



**TOGETHER WE CAN**

**Coordination of Afghan Relief (CoAR)**

**2018-2022**

## **PREFACE**

A Strategic Plan is one of the important management tools as it provides a road map for how to achieve an organization's objective. It is a mechanism that helps management optimize the resource allocation to different sectors and tasks. It helps focus organizational resources in the same direction as to achieve the overall objective. Strategic plan spells out the destination of the organization over a specific period of time, and define how the organization will get there. It defines the objectives to be achieved with the available resources over a specific period of time.

Coordination of Afghan Relief (CoAR) developed its current strategy in 2012. The plan has enabled CoAR to develop and work towards its objectives in line with its vision and mission statements, thereby laying the foundation for this strategic plan. CoAR has largely achieved its objective set out in the previous five years plan and has thereby learned many new lessons.

Recent changes in Afghanistan's socio-political environment provide civil society organizations (CSOs) a wide range of opportunities for organizational growth, but has also introduced a number of challenges previously not faced by CSOs. Societal changes and more educated youth open up for increased attention to the needs of and larger involvement of women and girls in emergency and development projects, an opportunity CoAR is well placed to capitalize on.

This plan has been developed following a detail review of several of the strategies adopted by Government of Afghanistan and donor agencies. Among the important documents reviewed for the development of this plan, are the ANPDF, NPPA, SDG, SFDRR, WHS, and ANDS etc. The study of these documents helped the management in identifying the potentials existing in the current environment and expected changes in the foreseeable future. These policies and frameworks reflect the government and donor expectations from CSOs, and their role in meeting the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

Therefore, CoAR management feel it necessary to review and revise the current plan in order to seize the available opportunities and manage the challenges efficiently that CoAR may face in the near future. It will have a twofold effect for CoAR. Primarily, CoAR will be able to pursue its objectives in the long and short run and secondly, communities in need of the humanitarian services that CoAR can provide will have better chances to benefit from the objectives set out in the Sustainable Development Goals.

This plan has been developed with the valuable efforts of the CoAR's management, Directors, Board of Trustees (BOT) and staff. In order to make it effective for the organization, BOT/BoD will review the plan on an annual basis, will identify any deviation from the plan, will identify the reason for this and suggest corrective measure, which may include a partial revision of this plan. CoAR's management shall reflect the progress in the achievements of strategic objectives in the annual report of the organization.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Developing this strategic plan was a challenging process that consumed precious and valuable time of the entire CoAR team. It was their combined effort and support that allowed the development of such an essential document, which from now on will guide CoAR's management and staff at all levels to achieve our agreed objectives.

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**ACRONYMS**

ACBAR	Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief
ADAP	Afghanistan Disability Action Plan
ANCB	Afghan NGO's Coordination Bureau
ANPDF	Afghan National Peace Development Framework
ANDS	Afghan National Development Strategies
CEN	Civil Society Empowerment Network
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CBSG	Community Based Stabilization Grant
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EiE	Education in Emergency
EU	European Commission
GRTV	Gorbat Radio & TV
HBC	Home Based Classes
ICT	Information, Communication, Technology
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IED	Improvised Explosive Devices
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
MC	Management Committee
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MISFA	Microfinance Investment Support Facility for Afghanistan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NFI	Non-Food Item
NPPA	National Priority Program Afghanistan
NCA	Norwegian Church Aid
PESTAL	Political, Social, Economic, Technological, Environmental and Legal analysis
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
SFDRR	Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction
TLC	Temporary Learning Classes
UNHCR	United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees
UN-OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WB	World Bank
WFP	World Food Programme
WHS	World Humanitarian Summit

**INTRODUCTION**

Coordination of Afghan Relief- CoAR is an Afghan, independent, non-political, non-sectarian, and non-for profit organization established in 1989 and registered formally with ministry of Economy. CoAR actively bridging between donors of humanitarian aid and rural Afghan communities severely affected by almost four decades of wars, internal conflicts, natural and man-made disasters and complexities. CoAR endeavors to reach to the unreached and embark on strengthening local coping mechanisms to enable communities to find durable local solution to their local problems and encourage self-reliance and sustainability. CoAR works with communities to proactively utilize their own scarce and limited resource the most efficiently and effective way and discourage a culture of aid dependency, except in times of disasters and extreme poverty. CoAR has maintained the access of beneficiaries to basic services with strict observation of humanitarian principles of Independence, Neutrality and Impartiality in practice.

Regardless of the tense situation that exists in Afghanistan, CoAR has managed to develop a long-term strategy of delivering humanitarian aid and development programs to Afghans despite facing funding challenges. During diverse phases of conflicts, CoAR has upheld beneficiaries' access to basic services by applying in practice the main humanitarian principles of Independence, Neutrality and Impartiality.

CoAR works deep in grassroots of the communities, through aid and development clusters shuras, village shuras, and district shuras. At national level COAR work in active partnership with ministry of Economy, Ministry of Women Affairs, Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Public Health, and Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock, Afghan National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA), National Environment protection Agency (NEPA), the main hubs of government's and donors' social service delivery. Meanwhile, CoAR is active member of national coordination bodies: "Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief (ACBAR), Afghan NGOs Coordination Bureau (ANCB), Awn DRRWG, CEN, CSAC, SDG, EPSWG, AHF, WSG and WTWG.

Currently, CoAR is widely involved in both Humanitarian and development activities such as Emergency Response, Disaster Risk Reduction, Agriculture, Livestock, Health, Irrigation and WASH/irrigation Engineering, Formal and Informal Education and Vocational skills training. in result of implementation of numerous projects in each sector, CoAR has gained significant experiences in each field and built the capacity of its staff on each level of management.



## METHODOLOGY

We used goal based planning model for the development of this strategic plan.



We mainly focused on the major opportunities and challenges faced by CoAR in the implementation of its projects and achieving of its objectives.

The plan is based on the detailed review of the organizational policies, donor recommendations, and current situation prevailing in country, current areas of specialty of CoAR, community expectation and government policies.

Management committee (MC) members were consulted for their insight of the organization. A detail discussion was held with the MC members in order to provide an opportunity to the members to express their views regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the organization and the opportunities available and threats the organization is currently facing.

This plan will reflect how CoAR foresee developments over the coming years revisit vision, mission, and mandate and core values and will priorities some activities over other for the achievements of the organizational goals and for the sustainability of the organization.

## Mission and Vision Statements

### Importance

It is pertinent that a mission and vision are standard and critical elements of any organization's strategy. An organization's mission statement is essentially its statement of purpose. It serves as a guide for all of the organization's decision-making. Leaders and employees are generally the target of the mission. It helps workers within the organization know what decisions and tasks best align with the mission of the organization.

Strategic planning is the process of developing organization's objectives, strategies and tactics to achieve the mission of the organization. The organization generates short and long-term objectives using the mission statement.

Vision and mission statements summarize an organization's strategy in a form that can be communicated and understood easily by stakeholders.

## VISION

The vision of CoAR is:

***“A just and equitable society that embraces the rights of all people to fundamental freedom through participation and contribution in all spheres of social, cultural, economic and political life.”***



**MISSION**

The mission of CoAR is:

*“Supporting the process of community development through various programmatic and organizational interventions leading to creation of an enabling environment for communities to improve their life standards.”*

**VALUES**

Values represents the organization **Culture** and **Belief**. CoAR observe the following set of values:

- Transparency, Accountability and Trust
- Leadership
- People centeredness
- Dignity
- Commitment
- Team Work
- Tolerance
- Fostering a learning environment

**CURRENT APPROACH**

Currently CoAR is mainly involved in providing services in the field of emergency relief and development assistance, agriculture and rural development, women empowerment, education and through sharing experiences and success stories through working with GRTV.

CoAR aims to make people of Afghanistan improve their lives by introducing modern techniques in agriculture and livelihood sectors and provide them formal and informal education.

Besides providing services in the agriculture and education sector, CoAR provide emergency relief services to returnees and IDPs in different regions of Afghanistan, including provision of food, health facilities, shelter, and Education in Emergencies (EiE).

Modern agricultural techniques introduced by CoAR has assisted many households in increasing household income. In addition, many boys' and girls' benefits from CoAR's education projects.

For the implementation of its projects, CoAR has been financially and technically supported by different donor organizations and UN Agencies such as:

- United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR),
- United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN-OCHA)
- United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF)
- World Food Program (WFP)
- Norwegian Church Aid (NCA),
- Microfinance Investment Support Facility for Afghanistan (MISFA)
- World Bank
- USAID

- EU

**Current strategy of CoAR can be summarized as follows;**

- Developmental and emergency relief and DRR services,
- Improve status of and encouraging professionalism in CSOs.
- Establishing CSOs, and CSOs Networking to contribute to the reconstruction and development of Afghanistan
- Rural development through utilizing modern techniques in the field of agriculture, livelihood, livestock and education
- Women empowerment
- Decentralization of processes to help expedite information sharing and decision making process

## **CONTEXT**

The complex Afghan context is a bitter reality. It poses multiple challenges for CSOs working hard to implement projects for the deprived people throughout Afghanistan. The working context has worsened dramatically over the last few years. There are three factors that are particularly important: the working Environment, available Resources and the intended Stakeholders. Studying and evaluating the context assisted the organization in performing the necessary analysis. The analysis required for developing a strategic plan are Environmental Scanning, SWOT and PESTEL analysis. Through the environmental scanning, both internal and external, internal and external favorable and unfavorable factors be identified. Environmental scanning covers all factors included in SWOT and PESTEL analysis.

### **Working environment**

Afghanistan is a hard place to live and work in. NGOs faces several types of challenges while implementing project activities that has to be factored into decision-making processes. On the one hand is the rugged terrain, mountainous area and deserts, and harsh weather conditions that affect the life of the population and the work of the humanitarian workers. For example, absence of secure roads and transport opportunities limits children living in remote areas access to education. On the other hand, the government and the CSOs are at times unable to reach to remote areas due to a range of often-unpredictable security risk, as kidnapping, military combat operations and local armed rivalry, landmines and improvised explosive devices (IED). But cities are also vulnerable, attacks may target government officials, mosques, commercial entities, NGO offices, restaurants, hotels, airports, and educational centers, and NGO staff might become victims of more random attacks.

Any organization need to be evaluated a range of factors influencing on their working environment in order to develop a responsive and practical plan. An environmental scanning, as mentioned above, is a useful tool for the CoAR strategy process, and the results are presented in the following paragraph.

### **Resources**

Resources for non-profit organizations can take on several forms. The main financial resources for an NGO are the grants from donor agencies and from the Afghan government. Although funds

from the donors are gradually decreasing, however, some donors still provide considerable amount for different humanitarian and development purposes. Other valuable resources are the efforts of community volunteers coordinated with NGO activities, and different forms of community contribution. This can be in the form of free labors and land for WASH projects, rooms to be used as classrooms for education projects, security measures for the NGO workers, free place for storage of project material etc.

### **Stakeholders**

A stakeholder in an organization is a member of the "groups without whose support the organization would cease to exist". A stakeholder can affect or be affected by the organization. An organization can have more or less stakeholders depends on the nature of activities, size of the organization, regulation of the country, and geographical dispersion of the population of the country.

CoAR's current stakeholders includes employees at the head and at the field offices, members of boards, beneficiaries of the projects (local communities), relevant government departments, donor agencies, UN agencies suppliers and services providers and civil society organizations working with CoAR. CoAR is committed to strengthen its relations with all of the stakeholders for betterment of the organization in the long run.



Mr. Arne discussing with Deputy of ANDMA ( Mohammad Qasem Haidari) about the partnership  
b/w ANDMA and CoAR

**STRENGTH AND OPPORTUNITIES**

Internal and external opportunities are the favorable factors identified in the internal and external environment of any organization. Organizations that are able to monitor and analyze their environment can more easily seize on available opportunities. Internal favorable factors are regarded as strengths of the organization while external favorable factors are the opportunity for the organization. These factors need to be identified and utilized to the best possible extent.

However, opportunities available to an organization can turn into threats if competitors aim to capitalize on the same. Therefore, the time factor is important and should be considered when formulating and executing a strategy.

Every organization have some strengths, which are beneficial factors for the organization and need to be identified and utilized. CoAR has several strengths, which provide a competitive advantage in comparison with similar organizations.

**Internal favorable factors (strengths) includes but not limited to the following.**

**Employed Afghan Nationals**

CoAR employ qualified Afghan nationals for the main and field offices. The benefits of employing local people are their awareness of the local customs and environment, which makes them a good fit for work with the local community. They might, however, also be part of local conflicts, which the organisation need to be aware off. In addition, employing local people reduces organisational personnel and travel cost.

**Qualified and Committed Personnel**

CoAR has employed qualified people with relevant experience for the key positions they are assigned to. It is of great importance for CoAR to retain these qualified and experienced persons for the stable running and development of the organization. Persons working in key positions, some now for over 27 years, are committed by the COAR platform to work for and serve deprived communities and vulnerable individuals. Skilled and committed personnel is the most important strength of CoAR.

**Documented Procedure**

To carry out the day-to-day work of the organization, CoAR management has devised policies and procedure manuals that is made available to all staff. These documented policies and procedures guide employees' actions in performing their duties. Therefore, a change of employees does not disrupt the organisational routines.

**Specialized Department**

CoAR has an organizational structure with separate departments for Program, Finance, Human Resources, Admin and procurement. The functional structure offers a number of advantages, of

which one is specialization. A challenge for the management is to ensure the best possible flow and coordination of tasks between departments. Each of them has a clear hierarchy and every employee has a clear understanding of it, and how to move up within the department and hence the organization. When employees gain knowledge and expertise, it does benefit the department and CoAR.

*These factors listed above require constant attention from the CoAR Management and Board, as to develop and adapt to the challenges posed by the external working environment.*

**External opportunities include but is not limited to the following:**

#### **Beneficiaries and donor satisfaction**

The projects CoAR decide to implement must be responsive to and meet the needs of the target communities. The implied objective of any project should be the satisfaction of the target communities. If that is met, the community will provide support for project mobilisation and implementation, and welcome the organization for other project as well.

Besides community satisfaction, which constitute the foundation, is donor satisfaction. This will include CoAR's ability to meet project and programme objectives, monitor activities and adjust implementation when required, keep donors updated on progress and provide agreed reports and analysis on time. Different donors will have different requirements for application, follow-up procedures and reporting, which different departments will need knowledge off.

#### **Geographical expansion**

The war has effected every province of Afghanistan, but with some variations. Vulnerable people is found in every part of the country. The Government of Afghanistan is unable to provide humanitarian and/or developmental assistance to everyone in need. It is, therefore, required and necessary for NGOs as CoAR to meet its vision and mission to come forward and assist the people of Afghanistan in periods of hardship. CoAR is currently providing assistance in thirteen provinces. CoAR has the organisational capacity to expend its expertise and activities to other provinces to assist with education, health facilities, and agricultural development and advocacy services. Any such expansion will, however, require a thorough assessment of risks up against CoAR's ability to meet identified needs.

#### **Networking with other humanitarian organization**

Networking with other organization working for humanity can bring additional benefits and synergy to CoAR and enable resource sharing. CoAR and partner organizations can implement projects in joint venture, solve complex issues, and share knowledge and experience for the common benefits of the communities and partners organization at the same time. CEN is the best example of CoAR's networking with like-minded organizations for the best interest of the partner organizations and for the benefits of the local communities.

**Technical personnel availability**

A few years back, technical and professional personnel were not available locally in Afghanistan. Organizations were then obliged to hire expats at high costs to be able to deliver their services. This has changed and qualified Afghan personnel are now more easily available locally, providing NGOs with a better economical solution and allow organizational resources to be utilized for other beneficial purposes.

**Increased number of needy communities**

Forty years of war has resulted in a high number of people in need of assistance throughout Afghanistan. In addition, recent changes in neighbour countries policies towards Afghan refugees has limited opportunities for job migration and sharply increased the number of returnees to Afghanistan. Those returning are frequently in needs for shelter, WASH, education, health services and job opportunities. The number of returnees might increase over the coming years. The majority of returnees are presently found along the borders with Pakistan and Iran, but many seek to go back to their province and area of origin. Here they are looking for NGOs like CoAR to provide them relief and developmental services to enable these reintegration. CoAR has demonstrated the ability, with the cooperation of various donor agencies, to design and implement a number of projects in education, health, agriculture and livestock sectors for the benefit of such returnees.

**Information, communication and technology (ICT)**

Information technology is changing rapidly throughout the world. In Afghanistan, new technology widely adopted by government departments, businesses, universities and NGOs. The induction of the new information and communication technology in the organizational processes opens up for rapid progress in many fields. CoAR can here take advantage of the new technologies to strengthen its organizational processes and procedures in the short run and in the long run, weighting costs up against the additional benefits.

**Specialization**

The returnees from neighbour countries, IDPs and host communities have often-different needs, some of which the Afghan government is unable to provide. Fortunately, the various donor agencies present in Afghanistan are in a position to support the different needs of vulnerable groups.

CoAR aim to establish specialised teams for its prioritized sectors, WASH/Rural engineering, Education (formal, informal, secondary and higher Education), agriculture/Food security, Humanitarian and Developmental as to provide targeted relief and development services to the deprived people of Afghanistan. Further investment will be made to increase the capacity of these specialised teams, where it, in addition to the technical expertise, is important to develop skills in dialogue with and mobilisation of individuals and communities, including youth and women.

**Government out-sourcing projects**

The Afghan government is facing a huge number of challenges, and can therefore not meet needs and demands in every field and sectors. The prevailing corruption in government departments reduce government effectiveness and efficiency, and their trust in the population. Therefore, government is out-sourcing projects to NGOs with relevant experience in the field of education, health, agriculture, livestock etc. CoAR have good experience in all these fields and is therefore in position to win government grants to implementing project in these fields.

**THREATS AND WEAKNESSES**

CoAR like other CSOs face a number of challenges when following its vision and mission statements and in implementing program activities to achieve its objectives. We can easily place the current challenges in the following two categorizes:

- Challenges within the organization,
- Challenges (threats) outside the organization

**Challenges within the organization**

Different challenges exist in every organization. These constitute potential organizational weaknesses and might influence on the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization in one way or the other. The effect of these weaknesses can be reduce to a considerable extent by better planning and utilization of available human and other resources.

CoAR's management has identified the following weaknesses in the organization.

- Scarce resources
- Lack of well-developed knowledge management system
- High turnover rate of field staff
- Lack of organization's own premises

**Scarce resources**

It is a matter of fact that CoAR, as most NGOs, faces difficulty in finding sufficient, appropriate and continues resources/funding for its activities. There is a high dependency on present donors. Most of the projects are externally funded for a specific period, with limited or no financial contribution from CoAR. Moreover, the donors provide funds for a set of project activities and has limitation on utilization of funds for indirect organizational costs.

A remedy for the scarce resources is the establishment of in-house source of income to support the humanitarian and developmental services of CoAR. The establishment of SHARQ university and GRTV is one these remedies to overcome the scarcity of the resources.

**Lack of well-developed knowledge management system**

A knowledge management system is a requirement and a potential strength of any organization. It accumulates the knowledge and experience of the organization and make these readily available to the employees and the management team. Unfortunately, CoAR's twenty-nine years of experience is no yet archived and thus the experience gained remain with individuals and is not



collectively available. A starting point can be to make all CoAR policies, guidelines, annual narrative and financial reports and monitoring and evaluation reports available on an internal web page.

CoAR maintain an MIS system, however, that MIS system will be upgraded to cope with the new requirements of the organization.

**Challenges/Threats outside the organization**

External challenges (threats) are unfavorable factors that can harm the organization or its staff in one way or the other. Such factors, outside the direct control of the organization, must therefore be identified and analyzed here. However, the impact of threats can be minimizing to some extent by proper planning and use of organizational resources, using internal strength and capitalizing on the opportunities.

**Turnover of project staff**

As the organization is mainly dependent on the funds from donors, therefore after the completion of projects CoAR cannot retain some projects related staff who have good experience in project implementation.

A remedy can be to inform partner/network NGOs on their availability and keep rosters of staff for upcoming projects, and prioritize retaining qualified women within the organization.

**Lack of organization owned premises**

CoAR lack organization owned office premises due to which CoAR spend a considerable amount of fund as rent of the premises. The fund used to pay office rent could be used for other relief and development services. However, in the prevailing security situation can investments in own property constitute a financial risk, if damaged.

A possible remedy, at least in the field, is to request communities or the local government to provide housing for the project period. In Kabul and provincial capitals can co-location with other NGOs help reduce costs.

Some other challenges existing outside of the organization can be enumerated as under,

- Negative competition among the NGOs (NNGOs & INNGOs)
- Political interference
- Challenges originating from illiteracy and traditional belief of the society,
- Challenges created by insecure environment
- Unstable political environment
- Corruption
- Government's complex regulations
- High inflation
- No sustainable financial resources

- Lack of accurate statistical information

**Negative competition among the NGOs (NNGOs & INNGOs)**

There is a considerable concern that INGOs occupy much of the space and funding in the sector, at the cost of local NGOs. CoAR is a local NGO and therefore feel the same challenge from the INGOs. INGOs can pay higher salaries and thereby attract qualified and competent staff from the local NGOs. It is therefore difficult for local NGOs to retain qualified and competent staff, which in turn effects the organization's performance.

One remedy for national NGOs is to be visible and transparent about their activities to the Afghan government and the public, UN agencies, international donors and the media, thereby demonstrating the advantage of channeling resources to these NGOs. Active participation in NGO coordination bodies can ensure influence on important processes and dialogue with the government and donors, and help develop initiatives in support of local NGOs.

**Political Interference**

In some regions, local politicians and civic leaders are major sources of hindrance to the CSOs. Implementing projects in those specific regions is a difficult task, as those individuals have limited concerns about the needs of or acceptance of larger communal benefits, and can therefore create hurdles in the project implementations. For example, local politicians feel that education can create awareness in the community, which can reduce their vote bank and therefore may create issues for NGOs implementing education project. Alternatively, they might demand the main benefit of projects, i.e. distribution of water resources, thereby reducing the value for the most vulnerable in those communities.

One remedy, as previously mentioned, is skills in community mobilization and another is the full transparency on available resources and distribution of these.

**Challenges originating from illiteracy and traditional belief of the society**

Illiteracy is one of the most destructive legacies of the Afghan crisis, prompted by decades of war. Afghan youth are especially affected as many spent their formative years in an environment of war, filled with violence and deprivation of education. These are a source of hindrance to the operations of NGOs, as they are not aware of the role of NGOs in community assistance.

Several religious individuals and institutions consider CSOs harmful to their beliefs and religious affiliations, as they frequently challenge the 'absolute truths' these seek to impose on the population. They do not hesitate to discredit activists and women's rights groups amongst the Afghan religious masses. They justify discrimination against women through religious arguments, resonating in a society with the lowest literacy rates in the world.

Such religious factors effect program activities in several ways. One-find misperceptions or negative perceptions of NGOs programming among local actors, incidents of NGOs being the direct targets of hostility, there have been several prominent cases in which NGOs were targeted because of their activities being perceived as either non-neutral or in violation of Afghanistan's cultural or religious customs. With the local operating environments becoming increasingly

complex and the array of armed actors both broader and more fragmented, this presents a key risk to NGOs.

A remedy to erase misconception of the communities is educating people in generally and regarding the objectives and services of the NGOs specifically.

### **Challenges created by insecure environment**

A deteriorating security environment characterized by multiple armed groups – both opposition and pro-government - including international military forces, and emergence of new militant actors, presents a significant challenge and continues to impact critically on many humanitarian operations across the country. This, combined with a politicized aid environment poses safety, operational, structural, reputational and ethical risks to our ability to respond to people in need wherever they are found.

Involving local communities in the project activities and explaining purpose of the projects to the targeted communities and local elders can gain the required support for the aid workers

### **Unstable political environment**

The political environment of Afghanistan is unstable and unpredictable which give rise to many challenges. Organizations working for profit and for humanitarian purpose struggle to predict the future with accuracy, as the political uncertainty do not allow for accurate foresight and planning. Different political groups, some part of the government, are polarized due to one reason or the other, and remain unable to develop a common vision for Afghanistan. Forthcoming elections for Parliament and the President of Afghanistan can, if corrupt practice remain unchanged, generate further divisions among groups and within the communities. These factors results in a very challenging and unpredictable working environment for all organizations striving to improve the living conditions of the common Afghan.

Working for humanity and not identifying organization with any political party or personality may reduce the adverse effect of political polarization. Moreover, working in close coordination with other partners and donor agencies can provide an accurate insight of the future for the humanitarian organization.

### **Corruption**

Corruption in Afghanistan is a widespread and a growing problem in Afghan society. Transparency International's 2016 Corruption Perception Index ranks the country 169th place out of 176 countries. The most common types of corruption in Afghanistan are:

- Petty bribery: asking for small gifts (baksheesh) in exchange for special treatment or favours
- Position buying: awarding opportunities in the police force, judiciary or civil service based on bribes as opposed to merit
- Nepotism/clienteles: awarding positions based on personal relationship/kinship networks rather than merit
- Offering and asking for preferential treatment: this includes giving bribes to expedite the processing of business documents or access to government-owned land
- Grand corruption: corruption that involves political elites on a large scale
- National police and law enforcement graft.

Corruption is one of the most common causes of poverty and injustice. It makes difficulties for the common people living in the corrupt societies and for the organization working in those societies. A starting point in addressing the challenge is for CoAR to ensure an internal transparent recruitment and procurement processes, avoidance of providing or receiving bribes and ensure that the selection of beneficiaries is based on their actual needs.

Obedying applicable laws can mitigate the risk of confronting situations resulting in corrupt practices.

**Government complex regulations**

Government regulations also adversely affect NGOs to some extent. It cost the organization resources and time, which can be used for other fruitful work. Employees of regulatory authority also misuse the powers vested in them by the regulation for their personal interest. This act of employees of regulatory authority adversely affect the work of NGOs.

A mitigating effort can be for NGOs to work with the government in agreeing on less restrictive regulations, and adapt joint approached towards individuals misusing their powers.

**High inflation**

The Afghan currency is not yet stable. A main challenge for NGOs arising from the high inflation is budget compliance. The exchange rate at the time of budget preparation differ from the exchange rate at the time of project implementation, which results in exchange losses. Donors do not accept exchange losses and NGOs are required to bear it from their core funds, which drain resources that should have enabled organizational development.

Qualified and experienced staff in the finance department can reduce the effect of inflation by applying good skills in financial management.

**No sustainable financial resources**

NGOs cannot plan with certainty, as the funds from donors are not sustainable. The instability of funding effect the work of NGOs in different ways. The mentionable effect of the unsustainable funding is that the NGOs are not able to retain qualified and experienced staff that in turn give birth to other problems.

Establishment of in-house source of income e.g. SIHE and GRTV can reduce the risks created by unsustainability of financial resources.

**Lack of accurate statistical information**

Sometimes, for designing and proposing projects to the donor agencies, NGOs rely on the statistical data provided by government. However, most of the time government cannot provide correct data. The unavailability of accurate data results in problems in project execution phase and in compliance of budget. A remedy can be for CoAR, possibly in collaboration with other NGOs working in a geographical area, to establish a more limited data baseline as part of project preparation. This can then be used to measure and document impact of CoAR implemented projects.

Working in close coordination with other Humanitarian organizations and surveys to collect the fresh data required for projects can provide correct selection.

## STRATEGIC PLAN

CoAR management and staff has high ambitions as to utilize the strength of the organization and overcome the weaknesses, to utilize available opportunities and minimize the impact of the threats that can face the organization over the coming five years. CoAR management is aware of the fact that developing the strategic plan is not just an onerous and one off exercise, rather it is fruitful practice for the organization in the long run and will require revision on periodic basis as the circumstances may change over period of time.

The plan for the coming five years consist of the following elements.

### Strategic Objectives

The objectives sets the direction of the organization and provide a basis for the strategic decisions of the management regarding prioritization of activities and allocation of resources. CoAR will follow the following objective as strategic directions over the coming five-year period:

- i. Organizational Development through planned interventions to increase organization effectiveness and cope with the changing environment.
- ii. Empowerment of CSO and Networking at National, Regional and International level.
- iii. Strengthening Communities Resilience against vulnerability, Increase involvement of Communities in all stages of Humanitarian Assistance and Development programs.

### Key indicators

Indicators performs many functions. It helps better and timely decision making by simplifying, clarifying and aggregating information relevant to the success factors. They are also useful tools to communicate ideas, thought and values. CoAR management will use following indicators for the successful achievement of strategic objectives.

Objective	Indicators
Organizational Development through planned interventions to increase organization effectiveness and cope with the changing environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Culture of strategic planning and performance measurement</li> <li>➤ In house promotion of staff on technical position</li> <li>➤ Annual departmental assessment by department heads and prepare a plan for improvement as a result</li> <li>➤ Organizational policies reviewed and updated</li> <li>➤ Devised new policies</li> <li>➤ Sources of in-house income</li> <li>➤ High level of performance efficiency</li> <li>➤ Employee receive job skills training</li> </ul>

Objective	Indicators
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ High level of staff involvement in decision making process</li> <li>➤ Changed employee behaviour</li> </ul>
Empowerment of CSOs and Networking at National, Regional and International level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Effective communication with partners</li> <li>➤ Outsourcing project activities to partners</li> <li>➤ Arranging seminars on current affairs and participating in seminar and workshops arranged by partners</li> <li>➤ Information and success stories sharing with partners</li> <li>➤ Align objective</li> </ul>
Strengthening Communities Resilience against vulnerability, Increase involvement of Communities in all stages of Humanitarian Assistance and Development programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ A proportion of vulnerable communities provided with WASH services, received hygiene kits, clean drinking water, latrines, health care centres and schools</li> <li>➤ Boys and girls received EiE through HBC and TLS</li> <li>➤ Vulnerable communities provided with emergency and permanent shelters and NFI</li> <li>➤ Targeted communities have economic empowerment</li> <li>➤ Modern scientific techniques applied in agriculture</li> <li>➤ Formal and informal education provided to a proportion of the IDPs, refugees and vulnerable host communities</li> <li>➤ Communities show trust on CoAR and its official</li> <li>➤ Increased number of volunteers from the communities</li> <li>➤ Communities take interest in the humanitarian activities of CoAR</li> <li>➤ Community provide in-kind contribution for the projects activities</li> </ul>

### Target groups

Target groups means those people who will get benefits from the implementation of the project activities. Those beneficiaries for the projects will be identified through a systematic and transparent procedure. Mainly these beneficiaries will include the following people.

- Marginalised and conflict effected communities
- Women, children and Aged People
- Youth
- IDPs, Refugees and Returnees

### ➤ Marginalised and conflict effected communities

Marginalized communities are those who are confined to the lower or peripheral edge of the society. Such communities are excluded from the mainstream political, economic, cultural and social activities. People belong to such communities have limited or no resources to utilize their

potential for prosperity. Marginalization affect a community of macro level, where it member lack access to quality education, standard health facilities, equal employment opportunities or gender-related issues.

Forty year of war and conflict in Afghanistan, resulted in communities that are effected in every aspect of their life. Such communities are struggling for life with limited or no opportunities as their homes as well as their business are effected by war and conflict.

CoAR understand the needs and problems of such communities and will implement projects to provide equal opportunities of life and prosperity to such communities on emergency and developmental basis. CoAR will serve such communities by providing services in the field of education, WASH/health and agriculture/livelihood.

➤ **Women, children and Aged People**

Afghanistan's population is roughly 36 million. Of this, 51.51% are males and 48.49 are females. About 22% of the Afghan people are urbanite and the remaining 78% live in rural areas, which has the highest degree of poverty. As part of local tradition, most females get married at very young age and, therefore, the education dropout rate is very high. Another factor that deprive girls from basic education in some areas is the local customs, which also limit their role in decision-making and public roles.

Women's roles and responsibilities differ throughout Afghanistan, but in recent years, has there been increased support for women to take on a more active role in their communities, in government administration and in politics. Women already play a major role, but less visible than men, in agriculture, husbandry and agro business. When emergencies strike a community women will step in to save lives and care for the wounded, though most humanitarian assistance is provided by men. Younger women are getting into roles leaders, and thereby become role models for a new generation of girls.

CoAR, understanding and respecting local customs and equally acknowledging the rights of women and girls is ideally positioned to address the specific needs of women and girls, and increase their opportunity for participation and economic development.

CoAR aim to be at the forefront of such developments, and aim to provide 1) basic education to girls and married women through home based education system, 2) targeted training in emergency mitigation and response, 3) inclusion of 25% women in training for Local Leaders, 4) explore how agricultural project and new technologies can enhance women's role in and opportunities to increase product quality, trade and income, and 4) involve women in planning for WASH and irrigation project, as to allow them a larger role and better meet their needs.



➤ **Youth**

About 63.7 percent of Afghans are under the age of 25. These young people, girls and boys, in Afghanistan face significant challenges related to education, health, sport, jobs and gender equality.

CoAR will design and implement projects to empower youth through education, training and participation. One initiative by CoAR to educate and empower youth is the establishment of Sharq Institute of Higher Education. CoAR through its projects will educate young Afghans and will enable them to participate in the development of the country. Special attention will be paid to involving and empowering girls.

➤ **IDPs, Refugees and Returnees**

Rehabilitation of the IDPs and Returnees is a challenge for the government and for the host communities. Most IDPs and Returnees communities lack access to basic health care, enough food, clean water, shelter and other basic facilities. Their return frequently lead to conflict over land and access to water.

CoAR, with the help of other partners and donors, will implement conflict sensitive projects to provide food, shelter, health facility and education to the IDPs and returnees.

**Target areas**

CoAR is currently working in following provinces, (Please see **Appendix B**)

- Kabul
- Mazar-e-Sharif
- Herat
- Jalalabad
- Ghazni
- Wardak
- Khost
- Kandahar
- Daikundi
- Bamyan
- Takhar
- Badakhshan
- Faryab
- Paktika

COAR would like to continue the implementation of the projects through a HQ in Kabul and 5 zonal (regional offices) as following:

- Herat western ( regional office and covering Herat, Farah, Ghor & Badghis )
- Mazar Northern zone ( all nine provinces in that region )
- Khost South east ( regional office covering Khost, Paktia and Paktika
- Eastern zone (regional office covering all 4 provinces )
- Kandahar South ( regional office covering Kandahar , Helmand ,Urozgan and

In the coming five years, CoAR is planning to expand its physical existence to other provinces. The expansion will base on the rationale of the project objectives and expected results from implementing project activities.

### **Strategic approach**

The overall approach to utilize opportunities and strength of the organization and avoid the anticipated threats while minimizing the effect of drawbacks existed in the organization in order to achieve the strategic objectives can be termed as strategic approach.

CoAR will make efforts to utilize all the opportunities mentioned above and those, which have not been enlisted in this document due to one reason or other. The expected impact of the current and future challenges will be minimized to the lowest possible level with the help of internal strengths.

### **Approaches that will be adopted can be summarized as follows,**

- Leadership and supervisory guide development
- Employing Quality of Work Life (QWL) techniques
- Jobs redesign
- Establish quality circles
- Address the human side systematically
- Involve every layer of management
- Restructuring CoAR, CEN, SHARQ and GRTV network to cope with current and future challenges
- Partnership with other NGOs, including women led organization
- Standardization of procedures
- Self-assessment
- Identify focal persons, including women when possible, among the communities at data collection stage
- Explain project objective to the communities from the start of the project and involve them in the planning

- Share and discuss selection criteria for project beneficiaries
- Provision of WASH and education facilities in emergencies
- Building community resilience against adverse effect of natural disaster and conflicts
- Secure food on emergency and sustainable basis
- Agriculture and livestock development
- Enterprise and vocational skills development
- Provide formal, informal and emergency education

**Action Plan**

CoAR management is aware of the fact that any strategic plan without any action is a use less document and the time and other resources allocated for the plan will go in vain. Therefore, a clear and practicable plan is established herewith to be act upon in order to achieve the strategic objectives. The action plan described in “**Appendix A**” will be incorporated in the organizational procedure in response to the strategic approach.

## Appendices

### Appendix A

Strategic objective	Strategic Approach	Proposed Action
Organizational Development through planned interventions to increase organization effectiveness and cope with the changing environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Leadership and supervisory guide development</li> <li>➤ Employing Quality of Work Life (QWL) techniques</li> <li>➤ Jobs redesign</li> <li>➤ Establish quality circles</li> <li>➤ Address the human side systematically</li> <li>➤ Involve every layer of management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Investment in leadership and talent development</li> <li>➤ Developing strong organizational culture</li> <li>➤ Organizational assessment to identify critical issues for top management review to generate development plan</li> <li>➤ Subordinating individual interest to organizational interest</li> <li>➤ Computerizing procedures</li> <li>➤ Devising and implementing new policies, if required</li> <li>➤ Monitoring, evaluating and managing changing environment and revising plan as required</li> </ul>
Empowerment of CSO and Networking at National, Regional and International level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Restructuring CoAR, CEN, SHARQ and GRTV network to cope with current and future challenges</li> <li>➤ Partnership with other NGOs, including women led organization</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Finding areas of common interest</li> <li>➤ Regular meetings among employees at different level</li> <li>➤ Resource sharing</li> <li>➤ Outsourcing project activities to one another</li> <li>➤ Implementing projects in joint venture</li> <li>➤ Experience sharing</li> <li>➤ Information sharing</li> </ul>
Strengthening Communities Resilience against vulnerability, Increase involvement of Communities in all stages of Humanitarian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Provision of WASH and education facilities in emergencies</li> <li>➤ Building community resilience against adverse effect of natural disaster and conflicts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Promote hygiene and provide hygiene kits in emergencies</li> <li>➤ Construction of Emergency and Semi emergency latrine (for IDPs and TLS) and ensure protected access for women/girls</li> </ul>

Strategic objective	Strategic Approach	Proposed Action
Assistance and Development programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Secure food on emergency and sustainable basis</li> <li>➤ Agriculture and livestock development</li> <li>➤ Enterprise and vocational skills development</li> <li>➤ Provide formal, informal and emergency education</li> <li>➤ Identify focal persons, including women when possible, among the communities at data collection stage</li> <li>➤ Explain project objective to the communities at the start of the project and involve them in the planning</li> <li>➤ Share and discuss selection criteria for project beneficiaries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Construct toilets for schools and health centres, including protected access for girls/women</li> <li>➤ Provide safe drinking water facilities through water well and quality piping installation</li> <li>➤ Establish community based classes for formal and informal education system</li> <li>➤ Ensure more attention to the role and opportunities for women in improving and increasing income from agriculture, produce and agro-business.</li> <li>➤ Conditional and unconditional cash distribution for food security</li> <li>➤ Voucher and food distribution</li> <li>➤ Establish emergency and permanent shelters and provide NFI</li> <li>➤ Construction of new irrigation systems and upgradation of existing irrigation system, involving the ultra-poor and women in planning of access and location of water points</li> <li>➤ Capacitate communities to monitor, anticipate, respond positively and manage known risks and future uncertainties</li> <li>➤ Emphasising DRR mainstreaming in all development activities (cross-cutting issues)</li> <li>➤ Helping vulnerable in reviving their livelihood to bring them smoothly to the normal life</li> <li>➤ Poverty reduction through provision of productive assets, employability and demand driven skills</li> <li>➤ Information sharing with communities</li> </ul>

Strategic objective	Strategic Approach	Proposed Action
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Involve community members, including women and youth, in project planning and activities</li><li>➤ Reward active members of the community, support male and female role models</li><li>➤ Involve designated community members in monitoring activities, including the most vulnerable and women</li><li>➤ Established complaint mechanism</li><li>➤ Include at least 25 % women in Local Leaders training</li></ul>

This action plan shall be reviewed on annual basis by the BOT and MC members for its effectiveness and any progress made towards strategic objective shall be included in published in the organizational annual report.

## Appendix B:

### Geographical/Project Wise Existence of CoAR

