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STABILITY IN KEY AREAS (SIKA) - EAST

QUARTERLY REPORT
REPORTING PERIOD
DEC 8 - 2011 – MAR 7 -2012

Contract Number: AID-306-C-12-00002

March 2012

This publication was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared by AECOM.

STABILITY IN KEY AREAS SIKA - EAST

QUARTERLY REPORT

Submitted to:

USAID Afghanistan

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AECOM International Development

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report covers the activities of the SIKA-East program for the Quarterly period December 2011 through February 2012. The report summarizes the activities undertaken during the reporting period detailing progress made towards achievement of program goals.

Major achievements during this period included the kick-off meeting with USAID on December 19, 2011, during which USAID's Deputy Office Director reviewed the requirements and expectations of the contract. The Office of Administrative Affairs, the AECOM team and the COTR were in attendance. The COTR provided a technical overview of the program.



A senior team of AECOM staff members were mobilized in Kabul during the first week following the award of the contract to organize the rapid start-up of SIKA-East. The team included AECOM's COO Torge Gerlach, SIKA-East Engagement Manager Sara Jones, SIKA-East DCOP Mojeeb Stanikzai, as well as others involved in operations and logistics. The Chief of Party John Lister joined the program in early January and held a series of meetings with the COTR and MRRD to ensure the timely and smooth implementation of the program.

During this Quarter SIKA-East reached significant milestones: initial submission of the workplan to USAID; the development of baseline and perception research tools; and the development of the program's Performance Management Plan (PMP). SIKA-East staff also presented the program modalities to the MRRD and IDLG senior staff liaisons together with USAID. Prior to this period, MRRD and USAID agreed on selection criteria to choose the initial 4 provinces and 8 districts where SIKA-East would first focus its resources: Baraki Barak District in Logar Province, Saydabad, Chak-e-Wardak and Nirkh Districts of Maidan Wardak Province; Zurmat and Waza Zadran Districts of Paktya Province; and Deh Yak and Andar Districts of Ghazni Province were selected, and initial steps were undertaken to recruit local staff to begin to implement the workplan.

SIKA-East program staff moved from the Technologists Inc (Ti) office to permanent offices located on 15th Street, Wazir Akbar Khan in early February. To aid in the start-up, SIKA-East received expendables and NXP office equipment from the ASOP project. A physical inventory, the assets from ASOP has been completed. The creation of a Receiving and Inspection (R&I) flow chart has also been completed and is being used to facilitate the inventory process. The renewal of AECOM's Afghanistan business operating license was initiated during this Quarter, and the SIKA-East Logistics team was trained to operate the OneSource inventory database.

The Baraki Barak District of Logar province was selected to be the first targeted district for the SIKA-East Program. The SIKA-East and MRRD coordinating team developed an Afghanized version of the District Stability Framework (DSF) for use during the initial rollout in the Baraki Barak District. Preparations for the program implementation included a two-day workshop to test materials, messages and staff readiness. Following MRRD concurrence for a startup date, SIKA-East staff will roll the program out.

During this Quarter, Jelani Popal, the former head of IDLG, visited SIKA-East's Wazir Akbar Khan Office. Mr. Popal spoke to SIKA-East staff and answered questions. He implored them to do their best to implement the SIKA program objectives adding that they had the necessary expertise and a sense of patriotism, and were morally bound through the teachings of Islam to help their fellow citizens. The visit

of Mr. Popal contextualized the significance of SIKA-East in contributing to the peace and stabilization of Afghanistan and provided an important motivational moment to SIKA-East national staff.

Finally, during this Quarter the managers of SIKA-East's Provincial Management Units (PMU) for Logar, Wardak and Paktya met with their Provincial Rural Rehabilitation and Development (PRRD) counterparts and Provincial government officials to discuss the program and ways in which they could collaborate to ensure its successful implementation. The PMUs were able to establish the Logar and Baraki Barak field offices. The Wardak field office will open early in the next Quarter.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

MRRD AND SIKA-EAST

SIKA-East management is in the process of building a strong and productive working relationship with MRRD. SIKA-East will work closely with MRRD to ensure that it is fully engaged at the national, provincial and district levels. To this end, the GIRoA has appointed Mr. Haider Ghulam, the Ministry's Deputy Policy Director, as the primary point of contact for SIKA-East. MRRD, USAID, and the SIKA-East team will collaborate throughout the project's implementation. During this Quarter, SIKA-East COP Mr. John Lister, MRRD liaison Mr. Haider Ghulam, USAID COTR Ms. Jodi Rosenstein, and USAID's Stability Coordination Manager Mr. Mike McParland met with the then Minister of RRD Mr. Jarullah Mansori. The key points that emerged during the meeting were:

- SIKA seemed more oriented toward development than to stabilization and was looking at the possible gains in employment and poverty reduction versus USAID focus on moving districts toward transition.
- In terms of capacity building projections, the minister noted that MRRD's overall capacity exceeded those of other ministries. He acknowledged that capacity at lower levels was lacking especially in some of the more remote provinces such as Paktika. He agreed that the GIRoA's legitimacy was tied to improving performance at the district level.
- The Minister emphasized that MRRD must have a lead role in SIKA. He described a proposed policy change developed by MRRD at the request of President Karzai that was now being considered by the Council of Cabinet. The policy proposed transforming CDCs into Community Councils and DDAs into District Councils. In Mr. Mansoori's view these bodies were likely to become the face of local government in the near future.
- Mr. Mansoori placed strong emphasis on the relationship between stability and sustainable community development projects.

SIKA-East staff established a close working partnership with MRRD. An initial introductory meeting was held on February 7-8 2012 with MRRD provincial directors, female representatives of the Ministry and SIKA-East staff. MRRD's input in creating an Afghan version of the District Stability Framework (DSF) and rolling-out DSF workshops helped move the program into the implementation phase during this Quarter.

IRI/DISTRICT STABILITY FRAMEWORK PROCESS

On 28th January, SIKA-East staff held a workshop of key stakeholders including MRRD, ASI and USAID colleagues. The workshop included people from a variety of backgrounds with varying degrees of familiarity with DSF. Participants examined the applicability of DSF core principles at the district level. Recommendations from this meeting were used to start the process of modifying the DSF methodology to make it resonate with District Entities (DE).

On February 7-8, SIKA-East staff presented the DSF methodology to MRRD partners (provincial directors, female MRRD representatives mentioned above) and SIKA-East staff. As a result of feedback received at this meeting, the SIKA-East team began the process of adapting the DSF into a more culturally useable tool in the target districts.



SIKA-East Program COP answers question at February's DSF session.

This meeting was followed up at a 2 ½ day workshop held from February 29th - March 2nd. SIKA-East staff and MRRD counterparts offered recommendations on how to best adapt the DSF methodology for use at the district level. The outcome was the first iteration of a modified methodology, which will be tested in the planned Baraki Barak workshop. The input received at this meeting contributed to SIKA-East's approach to other target districts.

Throughout February, the IR1 team facilitated internal discussions on the SIKA-East rollout process, the specific roles of individual IRs, and the role of the support departments in the implementation process. The aim of these discussions was to develop a detailed process map that would ensure better internal coordination by identifying areas for the four IR teams to work together. The discussions were intended to facilitate a project management approach for the various phases of the SIKA-East program roll out.

Highlights during this Quarter included:

- The development of innovative ways to adapt the DSF methodology to make it relevant at the provincial and district levels. These proposed approaches will be tested at the planned Baraki Barak workshop and the feedback produced will help determine the approach to other targeted districts.
- The DSF brainstorming session deliberately included people from a variety of backgrounds including senior MRRD counterparts Mr. Ghulam Haider, Dr. Ahmad Fahim, Mr. Qambar Ali, National Area Based Development Program Advisors and Ms. Sonia Rahimyar. SIKA-E national and expatriate staff also participated in the workshop. The result, achieved through consensus, was a decision to produce an Afghan version of the DSF. It is in the process of being translated in to Pashtu and Dari to be used in the targeted districts.



The DCOP addresses the workshop on the interactions of the various IRs

The COP, DCOP, IR1 and the IR3 directors provided clear information about the goals and objectives of SIKA-East and the implementation methodology of the program to the satisfaction and consent of the participants.

IR2 - SERVICE PROVIDER CATALOGUE

In preparation for the initial phase of field activities the SIKA-East team completed a Service Provider Catalogue (SPC) for Logar Province. The SPC is intended to provide district entities and other partners at the local level with valuable information about which organizations and agencies are providing services in their districts. The IR2 team developed a questionnaire to more effectively gather this information from the relevant ministries at the national and sub-national level and, with support of PMU staff, compiled a comprehensive list of resources available for Baraki Barak District in Logar, where SIKA East will start implementing its program. The IR2 team is currently working on developing a Strategy for Promotion

and Dissemination of SPC and commenced gathering information needed for the Service Provider Catalogue in Paktya and Maidan Wardak.

IR3/ COMMUNICATIONS

In this Quarter, the IR3-SIKA-East Communications Team prepared the initial program rollout in Baraki Barak. This involved creating a working set of Focus Group and Polling baseline survey questions, establishing common SIKA-East language, identifying potential communications vendors who have the capacity to work in the targeted provinces, and hiring and building a strong and effective Kabul-based communications team. The IR3 team also created a professional ‘Common Look and Feel’ plan for SIKA-East to ensure the uniformity of branding across the districts where SIKA East will be working. The ‘Common Look and Feel’ as a part of the Branding Implementation Plan has been submitted to USAID and is awaiting final approval.



IR3 Senior Program Manager addresses the workshop on strategic communications

The team has been working with all IRs by providing communications and reporting support. To this end, the IR3 team developed a draft set of provincial profiles, which will form the basis of further research in the next Quarter at the district level. The team worked closely with the Capacity Building Team to draft a set of communications training modules aimed at provincial and district level governments.

Highlights of IR3 activities in this Quarter include:

Two completed Requests for Proposals (RFPs) for the Polling Survey and Focus Groups were approved. These RFPs will contribute to the baseline assessment and are integral for the projects monitoring and evaluation process. Other activities include:

- Draft Focus Group and Polling baselines survey questions to support the RFP.
- A draft Strategic Communications Plan for SIKA-East.
- Collaboration with the Capacity Building Team to develop a series of communications training modules aimed at local and provincial government officials in four key areas: internal communications, external communications, intragovernmental communications, and public outreach and community consultations.
- A Communications Capacity Assessment survey administered in targeted provinces and districts, in cooperation with the Capacity Building Team.
- Hiring all Kabul-based staff.
- A skills building workshop for SIKA staff on the ‘Essentials of Communications’.
- The production of a daily media brief consisting of stories from eastern Afghanistan for SIKA-East staff.
- A draft set of provincial profiles.
- A briefing session with the Governor of Logar Province, during which a discussion was held on a draft list of potential questions for a proposed media event to announce the program role out in Logar.
- Finalized common language that will form the basis of briefing materials to be used across all IRs.

IR4/GRANTS

- A Grants Manual has been drafted and shared with USAID; comments have been incorporated.
- 50% of Kabul based staff has been hired, with the other half in process.
- Recruitment of provincial staff is underway.
- SIKA-East implementing partner, International Relief and Development, Inc. (IRD) mobilized a team to focus on recruitment and start-up activities for the grants component.

In the first two months of the start up, IRD focused on the recruitment process of staff in the headquarters and at the provincial and district levels. IRD's Grants, Subcontracts and Compliance Manager, Ms Carla Clemons began working on SIKA-East full time on March 5, 2012.

The SIKA – East Grants Manual was submitted to USAID on January 19, 2012. Since all SIKA-East team members were not able to provide input on the first draft of the Grants Manual, it is anticipated that the Grants Manual will be revised after the SIKA-East team has the opportunity to address and discuss the grants cycle and the program's relationship with MRRD and other government entities.

MONITORING & EVALUATION

The Monitoring and Evaluation team recruitment process was begun during this Quarter. The M&E Director arrived in country on 6th January and most of the M&E national staff has been hired. Meetings and discussions have taken place between the IR team leads, and the technical and support departments to design effective indicators. The M&E team developed a basic set of tools including an M&E database; a draft proposal for “baseline indicators” which includes a) objectives b) methodology c) sample size d) questionnaire e) resources required; and a Performance Management Plan (PMP) which will be harmonized with the USAID Measuring Impacts of Stabilization Program (MISTI).

Indicators for the baseline survey and capacity building have been developed; and the Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) team is working with the SIKA-East Communications Team to refine the Survey and Focus Group questions so they capture the necessary data for the baseline assessment.

CAPACITY BUILDING TEAM

- Has developed capacity building and training indicators, which have been incorporated into the PMP.
- Developed a training provider catalogue, listing organizations and private companies providing specialized training in project and grants management, financial management, and other key areas of program implementation. The catalogue is intended to provide district entities and other partners at the local level with valuable information about available training and capacity-development resources.
- Held a one-day internal workshop on February 9th to discuss participant questions and comments on the initial DSF meeting.
- Developed job descriptions for district, provincial, and Kabul based capacity-building staff.
- Has supported all IRs by developing capacity building and training materials and has assisted in the staff recruitment process.

CENTRAL SUPPORT UNIT

During this Quarter, the Central Support Unit (CSU) has been playing a vital role supporting SIKA-East Operations in the set-up of the new office and participated in the DSF workshops held in February. The CSU is designed to support SIKA-East implementation, and specifically provide logistical and technical support to the program expansion into provinces and districts. The CSU helped draft the SIKA-East project cycle, and supported the IR4 engineering section in gathering the necessary engineering software, a technical manual from MRRD/NSP and geological data from USGS. The CSU provided significant support during the recruitment of ICT and Translation department staff.

The Central Support Unit assisted in finalizing the Service Provider Catalogue for Baraki Barak. The CSU sent two staff to Logar to collect the necessary information for the Catalogue. Staff met with the Deputy Governor, as well as the Director of Education, Director of Economics, Director of Agriculture, Director of the PRRD and several non-governmental institutions as part of this mission.

Highlights of CSU activities in this Quarter are listed below.

- The CSU provided translation support to the various IRs for a wide range of documents such as: the SIKA-East FAQ sheet, Presidential Decree (Number 62 which dissolved private security companies), SIKA-East draft brochure, business cards, ID cards, the Communication Capacity Assessment, and the SIKA-East roll-out presentation.
- CSU contributed to the design of the draft Service Provider Catalogue with the IR2 team.
- With the resignation of SIKA-East's PMU manager for Paktya, the CSU staff is providing interim management until such time that the position is filled.

The CSU unit worked closely with all SIKA East departments and IRs to ensure the effective implementation of the program.

HUMAN RESOURCES UNIT

During this Quarter the following staff has been recruited and hired:

- Eighty-two male staff have been hired.
- Twelve female staff have been hired.
- Four AECOM Expatriate LTTA were hired: the COP, Security Director, IR1 Director and Finance Director.

GENDER POLICY

Gender equity is an important part of the SIKA-East program. SIKA-East staff is currently engaging key stakeholders at the national level including MRRD and USAID to explore ways in which the program can incorporate this goal in both the composition of its work force and the program's direct or indirect beneficiaries. SIKA-East has organized a series of meetings and is developing a comprehensive gender policy for the program.

FINANCE

	A	B	C	B+C = D	A - D
Month	Total Obligated Amount	Total Amount Invoiced Through February 29, 2012	Actual Field Office Expenses through March 15, 2012	Total Actual Expenses	Estimated Remaining Amount of Obligated Funds
1st Quarter	\$ 25,000,000	1,246,572.36	297,142.31	\$1,543,715	\$23,456,285.33

SECURITY

- SIKA-East's security team is pursuing a contract with the APPF for guard force services with the assistance of its newly licensed RMC (GardaWorld).
- The security team has adapted AECOM's OneSource portal to facilitate, coordinate and monitor staff movements. The security module within OneSource was designed exclusively for SIKA-East's needs. All international staff are now using the system. The streamlining of the transport scheduling has enabled the security department to assess key metrics regarding usage of vehicles, trends in daily travel, and anticipate potential difficulties.
- The security team is working in close coordination with Garda World to facilitate the implementation of security policies for general security and field trips.
- SIKA-East and Garda World have conducted a training workshop for all SIKA-East employees on security protocols that must be observed in the event of fire, earthquake and direct/indirect attacks.
- Security upgrades of the Office 1 and Guest House 2 have been completed, A security assessment of SIKA-East's Provincial Management Unit offices in Logar and Maidan Wardak provinces was also completed.

PROCUREMENT DEPARTMENT

- 48 requests for quotations have been issued
- 68 purchase order have been awarded for a total amount AFS 25,817,263.02
- 205 purchase requests have been completed

FIELD ACTIVITIES

LOGAR PROVINCE

The PMU manager has been hired for the province and has started his fieldwork. Recruitment of remaining staff positions has started.

- Office building is rented and a lease agreement will be signed between both parties. Procurement of office furniture is underway.
- The Service Provider Catalogue is completed. All relevant information has been submitted to IR2 staff in Kabul.
- The IR 3 Communications Capacity Assessment is underway.
- The Community Development, Grant and Finance officers for Pul-i-Alam have been selected and hired.

- The Capacity Development and Community Development personnel for Baraki Barak have been hired. The Grants Officer designate is in the approval process.

PAKTYA PROVINCE

The PMU manager for Paktya was hired but resigned due to personal reasons. The recruitment of a new manager is currently underway. During his brief tenure, the former PMU manager was able to brief the PRRD Director and establish a common understanding between the PMU and the Provincial Governor. He also met with the Director of the Cultural Department, Economic Department, and the ACCI to collect basic information for the Service Provider Catalogue.

MAIDAN WARDAK PROVINCE

The PMU manager has been hired and has started his fieldwork. Recruitment for the remaining vacancies is underway. The collection of the basic information for the Service Provider Catalogue has been initiated.

GHAZNI PROVINCE

Plans for the establishment of a provincial office have commenced. Staff are expected to be in place in the next Quarter. In the interim period IR3's PMU staff is serving as the Ghazni point of contact.