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# REGIONAL AFGHAN MUNICIPALITIES PROGRAM FOR URBAN POPULATIONS – REGIONAL COMMAND NORTH

**MONTHLY REPORT: FEBRUARY 2012**



*Photo: The Mayor of Sheberghan, along with representatives from the Governor's Office and the SDAG, officially opened the Sheberghan trash collection project on February 14, 2012.*

**MARCH 15, 2012**

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# CONTENTS

- ABBREVIATIONS & TERMS ..... II**
- ABOUT RAMP UP NORTH ..... 1**
- EXECUTIVE SUMMARY..... 2**
  - Programmatic Highlights .....2
- PROGRAMMING ACTIVITIES .....4**
  - Capacity Building .....4
  - Sustainable Service Delivery Improvement Projects.....8
- PLANNED MARCH ACTIVITES..... 11**
- APPENDIX: RU-N ONE-PAGERS ..... 12**

## ABBREVIATIONS & TERMS

CLIN	Contract Line Item Number
CO	Contracts Officer
COP	Chief of Party
COTR	Contracting Officer's Technical Representative
DAI	Development Alternatives Incorporated
DoWA	Department of Woman's Affairs
EA	Embedded Advisor
GDMA	General Directorate of Municipal Affairs
GIRoA	Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
IDLG	Independent Directorate of Local Governance
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MTL	Municipal Team Leader
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PAAG	Public Administration Advisory Group
PBB	Performance Based Budgeting
PBT	Project-based Training
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
RAMP UP program)	Regional Afghan Municipalities Program for Urban Populations (USAID
RC (E,W,N,S)	ISAF Regional Command East, West, North, South
RU-N	RAMP UP North
SDAG	Service Delivery Advisory Group
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
SOW	Scope of Work
TA	Technical Assistance
TAMIS	Technical Assistance Management Information System
TOR	Terms of Reference
ToT	Training of trainers
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government

### Terms

<i>gozar</i>	Neighborhood
<i>nahya</i>	Municipal District
<i>qaryadars</i>	village leaders
<i>wakil or kаланter</i>	<i>nahya</i> or <i>gozar</i> representative
<i>Tashkeel</i>	administrative structure of a GIRoA entity
<i>Safayi tax</i>	service charge and property tax
<i>Moustoufiat</i>	the provincial-level branch of the Ministry of Finance

## **ABOUT RAMP UP NORTH**

The purpose of the Regional Afghan Municipalities Program for Urban Populations for Regional Command North (RAMP UP North) is to create effective, responsive, democratic, transparent, and accountable municipal governance in the nine provinces that comprise the International Security Assistance Force's (ISAF's) Regional Command North.

RAMP UP North will: (1) increase the capacity of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) municipal officials, (2) markedly improve the delivery of municipal services to citizens in target municipalities, and (3) increase municipal capacity to enable, support, and sustain economic growth. As a result of the RAMP UP North, Afghan citizens will receive better services, understand the responsibilities of municipal leaders, play an active role in the municipal decision-making process, and see local governance structures as legitimate.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the month of February, RU-N advisors began to provide training and assistance to municipal officials in budget preparation and business registration and licensing—two areas of concern for many mayors. The Annual Municipal Budgets are due to the Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG) and the General Directorate of Municipal Affairs (GDMA) by April 10, 2012. RU-N will work with Mayors to develop timely budgets, while also helping to facilitate citizen input to shape spending priorities.

In addition, the first round service improvement projects continued to enter the implementation phase with six project kick off meetings and/or opening ceremonies this month. RU-N advisors and citizens continued to monitor ongoing projects on a daily basis. RU-N advisors also continued to provide project-based training this month, which mainly focused on monitoring projects and conducting public awareness campaigns.

RU-N held its first Mayors' Conference on February 7-8, where mayors provided positive feedback on RU-N activities, were updated on the status of projects, and were given in-depth training on budget preparation and business registration and licensing. The Mayors also had the opportunity to engage with GDMA officials on several topics. The response to the conference was very favorable, and RU-N plans to hold mayors' meetings quarterly.

Finally, RU-N held a workshop and training-of-trainers (ToT) session for embedded advisors, so that they are better prepared to provide technical assistance to mayors and municipal staff on budget preparation and business registration and licensing.

## PROGRAMMATIC HIGHLIGHTS

- In terms of capacity building, RU-N held a conference for mayors, a workshop for embedded advisors, and provided several consultations mainly focused on budget preparation and business registration and licensing. Project-based training is also ongoing.
- In terms of projects, RU-N facilitated the kick off meetings and/or opening ceremonies for five trash collection projects (Faizabad, Kunduz, Pul-e-Khumri, Sheberghan, and Taloqan) and one park improvement project (Sar-e-Pul). In addition, daily monitoring systems and forms have been developed and advisors are monitoring the progress of projects on a daily basis. Citizen monitoring groups have also been formed and citizens are being trained on monitoring basics.
- RU-N has focused on municipal revenue generation this month in the form of business registration and licensing. Mayors were eager to begin the process as a means of significant revenue generation for the



*Applicants for the business registration program survey team in Aybak took a written exam on February 26, 2012.*

municipalities. RU-N is assisting five municipalities in this process including Aybak, Faizabad, Pul-e-Khumri, Sar-e-Pul, and Taloqan. Staffing for the program began with the hiring of data entry and survey teams.

- Citizen engagement continued to be a priority this month, and RU-N civil society advisors met with Service Delivery Advisory Groups (SDAGs) to establish internal committees. Each SDAG is considering developing four committees, each focused on a different role—1) advocacy, 2) surveys, 3) monitoring and evaluation, and 4) transparency and procurement. The purpose of these committees is to distribute the work among SDAG members and build stronger ownership.

## PROGRAMMING ACTIVITIES

### CAPACITY BUILDING

#### Technical Assistance (TA)

During February, RU-N staff provided TA on budget preparation. Specifically, in Kunduz, Maymana, and Sar-e-Pul, RU-N advisors provided TA to mayors and municipal staff on the IDLG's letter on 1391 budget preparation. As a result, municipal budget committees were established for the purpose of budget preparation.

On February 20, a RU-N advisor provided technical assistance to the Sar-e-Pul Municipal Procurement Manager on requisitions. RU-N previously provided training on procurement during the bid openings for projects.



*A RU-N advisor provided technical assistance on requisitions to the Sar-e-Pul Municipal Procurement Manager on February 20, 2012.*

#### Consultations

RU-N advisors held regular consultations with municipal staff throughout the month. Topics of consultations in February mainly included business registration and licensing, budget preparation, and project management.

For instance, RU-N advisors in Aybak, the Mayor, and some members of the Public Administration Advisory Group (PAAG) discussed municipal development and revenue generation. First, the RU-N team explained that RU-N wanted to assist Aybak Municipality to enhance their revenue through business registration. According to the Mayor, the Municipality has issued licenses for businesses but there is currently no business registration database.



*The Mayor of Aybak and an RU-N advisor post job announcements for the business registration program survey team on February 13, 2012.*

Then, on February 13 and 14, the RU-N advisors assisted the Aybak Municipality's point of contact (POC) for business registration and licensing to design the scope of work (SOW) for the selection of business registration and data entry teams. They encouraged him to recruit the best candidates by announcing the job vacancies in high schools, higher education facilities, and many different locations around the city to ensure a transparent hiring process. The POC agreed and announced the vacancies in several populated areas. A follow-up meeting was held on February 21, and a RU-N advisor, the POC, the Vice Chair of the SDAG, and some SDAG members discussed the goals and objectives of business registration. The POC requested that the SDAG refer qualified candidates for the job postings related to business registration—especially women and youth. SDAG members are committed to supporting the process and cooperating with the Municipality.

Similar consultations took place in Faizabad, Sar-e-Pul, Pul-e-Khumri, and Taloqan, and RU-N advisors assisted the Mayors in staffing for data entry and survey teams. In Faizabad and Pul-e-Khumri staffing was completed. The remaining three municipalities worked on developing staffing plans and evaluating the applicants.

### Regional Workshops/Conferences

The RU-N Mayors' Conference, held on February 7-8, was, for most northern mayors, the first chance for mayors to meet each other, as well as the first time GDMA and IDLG officials addressed northern mayors exclusively. The conference was a rare opportunity for these mayors to speak openly and directly with their leaders from Kabul and to develop relationships with their counterparts across the North.



*The Mayor of Mazar-e-Sharif opened the RU-N Mayors' Conference on February 7, 2012.*

The Head of the GDMA, pointed out that municipal revenue increased by 70% this year, and that with increased revenue, mayors had an increased obligation to provide improved services. He added that, in future, Afghan mayors will be elected officials, and that they must work with RU-N to improve the quality of services to gain the support of the electorate. He wholeheartedly supported the efforts of RU-N in assisting mayors to do their jobs and instructed mayors to cooperate with RU-N staff.

The conference was also an opportunity for the mayors to discuss challenges. Some of the main challenges they face are related to budget preparation and their relationship with other sub-national structures such as the *Moustoufiat* (the provincial-level branch of the Ministry of Finance).

In anticipation of these issues, RU-N staff had prepared training materials on budget preparation, and jointly presented these materials with GDMA. Mayors had the opportunity to ask questions and clarify the process of budget formulation.

RU-N also provided informative sessions on business registration and licensing. Though some northern municipalities have already implemented such programs with the help of other donors, Mayors have asked RU-N to launch a business registration and licensing program in five municipalities—Aybak, Faizabad, Pul-e-Khumri, Sar-e-Pul, and Taloqan.

On February 20 – 22, 2012, RU-N embedded advisors from all nine municipalities attended a ToT workshop on municipal budget preparation and business registration and licensing. The workshop was practical in nature, and advisors went through each step of budget preparation and prepared a mock budget based on the GDMA guidelines using the required forms.

The culmination of the workshop was a mock budget hearing, where several RU-N staff participated, acting as citizens or municipal officials. The session conducted in Dari for authenticity and to allow for ease of discussions. The “citizens” asked several tough questions of the “Mayor”, giving RU-N advisors an idea of how to prepare the mayors they support to field questions.

The mock budget hearing was followed by a workshop on business registration and licensing. RU-N embedded advisors left feeling much more prepared to deliver both functional training and technical assistance to mayors and municipal officials. They were ready to assist Mayors in answering the tough questions citizens may pose—which will hopefully lead to constructive conversations between the mayors and the citizenries.

### **Functional Training / Project-based Training (PBT)**

RU-N staff continued to utilize the Sustainable Service Delivery Improvement Projects as opportunities to provide functional training to build the capacity of both municipal officials and citizen leaders in various phases of project management.

For instance, on February 1 in Maymana, RU-N advisors assisted four district managers, the City Markets Coordination Manager, and the Cleaning and Greening Manager to draft the communications plan, flyers, and schedule for the trash collection project.

Similarly, in Sheberghan, RU-N advisors provided assistance to four district managers, the Head of the Cleaning and Greening Department, and the City Market Coordination Manager on February 6 to develop the public outreach/distribution plan and monitoring plan for the trash collection project.

Also in Sheberghan, on February 7 and 8, following RU-N assistance, the Municipality conducted a public outreach campaign in four districts for three days. The campaign was conducted by 12 *kalanTERS* and monitored by municipal officials and the RU-N team. During the campaign, 1,200 flyers were distributed to 1,000 families and 200 shopkeepers. The focus of the campaign was to communicate the Mayor’s message, rules and regulations, the trash collection schedule, some slogans, and encouraged citizens to pay their *Safayi* taxes.

### **Women’s Participation in Municipal Decision Making**

RU-N has been highly involved in efforts to increase women’s participation in municipal decision making.

When designing the public awareness campaign for the first round trash collection project in Kunduz, RU-N Civil Society staff decided that women’s involvement was essential to the success of the project. To that end, they met with the Department of Women’s Affairs (DoWA) in Kunduz to obtain a list of the women most actively involved in their communities.



*RU-N advisors provided a training-of-trainers session to public outreach campaigners in Kunduz on February 1, 2012.*

The DoWA provided RU-N with names of 14 enthusiastic women who agreed to assist in the public awareness campaign. However, in order to be as effective as possible, RU-N put together a ToT course tailored to fit the objectives of the campaign.

On February 1, 2012, the RU-N embedded team conducted a ToT for 24 campaigners (14 female and 10 male). Six municipal officials chose to take part in this event as well.

Topics covered in the training included an overview of the goals and objectives of the project, methods of trash collection, revenue enhancement and sustainability of the project, and hygiene and sanitation. By the end of the training, the campaigners were well-prepared to deliver the Municipality's message to the public.

Participants were also given copies of the flyer publicizing the project and were assigned specific areas to cover during the campaign.

### **Citizen Beneficiary Group Meetings and Citizen Surveys**

The active involvement of service improvement project beneficiaries is viewed as key to long term sustainability. Hence, RU-N continued to facilitate the involvement of citizens in municipal activities.

For instance, on February 1, RU-N advisors in Faizabad coordinated with Districts 1 and 5 *kalanter*s to review the selected locations for the construction of 10 trash bins—which had been decided by citizens and municipal officials in previous meetings. *Kalanter*s expressed their opinions about the selected locations, and after discussions with the community, have altered two locations slightly.

In addition, RU-N staff has begun to assist in the establishment of citizen monitoring groups. These groups—made up of community leaders, *kalanter*s, *wakil gozars*, SDAG members, and other concerned citizens—will be trained by RU-N staff on monitoring tools and mechanisms.

Once trained, the groups will monitor project progress regularly, reporting back to RU-N, the Municipality, and citizens. They will ensure that the contractor fulfills the stipulations of the agreed upon contract—which is being translated into Dari by RU-N. Each monitor will have a copy of the contract to check against when monitoring the work.

The citizen monitors will submit reports to the Municipality regularly. When RU-N civil society staff surveyed the citizen monitors in District 5 at the beginning of the project, they indicated that they were only providing verbal reports to the Municipality. RU-N is developing written forms on which citizen monitors can keep written records of their findings.



*RU-N advisors assisted in the public awareness campaign for the Mazar-e-Sharif trash collection project on February 9, 2012.*

Since the use of citizen monitoring groups is relatively new, RU-N civil society staff is preparing to conduct trainings for citizen monitors in all nine municipalities. The monitoring phase of the projects is considered vital in ensuring sustainability and citizen ownership and participation.

In Maymana, RU-N advisors involved the SDAG and beneficiaries in the design of the scope of work (SOW) for the women's park improvement project and on February 12, they presented the final draft both groups for approval. A total of 16 representatives, of whom eight are male and eight are female, signed the SOW. In addition, the roles and terms of reference (ToR) for the monitoring committee were explained and the committee was formed. The six-member committee will be responsible for monitoring municipal projects.

On February 13, RU-N advisors and District 5 beneficiaries in Mazar-e-Sharif discussed challenges and shared comments and suggestions to improve the trash collection service. Attendees included 15 local leaders, the Head of District 5, the contractor's Field Supervisor, and the RU-N team. Some local leaders suggested that the trash, which has built up for years, could not be completely removed in just three days (initial clean up). They requested there should be a plan on how to continue with the initial clean-up efforts even after the door-to-door collection has begun. The group agreed to hold a beneficiary group meeting every Monday.

Eight citizens of Kunduz joined RU-N advisors on February 16 to monitor trash collection and report feedback to municipal officials. The citizens were briefed on their responsibilities as project beneficiaries to continuously monitor the service and provide regular feedback to the Municipality. They were also asked to encourage other citizens to pay their taxes to sustain the service. The group was given extra copies of the trash collection flyers so that they could share the schedule with others.

On February 29, for the first time in over a decade, Sheberghan citizens and government officials sat down together to discuss priorities for the upcoming 1391 municipal budget. Organized by the Mayor and RU-N staff, the meeting was led by the Deputy Mayor. After a budget presentation and open discussion, a paper list of proposed projects was distributed to attendees. Projects were ranked, based on factors such as revenue potential, community impact, and sustainability.



*RU-N staff facilitated a civil society meeting to discuss the municipal budget with Sheberghan municipal officials on February 29, 2012.*

The Head of the Retirement Union the Jawzjan Civil Society Network stated that “the citizens should be consulted, because the revenue of municipality comes from their payments [taxes]. After all it is our money. We should know what happens to the money we give to the municipality.”

and see how they have allocated funds for their projects. We want to see and reflect on their failure and success.”

Three projects fared poorly in the vote and the feedback was to be reported to the Mayor with discussions to continue. One attendee stated that “Officials should not mind when we come here

The involvement of civil society in project prioritization is considered vital in ensuring transparency and citizens’ ownership of municipal projects.

## **SUSTAINABLE SERVICE DELIVERY IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS**

Opening ceremonies and kick-off meetings were held in February across the North. Below are details of these events:

- Kunduz – On February 2 the RU-N team and municipal officials collaborated in organizing a kick-off meeting for the first round trash collection project. A total of 30 people including representatives from the SDAG, *wakil gozars*, a USAID representative, a representative from the Governor’s Office, the Chief of Police, the Provincial Council, and civil society attended. The meeting was chaired by the Mayor, who explained the trash collection project implementation process, especially the public awareness campaign, the six-day initial clean up, and door-to-door

trash collection in *Nahyas* 1 and 2. The Mayor announced that February 6 would be the start date for the initial clean up and requested that *Mullahs* announce this message during Friday prayers.

- Taloqan – On February 6, the RU-N team conducted a project kick-off meeting in which 30 *kalanTERS* and five PAAG members (including one female) participated. RU-N staff explained the project implementation and public outreach activities. The *kalanTERS* discussed the initial clean up with municipal staff.



*Municipal staff conducted the initial clean up for the Faizabad trash collection project in early February 2012, while citizens observed the process.*

- Faizabad – On February 6, the RU-N team conducted a kick-off meeting for the trash collection project with 22 male and four female participants, including *kalanTERS* of District 1 and 5, SDAG members, and local media. They discussed the project start date, trash collection issues, and distribution of the public outreach flyers by *kalanTERS*. On February 8, the trash collection project began with the initial clean-up phase. Participants included municipal officials, representatives from the contractor/construction companies, the RU-N team, a USAID representative, local media, and citizens. There was an initial clean up of the old city by Municipality staff, the contractor, citizens, and RU-N. The Mayor himself was the first person to transfer trash from the ground to the truck, and then the participants started working.
- Sheberghan – On February 14, the RU-N team facilitated the kick-off meeting for the trash collection project with 27 people in attendance. Attendees included 23 men and four women. The Mayor, SDAG members, representatives of the Provincial Governor, the Provincial Council, and a number of citizens participated. The meeting was chaired by the Mayor who explained the project and mentioned the installation of 50 trash bins and 50 trash containers in four districts and the market area. He indicated that the project would be sustained through citizen support. The Mayor highlighted the contracting of a local company for the project, thereby providing jobs opportunities. A number of flyers carrying the Mayor’s message were also distributed. The Mayor also announced that a three-day initial clean up would take place and encouraged participation from all parties. At the conclusion of the meeting, the participations went to District 3 and installed five trash bins and two trash containers.
- Pul-e-Khumri – On February 15, the RU-N team held a kick-off meeting for the trash collection project. Apart from the RU-N team, the Mayor and his staff (Administration/ Finance Manager, Cleaning and Greening Manager, Property Manager, and Revenue Manager), Provincial Council (PC) Secretary and a PC member, Head of the Afghan Cable Network for media coverage, Head of the SDAG, contractor, and a USAID representative attended the meeting. The Mayor opened the ceremony and provided information about the trash collection project funded by USAID and being implemented by the Municipality in close coordination with RU-N and the contractor. In addition, the Mayor emphasized the sustainability of the project and encouraged citizens to cooperate with the Municipality to ensure the sustainability of this project through paying *Safayi* tax.

- Sar-e-Pul – Finally, on February 22, the kick off meeting for the Sar-e-Pul park improvement project was held and attended by 31 individuals (three females and 28 males), including the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor, SDAG officers, the Head of the Olympic Department, the Head of the Women’s Association, and several *qaryadars* (village leader). RU-N advisors introduced the contractor to the participants and explained the duties and responsibilities of SDAG members during project implementation. The Deputy Mayor explained the delays in starting the project (mostly security-related) and assured the group that work would be completed within 60 days.

To date, eight of the nine northern municipalities have begun or completed (Aybak) implementation of the first round Sustainable Service Delivery Improvement Projects. The Maymana women’s park improvement project is in the final stages of design and development.

## **PLANNED MARCH ACTIVITIES**

RU-N advisors will continue to provide technical assistance to municipal staff to complete their annual municipal budgets in March or by the deadline in early April. RU-N staff will work with the newly created budget committees within the municipality according to the guidelines and regulations stipulated by the IDLG/GDMA. RU-N advisors, as well as Mayors and their Finance Managers, have already been trained on budget preparation and the process is expected to be completed on time or early. Citizens will be invited to participate in budget meetings to offer feedback for consideration, making the process a transparent one.

Project-based trainings will continue as well, as RU-N advisors assist municipal officials and citizens in the initial phases of the round two Sustainable Service Delivery Improvement Projects. Ongoing monitoring of implemented projects will continue, while SOWs for second round projects will be vetted by RU-N/Mazar senior staff and submitted to USAID for review and approval.

RU-N advisors will also continue to assist mayors with business registration and licensing. Once all the survey and data entry staff has been hired, RU-N advisors will assist in their training and guide them through the steps of the process. Business registration and licenses will begin to be issued in March, generating additional revenue for those municipalities involved in the program.

A workshop for Municipal Team Leaders (MTLs) will also be held in March, and MTLs will receive training on monitoring and reporting and will develop strategies for smoother planning and implementation of future rounds of sub-projects.

## **APPENDIX: RU-N ONE-PAGERS**

Each month RU-N plans to highlight particular achievements, successes, or unique aspects of the program. The following pages contain three such stories.



## RAMP UP-North Holds Successful Mayors' Conference

**Mayors and their Finance Managers attended the RU-N Mayors' Conference, where topics such as budget preparation and business registration were discussed.**



***“...the environment [in the North] is safe and [we welcome] development work...”***

***—Yunus Moqim, Mayor of Mazar-e-Sharif***

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The RAMP UP-North Mayors' Conference was, for most northern mayors, the first chance for mayors to meet each other, as well as the first time General Directorate of Municipal Affairs (GDMA) and Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG) officials addressed northern mayors exclusively. The conference was a rare opportunity for these mayors to speak openly and directly with their leaders from Kabul and to develop relationships with their counterparts across the North.

Mr. Popal, the Head of the GDMA, pointed out that municipal revenue increased by 70% this year, and that with increased revenue, mayors had an increased obligation to provide improved services. He added that, in the future, Afghan mayors will be elected officials, and that they must work with RU-N to improve the quality of services to gain the support of the electorate. He wholeheartedly supported the efforts of RU-N in assisting mayors to do their jobs and instructed mayors to cooperate with RU-N staff.

The conference was also an opportunity for the mayors to discuss challenges directly with Mr. Popal. Some of the main challenges they face are related to budget preparation and their relationship with other sub-national structures such as the *Moustoufiat* (the provincial-level branch of the Ministry of Finance).

The second day of the conference focused on two key RU-N program initiatives -- municipal budget preparation and business registration and licensing.

During the budget session, GDMA and RU-N covered topics including the GDMA budget calendar, the recently completed budget Standard Operating Procedure (SOP), as well as all relevant forms and checklists. Mayors had the opportunity to ask questions and clarify the process of budget formulation.

RU-N also provided informative sessions on business registration and licensing. Though some northern municipalities have already implemented business registration with the help of other donors, RU-N will launch a full-service, business registration and licensing program in five municipalities—Aybak, Faizabad, Pul-e-Khumri, Sar-e-Pul, and Taloqan. Temporary staff will be hired to register small businesses, compile data, and deliver license payment forms. At the same time, municipal staff will be trained to maintain the system.

The Mayor of Mazar-e-Sharif, in his opening speech stated, “...the environment [in the North] is safe and [we welcome] development work. I hope this conference is the beginning [of] more attention [for the North]...” Indeed RU-N plans to hold future Mayors' Conferences on a quarterly basis.



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## Keeping it Local—Ramp UP-North Encourages the Use of Local Contractors on Projects

### A local contractor is fabricating steel bins for the Sheberghan trash collection project.



***“...all the benefits of the project should be for the people of this city [Sheberghan].”***

***—Sakhidad “Feliz” (which means “metal”), the local contractor who is fabricating steel trash bins in Sheberghan.***

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The Sustainable Service Delivery Improvement Projects are small-scale projects that aim to improve municipal services through citizen participation and municipal capacity building. These projects are short-term, yet they are intended to bring about long-lasting and high-impact results. In order to ensure the Municipality’s ability to sustain the projects, Ramp Up –North has made an effort to keep the costs at a realistic level, according to local standards.

One way RU-N has ensured local pricing is by encouraging local contractors and business owners to submit bids on projects. Typically, many local business owners are not aware when RFPs are released via websites such as Peace Dividend Marketplace, because of their lack of resources (i.e. computers and internet connections). To remedy this, RU-N staff compiled lists of local contractors who were licensed and qualified and then hand-distributed hard copies of the RFPs to them.

Once the word was out, local contractors had a chance to submit bids. The result was that RU-N received several bids that were in line with cost estimates based on local prices. During bid evaluations, standardized criteria were used in evaluation of all the bids, and slight preference was given to local contractors. RU-N also encouraged newly opened or small businesses to submit proposals, since it often occurs that those contractors with the most experience have been given preference by friends or relatives in the past, making it next to impossible for new businesses to compete. RU-N was attempting to “level the playing field” and, through a transparent procurement process, open opportunities to all qualified contractors.

Not only has RU-N succeeded in paying local prices, so that projects can be sustained more easily, but they have also awarded local contractors the opportunity to build up their businesses, and by doing so, stimulate the local economy and indirectly generate revenue for the Municipality.

In Faizabad, for example, a local contractor is fabricating stone masonry trash bins for a trash collection project. Stone masonry is a traditional skill for which Faizabad is famous. In Sheberghan, famous for steel fabrication, a local vendor is constructing 50 large and 50 small trash bins for the trash collection project there.

Sakhidad Feliz—who has been given the moniker “Feliz” which means “metal”—the owner of Toran Adil Metal Works in Sheberghan states that there are two reasons for awarding contracts locally: “We cannot do low quality work. We are here in this city all the time and municipal officials and local citizens judge us for good or bad quality work...and all the benefits of the project should be for the people of this city. For example, 20 to 30 youth have part-time jobs in my company. They go to school and their families need their financial support...by giving this project to a local contractor we are not only providing income for these families but also providing the chance for these young people to go to college.”

By keeping it local, RU-N hopes that these projects will continue to benefit the community for years to come.



## One Woman is Leading her Neighborhood to Change

### Citizens are monitoring the trash collection project in Mazar-e-Sharif's District 5.



**"... If only a few women in my neighborhood feel responsible and do their part of the job, this entire neighborhood will be clean."**

**—a female beneficiary  
from Mazar-e-Sharif,  
District 5**

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Gul Jan, a housewife from Yulmarab village, called the contact number listed on the Mazar-e-Sharif trash collection flyers to lodge a complaint with municipal officials and RU-N. She stated that *zarangs* (motorized rickshaws) were not coming to her neighborhood to collect her trash according to the schedule posted on the flyers. A few days later, the RU-N Civil Society team met with the sub-contractors to address the issue.

The following day, as the *zarangs* and trucks came to Gul Jan's neighborhood to collect piles of trash, she called the RU-N team to express her appreciation for being heard. She stated, *"If only a few women in my neighborhood feel responsible and do their part, this entire neighborhood will be clean. Thanks to Mazar Municipality, I feel involved in decision making. I called, and I was listened to. There were piles of trash in my neighborhood. I had heard about this project, and I told the women in my neighborhood not to throw trash on the street. I told them zarangs from the Municipality will come and collect your trash."* Gul Jan has become an advocate of the program and a supporter of the Municipality.

But Gul Jan has one more request for the Municipality—to clean out a ditch near her home. People from her neighborhood have been dumping trash there for years. Gul Jan explained that if the Municipality could clean it just once, she would volunteer to go door-to-door and tell people not to throw their trash there anymore. She is also willing to voluntarily campaign for the trash collection project and train women in her neighborhood how to manage their trash.

Gul Jan has, in effect, brought the RU-N sustainability model for projects to life—with an initial boost from USAID funds and Municipality efforts, citizens ultimately need to take ownership to maintain the cleanliness of their neighborhoods.

**UPDATE:** RU-N advisors followed up with the Mazar-e-Sharif Municipality and the Head of District 5, and on February 23, 2012, the Head of District 5 supervised as the contractor cleaned the ditch in front of Gul Jan's home.