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UNOPS - Afghan Conservation Corps





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UNOPS - Afghan Conservation Corps

Who We Are

- **Type of organization**
 - Special project of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, managed by the United Nations Office of Project Services (UNOPS)
 - Grantee under USDA PASA & receives PL480 funds
- **Presence in Afghanistan**
 - Two central offices Kabul (NEPA & MAIL) & four regional offices – Herat, Kunduz, Jalalabad, and Mazar
 - 10 national program staff & 2 expatriates
 - Currently implementing sub-projects with communities in 13 Provinces (experience in over 20)



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Objectives of ACC

1. Improve rural livelihoods through community forestry, rangeland and integrated watershed management;
2. Contribute to the conservation of Afghanistan's cultural and biological diversity;
3. Develop the capacity of the Afghan Government and people to sustainability manage their natural resources; and
4. Provide employment to vulnerable Afghans.



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Community based natural pistachio forest management: Experience of ACC in Samangan

Use of satellite imagery

- Significant remaining areas of natural pistachio forest in Northern Afghanistan were identified using satellite imagery





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Participatory analysis with communities living around pistachio forest

- Communities approached & assessments of interest in pistachio forest management realized





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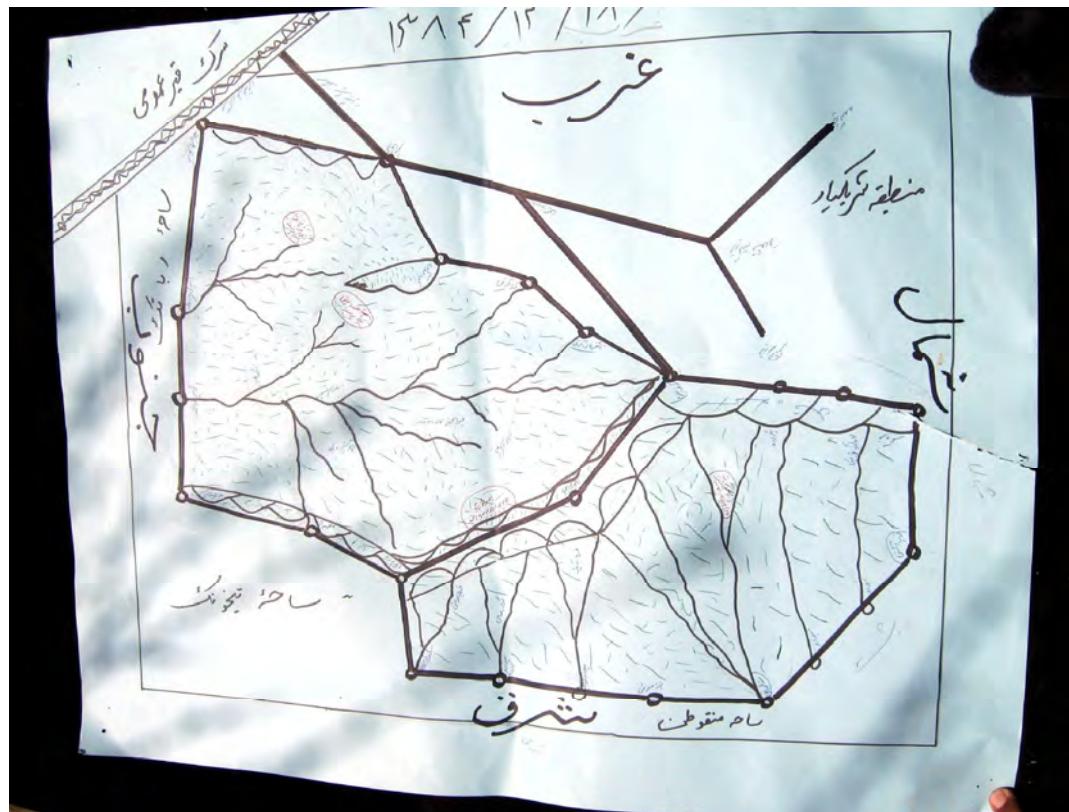
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Participatory mapping

- Participatory mapping of pistachio forests by FMC members





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Participatory natural resource with communities analysis identified the following problems

- Lack of protection guards.
- Cutting of forest for fuel wood.





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Participatory natural resource with communities analysis identified the following problems (cont.)

- Conversion pistachio wood land for wheat production.





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Participatory natural resource with communities analysis identified the following problems (cont.)

- Overgrazing.





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Participatory natural resource with communities analysis identified the following problems (cont.)

- Harvesting of pistachio nuts before ripening time.





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Participatory natural resource with communities analysis identified the following problems (cont.)

- Low knowledge of community about forest rehabilitation and problems associated with over-harvesting.
- Lack of coordination between community and government.



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Suggestions of the communities to resolve the problems faced

- Establish community based forest management committees
- At least 10 protection guards from the surrounding villages to be hired for each site.





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Suggestions of the communities to resolve the problems faced (cont.)

- Move those people who live inside the pistachio forest, back to their original villages
- Establishment grazing plan.
- Awareness program for communities concerning the importance of forests and their sustainable management.
- Provide pistachio nut harvesting guide to the community.



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Suggestions of the communities to resolve the problems faced (cont.)

- Increased visits by government and aid agencies to the forest and surrounding villages.
- Realize monthly coordination meetings between DFR, FMCs and ACC.
- Provision of transportation facilities to DFR to facilitate visits to the field (car or motorbike).



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Actions taken: Management

- Three Pistachio Forest Management Committees have been created in three different locations (Tikhonak, Shareek Yaar and Rubatak) Samangan Province to assist in the sustainable management of over 2,000 hectares of natural pistachio forest





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Actions taken: Management (cont.)

Forest Management Committee Members Selection Process:

All FMC members were selected by the communities using PRA methods.





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Actions taken: Management (cont.)

Forest Management Committee Members Selection Process (cont.):

No		Bori	Abdul Ahmad	Mula Faizullah	Abdul Hamid	Merajuddin	Abdul Razaq	Mohammad Qul	Juma	
1	Bori	X	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	0
2	Abdul Ahmad	2	X	2	4	2	2	2	2	12
3	Mula Faizullah	3	2	X	4	3	3	3	3	10
4	Abdul Hamid	4	4	4	X	4	4	4	4	14
5	Merajuddin	5	2	3	4	X	6	7	8	2
6	Abdul Razaq	6	2	3	4	6	X	7	8	4
7	Mohammad Qul	7	2	3	4	7	7	X	8	6
8	Juma	8	2	3	4	8	8	8	X	8



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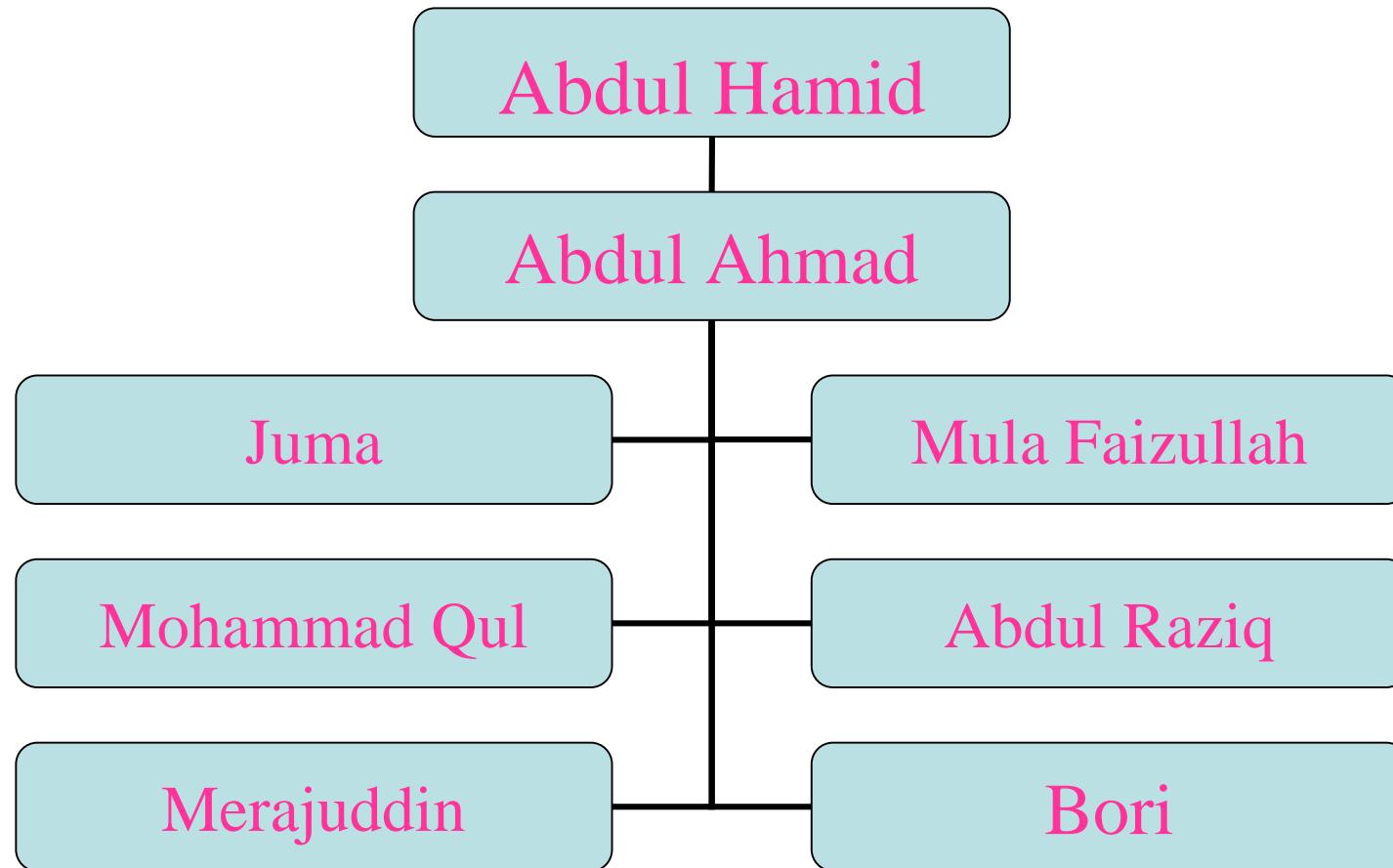
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Actions taken: Management (cont.)

- For example: Shareek Yaar Forest Management Committee





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Actions taken: Management (cont.)

- For example: Shareek Yaar Forest Management Committee





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Actions taken: Protection

- 30 protection guards have been hired by the FMCs from villages surrounding the pistachio wood land.





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Actions taken: Protection (cont.)

- Six protection check posts (location selected by FMCs and DFR) have been built.
- Water tank and other necessary equipment provided to these protection check posts.
- Six tents provided to FMCs to use as mobile protection check posts during harvesting time



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Actions taken: Protection (cont.)

- Over 2,000 hectares of pistachio forest now being protected by over 35 villages





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Actions taken: Coordination

- Coordination meetings continually being held between Governor offices, DFR, FMCs and ACC.
- Monthly transportation cost provided to FMCs to meet with DFR in Eibak city, Samangan Province; and to meet with other FMCs





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Actions taken: Support to Government

- Monthly transportation cost provided to DFR staff working on these projects to visit the pistachio woodland.
- Two off road motor bikes provided to DFR Samangan.



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Actions taken: Environmental education

- ACC has conducted community awareness and environment education workshops for 10 schools and 35 villagers.





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Actions taken: Environmental education (cont.)

- Three community mobilizers/ mullahs raise awareness amongst the villagers during social gatherings and on Fridays.





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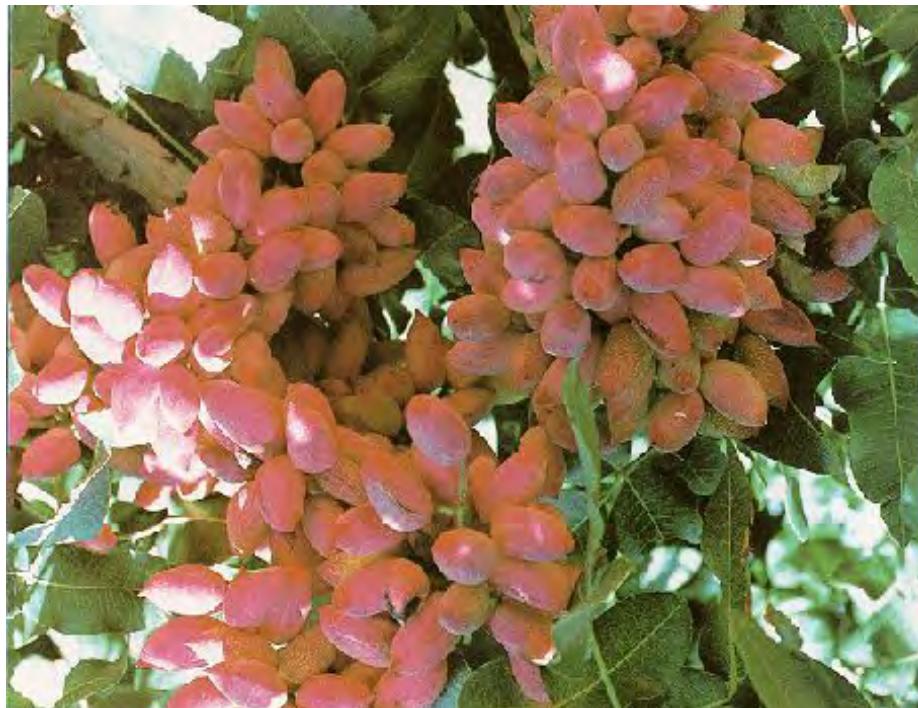
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Actions taken: Harvesting

- FMCs and DFR manage harvesting of pistachio nuts
- Pistachio harvesting time (Shool Pista) set up by FMCs, DFR and ACC each year.





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Actions taken: Restoration of degraded areas within the pistachio forest



- Three direct pistachio seeding projects on over 10ha of degraded land established inside the forest in three different areas.
- Hing / devil's dung (*Ferula asa-foetida*) and Licorice (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*) nurseries established by all three committees, (total 252 kg pistachio, 50 kg hing and 50 kg licorice seeds have been planted in three sites corresponding with the three FMCs)



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Actions taken: Sale of natural pistachios

- Participation of FMCs during Agriculture Fair in Badam Bagh, Kabul.
- Looking to develop market chain further.



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Results

- Over 2,000 ha pistachio woodland is protected.
- The quality and quantity of pistachio nuts harvested by local people has increased
- Increase in yields and locally-retained income from the pistachio forests by 40-50% during each of the first two years of community management
- Hing / devil's dung (*Ferula asa-foetida*) and Licorice (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*) nurseries established by all three committees
- New seedlings growing (?????????)





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Results

- Empowerment of communities to work together with the government to manage their natural resource base
- Learning experience for the new Forestry Law





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Future plans



- Expand FMC to Baghlan, Badghis/ Herat.
- Continued support to existing projects.
- Develop market chain (ASAP).
- Increase value of pistachio forest through development of medicinal plants and other valuable resources.



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Principles contributing to success

1. Active collaboration between the community, provincial government and the DFR.
2. Community led initiative.
3. Participatory establishment of community based forest management institutions based on traditional governance structures and CDCs.
4. Capacity building of community members and Gov in pistachio forest management.



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Principles contributing to success (cont.)

5. Valuable resources (pistachio nuts and hing).
6. Involvement of religious leaders in community awareness raising.
7. Regular visits and continuous follow up by experienced local staff.



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Challenges faced

1. Interference of a few individuals in the process for personal benefits.
2. Lack of an approved Forest Law that provides the formal legal framework for community based pistachio forest management.
3. Low levels of formal education and awareness about environmental and sustainability issues.
4. Still some people do not want to move from the pistachio wood land.



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Challenges faced (cont.)

5. Lack of high schools and low attendance rates in middle and primary schools.
6. Alternatives to fuel wood are not available.
7. There are capacity needs within the government to facilitate community based forest management.



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Community based Natural Pistachio Forest Management – questions?





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Thank you

