



ARTF Strategy Group Meeting

October 18, 2017

Summary of Discussions

An ARTF Strategy Group (SG) Meeting, held on October 18, 2017, was attended by 12 donor country representatives¹ and the World Bank as ARTF Administrator.

Below is a summary of the discussions:

- **Comments on the six issues discussed at the ARTF meetings in August and September**
 - Partners generally reconfirm their support for moving ahead with the six issues. Further comments, including written comments, are still welcome.
 - Specifically, on ramping up Results Monitoring and strengthening anti-corruption mechanisms, participants expressed support with the proposed approach, but also called for the need to balance the increase in resources with enhanced effectiveness in their uses, ensuring sustainability through strengthening of domestic systems, and systematically follow up on any findings.
 - Regarding the proposal to enhance alignment through a more flexible and adaptable approach to programming, there is support for the Multiphase Programmatic Approach (MPA), a new financing instrument that enables to tranche a long, large or complex program into smaller phases, thus introducing learning and adaptability as well as better management of available resources. There was also a recognition that because of the legacy portfolio, and the fact that not all NPPs are fully developed yet, the transition to a full programmatic approach may be gradual.
 - Three related documents (also attached) were shared: (i) a matrix of written comments received to date; (ii) a presentation on the Multi-Phase Programmatic Approach (MPA); (iii) a paper of the 4th issue on Anti-Corruption and Results Monitoring Plan of the ARTF.
- **Update on ARTF external review**
 - The work has progressed well. Collection of data and all basic information are finalized: (i) document review; (ii) survey; (iii) interviews of donors; government officials including in ministries, provinces, districts; and Bank staff. The Contact Advisory Group (CAG) is operational and is providing helpful feedback.

¹ Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Italy, EU, Japan, Norway, Switzerland, UK, and US.



- While the meeting was informed that the first draft report could be delivered by October 27, subsequent discussions with the review team indicate that because of few remaining information validation, and the overhaul of the report structure in light of discussions with stakeholders, workshops and CAG advice, the draft report is now more likely to be available by **October 31**.
 - After the draft report is circulated, and comments are shared by ARTF partners, the external review team will prepare a Comments Response Sheet, before moving on to finalize the report.
 - Participants indicated that the findings of the external review should feed in the planning of the ARTF steering committee as well as in developing the full-fledged notes on the six issues.
 - Participants enquired about two additional issues the external review team was asked to analyze: Bank staffing for the ARTF program, and the quality assurance in the rating of project performance. The review team has received preliminary information on trends in Kabul-based Bank staff, and further information on all Bank staff working on the Afghanistan program will also be shared shortly. The review team and the Bank have also discussed the matter of quality assurance for project performance rating, and the Bank will share the statistics on disconnect (if any) between final ratings by Bank teams and ratings by the IEG, the independent evaluation unit of the Bank. In the next financing
- **Update on ARTF Scorecard**
 - The ARTF scorecard was finalized and is at the graphic design and print production stage. The report will be shared with ARTF donors by **end-October**.
 - There was a recognition that this latest scorecard – which will be included in the Steering Committee Package – may not reflect the latest discussions on M&E, but the Steering Committee should offer the opportunity to discuss any needed adjustments based on the proposal under issue # 4 (M&E section). In that regard, the meeting was updated that the hiring of an operation officer, whose main responsibility would be to strengthen the M&E of the ARTF, is well advanced.
 - **Planning and time-frame for the ARTF Steering Committee (SC)**
 - The SC will likely take place in early December. On the critical path of the SC are: (i) the ARTF external review which should inform adjustments to be made; (ii) the pledges by ARTF partners by end-October, which will allow Ministry of Finance – with the support of the Bank – to initiate by earlier November the programming and prioritization under the Financing Strategy; (iii) fleshing out the remaining five of the six issues, as is already the case with the fourth issue on governance, anti-corruption and strengthened M&E.



- MoF and the Bank will share and seek feedback from ARTF partners on individual parts of the steering committee package as they are finalized throughout November. If all goes as planned, the final package will be circulated in late November for a SC meeting in early December.
- **AOB**
 - On the question about the handling of unspent commitments at the end of the current Financing Strategy, the meeting discussed that most projects will implement across two or three FS cycles, and in case of cancellation, restructuring and project closing, newly available resources balances are brought back to the parent fund to be committed to new projects in the active FS.
 - The End of Year Report (June 21, 2016 to December 20, 2016) of the ARTF was shared with participants, a copy of which could be retrieved at: [ARTF 2016 End-of-year-Report](#)