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# STABILITY IN KEY AREAS - NORTH

QUARTERLY REPORT: MARCH-JUNE 2012

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# ACRONYMS

CBA	Capacity Building Advisor
CDC	Community Development Council
DCC	District Community Council
DDA	District Development Assembly
DIT	District Implementation Team
DPP	District Project Portfolio
DSF	District Stability Framework
DSM	District Stability Matrix
DSU	District Support Unit
GIRoA	Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
GuC	Grants under Contract
IDLG	Independent Directorate for Local Governance
IR	Intermediate Result
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MRRD	Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development
PMP	Performance Management Plan
PRRD	Provincial Rural Rehabilitation and Development
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
RFP	Request for Proposals
SAM	Stability Analysis Mechanism
SIKA	Stability in Key Areas
SOI	Sources of Instability

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF FIRST QUARTER RESULTS

The Stability in Key Areas – North (SIKA-North) program works to foster confidence among Afghans in the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) by building the capacity of GIROA at the district level to function effectively, deliver the public services a governing authority is expected to provide, and address the problems of the population without abusing its authority. SIKA-North methodology focuses on ensuring that district entities are seen as leaders in bringing about improvements in governance and basic services for their populations, so that Afghans see that their government is in charge and deserves the credit for the improvements in their districts.

To work towards these objectives, SIKA-North is structured around four Intermediate Results (IRs), which build on and reinforce one another to create integrated solutions to instability in targeted districts. These IRs are:

- IR1: District Entities address Sources of Instability (SOI) and take measures to respond to the populations' development and governance concerns.
- IR2: Provincial and District entities understand what organizations and provincial lines departments work within their geographic areas, what kind of service they provide, and how the population can access these services.
- IR3: Provincial authorities improve their ability to communicate with district entities in order to help them better understand their population's needs and prioritize basic service delivery interventions.
- IR4: Provincial Authorities are able to improve basic service delivery by using GIROA, CDCs, DDAs and ASOP DCCs, which gain capacity to plan, design, implement and monitor projects, with a focus on labor-intensive projects or productive infrastructure.

SIKA-North's primary achievements in the first quarter of implementation were concentrated on IR 1, with significant progress also made towards IRs 2 and 3. Activities aimed at achieving IR 4 will mainly fall in the next quarter. In support of IR 1, SIKA-North has begun to engage with formal and informal government entities in Aliabad district in Kunduz province, with a view toward assisting those entities to identify sources of instability in their district by using the Stabilization Analysis Mechanism (SAM). The SAM was revised and adapted to Kunduz by the SIKA-North Stability Team, and the first SAM training for CDC clusters was recently launched. SIKA-North also made strong progress towards its situational awareness of Kunduz Province and Aliabad district, conducting desk reviews, attending a variety of stakeholder meetings, developing information gathering tools, and mobilizing its first District Implementation Team (DIT). Towards the achievement of IRs 2 and 3, SIKA-North developed Organizational and Communications Capacity Assessment Tools (OCAT/CCAT) and trained program staff to facilitate these assessments. Over the next quarter, SIKA-North will roll out the SAM to 10 CDC clusters in Aliabad, conduct OCAT and CCAT assessments of District Entities in Aliabad, build on its situational awareness through its field staff, and prepare to add two more districts to its portfolio.

It must be noted that the implementation of SIKA-North has been slowed by a number of external factors. Although dealing with these roadblocks has posed significant challenges for the program, SIKA-North has forged ahead with implementation, kept to its work plan timeline, and made important inroads into its pilot district, Aliabad.

The change in the management of the MRRD has constituted a challenge for SIKA-North. The new minister appointed to MRRD questioned some points of the SIKA's methodology. This has prevented the implementation letter between USAID and the MRRD from being signed which still delays SIKA-North's implementation in the field. Fortunately, due to the fact that SIKA-North is still in its startup phase, the program has been able to lay the groundwork for full-fledged implementation.

A preliminary agreement between MRRD and USAID was finally reached on May 26th, giving SIKA-North authorization to work in one district—Aliabad. Nonetheless, SIKA-North's kickoff meeting was also delayed for two weeks following this agreement while there were discussions within the MRRD regarding the extent of publicity for this meeting. It was finally decided that a limited publicity would be given to the event. This decision took into consideration two distinct factors: 1) with the Implementation Letter having not been officially signed, it was not advisable to publicize the event, and 2) the SIKA program is a stabilization program and in the current context of Afghanistan it is preferable to avoid publicity on such a program in order to minimize the exposure of the staff and of the stakeholders involved.

Issues surrounding the Afghan Public Protection Force (APPF) have also created challenges for SIKA-North, but the team designed solutions to overcome these. The main issue is that the APPF has not been able to supply the project with a static and mobile armed guard force. In spite of that the program has created an efficient system linking expatriate and backstopping staff in Mazar with program and operations staff in Kunduz, rather than remaining remotely stationed in Kabul while issues with the APPF are ironed out. In spite of the continuous problems with the APPF, all key staff members are now able to travel to and work in Kunduz to provide support to the team there, even while ongoing issues with the APPF are still negotiated. These solutions allow SIKA-North to implement its work plan on time despite the impediments.

While three months into the project SIKA-North has still not been authorized to implement beyond the pilot district, the team has successfully leveraged its resources to create an efficient and effective implementation structure, prepare itself with staff and materials, and lay the groundwork for a strong program. Notwithstanding the aforementioned challenges, the team has accomplished quick implementation of SIKA-North in Aliabad and is ready to move to other districts with short notice as soon as directed to by USAID and MRRD.

# CHAPTER I: SUMMARY OF PROJECT OBJECTIVES AND RESULTS

## PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The objective of SIKA-North is to promote stabilization in key areas by supporting the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) at the district level, while coordinating efforts at the provincial level, to implement community led development and governance initiatives that respond to the population's needs and concerns in order to build confidence, stability, and increase the provision of basic services. In support of the overall program objective, SIKA-North's four Intermediate Results (IRs) comprise a cohesive response to the problems faced by the Afghan government in the most unstable areas of the country. These four IRs are stated as follows:

- IR1: District Entities address Sources of Instability (SOI) and take measures to respond to the populations' development and governance concerns.
- IR2: Provincial and District entities understand what organizations and provincial line departments work within their geographic areas, what kind of service they provide, and how the population can access these services.
- IR3: Provincial authorities improve their ability to communicate with district entities in order to help them better understand their population's needs and prioritize basic service delivery interventions.
- IR4: Provincial Authorities are able to improve basic service delivery by using GIROA, CDCs, DDAs and ASOP DCCs, which gain capacity to plan, design, implement and monitor projects, with a focus on labor-intensive projects or productive infrastructure.



Members of one Aliabad CDC Cluster discuss sources of instability in their district during a SAM training.

In order to accomplish these results and build confidence in GIROA among the Afghan populace throughout the life of the project, the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) is the key leader in implementing SIKA-North, and along with the Afghan government will be seen in an appropriate leadership role throughout implementation. SIKA-North will also work with District Entities including District Governors, DDAs, DCs, CDCs, traditional district shuras, and other relevant district stakeholders, to identify SOIs and coordinate stabilization efforts in specific districts.

SIKA-North fulfills the role of an integrated stabilization program at the district level, focusing on how to address the problems which drive some communities to support insurgents. Through this lens, SIKA supports the District Entities to use a common methodology, the Stabilization Analysis Mechanism (SAM), to jointly analyze and identify the root causes of the support for the insurgency. District Entities then collaboratively design actions to address the drivers of instability in their districts and undermine the support given to the insurgency.

To improve the capacity of the District Entities to meet the expectations of the population in terms of service delivery and governance, SIKA helps the District Entities to get a better sense of what their constituents' priorities are, strengthen the district government's links with the provincial government, assist the District Entities to improve their interactions with the communities they serve, and support District Entities coordination and improved service delivery.

SIKA-North is cooperating with USAID's Measuring the Impact of Stability and Transition Initiatives (MISTI) to undertake a local perceptions survey to collect baseline data for monitoring and evaluation of SIKA's program achievements. MISTI will assess and evaluate the impact of the United States' stabilization efforts throughout Afghanistan. The project will collect, synthesize and analyze data at the district, provincial and regional levels to track high-order stabilization trends and help shape USG and Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) policy and practice related to transition. MISTI will also contribute to the larger body of knowledge on best practices and lessons learned related to the design, implementation and assessment of stabilization activities within a counterinsurgency context. In agreement with USAID SIKA-North will no longer be undertaking Level 3 M&E as this will be handled by MISTI and so SIKA-North will confine itself of Level 1 and 2 M&E.

## **OVERVIEW AT THE END OF THE QUARTER**

SIKA-North commenced on March 15, 2012 with an initial 18-month phase, and a second 18-month option dependent upon the budget and agreement of USAID and MRRD. The project is currently working in one pilot district in Kunduz—Aliabad—and is slated to begin work in two more districts in Kunduz in the near future, with the approval of USAID and MRRD.

In the first month of the program, USAID agreed that SIKA-North would establish a main office in Mazar-e-Sharif and a program office in Kunduz, with the DCOP spending at least 50% of his time in Kunduz. By the end of the first quarter SIKA-North had six local technical staff based in Kunduz in addition to the DCOP's frequent presence there. To date, three other senior Stability Team staff and the COP are based in Mazar along with the majority of the operational staff. In the first quarter of the project, SIKA-North made important progress towards achieving the first three intermediate results and establishing strong working relationships with GIROA entities in Kunduz, and in Aliabad district in particular. SIKA-North also developed strong relations with other international and local development actors operating in the area.

**Activities Towards Achievement of IR 1: Provincial and district entities increasingly address sources of instability and take measures to respond to the population's development and governance concerns.**

In order to gain a better understanding of conditions on the ground in the provisionally targeted districts and to formulate some initial ideas on the localization of the SAM (Formerly known as the DSF), in its first month the SIKANorth team conducted a series of meetings with various stakeholders. Contact was initiated with the implementing partners of the stabilization programs of GIZ and KFW in Baghlan and Kunduz provinces, primarily ACTED and the Agha Khan Foundation. Following this, a meeting was held at USAID attended by the SIKANorth team (COP, DCOP, and CBA), as well as the SIKANorth COR along with representatives of STABU, (District Stability Framework Coordinator and Stabilization Officer) in order to coordinate the localization of the SAM as the project moves forward. Additionally, the CBA met with ASI's Afghan SAM expert for discussions on how the SAM could be made more accessible to District Governors, DDAs and CDCs, as well as different training methodologies that might be used in the dissemination of the SAM in our target districts. This expert later joined SIKANorth as a Stabilization Director as is currently managing the implementation of the SAM training in Kunduz.

During the next two months of the first quarter, SIKANorth continued to build its contacts, coordinate and collaborate with stakeholders, develop its tools for analysis and training, and build its team. SIKANorth technical staff held a number of meetings with various stakeholders operating in Kunduz province to further various program objectives including situational awareness and district resource mapping, and more importantly to lay a strong foundation to build SIKANorth's working relationships and facilitate implementation of activities in Kunduz province. The COP met with other SIKA COPs to discuss MRRD's inputs into the projects, in addition to meeting with the

advisor for Planning and Monitoring of the UNDP Sub-National Governance Program to discuss their work in SIKANorth's target districts. The CBA met with the Agha Khan Foundation (AKF) to discuss coordination and cooperation, particularly AKF's training of the Aliabad DDA so that SIKA can build on,



SIKANorth DCOP and SD meet at the DDA office in Aliabad district with Aliabad DDA members and district officials to introduce the SIKANorth program.



Aliabad District Governor, center, meets with SIKANorth DCOP, right of DG, and district officials to discuss SIKANorth.

and avoid duplicating, efforts in this sphere. The DCOP held several meetings with District Entities over this period, including a meeting in the PRRD Kunduz office with the head of the PRRD, the head of the Aliabad district DDA, and the SIKANorth COR. The DCOP also held a meeting with the Provincial Governor, the head of the PRRD, and the USAID COR to introduce SIKANorth to the Provincial Governor, in preparation for the subsequent kickoff meeting held in Kunduz with around 100 participants to introduce and discuss SIKANorth with prominent stakeholders including members of the PRRD, DG, DDA, CDCs, and USAID.

The SIKA-North team also made strong progress in the first quarter towards its situational awareness, a key component of IR 1. This included several informative meetings held with the implementing partners of the GIZ and KFW stabilization programs in Baghlan and Kunduz (ACTED, AKF, and CBSG), to discuss strategies, lessons learned, and possibilities for future cooperation. The CBA also conducted a desk review of existing reports, conflict analyses, and other materials for Kunduz and Baghlan provinces that will form a key element of the district stability profiles and help populate the SAM.

Finally, the SAM was an essential part of the program's progress towards IR 1 during the first quarter. In terms of preparation for the roll out of the SAM into Aliabad, the SD attended a SAM training organized



SIKA-North SD conducts SAM training in Aliabad to the first Aliabad CDC Cluster.

### **Activities Towards Achievement of IR 2: Provincial and District entities understand what organizations and provincial line departments work within their geographic areas, what kind of service they provide, and how the population can access these services.**

Progress toward IR 2 centered on the Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool (OCAT). The Stability Team conducted a review of capacity assessment tools used in conflict and post-conflict environments and adapted DAI's OCAT for use with District Entities in the Kunduz context, through consultations with the Stability Team. Training modules, a guide for facilitators, and a comprehensive scoring guide was developed, and OCAT and CCAT training was rolled out for the Aliabad DIT and SWGAs. Results of the OCAT assessments will allow SIKA-North to identify weaknesses in a District Entity's operational capacity, target areas for intervention, and design capacity building activities that will help District Entities address sources of instability. OCAT assessments are slated to begin during the third week of July and roll out over the next several weeks.

SIKA-North also made progress towards gender-focused programming, with the Gender Adviser conducting a desk review of gender activities in Kunduz and stakeholders in the province involved in gender-focused issues, in addition to various governance programs in this sphere implemented in Afghanistan. The Gender Advisor also organized a series of meetings with relevant actors involved in these activities, including the UNAMA Governance Team Leader and Gender Unit representatives in Mazar.

### **Activities Towards Achievement of IR 3: Provincial authorities improve their ability to communicate with district entities in order to help them better understand their population's needs and prioritize basic service delivery interventions.**

Activities focused on IR 3 have been preliminary in the first quarter, and similarly to IR 2 they have focused on capacity assessment of District Entities'. The Stability Team conducted research on assessing communications capacity of government entities, and reviewed capacity assessment tools used in similar environments to tailor SIKANorth's Communications Capacity Assessment Tool (CCAT) to the District Entities in Kunduz. Training modules, a guide for facilitators, and a comprehensive scoring guide was developed, and OCAT and CCAT training was rolled out for the Aliabad DIT and SWGAs. Results of the CCAT assessments will allow SIKANorth to identify strategic areas of intervention to improve the communication of District Entities, enabling them to more effectively communicate with their constituents and one another. CCAT assessments will be conducted in conjunction with the OCAT, and are slated to begin during the third week of July and roll out over the next several weeks.

**Activities Towards Achievement of IR 4: Provincial Authorities are able to improve basic service delivery by using GIRoA, CDCs, DDAs and ASOP DCCs, which gain capacity to plan, design, implement and monitor projects, with a focus on labor-intensive projects or productive infrastructure.**

The bulk of activities aimed at achieving IR 4 will be implemented over the next 2-3 quarters of project implementation. To date, SIKANorth has drafted and submitted its Grants Manual for review by USAID, and anticipates providing training to MRRD and the SWG in the next quarter on SIKANorth's grants processes and procedures to facilitate grants to DEs in targeted districts.

During the first quarter, SIKANorth has also begun a review of the type and level of capacity building provided by various organizations and government entities in the targeted districts. Situational awareness activities, the OCAT and CCAT, and meetings and interviews with relevant stakeholders will also contribute to mapping the capacity building efforts in the target districts over the next several weeks, to avoid duplicating previous efforts, to learn from past experiences, and to build a comprehensive picture of each district.

# CHAPTER III: CONTRACT DELIVERABLES

The following deliverables were delivered during the reporting period:

- **Mobilization Plan:** The mobilization plan covered the first 90 days of SIKA-North's operations and included plans for achieving both operational and programmatic goals such as mobilizing expatriate staff, identifying project facilities and recruiting national staff.

The Mobilization Plan was originally submitted 29 March, 2012; based on comments from the COR, the plan was revised and resubmitted 3 April, 2012.

- **Baseline Collection Plan:** The Baseline Collection plan maps out how SIKA-North will establish the baselines which will allow SIKA North to evaluate the initial situation of the districts and District Entities upon SIKA North entry in the districts; create a base for discussions with the districts entities in order to establish what the sources of instability are in the districts using the localized SAM mechanism; program against these sources of instability through technical assistance and grants; and evaluate the impact of these activities and constantly adapt the program to the evolution of the stability in the district.

The plan had originally envisioned SIKA-North conducting extensive perception surveys within the program's area of operation through the subcontractor ACSOR, but in consultation with the COR, it has been determined that this service will be provided through the MISTI program and this activity has been removed from SIKA-North program

The Baseline Collection Plan was submitted 29 March, 2012, but will be revised upon approval of the Performance Management Plan described below.

- **Grants Manual:** The Grants Manual describes how SIKA-North will use grants under contract for the achievement of the objective of program, to assist GIROA at the district and provincial levels to respond to the population's development and governance concerns to better instill confidence and build stability.

The Grants Manual was submitted 17 April, 2012.

- **Work Plan:** This Work Plan describes how DAI will operationalize SIKA-North to achieve the program's four Intermediate Results (IRs) and overall objective. It describes how and when SIKA-North will meet deadlines for completion of all required deliverables and implement proposed activities.

The Work Plan was submitted 21 April, 2012;

- **Communications and Outreach Strategy:** The Communications and Outreach Strategy defines communications needs, partners and solutions based on the four IRs of the SIKA-North program. The main objective of the plan is to ensure that all the activities have an optic that is in line with the GIROA general outreach strategy, but with an improved capacity.

The Communications and Outreach Strategy was submitted 7 May, 2012.

- **Branding and Marking Plan:** The Branding and Marking Plan describes how SIKA-North will use signage and messaging to achieve the overall objective of the program and bolster the profile and legitimacy of GIRoA entities within the program's area of operation

The Branding and Marking Plan was submitted 9 May, 2012.

- **Performance Management Plan:** The Performance Management Plan includes performance indicator reference sheets for each proposed indicator. It is designed to provide for economical, standardized and repeatable monitoring and reporting processes that are easily incorporated into the project M&E systems.

The Performance Management Plan was submitted 5 July, 2012; SIKA-North received comments from the COR on 12 July, 2012 and the team is currently in the process of incorporating those comments in our resubmission.