

SIKA-EAST WEEKLY PROGRAM UPDATE

No. 48

On November 14 and 15, SIKA-East, supported by Provincial Rural Rehabilitation and Development (PRRD), conducted a two-day Service Provider Fair (SPF) at Maidan Shahr in Wardak Province. The event was attended by 43 governmental and non-governmental service providers, who set up booths to brief visitors on their services. Over 20 local government representatives and members of community and district organizations were present for the fair's official opening. More than 800 people visited the fair during the two days it was held to learn about the resources offered by service providers in their province.

The SIKA-East provincial team coordinated with the Governor's Press Office for media coverage of the fair. Significant aspects of the SPF were recorded via video and still photographs, and a press release is being prepared in consultation with the PMU Manager, the PRRD Director, and the Governor's spokesperson.

SIKA-East is planning to conduct a coordination meeting / conference among service providers and District Entities (DE) in Logar province. The meeting is scheduled to be held in the last week of November in Pul-e-Alam. In preparation for the event, field staff met with the Provincial Governor and PRRD Director to seek their help in the organizational effort. All 74 service providers listed in the Service Providers Catalogue (SPC) for Logar will be invited to attend the meeting. The agenda will be shared with senior management late next week. The Provincial Department of Economy is also playing a key role in this effort by providing coordination among service providers.

SIKA-East conducted a three-day workshop, "Strengthening the Governance Foundation and Preparing for DDP Implementation," for representatives from six *hawzas* of Saydabad District. The workshop assisted DEs to create Project Management Committees and prioritize projects contained in the Saydabad District Project Portfolio (DPP). The trainers presented basic grants criteria, including eligible and non-eligible organizations, restricted goods and activities, and SIKA-EAST financial restrictions and cost-share requirements. The workshop identified the first batch of 40-plus proposed projects, which will be further filtered and bundled based on Project Management Committee recommendations, priorities, and grant criteria.

A SIKA-East team developed a curriculum for negotiation and lobbying based on its post-DPP interventions. The curriculum will provide support to planning for the rollout in Nerkh, Mohammad Agha, and Deh Yak. The team also continued data collection and updating of the district profiles for Mohammad Agha, Zurmat, and Andar.

The Grant and Sub-contract Unit (GSU) finalized the grant application package this week. The package is designed to meet basic grant evaluation, selection, and award requirements, and at the same time include understandable and practical documents to complete at the community level. The GSU is currently translating this grant application package, which will be used for upcoming training for DEs.

The Capacity Building and Gender Unit (CBGU) facilitated a four-day Training of Trainers (ToT), "Project Design/ Grant Process," for 34 Kabul and field staff, including PRRD social organizers for Logar and Wardak Provinces.

A SIKA East Gender Strategy has been developed to support the SIKA-East mandate. The goal of the strategy is to ensure that women are fully involved in all aspects of the program. For this purpose, the Gender Strategy has been circulated to program units for review and feedback.

The capacity building officers in Wardak, Ghazni, Logar, and Paktya provinces compiled a list of influential women in those areas. The lists for Logar and Ghazni have been signed and approved by PRRD and Department of Women Affairs (DoWA) Directors; the Wardak and Paktya lists

are still under review. This data is being collected to provide Gender Service Provider Catalogues and Gender Training Providers.

Rahman Safi Impact Consultancy (RSI) continued to complete Focus Group (FG) implementation in Andar, Zurmat, and Zadran districts. As of the end of this week, 79 out of 90 FGs have been completed in nine designated districts. Seventy-five FG sessions have been transcribed, and 45 have been translated. Field work is completed in six of the nine districts. All the FGs for Saydabad, Chak, and Baraki Barak have been completed.

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Unit (MELU) reviewed the reporting outlines suggested by RSI and provided feedback on how SIKA-East would like to see the data. RSI is about to begin preliminary analysis for the three aforementioned districts and will submit their report in the standard USAID format for MELU review and comment. MELU is also working with the program unit to understand how the FG report can feed into programming design and planning.

MELU visited RSI's office on November 13 to conduct a quality control (QC) inspection with the goal of verifying the validity and accuracy of the data collected by RSI in their FGs. The QC team will submit a report after an in-house document review of the selected FGs.

MELU completed and populated the projected cost of all trainings implemented for FY 2012 Q3 and Q4. There is a need to review each voucher to find out the actual training expenditure for TraiNet. Once the calculations have been completed, MELU will update the TraiNet database.

A new **Afghan Info** report was uploaded to USAID's **Afghan Info** portal on November 12. This report is under review by the Contracting Officer Representative (COR).

Security Department coordinated the security of the Maidan Shahr SPF with responsible security organizations in Wardak Province. In addition, the unit conducted first aid training for Afghan Public Protection Force (APPF) guards.

The HR Unit filled three positions for AECOM and one position for Overseas Strategic Consulting, Ltd. (OSC) during the week.

FIELD ACTIVITY SUMMARY

Ghazni:

- The Ghazni Provincial Management Unit (PMU) Manager held his regular weekly coordination meeting with the PRRD Director, updating him on SIKA-East achievements and plans and coordinating the expected program rollout in Deh Yak District. He also submitted a copy of the district profile to the director for his further information.
- The Ghazni PMU completed Andar and Deh Yak district profiles and submitted the documents to the Kabul office for review.

Logar:

- The Logar PMU Manager met with the Provincial Governor and PRRD Director on November 8. The PRRD Director explained the SIKA-East program and activities to the Governor. The PMU Manager coordinated the upcoming coordination meeting among service providers. The Governor voiced his appreciation for SIKA-East's efforts in the province and committed his full support towards implementation of its initiatives.
- Logar PMU staff developed lists of influential women in Pul-e-Alam and Baraki Barak, and shared the lists with CBGU Kabul.

Paktya:

- The DDA head of Sayed Karam District visited the Paktya PMU office to request SIKA-East intervention in his district. The PMU manager referred him to MRRD, which has the right to select districts for program implementation.

Wardak:

- The Saydabad District Support Unit (DSU) conducted a DDP Implementation workshop for members of the Saydabad District Development Assembly (DDA), Community Development Council (CDC), and District Community Council (DCC).
- A Service Providers Fair was conducted on November 14 and 15 in Maidan Shahr. More information on the event is provided at the beginning of this report.
- The Nerkh community development officer identified ten influential women in the district who were members of a previous DDA but now have their own *shura*. It is hoped they may be helpful in program implementation in Nerkh.
- The Chak DSU met with elders of Alasang village and introduced them to the program. The team also provided the elders with information on preparing grant applications.

KEY ACTIVITIES PROJECTION FOR NEXT WEEK

- Submit a report on the Maidan Shahr SPF to senior management;
- Finalize a list of participants and an agenda for a coordination meeting in Pul-e-Alam;
- Finalize Mohammad Agha, Zurmat, and Andar district profiles;
- Organize a launch meeting for the SIKA-East program in Nerkh on November 18;
- Conduct a five-day workshop, “Project Design and Development/Grant Process,” in Saydabad District for assigned people of project management committees;
- Conduct a two-day workshop, “Strengthening the Governance Foundation,” for members of CDCs, DDA, DCC, and other influential people in Nerkh District;
- Follow up with units to receive their inputs for incorporation in the Gender Strategy;
- Prepare an agenda and training materials for the upcoming Grant Review Committee (GRC) workshop scheduled for later this month;
- Disaggregate data on actual training expenditures for FY 2012 Q4 for TraiNet;
- Review FG samples with a view to data quality;
- Follow up with procurement to procure SPSS software;
- Continue training of APPF guards and new hires;
- HR Department will continue recruitment of 66 staff:
 - Forty-three vacancies in process with AECOM;
 - Six vacancies in process with OSC; and
 - Seventeen vacancies in process with IRD.

PROJECTED FIELD ACTIVITIES FOR NEXT WEEK

Ghazni:

- Prepare for program rollouts in Ghazni Center and Deh Yak District.

Logar:

- Complete list of influential people in the province; and
- Conduct coordination meeting regarding PRRD.

Paktya:

- Participate in PRRD coordination meeting; and

- Conduct meetings with different NGOs based in Gardez in order to share knowledge and obtain information about their activities.

Wardak:

- Participate in regular coordination meetings with District Sub-Governor, DRRD Manager, and other government officials; and
- Coordinate and facilitate the Nerkh District rollout.