the ANDS, the four expected outcomes of the Agriculture and Rural Development Sector Strategy are: (1) strengthened

⁹¹U.S. Army, FM 3-07, *Stability Operations*, 1-12.

local governance; (2) poverty reduction and food security; (3) increased agricultural production and productivity; and (4) provision and maintenance of agriculture and rural infrastructure.⁹² To simplify categorization, local governance was considered to be synonymous with capacity building and included all projects with training components. All activities that included efforts to increase a community's agricultural output were classified as agricultural productivity projects. All projects involving commodity distribution were listed as food security and poverty reduction projects. Infrastructure projects included projects to improve or construct physical infrastructure or improve natural resource management. Activities that corresponded to more than one category are listed in each relevant category. Therefore the final total of activities should be read as the number of activities done to promote a particular category rather than a total number of projects.

Findings from the reports and supporting evidence from the "Lessons Learned" documents are used to draw conclusions and make recommendations in chapter 5.

⁹²Afghanistan, *ANDS*, 92-93.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

USDA agricultural advisor reports offer a great deal of insight into the issues and challenges experienced by PRT advisors. In this thesis, these final reports are analyzed to determine the potential project effectiveness or sustainability of PRT projects.

Additionally, analysis of the reports is used to determine the extent to which PRT operational issues and levels of internal and external coordination affect the success and long-term sustainability of USDA advisor activities.

PRT Operations

While the effectiveness of PRT agricultural activities is usually a function of project success and sustainability, the operational and administrative aspects of an agricultural advisors' deployment also contribute to USDA experts' ability to accomplish their mission. Variables such as funding, training, administrative issues, and critical skills determine an advisor's ability to get to the right location, find the needed funding, and receive the necessary cooperation from the other military and civilian PRT personnel to carry out a project. If project sustainability and host nation reconstruction are desired end states for PRTs, setting effective organizational conditions for the interagency PRT members is crucial to allow them to conduct successful activities.

Funding

USDA lacks the legislative authority to provide funding to its advisors for reconstruction activities.⁹³ For this reason, USDA agricultural advisors have no access to dedicated funding sources for agricultural projects. To fund projects in their province, advisors must apply for funding through the U.S. military CERP or USAID's QIP funding sources. Advisors in the last few years have also obtained funding from ADTs.

Eleven out of fifteen (73 percent) of the 2005 agriculture advisors and all three of the 2007 advisors reported frustration by the lack of USDA-specific funding (table 3). These advisors all reported difficulties obtaining funding for agricultural projects for their provinces. Two reported difficulties obtaining either CERP or USAID funding. Some advisors found that they were unable to receive funding for agricultural projects because of a lack of understanding of civil affairs or agricultural projects on the part of the military. One reported an inability to obtain funding because the initial PRT commander was not supportive of agriculture projects, while another expressed frustration with the amount of time spent finding funding, stating that time spent searching for program funds could have been better used on project development. Advisors stated that the lack of their own funding sources prevented them from doing more agricultural projects. One 2009 advisor expressly noted the difficulties in planning projects without funding, stating that even small amounts of funding would allow for immediate implementation of small projects.

⁹³USAID, *PRTs in Afghanistan: An Interagency Assessment*, 16.

Table 3. PRT Agricultural Advisors Citing Funding Issues			
Types of Issues:	2005	2007	2009
Lack of USDA funding	11	3	1

Source: Created by author.

These comments are consistent with the findings from the USDA-CCO workshop and the CCO general PRT conclusions. At the USDA-CCO workshop, returned advisors commented that USDA advisors were often seen as a burden or a nuisance because they lacked their own funding. Advisors reported that USAID and DOD controlled the agenda in theater because they controlled the funding, which allowed them to conduct projects without consultation with other PRT members. Additionally, even when available, funding sources failed to take into account the fact that agricultural projects often need multi-year funding to match agricultural cycles.

In its 2006 USAID PRT assessment, USAID recognizes that USDA representatives provide invaluable agricultural advice and support to PRTs. However, it reports that USDA's lack of legislative authority to provide funding to its representatives for PRT activities forces advisors to rely heavily on persuasion to access CERP or USAID QIP funds. The report concludes that USDA representatives, as well as representatives of any civilian agency serving on PRTs, need access to dedicated funding.⁹⁴

⁹⁴USAID, *PRTs in Afghanistan: An Interagency Assessment*, 16.

Training

The training that USDA agricultural advisors receive before deployment has evolved over the course of USDA's involvement with PRTs. Agriculture experts now complete four weeks of training before deployment to Afghanistan.⁹⁵ Advisors complete a one-week course in counter threat training, a one-week familiarization course on Afghan culture, a weeklong Afghan PRT orientation course, and a six-day PRT training at Camp Atterbury in Indiana. The PRT orientation course is intended to provide advisors with basic skills and knowledge of working with an integrated civil-military field team. The course also includes a basic overview of the U.S. political and military strategy in Afghanistan, Afghan government structure, ISAF, Afghan development programs, civil-military planning and integration, and other topics related to the PRT mission. The training at Camp Atterbury then provides an overview of integrated civil-military activities in Afghanistan, teaches participants about the structure, role, and capabilities of PRTs and military units, and gives basic training for operating and conducting development in a counter-insurgency or stability environment. Advisors also have two days of training at the USDA headquarters, where they receive information on USDA agricultural activities in Afghanistan, logistics, and administrative issues.

Pre-deployment training for agricultural advisors has improved over the course of USDA's involvement with PRTs. In the advisor reports, three 2005 advisors reported a need for basic training or knowledge of the military to work effectively on PRTs and one stated a need for general pre-deployment training (table 4). Two of the three 2007 advisor reports stated that USDA advisors should be involved in pre-deployment training with the

⁹⁵USDA, *Guide for USDA Agricultural Experts: PRTs Afghanistan*, 19-22.

military. None of the 2009 reports discussed training. Based on the reports alone, the absence of any mention of training seems to indicate that training for agricultural advisors improved substantially between 2007 and 2009.

Table 4. PRT Agricultural Advisors Citing Training Issues			
Types of Issues:	2005	2007	2009
Need for basic military training	3	2	--

Source: Created by author.

While only a few of the final reports expressed the need for joint training between the interagency PRT members and the military, the lack of joint training before PRT deployment is commonly discussed in other Lessons Learned and PRT assessment reports. While joint civil-military training is usually cited as an important way to improve working relationships in the field, interagency training is also essential in order to bridge cultural gaps between U.S. government agencies and educate civilians about the capabilities and limitations of each organization. However, USDA experts and other civilian PRT members typically arrive in Afghanistan and report to the PRT with little or no prior contact with the military or other civilian PRT members. The USDA-CCO workshop states that USDA must pursue joint training efforts, both to educate the agricultural advisors about the interagency and to improve the other PRT members' awareness of agricultural development and USDA capabilities.⁹⁶ The USAID assessment

⁹⁶USDA, *Lessons Learned Workshop*, 24.

also concludes that adequate pre-deployment training involving the military and civilian PRT members would eliminate most of the critical challenges facing PRTs.⁹⁷

Administrative Issues

The advisor final reports reveal persistent problems with both logistical and administrative issues surrounding advisors' deployments to PRTs. Some of these are organizational, such as the need for greater support and assistance surrounding administrative issues, while others are more structural, such as the lack of overlap between advisor deployments, which can impact the overall effectiveness of the PRT reconstruction mission.

Six of the 2005 advisor reports (40 percent) cited various administrative or logistical issues and two of the three 2007 reports also cited administrative frustrations (table 5). These issues ranged from poor communication with the Washington office to administrative problems with pre-deployment processes and not receiving reimbursements and extra pay. Three advisors from 2005 cited frustration at the lack of benefits relative to other civilian representatives on PRTs, stating that they were not receiving the same kinds of benefits in terms of pay, travel, compensatory time, and per diem as representatives from U.S. government agencies. Three of the 2005 advisors also cited issues regarding the need for the Washington office to provide better communication and coordination with their home agencies at USDA.

⁹⁷USAID, *PRTs in Afghanistan: An Interagency Assessment*, 17.

Types of Issues:	2005	2007	2009
Administrative or logistical issues	6	2	--
Lack of benefits	3	2	3
Need for better support to home agency	3	--	--
Overlap of advisors	5	1	1

Source: Created by author.

Many of the agricultural advisors discussed the critical need for overlap between the incoming and outgoing advisors. Overlap with incoming advisors allows the incumbent advisor to explain relevant information about the area’s agricultural situation, introduce the new advisor to key host nation, PRT, and interagency contacts, and hand over control of existing projects. Even a brief overlap between advisors would provide essential continuity of effort that would contribute to the sustainability of agricultural projects. However, the lack of overlap between advisors, and in many cases the long periods of time between advisors, often results in the termination or trailing off of the last advisor’s agricultural projects. A 2005 advisor remarked that several agricultural projects were “lost” by the military and USAID during the time gaps between agricultural advisor deployments. Another 2005 advisor stated that the time between advisor deployments frustrated the PRT commander because he had no guidance about ongoing agricultural projects. One 2009 advisor reported that previous agricultural projects stopped when the former advisor left. This incoming advisor was then forced to “start with a clean slate on agricultural issues” because of the four-month gap between USDA advisors. The lack of advisor overlap raises serious concerns about the potential sustainability of any

agricultural project if projects tend to terminate with the departure of the agricultural advisor. One advisor commented that any skills that he taught to local leaders would not last long if a no replacement advisor was able to reinforce them. These findings are consistent with the USDA-CCO Lessons Learned report, which states that tour overlaps and sufficient transition time between advisors is essential for the smooth transfer of responsibilities in country.⁹⁸

Critical Skills

The 2005 final report template asked agricultural advisors both to describe what made their accomplishments possible and to list the skills they utilized most as PRT agricultural advisors. Although agricultural advisors are selected based upon their expertise and knowledge of agriculture, agricultural production, or resource management, only four of the advisors from 2005 cited technical skills (such as engineering, irrigation and water management, or veterinary medicine) as the skills that they utilized most during their assignment (table 6). Eight advisors (53 percent) listed various types of networking and people skills (communication, coordination, networking, facilitation, and flexibility) as their most utilized skills. Three advisors reported that they used both technical agriculture skills and people skills during their assignments. Two advisors commented that technical skills are less important than people skills for an agricultural advisor's work on a PRT. Similarly, two of the 2009 advisors also reported that people and networking skills were used more than technical skills. As noted by one advisor and echoed by the USDA-CCO report, advisors are not matched to a PRT based upon their

⁹⁸USDA, *Lessons Learned Workshop*, 14-15.

skill set and the needs of the particular province.⁹⁹ Therefore, agricultural generalist skills and people skills are likely to be more useful to an advisor than very specific skill sets that may not be needed in that particular area.

Type of skills:	2005	2007	2009
Technical agriculture skills	4	--	--
People skills	8	1	2
Both technical and people skills	3	1	--

Source: Created by author.

Interagency Coordination

Effective working relationships between the civil and military members of a PRT are necessary for the team to accomplish their mission and conduct successful and sustainable PRT projects. The coordination of civil-military efforts on PRTs is heralded as one of the principle strengths of the PRT and a key component of the “whole of government approach,” or coordinated efforts of the departments and agencies of the U.S. government toward a shared goal.¹⁰⁰ However, actually creating successful collaborations between civil and military PRT members in the field remains difficult. As stated previously, U.S. civil and military personnel meet at the PRT and generally have very little training to prepare them for working with each other. PRT members by necessity

⁹⁹USDA, *Lessons Learned Workshop*, 14.

¹⁰⁰U.S. Army, FM 3-07, *Stability Operations*, 1-4.

must learn to work together on the ground when they arrive, a task that is further complicated by the high turnover rate of units and the asynchronous deployments of individual PRT members and military units. These structural and organizational difficulties often make it difficult to establish the strong working relationships that are necessary to conduct successful activities. Additionally, USDA agricultural advisors are in a unique situation, as they arrive at PRTs without their own funding and resources. Advisors must often rely on developing personal relationships with both the military and other interagency members to find funding sources to achieve their mission. For this reason, good working relationships with other agency personnel is perhaps more critical for them than for other PRT members.

The importance of effective coordination is seen throughout the advisors' reports. Eight of the 2005 advisors (53 percent), two of the 2007 advisors, and three of the 2009 advisors explicitly reported the importance of coordinating with their counterparts (military, USAID, DOS, other PRTs, NGOs) in order to ensure the successful planning and implementation of projects. Many noted that meeting with their PRT counterparts on a daily or weekly basis helped them stay updated on the PRT's other activities and helped develop relationships necessary to plan, fund, and implement their own projects.

Military Coordination

Ten of the fifteen advisors (67 percent) from 2005 stated that they had good relationships with the military component of the PRT, with three of those advisors describing their relationship with the military as "excellent" (table 7). Four advisors reported that their interactions with the military were mixed to poor. Some advisors worked with several PRTs and experienced good relationships with one PRT and poor

interactions with another PRT; others had poor relationships with the PRT commander but had good relationships with the PRT civil affairs team. The degree of coordination between the USDA advisor and the military members of the PRT seems to be a direct function of the importance that the commander and senior officers place on agriculture. For example, three of the four advisors with mixed reports on military coordination stated that the commander or contracting officer did not consider agriculture to be important and as such failed to support or fund agriculture projects or provide force protection and transportation. One advisor reported being treated as “nonessential” by the commander because the commander did not believe that agricultural projects were important.

Table 7. Advisor Relationships with Military			
Quality of relationships:	2005	2007	2009
Excellent	3	2	1
Good	7		
Mixed or poor	4	--	--

Source: Created by author.

Two of the three 2007 advisors also described their relationship with the military component of the PRT as excellent, although one advisor stated that the contracting officer did not want to fund agriculture projects because agriculture was “USAID’s responsibility.”

Because the 2009 final report template does not have a question about the advisors’ relationships with other PRT members, only one of the 2009 advisors explicitly discussed their relationships with the military (interestingly, this was likely only because

the advisor used the earlier final report format). This advisor described her relationship with the civil affairs team as excellent and with the commanders of the PRT and ADT as very good. However, the advisor noted that PRT commanders did not recognize agriculture as a primary need for Afghanistan unless directed to do so by a higher level.

The advisor's relationship with the PRT commander seems to be particularly important to the success of the advisor's mission largely because of the advisors' need to obtain resources and access assets from the PRT. Because the agricultural advisors must depend on military force protection and transportation to get to project sites, the support of the commander is crucial for the advisors to access necessary PRT assets. Because the advisors lack their own funding sources, the commander's support of agriculture also determines the advisors' ability to obtain CERP funding for activities.

Many of the advisors reported that being involved in the daily activities of the PRT helped make them more visible to the PRT commander and by extension increased the visibility of agricultural projects in general. Four of the advisors (one from 2005, two from 2007, and one from 2009) explicitly mentioned the need to attend daily or weekly meetings with the military to be aware of what the military units were doing, stay involved with the PRT, and to advise the commander as necessary. One of the 2005 advisors reported that once he convinced the PRT commander of the relationship between agricultural development and security sector reform, the commander added talking points about the importance of agriculture into his briefs.

These findings are echoed in the USDA-CCO workshop report, the CCO general report, and the USAID assessment. The USDA-CCO workshop found that while civil-military cooperation is generally good, commanders and senior officers often do not

understand the importance of agriculture to the local and national economies. The mutual lack of knowledge about organizational capabilities and limitations can cause confusion and misunderstandings in regards to the civil and military representatives about each other's priorities and approaches to the mission. Additionally, the military focus on large-scale, high-impact, and high-profile projects is often at odds with agricultural development programs, which are generally smaller scale, target-specific, and long term. In many cases, PRT commanders underestimated the timelines for agricultural projects and were frustrated that USDA advisors lacked their own funding.¹⁰¹ The CCO PRT report also notes that while civil-military relations tend to improve over time as individuals interact with each other more, these communication problems are symptomatic of deeper issues civil-military regarding resourcing, funding, and strategy.¹⁰²

Government Agency Coordination

Civil-military coordination on PRTs is a major topic of discussion in most PRT assessments, but there is generally little discussion of coordination between interagency members. Civilian representatives may also find it difficult to work effectively with each other because of a lack of understanding about other agencies' capabilities and limitations. Like working relationships between civilian and military members of PRTs, good working relationships between civilian PRT members depend heavily on developing interpersonal relationships. While PRTs may sometimes have representatives

¹⁰¹USDA, *Lessons Learned Workshop*, 11.

¹⁰²CCO, *PRT Lessons Learned Status Report*.

from several agencies, every PRT has a representative from both USAID and the State Department. For agricultural advisors, good coordination and collaboration with these representatives helps advisors to find funding and conduct activities.

USAID is the lead agency for reconstruction activities on PRTs in Afghanistan¹⁰³ and its PRT representatives have their own funding sources, like QIP, for reconstruction and development projects. USDA advisors can also apply to these USAID sources for project funding. Good relationships with USAID personnel thus can increase the likelihood of obtaining funding. Additionally, the sometimes overlapping reconstruction missions of the USAID and USDA in Afghanistan can lead to confusion regarding roles and responsibilities for each agency. Effective collaboration between USDA and USAID representatives on a PRT can reduce possible organizational tensions while also augmenting and improving the PRT reconstruction activities and projects.

Of the 2005 advisors, four reported good or very good relationships with the USAID representative on the PRT, one reported an “adequate” relationship, and four reported mixed interactions with USAID personnel (table 8). Of the advisors with mixed interactions, three had very good relationships with the PRT USAID representative but reported very poor interactions with USAID personnel at the regional or national levels. Two of the 2007 advisors described very good working relationships with the PRT USAID representative and three of the 2009 advisors highlighted their supportive working relationships with the USAID representative on their PRT. One of the advisors noted that collaborative working relationships with USAID add needed sustainability and introduce important training elements to projects.

¹⁰³USAID, *PRTs in Afghanistan: An Interagency Assessment*, 8.

Table 8. Advisor Relationships with USAID			
Quality of relationships:	2005	2007	2009
Good to excellent	4	2	3
Neutral	1	--	--
Mixed to poor	4	--	--

Source: Created by author.

On PRTs, State Department representatives are responsible for political oversight, coordination, and reporting.¹⁰⁴ Because DOS personnel have less of a role in planning and implementing reconstruction projects, there may be less interaction between the agricultural advisor and the DOS representative. However, many of the 2005 advisors reported that the DOS representatives were very supportive (table 9). Six advisors described their working relationships with DOS as good to very good and one reported an “adequate” working relationship. Two of the 2007 advisors and one 2009 advisor also described DOS personnel on their PRTs as supportive and reported having very good working relationships.

Table 9. Advisor Relationships with DOS			
Quality of relationships:	2005	2007	2009
Good to excellent	6	2	1
Neutral	1	--	--
Mixed to poor	--	--	--

Source: Created by author.

¹⁰⁴USAID, *PRTs in Afghanistan: An Interagency Assessment*, 8.

NGO Coordination

NGOs play a major role in the reconstruction efforts occurring in Afghanistan. Army doctrine includes NGOs as an important part of the “comprehensive approach” to stability operations, which encompasses the cooperative efforts of government agencies, multinational partners, intergovernmental organizations, and NGOs to create a unified effort toward stability operations.¹⁰⁵ In this approach, actors cooperate and work together out of a shared understanding and a common goal. In practice, this type of unity of effort toward stability and reconstruction is extremely difficult to create because NGOs’ need to be seen as neutral, impartial, and independent often makes them reluctant to associate with the military.

Many of the agricultural advisors reported good working relationships with NGOs in their area of responsibility (table 10). Four of the 2005 advisors reported good collaboration with the NGOs operating in their province and three reported a mixed relationship with NGOs. One 2005 advisor commented that local NGOs were the key to his projects’ success. However, many highlighted the NGOs’ reluctance to work with the PRT. Two reported that NGOs in their area were suspicious of the PRT’s military component and reluctant to work with the military. One of the 2007 advisors reported that while he advised many local NGOs, those organizations distanced themselves from the military. While two of the 2009 advisors also reported that they had good collaboration with local NGOs, one noted that some of the NGOs did not want to be associated with the military. However, agricultural advisors were sometimes able to

¹⁰⁵U.S. Army, FM 3-07, *Stability Operations*, 1-4.

bridge the cultural divide between the military and NGOs: three advisors reported serving as unofficial facilitators between the PRT military component and local NGOs.

Table 10. Advisor Relationships with NGOs			
Quality of relationships:	2005	2007	2009
Good	4	1	2
Mixed	3	--	--
NGOs reluctant to work with military	2	1	1
Facilitated between NGOs and military	3	--	--

Source: Created by author.

The CCO Lessons Learned Report also discusses the difficulties involved in reaching out to local NGOs. The report suggests that productive interactions with NGOs may best be cultivated by a PRT member who can serve as a regular interlocutor between the PRT and local NGOs, thus encouraging trust and communication with NGOs while allowing them to maintain their independence from the military.

Mission Effectiveness

PRT mission effectiveness can be thought of as the extent to which a PRT achieves its objectives within its province. The effectiveness of PRT projects, therefore, would be defined as the extent to which individual PRT projects create outcomes that contribute to achieving the PRT's overall objectives. In this way, PRT agricultural advisors' projects can be considered effective if they accomplish the agricultural advisors' objectives of strengthening the capacity of local officials or facilitating the long-term reconstruction, or sustainability, of Afghanistan's agricultural sector.

Capacity Building

Each of the PRT's main tasks (promote security, extend the reach of the Afghan central government, and facilitate reconstruction) attempt to improve the ability of host nationals, government officials, and institutions to conduct their own local, regional, or national affairs without outside assistance. Capacity building is thus a key component of sustainability, as it furthers the community or nation's ability to function independently while also obtaining the necessary community support to continue this independent functioning into the future.

In the case of Afghanistan, enhanced capacity in the public and private sectors is critical to sustainable development. Technical and financial support provided to Afghan communities will continue to be poorly utilized unless adequate systemic capacities are built at the local, provincial, and national levels. Aid programs in Afghanistan that focus on resource transfers often fail because they do not provide enough support for local capacity development.¹⁰⁶ The ANDS states that Afghanistan has an urgent need for technical education of its citizens¹⁰⁷ and cites a lack of capacity at the sub-national level in which civil society, the private sector, and local government structures remain weak.¹⁰⁸

Agricultural advisors conducted a number of capacity-building activities in conjunction with local leaders and officials. Of the 2005 advisors, two-thirds (ten advisors) reported conducting governance activities to improve local officials' ability to conduct their jobs and one-third (five advisors) conducted training activities for host

¹⁰⁶ Afghanistan, *ANDS*, 156.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 120.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 166.

country nationals (see table 11). Many developed positive relationships interactions with the local Afghan officials, with four of the advisors reporting good to excellent relationships with the local agriculture directors or other officials. Of the 2009 advisors that commented on the nature of their relationships with host country officials, all three noted good to excellent relationships (table 12). However, some issues prevented good relationships between advisors and Afghan officials: many advisors noted that corruption was present in all levels of the Afghan government. Some reported that the poor leadership and lack of skills of many officials limited useful collaborations.

Table 11. Number of Capacity-Building Agriculture Activities			
Activity Category:	2005	2007	2009
Governance	10	2	3
Training	5	--	2

Source: Created by author.

Table 12. Advisor Relationships with Afghan Officials			
Quality of relationships:	2005	2007	2009
Good	4	2	3
Fair	1	--	--
Poor	2	--	--

Source: Created by author.

However, many advisors noted that their Afghan partners were very supportive, proactive, and highly involved in working with the PRT on agricultural development activities. Four of the advisors reported that they served only as mentors and advisors

while local officials did all decision making and project design. Of particular note is the Provincial Director of Agriculture in Ghazni province, who worked with agricultural advisors in both 2005 and 2009. Both of these advisors made particular mention that the Provincial director had developed and submitted all project proposals with his staff.

The advisor comments about capacity building and local officials relationships are also echoed in the CCO “PRT Lessons Learned Status Report.” The report states that the limited capacity of local officials is a major obstacle to improving governance in Afghanistan. As described in the agricultural advisor comments on best practices, the report suggests that PRT members can build capacity by meeting with local leadership frequently, promoting local leaders’ efforts within the community, and encouraging local officials to plan and lead projects. The report also recommends identifying and mentoring local credible officials as a way to promote local government legitimacy and possibly curb corruption.

Sustainability

If capacity building is in many ways an activity’s short-term objective, then sustainability is its long-term goal. Sustainability takes into account the country or local area’s available resources and the necessary balance between all areas of development (social, economic, democracy and governance).¹⁰⁹ Planning for sustainability in projects requires a project designer to determine whether the community’s existing resources of manpower, expertise, funding, and support are sufficient for project continuation after external support is withdrawn.

¹⁰⁹U.S. Army, FM 3-07, *Stability Operations*, C-3.

Many well-meaning development or infrastructure projects often trail off or are abandoned after their completion because of a lack of resources or the departure of the implementing organization. One 2005 advisor commented that he chose education projects and microcredit trainings because their impact would last longer, noting that many previous infrastructure development projects in his area were underutilized or already abandoned. Another advisor from 2009 stated that new advisors should not begin any new agricultural projects, as there were already too many projects and not enough quality control or monitoring.

To ensure the sustainability of PRT agricultural projects, advisors used a variety of sustainability strategies to ensure that their projects continue after their departure. As shown in table 13, many advisors advocate for local participation in projects whenever possible. An advisor from 2005 and another from 2007 noted the need for a national agricultural strategy to guide project selection. Four advisors from 2009 included next steps or plans for their projects' continuation in their reports and five advisors reported that they continued and expanded projects from previous agricultural advisors. One advisor explicitly described his use of locally-available resources in projects that were designed to be self-sustaining and require minimal maintenance. Two advisors described collaboration with the ADTs in their province as a way to ensure sustainability and project success. One of these advisors reported collaborating on at least eleven completed or ongoing projects (with more in progress) with the Texas ADT, demonstrating the strong potential for USDA-ADT collaboration in agricultural reconstruction activities.

Table 13. Agricultural Advisor Sustainability Strategies			
Type of Strategy:	2005	2007	2009
Local ownership of projects	4	1	2
Long-term plan	--	--	4
National Agricultural Strategy	1	1	--
Continuation of last advisors' projects	--	--	2
Use of local resources	--	--	1
Coordination with ADTs	--	--	2

Source: Created by author.

Discussion of project sustainability is closely linked with the previous discussion of overlapping advisor deployments. Three of the 2009 advisors discussed the lack or progress or the abandonment of past advisor projects after the advisors' departure, with one advisor attributing this directly to the gap between agricultural advisors on the PRT. However, two advisors reported a successful continuation and expansion of past PRT projects.

Unfortunately, many local officials and communities lack the capacity, knowledge, and resources to maintain projects that are started and funded by the PRT. The USDA-CCO report finds that PRT development projects often fail because of a lack of local buy-in and local demand. Advisors at the workshop stated that U.S. funding is most effective when PRT projects involve host country time, money, and other resources. Ensuring long-term ownership by the community is also a main determinant of sustainable agricultural progress.¹¹⁰ The report also states that smaller projects (between

¹¹⁰USDA, *Lessons Learned Workshop*, 11.

\$25,000-50,000)¹¹¹ are often more effective, sustainable, and responsive to local needs than larger-scale infrastructure projects.

Alignment with National Agricultural Strategy

Many comments from advisors and from previous reports criticize the lack of strategic guidance given to advisors about agricultural priorities. The USDA-CCO report notes that the absence of a comprehensive national agricultural strategy for Afghanistan results in a lack of unified effort between organizations and countries conducting agricultural development projects in Afghanistan.¹¹² Although PRTs are ostensibly responsible for the design and implementation of agricultural projects at the provincial level, the report finds that these projects do not necessarily support a national agricultural program. As previously noted, two USDA PRT advisors also commented that a master agricultural plan is needed to guide projects.

While PRT agricultural advisors may not receive explicit strategic-level guidance, the 2009 final report template makes a point of stating that the agricultural advisor's main tasks (support reconstruction of Afghanistan's agricultural sector and build governmental capacity) should be done in support of the Afghanistan National Development Plan (Appendix B). A review of the available project descriptions for completed or in-progress agricultural activities reveals that the majority of advisors' projects correspond to the broad objectives of Afghanistan's agriculture and rural development strategy. In 2005, the greatest number of activities could be classified as capacity building, with almost as

¹¹¹USDA, *Lessons Learned Workshop*, 12.

¹¹²*Ibid.*, 9.

many activities devoted to infrastructure development (table 14). By 2009, the number of capacity building and infrastructure activities declined, and the relative number of activities to promote agricultural productivity increased.

Table 14. Agriculture Activities by ANDS Objectives			
Activity Category:	2005	2007	2009
Capacity Building	45	6	27
Agricultural productivity	33	4	40
Infrastructure	40	7	23
Poverty reduction/food security	5	0	5

Source: Created by author.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

USDA agricultural advisors' final reports offer valuable insights into the advisors' experiences on PRTs in Afghanistan. While these reports demonstrate the difficulties involved in monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of development projects in a complex environment, they also suggest ways to improve both the structural and organizational components of advisors' participation, as well as the effectiveness and sustainability, of their agricultural projects.

Agricultural advisor reports contained a wide variety of information, both because of the different formats used and also because each advisor likely changed the template to fit their needs. Some advisors included only a list of their activities, while others assessed the agricultural needs of the region, described their projects in depth, and included their personal comments and concerns. The diversity of information included in the reports made charting responses over time unfeasible, particularly because the absence of information or a non-response may not necessarily mean the absence of an issue or problem. For this reason, any discussion of trends is offered with a caveat that the change of report template after 2007 elicited different types of advisor responses. Regardless, enough information exists in the advisor reports to permit analysis of the same variables over the three time periods. Additionally, the available reports represent a majority of the advisors who were in country at some point during these years. Therefore, the comments in the available reports are likely representative of most advisors' experiences during those periods.

Conclusions

PRTs remain an evolving structure that changes over time in response to the nature of U.S. involvement in Afghanistan and Afghanistan's reconstruction needs and security situation. The nature of USDA advisors' participation on PRTs also seems to have evolved during this period. The advisor reports offer interesting insights into the changing role of agricultural advisors from 2005 to the present. Analysis of these reports suggests both general trends regarding USDA advisors' participation on PRTs as well as more specific conclusions about PRT operations, coordination, mission effectiveness, and the evaluability of PRT agricultural projects. Many of these have implications that cross a number of other categories.

In general, USDA advisors in the first few years of USDA's participation on PRTs struggled with numerous logistical and administrative issues while serving on PRTs. While administrative concerns also came up in the 2007 reports, no 2009 reports noted administrative issues. Similarly, while only a few 2005 reports discussed their projects' next steps in their reports, the focus of 2009 reports shifted from an emphasis on the operational aspects of the advisors' deployment to a focus on the impact and sustainability of their projects. Advisors in 2009 reported sustainability plans, possible project impact, the use of local resource for sustainability, and the continuation of the previous advisors' projects. The new focus on project sustainability seems to indicate maturation in the role of the agricultural advisor on PRTs from 2005 to 2009. As the PRT as an organization changes over time, some of the difficulties and concerns of early USDA advisors seem to have lessened, allowing the advisors to focus more on obtaining their mission objectives.

PRT Operations

Funding

In some ways, the support network for USDA advisors seems to have improved, allowing advisors to spend less time on administrative hurdles and more time on projects. However, the lack of USDA-specific funding remains a problem for advisors. Almost three quarters of 2005 advisors (the highest response for any question) and all 2007 advisors cited frustrations with the lack of agriculture project funding. Comments from a 2009 advisor indicate this remains an issue. The lack of USDA-specific funding hinders advisors' ability to conduct projects, as they must compete with USAID projects for QIP funding and military projects for CERP funding. The competition for limited funding resources and some military officers' lack of understanding of the role of agriculture requires USDA advisors to rely on the strength of interpersonal relationships to access funding. Respondents who discussed the lack of agriculture-specific funding noted that even small amounts of funding would allow for immediate implementation of small-scale, locally-appropriate projects.

Training

While advisors in 2005 and 2007 cited the need for better pre-deployment preparation that included basic training about the military, no 2009 advisors commented on training. The lack of responses suggests that the improved pre-deployment preparation advisors now receive has lessened overall advisor concerns about training. However, the 2009 advisor's comments that PRT leadership does not recognize agricultural projects as important, combined with similar comments from the 2009 USDA-CCO workshop, suggest that many commanders and senior officers may still lack an understanding of

agriculture's role in Afghanistan's reconstruction. In addition, the lack of knowledge about each other's capabilities and limitations between the military and PRT civilians indicates that more pre-deployment training is needed to improve civil-military coordination and collaboration on the PRT. The similar lack of knowledge among the interagency also suggests that interagency training on organizational cultures and capabilities should be included in pre-deployment training.

Administrative Issues

The early administrative problems cited by advisors were likely a result of the bureaucratic hurdles involved in shifting resources towards deploying and supporting domestic employees in an overseas conflict situation. Based on the advisor reports alone, it is not possible to determine if the lack of advisor concerns about administrative issues in 2009 indicates an absence of administrative issues. However, continued comments about the lack of benefits relative to other civilian PRT members indicates that little has been done to improve the discrepancies in USDA advisor benefits. Additionally, the need for a standardized overlap period for USDA advisors in the field is mentioned in each of the year groups. The 2009 advisor comments stating that agricultural projects stopped during the period between USDA deployments suggest that overlapping advisor deployments are extremely important to the success and sustainability of agricultural PRT projects.

Critical Skills

Advisors' comments clearly indicate that people and communication skills are more useful to USDA advisors on PRTs than a narrow set of technical skills. They

overwhelmingly report that they used networking, flexibility, communication, and facilitation skills to accomplish their mission more than skills in their area of expertise. However, it is difficult to draw a conclusion that technical skills in agriculture are unneeded, particularly because technical skills differentiate USDA advisors from USAID representatives working on reconstruction. Also, PRT commanders rely on USDA advisors for agricultural knowledge, which requires USDA advisors to have broad-based knowledge of agricultural issues. This suggests that USDA advisors should be selected based not only on agricultural skills, but also on demonstrated abilities in communication and facilitation. Many advisors reported playing the role of unofficial interlocutor between the PRT and NGOs, local leaders, and even between the PRT and ADT. While specific and highly technical knowledge can be attained through reachback to home agencies or expert contacts, it seems that technical skills cannot substitute for interpersonal skills for a PRT advisor. Facilitation skills therefore seem to be essential for USDA advisor success.

Interagency Coordination

Findings from the advisor reports show that developing interpersonal relationships within and outside of the PRT are extremely important to the potential success of USDA advisors. Strong interpersonal relationships with PRT military officers and USAID often determine the advisors' access to funding and PRT assets such as transportation and force protection. Regular coordination with all members of the PRT is important to keep the advisors involved in PRT activities, obtain buy-in for their projects from their military and interagency colleagues, and help ensure good implementation of projects. Overall, advisor relationships with USAID and DOS colleagues were very good,

with most USAID and DOS personnel being supportive of the USDA advisors' work. Working relationships with the PRT military officers were also very good. The majority of problems noted seem to stem from the military's misunderstandings of USDA's role and the importance of agriculture in general. This may be a result of lack of knowledge about USDA's capabilities and limitations on the part of military and other government agencies. USDA advisors also seem to play a unique role as facilitators on the PRTs, in several cases facilitating between NGOs and PRTs. It is possible that NGOs perceive USDA as more neutral actor than either USAID or DOS and are thus willing to allow USDA advisors to serve as unofficial interlocutors between them and the military.

While the advisor reports contain only a few accounts about USDA-ADT coordination, the positive nature of the comments suggests that pursuing greater interaction between ADTs and USDA advisors would be beneficial to the overall agricultural reconstruction effort in Afghanistan. ADTs' organic force protection assets and access to funding for agricultural projects could eliminate many of the advisors' challenges involving competition for force protection and funding on PRTs. While more information is needed, limited USDA deployments with ADTs would be useful to test the feasibility of this type of collaboration.

Mission Effectiveness

PRTs are tasked with conducting stability and reconstruction operations in insecure environments in order to set the conditions for long-term development. Evaluating PRT effectiveness at achieving its objectives is a difficult task that is further complicated by the non-permissive environments in which many PRTs operate. The effectiveness of PRT agricultural activities is particularly difficult to demonstrate, as

agricultural projects can take several years to develop and must take into account agricultural growing cycles. For USDA advisors on PRTs, the normal problems associated with evaluating international development programs are compounded by their short deployments and Afghanistan's poor security situation. For this reason, capacity building and sustainability are used as proxy indicators in this thesis to determine to what extent advisors' projects are achieving mission effectiveness.

Capacity Building

Building the capacity of Afghan leaders and officials to manage the affairs of their community and country is an essential part of improving governance in Afghanistan. As such, it is one of the key tasks of PRTs in general and agricultural advisors in particular. Analysis of advisor reports indicates that USDA advisors actively promote capacity building components in many of their projects. Advisors in all three year groups reported conducting both governance and training activities to promote capacity building of local agricultural officials. Additionally, many advisors reported having good working relationships with their host nation counterparts. When advisor projects were analyzed relative to ANDS objectives, the greatest number of reported projects in 2005 was in capacity building. In 2009, the number of capacity-building activities was second only to agricultural production projects.

These findings indicate that USDA advisors are being effective in their mission on the PRT to promote capacity building and are planning projects in accordance with Afghanistan's national agriculture strategy. Once again, USDA advisors' ability to develop interpersonal relationships, this time with host country nationals, proves to be extremely important in their ability to achieve their mission in the short term.

Sustainability

Evaluation or impact analysis of any development project is typically a long-term process, requiring dedicated time, resources, and expertise. Determining the long-term impact and sustainability of PRT agricultural projects is therefore extremely problematic, as PRT members' short deployments, the lack of overlap between agricultural advisors, and the need to demonstrate visible, measurable results prevent long-term monitoring of most projects. Poor security situations further hinder efforts to monitor project implementation or gather data for evaluation.

USDA advisors seem to be increasingly cognizant of the need to ensure the sustainability of their projects. Early advisors typically advocated for local ownership of agricultural projects so that local stakeholders would maintain activities after the advisors' departure. Reports from 2009 advisors suggest an increased emphasis on project sustainability and continuity of effort. This may simply be a result of the different questions asked on the 2009 report, but it is also likely a product of the continued deployment of USDA advisors to Afghan provinces. As the PRT as an organization has evolved over time, USDA advisors' ability to select appropriate projects for their province also seems to have also improved. Advisors mentioned the status of past advisors' projects, with two advisors specifically reporting that they had continued and expanded past advisors' work. The continuous deployment of USDA advisors to the same provinces actually creates a type of project monitoring system, with new advisors monitoring and revising ongoing projects as needed over time. This type of continuity of effort is a critical first step in ensuring long-term sustainability of agricultural projects.

Alignment with National Development Strategy

Some advisors commented that agricultural projects should be chosen in accordance with a comprehensive agricultural strategy and several interagency PRT assessment reports discussed the need for greater alignment of agricultural projects with the ANDS. However, while it is unclear to what extent large-scale efforts by countries or international organizations contribute to the Afghan national strategy, review of PRT advisors' projects indicates that many of their projects are in accordance with the broad expected outcomes of the Afghanistan agricultural strategy. In 2005, most projects promoted capacity building, but the trend shifted in 2009 with more projects being done to improve agricultural productivity. This trend could be a positive sign of improved capacity. Additionally, as more projects shift to increasing productive potential, this increased productivity should lead to greater economic regeneration. However, the small number of projects and time points prevent drawing too many conclusions from the data. Also, it should be noted that, while it is a positive sign that these projects contribute to Afghanistan's national agricultural strategy, alignment with strategy does not necessarily equate to project effectiveness or sustainability. At this time, it may be more useful to ensure that PRT agricultural projects meet community needs and have local support and ownership rather than focusing project planning on strict adherence to national-level strategies.

Evaluation of PRT Agricultural Projects

The primary research question of this thesis was to what extent PRT agricultural projects can be evaluated using the final reports of USDA advisors. While the secondary questions regarding how PRT operational variables and interagency coordination affect

USDA advisors' mission effectiveness are somewhat easier to evaluate, demonstrating effectiveness, impact, and sustainability of PRT agricultural projects is much more difficult. There seems to be no M&E system in place to monitor the progress of ongoing projects or to evaluate the impact of activities. The advisor reports do not contain enough information to make a determination regarding project outcomes or potential impact on the local communities. Advisor reports offer simple information about projects, funds allocated, and status of the project, but they do not provide the detailed information regarding the project's effects on its intended beneficiaries.

The only type of possible evaluation based only on the project information in advisor reports is implementation-based evaluation, which evaluates development interventions based on inputs and outputs. This type of M&E system only addresses compliance, such as mobilization of inputs, completion of activities, and delivery of outputs.¹¹³ It deals with how well the project is being implemented but does not provide any information about the success or failure of the project.

To demonstrate how well PRT agricultural projects are achieving the PRT, and ultimately the United States', goals, USDA advisors must move toward a results-based M&E system, which emphasizes the evaluation of an intervention's outcomes and community impact. Although this type of system is more time-consuming, the ability to demonstrate achievement of goals and objectives is necessary to prove a project or program's effectiveness and its contributions toward broader development.

¹¹³Kusek and Rist, *Ten Steps to a Results-Based Monitoring and Evaluation System*, 15.

In this thesis, the extent to which advisors achieved their mission goals of promoting capacity building and sustainability were used to determine mission effectiveness. However, while these proxy indicators for effectiveness suggest that USDA advisors' work on PRTs promotes Afghanistan's stabilization and reconstruction in the short-term, they still offer no indications of the actual impact that these projects have on Afghan communities. This type of impact determination will be difficult, time-consuming, and often resource-intensive, but it will ultimately be necessary to determine if PRTs are actually helping to set conditions for Afghanistan's long-term development.

Recommendations

1. Provide agriculture-specific project funding. The high response rate regarding funding issues suggests that the lack of agriculture-specific funding hinders USDA advisors' ability to conduct small-scale projects and activities. Community-level activities require smaller amounts of funding and are generally considered to be more culturally appropriate, locally relevant, and sustainable by communities. Larger-scale activities, such as infrastructure or industry projects, would still require funding approval through QIP or CERP, both to obtain funding and ensure PRT and interagency support. However, small amounts of agriculture-specific funding could be used to start projects quickly to take advantage of growing seasons or support small-scale initiatives. Unfortunately, it is probably unlikely that USDA will receive a legislative mandate in the near future to fund overseas reconstruction projects. Nevertheless, if the U.S. government truly believes that agriculture is the most important non-security priority in Afghanistan, then budgeting for agriculture-specific PRT activities should be prioritized.

2. Improve interagency training. While pre-deployment training for USDA advisors seems to have improved over time, more civil-military and interagency training is needed to improve coordination and collaboration between PRT members in the field. Improved interagency training for civilians is necessary to overcome collaboration challenges posed by differing organizational cultures and should be included in the advisors' pre-deployment training. In addition, military commanders and senior officers should receive guidance about working with civilian interagency members. In particular, senior officers need to understand the capabilities and limitations of each U.S. government agency to limit miscommunications and misunderstandings on the PRT. In regards to agriculture, if the U.S. Army truly believes in the benefits of agricultural reconstruction, then it must direct its commanders and officers to support those initiatives in the field.

In addition, while joint training involving all members of a deploying PRT is the optimal solution, the challenges of aligning schedules and administrative procedures for combined civil-military training may be too difficult to overcome. However, if it is not feasible to conduct combined training with the actual interagency team members who will work together in the field, greater cross-exposure to interagency cultures and procedures (both civil-military and interagency) is essential.

3. Streamline administrative procedures to better support advisors in the field. Although it appears that many of the early administrative challenges to USDA advisors in the field have diminished, persisting comments about the lack of benefits relative to USAID and DOS employees indicates that no change has been made to revise USDA regulations on supporting civilian advisors in the field. USDA experts cannot be expected

to deploy to dangerous areas if they do not receive the same benefits as other federal employees conducting similar work. USDA must bring its policies for employee compensation in a conflict zone in line with other government agencies. Progress towards agricultural reconstruction in Afghanistan will not be accomplished if USDA's inequitable employee compensation hinders the recruitment of skilled advisors.

4. Standardize overlapping advisor deployments. Valuable time and effort is lost if departing USDA advisors are unable to pass along their accumulated knowledge and experiences to new advisors. Overlapping deployments would create continuity in relationships with local leaders and officials and allow new advisors to build upon existing relationships with locals for greater capacity building. In addition, military collaboration may improve if commanders and senior officials have a continuous source for agricultural advice. Perhaps the greatest reason to standardize overlapping deployments is to improve project sustainability. Standardized transition periods between advisors would allow for adequate transfer of ongoing projects and ensure continuity of effort in agricultural activities. Overlap between advisors can ultimately save resources and time by supporting continuation of existing projects. Sustainable projects also contribute to the long-term PRT objective of fostering reconstruction in Afghanistan.

5. Train USDA advisors in facilitation and negotiation. As demonstrated by advisors' comments on their coordination with PRT members, local leaders, and NGOs, strong skills in communication and facilitation are essential for USDA advisors to accomplish their objectives. While advisor recruitment should take demonstrated interpersonal skills into consideration, pre-deployment training should also emphasize negotiation and facilitation skills. Improved skills in facilitation and negotiation would

assist advisors with internal PRT negotiations for limited funding and use of PRT assets. These skills could reinforce interagency and civil-military training, improving advisors' overall ability to coordinate and collaborate with their PRT colleagues. Facilitation and negotiation skills would also assist USDA advisors in their interactions with local NGOs, improving their already-demonstrated abilities to serve as PRT-NGO interlocutors. Perhaps most importantly, negotiation and facilitation abilities would help improve interactions with host country leaders and officials, which has substantial implications for improving potential capacity building and project planning.

5. Emphasize the need for sustainability in all PRT projects. All USDA advisor projects should be planned and implemented to promote sustainability. An assessment of local needs, demands, and abilities to resource and maintain a project should be completed with every funding request to prevent wasting resources on projects that will end after the advisor's departure. This focus on the need for sustainability must be discussed in pre-deployment training and reinforced throughout the advisors' deployments. Again, overlapping advisor deployments would significantly contribute to the potential sustainability of agricultural projects, as advisors could plan multi-year projects if overlaps between advisors were standardized.

6. Create a monitoring and evaluation framework for PRT projects. A simple monitoring and evaluation plan should be created that requires USDA advisors to track and demonstrate PRT project effectiveness. Appropriate indicators that take into account local conditions can be developed to allow current and future advisors to monitor project progress over time. These indicators would also provide advisors with relevant information in order to demonstrate project impact on communities. Basic training on

M&E could be provided to advisors before deployment and codified in advisor handbooks. Only by requiring basic M&E frameworks will PRT projects eventually transition from ad hoc, short-term efforts producing only anecdotal evidence to long-term reconstruction programs with quantifiable results.

7. Place USDA advisors with ADTs. While only a few advisor accounts discuss interactions with ADTs, these preliminary advisor reports suggest that both USDA advisors and ADTs may mutually benefit from placement of USDA advisors on ADTs. The potential benefits of this type of future collaboration suggest that the Army, ARNG, and USDA should investigate the possibility of trial deployments of USDA advisors with ADTs in Afghanistan.

Possible areas of future research into PRT agricultural project effectiveness should include interviews with advisors at the end of their deployments to gain more in-depth information about how PRT operational issues impacted their ability to operate effectively on the PRT. Interviews should be conducted with local Afghan officials and citizens in communities with PRT agricultural projects to assess local participation, local use of the project, community changes, and interest in project sustainment to determine the impact of these projects. Additionally, study and analysis of agricultural projects after the advisors' departures could provide greater insight into these projects' potential for local sustainment and their possible contributions to Afghanistan's long-term development.

As an organization, PRTs remain a work in progress. Civil-military coordination is a fundamental part of the PRT concept, but more time and effort is needed to improve the collaboration between civilians and the military on PRTs. However, certain

improvements can perhaps speed the evolution of PRT civil-military efforts, such as a greater emphasis on interagency and civil-military training. More interagency and civil-military familiarization between PRT members from the beginning of a deployment would hopefully allow PRT members to coordinate and collaborate faster and more effectively, improving overall PRT project planning, implementation, and monitoring. All aspects of the PRT's mission could theoretically benefit from these improved working relationships.

The USDA advisor's participation on PRTs also seems to be evolving over time. Advisor reports demonstrate that USDA advisors often occupy a unique role on PRTs, serving as facilitators and interlocutors between groups as well as providing PRT commanders with agricultural advice. Also, the reports seem to indicate that administrative challenges are diminishing and that advisors place an increasing emphasis on project sustainability. This new focus on sustainability is heartening, as it suggests that some of the initial growing pains of this new cross-government construct are being smoothed out. It also suggests that the emphasis for PRT projects is shifting from short-term outputs to longer-term impact. It remains to be seen if this is a continuing trend or simply a short-term change. Time will be needed to continue establishing the role of USDA advisors on PRTs.

While it is not possible at this time to evaluate the community impact of PRT agricultural projects based only on these reports, the advisor reports suggest that USDA advisors are achieving their short-term mission by promoting capacity building and slowing working toward project sustainability. While these objectives may only be initial steps towards long-term reconstruction, they are an essential part of setting conditions for

longer-term development. In this way, agricultural advisors from USDA seem to be playing an important role in the PRT stabilization and reconstruction mission in Afghanistan.

GLOSSARY

- Capacity building.** The process of creating an environment that fosters host-nation institutional development, community participation, human resources development, and strengthened managerial systems. (U.S. Army, FM 3-07)
- Development intervention.** An instrument (project or program) aimed at promoting development. (OECD, “Glossary of Key Terms”)
- Efficiency.** A measure of how economically resources or inputs (funds, expertise, time) are used to produce results. (OECD, “Glossary of Key Terms”)
- Goal.** The higher-order objective to which a development intervention is intended to contribute. (OECD, “Glossary of Key Terms”)
- Indicator.** Quantitative or qualitative factor or variable that provides a simple and reliable means to measure achievement or to reflect the changes connected to an intervention. (OECD, “Glossary of Key Terms”)
- Inputs.** The financial, human, and material resources used for the development intervention. (OECD, “Glossary of Key Terms”)
- Outputs.** The products, goods or services that result from a development intervention. (OECD, “Glossary of Key Terms”)
- Reconstruction.** The process of rebuilding degraded, damaged, or destroyed political, socioeconomic, and physical infrastructure of a country or territory to create the foundation for long-term development. (U.S. Army, FM 3-07)
- Stability Operations.** The military missions, tasks, and activities conducted in coordination with other instruments of national power to maintain or reestablish a safe and secure environment, provide essential governmental services, emergency infrastructure reconstruction, and humanitarian relief. Includes both stabilization and reconstruction activities. (U.S. Army, FM 3-07)
- Stabilization.** Managing or reducing underlying tensions that might lead to a resurgence in violence and a breakdown in law and order, while at the same time making efforts to support preconditions for successful long-term development. (U.S. Army, FM 3-07)

APPENDIX A

USDA FINAL REPORT TEMPLATE 2005-2007

Final Report from USDA Agricultural Advisors after Service on a Provincial Reconstruction Team

1. Describe what was accomplished during service. Please include all projects, accomplishments, “broad areas of need,” and any plans developed.

Project	Sources of funds and amount	Accomplishments/ Plans Developed	Broad area(s) of need

1a. What helped make your accomplishments possible?

1b. What obstacles did you encounter to accomplish your goals?

2. How was your experience serving as an agricultural advisor on a PRT?

3. Describe your experience working with each of the following:

USG civilian agencies: DOS _____, USAID _____, USAID PRT ____

The U.S. military: Civil Affairs Team _____, Commander _____

Afghan government: Former Director of Agriculture _____

Director of Research _____, Dean of Agriculture _____

Director of Irrigation _____, Director of MRRD _____

UN agencies: FAO _____

Nongovernmental agencies: _____

Foreign donor governments: _____

Other? Specify: _____

4. What skills did you most utilize during your assignment?

5. What is the element that you *liked most* about working as a USDA Agricultural Advisor on a PRT?

6. Do you have any recommendations or suggestions for the USDA FAS/ICD/DRD Afghanistan Team?

7. What recommendations do you have for anyone who might come to serve as an agricultural advisor on your specific PRT, and also on PRTs in general? Please include funding sources, what can specifically be done to increase the impact of future USDA PRT advisors?

8. Indicate how reasonable you think the salary, incentives and funding provided to Agricultural Advisors is.

	Very Unreasonable	Somewhat Unreasonable	Neither	Somewhat Reasonable	Very Reasonable	Don't Know or Not Applicable
Salary						
Incentives						
Project Funding						

9. Is there anything else you would like to say?

10. Photos- please attach each photo as its own file; label with your name and some identifier. Please provide a short caption below for each photo.

APPENDIX B

USDA FINAL REPORT TEMPLATE 2009

USDA Agricultural Advisor Final Report
[Advisor Name]
[PRT Name]

USDA'S Afghanistan Country Strategy Statement

Mission Statement: Support USG efforts to strengthen diplomatic and economic relations between the United States and Afghanistan with an emphasis on achieving economic efficiency in the agricultural sector.

Role of the PRT Agricultural Advisor

Support and foster reconstruction of the agricultural sector and help build the ability of the Afghan Central Government to support and provide services to the agricultural sector. All work should be carried out to support the Afghanistan National Development Plan and each Provincial Development Plan.

Introduction and Overview

1. For each agriculture project completed:
 - a. What is the project/activity?
 - b. What is the output/impact?
 - c. What needs to be done to make it sustainable?
2. For each agriculture project not completed:
 - a. What stage is the project in? (provide a timeline)
 - b. What needs to be done to complete the project?
 - c. What is the expected output?
 - d. What is the expected impact?
3. Possible agricultural projects or activities that could be developed/undertaken by the next Advisor.
4. Agriculture projects that have been tried but have not worked.
Obstacles to success:
5. A complete list of people and contacts that the new Advisor needs to be able to contact.

Summary/Issues

APPENDIX C

DATA SETS FOR AGRICULTURAL ADVISOR REPORTS

DATA SET:

Report	Start Year	End Year	Province	Security issues?	Key to success	Funding issues	Training	Administrative issues	ADMIN CODE	Coordination	MI	MI CODE	USAD
AFRS-1	2004-8	2004-12	Kanduz								Good		Good
AFRS-2	2005	2005	Kanduz (Uzuzan and Zabol)	Y	Previous military experience; ag generalist tech skills; basic engineering and water mgmt skills	Needed USDA funding; spent too much time searching for funding	Basic training needed in military concept/eng	USDA needs to better fund ag advisors; comp time and Sunday diff; risk of burnout; working w/o breaks; more timely notifications and info; overlap of replacements (and CDRS don't appreciate civ gaps); face to face debriefing on return; salary repayment to home agencies	Some benefits/Advisor overlap/home agency	Work in Uzuzan and Zabol (security risks) used to encourage opening of UN office; advise USAD in Uzuzan potential ag projects - brought in AID funding; facilitated funding agencies and contractors for windmill water pumps; good coord w/ mil; good relation with gov USAD (but not regional level) (COORD)	EXCELL ENT	EXCELL ENT	Prove good; Reg-poor
AFRS-3	2005		Nangrahar			Y - USDA funding needed		Better/worse pay process; 2wk leave; post duty leave time; poor initial admin support	Poor admin support	MI - excellent; very supportive; USG - ok; daily coord with MIDOS/AD (COORD)	EXCELL ENT	EXCELL ENT	OK
AFRS-4	2005	2006	Guzum		Only met with DDrAg had tour in Ghazni; 3 USDA advisors in Ghazni; strong tech background; daily coord MID/US/AD	Y - USDA funding needed	Need to be included in mil mgmt			Good with mil; NGO, USG - all people with others; daily mgs with mil; DOS, USAD (COORD)	POOR, NOT IMP-CA	MIXED	GOOD
AFRS-5	2004-8	2006-7	Herat								Good		Good
AFRS-6	2005		Mazar-e-Sharif		network of US experts and agencies					Continued CDR of need of ag for sector reform & reintegration	Good		GOOD
AFRS-7	2004-9	2005-2	Konduhar		experience in public dealings; people skills; tech skills; NGO interns	Y - need own funding/resources		better coord w/ DC		Good US/USG; local NGOs biggest asset to success (COORD)	Good		GOOD
AFRS-8	Voided												
AFRS-9	2005	2006-8	Lashkar Gah (Herat)	Y	Funding group with military focus and funding; involving multiple partners	Y - more could be done with own funding		Poor incentives (compared to other agencies) - PMS needs to provide feedback to home agency - don't expect any support or recog for work from home agency; improve coord and comm with home agencies; disc in HR these provide funding; need more results to other agencies	Same benefits	Difficult to get PRT and NGOs to partner; Mil coordination dependent on CDRS belief in imp of ag	Mixed PRT SUPP JE	MIXED SUPP JE	Good
AFRS-10	2005		Kapisa/Parsawarp Inqair			Y - frustrated by lack of funding	Need to have mil mgmt (US/USG esp)		Home agency/Some interns	Provided tech support and input to US/USG, which was used in US/USG and DOD for AO (COORD)			

Report#	Start Year	End Year	Province	Security issues?	Key to success	Funding Issues	Training	Administrative Issues	ADMIN CODE	Coordination	Mil Coord	MIL CODE	USAID Coord
AHRIS-11	2005					Y-No funds for small office items; no USDA funding		Limited in-country transport; need to ensure continuity of ad advisor deployments; engage with home agencies		USAID - poor; PRT - good	Good	GOOD; CA V GOOD	Poor
AHRIS-12	2005-7	2006-1	Purwar, Tji-Provence, Bagan, Pangliah	Permissive		Y - no funding from PRT or USAID			Advisor overlap/Home agency	HN officials receptive and supportive; some military discursive and not supportive; nil failure to provide support to projects	Mixed: one PRT v good, another bad ("stinky")	MIXED	Poor (active undermining from one AID rep at PRT)
AHRIS-13	2005-7	2006-1	Kandahar (KAF)	Worsening	Online tech info from US contacts; coord w/ other PRTs	Nil funding procedures poor; little understanding of CA projects or priorities		Firm commitment from PRT CDR on transport and FP; need to overlap advisors	Advisor overlap	No FP available for CA (perhaps result of security); often facilitated by NGOs & military; funding an issues - contacting officers didn't understand projects (COORD)		MIXED	Mixed
AHRIS-14	2005		Bamyan	permissive	Networking, cooperation	Y - hard to obtain funding (first CDR didn't support projects; 2nd did); reliance on others for funding difficult	Pre-deploy training course	Post-return HR support		Helped event ("bridge gaps" between military, USG and NGOs (COORD)	Good: supportive	GOOD	
AHRIS-15	2005	2005-6	Purwan	Permissive	Networking excellent relationships with PRT, NGOs, HN officials	Y - USDA or nil funding for ag projects; need strategic lobbying for ag projects		Advisor overlap	Advisor overlap	Excellent relationships; attend daily mgs (MTCG, COORD)	Good: supportive	GOOD	Good
AHRIS-16	2005		Garant/Wardak					Advisor overlap	Advisor overlap		Excellent	EXCELL ENT	Good

Advisor overlap - 5
poor admin support - 1
Home agency - 3
Same benefits - 3

Good - 7
Exc - 3
Mixed/po
or - 4

Report#	AID CODE	POS	NGOs	HN	Capacity Building	CAP BLDG CODE	Sustainability	ST/ST CODE	Skills most used	Recommendations	Observations	Project Types	CBG	I	F	P	
AF05-1					Helped HN leaders on project proposals	Gov			networking	More interaction needed from USDA team			3		4		
AF05-2	MIXED		Mixed- advised NGOs	Difficult relations. strong	Power Ministry involved in all decision processes; used local leaders; training of local staff; sending in candidates; projects used local input; corruption at all levels (ALL HN)	Gov TRG Labor, COR	HN involved in all decisions	OWN	Ag generalist skills: basic engineering skills, water mgmt skills (TECH)				1		5	1	2
AF05-3	ADEQUATE	ADEQUATE			Train Gov and coop leaders re: ag credit; train HN ag expert as interpreter	Gov TRG	noticed lack of utilization of previous construction projects; chose education and credit jobs; trained interpreter in ag		flexibility; oral knowledge; (networking) (PEOPLE)	USDA funding source; HN ag expert as interpreter/assistant; AL-AP use former advisors to fill gaps; weekly mtgs; work close with USAID/PRT; USDA funding source; part of oral training process	Main need education and ag credit; many construction projects unneeded or unutilized.			1			
AF05-4	GOOD/IV		Good; but NGOs suspicious of mill aspect of PRT (FAC) - need to establish civilian identity to work with NGOs		All projects dev and subm by HN; projects employed large # locals (ALL HN)	Gov Labor	HN involved in all projects	OWN	Tech ag skills	USDA must integrate with NATONASA Partner; full time field input; less theory, more practical des inputs	provided ag input to other org/mtg for dev jobs; success dependent on CDR; NGOs suspicious of PRTs (ml)			1		6	6
AF05-5	GOOD				mentor; advise local MOA P.D.L.	Gov	more attention to HN mentoring		people; cultural dev program; basic dev work no prior input needed (PEOPLE)					3		4	3
AF05-6					Taught P MinAg's prob solving and prioritization	Gov	acknowledges that skills taught to HN won't last long unless another AgAd comes to reinforce them		facilitation, partnering, teaching, networking, comm, prob solv, resmpg sldg (PEOPLE)	Go out of PDR; language and cultural skills needed; need break	Not hands-on tech ag position			1		1	2
AF05-7	GOOD		V GOOD		Trng to local commercial poultry grower; advise Gov't Ag 3yr plan; trained 100 HN in poultry prodn practices	Gov TRG			communication, people skills, tech knowledge, custom/religion knowledge (PEOPLE)	Need own resources/funds				8		3	5
AF05-8					Fair - good report; reliability & corruption problems												
AF05-9			Mixed - advised NGOs only; mil assoc problem		Trained and educated local vets and officials on animal disease control and animal health; Not always reliable to sustain or follow up	TRG; Reliability	Involve the MinAg whenever possible; require inputs in funds or labor from recipients (ALL HN)	OWN	communication, coordination, and org skills (PEOPLE)	Need to have military training; better command with home agencies; same benefits as other agencies				4			1
AF05-10					Vet stations; rural poultry dev prog; crop demonstration	TRG			vet medicine, surgery, animal health/diseases; military experiences (TECH)					7			1

DATA SET:

ANDS Objectives

Report#	AID CODE	DOS	NGOS	HN	Capacity Building	CAP BLDG CODE	Sustainability	SUST CODE	Skills most used	Recommendations	Observations	Project Types	CB/G	I	F	P		
ARRS-11	GOOD: KABUT BAD	GOOD	Mixed	Mixed	Met ASAP with Dir Ag. Jr to find out their priorities	Gov			tech skills ag prodn (TECH)	USDA funding better mix with USAID/vo projects; early networking best	Logistical issues - missions beyond 15 miles difficult; lack of own funding prevented small projects thru contacts or field visits of other advisors; good bureaucratic skills needed; PRTs v dependent upon individual mil leaders; "value our advisors bring to this country cannot readily be measured in numbers of projects or taxpayer dollars"							2
ARRS-12	REG V BAD PRT GOOD	GOOD		Good - v supportive with local officials, and receptive	Ag extn plan w/ local officials; mentorship; Good participation by local ag extn. Very good relationships with local officials, very supportive, proactive	Gov			Process skills - planning, priority setting, communication; project mgmt (PEOP/LE)	Capitalize on Afghan tradition of Hadjar, "burn rating"; specific funding for ag projects; use former advisors								3
ARRS-13		GOOD	poor communication & coord for NGOs; accidental facilitator for mlti HN, & NGOs (FAC)	Corruption; Difficult relationship	Corruption	COOR	Master ag plan needed; systems approach to recon/rev (CERP&AID projects with no master plan)	STRAT	Civiling eng skills; stream restoration; field skills (quick assessments) (TECH)	Put ag tech experts at RCs for whole region; generalists on PRTs - people skills most important on PRTs		Infrastructures: windmills; watershed; N/R mgmt; degraded lands; training (HN, ml)						1
ARRS-14		Good	UN - v good; NGOs: good; daily work with them; consulting (FAC)	V good; progressive			Various partners collaborating key to sustainable projects	COLL	tech skills; people skills; coordinating (TECH+PEOP/LE)	Develop good working relationships (PRT, HN, NGOs)	Needs to be serious evaluation as to the military's willingness to fund agricultural projects in the future otherwise I do not believe it is worth the time and effort by USDA to continue this mission	dem plot (better inputs/techniques); irrigation; degraded land						7
ARRS-15	GOOD	Good	UN - good; NGOs - close relms; no PRT; NGO outreach	close relms; w/ly mngs; daily mtn	HN locals employed by projects	Labor			Networking; organizational skills; tech skills less important; people skills (PEOP/LE)	Advisor overlap; reach back to US experts important; need to know about CERP funding		trees; ag inputs/equip; processing; watershed/irrigation; seeds; storage facilities; assessments						2
ARRS-16		GOOD	Excellent	Excellent	Interviewed over 400 district & prov leaders	Gov	suggests transfer of immediacy to HN officials and local leaders	OWN	Excellent relationships (PEOP/LE)	Need advisor overlap; establish PRT and HN relationships ASAP; do assessments for future advisor continuity	Lack of continuity between advisors cripples the program							1

Good - 4
Mixed - 4
OK - 1

Good - 4
Mixed - 3
Fair: 1

Good - 4
Fair: 1

OK - 1

FAC - 3

Gov: 10
TRG: 5

Labor: 3
Probs: reliability,

Ownership: 4
Strategy: 1

Tech/Network: 3

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DATA SET

2007

Report#	Start Year	End Year	Province	Security Issues?	Key to success	Funding Issues	FUND CODE	Training	Administrative Issues	ADMIN CODE	Coordination	Mil Coord	MIL CODE	USAID	DOS	NGOs	HN	Capacity Building
AH17-1	2006	2007-1	Paktiya, Logar	Y - need for improved direct PRT force from CA gov. farmers, etc.	FP; CA AF Eng; PRT work with HN Kabul	AID - large projects (H/E, dependent on good implementing partner); Small projects - monthly CERF; USDA funding would make more effective (SW UR)	USDA funding needed	USDA "uninvited from training" with CDS & AID; must be involved in things with whole PRT at Bridge & DC like State & AID	Better admin from DC office; poor communication, poor repayments; need PRT firm mgr in Kabul	Poor admin support	Good relationship with FP a must, involvement in all PRT mgt(MTGS, COORD)	Very good - CDR supportive; CA team supportive; briefed generals and visitors	GOOD	Good, but probs w/ implementing partner	Good - helpful and supportive	Advised, but distanced selves from mil	V Good - one weak reduction prjs; 3 very good	Worked closely with prov DirAg for ag reduction prjs; DRRR for the prjs
AH17-2		2007	Farah	Y - need for improved direct PRT force from CA gov. farmers, etc.	USAMID rep	USDA funding needed	USDA funding needed	Need to support and enhance training support at Fort Bragg	Overlap with next AgAd; initial admin issues	Advisor oversight/admin support	CA team - good, included good on mission & village assessments; CDR - good relationship; allowed to function and supplied force; MAJ from CA didn't want to fund Ag projects - thought they were USAID's responsibility	MIXED: CA GOOD; FIRST BAD	Very good - worked together well	Good - helpful and supportive	N/A	Good - regular mgs with DirAg	quality of Afghan DirAg at disprove levels a limitation	Helped prov ag dir write proj proposals
AH17-3		2007	Khosa	Limited ability to get to sites		Needed understand CERF funding process better; need funding support	USDA funding needed	Need to support and enhance training support at Fort Bragg	Match skills sets of AgAd with needs; learn start support at Embassy	Work as a team with DOS and AID, get to know daily mgs (MTGS, COORD)								

DATA SET
2007

Report#	CAP BLDG CODE	Sustainability	SUST CODE	Skills most used	Recommendations	Observations	Project Types	ANDS Objectives			
								CB/G	I	F	P
AF07-1	Gov	Involve local support and ministry support in Kabul on projects	OWN	Engineering skills (lacking in mlt); generalist skills (TECH)		USDA civilian feel like "poor cousins" compared to AID and DOS	ag education centers, research farm;	2	5		1
AF07-2	Gov	Know recon and dev plan for AF; MinAg master plan; get to know local HN right away;	STRAT	Flexibility, working w/ people and gov agencies; crop & irrigation water mgmt expertise; reachback to find ag info (TECH+PEOPLE)	learn about project funding			2	1		
AF07-3					Integrate mission needs and funding support with AID to improve project delivery; integrate mission support with ADTs; learn CERP process			2	1	0	3

Ownership: 1
Strategy: 1

DATA SET

Report#	Start Year	End Year	Province	Security Issues?	Key to success	Funding Issues	FUND CODE	Training	Administrative Issues	ADMIN CODE	Coordination	Mtl Coord	MIL CODE	USAID Coord	DOJ	NGOs
AE09-1	2008-3	2009-2	Palya	Moreening - bes 34 projects							Coordination very important and often lacking. Need better communication with PRT engineers for design and construction of ag projects. hydrology expertise needed. technicians to conduct field surveys. COORD					
AE09-2	2008	2009-2	Ghazni													
AE09-3	2008		Paktia													
AE09-4	2008-3	2009-4	Zabul	Y							Very good with USAID; get involved in all PRT mgs (COORD/MTGS)					Good, highly supportive
AE09-5	2008	2009	Ghazni	Y - reduced mobility	4 previous AgAids in Ghazni; wky mts with Dir/Ag; daily coord w/ PRT DOS, USAD (MTGS)	even small units of USDA funding (\$10k could get projects started immediately)	USDA funding needed		USDA should be issued body armor in Kabul		All projects coordinated with Prov Dir/Ag, ADT, USAD, and Prov Dir (COORD); PRT didn't recognize ag as primary need unless directed by higher level	Great (CA excellent; CDRs of PRT and ADT good); bridge between PRT & ADT	MIXED? EXCELLEN T, GOOD	Good	Great	worked with many CARE didn't want mil assoc (NGO-Mil coord)
AE09-6	2008	2009	Nuristan													
AE09-7	2008-3	2009-2	Paktia													
AE09-8	2008-3	2009-2	Kunar	Y - deteriorated					4 month gap between USDA advisors on PRT - no active or proposed ag project; ag projects started again with "clean slate" (prior projects bee and chicken projects)	Advisor overlap	Weekly meetings; little mtm between Dir/Ag and PRT prior to arrival	Indiana ADT arrived spring 2009;		Collaborative working with ADT can add sustainability and training elements to certain projects		
AE09-9	2009	2010	Kunar													

2007-3: Trng needed:
2009-1 2007 2

Advisor overlap 2007-1, 2009-1

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