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PROVISION OF SHORT-TERM CONSULTANTS TO WHO-ASSISTED
CONTINUING NATIONAL PROJECTS AFTER WITHDRAWAL OF
INTERNATIONAL (WHO) PERSONNEL

(Working Paper presented by the Government of Afghanistan)

The follow-up procedure is not a new approach in the curative neither preventive medicine. The follow up technique is used in public health practices in most countries of the world, in a variety of health problems such as Tuberculosis, Cancer VD, to mention a few. The intention of follow up is to keep under review and continue periodic assessment, developments which were initiated at the starting point of the project and which usually call for follow up. The Ministry of Public Health in Afghanistan, considering the specific difficulties in the operation of health services in the country due to the shortage of suitably qualified public health personnel feels that a follow up procedure in respect of WHO-assisted project on withdrawal of the International personnel is suitable and adaptable under Afghanistan conditions, and is necessary to maintain the continuity of ideas planted, achievements made and to keep a necessary stimulus for the national personnel continuing operations of the project or a service originated by the project. Follow up procedure, to be effective, should have certain distinct features. A short term consultant assigned to follow up the project must have firsthand knowledge of the background of the project itself and environmental factors prevailing in the country. The ideal choice would be an expert who at one time or another was responsible for the very project which he is going to follow.

Terms of reference of a short-term consultant during a follow up should be clearly defined in such a way that his assistance will be in the form of a constructive criticism and practical guidance. The operation of a service which resulted from the project would be a national undertaking and the function of a short-term consultant will be that of the Deputy recognising and diagnosing difficulties, if any, in the operation of the project and suggest such corrective measures as are applicable. The intention of the short-term consultant may not be applicable or acceptable uniformly throughout the Region. It is felt, however, that it might be usefully applied in the countries specially which face a shortage of trained personnel. The idea of a short-term consultant must not be construed as a confession of weakness or lack of self-confidence - just the opposite. It is the intention to face frankly and squarely the complex issues which may arise when the national health undertaking is going through a period of growing pains or learning from its own mistakes. The proposal of the

Government of Afghanistan aims at provision of a short-term consultant as a constant feature of the programmes in order that the government may have the chance to fall back on assistance which does not involve complex programme and administrative procedures. In other words it is a question of availability of a short-term consultant when and where the government wants it.