



REPORTING ON THE STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT IN AFGHANISTAN

Workshop Report

4 - 6 March 2019
Cedar Hotel, Kabul, Afghanistan



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This report was compiled by the workshop trainers, Nickolai Denisov of Zoï Environment Network and Laszlo Pinter of the Central European University and the International Institute for Sustainable Development, with inputs from Bilal Zadran (Central European University), Hassan Partow, Mohammad Haris Sherzad, Raihana Osmani and Zahra Khodadadi (UN Environment Programme).

Background and Summary

Afghanistan's Environment Law (Article 9.12) mandates the National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA) of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to prepare a State of the Environment (SoE) report every two years for urban areas and every five years for rural areas. Under the EU-funded Opportunities for Mountain Area Integrated Development Project, the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) is providing technical assistance to help kick-start the development of the SoE process drawing on Afghanistan's previous experience and best international practices in environmental reporting and assessment. With a view to sharing knowledge and enhancing the technical capacity of the national SoE team, NEPA together with UNEP organised from 4–6 March 2019 a three-day inception and training workshop that was facilitated by international experts and involved specialists from neighbouring Tajikistan, who recently completed their SOE report.

The workshop objectives were to:

- familiarize Afghanistan's environmental professionals with principles of and approaches for developing SoE reports, including the analytical framework of Integrated Environmental Assessment;
- share SoE reporting lessons learned through the experience of neighbouring Tajikistan, other countries, regions and UNEP's flagship Global Environment Outlook process;
- help develop and agree on organizational arrangements and the roadmap for the preparation of a new state-of-the-environment report for Afghanistan.

By the end of the workshop, participants indicated an improvement in their understanding of the principles and techniques of Integrated Environmental Assessment (IEA) and SoE reporting, including the purpose and the scope of an SoE report, analytical approaches and tools for its production, as well as its users and the communication and dissemination of its messages. The participants were also exposed to examples and best practices from various other countries, regions and the world. Given its close relevance for Afghanistan, the recent experience of Tajikistan was introduced by representatives of the Government of Tajikistan and discussed by participants. In order to build ownership, participants actively contributed in breakout group and plenary sessions to the development of the framework, the contents, and the production plan / road map for the next edition of Afghanistan state-of-the-environment report.

During its three days, the workshop brought together 70 participants from the National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA), various ministries and other governmental agencies, academic institutions, NGOs, the press, private companies, foundations, UN and other international organizations (Annex 1). A delegation from the Government of Tajikistan was also part of the meeting, sharing their country's recent experience in SoE reporting. The three-day programme (Annex 2) was split into several modules, focussing on the introduction to the approach, vision and focus of SoE reporting (day 1); the structure and tools of environmental assessment and reporting (day 2); and discussing the road ahead for the next edition of the SoE report for Afghanistan (day 3). At the end of the meeting the participants completed evaluation forms, commenting on various workshop elements and giving it the overall score 3.6 on a 1 to 4 scale (Annex 3). Simultaneous English-Dari interpretation was provided.

The meeting's structure built on: i) the Integrated Environmental Assessment (IEA) Training Manual and training modules developed by UNEP and the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), which has been successfully used for many years to build IEA capacity at the regional, national and subnational level and ii) Zoï Environment Network's multi-decade experience with capacity building for SoE reporting, with particular strengths in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

In conclusion, NEPA leadership committed to establishing a team/committee with responsibilities to lead the production of Afghanistan's SoE report. Furthermore, as a recurrent process, workshop discussions highlighted the importance of creating and embedding an SoE reporting system in NEPA to ensure its longer-term institutionalization. Substantial data management support and capacity building in IEA for NEPA staff is therefore needed for this to happen. Meanwhile, UNEP and partners will work with NEPA to formulate a road map to help guide the preparation of the next edition of Afghanistan's SoE report. This can also assist NEPA in directly approaching the Government as well as the international donor community with a well-developed proposal for support.

All participants of the training were awarded official certificates and given memory sticks with workshop materials and other relevant resources. UNEP's press release was published on the One UN for Afghanistan web site (Annex 6), while NEPA widely publicised the meeting through its Facebook page.

Workshop Content and Discussions

Day 1: Approach, Vision and Focus

The workshop was **opened** by NEPA and UNEP, followed by a **tour de table** among all workshop participants. In his opening speech Mr. Ezatullah Sediqi, Deputy Director of NEPA, emphasised the need to strengthen cooperation and close coordination gaps with respect to environmental management among various governmental organizations. Mr. Sediqi also underscored NEPA's interest in extending environmental awareness raising activities to all relevant staff of government organizations in the capital and in the provinces. For their part, participants emphasised the importance of environmental awareness, recognizing and building on existing capacities for collecting and managing environmental information in Afghanistan, and the need for their gradual modernisation.



Following an introduction to the **principles of Integrated Environmental Assessment**, the participants reviewed and discussed **NEPA's experience** in environmental reporting both for the national audience and through international processes and multilateral environmental agreements. The representatives of **Tajikistan** presented their experience with the recently prepared national SoE report together with a set of environmental indicators based on the guidelines of the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE).

The afternoon session was devoted to discussing the **purpose of SoE reporting** and ways to strengthen it by understanding and taking into account the intended impact and the target audiences of environmental assessment. To illustrate these points in the specific context of Afghanistan, two external speakers were invited to present common users views of previous Afghanistan SoE reports in the **'Meet the user'** session.

A student and an NGO representative (who at the same time is a university lecturer) shared their perspectives on the two existing Afghanistan SoE editions published in 2009 and 2012, respectively. The speakers acknowledged that despite being rather general than issue-specific, and not always presenting hard facts, the reports could be and actually were used for various purposes, including as a background reference for international aid projects. Written by small drafting teams or individuals, it was pointed out that reports missed opportunities to include inputs from a broader range of actors, especially academic institutions experienced and engaged with new methods as a matter of routine, research reports and academic publications. Academic experts could also bring into the process their students, who could join the data-collecting and report-writing team to the benefit of both sides. Some of the past reports, and especially the data used in them, are unfortunately not available online, which complicates and thus reduces the use of the report and their impact. Lack of access to data by the mass media was also emphasised. The speakers noted the lack of new information in the reports; many issues presented in 2012 can also be found in the 2008 edition.

The session resulted in a highly energetic, engaging and constructive **discussion**. Participants commented on the practical difficulties related to engaging people in the day to day efforts of environmental authorities who have a long list of responsibilities and usually insufficient resources. The lack of up to date and regularly collected data in various agencies is a serious bottleneck, forcing NEPA to initiate its own data collection often under precarious conditions. Without data it is hard to expect decision-making at any level to be based on facts and evidence. Data problems, which came up several times again later in the workshop is seen as a priority concern. In order to address data issues cooperation is needed among the different stakeholders, including environmental professionals with long-term hands-on experience on the one hand and organisations and individuals with considerable technical knowledge of the issues on the other. The value of cross-border environmental cooperation and experience sharing between Afghanistan and Tajikistan was also highlighted.

NEPA's **concluding perspective** in this session was that there are many gaps in the published SoE reports because of various limitations at the time of writing. It is therefore important to listen to comments on the reports in order to improve SoE reporting in the future. User comments should not be taken as a criticism, but even if they were, NEPA should accept these in an open and constructive spirit as a provider of public services. New recruitment, engaging students in NEPA's work, improving data availability are all important issues. Resolving these issues has been hindered by forty years of conflict, but there are opportunities now to learn from their own and others' experiences and move forward. Among other things this workshop should help NEPA move beyond business as usual in SoE reporting, and better institutionalize SoE reporting including by revising its overall framework and methodology. The strong and genuine leadership demonstrated by NEPA at the workshop should enable engaging a much wider range of contributors to prepare a report in 2019 that makes use of the best available data, reflects real concerns, and that also offers real solutions to society and decision-makers. Furthermore, the positive and participatory momentum created by the workshop should strengthen coordination, consultations, and cooperation with and between organisations.

The last part of the day was devoted to introducing the **thematic scope and issues of the SoE report** to prepare for a brainstorming session in break-out groups the following day.



Day 2: Structure and Tools

Workshop participants split into small break-out groups were asked to identify, characterize and prioritise **SoE issues for Afghanistan**. The exercise resulted in several sets of issues being presented and discussed as possible elements of the 'Table of Contents' of the future edition of Afghanistan's SoE report.

The next session focussed on ways to assess **environmental conditions, trends and impacts** and their interlinkages, using the Driving forces – Pressures – State – Impact – Response (DPSIR) analytical framework. The session also covered how to integrate data, indicators and narrative elements into presenting environmental issues in the SoE context. The use of the DPSIR framework was illustrated through a case study focused on deforestation in Afghanistan.



Breakout groups were tasked to select a priority environmental ‘state’ issue identified at the end of Day 1 as the basis to characterize its associated drivers, pressures and impacts, following the logic of the DPSIR framework introduced earlier during the session. They were also asked to identify indicators that can characterize the selected environmental state, drivers and pressures (Annex 4).

Following the plenary presentation of group results, a question was raised about how global indicators could help environmental management in Afghanistan. A reference was made to UN efforts (including those to monitor progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals) to develop and suggest common indicators which can help countries identify their place in the global community and compare

their performance with that of the others. At the same time, it was recognized that there are also country-specific indicators, some of which are more relevant nationally than globally. There are also common environmental indicators in Europe which have, for instance, been used by Tajikistan in its environmental reporting. Indicators in SoE reports can help policy makers, other social actors like companies, NGOs and citizens not only to envision and implement, but also to monitor the successes or failures associated with environment-related policies and programs. In this relation, the indicators identified under the Afghanistan SDG report (2015–2030) published by the Ministry of Economy, aligned with Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework (ANPDF) and National Priority Programmes (NPP), could be a good starting point to help reinforce the SoE report's policy relevance.



The afternoon session introduced **policy analysis** in the SoE context, focussing on the 'Response' part of the DPSIR framework. It reviewed policy types, policy actors, and the contextual factors that may affect the implementation of a given policy and its impacts. The session also drew attention to the difference between policy effects and policy effectiveness, and the challenges associated with attributing impacts to a specific policy. Building on the earlier developed assessment of drivers, pressures, environmental states and impacts, small groups were asked to identify and discuss clusters of policies responding to each one of these components of the DPSIR framework (Annex 4). All breakout groups presented the results of their work in plenary. The subsequent discussion addressed Afghanistan's current environmental legislation and issues associated with its implementation.

The last session of the day was devoted to **emerging issues and looking into the future**, building on scenario analysis methods. It covered the importance of understanding current and emerging risks, uncertainties, and how pathways for transition from business-as-usual to desirable futures can be analysed and presented in the SoE report. It highlighted the relevance of the SoE report's outlook section from the perspective of the SDGs, which all have a 2030 time horizon, and thus require developing action plans and reporting on progress made or not made as a result.

Day 3: The Road Ahead

The main purpose of the concluding day was to discuss and help produce an initial road map / action plan for the actual production of the new SoE report for Afghanistan, including:

- mapping key stakeholders and allocating among them drafting, review and other responsibilities;
- defining ways to engage the users;
- discussing data needs and the ways and options to access and use them;
- outlining the production plan; and
- identifying the types of resources and capacities needed for the assessment (funds, people, and other capacities, information and tools) and what it would take to make them available.

The day started with a discussion on **data management**. Data management tools and experience were presented by UNEP and the Afghanistan-based IMMAP team, followed by a vivid exchange of opinions about data issues in Afghanistan and how they can be solved. There is not yet a commonly accepted data collection and management system. Furthermore, it was recognized that some data sets are not very reliable (population, agriculture, biodiversity) or are outdated. Nonetheless, this should not prevent the use of data which are available. At the same time, there is a clear need to build capacities for accurate data collection and establishing functioning systems for their management. For instance, the Central Statistics Organisation of Afghanistan is developing new formats for collecting and sharing new and more accurate data. Tajikistan acknowledged similar challenges, which can only be more complex in a country in the state of conflict like Afghanistan. In cases where data differences are observed (e.g. between datasets provided by governmental vs. non-governmental organisations), it is important to at least acknowledge these differences, which in itself can help reveal important shortcomings to the audience – and may become a motivating factor for improving data quality and coherence.

Following a discussion on data issues, a lively **stakeholder-mapping** plenary session produced a preliminary matrix of some 40 stakeholders (see below) to be engaged in various capacities for producing the next edition of Afghanistan's SoE report. This includes those who could form part of the core production team, others to contribute with data and external expertise, and those to be brought onboard to help define report contents and priorities, key messages, discuss its findings and recommendations and secure broad engagement for their implementation.

In the afternoon, a preliminary outline of the detailed **workplan for SoE production** was presented and discussed, resulting in an improved outline (Annex 5) to be further elaborated in the follow-up to the workshop. This was followed by a discussion of **resources and capacities** required to implement the plans.

Brainstorming on the stakeholders of Afghanistan's next SoE report

PUBLIC AUTHORITIES

Central Statistics Organization
 Kabul municipality
 Meteorological Department
 Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock
 Ministry of Education
 Ministry of Energy and Water
 Ministry of Finance
 Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs
 Ministry of Industry and Commerce
 Ministry of Information and Culture
 Ministry of Mines and Petroleum
 Ministry of Public Health
 Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development
 Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation
 Ministry of Urban Development and Housing
 Ministry of Women's Affairs
 National Disaster Management Authority
 National Environment Protection Agency

RESEARCH AND UNIVERSITIES

Kabul University
 Kabul Technical University

NGOs, PUBLIC GROUPS, MEDIA

Afghanistan Environment Experts Association
 Afghanistan Young Greens
 Aga Khan Foundation
 Climate Action Network South Asia
 Environment Watch Afghanistan
 Famine Early Warning Systems Network
 GREENway Afghanistan
 iMAPP
 National Council of Religious Scholars
 Reform and Change Network
 Wildlife Conservation Society
 Local community committees
 Mainstream media

BUSINESS

Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat
 Urban Water Supply and Sewerage Corporation

INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES AND DONORS

GIZ
 JICA
 UN (UNDP, UNEP, FAO, UN-Habitat, WFP)
 Development banks



The exchange with and among the participants addressed various capacity and resource concerns, such as, for instance, low capacity for developing and implementing good plans. Consequently, capacity building needs to take place simultaneously with producing the next SoE report. Establishing synergies between SoE reporting and other reporting for various international environmental agreements can help maximise cost-efficiency.

Here again the availability of data was highlighted as one of the most important resources required to broaden the scope, deepen the analysis and increase the credibility, use and usefulness of Afghanistan's next SoE report. As it will be imperative to base the new report on up-to-date data, sufficient time will be needed for their collection from often scattered sources and updating. Standard data compilation, however, should not preclude the parallel use of complementary techniques to fill data gaps where that is possible, including statistical approaches, case studies and using proxy indicators and additional data sources. It also means that SoE production plans may need to be flexible and adaptive, allowing for proper, contextually appropriate data collection and exchange mechanism to be discussed, put in place and made operational.

During the **conclusions session** workshop participants were asked to share their impressions, lessons learnt and recommendations for the future. Many participants thanked the organizers for the informative workshop which substantially increased their knowledge on environmental assessment and reporting. Several speakers mentioned that they wish to use and share the knowledge they gained, and thought the workshop will help Afghanistan produce a better SoE report next time around. The participants also highlighted the importance of the following:

- closing the existing gap in public environmental awareness through specific targeted programmes and activities;
- addressing the massive data gaps, while using the best currently available data to produce the next SoE report;
- clarifying the roles and the division of responsibilities among governmental agencies in the environmental domain; and

- engaging representatives from other sectors, such as the media, in similar events in the future, so that stronger bridges and connections among people could be built.

The head of the delegation from Tajikistan expressed their gratitude for being made part of the workshop, acknowledged many similar challenges including data gaps – which can nonetheless be eventually overcome – and wished Afghanistan the best for its future SoE reports.

In his closing remarks the Deputy Director of NEPA noted the importance of the workshop and the high level of attendance throughout its three-days. Through this workshop NEPA tried to bring together and connect many actors having important roles in SoE reporting. Now it is also their responsibility to stay connected for better cooperation and coordination. NEPA in its turn commits to setting up a team/committee and assigning it responsibilities for leading the production of the SoE report. NEPA will seek to mobilize financial resources from the Government and partner organizations, and engage external expertise to contribute to SoE report drafting and managing its information sources. Equally, emphasis was placed on staying engaged with important partners such as the Central Statistics Organisation which are the custodians for official data, as well as universities in Afghanistan, which NEPA furthermore urged to share their new studies and publications. NEPA announced its intention to further review the lessons learned from the workshop, be open to accepting critical feedback and use it in a constructive manner. In addition, NEPA requested UNEP's ongoing assistance with the production and publication of the next SoE report.

UNEP thanked the participants and everyone who contributed to the successful organization of the workshop, and committed to sharing and making available the workshop report, and supporting the development of an SoE action plan.



Workshop Evaluation

Workshop evaluation forms were filled out by 42 participants (60% of the workshop audience) who gave the workshop the overall rating of 3.6 on a scale from 1 (bad) to 4 (very good). Evaluation details are presented in Annex 3.

Respondents particularly appreciated the workshop sessions on day 2 that involved a lot of interactions in break-out groups and the discussions of SoE reporting tools and techniques, as well as the stakeholder-mapping session in plenary on day 3.

In their free-form comments participants thanked the organisers, expressed appreciation for the SoE approach introduced, the training methods and of the workshop organization. At the same time, they suggested holding less general and thematically more focused workshops involving a smaller number of relevant participants in future with more group work. Some participants would have appreciated more attention to discussing the weaknesses of Afghanistan's previous SoE reports and how to overcome them.

Respondents called for organizing more similar training events, also for other audiences such as journalists, academics, university students as well as having more participants from Afghanistan's provinces. Suggestions were also made on the workshop follow-up including establishing a team and a process for SoE production in Afghanistan and strengthening communication among the relevant stakeholders.

Conclusions and Recommendations

In the view of workshop trainers and organisers, when comparing with many earlier SoE and IEA training precedents, the event was a definite success, unleashing great interest, energy and creativity among the audience. It was particularly encouraging to hear directly from NEPA's leadership about the importance of environmental information in improving decision-making and environmentally sustainable development outcomes. Participants not only from NEPA's headquarters but also from provinces, as well as many other governmental and non-governmental organizations were equally actively engaged. There is a real opportunity to build upon this momentum by institutionalizing the SoE production process in NEPA as well as reaching out to and engaging in the discussion a broader circle of interested governmental, non-governmental and international organisations.

Drawing on the workshop discussions, UNEP and partners will collaborate with NEPA in suggesting a road map for the preparation of the next edition of Afghanistan's SoE report. UNEP is also ready to assist NEPA with networking and looking for funding opportunities should external resources be required for the SoE production (e.g. providing additional national or international expertise). It was also suggested that NEPA follow-up on the workshop by directly approaching the Government as well as the international donor community with a targeted proposal for supporting the production of Afghanistan's next SoE report. This would demonstrate that the process is lead by national actors according to international standards.

In addition to UNEP, organisations to which the workshop trainers belong (Zoï Environment Network, Central European University) are equally interested in and committed to further supporting the process with inputs and expertise.

Annex 1 List of Participants

Name	Organization
Hasib Shah Auobi	National Environmental Protection Agency
Mohammad Solaiman Bakhshi	National Environmental Protection Agency
Din Mohammad Faqery	National Environmental Protection Agency
Nasir Ahmad Fazli	National Environmental Protection Agency
Aria Neiaees Habibi	National Environmental Protection Agency
Farzan Jalal Hakimi	National Environmental Protection Agency
Amanuddin Hamidi	National Environmental Protection Agency
Ghulam Nabi Khurami	National Environmental Protection Agency
Nick Mohammad	National Environmental Protection Agency
Ajmal Murtazayee	National Environmental Protection Agency
Yaqub Ali Mehri	National Environmental Protection Agency
Jalaludin Naseri	National Environmental Protection Agency
Hamidullah Nikzad	National Environmental Protection Agency
Nadera Rashidi	National Environmental Protection Agency
Sayed Shoaib Sadaat	National Environmental Protection Agency
Payenda Muhammad Sahak	National Environmental Protection Agency
Hamidullah Sahibi	National Environmental Protection Agency
Laila Samani	National Environmental Protection Agency
Sadrudin Sayah	National Environmental Protection Agency
Ezatullah Sediqi	National Environmental Protection Agency
Naqibullah Sediqi	National Environmental Protection Agency
Mohammad Tawab	National Environmental Protection Agency
Abdul Baqi Noori	Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock
Abdul Qayom Payenda	Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock
Mohammad Shafiq Hameedi	Ministry of Energy and Water
Ali Sah Khwarazmi	Ministry of Energy and Water
Samiullah Akrami	Ministry of Public Health
Ashiqullah Azizi	Ministry of Public Health
Ahmad Jawid Jooya	Ministry of Public Health
Najia Kharoti	Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development
Sultan Hamayoun Amin	Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation
Fatima Akbari	Ministry of Urban Development and Housing
Baseer Ahmad Nesar	Ministry of Urban Development and Housing
Sebghatullah Sherzad	Ministry of Urban Development and Housing
Sahabuddin Jalali	Central Statistics Organization
Bashir Ahmad	Afghanistan Meteorological Department
Ajmal Habibi	Kabul Municipality
Maryam Abassi	Kabul University

Abdul Aziz Mohibbi	Kabul University
Obaidullah Salehie	Kabul University
Ali Reza Noori	Kabul Polytechnic University
Abdul Basit Karokhel	Pajhwok Afghan New
Mohammad Tawab Amiri	Reform and Change Network
Ramesh Mohammad Nassery	iMMAP / Spatial Data Center
Hassibullah Fakhri	iMMAP / Spatial Data Center
Gul Rasool Hamdard	Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat
Ramin Munib	Agha Khan Foundation
Hafizullah Hashimi	UN Environment Programme
Ahmad Jamshed Khoshbeen	UN Development Programme
Zahra Khodadadi	UN Environment Programme
Nilofar Malik	UN Development Programme
Raihana Osmani	UN Environment Programme
Hassan Partow	UN Environment Programme
Haris Sherzad	UN Environment Programme
Jenna Jadin	UN Food and Agricultural Organization
Mohammad Ajmal Rahimy	UN Food and Agricultural Organization
Mohammad Arif Rasuli	World Bank
Mujtaba Bashari	Wildlife Conservation Society
Hafiz Rahmani	Wildlife Conservation Society
Karimjon Abdualimov	Tajikistan Committee for Environment Protection
Abdusalim Juraev	Tajikistan Committee for Environment Protection
Maksatullo Mardonov	Tajikistan Committee for Environment Protection
Laszlo Pinter	Central European University / IISD
Bilal Zadrán	Central European University
Nickolaï Denisov	Zoï Environment Network
Ahmad Farhad	Freelance Translation Interpretation Services
Idrees Wafa	Freelance Translation Interpretation Services
Modasirullah	Freelance Translation Interpretation Services
Mohammad Salim Maged	

Annex 2 Workshop Agenda

(MON) DAY 1: APPROACH, VISION AND FOCUS	
8:30 – 9:00	<p>Opening</p> <p>Welcome by UNEP and NEPA</p> <p>Tour de table (participants introduction, background and expectations)</p>
9:00 – 9:30	<p>Integrated Environmental Assessment and reporting: an introduction (Laszlo Pinter)</p> <p>Overview of the workshop and the agenda</p> <p>Concepts, examples, institutional and production setup of integrated SoE reporting</p> <p>The GEO approach to IEA</p>
10:00 – 12:00	<p>Sharing examples and experience</p> <p>SoE Reporting in Afghanistan (products, experience, lessons learnt)</p> <p>Afghanistan reporting to international conventions</p> <p>2018 SoE report in Tajikistan: product, experience, lessons learnt and plans</p> <p>Discussion</p>
12:00 – 13:00	<i>Lunch</i>
13:00 – 13:30	<p>Vision, purpose and impact of an SoE report (Nickolai Denisov)</p> <p>What impact does an SoE report intend to achieve and by impacting whom? Introduction into SoE report purpose and target audience</p>
13:30 – 14:30	Meet the user! Invited presentation for evaluating 1-2 previous SoE reporting products of Afghanistan from a perspective of a user
15:00 – 16:30	<p>Identifying and prioritising the content (Laszlo Pinter)</p> <p>Establishing the thematic scope</p> <p>Scale and boundary issues</p>
16:30 – 16:45	Conclusions and wrap-up

(TUES) DAY 2: STRUCTURE AND TOOLS	
8:45 – 10:00	Small group work to identify, characterize and prioritize SoE issues for Afghanistan. Presentation and plenary discussion
10:30 – 12:00	Assessment of environmental conditions, trends and impacts (Laszlo Pinter) Introducing the DPSIR framework with examples Data and indicators Telling and illustrating SoE stories Small group work to develop Afghanistan specific cases, report back to plenary and facilitated discussion
12:00 – 13:00	<i>Lunch</i>
14:00 – 14:30	Policy analysis (Laszlo Pinter) Links to DPSIR What is policy, policy types Exploring the link between policies, environmental outcomes and impacts Small group discussion to identify cluster of policies driving specific environmental outcomes Presentation and plenary discussion
15:00 – 16:15	Emerging issues and looking into the future (Laszlo Pinter) Current and emerging risks and uncertainties related to the environment Exploring transition pathways
16:15 – 16:30	Conclusions and wrap-up

(WEDNES) DAY 3: THE ROAD AHEAD	
8:45 – 9:30	Geospatial data Experience and perspectives of UNEP (Hassan Partow) and iMAPP
9:30 – 10:00	Data access and management (Laszlo Pinter) Discussion of data needs, accessibility and alternative options to fill the gaps
10:30 – 12:00	Stakeholders and users (Nickolai Denisov) Interactive mapping of the institutional landscape, exploring workable set-up and responsibilities for SoE reporting in Afghanistan
12:00 – 13:00	<i>Lunch</i>
13:00 – 14:30	SoE production plan (Nickolai Denisov) Discussion and interactive design of the report production process / flow-chart and a road map
15:00 – 16:00	Resources and capacity (Laszlo Pinter) What resources are available (funding, capacities, information resources) and how can the gaps be filled
16:00 – 16:30	Workshop conclusion

Annex 3 Evaluation by Participants

STATE-OF-THE-ENVIRONMENT REPORTING WORKSHOP					
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	useful / good				TOTAL SCORE
	Not	Not very	Rather	Very	
	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	
DAY 1					
Introduction to Integrated Environmental Assessment and reporting	0	4	15	20	3.4
Examples and experience of SoE reporting in Afghanistan and Tajikistan	0	8	12	20	3.3
Vision, purpose and impact of an SoE report. Meet the user!	0	5	14	20	3.4
DAY 2					
Identifying and prioritising the content (topics / thematic scope of SoE Afghanistan)	0	4	14	24	3.5
Assessment of environmental conditions, trends and impacts. DPSIR framework, indicators	0	7	12	23	3.4
Policy analysis	0	5	16	21	3.4
Emerging issues and looking into the future	0	4	19	19	3.4
DAY 3					
Data management	2	5	18	17	3.2
iMMAP and databases	1	3	12	26	3.5
Stakeholders and users. Mapping the institutional landscape	0	4	16	20	3.4
SoE Afghanistan report production plan	0	1	23	18	3.4
Resources and capacities	0	5	20	17	3.4

OVERALL					
Practical / logistical organization of the meeting	0	4	12	24	3.5
Overall evaluation of the meeting	0	3	10	25	3.6

What did you particularly like?

- Training method were good
- Learned from foreign experts
- Liked the diversity in trainers
- Informative session about past SoE reports of Afghanistan
- Educative Tajik presentations
- Clear description of indicators; very beneficial session
- Liked the planning session
- The data access and management part of the process
- Informative and beneficial iMMAP session
- Liked the working groups
- Simultaneous interpretation was good
- Good management and organization of the workshop
- Participation of provincial colleagues is appreciated
- Thanks to all organisers for the practicalities
- Very informative and beneficial workshop
- Hopefully the next SOE will be very rich

What did you not like – and how would you suggest to change it in future?

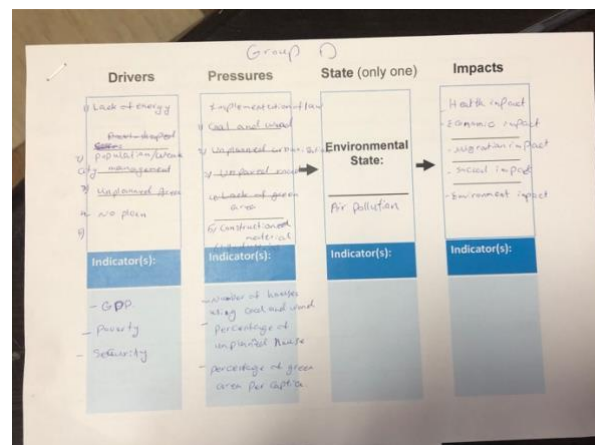
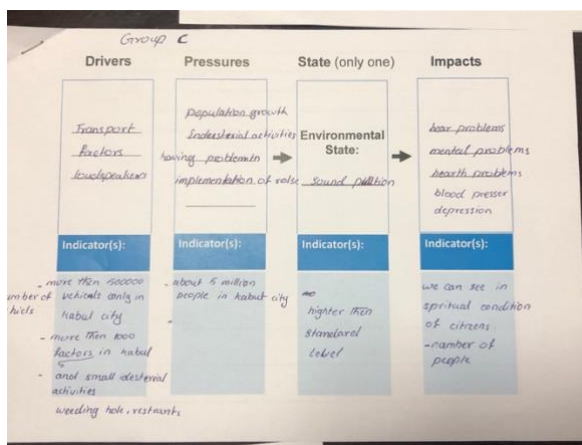
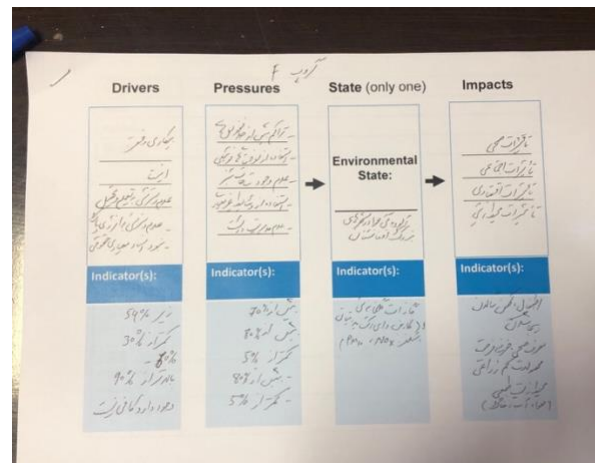
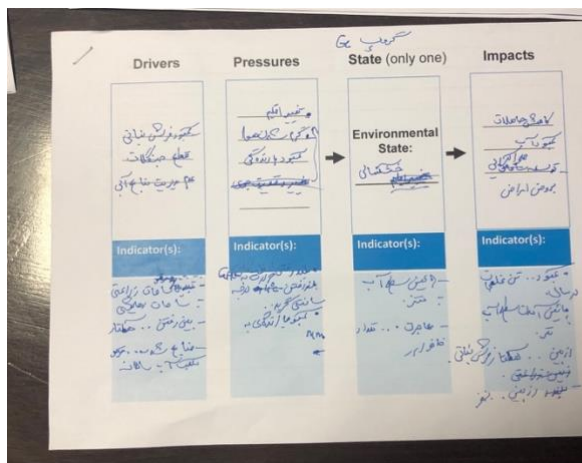
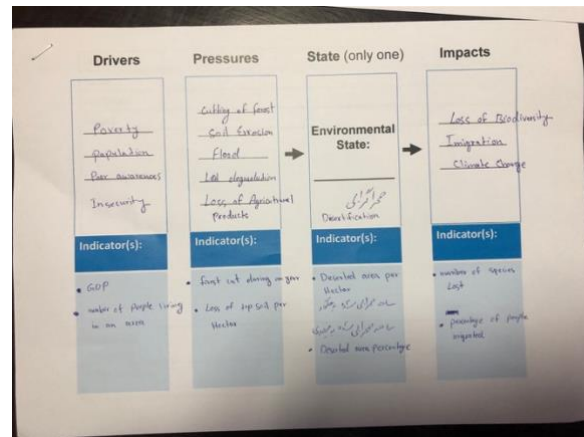
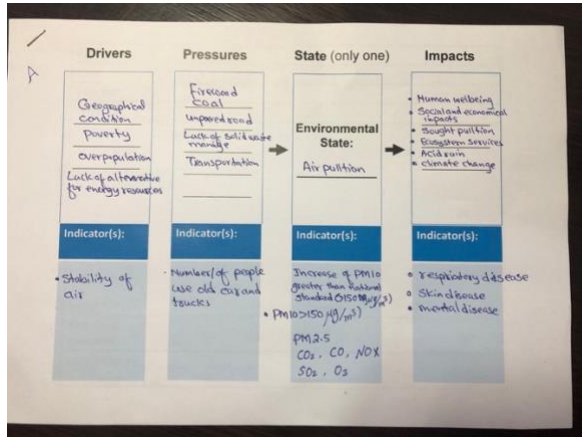
- It was very general, more specific workshops are better
- Expected an assessment of the weak points of previous SoE reports
- The planning session not presented well due to the shortage of time
- Large number of participants
- Irrelevant stakeholders were invited
- One of NEPA colleagues caused “sound pollution” with showing-off attitude
- No format for the next SoE report was developed
- The physical aspects of the venue was not suitable, we were unable to see the presentations
- A bit boring

Other thoughts, comments or suggestions

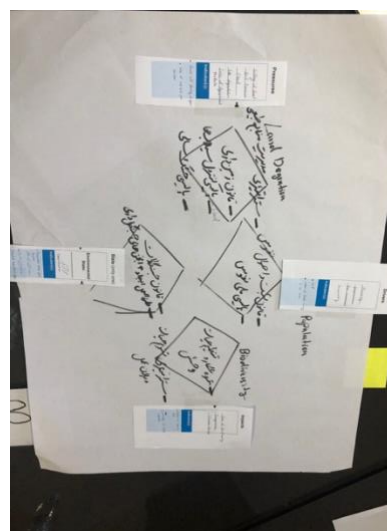
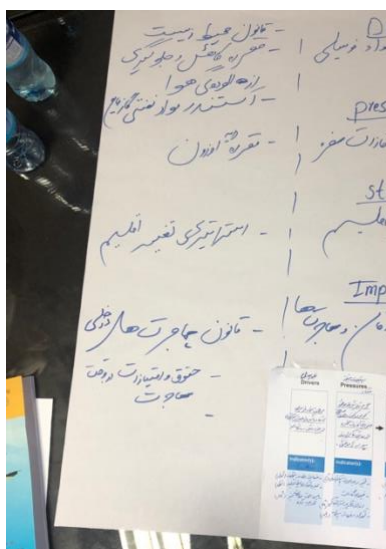
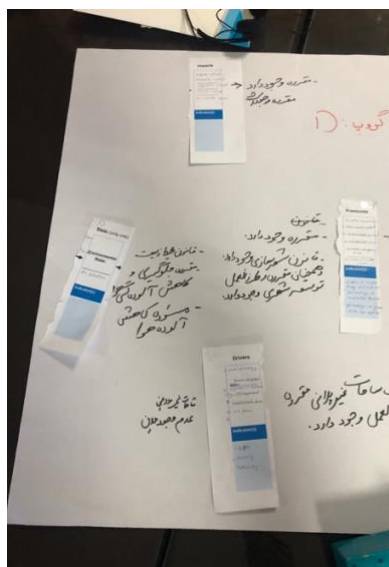
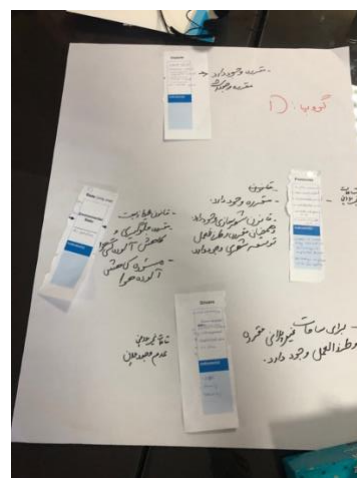
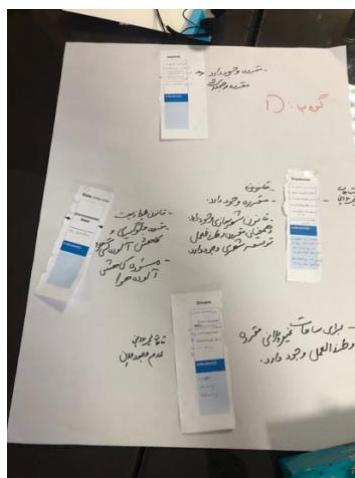
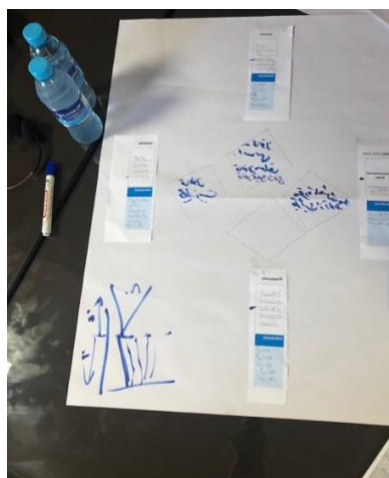
- More workshops of a similar type to be organized
- Similar type of workshops should be planned for journalists
- Universities and students to be involved in such workshops
- Similar workshop to be replicated in provinces
- Additional practical and group work would be useful
- Better logistical arrangements, especially with the Venue
- A centralized system for SoE development is required; there should also be coordination and good communication among the relevant stakeholders
- Team should be specified for the SoE report development
- Online platform should be established, similar to iMMAP, for environmental issues
- There are good experts in this country, but the government is scared that their participation will be destructive for the report; it should not be afraid!

Annex 4 Breakout Groups Results

DPSIR analysis of selected environmental topics



Policy response analysis



Annex 5 Outline of the SoE Report Production Plan Revised in the Course of the Workshop

START-UP	
Legal mandate	Exists, every 2 years
Lead agency / technical team	NEPA, ToR for the technical team
Conceptual framework	IEA / DPSIR
Production planning	
Allocate funds and other resources	Funds still need to be raised
Kick-off production meeting	
INSTITUTIONAL SETUP	
Identification of stakeholders	Stakeholder mapping
Roles and responsibilities of partners	MoUs
Coordination mechanism	MoUs, ToR for the lead agency
Kick-off meeting with stakeholders	
Schedule of further meetings	
SCOPING	
Impact strategy / target audience	Define intended impact, map target audience,
User consultations	Consultation meeting / focus group with selected users
Scoping the report	Define issues / priorities – boundaries – focus > draft outline
Indicators and data	Define indicators, data needs and sources
Communication (and media) strategy	Define key messages, channels and other elements
PRODUCTION	
Data review, collection and processing	
Issue analysis and write-up	
Outlook / scenario workshop + process	
Consolidation of the draft, initial editing	
Stakeholder consultations on the draft	
Revision of the draft	
Communication of selected key messages	
User consultations and peer-review	
Final revision	
Final editing and publication (i.a. online)	
Secondary information products	incl. translation of the main report
LAUNCH AND OUTREACH	
High-profile launch of the report	
Media campaign	
Local and topical launches	

Launches of derived products	
Dissemination of messages to target groups	Various means, channels and formats
MONITORING AND EVALUATION	
Collect additional feedback	User survey
Evaluate user feedback	May need a commissioned study
Evaluate the overall impact	May need a commissioned study
Discuss lessons learnt	
CAPACITY BUILDING AND SOE SYSTEM DESIGN	
Overview and scoping of the needs	
Methodological introduction / overview	Intensive introductory training (done)
Data management	Data strategy, holders round-table, long-term partnerships
Assessment and indicators	One-week training + follow-up guidance (support)
Policy analysis	Half-week training + follow-up guidance (support)
Outlooks and scenarios	One-week training + co-facilitation of stakeholder workshop
Communication and outreach	Half-week training + support to selected outputs

Annex 6 Stocktaking Afghanistan's Environment to Inform Effective Policy-Making Gets Underway

Kabul, 6 March 2019 – Afghanistan's population is facing a growing array of environmental problems including unrelenting deforestation and land degradation, uncontrolled urbanization and solid waste disposal, worsening air and water pollution, depletion of groundwater, illegal wildlife hunting and timber trade, expanding mining footprint including informal artisanal quarrying, limited renewable energy alternatives, and more frequent and severe floods, droughts and landslides. Insecurity in large parts of the country, poor infrastructure, and the accelerating impacts of climate change are seriously limiting efforts to get a better grip of the deteriorating situation and its effects on human wellbeing.

With a view to increasing the awareness and understanding of environmental threats and catalysing appropriate remedial solutions, the National Environment Protection Agency (NEPA) and UN Environment organized a three-day training and planning workshop in Kabul from 4-6 March 2019 to help build the foundations for an integrated State of the Environment Reporting system in Afghanistan. Over 60 experts from the central government, provincial and municipal authorities, academia, civil society and non-governmental organizations, media, and UN agencies participated in the event which sought to transfer the tools, best practices and lessons learned by UN Environment through its Global Environment Outlook (GEO) process to Afghanistan.

While two State of the Environment Reports on Afghanistan have already been published, this will be the first time that it will be prepared through the collaboration of various national partners coordinated by the National Environmental Protection Agency, with a longer-term view to ensure the sustainability of the process and not as a single standalone report. 'Previous reports were either prepared by international consultants or a handful of individuals, which under the circumstances was probably the best that could be done, but to be honest they have not had the desired impact', said Mr. Ezatullah Sediqi, Deputy Director General of NEPA.

'As a report user, the previous state of the environment reports essentially identified the key issues but did not quantify the extent of the problem. Furthermore, there is not really much difference between Afghanistan's state of the environment 2008 and 2012 editions', observed Assistant Professor Mujtaba Bashari of Kabul University. 'It's very difficult to access Afghanistan's state of environment reports and the underlying data, which are not available on the internet', noted Ms. Maryam Abbasi, a recent student from Kabul University.

'It's therefore important that we take a learning by doing approach to develop our capacity in state of the environment reporting, and that it becomes an institutionalized process within government. This is critical to keeping our national environment under continuous review, as state of the environment reporting is a recurrent exercise which we are legally required to carry out within established time intervals to inform Afghan society and decision-makers on the overall health of our national environment and the future towards which we are heading', added Mr. Sediqi.

Experts from the Committee on Environmental Protection from neighboring Tajikistan which recently published its state of the environment report in 2018 also participated and shared their experiences and insights in integrated environmental assessment and the development of core environmental indicators. In addition, the event was also a good opportunity to promote exchange of environmental expertise and to reinforce environmental cooperation, including on sharing environmental data between the two countries.

One of the main gaps underscored in the workshop discussions is the need to improve coordination and data exchange between and within government agencies, and between national and provincial authorities. 'One way of bridging these communication gaps is by creating a structured and participatory

state of the environment reporting process that is embedded in the governmental set-up. With the genuine commitment I have seen from NEPA's leadership evidenced by the high workshop turnout including of senior officials, I'm confident that this is entirely feasible', said Dr. Laszlo Pinter from the Central European University and the International Institute of Sustainable Development who co-facilitated the training event.

A critical part of the workshop discussions focused on planning the preparation of Afghanistan's next State of the Environment report in an efficient and cost-effective manner. 'A critical first step is to map and engage the key stakeholders, including its prospective users, who can substantially contribute to the state of the environment report, its outreach and impact, and to design a sustainable organizational set-up for report production', underscored Dr. Nickolai Denisov, Senior Associate with Zoï Environment Network who co-led the workshop. NEPA in collaboration with UNEP will be working to develop a road map to produce Afghanistan's State of the Environment report taking into consideration the consultation process, institutional technical capacity, data management planning, report dissemination channels and formats, timeline and funding. And UNEP will remain available to provide technical advisory support to accompany Afghanistan's state of the environment report, if so requested.

This training workshop, including the development of the action plan for Afghanistan's State of the Environment report, is generously supported by the European Commission under the 'Opportunities for Mountain Area Integrated Development' project which started in late 2018.



The press-release was published on the One UN for Afghanistan website: <https://www.af.one.un.org/en/>.

