

**SIKA-EAST WEEKLY PROGRAM UPDATE**

No. 34

SIKA-East conducted a meeting with implementing partners and the leadership of the Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG) and Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) in Kabul. The session was an opportunity for all four SIKAs to present their mandate and the activities to the IDLG, emphasize how SIKA can add value and build on the successes of the previous government-led programs such as National Solidarity Program (NSP) and National Area Based Development Program (NABDP) and work in partnership with key Afghan authorities once the full implementation begins. It also provided a forum for SIKA leadership to address some of the key IDLG questions and concerns ahead of the anticipated signing of the Implementation Letter between USAID, MRRD and IDLG, which would enable SIKA to engage in full program implementation.

At the field level, joint MRRD and SIKA-East teams continued facilitating concept development sessions for *Hawza* leaders from Baraki Barak and Sayyidabad. During the week, the team assisted Community Development Council (CDC) elders from Pathawb and Baraki Rajan *Hawzas* of Baraki Barak and Tangi and Onkhay *Hawzas* of Sayyidabad in designing meaningful projects to mitigate local Sources of Instability (SoI). During the sessions, participants engaged in discussions on feasibility, sustainability, and resources, among others, and drafted project work plans detailing individual activities and locations as well as estimated cost and beneficiaries. Building on the results of the stability analysis sessions, MRRD and SIKA-East are relying in this phase on the best practices of the NSP, allowing the *Hawza* leaders to make technical decisions locally and fully own the planning and design process for the planned stabilization interventions.

The sessions in Puli Alam and Maidan Shahr were also attended by representative of key provincial and district line departments, including departments of Education, Health, Agriculture & Livestock and Water Management. Together with local Provincial Rural Rehabilitation and Development (PRRD) directors and District Development Assembly (DDA) heads, government counterparts provided significant contribution to the dialogue and offered concrete guidance for the development of the projects and activities. In addition to producing local Stability Plans and District Project Portfolios (DPP), the sessions are providing a valuable opportunity for *Hawza* leaders to discuss their stabilization and governance priorities with the district and provincial authorities, and jointly decide how to address them.

In consultation with PRRD office and to ensure gender mainstreaming throughout the program, an identical workshop was held for women from Baraki Barak and Sayedabad in Kabul. In separate sessions, influential women from the two districts proposed and designed solutions to the previously identified challenges to the stability in their districts. Their views and input will be included in the upcoming District Stability Plans and DPPs.

SIKA-East reviewed the *Hawza* stability plans and identified SoI that can be potentially addressed with the help of existing service providers. There is a need to work with district entities (DE) to enable them to access services and assist them in utilizing the existing resources for addressing SoIs.

Service Providers Catalog (SPC) for Paktia province has been finalized and shared with SIKA-East management. The data at provincial level was the result of the joint effort between PRRD and SIKA-East field staff using face-to-face interviews and questionnaires.

The Communications & Outreach department continued communication surveys for CDC and *Hawza* members, increasing the number surveyed members to over 150 and preparing an initial report for internal distribution. As per regular duties, the communications team distributed the daily media analysis with particular attention to Logar, Wardak, Paktiya and Ghazni provinces.

Leaders from five *Hawzas* participated in stability planning and project concept development workshops held in Wardak and Logar provinces. Over 28 *Hawza* leaders, DDA heads, and USAID representatives from Stabilization Unit and Deputy Field Program Officer from Logar and Wardak participated in the trainings. A total of 11 Wardak female leaders participated in a similar workshop in Kabul. In addition to completing *Hawza* Stability Plans, the leaders developed project ideas to address root causes of instability and prepared first drafts of related work plans.

The Engineering Support Group (ESG) developed a construction project management confidence report and engineering level-of-effort table, based on National Solidarity Program (NSP) standard plans and processes, to anticipate field engineer human resource (HR) needs and plans accordingly.

The Community Development (CD) Team designed a training activity to build stakeholder outreach skills for staff and government partners. Building on the program's current approach, the training aims to enhance stakeholder engagement across social, economic, and political spheres and standardize SIKA-East's outreach practices, steps, and tools. The concept will be distributed and discussed with Deputy Chief of Party (DCoP) and section heads. Additionally, the SIKA-East Program Implementation Cycle Matrix was completed and submitted to DCOP for review.

The Grant Team supported SIKA college by providing a three-hour training session on grants including eligibility, process and cycle, grant types, allowable, unallowable and restricted activities and costs, procurement under in-kind grants, and other key information.

The interim grant database was a significant focus this week for the grant and database teams with revision of fields and screens to better capture and report key data. Specifically, several data entry screens will be added, revised and reorganized. This interim database will provide the footprint for the online version.

Grants Team supported several key planning and coordination activities and tools including the development of a matrix designed to integrate track and schedule key implementation activities across program phases and work streams. The matrix will help both management and staff notice linkages, resource requirements, and key activities within each program phase.

The Program Support Unit (PSU) conducted a mission to Logar province during the week. In a meeting with Logar PRRD Director providing a temporary additional office for SIKA-East in PRRD compound was discussed. The PRRD director promised to provide space for SIKA-East upon the approval of MRRD. Additionally, the PRRD director requested support by providing electricity from the SIKA-East office generator. SIKA-East operations team will analyze if the generator has enough capacity to provide electricity to the PRRD office.



Meeting with Logar PRRD Director

PSU translation subunit, translated SIKA Fact Sheet, IR4 Community Development & Grants Presentation and *Hawza* stability plans for Sayyidabad, Sheikhabad, Baraki Barak and Baraki Rajan.

The Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) training manual had been drafted and the policy and procedure for each indicator has been incorporated into the document. Additionally, survey questionnaire version 19 of Measuring Impact of Stabilization Initiative (MISTI) was reviewed and the concerns are shared with SIKA-East Management for further follow up.

The Capacity Building Department facilitated the fourth session of SIKA College with participation of 25 newly recruited staff from all SIKA-E provinces. The department facilitated a Project Concept Development workshop for 11 prominent women from Wardak province as well.

Paktia capacity building and gender officer met with the Department of Women's Affairs (DoWA) director and other prominent women. They continue collecting data for the purpose of developing a provincial gender strategy.

The security department provided security orientation briefings to newly hired staff from various SIKA-East provinces and districts. The team implemented an incident monitoring tracker that documents daily security incidents in the provinces and districts of SIKA-East.

Human Resource (HR) Department filled eight positions for AECOM and one position for Overseas Strategic Consulting, Ltd (OSC) during the week.

## **FIELD ACTIVITIES**

### WARDAK

During this week Concept Development Session for Sayyidabad *Hawza* was conducted, in which Sayyidabad DCC's and DCC members, the head of the DDA, elders, the district governor and social organizers participated. The participation was very active and SoIs of the mentioned district were identified successfully. The participants proposed ways to address instabilities. The same session for Tangi and Onkhi *Hawza* ended on August 9th.

A coordination meeting regarding Concept Development Session for Shnize Olia and Shnize Sufla *Hawza* was conducted with Wardak PRRD staff. According to the schedule arranged by Wardak PMU and coordinated with Sayedabad DDA and District Governor (DG), the sessions in mentioned *Hawza* will be completed on August 16th.

### GHAZNI

During the week Ghazni PMU conducted coordination meetings with the Andar DDA head and key members of the DCC. The mentioned entities committed to full support of project implementation. Almost half of Ghazni staff participated in SIKA College 4 sessions in Kabul during the week.

### PAKTYA

Based on a standard format Paktya Team gathered information linked with districts profile of Wuza Jadran & Zurmat districts.

### LOGAR

On July 3 the Logar Provincial Management Unit (PMU) conducted a meeting with Logar PRRD Director and DDA chairperson. The purpose of this meeting was to coordinate Project Concept Development sessions for Pad Khwab Roghani. Consequently, the session started on August 4th and ended on August 7. Thirty-seven individual participated in all or part of the session. In order to organize the same session for Baraki Rajn a meeting was conducted with the PRRD director and DDA chairperson on August 6. The sessions accordingly started on August 8 and ended on August 9. The average number of participants in this session was 56.

## **PROGRAM NEXT WEEK KEY ACTIVITIES PROJECTION**

In the upcoming week, MRRD and SIKa-East Teams will conclude the Concept Development series with two-day sessions for Chilozi and Shah Mazar (Baraki Barak) and Shenz Sofla and Shenz Olia (Sayyidabad) *Hawzas* and move towards the development of the district-wide DPPs.

Upon receiving final approval of Baraki Barak district profile, the Communication & Outreach team will complete initial drafts of profile for Sayedabad, Chakh and Nerkh districts. The team will also continue with the CDC/DDA communication surveys, adding an additional 100-200 interviews per week until the base of 600 is completed. Local field staff from Baraki Barak will also travel to Kabul for a one-day intensive session to prepare materials for training on communication for Baraki Barak *Hawza* members

Stability planning and project concept development activities will be completed in final four *Hawzas* in pilot districts. As early drafts of *Hawza* Project Portfolios come in, a quick internal review will be undertaken to assess durability of project linkages with root causes of instability, and realism of technical scopes, beneficiary numbers, and budget estimates.

ESG will collect and review unit cost data from the districts and provinces. In addition, NSP standards, forms and checklists will be reviewed for potential SIKa-East use, and coordination meetings will continue with NSP Engineering Director. ESG will also meet with International Rescue Committee (IRC), to discuss rural infrastructure implementation.

The grant team will continue with the recruitment for remaining open positions in Ghazni, Paktya and Wardak provinces. Other USAID implementing partners will be contacted to request recommendations from recently closed or soon to be closed projects. The team will additionally harmonize the grant and procurement forms to those of NSP in the next week and these will be sent for translation. The team will continue to develop different type of fact sheets, which will be used by grantees and staff to help guide them in managing grants.

PSU will work on developing the grant section interim database. The unit will translation of Shikhabad *Hawza* DPPs.

M&E Department will meet Rahman Safi Impact consultancy (RSI) to discuss the preparation phase of the upcoming focus groups.

Capacity Building department will continue facilitate SPC awareness and Communication trainings.

Security team is planning to conduct Security Risk Assessments (SRA) for Ghazni. They will produce a database for incident reports in coordination with PSU/ICT Department.

HR Department will continue recruitment of 55 staff. The details are below:

- Twenty-one vacancies under process with AECOM;
- Twelve vacancies under process with OSC; and
- Eighteen vacancies under process with International Relief and Development (IRD).

## **FIELD ACTIVITIES**

### WARDAK

- Support the concept development sessions in Shenz Olia and Shenz Sofla *Hawzas*.

- Support the concept development sessions in Nerkh district.
- Install VSAT in Sayyidabad and Nerkh district DSU offices.

GHAZNI

- Prepare for SIKA-E rollout in Ghazni.
- Start- up DehYak DSU office.

PAKTYA

- Meet Paktya governor and obtain his approval to use the governor office's guest house for SIKA-East employees who have duties in Paktya province.

LOGAR

- Invite Shamazar *Howza* participants for Concept Development Sessions.

SECURITY:

Total number of incidents reported in SIKA East provinces and districts this week: **20**

Total number of incidents reported in Wardak Province this week: **7**

Total number of incidents reported in Logar Province this week: **10**

Total number of incidents reported in Paktia Province this week: **2**

Total number of incidents reported in Kabul Province this week: **1**