



# **TADBEER CONSULTING INC**

*Research – Consultancy – Capacity Building*

**Creating, applying, and spreading local Afghan knowledge and insight for improved policy making for sustainable development in Afghanistan**

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## **CONTEXT**

Each post-conflict setting and fragile state has its own unique circumstances; however, peace-building efforts and development systems treat each setting with a conventional approach, which in many cases has failed to achieve sustainable results. In the case of Afghanistan, the shortcoming is partly due to international actors' lack of understanding of the environment and their inability to contextualize international experience to local realities. There has also been an acute lack of local institutional capacities to inform post-conflict reconstruction. This has been a structural and systematic weakness that needs to be immediately addressed.

After nearly a decade of international presence in Afghanistan, only now is it becoming clear that socio-economic development must occur in addition to military intervention. Effective socio-economic development policies are best devised based on the incorporation of local knowledge and a clear understanding of the context and realities on the ground. A vast array of international organizations, civil society actors, and consultants involved in development and reconstruction activities in Afghanistan exist; however, there is still too small an Afghan voice amidst this cacophony.

There has been a heavy reliance on foreign consultants and the international community to devise and implement development policies for Afghanistan. It is widely admitted that international actors, with little or no input from Afghans themselves, constitute the primary driver of the Afghanistan development agenda.

Afghans and the international community understand that current levels of international involvement, each working towards an “exit strategy,” cannot be sustainable. Lest the country reverts to its pre-2001 state, Afghans must be prepared to seize this opportunity and take ownership of the development process for any gains to be sustainable. Especially today, when many western countries, amidst unprecedented fatigue and shifting public opinion, are focused on crafting an exit strategy that does not amount to a precipitous withdrawal, but also does not commit them to an indefinite presence; there is a need to invest in creating local institutions that can sustain and consolidate the gains made over the past decade.

With the pending departure of international actors, there is a very real risk of an unintentional withdrawal of institutional memory and capacity, thus creating a debilitating chasm in knowledge and functional capability. In order to mitigate this risk, Afghans must take the lead in their own development.

This is where investment, for the establishment and strengthening of Afghan institutions to play an active role in the development of informed policy-making processes, must be given high priority as part of an exit strategy by international actors.

TADBEER, an Afghan-initiated and Afghan-driven company, aims to build Afghan ownership through policy-informing research and capacity building, and to adapt international expertise and experience for Afghanistan’s unique complex development context. TADBEER strives to use this insight to support the Afghan government and other development actors to craft the most effective policies. Ultimately, TADBEER’s aim is to work together with and to support the development community’s efforts for Afghanistan’s reconstruction and development.

## **Vision**

A unique combination of local wisdom and international knowledge for a thriving and prosperous Afghanistan.

## **GOAL**

To create, apply, and spread indigenous insight for improved policy making and sustainable development in Afghanistan.

## **INSTITUTIONAL NICHE**

TADBEER's niche is informed by an Afghan-owned and Afghan-led research paradigm that will:

- 1). Focus explicitly on human security and development;
- 2). Improve policy to better reflect Afghan voices, concerns, and priorities;
- 3). Build sustainable capacity through training and support to emerging Afghan experts.

TADBEER will catalyze Afghans to be participants in—rather than subjects of development research and policy, by facilitating and providing appropriate opportunities for Afghan leadership.

## **PRINCIPLES**

TADBEER seeks to accomplish its goal by adherence to the following five important principles:

- 1) Afghan leadership of development
- 2) Human development focus
- 3) Gender equity
- 4) Demand driven
- 5) Sustainability of intervention

## SERVICES

TADBEER will engage in three main areas of work: research, consultancy and capacity building.

TADBEER aims to conduct tangible, comprehensive and results-oriented surveys, interviews, cost-benefit analyses, socio-economic assessments, evaluations, appraisals and impact assessments. TADBEER's methodology will be different because it will be guided by a participatory, inclusive approach in order to elicit genuine Afghan voices. The research agenda will be driven by a focus on producing actionable, policy-informing and quality research that reflects Afghan realities. TADBEER's research will provide practical and actionable recommendations, and not simply theory.

TADBEER will also provide consultancy services to policy makers, whether government officials, donors, or the broader community of development actors. These services will aim to improve policy by strategy formulation, which will be supported by developing robust monitoring and evaluation systems within a local context. Activation of these consultancy services will apply research knowledge to a policy environment. A specific example of such services is contributing to the development of strategies for Afghan government ministries.

TADBEER transfers the skill sets and aptitudes for sustainable development through training and capacity building, targeted to the needs of its clients and their environment. TADBEER's methodology focuses on experiential learning: we will work closely with our clients to arrive at the right blend of knowledge, skills and attitudes that will equip a new generation of development experts with just the right tools to succeed.

The specific areas in which TADBEER specializes and provides services include:

- Conceptualizing and design of development, governance and livelihoods initiatives
- Strategy development for governmental and non-governmental organizations
- Impact evaluation studies
- Baseline surveys (including data collection, analysis and presentation) and needs assessments

- Customized, practitioner-targeted trainings in development, governance and management
- Economic analysis, sub-sector studies and business plan development

## **DEMONSTRATION OF EXPERTISE**

The following project snapshots illustrate TADBEER's unique performance capabilities:

### *Capacity Building Project in Uruzgan*

As a forerunner of participatory capacity building, TADBEER provided extensive training to provincial governance administrators in Uruzgan who were handicapped with weak public administration and service delivery capacity. Over a three-month period, TADBEER worked closely with participants to complement existing knowledge, to challenge existing skills and to provide vital training to better carry out administrative functions and therefore enhance service delivery.

### *Continuous Conflict Assessments, Northern Afghanistan*

Situating itself in a remote environment, TADBEER undertook three successive conflict assessments in nine northern provinces to understand disruptions in program delivery. Focusing on local governance and local conflict, the results of the study indicate that although a relatively peaceful situation prevails in comparison to other provinces, conflict over natural resources, presence of illegal armed groups, influence of warlords and the presence of the Taliban hinders development project delivery and execution. The studies set an important standard for development practitioners to look beyond the national context to reveal specific, local needs worthy of project implementation.

### *Community Perspectives on the Business Responsibility to Respect Human Rights in Countries Affected or Threatened by Conflict*

In order to assist companies to develop guidelines to conduct business in conflict zones, TADBEER conducted research in three major cities to study the impact of companies on communities. Consistent with TADBEER's ability to engage the voices of all levels of society, the study uncovered a wealth of information about the public's expectation of companies towards communities, and revealed greater truths about the rights of individuals in small villages.

### *Impact Evaluation of Rural Development Programs*

Assessing the impact of three distinct rural development programs highlights TADBEER's ability to process and interpret vast amounts of information- the study evaluated rural development, water and women's resource centre projects over a four-year period in three provinces. Extensive investigative surveys and interviews were conducted with ramifications for program delivery for the study's sponsor, and greater implications for similar project delivery for future project implementation.

### *Research and Assessment of Provincial Operation and Maintenance*

Equally at home in development issues and governance, TADBEER conducted an assessment of operation and maintenance expenditures at the provincial level to address the issue of low operation and maintenance allocation to provinces. With implications for service delivery at the national level, the study revealed a rift between sub-national and national governance bodies; questions of capacity, training and trust prevail. The study reveals that in order to address these issues, there is space for the private sector to become involved and to increase government financial management capacity.

### *Road Maintenance Workshop, Uruzgan Province*

To enhance capacity for provincial road sector development, TADBEER planned and executed a two-day preparatory workshop to prepare trainees for a yearlong road maintenance program. TADBEER employed visual aids, teamwork and technical skills-building sessions to prepare the staff of the relevant provincial department for road maintenance. The workshop not only prepared the group, but positive feedback on the session highlighted the importance of training local road maintenance experts, as outside recruitment is prohibitive given the remote nature of this province.

## **WHO ARE WE?**

TADBEER is an Afghan consultancy firm with strong links to reliable expertise at the grassroots, national, regional and global levels. TADBEER's current team possesses decades of close association with development, especially successful national programs. Its management is drawn from development professionals with backgrounds in high-performing institutions within and outside the Afghan government and the region. Each member brings a deep understanding of developmental issues facing the country, a deep commitment to

ensuring Afghan ownership and leadership of the development process, along with a wide network of contacts at various levels and in all key institutions.

TADBEER's team is led by the former minister of Afghanistan's Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD), Mr. Mohammed Ehsan Zia. Mr. Zia, currently the CEO of TADBEER Consulting, holds a Masters degree in Post-war Reconstruction Studies from the University of York in the UK. He has more than three decades of experience in design and management of humanitarian, development and governance programs and policies, and has authored extensively on these subjects.

Supporting Mr. Zia and TADBEER's team is Mr. Arsalan Ghalieh. Mr. Ghalieh, an international consultant with a Masters degree in development management, has a demonstrated track record of experience in governance, development and organizational change. He has been working at senior levels advising the Afghan government on development.

TADBEER national team is comprised of highly qualified development, management and governance professionals, including an experienced network of surveyors in 34 provinces. Internationally, TADBEER has access to a wide network of deployable professionals with expertise in various areas and with extensive experience of work in Afghanistan.

#### **AFFILIATE INSTITUTIONS**

With its commitment to inject a true Afghan voice into policy dialogue, TADBEER thinks globally and acts locally. As such, TADBEER will not operate in isolation. Instead, in the spirit of being part of a wider discourse on development, TADBEER welcomes and cultivates collaborative partnerships with policy research institutions across the world, including the Christen Michelson Institute (CMI) – Norway, Center for Policy and Human Development (CPHD) – Kabul University, Afghanistan Research & Evaluation Unit (AREU), Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) – Norway, Lichtenstein Institute on Self Determination (LISD) – Princeton University – US, Postwar Recovery and Development Unit (PRDU) – University of York– UK.