



2014:2:1

Sida Decentralised Evaluation

Erik Bryld
Ian Christoplos
Dina Sinigallia
Palwasha Hassan
Saboor Kamraan

Evaluation of Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU)

Final Report

Evaluation of Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU)

**Final Report
December 2013**

**Erik Bryld
Ian Christoplos
Dina Sinigallia
Palwasha Hassan
Saboor Kamraan**

**Sida Decentralised Evaluation 2014:2:I
Sida**

Authors: Erik Bryld, Ian Christoplos, Dina Sinigallia, Palwasha Hassan and Saboor Kamraan

The views and interpretations expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sida.

Sida Decentralised Evaluation 2014:2:I

Commissioned by the Embassy of Sweden in Afganistan

Copyright: Sida and the authors

Date of final report: December 2013

Published by Citat 2014

Art. no. Sida61699en

urn:nbn:se:sida-61699en

This publication can be downloaded from: <http://www.sida.se/publications>

SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AGENCY

Address: S-105 25 Stockholm, Sweden. Office: Valhallavägen 199, Stockholm

Telephone: +46 (0)8-698 50 00. Telefax: +46 (0)8-20 88 64

E-mail: info@sida.se. Homepage: <http://www.sida.se>

Table of Contents

Abbreviations and Acronyms	3
Preface.....	4
Executive Summary.....	5
1 Introduction.....	9
1.1 Methodology.....	9
1.2 Limitations	10
2 AREU Background.....	12
3 Findings.....	15
3.1 Relevance	15
3.2 Effectiveness	20
3.3 Impact.....	26
3.4 Sustainability	31
4 Evaluative Conclusions	36
5 Recommendations for Future Support	38
6 Annexes.....	40
Annex 1 – Terms of Reference	40
Annex 2 – Inception Report	53
Annex 3 – AREU’S Strategic Plans	98
Annex 4 – AREU Tools (Over Time).....	101
Annex 5 – AREU – Facts and Figures	103
Annex 6 – Sweden’s Priorities in Afghanistan.....	105
Annex 7 – Geographical Areas Covered by AREU.....	109
Annex 8 – Main Donor Conferences Related to Afghanistan – Since 2002	110
Annex 9 – AREU in the Media and at Events	111
Annex 10 – AREU Donors since 2003.....	112
Annex 11 – AREU Foreseen Budget and Contributions	114
Annex 12 – AREU Products According to Origin	115
Annex 13 – List of Persons Met.....	116
Annex 14 – Document Review Matrices	120

Abbreviations and Acronyms

AAN	Afghan Analyst Network
ANDS	Afghanistan National Development Strategy
AREU	Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DFID	Department for International Development, UK
EC	European Commission
HRBA	Human Rights-Based Approach
MOWA	Ministry of Women's Affairs
NFI	National Financial Institutions
NGOs	Non Governmental Organisations
NPP	National Priority Programme
NRM	Natural Resource Management
NSP	National Solidarity Programme
OECD-DAC	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development Assistance Committee
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SMU	Strategic Management Unit
ToR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
USD	United States Dollars

Preface

The Embassy of Sweden in Afghanistan commissioned this evaluation of the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU) through Sida's framework agreement for reviews and evaluations.

The evaluation was undertaken by Indevelop AB in collaboration with Tana Copenhagen between October – December 2013. Jessica Rothman was the Project Manager with overall responsibility for managing the implementation of the evaluation, and Riccardo Polastro provided quality assurance of the reports.

The independent evaluation team included the following key members:

- Mr. Erik Bryld, Team Leader
- Dr. Ian Christoplos, Evaluator and Researcher
- Ms. Palwasha Hassan, National Evaluator
- Mr. Abdul Saboor Kamaraan, National Evaluator
- Ms. Dina Sinigallia, Junior Consultant

A draft report was circulated to the Embassy and AREU for comments, which have been addressed in this final report.

Executive Summary

This report presents the findings and conclusions of the evaluation of the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU) performed by Tana Copenhagen and Indevlop AB, commissioned by Sida and implemented during Autumn 2013.

The team evaluated the impact, relevance and timeliness of research initiatives, quality of publications and sustainability. In agreement with Sida, the questions of the Terms of Reference (ToR) were joined, focused, and realigned with the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria. The issue of efficiency was not assessed (as per the ToR). The evaluation was conducted in accordance with the OECD-DAC evaluation standards and criteria. Quantitative as well as qualitative techniques were applied. The Team used multiple evaluation tools to ensure that the findings were triangulated. These include: (i) Theory of change assessment of the institution; (ii) Context-timeliness-relevance assessment, which resulted in a mapping exercise of outputs against contextual developments and key development and political events in Afghanistan; (iii) Document quality assessment against credibility, utility, with specific attention to cross-cutting issues and the extent to which these apply a Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA); (iv) Quantitative assessment of quality, ownership and influencing parameters such as output/budget tracking, tracking of author nationalities as well as tracking of use of internal/external researchers.

The Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit is an organisation with a long history of providing research and background information on Afghanistan in what has, in the past, effectively been a vacuum in relation to in-depth, empirically-based analysis. AREU was widely respected for a number of years, but the organisation has been marred by poor management in the last two to three years. This has resulted in uncertainties related to its mandate, strategy and ability to deliver expected results. Irrespective, the evaluation team still found high degrees of contextual and policy relevance concerning their work, combined with the continued ability to deliver high quality research. A new Director has been heading the organisation since the spring of 2013. He has embarked on a number of reforms, including the drafting of a new strategic plan. The latter is currently being finalised and a number of the points highlighted by the Team are addressed therein. This evaluation looked at past experiences and naturally cannot draw conclusions regarding future outcomes of this strategic plan, but notes that, if approved and implemented, it will represent an important step forward.

In summary, the Team considers AREU's work relevant for Sweden and aligned to the Swedish development goals for Afghanistan. It is furthermore well aligned with the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) and the National Priority Programmes (NPPs), and provides input that is relevant to their implementation.

Prospects for maintaining relevance are, however, limited by the lack of a clear research strategy for the organisation. This omission also partly explains why, whereas most of the research is in some ways relevant to Afghan needs (as long term development research will remain relevant), the work has not always been timely, vis-a-vis the major events in the country. AREU's core funding has been important in allowing for flexibility in selecting relevant research topics, as this is central to allowing for timely responses to emerging issues.

In terms of effectiveness, the current lack of clear goals and indicators (being developed under the new strategic plan) means that the Team has assessed against criteria, defined in the inception report, which are related to quality and influencing. AREU is an organisation with products that are read and, in most cases, used by decision-makers, be they international or from the Government of Afghanistan. The products reviewed are assessed to be credible and of high quality (impressions of a reduction in quality by some interviewees were not confirmed by the evaluation). The outreach is, however, limited by the technical nature of the outputs (research products) of the organisation and the lack of a clear communication strategy. However, accessibility is, on the other hand, enhanced by the publication of all documents on the AREU website and commitments to publish in Dari and Pashtu.

AREU has to date lacked a clear strategy to achieve its stated goal of the promotion of a research culture in the wider research community (and in part internally). The organisation has led by example rather than by engagement, and the effectiveness of its activities in this area has been limited.

Given its (or its researchers) credibility and knowledge on Afghanistan, AREU's outputs and processes are assessed to have a high probability of influencing decision-makers. Most importantly, all government representatives acknowledged knowing, reading and quoting AREU in their work; and AREU has participated in a number of working groups and task forces on key policies such as ANDS and NPP, as well as specific sectoral policies. New approaches at AREU – of engaging with policy-makers in research and creating ownership – appear to have been effective, though a clear strategy is still to be finalised and institutionalised.

In terms of cross-cutting issues, it appears that more attention has been paid to some cross-cutting issues than others: participation is clear in all documents and so is the perspective of the poor. Non-discrimination and transparency, while not as evident in all documents, are rather strong as well. The picture is less clear when it comes to gender and accountability. The Team assesses that AREU has had limited success in mainstreaming gender issues throughout its research (outside of specific gender studies) and it appears that gender discrimination may have been taken for granted, to some extent, thus limiting the depth of analysis. The organisation is aware of this point and is seeking to strengthen this aspect.

Sustainability is challenged by different understandings as to the organisation's position *vis-à-vis* advocacy, consulting, its role in relation to the Government and

policy influence, as well as the degree to which it should become more engaged in capacity building. Furthermore, previous observers mentioned a disconnect between AREU staff and the board's vision on AREU. Over the last couple of years, the organisation has suffered from unstable and inconsistent leadership, further compounding the challenges highlighted above. The new director has only taken up his functions recently. He has engaged the organisation in reflection on its identity and a revision of its strategy.

In spite of outstanding critical identity questions, there is a strong institutional identity and staff members, both current and past, appear to be proud to work for AREU, which provides a sustainable foundation for the future. There is, however, still a heavy and presumably unsustainable reliance on external international staff for research projects in relation to national and in-house staff.

AREU is an organisation that had an obvious *raison d'être* at the time of its inception, providing high quality research and data in a country where none existed. It soon became the focal point for any development related research work in the country as well as for background analysis. However the lack of clear direction, identity, goals and indicators in the past, combined with periods of ineffective management, has had a negative impact on the organisation's ability to stay relevant and effective, and continues to impact policy development in the country.

The findings of this evaluation are not new, as many of the challenges faced by AREU have been presented in previous reviews and evaluations. AREU has had several years to address these, but poor management has effectively reduced the incentives and ability to engage accordingly. Indications of a constructive approach to addressing AREU's challenges should be maintained and implemented. Without these, it would be difficult for the evaluation team to recommend continued funding to the organisation. However, with new leadership, AREU has developed a number of internal plans and a draft strategy aimed at addressing the bulk of the issues presented in this evaluation report.

Based on the evaluation, the Team recommends:

For Sida:

It is recommended that Sida consider its funding for the next phase in light of the findings of this evaluation report and its priorities in the coming country strategy. Continued funding should be conditioned on evident progress of AREU towards addressing the weaknesses of the organisation described in the evaluation. Sida should use the findings of the evaluation and enter into a dialogue with AREU on these prior to engaging in funding for a next phase.

The Team furthermore recommends that Sida continue to focus on core funding to enable AREU to produce high quality independent research that is based on the research needs identified by the organisation itself.

For AREU:

It is recommended that AREU address the issues identified in this report, with a focus on strategy, identity and the future role of the organisation in Afghanistan. This includes focusing its research pillars and developing a clearer approach to selecting its research topics; promoting a joint understanding between, first and foremost, the board and the management on the organisation's mission, vision and priorities for 2014 onwards, and secondly, between the management and the staff of the organisation. Similarly, the organisation will need to redefine its role and agree on a manageable but meaningful approach to capacity development and the promotion of learning from research among the broader Afghan audience.

Furthermore, AREU should continue to implement the Afghanisation of AREU through a strengthening of national staff's capacities and the promotion of Afghan researchers. This may include developing stronger, more strategic and longer-term partnerships with selected international research institutions. AREU should not adopt an "open door policy" to such collaboration, but should demonstrate a stronger commitment to selective international partnerships.

Finally, AREU must finalise the revision of the communication and outreach strategy while maintaining the flexibility of adapting it to the requirements of specific studies. In this process, the library should be given due attention and adequate human and material resources should be factored into the implementation of the strategy.

1 Introduction

This report presents the findings and conclusions of the evaluation of the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU) performed by Tana Copenhagen and Indvelop AB, commissioned by Sida and implemented Autumn 2013.

In the following report, we present a brief overview of the methodology and limitations to the evaluation, followed by a presentation of findings, evaluative conclusions and recommendations for AREU and Sida for the future.

The evaluation team (the Team – hereafter) would like to extend its appreciation for the good collaboration by AREU throughout the evaluation; we value the time and resources that were set aside to inform the evaluation team about the organisation. In particular, we would like to thank Bilal Askaryar and Chona Echavez for their logistical support in arranging meetings.

1.1 METHODOLOGY

The evaluation methodology is described in the inception report that is attached to this document (Annex 13). The inception report is the evaluation team's response to the terms of reference (ToR – Annex 12). The evaluation questions have been focused, discussed and agreed upon with the Embassy of Sweden in Afghanistan. AREU provided comments to the inception report, which have been accepted by the Team. The final inception report thus outlines the agreed-upon evaluation questions, which formed the basis for this evaluation.

The Team evaluated the impact, relevance and timeliness of research initiatives, the quality of publications and sustainability. A total of 27 specific questions were asked as part of the ToR. In agreement with Sida, these questions were joined, focused, and realigned with the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria. The issue of efficiency was not assessed (as per the ToR), as the Embassy wanted the Team to pay attention to the remaining four evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, impact and sustainability).

The evaluation was conducted in accordance with the OECD-DAC evaluation standards and criteria. Quantitative as well as qualitative techniques were applied. The Team used multiple evaluation tools to ensure that the findings were triangulated. These include:

- 1) Theory of change assessment of the institution (and seeking a validation of this in the evaluation, through desk review and discussions with key informants).
- 2) Context-Timeliness-Relevance assessment which resulted in a mapping exercise of outputs against contextual developments and key development and political events in Afghanistan.

- 3) Document quality assessment against credibility, utility, with specific attention to cross-cutting issues and the extent to which these apply a Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA).
- 4) Quantitative assessment of quality, ownership and influencing parameters such as output/budget tracking, tracking of author nationalities as well as tracking of use of internal/external researchers.

The Team undertook data collection and assessment of these through:

- 1) Desk-based analysis of documents provided by AREU, Sida as well as through internet search, including key evaluations.
- 2) A field mission to Kabul, Afghanistan in the period 24 October to 6 November 2013. During this mission, interviews were done with interviewees identified by AREU (and AAN), Sida as well as the Team, based on previous knowledge of Afghanistan. Recommendations from other interviewees were also taken into account.

AREU has so far published over 300 reports covering a broad range of themes. To enable the evaluation Team to undertake a more focused evaluation, the Team agreed with the Embassy of Sweden and AREU to focus on a limited number of thematic areas for more in-depth analysis. It was agreed to focus on (1) natural resource management (NRM) and (2) women's empowerment and gender equality. Both areas are aligned with Sweden's overall policies and the objectives of Sweden's country strategy for Afghanistan. The first area could, moreover, be of particular interest to Sweden's future engagement in Afghanistan.

1.2 LIMITATIONS

A number of limitations to the evaluation are outlined below. The Team assesses that none of these have had a level of impact on the evaluation that compromises the findings of the evaluation. Limitations include:

- 1) AREU has gone through troubled times recently and a number of significant changes have occurred which yet have to show their scope and scale. In this sense, while a new strategic plan is currently being adopted, and while this (currently draft) plan addresses a large number of concerns raised by this and other evaluations and reviews, the actual impact remains to be seen and measured. Hence, the Team chose to reflect the concerns and tried to highlight when the new strategic plan touches upon them.
- 2) The evaluation was done in parallel to the evaluation of the Afghanistan Analyst Network (AAN). This limited the time available to each organisation. However, the targeted interviewees were in most cases relevant to both organisations. To ensure clarity on what was being evaluated, the Team designed the interviews so that each organisation would be discussed separately. The Team furthermore stressed that no comparison of the organisations was to be carried out.
- 3) The period under consideration is long and stretches from 2002 to 2013. The rotation of personnel, both within the organisation (in particular in 2011) and

outside, has made it difficult to rigorously assess the long-term trajectories of the organisation (see point 4 below). The existence of reports, such as the 2005 evaluation¹ and the 2011 review², however, facilitated work as those findings could be used to illustrate these periods (2002-2005 and 2005-2011 respectively).

- 4) Two themes were selected in coordination with AREU. We argue that by using best practices identified by the respective organisations, useful information was gathered regarding the process and important lessons learned. While AREU selected examples, which were successful according to their standards, critical elements emerged as well.
- 5) Focusing on two themes of AREU's work has enabled the Team to undertake more in-depth analysis, but with the risk of overlooking findings in other documentation. To compensate for this, the Team has undertaken interviews more broadly than related to the two themes, and analysed additional documentation.
- 6) The high turnover of (international) staff in Afghanistan means that the Team met a number of individuals who were new to Afghanistan and, hence, had limited knowledge or institutional memory. In order to overcome this, the Team also engaged, through Skype, with individuals who had left the country. This issue was further compounded by the mobility of staff who have worked in Afghanistan for a longer period of time and who have multiple organisational affiliations. The Team has sought to reflect this in the list of persons met by adding a column "additional affiliation". The Team believe that these multiple affiliations, however, allowed access to a greater diversity of experiences and a further triangulation of discussions.
- 7) The high turnover of staff also means that many people arrived after 2010, which was a period of crisis for AREU. Views and perceptions might have, to some extent, been affected by this. However, evidence of the organisation's relevance, effectiveness, impact and sustainability prior to 2010 is available through prior evaluations, and the Team furthermore carried out its own independent assessment to mitigate this risk.
- 8) The Team has endeavoured to access as wide a representation of interlocutors as possible. However, a number of institutions could not be accessed.³ The Team believes that by asking other interlocutors to reflect on these institutions' interaction/use of AREU, it has been able to achieve a good representative sample of views.

¹ Channel Research, *External Evaluation of the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit*, 28 May 2005.

² Safar, M., Hicks, N., *External Review of the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit*, March-April 2011.

³ Specifically the Ministry of interior declined to meet with the mission.

2 AREU Background

First envisaged as part of the *UN's Strategic Framework initiative*, which was launched in 1998, AREU was established in 2000 as the Strategic Monitoring Unit (SMU), with a director and a management board consisting of three UN, three NGO and three donor representatives. The SMU was not to focus on individual projects; rather, it was to look at the broad strategies and themes outlined in the Strategic Framework document and evaluate the overall impact of the assistance effort. Following the events of 11 September 2001, and the subsequent shift in the assistance context, the assistance committee determined that the SMU would be more effective as an independent, policy research institute; and AREU was formed in February 2002.

AREU's work is guided by its (multi-annual) Strategic Plans. AREU has so far had four strategic plans. It is currently working under the guidance of the *2013-2015 Strategic Plan*, which states that AREU's mission is "to inform policy and practice by conducting high-quality, relevant research and actively disseminating

Box 1: AREU's mission (2013-2015 Strategy)

- Inform policy and practice by conducting high-quality, relevant research and actively disseminating the results,
- Promote a culture of research and

the results, and to promote a culture of research and learning"⁴. It identifies four research themes: Gender, Natural resource management and sustainable livelihoods, Political economy and governance, Social sector and protection. With the recruitment of a new Director, the organisation is now in the process of revising its Strategy. Annex 1 presents an overview of AREU's strategic plans, their goals and themes.

Discussions with AREU staff and a reading of relevant material allowed the Team to establish the theory of change inherent to AREU's work. The main rationale for creating AREU was to help address the lack of reliable data and analysis as well as the need for an independent voice to comment on Afghanistan's reconstruction and development.⁵ While at the beginning of AREU, its stakeholders were mostly the donor community, AREU increasingly aims to balance between international and

⁴ AREU, *Strategic Plan 2013-2015*, p.4

⁵ Fishstein, P., Wilder, A., "Establishing a Policy Research Organization in a Conflict Zone: The Case of the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit" in Mazurana, D., Jacobsen, K. and Gale, L. (eds.), *A View from Below: Conducting Research in Conflict Zones*, Cambridge University Press, 2010.

national stakeholders (government, as well as civil society and media). AREU management has discussing whether it should seek to *influence* policy or “merely” inform it. This can be illustrated by the slight changes in mandate from one strategic plan to another (see Annex 1) and is intimately linked to the organisations discussions about where it is positioned on the continuum between communication and advocacy.

AREU has developed a number of tools to carry out its work. These include briefing papers, case studies, policy papers and also a library/resource centre as well as events and trainings. A list of these tools can be found in Annex 2. An overview of the theory of change can be found in table 1 below.

Table 2.1: AREU Theory of Change

	Policy research and influence	Promotion of culture of debate and research
Presumed need	Informed policy formulation and solid independent data	Stronger research capacities and informed debates
Input	Quality data collection and research on Afghanistan	Trainings, other capacity development, presentations, debate events, space for debates and research. Leading by example
Output	Research publications, presentations, briefings	No. of persons trained, no. of events organised, use of library
Outcome	Research used and quoted by decision-makers, CSOs, donors and AREU consulted for better informed and framing of discussions	Enhanced understanding and implementation of quality research and debate in Afghanistan, increased number of qualified researchers (internal and external), increased use of quality research findings
Impact	Improved policies	Improved understanding of Afghanistan and policy influence

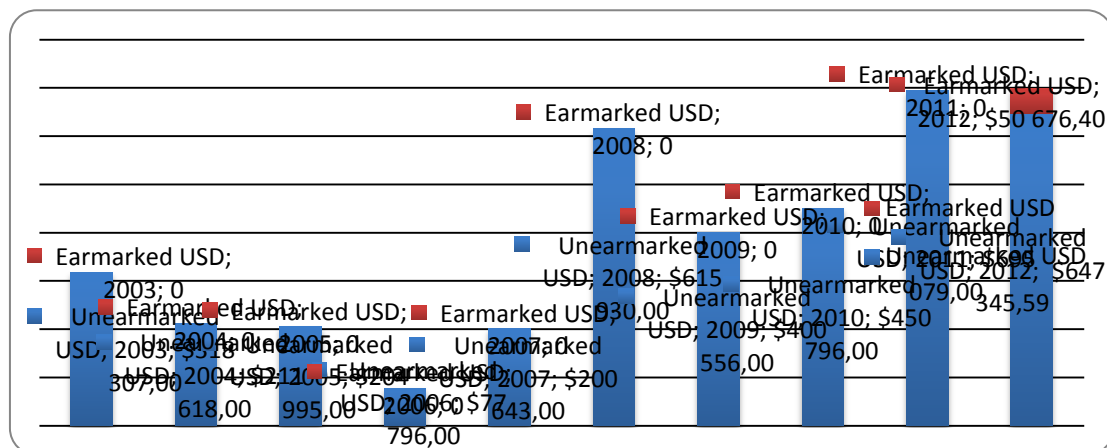
AREU’s Board originally consisted of 9 members (later increased to 12) equally divided between UN/multilateral organisations, embassies/bilateral-donors, and NGOs. The board presents itself as a rather *hands-off board*, working both on influencing AREU in the themes it studies and influencing constituencies in using AREU’s research and supporting it. In 2011, however, the board became more actively involved in the management of the organisation and the identification of a new director (see below).

AREU currently has 59 staff members, 84% of whom are Afghan nationals. AREU has recently gone through a management and financial crisis which resulted in a

series of reforms including the rationalisation of resources, of workflows and of staffing⁶: a number of projects were wound down and staffing reduced.⁷ AREU also embarked on a strengthened Afghanisation process and further efforts to strengthen capacities. Annex 3 provides an overview of AREU relevant facts and figures regarding these changes.

Since its establishment, AREU has received funding from a large number of donors including the Swedish Government, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), the UK Department for International Development (DFID), the European Commission (EC), etc. AREU receives both restricted and unrestricted grants. Sida has been supporting AREU since 2002. Figure 2.1 below illustrates the breakdown of Sida’s funding to AREU since that year. Sida is the organisation’s largest unrestricted donor, and contributed over 40% of AREU’s unrestricted funds for 2012. Sida’s contributions made up 26.5% of AREU’s contributions for 2012. Refer to annex 3 for an overview of SIDA’s contributions in percentage of overall funding levels.

Figure 2.1: Sida's contributions to AREU since 2002 (in USD)



⁶ AREU, *Annual Report 2011*, p. 6.

⁷ According to the Annual report for that year, number of research staff released from AREU went on to take-up employment in other research agencies and UN offices in Kabul.

3 Findings

The findings are presented in accordance with the four evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, impact and sustainability.

3.1 RELEVANCE

Questions from Evaluation Matrix:

R.A.1 Are the topics and timings (research strategy and implementation) of the AREU research relevant to the political and contextual developments in Afghanistan? Given that Sweden's development cooperation is aligned with the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) and the National Priority Programmes (NPPs), how has AREU's research agenda reflected these entry points for policy development?

R.A.2 Are AREU's areas of engagement relevant to Sweden's country strategy sectoral objective of democracy, human rights and gender equality and Sweden's overall policies related to democracy, human rights and gender equality, including attention to the perspectives of the poor?

Relevance is first and foremost assessed against the context of Afghanistan and the timeliness by which the outputs of AREU are delivered in this context. Second, relevance is assessed against the Swedish policies of support to Afghanistan, as defined in the country strategies as well as in the overall Swedish development objectives, and finally AREU's contribution to these objectives (i.e. the extent to which the outputs of AREU are aligned with them).

Relevance of topics to developments in Afghanistan, including ANDS and NPPS

AREU was created at a time when little (reliable) data was available on and from Afghanistan. As illustrated in Annex 1, the organisation initially selected a number of research areas (now called *areas of outcome*) which were relatively broad. Both the 2005 evaluation and the 2011 review confirmed that the topics covered by AREU were, however, relevant to Afghanistan.

While AREU's areas of outcome were reduced from 7 to 4 in the strategy for 2013-2015, the organisation has operated by merging of areas rather than a real reduction. Interviews held confirmed the relevance of these areas, in particular governance, livelihoods, social sector, protection and gender. Persons met highlighted also the importance of AREU's work with regard to land issues as well as the role of opium cultivation in rural livelihoods. Furthermore, several interlocutors mentioned the importance of AREU's work with regard to the transition currently being carried out (i.e. the withdrawal of the majority of International Security Assistance Force troops

from Afghanistan at the end of 2014) and in particular the economic aspect of transition. This topic is, by interviewees, expected to be key topic for the times ahead. AREU's potential to carry-out thorough political economy analysis of Afghanistan was highlighted. Overall, however, the Team seldom met two people with the same understanding of AREU's area of work and several mentioned the broad scope of issues addressed and thus the limited degree of focus of the organisation.

The relevance of AREU's work and expertise was highlighted with regard to the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS - esp. agriculture and rural development; water and irrigation; governance, public administration reform and human rights) and National Priority Programme (NPPs). Not only do AREU's research areas fall within ANDS or NPP focus areas, but AREU has also produced specific papers on the ANDS⁸ in addition to participating to the processes leading up to the ANDS and NPPs (more on this below under timeliness).

Relevance to Sweden's country strategy and contribution to Sweden's development agenda in Afghanistan

AREU's work has been assessed by the Team to have been relevant for Sweden and to remain well focused in relation to the proposed new overall goal⁹ of Swedish development cooperation. A detailed assessment of how AREU's work relates to Sida's overall and specific sector¹⁰ development goals can be found in Annex 4. AREU's focus on gender and governance in particular has been of continued relevance to Sweden's priorities. Similarly, AREU's work on health and education has been relevant for Swedish priorities in these sectors. Finally, as evident from Annex 5, AREU's work touches upon geographical areas in Afghanistan that are of particular relevance to Sweden's engagements.¹¹

⁸ AREU, *Delivering on Poverty Reduction: Focusing ANDS Implementation on Pro-Poor Outcomes*, February 2009.

⁹ The overall objective of Swedish development cooperation in Afghanistan is to enable people living in poverty, particularly women, girls and young people, to enjoy better living conditions in a peaceful, democratic and legally secure society. -

¹⁰ Sector 1. Democracy, human rights and gender equality

- Strengthened democratic institutions and systems for public financial management, and greater transparency in central government administrations.
- Strengthened ability of women to enjoy their human rights and influence the development of society.
- The presence of viable actors in civil society and free, independent media capable of contributing to greater accountability and a more transparent public administration.

Sector 2. Education

- Increased access to primary education of good quality, with special focus on girls' right to education.
- More trained teachers.
- Increased literacy among women aged 15 – 24. – Revised development cooperation strategy – Afghanistan January 2012 – December 2014

¹¹ Swedish strategies indeed put a particular focus on northern Afghanistan, in particular the provinces of

AREU is also assessed to be likely to remain relevant with regard to future Swedish development priorities (as expressed in the draft cooperation strategy), especially with regard to livelihoods, economic opportunities and social protection research (including a focus on women and vulnerable groups).

The work of AREU on issues impinging on participation, accountability, transparency and non-discrimination are, furthermore, in line with Sweden's HRBA. AREU seeks to present the perspective of the poor and the vulnerable in its research. Gender has been a priority area for AREU since its first strategic plan and human rights has now been added. The section below, on impact, presents further details on the organisation's success in mainstreaming gender and other cross-cutting issues.

Context-Time relevance

The 2005 evaluation of the organisation concluded that "AREU has been able to produce quality research quickly. Of equal importance, it has been able to predict what key decision makers will need to be thinking about"¹² while the 2011 review suggests that AREU can rationalise its in-depth research work to produce more timely (...) outputs"¹³.

Respondents found it difficult to answer the question of timeliness of AREU research and often went on to reflect on whether the nature of research done by AREU required a notion of timeliness. The longitudinal, rather technical, field-based, long-term studies that are the trademark of AREU require intensive field research and often stretch out over longer periods of time and are, hence, less time constrained.

On the other hand, AREU has a number of products where the question of timeliness is more apparent and this question is regularly discussed by AREU staff and management. The context-time-relevance of AREU was analysed through both general discussions with key informants and the time relevance matrix. Overall, it was found that, while AREU initially did not produce *timely products*¹⁴, this trend changed as early as with the 2004 elections and growing attention and efforts were put into this. In recent years several timely publications were also released for development events (Press releases for London (2010), policy notes and press releases for Kabul (2010) and a package of policy notes for the 2011 Bonn Conference titled "Afghanistan Looking Ahead: Challenges for Governance and Community Welfare). There is thus varying degrees of timeliness.

Balkh, Samangan, Sar-e-Pul and Jowzjan.

¹² Channel Research, *op.cit.*, p. 15.

¹³ Safar, M., Hicks, *op. Cit.*, p. 9.

¹⁴ E.g. :no publications were produced for Tokyo Conference (2003) or Berlin (2004); nothing before the constitutional process.

More informally, AREU provided relevant and timely input to the ANDS and NPP processes. As of 2005, AREU experts were involved in the lead-up to the ANDS, providing guidance on private sector development, urban sector development, participating in a number of Technical Working Groups, Consultative Groups, civil society consultation and the External Advisory Board. Senior AREU staff also reviewed reports of the Joint Coordination Monitoring Body. AREU also produced a policy note to feed into the NPP drafting process, in particular with regard to justice, governance and development. Furthermore, AREU experts participated in different round tables and commented on the different NPP products.

Table 3.1 below illustrates some examples from the context-time-relevance matrix.

Table 3.1: Time Context Relevance examples

Date	Event	AREU publication
Oct-04	Presidential election	Aug-04: Briefing paper on elections Sept-04 Brief : <i>Free, Fair or Flawed: Challenges for Legitimate Elections in Afghanistan</i> Oct-04: <i>Afghanistan Research Newsletter</i> featuring <i>Take the Guns Away: Afghan Voices on Security and Elections.</i>
Sept-05	Parliamentary elections; Dec-05: parliament opens	Aug-05: <i>A Guide to Parliamentary Elections in Afghanistan</i> Sept-05: AREU <i>Election Observation Report</i> Dec-05 issue paper: <i>A House Divided? Analysing the 2005 Afghan Elections</i>
Jan-07	Cabinet of Ministers approves the new Land Policy	Dec-04 Synthesis paper: <i>Looking for Peace on the Pastures: Rural Land Relations in Afghanistan</i> Feb-05 working paper: <i>Who Owns The Farm? Rural Women's Access to Land and Livestock</i> Jun-06 Case study: <i>Land Tenure</i> Feb-07 working paper: <i>Options for Land Registration</i>
Feb-08	Adoption of ANDS	Feb-09 Discussion paper: <i>Delivering on Poverty Reduction: Focusing ANDS Implementation on Pro-Poor Outcomes</i> Feb-09 Policy Note: <i>Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) Formulation Process: Influencing Factors and Challenges</i> Feb-09 Workshop: <i>Focusing ANDS Implementation on Pro-Poor Outcomes</i>
Feb-09	Adoption of Shiite Personal Status Law	Sept-09 policy note: <i>A Closer Look: The Policy and Lawmaking Process Behind the Shiite Personal Status Law</i> Oct-09: <i>The Shiite Personal Status Law: ACBAR Presentation Notes</i> Mar-10: Podcast: <i>The Shiite Personal Status Law Proces</i>
Sept-10	Wolesi Jirga (House of People) elections	May-10 brief: <i>Connecting With Kabul: The Importance of the Wolesi Jirga Election and Local Political Networks in Afghanistan</i> Jun-10 brief: <i>The Wolesi Jirga in 2010: Pre-Election Politics and the Appearance of Opposition</i> Sept-10 brief: <i>Afghan Election, 2010: Alternative Narratives</i> Sept-10 discussion paper: <i>The Wolesi Jirga in Flux, 2010: Elections and Instability I</i> Sept-10 discussion paper: <i>Parliamentarians and Local Politics in Afghanistan: Elections and Instability II</i> Feb-11 briefing paper: <i>Undermining Representative Governance: Afghanistan's 2010 Parliamentary Election and its Alienating impact</i> May-11 policy note: <i>Practicing Democracy in Afghanistan: Key Findings on Perceptions, Parliament and Elections</i> May-11 brief: <i>Political Economy in the Wolesi Jirga: Sources of Finance and their Impact on Representation in Afghanistan's Parliament</i> May-11 report: <i>Deconstructing "Democracy" in Afghanistan</i>
Jul-13	National Assembly passes Law on IEC, IECC and electoral law.	Mar-12 synthesis paper: <i>Equal Rights, Unequal Opportunities: Women's Participation in Afghanistan's Parliamentary and Provincial Council Elections</i> Jul-12 briefing paper: <i>Fixing Afghanistan's electoral system</i>

A special mention should be made concerning the **identification of research topics**. AREU has defined its areas of research and within these it has multi-year projects as well as shorter-term ones. To the extent possible, it identifies relevant issues on a yearly basis (yearly planning processes). The board was furthermore conceived with the ambition of bringing together individuals with the leverage and understanding that would support AREU directly and strategically in its selection of research topics.

The 2005 evaluation as well as the 2011 review, both highlighted the fact that this process appears to be done on a rather ad-hoc basis, without strategic planning. The 2011 review goes on to lament a "disconnect with the national policy environment". The Team has similarly not been able to identify a systematic process of research topic selection. The extent to which the board has been able to play its anticipated role appears to have been limited. While interlocutors stressed the importance of AREU's core funding in allowing for flexibility in selecting relevant research topics, it is interesting to note that the levels of un-earmarked funding do not necessarily seem to match up to the most timely and relevant products (see Annex 3 for levels of un-earmarked funding). This may relate to AREU's long-term approach to research.

Interviews also highlighted how interlocutors from outside the organisation fail to see which stakeholders are consulted to carry out the selection of research areas, how much the process is donor driven and what levels of initiative remain with AREU. Many interlocutors specifically mentioned that research topics were defined by donors; some associated AREU with consulting firm practices and others highlighted the need for a thorough analysis on the complementarity of the organisation's research vis-à-vis other organisations' work.

While AREU came into being in a context where much needed to be researched and most topics were relevant, it appears that it has reached a point where the strategic prioritisation of its research topics needs to be clarified; and a balance needs to be struck between direction dictated by funding opportunities and capitalising on expertise accumulated, complementarity and comparative advantage.

3.2 EFFECTIVENESS

Questions from Evaluation Matrix:

E.A.1 How and to what extent do institutions judge that AREU's work has influenced their attitudes, discourse, procedures, actual policies and policy implementation?

E.A.2 Which aspects of AREU's work (publications, seminars, dialogue, etc.) do stakeholders perceive as being most/least credible and useful?

E.A.3 What are the factors that determine that determine the utility and credibility of different aspects of AREU's work?

E.A.4 Has AREU been effective in developing the capacities of Afghan staff researchers and other collaborating Afghan researchers?

AREU has logframes for specific projects (e.g. the EC funded "Enabling more effective and equitable natural resource management to improve rural livelihood security: A programme of research") and has also recognised the need for such a tool at the organisational level, though none exists at the moment¹⁵. AREU's current Strategic Plan offers some indications on what AREU intends to do and how it intends to do it. The annual plan provides some measurable indicators (without targets most of the time), yet reporting is not done along those lines. The Team consequently chose to relate to effectiveness in: (1) the degree to which AREU is able, with its activities and outputs, to influence attitudes, discourse, procedures, actual policies and implementation (this included attention to which outputs were regarded most useful and credible by interlocutors) and (2) the degree to which AREU has been able to develop the capacity of Afghan researchers (both internal and external).

AREU's effectiveness in influencing attitudes, discourse, policies and policy implementation

The Team assessed influencing against the following five parameters:

- 1) The target audience¹⁶ must be aware of the existence of the organisation and its activities.
- 2) The target audience must have an interest in the themes discussed and presented by the organisation.
- 3) The outputs of the organisation must be easily accessible and in a format that is adapted to the target audience's needs.
- 4) The organisation must be perceived as having a high integrity and the outputs as credible and of high quality.
- 5) The outputs must be presented at the appropriate time to be relevant (analysed in the section above).

Table 3.2 offers a numerical overview of interviewee's knowledge and use of AREU.

Table 3.2: Knowledge and use of AREU (individuals)

	Aware and give examples of use	Aware and read documents	Aware but no use	Not aware
Government/State	8	0	0	0
Donors/Ios	11	3	1	0
Other institutions¹⁷	17	2	0	0

¹⁵ The Team was informed that AREU was in the process of developing and organisational logframe, but has not seen it.

¹⁶ *Policy makers*, knowing that AREU defines *Policy* as follows "Principles and plans for action, usually formalised and documented. AREU is particularly concerned with policy set by those who share the objective of contributing to the reconstruction and development of Afghanistan, particularly **the Government of Afghanistan, international donor organizations and foreign representatives, and the civil society sector.**" (AREU communication strategy 2010)

Interviewees, both within and outside Afghanistan, were all aware of AREU and its work. Most stated finding AREU reports very useful and confirmed reading, using its reports as background information and quoting them in their work (in meetings or as background information when drafting papers for instance). More on each category of interlocutor's use of AREU can be found below.

With regard to the accessibility of AREU's outputs, a number of points were raised:

- Language 1: while research is drafted in English, AREU has invested in making sure that many products (either entirely or their executive summary) are available in Pashtu and Dari. Several interlocutors nonetheless mentioned the limited availability of products in local languages. Quality of translation¹⁸ according to the 2010 review, is considered high.¹⁹
- Language 2: many interlocutors mentioned the technical complexity of AREU's papers made them often accessible to only a smaller group of experts.
- Length: the length of many of AREU's reports (up to 70 pages or more) is seen as an obstacle, sometimes even discouragement from reading the studies, especially for policy makers.
- Format 1: AREU has made efforts to print reports and disseminate them in hard copies. The number of printed reports is limited and many interviewees called for an increase in hard copies, including in light of limited country-wide internet coverage. Interviewees have also questioned the extent to which AREU papers penetrate the provinces in the absence of a strategic effort to disseminate them. AREU has been sending some reports to universities in the provinces and has also been increasingly seeking to reach back to the communities/provinces where research is carried out.
- Format 2: AREU appears to make limited use of the internet and social media. AREU has revamped its website on a number of occasions (and is planing to do so again) and this has been noted positively by interlocutors. AREU's use of social networks could be strengthened (with some 3.800 followers on twitter and 86 likes on facebook). AREU is aware of this last point and recognises that it should be included in its revised communication strategy.

¹⁷ CSOs and academia

¹⁸ The Team did not have the tools to verify the quality of translation itself. It is interesting to note that while AREU changed its approach to translation in 2011 (letting go of its in-house translators) no one met mentioned a change in quality of translation.

¹⁹ Safar, M., Hicks, *op. Cit.*, p. 6.

These points appear to reduce the circle of potential readers and users of AREU, eliminating non-English speaking, non-urban, non-internet users and even limiting the non-academic public, reducing the likelihood of use and of impact.

Interlocutors also commented on the organisation's outreach and communication. Many highlighted a reduction in AREU's visibility and outreach in recent years. The library is a strong example: it was a centre of information, a bustling environment where people would convene, findings of research would be shared and ideas exchanged. It no longer is perceived as such. While this is not only linked to an AREU decision, as the worsening of the security environment reduces people's (especially the international personnel's) access to the centre, it is also linked to the management crisis and the loss of the librarian.

AREU's communication strategy is currently being revised. The challenge of defining AREU's position vis-à-vis advocacy remains open and AREU is currently considering recruiting a consultant to finalise its strategy. As some analysts put it: "the first (complex issues which the organisation had to grapple with) was to try to determine where on the continuum from (passively) communicating research findings to (actively) advocating for specific policy changes based on research findings was appropriate for a policy research organisation."²⁰ This is linked to trying to strike a balance between credibility and neutrality on one side, and impact on the other. The authors define AREU's chosen approach to advocacy as a "pragmatic policy of "targeted advocacy," whereby some research findings were left to speak for themselves, whereas on others AREU more actively advocated for policy changes"²¹.

In addition to the challenge of defining its position vis-à-vis advocacy, AREU is struggling with strategising communication on projects with limited human resources and lead researchers only being in country for limited periods of time (and then in the field carrying out the research). This seriously reduces the ability to carry out information, networking or advocacy campaigns. The organisation is currently investing in revising its communication strategy.

AREU has started developing project specific communication strategies (e.g. for the EC funded "Enabling more effective and equitable natural resource management to improve rural livelihood security: A programme of research"), spelling out the potential impact of the study, key stakeholders and their engagement, the target audience, approach to dissemination and how to measure impact. It is trying to institutionalise this approach. Such an approach could allow the tailoring of

²⁰ Fishstein, P., Wilder, A., *op. Cit.*, p. 18.

²¹ Fishstein, P., Wilder, A., *op. Cit.*, p. 18.

communication and advocacy to the specific needs of topics (including their sensitivity and security implications) and to better engage and target audiences.

With regard to the question of quality, integrity and credibility of AREU outputs, most interlocutors agreed that it produced high quality (highly specialised) outputs. The thoroughness of the studies, the extensive data collection (mostly qualitative, but increasingly quantitative) and the organisation's access to the field were mentioned by many. The good quality of the analysis and certain analysts in particular (all international) were mentioned. AREU's significant experience and accumulated knowledge were also highlighted. AREU was regarded as a highly credible organisation. Its neutrality was questioned by any interviewee, even if some mentioned its dependence on external funding. In the areas of focus of this evaluation (NRM and gender), the work done in the field of NRM, in particular opium production and land management, were very appreciated, even if the work on opium for instance took controversial positions, questioning prevailing donor perspectives. On the contrary, their products are valued for being *thought provoking* and looking at *non-mainstream issues*.

More concretely, interlocutors mentioned the *A-Z guide*, the library and long-term studies when talking about AREU's quality. It should be added that a number of interlocutors stated that while the organisation "had a reputation of high quality, there had been a fluctuation in quality in recent years". The Team's assessment of a sample of products from 2011-2013 however does not find a decrease in quality. It rather found a high quality of research across all papers analysed. the Team would hence rather attribute this statement to a *perception of decrease* of quality (and credibility) related to the recent management crisis rather than a real decrease. The following paragraphs present a summary of the Team's assessment.

The Team has undertaken an independent assessment of AREU outputs to assess their quality, related to credibility and utility. Thirteen documents were selected, five within the field of gender and eight within the field of NRM. The selection was based on AREU's suggestion. Findings are presented in table 3.3. below and further details in Annex 12.

Table 3.3: Credibility and utility of selected AREU publications

Grade	Credibility			Utility		
	Good	Weak/ evidence unclear	Opinionated impressions	Readable for a broad audience	Narrower audience of specialists	Difficult for most readers
NRM (8)	8	0	0	3	5	0
Gender (5)	4	1	0	4	1	0

NRM

The AREU NRM research is very high quality research. These reports may be long and perhaps somewhat difficult for some readers (e.g., the use of some unexplained concepts indicate that the reports are directed at readers with basic knowledge in the

sector), but the very high level of relevance for development (international and national policies) makes this very important reading. Research briefs address the limitation of the length and complexity of the research papers to an extent, but the nature of the topics means that the information being provided will inevitably be complex and difficult for some readers.

Gender

While one of the gender papers analysed was assessed to be of very high quality²², the other 4 products are not of such high quality, lacking the depth and structural/contextual analyses found in AREU's NRM-related research. Nonetheless, the quality of the reports remains good. Some reports resemble in-depth evaluations, looking at how gender has been taken into account in specific fields such as NSP or NFI. While this is positive in relation to addressing the priority concerns of policy makers interested in judging these programmes, it implies less applicability in terms of broader understanding.

Related to this, the gender research draws heavily on “stories” of individual cases. This is positive in terms of being able to “give life” to the data and provide the readers with a sense of the micro-level implications of development programmes. A negative side is that the research can, in some cases, be seen to rely too heavily on anecdotal evidence. Research does not appear to be sufficiently anchored in the international research discourse on the topics covered. Opportunities to cross-reference findings with other AREU research seem to have been missed.

Editing of these publications has not been fully up to standard, with some evidence of “cut and paste” across the different case study reports (references to the wrong province).

AREU effectiveness in promoting a culture of research and learning

Two dimensions are looked at vis-a-vis promoting a culture of research and learning: (1) The effectiveness of AREU at promoting such a culture within (i.e. capacity development of its own staff), and (2) Its effectiveness at promoting such a culture in the wider research community of Afghanistan.

With regard to its own staff members, AREU has provided capacity development opportunities which have contributed to the learning and skills of its staff members. It is interesting to note that while AREU appeared to have a rather comprehensive capacity development strategy, including a mix of internal trainings, support to staff

²² The “Equal rights, unequal opportunities” report includes a very solid historical and contextual analysis. The report is lengthy but clear for readers without sectoral experience.

to continue their education in Afghanistan or further afield and on-the-job training, the current approach to developing the capacity of Afghan staff is largely limited to the latter. AREU staff members are generally highly qualified. Some interlocutors have however, referred to a glass ceiling for national researchers who were not promoted past the point of quality data collectors (i.e., had not exposure to analysis). This issue is progressively being addressed by AREU.

Regarding the promotion of a research culture in the wider research community, AREU seems to have lacked a clear strategy to do so. The organisation has led by example rather than by engagement. Certain interviewees mentioned a lack of desire of the organisation to do so, others mentioned the tension between addressing internal needs and external ones, in an environment of limited resources. As mentioned above, the library is regarded as having played an important role in creating an Afghan research community. The previous librarian was credited with a special role in this effort. A collateral effect of the crisis and the drastic downsizing of AREU as perceived by interlocutors, was that other research institutions, civil society organisations and donors benefited from the quality staff AREU had to let go.

In certain specific instances, AREU was commissioned by donors to strengthen the skills of certain institutions. AREU, financed by UNDP, is for instance working with the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA) to develop gender tools for gender mainstreaming and gender audits of ministry projects, and helping MOWA examine the policies of other ministries to consider how gender sensitive they are. This cooperation is also aiming at the establishment of a Women's Policy Development Centre. Ministerial representatives met furthermore highlighted their continued interest in such support from AREU.

3.3 IMPACT

Questions from Evaluation Matrix:

I.A.1 To what extent has AREU contributed to influence policies, policy processes and behaviour of key actors in Afghanistan (both government and other, including international)?

I.A.2 How, and among whom has AREU contributed to creating a culture of debate and research? Are women, men and different ethnic groups part of this 'culture of research and learning'?

I.A.3 To what extent do civil society and the Afghan academic community judge that AREU has enabled them to act more effectively in influencing the government and donors in relation to attitudes, discourse, procedures, actual policies and policy implementation?

I.A.4 To what extent has AREU contributed to enhanced transparency to generate greater accountability between rights holders and duty bearers?

I.A.5 Do AREU's policy influence efforts take into account the implications of proposed changes in relation to environmental sustainability, gender equality, creation of institutional environments conducive to minimising corruption and

factors related to conflict? How influential were these in relation to the perspectives and actions of policy makers and civil society efforts to influence policy?

In the ToR for this assignment, impact foremostly relates to influencing policies and policy process in Afghanistan. However, as discussed in the inception report, the focus of the evaluation is mostly on outcomes (changes in attitudes and discourses as outcomes, which are likely to impact policies).

Regarding impact, the 2005 evaluation concluded that AREU framed discussions and defined what questions that needed to be asked,²³ while the 2011 review does not delve into the issue and only comments on the the organisation's approach to measuring impact.

It should be mentioned that AREU has been struggling with finding an appropriate way to measure impact. It chose to set up an impact database, which however has had limited efficiency in showing impact (see in Annex 7 a summary of the information provided by AREU), all the more since it depends greatly on the researcher's feedback. The 2011 review recommended a number of points be addressed. The revised strategy that is currently being prepared appears to have taken some of these into account. AREU now defines its outcomes at five levels and provides examples of impact at each level: a. Framing debates, b. Discursive commitments, c. Procedural change, d. Policy and programme content, e. Behavioural change.

No interviewees referred to the degree to which AREU outputs had enabled them to act more effectively in influence the government. Irrespective of the high quality and relevance of the work of AREU, the Team has hence found it challenging to track direct influence on the attitudes, discourses or policies and processes of the Government of Afghanistan, or the international community, though its involvement in these activities clearly indicates influencing (see below). Most interviewees furthermore confirmed the complexity of influencing policy makers, Afghan and international alike. AREU's unclear relation to advocacy further limits the potential for impact and other points mentioned under effectiveness, such as the high specialisation and complexity of some papers, further reduce the likelihood of uptake of findings and recommendations.

The shift to a more Afghan management, which is currently being carried out, could be positive for the organisation's impact within the country, provided that AREU maintains its balanced stance and neutral reputation.

²³ Channel Research, *op.cit.*, p. 14.

While tracing policy influence is difficult, the fact that interviewees point to specific research and are able to refer to these show that the research is used in the analysis of the interviewee. Research highlighted by interviewees include:

- Local governance papers, 2002 to 2011
- Land reform research, 2004
- Balkh research, August 2013
- Counter-narcotics papers, 2005- ongoing
- Transitional justice, 2010
- Water relevant papers, inc. *Mind the gap* (2012)

Influencing government

All government representatives interviewed acknowledged knowing, reading and quoting AREU in their work. Furthermore, AREU has participated in a number of working groups and task forces on key policies (e.g. ANDS) and AREU external researchers have been engaged in the development of policy (e.g. Liz Alden Wily and land legislation). AREU is also engaged in specific projects aiming at improving specific areas of policy (e.g., gender mainstreaming with the Ministry of Women's Affairs), tools (assisting the Central Statistic Office in strengthening the sex disaggregation of statistics, or assisting the same office in the development of the National Risk Vulnerability Assessment).

Interviewees stressed that influence, especially at the level of the government, depends on the level of engagement of stakeholders throughout the research process. While this was limited in the past, there appears to be increasing attention to this and AREU is trying consulting with authorities (including at local level) throughout the research. AREU is also increasingly responding to this with relevant findings. This included, for instance ,involvement and feedback to the Ministry of Agriculture, Minister of Energy and Water and the local water administration as part of the recent NRM research.

Finally, interviewees also added that levels of influence depended, to some extent, on lead researchers, their networks, seniority in the thematic area and access to policy makers. While this shows how AREU has been able to engage highly relevant researchers, there appears to be a danger that this can be ad hoc rather than institutionalised.

Influencing the international community

Interlocutors from the international community confirmed that AREU remains one of the main sources of quality and credible information on Afghanistan. Some furthermore added that AREU was instrumental in influencing understanding of context and highlighting questions or attracting attention to non-mainstream issues. Several donors have been financing specific studies or programmes for several years (e.g. the EC on NRM, several donors including the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the WB on land rights). There is hence a high probability of impact on the international community, especially on technical issues.

As part of the review of the eight NRM and five gender documents, an assessment was also made of **probable influence on Swedish development cooperation**. The Team, as highlighted above, found the documents to be highly relevant and potentially useful to Sida. On NRM, AREU in particular offers the possibility to contextualise and debunk, where relevant, prevailing development narratives. The studies have the potential to provide a critical perspective on who might be the winners and losers from future programming focused on livelihoods and economic opportunities, and thereby help to avoid common pitfalls. The analysis around social protection and vulnerability are also particularly useful for future Sida policies in Afghanistan. On gender, AREU's work could support Sida's analyses in terms of highlighting how economic empowerment is contingent on access to basic public services and policy alignment, and also touching upon the broader governance issues and looking at women's participation, including in decision making at the local level.

Creating a culture of research and learning and enabling civil society in influencing government and donors,

AREU remains an important source of information and also a partner for a number of civil society organisations. The Team has however failed to identify a strategic and systematic engagement with civil society. It appears to have remained ad hoc to some extent, AREU having been responsive to outside requests and initiatives rather than proactive.

As mentioned above, former AREU researchers are regarded as high quality researchers and their subsequent work in other organisations is likely to have had an impact on the wider research community. However, as the Team could not identify a systematic approach to creating a culture of research and learning in the past, the impact has also been assessed to be rather limited. The revised draft Strategic plan is making an attempt in that direction.

Regarding the media, there also appears to be media interest in AREU, both nationally and internationally. AREU is substantially quoted and referenced. AREU is also quoted in non-academic publications. Unfortunately, no strategic or systematic engagement with the media currently exists, thus reducing the potential impact.

Informants in academia confirmed that AREU is an important source of primary information for Afghanistan. AREU is quoted in academic publications. Some papers on NRM analysed by the Team, for instance, appear to be widely cited and are used both in Afghanistan and internationally. Cooperation with (national) academia has been stressed as another area to be strengthened and AREU has recognised it to be essential.

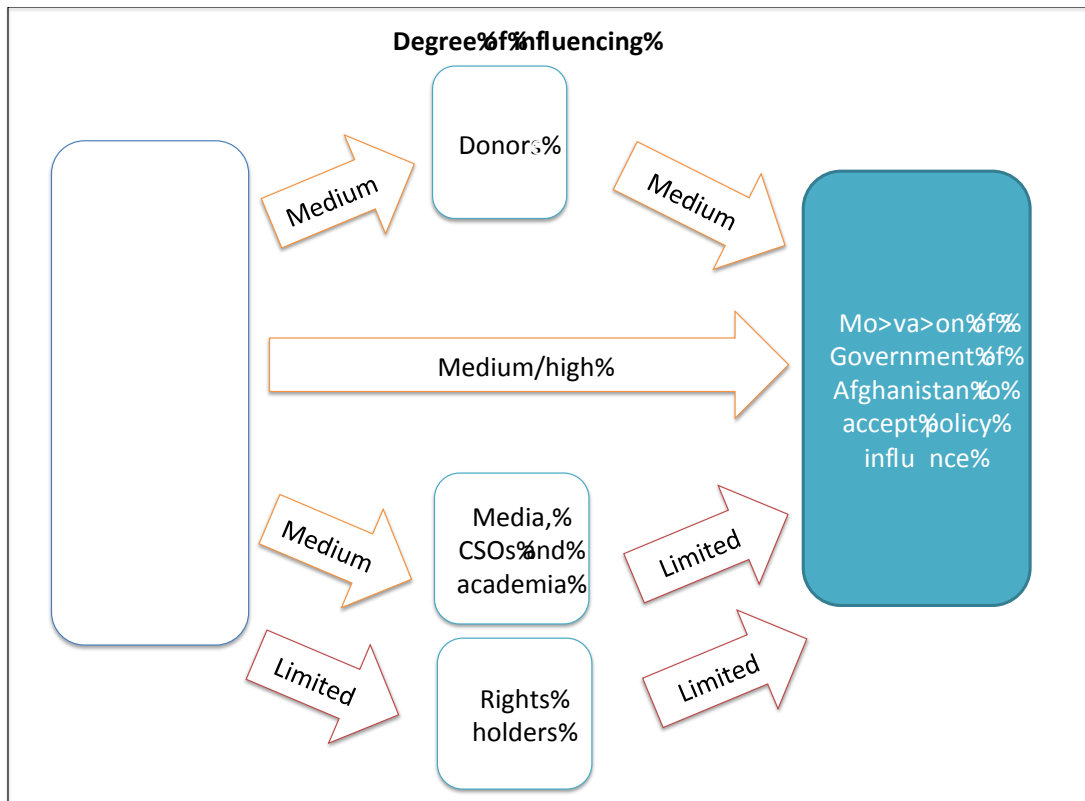
Influence the rights holders

AREU's influence on rights holders is rather limited. This is linked, on the one hand to the limited access to AREU publications mentioned above (section on effectiveness), and on the other hand to the limited engagement of these (besides being key informants and providing the raw data) in AREU research. AREU is now

increasingly trying to provide feedback to the communities regarding research findings and follow-up (it is highlighted as an important element in the revised strategy that is currently being discussed). This is, however, made difficult due to limited funding (going back to the field and the communities seldom being budgeted for), logistic and security challenges. On the other hand, as stressed by some, in addition to being an important opportunity for empowering rights holders, this is also an important tool to maintain access to communities, fight research fatigue and ensure acceptance by the communities (and hence security).

The documented and probable outcome of influencing is illustrated in figure 3.1 below:

Figure 3.1: AREU (probability of) influence



In terms of **cross-cutting-issues**, the 13 documents that were assessed highlighted a number of findings shown in the table 3.4 below. It appears that there is more attention to some cross-cutting issues than others: participation is clear in all documents and so is the perspective of the poor. Non-discrimination and transparency, while not as evident in all documents, are also rather strong. The picture is less clear when it comes to gender and accountability. The Team assesses that AREU has had limited success in mainstreaming gender issues throughout its research (outside of specific gender papers) and it appears that gender discrimination may have been taken for granted to some extent, limiting the depth of analysis. It is interesting to note in this regard that AREU’s draft revised strategy highlights the need for increased gender mainstreaming. There is also a large variation in how AREU integrates accountability in its outputs. Finally, AREU is weak regarding

broader attention to environmental sustainability outside of topics with an obvious link to this (e.g., NRM).

Table 3.4: Screening for cross-cutting issues

Assessment criteria	NRM (8)	Gender (5)
1. Gender clear	62.5%	100%
2. Gender weak	37.5%	
3. Participation clear	100%	100%
4. Participation weak		
5. Accountability clear	100%	40%
6. Accountability weak		60%
7. Non-discrimination clear	75%	100%
8. Non-discrimination weak	25%	
9. Transparency clear	100%	60%
10. Transparency weak		40%
11. Perspective of the poor clear	100%	100%
12. Perspective of the poor weak		
13. Environmental Sustainability clear	37.5%	
14. Environmental Sustainability weak	62.5%	100%

3.4 SUSTAINABILITY

Questions from Evaluation Matrix:

S.A.1 What are the medium- to long-term financial sustainability of AREU?

S.A.2 How is the knowledge generated at AREU sustained?

S.A.3 Are the capacity development efforts of AREU as an institution (and for national staff) relevant and sustainable?

S.A.4 Is the cooperation with Afghan institutions (both government and research institutes) enhancing the sustainability of AREU and leading to an enhanced Afghan ownership and leadership in creating and maintaining a ‘culture of research and learning’ in Afghanistan?

The sustainability of AREU is assessed both in financial and institutional terms. It should first be noted that a financial audit was not part of the Team’s task. An audit carried out in 2012²⁴ highlighted a number of outstanding shortcomings regarding proper register of fixed assets, procedures for annual performance appraisal of the staff and results, procedures to ensure proper maintenance of attendance records for

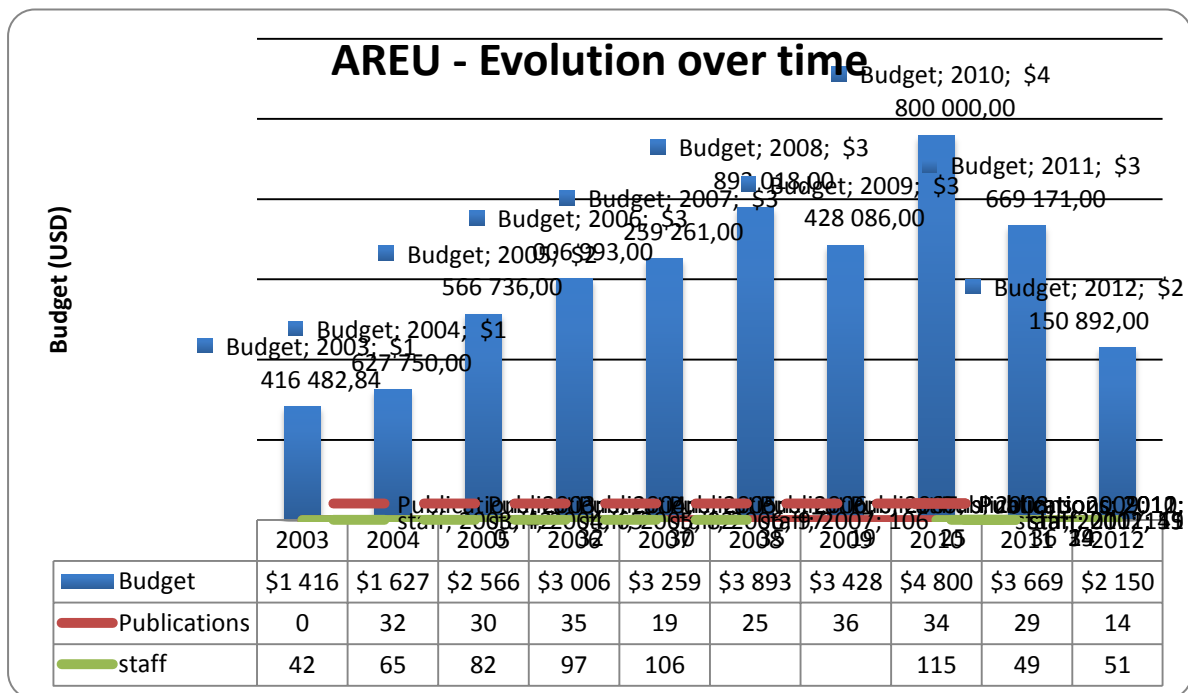
²⁴ Carried out by Ernst and Young

actual time spent on projects and finally of an internal audit function. AREU has noted these observations and already taken action on a number of these.

AREU is primarily financed by contributions from donors. It receives both earmarked and core funding. As shown in Annex 3, AREU has accessed high levels of un-earmarked funding over the years, with a peak at 85% in 2009. While the level of un-earmarked funding has gone down with the recent management crisis, it remains at over 60% of the organisation’s funding. The 2011 management crisis resulted in a significant contraction of the budget. However, as illustrated in table 3.5 below, this reduction in funding (and staffing) does not appear to be in direct relation to the number of publications produced. Part of this can be explained by the fact that many publications are part of multi-year efforts and, consequently, a reduction in funding would likely be seen in a delayed manner.

Annex 8 presents an overview of AREU donors since 2004. It illustrates the relative contraction of AREU’s donor base, which is mostly made up of governments and international organisations. It furthermore highlights how some donors have been more stable than others (e.g. the EC, DFID and Sida).

Table 3.5: AREU funding (in million USD), staff and outputs



Annex 9 provides an indication of AREU’s foreseen budgetary requirements and funds raised. The budget already raised corresponds to some 60% of the budget for the upcoming 2 years. However, a significant difference in the repartition of committed grants should be highlighted with operating costs covered by only 27%. Core funding is key to ensuring the organisation’s independence and flexibility, and should continue to be a priority for the organisation.

Institutional sustainability refers to the extent to which AREU is sustainable as an organisation. There are different parameters which will ensure institutional sustainability. These include:

1. A clear mandate and strategy
2. Systems and procedures in place
3. Institutional transfer of knowledge internally (institutional memory)
4. Degree of Afghan ownership

While AREU has had a clear and rather stable mandate and vision since its creation, as well as clear strategies over the years, a number of identity questions remain open and challenge the organisation's progression. These include the organisation's position vis-à-vis advocacy, consulting (should it engage in consultancy type assignments?) or politics and issues of the day as well as the degree to which it should focus on capacity building, the type of engagement with others and the level of support to the government. Furthermore, the 2011 review mentioned a disconnect between AREU staff and the board's vision on AREU (which was confirmed by the evaluation team). The Team would like to add the question of alignment between staff and management visions, stressing the importance for identity to permeate throughout the organisation. The recent staff retreat is a positive step in that direction and so is the thinking about the relation between the board and the organisation.

Over the last couple of years, the organisation has suffered from unstable and inconsistent leadership, further compounding the challenges highlighted above. The new director has only taken up his functions recently. He has engaged the organisation in reflection on its identity and a revision of its strategy. At the time of this evaluation, the revised strategy had not been submitted to the board yet. These efforts and their results may have profound impact on the future sustainability of AREU.

The Team would like to stress that, in spite of outstanding critical identity questions, there is a strong institutional identity; and staff members, both current and past, appear to be proud to work for AREU. They are confident that it can recover and is indeed on the way to doing so. A few staff who have been let go have rejoined the organisation; others have expressed their desire to do so, showing significant allegiance to the organisation.

In terms of institutional memory, one of the organisation's key strengths is the amount of knowledge generated and kept. The full potential, however, still remains to be exploited. The 2011 review²⁵ noted that the share drive should be made more

²⁵ Safar, M., Hicks, *op. Cit.*, p. 11.

efficient and also mentioned the need to link better new research to previously generated knowledge. AREU has a number of tools at its disposal that aim at generating analysis across different generations of research, such as briefing papers and policy notes. AREU intends to produce more of these. However, the organisation does not appear to have invested sufficiently in identifying ways to ground new knowledge and research on AREU's existing body of research.

As noted regarding the limited gender mainstreaming throughout AREU's work, as well as the limited cross-fertilisation of research topics, the lack of cross sectoral learning is an additional factor limiting the sustainability of AREU and its research.

AREU has traditionally relied on international staff both in management positions and for research. Annex 10 presents the evolution of authors of AREU products divided in national/international (and internal/external). As the graph shows, there has been an overwhelming majority of international authors. This over-reliance on international external researchers, while giving AREU access to experts of top quality, however also reduces the sustainability and stability of the organisation and increases the outside perception that it is an international organisation, potentially limiting its credibility to Afghans. On the other hand, an international label could also potentially increase the perceived independence of the organisation. AREU has now embarked on an Afghanisation of the organisation, in particular at senior management and lead researcher level. The new director and one of the deputy directors are Afghan nationals. The organisation is also aiming at increasing the proportion of Afghan authors of reports. This is an important step, however two important points should be noted:

1. The perception of independence of the organisation may be affected. The new director will be under high scrutiny. His engagement in civil society organisations and past activities will need to be managed carefully in order to avoid perceptions of conflict of interest.
2. An important challenge with regard to the use of Afghan researchers is their capacity. Capacity building is an integral part of the Afghanisation so as not to pay mere lip-service to the objective of increasing Afghan authors of products.

Interviews and documentary review show that AREU has been investing in capacity development of staff. The organisation recognises that further steps need to be taken in order to further sustainability. It appears that most capacity development of national staff has focused on data collection, rather than on the design of research methodologies or the analysis of results. Those two elements would need to receive more attention in order to create a comprehensive national capacity.

Emphasising on-the-job training when relying on external lead researchers may present a reduced probability of impact and should be looked at thoroughly. Many interviewees highlighted how human resources have consistently been a challenge for AREU:

- Retention of international staff in Afghanistan in light of the security situation and uncertain future developments is one significant challenge. Ensuring the right level of seniority is another one.
- Recruiting high quality staff and in particular female staff has been a challenge. Competition from operational international programmes which offer higher salaries has been a compounding factor and has also challenged the organisation's ability to retain highly qualified (trained) staff.

When it comes to working with others, we have reflected above on AREU's limited impact on the Afghan research environment. AREU's engagement in partnerships with other organisation did not appear clearly from interviews or desk reviews. While AREU has indeed engaged in joint projects with NGOs, civil society organisations, universities or other research institutions (including the Overseas Development Institute hosted Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium), these appear to have occurred on an *ad hoc* basis, rather than being based on strategic partnerships. AREU's discussions with a number of national universities about more formalised partnerships suggests that efforts are being made in this area.

4 Evaluative Conclusions

The work of AREU is highly relevant to the Afghan context and policies (including the ANDS and NPPs), as well as for Sweden's overall policies and specific goals in Afghanistan. The findings of the evaluation raise concerns *vis-à-vis* the selection of AREU's research themes and the systematic nature of the research identification process, as well as the question of the timeliness of the products. AREU's strategic prioritisation of its research topics and the selection of its research pillars (areas of outcome) needs to be clarified and a balance needs to be struck between the direction dictated by funding opportunities and capitalising on expertise accumulated, complementarity and comparative advantage.

Regarding effectiveness, the Team found that AREU is widely known and praised for the high quality of its products. A number of points, however, limit the access to its products, including the limited use of electronic media and of printed outputs. A major challenge, furthermore, appears to be AREU's outreach and communication strategy. This is currently under revision and brings with it a number of critical questions, such as: How far should AREU engage in advocacy? Should and, if so how might AREU set-up strategic partnerships with the media, civil society, etc.? The sensitivity of some of the issues studied by AREU further complicate the choices being faced in defining this strategy.

While AREU has a strong institutional identity, there is a need to strengthen this further. Sustainability is limited by a number of identity questions such as the organisation's position *vis-à-vis* advocacy, consulting, its role *vis-à-vis* government and policy influence, as well as the degree to which it should become more engaged in capacity building. The apparent lack of a common vision of the organisation across management, the board and staff members as well as the lack of communication on these issues with key stakeholders, further reduce the clarity of AREU's institutional identity.

The recent management and financial crisis strongly affected the organisation, which is still recovering. The new director, who has only taken up his functions recently, has engaged the organisation in reflection on its identity and a revision of its strategy. Furthermore, he is implementing the *Afghanisation* that was recommended by the recent review and spearheading the development of a results framework. Despite the identity questions mentioned above, AREU retains a significant capital of trust and respect from past efforts that he can use in the future to rebuild internal dynamism and broader partnerships.

Some recommendations from recent reviews and audits are, however, still outstanding and much remains to be done on the road to Afghanisation. The latter

includes a strengthening of the role of Afghan researchers and, hence, capacity development of AREU staff, especially given some of the shortcomings identified by the evaluation. A challenge inherent to the Afghanisation is also maintaining the overall perception of AREU's independence and neutrality. The high scrutiny that is likely to be put on senior management will require careful management.

Regarding Afghanisation and the use of international researchers, the Team does not suggest abandoning the cooperation with key international researchers, however the cooperation should be reviewed with a view to increasing institutionalisation of findings and methodologies. This should also be read in light of the Team's finding concerning AREU's limited (systematic) engagement in partnerships with other organisations, be they international research institutions, Afghan academia, think tanks, civil society or the media. AREU is looking at defining strategic partnerships with a wide array of actors. This is a key step vis-à-vis most evaluation criteria.

Through an overview of AREU donors since 2003, the evaluation highlighted AREU's dependence on a limited number of donors (mostly donor countries and international organisations). AREU should work to diversify its funding base.

The findings of this evaluation are not new, as many of the challenges faced by AREU have been presented in previous reviews and evaluations. AREU has had several years to address these, but poor management has effectively reduced the incentives and ability to engage accordingly. Without indications of a constructive approach to address the challenges of AREU, it would be difficult for the Team to recommend continued funding to the organisation. However, with the new leadership, AREU has developed a number of internal plans and a draft strategy aimed at addressing the bulk of the issues presented in this evaluation report. Given the continued relevance of the organisation and their high quality work, the Team recommends continued funding to AREU, conditioned by these new plans and initiatives. Funding should be accompanied by dialogue, support and close monitoring of progress by Sida. A clear signal should be given to the organisation that funding cannot be continued in the medium-term (1-3 years), should AREU not be able to address recognised concerns.

5 Recommendations for Future Support

Recommendations have been divided between Sida and AREU.

Sida:

It is recommended that Sida consider its funding for the next phase in light of the findings of this evaluation report and its priorities in the coming country strategy. Continued funding should be justified via evident progress by AREU towards addressing the weaknesses of the organisation described in the evaluation. Sida should use the findings of the evaluation and enter into a dialogue with AREU on these prior to engaging in funding for a next phase. It is recommended that Sida use the following step-wise approach to address these issues:

1. Engage in dialogue with AREU and ensure that there is a consensus on the challenges facing AREU and ascertain the willingness of the AREU Board and management of addressing the current challenges by May 2014.
2. Support AREU (possibly with additional technical assistance in strategy development and results-based management) in developing a sound strategy and action plans with clearly identified results, timelines and indicators for documenting progress toward these results.
3. Clearly define conditions for future core funding linked to progress on key results areas identified from the revised AREU strategy and results framework.
4. Closely monitor progress and adjust funding to the organisation in the medium-term, in light of the commitment and ability of the organisation to meet its planned targets.

The Team furthermore recommends that (if AREU shows commitment to the change process and produces an acceptable strategy) Sida continue to focus on core funding to enable AREU to produce high quality independent research that is based on the research needs identified by the organisation itself.

AREU:

It is recommended that AREU address the issues identified in this report, with a focus on strategy, identity and future role of the organisation in Afghanistan. More specifically, AREU should:

1. Look into focusing its research pillars and developing a clearer approach to selecting its research topics. Research topics should take into consideration the issue of contextual relevance and timeliness vis-à-vis the development needs of the country. It is important that the complementarity (and potential collaboration) with other research actors be kept in mind in this process.

2. Improve access to its products, with an emphasis on (1) electronic media, including the internet, social media services (such as Twitter and Facebook), and (2) enhanced use of printed outputs.
3. Finalise the revision of the communication and outreach strategy while maintaining the flexibility of adapting it to the requirements of specific studies. In this process, the library should be given due attention and adequate human and material resources should be factored into the implementation of the strategy.
4. While AREU already has a strong institutional identity, it could be strengthened and focused further. This includes:
 - The new director of AREU should take the lead in promoting a joint understanding between, first and foremost, the board and the management on the organisation's mission, vision and priorities for 2014 onwards, and secondly, between the management and the staff of the organisation.
 - Ensure that the discussion includes clear policies in relation to the following issues: consultancies versus/combined with research; degree of advocacy emphasis of the organisation; how to maintain collaborative and supportive relations with the Government while still ensuring neutrality.
 - Similarly, the organisation will need to redefine its role and agree on a manageable but meaningful approach to capacity development and promoting learning from research among the broader Afghan audience.
 - Communicating clearly on these issues with all relevant stakeholders.
5. Maintain a high level focus on overcoming the organisation's recent management crisis. This includes continued efforts to implement the recommendations from previous audits and reviews, as well as continuing the process of developing the organisation's results framework.
6. In support of (3) AREU should continue to implement the Afghanisation of AREU through strengthening of national staff's capacities and promotion of Afghan researchers. Similarly, the use of a substantial number of external researchers should only be continued in as far as the knowledge generated and methodologies applied can be institutionalised in AREU. Attention should be paid to potential and perceived conflicts of interest of senior staff and maintaining a (perception of) high level of independence and quality of the products produced by AREU.
7. One way to retain the input of senior international researchers, while pursuing the Afghanisation of the organisation, may be to develop stronger, more strategic and long-term partnerships with selected international research institutions. AREU should not adopt an "open door policy" to such collaboration, but should demonstrate a stronger commitment to selective international partnerships.
8. Develop strategic partnerships with key stakeholders such as Afghan academia, other think tanks and civil society. After careful analysis, define strengthened partnership with the media as well.
9. Work to diversify the funding base of the organisation to reduce risk and improve the sustainability of the organisation.

6 Annexes

ANNEX 1 – TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Background

Sida has been supporting Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU) and Afghanistan Analysts Network (AAN) under the sector objective of ‘democracy, human rights and gender equality’ since 2002 and 2011 respectively. Moreover, Sweden (through Ministry of Foreign Affairs) has contributed to the establishment of AAN in 2009 and extended its support in 2010 as well.

This ToR is for two different evaluations of two different organisations, namely AREU and AAN and it shall result in two separate final reports for AREU and AAN. The reasons why they are both put under the same ToR are:

- Both organisations are research think-tanks aiming for better and informed policy making in Afghanistan.
- Both organisations have very similar target audience, hence making it possible for the evaluators to assess both at the same time.
- It saves time, cost and resources.

1.1 AREU - Background

AREU is an independent Afghanistan-based research institute. Its mission is to inform and influence policy and practice through conducting high-quality, policy-relevant research and actively disseminating the results, and to promote a culture of research and learning. To achieve its mission AREU engages with policymakers, civil society, researchers and students to promote their use of AREU’s research and its library, to strengthen their research capacity and to create opportunities for analysis, reflection and debate.

As an impartial Afghanistan-based voice dedicated to research excellence, AREU aspires to contribute to the development of inclusive and transparent policymaking processes, driven by the priorities of the Afghan people, with the aim to give rise to better informed policies and programmes that improve Afghan lives. To achieve this vision AREU works to promote inquiry, inspire debate and enhance analysis. AREU seeks to foster a work environment of mutual respect, inclusion and learning for all, which engages a diverse, experienced team united in its purpose. AREU’s commitment to building capacity today is expected to shape the future face of research in Afghanistan.

This evaluation was foreseen in the 2010 agreement between Sida and AREU for implementation of AREU’s Strategic Plan 2010 – 2012.

Sida has been supporting AREU with core support since 2002. This evaluation is expected to cover the activities of AREU between 2002 until 2013. The evaluation is commissioned by Sida (only) but due to the fact that Sida has been one of the donors providing core funding to AREU, the evaluation will cover all AREU activities in general and will not be confined merely to Sida-funded activities.

1.2 AAN – Background

AAN is an independent non-profit policy research organisation registered in Germany and Afghanistan. It was founded in February 2009 on the premise that the need for information, analysis and strategic policy advice about Afghanistan is steadily increasing due to several factors, including:

- a highly complex and deteriorating political, social and security environment (including an increasingly assertive insurgency, rising popular disaffection, widespread rearmament and a weak and factionalised government) leading to a widely shared sense of urgency;
- increased realisation that long-term positive change cannot be affected without a better understanding of realities on the ground;
- high turn-over of international staff and decreasing mobility and access to the countryside, leading to a lack of knowledge and understanding of local dynamics;
- lack of common purpose and clear strategy within the international community, leading to a fragmented and piece-meal approach in the field of sustainable development and long-term state-building;
- The limitations of most currently available analysis, which often lacks the relevant level of detail or timeliness required for policy planning, and often has no follow-up on the ground.

AAN was established with the aim to (1) provide independent, timely, detailed and in-depth political analysis and policy research on Afghanistan to a wide range of policy makers and researchers, as well as to the general public; and in doing so to (2) contribute to a greater understanding of the country and its region and to (3) contribute to the formulation of policy interventions that contribute to long-term stability in Afghanistan.

The current AAN 3 years (2011 - 2013) programme under implementation ‘Afghanistan’s Transition: Unpacking Local, National and Regional Politics’ aims to achieve (1) to consolidate AAN’s position as reputable, influential and credible source of information and analysis on Afghanistan and (2) to expand the level of analysis and range of subjects to match the increasing complexity of a country in transition.

The current programme has the following objectives:

- 1) To promote greater understanding of Afghan realities through field-based research, unbiased analysis and high-quality publications;
- 2) To provide a platform for individuals with in-depth understanding of Afghanistan to contribute to (1), through blogs, publications, seminars, etc.

- 3) To ensure the inclusion of a broad range of ‘Afghan voices’ in policy discussions.
- 4) To inform and influence international policy-making on Afghanistan through additional briefings for decision-makers, participation in conferences and high-level meetings, media presence, etc.

AAN is not an advocacy organisation, but it seeks to influence policy makers and media by ensuring that they have access to independent, accurate and grounded analysis and research findings.

Sida contributed to the establishment of AAN in 2009 (through Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and continued its support in 2010. Sida has been supporting AAN since 2011.

2. Evaluation Purpose and Objective

2.1 AREU - Evaluation Purpose and Objective

Overall Objective:

The evaluation should assess the *impact*, relevance, timeliness and quality, of AREU’s research. It shall also assess organisational and financial sustainability of AREU. The scope and impact of AREU’s contribution to ‘development of inclusive and transparent policymaking processes, driven by the priorities of the Afghan people, which give rise to better informed policies and programmes that improve Afghan lives’ – as AREU’s vision states and more simply AREU’s capability to influence policy making in the Afghan public sector is the overall objective of this evaluation.

The findings of the evaluation will enable Sida to make an informed decision for the assessment of future contribution to AREU after the current one year bridge funding period ends by May 2014. It is also very much likely that the findings will be used during development of and browsing of ideas for the new country strategy for Afghanistan.

Specific Objectives:

1. **Impact** – To assess the impact of AREU’s work is a key objective of this evaluation. After supporting AREU for many years, it is vital to assess the impact of AREU’s work in relation to policies developed and adopted and development decisions made in Afghanistan (example would be level/extent of influence on the results of a number of international conferences held in the past decade on Afghanistan). Impact could be assessed for example through AREU’s direct input in the policy making process, utilisation of AREU publications as input into policy preparation, demand for training by institutions entrusted with policymaking. Evidence of influence on different Afghan government ministries who prepare policies and legislation, the parliament, ministry of finance (as the main government institute entrusted with policy discussion on development dialogue (with donors) in Afghanistan) is to be assessed. It would be vital for the evaluation team to meet with as many policy actors as possible to get a grasp of AREU’s level of influence and outreach.

2. **Relevance and timeliness of research initiatives** – To assess how research initiatives and prioritisation within initiatives relate to the major policies undertaken and developed in Afghanistan, such as ‘a number of international conferences that have taken place that shaped the theme and direction of development efforts in Afghanistan, the latest being the Tokyo conference in July 2012’ and the subsequent follow up events. Differentiation should be made between political and development policies as the assessment goes on (keeping in mind Sida is a merely a development entity). More specifically, how do they relate to Sida’s overall²⁶ and specific sector²⁷ development goals in Afghanistan as outlined in the ‘Revised country strategy for Afghanistan (2012 – 2014). Timeliness of research initiative in relation to the time of important raised critical issues, policies and development decisions is also to be assessed.
3. **Quality of AREU’s publications** – To assess quality of AREU’s publications using quantitative methods such as citations’ index and publications in recognised journals as well as qualitative assessment such as utilisation of research by academic institutions. Quality assessment of AREU’s publications should also include the team’s own assessment of carefully selected sample of AREU’s publications which have not been reviewed or published in journals.
4. **Sustainability** – To assess AREU’s organisational and financial sustainability in the light of changing economic and political environment in the country. AREU’s funding base is to be assessed as to how broad or on the contrary how dependent it is on core funding from donors. AREU’s relation and long term status/position in relation to principal government research institutions is to be explored and clarified, including AREU’s cooperation and position to Central Statistics Office of Afghanistan or other relevant institutions. National ownership is an important aspect to look at. Ratio of national versus international staff; efforts to build competence among national staff; nature, quality and content of tasks handled by Afghan staff is to be assessed.

²⁶ The overall objective of Swedish development cooperation in Afghanistan is to enable people living in poverty, particularly women, girls and young people, to enjoy better living conditions in a peaceful, democratic and legally secure society. -

²⁷ Sector 1. Democracy, human rights and gender equality

- Strengthened democratic institutions and systems for public financial management, and greater transparency in central government administrations.
- Strengthened ability of women to enjoy their human rights and influence the development of society.
- The presence of viable actors in civil society and free, independent media capable of contributing to greater accountability and a more transparent public administration.

Sector 2. Education

- Increased access to primary education of good quality, with special focus on girls’ right to education.
- More trained teachers.
- Increased literacy among women aged 15 – 24. – Revised development cooperation strategy – Afghanistan January 2012 – December 2014

2.2 AAN – Evaluation Purpose and Objective

Overall Objective:

The evaluation should assess the *impact*, relevance, timeliness and quality, of AAN's research (blogs/dispatches and reports, background briefings, media interventions, public speaking). It shall also assess organisational and financial sustainability of AAN. The scope and impact of AAN's contribution to 'provide independent, timely, detailed and in-depth political analysis and policy research, on Afghanistan, to a wide range of policy makers and researchers, as well as to the general public; and in doing so to contribute to a greater understanding of the country and its region and to contribute to the formulation of policy interventions that contribute to long-term stability in Afghanistan.' – as AAN's aim describes - and more simply AAN's capability to influence policy making or policy actors (in Afghanistan) and policy actors working on Afghanistan (capitals, headquarters) is the overall objective of this evaluation.)

The findings of the evaluation will enable Sida to make an informed decision for the assessment of future contribution to AAN after the current agreement ends in January 2014. It is also very much likely that the findings will be used during development of and browsing of ideas for the new country strategy for Afghanistan.

Specific Objectives:

1. **Impact** – To assess the impact of AAN's work is a key objective of this evaluation. The evaluation is taking place at an important time (end of 3 year support to AAN) and shall contribute to an informed decision on behalf of Sida for future cooperation with AAN.

The impact of AAN's work (research and publications) is to be assessed against its organisational and programme goals. Impact could be assessed for example through AAN's direct input in the policy making process, utilisation of AAN publications as input into policy preparation.

Evidence of influence on different international community actors in Afghanistan (among other policy actors including the Afghan government) is to be assessed. It would be vital for the evaluation team to meet with as many policy actors as possible to get a grasp of AAN's level of influence and outreach.

2. **Relevance and timeliness of research initiatives** – To assess how research initiatives and prioritisation within initiatives relate to the major policies undertaken and developed in Afghanistan, such as a number of international conferences that have taken place that had shaped the theme and direction of

development and politics in Afghanistan. Differentiation should be made between political and development policies and initiatives (keeping in mind Sida is a merely a development entity) as the assessment goes on. More specifically, how does AAN and their work (research and publications) relate to Sida's overall²⁸ and specific sector²⁹ development goals in Afghanistan as outlined in the 'Revised country strategy for Afghanistan (2012 – 2014). Timeliness of research initiatives in relation to the time of important raised critical issues, (political and developmental) is also to be assessed. Strategically/timely planned research initiatives increase the potential for intended impact of research.

3. **Quality of AAN's publications** – To assess quality of AAN's publications using quantitative methods such as citations' index and publications in recognised journals as well as qualitative assessment such as utilisation of research by the target audience (policy actors in the country as well as in the capitals) academic institutions. Quality assessment of AAN's publications should also include the team's own assessment of carefully selected sample of AAN's publications which have not been reviewed or published in journals. Quality assessment of research publications links up with the degree of their intended impact.
4. **Sustainability** – To assess AAN's organisational and financial sustainability in the light of changing economic and political environment in the country. AAN's funding base is to be assessed as to how broad or on the contrary how dependent it is on core funding from donors.

²⁸ The overall objective of Swedish development cooperation in Afghanistan is to enable people living in the poverty, particularly women, girls and young people, to enjoy better living conditions in a peaceful, democratic and legally secure society. -

²⁹ Sector 1. Democracy, human rights and gender equality

- Strengthened democratic institutions and systems for public financial management, and greater transparency in central government administrations.
- Strengthened ability of women to enjoy their human rights and influence the development of society.
- The presence of viable actors in civil society and free, independent media capable of contributing to greater accountability and a more transparent public administration.

Sector 2. Education

- Increased access to primary education of good quality, with special focus on girls' right to education.
- More trained teachers.
- Increased literacy among women aged 15 – 24. – Revised development cooperation strategy – Afghanistan January 2012 – December 2014

3. Evaluation Questions and Criteria

3.1 Evaluation Questions and Criteria – AREU

The evaluation questions are based on DAC criteria and connected to the relevance & timeliness, quality, sustainability (more of AREU as an organisation and its financial base and future predictability) and impact of AREU's work and publications as outlined in the objectives of the evaluation.

- **Impact**

How has AREU contributed to 'inform and influence policy and practice through ... research' – as its mission states?

How has AREU contributed to promotion of a 'culture of research and learning'?

How has AREU engaged with civil society, researchers and students in all aspects of their work?

'AREU creates opportunities for analysis, reflection and debate' – How? Are there examples and tangible results out of these?

How has AREU contributed to 'development of inclusive and transparent policy making processes'?

Number of instances where to-be-developed or developed policies were influenced for better changes? An example would be development of the 22 National Priority Programmes (NPPs).

How has AREU contributed to building capacity in order to 'shape the future face of research in Afghanistan' in their work so far?

Have AREU included cross cutting issues such as environment, gender and anti-corruption, conflict sensitivity in their work? How influential were these in relation to policy actors?

How have AREU publications influenced primarily government policies (proof of change of behaviour or policies) and also other main actors such as the World Bank?

How and to what extent does AREU contribute to and influence better decision and policy making in Afghanistan?

Were there any unforeseen beneficial / detrimental impacts from AREU's work?

How does AREU relate to and contribute to the realisation of Sida's development agenda and goals in Afghanistan?

- **Relevance and Timeliness**

How strategic and timely were the decisions on research initiatives? How relevant and timely were the research initiatives in comparison to highlights of that time, upcoming policies, elections, expected legislation in the parliament, international donor conferences and so on.

How relevant are AREU's areas of engagement to Sida's country strategy (overall goal and sector objectives)?

Evidence and extent of relevance and timeliness of research initiatives leading to better and more influence on policy actors?

- ***Quality of AREU's publications***

The aim is to find out how good AREU's publications are by answering the followings:

How and to what extent, do other institutions depend and refer to AREU's work and publications in their planning and analysis?

Number and type of academic journals referring to AREU's publications?

Have AREU's publications been reviewed by academic journals?

Evidence of AREU's publications use at universities and other academic organs.

How do government institutions (as primary policy makers for the country) see and use AREU publications?

How does AREU's other target groups see and use AREU publications?

How effective are AREU's methodologies for reaching out to its intended audience?

- ***Sustainability***

How broad is AREU's financial base or on the contrary how dependent is AREU on core funding of donors?

What happens if donors stop their core support to AREU, does AREU have any plans to sustain if donors withheld their funding?

What happens to the vast accumulated knowledge / library that AREU has gathered in its life time if donors withheld their funding?

Ratio of international versus afghan exerts – How has AREU developed national staff capacity to sustain its life on the long run?

Where does AREU see itself in 5 – 10 years, how does it plan to operate (financially) during that time?

How does AREU cooperate with other Afghan research institutes and think-tanks including government bodies such as Central Statistics Office?

The inception report shall suggest pertinent questions missing from the ToR.

Conclusions, recommendations on all of the above points and lessons learnt from AREU's many years of activities makes the most important feature and goal of this evaluation that will enable Sida to make a more informed decision on the future of cooperation with AREU in 2014 and will be used for the development of next country strategy for Afghanistan.

Hence it is extremely important that the evaluation report draws precise and clear conclusions and recommendations as much as possible.

3.2 Evaluation Questions and Criteria – AAN

- ***Impact***

How does AAN contribute to 'formulation of policy interventions that contribute to long-term stability in Afghanistan'?

How has AAN contributed to 'greater understanding of Afghan realities'?

How has AAN contributed to ‘provision of a platform for individuals with in-depth knowledge of Afghanistan to promote greater understanding of Afghan realities’?

How has AAN ensured ‘inclusion of a broad range of “Afghan voices” in policy discussions’?

How has AAN contributed to ‘development of inclusive and transparent policy making processes’?

Have AAN included cross cutting issues such as environment, gender and anti-corruption, conflict sensitivity in their work? How influential were these in relation to policy actors?

How have AAN publications influenced the international policy making in Afghanistan? Has their work led to better planning on the International Community part? For example have they pushed donors to reach to more deprived areas, or to be more cost effective, or to be more aligned with Afghan realities on the ground in their planning and analysis of their programing or while shaping their country strategies?

How AAN demonstrates links to development issues in their publications?

Were there any unforeseen beneficial / detrimental impacts from AAN’s work?

How does AAN relate to Sida’s development agenda and goals in Afghanistan?

How do AAN’s target audience (different policy makers) see and use AAN publications?

How does AAN cooperate with other and in particular local research organisations?

- ***Relevance and Timeliness***

How strategic and timely were the decisions on research initiatives? How relevant and timely the research initiatives were in comparison to highlights of that time, upcoming policies, elections, expected legislation in the parliament, international donor conferences, transition and so on. Research on issues at margins or neglected are to be considered as relevant as well

How relevant are AANs areas of engagement to Sida’s country strategy (overall goal and sector objectives)?

Evidence and extent of relevance and timeliness of research initiatives leading to better and more influence on policy actors?

How effective are AAN’s methodologies for reaching out to its intended audience?

- ***Quality of AAN’s publications***

The aim is to find out how good AAN’s publications are by answering the followings:

How and to what extent, do other institutions depend and refer to AAN’s work and publications in their planning and analysis?

Number and type of academic journals referring to AAN’s publications?

Have AAN’s publications been reviewed by academic journals?

Evidence of AAN’s publications use at universities and other academic organs.

How do government institutions (as primary policy makers for the country) see and use AAN's publications?

How do AAN's other target groups see and use AAN publications?

- ***Sustainability***

The evaluators should assess AAN's sustainability as an organisation.

The inception report shall suggest pertinent questions missing from the ToR.

Conclusions, recommendations on all of the above points and lessons learnt from AAN's many years of activities makes the most important feature and goal of this evaluation that will enable Sida make a more informed decision on the future of cooperation with AAN in 2014 and will be used for the development of next country strategy for Afghanistan.

Hence it is extremely important that the evaluation report draws precise and clear conclusions and recommendations as much as possible.

4. Scope and Delimitations

The scope of the evaluation can be seen as rather broad as AREU and AAN's areas of engagements are broad. However the evaluation is intended to focus more on the effects and more longer-term 'impact' of AREU and AAN's work which requires observation, study and analysis of trends of policy making and development decisions taken over the years (as covered by the evaluation) including current status of affairs of these issues.

Relating AREU and AAN's different research initiatives to the evolution of decision making and policy development in Afghanistan during the past decade or so, will likely to be challenging and demand focused and prioritised work and deep study of all these evolved trends and policies. At the same time, there will be a lot of interaction between the evaluators and external stakeholders (policymakers, donors, the World Bank, civil society, researchers, academic institutions and students) besides working closely on all matters with AREU and AAN themselves, as the nature of the evaluation (impact) suggests. Thus it is extremely important for the evaluators to focus, prioritise and plan how to conduct the evaluation after an initial and vital desk study by the end of which they will develop an inception report.

The evaluation is not intended to consider and study all policies developed in the country during the activity period covered, but the evaluators should keep in mind the end results (of research initiatives), signs of behaviour change, influence in decision making, either directly or indirectly, as a result of AREU and AAN's work. The evaluation is to be realistic as to what can and cannot be achieved i.e. to consider external uncontrollable factors (existing in Afghanistan) that may hamper or constrain policy change in Afghanistan which are beyond AREU and AAN's ability, scope and mission.

5. Methodology

Based on OECD/DAC's criteria for evaluations, the evaluation should focus on relevance & timeliness, quality, sustainability, and more importantly on impact of AREU and AAN's work for which adequate attention needs to be paid to the evolution process of different major policies in the country that are close to AREU and AAN areas of work. AREU and AAN rationale and criteria for selection and prioritisation of research initiative are to be compared with needs and important / critical issues at the time when initiatives were commenced. Rationale for not focusing on certain research topics could be considered and analysed as well.

The evaluation will receive input internally from AREU and AAN as well as during different interactions with other external institutions such as AREU and AAN target groups i.e. policy making institutions (primarily at the government), the World Bank, sister organisations, other donors (but not limiting to core support providers), civil society organisations, universities and libraries.

Hence the evaluation shall be carried out as follow:

During the first week, the evaluation team will conduct a desk study. All required information and documents such as AREU and AAN's statute, strategic plans, annual work plans, audit reports, any other internal and external assessments / evaluation(s) conducted in the past, major publications and any other specific information requested by the evaluation team, are to be sent digitally to the evaluation team by AREU and AAN and Sida (if needed). The evaluation team is expected to prepare an inception report based on their desk study and this ToR. The inception report is to be shared with Sida immediately after the desk study.

After the desk study, the team is expected to arrive in Kabul. And subsequently meet with Sida office in Kabul to discuss the inception report and clarify any pending issues.

The rest of the how-to will depend on the inception report and the clear and detailed methodology proposed there.

For the remaining evaluation process and reaching out to stakeholders, a combination of face to face, mail or telephone conversations can be used as appropriate (with regard to time, cost and response effectiveness).

At this point Sida does not foresee the need to visit provinces as most agencies/policy actors are based in Kabul. But this could change and the actual methodology will depend on the detailed plan drafted in the inception report.

The whole evaluation process should be as inclusive as possible and should reach the maximum number of stakeholder institutions (policy making institutions (primarily at the government), the World Bank, sister organisations, other donors (but not limited to core support providers), civil society organisations, universities and libraries, etc...) while maintaining and ensuring enough time and resources for proper analysis

of findings, reflections and drawing precise and reliable conclusions for the evaluation team.

Thus; Sida keeps it open for the evaluators to add aspects which they consider pertinent to the evaluation.

6. Time Schedule and Qualifications of Consultants

The evaluation process shall start October 1st 2013. The time is proposed to be spent as follow:

October 1 st – 7 th	Desk study at home (wherever the evaluation team is located) by the end of which an inception report detailing the methodology, work plan and distribution of tasks among the evaluators is to be drafted. It will also clarify any unclear issues with the evaluation questions.
October 8 th	The evaluation team meets with Sida office in Kabul to discuss the inception report and any other pending and unclear issues with the methodology and so on. And starts carrying out their activities based on the proposal in the inception report.
October 8 – 20	The evaluation team carries out its forecasted activities in the country.
October 21 st	Prior to their departure, the evaluation team meets with Sida office in Kabul and presents their initial findings. Sida may invite other embassy colleagues or other stakeholders such as other donors to this session.
October 28 th	The evaluation team sends draft evaluation report to Sida.
November 4 th	AREU and AAN, Sida Kabul and HQ, the embassy and (maybe other stakeholders) send their feedback and comments to the evaluation team.
November 14 th	The evaluation team sends out the final evaluation report.

Note: The consultants are responsible for all the logistical arrangements for their trip to Afghanistan, including visas and while in Afghanistan, setting up appointments with stakeholders, transport, security and accommodation.

Qualification of Consultants

The evaluation shall be carried out by a team of international and local consultants with expertise in conducting evaluations, international development cooperation and policy analysis and/or development.

Considering that this is an evaluation of two research institutions of many years of experience in Afghanistan, we expect the team leader to be of expert knowledge of development in conflict and post-conflict countries and specifically who has vast knowledge (recommended also working experience) of Afghanistan. Additionally having experience of evaluations of think-tanks or other types of research institutions is crucial.

Additionally, considering that many national stakeholders are involved i.e. various policy development and practicing entities at the government, it is highly recommended that the team consists of an expert Afghan national to ensure no communication problems occurs. A national expert is also vital for understanding and analysing reports produced in local languages. Additionally, the local expert should have proper knowledge of women and their issues in Afghanistan to understand the impact of both AREU and AAN work on this cross cutting issue.

Additional qualifications of the team shall be:

- Documented qualified experience from evaluations within relevant fields such as development cooperation, policy analysis and research projects/organisations.
- Knowledge of and experience of qualitative assessments, inspection and evaluation focusing on research, policy development and analysis.
- Knowledge and experience in interpretation of statistical information on broader range of issues and sectors.
- At least Master's degree in public policy or other relevant fields with a minimum of 5 years of professional experience.
- It is recommended that the team be gender balanced.

7. Reporting and Communication

Reporting timing and methods are explained above under heading 6 'Time Schedule and Qualifications of Consultants'.

The final report should specify and explain the methodology used in the final report. The final report should also specify explicitly all limitations and their consequences. The draft as well as the final reports shall be produced in electronic versions, the final report in PDF format. The main document of the final report shall not exceed 40 pages (excluding annexes) for each of the organisations and the report shall be written in English.

8. Resources

The budget for the evaluation should not exceed |

ANNEX 2 – INCEPTION REPORT

1. Introduction

Indevelop has been contracted to undertake the evaluation of two research organisations in Afghanistan: the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU) (2002-2013) and the Afghanistan Analysts Network (AAN) (2009-2013). Both evaluations will be carried out simultaneously by Tana Copenhagen and Indevelop jointly. This inception report outlines the suggested approach and methodology for the two evaluations as well as reflections on the Terms of Reference (ToR) and the implementation planning.

Given the similarities between the two organisations and that the evaluations have quite similar objectives (see section 3) and that the methodology suggested in section 5 is similar as well, it was suggested that the two evaluations be combined to some extent. Furthermore, combining these assignments will allow saving time, resources and limit costs as well as drawing broader conclusions about the support to policy analysis in Afghanistan. The evaluations have similar objectives and types of questions (see section 3). This approach may also optimise opportunities for utilisation of the evaluation findings as the evaluations are expected to be of interest to similar audiences.

A number of differences between the two organisations should however be stressed from the onset. These include:

- Years of operation: AREU has existed considerably longer than AAN
- Type of organisation: AAN is registered as a not-for profit independent research institution in Germany and Afghanistan, while AREU is independent research organisation located in Kabul with diplomatic status
- Structure and governance: AREU was set-up by the international community and hence has a board of directors with representation from the UN, NGOs, etc., while AAN the executive board is composed of 3 co-directors and staff of the organisation
- Mandate: while AREU aims both at informing policy and practice related to Afghanistan as well as promoting a culture of research, AAN aims primarily at the former
- Funding: AREU have received Swedish funding since 2002, AAN since 2009. AREU furthermore has a considerably larger budget than AAN.

The evaluations fall under the Swedish sector objective of ‘democracy, human rights and gender equality’. The objectives within this sector are:

- *Stärkta demokratiska institutioner och system för offentlig finansiell styrning samt ökad transparens i statsförvaltningen / Strengthening democratic institutions and systems for public financial management and increased transparency in public administration*
- *Kvinnor och flickors möjligheter att komma i åtnjutande av sina mänskliga rättigheter ska ha stärkts, liksom deras möjligheter att påverka*

samhällsutvecklingen / Women's and girls' opportunities to enjoy their human rights should be strengthened, as well as their ability to influence the state and society

- *Livskraftiga aktörer i det civila samhället samt oberoende och fria medier som bidrar till ökat ansvarsutkrävande och en mer transparent förvaltning / Viable actors in civil society, and independent and free media that contribute to greater accountability and a more transparent public management.*

2. Background

Below are first reflection on the background of the evaluations in terms of Afghan context and initial introduction to the two organisations.

2.1 Afghan Context

The period covered by this evaluation(s) ranges from 2002 (for AREU and 2009 for AAN), shortly after the fall of the Taliban to 2013, in the midst of the withdrawal of foreign forces from the country and uncertainty about what lies ahead. While Afghanistan made advances in those years, it remains a country facing immense development challenges and human rights violations. Women and girls are particularly affected.

Overall post-2001 context

After the 11 September 2001 attacks in the USA³⁰, the US initiated aerial attacks in Afghanistan in October 2001, paving the way for opposition groups to drive the Taliban from power and heralding a long-term, NATO-led military presence. UN Security Council in Resolution 1386 (December 2001) established an International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), which later came under NATO command. In January 2002, the first contingent of the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) arrived.

The UN-sponsored Bonn Conference in 2001 established a process for political reconstruction that included the adoption of a new constitution, a presidential election in 2004, and National Assembly elections in 2005. As a result of the Bonn Agreement, an interim administration took office. In June 2002, the United Nations oversaw an emergency loya jirga (gathering of representatives) that appointed a Transitional Administration (TA) to rule Afghanistan for a further two years. Interim leader Hamid Karzai won the votes of more than 80% of the delegates to become president and head of the TA. In January 2004, the Loya Jirga adopted the new constitution, which provides for strong presidency. The October-November 2004

³⁰ This overview is based on BBC's Afghanistan overview, complemented by a number of other sources.

Presidential elections declared Hamid Karzai winner and in September 2005 the first parliamentary elections in more than 30 years were held.

Predictions of the Taliban's demise after the adoption of the new constitution in 2004 proved to be premature as violence increased.

In October 2009, Mr Karzai was declared winner of the August presidential election. The Presidential and provincial elections were marred by widespread Taliban attacks, patchy turnout and claims of serious fraud. The September 2010 Parliamentary polls were also marred by such violence, widespread fraud and a long delay in announcing results.

Amid a rising death toll and the increasing unpopularity of the conflict among Western voters, pressure grew for a withdrawal of foreign forces. In 2012, NATO backed plans to hand over combat duties to Afghan forces by mid-2013. Some 130,000 NATO-led combat troops will leave Afghanistan by December 2014. According to Human Rights Watch, “many Afghans feel enormous anxiety as the 2014 deadline for withdrawing international combat forces from Afghanistan looms and warlords and other powerbrokers jockey for position”³¹.

Development challenges

Afghanistan faces immense development challenges. Afghanistan’s Human Development Index (HDI) value for 2012 is in the low human development category (0.374, even low for the regional average), positioning the country at 175 out of 187 countries and territories. 36% of the population live below the poverty line. Poverty is particularly strong in rural areas. The country’s human, physical and institutional infrastructure, long underdeveloped, has been crippled by over three decades of war. Despite significant improvements in the past decade, low capacity and ongoing conflict continue to undermine Afghan government institutions and their ability to deliver basic services, justice and security.

Afghanistan has a Gender Inequality Index (GII) value of 0.712, ranking it 147 out of 148 countries in the 2012 index. In Afghanistan, 27.6% of parliamentary seats are held by women, and 5.8% of adult women have reached a secondary or higher level of education compared to 34% of their male counterparts. For every 100,000 live births, 460 women die from pregnancy related causes; and the adolescent fertility rate is 99.6 births per 1000 live births. Female participation in the labour market is 15.7% compared to 80.3 for men.

³¹ Human Rights Watch Afghanistan Page, consulted in October 2013:
<http://www.hrw.org/en/asia/afghanistan>

Human Rights in Afghanistan

According to human rights observers³², main human rights challenges include:

- Violence against women,
- While freedom of expression and association of the media and political parties were hailed as one of the few clear human rights success stories since 2001, these rights came increasingly under threat in 2012, including through new legislation, targeting of individual journalists and the crackdown on a political party that advocates prosecuting warlords.
- Protection of civilians: the country is exposed to widespread violence and civilian casualties remain alarmingly high. The Afghan Local Police commits numerous abuses. Taliban laws-of-war violations against civilians also continue.

Other violations include abuse of prisoners and detainees, preventing human rights defenders' work and curtailing transitional justice (especially the dismissal of 3 commissioners of the Afghan Human Rights Commission in December 2011). The US State Department *Report on Human Rights Practices for 2012*³³ adds pervasive official corruption; extrajudicial killings by security forces; ineffective government investigations of abuses and torture by local security forces; arbitrary arrest and detention, particularly of women accused of so called "moral crimes"; prolonged pretrial detention; judicial corruption and ineffectiveness; violations of privacy rights; restrictions on freedom of religion; limits on freedom of movement; underage and forced marriages; abuse of children, including sexual abuse; discrimination and abuses against ethnic minorities; trafficking in persons; discrimination against persons with disabilities; societal discrimination based on race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, and HIV/AIDS status; abuse of worker rights; and sex and labour trafficking. Widespread disregard for the rule of law and official impunity for those who committed human rights abuses are also serious violations.

Afghanistan remains under preliminary analysis by the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court. Since 2007, the court has been looking into allegations of crimes, including killings, torture and other forms of ill treatment, use of human shields, abductions, punishments by parallel judicial structures, recruitment of child soldiers, attacks on protected objects.

³² Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2013: Events of 2012*, Consulted in October 2013: <http://www.hrw.org/world-report/2013/country-chapters/afghanistan>, AIHRC Annual Report 1389, and UNHCR briefings.

³³ US Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2012: Afghanistan*, consulted in October 2013: <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm#wrapper>

Civil society in Afghanistan

While the constitution provides for freedom of speech and of the press, the government restricts these rights in practice. The government also imposes restrictions on curricula and research it deems un-Islamic, requiring prior approval of “concerned ministries and institutions,” such as the Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs.

Since 2001, Afghanistan has witnessed an expansion of civil society. However, the latter’s relation to the power-holders in the country is under-developed and they are often looked at with suspicion.

Freedom House’s 2012 *Freedom in the World Report* stresses that the work of hundreds of international and Afghan nongovernmental organisations is not formally constrained by the authorities, but their ability to operate freely and effectively is impeded by the worsening security situation and increasingly restrictive bureaucratic rules. Civil society activists, particularly those who focus on human rights or accountability issues, continue to face threats and harassment.

A 2010 study on civil society development in Afghanistan carried out by LSE³⁴ found that CSOs expressed “feelings of powerlessness engendered by the deteriorating security situation with their views not being taken into account and the relatively little collective action”. It goes on to mention that The Government, like donors, were thought to be reluctant to consult or trust civil society. This included scepticism about the extent to which civil society was taken into consideration in conferences held to discuss the future of Afghanistan, despite the holding of a number of civil society conferences on the margins of these.

National and International Efforts

In line with the above, Afghanistan’s Poverty Reduction strategy Paper adopted in 2008 (*Afghanistan National Development Strategy 2008-2013*) is built on three pillars: i. Security, ii. Governance, Rule of law and Human Rights and iii. Economic and Social Development. As mentioned above, the government’s capacity to deliver required services is seriously constrained, and the situation is compounded by corruption, impunity and a general lack of rule of law.

Since late 2001³⁵, Afghanistan has become a major site of concentration of international aid, security and military resources. Between 2002 and 2009, US\$26.7

³⁴ Winter, E., *Civil Society Development in Afghanistan*, June 2010, consulted in October 2013: http://www.lse.ac.uk/internationalDevelopment/research/NGPA/publications/winter_afghanistan_report_final.pdf

³⁵ Poole, L., *Afghanistan: Tracking major resource flows, 2002-2010*, January 2011, consulted in Octo-

billion in aid was spent in Afghanistan. By 2009, Afghanistan was the leading global recipient of official development assistance (ODA), for the second consecutive year. Afghanistan also hosts the world's largest and most costly international peacekeeping force. Volumes of funding in support of building the security sector and of counter-narcotics activities are difficult to trace but totalled at least US\$16.1 billion by 2009.

The UN has adopted a harmonised programme cycle in Afghanistan, first as a UN Integrated Transitional Assistance Programme (ITAP) prepared in January 2002, later a UNDAF the last of which supports the Afghanistan National Development Strategy and runs from 2010 to 2013. It is important to note that Afghanistan benefits both from humanitarian and Development assistance. The humanitarian community too has integrated its planning under the *Common Humanitarian Action Plan for Afghanistan* (CHAP).

A number of events, conferences and strategies should be mentioned to illustrate Afghanistan and in the International Community's efforts to address the country's challenges:

- 2002: Tokyo donor conference (recovery and reconstruction)
- 2004: Berlin Donor Conference (recovery, reform and development)
- 2006: Afghan Compact (poverty reduction, aid effectiveness - Successor to the Bonn Agreement; defined principles of cooperation for 2006–11. Agreed pillars of activity: security; governance, rule of law and human rights; economic and social development.)
- 2008: Paris declaration (reconstruction and development - Donors expressed commitments in support of the Afghan National Development Strategy).
- 2009: The Hague Conference (good governance, economic growth, security - Participants stressed the need for greater Afghan ownership of security and economic development.)
- 2010: London Conference (security, anti-corruption, reconciliation)
- 2010: Kabul Conference (security handover)
- 2012: Tokyo donors' conference (security, development, anti corruption, regional cooperation, private sector and civil society)

Human Rights Watch³⁶ regrets that international support to the promotion of human rights has been insufficient and remarks amongst others that political pressure on the government to respect women's rights has gone down in 2012, and that commitments to support human rights made during the 2012 Tokyo conference are "glaringly short on details". The organisation goes on to mention that "Diplomats admit behind closed

ber 2013: <http://www.globalhumanitarianassistance.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/gha-Afghanistan-2011-major-resource-flows.pdf>

³⁶ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2012*, *Op. Cit.*

doors that willingness to continue high-level support to Afghanistan is fading fast, and the planned military drawdown by 2014 is already prompting further disengagement when it comes to using political pressure and providing aid. Cuts in international aid are already leading to the closure of some schools and health clinics.”

2.2 Background on the AREU-Sida Cooperation

AREU is an independent Afghanistan-based research institute.

AREU aspires to contribute to the development of inclusive and transparent policymaking processes, driven by the priorities of the Afghan people, with the aim to give rise to better informed policies and programmes that improve Afghan lives. To achieve this vision AREU works to promote inquiry, inspire debate and enhance analysis. AREU’s commitment to building capacity today is expected to shape the future face of research in Afghanistan.

AREU was established in 2002 by the assistance community working in Afghanistan and has a board of directors with representation from donors, the United Nations and other multilateral agencies, and non-governmental organisations. It was set-up building upon the international community’s experience with the Strategic Monitoring Unit (SMU), envisaged as part of the UN’s 1998 Strategic Framework for Afghanistan.

AREU donor’s are: the Royal Norwegian Embassy, the European Commission, the Netherlands Embassy, the Finnish Embassy, Sida, United States Institute for Peace (USIP), UNWOMEN, the Overseas Development Institute, the International Development Research Centre, the Swiss Development Agency, the Danish Embassy and UNDP. AREU receives both restricted and unrestricted grants. In 2012, 57% of the funds received (2.8 million USD) were unrestricted.

Sida has been supporting AREU with core support since 2002. In 2012, Sida financed AREU with over 750.000 USD, 90% of which were unrestricted. Sida was the organisation’s largest unrestricted donor, with over 40% of AREU’s unrestricted funds for that year. Sida’s contributions made up 26.5% of AREU’s contributions for 2012.

2.3 Background on the AAN and its cooperation with Sida

AAN is an independent non-profit policy research organisation registered in Germany and Afghanistan. It was founded in February 2009 on the premise that the need for information, analysis and strategic policy advice about Afghanistan is steadily increasing.

Box 1: AREU’s mission

- Inform and influence policy and practice through conducting high-quality, policy-relevant research and actively disseminating the results,
- Promote a culture of research and learning.

To achieve its mission, AREU engages with policymakers, civil society, researchers and students to promote their use of AREU’s research and its library, to strengthen their research capacity and to create opportunities for analysis, reflection and debate.

AAN functions on core funding. Sweden contributed to the establishment of AAN in 2009 (through Ministry of Foreign Affairs). Sida has been supporting AAN since 2011. Since 2010 Norway has joined Sweden in financing the organisation. In 2011, a donor consortium was created (Sweden, Norway, Denmark and the Netherlands). It is led by Sweden. Sida's current funding covers the period from 1 February 2011 to 31 January 2014.

The current AAN 3 year (2011 - 2013) programme entitled "Afghanistan's Transition:

Unpacking Local, National and Regional Politics" aims (1) to consolidate AAN's position as reputable, influential and credible source of information and analysis on Afghanistan and (2) to expand the level of analysis and range of subjects to match the increasing complexity of a country in transition.

Box 2: AAN's mission

- Provide independent, timely, detailed and in-depth political analysis and policy research on Afghanistan (political and social developments) to a wide range of policy makers and researchers, as well as to the general public; and in doing so to
- Contribute to a greater understanding of the country and its region and to
- Contribute to the formulation of policy interventions that contribute to long-term stability in Afghanistan.

3. Assessment of scope of the evaluation

The scope of the evaluation is based on the directions given in the ToR and the dialogue on the proposal between Sida and Indevlop.

3.1 Reflections on the ToR

According to the Terms of Reference (ToR), the purpose of this evaluation is to assess the impact, relevance, timeliness and quality of the AREU as well as the AAN research, as well as the organisational and financial sustainability of the two organisations against the specific questions outlined in the ToR. The findings and recommendations will provide inputs to the organisations to assist these in further enhancing their performance as well as to Sida to assist in the decisions on further support to the two organisations and feed into the new country strategy.

Specifically for both organisations, the team will assess:

- 1) Impact
- 2) Relevance and timeliness of research initiatives
- 3) Quality of publications
- 4) Sustainability

As mentioned in the proposal, the requirements and expectations outlined in the ToR are clear and concise to the team and will be responded to in the implementation of the assignment. The team notes that the following was agreed with the Embassy of Sweden in the proposal negotiation process:

- 1) OECD-DAC criteria will form the basis of the full methodology development to be outlined in this report.

- 2) A core challenge in the evaluation is to determine what constitutes the ‘Impact’ of policy analysis. Impact refers to the intended and unintended longer-term effects of the interventions assessed. Given the magnitude of assessing impact in this complex setting, where multiple factors beyond the research institutions influence impact, the evaluation will have a stronger focus on assessing outcomes (i.e. influence on decisions and/or creation of transparency and inclusiveness in decision-making process). This is also, closely aligned with the suggested questions under Impact on p 7 and 9 in the ToR.
- 3) In relation to (1) and (2), the ToR refers specifically to impact, relevance and sustainability but does not explicitly (though implicitly) refer to effectiveness and efficiency, though the questions related to quality can be understood as largely being congruent with effectiveness (i.e., does the work of AREU and AAN have appropriate qualities to exert intended policy influence). The evaluation questions have been realigned with all five criteria (see matrices below). This will include refocusing the quality questions to be more explicitly directed at effectiveness, e.g. the extent to which publications/inputs have been effective in informing and influencing decisions, as well as the extent to which they have contributed to an environment for policy formation that utilises evidence. A key element of this will include the extent to which the research processes, publications and other forms of outreach and interaction with decision-makers (non-publication activities) have been structured in a timely, inclusive and appropriate manner. The use of the five criteria allows for a realignment and simplification of the questions posed in the ToR to more explicitly refer to – and be measured against – the OECD-DAC criteria.

3.2 What to evaluate

The policies that AREU and AAN seek to influence³⁷ include a range of formal and informal decisions, the trend of policy making, some documented and some not. Some of these processes are led by the government, whereas in many cases this influence is directed toward the decision-makers of the international community and the priorities of Afghan civil society. In the latter two cases this influence is on the organisations that in turn seek to influence the government and also in their own resource allocations that effectively enable or constrain government policy making and implementation. AREU and AAN seek to exert this influence by using evidence about the social, political and economic changes underway in the country, and/or the ways existing policies are impacting on the people of Afghanistan and the societal changes that are underway. In some respects this evaluation can be seen as

³⁷ The team notes that AAN stress that trying to influence policy developments in Afghanistan is also about ‘informing’ (embarrassing, witnessing, watchdog functions, etc.) as a form of influence.

‘evaluating the evaluators’. Note that AAN has to some extent a regional dimension (transcending Afghanistan), which is however not the primary focus of the evaluation.

Jones³⁸ suggests that there are five processes that are targeted when influencing policy: attitudinal change, discursive commitments (i.e. the language used to frame arguments for a given policy), procedural change, policy content, and behavioural change (including policy implementation). The revised questions related to relevance, effectiveness and impact in Table 4.1 below are structured so as to better unpack outcomes in relation to these five processes.

The evaluation team is concerned that the questions proposed in the ToRs may overemphasise qualities of publications as conventionally judged in academia. Whereas peer reviewed publications and the academic discourse is one way to influence policy, in our initial review of the work of AREU and AAN we judge that this is not a major priority channel. We therefore suggest giving greater priority to first determining the theory of change³⁹ by which the two organisations intend to exert policy influence and then look at the extent to which stakeholders perceive the relevance, credibility and effectiveness of their work. In addition to the fieldwork in Afghanistan, the evaluation team will also assess a selection of the major publications of the two organisations regarding the plausibility that these publications will contribute to the five policy change processes noted above. This plausibility will be iteratively triangulated with the findings from the fieldwork. It should be stressed, however, that the evaluation team recognises that the actual publications may have less intrinsic value than the processes that surround the production of these outputs.

3.3 Utilisation and audience

The team would like to see full utilisation of the evaluation as a way of learning for the involved stakeholders. We expect that this evaluation will provide lessons learned to all key stakeholders including AREU, AAN, Sida and AREU and AAN partners in Afghanistan, including other donors.

Four activities and events are of particular importance to Sida and AREU and AAN lessons learning process:

- 1) The feedback on the inception report to ensure that AREU, AAN and Sida will have an evaluation product, which fully live up to their expectations of utilisation

³⁸ Jones, Harry (2011) A Guide to Monitoring and Evaluating Policy Influence. ODI Background Note February 2011.

³⁹ <http://www.theoryofchange.org/what-is-theory-of-change/#5>

- 2) The discussions with the partners during the implementation, which will allow for reflection and learning of partners
- 3) The mid-term debriefing will enable reflections and learning on preliminary findings
- 4) The final report in December

The team also welcomes suggestions from Sida and AREU and AAN on how to engage different groups of stakeholders to better understand how they expect to use this evaluation in their work, what kinds of decisions the evaluation may support and what kinds of data/information are expected to be most useful for these decisions. Furthermore, it should be noted that the rephrasing of the evaluation questions related to quality/effectiveness in a more open-ended manner is intended to promote utility by ensuring that the stakeholders in the evaluation process feel that the focus is on ‘qualities’ that they perceive as relevant in relation to their work. Initial interviews have generated indications that an undue focus on academic criteria could be detrimental to ownership of the evaluation findings. This has been taken into account as indicated in the previous section on “what to evaluate”.

The team is aware of possible negative impacts and reputational risks the evaluation process could have (e.g. perceiving that the organisation no longer has donor support because critical questions are being asked), especially vis-à-vis government partners in Afghanistan and will take all relevant measures to minimise these.

4. Relevance and evaluability of evaluation questions

With the considerations outlined in the sections above in mind, we feel confident that the assignment is feasible and suggest it be implemented based on the methodology and implementation plan outlined in this document. That is, the time and resources available are assessed to suffice to make a qualitative evaluation in line with the ToR, however with a focus on outcome rather than impact.

The scope of the evaluation means that the findings will be based on desk studies combined with key informant interviews. The evaluation will thus first and foremost rely on qualitative data, but relate to quantitative data as well. Mapping adaptation of recommendations in policy and development priorities is best captured through qualitative assessments.

4.1 Data availability

As requested, the team has received requested information from AREU and AAN. The team will assess this documentation and revert to AREU, AAN and Sida with requests for further documentation if required.

In addition to the desk study, the team will be collecting data during the field visit, as well as in the interactions with AREU, AAN and Sida during the course of the implementation. Finally, Skype-interviews with selected interviewees will provide additional data.

4.2 Assessment of evaluation topics and suggested evaluation questions

The team finds the evaluation questions clear and find the evaluation implementable if the questions are revised in accordance with the recommendations outlined in table 4.1 and 4.2 below (one for each evaluation). The revised questions are based on an assessment of the ToR as well as the initial dialogue with Sida on evaluation expectations. The revised questions also suggest pertinent questions missing.

A total of 28 evaluation questions to AREU and 24 to AAN are outlined in the ToR. While many similarities exist between the two sets of questions, differences are justified by the different mandates and characteristics of the organisations. To enhance focus and enable greater flexibility for the evaluation a number of these questions have been merged as suggested in the two tables below. This does not mean that the team will not be answering the evaluation questions outlined in the ToR to the same level of detail, but it will allow for a more coherent approach focusing on the individual questions as part of a larger evaluation issue. This will also be used as an interview guide for the team.

Table 4.1 Revised evaluation questions for AREU

Evaluation topic identified in ToR	Comment	Suggested evaluation question
Relevance		
R.1.1 How strategic and timely were the decisions on research initiatives? How relevant and timely were the research initiatives in comparison to highlights of that time, upcoming policies, elections, expected legislation in the parliament, international donor conferences and so on	Agreed. Question focused	R.A.1 Are the topics and timings (research strategy and implementation) of the AREU research relevant to the political and contextual developments in Afghanistan? Given that Sweden's development cooperation is aligned with the Afghanistan National Development Strategy and the National Priority Programmes, how has AREU's research agenda reflected these entry points for policy development?
R.1.2 How relevant are AREU's areas of engagement to Sida's country strategy (overall goal and sector objectives)?	Relevant. Slight revision	R.A.2 Are AREU's areas of engagement relevant to Sweden's country strategy sectoral objective of democracy, human rights and gender equality and Sweden's overall policies related to democracy, human rights and gender equality, including attention to the perspectives of the poor?
R.1.3 Evidence and extent of relevance and timeliness of research	Addressed under I.A.1 and E.A.2	

Evaluation topic identified in ToR	Comment	Suggested evaluation question
initiatives leading to better and more influence on policy actors?		
Effectiveness*		
E.1.1 How and to what extent, do other institutions depend and refer to AREU's work and publications in their planning and analysis?	E.1.1 – E.1.7 (except for E.1.5) all relate to the quality of AREU's processes and publications and are suggested merged as well as their use. It is suggested complemented with E.A.2	E.A.1 How and to what extent do institutions judge that AREU's work has influenced their attitudes, discourse, procedures, actual policies and policy implementation? E.A.2 Which aspects of AREU's work (publications, seminars, dialogue, etc.) do stakeholders perceive as being most/least credible and useful? E.A.3 What are the factors that determine that determine the utility and credibility of different aspects of AREU's work?
E.1.2 Number and type of academic journals referring to AREU's publications?	See E.A.1.1-3	
E.1.3 Have AREU's publications been reviewed by academic journals?	See E.A.1.1-3	
E.1.4 Evidence of AREU's publications use at universities and other academic organs	See E.A.1.1-3	
E.1.5 How do government institutions (as primary policy makers for the country) see and use AREU publications?	We suggest that this question is integrated under impact	
E.1.6 How does AREU's other target groups see and use AREU publications?	See E.A.1.1-3	
E.1.7 How effective are AREU's methodologies for reaching out to its intended audience?	See E.A.1.1-3	
	From I.1.7.	E.A.4 Has AREU been effective in developing the capacities of Afghan staff researchers and other collaborating Afghan researchers / research institutions?

Evaluation topic identified in ToR	Comment	Suggested evaluation question
Efficiency		
No questions posed in ToR	Will be included if evaluation findings indicate need for assessment of efficiency	
Impact (outcome)		
I.1.1 How has AREU contributed to ‘inform and influence policy and practice through ... research’ – as its mission states?	Slight revision	I.A.1 To what extent has AREU contributed to influence policies, policy processes and behaviour of key actors in Afghanistan (both government and other, including international)?
I.1.2 How has AREU contributed to promotion of a ‘culture of research and learning’?	Slight revision	I.A.2 How, and with whom has AREU contributed to creating a culture of debate and research? Are women, men and different ethnic groups part of this ‘culture of research and learning’?
I.1.3 How has AREU engaged with civil society, researchers and students in all aspects of their work?	Slight revision	I.A.3 To what extent do civil society and the Afghan academic community judge that AREU has enabled them to act more effectively in influencing the government and donors in relation to attitudes, discourse, procedures, actual policies and policy implementation?
I.1.4 ‘AREU creates opportunities for analysis, reflection and debate’ – How? Are there examples and tangible results out of these?	Effectively merged with I.A.2	
I.1.5 How has AREU contributed to ‘development of inclusive and transparent policy making processes’?	Slight revision	I.A.4 To what extent has AREU contributed to enhanced transparency to generate greater accountability between rights holders and duty bearers?
I.1.6 Number of instances where to-be-developed or developed policies were influenced for better changes? An example would be development of the 22 National Priority	It is not likely that this can be quantified. Case studies will be developed to	

Evaluation topic identified in ToR	Comment	Suggested evaluation question
Programmes (NPPs).	illustrate these policy changes in relation to the other questions related to impact	
I.1.7 How has AREU contributed to building capacity in order to ‘shape the future face of research in Afghanistan’ in their work so far?	Slightly revised and moved to effectiveness E.A.4.	
I.1.8 Have AREU included cross cutting issues such as environment, gender and anti-corruption, conflict sensitivity in their work? How influential were these in relation to policy actors?	Slight revision	I.A.5 Do AREU’s policy influence efforts take into account the implications of proposed changes in relation to environmental sustainability, gender equality, creation of institutional environments conducive to minimising corruption and factors related to conflict? How influential were these in relation to the perspectives and actions of policy makers and civil society efforts to influence policy?
I.1.9 How have AREU publications influenced primarily government policies (proof of change of behaviour or policies) and also other main actors such as the World Bank?	Effectively covered under I.A.1 and I.A.3	
I.1.10 How and to what extent does AREU contribute to and influence better decision and policy making in Afghanistan?	See I.A.1	
I.1.11 Were there any unforeseen beneficial / detrimental impacts from AREU’s work?	Will be addressed across all questions and not defined as stand-alone	
I.1.12 How does AREU relate to and contribute to the realisation of Sida’s development agenda and goals in Afghanistan?	Suggest that this is covered under relevance as R.A.2	
Sustainability		
S.1.1 How broad is AREU’s financial base or on the contrary how dependent is AREU on core funding of donors?	S.1.1, 1.2, 1.5 all relate to medium- to long-term financial sustainability and are	S.A.1 What factors will determine the medium - to long-term financial sustainability of AREU?

Evaluation topic identified in ToR	Comment	Suggested evaluation question
	suggested merged	
S.1.2 What happens if donors stop their core support to AREU, does AREU have any plans to sustain if donors withheld their funding?	See S.1.1	
S.1.3 What happens to the vast accumulated knowledge / library that AREU has gathered in its life-time if donors withheld their funding?	It is suggested that the focus is on the sustainability of the knowledge generated	S.A.2 How is the knowledge generated at AREU sustained?
S.1.4 Ratio of international versus afghan exerts – How has AREU developed national staff capacity to sustain its life on the long run?	The international/national ratio discussion is based on an assumption of influence. It is suggested the question is revised towards capacity development. In addition the question also relates to relevance (must be relevant to be sustainable)	S.A.3 Are the capacity development efforts of AREU as an institution (and for national staff) relevant and sustainable?
S.1.5 Where does AREU see itself in 5 – 10 years, how does it plan to operate (financially) during that time?	See S.1.1	
S.1.6 How does AREU cooperate with other Afghan research institutes and think-tanks including government bodies such as Central Statistics Office?	Given that the question ranks under ‘sustainability in the ToR it is suggested revised to focus on this	S.A.4 Is the cooperation with Afghan institutions (both government and research institutes) enhancing the sustainability of AREU and leading to enhanced Afghan ownership and leadership in creating and maintaining a ‘culture of research and learning’ in Afghanistan?

* *Quality will be included under effectiveness for assessment of research question*

Table 4.2 Revised evaluation questions for AAN

Evaluation topic identified in ToR	Comment	Suggested evaluation question
Relevance		
R.2.1 How strategic and timely were the decisions on research initiatives? How relevant and timely the research initiatives were in comparison to highlights of that time, upcoming policies, elections, expected legislation in the parliament, international donor conferences, transition and so on. Research on issues at margins or neglected are to be considered as relevant as well	Agreed. Question focused. The issue of marginalised/orphaned topics is indirectly included in questions (and with AAN as well)	R.B.1 Are the topics and timings (research strategy and implementation) of the AAN research relevant to the political and contextual developments in Afghanistan? Given that Sweden's development cooperation is aligned with the Afghanistan National Development Strategy and the National Priority Programmes, how has AAN's research agenda reflected these entry points for policy development?
R.2.2 How relevant are AANs areas of engagement to Sida's country strategy (overall goal and sector objectives)?	Relevant. Slightly revised	R.B.2 Are AAN's areas of engagement relevant to Sweden's country strategy under the sectoral objective of democracy, human rights and gender equality and Sweden's overall policies related to democracy, human rights and gender equality, including attention to the perspectives of the poor?
R.2.3 Evidence and extent of relevance and timeliness of research initiatives leading to better and more influence on policy actors?	Addressed under I.B.1 and E.B.2	
R.2.4 How effective are AAN's methodologies for reaching out to its intended audience?	Addressed under effectiveness E.B.3	
		R.B.3 How does AAN contribute to the realisation of Sweden's development agenda in Afghanistan?
Effectiveness*		
E.2.1 How and to what extent, do other institutions depend and refer to AAN's work and publications in their planning and analysis?	E.2.1 – E.2.4 and E.2.5 all relate to the quality of AAN's processes and	E.B.1 How and to what extent do institutions judge that AAN's work has influenced their attitudes, discourse,

Evaluation topic identified in ToR	Comment	Suggested evaluation question
	publications and are suggested merged as well as their use. It is suggested complemented with E.B.2	<p>procedures, actual policies and policy implementation?</p> <p>E.B.2 Which aspects of AAN's work (publications, seminars, dialogue, etc.) do stakeholders perceive as being most/least credible and useful?</p> <p>E.B.3 What are the factors that determine that determine the utility and credibility of different aspects of AAN's work?</p>
E.2.2 Number and type of academic journals referring to AAN's publications?	See E.B.1-3	
E.2.3 Have AAN's publications been reviewed by academic journals?	See E.B.1-3	
E.2.4 Evidence of AAN's publications use at universities and other academic organs	See E.B.1-3	
E.2.5 How do government institutions (as primary policy makers for the country) see and use AAN's publications?	We suggest that this question is largely covered under E.B.1-3 and also integrated under impact	
E.2.6 How do AAN's other target groups see and use AAN publications?	See E.B.1-3	
	Question I.2.12	E.B.4 Is AAN's cooperation with other Afghan research institutions contributing to AAN's effectiveness?
Efficiency		
No questions posed in ToR	Will be included if evaluation findings indicate need for assessment of efficiency	
Impact		
I.2.1 How does AAN contribute to 'formulation of policy interventions that contribute to long-term stability in Afghanistan'?	From an impact perspective the question has been slightly refocused to	I.B.1 How and to what extent has AAN contributed to influence policies and policy process in Afghanistan?

Evaluation topic identified in ToR	Comment	Suggested evaluation question
	policy influence	
I.2.2 How has AAN contributed to ‘greater understanding of Afghan realities’?	Question has been refocused to be more explicit	I.B.2 Has AAN contributed to a greater understanding of the realities facing duty bearers and rights holders in Afghanistan and have these ‘realities’ been disaggregated to reflect the conditions facing women and men, and different age and ethnic groups?
I.2.3 How has AAN contributed to ‘provision of a platform for individuals with in-depth knowledge of Afghanistan to promote greater understanding of Afghan realities’?	Slight revision combined with I.2.4 and I.2.5	I.B.3 How has AAN contributed to ‘provision of a platform for individuals with in-depth knowledge of Afghanistan to promote greater understanding of Afghan realities’ and who (in relation to gender, age, ethnicity, government/civil society/academia, etc.) is part of these platforms?
I.2.4 How has AAN ensured ‘inclusion of a broad range of “Afghan voices” in policy discussions’?	Covered as part of I.B.3	
I.2.5 How has AAN contributed to ‘development of inclusive and transparent policy making processes’?	Covered as part of I.B.3	
I.2.6 Have AAN included cross cutting issues such as environment, gender and anti-corruption, conflict sensitivity in their work? How influential were these in relation to policy actors?	Slight revision	I.B.4 Do AAN’s policy influence efforts take into account the implications of proposed changes in relation to environmental sustainability, gender equality, creation of institutional environments conducive to minimising corruption and factors related to conflict? How influential were these in relation to policy actors?
I.2.7 How have AAN publications influenced the international policy making in Afghanistan? Has their work led to better planning on the	Addressed in I.B.1 and E.B.1-3	

Evaluation topic identified in ToR	Comment	Suggested evaluation question
International Community part? For example have they pushed donors to reach to more deprived areas, or to be more cost effective, or to be more aligned with Afghan realities on the ground in their planning and analysis of their programming or while shaping their country strategies?		
I.2.8 How AAN demonstrates links to development issues in their publications?	Assessed to be an assumption rather than impact	
I.2.9 Were there any unforeseen beneficial / detrimental impacts from AAN's work?	Will be addressed across all questions and not defined as stand-alone	
I.2.10 How does AAN relate to Sida's development agenda and goals in Afghanistan?	Suggest that this is slightly rephrased and addressed under relevance as R.B.3	
I.2.11 How do AAN's target audience (different policy makers) see and use AAN publications?	Addressed in E.B.1-3	
I.2.12 How does AAN cooperate with other and in particular local research organisations?	The question relates more to 'how' than to a specific evaluation question. It is suggested moved to effectiveness and revised	
Sustainability		
S.B.1 The evaluators should assess AAN's sustainability as an organisation	Agreed. Minor revision	S.B.1 Is AAN a sustainable organisation?

* *Quality will be included under effectiveness for assessment of research question*

5. Proposed approach and methodology

The approach and methodology have been designed based on the ToR and as presented in the proposal. The key instrument for this evaluation will be the evaluation matrix, which will guide the evaluators in their work. This will be complemented by supporting methodologies such as Time-Context-Relevance analysis; and research quality analysis and be quality assured through a targeted interview identification process and evidence triangulation.

5.1 Evaluation matrix

The major evaluation tool designed for this evaluation will be the evaluation matrix. The matrix is aligned with the OECD/DAC criteria, and the team will use the OECD/DAC definitions of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability.

The matrix is an internal evidence tool, which ensures that all responses and desk work are captured and triangulated in accordance with the evaluation questions, and that these can be derived and aggregated for the report. All team members will use the same format for the data collection to ensure that all areas are covered and that there is consistency in the application of the methodology. A sample of the matrix is presented in table 5.1 below, while the two matrices (once for each evaluation) are presented in Annex 2.

Table 5.1 Matrix to be used for the evaluations of AREU and AAN respectively

Suggested evaluation question	Answer from desk analysis or interview	Date and initials	Source	Comment
Relevance				
1.1 Example: R.A.2 Is AAN's areas of engagement relevant to Sida's country strategy?	Example: Desk review shows linkages between Sida priority area XX and AAN research area XX	23/10/13 – EB	Desk review of G1	G1 in draft format only
Effectiveness				
Efficiency				
Sustainability				

The matrix will serve as a background tool for the evaluation team and will not be shared beyond the team to ensure anonymity of interviewees.

Interviews will be conducted using a semi-structured interview guide aligned with the questions of the evaluation matrix presented above. This approach is aimed at ensuring that all questions are answered and at the same time leave room for the respondent to go more in-depth with issues of particular importance.

5.2 Quality and outcomes of policy influence

As highlighted above, policy influence will be assessed within an overall focus on five sets of targeted changes/processes: 1) attitudes, 2) discourse, 3) procedures, 4) policy content, and 5) behaviour. Review of AAN and AREU activities and outputs will be undertaken based on a light theory of change for achieving these outcomes. The latter will be developed together with AREU, AAN and the Embassy of Sweden.

The quality of the work of the organisations will be assessed in two ways, first, in relation to the perceptions of interviewees, and second by looking at the plausibility that published outputs will contribute to outcome achievements. The following approach will be applied to 2-3 case studies of policy initiatives undertaken over the past four years by each organisation.

1. Theory of change: What were the implicit and explicit assumptions regarding how the initiative was intended to contribute to changes in attitudes, discourse, procedures, policy content and behaviour?
2. Quality of outputs and activities: What were the contributing factors and to what extent were the outputs and activities seen by interviewees to have been credible and useful in contributing to changes in attitudes, discourse, procedures, policy content and behaviour?
3. Relevance of outputs (primarily publications): To what extent do outputs reflect inclusive analysis which brings out the implications of intended policy change in relation to enhancing the participation of right holders, the accountability of duty bearers, ethnic and gender (non)discrimination, environmental sustainability, and public sector transparency?
4. Perceived impact of the initiatives: Examples of changes in attitudes, discourse, procedures, policy content and behaviour.

It is foreseen that the majority of the case studies (3 case studies per organisation in total) will be selected in coordination with AREU and AAN. We argue that by using best practices identified by the respective organisations, useful information will be gathered regarding the process and important lessons can be learned. It is also clear that while the organisations will select examples which were successful according to their standards, critical elements are also likely to emerge as well. This will provide a basis for assessing the optimal case scenario of how far the organisations have come in their work processes. The organisations will be asked to submit a gross list of case studies to be examined further. The case studies will be chosen so as to represent contrasting topics in relation to sectoral focus, and contextual analysis versus direct policy focus. Emphasis will be given to case studies where there is an overlap with Swedish development concerns in Afghanistan.

When stakeholders report that certain factors are major determinants of credibility and utility, further analyses will be done of these factors (e.g., language of publication, readability, citations in peer reviewed publications, etc.). The evaluation team will enquire about these criteria in the course of the evaluation and respond accordingly. In addition, the evaluators will duly note any obvious inaccuracies, logical inconsistencies or other apparent deficiencies in the publications.

5.3 Timeliness and relevance

The effectiveness of the work of AREU is very dependent on the extent to which research initiatives and specific dialogue activities and release of publications are timed in relation to windows of opportunity for greatest policy influence. The

ToRs therefore suggest that timeliness is an aspect of quality which should be given particular attention.

To assess this the team will undertake a mapping exercise across time. Through desk reviews and interviews the team will identify the timing of: relevant contextual developments in Afghanistan; key Government and donor dialogue initiatives; and the main activities and outputs of AAN and AREU respectively. These findings will be plotted into an annotated Time-Context- Relevance (TCR) diagram to illustrate relevance and probability of effectiveness (based on the assumption that the output must be relevant to be effective).

An indication of relevance will also be the internet usage of the products produced. Using web-base tools, the team will seek to assess this in a certain number of case studies.

A first overview of the TCR-diagram is presented in Annex 4.

5.4 Triangulation and sampling strategy

To enable the highest level of objectivity and ensure an evidence-based approach, the team will apply a method of triangulation in the evaluation as presented in table 5.2 below.

Table 5.2 Triangulation of evidence

Source	Explanation
Desk review	Examination of documents from AREU and AAN respectively (e.g. internal documents such as statutes; strategic documents, annual reports, audits, studies reports and term reviews and external publications, blogs etc.), Sida (Sweden's country cooperation strategy, other relevant Swedish policy documents, field mission reports, AREU and AAN support documents and evaluations) and partners (research institutions, Government of Afghanistan, civil society, donors etc.). Advantage: Efficient way of obtaining information. Limitation: Difficult to assess validity and reliability of secondary data
Semi-structured interviews with AREU and AAN staff	Advantage: Flexible in-depth approach. Easy to implement. Limitation: Risk of biased presentation and interpretation of the interviewee
Semi-structured interviews with AREU and AAN clients/information users	Advantage: Flexible in-depth approach. Easy to implement. Limitation: Risk of biased presentation and interpretation of the interviewee less outspoken

The same questions will be addressed through all three approaches presented in the table above and be assessed against each other.

Interviews will be conducted using the evaluation matrix as a semi-structured interview guide (Annex B). This approach is aimed at ensuring that all questions are answered and at the same time leave room for allowing the respondent to go more in-depth with issues of particular importance.

5.5 Two evaluations in one mission

The evaluation methodology presented in this report is similar for the two organisations being evaluated. Consequently, the team will also seek to enhance time and cost-effectiveness by using joint meetings and data collection across the two organisations. Irrespective of this the evaluation team is critically aware of the requirement of providing two separate independent evaluations in one report, which respects the diversity of the two organisations.

To ensure that cost-effectiveness is ensured while diversity is respected the team will apply the following strategy:

- 1) In communication of topics which are of relevance to AREU as well as AAN the evaluation team will communicate with both. This may include issues pertaining to logistics, sharing of common written inputs (such as this inception report).
- 2) Requests for information may be sent to both simultaneously but responded to bilaterally by the two organisations.
- 3) All communication related to substance will be on a bilateral basis.
- 4) During interviews with third parties, the team will clearly express when questions relate to AAN and/or AREU and ask respondents to specifically refer to the two individually.
- 5) No information will be cross-shared between the two organisations unless this is already public or agreed in advance.
- 6) Separate debriefings and reports will be produced and shared with Sida who will then share it with the respective organisation.

5.6 Implementation plan

The implementation of the methodology will follow three distinct phases.

- 1) *Inception phase (September-October 2013)*. The objective of the inception phase is to ensure that the grounds are established for a successful implementation of the assignment. This objective is achieved through, (i) methodology development, (ii) desk analysis of all relevant material in accordance with the assessment questions, and (iii) Skype-meetings with AAN, AREU and Sida to assess information requirements, and agree on evaluation methodology. The findings from the desk analysis have been used for this inception report. Desk studies have included internal AREU, AAN and Sida documents such as reports related to progress including feasibility studies, project document, field mission reports, progress reports,

publications, blog reports etc. (still being collected and therefore reviewing is still in progress and will be included in final report).

- 2) *Implementation phase (October-November 2013)*. This phase will first and foremost comprise a field mission to Afghanistan. The mission will include meetings with AREU and AAN partners and any other relevant stakeholders, including Embassy of Sweden staff, other bilateral donors, Afghan Government, research institutions, CSOs and resource persons in the country. The list of persons to meet will be discussed with AREU and AAN. The team will hold a mid-term debriefing with the Embassy and each of the two organisations.

Review of AREU and AAN publications will be undertaken during the implementation phase and an iterative approach will be taken wherein the case studies will be built on combined documentation review and interviews.

During the implementation mission, the team will – when required – split into two teams to cover more respondents.

- 3) *Analysis and validation phase*. The objective of the analysis and validation phase is to synthesise findings and have these validated. Once all the information has been compiled the team will analyse the data in accordance with the methodology and draft findings. The findings will be compiled into the two draft evaluation reports and submitted for quality assurance in accordance with the QA system proposed in this proposal.

An updated implementation plan can be found in Annex 1.

5.7 Security

The evaluation will require a mission to Afghanistan, which has high levels of insecurity for undertaking fieldwork. Indevelop and Tana Copenhagen have extensive experience with implementing missions in fragile and conflict settings. These experiences will be applied for this mission. The general principles of engagement are the following:

- 1) Based on the most recent security updates, the field missions will be approved by Indevelop and Tana management. Updates are based on UN security reports and local networks. In this case the team requests that the Embassy of Sweden provides latest security updates (or reliable sources) before and throughout the mission.
- 2) The team members should be provided the same level of security as similar international organisations while in the field.
- 3) Transport in Kabul will be with armoured vehicles.
- 4) Accommodation will be in a UN designated safe place.
- 5) Any team member may decide to withdraw/disengage from a field mission at any point in time for security reasons.
- 6) All team members have appropriate insurance for working in Afghanistan.

Inception Report Annex 1 – Implementation Plan

						September		October					November				Dec	
	EB	IC	PH	AS	DS	W38	W39	W40	W41	W42	W43	W44	W45	W46	W47	W48	W49	W50
Contract signed with Sida																		
Desk review, dev. of methodology, preliminary interviews	8	4			5													
Drafting of inception report & planning	2	2			1													
<i>Submission of draft Inception Report</i>										14/10								
Feedback on inception report										18/10								
Stakeholder interviews, field visits, data collection (including travel)	12		13	13	12													
Debriefing Session with preliminary findings in Afghanistan	1		1	1	1													
Drafting of evaluation reports	8	4	1	1	3													
<i>Submission of Draft Reports</i>															27/11			
Comments from Sida, AREU and AAN draft reports																04/12		
Finalisation of report	1																	
<i>Submission of Final Report</i>																		13/12
Total days	32	10	15	15	22													

Initials: EB = Erik Bryld, IC = Ian Christoplos, PH = Palwasha Hassan, AS = Abdul Saboor Kamraan, DS = Dina Sinigallia

Inception Report Annex 2 – Evaluation Matrices

Matrix 1 - AREU

Suggested evaluation question	Answer from desk analysis or interview	Date and initials	Source	Comment
Relevance				
R.A.1 Are the topics and timings (research strategy and implementation) of the AREU research relevant to the political and contextual developments in Afghanistan? Given that Sweden's development cooperation is aligned with the Afghanistan National Development Strategy and the National Priority Programmes, how has AREU's research agenda reflected these entry points for policy development?				
R.A.2 Are AREU's areas of engagement relevant to Sweden's country strategy sectoral objective of democracy, human rights and gender equality and Sweden's overall policies related to democracy, human rights and gender equality, including attention to the perspectives of the poor?				
Effectiveness				
E.A.1 How and to what extent do institutions judge that AREU's work has influenced their attitudes, discourse, procedures, actual policies and policy implementation?				
E.A.2 Which aspects of AREU's work (publications, seminars, dialogue, etc.) do stakeholders perceive as being most/least credible and useful?				
E.A.3 What are the factors that determine that determine the utility and credibility of different aspects of AREU's work?				
E.A.4 Has AREU been effective in developing the capacities of Afghan staff researchers and other collaborating Afghan researchers?				
Efficiency				
N/A at the moment				
Impact				
I.A.1 To what extent has AREU contributed to influence policies, policy processes and behaviour of key actors in Afghanistan (both government and other, including				

Suggested evaluation question	Answer from desk analysis or interview	Date and initials	Source	Comment
international)?				
I.A.2 How, and among whom has AREU contributed to creating a culture of debate and research? Are women, men and different ethnic groups part of this ‘culture of research and learning’?				
I.A.3 To what extent do civil society and the Afghan academic community judge that AREU has enabled them to act more effectively in influencing the government and donors in relation to attitudes, discourse, procedures, actual policies and policy implementation?				
I.A.4 To what extent has AREU contributed to enhanced transparency to generate greater accountability between rights holders and duty bearers?				
I.A.5 Do AREU’s policy influence efforts take into account the implications of proposed changes in relation to environmental sustainability, gender equality, creation of institutional environments conducive to minimising corruption and factors related to conflict? How influential were these in relation to the perspectives and actions of policy makers and civil society efforts to influence policy?				
Sustainability				
S.A.1 What are the medium- to long-term financial sustainability of AREU?				
S.A.2 How is the knowledge generated at AREU sustained?				
S.A.3 Are the capacity development efforts of AREU as an institution (and for national staff) relevant and sustainable?				
S.A.4 Is the cooperation with Afghan institutions (both government and research institutes) enhancing the sustainability of AREU and leading to an enhance afghan ownership and leadership in creating and maintaining a ‘culture of research and learning’ in Afghanistan?				

Matrix 2 - AAN

Suggested evaluation question	Answer from desk analysis or interview	Date and initials	Source	Comment
Relevance				
R.B.1 Are the topics and timings (research strategy and implementation) of the AAN research relevant to the political and contextual developments in Afghanistan? Given that Sweden's development cooperation is aligned with the Afghanistan National Development Strategy and the National Priority Programmes, how has AAN's research agenda reflected these entry points for policy development?				
R.B.2 Are AAN's areas of engagement relevant to Sweden's country strategy under the sectoral objective of democracy, human rights and gender equality and Sweden's overall policies related to democracy, human rights and gender equality, including attention to the perspectives of the poor?				
R.B.3 How does AAN contribute to the realisation of Sweden's development agenda in Afghanistan?				
Effectiveness				
E.B.1 How and to what extent do institutions judge that AAN's work has influenced their attitudes, discourse, procedures, actual policies and policy implementation?				
E.B.2 Which aspects of AAN's work (publications, seminars, dialogue, etc.) do stakeholders perceive as being most/least credible and useful?				
E.B.3 What are the factors that determine that determine the utility and credibility of different aspects of AAN's work?				
E.B.4 Is AAN's cooperation with other Afghan research institutions contributing to AAN's effectiveness?				
Efficiency				
N/A at the moment				
Impact				
I.B.1 How and to what extent has AAN contributed to influence policies and policy process in Afghanistan?				
I.B.2 Has AAN contributed to a greater				

Suggested evaluation question	Answer from desk analysis or interview	Date and initials	Source	Comment
understanding of the realities facing duty bearers and rights holders in Afghanistan and have these ‘realities’ been disaggregated to reflect the conditions facing women and men, age and different ethnic groups?				
I.B.3 How has AAN contributed to ‘provision of a platform for individuals with in-depth knowledge of Afghanistan to promote greater understanding of Afghan realities’ and who (in relation to gender, age, ethnicity, government/civil society/academia, etc.) is part of these platforms?				
I.B.4 Do AAN’s policy influence efforts take into account the implications of proposed changes in relation to environmental sustainability, gender equality, creation of institutional environments conducive to minimising corruption and factors related to conflict? How influential were these in relation to policy actors?				
Sustainability				
S.B.1 Is AAN a sustainable organisation?				

Inception Report Annex 3 – TCR-Diagram – Advance Example with AAN

Date	Events		AAN			
	Afghanistan (incl. National Policies)	International	Thematic Reports	Briefing papers	Discussion Papers	Occasional Papers
2009			Set up with Swedish support			
20/1/09		Election of B. Obama - USA				
Mar-09		Obama unveils new strategy for Afghanistan				
31/3/09		The Hague Conference: The Afghanistan Conference 2009: A Comprehensive Strategy in a Regional Context				
14/7/09			Thomas Ruttig, The Other Side: Dimensions of the Afghan Insurgency. Causes, Actors and Approaches to Talks, AAN Thematic Report 01/2009			

Aug-09			Martine van Bijlert, How to Win an Afghan Election: Perceptions and Practices, AAN Thematic Report 02/2009			
20/8/09	Presidential and provincial council elections					
3/9/09				Martine van Bijlert, Polling Day Fraud in the Afghan Elections, AAN Briefing Paper 03/2009		
Oct-09	Karzai declared winner of August presidential election					
Nov-09	Adoption of United Nations Development Assistance Framework in Support of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy for 2010-2013					

Dec-09		US President Obama decides to boost US troop numbers in Afghanistan				
2010						
8/1/10					Anders Fänge, The State of the Afghan State, AAN Discussion Paper 01/2010	
21/1/10					Christian Wagner, Governance in Afghanistan in Regional Perspective, AAN Discussion Paper 02/2010	
28/1/10		London International Conference on Afghanistan				
Feb-10	Nato-led forces launch major offensive, Operation Moshtarak, in bid to secure government control of southern Helmand province.					

4/3/10				Ann Wilkens, Smoke Gets in Your Eyes: Pakistan in 2010, AAN Policy Briefing 01/2010		
9/3/10				Karl Fischer, The AfPak Strategy: Reactions in Pakistan, AAN Policy Briefing 02/2010		
15/4/10			Martin Kipping, Two Interventions: Comparing Soviet and US---Led State---Building in Afghanistan, AAN Thematic Report 01/2010			
22/4/10					Matt Waldman, Golden Surrender: The Risks, Challenges, and Implications of Reintegration in Afghanistan, AAN Discussion Paper 03/2010	

May-10			Antonio Giustozzi, Nation---Building Is Not for All: The Politics of Education in Afghanistan, AAN Thematic Report 02/2010			
27/5/10			Mathieu Lefèvre, Local Defence in Afghanistan: A Review of Government---Backed Initiatives, AAN Thematic Report, 03/2010			
24/6/10				Antonio Giustozzi, The Northern Front: The Afghan Insurgency Spreading beyond the Pashtuns, AAN Briefing Paper 03/2010		
29/6/10			Thomas Ruttig, How Tribal Are the Taleban? Afghanistan's Largest Insurgent Movement between its Tribal Roots and Islamist Ideology, AAN			

			Thematic Report, 04/2010			
20/7/10	Kabul Donor Conference					
Jul-10		Whistleblowing website Wikileaks publishes thousands of classified US military documents relating to Afghanistan.				
Aug-10	Dutch troops quit					
18/9/10	WOLESI JIRGA (HOUSE OF PEOPLE) elections					
Sep-10			Martine van Bijlert, Who Controls the Vote? Afghanistan's Evolving Elections, AAN Thematic Report 05/2010			
20/10/10					Thomas Ruttig, The Ex- --Taleban on the High Peace Council: A Renewed Role for the	

					Khuddam ul--Furqan? AAN Discussion Paper 04/2010	
2011						
28/1/11					Matt Waldman and Thomas Ruttig, Peace Offerings: Theories of Conflict Resolution and Their Applicability to Afghanistan, AAN Discussion Paper 01/2011	
15/2/11				Florian Broschk, Inciting the Believers to Fight: A Closer Look at the Rhetoric of the Afghan Jihad, AAN Briefing Paper 01/2011		
19/2/11				Martine van Bijlert, Untangling Afghanistan's 2010 Vote: Analysing the Electoral Data, AAN Briefing Paper 03/2011		

21/3/11			Lutz Rzehak, Pashtunwali – Tribal Life and Behaviour among the Pashtuns, AAN Thematic Report 01/2011			
31/3/11			Citha D. Maass, Afghanistan's Drug Career: From War to Drug Economy, AAN Thematic Report 02/2011			
Apr-11		Burning of Koran by a US pastor prompts country-wide protests in which foreign UN workers and several Afghans are killed				
27/4/11						Thomas Ruttig, Afghanistan's Early Reformists: Mahmud Tarzi's Ideas and Their Influence on the Wesh Zalmian Movement, AAN Occasional Paper 01/2011

5/5/11			Antonio Giustozzi and Christoph Reuter, The Insurgents of the Afghan North, AAN Thematic Report 04/2011			
10/5/11			Kate Clark, The Takhar Attack: Targeted Killings and the Parallel Worlds of US Intelligence and Afghanistan, AAN Thematic Report 05/2011			
20/5/11						
4/7/11			Kate Clark, The Layha: Calling the Taleban to Account, AAN Thematic Report 6/2011			
12/9/11					Ann Wilkens, Another Pakistan Is Needed: Can Openings Emerge Post--Osama bin Laden? AAN Discussion Paper 2/2011	

12/10/11			Alex Strick van Linschoten and Felix Kuehn, A Knock on the Door: 22 Months of ISAF Press Releases, AAN Thematic Report 10/2011			
22/11/11			Antonio Giustozzi and Mohammad Isaqzadeh, Afghanistan's Paramilitary Policing in Context. The Risks of Expediency, AAN Thematic Report 07/2011			
2/12/11					AAN, The International Community's Engagement in Afghanistan beyond 2014, AAN Discussion Paper 03/2011	
13/12/11			Antonio Giustozzi and Claudio Franco, The Battle for Schools: The Taleban and State Education, AAN Thematic Report			

			08/2011			
2012						
Jan-12	Taliban agree to open office in Dubai as a move towards peace talks with the US and the Afghan government					
18/4/12				Sarah Han, Legal Aid in Afghanistan: Contexts, Challenges and the Future, AAN Briefing Paper 01/2012		
25/4/12				Kate Clark, Death of an Uruzgan Journalist --- Command Errors and 'Collateral Damage', AAN Briefing Paper 02/2012		
16/5/12			Barbara J Stapleton, Beating a Retreat – Prospects for the Transition, AAN Thematic Report			

			01/2012			
7/7/12						AAN, 'Snapshots of an Intervention. The Unlearned Lessons of Afghanistan's Decade of Assistance (2001–11)', E---Book,
2/8/12			Nils Woermer, The Networks of Kunduz: A History of Conflict and Their Actors, from 1992 to 2001, AAN Thematic Report 02/2012			
31/8/12			Niamatullah Ibrahim, AAN political parties paper series 2: Rise and Decline of Maoism, AAN Thematic Report 03/2012	Robert Peszkowski, Start of AAN political parties paper series 1: Reforming Jombesh, AAN Briefing Paper 03/2012		
20/5/12		NATO Chicago summit: Nato summit endorses the plan to withdraw foreign combat troops by the end of 2014				

8/7/12		Tokyo donors' conference				
Sep-12	US hands over Bagram high-security jail to the Afghan government, although it retains control over some foreign prisoners until March 2013.					
2013						
18/1/13						Thomas Ruttig, 'How it all began: A Short Look at the Pre---1979 Origins of Afghanistan's Conflicts', AAN Occasional Paper 01/2013
30/1/13			Noah Arjomand, 'Eagle's Summit Revisited: Decision---Making in the Kajaki Dam Refurbishment Project', AAN Thematic Report 01/2013			

4/2/13		President Karzai and Pakistan's Asif Ali Zardari agree to work for an Afghan peace deal within six months after talks hosted by Britain's Prime Minister David Cameron				
Mar-13	Two former Kabul Bank chiefs, Sherkhan Farnood and Khalilullah Ferozi, are jailed for the multi-million dollar fraud that almost led to its collapse and that of the entire Afghan banking system in 2010					
28/4/13						Barbara J Stapleton, 'Disarming the Militias – DDR and DIAG and the Implications for Peace Building', AAN Occasional paper 02/2013

7/5/13				Ann Wilkens, 'A Lot to Worry About – Pakistan on the Eve of Its First Democratic Transition', AAN Briefing Paper 01/2013		
Jun-13	Afghan army takes command of all military and security operations from Nato forces					
10/6/13				Antonio Giustozzi and Claudio Franco, 'The Ongoing battle for the Schools – Uprisings, Negotiations and Taleban Tactics', AAN Briefing paper 02/2013		
30/6/13			Patricia Gossman and Sari Kouvo, 'Tell Us How This Ends, Transitional Justice and Prospects for Peace in Afghanistan', AAN Thematic Report 02/2013			
Total			20	11	7	4

ANNEX 3 – AREU’S STRATEGIC PLANS

Strategy document	Priorities	Themes	Comment
<i>Improving Afghan Lives Through Research: AREU Strategic Plan (2004-2006)</i>	<p>AREU's mission: To conduct and facilitate action-oriented research and learning that informs and <u>influences</u> policy and practice. AREU also actively promotes a culture of learning by strengthening analytical capacity in Afghanistan and by creating opportunities for analysis, thought and debate. Fundamental to AREU’s vision is that its work should improve Afghan lives.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Governance 2. Livelihoods and Vulnerability 3. NRM 4. Gender 5. Education 6. Health 7. Political Economy and markets 	
<i>"Improving Afghan Lives through Research: AREU Strategic Plan (2007-2009)"</i>	<p>AREU’s mission is to conduct high-quality research that informs and <u>influences</u> policy and practice. AREU also actively promotes a culture of research and learning by strengthening analytical capacity in Afghanistan and by creating opportunities for analysis, thought and debate. Fundamental to AREU’s vision is that its work should improve Afghan lives. To achieve its mission, AREU has the following aims:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Close the knowledge gap through high-quality, policy-oriented research and analysis. 2. Communicate and advocate for change that has a positive effect on Afghan lives. 3. Strengthen the capacity and culture of research. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Governance 2. urban and rural livelihoods (incl. Migration) 3. Natural Resource management 4. Gender 5. Education 6. Health 7. Political Economy and markets 	<p>Minor wording changes vis-à-vis the previous strategy, mainly in making the mission statement more succinct and in replacing “action-oriented research” with “policy-oriented research” to reflect AREU’s understanding that its research will address policy needs, but would not be “action-oriented” in the sense that it was “action research.</p>

Strategic plan 2010-2012

AREU's Mission:

to inform and influence policy and practice through conducting high-quality, policy-relevant research and actively disseminating the results, and to promote a culture of research and learning.

To achieve its mission AREU engages with policymakers, civil society, researchers and students to promote their use of AREU's research and its library, to strengthen their research capacity and to create opportunities for analysis, reflection and debate.

Vision:

AREU aspires to contribute to the development of inclusive and transparent policymaking processes, driven by the priorities of the Afghan people, which give rise to better informed policies and programmes that improve Afghan lives.

To achieve this vision AREU works to promote inquiry, inspire debate and enhance analysis. AREU seeks to foster a work environment of mutual respect, inclusion and learning for all, which engages a diverse, experienced team united in its purpose. Our commitment to building capacity today will shape the future face of research in Afghanistan.

1. legitimacy
2. Governance

Note:

Despite the 2 themes mentioned in the strategic plan, Annual Reports reported on the following themes:

1. Governance (and political economy in 2012)
2. Justice (2010-2011)
3. Gender
4. Livelihoods and Human Security (2010 and 2011)
5. Policy Process (2010)
6. Natural Resource Management (2011-2012)
7. Social sector and social protection (2012)
8. Mapping of researchers (2012)

<p><i>Strategic plan 2013-2015</i></p>	<p>Vision: AREU aspires to contribute to the development of inclusive and transparent policymaking processes that reflect the priorities of the Afghan people, to give rise to better informed policies and programmes.</p> <p>Mission: To inform policy and practice by conducting high-quality, relevant research and actively disseminating the results, and to promote a culture of research and learning.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gender 2. Natural resource management and sustainable livelihoods 3. Political economy and governance 4. Social sector and protection 	<p>Note: changes vis-à-vis 2010-2013</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - no mention of "informing policy" - "policy-relevant research" has become "relevant research"
<p><i>Draft Revised Strategic Plan 2013-2015</i></p>	<p>Vision AREU envisions an Afghanistan where policy decisions are made on the basis of evidence, open debate and widespread public awareness, in the belief that this approach will better reflect the priorities of the Afghan people and give rise to more informed policies and programmes.</p> <p>Mission Our mission is to inform policy and practice by conducting high-quality, relevant research and actively disseminating results in order to promote a culture of research and learning in Afghanistan.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Governance & Political Economy 2. Social Sector & Protection 3. Gender/human rights 4. Natural resource management 	<p>Note: Change vis-à-vis previous version: "in order to promote a culture of research" instead of "and to promote..."</p>

ANNEX 4 – AREU TOOLS (OVER TIME)

Type	Description	Evolution over time
Annotated bibliographies of research areas	Bibliographies about specific topics AREU's Published two annotated bibliographies: - Livelihoods in Afghanistan (2004), - Water Management, Livestock and the Opium Economy (2006)	Since 2004
Briefing papers	Briefing Papers are shorter publications designed to engage a broad audience and to shape and inform policy debate. They are often drawn from longer research projects but can also be based on stand-alone research. They are normally translated into Dari and Pashto.	Since 2003
Briefs	Briefs are short papers based on emerging research that are often released in response to rapidly-changing situations such as elections. They are often translated into Dari and Pashto.	Since 2003
Case studies (30-70p)	Case Studies represent the building blocks of AREU's longer-term research projects. They focus on specific geographic issues (e.g. land relations in Bamiyan Province or gender and decision-making in Samangan) or programming areas (e.g. wheat seed programming, water management at the village level) and include policy and programme recommendations where appropriate. The findings from Case Studies are often later drawn together in Synthesis Papers or Briefing Papers.	Since 2003
Discussion Papers	Discussion papers are aimed at disseminating ideas to provoke debate on major developing issues such as elections, corruption or transitional justice. They are often translated into Dari and Pashto.	Since 2009
Facebook		
Issue papers (40-75 p.)	Issues Papers are longer papers that provide in-depth analysis of a particular issue. They are based on literature reviews, interviews with those who have first-hand knowledge of the topic, and sometimes lengthy qualitative or quantitative research projects. Issues Papers or summaries of them are usually translated into Dari and Pashto.	Since 2003
Newsletter	A quarterly roundup of research activities taking place in and on Afghanistan. The newsletter was first published in English and Dari and distributed in hard and soft copy. Later a trilingual edition was added.	Launched in 2004 2005: first trilingual edition
Policy Papers	Policy Notes focus on disseminating policy recommendations drawn from Synthesis Papers or ongoing research projects in Dari, Pashto and English. They are four-page documents that highlight one major theme, providing relevant background, key findings and specific policy prescriptions.	Since 2006

Ressource centre / Library	In 2003, the Society of South Asian Studies (ex British Institute of Afghan Studies) agreed to transfer ownership to AREU of an estimated 3,000 library books mostly pertaining to Afghanistan. The Library formally opened in 2005. It offers access to some 15.000 titles about Afghanistan. The Resource Centre also hosts trainings for students and librarians, workshops for government officials, and lectures.	Started in 2003 Formal opening to the public in 2006
Synthethis papers (50-70p)	Synthesis Papers draw together the findings and recommendations of AREU's long-term research projects. They focus on the key themes and policy and programming implications emerging from case studies and field research. Synthesis Papers or summaries of them are usually translated into Dari and Pashto.	Since 2004
The A to Z Guide to Afghanistan Assistance	Started in 2002 in englis and pashto. Produced on a yearly basis, the guide aims to enhance general undertsanding of the array of actors, structures and government processes related to aid and reconstruction efforts in the country. The guide provides: a wide rangy glossary of assitsance terms and actors, and overview of Afghanistan's system of government, political provincial briefs, a series of country and city maps, key primary documents and an extensive contacts directory. Nominal price: 10 USD in early 2000s. Now: 20USD	First edition in 2002 2005: first Dari edition
Twitter Account	In 2011, AREU expanded its social media presence through Twitter. After a process of regular Tweets, AREU has attracted over 3,600 followers, including major media outlets, think-tanks and Afghanistan commentators. All new reports are publicised this way. No strategy.	Launched in 2011
Website	Is available in English and Dari. Pashto since 2006. As of 2006, visitors could sign up for electronic announcements of new AREU publications. In 2007, AREU's library database was linked to the website to allow online access from outside AREU. In 2011, a blog was added. <i>Note: AREU remains mindful of the limited internet access of many Afghan government offices and other organisations. AREU remains committed to hard copy distribution of its publications and other outreach materials.</i>	Redesigned in 2004 and 2006 Pashto since 2006 New usage measurement system since 2011
Working papers	Working Papers focus on key topics that complement AREU's longer-term research projects. They may be used to disseminate initial research findings during an early stage in a project or contribute to overarching research themes. Working Papers often inform the development of AREU's research programme and highlight important issues for future research.	Since 2003

ANNEX 5 – AREU – FACTS AND FIGURES

	Budget (% unearmarked)	Staff			
		total	Int.	Nat.	Directors
2002-2003					Chris Johnson
2002	\$750,000.00	4	50%	50%	
2003-April 2005					Andrew Wilder
2003	\$1,416,482.84 (46%)	42	n/a	n/a	
2004	\$1,627,750.00 (53%)	65	n/a	n/a	
05/2005-07/2008					Paul Fishstein
2005	\$2,566,736.00 (40%)	82	n/a	n/a	
2006	\$3,006,993.00 (59%)	97	n/a	n/a	
2007	\$3,259,261.00 (47%)	106	15%	85%	
08/2008 - 07/2010					Paula Kantor
2008	\$3,893,018.00 (78%)	n/a	15%	85%	
2009	\$3,428,086.00 (85%)	n/a	12%	88%	
07/2010 - mid-2011					Pierre Fallavier
2010	\$4,800,000.00 (67%)	118	13%	87%	
Mar-11	SDC requests a 5year review of AREU				
06/2011-03/2012					Vacant: Interim Management Team⁴⁰.
Jul-11	<i>Roadmap for change at AREU - follow-up to review</i>				
2011	\$3,669,171.00 (71%)	49	14%	86%	
03/2012-09/2012					Mathew Varghese
09/2012-spring 2013					Vacant: Senior Management Team⁴¹
2012	\$2,150,892.00 (60.65%)	51	16%	84%	
Spring 2013					Nader Nazri

⁴⁰ 4 senior staff—Chona Echavez, Mir Ahmad Joyenda, Moharram Ali and Royce Wiles

⁴¹ Finance & Operations Advisor Sabohat Dustova, Deputy Director of Research Chona Echavez, and Acting Director and Deputy Director of Communications & Advocacy Mir Ahmad Joyenda

Year	Sida funding (as% of overall)
2003	22%
2004	13%
2005	8%
2006	3%
2007	6%
2008	15%
2009	12%
2010	11%
2011	44%
2012	32%

ANNEX 6 – SWEDEN'S PRIORITIES IN AFGHANISTAN

Swedish Strategy/ policy	Overview	AREU Relevance
<i>Sweden's policy for global development (2003)</i>	<p>Two fundamental perspectives guide the design of Sweden's development policy:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The perspective of poor people on development, 2. A human rights perspective <p>Six global challenges where Sweden, can make an effective contribution to global development:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Oppression, 2. Economic exclusion, 3. Climate change and environmental impact, 4. Migration flows, 5. Communicable diseases and other health threats, 6. Conflict and fragile situations 	<p>AREU partly in line with the Human Rights-Based Approach: focus on duty bearers, they accountability and attention to issues of governance (incl. Transparency, accountability, corruption); increased focus on participation of rights holders, as well as participation in economic opportunities; focus on non discrimination (e.g. gender focus, work on refugees/returnees etc.); organisation's focus on its own accountability and transparency.</p> <p>AREU seeks to provide the perspective of the poor and vulnerable (incl. Children, girls, and refugees/returnees).</p> <p>AREU deals with issues such as economic exclusion, migration, oppression and health.</p> <p>AREU operates in a conflict and fragile situation and seeks to contribute to Afghanistan's reconstruction and development</p>
<i>Saving lives and alleviating suffering Policy for Sweden's Humanitarian Assistance 2010-2016</i>	<p>The overall goal of Sweden's humanitarian assistance is to save lives, to alleviate suffering and to maintain human dignity for the benefit of people in need who are, or are at risk of becoming, affected by armed conflicts, natural disasters or other disaster situations.</p> <p>The overall goal of Swedish humanitarian assistance is to be achieved by focusing on three main areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - flexible, rapid and effective humanitarian response designed to meet the humanitarian needs of today and those of the future, - a strong and coordinated international humanitarian system, 	<p>AREU deals with a wide range of issues of which some are situated at the intersection between relief and development, including research related to resilience, livelihoods, refugees, returnees, etc.</p>

	- improved interaction with development assistance and with other types of interventions and actors.	
Afghanistan Specific		
<i>Country strategy for development cooperation with Afghanistan</i> January 1 2002 – December 31 2004 (extended up to 31 March 2005)	<p>Assistance will continue to focus on humanitarian mine clearance, food safety, education and health and the return of refugees: Particularly vulnerable target groups such as women, children, people with disabilities and oppressed ethnic minorities should be given special priority.</p> <p>The development-related aspects: 5.4.1 Education and health (including support to people with disabilities) 5.4.4 Agriculture 5.4.7 Support for reconstruction and longer term measures</p>	<p>AREU 2004-2006 themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political economy and markets; • Governance; • Livelihoods and vulnerability (incl. Refugees/returnees); • Gender; • Natural resource management; • Education; and • Health
<i>Country strategy for development cooperation with Afghanistan</i> April 1 2006 – June 30 2009	<p>The priority areas of development cooperation with Afghanistan 2006-2008:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. to strengthen the country's prospects of long-term and in a sustainable way to reduce poverty (incl. support to NSP) 2. to develop and strengthen the foundations of democracy, rule of law and respect for human rights, including strengthening women's position in society (incl. right to education and right to health) 3. to contribute to the development of civil society 4. to help strengthen the external and internal security (incl. UxOs and drug production, some microfinance) 	<p>AREU 2007-2009 themes</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Governance (incl. NSP) 2. urban and rural livelihoods (incl. Migration) 3. Natural Resource management (incl. Poppy and water) 4. Gender 5. Education 6. Health 7. Political Economy and markets

<p><i>Strategy for development cooperation with Afghanistan</i> July 2009 – December 2013</p>	<p>Three cooperation areas:</p> <p>1) Democratic governance and human rights: (i) strengthened democratic governance, including strengthened administration (ii) increased respect for human rights, with particular focus on the position of women and their opportunities to enjoy human rights</p> <p>2) Education: (i) increased access to education of good quality, with particular focus on women and girls</p> <p>3) Private sector development: (i) a strengthened and growing private sector, in which people living in poverty participate more extensively and are employed.</p> <p>Issues for strategic dialogue will be gender equality and the situation and rights of women, and democratic governance, with special focus on anti-corruption.</p>	<p>AREU 2010-2012 themes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Governance (and political economy in 2012) 2. Justice (2010-2011) 3. Gender 4. Livelihoods and Human Security (2010 and 2011) 5. Policy Process (2010) 6. Natural Resource Management (2011-2012) 7. Social sector and social protection (2012) 8. Mapping of researchers (2012)
<p>Revised development cooperation strategy Afghanistan January 2012 – December 2014</p>	<p>Cooperation is to be based on Afghan priorities as expressly provided in the ANDS, NPP and development plans at provincial and district level. Swedish support for national programmes should target 2 sectors:</p> <p>1) democracy, human rights and gender equality:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Strengthened democratic institutions and systems for public financial management, and greater transparency in central government administration. · Strengthened ability of women to enjoy their human rights and influence the development of society. · The presence of viable actors in civil society and free, independent media 	<p>AREU 2013-2015 themes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gender 2. Natural resource management and sustainable livelihoods 3. Political economy and governance 4. Social sector and protection <p>Some projects in the North</p>

capable of contributing to greater accountability and a more transparent public administration.

2) education.

- Increased access to primary education of good quality,
- More trained teachers.
- Increased literacy among women aged 15–24.

3) Contributions in northern Afghanistan (the provinces of Balkh, Samangan, Sar-e-Pul and Jowzjan): In addition to the objectives set for Afghanistan as a whole:

- Strengthened administrative capacity at provincial and district level so that basic social services can be delivered in a democratic and legally secure manner.
- A growing private business sector able to help improve livelihoods and boost employment, particularly among women and young people.

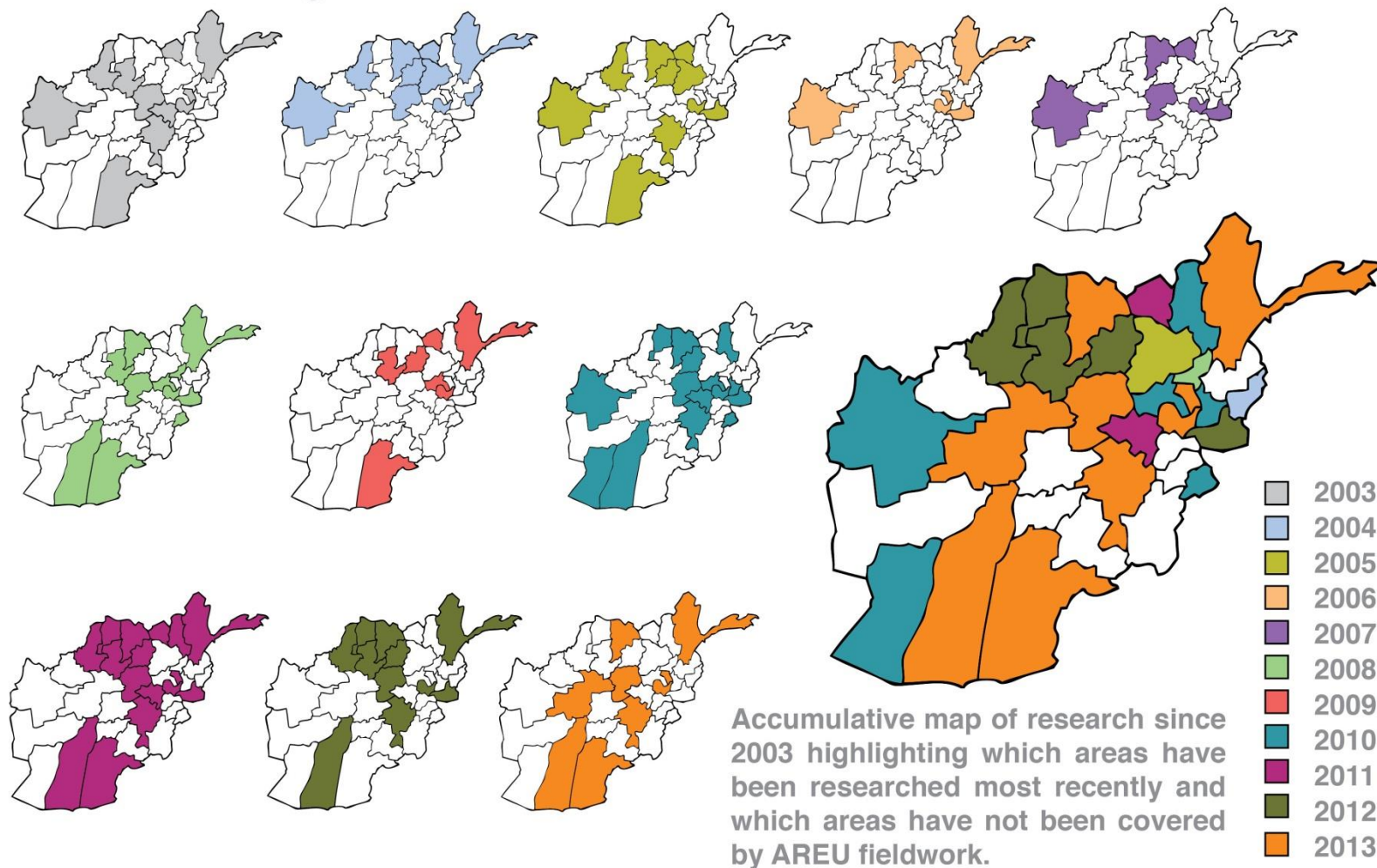
Humanitarian assistance is an important part of Swedish support to Afghanistan.

Civilian crisis and conflict management, security sector reform, disaster risk reduction and capacity-building for disaster management and contingency planning at local level

Support for interventions involving the handling of landmines and unexploded ordnance should continue, with a focus on national capacity development in order to enable Afghanistan to adhere to the terms of the Ottawa Convention.

ANNEX 7 – GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS COVERED BY AREU

Regions AREU Conducted Fieldwork Research 2003-2013



ANNEX 8 – MAIN DONOR CONFERENCES RELATED TO AFGHANISTAN – SINCE 2002

A number of events, conferences and strategies should be mentioned to illustrate Afghanistan and in the International Community's efforts to address the country's challenges:

Year	Conference	Topics
2002	Tokyo Donor Conference	Recovery and reconstruction
2004	Berlin Donor Conference	Recovery, reform and development
2006	London Conference	<i>Afghan Compact</i> : Poverty reduction, aid effectiveness - Successor to the Bonn Agreement; defined principles of cooperation for 2006–11. Agreed pillars of activity: security; governance, rule of law and human rights; economic and social development
2008	Paris International Conference in Support of Afghanistan	<i>Paris Declaration</i> : reconstruction and development - Donors expressed commitments in support of the Afghan National Development Strategy
2009	The Hague Conference	Good governance, economic growth, security - Participants stressed the need for greater Afghan ownership of security and economic development
2010	London Conference	Security, anti-corruption, reconciliation Launches the Kabul process (22 NPPs)
2010	Kabul Conference	Security handover
2012	Tokyo Donor's Conference	Security, development, anti corruption, regional cooperation, private sector and civil society

ANNEX 9 – AREU IN THE MEDIA AND AT EVENTS

	Citations	Media coverage - international	Media coverage - national	Events - national	Events - international
2002					
2003			7		
2004	1		16		
2005	4	1	2		
2006	16		2		
2007	38		6		
2008	15		7		
2009	53		5		
2010	44	18	15	49	6
2011	24	7	8	18	4
2012	5	3	2	16	
2013	8	4	8	4	1

(source: AREU data)

ANNEX 10 – AREU DONORS SINCE 2003

(Based on presentation to the team by AREU)

Note: "x" incates a contribution inferior to 1%

Donor	Year										total years	
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012		
Aga Khan Foundation					X							1
Asia Foundation								X				1
Canada			1%	1%								2
Child Rights Consortium						X						1
Christian Aid					X							1
Denmark			2%	6%	18%			21%	x			5
DFID	5%	16%	26%	28%	16%	51%	57%	11%	1%			9
DFID-ESRC						5%		2%				2
EC	29%	13%	16%	28%	23%	X		10%	6%	14.50%		9
Finland							4%	3%	10%	14.17%		4
Foundation-OSI							3%	6%				2
GTZ				x								1
International Development Research Center(IDRC)							4%	5%	5%	4.30%		4
IRC									2%			1
Japan					5%	1%						2
Netherlands		1%								2.42		2
Norway			1%	4%		13%	15%	19%	6%			6
ODI									5%	4.78		2
Stichting Vluchteling,		3%	1%									2
Sweden	22%		8%		6%	15%						4
SIDA		13%		3%			12%	11%	44%	31.82%		6
Switzerland	23%		9%	8%	14%	10%				11.03%		6
SDC		15%					1%	13%	7%			4
TAF							1%					1

UNAMA	14%	24%	18%	12%							4
UNESCO			1%	x							2
UNHCR		7%	10%	7%	6%						4
UNICEF					X	1%					2
UNIFEM					X	x					2
UN Women								10%	3.77%		2
USIP				2%	X				3.19%		3
WB		5%	4%	1%	9%	1%					5

ANNEX 11 – AREU FORESEEN BUDGET AND CONTRIBUTIONS

A Multiyear Budget

Research & outreach	2014 - 2015
<i>Gender</i>	1,377,656.00
<i>NRM & Sustainable Livelihoods</i>	884,788.83
<i>Political Economy & Governance</i>	596,310.26
<i>Social Sector & Social Protection</i>	1,491,785.67
Capacity building	664,351.88
Operating	1,002,978.53
	6,017,871.17

B Comitted Grant per Impact Area

Research & outreach	2014 - 2015
<i>Gender</i>	677,333.33
<i>NRM & Sustainable Livelihoods</i>	642,000.00
<i>Political Economy & Governance</i>	348,641.00
<i>Social Sector & Social Protection</i>	1,360,000.00
Capacity building	282,666.67
Operating	274,750.00
	3,585,391.00

Comitted Grants

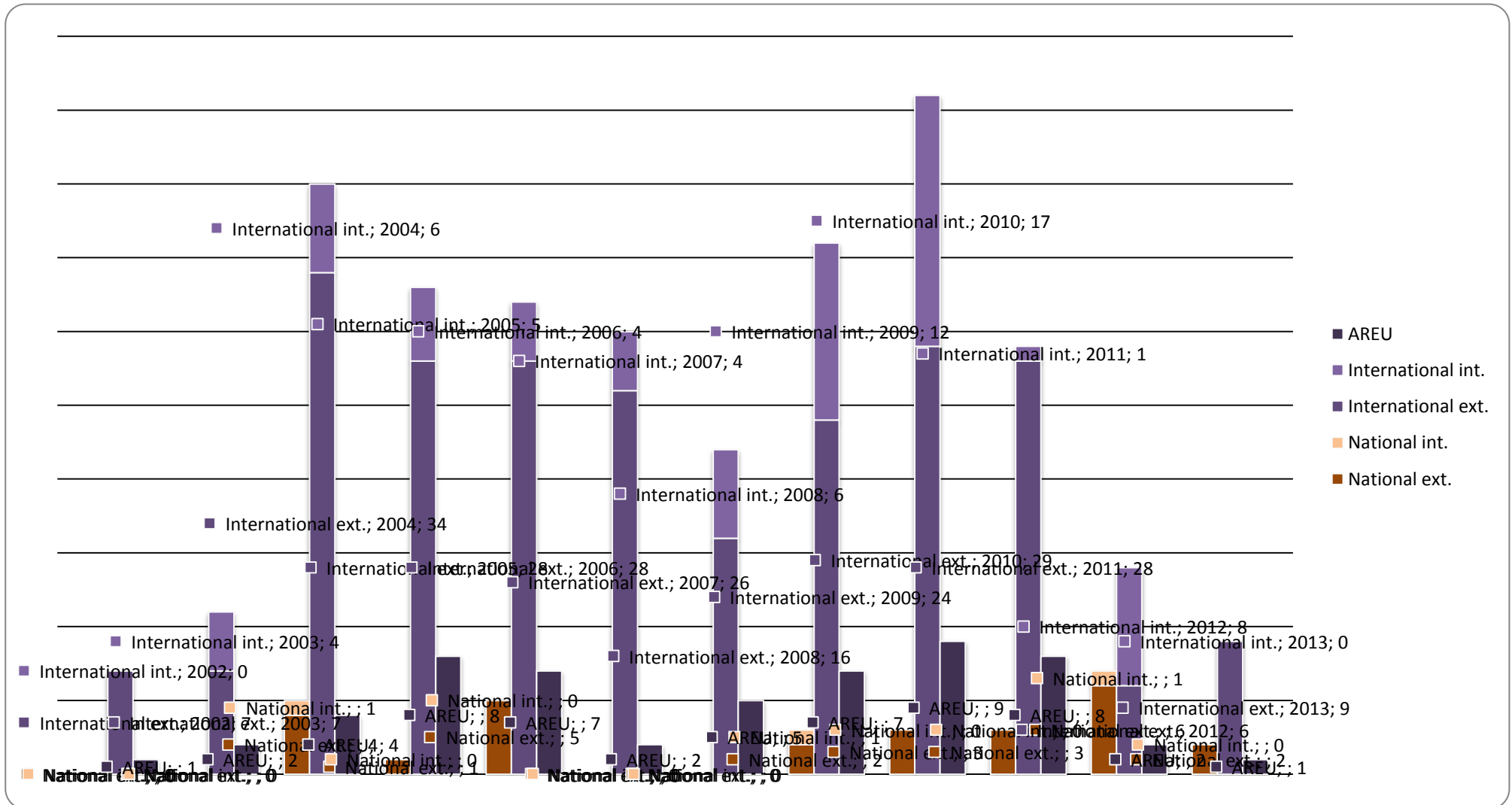
	EC	ODI SLRC	USIP	Finland	SDC	SIDA	Total
Year 2014	530,000.00	680,000.00	185,891.00	260,000.00	570,000.00	336,000.00	2,561,891.00
Year 2015		680,000.00		65500	278,000.00		1,023,500.00
	530,000.00	1,360,000.00	185,891.00	325,500.00	848,000.00	336,000.00	3,585,391.00

C TO BE FUNDRAISED

Research & outreach	2014 - 2015
<i>Gender</i>	700,322.67
<i>NRM & Sustainable Livelihoods</i>	242,788.83
<i>Political Economy & Governance</i>	247,669.26
<i>Social Sector & Social Protection</i>	131,785.67
Capacity building	381,685.21
Operating	728,228.53
	2,432,480.17

ANNEX 12 – AREU PRODUCTS ACCORDING TO ORIGIN

Origin of Researcher (National/International; Staff of AREU (Int.)/External to AREU (Ext.))



ANNEX 13 – LIST OF PERSONS MET

#	Date 2013	Organisation	Name	Function	Additional affiliation	M/F
1	07/10	AREU	Adam Pain	External researcher	Independent reseacher	M
2	10/10	AAN	Martine Van Bijlert	Executive Board		F
3	24/10	SIDA	Anders Öhrströ	Head of Dev Cooperation		M
4	24/10	SIDA	Marie Svensson	Democracy HR and anti-corruption		F
5	24/10	SIDA	Shafi Najib	National Programme Officer		M
6	26/10	AREU	Chona Chavez	Deputy-Director (Research)		F
7	26/10	AREU	Mir Ahmad Joyenda	Deputy Director Communication		M
8	26/10	AREU	Nader Naderi	Director		M
9	26/10	AREU	Sabohat Dustova	Finance and operations advisor		F
10	27/10	AAN	Christine Roehrs	Analyst		F
11	27/10	AAN	Gran Hewad	Nat Pol Researcher		M
12	27/10	MoFA	Janan Mosazai	Spoksmen & DG of Communication	UNAMA	M
13	27/10	AAN	Kate Clark	head of Office		F
14	27/10	AAN	Obaid Ali	Nat Pol Researcher		M
15	27/10	AAN	Sari Kouvo	Co-Director		F
16	28/10	Central Statistics Office	Ali Mohammad	ICT data base manager		M
17	28/10	Ministry of women affairs	HE/Prof. Sayeda Mojgan Mostafawi	Deputy Minister-Technical		M
18	28/10	MRRD-NSP	Mamoon Khawar	Donor Relations Manager		M
19	28/10	AIHRC	Mohamad Musa Mahmodi	Executive secretary		M
20	28/10	MRRD	Mukhtar Ghafarzoy	Policy Advisor	BBC	M
21	28/10	AIHRC	Nafisa Nezam	Operations Manager		F
22	28/10	Embassy of Sweden	Peter Semneby	Embassador		M
23	28/10	AAN	Thomas Ruttig	Co-Director		M
24	28/10	AREU	Vincent Thomas	Water management lead researcher NRM pilar		M
25	29/10	USIP	Farid Ahmad Bayat	Research Officer	ex-AREU	M

					researcher	
26	29/10	Ministry of Counter Narcotics	Ibrahim Azhar	Deputy Minister		M
27	29/10	Dutch Embassy	Ingrid Kersjes			F
28	29/10	AREU	Jennefer Bagaporo	Senior Research officer - Gender Unit		F
29	29/10	CIDA	Jodi Mc Murray	Deputy Head of Aid (2010-2012); Head of Board of AREU between 2011-2012		F
30	29/10	AREU Board	Jolyon Leslie	Chair of the Board	Afghan Cultural Heritage Consulting Organisation	M
31	29/10	PTRO	Mirwais Wardak	Director	ex-KPAU	M
32	29/10	Embassy of India	Mukul Arya	Second secretary - Pol affairs		M
33	29/10	USIP	Tim Luccaro	Programme Officer		M
34	30/10	NAI	Abdul Mujeeb Khalvatgar	Executive Director	internews	M
35	30/10	UNWOMEN	Anil Chandrika	WESR specialist		M
36	30/10	AAN	Borhan Osman	Nat Pol Researcher		M
37	30/10	UNODC	Jean-Luc Lemahieu	Regional Rep, Special Advisor to the SRSG in Counter Narcotics		M
38	30/10	Finnish Embassy	Matti Vaananen			
39	30/10	USAID	Rachel Wareham	Senior gender advisor to Midas	GTZ, NDI, IEC	F
40	30/10	AAN	Wazhma Samandari	Nat Pol Researcher		F
41	31/10	CPAU	Idrees Zaman	Managing director		M
42	31/10	UNAMA	Joanne Nathan	Special Assistant to SRSG		F
43	31/10	UNAMA	Megan Minnion		UNDP, NATO	F
44	31/10	AREU	Mujib ahmad	Senior Research Assistant		M
45	31/10	Royal	Runar Gunnerud	Counsellor		M

		Norwegian Embassy				
46	31/10	AREU	Shukria Azadmanesh	Research Assistant		F
47	31/10	AREU	Wamiqullah Mumtaz	Project Coordinator SLRC		M
48	31/10	Royal Norwegian Embassy	Ane Osnes	Second secretary - Pol affairs		F
49	31/10	Embassy of Sweden	Christian Nilsson	First Secretary - Pol affairs		M
50	01/10	NDI	Grant Kippen	Director	Electoral Complaints Commission AREU	M
51	02/11	UNAMA	Nilab Mubarez	Spokesperson	AREU board member	F
52	02/11	Embassy of Finland	Petri Lehtonen	First Secretary - development cooperation		M
53	02/11	Kingdom of the Netherlands	Rana Abbawi	Second secretary - development cooperation		F
54	03/11	EU	Luis Castellar Maymó	Attaché - governance and rule of law		M
55	03/11	FEFA	Marzia Faraz	Women Outreach Officer		F
56	03/11	ACKU	Rafatullah Rahmatee	Program Manager		M
57	03/11	EU	Wali Mohammed Farhodi	Senior Programme Manager - Rural development		M
58	04/11	UNAMA	Andreas Løvold	Electoral Affairs Officer	Norwegian Embassy, AREU Board member	M
59	04/11	UNAMA	Augustine Sowa	Electoral Affairs Officer		M
60	04/11	Tolo News TV	Lofullah Najafizada	Head		M
61	04/11	NDI	Nelika Little	Analyst/LTO	internews, UNDP, IFES, the Asia Foundation	F
62	04/11	Integrity Watch	Yama Torabi	Director	FCCS	M
63	05/11	ACKU	Abdul Wahid Wafa	Director		M
64	05/11	Agga Khan	Ajmal Maiwandi	Chief Executive		M

		Trust for Culture		Officer		
65	05/11	EU SR	Emily Winterbotham	Political adviser	AREU	F
66	05/11	OHCHR	Georgette Gagnon	Director	HRW	F
67	05/11	DFID	Mark Mallalieu	Head of DFID		M
68	05/11	Middle East Institute	Marvin Weinbaum	Director of the Center for Pakistan Studies	US state department; uni of Illinois; AREU; AAN	M
69	05/11	Agga Khan Trust for Culture	Shahla			F
70	11/11	Center for national security	Candace Rondeaux	Research Fellow	ICG; Washington Post	F
71	12/11	AREU	David Mansfield	Researcher		M
72	13/11	AREU	Paul Fishstein	Former Director		M
73	13/11	AREU	Paula Kantor	Former Director	AREU senior researcher	F
74	14/11	Afghanistan Watch	Ibrahim Niamatullah	Co-Director	ICG, LSE, researcher	M
75	14/11	Freie Universität Berlin,	Michael Dexner	Professor of Sociology and University President emeritus (Oldenburg). Freie Universität Berlin, SFB 700, Project C9 Afghanistan		M
76	15/11	Doughty Street Chambers	Nikolaus Grubeck	Barister	UNAMA, Afghan Human Rights commission	M

ANNEX 14 – DOCUMENT REVIEW MATRICES

Gender Doc #	Credibility	Utility	Cross cutting perspectives
1	2 (evidence base not clear in this initial report)	2 (attempt to cover too much in a brief negative for readability)	1,3,6,7,9,11,14 (Useful initial report, particularly in terms of highlighting how economic empowerment is contingent on access to basic public services and policy alignment)
2	1	1	1,3,5,7,9,11,14
3	1	1	1,3,6,7,10,11,14
4	1	1	1,3,6,7,10, 11,14 (good particularly in that it describes gender relations and not just women's roles)
5	1	1	1,3,5,7,9,11,14 (excellent report, out of the sample the only one that has a clear "research" character)

NRM Doc #	Credibility	Utility	Cross cutting perspectives
1	1	2	2,3,5,8,9,11,13 (very useful for development planning, though some unexplained concepts suggest that report is directed to those with basic knowledge of water sector)
2	1	2	2,3,5,8,9,11,13 (very useful for development planning and very high research quality, though some unexplained concepts suggest that report is directed to those with basic knowledge of water sector; even in the extended report gender is essentially ignored)
3	1	2	1,3,5,7,9,11,14 (very useful for development planning and very high research quality, though some unexplained concepts suggest that report is directed to those with basic knowledge of livelihoods)
4	1	1	1,3,5,7,9,11,14 (very useful for development planning and very high research quality; gender issues raised, but could be stronger)
5	1	1	1,3,5,7,9,11,14 (very relevant and high quality; attention to social protection perspectives may be particularly relevant if/when Sida adopts planned increase in attn. to this; also this carries with it an implicit focus on rights)
6	1	2	2,3,5,7,9,11,14 (relevant, though somewhat more difficult reading than other reports in series and gender weaker)
7	1	1	1,3,5,7,9,11,14 (very relevant and high quality; attention

			to social protection perspectives may be particularly relevant if/when Sida adopts planned increase in attn. to this; also this carries with it an implicit focus on rights)
8	1	2	1,3,5,7,9,11,13 (very relevant and high quality; 'essential reading' for a range of future development interventions; weak on gender though)

Codes

Credibility

- 1 apparently good
- 2 evidence based weak/unclear
- 3 opinionated impressions

Utility

- 1 Readable for a broad audience
- 2 Narrower audience of specialists
- 3 Difficult for most readers

Cross cutting perspectives

- 1 Gender clear
- 2 Gender weak
- 3 Participation clear
- 4 Participation weak
- 5 Accountability clear
- 6 Accountability weak
- 7 Non-discrimination clear
- 8 Non-discrimination weak
- 10 Perspective of the poor clear
- 11 Perspective of the poor weak
- 12 Environmental sustainability clear
- 13 Environmental sustainability weak



Evaluation of Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU)

This report presents the findings and conclusions of the evaluation of the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU). AREU is an organisation that was created in what was an effective vacuum in relation to in-depth, empirically-based analysis. It has provided high quality research and data. However, periods of ineffective management combined with a lack of clear direction, identity, goals and indicators, has had a negative impact on the organisation and threatens its ability to stay relevant and effective.

Recent indications of a constructive approach to addressing AREU's challenges should be maintained and implemented. Without these, it would be difficult for the evaluation team to recommend continued funding to the organisation. However, with the new leadership, AREU has developed a number of internal plans and a draft strategy aimed at addressing the bulk of the problems that have arisen in recent years.