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AFGHANISTAN

STABILITY IN KEY AREAS (SIKA) – EAST

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Photo: The Provincial Governor of Khost province inaugurated the SIKA-East launch in the Mando Zayi district.

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Highlights of the Week:

- SIKA-East was officially launched in Mando Zayi District of Khost Province – the 21st and last district in which the program will operate during the base period.
- Three new District Project Portfolios (DPPs) were submitted to and approved by USAID enabling future stability-focused initiatives in Khoshi, Khwaja Umari, and Laja Ahmad Khail Districts.

Results to Date:

- **Capacity Building:**
 - 13 capacity building sessions conducted in nine districts during the week, attended by 430 participants, one-fourth of whom were women.
 - 10,999 individuals in total trained in 302 sessions in various stability-focused skills
 - 2,569 women trained to date
 - 516 Afghan governmental officials from various line ministries at provincial and district levels trained
- **Grants:**
 - Four community-driven grants completed in the reporting period, pending three-month mandatory monitoring before closure.
 - Since the beginning of the program, 129 grant applications worth over \$6 million submitted with SIKA-East assistance as part of the DPP implementation process.
 - Of the 105 USAID-approved grant applications, 79 in total have been awarded, in cumulative value of \$3,546,090, in the districts of Andar, Baraki Barak, Chaki Wardak, Dih Yak, Mohammad Agha, Nirkh, and Saydabad.



Photo: Eng. Mahidi, Director of the Khost Provincial Rural Rehabilitation and Development, spoke at the SIKA-East launch in Mando Zayi District of Khost Province.

Changing Mentality by Keeping Promises

“It’s a difficult job,” said Eng. Mohammad Usman Mahidi about his years as Director of Provincial Rural Rehabilitation and Development (PRRD) in Khost Province in eastern Afghanistan. The security situation in his province had somewhat improved since the 180 km border with Pakistan was sealed to a large degree by international and Afghan security forces. “Six out of the 12 districts are now totally safe,” he said. “The other six are not.”

“SIKA-East operates in some of the less secure districts. The plan was to start this program in more secure areas, so that the insecure districts would learn by example that development projects come with stability. When [people from] other districts found out about SIKA-East activities, they came to us asking for the same, mainly flood prevention walls, intakes, canals, potable water. They don’t come to us openly,” he said, “They don’t want the insurgents to know.”

SIKA’s ongoing capacity building activities in Khost, according to the PRRD Director, have already started creating the perception that the program is there to help people. The Mando Zayi launch will help less secure areas gain a more stable footing.

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Institutional Strengthening and Stabilization

- SIKa-East submitted to and received approvals from USAID for three District Project Portfolios (DPPs) – for Khoshi, Khwaja Umari, and Laja Ahmad Khail. Each DPP is produced by the SIKa-East–formed District Development Assembly Plus (DDA+) as part of the capacity building program for subnational governance. The DPPs are based on district stability analysis and compile a list of prioritized interventions (Cycle I) that address local sources of instability. The DPP serves as the basis for grant and other activities, which roll out once the plan is approved.
- Preparations continue for the first DDA+ Provincial Conference, which is to be held in Maydan Wardak in October and is supported by a SIKa-East grant. The program is also providing technical support to the involved DDAs in planning and managing the event. The conference goal is to provide a platform for all DDAs in the SIKa-East area of operation to discuss stability-related experiences, challenges, and lessons learned.
- SIKa-East hosted the first two-day coordination and training meeting for Independent Directorate for Local Governance (IDLG) SIKa provincial coordinators.

Capacity Building

- In the reporting period, 13 capacity building workshops were held in 11 districts, dealing with Stability Planning Process, Coalition Building, and Infrastructure Project Implementation. Of the 430 individual participants, 315 were men and 115 were women.
- Since the beginning of the program, 10,999 individuals, including 2,569 women, have been trained in 302 sessions in various stability-focused skills.

Grants

- SIKa-East conducted its first grant writing training for 21 representatives of PRRD, DDA, and Community Development Councils (CDCs) from Logar, Maydan Wardak, and Paktya Provinces. This three-day pilot capacity building activity will be further developed and offered to other SIKa-East districts through grant funds.
- During the week, \$86,967 in grant milestone payments were executed for nine CDCs. Payments for an additional four CDCs with completed milestones had to be postponed due to the absence of some of the CDC officials whose presence is mandatory for payment.
- Thirty-three engineering designs, valued at nearly \$2 million, are being developed for infrastructure grant applications. To date, the program has completed 124 designs worth nearly \$6.3 million.

IDLG and All SIKa Meeting Hosted by SIKa-East



SIKa-East hosted the first two-day coordination and training meeting for IDLG-SIKa provincial coordinators. Representatives from the four SIKa projects presented the SIKa East, West, South, and North programs in the presence of IDLG representatives and the Saydabad District Governor.



The goal of the meeting was to introduce the coordinators to IDLG and to facilitate communication and coordination among the programs and the government. IDLG is one of the two primary governmental partners for the SIKAs, providing programmatic advisory recommendations and guidelines, with a focus on governmental capacity building programs at provincial and district levels. The two SIKa-East coordinators will be embedded with IDLG in Kabul and in the regional office in Gardez.

- Of the 105 USAID-approved grant applications, 79, with a cumulative value of \$3,546,090, have been awarded in the districts of Andar, Baraki Barak, Chaki Wardak, Dih Yak, Mohammad Agha, Nirkh, and Saydabad. The first three approved grants for Khoshi, Zadran, and Zurmat will be awarded and will start implementation in early October. Since the beginning of the program, 130 grant applications worth over \$6 million have been submitted with SIKA-East assistance as part of the DPP implementation process.

SIKA-East Grants Pipeline

Province	District	Under Development	Applications Received		Vetting Pending	Vetting Approved	GRC Approved	Approval Requested	Approval Received		Grants Awarded		Grants Completed	
			No.	\$ Value					No.	\$ Value	No.	\$ Value	No.	\$ Value
Ghazni	Andar	19	5	340,801	4	4	4	5	5	340,801	2	127,806		
	Dih Yak	10	11	495,880	0	8	11	11	10	419,669	9	352,487		
Khost	Tani	0	1	42,824	1	0	1	1	1	42,824		0		
Logar	Baraki Barak	17	18	954,095	1	15	18	15	14	743,211	10	538,488		
	Khoshi	0	1	42,824	1	0	1	1	1	42,824	0	0		
	Moh. Agha	20	23	1,110,264	1	24	22	22	22	1,025,875	20	940,787	2	93,593
Maidan Wardak	Chaki Wardak	7	15	727,569	6	7	15	13	13	608,632	9	385,843		
	Nirkh	14	20	1,131,149	0	20	18	16	15	902,999	12	666,999		
	Saydabad	0	29	945,703	0	11	26	23	23	690,432	17	533,680	4	85,088
Paktya	Zadran	10	2	82,015	2	0	2	1	0	\$0	0	0		
	Zurmat	16	4	171,284	4	0	4	1	1	51,284	0	0		
Totals		113	130	6,044,408	20	89	123	109	105	4,868,551	79	3,546,090	6	178,681

Gender Mainstreaming

- SIKA-East met with representatives of the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD), Afghanistan Rural Enterprise Development Program (AREDP), and the National Area Based Program for Development (NABDP) to discuss the design and viability of livelihood initiatives for women. Presenting best practices, tools, and approaches, SIKA-East raised the issue of making female income-generation projects sustainable and creating market linkages for women. Gender advisors from all programs decided to better communicate and coordinate at the field level, involving the SIKA-East–formed DDA gender subcommittees.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- Preparations started for the focus group survey of the 12 remaining districts, namely, Khwaja Umari, Khoshi, Laja Ahmad Khail, Laja Mangal, Gurbuz, Jaji Maydan, Tani, Jaghatu, Qarabagh, Jalrez, Ahmad Abad, and Mando Zayi. Implementation will start in the second half of October after the Eid al-Adha holidays, and the survey will be completed by the end of the calendar year.

- Seven monitoring site visits came back with positive reports for grant milestones reached: three in Dih Yak District, two in Mohammad Agha, and two in Saydabad.

Security Challenges

- On September 28, a roadside bomb between Rubat and Kohna Dih villages of Ghazni District killed the CDC chairman of Shetam and two local people. Dr. Abqi, the Shetam CDC chairman and head of the Dih Yak DDA, was the SIKA-East grantee for two awarded projects and seven grant applications in the pipeline. For the grants that are already in implementation, SIKA-East had to withhold the milestone payments, as the required number of authorized persons to receive the funds were not available. Apart from the deceased, the CDC secretary, one of the authorized persons, was injured in the explosion, while the CDC treasurer is making the Hajj. This left SIKA-East with no alternative but to postpone all the work in Shetam for the time being.
- The Mohammad Agha Mayor was injured and two DCC members were killed by two armed persons in Khodi Khail village.

SIGNIFICANT PROVINCIAL ACTIVITIES

GHAZNI

- A conflict between Andar District's Payendi and Khairowal CDCs over a grant application was resolved, with the contending party accepting that only one CDC was a formal applicant.
- SIKA-East disbursed the first milestone for a project in Dih Yak.
- In Jaghatu District, a four-day Stability Planning Process (Part I) training was conducted for 63 men.
- In Qarabagh, the Stability Planning Process training was completed for a total number of 62 CDC, DDA, and DCC members, as well as tribal elders and other influential individuals.

KHOST

- On October 1, SIKA-East was launched in Mando Zayi District of Khost Province. The inauguration event was held at Provincial Peace Office, led by the Khost Provincial Governor and the Mando Zayi District Governor, and attended by provincial council members, line directors, DDA members, community elders, and religious scholars.

LOGAR

- On September 2, a resource coordination meeting was held in Puli Alam. The participants included the Baraki Barak District Governor and representatives of PRRD, National Solidarity Program



The Baraki Barak District Governor delivering a speech during the resource coordination meeting in Puli Alam, Logar Province.



Khwaja Umari communications committee members designing a joint male and female action plan.



The Ramak Akli canal is only about one-third complete and already an impressive sight in the arid landscape of Dih Yak District, Ghazni Province.

(NSP), the provincial council, and DDAs, as well as the Departments of Economy, Women's Affairs, Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock, Youth and Cultural Affairs, and Refugees and Returnees. The PRRD Director stated that such meetings enabled strong coordination among the service providers.

- Two projects were approved for Baraki Barak by the Logar Grant Review Committee (GRC), consisting of DDA+ representatives and the PRRD Director.
- Infrastructure Project Implementation trainings were conducted in Baraki Barak and Mohammad Agha with, respectively, 16 and 25 DDA+ male members attending.
- Training in Coalition Building was conducted for 37 women from the Baraki Barak DDA+.
- The Khoshi DDA+ communication plan was submitted to SIKA-East's Kabul office for further review.

MAYDAN WARDAK

- Infrastructure Project Implementation training was conducted for 20 men from the Chaki Wardak DDA+, as well as CDC members and teachers. The same training was delivered to 20 men from Saydabad and Nirkh.
- Coalition training was conducted for 24 CDC members, teachers, and tribal elders from Chaki Wardak.
- The Stability Planning Process session for Jalrez women was completed. The participants learned about Stability Analysis Methodology (SAM), social responsibilities, stability and non-stability dynamic analysis, identifying source of instability, and DPP development. The same training started for Jalrez men on September 29.
- A male and female communication plan implementation meeting was held with the Saydabad DDA+ members, eliciting their support. The participants discussed the coordination between the local community and communication committees, community problems, and coordination between the men's and women's communication committees.
- The completed Zara Kheil karez excavation project was inaugurated in Saydabad.

PAKTYA

- Stakeholder Orientation trainings were conducted for 13 women and 45 men from the Ahmad Abad DDA, while Lobbying training was conducted for 36 men from the Zurmat DDA+.
- The Zurmat DDA+ communication committee is discussing the formation of a new female communication committee.
- The Zurmat GRC approved three new grant projects.
- A program evaluation meeting with the Zurmat PRRD and key stakeholders concluded with positive remarks about SIKA-East's infrastructure activities and a note on the importance of timely delivery of such projects to prevent community disappointment and distrust.

ACTIVITIES FOR NEXT WEEK

- Conduct Grant Award and Management training for five new USAID-approved infrastructure projects in Baraki Baraki, Nirkh, and Chaki Wardak Districts;
- Support development of grant applications for vocational trainings for female beneficiaries in Zurmat and Chaki Wardak Districts;

- Conduct Stability Planning Process (Part II) training for Qarabagh District, as well as an Sol and root cause verification session for Qarabagh and Jaghatu Districts in Ghazni;
 - Conduct Grant Management training for five CDCs of Baraki Barak in Logar; and
 - Conduct communication committee workshops in Maydan Wardak.
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