STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES (SOPs)

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Background

Afghan Bureau Collaboration Office (ABCO) was founded in 1993 as a national NGO by a group of considerate men in intend of rehabilitation of damages of the lasting war. As war damages and the high number of domestic destructions have close and direct effects in livelihood of people and creating development gap; ABCO concentrated its activities in various key sectors for human care and taking an active part in developmental sector of Afghanistan.

Afghan Bureau Collaboration Office (ABCO) is a national NGO registered with the government of Afghanistan. ABCO has been working since 1993 and has been engaged with project implementations in all regions of Afghanistan on and off site. ABCO has been directly awarded with projects funded under UN Agencies, International Banks, Ministries, International NGOs, USAID, ISAF and other international organizations working in Afghanistan.

Afghan Bureau Collaboration Office (ABCO) has experience of project implementation in all regions of Afghanistan on and off site. ABCO has been engaged with many projects in rural and remote areas of Afghanistan too. ABCO has experience of managing the challenging local and national situation of Afghanistan that might arise during the project. ABCO's personnel with more than 2 decades of experience in Afghanistan has become very professional to face and solve any kind of local and national barriers during project implementations to offer the best outcome possible.

Afghan Bureau Collaboration Office has received written certificates of appreciation from WFP, USAID and other donors for its deliveries. ABCO has the highest level of integrity in its administrative, service, and outreach activities; we tie these activities directly to our mission, and we maintain and report our records/deliveries in a transparent manner.

Over the last 27 years, since our start, we have continued to grow while staying true to our original mission. With our headquarters in the Balkh and Kabul provinces of Afghanistan, we are physically present and actively delivering services in more than 16 provinces across Afghanistan.

Purpose

The objective of this Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) document is to set out operational and managerial guidance for Directors, Head of Departments, Managers, Key personnel and project staff during project implementation, planning, preparedness, response, and to contribute to the effective functioning of ABCO.

ABCO must function such that a responsible and consistent ethical review mechanism for achieving its objectives is put in place for all activities dealt by it, The SOP defines roles and responsibilities of ABCO's all personnel responsible in executing its strategic plan and activities on daily basis. It also links operations of ABCO to its donors and partners, and down to provincial and community-level services receivers.

Composition and Responsibilities

The composition of ABCO is multidisciplinary, comprising of individuals with varied expertise. Commitment and competence are the two hallmarks of this ABCO. The Members of Board of Directors of the ABCO will necessarily be persons of stature with a rich background and adequate familiarity with the principles and ethics of related issues. The Executive Director who will conduct and oversee activities, polices and plans of the organization. The composition of the ABCO shall reflect gender equality, and members will include a mix of agriculture, engineering, management, business, social science, finance, operations persons including ad-hoc advisors. Each member will bring in his or her perspective, knowledge and experience thereby ensuring comprehensive actions to achieve the organization mission and strategic plans. The composition of the organization is as follows:

- Board of Directors – Various composition
- Executive Director - Agriculture
- Management Team
    - Head of Finance Department - Finance
    - Head of Human Resources Department – Human Resources
    - Head of Project Management Department - Management
    - Head of Technical Sector Department - Engineering
- Project Staff – Project based and need composition

The main task of Board of Directors is the directorial management of organization. The Board of Directors is liable to the chairperson of the board and has 3 members. Responsibilities of Board of Directors:

- To make decisions about the organization excluding daily operations.
- Approve organizational policies, structural changes, and programs.
- Approve the strategic plan and budget.
- Overseeing the affairs of the organization.
- Approve financial transactions above fifty thousand USD.
- Reviewing the performance of the executive director.
- Auditing, monitoring and evaluating the organization.
- Promoting the objectives of the organization within and outside the organization.

The Executive Director's purpose is to lead the organization's daily activities and is answerable to the Board of Directory. The Executive Director is hired on an open contract approved by the Board of Director and may be employed as long as the Board of Director is satisfied with his or her work. Responsibilities of the Executive Director:

- Implementing the policies of the organization.
- Serving as the organization's representative when written agreements are formed.
- Hiring and dismissing of personnel.
- Approving all financial disbursements.
- Ensuring financial transparency of the organization.
- Managing daily operations.
- Promoting the objectives of the organization within and outside the organization.
- Ensuring strong community and government relations.
- Reporting activities to the Board of Director quarterly.
- Issuing an annual report.

The purpose of the management team is to implement ABCO's daily activities and manage respective departments and/or projects of the organization. The managment team is answerable to the Executive Director. The management team is comprised of the Executive Director and department heads. Responsibilities of the Management Team:

- Implementing daily activities by supporting departmental staff and managing departmental resources.
- Assist the Executive Director in making managerial and strategic decisions.
- Regularly report the status of ongoing activities to the Executive Director.
- Ensuring to meet deadlines and report on time.
- Promoting the objectives of the organization within and outside the organization.
- Ensuring strong community and government relations.

The project and office staff's responsibilities are described in their job descriptions, contracts, adhere to the ABCO's personnel policy.

Terms of Appointment, Resignation, and Replacement/ Removal of Personnel

i. Cessation of Board of Directors membership is through dismissal by majority vote of all members, death, or resignation.

ii. Appointment of Executive Director is by majority vote of board of directors. Cessation of Executive Director is by: contract expiration, dismissal by the Board of Directory and in accordance with ABCO's personnel policy, death, or resignation.

iii. Replacement and Removal of management team is by dismissal by the Executive Director in accordance with ABCO's personnel policy, death, or resignation.

iv. Appointment of project staff is done by Human Resources Department in line with ABCO' HR policy. Replacement/Removal of project staff is by contracts date, resignation, date adhere to the ABCO's HR policy and code of conduct for staff.

v. New appointees can be recommended by current/past organization personnel.

vi. The duration of appointment for invited members is usually based on the duration of activities and related project.

vii. Members may be re-appointed for as many terms as deemed by the board of directors.

viii. At the end of the term of a member or members, new member(s) are appointed such that at least 50% of the members will remain in the organization to provide continuity.

ix. A member can be replaced in the event of resignation or nonattendance for three consecutive quarterly meetings (unless this was intimated in advance to the executive director on sufficient grounds), or for any action not commensurate with the responsibilities laid down in the guidelines. Disqualification of members/personnel for any reason is communicated in writing by the board of directors and executive director.

x. vii. A member who is unable to attend three consecutive meetings and informs the member secretary in advance may be temporarily replaced by another member selected by the Chairperson.

xi. viii. A member can tender his/her resignation from the committee, with approval from the Chairperson. ix. Membership of the IEC is a position of responsibility. Members will be paid an honorarium for attending meetings.

Coordination Arrangements

Meetings

The Executive Director and Head of Project Management Department is responsible for organizing meetings during Planning and Preparedness Phases.

Invitations are to be sent to members and observers via ABCO email at least three (3) day prior to the meeting to advice on date, venue, time and meeting agenda.

All meetings during peace time are to be chaired by the Executive Director, and the Admin& Data Capture Officer of the ABCO is to register attendance and record minutes. Copies of the Attendance Record and Minutes are to be circulated to members and observers via ABCO email within three (3) days after the meeting.

Meetings during this phase are to be conducted regularly to keep members informed.

Coordination with Partners and stakeholders

ABCO Management team and Field officers are to work in collaboration with partners and stakeholders to develop, update and implement change plans. Field officers must have close coordination with representative of partners and stakeholders during each phase of activities/projects.

Communication with Donors

Communication with donor partners will be delivered by Executive Director in management level. On project and field level, communications must be done by executive director, project managers, coordinator and senior field officers.

Crisis Time - Emergency Response and Recovery

Briefings

The Executive director and Head of project management department are also responsible for organizing and advising the to call meetings/briefings during crisis time - emergency response and recovery stages. ABCO Information and Monitoring officer should maintain an up-to-date contact data base of initial stakeholders.

During the Emergency Response Phase, invitations are to be sent to members and observers via ABCO email, phone and SMS to immediately advise on date, venue, time and meeting agenda.

Briefings or meetings are to be held daily, and with consideration of the scale of the crisis the Executive Director will advise when daily briefings shall cease or be changed to longer time intervals. Moving into the Recovery Phase, the calling and staging of meetings/briefings are to be conducted as in the Preparedness Phase.

Surge Capacity

Project Management Dep. must be able to communicate clearly capacity needs to Human Resources Dep. and other relevant departments supporting the activities to second staff to provide additional support.

Information Management

The Head of Monitoring and Evaluation Department will act as the Information Manager for the ABCO. He/she is to work in collaboration with members of board of director, executive director and other personnel of ABCO, and will be responsible to collect, provide and share information within the organization.

Peace Time – Planning, Preparedness and Implementation

Filing and Recording

ABCO has both an electronic filing system and paper filing system. The Monitoring and Evaluation Department must establish shared drives which will contain:

- Databases (includes that of baseline data);
- Maps and charts;
- Work documents;
- Final documents;
- Officer responsible for the creation of documents has to ensure it is saved into the filing system
- Documents that need to be updated are the responsibility of the Data Capture Officer.

Contact List – Stakeholders and Sector Focal Points

Both Project Management Department and Monitoring and Evaluation Department will be responsible for maintaining an up-to-date contact list of the stakeholders. This includes the departments, the directors and focal points, the extension officers, Operation Manager and coordinators.

- Country Directors and Focal Points, the Donors Regional Coordinators

Maps and Charts

Maps and charts are used to record geographically and pictorially significant operational information including details of the area or specific locations under threat and the extent of damage caused. The Information officer has to ensure that all relevant, updated and available maps and charts are in the electronic filing system.

The types of maps and charts are:

- Vulnerability maps: flood, landslide, etc.;
- Maps for food security issues (Hotspot mapping);
- Land use maps;
- Hydrological maps;
- National and provincial maps – used to plot locations of damage, resources, problems, etc.;
- Tracking Map

Key Messages

The Information Officer is responsible for securing, collating and updating all multi-hazards key messages. The key messages will be validated by ABCO and the local partners and saved on the shared drive. The above Officer will disseminate them across the organizations, partners and stakeholders.

Data Collection and Management

The Monitoring and Evaluation Department will be responsible to collect and manage relevant databases of risk management and climate change adaptation in the sector. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Disaggregated population data;
- Productive areas (crops, livestock, fisheries);
- Nurseries;
- Public infrastructure for agriculture, livestock, forestry and fisheries;
- Record and incidence of pest and disease outbreaks;
- Database of soil conditions;
- Risk and vulnerability mapping;
- Rainfall data;
- Operational 4Ws (Who, what, when and where);
- Food and Nutrition Security activities in the sector.

Crisis Time - Emergency Response and Recovery

Contact List

The Information Officer will be responsible of maintaining an up-to-date contact list of the stakeholders. This includes all surge capacity officers/teams coming in country and in the region.

Data Collection, Management and Sharing of Information

The Monitoring and Evaluation Department will be responsible for collecting, managing and sharing the information within the organization and its partners and stakeholders. The contact point of ABCO in this regard is the Head of Monitoring and Evaluation Department. He/she will liaise with the provincial technical officers, the extension officers and other relevant officers to collect information as and when required.

Situation Report

Information officer in ABCO prepares the situation report with assistance from project management department and field team.

The situation report should contain a progressive update of the emergency situation in terms of:

- Details of the hazard/crisis.
- The areas and population affected.
- Impact on food security.
- Actions taken and progress of response.
- Any other relevant information

The 4Ws (Who, what, when and where)

This is an important activity reporting tool adopted by the ABCO to gather information from the organization personnel and project staff on the 4Ws (Who, When, Where, What)? The Monitoring and Evaluation Department is responsible for collecting, updating and analysing this report on a monthly basis.

Communications

Peace Time – Planning, Preparedness and Implementation

The Project Management Department shall undertake to compile, update and/or develop communication systems, the current communication mediums are though the following means:

- Print material (reports, brochures etc.);
- Email;
- Mobile;

Crisis Time - Emergency Response and Recovery

All communication with partners and stakeholders will be delivered by Executive Director and he will act as the focal point on all matters. The focal point releases and provides the important information.

The focal point will:

- Be responsible for liaising with the partners, stakeholders and with other agencies with the emergency related information requirements;
- Report;
- Assemble and prepare information;
- Inform and conduct regular meetings;
- Manage requests and organize briefings;
- Set-up an information meeting and update on a regular basis;
- Liaise with other agencies and monitor all forms of communication for inaccurate information;
- Record all information
- Write recommendation on adaptation, preparedness, response and recovery;

Hotline

ABCO provides an email address and hotline in the field area of our projects to receive emails and calls from the public, service receivers regarding any complains, information and/or provide advice.

Field Project Managers across all locations are responsible to provide the information about the hotline to the communities and service receiver of the projects.

Resource Deployment

Peace Time – Planning, Preparedness and Implementation

ABCO carefully selects an exceptionally qualified project team; key personnel whom all have worked previously with ABCO, UN Agencies and other international organizations.

We will use our HR strategy to identify and hire new personnel going to be required for new projects. We utilize various approach to find out, identify, and select the most appropriate project personnel. The approaches we use are the following:

- Look through our bank of CVs already available in our organization databases (because we are an organization with 27 years of experience in Afghanistan, we have a great list of qualified relevant personnel already interviewed for employment when needed);
- Contact all previous personnel working for us on similar projects;
- Contact our organization's networks for similar professional staff;
- Advertise through internet to collect CVs; and
- Finally, use referral system already available within our organization as well as those within our network of partners.

Crisis Time - Emergency Response and Recovery

When an emergency is presented or following the declaration of an emergency, ABCO will deploy additional officers or staff and resources to assist, resource deployment must be well coordinated.

Types of resources may include but are not limited to:

- Staff;
- Vehicles;
- Equipment;
- Equipment consumables;
- Office equipment;
- Petty cash;
- Transport and travel costs;
- Monitoring & Evaluation reports on resource utilization;
- Electronic devices

Financial Management

Financial Management is per the proposed project deliveries and scheduled spending. Reports are prepared on:

- Correct financial documentation on all purchases;
- Local Purchase Orders (LPOs) correctly completed as per project requirement;
- Food;
- Fuel;
- Stationery;
- Travel expenses;
- Stock Control;
- Petty cash.

Monitoring & Evaluation Reports on Resource Utilization

- M&E reports on resource utilization must be completed as per donor regulations;
- Timely reports to supervising or designated focal point officer may be needed to release next tranche of funds;
- Acquittals may be required to be made in different forms depending on donor.

Cross Cutting Issues

Gender

ABCO must promote Gender.

Planning, Preparedness and Implementation

Organizational Activities and strategic plans should be developed by and disseminated to both men and women, to ensure responsibility and awareness. Ensure women, youths, People Living with Disability and other vulnerable groups are engaged and has been taken into consideration in preparedness of programs from the beginning.

Crisis Time - Response and Recovery

Women, youths, People Living with Disability and other vulnerable groups need to be given information and power to make decisions in time of crisis, be equally represented on assessment teams, and be equally involved in coordination and decision making.

Women and children, and People Living with Disability have different needs to those of men following a crisis. These needs should be addressed by the response. Ensure information about response is communicated directly to women, and meeting times and locations are appropriate for women.

Environment

ABCO's operations must incorporate environmental considerations.

Natural disasters such as floods can generate large quantities of solid and liquid wastes which can pose risks to public health through direct or vector-induced exposure to uncollected hazardous wastes. ABCO will coordinate with the relevant authorities and the Environmental departments as and when necessary to address environmental issues.

TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Training and Capacity Building is essential for ABCO and its personnel to improve organizational and systemic capability to support partners and stakeholders in its role as coordination and implementing agency for:

- Planning
- Preparedness
- Implementation
- Response &
- Recovery

A Training Needs Analysis (TNA) survey is undertaken every year to determine emerging training needs for initiatives in these five designated areas.

Needs identified through an informal TNA conducted with partners indicate the following trainings:

- Grant Application Preparation
- Project Management
- Project Design Writing
- Report Writing
- Excel – Introduction, Refresher and Advanced Levels
- PowerPoint – Introductory & Advanced
- Data Analysis
- GIS – Introduction
- Simulation Exercise to test the ABCO SOPs

- Web Site Management
- Use of social media in emergencies
- (WEB 2.0)
- Needs Assessment
- Safety measures
- Financial Proposal writing
- Technical Proposal writing