

SIKA-EAST WEEKLY PROGRAM UPDATE**No. 50**

On Friday November 23, a truck bomb was detonated in the government center of Maidan Shahr, Wardak. The SIKA-East office embedded within the PRRD compound, as well as the SIKA-East guest house located 150 meters away, were damaged in the attack. No SIKA-East staff were injured in the attack, and all staff were accounted for shortly after the incident. Considering the location and magnitude of the blast, it is clear that the attack was directed at the cluster of GIRA facilities in the area and was intended to cause maximum damage to these facilities. The blast radius was approximately 150 meters, encompassing a number of government buildings, commercial premises, and residences. An estimated 20 buildings were leveled by the blast. The SIKA-East guest house was on the outer perimeter of the blast radius and sustained some structural damage, and all doors and windows were destroyed by the blast wave. The SIKA-East office connex buildings also lost a number of doors, and all windows were destroyed. All SIKA-East office equipment and sensitive items were removed within hours after the incident and transported to Kabul in order to prevent theft or looting. Security worked quickly and diligently to conduct staff accountability and to secure USAID property. Damages are currently being assessed and repaired in an effort to bring project activities back online.

SIKA-East submitted the final two district profiles, for Zurmat and Mohammad Agha, to USAID, bringing to seven the number of profiles submitted to date. Also, the SIKA-East communication strategy was updated and submitted to SIKA-East management for final review.

SIKA-East and Provincial Rural Rehabilitation and Development (PRRD) prepared to co-facilitate two separate Governance and Stability Planning Process workshops for influential women from Nerkh and Mohammad Agha Districts. The five-day training sessions, which will be held in Maidan Shahr and Pul-e-Alam, are aimed at involving district-level women in the stabilization process, including identifying main causes of instability and planning projects and interventions to mitigate them. The outputs of these sessions are mini Project Portfolios, which will be incorporated into the comprehensive District Project Portfolios (DPP) for Nerkh and Mohammad Agha to ensure that women's input is taken into consideration throughout the stability planning process. Provided the security situation remains stable over the weekend, SIKA-East expects almost 20 influential women leaders from each district to participate in the two workshops. These sessions will be followed by a two-day Advocacy Training to assist women to effectively communicate and advocate for their priorities.

As a result of the Project Design and Grant Process workshop that took place on November 18 to 22 for Saydabad District Entities (DE), SIKA-East received 21 partially filled grant applications. The relevant team is currently working at the district and provincial levels to assist grantees in the completion of these applications, although the security situation in Wardak is affecting the process. The first five completed applications are expected by the end of next week. Various forms – including Drawing, Site Plan, Bill of Quantity (BoQ), Work Plan, and certain social and environmental forms – have been completed for the five projects. At the same time, SIKA-East is completing capacity assessments of the proposed grantees in order to determine their capability in managing and implementing Fixed Obligation Grants (FOG).

The final version of the Standard Procurement Procedures under In-Kind Grants was approved by IRD's home office this week. SIKA-East is now working to develop, update, and adjust the required procurement templates, training materials, and checklists in accordance with the final approved procedures. Also, procurement field staffs have been busy surveying the local markets at the district and provincial levels to determine locally available vendors for various expected In-Kind Grant activities. This will facilitate the procurement process.

SIKA-East is planning to conduct a one-day coordination meeting / conference among service providers and DEs of Baraki Barak on December 5 in Pul-e-Alam. The purpose of this conference is to improve service delivery by strengthening coordination among the service

providers. The meeting will be the first program activity conducted in Logar following the completion of the DPP. In preparation for the event, invitation cards and a service providers booklet have been submitted for printing.

Capacity Building and Gender Unit (CBGU) facilitated a five-day Stability Analysis and Planning Training of Trainers (ToT). The training took place from November 25 to 29 in Kabul and was attended by 27 field staff from Mohammad Agha District of Logar and from Nerkh and Chak Districts of Wardak. During the workshop, the participants had an opportunity to learn about the overall planning process, including the identification of local sources of instability (SOI), designing of stabilization projects, and identification of available resources to fund the projects, as well as the types of assistance SIKA-East can provide to support the implementation of the DPPs.

The unit finalized a post-training evaluation report on the Grant Process / Project Design and Development workshop and shared it with management.

Rahman Safi Impact Consultancy (RSI) has completed the implementation of 90 focus groups (FG) in all nine districts. Sixty-eight FGs have been translated and the remaining 22 are being translated. Data for four districts are being analyzed; the analysis for five other districts will begin next week.

In communication with Measuring Impact of Stabilization Initiative (MISTI), Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Unit (MELU) received the data for Andar, Baraki Barak, Zurmat, Saydabad, Chak, Nerkh, and Deh Yak Districts, and has started analyzing it. The SPSS software to aid data analysis is being procured.

MELU staff have again been granted access to TraiNet and plan to upload data to the portal next week.

During the week, HR filled seven positions for AECOM, one position for Overseas Strategic Consulting Ltd (OSC), and two positions for IRD.

Security Unit continued training of the Afghan Public Protection Force (APPF) and providing orientation to newly hired staff.

A Success Story (Snapshot) on the recent Service Providers Fair held at Maidan Shahr in Wardak was submitted to USAID for posting on their website.

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. It was decided to coordinate the rollout with the provincial governor and line departments.

Logar:

- The SIKA-East launch in Mohammad Agha District took place on November 25. During the kick-off meeting, the district governor welcomed the participants and briefed them on SIKA-East. The PRRD head presented program aspects in great detail, mentioning the goals and objective of the project. SIKA-East's Program Support Unit (PSU) Director explained project implementation procedures and answered participants' questions.

Paktya:

- On November 27, the Paktya PMU manager visited the provincial Economy Director in order to collect information on vendors and suppliers existing and working in Paktya

Province. The director presented a detailed list of vendors. The vendors will be contacted about supplying materials for future projects.

- The Central Support Unit (CSU) manager and officer conducted a coordination meeting with the Paktya PRRD director in his office and updated him on the activities and progress of SIKA-East in the province.

Wardak:

- A three-day training on Project Design and Grants Process was conducted for 42 participants from six *hawzas* of Saydabad District. The main goal of the training was to work with community elders on filling out grants application forms and BoQs.
- The Saydabad team worked with *hawzas* in Saydabad and Shekhabad to fill out grants application forms for projects requested by the communities. The forms will then require approval by the district governor and DDA head before submittal to the SIKA-East team.

KEY ACTIVITIES PROJECTION FOR NEXT WEEK

- Conduct a five-day Governance and Stability Analysis and Planning workshop for Nerkh and Mohammad Agha Districts women;
- Conduct a five-day District Stability Planning Process ToT workshop for field staff from Ghazni and Paktya and PRRD Social Organizers;
- Start data collection for Logar, Ghazni, Paktya, and Wardak provincial profiles;
- Begin composing the monthly media analysis for November;
- Work on post-training evaluation of the Stability Analysis and Planning ToT;
- Work on Construction Feasibility training outline;
- Facilitate Process / Project Design and Development training;
- Receive completed grant applications from Saydabad District;
- Review grants applications forms to ensure all required information and supporting documents are complete before submission to the Grant Review Committee (GRC);
- Conduct GRC training for Wardak Provincial Officer;
- Continue working with potential grantees in Saydabad District to complete pre-qualification surveys;
- Participate in TraiNet portal orientation;
- Deliver presentation on coding system;
- Draft the justification letter for RSI for mid-term review of the SIKA-East program;
- Review reporting timelines and structures for SIKA-East;
- Conduct Service Provider Coordination meeting at Pul-e-Alam;
- Complete post-evaluation report of the recent Service Provider Fair (SPF) at Maidan Shahr in Wardak;
- Conduct Resource Development ToT for SIKA-East staff of Ghazni and Paktya Provinces; and
- HR Department will continue recruitment of 54 staff:
 - Thirty-four vacancies in process with AECOM;
 - Six vacancies in process with OSC; and
 - Fourteen vacancies in process with IRD.

PROJECTED FIELD ACTIVITIES FOR NEXT WEEK

Ghazni:

- Prepare the list of invitees for the program rollout in Deh Yak;
- Prepare the list of participants for the Deh Yak rollout; and
- Conduct regular coordination meeting with Ghazni PRRD director.

Logar:

- Conduct coordination meeting among service providers;
- Conduct two-day Strengthening of the Governance Foundation workshop for Mohammad Agha district entities;
- Conduct five-day Governance and District Stability Planning Process Workshop for Women from Mohammad Agha District in Pul-e-Alam; and
- Participate in PRRD coordination meeting.

Paktya:

- Participate in PRRD coordination meeting; and
- Conduct meetings with different service providers to update the Service Provider Catalogue (SPC).

Wardak:

- Conduct Strengthening of the Governance Foundation training for Nerkh District women;
- Conduct five-day Governance and District Stability Planning Process Workshop for Women from Nerkh in Maidan Shahr;
- Continue grants application form filling in Saydabad; and
- Conduct survey on the first cycle of grant projects in Saydabad for the purpose of BoQ development.