



Citizens' Voice Project

Ist Monthly Report

July 2012

TDEA Office
Citizens' Voice Project
520-Margalla Road, F-10/2, Islamabad
T: +92-51-2100862-63-64
Website: www.cvpa-tdea.org

Activities undertaken during the last month

I. Administration and Procurement:

Administration and procurement staff coordinated efforts with security focal person to procure and setup jersey barriers at the office entrance, which was felt necessary and expedient to secure the office premises.

Procurement process for the advertisement of the 3rd grants cycle was completed in this month, and the advertisement was published on July 1, 2012.

Administration and Procurement unit played their part in organizing the Third Grants Cycle information session, which was held at Hyderabad on Monday, July 9, 2012.

Procurement process for vehicles remained in process, after EAD's communication that the tax exemption certificate will be issued once the related documentation is provided to them. This procurement has been delayed due to some procedural difficulties and staff engagement in other matters.

Procurement of security equipment remains in process in order to improve the level of preparedness for any accident or security related incident.

In addition to the above, the unit also performed a range of routine functions and operations to support ongoing project activities.

2. Human Resource Management:

HR Unit contributed to TDEA's efforts aimed at developing a new performance appraisal system, which will be applicable to the project staff as well.

HR Unit conducted interviews for the position of Application Developer and Webmaster on Wednesday, July 18, 2012. The recruitment committee only recommended one suitable candidate for the position of Application Developer, who later declined the offer. The committee did not make any recommendations for the position of Webmaster.

Recruitment process for two vacant positions of program managers in the Program Development and Research Unit were completed and offer letters were sent to Mr. Kashif Farooqi and Mr. Naseer Abbas Khan who accepted the offer. Recommendations were sent to the USAID for approval on July 12, 2012 and July 20, 2012 respectively. Tests and interviews for the vacant positions of Monitoring Officer and Senior Program Officer were also conducted. However, the process is yet to be completed.

TDEA accepted the resignation of Mr. Ali Shan Azhar, Director, Monitoring, Evaluation and Research, and communicated the same to the USAID on July 25, 2012.

The HR Unit also facilitated staff of M&E Unit to attend the ASP-LUMS training on Monitoring and Evaluation, which was held at LUMS, Lahore on July 16-20, 2012.

HR Unit also performed a wide range of other functions including appraisals, internal disciplinary matters, and coordination with AASR for staff trainings.

3. Finance, Grants and Compliance:

The Grants unit processed 15 grants, which were approved by the USAID. The related work included, among others, negotiations with applicants to get their applications revised in the light of USAID comments/ conditions, budget negotiations, development of capacity action plans after review of pre-award assessments, and various security related checks. By the end of the month, the award process was at a very advanced stage.

The Grants unit participated in and supported various initiatives related to third grants cycle including presentations in the information sessions, response of potential applicants' queries, inputs in the GMC meetings, and work related to pre-award process.

Finance Unit submitted request for advance for First Tranche of Second Grants Cycle to USAID on Wednesday, July 18, 2012.

Finance Unit submitted monthly reimbursement request for the month of June 2012 to USAID on Friday, July 6, 2012.

Finance Unit submitted request for advance for sub-contracts for July 2012 to USAID on Tuesday, July 3, 2012.

AASR Compliance Unit remained in the process of preparing and finalizing the Semi Annual Compliance Report. Besides, the Compliance Unit continued to perform the routine compliance checks on, among others, almost all procurement orders.

4. Capacity Building:

TAF project team conducted its second Quick Impact Training for sub-grantees with focus on municipal services sector which was held on July 16- 18, 2012 at Shangrila Hotel, Murree. 18 persons attended the training including 14 staff members from the grantee organizations.

TAF team contextualized the Participants' Handbook by making changes to the text, inserting sector specific case studies and exercises and etc.

In response to its call for applications, TAF received proposals from institutions in Sindh and Punjab, which were reviewed for delivery of NPO Management Course. In the meanwhile, TAF project team formed a technical review committee, which evaluated proposals for NPO management course received from institutions from Islamabad Region, Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

TAF initiated the review of first draft of NPO management curriculum submitted by COMSATS Institute comprising 11 modules.

A Program Officer from TAF project team participated in a one-day workshop on project cycle organized by Development Solutions International (DSI) on Tuesday, July 24, 2012.

TAF also reviewed research reports on Health, Education and Municipal Services and feedback was shared with the Consultant.

AASR Capacity Building team developed consolidated training planner of HRM, Procurement and Financial Management. It also made preparations for a series of training workshops to be conducted for grantees soon after the month of Ramazan.

5. Program Development and Research:

The 3rd grants cycle was announced on July 1, 2012, after the USAID approved 5 program descriptions, which included the following:

- Advocacy for effective implementation of FCR reforms;
- Citizens' engagement and accountability for effective local government system;
- Citizens' voice for strengthening transparency and accountability mechanisms;
- Citizens' advocacy for implementation of 18th Amendment; and
- Energy sector reforms.

The PD&R Unit participated in the 13th GMC, held on Tuesday, July 10, 2012, to discuss and review the grants making process, eligibility criteria and suggestions for amendments to the grants making process.

Mr. Inayat Ali, Program Officer, visited Karachi on July 20, 2012 to meet with Mr. Khaqan Murtaza, Project Director MSDP, along-with staff members of Goth Sengar Foundation.

After the closing date (July 20, 2012), five Technical Review Committees (TRCs) were constituted, which included the staff members of PD&R unit, TDEA secretariat and capacity building team of TAF. The TRCs were given a 2 days-long training and, soon after, these committees started evaluating the grant applications. The TRCs completed their evaluations by the end of the month i.e. within 10 days.

PD&R Unit developed responses to USAID comments on PSC approved applications under the thematic areas of 'Tax Sector' and 'Citizen Oversight of Effective Legislative Governance'.

PD&R Unit coordinated with the applicant organizations relating to education and municipal services sectors, whose applications were approved by USAID with observations and conditions, to have their applications appropriately revised.

The PD&R Unit presented results of the TRCs in the GMC meetings held on July 27, 2012 and July 31, 2012 to discuss, review and evaluate 3rd grants cycle. After GMC made its recommendations, task orders were issued to the AASR for the pre-award process of potential grantees.

6. Monitoring and Evaluation:

M&E Unit finalized its pre-award assessment plan for the Third Grants Cycle shortlisted applicants; and started pre-award assessments after GMC recommendations.

All members of M&E Unit attended ASP-LUMS training at LUMS, Lahore on 'Monitoring and Evaluation for Operational Managers' on July 16-20, 2012.

M&E Unit finalized the First Grants Cycle individual applicant wise assessment reports.

The second draft of PME of 12 out of 13 sub-awardees of the First Grants Cycle was received after incorporating the comments of the M&E unit in the PMEs. The M&E unit is currently in process of finalizing the PMEs.

The second draft of monthly progress report of the First Grants Cycle sub-awardees was received after incorporating the comments of M&E unit; and the reports are currently being finalized.

Mr. Ajmal Elahi, Manager M&E, visited Karachi on Friday, July 13, 2012 to attend a meeting at Avari Hotel with the USAID team and representatives of DEVCON, PEACE Sindh and Goth Seengar Foundation. The main agenda of the meeting was to build close coordination amongst the Citizens' Voice Project sub-awardees and other partners of USAID working in the municipal services sector in Sindh.

Mr. Ajmal Elahi, Manager M&E, and Mr. Tahir Ali, SPO PD&R, visited Peshawar to attend a meeting at the Khyber Club with the USAID team and representatives of AHKRC and DADO i.e. municipal services sub-awardees. The main agenda of the meeting was to build close coordination amongst the Citizens' Voice Project sub-awardees and other partners of USAID working in municipal services sector in KPK.

The Unit also organized several meetings of grantees with the USAID team members at the project office. Purpose of these meetings was information sharing, communication and identification of areas for synergies.

7. Communications and External Relations:

The communications team worked on the newspaper advertisement as well as the outreach plan for the 3rd grants cycle, which was announced on July 1, 2012.

The Unit prepared and organized two orientation sessions at the project office with regards to the Third Grants Cycle on Wednesday, July 4, 2012. Potential applicant organizations based in Islamabad were invited to attend these sessions.

The Unit also held an orientation session at the project office on Tuesday, July 10, 2012 with the focus on the theme of 'Energy Sector Reforms'.

Third Grants Cycle Information Session was held at Indus Hotel, Hyderabad on Monday, July 9, 2012. Around 145 people from the civil society, lawyers' community, print/electronic media and private sector organizations attended the session.

The Unit also provided support to the potential applicants till the last moment of the deadline and provided them information about the application submission process and other related issues.

The Unit has also prepared a Branding and Marking Manual for sub-grantees, which will be submitted to the USAID for approvals after internal reviews.

8. General:

A meeting was held at the project office on Tuesday, July 24, 2012, which was attended by Mukhtar Ahmad Ali, Chief of Party; Rebecca Semmes, Democracy Officer Lahore; Philippe Accilien, outgoing USAID Democracy Officer; Catherine Pierce, USAID DG Grants Administrator, Islamabad; and Nazeer Mahar, COR. Purpose of the meeting was to introduce the project to the new team members of the USAID.

A project overview meeting was held at TDEA Secretariat with TAF Chief Operating Officer/Executive Vice President Ms. Susan E. Siskel on Monday, July 16, 2012.

A Project Staff meeting was held on Tuesday, July 10, 2012 to inform the staff about the cancelation of Official Staff Retreat at Nathiagali due to security concerns in view of telephone calls received at TDEA Secretariat and the Project Office.

A meeting was held at the Citizens' Voice Project Office with USAID's energy team members and representatives of energy related sub-awardees like Consumer Rights Commission of Pakistan, Semiotics and The Network for Consumer Protection.