

Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

FY2019 Ex-Post Evaluation of Technical Cooperation Project

‘The Community Development Project for Returnees and Receiving Communities  
in Nangarhar Province’

External Evaluator: Hirofumi Tsuruta, TAC International Inc.

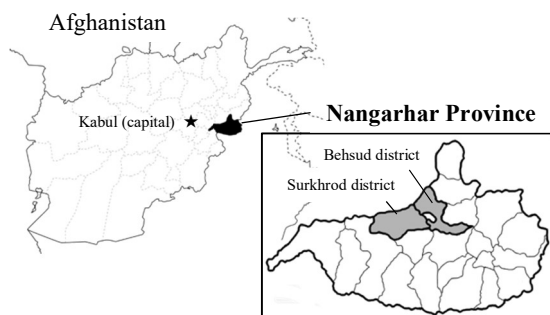
## 0. Summary

The project aimed to improve the living conditions of returnees and host communities in the Behsud and Surkhrod districts of Nangarhar Province, Afghanistan by developing an environment conducive to implementing projects to improve basic infrastructure at the community level.

This project was aligned with *the Afghanistan National Development Strategy 2008–2013*, which put forth a policy to improve the living conditions of communities, including returnees, and to strengthen administrative capacity to this end. In addition, the project responded to the development needs of Nangarhar Province, which faced the challenge of hosting returnees. Furthermore, the project was consistent with Japan’s aid policy at the time, which set forth a policy of ‘providing assistance in areas such as agricultural and rural development, infrastructure development (including energy), education, health and other basic human needs’. Therefore, the relevance of this project is high. Although the project did not sufficiently strengthen the maintenance and management capacity of the implementing agencies, it did provide a model for the implementation of community infrastructure projects, enhance the capacity of contractors, etc., and contribute to the improvement of the livelihoods of the population through the infrastructure developed through the pilot projects. Thus, the effectiveness and impact of the project are fair. The project cost and period were both within the plan; thus, its efficiency is high. The sustainability of the project is fair, because some minor problems have been observed in terms of institutional/organisational, technical, and financial aspects, as the implementing agency is not currently involved in infrastructure development in rural areas and have to rely on external funding.

In light of the above, the project is evaluated to be as satisfactory.

## 1. Project Description



Project locations



School walls constructed during the pilot project

## 1.1 Background

Many Afghan migrants who had left Afghanistan returned to the country in the late 2000s, and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (hereinafter referred to as ‘UNHCR’), in collaboration with the Ministry of Refugee and Repatriation of Afghanistan, implemented cooperation projects to facilitate the return of refugees and livelihood support for humanitarian assistance after their return. In this context, when JICA’s then president, Dr Ogata, visited Afghanistan in December 2007, JICA decided to collaborate with UNHCR to provide community development assistance by expanding the receiving capacity of host communities and developing basic livelihood infrastructure. In addition to the short-term humanitarian aid provided by UNHCR in the form of support for the refugees’ return and essential livelihood maintenance, JICA concluded<sup>1</sup> that it would be more effective to facilitate the reintegration of refugees returning from displacement by providing community development assistance from a medium- to long-term perspective, which is JICA’s forte.

In October 2008, the provincial government of Nangarhar requested that the Government of Japan provide technical cooperation and grant aid to improve the living environments of returnees and host communities.

In June 2009, based on this request, a preparatory study for this cooperation was carried out with a view toward providing support ranging from grant aid to technical cooperation, recognising that ‘community development in the post-return phase involves many development issues, from infrastructure development in basic livelihood areas to promote the resettlement and self-reliance of returnees, to improving the livelihoods of the host communities, including returnees, and addressing issues related to education, vocational training and health’.<sup>2</sup> JICA concluded that, ‘given the situation, we believe that the project should first provide the infrastructure that the people want and secure their physical livelihood, and then carry out livelihood improvement projects as the next step’<sup>3</sup> and decided that cooperation should focus on the development of community infrastructure. At the same time, it was confirmed that there was a lack of community infrastructure in Nangarhar Province, which had been devastated by the prolonged war, and that there was room for improvement in the implementation mechanism and environment for community infrastructure development projects due to a lack of sound contractors to undertake public work, inadequate contracting business practices, inappropriate construction supervision systems, and immature community decision-making processes.

In this background, it was decided to initiate this project as a technical cooperation project in advance and to develop an implementation system and environment for community infrastructure projects while implementing several pilot projects under this framework of the technical cooperation.

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<sup>1</sup> JICA (2009) Preparatory Survey (1<sup>st</sup>) Report ‘1-1 Background of the Survey’ (in Japanese)

<sup>2</sup> JICA (2009) Preparatory Survey (1<sup>st</sup>) Report ‘1-2 Purpose of the Survey’ (in Japanese)

<sup>3</sup> JICA (2009) Preparatory Survey (1<sup>st</sup>) Report ‘4-1 Comments of the Survey Leader’ (in Japanese)

## 1.2 Project Outline

Overall Goal		The living environment of the returnees and receiving communities will be improved by effective operation for the improvement of basic infrastructure at the community level in Nangarhar Province
Project Purpose		An environment conducive to implementing projects for the improvement of basic infrastructure at the community level in two target districts is developed to improve the living environment of the returnees and receiving communities
Output(s)	Output 1	To compile the current situation and development needs of Behsud and Surkhrod district in Nangarhar Province
	Output 2	To select pilot projects and prepare implementation plans with the participation of the local community
	Output 3	To develop a system to be able to implement projects for the improvement of basic infrastructure at the community level by local residents
	Output 4	To develop a system to be able to implement projects for the improvement of basic infrastructure at the community level by local contractors
	Output 5	To develop an operation and maintenance system of basic infrastructure at the community level
Total Cost (Japanese Side)		1,000 million yen
Period of Cooperation		July 2010–July 2013
Target Area		Behsud district and Surkhrod district in Nangarhar Province
Implementing Agency		Provincial government of Nangarhar, Independent Directorate of Local Governance (hereinafter referred to as ‘IDLG’) <sup>4</sup>
Other Relevant Agencies/Organisations		(Members of Project) Provincial Directorate of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, Provincial Directorate of Refugees and Repatriation, Provincial Directorate of Education, Provincial Directorate of Public Health, Provincial Directorate of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock, Provincial Directorate of Irrigation, Governor of the Surkhrod District, Governor of the Behsud District
Consultant in Japan		Katahira & Engineers International
Related Projects		[Technical cooperation projects]

<sup>4</sup> The provincial government consists of the Governor of the Province and officials from the IDLG. In addition to the Headquarters of the IDLG, Provincial and District government officials are IDLG staff (according to the report from the Preparatory Survey Report).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strengthening the Community-led Rural Development Support System (March 2011–February 2015)</li> <li>- Project for the Socio-economic Activation of Rural Afghanistan (August 2011–August 2013)</li> <li>- Inter-Communal Rural Development Project (November 2005–October 2011)</li> </ul> <p>[Grant aid project]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project for Rehabilitation of Community Infrastructure in Nangarhar (February 2013)</li> </ul> <p>[Other development partners]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- World Bank, National Solidarity Programme (hereinafter referred to as ‘NSP’) Phase 1 (December 2003–March 2007), Phase 2 (April 2007–September 2011), Phase 3 (June 2010–March 2017)</li> <li>- World Bank, Citizens’ Charter Afghanistan Project (hereinafter referred to as ‘CCAP’) (October 2016–December 2022)</li> </ul>
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Note: The systems for implementing infrastructure projects in Output 3 and Output 4

As part of this project, two system models for the implementation of infrastructure projects were developed and implemented in the pilot project, as shown in Figure 1, based on the guidelines of the NSP, a national program for community infrastructure development supported by the World Bank.

In forming both models, the project introduced a consensus-building mechanism centred on the Board of Community Development Committee (hereinafter referred to as the ‘BCDC’). The BCDC is anchored by the existing Community Development Council (hereinafter referred to as the ‘CDC’) and is a coalition of several CDC representatives.<sup>5</sup> The BCDC has an implementation committee, a procurement committee, and an operations and maintenance (hereinafter referred to as “O&M”) committee. In the past, the NSP implemented similar community infrastructure development using CDCs and promoted the formation of CDCs. This project utilised the CDC because the purpose of the consensus-building mechanism in this project is limited to the selection, implementation, and maintenance of the pilot project, and it was judged that the use of an existing CDC would lead to the efficient performance of activities.

In addition, both models incorporated a facilitating partner (hereinafter referred to as ‘FP’) to outreach communities to promote the BCDC and other initiatives in community infrastructure

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<sup>5</sup> The CDCs were organised for the implementation of the NSP. During the implementation of the project, the NSP was also implementing a community infrastructure development project for cluster CDCs consisting of several CDCs. According to the responses from a former Japanese expert at the time of this ex-post evaluation, the BCDC introduced in this project is one type of cluster CDC, but at that time, there were various discussions on how to structure a cluster CDC, so the term BCDC was used to avoid confusion.

development. An FP had also been introduced into the NSP prior to this project.

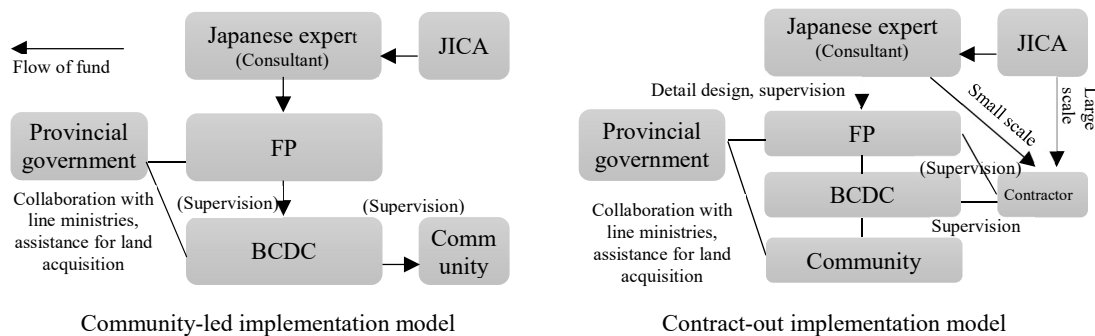


Fig. 1. Project's models of the implementation structure of the infrastructure development  
Source: Project Final Report

### 1.3 Outline of the Terminal Evaluation

#### 1.3.1 Achievement Status of the Project Purpose at the Terminal Evaluation

At the time of the terminal evaluation, based on the achievement status of each output, the functioning of the BCDC as a community consensus-building mechanism, and the review of stakeholders for the results of the pilot project, it was judged that 'it was highly possible that the project purpose would be achieved'. It was also assumed that all five outputs would contribute to the project purpose if appropriate inputs were provided by the end of the project.

#### 1.3.2 Achievement Status of the Overall Goal at the Terminal Evaluation (Including Other Impacts)

It was expected that if the provincial government of Nangarhar and the IDLG were to take a solid initiative to disseminate continuously the project results throughout the province following the end of the project, it would be possible to achieve the overall goal. In addition, the community questionnaire survey results revealed that the communities' socio-economic environment improved as a result of the implementation of the pilot projects.

#### 1.3.3 Recommendations from the Terminal Evaluation

At the time of the terminal evaluation, the following recommendations were made regarding what should be done before the completion of the project:

- [Completion of remaining planned activities (implementation of pilot projects, development of various manuals, establishment of O&M mechanism for completed pilot projects)] At the time of the terminal evaluation, 12 of the 44 pilot projects had not been completed. In addition, the project implementation manual, construction supervision manual, and O&M manual were not completed. In addition, some of the completed pilot projects did not have an O&M system in place; therefore, they needed to be completed.
- [Dissemination and utilisation of the developed manuals] It was necessary not only to distribute

the manuals to the relevant stakeholders but also to ensure their practical use even after the end of the project.

## **2. Outline of the Evaluation Study**

### **2.1 External Evaluator**

Hirofumi Tsuruta, TAC International Inc.<sup>6</sup>

### **2.2 Duration of Evaluation Study**

This ex-post evaluation study was conducted with the schedule outlined below.

Duration of the study: September 2019–August 2021

Duration of the field study: No field study. For security reasons, fieldwork was carried out by a field survey assistant in Afghanistan. This operation structure for conducting the field survey was planned prior to the new coronavirus epidemic.

### **2.3 Constraints during the Evaluation Study**

Because this ex-post evaluation was conducted through communication with the implementing agency and JICA Afghanistan office by document and the field survey assistant was not allowed to visit the construction sites in the Nangarhar Province for safety reasons, there were some limitations: 1) it was challenging to obtain supplementary information and data if the answers given in the questionnaire<sup>7</sup> were insufficient, and 2) the data and information tended to be of insufficient quality to understand the actual status of the O&M of the developed infrastructure.

In addition, it was expected from the beginning that the field survey work would be limited because of the instability of the security situation in the country. However, the new coronavirus pandemic further restricted the activities of the JICA Afghanistan Office, implementing agencies, and field survey assistants beginning in the end of 2019. This caused them to delay the start of the activities. As a result, the time spent on information and data collection in the field was reduced, and the amount collected was minimal.

In response to this situation, more time was allocated than originally planned to collect existing literature, and the evaluator attempted to collect as much supplementary information as possible.

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<sup>6</sup> The evaluator belongs to the Namidabashi Lab. Co., Ltd., and participated in this ex-post evaluation as a reinforcement member.

<sup>7</sup> At the time of this ex-post evaluation, a questionnaire survey was conducted with FPs (1 organisation), BCDC representatives (3 persons), contractors (3 companies), the Provincial Education Directorate, and the Provincial Health Directorate regarding 1) the contribution and impact of the project in improving the implementation system, environment, and living conditions, 2) the O&M status and institutional structure for maintenance of the infrastructure developed, and 3) existing statistical data. The questionnaire survey could not be conducted for the implementing agency because no one was involved in the project at the time of the ex-post evaluation.

### 3. Results of the Evaluation (Overall Rating: B<sup>8</sup>)

#### 3.1 Relevance (Rating: ③<sup>9</sup>)

##### 3.1.1 Consistency with the Development Plan of Afghanistan

*The Afghanistan National Development Strategy 2008–2013*, which was the national medium-term development plan at the time of the ex-ante evaluation (2010) and at the time of the completion of the project (2013), defined three strategic pillars, one of which is to contribute to ‘*economic and social development*’: the development of water resources (irrigation development and rehabilitation), agricultural and rural development (improvement of agricultural and rural infrastructure and strengthening of community autonomy), improvement of transport infrastructure (improvement of rural access roads), expansion of education (construction of facilities and procurement of equipment for equity), and improvement of health services (strengthening existing infrastructure and promoting community participation). In addition, as a cross-cutting issue, it defined the safe, voluntary, and sustainable repatriation and social integration of refugees and internally displaced persons as a strategic objective. In particular, to ensure repatriation and social integration, it emphasised the guarantee of their human rights, housing provision, the enhancement of social services, and the strengthening of administrative capacity to assist them.

Therefore, the project, which aimed to improve the living conditions of returnees and host communities, as well as the implementation system and environment necessary for rural development and the development of community infrastructure such as agriculture, water resources, schools, and health facilities was consistent with Afghanistan’s development policy.

##### 3.1.2 Consistency with the Development Needs of Afghanistan

The number of returnees in Afghanistan from the planning stage to the completion of the project (2009–2013) is shown in Table 1. It was estimated that about a quarter of the total population were returnees. Thus, it was considered necessary to strengthen receiving systems and capacities, including expanding social services, to ensure sustainable repatriation and settlement. In particular, Nangarhar Province is a state with many returnees, and UNHCR statistics indicated that approximately 20% of the 150,000 people who returned to Afghanistan in the three years from 2012 to 2014 were those returning to Nangarhar.<sup>10</sup> According to a report by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (hereinafter referred to as ‘OCHA’),<sup>11</sup> in 2013, Nangarhar was one of the five top provinces with the most significant humanitarian needs<sup>12</sup> as well as the highest number of security cases and inadequate access to food security, nutrition, and

<sup>8</sup> A: Highly satisfactory, B: Satisfactory, C: Partially satisfactory, D: Unsatisfactory

<sup>9</sup> ③: High, ②: Fair, ①: Low

<sup>10</sup> UNHCR (2014) The 2014 Afghanistan Refugee and Returnee Overview

<sup>11</sup> OCHA (2013) Humanitarian Needs Overview 2014

<sup>12</sup> OCHA analysed the size of humanitarian needs in terms of the size of the population in need of health, nutrition, water and sanitation, food security, emergency shelter and basic necessities, protection, and multi-sectoral efforts. (OCHA (2013) Humanitarian Needs Overview 2014)

health services.

Therefore, this project, which aimed to improve the living conditions of returnees and host communities and to develop the necessary community infrastructure, was consistent with the development needs of Afghanistan and Nangarhar Province.

Table 1. The number of returnees in Afghanistan

Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Number of returnees (persons)	54,552	112,968	67,962	94,556	38,766	16,995

\*Undocumented returnees are not included.

Source: UNHCR Afghanistan Situation <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/Afghanistan> (accessed on 30 January 2021).

### 3.1.3 Consistency with Japan's ODA Policy

Japan's ODA policy for Afghanistan at the time of the ex-ante evaluation (2010) was the '*New Strategy to Counter the Threat of Terrorism (Japan's New Assistance Package for Afghanistan and Pakistan)*', announced by the Government of Japan in 2009. The strategy outlined three strategic axes, one of which was 'sustainable and self-reliant development', which included the policy of 'providing assistance in areas such as agricultural and rural development, infrastructure development, education, health and other basic human needs based on Afghanistan's needs'.

Therefore, the project, which contributed to support for infrastructure development, agricultural and rural development, education, and health, was consistent with Japan's aid policy.

### 3.1.4 Appropriateness of the Project Plan and Approach

A conceptual framework of the causal relationship among the outputs, project purpose, and overall goal of the project is shown in Fig. 2. Any logical deficits was found in the conceptual framework. Moreover, as described in 'Section 3.2.1 Effectiveness' and 'Section 3.2.2 Impact' below, the project's effects did not appear entirely in line with this relationship, but this was due to the weak commitment of the implementing agency. Thus, it is concluded that there are no significant problems with the logic of the project plan.

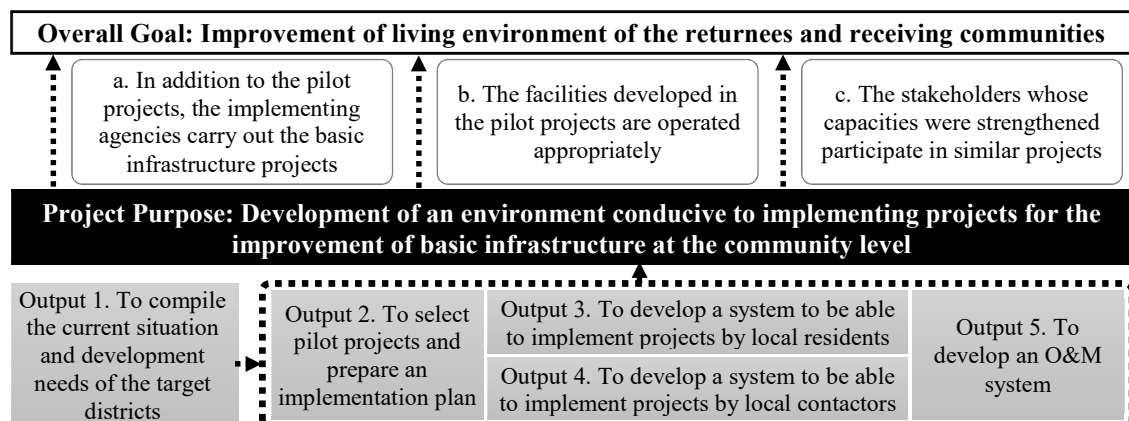


Fig. 2. Relationship among outputs, project purpose, and overall goal (conceptual framework)

In addition, as described in ‘Section 1.1 Background’, the project was designed to improve the implementation system and environment while implementing the pilot project of community infrastructure development prior to the grant aid project. At the ex-post evaluation, the relationship between technical cooperation and grant aid was clarified, as shown in Fig. 3. The project complemented the grant aid in two aspects: 1) through the development of the implementation system and environment and 2) through the development of community infrastructure. Thus, the relationship between the two was appropriate.

At the time of this ex-post evaluation, it was impossible to confirm the extent to which the relationship shown in Fig. 3 had been envisaged when this technical cooperation project was planned. Detailed plans for each project were formulated at different times.<sup>13</sup> Generally speaking, it is not possible to develop a project plan that guarantees that the results of an earlier project are achieved. In addition, in conflict-affected countries, the situation can change rapidly. In such circumstances, this planning approach, without integrating technical cooperation and grant assistance, may have allowed for more flexible decisions and responses.

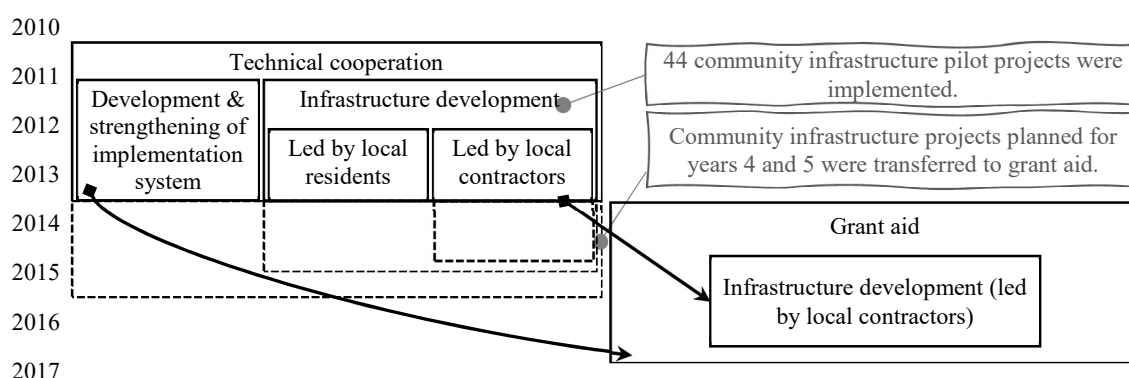


Fig. 3. Relationship between technical cooperation and grant aid (summarised by the external evaluator at the time of the ex-post evaluation)

In summary, the project has been highly relevant to the country’s development plan and development needs as well as to Japan’s ODA policy, and its project plan and approach was appropriate. Therefore, its relevance is high.

### 3.2 Effectiveness and Impacts (Rating: ②)

#### 3.2.1 Effectiveness

##### 3.2.1.1 Project Outputs

The relationship between the five outputs of the project and the project purpose is shown in

<sup>13</sup> As for grant aid, a preparatory study was conducted from May to November 2012, and the basic design was established based on the judgment that ‘the implementation system has been developed to the extent that the implementation of the grant aid is feasible’ based on the advisory study (February 2012) during the implementation of the technical cooperation project.

Fig. 2. The project aimed to achieve its objectives by planning a pilot project, developing two project models (community-led and contract-out), and establishing an infrastructure maintenance and management system based on understanding the situation and needs.

At the time of this ex-post evaluation, it was confirmed that outputs 1 to 4 were achieved through the project.

First, a survey was conducted to understand the current situation and needs of the 11 villages proposed by UNHCR, where there was a large concentration of returnees and a high need for resettlement and social integration (Output 1). In these 11 villages, the BCDC, a village consultation system that serves as a consensus-building mechanism among communities, was established, and with the participation of the BCDC, a total of 45 pilot projects (24 resident-led pilots and 21 contractor-led pilots) were planned (Output 2).

Table 2. Details of planned pilot projects in each group

Group	District	Community-led*					Contract-out*					Total
		S	H	R	I	Misc.	S	H	R	I	Misc.	
1	Behsud	0	0	1	5	0	4	0	0	0	0	10
	Surkhrod	0	0	1	7	0	1	0	0	0	0	9
2	Behsud	0	0	0	0	0	8	1	1	0	0	10
	Surkhrod	0	0	2	0	0	3	2	1	0	0	8
3	Behsud	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	3
	Surkhrod	0	0	0	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	5
Total		0	0	4	15	5	16	3	2	0	0	45

\*S: School-related projects, H: Health facility-related projects, R: Road-related projects, I: Irrigation-related projects, Misc.: Other projects

Source: Project final report

Of the 45 pilot projects shown in Table 2, 44 were implemented and completed by the end of the project.<sup>14</sup> Prior to and in parallel with the implementation of these pilot projects, the implementation and supervision manuals were developed and revised, training was provided to the BCDC and contractors, and community outreach was carried out by FP (Output 3 and 4).

However, at the time of this ex-post evaluation, it was judged that Output 5 was not achieved. Through this project, an O&M system was proposed, an O&M manual was developed, and an O&M committee was established, but it was not possible to make them functional. For example, in the final report of the project, it was pointed out that the local government and related directorates did not have a sufficient budget for the maintenance of public facilities such as roads, so the local people were instructed to maintain them, but it was doubtful whether the local

<sup>14</sup> All the 12 works recommended at the end of the evaluation were completed by the end of the project. The preparation of manuals and other documents was likewise completed by the end of the project and distributed to the relevant authorities.

residents could do this sufficiently because they did not have a large-enough budget. Therefore, O&M systems should have been improved. In addition, according to the responses to the questionnaire by the contractors and FPs at the time of the ex-post evaluation, the involvement and cooperation of the implementing agency was low throughout the project, despite the government's support being necessary for the O&M of the projects contracted by local contractors. In other words, the O&M system centred on the implementing agency was not sufficiently strengthened.

### 3.2.1.2 Achievement of Project Purpose

Table 3. Achievement of project purpose

Project Purpose	Indicators	Actual
An environment conducive to implementing projects for the improvement of basic infrastructure at the community level in the two target districts is developed to improve the living environment of the returnees and receiving communities	(1) A development model is established.	[Achieved] Through this project, the implementation structure for community-led and contract-out community infrastructure projects was clarified.
	(2) FPs' capacity to select and implement the projects is improved.	[Achieved] FP capacities were strengthened through the training and on-the-job training conducted as part of the project.
	(3) Contractors' capacity to execute the projects is improved.	[Achieved] Contractors' capacities were improved through the training and utilisation of regular consultation opportunities provided by the project.
	(4) Similar projects for the returnees and receiving communities are formed.	[Not achieved] No projects were identified for community infrastructure projects other than the pilot projects.
	(5) The capacity of implementing agencies to select and implement the projects is improved.	[Not Achieved] The capacity of the implementing agencies was not sufficiently strengthened for the O&M of community infrastructure built by local contractors under the initiative of the implementing agencies.

Indicator (1) was achieved, as mentioned in the outputs. Based on the needs identified through the survey, a consultation system in the village for community-led and local contract-out community infrastructure projects was established, standard structures and procedures for planning, implementation, operation, maintenance, and management were defined, and the details

of the development model were clarified. In addition, through the pilot project, it was confirmed that these systems, structures, and procedures could be put into practice.

Concerning indicator (2), through the project, the capacity of FPs was strengthened, and their experience accumulated through training and pilot projects. In the questionnaires at the time of the terminal evaluation and at that of the ex-post evaluation, FP responded that their skills and knowledge had improved in 1) selecting needs, 2) building consensus in communities, 3) formulating project implementation plans, 4) supervising the implementation of community-led projects, 5) supporting contracts between communities and contractors, 6) preparing various documents for payment, and 7) inspecting defects.

Regarding indicator (3), the capacity of the contractors was strengthened through training, on-the-job training through regular consultations, and practice during the pilot project. In response to the questionnaire at the time of the terminal evaluation and at the time of the ex-post evaluation, contractors who responded to the questionnaire said that they not only acquired engineering skills from the Japanese experts but also learned administrative know-how such as the meaning of contracts, the procurement process, the payment process, and how to prepare various documents. They also indicated that the project taught them the importance of working together with the community.

Indicator (4) was not achieved. This indicator indicates whether projects other than the pilot project were formed.<sup>15</sup> In other words, it clarifies whether the implementing agencies had accumulated knowledge through the formation and implementation of pilot projects, whether they had developed and refined its implementation system and environment based on the knowledge, and whether the implementation system and environment are functional. No other projects were identified from the terminal evaluation survey report, the final project report, or the questionnaire survey at the time of the ex-post evaluation.<sup>16</sup>

Indicator (5) was also judged to have not been achieved. At the time of this ex-post evaluation, no one in the implementing agency knew the situation during the project period, so it was impossible to obtain opinions or information in this regard. However, according to the responses to the questionnaire by former Japanese experts and FPs, the involvement and cooperation of the implementing agency was reported to have been low throughout the project. In addition, as shown

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<sup>15</sup> In the PDM, this indicator is described as similar projects for the returnees and receiving communities are formed, suggesting that projects other than the pilot project were envisaged. In the project outputs, it was clearly indicated as a pilot project.

<sup>16</sup> At the time of this ex-post evaluation, it was judged that the community infrastructure development in the grant aid 'The Project for Rehabilitation of Community Infrastructure in Nangarhar' implemented following this project did not support the achievement of the indicator. This is because it was considered that the system and environment for implementing the grant aid project in the implementing agencies were not necessarily sufficient compared to the system and environment aimed for in the project purpose. In the terminal evaluation, it was judged that the project had 'developed the capacity to implement the basic community infrastructure projects to be implemented under the grant aid', while the evaluation of effectiveness stated that 'the project objectives are likely to be achieved by the end of the project', indicating that the project objectives were still not achieved. Moreover, the terminal evaluation pointed out the technical and organisational problems of the implementing agencies in terms of sustainability. In other words, the system and environment in which the implementing agencies were able to carry out the grant aid still had room for improvement, compared to what was aimed for in the project purpose.

in Output 5, there remained some issues related to the O&M of the community infrastructure built by the local contractor, which the implementing agency mainly carries out. Thus, it is difficult to imagine that the agency's capacity was sufficiently strengthened by the completion of the project.

In summary, the project achieved its purpose at a limited level. As a result of this project, 1) two development models for community infrastructure development – one community-led and one contractor-led – have been developed; 2) manuals have been developed to put these models into practice; 3) the capacity of FPs, contractors, and communities has been strengthened, and experience has been accumulated; and then the system and environment for implementing basic infrastructure projects at the community level has been consolidated and improved. However, the capacity of the implementing agencies to operation and maintain community infrastructure was not sufficiently strengthened, so the project purpose was achieved at a limited level.

### 3.2.2 Impacts

#### 3.2.2.1 Achievement of the Overall Goal

At the time of this ex-post evaluation, the following three main paths were envisaged in terms of the pathway from the outputs and project purpose to the overall goal of 'improvement of the living environment':

- A) The implementation system and environment developed in the project will be used by the implementing agencies to implement other basic infrastructure projects in addition to the pilot project, thereby contributing to improving the living environment (the pathway can be found in the plan).
- B) The facilities developed in the pilot project will be properly operated and maintained after the completion of the project, which will contribute to the improvement of the living environment (the pathway can be found in the plan).
- C) The contractors, FPs, BCDC, etc., whose capacity has been strengthened through the project, will participate in similar community infrastructure projects and contribute to improving the living environment by using the results and experiences from the project (not readable from the plan but considered a possible path at the time of the ex-post evaluation).

It can be considered that A) is based on the achievement of the project purpose, while B) and C) contribute directly to the overall goal from the level of outputs. On the basis of this understanding, the achievement of the overall goal was discussed. The achievement levels of the overall goal are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Achievement of overall goal

Overall Goal	Indicators	Actual
The living environment of the returnees and receiving communities will be improved through the effective operation of basic infrastructure at the community level in Nangarhar Province.	(1) Agriculture output is increased.	[Achieved] At the time of the terminal evaluation, a questionnaire survey of the community reported that crop production had increased. It was also said that agricultural productivity had improved due to irrigation development in similar projects by other development partners.
	(2) Traveling time to the community centre is shortened.	[Achieved] During the project's implementation period, the average vehicle speed in the target area was 20 km/h, but at the time of this ex-post evaluation, it was reported to be 70 km/h. The project contributed to the reduction of travel time.
	(3) The capacity of school or clinic is increased.	[Achieved] The number of classrooms, students, and outpatients in the target districts has increased.
	(4) The models and mechanisms developed in this project will be used.	[Not achieved] At the time of ex-post evaluation, it was impossible to confirm the implementation of community infrastructure development using the development models and mechanisms developed by the project.

Indicator (1) was achieved. Although it was not possible to collect information and data on the current situation, including quantitative data, at the time of this ex-post evaluation, it had been reported in the questionnaire survey to the community at the time of the terminal evaluation that 'the construction of irrigation has increased the production of crops as the farmland is no longer flooded'. In addition, similar projects from other development partners have reported improved agricultural productivity due to irrigation development.<sup>17</sup>

Indicator (2) was also achieved. As shown in Table 5, the average speed and maximum access time to schools and health facilities improved, compared to the project period. In their responses to the questionnaire, the BCDC also reported that 'the improved road has made it easier to transport goods to the market as there is no time wastage' and 'access to the market, hospitals and schools has also improved'.

<sup>17</sup> World Bank website (2018) A New Irrigation Canal Brings Hope to Rural Afghans <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2018/09/10/irrigation-rehabilitation-improves-water-usage-and-reduces-water-related-conflicts-in-rural-afghanistan> (Accessed on 25 April 2021)

Table 5. Travelling speeds and maximum access times to schools and health facilities

Indicators	2012	2019
Average driving speed in the target area (km/h)	20	70 <sup>*2</sup> /70–90 <sup>*3</sup>
Maximum access time to schools and health facilities (minutes)	15 <sup>*1</sup>	10 <sup>*2</sup> /5 <sup>*3</sup>

Source: \*1 Ex-ante evaluation sheets on grant aid, \*2 Questionnaire for the Provincial Education Directorate, \*3 Questionnaire for the Provincial Health Directorate.

Indicator (3) was also achieved. The number of classrooms, students, and outpatients in the two target districts improved, compared to the project period, as shown in Table 6. Regarding education, according to the responses to the questionnaire from the BCDC, ‘In the past, girls were not allowed to go to school, but now that the outer wall of the school has been built to prevent suspicious persons from entering, it is easier for girls to go to school with a feeling of security’ and ‘A safe learning environment has been created for both boys and girls’. Regarding health facilities, the responses to the questionnaire from the Provincial Health Directorate reported improvements in public health as well as in access to and the quality of health services, and the BCDC responded that access to health facilities had become easier. These responses support changes in the indicators listed in Table 6.

Table 6. Provision of services in schools and health facilities

Indicators		2012	2019
School	Number of available classrooms in the two target districts (rooms)	95 <sup>*1</sup>	550 <sup>*2</sup>
	Number of students per classroom in the two target districts (students/room)	185 <sup>*1</sup>	64 <sup>*2</sup>
	Enrolment rate in the two target districts (%)	89.6 <sup>*3</sup>	90.9 <sup>*3</sup>
Health facilities	Number of patients per day in comprehensive and basic health centres in the two target counties (persons)	250 <sup>*1</sup>	1,204 <sup>*4</sup>
	Antenatal care rate (%) in Nangarhar Province (reference)	58.4 (2010) <sup>*5</sup>	72.6 (2016) <sup>*6</sup>
	Institutional delivery rate (%) in Nangarhar Province (reference)	44.1 (2010) <sup>*5</sup>	50.6 (2016) <sup>*6</sup>

Source: \*1 Ex-ante evaluation sheets on grant aid, \*2 Questionnaire to the Provincial Education Directorate, \*3 Documents shared from the Provincial Education Directorate, \*4 Questionnaire to the Provincial Health Directorate, \*5 USAID (2013) DHS Working Papers -Maternal Health Care Trends in Afghanistan, \*6 CSO (2017) Afghanistan Living Condition Survey 2016

However, indicator (4) was not achieved. At the time of this ex-post evaluation, the implementation of community infrastructure development using the models and mechanisms developed in the project was not confirmed. As mentioned above, the weak commitment of the

implementing agencies – the provincial government of Nangarhar and the IDLG – to the project had been pointed out during its planning and implementation. In the preparatory survey report, the NSP's implementing agency was reported to be the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, and the Ministry had significant experience with community infrastructure projects. At the same time, it was noted that the government of Nangarhar and the IDLG itself lacked implementation capacity. Thus, there were concerns about implementation in a self-reliant manner.<sup>18</sup> Additionally, as of April 2021, community infrastructure development similar to the project was being implemented in Nangarhar under the auspices of the World Bank as a CCAP, but the IDLG, which was the implementing agency for the project, was not involved in rural community infrastructure development and was not able to use the models and mechanisms introduced by the project.

Considering the achievement status of these indicators, the fact that indicator (4) was not achieved means that the effects of the project did not occur in pathway A), and the effects of the project on indicators (1) to (3) above are likely to occur in pathways B) and C). In fact, at the time of this ex-post evaluation, according to the responses to the questionnaire provided by the Provincial Education Directorate, Provincial Health Directorate, and BCDC, it was reported that the infrastructure developed in the pilot project is in operation. They also noted that some FPs, contractors, and BCDCs whose capacities were strengthened through the project are participating in the NSP and CCAP supported by the World Bank and that 'My colleagues and I are using the knowledge we learned through the project to implement the current project'. Therefore, it is suggested that the effects of the project are manifested in pathways B) and C).

In summary, the project has achieved at a limited level its overall goal because the living conditions of the local population in Nangarhar have improved. However, although there were three possible pathways through which the effect could be manifested, due to the lack of projects similar to the pilot project and the limited commitment of the implementing agencies during the implementation of the project, only two pathways were found to be effective.

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<sup>18</sup> According to the preparatory survey (1<sup>st</sup>) report, at the time of planning, the implementation structure of the project was examined in various manners, including whether the implementation structure should be led by the provincial government and the IDLG or by the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, which has played a central role in the NSP and other rural community infrastructure projects. For example, while the implementation structure centred on the provincial government and the IDLG had the disadvantages mentioned above, it also had the perceived advantages of easier cooperation from various sectors within the province, easier political backing, and an easier regional focus in Nangarhar. In contrast, the disadvantages of taking the Ministry of Rural Reconstruction and Development as the focal point were perceived to be the insufficient cooperation from other sectors and the susceptibility to the influence of the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development framework (schemes, priority policies, etc.).

It should be noted that, in the preparatory study report, the selection of the implementing agency is confirmed in terms of the above contents, i.e. consideration of the implementation and management, but the consideration in terms of the manifestation of effects and sustainability after the completion of the project is not clearly described.

### 3.2.2.2 Other Positive and Negative Impacts

In this project, infrastructure development was carried out through a pilot project, but at the time of the ex-post evaluation, no particular negative impact was confirmed. In addition, according to the answers to the questionnaire that was given to the former Japanese experts at the time of the ex-post evaluation, although land acquisition (donation of land by the residents) occurred during the implementation of the pilot project, this was resolved through discussions between the local residents at the planning stage, and no negative effects due to resettlement and land acquisition were confirmed.

The other impacts confirmed at the time of this ex-post evaluation are summarised in Table 7.

As for collaborations with development partners, although this was consciously planned at the time of planning and implementation of the projects, it was not always possible to confirm apparent synergy effects. However, the effects mentioned above, such as the improvement of the living environment, can be regarded as the result of these various efforts, including this project.

In addition, any examples of the use of the development models/mechanisms established in this project could not be found. As mentioned in the analysis of indicator (4) in ‘Section 3.2.2.1 Achievement of the Overall Goal’, this was because the IDLG, the implementing agency of the project, was less committed to the activities during the project implementation phase and has not been involved in community infrastructure development in rural areas since the completion of the project.

Concerning the empowerment of the community, even if it was not necessarily mentioned, there were responses such as ‘I learned the importance and concrete ways of working with the community’ that suggest a change in the perspective of the community and the awareness of those involved in the collaboration. This is the impact of considering the relationship with residents in a situation of conflicting interests among different stakeholders as a project implemented in a conflict-affected area. The final project report found that mutual trust and cooperative relations have been established through the implementation of pilot projects and monthly security meetings. Communities also have a sense of ownership and cooperate positively to secure safety. This project management attitude was likely transmitted not only to the residents but also to other stakeholders. This indicates that trust in decision-making on the part of the community has been fostered and that the project has contributed to ‘developing confidence between the government and the people’, which is the goal of JICA's peacebuilding cooperation<sup>19</sup>.

Another possible impact on peacebuilding was the promotion of reconciliation between refugees and internally displaced persons and the host society. Although the opinions of the stakeholders were not fully confirmed at the time of the ex-post evaluation, as described in ‘3.2.1.1 Project Outputs’, the project deliberately selected villages where there was a high concentration of returnees and where there was a high need for resettlement and social integration

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<sup>19</sup> JICA's Position Paper on SDGs: Goal 16

and built community infrastructure in those locations. Therefore, it can be said that the project has promoted reconciliation between refugees and IDPs and the host society and has contributed to the ‘mitigation of instability’ necessary for peacebuilding.

Table 7. Other impacts checked in this ex-post evaluation

Other impacts	Details confirmed during the ex-post evaluation
Synergy with a grant aid project	As shown in ‘Figure 3: Relationship between technical cooperation and grant aid’, this project could complement the grant aid in two aspects, 1) through the development of the implementation system and environment and 2) through the development of the community infrastructure, and synergy effects were expected at the planning phase. However, at the time of this ex-post evaluation, due to the limitations of the survey, it was not possible to confirm specific examples of synergies.
Synergy with UNHCR’s humanitarian assistance	The project has been planned in close collaboration with UNHCR. For example, the selection of target areas for the pilot project was based on recommendations by UNHCR. As a result, villages with a high need for resettlement and social integration could be selected more appropriately, thus contributing to the promotion of reconciliation between refugees and IDPs and the host society. However, at the time of this ex-post evaluation, due to the limitations of the survey, it was not possible to confirm specific examples of synergy.
Use of development models/mechanisms established in technical cooperation projects	In a questionnaire survey that was given to the NGO, Future Generation, which was the FP that promoted the activities of the local people in the technical cooperation project and is also involved as FP in the current CCAP, the response was that ‘the models and mechanisms developed in this project are still not used in other projects’. In addition, none of the literature collected during this ex-post evaluation from the World Bank, UNHCR, or other sources mentioned the model or mechanisms of this project.
Community empowerment	Responses to the BCDC questionnaire included the following: ‘I increased my knowledge, skills, and experience in implementation and infrastructure maintenance’; ‘Participation in the project strengthened my sense of ownership and care in the community and has prepared me for what I need to think about in advance in terms of community infrastructure development, including the financial and human costs’. In addition, the FP and contractors responded that there was a sense of empowerment of the community and that the FP and contractor side had a clearer understanding

	of the importance of community involvement.
Enhancing the reputation of Japan	At the ex-post evaluation, the Provincial Health Directorate responded that ‘the reputation of the Japanese people has been improved through this project’. At the same time, other questionnaire responses indicated that ‘there was no improvement in reputation’. It should be noted that in the terminal evaluation, it was reported that ‘the projects implemented in the pilot project were often rated as having a higher quality of construction than other community infrastructure projects, which enhanced the reputation of Japan’.
Sense of Coherence (hereinafter referred to as ‘SoC’) <sup>20</sup>	Responses to the questionnaire given by the BCDC included statements such as ‘Through this project, I have learned how to share my problems with other residents, and I have a sense of being treated fairly and of being in control of the situation’ and ‘A sense of caring for others has been developed among the people’, but at the time of this ex-post evaluation, due to the constraints of the survey and other factors, it was not possible to collect examples of changes in the sense of coherence or clear evidence of such changes.

In summary, since this project has to some extent achieved the project purpose and overall goal, the effectiveness and impact of the project are fair. Regarding the project purpose, it cannot be said that the capacity of the implementing agencies was sufficiently strengthened; in particular, the O&M system of the infrastructure remained an issue, while the models to be pursued were clarified, manuals were developed to put these models into practice, and the capacity of implementing agencies, contractors, and FPs was strengthened. As for the overall goal, it is considered that the effects were not achieved along all the pathway envisaged at the time of planning, but the living environment of local residents, including returnees, has been improved through the use of the infrastructure developed in the pilot projects. In addition, the project contributed to peacebuilding by developing confidence between the government and the people and promoting reconciliation between refugees and internally displaced persons and the host society.

<sup>20</sup> SoC refers to the sense of being able to perceive, make sense of, and act with a sense of security in relation to the various events in one’s life. SoC is composed of three specific components: comprehensibility (a sense of knowing what the future holds), manageability (a sense of being able to cope with the situation at hand), and meaningfulness (a sense of satisfaction with life). Studies have shown that SoC decreases in conflict situations. In this ex-post evaluation, the evaluator attempted to identify SoC as a proxy indicator of the ‘sense of security’ brought about by conflict prevention and peacebuilding through cooperation projects. The evaluator used a tool called the SoC-13, which consists of 13 questions answered using a seven-point Likert scale, translated from English into the local language and administered in the form of a self-response questionnaire. In addition to the scales, the evaluator asked respondents about their views and specific experiences related to pre- and post-change to supplement the judgments.

### 3.3 Efficiency (Rating: ③)

#### 3.3.1 Inputs

Inputs	Plan	Actual
(1) Experts	No specific number of persons or person-months of work in the ex-ante evaluation	Short-Term: total 15 persons (110.3 person-months)
(2) Trainees Received	No specific information in the ex-ante evaluation	No trainees
(3) Equipment	Office equipment for the project office, etc.	No procurement of equipment
Japanese Side Total Project Cost	1,500 million yen	1,000 million yen
Afghanistan Side Total Project Cost	Counterpart personnel costs, provision of project office space, provision of information on the security situation (specific project costs unknown)	Assignment of counterparts (7 persons) and their personnel costs, provision of land for the pilot project, provision of information on the security situation (project cost unknown)
Project Period	July 2010–June 2015 (5 years)	July 2010–July 2013 (3 years)

##### 3.3.1.1 Elements of Inputs

One of the most notable Japanese-side inputs to the project was the deployment of experts with extensive experience in community infrastructure development in Afghanistan. This arrangement enabled the project to respond flexibly to the situation, including the use of local persons to supervise the implementation of the project and to change the method of supervision according to the situation in the face of many constraints due to security and other factors and unpredictable conditions. Specifically, because of the large number of pilot projects, the scattered locations of the pilot implementation, and the fact that some areas were inaccessible for security reasons, the project was planned from the outset with the assumption that local people and FPs would be involved. In practice, the project responded the situation by varying the intensity of remote control on the local people and FPs. For example, in February 2011, when Japanese experts were evacuated from Nangarhar Province to the capital, Kabul, measures were taken to increase the frequency of communication by adding weekly reports to the monthly reports submitted by the national staff to the Japanese experts so as to avoid reducing the quality of the activities. These measures were based on the know-how of JICA's Inter-Communal Rural Development Project (2005–2011).

On the other hand, seven staff members were assigned to the Afghanistan side, and the primary

personnel remained unchanged during the implementation period. In addition, because the sectors covered by the pilot project are agriculture and water resources, education, health, and roads, the Project Coordinating Committee consisted of various members not only from the provincial government of Nangarhar and IDLG but also from the Provincial Directorate of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, Provincial Directorate of Refugees and Repatriation, Provincial Directorate of Education, Provincial Directorate of Public Health, Provincial Directorate of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock, Provincial Directorate of Irrigation, Governor of the Surkhrod District, and Governor of the Behsud District. At the time of this ex-post evaluation, it was not confirmed that any problems arose during the implementation period with these project management structures. Concerning the weak organisational commitment as an implementing agency, as mentioned above, no particular negative impact on the operation or progress of the project could be identified, although it is considered that more staff would have been required for the project to be effective.

#### 3.3.1.2 Project Cost

The actual project cost was within the plan (66.7% of the planned cost). One of the reasons for this is that the project period was shortened from five to three years, as described in Section 3.3.1.3. However, it is considered that the shortening of the project period and the resulting reduction in project costs did not affect output achievements.

Even in terms of technical cooperation, there was no impact on output production due to the shortening of the project period and the consequent reduction in the project cost.

Concerning the unachieved Output 5, two of the three indicators were achieved. The unachieved indicator, (3), was due to the weak commitment of the implementing agency, as mentioned above. This problem cannot always be solved by increasing the number of activities and inputs.

#### 3.3.1.3 Project Period

The project period was within the plan because the period was shortened from five years to three years, which is 66.7% of the planned period. The reasons for the shortening of the project period were as follows: 1) the advisory study conducted in February 2012 confirmed that the project was expected to produce outputs; 2) it was judged that it would be possible to implement grant assistance by utilising the capacity developed in the project; and 3) due to the rapid deterioration of security in the target area, the entry of Japanese nationals was prohibited. As a result, it was decided that the modality of the cooperation would change and the contract-out community infrastructure planned in the fourth and fifth years of the technical cooperation project would be implemented under the grant aid scheme, and the project was terminated.

As mentioned above, shortening the project period did not significantly affect output production.

In summary, both the project cost and the project period were within the plan. Therefore, the efficiency of the project was high.

### 3.4 Sustainability (Rating: ②)

The project's effects were to strengthen the implementation structure of community infrastructure projects and to improve the living conditions of returnees and host community residents through the operation of community infrastructure. The following sections examine the policy and political commitments, institutional and operational arrangements, technical aspects, and finance required to sustain these benefits.

#### 3.4.1 Policy and Political Commitment for the Sustainability of Project Effects

In this section, the evaluator reviews the policy and political commitments in developing community infrastructure and the improvement of the living conditions of returnees and host communities.

First, the *Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework 2017–2021*, Afghanistan's five-year national development strategy at the time of this ex-post evaluation, states that ensuring a better future for refugees, returning migrants, and internally displaced people is a critical part of the national development strategy. To realise this, the Citizen's Charter National Priority Program was established as a poverty reduction and social integration strategy, and the direction was outlined to improve the service delivery mechanism using the CDC for education, health, rural infrastructure, and agriculture. At the time of the implementation of the project, the policy of improving community infrastructure and promoting the social integration of returnees through the use of the CDC was embodied and implemented by the NSP under the auspices of the World Bank, but at the time of the ex-post evaluation, it was taken over by the CCAP, the successor project of the NSP. In the evaluation of the NSP by the World Bank in 2016, the political commitment to community infrastructure development was rated as 'good' (second best out of four).<sup>21</sup>

The above indicates that from the end of the project to the ex-post evaluation, the development of community infrastructure and the resulting social integration of returnees have been clearly stated in policy and implemented with the support of the World Bank. Therefore, policy and political commitment to improving living conditions and community infrastructure for returnees and host communities is high.

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<sup>21</sup> Centre for Public Impact, BCG Foundation. (2016) Building trust in government: Afghanistan's National Solidarity Programme (NSP) <https://www.centreforpublicimpact.org/case-study/building-trust-in-government-afghanistans-national-solidarity-program> (Accessed on 10 April 2021)

### 3.4.2 Institutional/Organisational Aspects of the Sustainability of Project Effects

This section examines the institutional/organisational aspects of implementing community infrastructure development projects that contribute to improving living conditions.

In Afghanistan, from the end of the project to the ex-post evaluation, the implementation structure of the community infrastructure development project using CDCs (roles and relationships among the national government, provinces, counties, CDCs, and FPs) has been strengthened through the implementation of the NSP and CCAP, including the arrangement of the roles of the relevant organisations.

At the ex-post evaluation, the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development is the supervising and implementing agency at the national level for rural infrastructure development. A provincial management unit was established within the Provincial Office of the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, which is responsible for implementing community infrastructure projects. Its responsibilities include monitoring the activities of FPs in communities and reviewing proposals for infrastructure projects. The FPs are responsible for the capacity development of provincial and district officials and monitoring the implementation of community infrastructure projects. For communities, decision-making and community activities are carried out by a single CDC or a cluster of CDCs and encouraged by the FP to promote implementation, including capacity building. These institutional and organisational arrangements for implementation, such as the use of FP and cluster CDCs, are similar to the model developed in this project.

However, it was not possible to confirm at the time of this ex-post evaluation how, specifically, the model and findings of the project are reflected in the current institutional and organisational arrangements, which are led by the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development. In addition, the IDLG, which was the implementing agency for the project, is not currently involved in infrastructure development in rural areas. Therefore, even if the current system is capable of implementing community infrastructure projects that contribute to the improvement of living conditions, it is not clear whether the arrangements strengthened by this project and its knowledge can be maintained.

From the above, it is considered that the implementation structure for community infrastructure development has been organised and strengthened and that it does not deviate significantly from the model through which the project has functioned. However, as the situation reflecting the model is uncertain, and the IDLG, which was the implementing agency, has not been involved, it is judged that the institutional and organisational arrangements for sustaining the effects are not necessarily sufficient.

### 3.4.3 Technical Aspects of the Sustainability of Project Effects

This section examines the technical capabilities (including planning, supervision, and maintenance) of implementing agencies, contractors, FPs, and BCDCs involved in implementing

community infrastructure projects that contribute to the improvement of the living environment.

First, regarding the IDLG, no one was involved in the project due to staff turnover in the 7–8 years between the end of the project and the ex-post evaluation, and it could not be confirmed that the manual developed for the project has been used. In addition, as mentioned above, the IDLG is not currently involved in the development of community infrastructure in rural areas. Given this situation, it is concluded that the current IDLG has not maintained the necessary skills for community infrastructure development projects strengthened by this project.

However, contractors', FPs', and BCDCs' responses to the individual questionnaires indicated that they were still in an environment in which they engaged in the implementation of community infrastructure projects even after the end of the project and that the skills and awareness of the relationship with the community strengthened by the project were still valuable. In addition, they participated in training by other development partners, and capacity-building through the FP was conducted. This suggests that they are involved in a situation in which they can use and improve the skills and knowledge gained from the project and have the skills required to implement community infrastructure projects.

In summary, the FPs, contractors, and BCDCs are in a position to maintain or improve the skills and experience they gained from the project. However, the IDLG is not involved in rural community infrastructure projects and does not have the skills required to sustain the effects that were achieved.

#### 3.4.4 Financial Aspects of the Sustainability of the Project Effects

This section reviews whether the government has the financial resources necessary to implement community infrastructure projects and ensure the continued O&M of the infrastructure developed under the projects.

The overall expenditures of the government of Nangarhar are listed in Table 8. The evaluator could not collect information regarding the financial statements of the Nangarhar Province IDLG, the Provincial Education Directorate, or the Provincial Health Directorate, nor could the evaluator fully determine the adequacy of the following allocations, but it was found that budgetary allocations have been made for the maintenance of infrastructure. In addition, the questionnaire responses from the Provincial Education Directorate did not report any particular challenges. Nonetheless, the questionnaire responses to the Provincial Health Directorate indicated that there were some challenges and that the directorate received support from NGOs and the central government.

In addition, to allocate funds to the community for maintenance activities conducted by the residents, the Maintenance and Construction Cash Grants ('MCCG') scheme is being trialled within the CCAP. These grants are intended to assist communities in promoting social integration by creating short-term employment for returnees and vulnerable groups. These grants would be used to cover the cost of labour and materials for road repairs, maintenance of community

infrastructure, and the construction of school and clinic facades, toilets, and additional classrooms. Although it was indicated in the project's final report that there were doubts about the ability of the local government to adequately maintain public facilities such as roads due to the lack of sufficient budgetary resources, this mechanism can mitigate such problems.

Table 8. Revenue and expenditure of Nangarhar Province (in Afghani)

Items	2016	2017	2018
<b>A. Revenue</b>	<b>14,146,119,477</b>	<b>25,558,179,120</b>	<b>24,414,961,468</b>
Tax	12,887,071,545	14,696,548,449	16,304,121,796
Social contribution	280,344,448	319,931,808	227,128,448
Aid	0	9,371,102,484	6,901,956,462
Other	978,703,484	1,170,596,379	981,754,762
<b>B. Expenditure</b>	<b>14,550,005,780</b>	<b>15,393,431,628</b>	<b>12,844,640,082</b>
Personnel costs	11,080,588,258	11,400,709,093	10,674,907,540
Supplies & services	2,218,526,795	2,667,952,659	846,857,155
Travel expenses	40,763,218	Not available	21,272,049
Food	225,746,955	Not available	99,959,695
Outsourcing expenses	1,015,593,915	Not available	444,360,485
Repair and maintenance fees	524,034,228	Not available	61,904,481
Utilities	95,448,381	Not available	21,925,569
Fuel	151,519,548	Not available	92,843,258
Equipment and materials	165,420,550	Not available	104,591,618
Grant	121,620,100	27,200,000	20,650,000
Social security fee	1,112,025,603	1,281,162,427	1,220,484,803
Other	17,245,024	16,407,449	81,740,584
<b>C. Cash balance</b>	<b>-403,886,303</b>	<b>10,164,747,492</b>	<b>11,570,321,386</b>

Source: Ministry of Finance Afghanistan government budget documents.

(<https://www.budgetmof.gov.af/index.php/en/2012-12-06-22-51-13/national-budget>. Accessed on 23 April 2021)

From the above, it can be said that the budget of Nangarhar Province and the implementation of the CCAP have secured financial resources for the development and maintenance of community infrastructure, and the budget allocation mechanism for the O&M of community infrastructure is now more advanced than it was during the implementation of the project. However, this means that only the provincial budget is not sufficient to cover the cost of the O&M of the infrastructure, and some challenges remain for the continuous implementation of the community infrastructure projects and the O&M of the constructed infrastructures in terms of financial sustainability.

### 3.4.5 Status of Operation and Maintenance

At the time of this ex-post evaluation, the O&M status of only some of the facilities could be confirmed. However, no problems related to operation and maintenance (e.g. loss of use) have been reported.

In summary, some minor problems have been observed in terms of institutional/organisational, technical, and financial aspects. Therefore, the sustainability of the project effects is fair.

## **4. Conclusion, Lessons Learned, and Recommendations**

### **4.1 Conclusion**

The project aimed to improve the living conditions of returnees and host communities in the Behsud and Surkhrod districts of Nangarhar Province by developing an environment conducive to implementing projects to improve basic infrastructure at the community level.

This project is aligned with the *Afghanistan National Development Strategy 2008–2013*, which put forth a policy to improve the living conditions of communities, including returnees, and to strengthen administrative capacity to this end. In addition, the project responded to the development needs of Nangarhar Province, which faced the challenge of hosting returnees. Furthermore, the project was consistent with Japan's aid policy at the time, which set forth a policy of 'providing assistance in areas such as agricultural and rural development, infrastructure development (including energy), education, health and other basic human needs'. Therefore, the relevance of this project is high. Although the project did not sufficiently strengthen the maintenance and management capacity of the implementing agencies, it did provide models for the implementation of community infrastructure projects, enhance the capacity of contractors and FPs, and contribute to the improvement of the livelihoods of the population through the infrastructure developed through the pilot projects. Thus, the effectiveness and impact of the project are fair. The project cost and period were both within the plan; thus, its efficiency is high. The sustainability of the project is fair, because some minor problems have been observed in terms of institutional/organisational, technical, and financial aspects, as the implementing agency is not currently involved in infrastructure development in rural areas and have to rely on external funding.

In light of the above, the project is evaluated as satisfactory.

### **4.2 Recommendations**

#### **4.2.1 Recommendations for the Implementing Agency**

The provincial government of Nangarhar and IDLG should recognise their responsibility as the project's implementing agency and confirm the current status of the proper operation and maintenance of the infrastructure developed in the pilot projects through relevant bureaus such as the Provincial Education Directorate and Provincial Health Directorate by the end of 2021. In the case that any problems should arise, they should report to the JICA Afghanistan Office and take appropriate action.

#### **4.2.2 Recommendations to JICA**

After completing the evaluation, the JICA Afghanistan Office should distribute the project's deliverables, such as the manual and the project completion report, to the provincial government of Nangarhar and IDLG. Although no one in the office knew about the project at the time of the ex-post evaluation, the JICA Afghanistan Office could, through distribution, encourage the

experience of this project to be accumulated as part of its organisational knowledge and discuss the possibility of using the deliverables.

### **4.3 Lessons Learned**

[Lessons learned involved the selection of the implementing agency and the strengthening of collaboration with other cooperative organisations to ensure effectiveness and sustainability]

The main challenge for the effectiveness of the project was the commitment of the implementing agencies – the provincial government of Nangarhar and the IDLG – which did not have sufficient practical experience in community infrastructure development projects. Further, their governmental positions did not allow them to become deeply involved in rural infrastructure, so they were not fully committed to the activities. In the planning stage, the merits and demerits of choosing the provincial government and the IDLG as the main implementing agencies were considered, alongside the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, which had played a central role in rural community infrastructure projects through the NSP. Thus, the choice of the state government or the directorate of a local government was not necessarily judged to be problematic.

However, the contents of the preparatory study report indicate that the study was conducted mainly from the perspective of implementation and management. It was not confirmed that the discussion was conducted from the viewpoint of effectiveness and sustainability after the completion of the project.

Based on the above, when similar projects are planned in the future, consideration should be given to the effects and sustainability of the project. This includes consideration of strategic partnerships with the projects of other development partners (e.g. NSP in this project). In addition, the implementing body should be reviewed from time to time during the implementation period, and the same perspectives should be included in such reviews on an ongoing basis. This will enable a more appropriate selection of the implementing agency and will also lead to the development of a project plan based on the development of effects and sustainability.