



Key issues in local governance

Sarah Lister
Senior Researcher,
Political Economy and Governance,
AREU

24 Oct 05

Outline

- general issues to consider
- provincial elected councils
- public administration reform (PAR), Priority Reform and Restructuring (PRR) & the Afghanistan Stabilisation Programme (ASP)
- provincial coordination
- the National Solidarity Programme (NSP)
- concluding remarks

General issues in subnational governance

- Unclear split of responsibilities - confusing legislation, multiple players (donors & govt)
- Lack of clarity about 'end state' – decentralisation or not? If so, what type?
 - Ideological differences
 - Fear of corruption
 - Fear of 'federalism'
- Inter-ministerial rivalry
- Very low capacity levels

Provincial Elected Councils (PCs)

- 9-29 members, depending on size of population. 25% reserved for women.
- elected in single provincial constituency through SNTV
- within 15 days of installation, each PC will elect one member to MJ
- PC law
 - Not approved by Cabinet until Aug 15th, after nominations and just before campaign started!
 - Poorly drafted
- Not very clear roles, nor clear links to other subnational bodies
- Unclear how will be resourced & supported.

PC roles

- Participate in development goals of govt
- Provide consultation on effective usage of revenues of province
- Participate in settlement of ethnic and local disputes through correctional assemblies
- Provide consultation on design of development plan of province
- Participate in elimination of customs & traditions contrary to law & Islamic Sharia...
- Visiting areas lacking freedom...
- Counter-narcotics responsibilities
- Acquire information on proceedings & working plan of provincial administration
- Consult inhabitants every 3 months

Public Administration Reform (PAR) (1)

- Key programmes are Priority Reform & Restructuring (PRR) and Afghanistan Stabilisation Programme (ASP)
- PRR is demand-led process under IARCSC to restructure civil service, establish clear lines of responsibility, merit-based recruitment & new pay scales
- Regional centres – pilot of Governor's office underway in Balkh, and roll-out to 8 Northern provinces
- Problematic in Kabul and in roll-out to provinces. Currently under revision.

Public Administration Reform (PAR) (2) - ASP

- NPP launched in April 2004, initially four pillars:
 - Provincial Stabilisation Fund (PSF)
 - Admin Reform
 - District Infrastructure
 - Training & capacity building
- Multiple problems in management and vision
- Currently review in progress - future not clear.
- Issues about use of PSF money
- Has it totally lost all aspects of political conditionality?

Provincial coordination

- History
 - Growing need for some coordination mechanisms
 - Plethora of coordinating structures & various 'Provincial Development Committees' emerging – , PCBs, PRT, ASP, AL/MRRD, MoF
 - Unclear mandate of those establishing them
 - Access to large sums of money – AL money
 - Extensive working group process
 - Now – Ministry of Economy draft, but lack of clarity
 - Unclear linkages to elected councils
-and then there are district & village structures and their linkages horizontally and vertically....and municipalities..

National Solidarity Programme – a tool for local-level governance?

What is it?

- NPP, administered by MRRD, to:
 - Establish framework for village-level consultative decision-making
 - Promote local-level reconstruction, development and capacity-building
- Creation of Community Development Councils (CDCs) by secret ballot (mixed & single sex)
- Direct block grant transfers for local-level projects
- Implemented by Facilitating Partners (FPs), with OC
- By 2007 all villages (about 40,000) in Afghanistan. By May 05, 8100 in 150 districts in all provinces.

NSP – importance?

- Some extraordinary successes/stories. Probably the most successful GOA programme.
- Mixed results in some areas, depending on:
 - Resistance from local power holders & elites
 - Capacity of FPs & OC
 - Cultural issues around role of women
- Increasing evidence of:
 - Growing role of CDCs in local dispute resolution
 - Some ‘new’ players on CDCs, compared to ‘traditional’ shuras
 - Villages feeling more connected to ‘government’

NSP – important issues to consider

- What happens to CDCs at the end of their project cycle? Village elected councils?
- Do we ‘scale-up’ impact? How? Horizontally (sector)? Vertically, to cluster and then district?
- What is the relationship between CDCs and ‘traditional’ forms of decision-making?
- How do we diffuse tensions/create useful relationship between CDCs and local public admin structures? (also at Kabul-level)
- What happens to NSP after 2007?

Summary: decisions to be made (1)

- What is provincial planning, what is it for, and who does it?
- Whose money? How do provincial planning processes link to centralised budget processes? What is relationship of provincial structures to different types of budget?
- How will elected councils relate to non-elected structures?

Summary: decisions to be made (2)

- How do provincial structures link to lower-level planning?
- With postponement of district council elections, what measures can be put in place to ensure widespread participation, yet guard against elite capture of resources at this level?
- Critical issue of *appointments* at subnational level & reform of Ministry of Interior – are these areas where international community can exert pressure more effectively? Conditionality?