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STABILITY IN KEY AREAS (SIKA) - EAST

MONTHLY REPORT APRIL 2012

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STABILITY IN KEY AREAS (SIKA) - EAST

MONTHLY REPORT

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Background **1**

SIKA Key Program Activities **2**

 District Rollout Plan and Program Development 2

 Grants 3

 Monitoring and Evaluation 4

 Capacity BUILDING & Gender 4

 Communications 5

GIRoA Coordination **5**

Operations, Support, and Field Activities **7**

 Maidan Wardak Province 7

 Ghazni Province 8

 Logar Province 8

 Paktia Province 8

Finance and Security **9**

 Finance activities 9

 Security Activities 9

BACKGROUND

This report covers activities of the SIKA-East project during the month of April 2012. The report reflects programmatic activities accomplished over the past month and is split into four primary subject areas. Under each header, a brief summary of key programmatic initiatives is provided.

While awaiting approval of the Implementation Letter between USAID and MRRD which will permit full implementation of SIKA-East, major achievements in this period included the establishment of provincial and district offices in Logar, Maidan Wardak, Paktia and Ghazni. The recruited Provincial Management Unit (PMU) heads and the key staff moved to the provincial capitals and target districts to accelerate the operational start-up. To ensure full integration with the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD), the SIKA-East teams will be fully collocated with the provincial RRD offices, while district staff will work out of the allocated office space in district governor compounds. By the end of April, SIKA-East has recruited close to 40 percent of its provincial and district staff and will continue intense hiring in the target districts in May in order to prepare for the quick roll out and program implementation.

During the reporting period, SIKA-East reached an important milestone – the development of a community-friendly stability analysis methodology based on the District Stability Framework (DSF). The modified methodology is significantly streamlined and adapted to the cultural and social context of Afghanistan, however, it retained the fundamental analysis required to distinguish between a needs-based development and stabilization programming by using language and examples that will resonate with local communities. A joint SIKA-East and MRRD teams will facilitate work sessions at the district level and work with District Entities (DE) to identify sources of instability and effectively program against them.

In April, SIKA-East has initiated a comprehensive training effort to prepare its field staff to facilitate stabilization work sessions. All newly recruited field personnel and Kabul-based staff participated in regular weekly workshops on the SIKA structure and programing and the stability analysis methodology. Moving forward, SIKA-East plans to significantly expand the effort and provide the training and regular orientations to colleagues from other SIKAs as well as MRRD and other government counterparts who might play a role in SIKA programming.

SIKA KEY PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Below is a list of programmatic activity. The list is divided by program area and department. Should you require any additional information on any specific item please do not hesitate to contact SIKA-East Reporting Team at reports@sikaeast.com:

DISTRICT ROLLOUT PLAN AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

District roll out planning continued throughout the month with SIKA-East working closely with MRRD and USAID to prepare the program implementation. In April, SIKA-East intensified the operational start up in provincial and district offices and made the most notable progress on developing a modified stabilization analysis methodology, which will serve as the basis for stabilization work sessions at the district level. Throughout the period, MRRD provided valuable input into all program-related activities.

During the reporting period, the Provincial Management Unit (PMU) heads with the full support of Kabul-based Operations worked closely with their Provincial Rural Rehabilitation and Development (PRRD) counterparts and relevant district authorities to ensure quick operational start-up at provincial and district level. To bridge the operational gap until the procurement process for the pre-fabricated offices is completed, SIKA-EAST is sharing the limited office space with PRRD. At the district level, SIKA-EAST has secured workspace in district government compounds and the minor renovations and procurement of furniture and equipment were ongoing in April. To complement the field start-up, SIKA-EAST in close collaboration and cooperation with MRRD intensified the recruitment process in Logar, Wardak, Paktia and Ghazni and conducted interviews and selected candidates for a dozen of key positions at the provincial and district offices. PRRD representatives participated in the interviews for SIKA-East field positions and provided constructive and valuable input into the recruitment process.

To provide support to PMU managers and create an effective conduit for communication with the Kabul office, SIKA-East Program Support Unit (PSU) assumed full field coordination and designated full-time points of contact for each province. Apart from assisting the field, PSU developed a Roll out Tracker to follow progress on the status of provincial and district offices, including renovations, procurement of furniture and equipment, as well as staffing. The tracker is updated on a weekly basis and has served as an effective management tool for the field start-up.

After several months of workshops and intense consultations with Afghan colleagues and counterparts, SIKA-East finalized the modified stabilization analysis methodology based on the District Stability Framework (DSF). The streamlined methodology retained the core analysis of DSF, but replaced the heavily conceptual elements and the original militarized language with culturally appropriate terminology and examples that will resonate with the district-level audience. This methodology will rely on a facilitative method to assist District Entities (DE) to identify sources of instability and program against them. IR1 has developed an accompanying instructor guides for the facilitation modules and received substantial input from MRRD and USAID.

To ensure meaningful integration between SIKA-East and MRRD in this process, the SIKA-East district facilitation team will consist of SIKA program employees and RRD Community Mobilizer. In late April,

SIKA-East commenced with weekly workshops to provide comprehensive introduction to SIKA program and the Stability Analysis Tool. Throughout the month, IR1 organized orientations for SIKA-East field staff, as well as the USAID Deputy Field Program Managers from SIKA target districts. Each district team, including the MRRD Community Mobilizer, is required to attend a three-day Training of Trainers (ToT) to prepare to facilitate the stability analysis work sessions at the district level. SIKA-EAST will continue conducting comprehensive orientations and trainings for the newly recruited and field staff on a regular basis, with the goal of eventually expanding the modules and involving MRRD in relevant workshops, both as trainers and participants.

In addition to training SIKA-East provincial and district staff, IR1 – with support of the MRRD and the Capacity Building and Gender Department - conducted an all-day orientation on SIKA to over 20 gender focal points from MRRD, Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG) and Ministry of Women Affairs (MOWA). The objective of the workshop titled “Women in SIKA-East” was to bring awareness of the SIKA program and discuss how to effectively involve women in all phases of the program implementation. The event was the first step in the broader effort to incorporate gender mainstreaming into the SIKA program.



IR1 Trainer explains the SIKA
Stability Analysis cycle

To assist the anticipated program implementation, IR2 developed the first draft of the Service Provider Catalog (SPC) Promotion and Dissemination Strategy, which identifies the different target groups for distribution and modalities on possible outreach. The team is also in the process of design and development of on line central database, which will host all information already specified in the SPC.

GRANTS

In April, the IR4 team and the Grants team met with MRRD (National Solidarity Program and National Area Based Development Program) counterparts and discussed their program operations, successes and lessons learned. The meeting helped provide information for the grants processes, which will be used while implementing the program. The grant team also developed and communicated requirements for the grant database, including the possible incorporation of smart phone technology for field monitoring and reporting. Also during the reporting period, the team has developed the Grants Manual and accompanying annexes, including the templates and forms to be used in the grant development process. In close coordination with other IRs, the IR4 team refined grants cycle workflow and a narrative.

Most of the Engineering Support Group (ESG) efforts were based on the expected approval to begin engagement with the MRRD and focused on preparation for the rollout in Logar Province. The ESG expended considerable efforts on HR and staffing, especially for Logar, Wardak, Ghazni and Paktya provinces and the associated districts. To further prepare the engineering technical advisors for dispatch to the field a Field Engineers Training Update Program has been developed for all incoming provincial and district engineers. To assure reliable communications with district and provincial engineers, the ESG

researched and successfully field-tested GPS capable cellphones for use in the field; these will allow the transmission of voice/text communication, geo-tagged project photos and personnel locations.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

M&E team and representatives of the SIKA-EASTAST, SIKA-West and SIKA-South met in April with the leadership of the new Measuring Impacts of Stabilization Initiatives (MISTI) project to discuss ways to collaborate, particularly on the baseline survey and focus groups, including the development of a platform to conduct surveys and measure overall stability trends. SIKA-East representatives were asked to take an active part in the upcoming Monitoring and Evaluation Summit, which is scheduled to take place in May.

Also in April, the M&E team finalized the new version of the Performance Management Plan (PMP) and submitted it to USAID for a review and approval. The revised version is fully harmonized with the SIKA-West PMP.

CAPACITY BUILDING & GENDER



SIKA-East Staff discuss gender

Capacity Building department continued playing a key role in SIKA-EAST program. Apart from providing support to other IRs, Capacity Building is currently updating the capacity building and training service provider catalogue, which will be uploaded into a central data base.

During the reporting period, the newly recruited Director of the department arrived to Kabul and subsequently met with all IR units and relevant departments to conduct an initial baseline capacity building and training needs assessment. The findings of the process will lead in development of a “Capacity Building Activities Plan” for future. The director closely coordinated with individual IRs to streamline gender activities and had meeting with MRRD’s Women Affairs Department and other organizations to develop strategies to effectively incorporate the gender component into the program implementation.

In compliance with AECOM and USAID code of conduct policy and Trafficking in Person (TIP), the Capacity Building and Gender unit conducted the code of conduct training for all (175) SIKA-EASTAST staff including CCNs and expatriates. Each employee has also completed an on-line TIP course.

Gender in SIKA-EAST is one of the important components of the program. During the reporting period, the Capacity Building and Gender department has made a significant progress in bringing awareness of the importance of gender mainstreaming in SIKA-EAST program and has established an internal gender-working group - “SIKA Women’s Circle”. The objective of this working group is to ensure that designated focal point oversees gender activities in his/her relevant department. Each IR and department designated an individual to be the gender focal point to ensure gender is fully integrated across SIKA-EAST program. A draft mandate is generated and will be finalized with consultation of focal points. In addition, the gender department started initial dialogue with MOWA, IDLG and MRRD gender focal

points. Development of first draft of Gender Strategy for SIKA-EAST- is under process and will be finalized by the end of May 2012.

Capacity Building and Gender department met with SIKA East representatives from Logar, Ghazni, Wardak and Paktia provinces to explore possibilities and ideas of how to integrate women in SIKA-EAST, mainly in project cycle and decision making process. Current situation of each province were discussed and analyzed in terms of MOWA presence and strength as well as, opportunities and threat for the women in the focused provinces and districts.



Participants take part in Code of Conduct workshop

COMMUNICATIONS

In April, IR3 finalized the District and Provincial profiles of Logar and Baraki Barak and is currently researching information necessary to complete the Paktia, Ghazni and Maidan Wardak profiles and prepare for the roll out. IR3 continued its various research and rollout activities. Communication training modules have been drafted and distributed to the capacity building team and other IRs in order to ensure alignment with local provincial and district environments.

The IR3 Director met with Amal Marjan to discuss the Ministries work in the Province and District and ways we can cooperate together improve government communication. We explained the SIKA-East program and the role of the various IRs. We inquired about the role of MoCIT in inter-governmental communication, and what MoCIT in general provides support to the government at provincial and district level. Mr. Marjan spoke about the Village Communication Network (VCN), as a potential area where SIKA-East and MoCIT could cooperate.

The IR3 team has also collated the DDP packages from Independent Directorate of Local Governance for SIKA-East. IR3 PMU officer provided support to the Ghazni PMU manager to coordinate and facilitate meetings with District Governor of Deh Yak and the District Governor of Andar, which provided additional opportunity to collect the DDA's information and gather information for service provider catalogue.

IR3 held a meeting with TLO (Tribal Liaison office) in an effort to gather district and provincial maps and other tribal information. The Deputy Director of TLO explained their project activities and expressed their future cooperation to share information with SIKA-East. It is hoped that a future meeting can be scheduled soon.

GIROA COORDINATION

SIKA-East continued working very closely with MRRD on the operational start up in the field as well as the key program-related activities. During the reporting period, SIKA-East held regular meetings with MRRD Chief Coordinator for SIKA Mr. Ghulam Haider to consult on SIKA's engagement strategy at the district level and receive MRRD input into the development of a modified stability analysis methodology and instructor guides for the modules. At the technical level, SIKA-East IR4, including Grants and

Engineering Departments also met with their counterparts from NSP and NABDP to discuss the ways of integrating the existing MRRD guidelines and manuals into the SIKA processes, and specifically, incorporating NSP practices into the SIKA-East Grants Manual. Moving forward, MRRD committed to designate specific points of contact in MRRD for each SIKA-East department to ensure close cooperation on specific technical elements relating to the work of individual IRs.

To further strengthen collaboration in the field, PRRD representatives participated in all interviews for SIKA-East field and program level positions and provided constructive and invaluable input into the recruitment process for the key positions. SIKA-East will continue reaching out to MRRD counterparts and other Afghan partners to ensure coherent program development and implementation.

OPERATIONS, SUPPORT, AND FIELD ACTIVITIES

The AECOM HR Specialist has developed an HR Manual to provide systematic guidance on HR rules and procedures. The HR Manual was also designed to synchronize SIKA-East HR policies with Afghanistan's labor legislation. The Employee's handbook has been approved by AECOM home office. During the reporting period AECOM has hired 12 CCNs with 75 more positions under process. In collaboration with the Capacity Building Team, HR conducted a 'Code of Conduct' training for all the CCNs and expatriate staff.

A Tax Identification Number (TIN) has been secured from Ministry of Finance (MoF) for 70 % of SIKA-East staff. Finance and HR are assisting in helping the remaining staff secure their TIN. Throughout April, the Audit department continued the internal audit of HR, Finance and Procurement departments.

In April, the operations department focused on the procurement of office equipment and pre-fabricated offices needed for the PMUs. As well, 84 purchase requests including the purchase orders for the pre-fabricated offices were processed over the reporting period



SIKA-East Field Staff conducting meetings in Wardak and Ghazni

Maidan Wardak Province

The PMU head of Maidan Wardak held a series of coordination meetings with PRRD staff and participated in a District Development Assembly (DDA) workshop organized by the PRRD. SIKA-East PMU Manager and PRRD Director agreed to establish strong coordination mechanism between DDA, Community Development Councils (CDC), and SIKA EAST Program.

During the reporting period, the PMU team also met with provincial director of MoWA and discussed the ways to involve women in the SIKA-EAST program at the provincial and district level. The MOWA director suggested that SIKA-East should recruit female candidates for program position, especially in the field, and emphasized that this would encourage greater participation of women in all phases of program implementation.

Ghazni Province

The PMU head and the IR3 officer met in April with Deh Yak District Governor Mr. Fazal Ahmad Tolwak to discuss future cooperation. The governor welcomed the program to the district and agreed to provide office space for SIKA-East district team in Deh Yak.

The team also accompanied the Ghazni PRRD Director to a coordination meeting with Mr. Niaz Mohammad Sahak Admin/Finance Director of Ghazni province. During the meeting, PRRD representatives introduced SIKA and spoke about its program objectives. Mr. Sahak welcomed SIKA-East staff and promised to support the initiative.

Logar Province

The Logar team established a fully functioning temporary PMU office on the Pul-i-Alam PRRD compound and secured a letter from the Baraki Barak district governor providing space for SIKA-East team on the district government compound.

The Logar team has met in April with PRRD counterparts, as well as the MRCA and Agriculture department directors. The meetings were designed to introduce the SIKA-East and to get feedback on the Service provider Catalog. The respective directors appreciated the initiative and promised to provide full support to the SIKA-East program.

Paktia Province

At the invitation of PRRD, the PMU team met with Paktia Provincial Governor to introduce SIKA-EAST program in Paktia. During the reporting period, the team also met with the head of provincial Peace council, as well as the Zurmat and Wazha Zadran DDA to discuss their existing capacity and future cooperation.

FINANCE AND SECURITY

FINANCE ACTIVITIES

Month	Total Obligated Amount	Amount Billed	Remaining Amount of Obligated Funds
APRIL	- \$25,000,000	- \$ 1,335,174	- \$21,571,944

SECURITY ACTIVITIES

Overall security measures are being reviewed with the necessary action being taken to ensure the safety of the CCN and expatriate staff. The security department and Garda World conducted a preliminary security drill on Sunday, 29 April 2012 as part of effort to familiarize staff with security procedure. The security department also compiled a set of in-house emergency procedures for all staff. The drills will continue to take place on a regular basis.

Garda World has signed a contract with Afghan Public Protection Force (APPF). The APPF integration is completed, with uniforms, weapons and ammunition issued to security staff. Three new personal security personnel have been added to the local security team and are being processed through APPF biometric and finance system to ensure a full vetting according to APPF regulations. However, obtaining a “tashkil” from the Ministry of Interior has remained a challenge to the full implementation of the program.