



# Practitioner's Guide:

## Governance Structures in a Post Conflict Environment

**gtz**

Deutsche Gesellschaft für  
Technische Zusammenarbeit  
(GTZ) GmbH



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wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit  
und Entwicklung



Ministry of Rural  
Reconstruction and  
Development - MRRD,  
Afghanistan

# Governance Structures in a Post Conflict Environment

### Brief Description



Countries, regions or societies where there is a total or considerable breakdown of authority are characterised by the lack of central government authority, conflict amongst different interest groups, collapse of governance structures, establishment of new power structures enforced through guns, mass suffering of the citizens, sporadic or continuous armed conflicts.

In many cases the central state has been traditionally weak vis-à-vis local forces, leading to the growth of powerful regionally based groups. State structures break down and are no longer functional. Essentially, they are warlord structures that originated during military conflicts and that have sustained themselves through a political economy of war based on drug production, smuggling, plunder and foreign aid. Some have appalling human rights records, including genocide, mass deportation to mention just a few excesses. Neighbouring states in the area often have major and mostly conflicting stakes in the future of a country. The distribution of power inside the country bears evidence of this war time status.

The viability of a nation building process depends ultimately on the establishment of a legitimate state that is responsive to the demands of the population and that is gradually able to resist threats from regional military groups within the country as well as pressure from international actors.

To reduce the militarisation of politics in the nation building process, and to break a country's regional economies of war, the international community often needs to step in to support national institutions at the national, and sub-national level (regional, provincial, district, and community level). Both military and developmental interaction is required. In many countries two distinct and partly competing politico-administrative organisations exist.

One may see some form of a national administrative structure as provided for in the Constitution. The other structure rests on military power rather than constitutional legitimacy. Based on geographic regions, it evolves from the rule of the warlords and the establishment of various military commanders. The idea of a unitary state based upon modern state institutions (including a national police, army, educational system, etc.) have to be embodied in the constitution of a country. There is a distinct gap between the theory of unitary structure and the practice of decentralised power. This method describes some principles and procedures required to promote and achieve nation building.

## Governance Structures in a Post Conflict Environment

### Proposed Main Users

Donor Organisations, National, Provincial and Local Governments



### Purpose of the Method



There are always high stakes involved, defining the reality of centre-local relations is an arena of intense competition, both as part of elaborating the constitutional process and as the defining element of politics in a transitional period. Divisions of administrative responsibility at the central, regional and local levels affect major issues of power (e.g. taxation) and principle (e.g. religious versus secular courts and the role of women). Often modernist traditionalist divide runs parallel to central-local divisions. Often a massive international interest of states beyond the region in rebuilding the country politically and economically provides the most significant change from the conflict situation.

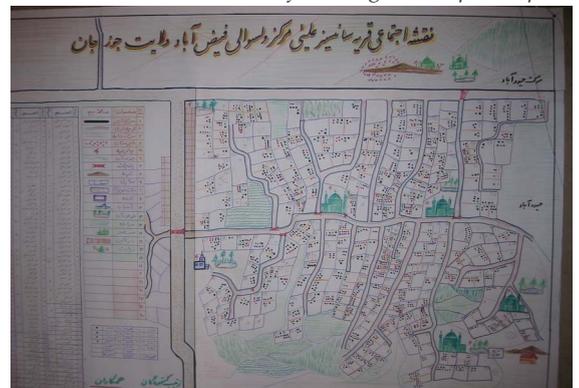
To sustain the framework for nation-building, the international commitment must not only endure; specific interests pursued by various external actors in the country need to be balanced by a commitment to the peace and nation building. Sensitivity is required when it comes to international expectations regarding Western, secular concepts of human rights and democratic development.

The method commences at the point when large scale armed conflict has ceased and a genuine interest exists amongst the majority of citizens that peace and rebuilding of the state is desired. It describes the processes required for establishing governance structures at the local (i.e. community or village level) through the sub-national (i.e. district, province or regional level) and how this can be interlinked at the national level. Finally, the roles of the international community are also highlighted in the method.

Picture 1: Village planning workshop



Picture 2: Sections of a Village development plan



# Governance Structures in a Post Conflict Environment

## Advantages



- ▶ Provides approach to shift power across the whole country towards new governance structures being developed and away from those based upon violence and power of warlords.
- ▶ Systematic approach for filling the vacuum between national and sub-national levels.
- ▶ Approach for ensuring people in the country are given the opportunity to take the responsibility of their development, and they are highly receptive and willing to re-create a link with the Central Government.
- ▶ Process for expansion of government services to the communities where government has been unable to maintain its presence.
- ▶ Enhancement of the spirit of confidence of the community members on the government, its working capacity in service delivery, providing ground for active participation and empowerment, in particular for women.
- ▶ Grass-root organisation based on existing social structures representing various population groups at sub-district level would in turn influence the district administrations to represent fairly the various communities.

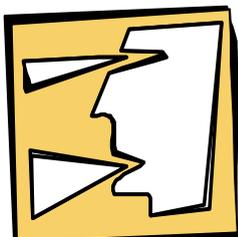
## Limitations



- ▶ Complex and resource intensive approach, difficult to manage and coordinate all the stakeholders at all different levels in the approach.
- ▶ For implementing the method a large international presence for peace-building purposes is required, this can severely distort the economy and politics of the country in question. In poor and divided countries the effect is magnified.
- ▶ The method may lead to a fundamental tension that stems from the contradiction between the desire for quick results and the slow process of empowering representative national institutions. There is an obvious temptation for the international aid community to rush in with funds and quick fixes to demonstrate that peace pays and good governance processes work and can pre-empt the many destabilising forces at work.
- ▶ In some cases traditional village leaders and former commanders become the newly elected representatives and continue to wield their former power through the new structures.
- ▶ Need for continuous efforts for capacity building at all levels and there is no quick-fix quality implementation of projects.
- ▶ Delays in the whole process leads to loss of confidence of process.
- ▶ Remote parts of the country lack qualified staff to implement the approach.

# Governance Structures in a Post Conflict Environment

## Principles & General Procedures



## Some Principles and Pre-conditions

Reconstruction of a country and the necessary governance changes require some pre-conditions:

- ▶ "Peace" must exist, in other words, regular armed conflict does not take place
- ▶ The majority of the population and the ruling elites must actually want "peace" to take effect
- ▶ The international donor community is willing to support the reconstruction and development process over a longer period of time
- ▶ The support is actually translated into financial resources for the country
- ▶ A national ministry is willing to take on the challenges of introducing a participatory bottom-up approach for development planning and management

These are some of the most important ingredients needed to be able to undertake the process approach described in this method.

*Photo 3: The relics of armed conflict*

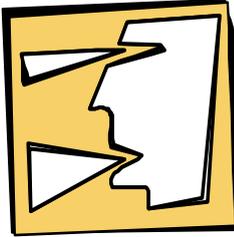


*Photo 4: Traditional nomads*



## Governance Structures in a Post Conflict Environment

### Principles & General Procedures



### Creation of a National Programme

**A National Programme needs to be formed:** The aim of the Programme is to develop the ability of local communities to identify, plan, manage, and monitor their own development projects. The national programme needs to promote a development paradigm whereby communities are empowered to make decisions and control resources during all stages of the project cycle. The programme is expected to lay the foundations for a long-term strengthening of local governance, to make it more inclusive (e.g. for women, Internally Displaced Persons, returnees, ethnic minorities), and to provide assistance for reconstruction and development of communities.

**The goal of the National Programme** would be to reduce poverty through empowering communities with regard to improved governance, and social, human, and economic capital.

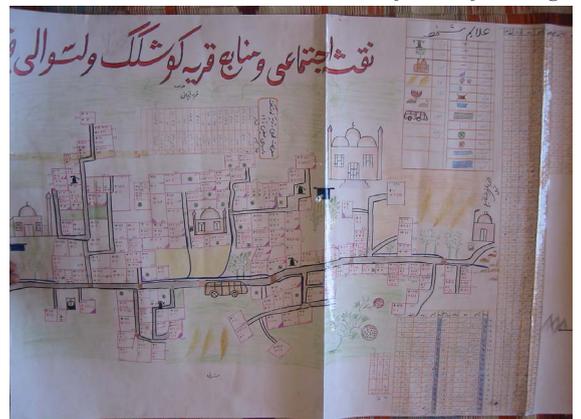
**The objectives** of the programme are to:

- ▶ lay the foundations for a strengthening of community level governance, and to
- ▶ support community-managed sub-projects comprising reconstruction and development that improve the access of rural communities to social and productive infrastructure and services.

Photo 5: Emancipating the communities

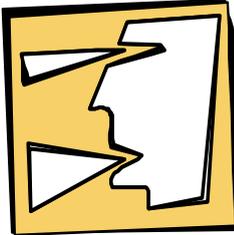


Photo 6: The future of a village



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### Creation of Implementing Structures

**A national executing ministry has to be selected:** Ideally, a national ministry such as Ministry of Local Governance or Ministry of Rural Development is best suited to take on the role of being the national executing agency. The national executing agency should promote a unique development paradigm whereby communities can make important decisions and control resources at all stages of development. This will ultimately enable all villages and communities to be eligible for funding through the National Programme. Within the ministry, Steering or oversight committee should manage the National Programme. The objective of the committee is not only to coordinate the National Programme but also to ensure that capacity for community development and programme management is developed and strengthened. This process may require external consultancy support.

For the working structure a National Office and regional or provincial offices need to be established. The Steering Committee acts in an advisory capacity to the Ministry on overall programme policy formulation and direction, and oversees programme implementation. Representatives at the Steering committee would include members of the Executing Ministry, Ministry of Finance. The committee should be kept relatively small to make it manageable. An External Review Committee consisting of donors, UN agencies, NGO representatives would also need to be formed to meet on a regular basis to review and endorse all policy and contractual issues.

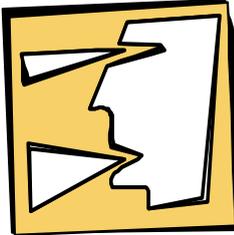
### Facilitating Partners

In most post conflict environments the administrative and political structures are not available on the side of the state that can take over the development roles and functions. Often there are numerous Non-Governmental and UN Organisations in the country, mainly involved in relief work. These organisations have the necessary administrative and organisational capacity to reach out to the people living in nearly all parts of the country. These organisations are ideally suited to becoming so called "facilitating Partners".

The primary role of the Facilitating Partner is to provide support and guidance to the community in meeting the requirements of the National Programme. The Facilitating Partners are expected to report to the National Programme Steering Committee. In each province or region one or more Facilitating Partner would deploy community facilitators and technical specialists for one or more districts to cover a certain number of communities or villages. The Facilitating Partners may use facilitation methods that they deem appropriate while respecting the eligibility criteria to achieve the outputs against which the eligibility of community project proposals are appraised and may also plan the deployment of their staff and sequencing of activities in ways they consider optimal for achieving their overall output targets.

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## Operations manual

In order to be able to effectively and efficiently implement the National Programme, an operations manual has to be developed. Quality of process is essential for the long-term sustainability of community investments and for the success of a programme. As such, community level planning must follow an approach that complies with the basic principles below:

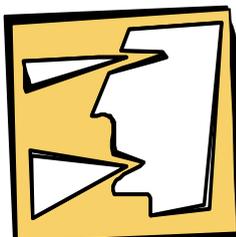
- ▶ **participatory planning** of activities through inclusive community meetings and representative elected development councils;
- ▶ **community contributions** to capital costs and operation and maintenance;
- ▶ **transparency and accountability** of budgeting and accounting.

The operations manual should be short and concise and should contain all the necessary information required to operationalise the goals and objectives of the National Programme. The manual should not exceed 20 pages and should be based upon the principle of delegating decision-making authority to the lowest level possible. The administration should be "lean" and effective. The main sections to be covered in the operations manual include:

- ▶ Objectives
- ▶ Institutional principles
- ▶ Organisation Structure
- ▶ Eligibility and targeting of projects to be supported by the National Programme
- ▶ Approach for project identification
- ▶ Feasibility and selection process
- ▶ Planning and preparation for implementation
- ▶ Implementation approach, including operations, maintenance and sustainability
- ▶ Facilitating Partner Organisation Capacity building
- ▶ Defining eligibility criteria for facilitating partners
- ▶ Selection of trainers
- ▶ Process monitoring and evaluation approach
- ▶ Reporting procedures
- ▶ Finance and administration of the National Programme
- ▶ Management of financial resources
- ▶ Personnel administration
- ▶ Micro-credits (if relevant)
- ▶ Procurement, tendering and other allocation procedures
- ▶ Financial auditing, financial reporting and public auditing

# Governance Structures in a Post Conflict Environment

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### Donors

Post conflict environments often bear the scars of years of civil unrest and war; one of the least available factors is any form of financial resources. The realization and continuation of any National Programme aiming at enabling the community to rebuild and develop their shattered lives is dependent on the commitments of donor countries and institutions.

While donor funds can be helpful in securing initial resources required for the development work, in the medium term the national government needs to provide the necessary resources required for the development work

### Block grants

A key ingredient for the success of the National Programme is the provision of Block grants. These grants are allocated directly to the community. While this is initially only sustainable due to the contributions of the donor organisations, it would require a similar allocation by the Ministry of Finance. Examples exist in the world (i.e. Nepal) where block grants are allocated to every village level development council / committee in the country and to each district council. These block grants are allocated for developmental investment purposes and not for use for recurrent expenditures. The block grants to villages are intended to act as catalysts and at the same time provide much needed support for local reconstruction and development activities.

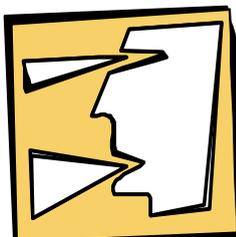
### Cyclical phases of the National Programme

A "5-Phase-Cycle" can be applied as a guide for the annual implementation process. The cyclical approach inherently contains a "loop-back" function.

- ▶ During **Phase I** contacts are made with communities and villages. A team of "facilitators", or locally recruited and trained staff from the facilitating partners, works with people in the communities and villages to discuss current community problems as well as their causes.
- ▶ **Phase II** focuses on establishing a representative community body, some form of a village or community development council. The emphasis is on the term "development". In many countries traditional community for a exist but these tend not to be developmental in nature. The elected council is responsible for proper and transparent accounting and the overall management of the community's socio-economic development process.

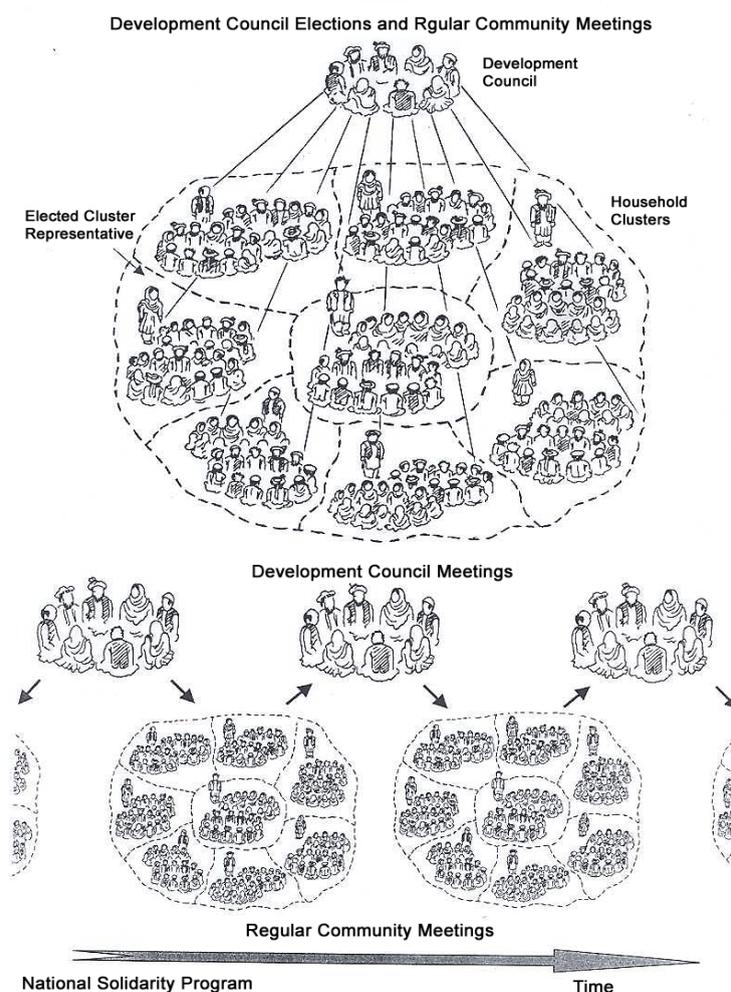
## Governance Structures in a Post Conflict Environment

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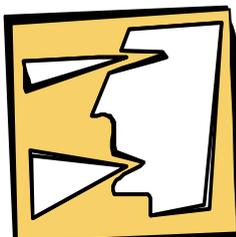
- ▶ In **Phase III**, the newly elected village or community development councils consults with the members of the community in order to decide on what projects can be carried out independently and what projects need to be executed with outside support. Proposals will be written and submitted to either directly or through the Facilitating Partners to the National Programme offices. In order to minimise the administration demands approval authorities need to be delegated to provincial and possibly district levels.
- ▶ **Phase IV** then focuses on the project implementation. After project approval, first block grant instalments are paid for the purchase of materials and contracting of services. At this point, the communities organize themselves and mobilize community resources for contributing to the project execution.
- ▶ **Phase V** can be seen as the project evaluation. Regular monitoring of the progress is as important as the evaluation of the completed project.

Figure 1: Development Council Election Process & Council Meetings



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## Basic annual steps

Within the five phase cycle described above, the following steps need to be undertaken by the Facilitating Partners, the Communities / Villages and the National Programme:

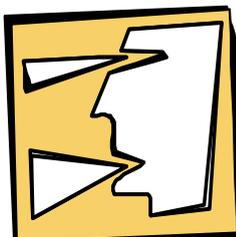
1. Selection of communities
2. Preparation of the communities
3. Appraisal of community development projects and plans
4. Sub-project implementation
5. Monitoring of the implementation process by the community
6. Physical and financial progress monitoring
7. Sub-project completion
8. Final monitoring and evaluation

### 1. Selection of communities:

- ▶ The term “community” or “Village” has to be defined. It can be based upon number of inhabitants or other similar criteria.
- ▶ Communities should elect their representatives. After secret balloting, the elected members form the Community or Village Development Council.
- ▶ The elected Council sets up a local Community Development Fund and keeps the community regularly informed about council’s activities and decisions via a public notice board and other local means of communication.
- ▶ Communities must participate in identifying and planning the project(s).
- ▶ Based on a wide consensus and in-depth consultations, the project(s) proposal must be endorsed.
- ▶ Communities must present technically and financially sound projects and also plan for equal access to future benefits.
- ▶ Communities contribute towards both capital costs (mainly labour) and operation and maintenance. They must design an operation and maintenance plan.
- ▶ Communities accept principles of transparency in budgeting and accounting.
- ▶ Communities encourage a strong project participation of women

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## 2. Preparation of the communities

**Facilitating Partners** are expected to facilitate the process so that communities can jointly plan and implement projects in partnership with the National Programme. The FPs are expected to help:

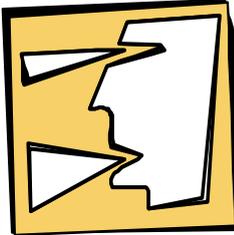
- ▶ To mobilize the community including facilitating the establishment through elections of a Community or Village Development Council and related project implementation committees as agreed with the community;
- ▶ Facilitate a participatory planning process that includes women and the weaker sections of the community;
- ▶ Strengthen community capacity to identify and prioritise needs;
- ▶ Assist the community to prepare a Community Profile with baseline data
- ▶ Facilitate the preparation of a Community Development Plan and proposals for specific project(s) with budget(s);
- ▶ Provide technical assistance to develop sub-project proposals for appraisal through either:
  - a) facilitating community access to technical assistance available in the market or from other agencies; or,
  - b) technical assistance provided by the Facilitating Partner,
- ▶ Sign off on the Community Development Plan and sub-project proposal(s) with respect to technical quality, financial feasibility and inclusive community involvement in planning and decision-making before they are submitted to NSP.

On the other hand the **community** also is expected that it will:

- ▶ Elect an inclusive Community or Village Development Council and establish Project Management Committees as needed for the community projects;
- ▶ Develop a Community Development Plan (including priority sub-project proposals with budgets and community cost contributions and Operations and maintenance arrangements as well as projects which can be financed and implemented by the community itself);
- ▶ Obtain inputs and endorsement from the community (if necessary through separate meetings with men and women) regarding the Community Development Plan;
- ▶ Mobilize the required technical expertise to help develop designs within given technical standards;
- ▶ Agree on rules for dissemination of budget and expenditure information;
- ▶ Submit the community development plan and proposal(s) to National Programme in accordance with the rules defined in the operations manual.

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### 3. Appraisal of community development projects / plans

The community (with the assistance of the Facilitating Partner) will complete and submit a Community Development Plan and standard sub-project proposal(s) (including technical designs and cost schedules) to the provincial representative of the NSP. The Community Development Plan constitutes a medium term investment plan for a particular community, which would provide the basis for additional future development activities whether funded by the National Programme or other sources, and also represent for the first time ever a bottom-up input to higher level planning at the district, provincial, and national level.

Appraisal of the community proposal and budget are conducted by the National Programme. The Facilitating Partner helps communities to prepare and implement sub-project proposals and be positioned as "allies" of the community, while the National Programme staff formally appraises proposals and makes funding decisions.

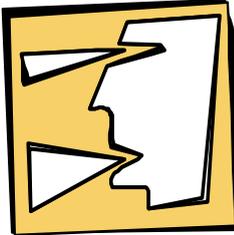
While the National programme is ultimately responsible for appraisal of all community project proposals to determine whether they meet the eligibility criteria, where possible, the decision making should be undertaken decentralised at the provincial levels. Only large project should be submitted to the national level for approval.. Selection can be completed using a standard appraisal tool and should involve line agency staff wherever and whenever possible. The appraisal is to be done using a transparent procedure with eligibility criteria, indicators and means of verification. The criteria are made known to the community in order to limit the discretionary power of the National Programme. A proposal is evaluated based on these criteria and assessed participatory meetings to be conducted every two-months in the districts. During appraisal visit by qualified engineers the appropriate levels of instalments will be discussed and agreed upon. In the absence of special agreements instalments could be 50%, 40% and last instalment of 10 %.

The community will be informed regarding the result of the appraisal, which may be

- ▶ approval of funding for the proposed plan,
- ▶ rejection for non-compliance with National Programme rules (e.g. project is on the negative list),
- ▶ requiring the community to revise its proposal with regard to either the election of the Development Councils, the planning process, the budget, or the technical standards.

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The provincial and national office of the National Programme will undertake field verification on a sample basis of whether elections of Community Development Councils conform to the basic principles defined.

Upon completion of appraisal and approval by the National Programme of a community project proposal, a Tripartite Agreement is signed between the Community Development Council, National Programme, and the Facilitating Partner regarding the financing of the sub-project, disbursement schedule and benchmarks triggering instalments and the general obligations of each of the parties to the agreement

### 4. Project implementation

The primary responsibility for project implementation rests with the community (the Community or Village Development Council, Project Management Committee, and the greater community). Clear divisions of responsibility between the Development Council members and Project Management Committee members increase accountability. Three or more persons at the community level should be identified as responsible for most implementation activities such as procurement, bookkeeping, supervision, storage and accounting. This not only promotes transparency and continuity at the community level but ensures as well that more than one person in the community has the necessary skills/training to perform the task.

Depending on the type of project, the community is either capable of undertaking implementation itself, or may require external assistance regarding specialized technical skills or services (e.g. masons for school construction, or lining and hand pump installation for dug wells for drinking water).

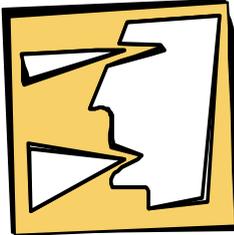
If a community is using its block grant for more than one project, parallel implementation is an option, if sufficient capacity is present, since this speeds up overall implementation, and enables completion of projects within the constraints defined by local climate and altitude.

The Facilitating Partner supports the community during this process with regard to:

- ▶ Technical assistance on an as needed basis (e.g. procedures for procurement of goods or contractors);
- ▶ Implementation (e.g. advice on implementation organization, and supervision of works and construction quality);
- ▶ Training on matters such as bookkeeping, contracting, maintenance tasks etc.

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### 5. Monitoring of the implementation process by the community

The community wide assembly has to agree on the methods and schedule of reporting to the community (on financial and physical progress) by the Community or Village Development Council and the relevant Project Management Committees. The methods for information dissemination should ensure that women are informed about project activities. The community has to agree on key indicators to monitor joint decision-making, project progress, and transparency. Monitoring against these indicators has to be reported in the Community Progress Reporting Form used by the Facilitating Partners.

In the community, all records and accounts must be available for inspection by the members of the community, the Facilitating Partner, and the National Programme. The arrangements to ensure transparency include regular community wide information meetings, display of all relevant information on implementation progress and expenditures on notice boards accessible to the public, and/or announcements of project-related information at community gatherings.

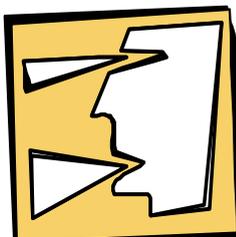
### 6. Physical and financial progress monitoring

The Facilitating Partner is responsible for physical and financial progress monitoring on a quarterly basis with more comprehensive annual reports. The Facilitating Partner reports to the National Programme on process, achievement of implementation benchmarks, and quality of works as defined in the Tripartite Agreement. Achievement of implementation benchmarks will be tied to the release of funding to the community.

The National Programme staff performs sample audits of the support for the community carried out by the Facilitating Partner regarding elections of Community Development Councils, preparation of sub-project proposals that comply with National Programme eligibility criteria, recommendations for release of block grant instalments based on achievement of agreed milestones, and the adequacy and realism of progress reporting

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### 7. Project Completion

A completion report has to be prepared by the community and the Facilitating Partner. The completed project is inspected by the National Programme and a Certificate of Completion is issued to the community provided the sub-project is technically sound and that all funds received from National Programme have been reconciled. The National Programme may approve that any savings that are remaining may be allocated to be used by the community to increase the scope of the community development plan during the current or following year.

### 8. Final monitoring and evaluation

The National Programme requires a functioning monitoring and evaluation (M&E). The system is intended to provide adequate information to the relevant stakeholders on project implementation performance, process, outputs, and outcomes. The main purpose of the monitoring system is to provide timely feedback to key stakeholders, and permit mid-course corrective action initiated where necessary. The M&E system should have four components:

- ▶ Implementation monitoring –physical/ financial;
- ▶ Process monitoring;
- ▶ Post-implementation monitoring, including sustainability monitoring of completed sub-projects and audits; and
- ▶ Evaluation of process, outputs, outcomes, and financial management.

At the community / village level, communities are assisted by their Facilitating Partner to monitor their own progress based on a few self-selected key indicators (e.g. on process/participation, implementation progress/results, and expenditures). Formats need to be made available for this purpose.

At the next level, the Facilitating Partner, using the community as the basic unit of monitoring, provides a comprehensive report, including physical (and other outputs) and financial progress, on a quarterly basis to the NSP office. The Facilitating Partner's quarterly report includes the findings of the community monitoring.

The Facilitating Partner's quarterly progress reports covers the district(s) or province(s) in which the particular Facilitating Partner is responsible. The report need to be amalgamated at the provincial / regional and national levels. At the national level, quarterly progress reports are to be shared with key stakeholders, the Steering Committee, Facilitating Partners, and donor agencies.

To evaluate project outcomes in terms of assessing whether the National Programme is meeting its objectives, key performance indicators need to be developed. An external neutral person should evaluate achievements against these.

## Governance Structures in a Post Conflict Environment

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