

## SIKA-EAST WEEKLY PROGRAM UPDATE

NO. 62

## SIGNIFICANT PROVINCIAL ACTIVITIES

## GHAZNI

- The **Acting PRRD Director** met several times with the SIKA-East manager for Ghazni to get updated on program achievements and current and planned activities. On several occasions, the main subject was coordination of the program rollout in Andar District.

## Andar

- A launch meeting was held in the provincial hall in Ghazni City on Tuesday, February 19, to roll out SIKA-East in Andar District. The meeting was attended by approximately 80 men and 10 women. **Eng. Abdul Latif Basharyar, representing PRRD**, explained SIKA-East in some detail, emphasizing the program's goal is to improve the lives of rural people in the district through better service delivery by district authorities. Mr. Mohammad Ali Ahmadi, Deputy Governor of Ghazni, then expressed his optimism and support for the program. **Andar District Governor, Mr. Mohammad Qasim Disiwal**, expressed thanks for the selection of Andar as a target district. He also said



**Mr. Mohammad Ali Ahmadi, Deputy Provincial Governor**, speaks during the Andar District launch meeting.

that if other ministries had been able to initiate two or three programs as MRRD has, Afghanistan would be much better off now. At the request of the Ghazni provincial gender officer, a DOWA representative spoke about SIKA-East and expressed DOWA's commitment to the program. It deserves to be noted that this was the first time in the SIKA-East program that a woman spoke during a launch meeting. The meeting concluded with questions and answers.

- The day after the launch meeting, SIKA-East trainers began conducting a workshop on Stakeholder Orientation / Governance Foundation for 19 women from Andar as an entry point to cultivating female participation within the district. The attendees said they appreciated stability and explained that women in Andar District were reluctant to participate in programs because of some bad experiences and poor security conditions. They committed to ensure that Andar women had a voice in the initiative, while requesting that this issue be raised with Andar men.

## Dih Yak

- From February 17 to 21, training in Grant Process and Application Development was conducted for approximately 50 men from the Dih Yak DDA+ and CDCs, as well as other influential men from the district.

## LOGAR

- On February 19, the **Logar PRRD Director** met with the SIKA-East manager to discuss the planned date and other arrangements for the upcoming Service Providers Fair. It has been decided to hold the event in an enclosed garden for women, which has ample space and is safe and secure. The aim of this event is to bring all service providers together to present their types of services.

- The updating of the Logar Service Providers Catalogue, which will be distributed at the fair, was completed this week and includes the addition of 35 new service providers. During the process, staff met with each service provider to talk about the upcoming fair and encourage them to participate.

#### Baraki Barak

- On February 17 and 18, a Stability Planning Process review session was conducted at the PRRD compound for Baraki Barak DDA+ men. The aim of this training was to refresh the participants' knowledge of the process, as the program in Baraki Barak has only recently been relaunched after an interruption of several months due to security threats. The same training review was conducted for women from the district on February 19 and 20.



Men from Baraki Barak attend a review session on the Stability Planning Process.

#### Mohammad Agha

- The Mohammad Agha district stakeholders registration sheet was prepared and submitted to Kabul.
- Engineering surveys for the karez and protection wall of Panama and Dehnaw Villages were completed during the week.

#### PAKTYA

- On February 18, the PRRD Director met with SIKA-East's provincial manager and his communications and outreach officer to discuss the radio play scripts that SIKA-East is producing. The PRRD Director said he will bring them up at next week's meeting with the District Governor and the Directorate of Information and Culture, and he hoped they would provide positive feedback and sign off on the scripts.

#### Zadran

- From February 17 to 19, SIKA-East Stakeholder Orientation and Governance Foundation sessions were held for 60 DDA+ members and other stakeholders from Zadran. The idea of improving stability and the initiative's participatory approach were unfamiliar, and participants discussed at length before agreeing. In addition, people had concern that SIKA will just collect information as many other programs have, but after more information on stakeholder engagement and the implementation cycle, they were reassured. On February 20 and 21, they began training in Stability Planning Process.



Training in Stakeholder Orientation / Governance Foundation was held for men from Zadran.

## Zurmat

- On February 17, the District Support Unit office moved from SIKA-East's provincial office to the program's Paktya guesthouse.

## WARDAK

- On February 17, the **PRRD Deputy Director** held a coordination meeting attended by SIKA-East staff and other key stakeholders. The main point of discussion was how to resolve issues with certain CDCs that are currently holding up the release of grants for stabilization projects.

## Chak-i-Wardak

- In Chak-i-Wardak, forty men from the DDA and CDCs as well as community elders began training in Stakeholder Orientation / Governance Foundation. Participants had some understanding of SIKA-East from the startups in Saydabad and Nirkh. They appreciated the focus on local participation and consultation and agreed that they would evaluate and improve each stage of implementation, considering their fellow district residents' advice.
- Thirty-women from various organizations participated in Stability Planning Process training from February 17 to 21.

## Nirkh

- The **Deputy District Governor** met with SIKA-East's district manager to discuss SIKA-East progress, especially on surveys that program engineers are conducting for implementation projects. They also discussed grant application progress. The **Deputy District Governor** pledged his support for the program.
- The Nerkh grant team collected bank statements from some CDCs, plus ID cards from female CDC and DDA members, in order to process grant applications.
- The SIKA-East district engineer completed the bill of quantities, work plan, and drawings for the Dadal road project.



The Nirkh **Deputy District Governor** receives a briefing on SIKA-East plans and activities from the district support team.

## Saydabad

- The District Support Unit team shared the District Project Portfolio with government line departments in order to avoid duplication of proposed projects. The Departments of Education, Rehabilitation and Rural Development, Health, and Agriculture approved the proposed projects in accordance with GIRoA norms and standards. The Department of Social Affairs and Public Works addressed some of the proposed projects, including vocational training courses and centers for men and women, using their existing resources.
- The Saydabad grant team worked to collect the missing documents that need to accompany grant applications processed by the Grant Review Committee. They also filled out English versions of the grant applications.
- The district engineering team conducted two surveys in Onkhai for two Cycle 1 projects and also prepared drawings for projects in Zara Qala and Yawiz.

## SIGNIFICANT KABUL-BASED ACTIVITIES

- On February 20, SIKA-East hosted an all-day management Lessons Learned session to recount challenges, review successes, and draw lessons from program implementation in the five provinces where SIKA-East is currently being implemented or, in the case of Khost, about to be launched. The meeting also had the purpose of strengthening the partnership with MRRD and IDLG in the program's current provinces and districts and in future ones. Participants in the session included MRRD's Chief Coordinator for SIKA; MRRD Senior Program Officer; PRRD Directors from Logar, Maydan Wardak, Ghazni, Paktya, and Khost; the USAID COR and Alternative COR; and senior management of SIKA-East.



MRRD's Chief Coordinator for SIKA makes a point during the coordination meeting.

During the session, the PRRD Directors and SIKA-East Provincial Management Unit managers from Khost, Ghazni, Paktya, Logar, and Wardak described their programs' activities and engaged in a general discussion on how to resolve some of the implementation challenges encountered in the process.

SIKA-East and PRRD Directors noted two critical issues that are creating delays with grant implementation. One is the high number of expired CDCs, and the other is CDCs that are blacklisted by PRRD/NSP and were recommended as grantees for a number of SIKA-East grants. The USAID COR stressed that this issue is currently holding up the issuance of grants and could ultimately jeopardize the future of the program. She urged MRRD to resolve these issues without delay. MRRD's Chief Coordinator said that MRRD lacks resources to undertake the re-election of CDCs, but noted that the Ministry would issue a directive to PRRD Directors to find a quick solution to the problem and expedite the grant approval process.

Finally, SIKA-East and MRRD discussed the way that future target districts are selected in order to ensure that the program is only implemented in districts that are reasonably safe. It was agreed that a joint high-level SIKA-East and MRRD team should approach the governor of a targeted province, introduce the program, and ask him to select from a list of proposed four to six districts those where SIKA-East could work.

- All trainings held during the week, project-wide, are listed below:

Date	Title	Location	Type	Men	Women
February 17-18	Stability Planning Process Review – Baraki Barak Men	Pul-e-Alam	Workshop	41	
February 17-19	Stakeholder Orientation / Governance Foundation – Zadran Men	Gardiz	Training	58	
February 17-19	Stakeholder Orientation / Governance Foundation – Chak Men	Maydan Wardak	Training	43	
February 17-21	Project Design and Development / Grant Process – Dih Yak Men	Ghazni	Training	30	

February 17-21	Stability Planning Process – Chak Women	Maydan Wardak	Training		34
February 18-20	Stakeholder Orientation / Governance Foundation – Andar Women	Ghazni	Training		19
February 19	Resource Dialogue – Women	Chak	Training		25
February 19-20	Stability Planning Process Review Session – Baraki Barak Women	Pul-e-Alam	Training		NA
February 19-20	Stability Planning Process Review -- Women	Baraki Barak	Workshop		24
February 20	Stability Planning Process – Chak Men	Maydan Wardak	Training	43	
February 20-21	Stability Planning Process – Zadrans Men	Gardiz	Training	45	

- Grants and Subcontracts Unit continued to process grant applications as follows:
  - Nirkh: 36 applications (6 female, 30 male); the district team is engaged with CDCs to collect the required documents;
  - Saydabad: 8 applications pending **PRRD** decision on way forward; the team is working on additional applications and the collection of required documentation;
  - Mohammad Agha: 32 applications (4 female, 28 male); the team is engaged with CDCs to complete grant application packages; and
  - Ghazni: The unit supported several trainings in Dih Yak and Andar Districts.
- A glossary of abbreviations and acronyms has been drafted, which is proposed for use project-wide in order to standardize the SIKA-East terminologies.
- Communication and Outreach Unit continued to follow up its advocacy trainings a couple of weeks later via phone interviews with the participants. The objective of this is to report on all advocacy-based activity, even the ones that may not directly relate to SIKA-East, to see how the training has helped. The following two examples show that it has been effective:
  - Women in Deh Yak District organized an advocacy team to request support in organizing a tailoring course for 15 widows. The Department of Labor Social Affairs, Martyrs, and Disabled agreed to add the course into next year's planning.
  - Men from the Abazak village CDC in Mohammad Agha District wanted to have a karez cleaned. They organized successive meetings with, and received approvals from, the DDA and **District Governor**, the **PRRD Director** for Logar Province, and finally the **NABDP Director**, who promised to add the project to next year's plan.
- Communication and Outreach Unit also submitted radio play scripts to field offices for **PRRD and District Governor** approval in targeted districts.
- The final modules of the SIKA-East web-based integrated database system were completed this week, and Resource Development Unit received training on it. A presentation on the database was made to senior management on February 20.
- The gender group continued to work on the SIKA-East gender mainstreaming strategy.
- Human Resources filled two positions this week for IRD.

- Security Department conducted interviews to fill positions as district security and operation officer in Deh Yak and Khwaja Omari Districts.
- Security also conducted a security risk assessment for the Provincial Management Unit guesthouse in Pul-e-Alam and identified a house for the transition of the staff members visiting the SIKA-East office there.

## PROJECTED FIELD ACTIVITIES FOR NEXT WEEK

### GHAZNI

- Conduct Advocacy training for men from Dih Yak District;
- Conduct training in Stakeholder Orientation / Governance Foundation for men from Andar District; and
- Jointly with PRRD and DoWA, conduct Stability Planning Process training for influential women of Andar District.

### LOGAR

- Conduct regular coordination meetings with the PRRD Director;
- Conduct training in Infrastructure Project Planning for men from Baraki Barak DDA+; and
- Conduct Project Design and Development training for Baraki Barak women.

### PAKTYA

- Conduct regular coordination meetings with the PRRD Director and other concerned organizations;
- Conduct a Stakeholder Orientation / Governance Foundation workshop and begin a Stability Planning Process training for men from Zurmat District;
- Conduct the second part of the same training for members of the Zadran DDA, CDC, and DCC, as well as other influential men in the community; and
- Conduct Resource Dialogue and Advocacy training for women from Zadran District, and a workshop in Stability Planning Process for women from Zurmat.

### WARDAK

- Hold regular coordination meetings with PRRD and other stakeholders;
- Conduct surveys in Saydabad District according to the engineering department plan;
- Fill out grant applications for projects in Saydabad District;
- Conduct Stability Planning Process training for Chak women, and Stakeholder Orientation/ Governance Foundation sessions for men;
- Conduct engineering surveys for proposed projects at Tokarak Hawza and Dekhorqa Village; and
- Continue working on grant applications for Saydabad and Nirkh Districts, including verifying eligibility checklists and male and female ID cards.

## PROJECTED KABUL-BASED ACTIVITIES FOR NEXT WEEK

- Review the six grant applications from Muhammad Agha and if the applications fulfill compliance requirements, organize a Grant Review Committee for their evaluation and further processing;
- Continue to support Wardak, Logar, and Ghazni CDCs to complete their grant applications;
- Present the GSU web-based database to GSU staff and train them in its use;
- Request equipment and furniture for the Khost Provincial Management Unit office;
- Start repair of Khoshi and Khwaja Umari District Support Unit offices;
- In coordination with HR department, shortlist candidates for Khoshi, Khwaja Umari, and Khost District Support Units;
- Continue infrastructure design efforts for projects in Mohammad Agha, Saydabad, and Nirkh; and
- Continue recruitment by HR Department of 95 staff:
  - Fifty-two vacancies in process with AECOM;
  - Seven vacancies in process with OSC;
  - Thirty-three vacancies in process with IRD; and
  - Three vacancies in process with Ti.