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Support Afghanistan Livelihoods and Mobility (SALAM)

Project Initiation Phase

2017 3rd QUARTERLY PROJECT PROGRESS REPORT



DONORS



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PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Award ID:	00094515
Duration:	2017-2021
CPD Outcome\:	Outcome 3: Economic growth is accelerated to reduce vulnerabilities and poverty, strengthen the resilience of the licit economy in its multiple dimension
Contributing to NPP:	Legal and Institutional Frameworks to Manage Migration Flows Is Established
UNDP Strategic Plan Outcome:	Outcome 6: Early recovery and rapid return to sustainable human development pathways are achieved in post-conflict and post-disaster settings
Total Budget:	US\$120,000,000
Funded:	US\$ 4,891,304
Unfunded Amount:	US\$115,108,696
2017 Annual Budget:	US\$ 1,601,563
Implementing Partner:	Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs & Disabled (MoLSAMD)
Responsible Parties:	MoLSAMD
Project Manager:	Mohammad Kazim Elham
Chief Technical Advisor:	Vacant
Programme Unit Head:	Laura Rio

COVER PAGE: Tonyalay Jaffary, a deportee from Germany and his daughter© UNDP Afghanistan / Omer Sadaat

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ACRONYMS

ANPDF	Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework
DiREC	Displacement and Return Executive Committee
DoLSAMD	Directorate of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled
GoIRA	Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
IDPs	Internal Displaced Persons
ILO	International Labour Organization
MoLSAMD	Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled
NTA	National Technical Assistance
SALAM	Support Afghanistan Livelihoods and Mobility
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Support Afghanistan Livelihoods and Mobility project (SALAM) is a joint programme of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), International Labour Organization (ILO) and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) implemented by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled (MoLSAMD).

SALAM is funded by the Government of Finland. It aims at meeting the long terms livelihoods needs of returnees and Internally Displaced People (IDPs), especially those of women and youth in the wake of a massive return of Afghan people expelled from Pakistan.¹It is defined by the close participation of the national and international private sector.

During the third quarter, the project remained in its initiation phase. The recruitment processes continued for both UNDP and Ministry of Labour based National Technical Assistance (NTA) positions, procurement processes were also undertaken to equip SALAM project offices. Coordination was strengthened between project partners including through the Durable Solutions Working Group, the regular World Bank group meeting on labour migration, and the European Union (EU) funded Consortium of NGOs, who are undertaking a Labour Market Assessment.

Challenges encountered during the quarter were related to difficulties in recruiting project personnel and transferring funds between UNDP and ILO. These resulted in a slow project delivery. Also, applications from women for national technical advisory positions were extremely low.

UNDP mitigation measures and responses to the challenges included: support to MoLSAMD to develop and implement a revised accelerated recruitment plan and closer consultations with UNDP and ILO Headquarters to accelerate funds transfer. UNDP and MoLSAMD adopted special measures to strengthen gender parity and enable female candidate to be included in the interviews and recruitment process.

II. RESULTS

During the reporting period, the main result was setting up an enabling environment to achieve the project outputs. This included mostly recruitment of project staff, securing a secure workspace in MoLSAMD and facilitating partner coordination.

UNDP and MoLSAMD initiated the recruitment of the NTA Project team.² In order to ensure accountability, transparency and fair recruitment process, UNDP together with MoLSAMD, oversaw the finalization of the shortlist, grading of the written exams, and attended both interviews as an observer. Out of a total of 14 NTA staff, UNDP completed the recruitment process for Project Manager and Finance Associate positions, who have been on board since the end of August and early September 2017 respectively. As the NTA positions require specific skill sets on labour migration and policy, in the first round of announcements qualified candidates were not found, thus the interview panel re-advertised the positions in August 2017.

¹ Since 1 January 2016, over 775,000 undocumented Afghans have returned due to diverse push factors, including deteriorating protection space in Pakistan, April 2017 IOM.

² Organigram attached in Annex 2. Gender Advisor; Sr. Technical Specialist Migration and IDPs, Sr. Technical Specialist TVE, Sr. Technical Specialist Private Sector and provincial positions, Provincial Coordinator, Business Development officer, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Officer, and field monitors.

In consultation with MoLSAMD, an office room for the SALAM project staff was provided within MoLSAMD premises to help the project team work closely with the responsible MoLSAMD departments, including the Directorate of Manpower, Directorate of Skills Development, and Directorate of Policy and Planning. UNDP procured office furniture, IT equipment and connectivity to support SALAM operations from within MoLSAMD. On coordination with partners, see Section: Partnerships

Below is a snapshot of where SALAM project stands as of 30 September 2017- in relation to its annual targets for Output 1 Formalized Institution Structures in Support of Regular Labour Migration for Afghan Women and Men are Established and Output 2 National and International Employment Opportunities for Women and Men Potential Migrants and Returnees in Kabul and Five Pilot Provinces are Increased

Annul Work Plan Indicators	2017 Baseline	2017 Targets	Q2	Q3 Targets	Actual Progress Q3	Comments
1.1. a ³ . Number of MoLSAMD and other government officials trained on international standards and good practices on law / regulations and policy coherence	0	20	0	20	0	During the reporting period, the project has focused its work on delivering several activities to set up an enabling and conducive project environment such as staff recruitment, project office and coordination. This work is not captured by the existing AWP output indicators. (See Section Challenges)
1.1.b Extent to which national laws and regulations align with international labour standards (scale 0-10)	0	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	
1.1.c.e. % of increase of knowledge and understanding of the trained officials (scale 0-10)	0	8	0	8	0	
1.2. Number of BLAs on labour migration signed with countries of destination	0	2	0	2	0	
1.3. Number of contracts signed with employers / agents in destination countries each year (by country, by sector, by # of workers in demand letters)	0	2	0	2	0	
1.4. Average cost of migration in the Afghanistan - Saudi corridor, using ILO-World Bank methodology	0	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	
2.2 ⁴ # of SALAM training program graduates, that are locally employed (M/F, by provinces)	0	400	0	400	0	
2.2.a Standardized courses and curricula developed	0	4	0	4	0	
2.2.b #of people trained in selected priority sectors	0	500	0	500	0	
2.6. ⁵ Clients satisfaction from ESCs services provision (scale 1-10)	0	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	

³ 1.1 not targeted in 2017

⁴ 2.1. Not targeted in 2017

⁵ Activities 2.3; 2.4; 2.5 not targeted during 2017

III. GENDER SPECIFIC RESULTS

No gender specific results have been achieved under the initiation phase. Two NTA recruitments were completed during the reporting period. The Nangarhar Provincial Coordinator position and the Senior Technical Specialist (TVET), Kabul positions both received no female applicants. SALAM is closely monitoring the application and recruitment rate of female to males to promote greater gender balance in the project team and project deliverables. (See also Section Issues and Risks)

IV. PARTNERSHIPS

SALAM project was presented and discussed in the Durable Solution Working Group (DSWG) meeting in August 2017⁶. The meeting resulted into a discussion of the Labour Market Analysis to be conducted by SALAM to assess the protentional for growth, profitability and employment of local economic sectors and identify the value chains with high potential to promote self or wage employment, enterprise and entrepreneurship development for returnees and IDPs.⁷ This discussion was continued during a second meeting of UN DSWG partners (FAO, WFP, ILO, and IOM) that resulted in the agreement of the methodology, terms of reference and coordination arrangements for the Market Analysis in Nangarhar.

SALAM project was included in the agenda of discussion of the Migration Working Group led by the World Bank in September 2017. To contribute to the development of an associated action plan and timeline for the National Labour Migration Strategy, it was agreed to submit to MoLSAMD the Regular Migration Country Case Study prepared by SALAM during the previous quarter along with the World Bank and the forthcoming EU gap assessments of the labour sending system. It was also agreed to ask MOLSAMD to co-locate the World Bank pilot migration scheme to Saudi Arabia and the SALAM project team in the same premises within the Ministry to coordinate activities.

V. ISSUES AND RISKS

Annual Work Plan indicators do not fully capture project progress

The indicators in the Annual Work Plan do not fully capture the work undertaken during the reporting period to set up an enabling environment and help achieve the project outputs. To address this issue, UNDP has worked with MoLSAMD and ILO to refine the Annual Work Plan.

⁶ The DSWG is chaired by the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriations or a representative of a relevant line Ministry on a rotational basis (based on the thematic area discussed during the DSWG) and co-chaired by UNHCR, UNDP and IOM on a rotational basis, which ensures to link the project with reintegration platforms and coordinate activities appropriately.

⁷ It is important to note the distinction that the EU funded NGO Consortium Market Assessment is more focused on TVET providers, from a labour and small enterprise perspective, focused on strengthening post-training linkages with the local market and improving IDPs' and returnees' prospects for vocational education, on small and micro businesses. This contrasts with the broader perspective of SALAM which will assess the potential for growth, profitability and employment of local economic sectors, identification of high potential value chains and in-depth analysis of selected value chains to determine how those can be developed to promote self of wage employment, enterprise and entrepreneurship, focused on IDPs, returnees, unskilled and semi-skilled youth, and potential migrants. This close coordination and communication with the EU funded Consortium of NGOs project helped to identify synergies, avoid overlap and coordinate relevant activities in an effective manner

Delays in Implementation of Project Activities

There has been delay in the recruitment of staff, due to lack of qualified candidates in the first round. As a mitigation measure, for the NTA staff, UNDP and Department of Human Resources in MoLSAMD prepared a revised schedule to accelerate the recruitment process of the remaining 14 NTA positions. UNDP has re-advertised the international Adviser's position and reached out to suitable candidates and encourage them to apply.

Difficulties in the fund transfer process between UNDP and ILO have resulted in delayed implementation of ILO led activities. UNDP has held multiple meetings both at country and HQ level to resolve the transfer related issues which have resulted into a revised modality for fund transfer to ILO better suited to the circumstances.

Gender Balance

Applications from women were negligible for the NTA positions resulting in a gender imbalance in the project team composition thus increasing the risk that women's perspectives are not included in the project and their needs not met. To mitigate this risk, UNDP and MoLSAMD adopted special measures including ensuring that hiring managers are aware on the implications of their hiring decision for overall parity goals and allowing for greater gender consideration and latitude in the final selection process.

Low Financial Delivery

Because of the delay in the implementation of project activities, the financial delivery for the reporting period remained low at 8%. To address this issue and help improve delivery, UNDP and MoLSAMD implemented an accelerated procurement plan and revised the 2017 Annual Workplan which helped to increase delivery from 3.6 to 8% during Quarter 3.

For further information, see Annex 3: Issue Log.

VI. FUTURE PLAN

September – December 2017:

- Finalize NTA national provincial team recruitment.
- Transfer funds to ILO under MOU.
- Map capacity of Man Power General Directorate of MoLSAMD/Regulation.
- Support the National Labour Conference to be organised by MoLSAMD.
- Support identification of Inter- Ministerial Task Force Members on Regular Labour Migration.
- Develop ToR, methodology and questionnaire for labour market assessment.
- Identify beneficiaries and communities selection criteria in consultation with UNHCR.
- Prepare a summary of the SALALM Regular Migration Country Case Study for submission to MoLSAMD.
- Organise a visit to DOLSAMD and project stakeholders in Nangarhar.
- Request No-Cost Extension request until end 2019.
- Revise Procurement, HR and Annual Workplan.

VII. ANNEX

ANNEX 1: PROVISIONAL EXPENSES BY OUTPUT

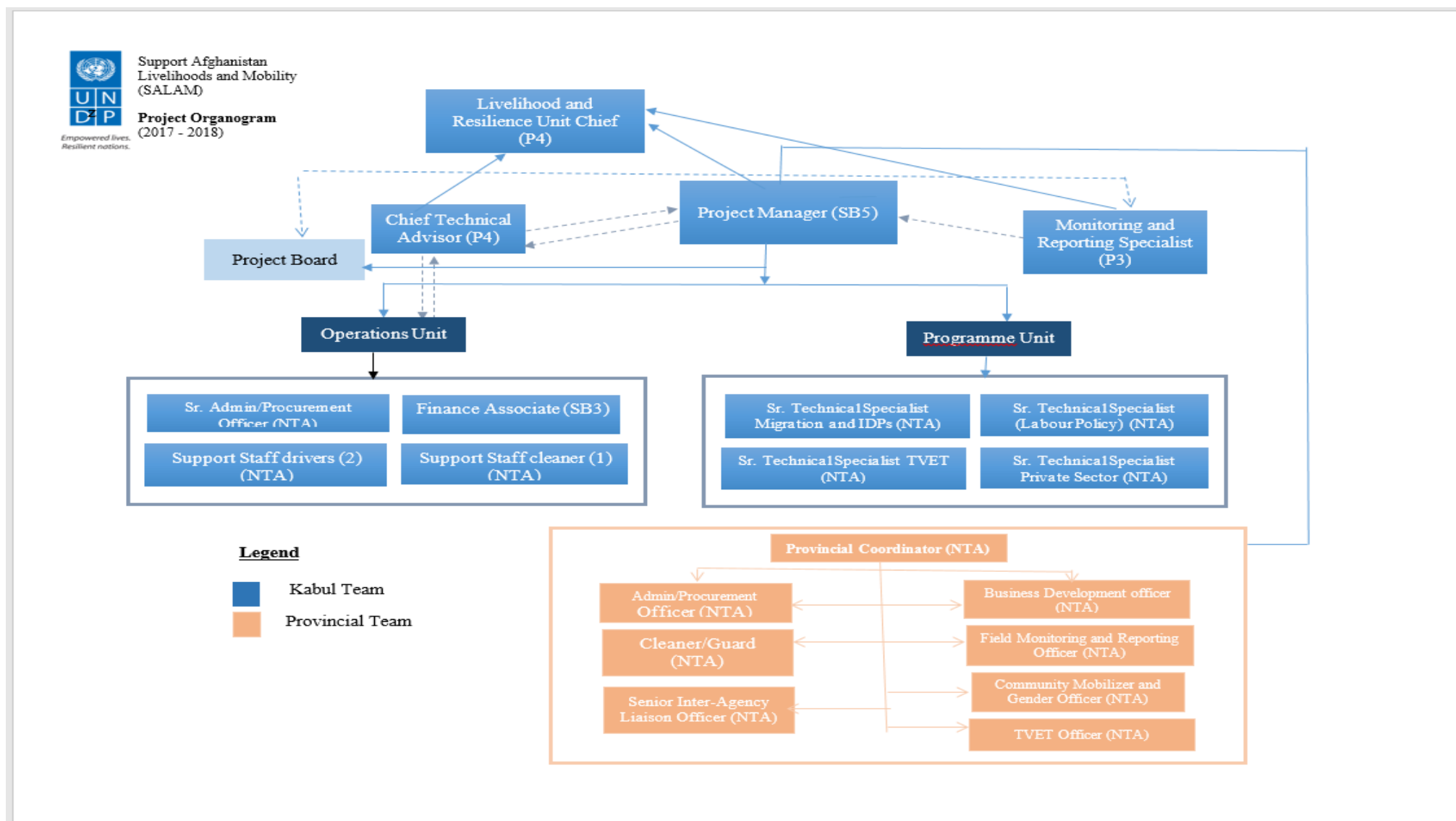
Project Output ID and Description	2017 Budget (AWP)	Expenses (01 Jan- 30 September 2017)	Delivery Rate
Output 1 (ID 00098662): Formalized institution structures in support of regular labour migration for Afghan women and men are established	572,631	61,738	11%
Sub-total Output 1	572,631	61,738	11%
Output 2 (ID:00098663): National and international employment opportunities for women and men potential migrants and returnees in Kabul and five pilot provinces are increased	1,028,931	58,180	6%
Sub-total Output 2	1,028,931	58,180	6%
Grand Total	1,601,563	119,918	8%

Note:

i) The data contained in this report is provisional (Prorated salaries of UNDP staff in the Livelihoods and Resilience Unit were charged to project to perform SALAM that were to be performed by the project team). The financial data provided above is not complete, it is provisional and subjected to change by end of the year.

ii) The income received in currency other than USD is approximated to USD based on UN- Operational Rate of Exchange applied.

ANNEX 2: PROJECT ORGANIGRAMME



ANNEX 3: ISSUE LOG

#	Description	Date Identified	Impact/ Priority	Countermeasure/Management Response	Owner	Status
1	Delay in recruitment of NTA staff	August 2017	Overall project delays Impact = 3 Priority= 3 I = 3	UNDP consulted and drafted a plan jointly with MoLSAMD HR to schedule appropriately and accelerate recruitment process. Day to day follow up of UNDP with the panel and HR. UNDP participates or observes at all stages of MoLSAMD recruitment processes.	Project Manager and MoLSAMD Focal Point	Being addressed Recruitment is proceeding according to the new accelerated schedule, expected to be completed by end of October 2017.
2	Fund transfer difficulty with ILO	September 2017	ILO project implementation delays Impact = 4 Priority= 4	Agreed on alternative modality of fund transfer with ILO both at HQ and country level, issue is resolved.	Project Manager and UNDP Finance	Addressed and resolved
3	Gender imbalance in team composition	August 2017	Lack of project responsiveness to women's aspirations and needs Impact= 3 Priority= 3	Adopted special measure to counteract gender imbalance in consultation with MoLSAMD HR. Widely disseminated the vacancies through all means including through provincial DoLSAMD.	Project Manager and MoLSAMD Focal Point	Logged in Female applicant rate remains low compared to male applicants.
4	Low financial (actual activity related) delivery	September 2017	Lack of project responsiveness to stakeholders and clients' needs Impact= 4 Priority= 4	Revision of the AWP and procurement plan to incorporate more realistic activities & timelines. Initiated accelerated procurement planning for the office setup in MoLSAMD.	Project Manager and MoLSAMD Focal Point	Being addressed Financial delivery increased from 3.6% to 8 % during Quarter 3.

ANNEX 4: RISK LOG

Description	Date Identified	Type	Impact & Probability	Countermeasures / Mngt response	Owner	Submitted, updated by	Last Update	Status
Regional instability may continue to the detriment of the regional economy	June, 2016	Political	Regional instability could lead to reduction of economic opportunities for regular migration P = 2 I = 3	Diversification of countries with which Afghanistan seeks a Bi-Lateral Agreement	Sr. DCD, Project Manager, CTA and Output 1 Manager	Project Design Team	September 2017	No change
Local security in targeted regions may delay project implementation	June 2016	Political	P: 4 I: 4	UN-DSS and MOSS procedures will be followed at all times to ensure safety and security of project staff Project sites will be re-assessed during the project inception phase and project activities moved to more secure districts if necessary. CDCs will be used for Implementation as far as possible to promote ownership and reduce security threats to outside staff.	Sr. DCD, Project Manager, CTA and Output 1 Manager	Project Design Team	September 2017	No change
Global oil prices may remain low or unstable to the detriment of the regional countries	June, 2016	Political Financial	Low oil prices equate to reduced income for regional destination countries known for labour migration. An extended period of low oil prices could cause the economies of	Diversification of countries with which Afghanistan seeks a Bi-Lateral Agreement	Sr. DCD, Project Manager, CTA and Output 1 Manager	Project Design Team	September 2017	No change

Description	Date Identified	Type	Impact & Probability	Countermeasures / Mngt response	Owner	Submitted, updated by	Last Update	Status
			destination countries to restrict, adversely affecting the demand for migrant workers P = 2 I = 4					
Government buy-in/political will may be low/slow in responding	June, 2016	Political Regulatory	Without government buy-in/political will, the effect is different per output: O1 SALAM is highly unlikely to create a pathway for regular migration due to the numerous ministries and government institutions required to support the facilitation of regular migration P = 1 I = 5 O2 Given this is a local intervention based in regional centres and focused on municipalities, local political will is required; and the government's support comes primarily from	What actions have been taken/will be taken to counter this risk O1 UNDP have closely partnered with government in the development stages of SALAM. Further engagement with respective ministries and institutions will continue as well as close coordination with the Presidential Office O2 UNDP and the SALAM Project Team will engage with local government and DoLSAMD to ensure there is local government buy-in/political will to create enabling environments for economic growth O3 UNDP and the SALAM Project Team will engage with local government and CSOs to ensure there is local	Sr. DCD, Project Manager, CTA, and all Output Managers	Project Design Team	September 2017	No change

Description	Date Identified	Type	Impact & Probability	Countermeasures / Mngt response	Owner	Submitted, updated by	Last Update	Status
			MoLSAMD, so risk is lower P = 1 I = 3 O3 Awareness raising can be done locally or at the national level depending on committed funding and can be done with or without significant government buy-in/political will P = 1 I = 1	government buy-in/political will to raise awareness				
The ongoing stability of the current government remains an uncertainty throughout the implementation of the project	June, 2016	Political	If the Unity Government were to dissolve, project delays are expected and may be extensive P = 3 I = 5	UNDP remains committed to supporting the Unity Government; and regardless of the political environment will work towards the betterment of the Afghan people	Project Manager, CTA and All Output Managers	Project Design Team	September 2017	No change
The ongoing conflict throughout the country may limit access to some locations for periods of time during the project	June, 2016	Political Other - security	Some project locations may be cut off or isolated due to the ongoing conflict (as occurred in Kunduz in late 2015) before or during implementation P = 4 I = 4	Integrated into the project activities is an effort to empower local government and community leaders to stabilize and create enabling environment for economic growth	Project Manager, CTA and Output 2 Manager	Project Design Team	September 2017	No change

Description	Date Identified	Type	Impact & Probability	Countermeasures / Mngt response	Owner	Submitted, updated by	Last Update	Status
Despite the establishment of regular migration channels, Afghan women and men may choose to migrate through irregular channels depending on the mix on incentives and disincentives	June, 2016	Other - social Other - context	Human traffickers and their agents have a vested interest in maintaining the allure of irregular migration. Regardless of government initiatives, public awareness campaigns as well as training and employment opportunities, Afghan men and women will continue to be targeted by traffickers and their agents P = 5 I = 1	SALAM commits the efforts of an entire Output to countering these messages raising awareness of the risks of irregular migration as well as of the local employment and regular migration opportunities	Output 3 Manager	Project Design Team	September 2017	No change
Low rates of female participation in vocational training as a result of cultural attitudes and societal norms	June, 2016	Other - social Other - context	Limited female participation in vocational training will contribute to continued low female labour force participation and employment rates. Since both are correlated with growth, this will serve to limit the impacts of SALAM P = 4; I = 4	SALAM is committed to assess needs by collecting gender disaggregated data and develop gender relevant and appropriate vocational training programmes. SALAM may also reserve some places on each vocational training programme for women.	Output 2 Manager	Project Design Team	September 2017	No change

Description	Date Identified	Type	Impact & Probability	Countermeasures / Mngt response	Owner	Submitted, updated by	Last Update	Status
Afghan women may not be welcomed as migrants to conservative countries in the region, or be screened out of employment opportunities based on sex	June, 2016	Other - social Other - context	Some of the regional destination countries which Afghanistan will aim to sign BLAs with, are on the extreme edge of religious conservatism. Women who migrate to these states may be further marginalized, discriminated against, forced against their will, or worse P = 4 I = 4	SALAM will establish a Migrant Contract Management System which protects international women and men's worker's rights and wages, including refugee rights. Additionally, SALAM will design and develop guidelines and trainings with gender parameters on migrant workers' rights and contractual packages with a standard employment contract in Dari and Pashto. Also, SALAM is working with MOFA to establish Migrant Worker Help Desk and Legal Aid Facility in Afghan embassies and consulates	Output 1 and 2 Managers	Project Design Team	September 2017	No change
Migration turned to Human Trafficking	June, 2016	Other - social Other - context	Afghan women and men, girls and boys who migrate may have their migration turned into a human trafficking or forced labour experience with adverse and long-lasting consequences P = 4; I = 2	Included in the guidelines and trainings developed by SALAM is reference to regulations of recruitment agencies, awareness raising and reporting of Human Traffickers and provision of emergency contact information in destination countries	Output 1 and 2 Managers	Project Design Team	September 2017	No change

Description	Date Identified	Type	Impact & Probability	Countermeasures / Mngt response	Owner	Submitted, updated by	Last Update	Status
Authorities in destination countries may deny recognition and adherence to commitments made under international conventions	June, 2016	Other - social Other - context	Many labour migrant destination countries in the Gulf Region are renowned for poor records in upholding human rights, women's rights and child rights P = 3 I = 4	Engaged in the ongoing efforts to strengthen protections for migrant workers in law and practice in the GCC countries and other countries of destination. Included in the guidelines and trainings developed by SALAM is reference to regulations of recruitment agencies and awareness raising and reporting of rights violations to local rights-based organizations such as Amnesty International or Human Rights Watch	Output 1 and 2 Managers	Project Design Team	September 2017	No change
There may be a local backlash against IDPs, returnees and youth due to the benefits focused on them versus the local unemployed	June, 2016	Political Other - social	If there were to be a backlash, IDPs, returnees and youth could be further marginalized than they already are. P = 1; I = 3	Within DoLSAMD, SALAM strengthens the capacities of ESCs who serve not only SALAM beneficiaries, but the general public as well	Output 2 Manager	Project Design Team	September 2017	No change
Provision of extra support mechanisms targeting IDPs/ returnees may not be initially welcomed by local DoLSAMD/ Employment Service Centers, particularly in locations with high unemployment	June, 2016	Political Other - social Other - partner	DoLSAMD and the respective ESCs may resist SALAM efforts to specifically support IDPs, returnees and youth P = 1; I = 3	UNDP/SALAM will work closely with MoLSAMD at the national/ sub-national levels to garner the vested interest of this government partner in addressing the training and employment needs of these marginalized groups	Output 2 Manager	Project Design Team	September 2017	Decreased

Description	Date Identified	Type	Impact & Probability	Countermeasures / Mngt response	Owner	Submitted, updated by	Last Update	Status
Efforts to address Gender imbalances through the provision of opportunities to women may be viewed by a local minority as in opposition to local traditions and customs	June, 2016	Other - social Other - cultural	Social conservatives and traditionalists may be threatened by SALAM attempts to mainstream gender into project activities P = 2 I = 1	UNDP remains committed to the advancement of gender equality and will team with government partners and if necessary, clerics who espouse the importance of empowering women to realize their rights to training, employment and migration	Project Manager, CTA and All Output Managers	Project Design Team	September 2017	No change
Some local powerholders may attempt to steer infrastructure interventions to benefit particular businesses over others	June, 2016	Political Other - social Other - economic	Local Powerbrokers influence and direct project interventions in order to directly benefit themselves and limit benefits to political or social opponents P = 3 I = 2	UNDP remains committed to strengthening selected local economies to the direct benefit of IDPs, returnees and youth and will ensure that their interests are at the forefront of any project intervention; infrastructure support or otherwise	CTA, PM and Output 2 Manager	Project Design Team	September 2017	No change