

Agency Coordinating Body For Afghan Relief and Development (ACBAR)



Government Perception Survey

14/05/2020

Acknowledgments

This report highlights an overview of baseline survey and presents the findings under WHH funded project *“Enabling Civil Society - Enhancing Effectiveness, Accountability and Perception of Civil Society Actors in Afghanistan”* which will be implemented by ACBAR.

ACBAR is thankful to all respondents who participated in the survey during data collection and we would like to express our gratitude to our team who collected the data at center and provincial level, managed and analyzed the data and prepared the final report.

Fiona Gall
Director
ACBAR

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Summary

From 13 October 2019 to 02 December 2019 ACBAR carried out a baseline survey with 101 Government officials to assess their perceptions of civil society organizations as “legitimate actors” The survey was carried out in 13 provinces by ACBAR regional managers and capacity-building staff with different Government managers in national and provincial sectoral departments (see list of participants in annex).

The participants were selected on the basis of project relation with sectoral departments at Kabul and provincial level.

It should be noted that the term Civil Society Organization (CSO) is used in this survey for the broader group of actors including International and National Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) and local organizations. In Afghanistan, NGOs are specifically registered with Ministry of Economy under the NGO Law and deliver many projects and services under different sectoral Ministries such as health, education, agriculture, rural development, gender, disability and humanitarian assistance for displaced people and refugees.

The following seven questions were asked from respondents and data were analyzed in quantitative and qualitative methods to indicate the perceptions.

- 1) What do you think about CSO activities overall?
- 2) Do you think CSOs in Afghanistan have good organization capacity?
- 3) Do you think CSOs in the Afghanistan have a good public image (e.g., positive media coverage, positive perception from public, government)?
- 4) Do you think the relations between national government and CSOs are good (coordination, cooperation, communication)?
- 5) Do you think the relations between local Government and CSOs are good (coordination, cooperation, communication, policies and accountability)?
- 6) Do you think CSOs in the province where you operate have significant influence over the policies, programs and projects of the provincial government?
- 7) Do you think CSOs in the country have significant influence over the policies, programs and projects of the national government?

The data has been analyzed to find out positive and negative perceptions of respondents on each aspects of the survey and is detailed in the Findings section.

The survey concludes that overall, Government employees have a positive and good perception of CSOs and their activities. 88% of respondents were men and 12% were women. The key findings were:

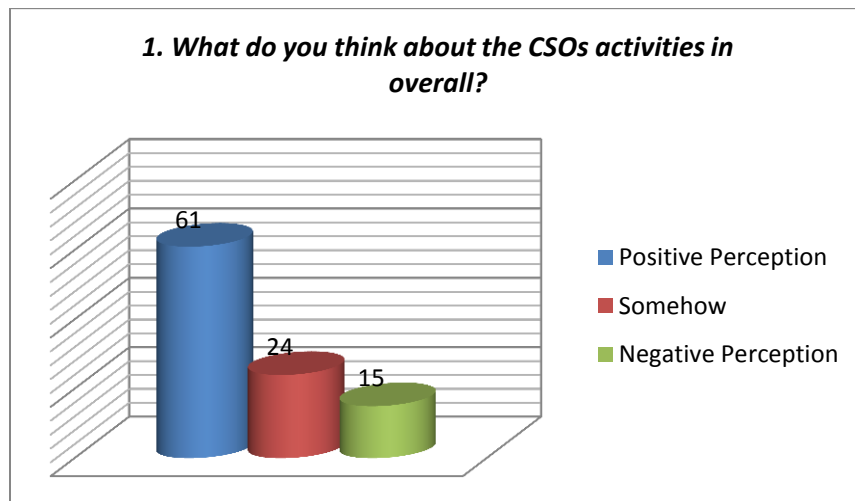
- 61% of the respondents indicated that besides the Afghan Government, CSOs have made essential contributions in humanitarian, education, health care, public policy, social protection, human rights, women empowerment, environment and other areas to maintain effective changes in people live;

- 15% of the respondents responded that the NGOs are not using their resources properly and they working for their own benefits;
- 57% of the respondents acknowledged the administration and management system of NGOs and were satisfied from the quality of their project implementation.
- 68% of respondents believe that the coordination mechanism between the government and CSOs has improved compared to the past. However, there were complaints about lack of sharing of project documents with line departments by CSOs in some provinces.

Detailed Findings

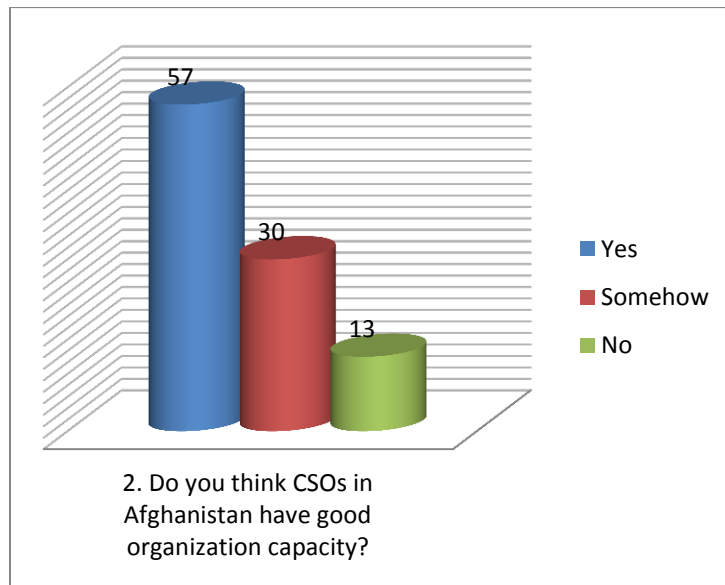
1. What do you think about the CSOs activities in overall?

- 1.1)** 61% of the interviewees normally indicated that besides the Afghan Government, CSOs have made essential contributions in humanitarian, education, health care, public policy, social protection, human rights, women empowerment, environmental, and other areas to maintain effective changes in people live according to their objectives at center and remote areas where Afghanistan government did not have access in remote areas.
- 1.2)** 24 % of the interviewees responded that CSO activities have effective role in developing of communities and societies and they support the needy people all over Afghanistan and they perform their activities according to the NGO law.
- 1.3)** 15% of interviewees responded that most of CSOs are working for their own profit and they do not have a clear objective for executing of their activities and they insufficiently used the time and money which do not have a specific result for the community, because these activities are led by corrupt individuals. They added that CSOs do not have the proper coordination and communication with sectoral departments which causes many misunderstanding and challenges between them. Besides, CSOs are implementing the projects without considering the sustainability of it and the community and people cannot take advantage of it in long terms.



2. Do you think CSOs in Afghanistan have good organization capacity?

- 2.1)** 57% of respondents stated that we hereby acknowledge CSOs have good administration and management system, experienced and capable staff and work facilities as it is due to financial opportunities that they have. The activities and projects are implemented by them are satisfactory for us and beneficiaries.
- 2.2)** 30 % of the respondents mentioned that if the CSOs accept the transparency as a principle of the organization in their recruitment process; The CSOs can hire experienced and qualified staff to design and implement projects successfully and also maintain a good coordination with government, stakeholders and community.
- 2.3)** 13% of the respondents said that CSOs do not have transparency on recruiting qualified and talented staff and they mostly hire their staffs among their friends and relatives who do not have the exact capacity and ability to perform the activities of a project; therefore the projects are not done successfully and fail to maintain the required outcome. And that cause a bad image for CSOs/NGOs in future.

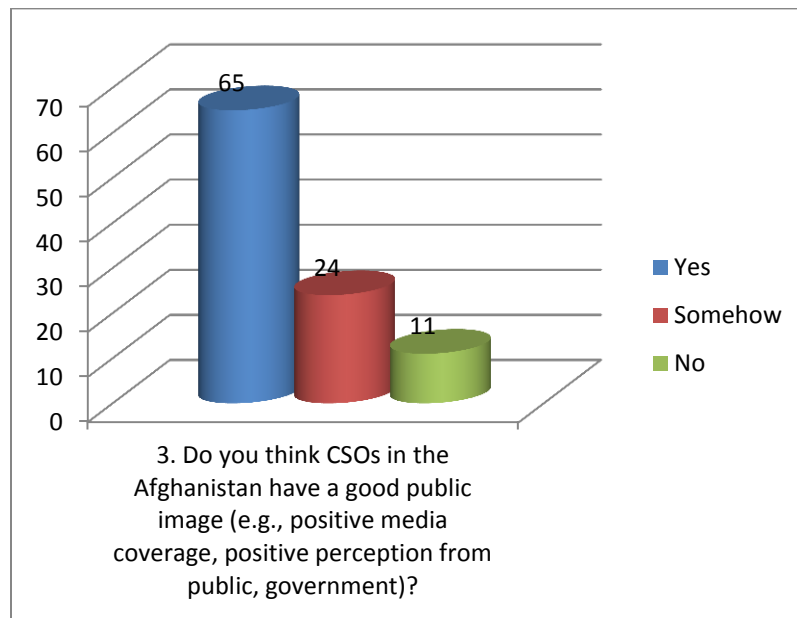


3. Do you think CSOs in the Afghanistan have a good public image (e.g., positive media coverage, positive perception from public, government)?

3.1) 65% of respondents said that CSOs are mostly involved with the communities and implementing various projects on agriculture, health, education, advocacy, awareness and providing tangible benefits to communities. And they provide services to needy people in any situation and the communities are satisfied with their activities and projects which had a good effect on life of the people to maintain a positive and good image of CSOs.

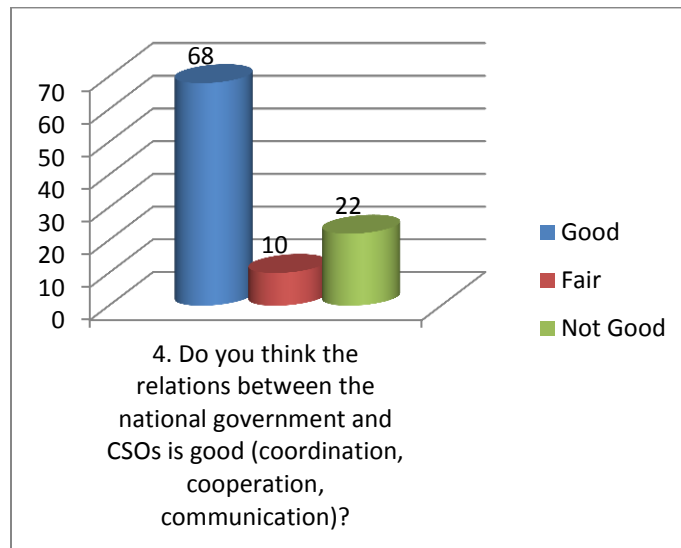
3.2) 24% of respondents said that some of the CSOs have good public image, due to their past good experiences and the people and community are happy from their services. But some other CSOs didn't work well or left the projects uncompleted, so people and community do not rely on them and this causes negative public image to CSOs.

3.3) 11% of respondents showed their dissatisfaction and revealed that there is a lot of misuse in CSOs projects activities and resources and did not fulfilled the needs of community. As well as due to of discrimination of recruitment, unfortunately, the CSOs do not have good image among the community. The projects they are implementing are not useful and sustainable for the people. The aforementioned issues are caused those CSOs losing the good image and credibility.



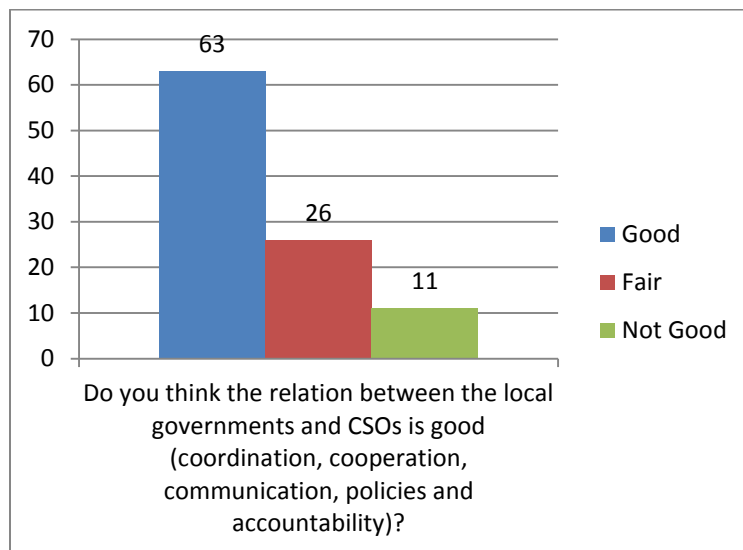
4. Do you think the relations between the national government and CSOs is good (coordination, cooperation, communication)?

- 4.1)** 68% of respondents revealed that CSOs Coordination and work relationship with ministries are much improved than before and this component is on a very strong level. This is may be due availability of experts and “high level managerial staff at Kabul office of the NGOS.”
- 4.2)** 10% of respondents declared that some of the NGOs have good coordination and corporation with the community in the secure area. Based on the NGO law, types of coordination is not explained well, but the NGOs have almost good coordination with the ministries. We should have united coordination team for any of the project.
- 4.3)** 22% of respondents revealed that Coordination, communication at central level with ministries is good but at provincial level there is no good coordination with sectoral departments.



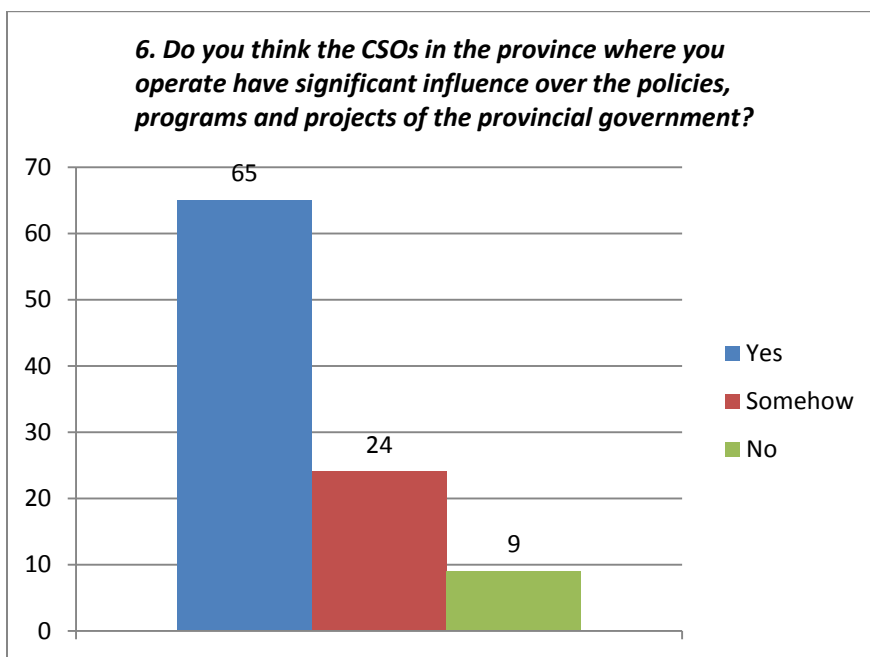
5. Do you think the relation between the local governments and CSOs is good (coordination, cooperation, communication, policies and accountability)?

- 5.1)** 63% of respondents declared that Coordination and Cooperation of NGOs at the provincial level is good and there is good working-relation among NGOs and some local government. MoRRD stated that “Yes, exactly the NGOs in terms of having accountability and transparency and perform their activities on time and they had an effective coordination and communication with local government.” MAIL specifically mentioned that “at provincial level, CSOs are cooperative and coordinate their activities; we do try to avoid gaps that cause delay in project implementation.”
- 5.2)** 26 % of respondent said that coordination, communication and cooperation with CSOs at provincial levels was good but there were some problems in terms of policies, CSOs were not sharing all the required documents with sectoral departments which were a big challenge for all provincial departments and this communication should be improved in a better way.
- 5.3)** 11% of government officials declared that most of CSOs were not sharing all relevant and required information with local government and they do not consider there was enough accountability and transparency in the budget NGOs were spending on the projects so this was causing misunderstandings.



6. Do you think CSOs in the province where you operate have significant influence over the policies, programs and projects of the provincial government?

- 6.1)** 65% of respondents stated that the CSOs are implementing lots of different projects in secure, insecure, remote and backward areas which had a considerable impact on lives of the community which can be counted as a big support to the government. Despite the fact that some projects were duplicated, the work was appreciated and noticed.
- 6.2)** 24% of respondents said that sometimes CSOs need to apply advice of sectoral departments for monitoring and implementation of project activities. If CSOs activities are implemented by coordination of sectoral department; it will have positive affection on both sides' policies and programs.
- 6.3)** 9% of respondents mentioned that the projects are designed and offered from Donors and the needs and problems of communities are not analyzed and they are not considered in national priorities and policies and programs, therefore CSOs activities are not acceptable because people did not have information about NGOs are doing. So it is definitely clear that people are dissatisfied and this will have a negative impact and influence on CSOs policies and programs.

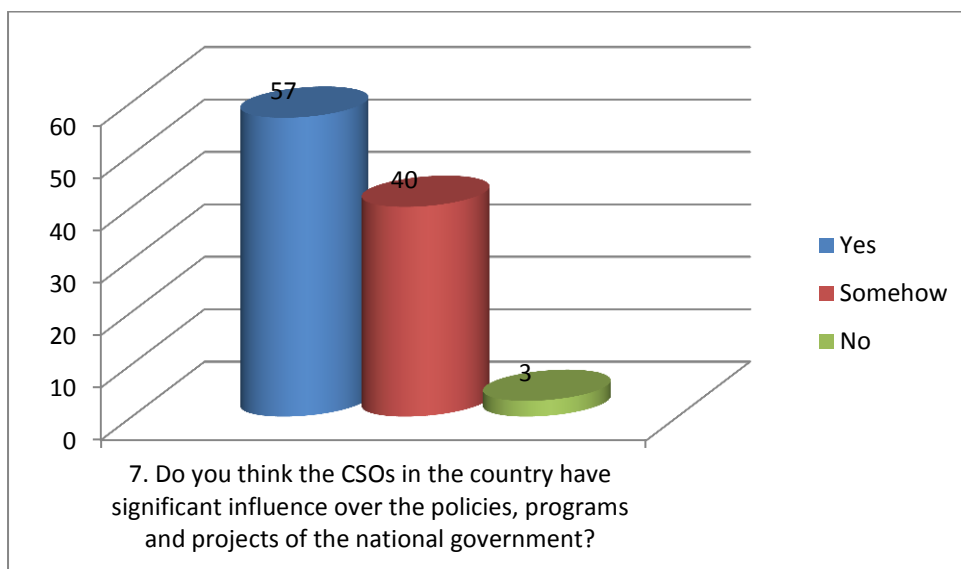


7. Do you think the CSOs in the country have significant influence over the policies, programs and projects of the national government?

7.1) 57% of respondent answered that since the Government of Afghanistan is not yet self-reliant, therefore the role of the CSOs has a significant influence up on the projects and policies of the government employees. CSOs have a part in the development of policies, strategies and guidelines. They implement many projects based on main policies/programs of the Afghan Government with a satisfactory level.

7.2) 40% of respondents stated that if CSOs activities are done with coordination and cooperation of government, and their projects are evaluated and monitored, it is obviously clear that it will have positive effect on policies and programs of both CSOs and Government. And they also added that if the CSOs are planning to design a project it should be according to the Development plans and policy of government and they may have more positive effect in the area.

7.3) 3% of respondents had negative perception on this question and said that CSO activities and projects do not have any influence on national policies and programs.



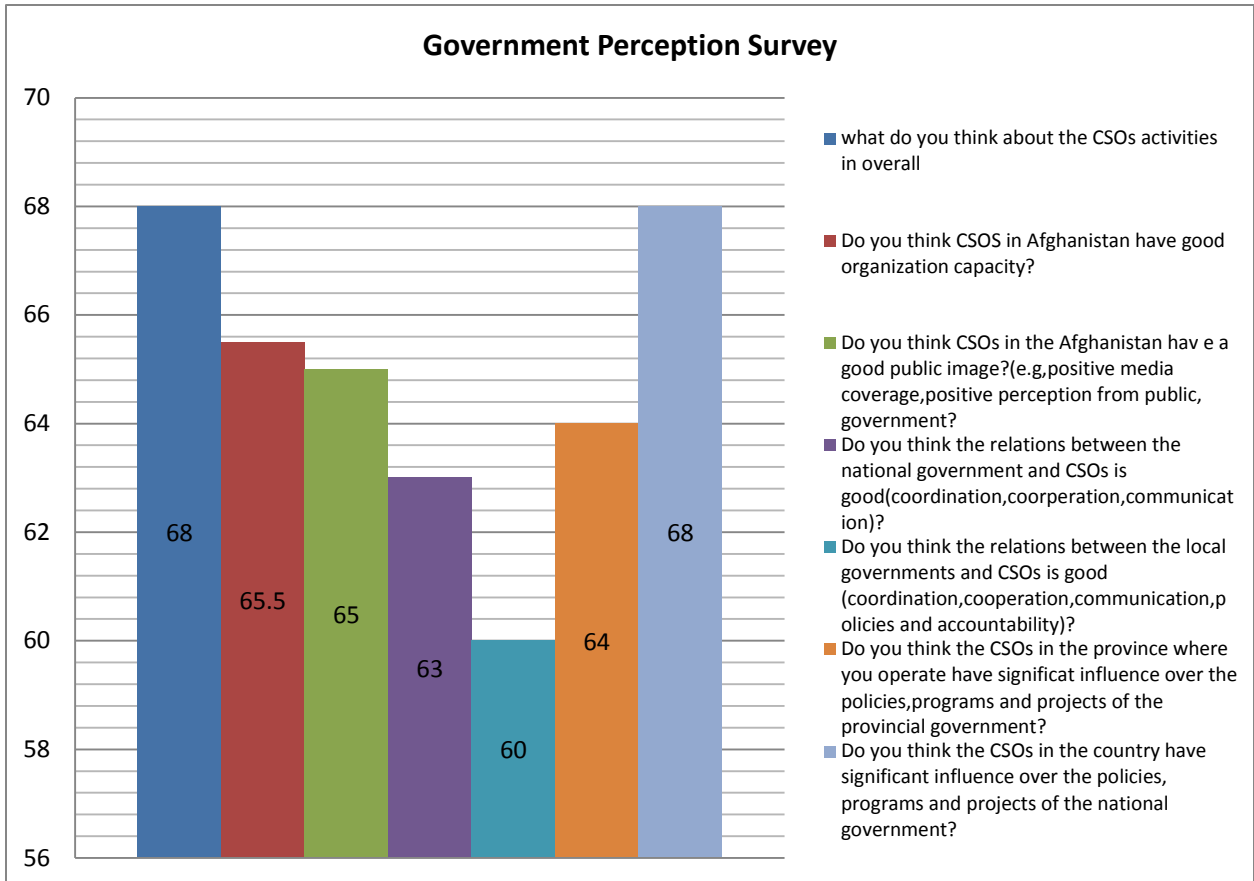
Conclusions

ACBAR carried out this perception survey as a baseline for their “*Enabling Civil Society - Enhancing Effectiveness, Accountability and Perception of Civil Society Actors in Afghanistan*” project with WHH. The same survey will be carried out in 2021 at the end of the project with the same Government officials to measure changes in perceptions. The conclusion of this preliminary baseline study is that there is trust between many Government officials working with NGOs and CSOs on national and provincial levels despite frequent anti-CSO rhetoric on national levels. The conclusion for ACBAR is that the work on awareness rising on rights and obligations of NGOs under the NGO Law on provincial levels will continue to play a useful role in improving relations with Government sectoral departments.

Annex

1. Quantitative data

Graph showing % of positive responses to different questions by participants.



2- List of participants from Ministries in Kabul and Directorates in Provinces

No	Province	Total Number of SD/M	Sectoral Directorates/ Ministries
1	Badakhshan	10	Directorate of Road Maintenance, Directorate of Public Health, Directorate of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, Directorate of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock, Directorate of Returnee and Repatriation, Directorate of Education, Directorate of Women Affairs, Directorate of Labor and Social Affairs, Department of Finance, Directorate of Economy
2	Balkh	5	Directorate of Technical and Sectoral Services, Directorate of Education, Directorate of Public Health, Directorate of Labor and Social Affairs, Directorate of Provincial Road Maintenance,
3	Bamyan	7	Directorate of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, Directorate of Labor and Social Affairs, Directorate of Public Health, Department of Finance,, Directorate of Education, Directorate of Women Affairs, Directorate of Returnee and Repatriation
4	Helmand	9	Directorate of Public Welfare, Directorate of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, Directorate of Labor and Social Affairs, Directorate of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock, Directorate of Women Affairs , Department of Finance,, Directorate of Education, Directorate of Economy and Sectoral department
5	Herat	6	Directorate of Technical and Sectoral Services, Department of Finance,, Directorate of Education, Directorate of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, Directorate of Women Affairs, Directorate of Public Health
6	Kabul	8	Directorate of Foreign Nationals License Distribution, Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, Ministry of Economy, Ministry Labor and Social Affairs, , Ministry of Public Health, Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock, Ministry of Returnee and Repatriation and Ministry of Education
7	Kandahar	10	Directorate of Economy, Directorate of Labor and Social Affairs, Directorate of Public Health, Directorate of Returnee and Repatriation, Directorate of Women Affairs, Directorate of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock, Directorate of Public Welfare, Directorate of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, Department of Finance,, Directorate of Education
8	Kunduz	4	Directorate of Education, Directorate of Public Health, Directorate of Labor and Social Affairs and Directorate of Economy
9	Kunar	9	Directorate of Economy, Directorate of Labor and Social Affairs, Directorate of Public Health, Directorate of Women Affairs, Directorate of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock, Directorate of Public Welfare ,Directorate of Returnee and Repatriation, Department of Finance,, Directorate of Education
10	Laghman	7	Department for Disaster Relief (ANDMA), Directorate of Public Health, Directorate of Education, Directorate of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock, Directorate of Labor and Social Affairs, Directorate of Economy, Directorate of Rural Rehabilitation and Development
11	Nangarhar	5	Directorate of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock, Department of Finance,, Directorate of Returnee and Repatriation, Directorate of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, Directorate of Economy
12	Urozgan	7	Directorate of Economy, Directorate of Women Affairs, Technical Services Sector, Directorate of Public Health, Directorate of Education, Directorate of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, Directorate of Labor and Social Affairs
13	Zabul	5	Directorate of Labor and Social Affairs, Directorate of Public Health, Directorate of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock, Directorate of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, Directorate of Education