

Think-and-do-tank Govern4Afg on Good Governance in Afghanistan

Review of Functions of Governmental Agencies

What is Govern4Afg?

The two-year initiative ‘Governance Forum Afghanistan (Govern4Afg)’ has been launched by German and Afghan partners to establish a platform for policy dialogue on governance topics in Afghanistan. Govern4Afg brings together representatives of research, science, governance practitioners and decision makers to discuss and further develop on governance related topics. Thereby Govern4Afg supports the governance portfolio in Afghanistan in the implementation of the BMZ Country Strategy and contributes to overarching policy development and implementation aligned with Afghan context and needs.

Context

At the beginning of the transformation decade (2015 – 2025) in Afghanistan, the National Unity Government has set benchmarks with the international community to realize the ‘*Self-Reliance through Mutual Accountability Framework*’ aiming at improving the Afghan governance structures. One of the overarching objectives of the Afghan Government is to focus the use of its limited resources for better and more efficient service delivery and creating welfare for Afghans.

One of the key findings of the initial discussion and research undertaken and promoted by Govern4Afg in 2015/2016 is that the distribution of competencies and roles between governmental agencies both in horizontal and vertical perspective are blurred and consequently hamper effective service delivery. The revision of the Subnational Governance Policy and the envisaged deconcentration of public service delivery add to this complexity. Particularly the distribution of competencies and roles between IDLG and the line ministries remains unclear and includes an element of competition.

Approach

Consequently Afghan and German partners agreed on a functional review of the government structure in order to:

- assess the current functioning and performance of institutions and identify ambiguities in competences, roles, responsibilities and functions of entities with a (perceived) similar role;
- make recommendations to improve the performance of the government system particularly with regard to functions implemented by the government, and its institutions in horizontal and vertical level and the creation of optimal function clusters as a basis for the design of most effective and efficient organizational structures; and
- provide a sound and solid empirical basis to assess the impact of future reform initiatives.



The analytical approach is based on a preliminary understanding of the Afghan Government structure which identifies top-level structures (coordinated by the Administrative Office of the President), units on the Provincial level and units on District level. Municipalities are no part of the approach.

The Analytical Model is based on the so-called “T” Concept. This means first to describe one level of organisational units and their functions rather roughly, based on easily available data (from primary and secondary legislation, as well as material published by the government or other sources).

A small number of units will – in an exemplary way – be analysed deeper:

- Independent Directorate for Local Governance (IDLG);
- Ministry of Finance (MoF);
- Ministry of Economy (MoEc)
- The Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission (IARCSC)
- Other relevant lines ministries according to access and appropriateness, particularly:
 - Ministry of Education (MoE)
 - Ministry of Agriculture Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL)
 - Ministry of Public Health (MoPH)
 - Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD)
 - Ministry of Public Works (MoPW) et al.;

On the provincial level **one or two of the 34 provincial administrations** will be identified for deeper analysis. Criteria for selection are availability, supportiveness, and safety. On this basis, the project will identify the functional structures and the relationships between general provincial administration and those units, as well as the vertical processes at the ministry level. The same might apply for the district level, preferably looking into 1 or 2 **district administrations** within the selected provinces.

Expected Outcomes

The functional analysis will have the purpose of optimising horizontal and vertical structures and leading to the elaboration of simple but effective management instruments, particularly of benefit and use of key stakeholders regarding structural service delivery processes reforms, budget management and allocation, national service delivery planning and project and programme design and implementation.

There are already some preliminary assumptions for optimization:

- National level structure is extremely broad, with the risk of fragmentation of activities, overlaps and internal competition → check necessity to concentrate national level structures;
- Provincial administration structures exist but are rather unclear → check how provincial administration can be strengthened and how provincial level offices of ministries can be managed and coordinated in the best way;
- Regional administration is weak, and implementation of functions on this level is arbitrary. → define needs and opportunities to build up a workable regional administration;
- The quantitative distribution of work of about 1:3 (central to subnational level) has to be seen questionable. The share of the subnational structures might be higher. → Reduce functions on national level and check options of decentralization/deconcentration;
- Internet of the government is structured but not functional enough → Office of the President should be supported to build up an effective information base covering all institution;
- The “Tashkils” (Functions distribution plan) exists but are kept confidential → Implement a standardised Tashkil model, covering mandates, mission, visions, goals, functions on unit levels, post descriptions, staff lists, and administrative regulations as key public sector management instruments.

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Published by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
Registered offices Bonn and Eschborn, Germany
Sector project “Good Governance” Afghanistan
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As at April 2017

GIZ is responsible for the content of this publication.

Implemented by

giz Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

KfW

Implementing and facilitating consortium GOPA Consultants mbH, Afghan Research and Evaluation Unit and JS Consultancy Services

On behalf of

Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)