Midterm assessment of Twinning Program

Consultancy Report

Ilkhomjon Gafurov
Kabul, Afghanistan
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1. Introduction and scope of assessment

The Twinning Program was designed to help national NGOs in Afghanistan to build their capacity to access the CHF funding, participate more fully in humanitarian coordination, and provide quality assessments to the UN Coordination Clusters. To achieve these objectives ACBAR paired national and international NGOs, which provide mentoring sessions and support in reviewing organizational policies, conducting joint field visits and needs assessments. Similarly, ACBAR provides mentoring sessions and support in reviewing organizational policies and organizing various training activities aimed at strenthening managerial and technical capacities of national NGOs.

The aim of the consultancy is to review the progress up-to-date with an emphasis on weaknesses and recommendations on how the Twinning Program can improve in these areas. Specifically, the following areas are covered by the assessment and relevant recommendations are provided at the end of each section (Annex 1. Terms of Reference):

1. Review of strategic vision, management and delivery of the Twining Program
2. Review of training and other capacity building activities i.e. mentoring sessions by ACBAR and international NGOs, joint field visits by national and international NGOs, needs assessments by national NGOs on request by UN Coordination Clusters
3. Review of M&E indicators to measure the progress, quality and results of the Twinning Program
4. Analysis of relationships between ACBAR, UN Coordination Clusters national and international NGOs
5. Possible future activities

The Terms of Reference have also requested an assessment of value for money. This is deemed not feasible at this point primarily due to the design of the monitoring and evaluation indicators of the Twinning Program. The Program does not explicitly define its costs and benefits and measures of effectiveness and efficiency, and therefore lacks systematically collected data which can enable this type of analysis.

2. Methodology of assessment

As outlined in the Terms of Reference, the methodology is based on a qualitative and quantitative evaluation of the Twinning Program from the multiple perspectives of ACBAR, international NGOs, national NGOs, DFID, CHF and UN Coordination Clusters. During the initial phase, a comprehensive desk review of program documentation was carried out. The review formed a basis for updating the 2015 stakeholder survey and preparing detailed questionnaires for online survey and individual interviews (Annex 2. Survey questionnaires). Four out of twelve international NGOs and five out of

twenty-two national NGOs responded to the online survey and six international and six national NGOs were interviewed directly. In addition, meetings with DFID, CHF and UN Coordination Clusters were held and two field visits were carried out in Mazar-i-sharif and Herat (Annex 3. Meeting schedule).

3. Strategic vision and management of the Twining Program

3.1.   Review of strategic vision and management of the Twining Program

Afghanistan has experienced sharp fall in donor funding since 2014, while its humanitarian needs have been steadily increasing due to renewed conflict, increasing influx of returnees and natural disasters. In response, donors have designed a common humanitarian pooled system managed by UNOCHA. To minimize corruption risks and improve accountability mechanisms, UNOCHA has put in place a rigorous process which any applicant, including UN agencies, international and national NGOs, is to go through in order to gain access to the CHF funding. The global and country level priority of UNOCHA and DFID, as a major donor to the CHF, was to increase the number of national NGOs in the CHF candidate pool. The Twinning Program has been developed in this context and its aim is to build and sustain organizational and technical capacities of national NGOs in responding to the humanitarian emergencies through the CHF[1].

As of October 2016, there are twenty-two national and eleven international NGOs partners enrolled in the Twinning Program. Two national NGOs have already passed both the CHF due diligence test and KPMG capacity assessment process and two national NGOs are awaiting the CHF capacity assessment, bringing the total number of national NGOs technically eligible for the CHF funding to four. Five national NGOs have applied for the CHF due diligence test, received below-the-threshhold grading and are in the process of addressing the CHF feedback. The remaining thirteen national NGOs are in different stages of reviewing their organizational policies[2].

The Program is managed by the Program Manager with a team of two Remote Managers, one Program Officer and one Training Officer. Remote managers are responsible for regular technical and organizational support to national NGOs through mentoring sessions. The Program Officer is responsible for monitoring and tracking the progress and the Training Officer organizes training activities of the Program. The Program reports to DFID based on a set of log-frame indicators, all at the output level.

3.2.   Analysis and recommendations for strategic vision and management

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[1] ACBAR project proposal 2014
[2] Twinning Program Annual Report 2015 and Quarterly Report 1, 2016

The CHF plays a crucial role in the management of the humanitarian response in Afghanistan. Since its inception in 2014, the CHF received USD 126mln (USD 39mln in 2016) which forms approximately 10% of the required funding to respond to the humanitarian needs of the country[3]. The largest share of the CHF funding was allocated to international NGOs (40.2%) and UN agencies (55.4%), while the share of national NGOs was on average 4.4% in 2014-2015[4]. The situation has been changing since 2016 with a sharp increase of the amount allocated to national NGOs (14.5%, or threefold increase since 2014-2015)[5], which can be attributed, to a certain extent, to the increasing number and quality of national NGOs in the CHF candidate pool. As of September 2016, there were twenty-one national NGOs out of total sixty-eight NGOs in the CHF candidate pool, of which two national NGOs were the graduates from the Twinning Program (3% of the candidate pool)[6]. If the latest, but not yet officially confirmed, data is considered, the number of national NGOs from the Program technically eligible for the CHF funding is four, which constitutes 5% of the total candidate pool. Furthermore, national NGOs which have received below-the-threshold CHF due diligence grading can technically be eligible for the CHF funding if they apply as a sub-implementing partner of certified international NGOs. This further increases potential participation of the members of the Program in the implementation of humanitarian projects.

The increasing number of NGO candidates in the CHF pool implies more competition for limited funds, thus decreasing chances for individual national NGOs to receive funding, which in turn can lead to frustration and eventual withdrawal from the candidate pool. There is evidence that national NGOs in the Program have already started applying for other funding opportunities. At the same time, the donor environment in Afghanistan has evolved since the start of the Program. The recent pledges of USD 15.2bn made at the donor conference in Brussels[7] are likely to increase the availability of development funding for NGOs. These considerations necessitate a revision of the overall aim of the Program and broaden its focus to strengthen capacity of national NGOs to compete for a wider range of funding opportunities and improve their networking skills to enter into productive partnerships with international NGOs and UN agencies.

The available evidence on the different level of progress of twenty-two NGOs strongly suggests that the management of the Program needs adjustments. Three groups of national NGOs can already be identified at this stage[8]:

- Group A: four NGOs which have passed the CHF due diligence and are eligible apply for the CHF funding alone;

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[3] CHF Update July 2016
[4] HFU Overview 2014-2015
[5] HFU Overview 2016
[6] CHF due diligence cleared list of NGOs, September 2016
[7] http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-37560704
[8] Eligible CHF partners that are UN agencies, international and national NGOs can apply for CHF funding with a national NGOs from the three groups as a sub-implementing partner if it can demonstrate the added value of the sub-implementing partner in terms of access, technical knowledge and capacity building.

- Group B: five NGOs which have received below-the-threshold grading of CHF due diligence test and are not eligible to apply for the CHF funding alone;
- Group C: thirteen NGOs which are still in the process of preparing for the CHF due diligence test and are not eligible to apply for the CHF funding alone.

It is clear that these three groups have different organizational and capacity building needs and priorities and the following recommendations are proposed to address the evolving nature of the Program:

1. Update and customize MoU between ACBAR, national and international NGOs in terms of:
   1.1. Specific roles and responsibilities of each party;
   1.2. Specific organizational and capacity building support, its frequency and means of verification by each party;
   1.3. Specific objectives, milestones, targets and means of verification;
   1.4. Adjustments of financial fees for mentoring sessions, currently at USD 735 for all international NGOs, depending on the amount of time, intensity and type of involvement and effort;
   1.5. Reward mechanisms through non-monetary means e.g. accounting and other software, study tours, depending on the achievement of pre-agreed targets and objectives stipulated in MoU;
   1.6. Criteria for termination of membership in the Program due to systematic failure to abide by MoU.

Prior to revision MoU, the Twinning Program needs to arrange an event for all members of the Program to renew their commitment to the Program and partners under new conditions and to start preparations for the revision of MoU. Both national and international NGOs should update their NGO profiles to ensure better matching between partners. International and national NGOs need to have greater freedom to select their partners, as available evidence suggests that common goals and history of partnerships in the past are important determinants of success.

2. The Program had to introduce softer criteria in order to increase the intake of new NGOs and reach the log-frame defined target number of national NGOs in the Program. However, a stronger focus on quality aspects of national and international NGOs already in the program is needed and the access of new entrants is to be restricted through the following measures:
   2.1. Reintroduce more stringent eligibility criteria for new NGOs
   2.2. Introduce strict compliance and performance evaluation criteria for the existing NGOs. The evaluation needs to be conducted regularly, on a quarterly and annual basis, as 360-degree evaluation from multiple perspectives e.g. failure to receive the CHF clearance after 3

attempts, failure to attend and benefit from capacity building activities, failure to meet deadlines of ACBAR and partners, failure to contribute to the UN Coordination Clusters etc;

2.3. Introduce a set of positive and negative incentives to reward or correct performance of NGO partners e.g. reward systems through non-monetary mechanisms as described in recommendation 1.5 above, probation periods for failure to meet deadlines and submit deliverables, revocation of received fees by international NGOs, temporary suspension of membership etc.

3. Update available reporting formats in order to have systematic and structured overview of ongoing activities and to enable the Program staff to provide timely response.

4. Strengthen the Program team's efforts in monitoring and tracking of performance and progress: The Program has already established an Excel-based system which should be elaborated further to enable tracking of deadlines and deliverables to ensure prompt intervention from the Program.

5. Involve ACBAR Regional Managers to play a more active role in the mentoring and monitoring sessions of national NGOs which do not have a central office in Kabul. The Regional Managers are in daily contact with regional NGOs for coordination purposes and know all local partners and can provide valuable support to the ongoing efforts. The Regional Managers need to have a comprehensive introductory course on the objectives and methodology of the Program and training courses on M&E.

6. Develop visibility and communication strategy: Although presentations on the progress of the Program are regularly made through ACBAR channels, the Program needs to develop a more systematic approach to communicate the progress to the internal and external partners and stakeholders using modern audio-visual means e.g. through annual Twinning Program conferences, quarterly newsletters, posters, videos of programmatic events, regularly updated website or webpage, exchange visits etc.

7. Strengthen the sense of community among the Program members: Regular meetings with all partners will be an opportunity to create a common platform to share experiences, challenges and lessons learnt. Development of other communication channels e.g. quarterly newsletters, website or webpage will encourage all partners to contribute.

8. In addition to current log-frame indicators, introduce new process level indicators for quarterly reporting and outcome level indicators for annual reporting and set respective baseline values.

Target values need to be set jointly by ACBAR, national and international NGOs (Annex 4. Proposed indicators).

4. Capacity building activities

4.1. Training activities

As an outcome of SWOT analysis conducted by all national NGOs with support of ACBAR and international NGOs, ACBAR designed a comprehensive package of training courses. The courses were labelled and grouped as Laying the foundations, Improving technical skills, and Meeting international standards[9]. As of October 2016, ACBAR has completed training courses on ten subjects. One extended training course on proposal writing was arranged based on suggestions from the previous course and was in progress at the time of consultancy report writing (Annex 5. Summary of training courses).

The annual survey conducted among national NGOs in January 2016 showed that all national NGOs (number of respondents = eleven) found training courses carried out so far to be useful and relevant in their work. A mixed response pertaining to the quality of course facilitators (and, indirectly, of training courses), however, was observed. The quality of trainers was assessed by the participants as excellent (27%), good (64%) and fair (9%)[10]. The quality issue was raised during interviews with national NGOs and, based on a combined analysis of interview responses and annual survey, the following factors are likely to explain such an assessment of the quality:

- Selection of training institutions: Some NGOs commented that they were more "knowledgeable" than trainers and, in some cases, trainers were not adequately prepared for the course and did not know their target audience. Furthermore, NGOs commented on poor coordination between multiple trainers within the courses and reported inadequate amount of training materials, their quality and poor timing for dissemination of teaching aids among participants;

- Lack of a clear structure: Although some trainers had pre- and post-course evaluation of participants, none of the courses had clear and structured learning objectives and how they might contribute to the achievement of Twinning Program goals. The longer term follow-up of participants to assess the retention and application of acquired knowledge and skills was absent in all training courses;

- Duration of training courses: The average duration was 2.5 days, which was deemed by most participants as insufficient to cover and explore all topics within the courses;

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[9] Twinning Program Presentation to Advisory Board, March 2016
[10] ACBAR Twinning Program NNGO Annual Review, January 2016

- Selection of trainees: Course facilitators also had an opportunity to comment on participants. Lack of commitment, interest and continuity of participation, were reported in some cases;

- Almost exclusive focus on theoretical aspects: None of training courses, except, to a limited extent, proposal writing course used an interactive adult-oriented training methodologies;

- Inadequate course logistics: Participants reported poor timing for courses e.g. in the end of the year, late invitations not allowing proper planning and selection of trainees, lack of coordination between different parties involved in course management.

4.2. Mentoring sessions

As a part of its capacity building plan, the Twinning Program designed mentoring sessions for national NGOs by the staff of international NGOs and the Twinning Program. There are four mentoring sessions per month, two by ACBAR and two by international NGOs. The agenda for mentoring sessions is set by all participants and is exclusively focused on reviews of organizational policies included in the CHF due diligence checklist. In addition, there is a monthly Directors' meeting in which broader subjects are discussed e.g. review of the overall progress of the partnership, organizational strategy, planning for potential joint donor applications, fundraising strategies etc.

The annual survey conducted among national and international NGOs (number of respondents =eleven and fourteen, respectively) in January 2016 showed that mentoring sessions did take place, on average one session per month, although significant variations in the frequency and the number of sessions was observed. All national and international NGOs found the mentoring sessions to be a useful mechanism in preparing for the CHF due diligence test. However, almost half of national NGOs (45%) ranked the quality of support from international NGOs as poor or fair, while 40% of international NGOs also reported somewhat poor responsiveness of national NGOs in their mentoring sessions. At the same time, all national NGOs were unanimously positive about ACBAR's mentoring sessions. Individual discussions with national and international NGOs confirmed the original findings of the annual survey and helped to identify the following factors that affected the quality of interactions between national and international NGOs:

- Quality of twinning: While some national and international NGOs had already been involved in partnerships and joint project implementation in the past, and, hence, were more likely to have productive mentoring sessions, the remaining NGOs found it difficult to build rapport and working relationships with their twinning counterparts. The frequently cited reasons include lack of linkages in terms of work sectors and geographical areas, mismatch in organizational values, vision and strategic priorities, lack of time and human resources, insufficient compensation for the level of effort provided by international NGOs and concerns over potential competition in future;

- Quality of national NGOs: Some international NGOs commented on low quality of national NGOs in terms of poor organizational setup, lack of dedicated staff, poor motivation, focus on profit-generating and fundraising activities to maintain senior management and NGO board staff.

4.3. Relationships with UN Coordination Clusters

Both national and international NGOs report their participation in the respective Clusters' activities. However, the Clusters commented on the following aspects:

- Decreasing quality of new entrants and poor quality of some partnerships due to differences in sectors of work and geographical focus;
- High turnover of staff of national NGOs and therefore impossibility to develop lasting working relationships;
- Lack of understanding of the humanitarian architecture and the role of the Clusters in providing humanitarian response;
- Poor quality of needs assessments and other contributions to the Cluster, which could be in part explained by insufficient proposal and report writing skills.

The clusters have also provided recommendations which are not included in the main recommendations and are left open to the discretion of the Twinning Program and the Donor:

- Provide organizational support in addition to capacity building support e.g. paying the core staff of national NGOs, contribution towards fixed costs of NGOs, creating office co-sharing environments;
- Encourage national NGOs to become sub-contractors of UN agencies and international NGOs in order to gain relevant implementation experience and credibility.

4.4. Analysis and recommendations for capacity building activities

Overall, Twinning Program identified and grouped various courses for the first two years correctly. The initial set of training courses, or "core period" courses, was designed to create a common understanding among all national NGOs of general principles of humanitarian work, general management topics and fund acquisition. The mentoring sessions, while being a valuable tool, lack consistency and systematic follow-up, while the up-take of other capacity building activities (joint field visits and needs assessment) has been extremely low. As of October 2016, the only indicators available to monitor and report on capacity building activities are the log-frame output level indicators 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7 and 4.9 and subjective perceptions of usefulness and impact of training

activities by course participants. As such, there is no quantifiable and evidence-based measure of either the quality or results of capacity building activities.

The following recommendations can be considered in order to improve capacity building activities of national NGOs in the next implementation phase:

1. No other generic courses and workshops should be considered at this stage, with the exception of:
    1.1. Course on Monitoring and Evaluation: Although all participants already have some level of understanding of general principles and issues in M&E, it would be useful to provide a refresher M&E course followed by sessions focusing on cluster-specific issues and, ideally, practical exercises and field visits;
    1.2. Workshop on Donor Mapping and Requirements: Based on feedback from national NGOs, a workshop on requirements of major donors, including international NGOs, is necessary to increase access to potential funding sources. The workshop needs to be preceded by a comprehensive donor mapping at both national and regional levels. The CHF criteria can be used as a reference point and a benchmark against which all other donors' requirements will be compared. A Q&A session with donor representatives, where possible, should be arranged within the workshop;
    1.3. Quarterly mock proposal writing: National NGOs should be encouraged to practice proposal writing skills using real RFPs issued in the past. This can be arranged as a follow-up and post-course evaluation of a proposal writing course recently completed by ATR.

2. Plan and coordinate training activities in timely manner with all involved stakeholders and ensure rigorous selection of training institution, including requirements to include systematic pre and post-training assessment, plans and tools for longer-term follow-up of trainees, clear statement of learning and course objectives and how they relate to overall advancement of the Twinning Program.

3. Redesign existing reporting format by training institutions by making compulsory the following entries: a) total cost, b) cost per participant, c) results of pre-test, post-test and longer-term evaluation (to be submitted after it is done and attached to the initial training report) for each participant. This will provide inputs for any future analysis of effectiveness and efficiency of training activities.

4. Develop NGO Group-specific capacity building activities: Groups A and B need capacity building activities focused on improving their technical and implementation skills to deliver high quality humanitarian interventions. Group C will still require support of ACBAR and

international NGO in finalizing preparations for the CHF due diligence test (Annex 6. Proposed Group-specific capacity building activities).

5. Redefine the scope and content of mentoring sessions: Currently mentoring sessions are focused exclusively on supporting the revision of organizational policies. This should be continued with national NGOs, where relevant, and reinforced with, but not limited, by the following (see also Annex 6. Common limitations of national NGOs and Annex 7. Proposed Group-specific capacity building activities):

   5.1. Mentoring sessions by ACBAR and international NGOs to provide technical and administrative feedback and support during mock proposal writing as described in recommendation 1.3 above;

   5.2. Direct observation and continuing support to national NGO when they embark on developing real funding applications, regardless of funding source;

   5.3. Continuing support to ensure compliance with organizational policies (ACBAR) and technical standards (international NGOs) during the project implementation phase, regardless of funding source or level of progress with the CHF due diligence process. In case of national NGOs which do not have active ongoing projects, this support can be limited to review past project activities;

   5.4. Informal mid-term external audit of project activities for national NGOs which have active ongoing projects, regardless of funding source in order to reinforce the implementation of organizational policies and improve the technical quality of implementation.

6. Reinforce implementation of joint field visits by making them a mandatory requirement for continuing membership in the Program. Needs assessments should be viewed as an integral part of a proposal writing process and national NGOs should be requested to plan and conduct needs assessment when they apply for funding other than CHF. Needs assessment budget (USD 5000) can be used for such purposes; in addition, national NGOs can join and contribute to research and evaluation activities done by UN agencies and international NGOs.

7. Establish a closer monitoring mechanism to measure performance and contribution of national NGOs to activities of their respective Clusters. The Program need to have a monitoring form through which the Clusters will be able to share their perspectives on the participation of national NGOs in terms of motivation, level of initiative, level of commitment and satisfactory contribution.

5. Conclusions

The Twinning Program has achieved a moderate success, considering inevitable delays in identifying eligible national and international NGOs, setting up the Program, turnover of staff at ACBAR and at international and national counterparts. All activities of the Program have been directed towards achieving a stated goal of increasing the number of national NGOs providing humanitarian response and assistance. The Program, however, lacked a broader vision for post-graduation plan for national NGOs which entered the CHF candidate pool. The proposed recommendations constitute a minimum set of strategic and management interventions which can provide a further impetus to the Program and ensure a more harmonious development of NGO capacity to deliver both development and humanitarian assistance. Stricter monitoring and assessment of output, process and outcome level results will contribute to a greater cost-effectiveness of the program and will allow rigorous documentation of the experience for possible continuation of the Program and replication of its experiences in similar settings. UNOCHA has already been sharing the Twinning Program experience with other countries in which it operates, as the Program appears to be a systematic effort to achieve the global goal of UNOCHA for greater inclusion of national NGOs in the provision of humanitarian response[11].

Inevitably, some national and international NGOs might opt out from the Program or their membership might be terminated due to unsatisfactory performance. This should not be seen as a drawback, but, rather, as a result of a natural selection and quality enhancement, with ultimate impacts on the efficient use of resources and quality interventions for the final beneficiaries.

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[11] Personal communication from HFU

Annex 1. Terms of Reference

Midterm assessment of Twinning Program, Kabul Afghanistan

Background:

The Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief and Development (ACBAR) was created in August 1988, in response to demands for a more coordinated approach to humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan and for Afghan refugees in Pakistan. ACBAR moved its headquarters to Kabul in 2002 and currently has 151 NGO members, both national and international organizations, working in all sectors of humanitarian assistance and development, including capacity building.

In 2015, ACBAR, funded by the UK's Department for International Development (DFID), began a capacity building program, the Twinning Program, which strives to build the ability of National NGOs (NNGOs) to respond to humanitarian needs and gain access to humanitarian funding. The program was designed in response to a lack of NNGOs who had passed the CHF Due Diligence process and qualified for the CHF.

The program aims to build humanitarian NNGO capacity in Afghanistan by implementing a training program that draws on the valuable knowledge and input of varied actors with experience in the humanitarian community, including the INGOs and UN Clusters.

The twinning program aims to:
· Increase NNGO membership in the CHF
· Increase NNGO participation in the clusters and ability to access other funds
· Increase NNGO ability to conduct quality assessments
· Provide quality assessments to the UN clusters
· Give the entire humanitarian community more access to local knowledge
· Ensure all organizations involved follow international humanitarian principles
· Ensure all members follow best practice in administration
· Increase the sharing of knowledge between NNGOs and INGOs

At the beginning of the Twinning Program a mapping of the Humanitarian Community was conducted through a call for interest, in which NNGOs provided information regarding their organization. This included information on which sectors and in which regions they worked, past donors, and a list of projects in the last year. From this mapping, 22 NNGOs were identified which met the necessary criteria for the program; including having experience in the humanitarian sector and implementing large scale projects.

After identifying NNGOs for the program, they were partnered with ACBAR INGO members who, along with ACBAR, act as twinning mentors. All NNGOs then conducted a SWOT analysis, in order to analyze their organization and devise a work plan to be followed by all parties. Support provided by ACBAR and INGO partners includes technical mentoring, policy review, trainings, institutional support, and support in the field.

Purpose of the Program Review

The Twinning Program has completed 18 months and would like to review the progress to date. Specifically, the program would like to focus on where weaknesses are, how it can improve in these areas, and appropriate ways to spend funds for the remainder for the program. The review should focus on the following elements:

Reflection and learning to date:

a. The twinning program is interested in a comprehensive review of where the program has succeeded and where it needs to improve. This includes implementation of program activities and relationships with stakeholders.
b. A review of trainings. To date the program has conducted a series of trainings for member which have laid a base of knowledge, including Afghan law and humanitarian principles. Subsequent trainings have focused on more technical skills including financial management and proposal writing. The review should look at the value of these training for partners and make suggestions for future trainings.
c. The consultant should identify what are barriers to partner relationships and INGO and NNGO participants meeting their obligations.
d. Assess value for money and whether the program is achieving stated objectives. e. Does the theory of change originally identified still apply to the program?

Recommendations:
a. Interventions for the future. ACBAR has provided a base of trainings, but needs of the members of the program change over time. What training needs are most important for partners?
b. In what ways can the ACBAR team improve in project delivery? Meeting targets can be a challenge for all partners and therefore an understanding of what can be done to improve the ability of the program to meet these targets is needed.
c. Currently, the program has funds, for which assessments best suited to the needs of clusters and the humanitarian community should be provided. The twinning program aims to provide more and better quality assessments, and is interested in the best ways to implement this in the next phase of the program.
d. The Twinning Program aims to more fully involve Humanitarian NNGOs in the cluster system in order to provide better quality assessments and provide better services to Afghans. In order to achieve this, the program needs to identify ways in which coordination can be improved between clusters and partner, and the clusters and ACBAR.
e. Assess relevance of indicators and how they can be improved.
f. In 2016 the twinning program has begun distributing small grants to conduct assessments based on UN Cluster needs. The consultant will interview the clusters and NNGO Twinning members who have conducted assessments and provide analysis on strengths, weaknesses and how it can be improved.

Scope:

The program review will take place in Afghanistan over a 3 week period including 2 days desk review before arrival. The consultant will be based in Kabul with travel to MazareSharif and Herat as required.

Methodology:

The Twinning Program interacts with a variety of partners including INGOs, NNGOs, Donors, and the UN, and has a variety of goals to achieve. Consequently, the consultant will need to have a thorough understanding of the program partner's responsibilities and their goals, and how they interact with each other in the context of the twinning program.

Stakeholder Survey

Consultant will do a short review of the stakeholder survey that was conducted for the annual review of the program in 2015 and conduct the same survey again. The Twinning Program will provide the survey questions, to which the consultant may add relevant questions, and the survey monkey platform to conduct the review. This will be in addition to face to face interviews with programme participants.

Desk Review

The consultant will begin with a desk review in order to understand the background of the twinning program. This will include a review of the following program documents:

- Business case
- Project proposal
- NNGO SWOT analysis
- Training reports and reviews
- Quarterly and annual reports
- NNGO and INGO monthly reports
- Field visit reports
- Field visit TOR
- Field assessment RFP
- Log frame

Field Interviews

The consultant will conduct interviews with participants including, but not limited to:

- NNGO twinning partners in Kabul, Mazare Sharif and Herat
- INGO twinning partners
- UN Cluster leads
- OCHA Humanitarian Financing Unit (HFU)
- Program staff
- DFID (project Donor) and relevant donors in Afghanistan
- Other relevant stakeholders outputs

Inception Report and Desk Review (5 days)

The consultant will conduct a desk review and produce a 2 page report which identifies the methodology, procedure, and timeline for producing the report within the first 5 days after signing contract.

Field Work (12 Days)

The consultant will have 12 days in country to meet with key stakeholders, conduct interviews, and gather data, from which the report will be drafted.

Draft Review (7 Days)

Seven days after the field work, the consultant will submit a draft of the review, which ACBAR will have 3 days to provide comments

Final Review (6 Days)

The consultant will submit a final version of the review 5 days after ACBAR has returned the draft review with comments

Conditions:

- Consultant will be paid a lump sum for 30 days with taxes payable in Afghanistan deducted before payment. The payment will be in 3 installments: 1) after inception report is provided, 2) after draft review is provided and 3) final report is submitted.
- ACBAR will provide transportation and accommodation in Kabul and the provinces
- ACBAR will provide lunch daily
- ACBAR will provide a phone with a prepaid sim card
- The final report must be submitted no later than October 25th, 2016.

How to apply:

Please send to: Programmanager@acbar.org by August 31st, 2016, COB
- · Consultancy Proposal with methodology, budget and timeline
- · Resume including evidence of previous consultancies
- · 3 References (to be contacted if proposal is shortlisted)

Annex 2. Survey questionnaires

Midterm assessment of Twinning Program, Kabul Afghanistan

Online survey paired international NGO

NNGO relationships

1. Please identify yourself by selecting from the dropdown list
2. Please select your NNGO partner from the dropdown list
3. Since January 2016, how many times have you met with your NNGO partner?
4. If less than 2, please explain why and what suggestions do you have to make sure that you can meet the agreed commitment going forward?
5. What were the reasons for meetings with NNGO? Please select from the dropdown list.
6. Since January 2016, how many field visits have you **carried out** with your NNGO partner?
7. Since January 2016, have you applied for any donor funds jointly with your partner NNGO?
8. Have you had a funding relationship with your NNGO partner?
9. Would you apply for funds with your NNGO partner?
10. What else, apart from current support, you could provide to your NNGO partner?
11. Was the NNGO partner that ACBAR paired you with a good match?
12. Please explain why your current NNGO partner is or is not a good match for your organization?
13. Would you like to change your current NNGO partner?

ACBAR support and relationships

14. Since January 2016, how many times have you met with ACBAR for mentoring sessions?
15. How would you rank the quality of support by ACBAR?
16. What else could ACBAR do in order to strengthen your organization?
17. What else could ACBAR do in order to strengthen the Twinning Program?

Cluster meetings

18. Since January 2016, how many cluster meetings have you attended?
19. Did you provide assessment and other reports to your cluster?
20. Did you attend all cluster meetings with your NNGO partner?
21. Since January 2016, has your NNGO partner applied for CHF due diligence process?
22. If not, please explain why

Future needs

23. Considering SWOT analysis and current situation with your NNGO partner, which training courses will your NNGO partner need in 2017? Please include duration of intended trainings
24. What other capacity building activities would you like to have organized for your partner NNGO by ACBAR in 2017?
25. Please provide any further ideas and suggestions that might be instrumental in strengthening your partner NNGO

Annex 2. Survey questionnaires

Midterm assessment of Twinning Program, Kabul Afghanistan

Online survey paired national NGO

INGO support and relationships

1. Please identify yourself by selecting from the dropdown list
2. Please select your INGO partner from the dropdown list
3. Since January 2016, what is the turnover rate of technical and managerial staff in your organization (calculated as percentage of resigned technical and managerial staff over total number of technical and managerial staff)?
4. Since January 2016, how many times have you met with your INGO partner?
5. If less than 2, please explain why and what suggestions do you have to make sure that you can meet the agreed commitment going forward?
6. What were the reasons for meetings with INGO? Please select from the dropdown list.
7. Since January 2016, how many field visits have you **carried out** with your INGO partner?
8. Since January 2016, have you applied for any donor funds jointly with your partner INGO?
9. Has your INGO partner introduced your organization to other potential partners and donors?
10. Since January 2016, have you applied for any donor funding alone?
11. What else, apart from current support, INGO could provide to your organization?
12. Was the INGO partner that ACBAR paired you with a good match?
13. Please explain why your current INGO partner is or is not a good match for your organization?
14. Would you like to change your current INGO partner?

ACBAR support and relationships

15. Since January 2016, how many times have you met with ACBAR for mentoring sessions?
16. How would you rank the quality of support by ACBAR?
17. What else could ACBAR do in order to strengthen your organization?
18. What else could ACBAR do to strengthen the Twinning Program?

Cluster meetings

19. Since January 2016, how many cluster meetings have you attended?
20. Did you provide assessment and other reports to your cluster?
21. Did you attend all cluster meetings with your INGO partner?
22. Since January 2016, have you applied for CHF due diligence process?
23. If not, please explain why

Future needs

24. Considering your SWOT analysis and current situation with your organization, which training courses will you need in 2017? Please include duration of intended trainings and the number of people from your organization who could attend them
25. What other capacity building activities would you like to have organized by ACBAR in 2017?
26. Please provide any further ideas and suggestions that might be instrumental in strengthening your organization

Annex 3. Meeting schedule

Midterm assessment of Twinning Program, Kabul Afghanistan

Date	Time	Organization	Focal Person	Position
13.10.2016 Kabul	08.30 – 09.30	ACBAR	Mr. Gabriel Schickel Mr. Rohullah Dr. Qamarudin Ms. Farhat	Program Manager Remote Manager Remote Manager Program Officer
	09.30 – 10.30	ACBAR	Mr. Tamim	Finance Manager
	13.00 – 14.00	ACBAR	Ms. Fiona Gall	Director
	14.00 – 15.00	ACBAR	Mr. Hamidullah	Information and Coordination Manager
14.10.2016 Kabul	11.00 – 12.00	WHH	Ms. Marisa Perello	Expert Partner Consultant
15.10.2016 Kabul	09.00 – 10.00	IRC	Mr. Hafizullah	Education Coordinator
	11.00 – 12.00	The Johannitor	Mr. Faruq Faisel	Acting Country Director
	15.00 – 16.00	DACAAR	Mr. John Morse	Country Director
16.10.2016 Kabul		DFID	Ms. Fiona Rushbrook Ms. Phillida Strachan	Senior Humanitarian Program Manager Humanitarian Advisor
17.10.2016 Mazar-i-sharif	09.00 – 11.00	SHA	Mr. Nasser	Director
	11.00 – 13.00	ADEO	Mr. Tawab	Director
	13.30 – 14.00	ACBAR	Mr. Qaderi	Regional Manager
20.10.2016 Herat	11.00 – 14.00	AHDAA RAADA	Mr. Abdul Aziz Mr. Aryan	Director Director
	14.00 – 14.30	ACBAR	Mr. Sultani	Regional Manager
24.10.2016 Kabul	10.00 – 11.00	HFU	Ms. Maia McFadden	HFU Head
	11.30 – 13.00	ACBAR	General Assembly	General Assembly
	13.30 – 14.00	ANCC	Mr. Rahimullah	Senior Program Officer
	14.00 – 14.30	NCRO	Mr. Sayed Ghufran	Director
	14.30 – 15.00	ZOA	Mr. Mirafzal	Program Assistant
25.10.2016 Kabul	08.30 – 10.00	WASH Cluster	Mr. Ramesh Bhusal	WASH Coordinator
26.10.2016 Kabul	10.00 – 11.00	Shelter Cluster	Ms. Pia Jensen	Shelter Coordinator
	15.00 – 16.00	FSAC Cluster	Mr. Abdul Majid	FSAC Coordinator
27.10.2016 Kabul	11.00 – 12.00	DFID	Ms. Fiona Rushbrook	Senior Humanitarian Program Manager
	12.30 – 13.30	NAC	Mr. Terje Watterdal	Director

Annex 4. Proposed indicators

Midterm assessment of Twinning Program, Kabul Afghanistan

Quarterly process level reporting indicators:

Proposed indicator	Baseline value	Explanation
% of national NGOs which have updated and signed MoU with customized capacity building plan by the end of the quarter	0%	Denominator = 22 NGOs = 100%
% of national NGOs which developed award-winning mock project proposal by the end of the quarter	0%	Denominator = 22 NGOs = 100%
% of national NGOs which received mentoring sessions and other support, as described in MoU, while developing real funding applications, regardless of donor, by the end of the quarter	0%	Denominator = 22 NGOs = 100%
% of national NGOs which received support to ensure compliance with organizational policies (ACBAR) and technical standards (international NGOs), as described in MoU, during the project implementation phase, regardless of funding source, by the end of the quarter	0%	Denominator = number of NGOs with active project implementation by the end of the quarter = 100%
% of national NGOs without active project implementation which had their past project activities reviewed, by the end of the quarter	0%	Denominator = number of NGOs without active project implementation by the end of the quarter = 100%
% of national NGOs with active project implementation which received informal mid-term external audit of project activities, by the end of the year	0%	Denominator = number of NGOs with active project implementation by the end of the year = 100%
% of national NGOs in process of reviewing organizational policies which passed CHF due diligence test, by the end of the quarter	0%	Denominator = 13 = 100%

Annex 4. Proposed indicators

Midterm assessment of Twinning Program, Kabul Afghanistan

Annual outcome level reporting indicators:

Proposed indicator	Baseline value	Explanation
% of national NGOs which completed review of organizational policies by the end of the year	41%	Denominator = 22 NGOs = 100% 4 national NGOs passed CHF due diligence test (18%) + 5 national NGOs which applied once (23%) = 41%
% of national NGOs which passed due diligence test by the end of the year	18%	Denominator = 22 NGOs = 100% 4 national NGOs passed CHF due diligence test (18%)
% of national NGOs which entered CHF candidate pool	18%	4 national NGOs passed CHF due diligence test and audit = 18%
% of national NGOs awarded CHF funding by the end of the year	0%	Denominator = number of NGOs in the CHF candidate pool by the end of the year
% of national NGOs which submitted at least 3 proposals to any donor by the end of the year	0%	Denominator = 22 NGOs = 100%
% of national NGOs awarded any donor funding by the end of the year	0%	Denominator = 22 NGOs =100%
Total amount awarded by CHF / total amount spent per NGO and per all cohort per year	0	Total amount = training costs + mentoring sessions + ACBAR costs + international NGO mentoring fee + other incentives
Total amount awarded by any donor / total amount spent per NGO and per all cohort per year	0	Total amount = training costs + mentoring sessions + ACBAR costs + international NGO mentoring fee + other incentives

Annex 5. Summary of training activities as of October 2016

Midterm assessment of Twinning Program, Kabul Afghanistan

Course category	Title	Dates
Laying the foundations	Sphere Principles	28-29.09.2015[1] 18-19.10.2015 03-04.11.2015 02-03.12.2015 17-18.01.2016
	Updated Afghan Law	04.09.2015 13.09.2015 14.12.2015
	Integrity in NGO Management	21-29.12.2015 27-31.03.2016
	Disability Awareness	04-05.11.2015 17-18.11.2015 13-14.12.2015 30-31.12.2015 10-11.02.2016
	Project Cycle Management	21-27.04.2015 10-14.05.2015 19-25.05.2015 31.05-4.06.2015 08-13.06.2015 01-09.07.2015 13-16.09.2015 11-15.10.2015 08-12.11.2015 14-17.12.2015 17-20.01.2016
Improving technical skills	Risk Assessment and Management	21-22.02.2016
	Financial Management	28-29.02.2016 07-08.03.2016
Meeting international standards	Gender Mainstreaming	06-07.04.2016
	Emergency Assessment	31.05-2.06.2016
	Proposal Writing	25-26.07.2016 27-28.07.2016 18-19.09.2016 09-10.10.2016 25-26.10.2016
	Monitoring and Evaluation	Not conducted yet

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[1] Multiple dates indicate the same course repeated in different locations for national NGOs resident in those locations

Annex 6. Common limitations for national NGOs (provided by HFU/CHF)

Midterm assessment of Twinning Program, Kabul Afghanistan

Common Humanitarian Fund (CHF) Afghanistan
CHF Eligibility Process

Common limitations for National/Local NGOs

In general:

1. NNGOs/LNGOs are mostly mobile which have nomadic status. They work where the projects are available.
2. No specific sector of intervention and work in all sectors (multi-sector), therefore some NNGOs/LNGOs lack expertise.
3. In the past, NNGOs/LNGOs have worked in development or rehabilitation rather than humanitarian.
4. NNGOs/LNGOs have no core staff due to the lack of a core fund to maintain professional staff for long periods of time. They usually hire project-based staff.

Related to Specific Due Diligence Criteria:

1. NNGOs/LNGOs are not a signatory of Code of Conduct (CoC) of the Red Cross/ Red Crescent. They usually develop their own CoC.

2. Most of the NNGOs/LNGOs cannot prove their transparency through a website. On the one hand the internet connection is weak in their location and on other hand they cannot maintain the website because of the charges.

3. NNGOs/LNGOs mostly copy Manuals and Policies from INGOs or download from google for the purpose of the DD review. Therefore, their policies and manuals are new and application of the policies and manuals cannot be guaranteed.

4. There is a lack of female staff in most of the NNGOs/LNGOs resulting in a lack of gender balance.

5. Most NNGOs/LNGOs have worked with other donors rather than the UN in the past, therefore they had no partnership with UN agencies.

6. As most NNGOs/LNGOs had no partnership with UN, therefore they have not undergone the Capacity Assessment by UN entities.

7. NNGOs/LNGOs cannot afford regular audit of their organization and an audit of their implemented projects depends on the policy of the donors of the projects.

8. As most NNGOs/LNGOs have no office in Kabul and they work in different sectors considering availability of project, they cannot maintain active membership of a specific cluster.

9. As most NNGOs/LNGOs implement small projects, their yearly budget is very low.

10. Almost all NNGOs/LNGOs provide an annual report to the Ministry of Economy according to the very brief ministry format, and they do not have an annual report to provide as per the DD requirement.

11. As most NNGOs/LNGOs have no core budget, they cannot carry out any evaluation, studies or reviews.

Annex 7. Proposed Group-specific capacity building activities

Midterm assessment of Twinning Program, Kabul Afghanistan

	Group A	Group B	Group C
Training activities	- M&E - Donor mapping workshop - Mock proposal writing - Technical trainings by partner international NGO	- M&E - Donor mapping workshop - Mock proposal writing - Technical trainings by partner international NGO	- M&E - Mock proposal writing - Technical trainings by partner international NGO
Mentoring sessions	- Support for proposal writing - Networking - Post-technical training follow-up - Implementation of organizational policies	- Support for proposal writing - Networking - Post-technical training follow-up - Implementation of organizational policies	- Support for organizational policy review - Post-technical training follow-up - Implementation of organizational policies
Field Visits	No	Yes	Yes
Needs assessment	Yes	Yes	No
Other	- Internships - Secondment of staff - Study and exchange visits	- Internships - Secondment of staff - Study and exchange visits	- Internships - Secondment of staff - Study and exchange visits