

SIKA-EAST WEEKLY PROGRAM UPDATE

No. 40

This week's joint Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) and Stability of Key Area (SIKA-East) District Planning and Resourcing workshop in Pul-e Alam and Maydan Shahr marked the completion of the SIKA-East stability analysis and planning phase in two pilot districts of Baraki Barak and Saydabad. The three-day workshops, one in each district, assisted District Development Assembly (DDA) members, designated *hawza* representatives and relevant line departments from two districts to determine district-wide instability trends and strategically plan how to address them through existing resources or SIKA-East grants. During the session, participants reviewed key principles of stability programming, developed criteria to guide priority and sequence of projects in their portfolios, and reflected on responsible project development techniques and resourcing. Participants approved District Project Portfolios (DPPs) at the end of respective district sessions.

Despite the ongoing security incidents, the workshops were well attended and provided additional opportunity for District Entities (DE) and *hawza* leaders to jointly discuss key challenges to stability in their areas and plan interventions in a more strategic and inclusive manner. Networking and coordination with government departments provided a strong basis for transforming stability plans into action.

Baraki Barak and Saydabad engineers began reviewing project portfolios, including researching proposed locations for logistical considerations, assessing feasibility, and discussing technical aspects of project prioritization and sequencing.

Resource Development Unit (RDU) conducted two-day resource dialogue session for Sheniz Olia *Hawza* of Wardak. The participants included Community Development Council (CDC)/District Development Assemblies (DDA) members and representatives of several governmental non-governmental service providers. The participants learned about existing resources, services and ways to access them. Furthermore, the team presented Service Provider Catalogue (SPC) to the participants and answered their questions accordingly.

Communication and Outreach Unit (COU) continued *hawza* communications strategy sessions for Sheniz Sofla in Saydabad district. The unit developed initial draft of Andar district profile and continued data collection for Zurmat district profile. The COU also submitted the Nerkh district profile for final approval.

Service Delivery Unit (SDU) management assisted Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Unit (MELU) with honing and aligning the SIKA-East program implementation matrix and accompanying annual work plan narrative. SDU also initiated review of SIKA College presentations to ensure materials reflect the updated implementation cycle as well as integrated activities.

Engineering Support Group (ESG) of SDU completed review of relevant National Solidarity Program (NSP) standard infrastructure designs. The group also corrected and marked engineering calculations for NSP review and concurrence and completed major revisions to the provincial construction unit cost table for Logar, Wardak, Ghazni and Paktya Provinces. Data will be shared with the Grants and Subcontracts Unit (GSU).

The ESG continued with district engineer recruitment and completed staff probation evaluations, while Community Development Group (CDG) of SDU delayed activities to

accommodate the demands of district trainings.

In preparation for wider discussion, SDU began drafting a standardized stability stakeholder engagement process, shaping the steps from assessing promising community entry points to mapping influential individuals and groups and developing local participant lists for SIKA-East stability activities. SDU also provided Human Resource (HR) with additional justification for recruitment of a short-term local engagement advisor to assist roll-out and orientation.

With the finalization of DPP projected for next week, GSU worked on development of training materials and process timelines for the grant review, evaluation and selection committee members. These training materials will prepare members for effective grant proposal evaluation and selection. A series of training for members from Logar and Wardak Provinces will be organized in the first half of October.

Significant progress has been made by the GSU in harmonizing NSP rules, regulations and procedures with applicable USAID rules and regulations in order to develop understandable and practical manual for grantees, particularly CDCs and DDAs. The focus this week was on the grantee procurement procedures and developing a grantee handbook.

Program Support Unit (PSU) established District Support Unit (DSU) in Deh Yak District of Ghazni Province.

Information and Communication Technology Group (ICTG) continued designing the front-end forms and the diagram of the SDU Database. The unit worked on application, grants, procurement and disbursement modules and integrated them into a single database. Moreover, the unit uploaded the databases of the different departments to OneSource.

Monitoring, Evaluation Learning Unit (MELU) staff participated in the Focus Group (FG) training session arranged by Rahman Safi Impact Consulting (RSI) for field staff. The purpose of this training was district mapping and to outline the translation and implementation of FG questionnaire at field level. RSI was asked to submit the final Pashto translated version and district maps to SIKA-East for the MELU review. MELU will cross check the translated version of questionnaire with the original FG questions.

MELU submitted a letter of cooperation to Measuring Impact of Stabilization Initiative (MISTI) on September 19. This letter outlines the SIKA-East and MISTI cooperation and the expectations of SIKA-East from the process of baseline survey and how the information should be given to AECOM.

Human Resources (HR) filled one positions for AECOM during the week.

FIELD ACTIVITY SUMMARY

Ghazni

Ghazni Provincial Management Unit (PMU) conducted coordination meeting with the PRRD Director for Ghazni. The purpose of the meeting was to update the director on SIKA-East achievements, current and planned activities in Ghazni province. Additionally the team conducted a meeting with Deh Yak DDA key members and described SIKA-East objective and the role of DDA, CDCs, and District Community Councils (DCC) in

program implementation. Ghazni PMU received equipments for Deh Yak DSU office from Kabul.

Logar

Logar PMU prepared the updated list of Baraki Barak DDA female members and influential women in the community. The unit had a meeting with Padkhawb *Hawza* members to select their three representatives for the DPP workshops. Twenty-one *hawaza* members participated in the meeting.

As noted above, in Baraki Barak a three-day-planning session started on September 18. The selected *hawza* members, DDA members and line ministries' representatives participated in mentioned session.

Maidan Wardak

Saydabad DSU conducted resource and communication dialogue session for Sheniz Olia and Sheniz Sofla clusters. The sessions went smoothly and all the participants were very pleased of receiving the training. The overall DPP planning session for Saydabad described in the above narrative was also conducted in Maidan Shahr, the provincial capital.

Paktya

Paktya PMU obtained official confirmation of district governor on the list prepared for roll out meeting.

NEXT WEEK KEY ACTIVITIES PROJECTION

All SIKA-East units will work in coordination to create a streamlined agenda for district-level trainings, taking DEs from stability analysis to the creation of district project portfolios.

In coordination with other units, SDU will review community development and technical construction aspects of district-endorsed DPP, as SIKA-East assesses the level of effort needed to provide district entities with follow-on assistance.

RDU will conduct Resource Information session as part of Resource Dialogue for Women of Saydabad and Baraki Barak. The team will follow up on Service Provider Fair (SPF) coordination with GIROA entities in province and Kabul.

COU will continue data collection for the Mohammad Agha and Zurmat. The unit will prepare the first draft of field manual for COU staff.

ESG rescheduled coordination meetings with MRRD/NSP Engineering to next week due to security concerns. The group will also submit the SIKA-East Geographic Information System (GIS) layers request letter to MRRD for deputy minister approval as required by the Afghan Geodesy and Cartography Head Office (AGCHO). SDU will continue collaborative meetings with International Rescue Committee (IRC), especially regarding capacity development, engineering and community development efforts. The unit also will review short lists, conduct interviews, and finalize hiring decisions for several positions.

SDU will orient and deploy a short-term community engagement advisor.

PSU will conduct a meeting with the Mohammad Agha district governor to establish a new DSU office over there. The ICTG will continue working on the SDU database and

present the beta version of the database to GSU. TEG will translate the documents which will come out from the formulation of DPP in Baraki Barak and Saydabad districts.

The GSU will continue to work on training modules for grantees and preparation for Train the Trainer (TOT) for grant and subcontract training officers. These officers will be responsible, at the district level, to train and assist grantees in grant management, administration and effective, transparent and compliant implementation of grants.

MELU plans to conduct M&E training for district and provincial MELU staff next week. The unit will follow up with MISTI on letter of cooperation between SIKA-East and MISTI.

Capacity Building and Gender Unit (CBGU) will compile and submit SIKA-East Capacity Building activities monthly projection. Additionally, they will draft ToT outline for SIKA-East field engineers.

HR Department will continue recruitment of 47 staff. The details are below:

- Twenty two vacancies under process with AECOM;
- One vacancy under process with Technologists, Inc (TI);
- Seven vacancies under process with OSC; and
- Seventeen vacancies under process with IRD.

NEXT WEEK PROJECTED FIELD ACTIVITIES

Ghazni

- Conduct regular coordination meeting with Ghazni PRRD Director;
- Prepare for SIKA-East rollout in Deh Yak; and
- Share the final participants list of Deh Yak stability session with Kabul SDU for review and comments.

Logar

- Collect data for Mohammad Agha profile;
- Review Logar SPC; and
- Collect information on existing CDCs in Logar province.

Maidan Wardak

- Coordinate and facilitate rollout training for Nerkh district; and
- Collect data for SPF from key department in Maydan Shahr.

Paktya

- Conduct meetings with different governmental departments to find out the number and type of their ongoing and planned projects at province level particularly in Zurmat and Wuza Jadran.