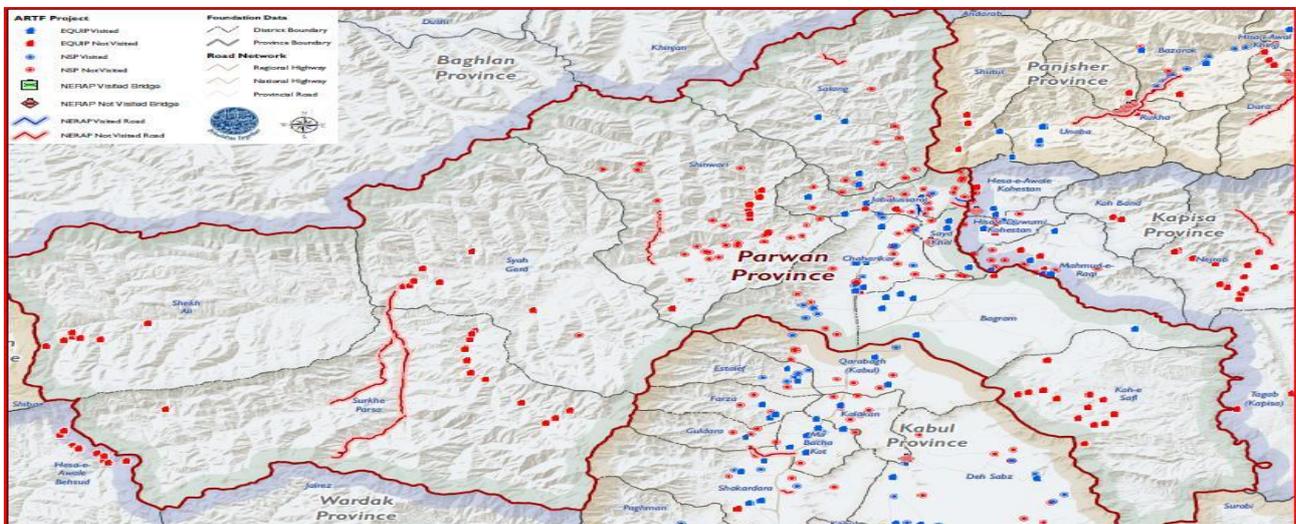


Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund Supervisory Agent

Overview of the project/activity: Monitoring project implementation is a challenge in any project, but in Afghanistan, the challenges are magnified by ongoing conflict and insurgency that limits the ability of Bank teams, their clients, and partners to go to the field. Accompanying the security challenge was a large donor community and intense press scrutiny that heightened the need for accountability. The Bank is fulfilling its supervision responsibilities as ARTF Administrator, but in 2011 the Bank added a highly innovative third-party monitoring program of infrastructure construction to help overcome the challenging security context, limited client capacity for monitoring and quality assurance, and persistent rumors of fraud and corruption at a time when the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF) experienced significant growth in scope. In this context the program set out to systematically assess and monitor infrastructure construction, financed under selected key national programs in Afghanistan. The Bank contracted a Supervisory Agent (SA) under the ARTF starting on September 1, 2012 to carry out asset verification, quality assurance, and data mapping of three projects—the National Solidarity Program, Rural Access Project, and Strengthening Higher Education Program.

The first phase (September 1, 2012 - August 31, 2013) included 1500 individual site visits divided over the participating projects, with a total value of the three participating projects (NSP, rural roads and education) of US\$588 million and an approximate value of US\$81 million for the 1500 project sites visited. The program allows the Bank to reach out to all 34 provinces of Afghanistan, including highly insecure areas, to get data from key national programs. See below a SA map of one province in Afghanistan (Parwan) mapping all project sites for the three participating projects.

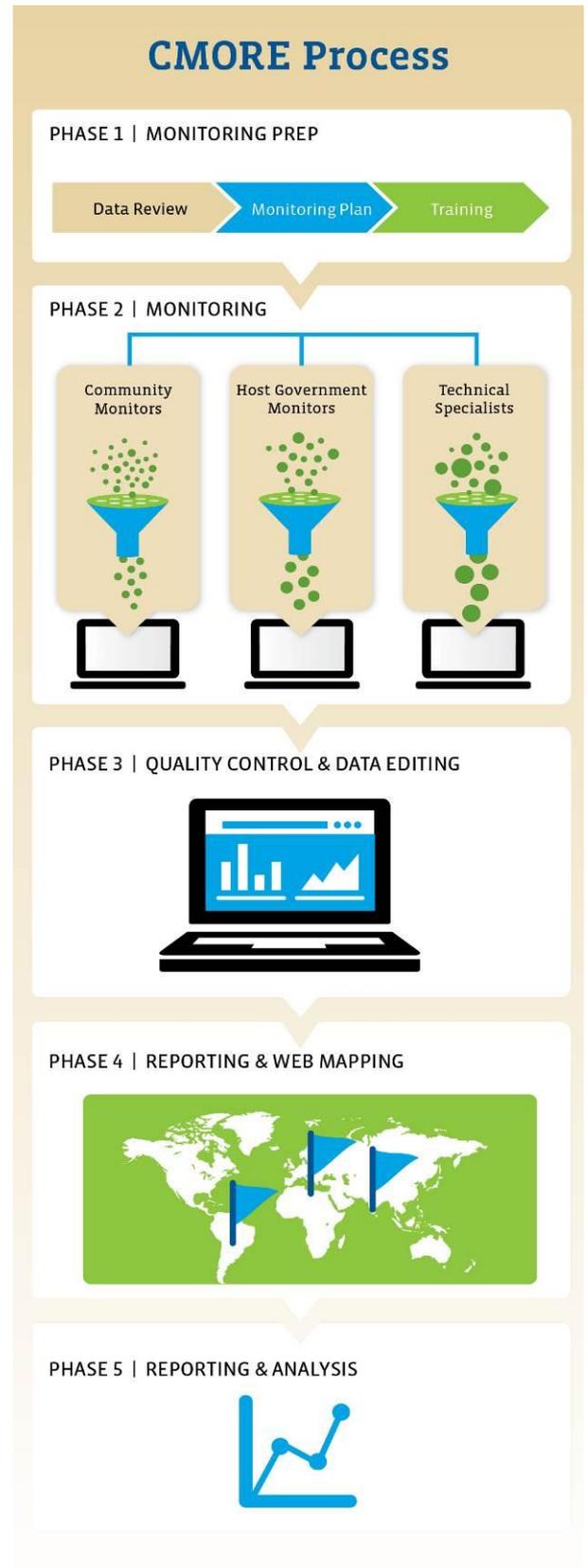


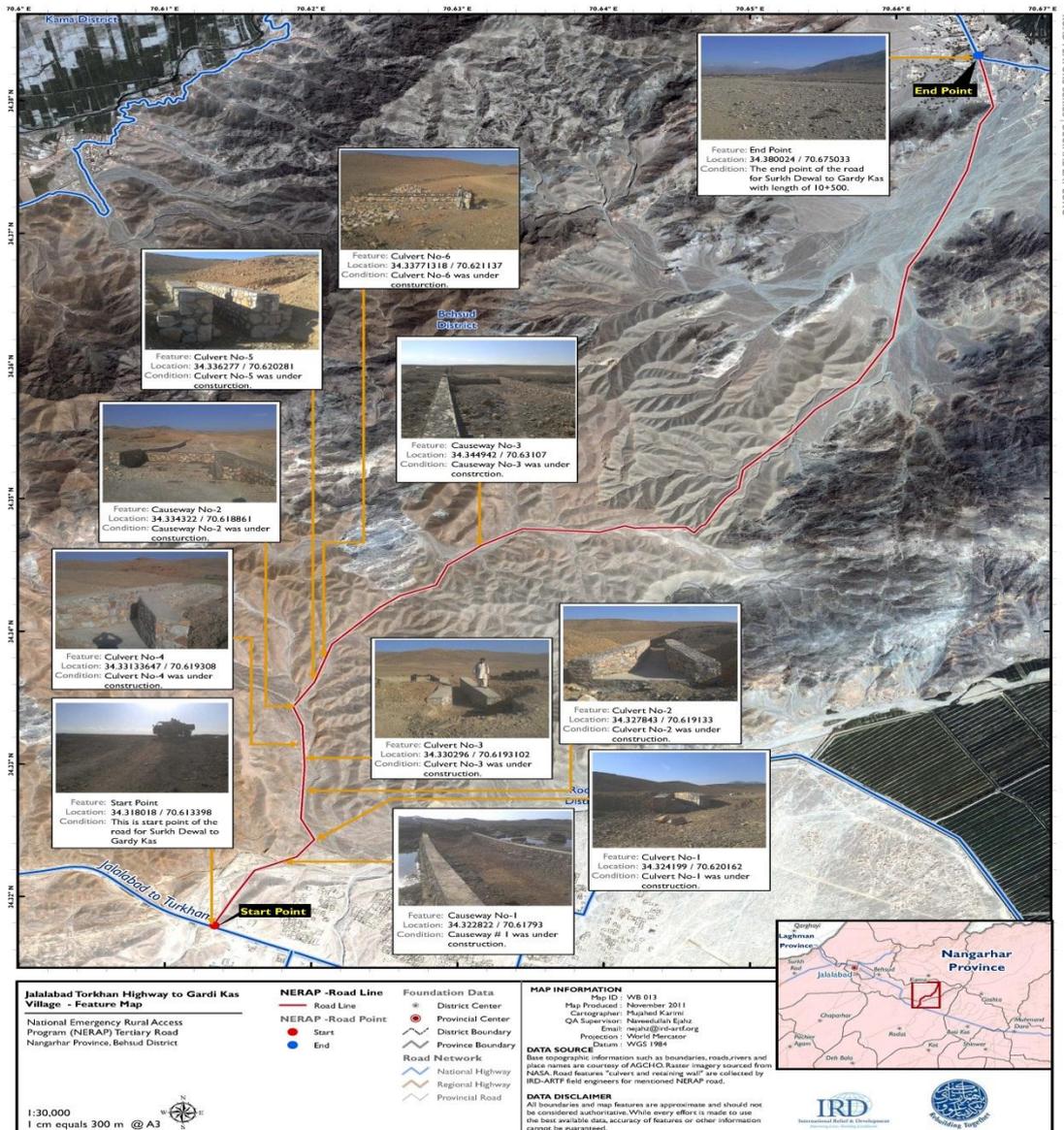
The project follows a comprehensive five-step process designed to ensure that all relevant information is captured, that all data and analysis meets the needs of the Bank and line ministries, that the data is accurate and robust and, that technology and capability are transferred to the clients' monitoring teams and engineers (see CMORE Process Figure below):

1. **Preparation:** Designing monitoring plans for each project and creating the monitoring database and population populating it with basic project data;
2. **Monitoring:** Afghan field engineers performing site visits to gather in-depth technical information, using smartphones that include push-button queries, voice, photo, and GPRS data capture. Using

smartphones allows the Afghan engineers to operate discreetly in a challenging security environment;

3. **Quality control and data editing:** The information enters a database and passes through a series of quality control reviews, looking for accuracy and completeness of information. Other specific reviews verify information using satellite imagery or specialized technical experts;
4. **Reporting and web mapping:** Once verified, information is published in an online database and mapping application, which acts as a searchable catalogue that geospatially displays data and is accessible to anyone with an internet connection([Please find here a link to the map-based database](#) where you can sign in as guest);
5. **Reporting and analysis:** The SA provides the Bank and line ministries with detailed inspection reports and comprehensive analysis of identified patterns complete with recommended actions. The SA, the Bank and line ministries agree on necessary actions to address identified deviations and correct systems to prevent similar problems from reoccurring and increase impact on the ground. The picture below showcases part of the monthly reports that outlines project problems in a map-based format.





Third party monitoring was new to the Afghan-based Bank teams and the client, so the learning curve was significant on both parts, but the results are impressive. While the immediate purpose of the program was to generate data on project-financed infrastructure, several other results have come about:

1. Client awareness and capacity for monitoring and quality assurance has increased through the regular multi-party discussions around the data. Ministries have taken new initiatives to strengthen their own internal monitoring programs that mirror the systems built by the SA. Client Capacity is built through the frequent interaction with the SA technical experts and Bank teams;
2. Responding to the recurrent finding of poor maintenance of infrastructure, the ARTF is financing a new Operations & Maintenance Facility. This will finance O&M costs through the operating budgets of the Ministries of Education and Public Health as a start. The SA will support this work by providing data on O&M needs of schools in the provinces;
3. Mapping: Information is more readily available in a [new online database](#)—in a limited form to the general public (all project sites are mapped and color coded to show which have been visited by the

- SA), and in full form to the line ministries and the Bank so they can access all reporting with pictures, data, ratings etc. For security reasons the full database is not externally available; and
4. The program has strengthened the Bank's accountability as ARTF Administrator vis-à-vis donors in an environment fraught with rumors of corruption.

Based on the lessons from the first year, a second phase was initiated, the program was scaled up to 2800 site visits per year, and the Irrigation Restoration and Development Project was added. Participating ministries are enthusiastic and thirsty for more information and capacity. Two new components have been added to ensure sustainability of the program through client capacity building and a cost-efficient community monitoring pilot.

Collaboration: When different parties work in concert, they can achieve quite a lot. We have seen a third party monitoring agent come together with line ministries and the Bank teams to ensure strengthened project performance, improved communication and learning. While monthly meetings focus on individual projects, quarterly meetings chaired by the Bank facilitate discussion of cross-cutting issues between Bank teams, ministry staff, and the SA. These cross-cutting discussions have resulted in frank and robust deliberations on how to address complex issues and increase the developmental impact of each project.

Innovation: The use of third party monitoring with a strong emphasis on applying state of the art technology is the first of its kind in Afghanistan, at such a scale. The use of smart phones, satellite imagery, mapping technology has significantly enhanced, and sometimes even allowed, the ability of the World Bank sector teams to monitor and assess the quality of implementation in remote and ongoing conflict conditions — thus making the Bank a more effective administrator of ARTF funds. The program has required staff to invest significant time to ensure the desired results. Not only in the design phase to guarantee that the right data is generated, but even more so in the implementation phase to ensure that data is used properly to feed into and strengthen the quality of infrastructure and thereby the projects' development impact on the ground. Each month 100-200 individual site inspection reports are submitted to the Bank. It required much effort from project teams to ensure buy-in by line ministries and set up systematic approaches to address deviations. This way of working was new to the Bank teams and it therefore required some hard work and creativity to build the systems necessary to ensure maximum benefit from the program and a minimum of risk. The pilot was, however, successful. The Bank as well as the line ministries and the SA learned a lot during the pilot. New concepts were assessed and lessons generated informed a second phase of the program.