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Afghan Agricultural Research and Extension Development Program (AGRED)



Monthly Report

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Afghan Agricultural Research & Extension Development Program (AGRED)

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
ACHIEVEMENTS IN MAY	4
RESEARCH AND EXTENSION.....	4
PRIORITIES	4
ACTIVITIES.....	5
WOMEN EXTENSION PROGRAM.....	15
PRIORITIES	15
ACTIVITIES.....	15
CHALLENGES.....	19
TRAININGS AND WORKSHOPS	20
PRIORITIES	20
ACTIVITIES.....	20
COMMUNICATION	23
PRIORITIES	23
ACTIVITIES.....	23
CHALLENGES.....	23
MONITORING AND EVALUATION.....	23
PRIORITIES	23
ACTIVITIES.....	24
RESEARCH AND EXTENSION.....	26
PRIORITIES	26
WOMEN EXTENSION PROGRAM.....	26
PRIORITIES	26
TRAININGS AND WORKSHOPS	27
PRIORITIES	27
COMMUNICATIONS.....	27
PRIORITIES	27
MONITORING AND EVALUATION.....	27
PRIORITIES	27
WOMEN EXTENSION PROGRAM.....	27
PRIORITIES	27
ADMINISTRATIVE.....	30

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During the month of May the AGRED team focused on a number of training activities for both DAIL and farmer level capacity building; on outreach and coordination across MAIL, DAIL and other NGOs for the current and future of AGRED implementation; and on the continued development and implementation of mini proposals.

Trainings were held for DAIL staff on report writing and mini-proposal development; DAIL staff and farmers received training on technical topics for rice and corn cultivation in Nangarhar and Kandahar, and on pest control in Zabul.

Numerous coordination meetings were held countrywide as AGRED staff met with DAIL directors, USAID, other NGOs with agriculture programs and other Government of Afghanistan officials. As AGRED is a new type of development project, these meetings are key opportunities to continue to share the goals and objectives of AGRED, as well as to help other understand the on-budget process and timeline. The AGRED Women's Extension Program has been working closely with a number of the stakeholders at the central and regional levels to establish a Women in Agriculture Working Group. This group will provide a significant mechanism to both coordinate gender activities in the agriculture sector as well as provide a method for women farmers and herders to collect and express their needs to the government and NGOs working in the agriculture sector.

AGRED staff continues to work with DAILs to develop off-budget mini-proposals to address research and extension needs. To date, eleven mini-proposals have been finalized and approved, with eight additional proposals in the pipeline. These proposals provide the opportunity for AGRED to reinforce processes that will be significant for the success of the on-budget portion of the project. Through the off-budget mini-proposals, DAILs have the opportunity to practice voicing their needs using the proposals as a mechanism for communicating with MAIL what is needed at the district level, how resources will be used, what finances are needed and what the outcomes will be.

These "off-budget" efforts are only half the effort and concentration of the AGRED team this month.

Significant effort continues to be made to prepare for AGRED On-budget implementation. The AGRED team has been working to develop the extensive "On-budget Implementation Plan." In developing the plan, the AGRED team has been holding numerous meetings with MAIL to ensure that MAIL leadership is fully informed of the process that is developing, and perhaps more significantly, of the timeline of the expected start of the flow of funds.

ACHIEVEMENTS IN MAY

RESEARCH AND EXTENSION

PRIORITIES

Hold mini proposal writing workshop for AGRED staff

Enhance the DAIL capacity through training programs:

- Conduct report writing workshop for the DAIL staff.
- Conduct extension training workshop of corn cultivation on raised bed methodology.
- Conduct training session on new methodology of rice cultivation.
- Training workshop on melon fly control by different methodologies.

Enhance the farmers' capacity through training programs:

- Conduct training pesticide usage in fields.
- Conduct training on disease of almond leaf.

Collection of actual data about agriculture faculties, institutions and high schools on country level for special report on Agriculture Education in Afghanistan.

Conduct coordination meetings with MAIL and DAIL:

- His Excellency Minister of MAIL
- MAIL/HR Director
- MAIL/Acting DG Extension
- DAIL Directors/Research and Extension Departments
- DAIL Directors
- Extension and Research Department

Conduct meeting with USAID and /PRT/ADT representatives.

Conduct agriculture sector (ATWG) meeting.

Conduct coordination meeting with NGOs:

- Conduct coordination meeting with CBCMP
- Attend coordination meeting with DAIL and UN agencies

- Participation in PHDP/ANDO field day in Kohkaran

Continue/ start implementation of approved mini proposals:

- Herat-Wheat seed cultivation trails
- Kabul-Cultivation of 11 new improved commercial grape varieties
- Kabul-Establishment of grape vineyard
- Kunduz-Melon fly control project
- Nangarhar-Rice cultivation

ACTIVITIES

Mini proposal writing workshop

On 29 April 2013, a “Mini Project Proposal Writing Workshop” was conducted jointly by AGRED and AAEP. This training was attended by 21 AGRED field staff including 7 female staff, AAEP staff, staff from MAIL and DAILs and participants from other NGOs. The training was facilitated by AGRED and was held in the AGRED training hall in Kabul. The below topics were discussed in the workshop:

- What is a Mini Fund Proposal?
- How to identify a good idea for a Mini Fund Proposal?
- How to write a Mini Fund Proposal?
- What is the correct format?
- What is the process to write a Mini Fund Proposal?
- How is a Mini Fund proposal approved and who approves it?
- What can this fund for and how one can use it?
- How to evaluate and report progress?

This training program covered both AGRED and AAEP mini project channels and systems for project proposal writing and approval. The workshop resulted in AGRED staff being able to draft mini project proposals as it is required and transfer the knowledge to the other DAILs staff in the field offices.

MAIL/DAIL staff will also be able to raise ideas for extension and research mini projects to be designed and implemented.

DAIL LEVEL CAPACITY BUILDING

Development of training for DAIL staff on report writing

One of the main objectives of AGRED is to improve capacity of MAIL/DAIL at central and provincial levels. Towards this goal, the AGRED team in Kandahar developed a curriculum in both national languages on report writing for use by DAIL staff. The handouts were distributed to the participants for easy reference in the future. The training was conducted for DAIL staff from 11-13th May 2013, with four-hour sessions each day. 18 staff from 8 different departments (MIS, Plan & Policy, Natural Resources, Research, Extension, Plant Protection, and Cooperatives) participated in the training.

Conduct report writing workshop for the DAIL staff

During the three day workshop the below topics were discussed:

- Goal and objectives of the workshop
- Definitions for objectives, activities, input, output, effect, impact, quantitative and qualitative data and indicators, and achievements
- Kinds of reports
- Difference between written and verbal reporting
- Definition of regular periodic reports and specific purpose reports
- Phases of report writing
- Preparing of plan for the report writing by phases.
- Importance of planning during the report writing
- Use of balloon method to remember activities
- Writing of general report and submission to different organizations (internal management, donors, authorities, community and media)
- Reporting formats

As the result of this training session, DAIL staff members have the knowledge to design different kinds of reports; they are familiar with the phases of report writing and are better able to write complete reports on their projects and activities. Improvements in this kind of communications will improve AGRED reporting as well as help to improve communications between DAILs and other donor programs and especially to MAIL.

Conduct extension training on corn cultivation using raised bed methodology

A mini project on corn cultivation on raised bed methodology, which was approved on 8th April 2013, started its implementation on 20th May 2013. To develop the capacity of DAIL

and other concerned groups, AGRED staff in Kandahar conducted a training on corn cultivation using a raised bed methodology on 13th May 2013. Participants included DAIL staff, agriculture students, Directorate of Women Affairs (DoWA) staff, and lead farmers for a total of 34 training participants. The topics covered under this training session, are listed below:

- Explanation of approved corn mini project proposal
- Explanation of AGRED program
- History of corn cultivation
- Usage of corn as food and feed of animals
- Introduction of corn pioneer variety
- Introduction and benefit of raised bed methodology
- Usage of animal manure and fertilizers during the cultivation of corn on raised bed methodology
- Introduction of irrigation system in raised bed cultivation
- Control of pest and diseases during pre- and post harvest activities
- Usage of corn stalks as fresh and compost for animal feed purposes

The training was facilitated by the AGRED team (REC, PEC and RRC) in Kandahar. As a result of this training participants gained knowledge on corn cultivation using a raised bed methodology as well as pest control and disease prevention during pre-harvest and post harvest times.

Mini proposal writing workshop

As per an official request from Ghazni DAIL, the AGRED team conducted a workshop on Mini Project Proposal Writing. This workshop was attended by a total of 35 participants (26 DAIL employees, 4 women and 5 lecturers). The workshop was held on 21-22 May 2013 in Ghazni province and was jointly facilitated by the AGRED



REC from Paktya and PEC from Ghazni. The below topics were discussed during the two-day workshop:

- What is a mini proposal?
- How to identify a good idea for a mini proposal?
- How to write a mini proposal?
- What is the correct format?
- What is the process to write a mini proposal?
- How is a mini proposal approved?
- How one can utilize the mini fund?
- How to evaluate and report on the progress of mini projects?

The workshop enabled participants to:

- Identify ideas that can be brought under mini proposals
- Know how develop a mini proposal
- Know how evaluate the results
- Know how to utilize the fund for mini project proposals

Rice cultivation of with improved methodology training

With financial support from AGRED, and technical support from JICA and the Shishambagh Research station Cereal Crop Improvement department, a one-day training on Rice Cultivation using row planting techniques was conducted on May 21. This training was attended by 21 AGRED and DAIL extension and research staff (4 from Laghman, 4 from Kunar and 8 from Nangarhar) and there was one woman participant. At the end of the training the participants were able to design and establish rice demonstration plots with improved planting techniques, and are able to train farmers in the concerned areas.

FARMER LEVEL CAPACITY BUILDING

Training on usage of pesticides in fields

As per Extension Manager request, a training was conducted for farmers in Paktya on 26th May 2013 on how to use pesticides to. 15 farmers participated in this training. Topics covered include advantages and disadvantages of pesticide use, and the hazards of the pesticides. Discussion topics included:

- Difference between pesticides, fungicides and herbicides
- Proper dose of pesticide to treat an infestation of host
- How to protect the environment
- How to protect animal, honeybees, children from pesticides' side effects.

- Advantages of the protection kit (clothes, glasses, mask, cape, long shoes and gloves)
- Suitable time for spraying
- How to keep pesticide out of reach of children

Conduct training on Almond Leaf Role pest control

In coordination with the Zabul DAIL Extension Officer, a training was held on May 1st on “How to Control Almond Leaf Role Pest.” This training was conducted in Resala village of Qalat District, 7 village farmers participated. As a result, the farmers are able to understand the mentioned almond pest, and are able to control it using a locally prepared pest solution.

Collection of data about agriculture education in Afghanistan

As per a request received from USAID-Kabul, the AGRED management team began a project to collect countrywide data on agriculture schools and institutes to include the number of institutes and schools, number of students-male/female, number of lecturers-male/female, etc. The AGRED team began a survey on 22nd May. The survey is in progress.

Coordination meetings with MAIL and DAIL

During the reporting month the AGRED team had several coordination meetings. The main purpose of these meetings was to improve coordination and communication between AGRED, MAIL, DAILs and other organizations working with MAIL, such as CBCMP. Following is the list of meetings conducted:

Meeting MAIL HR Directorate in Kandahar on 14th May 2013. The purpose of this meeting was to keep the HR directorate informed of AGRED activities with regard to the on-budget implementation plan. The HR Directorate will need to be involved in a number of the strategic goals, and maintaining close communication with the HR Directorate will ensure that both the HR Directorate and AGRED staff are on the same page for on-budget activities and progress.

Conducted meetings with MAIL/Acting DG of Extension as needed. During the month of May, the AGRED team worked on the draft research strategy at the request of the Acting DG of Extension and shared that with MAIL extension and research departments and further actions. The draft strategy was presented to the Acting DG on 18th May 2013.

Throughout the reporting period the AGRED team held various meetings with DAIL directors. These meetings also provide the opportunity for AGRED staff to update DAIL directors on the progress on mini projects as well as to collect new ideas for more mini

projects to be developed. During the month of May these meetings largely focused on mini proposals. As the result of these meetings, new ideas and concepts presented to AGRED staff by DAIL directors to be developed into mini proposals. Examples of ideas presented by the DAIL directors are: turkey, honeybees, sesame and soybean extension projects for on-budget funding.

Meetings were held with DAIL extension and research from 6-24th May 2013 in all AGRED regions. During these meetings, the DAIL staff were oriented on approved mini projects and informed of the respective responsibilities of AGRED and DAIL staff for development and implementation of mini proposals. These meetings resulted in increasing the knowledge of DAIL staff on mini projects, and the responsibilities of partners behind these projects, all DAIL staff agreed with the responsibilities set forth.

On 9 May 2013 KPRT called a meeting with AGRED, CBCMP and DAIL to discuss AGRED and CBCMP activities to date. The Zari District Extension Center, rehabilitated by the Canadians, was handed over to Kandahar DAIL during this meeting. The KPRT requested to review the work plans of Zari District and the extension work plan of CBCMP developed for DAIL. The two plans need to be integrated to each other and have one plan after the handover is completed. This is to support accomplishment of DAIL/MAIL strategic goals.

On 8 May 2013, representative of AGRED participated in coordination meeting with SPRT team, DAIL's director and staff in Samangan province. During the meeting the AGRED representative explained the project's current activities and progress to date. At the end of the meeting the DAIL Director suggested AGRED work on green houses for the winter season, which would be beneficial to both men and women farmers. The AGRED team noted the suggestions and shared that with national team at Kabul Level.

AGRED Ghazni team participated in a meeting on 28 May 2013 with representatives from the Ghazni ADT and PRT. The AGRED team updated the participants of the AGRED activities, especially updates on mini projects. The ADT representative mentioned that they will try to provide technical support to the DAILs on implementation of projects.

Representatives from USAID and U.S embassy visited AGRED Kunduz office on 14 May 2013. AGRED Kunduz team briefed the mission on current activities of AGRED. At the meeting, a USAID representative announced was that the regional USAID office in Kunduz will be closing. USAID will monitor all ongoing USAID projects in Kunduz from the Balkh office. They also added that this will be the last coordination meeting of USAID with other stakeholders in the region.

Agriculture Directorates initiated Agriculture Technical Working Group (ATWG) for national and international NGOs, UN agencies and other private sectors involves in agriculture project activities to discuss technical issues, to share project information and address technical issues at the provincial level. The AGRED team participated in these ATWG meetings and shared AGRED information to the participants.

The AGRED team participated in several ATWG (agriculture technical working group) meetings throughout the month of May in regional and provincial levels (e.g. Logar, Jawzjan, Samangan, Kandahar, Parwan, Nangarhar, Bamyan and others). These meetings were attended by national and international NGOs and UN agencies. The main points discussed during these meeting were building the capacity of farmers and Farmer's training hall. Each of the participating organizations presented their progress and it was decided that for the next meeting, participants should provide a detailed report of their project activities. This meeting resulted in awareness of all the participants about AGRED progress and current activities in the regions and provinces.

On 14 May 2013 AGRED regional and provincial team met the CBCMP DCOP, CBMCP Kandahar AGRED field staff and Kandahar DAIL director. During the meeting the director of DAIL motivated both projects' staff to coordinate closely as the ultimate goal of both projects are to enhance DAIL's capacity for implementation of projects and achieving agricultural goals and objectives of DAIL and MAIL. He also appreciated recent progress of the AGRED team especially after new team of AGRED management is hired. The meeting resulted in establishing close cooperation and coordination in between AGRED and CBCMP projects at the regional levels. Also, CBCMP-DCOP encouraged his regional team to work closely with the AGRED team for better coordination and cooperation.

Conduct coordination meeting DAIL and UN agencies

The AGRED team participated in a UN Agencies Coordination Meeting on 22 May 2013. The meeting was attended by FAO, UNODC and UNAMA. The meeting focused on Kohkaran Research Center and Farmer Training hall refurbishment. Related to this, the AGRED regional team in Kandahar presented information about On- and Off-budget activities and recommended that the DAIL may cover these under AGRED On-budget funds. The team also updated the meeting on recent activities and progress of AGRED in the region. The FAO representative requested that DAIL share their plan for farmers' training hall and Kohkaran research center rehabilitation. FAO will try to do resource mobilization for these plans.

Field Visit by AGRED Management

The AGRED COP and DCOP-Program visited Northern and North-East regions to monitor field activities and attend coordination meetings. During the mission, they visited Balkh, Jawzjan, Samangan, Baghlan, Takhar, Kunduz and Badakhshan provinces. The mission monitored activities and advised the field team on the implementation of approved mini projects. Additionally, the mission had meetings with DAIL directors and staff of the abovementioned provinces' DAIL directorates. While meeting with DAIL directors, new concepts for the mini projects were raised and noted by AGRED team. Some of these new ideas that were raised by Samangan DAIL director included turkey rearing and honeybees. As a result of this visit, the AGRED activities were monitored and advice provided to the team. Additionally, the AGRED management developed a clear understanding of regional needs which will guide project decision making.

Field visit from Kohkaran farm

The Mung Bean mini project has been developed by Kandahar DAIL and is currently under review by MAIL and AGRED. For the implementation of this project, AGRED Kandahar regional team visited Kohkaran Research Center on 19 May to identify a proper one Jerib land for the project. The DAIL managers of Research and Agronomy accompanied the team. Unfortunately no proper land was identified as all available land in the research center (30 Jeribs) has been cultivated by PHDP/ANDO for perennial horticulture crops. The Farm and Research Managers promised that they will closely cooperate with the team to identify a suitable plot of land for the implementation of Mung Bean research mini project and make it ready before the project is approved.

Participation in PHDP/ ANDO field day in Kohkaran research center

AGRED team in Kandahar, on 19 May 2013 participated in the Field Day arranged by PHDP/ANDO in Kohkaran research center. This field day was attended by ANGOs, students from Agriculture Faculty of Kandahar University, representatives of NGOs and lead farmers from the community. The facilitator for the field day provided information on different kinds of stone fruits, pomegranate, grapes, loquats and figs. Rooted cuttings of grapes and pomegranates were distributed to participants. The AGRED team will work to identify which variety of these crops are not tested by PHDP/ANDO so they will share that with DAIL and AGRED technical team to review for possible mini project proposals.

Implementation of approved mini Projects

In total, 11 mini project proposals are confirmed by concerned DAILs, endorsed by MAIL and approved by AGRED. Each of the approved projects are noted below in details.

Wheat seed cultivation trials:

Wheat seed demonstration plots were established on 21 Feb. 2013. Two varieties of wheat seeds (Lalmy-1 & Lamy-2) were cultivated in one jerib of arable land with three different methodologies (broadcast seeder machine, line hand seeding, and hand traditional broadcasting) in Urdokhan Research farm of Herat province. During this reporting period, AGRED Herat team had completed the following activities for the implementation of this project.

Irrigation of wheat seed by flood irrigation: the mentioned wheat seeds trail plots were irrigated three times (10-16-24-May-2013) by flood irrigation method under direct supervision of AGRED PEC, REC and DAIL research farm staff. Required data was collected for the purpose of record.

Control of off-type varieties by rouging: during the reporting period, the wheat seed trail was in the milking stage and the team removed and cleaned it from off-varieties of wheat seeds in plots by rouging methods. This is done for the purpose of producing pure seeds from mentioned three plots.

Cultivation of 11 new, improved commercial grape varieties:

After the leveling of the allocated arable land for 11 new, improved commercial grape varieties (Red Globe, Crimson Seedless, Rebier, Flame seedless, Thompson seedless, Parlet, Tashkant, Fantasy, Rubby, Exotic and Black Emerald) and planting of 120 rooted cuttings, during the reporting period, it was found that 115 rooted cuttings had good vegetative growth and 5 of them died for an unknown reason.

Establishment of grape vineyard

The MAIL Mechanization Director submitted a proposal to AGRED for land leveling, making a tube well and establishing a grape vineyard at four jeribs of land at the Badam Bagh research farm. On 5-6 May 2013, 700 rooted cuttings of Tayfi grape variety were planted in the prepared land. The standard hole digging methods were used to plant these rooted cuttings. Meanwhile, irrigation of this vineyard is conducted by basin irrigation method. This project was regularly supervised and data collected.

Melon fly control and management project

On 8 May 2013 AGRED in Kunduz invited different NGOs, DAIL departments, university students and farmers to participate in the session introduced melon fly control and its management and to practically participate in the cultivation of musk melon.



The head of the research department of Kunduz DAIL introduced the program. After the introduction, all the participants took part practically in the cultivation of the musk melon. On the same day, AGRED arranged a farmer field school to the invited members to this program.

Total area covered by this project is 3 jeribs for the research project. These three jeribs of land are divided into 9 plots which will present 3 treatments with a 3 replication of each treatment mentioned below:

- Bagging of the fruits.
- Chemical control
- Control (no treatment)

Rice cultivation Project

Laghman, Kunar and Nangarhar DAIL directorates submitted a proposal to AGRED for Rice cultivation using improved techniques at 20 jeribs of land. After review by the concerned departments, mini proposals for these three provinces were approved on 13 May 2013. Beginning 21-25 May, 20 Rice Nurseries (6 in Qarghee, 3 in Khas Kunar and 3 in Narang and 8 Kama districts) of Sowam194 and PB3 varieties were established in 4 different locations. Each Nursery was established in the area of 20 M²

Drafted mini proposals

During this reporting period, AGRED RRCs, RECs and PECs, in close coordination with concerned DAILs, drafted 9 mini proposals (2 of research and 7 of extension). These mini proposals are focused on Mung beans, beans, maize, per millet, saffron and sesame. These reports are provided to AGRED and MAIL management for review/comments and endorsement/ approval.

WOMEN EXTENSION PROGRAM

Priorities

- Introductory meetings between female regional coordinators with concerned DAIL directors at provincial level.
- Coordination meeting with MAIL Management Information System department (MIS).
- Coordination meeting with MAIL Capacity Building department.
- Coordination and technical meetings with MAIL Extension, Research, Gender and Home Economy departments.
- Participation in Agriculture Sectorial Group (ASG) meetings.
- Establishment of Women in Agriculture Working Groups at regional level.
- Coordination meetings with MAIL Extension/Research, Gender and Home Economics Departments on OAG IP Gender Working Group Meeting.
- Coordination meetings with AAEP on Women in Agriculture Working Groups.
- Conduct meeting with agriculture faculties, Ag. Institute and Ag. high schools.
- Working on drafted mini proposal and AGRED Gender program work plan for on budget.
- Meeting with USAID representative in Badghis Province.

ACTIVITIES

Women Regional Extension Coordinators conduct introductory meetings with DAIL directors at provincial level.

During the month of May the AGRED Women RECs, jointly with RECs in Mazar, Kunduz and Herat provinces, held introductory meetings with concerned DAIL, Extension, Research and Home Economy directors as well as with DAIL women staff in Samangan, Faryab, Badghis, Takhar and Badakhshan provinces.

After a short introduction of the women extension coordinators, the AGRED team briefed officials about the women extension program's goal, objectives and activities and progress so

far. The team also presented on how to initiate a system to incorporate gender into research and extension plans and activities at the DAIL level. The establishment of Women in Agriculture Working Group at provincial level was also point of discussion in these meetings.

The AGRED team closed the briefing by requesting DAIL directors to support the project, particularly the recruitment of qualified female staff at the DAIL level. The meetings resulted in securing support from DAIL directors of Samangan, Faryab, Badghis, Takhar and Badakhshan provinces. DAIL directors appreciated AGRED progress and activities, promising to work closely with the AGRED team at both the regional and provincial levels.

Coordination meeting with MAIL Management Information System Department (MIS)

For better coordination between the Gender Directorate with MIS Directorate to ensure that sex disaggregated data is collected for extension and research projects. On 28 May 2013 the AGRED women program team met with the MAIL MIS Director. The meeting covered many issues such as women's involvement at MAIL and DAIL levels, and how to initiate a system to increase women's involvement in data collection and statistics. The MIS Director pointed out that creating a sustainable platform for information management is one of the key issues for MAIL. Departments and projects are lacking proper database for data collection, analysis and dissemination. Providing trainings for women employees on development project database, sectorial database, administrative database and document management database will strengthen them to provide information at various levels to decision makers of MAIL and provide updates nationwide on women involvement in agriculture activities through out Afghanistan at MAIL and DAIL levels. This meeting was the first step to initiate a system to engender all extension and research activities in MAIL and DAIL levels.

Coordination meeting with MAIL Capacity Building department

On 27 May 2013, the AGRED women extension team met with the MAIL Director of Capacity Building. During the meeting discussion focused on a needs assessment of current female staff capacity, required trainings and the required funding.

The Capacity Building Director stated that a training needs assessment has already been done for all MAIL/DAILs staff through out the country and there is no specific fund to address women's capacity building. This meeting served to discuss funding necessary for women's capacity building in extension and research and to engage the MAIL Gender Directorate in planning for capacity building activities of the directorate.

Coordination and technical meetings with MAIL Extension/Research Gender and Home Economics departments

During the reporting period coordination meetings were held to create better coordination and collaboration between MAIL Extension/Research, Home Economy and Gender departments. In order to increase women's involvement in decision making, design and planning of the programs and activities, the mentioned departments have to work together to create a system to incorporate gender into all programs and activities, and expanding opportunities for women at both MAIL and DAIL levels.

During the coordination meetings many issues were discussed, such as how to increase women's involvement in extension and research programs and activities, how to ensure research and extension projects and programs address women farmer/herders needs, how to increase the awareness of decision makers, existing male researchers and extension staff of the technical needs of women farmers/herders. This meeting was an important step to ensure that all extension and research projects and programs address the needs of women farmers/herders at the community levels.

Participation in Agriculture Sectorial Groups (ASG) meetings

During the month of May AGRED Women Regional Extension Coordinators of Kandahar, Kunduz, Balkh, Paktia, Nanagarhar and Herat participated in the monthly agriculture sectorial meeting at the regional and provincial levels. Meetings were attended by a wide variety of stakeholders to include government representatives from DAILs and others, UN agencies, national and international NGOs (SIKA, PHDP, GIZ, Mercy Corps, JICA, CBCMP, and others) and KPRT representatives.

During the meeting, AGRED Women Regional Extension Coordinators provided an update on AGRED activities and progress for the past quarter to include: establishment of women in agriculture working group, coordination meetings with DAILs directorate at provincial level and coordination meetings with Ag. faculties, institutes and professional schools.

Establishment of Women in Agriculture Working Groups at regional level

Women in Agriculture Working Groups (WIAWG) are one of the major tasks that are to be established at the regional level. WIAWG is a collection of diverse individuals/ divisions that will come together to address women in agriculture issues. WIAWGs will be designed to encourage teamwork on issues and problems identified through a bottom up priority identification process. Initial discussions and steps have been taken to develop a SOW for these groups. AGRED involved MAIL/DAIL Extension, Research, Gender, Home Economy

staff, as well as academics and farmer associations in establishing Women in Agriculture Working Groups in seven agricultural regions.

Coordination meetings with MAIL Extension/Research, Gender and Home Economics Departments on OAG IP Gender Working Group Meetings

Coordination meetings were held with MAIL Extension/Research, Gender and Home Economy directors to orient them on importance of such platform. MAIL Gender Director added that this is a good opportunity to share information, and strengthen coordination among MAIL and USAID implementing partners and the USAID/OAG on issues regarding gender equity and empowerment of women in agriculture value chains. They believe that an increased awareness of the needs of women farmers/herders will gradually build support within the system to expand opportunities for women.

Participation in the OAG Implementer Partner Gender Working Group Meeting

The USAID Office of Agriculture's (OAG) program conducted the first meeting of the Working Group on Gender on 9 May 2013. The participants included National and International organizations representatives and government entities (MAIL Extension, Research and Home Economy representatives). During the meetings many issues were discussed such as findings from OAG's Gender Assessment, AGRED Focus program and On-Budget and Off-Budget components including women program activities, Agricultural Development Fund gender objectives and key accomplishments.

Coordination meetings with AAEP on Women in Agriculture Working Groups

During the month of May meetings were held with AAEP program to coordinate AGRED and AAEP women activities in order to prevent duplications. The main topics discussed were; establishment of Women in Agriculture (WIA) working groups at provincial level, discussion of "difficulty of accessing women agricultural beneficiaries in Afghanistan and some solutions or approaches", membership criteria and benefits for working groups, conduct proposal writing workshop for working groups, conduct workshops and transferring new technologies and knowledge to DAIL women extension agents.

Conduct meeting with agriculture faculties and Ag. Institutes

During the month of May for the better coordination with agriculture faculties and institutes, the Women program RECs of Balkh, Herat, Kunduz met agriculture university and Ag institutes' directors. After a short introduction of AGRED program goals, objectives, and progress in the aforementioned regions, they discussed main topics such as; importance of cooperation of DAILs with Ag faculties, Lack of research activities in Ag-Faculty, lack of

demonstration plots, Lack of practical projects in Ag faculty, lack of coordination between DAILs and Ag Organizations, lack of trainings for Ag faculties students to help women farmers to increase the efficiency of their activities.

The Dean of Agriculture faculty in Badghis, appreciated AGRED's efforts. He added that they are interested to collaborate with DAILs staff and provide academic trainings on new technologies in order to increase the DAIL staff capacity.

Working on drafted mini proposal and MAIL Gender work plan for on budget

During the reporting period, Women Program RECs in collaborating with extension/research and home economy, AGRED women program staff worked on drafting mini project proposals to make sure they are engendered.

Meeting with USAID representative in Badghis Province

AGRED Women Program REC with Herat REC and Badghis PEC met USAID representatives in Badghis province. Some questions were raised by USAID representative that were answered by AGRED team. Some questions which have been raised during the meeting by USAID representatives are as below:

- Who will select the projects?
Answered by AGRED team: Projects are selected by all stockholder members (DAIL extension and research staff, agriculture faculty professors, organizations which are involved in agriculture projects, cooperatives, farmers and traders).
- What are the big challenges of this project?
Answered by AGRED team; Security, DAILs staff coordination, and participation of DAIL staff in the training and working on projects without any payment will be another challenge.

CHALLENGES

1. Participation of DAILs staff in the training/workshop and working on mini projects without any monetary incentive is a challenge.
2. Security problems in targeted area

TRAININGS AND WORKSHOPS

PRIORITIES

1. Development of training work plan for the month of May 2013.
2. Coordination of one-day proposal writing training for Kunduz regional office.
3. Coordination of proposal writing training workshop for three days in Kandahar.
4. Coordinate a one-day training on Application of Best Agriculture Practices in Maize production in Kandahar.
5. Coordination of one day training on rice cultivation by new methods and production in Nangarhar province.
6. Coordination of two days training on proposal writing in Paktya regional office and in Ghazni provincial office.



ACTIVITIES

Development of Training Work Plan for the month of May

The AGRED training unit developed a training plan for May following the below steps:

1. Data collection based on the DAILs needs assessment reports
2. Development of lessons plans and curriculums
3. Developing schedule for each of the trainings
4. Training implementation plan

Coordination of one day proposal writing workshop for Kunduz regional office

On 11 May 2013, AGRED North-East regional team conducted a one-day proposal writing workshop. 38 participants attended the training. This workshop covered the below topics:

- A brief presentation about AGRED
- AGRED mini proposal purpose and policy
- How to write a good proposal



At the end of the training program participants were able to write mini proposals.

Coordination of Report Writing Training Workshop for three days in Kandahar

Kandahar regional team conducted a three-day training workshop on report writing from 11-13 May 2013. The main purpose of this training session was to build the capacity of DAIL staff on report writing. Participants for this training were from Kandahar DAIL's staff from different departments such as MIS, IT, Extension, Plant protection, Research, natural resources, procurement and cooperative. Participants of this training were from all 18 departments. At the end of the training session the participants were able to collect data, format and draft a report.

Coordinate a one day training on Application of Best Agriculture Practices in Maize production in Kandahar

AGRED team in Kandahar designed and implemented a training on application of best practices for maize production. This was a one-day training program that was conducted on May 19, 2013. The best practices applicable for Maize production introduced to the participants was raised bed and new yield production. Totally, 34 participants from KDR-DAIL extension, research, live stock departments, Kohkaran research center, Kandahar agriculture faculty students, targeted districts (Arghandab, Dand and Daman) extension managers, community farmers and Kandahar women affairs staff participated in the training session. The purpose of this training session was to increase the awareness of participants on best practices and know how to apply these practices.

On the other hand, Kandahar regional team organized a one-day training on "Maize Cultivation Using Raised Bed Methodology" to the extension managers, research and extension staff of targeted districts in Kandahar on 20 May 2013.

Coordination of one day training on Rice cultivation by new methods and Rice Production in Nangarhar province

DAILs of Nangarhar, Laghman and Kunar provinces presented a mini project concept for rice cultivation and production. During project implementation, DAILs requested that the AGRED team train provincial and district extension and research staff on new rice cultivation methods. AGRED staff and a JICA technical officer jointly developed a training plan and conducted the training on 20 May 2013. 21 participants from DAIL research and extension departments attended the training. The meeting resulted in increased knowledge of new rice cultivation methods.



Coordination of two-day training on proposal writing in Paktya regional office and in Ghazni provincial office.

AGRED Paktya regional team designed and implemented a training on proposal writing in Ghazni province. The training was conducted for two days 21-22 May 2013 in Ghazni DAIL training hall. 35 DAIL staff from various departments attended the training. This training increased knowledge of what a mini-proposal is, and how to write mini-proposals.



COMMUNICATION

PRIORITIES

1. To draft and finalize April Monthly report for AGRED
2. To draft AGRED Branding and Marking Policy
3. To fill the vacant positions of communication Manager & officer

ACTIVITIES

Draft and finalize Monthly Report for AGRED

The Communication department, based on program requirements, initiated collecting data from AGRED field offices for the monthly reporting. The data received from different program departments is revised and consolidated as one monthly report. The report is internally shared and the final version submitted to USAID.

Fill the vacant position of communication Manager & officer

Finding a qualified Communication Manager and Communications Officer has become a challenge for the AGRED Communications Department as no qualified candidate has been identified to fill the position. The AGRED HR team has reinvigorated the search for a qualified individual. Some candidates tested and interviewed for both positions but they could not meet the expectations or requirements of these positions.

CHALLENGES

It has been difficult to find a qualified Communication Manager to lead the high level of tasks required for successful AGRED communications. The responsibilities of this department are temporarily assumed by DCOP Operations.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

PRIORITIES

1. PIRS for performance benchmarks' indicators
2. AGRED Baseline study (Data analysis)
3. Inventories reports
4. Guidelines for field level monitoring of off-budget activities
5. EMMP
6. Monitoring of the AGRED's trainings
7. Participation in meeting with senior level staff of MAIL
8. Update Afghan Info database

ACTIVITIES

PIRS for performance benchmarks' indicators

The M&E unit compiled Performance Indicators Reference Sheets (PIRS) for benchmarks' indicators. There are a total of 45 PIRS for 17 benchmarks. The PIRS document was shared with USAID for review. Comments received from USAID were incorporated and the document will be shared with MAIL next month.

AGRED Baseline study

Baseline data for the AGRED was analyzed in the reporting month. Report writing for the baseline study is in progress. Once the report completed, it will be shared to the concerned offices for review and comments.

Inventories reports

Detailed inventories reports for the following 11 centers were produced and shared with USAID during the reporting period.

1. Extension center - Aqcha Jawajan
2. Extension center - Bghalan Markazi
3. Extension center - Kunduz
4. Extension center - Sare-e-Pul
5. Extension center - Nadiali Helmand
6. Research center - Chasham Maran Paktya
7. Extension Center - Ayback Samangan
8. Extension Center - Qargae Laghman
9. Research Center - Kakas Laghman
10. Dehdadi Research Station – Balkh province
11. Khuja Sabzposh Extension Center – Faryab province

EMMP

The AGRED Environmental Mitigation Monitoring Plan (EMMP) was revised based on USAID feedback on the earlier submission. The revised EMMP will be re-submitted to USAID for review and approval.

M&E guidelines and procedures for monitoring off-budget activities

The M&E unit drafted guidelines and tools for monitoring of the off-budget activities i.e. mini projects and trainings. The guidelines also include template for writing success stories and case studies. The guidelines and tools will be implemented in the upcoming months.

Meetings with MAIL senior staff

AGRED M&E Coordinator participated in various meetings with MAIL senior staff. The purpose of these meetings was to explain the AGRED on-budget process and the related performance benchmarks to MAIL's senior management.

Monitoring of the AGRED trainings

During the reporting month, five trainings were arranged by AGRED for DAIL staff. The M&E unit collected participants' feedback on the training, action plan of participation and trainings' participants' details as per the M&E requirements.

Afghan Info database updates

The USAID Afghan Info database was updated with AGRED progress against PMP indicators and expenditures by district.

ACTIVITIES FOR JUNE 2013

RESEARCH AND EXTENSION

PRIORITIES

1. To write mini project proposal for AGRED off-budget
2. Meetings and work to gather with research and extension departments of MAIL/DAILs
3. Training workshops for DAILs staff
4. Meeting with PHDP and CBCMP team leaders
5. Implementation of improved mini project proposals
6. Supervision of demonstration plots and mini projects
7. Coordination meetings with DAIL directors
8. Conduct technical and report writing training workshops for DAILs' staff

WOMEN EXTENSION PROGRAM

PRIORITIES

1. Data collection from agriculture universities, institutes and professional schools.
2. Support implementation of approved mini project proposals.
3. Coordination meeting with AAEP on women in agriculture activities.
4. Participation in FAO national workshop on women in agriculture.
5. Conduct technical and capacity building trainings for DAIL staff at regional and provincial level.
6. Participate in Agriculture Technical working Group (ATWG) meetings.
7. Participation in the OAG Implementer Partner Gender Working Group.
8. Meetings with MAIL departments: Policy and Planning, Management Information System, Capacity Building, Gender and Home Economy, Research and Extension.
9. Meeting and working with research and extension departments on mini project proposals.
10. Conduct field day of melon fly control at Kunduz province.
11. Supervision of demonstration plots for the better and efficient implementation of mini projects.
12. Drafting an assessment form to assess MAIL/DAILs women capacity to develop training plans based on the actual needs.
13. Working with DAILs Home Economy and DoWAs to identify women for trainings.

TRAININGS AND WORKSHOPS

PRIORITIES

1. Conduct training needs assessment in seven targeted regions to find the technical capacity of staff and to find what is their real needs to make them qualified for the better activities.
2. Collection of training materials for future AGRED training sessions.
3. Hold meetings and work with research and extension departments, CBCMP and AAEP at regional and provincial levels to discuss coordination on capacity building activities.
4. Provide support in mini project proposal writing.
5. Capacity building training for extension officers in different DAILs.

COMMUNICATIONS

PRIORITIES

1. Fill the vacant positions within the department
2. Finalize and submit monthly report

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

PRIORITIES

1. Baseline study report
2. EMMP
3. Implementation of monitoring guidelines

WOMEN EXTENSION PROGRAM

PRIORITIES

1. Data collection from Ag universities, institutes and professional Schools
2. Support implementation of approved Mini projects proposals.
3. Coordination meeting with AAEP on women in agriculture activities
4. Participation in FAO national workshop on women in agriculture
5. Conduct technical and capacity building trainings for DAIL staff at regional and provincial level
6. Participate in Agriculture Technical working Group (ATWG) meetings.
7. Participation in the OAG Implementer Partner Gender Working Group
8. Meeting with MAIL Policy and Planning department

9. Meeting with MAIL Management Information System department
10. Meeting with MAIL capacity building department
11. Meeting with MAIL gender and home economy departments
12. Meeting and working with research and extension departments on mini project proposals
13. Conduct field day of melon fly control at Kunduz province.
14. Supervision of demonstration plots
15. Drafting an assessment form to assess MAIL/DAILs women capacity
16. Working with DAILs Home Economy and DoWAs to identify women for trainings

AGRED Year-1 Target Provinces and Districts

#	Province*	Priority Districts
1	Kabul	Shakar Dara, Char Asyab
2	Bamyan	Bamyan
3	Ghazni	Ghazni Center, Khoja Omari, Jaghori
4	Kapisa	Khohistan 2 nd
5	Parwan	Charikar, Sayed Khil
6	Wardak	Maidan Shar
7	Nangarhar	Mohmand Dara, Kama, Sorkhrood, Rodat
8	Kunar	Narang, Khas Kunar
9	Laghman	Qargae
10	Paktya	Gardiz, Ahmad Aba
11	Logar	Mohammad Agha
12	Kandahar	Dand, Daman, Arghandab
13	Helmand	Nadali, Garmsir
14	Urozgan	Trinkot
15	Zabul	Qalat, Shahjoy
16	Herat	Gozara, Pashton Zarghon
17	Badghis	Qadis
18	Balkh	Nahre Shahi, Dehdadi
19	Faryab	Khoja Sabzposh
20	Jawzjan	Aqcha
21	Samangan	Aybak
22	Sar-i-Pul	Sancharak
23	Kunduz	Kunduz Center, Khan Abad
24	Takhar	Taloqan
25	Baghlan	Markazi Baghlan
26	Badakhshan	Kishim

*The seven initial target provinces are highlighted in bold

ADMINISTRATIVE

The total AGRED team includes total 3 expats and 74 local staff. (See Table 1 for AGRED staff in the May 2013.)

Table 1: AGRED Staff in May 2013

No	Province	Name	Position
1	Kabul	Herschel Week	Chief of party
2	Kabul	Sharif Osmani	External Relations Specialist
3	Kabul	Mohammad Sediq Orya	DCOP Operation
4	Kabul	Amanllah Alamzi	DCOP Program
5	Kabul	Mona Kamel	Procurement and Compliance Mgr
6	Kabul	Dr.Shahla	Women Regional Extension coordinator
7	Paktya	Masood	Regional ResearchCoordinator (currently in Kabul)
8	Kabul	Hamed Sultani	Admin/Logistic Manager
9	Kabul	Nabil Rahil	Human Resource Specialist
10	Kabul	Abdullah Mubraz	Executive Assistant
11	Kabul	Hashmatullah	Human Resource Assistant
12	Kabul	Nisar Ahmad	National Extension Coordinator
13	Kabul	Raz Gul	Regional Resarch Coordinator
14	Kabul	Lal Mohmmad	Regional Extension Coordinator
15	Kabul	Mohmmad Shafiq Azimi	Training Coordaintor
16	Kabul	Abdul Jalal	E&M Mananger
17	Kabul	Maheedullah	E&M Coordiantor
18	Kabul	Mohammad Haris Mujadidi	Financial Analyst
19	Kabul	Nazim	IT Assistant
20	Kabul	Farhad Askhyar	Guesthouse Manager
21	Kabul	Mohmmad Akram Anwari	Procurement Manager
22	Kabul	Abdul Maroof	Procurement Agent
23	Kabul	Zahra Raghuzar	Accountant
24	Kabul	Abdul Nasear Salmyar	Admin &Log officer
25	Kabul	Ahamd Shahir Pazhhan	Facilites officer
26	Kabul	Bashir Ahamd Paiman	Security Manager
27	Kabul	Hamid Nazari	Admin &Log Assistant
28	Kabul	Seyar	Driver
29	Kabul	Parviz	Driver
30	Kabul	Shair Shah	Driver
31	Kabul	Asrif Hssain	Security officer
32	Kabul	Hajiratulla	Cleaner

33	Kabul	Mohammad Salim	Cleaner
34	Kabul	Mohammad Akbar	Guard
35	Kabul	Wahidullah	Guard
36	Kabul	Aziz	Gusthouse Cleaner
37	Balkh	Mohammad Farhad	Provincial Extension Coordinator
38	Balkh	Laily Ahamdi	Women Regional Extension Coordinator
39	Balkh	Khan Alam	Regional Extension Coordinator
40	Balkh	Baktash Hakimi	Regional Research Coordinator
41	Faryab	Sayed Tuha	Provincial Extension Coordinator
42	Jawzjan	Mohammad Fawad Saqib	Provincial Extension Coordinator
43	Samangan	Mohammad Eisa Tabish	Provincial Extension Coordinator
44	Sar-i-pul	Jayoon	Provincial Extension Coordinator
45	Kunduz	Fazal Rahman	Provincial Extension Coordinator
46	Kunduz	Asdullah Salarzi	Regional Extension Coordinator
47	Takhar	Mohammad Nader	Provincial Extension Coordinator
48	Baghlan	Asadullah Dahi	Provincial Extension Coordinator
49	Kunduz	Rahina Asghary	Women Regional Extension Coordinator
50	Badakhshan	Abdul Rahim Sherzad	Provincial Extension Coordinator
51	Nangarhar	Mohammad Naeem	Provincial Extension Coordinator
52	Nangarhar	Shah Mardan Heamt	Regional Research Coordinator
53	Kunar	Ajmal Azam	Provincial Extension Coordinator
54	Jalalabad	Naveen Hashimi	Women Regional Extension Coordinator
55	Laghman	Abdul Shakoor	Provincial Extension Coordinator
56	Paktya	Masood	Regional Research Coordinator
57		Ahamd Zia Khaliqi	Provincial Extension Coordinator
58	Paktya	Amina Rawan	Women Regional Extension Coordinator
59	Paktya	Mohammad Din	Regional Extension Coordinator
60	Logar	Mohammad Maroof	Provincial Extension Coordinator
61	Kandahar	Mohebullah Alokzai	Provincial Extension Coordinator
62	Kandahar	Habib ur Rahman Irfan	Regional Research Coordinator
63	Kandahar	Shah wali Khan	Regional Research Coordinator
64	Helmand	Toryali	Provincial Extension Coordinator
65	Kandahar	Heena	Women Regional Extension Coordinator
66	Urozgan	Najibullah	Provincial Extension Coordinator
67	Zabul	sadiqullah	Provincial Extension Coordinator
68	Heart	Fzel Ahmad Ahmadi	Regional Extension Coordinator
69	Heart	Ahamdi Azizi	Provincial Extension Coordinator
70	Heart	Sema Rezai	Women Regional Extension Coordinator
71	Badghis	Dr.Asif	Provincial Extension Coordinator

72	Kabul	Ahmad Sear Azimi	Provincial Extension Coordinator
73	Bamyan	Sayed Ali	Provincial Extension Coordinator
74	Ghazni	Ahmad Farid Azizi	Provincial Extension Coordinator
75	Kapisa	Emamuddin Eshaqzai	Provincial Extension Coordinator
76	Parwan	Mohammad Arif	Provincial Extension Coordinator
77	Wardak	Mirdad Arbab	Provincial Extension Coordinator

ACROYNMS

AAEP	USDA Afghan Agricultural Extension Program
ADT	US Military Agriculture Development Team
AGRED	USAID Afghan Agriculture Research & Extension Development
ASG	Agriculture Sectorial Group
ATWG	Agriculture Technical Working Group
CBCMP	USDA Capacity Building and Change Management Program
COP	Chief of Party
DAIL	Directorate of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock
DoWA	Directorate of Women Affairs
EMMP	Environmental Monitoring and Mitigation Plan
FAO	UN Food and Agriculture Organization
GIRoA	Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
GIZ	Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
IP	Implementing Partner
IPM	Integrated Pest Management
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
KPRT	Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team
MAIL	Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoWA	Ministry of Women Affairs
OAG	USAID Office of Agriculture
PHDP	Perennial Horticulture Development Program
PEC	Provincial Extension Coordinator
ROP	Roots of Peace
RRC	Regional Research Coordinator
REC	Regional Extension Coordinator
SIKA	Stabilization in Key Areas
SPRT	Samangan Provincial Reconstruction Team
UNAMA	UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNODC	UN Office on Drugs and Crime
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WIA	Women in Agriculture
WIAWG	Women in Agriculture Working Group