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STABILITY IN KEY AREAS – NORTH MID-TERM PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

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STABILITY IN KEY AREAS – NORTH MID-TERM PERFORMANCE EVALUATION



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Measuring Impact of Stabilization Initiatives (MISTI) Project

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ACRONYMS AND OTHER ABBREVIATIONS

ADS	Automated Directives System
AGE	Anti-Government element
CDC	Community Development Council
COR	Contracting Officer’s Representative
DAI	Development Alternatives Inc.
DDA	District Development Assembly
DDP	District Development Plan
DoWA	Department of Women’s Affairs
DPP	District Project Portfolio
FOG	Fixed Obligation Grant
GIRoA	Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (referred to as “the government” throughout the report)
IDLG	Independent Directorate for Local Governance
IL	Implementation Letter
IR	Intermediate Result
IP	Implementing Partner
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
LGCD	Local Governance and Community Development
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MISTI	Measuring Impacts of Stabilization Initiatives
MRRD	Ministry for Rural Rehabilitation and Development
NABDP	National Area Based Development Program (MRRD program)
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NSP	National Solidarity Program (MRRD program funded by the World Bank)
PMP	Performance Management Plan
PRRD	Provincial Rural Rehabilitation and Development
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
SAM	Stability Analysis Mechanism
SIKA	Stability in Key Areas
SIGAR	Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction
SOI	Source of Instability
STAB-U	Stabilization Unit
SWG	Stability Working Group
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since March 2012, Stability in Key Areas (SIKA) North, implemented by Development Alternatives Incorporated (DAI), has programmed a multitude of district government confidence building initiatives, mitigation activities, and grants aimed at addressing community identified sources of instability in Baghlan and Kunduz provinces. Working closely with the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) and the Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG), SIKA North aims to expand and improve the legitimacy of the Afghan Government to districts and unstable communities. Their strategy is to first assist district entities to better understand their operating environment and identify the challenges to stability they face, and then enable district governments to implement activities aimed at addressing those identified sources of instability (SOI). This mid-point in the program marks an opportunity to document SIKA North's successes and challenges and reflect on lessons learned that can be applied in the option period and for other stabilization programs, both in Afghanistan and other countries. This report describes findings from the mid-term performance evaluation of SIKA North's activities and grants up to January 2014 in Baghlan and Kunduz provinces, in which SIKA North has ongoing programming in eight districts.

The evaluation scope of work required the team to address eleven key questions:

- Are the assumptions and logic built into SIKA North's theory of change still valid and consistent with the evaluation findings?
- To what extent did program activities and grants address sources of instability?
- Was the approach to women's inclusion appropriate and effective in empowering women and increasing their participation in decision making in SIKA North activities?
- How effectively did SIKA North incorporate the Kandahar Model as defined in the latest modification to the contract?
- To what extent have SIKA activities been successfully presented as government activities, connecting people to resources (both government and non-government) for service delivery?
- How effectively did a bottom-up communications process link MRRD-developed District Development Assemblies (DDAs) to the district and provincial development planning processes?
- How effective were capacity building initiatives aimed at teaching district entities how to plan, design, implement and monitor various types of development projects?
- What lessons learned from the SIKA North program implementation can inform future USAID programming?
- What components of SIKA North were most and least valued by district and provincial entities?
- Which activities undertaken by SIKA North had the most or least contribution to stabilization objectives?
- How effectively did SIKA North work through Afghan government structures and within Afghan government processes to empower the district governments in decision making and community engagements under existing district level interventions?

The evaluation team consisted of one expatriate and two Afghan evaluators, based in Kabul, and one interviewer in each of the two provinces who could travel in the project districts. A female interviewer visited districts in Baghlan and Kunduz. In total, 353 interviews were conducted with stakeholders, including USAID and SIKA North staff, Afghan government officials, Community Development Council (CDC) and DDA members, community elders, project beneficiaries, and other members of the community in both of the provinces in which SIKA North works. The Kabul-based team reviewed project documents and conducted interviews with key USAID, SIKA North, and Afghan government officials. Local interviewers travelled to five out of eight SIKA North districts to view select projects and interview beneficiaries. The evaluation team began fieldwork in February 2014 and concluded in May 2014.

Key Findings and Recommendations

Overall, SIKA North activities and grants addressed SOIs as seen on District Project Portfolios (DPPs) and appear to be having a measurable long term stabilizing impact. Results of the three semiannual MISTI surveys from September 2012 to January 2014 indicate relatively positive stability index scores and a relatively positive confidence in local government in all sampled SIKA North districts. This is a positive evaluation and MISTI has found nothing in particular that needs to be either scaled up or eliminated. Some programmatic challenges are discussed and these should be considered based on MISTI's recommendations, of which the highest priority items are listed in order below. MISTI's full recommendation list is contained in the *Recommendations* section at the end of this report.

1. The SIKA North Performance Management Plan (PMP) indicators are limited to measuring inputs and outputs. A PMP revision is necessary and should include outcome indicators at the Intermediate Results (IR)-level that measure whether programs have had an effect on treatment communities. The current outcome indicators listed in SIKA North's PMP are in reality mislabeled output indicators. Rather than simply measuring the number of meetings held or percentage increases in activity participation, SIKA North's outcome indicators should focus on progress towards the IRs and the Assistance Objective, and be linked to the project's theory/ies of change.
2. A suggested approach to the development of the theory of change is to break it down into two separate but measurable theories. One focused on development and aligned with the MRRD and the other focused on governance and aligned with the IDLG. Since SIKA North programs in both domains it needs to differentiate causal relationships by programming type.
3. Gender programming is practically nonexistent. While some gender programming occurred, it was either through passive involvement of women already present or unsuccessful. USAID has not done its due diligence either in ensuring that SIKA North conducts the gender programming required under its contract. Gender programming needs to happen in the option period.
4. Certain activities have questionable relevance to stability. For example, poetry reading competitions may not have been the most prudent use of USAID funds. These types of activities should be reevaluated going forward to ensure they meet stabilization objectives and address SOIs as seen on DPPs. If the community is choosing activities that clearly do not meet stabilization objectives, then this is likely a result of inadequate Stability Analysis Mechanism (SAM) training. If so, SIKA North should reevaluate the SAM training conducted in those communities to observe and rectify weaknesses.
5. SIKA North's activities in Kunduz and Baghlan should be linked to other USAID programming in the same provinces. USAID should facilitate synergy between Stabilization Unit (STAB-U) and other

offices that are working on similar programming. The Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) should be responsible for ensuring SIKa North aligns not only with the Afghan government, but with other USAID programs as well.

6. The Kandahar Model is only partially relevant to SIKa North. SIKa North should instead focus on community contracting in line with the National Area Based Development Program (NABDP) methodology and guidelines for the monitoring of projects. The NABDP approach is codified in a lengthy, detailed manual available from the MRRD. USAID should formalize this change through a contract modification.
7. SIKa North's contract requires it to align with the Afghan government. In kind grants do not align with any MRRD program that works directly with CDCs/DDAs. The MRRD has opposed in kind grants and told MISTI they will disengage from SIKa North should in kind grants continue. The continued use of in kind grants also violates the Kandahar Model and is not consistent with Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction's (SIGAR's) recommendations. If USAID and MRRD want to allow SIKa North to continue in kind grant programming, then some of the cost-savings can be transferred to additional capacity building, outreach activities, or to new gender programming. However, since in kind grants limit community involvement, SIKa North should devise a mechanism to ensure that community participation and ownership are not lost.
8. Finalized DPPs are signed by the provincial governors before the Provincial Rural Rehabilitation and Development (PRRD) directors. This is incorrect protocol. Provincial governors are representatives of the President whereas PRRD directors are representatives of the MRRD Minister. Under Afghan norms, a PRRD director cannot refuse to sign a DPP he disagrees with if the provincial governor has already signed it as this would cause intra-governmental conflicts. The provincial governor needs to be the last to sign a DPP.
9. Capacity building initiatives should align with Afghan Government processes in order to satisfy the demands of SIKa North's contract with USAID and to be sustainable. While IDLG processes, strategies, and guidelines do not exist for every type of capacity building initiative, SIKa North should coordinate with the IDLG to ensure they are aligned with the directorate's strategy, as available. USAID should assist with the alignment process as was requested by IDLG and MRRD at several high level ministerial meetings in late 2013 and early 2014.
10. Reconciliation jirgas (conflict resolution committees) were particularly effective at addressing local SOIs through local solutions, particularly when it came to ethnic, land, and security disputes. MISTI has observed how effective these jirgas are in other regions as well. SIKa North should actively continue this type of activity in every district as dictated by local needs.

Conclusion

The findings of this evaluation suggest that SIKa North programming has had positive stabilization impacts, particularly in Kunduz. The project has done a good job on improving local governance, service delivery, and linkages of communities to district and provincial entities. Strong and consistent outreach and media activities have improved linkages between the communities and the government, all while SIKa North stayed in the background and let local Afghans lead most of the processes.

SIKA North's senior management, particularly the Chief of Party, had previously worked on stability programming in Afghanistan and this experience and understanding of effective stabilization programming in a local context was observable. Using this understanding and existing networks, SIKA North was able to leverage local assets and the military in order to get a head start implementing while USAID and MRRD took months to sign the implementation letter.

The lack of gender programming to empower females in district decision making and the use of in kind grants have prevented what would have otherwise been a fully positive evaluation. Overall, this is a positive performance evaluation for a program that has measurably improved local governance and stability in the districts in which it was tasked to program. The process changes in the *Additional Observations* and *Recommendations* sections should serve to improve the program's successes during the option period.

INTRODUCTION

The objective of the Stability in Key Areas (SIKA) North program is to promote stabilization in key areas by supporting the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (the government) to implement community led development and governance initiatives that respond to the population's needs and concerns. SIKA North helps district entities to identify and respond to challenges to stability with an aim to build confidence in local government and increase the provision of basic services. SIKA North's work focuses on key districts identified based on district selection criteria which USAID, the Afghan government, and SIKA North agree upon, and is aligned with other district priorities as determined by the provincial governments.

SIKA North seeks to increase confidence in the district level government of the two selected northern provinces of Afghanistan, leading to greater legitimacy and the expansion of provincial and district governing structures in those areas. SIKA North assists district governments to understand sources of instability (SOIs), increase coordination with line departments, and to improve communication with, and provide better basic services to constituents. SIKA North complements other USAID stabilization efforts, such as SIKA West, SIKA East, SIKA South, the Community Cohesion Initiative, and the Afghanistan Civilian Assistance Program II, among other stabilization and development programs. SIKA North is a three-year project that began in March 2012. Official implementation of program activities did not begin until September 2012 when the Ministry for Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) and the Independent Directorate for Local Government (IDLG) signed an implementation letter (IL) with USAID covering the SIKA programs. This delay was caused in large part by the MRRD which insisted that the SIKAs become an on-budget program. However, SIKA North's leadership and the field-based USAID Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) did not wait for the Implementation Letter (IL) to begin programming. They leveraged International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF) in Kunduz to provide initial assistance, particularly in Aliabad district (the MRRD granted the authorization to work in a limited number of districts to the SIKAs while the IL was negotiated at that time). This jump-started stabilization programming, providing SIKA North with faster exposure to communities and cleverly utilized military funding that did not impact the SIKA North budget.

Background Context

USAID overseas a number of stability programs throughout Afghanistan aimed at improving security and extending the reach and legitimacy of the government to poorly serviced communities in insecure areas. These programs are designed to mitigate against SOIs and establish an environment for sustained social and economic development. The goal is engagement of government officials in communities in key districts, the implementation of projects aimed at extending the reach of the government to unstable areas, provision of social and economic assistance and income generating opportunities, the building of trust between local citizens and their government, and encouragement of local populations to play an active role in their own development.

Traditionally, Afghans look to their district entities to solve local grievances rather than to their provincial or central government. However, district entities have often been overlooked by donors. A particular need exists to involve district entities in the planning process for defining district level issues, overseeing solutions with mitigation activities, and playing a central role in monitoring these activities. Putting district entities in the lead aligns with the IDLG's Sub-National Governance Policy. A lack of district level focus threatens to erode the legitimacy of provincial governments and hinders their ability to expand authority and deliver basic services throughout their provinces.

The focus of the SIKA programs is therefore to address two particular weaknesses at the district level: (1) lack of development, and (2) lack of good governance. SIKA was designed to deliver community

developed and implemented projects in close partnership with the government in order to build confidence in the government and increase stability by addressing these two main weaknesses at the district level. SIKA North cooperates closely with the MRRD and IDLG in this effort.

The MRRD's approach to stabilization is to empower people, build unity within communities, and instill grassroots level participation in decision making while maintaining the ultimate goal of building the population's confidence towards Afghan institutions. These approaches to stability have been used by the MRRD since 2002 through the National Area Based Development Program (NABDP) and, since 2003, through the National Solidarity Program (NSP). NABDP is MRRD's primary stabilization initiative at the district level. Its goals are the sustainable reduction of poverty and an improvement in the livelihoods in rural Afghanistan. NABDP uses District Development Assemblies (DDAs)¹ to create District Development Plans (DDPs) which link community priorities to the government's agricultural and rural development strategy. It also strengthens the DDAs as the primary conduit for stabilization initiatives as well as social and economic development planning at the district level.

NSP was created to help local communities identify, plan, manage, and monitor their own development projects largely through the formation of Community Development Councils (CDCs), which serve as the focal points for all village-level rural development in Afghanistan. NSP and NABDP complement each other to provide a stabilizing influence at the district level².

However, MRRD realized that the lack of rural development was due mainly to insecurity and that without development, security would not improve. To improve development through successful project implementation in insecure areas, MRRD developed the Kandahar Model which decentralized the procurement and financial procedures essential to community contracting. The model also provided a platform for direct community participation in project planning, budgeting and decision-making through established CDCs and DDAs, thereby increasing the population's confidence in their district level government entities.

Since 2001, various stakeholders established and/or supported sub-national governance as this became a key focus for civilian and military personnel, specifically Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), which assisted in extending the authority of the government. While PRTs relied on quick impact projects to garner favor with the communities and often attempted capacity building of local officials, these efforts were not often coordinated effectively with the provincial or central government. Given the varied North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)-country representation at each PRT, local governance and stability programming were as diverse as the countries running the PRTs. While there has been some coordination with provincial government, these initiatives have tended to replace government capacity rather than build it, create unsustainable infrastructure, and undermine strategic planning and prioritization by the government³.

The government has also had a hand in institutional disorganization and developing overlapping structures that hinder the functioning of district entities. Some obstacles like factional influence, disparity in capacity and mandate, absence of perceived legitimacy, lack of capacity and basic equipment, and problems with communication, access, and security plague the effectiveness of district entities. Overcoming these contextual obstacles is a key mandate of SIKA North's local governance and stabilization programming.

¹ DDAs are comprised of elected representatives of clustered CDCs.

² NABDP and NSP programming under the MRRD were designed to implement a bottom-up approach to improve confidence in local government and capacity of community development bodies to participate in their own development and reach the most deprived areas. The bottom-up approach emphasizes local and flexible problem solving rather than centralized blanket programming.

³ NABDP Beneficiary Assessment – Fieldwork Synthesis October 2012, p 10.

Working closely with the MRRD and IDLG, SIKA North's strategic objective is for Afghans to have increased confidence in their district government, leading to the expansion of authority and legitimacy of Afghan provincial government to the districts and to unstable communities. Since the government has been unable to meet the challenges of addressing its population's various needs, SIKA North's strategy is to assist district entities to better understand their operating environment and the challenges to stability they face. SIKA North enables them to develop a localized methodology aimed at addressing SOIs and to implement activities that address these SOIs.

USAID has identified four intermediate results (IRs) required to achieve the strategic objective:

1. Provincial and district entities increasingly address sources of instability and take measures to respond to the population's development and governance concerns (Stability Analysis Mechanism (SAM) training, Stability Working Groups (SWGs), identification of SOI mitigation activities);
2. Provincial and district entities understand what organizations and provincial line departments work within their geographic areas, what kind of services they provide, and how the population can access those services;
3. Provincial authorities improve their ability to communicate with district entities to help them better understand their population's needs and prioritize basic service delivery interventions (systems development and mentoring, capacity building of district entities);
4. District entities authorities improve basic service delivery by using the government, CDCs, DDAs, Afghanistan Social Outreach Program District Community Councils to plan, design, implement and monitor projects and focus on labor-intensive projects or productive infrastructure (grants under contract for small community projects that are available through other mechanisms).

USAID designed SIKA North to function as an Afghan led and government owned program that works within the structures already set up by the government. As such, SIKA North works with the MRRD and IDLG at the provincial and district levels to enhance the capacity of the government to plan and implement stabilization programming, and to improve governance and service delivery in strategic districts by working within the existing framework of NABDP and the Kandahar Model.

SIKA North's stabilization programming is meant to serve as a quick delivery program where projects identified by the community through the localized SAM process are initiated quickly, but achieve long-term results. The SAM process is used to identify local sources of instability and their systemic and root causes in order to produce useful programming information about the district and community-level environments. CDCs, with input from members of the government, analyze these SOIs to select mitigation activities. These activities are implemented by the community, achieving a level of local ownership required for stabilization.

Purpose of the Evaluation

The objective of this mid-term performance evaluation is to assess the performance, relevance, and success of the SIKA North program within the context of stabilization programming to inform management decisions. Specifically, this evaluation is being undertaken to provide information to the senior management of the Stabilization Unit and USAID Mission management on whether stabilization activities implemented by SIKA North are achieving their desired results by examining the performance

of SIKa North according to its approved program objectives. The secondary objective includes assessing the stabilization impact of the program's interventions to the extent possible given available data.

This mid-term performance evaluation documents accomplishments, areas for performance improvement, and lessons learned from March 2012 to January 2014 for the use of USAID management, SIKa North staff, the Implementing Partner (DAI), and the MRRD and IDLG. The Stability Analysis Mechanism component of SIKa North's Intermediate Result 1 (IR1) has already been evaluated by MISTI in October 2013 and key results are incorporated in this evaluation as well as the results of MISTI's stability trends analyses. With these data sources incorporated, this evaluation will serve as a vehicle for extracting key lessons from SIKa North's experience to date and providing evidence to inform performance management decision making including SIKa North strategy and implementation adaptation.

Key Evaluation Questions

The following evaluation questions were examined through the evaluation:

1. Are the assumptions and logic built into SIKa North's theory of change still valid and consistent with the evaluation findings?
2. To what extent did program activities and grants address sources of instability?
3. Was the approach to women inclusion appropriate and effective in empowering women and increasing their participation in decision making in SIKa North activities?
4. How effectively did SIKa North incorporate the Kandahar Model as defined in the latest modification to the contract?
5. To what extent have SIKa activities been successfully presented as government activities, connecting people to resources (both government and non-government) for service delivery?
6. How effectively did a bottom-up communications process link the MRRD-developed DDAs to the district and provincial development planning processes?
7. How effective were capacity building initiatives aimed at teaching district entities how to plan, design, implement and monitor various types of development projects?
8. What lessons learned from the SIKa North program implementation can inform future USAID programming?
9. What components of SIKa North were most and least valued by district and provincial entities?
10. Which activities undertaken by SIKa North had the most or least contribution to stabilization objectives?
11. How effectively did SIKa North work through Afghan government structures and within Afghan government processes to empower the district governments in decision making and community engagements under existing district level interventions?

Methodology

This performance evaluation used qualitative methods, including observation, interviews, and a desk review of project documents to evaluate SIKa North performance up to January 31, 2014. The Kabul-based evaluation team consisted of one expatriate and two Afghan evaluators who conducted interviews

with SIKa North staff, USAID staff, MRRD staff, IDLG staff, and project stakeholders to understand processes, challenges, and lessons learned of the program. The expatriate evaluator traveled to SIKa North's offices in Mazar-e-Sharif to conduct interviews with expatriate and Afghan managers. SIKa North leadership also travelled to Kabul twice to meet with MISTI staff. The Afghan evaluators traveled to Kunduz City (Gor Tapa), Aliabad, Imam Sahib, Khanabad, and Pul-e Khumri for interviews. They also managed a team of field interviewers who traveled to project sites.

To gain a deeper understanding of how the program performed in the field, the evaluation selected 62 completed and ongoing activities/projects under the period of performance (almost all of the completed projects and a cross section of ongoing projects by type) for closer study. SIKa North project data was examined to understand how projects varied in terms of type, value, beneficiaries, and location. Further project analysis involved examining District Project Portfolios (DPPs) for project relation to identified SOIs, as well as length of time between DPP approval and actual project implementation. Survey data from the MISTI Stability Survey was used to characterize project districts in terms of variables such as overall stability and perceptions of local security. Together this information allowed the team to select study projects that were relatively representative of the universe of SIKa North programming. The map (Figure 1) shows all SIKa North districts, with those MISTI visited in green. A complete list of projects visited appears in Annex A.

Security conditions in certain project areas prohibited the Kabul-based Afghan evaluators from visiting each site. Instead, the team recruited and trained two male interviewers from each province and one female interviewer to visit the selected project sites and interview direct and indirect beneficiaries and project stakeholders such as CDC and DDA members who were involved in project implementation and oversight. The interviewers conducted at least five interviews for each project site visited. The Afghan and local interviewers documented perceptions of project selection, implementation, monitoring, effects on stability, and how valued they were by the community in which they were implemented. They also evaluated the degree to which communities recognized Afghan government involvement. The evaluation team did not hire engineers to inspect project quality or accountants to review records. The evaluation was designed to examine community perceptions of processes, outputs, and some limited outcomes. Measuring program impact was not an objective of the performance evaluation since that will be measured through MISTI's on-going impact evaluations.

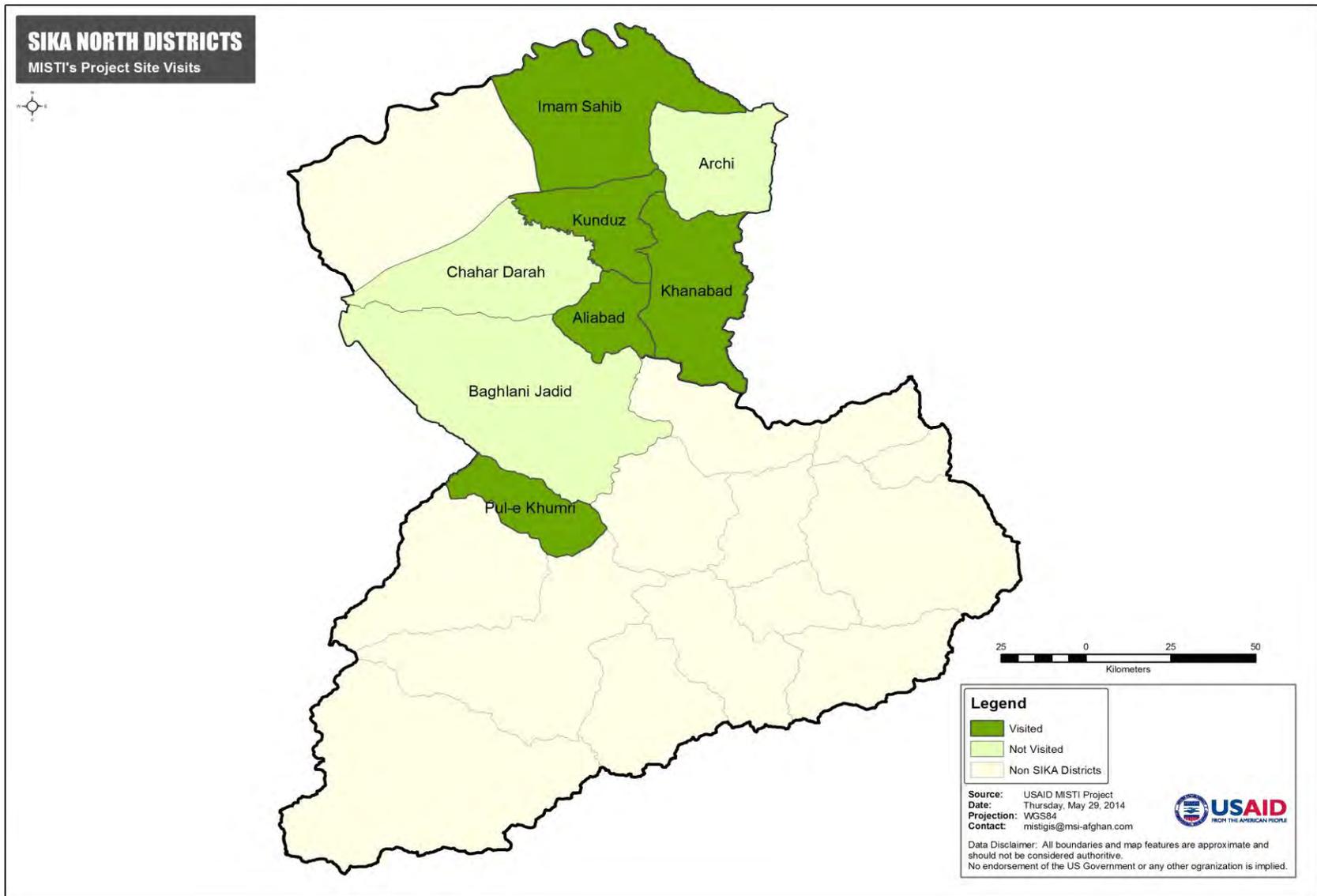
While the SOW called for evaluating program performance in at least two districts, the evaluation team visited five districts in two provinces. In total, the evaluation team conducted 343 interviews: 4 with USAID staff, 28 with SIKa North staff, 22 with Afghan government officials, 20 with district entities, and 279 with community members (DDA members, CDC members, elders, laborers, and other community members). A table with interviews by category appears as Annex B.

MISTI's semiannual survey has begun to ascertain the impact of SIKa North's projects quantitatively in terms of changes in stability, perceptions of government, and perceptions of service delivery. The MISTI survey collected a baseline for SIKa North districts in Fall 2012 and followed up with a second wave in Summer 2013 and a third wave in Fall/Winter 2014. As SIKa North had enough IRs 1-4, capacity building, and outreach programming by the end of the third wave, the results of MISTI's survey were used to ascertain the stabilization impact in findings question #2.

TABLE I. DATA-COLLECTION SCHEDULE

Area	Dates Data Collected
Kabul – USAID, MRRD, IDLG, external interviews	March – May 2014
Kunduz and Baghlan Fieldwork Phase 1	February – March 2014
Kunduz and Baghlan Fieldwork Phase 2	March - April 2014

FIGURE I. MAP OF SIKA NORTH DISTRICTS AND EVALUATION DISTRICT VISITS



Limitations

The evaluation design had many strengths including the collection of data from almost triple the number of requested districts and multiple project sites. The hiring of a female interviewer added depth to the gender portion of the evaluation as access to females by male interviewers is almost impossible in rural areas of northern Afghanistan. In addition, the evaluation team has previous experience evaluating USAID stabilization programs in Afghanistan.

Nevertheless, some limitations should be noted. Since only one to two local interviewers were hired in each province, the depth of information differed, so results should not be compared exclusively by province. In addition, SIKa North's COR provided a project tracker for the period of performance in February 2014 that did not accurately reflect all completed/ongoing activities or correct start and end dates. These were subsequently corrected by SIKa North's leadership, but caused fieldwork and data analysis delays for MISTI.

FINDINGS

Are the Assumptions and Logic Built into SIKa North's Theory of Change Still Valid and Consistent with the Evaluation Findings?

SIK a North does not have a defined theory of change articulated in its contract, approved Performance Management Plan (PMP) (and subsequent revisions), or work plan. Furthermore, while SIK a North has a robust monitoring system it lacks effective evaluative practices. Occasional impact assessments of select projects/activities, atmospheric reporting, and informal discussions with stakeholders and beneficiaries do not give SIK a North or USAID accurate program impact.

According to USAID, there is an understanding that a theory of change was not adequately defined or measured under the period of performance nor was USAID particularly keen on effectively testing SIK a North's programming through internal monitoring and evaluation (M&E) mechanisms. Currently, there is a USAID push to incorporate the below theory of change into a revised PMP:

*"If sub-national government institutions are capable and responsive to local root causes of instability in a systematic way, then stabilization, development, and governance efforts will reinforce each other and be sustainable, [particularly] in the planning, design, implementation, monitoring, and maintenance of own solutions to local problems using Afghan government processes."*⁴

This language is too complicated for an effective theory of change that can be measured at this point. SIK a North would be better served if they had simple theories of change (more than one is acceptable for a program of this nature) that hypothesized causality between only two items rather than a multitude. Should several simple ones be incorporated into a revised PMP and adequately measured by the M&E unit, SIK a North will have a working theory of change consistent with its contractual requirements for alignment and sustainability.

A theory of change is a specific and measurable description of a social (behavior) change program that forms the basis for planning, decision making, and evaluation of a program's outcomes according to USAID Automated Directives System (ADS) 201. Theories of change require programs to:

⁴ SIK a North COR email to MISTI M&E team May 3, 2014 outlining USAID's view of SIK a North's theory of change post-base period.

1. Demonstrate a causal pathway from the start of programming to a determined endpoint, showing what specifically is needed for objectives to be achieved (*e.g. After SIKA North identifies activities that respond to a community issue it will implement them through sub-national government institutions which will be trained to better respond to local root causes of instability in a systematic way.*)

This particular pathway broadly shows that SIKA North cannot reach its objectives without properly training sub-national government institutions on how to respond to community-identified sources of instability. Currently, SIKA North only measures an overly broad output indicator that does not take into account sub-national government involvement – PMP indicator 1 – ‘Percent of activities implemented under SIKA North that beneficiaries identify as both responding to a community issue and positively impacting the community.’

2. Articulate a hypothesis about why SIKA activities will cause individual outcomes with justifications that these outcomes were achieved because of SIKA activities – “if we do this, then that will happen”; “this can only succeed if...” (*e.g. If SIKA North establishes stability working groups in each district, then stability will improve through regular discussions between influential stakeholders and government officials on how to mitigate instability.*)

Currently, PMP indicator 18 only measures ‘Number of Stability Working Groups established’ rather than how these stability working groups mitigated instability through governance efforts that reinforced each other. While an indicator counting a required output is necessary, there is no follow-on indicator to measure how this output actually contributed to stability and to SIKA North’s strategic objectives as outlined in its contract with USAID.

3. Change management thinking away from what is being done to what needs to be achieved (*e.g. away from non-attributable outputs such as PMP indicator 16: ‘number of meetings held between district and provincial entities’ to what these meetings actually accomplished within the scope of SIKA North’s programming such as ‘number of conflicts resolved or new stability programs/activities agreed upon after meetings held between district and provincial entities.’*)

Under the period of performance, SIKA North has conducted impact assessments of its activities through the program department, M&E unit, and through third party subcontractors. Activities are generally followed up with a lessons learned report written by the program officers who organized the particular activity. The M&E unit captures perceptions of beneficiaries post-activity to better understand impact. Each activity is also evaluated through a final monitoring report prepared by the M&E unit. Lastly, SIKA North receives a number of reporting through third parties such as subcontracted atmospheric reporting, district and provincial government entities (informal discussions), and directly from beneficiaries in order to get a well-rounded perspective on the impact of their stability programming. SIKA North has done well to take these perspectives into account and to regularly change its implementation methods to account for issues on the ground, thereby improving their effect.

However, there are several problems with the above methods:

- Impact assessments are limited to asking the activities staff questions rather than through a more thorough assessment using a cross section of beneficiaries and facilitators. These assessments are not grouped into same type reports that would help senior management identify cross-sectional issues. For example, a teacher training assessment is done after the activity and then filed away

rather than conducting a single-type assessment on all educational activities that use the same subcontractor to better identify cross-sectional issues.

- Feedback from local stakeholders and beneficiaries is highly important, but is not done in a systematic way and not in every district. There is an overreliance on informal discussions and self-reporting that tend to be subjective.
- There was an overreliance on the previous COR who had a longstanding informal network in Kunduz. While this helped SIKA North advance quickly and gain traction with the government (as seen in Figure 2 through programming that started before the Implementation Letter signing with the MRRD in September 2012), it prevented SIKA North from creating a systematic method for understanding and incorporating lessons learned and creating a robust M&E system that can measure impact and outcomes when personal connections falter.

A clearly defined theory of change is a practical and essential part of a successful social transformation program. In order for SIKA North to more properly manage its results based framework and adequately understand whether stabilization programming is having the intended long-term sustained outcomes, a theory of change (or another appropriate outcome-focused causal model) is necessary. This way, the program will be better able to test intermediate results (IRs 1 through 4) and attainment of its strategic objectives through a district-specific and measurable causal model.

To What Extent did Program Activities and Grants Address Sources of Instability?

Overall, SIKA North activities and grants addressed SOIs as seen on DPPs and appear to be having a measurable long term stabilizing impact⁵.

Results of the three semiannual MISTI surveys from September 2012 to January 2014 indicate relatively positive stability index scores and a relatively positive confidence in local government in almost all SIKA North districts sampled. These results are based on three survey waves that occurred in Fall 2012, when SIKA North started most of the SAM trainings and SWGs, Summer 2013, when DPPs were signed and SOI mitigation activity programming was just starting, and in late Fall 2013, when SOI mitigation activity programming was in full implementation with scores of completed and ongoing activities. Relatively positive key indicators may correspond to community enthusiasm for community-identified projects and with greater exposure to district governments resulting in greater expectations for service delivery, which have largely been met through SIKA North programming.

⁵ MISTI conducts semiannual surveys in SIKA North districts on a range of security, governance, and service delivery questions, and uses the data to conduct quasi-experimental impact evaluations, measure specific program performance, and compile a trends analysis on key indicators.

FIGURE 2. SIKA NORTH SAM TRAININGS, STABILITY WORKING GROUPS, AND PROJECT/ACTIVITY START DATES UNDER THE PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE

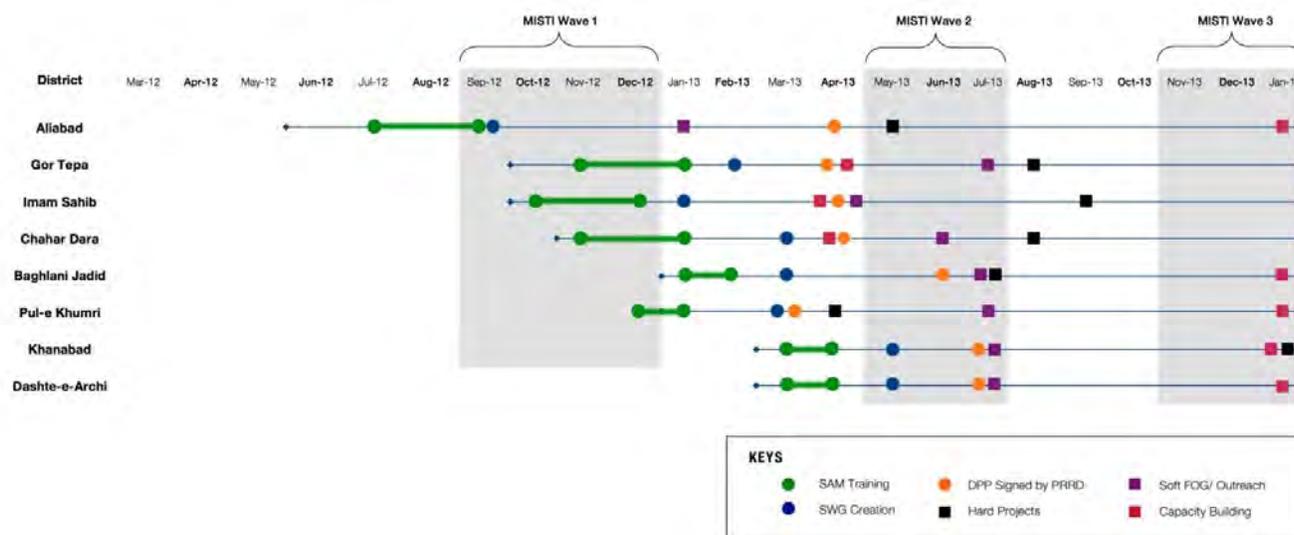


Figure 2: This timeline shows the progression of SIKA North’s activities overlaid over MISTI’s semiannual stabilization perception survey waves. The colored squares for hard projects, soft FOGs/outreach, and capacity building show the first instance of this particular activity occurring in each district. While SIKA North conducted numerous outreach activities, this timeline only presents outreach activities that required a FOG.

Although SIKA North’s contract was signed in March 2012, official operations did not begin until September 2012 when USAID and MRRD signed the SIKA Implementation Letter. During the interim period and occasionally afterward, SIKA North, through its COR, was able to leverage ISAF assistance and begin programming earlier than some of the other SIKAs – which is why SAM training occurred in Aliabad before the Implementation Letter was signed. Based on the timeline in Figure 2, SWGs were established shortly after completion of SAM trainings in each district. While DPPs created during SAM should have generally been signed soon after the training, there were significant delays early on (as seen by the seven month delay in Aliabad). However, once early coordination issues with the provincial governments and PRRDs were resolved, all of the DPPs were signed within a short three month window. What followed was a push to begin programming as quickly as possible, mostly starting with outreach activities which tended to be easier to implement than infrastructure Fixed Obligation Grants (FOGs) – this is seen by the purple squares (outreach FOGs) closely following the orange circles (DPP signing). All but three districts’ capacity building programming started at the very end of the period of performance and will be evaluated in the final performance evaluation.

Major SOIs as seen on DPPs are lack of government legitimacy, lack of government presence, education, and security. SIKA North has completed significant programming to address these SOIs and some of this can be observed through MISTI’s perception surveys. In Figure 3 most of the districts saw an improvement in confidence in local government since SIKA North began programming. However, the two districts in Baghlan saw slight decreases in confidence. Pul-e Khumri and Baghlani Jadid districts received a combined 67 projects and activities (19% of all SIKA North programming) implemented before MISTI’s third wave was complete. Having received a significant proportion of programming and a later start than half the other districts should have had a positive effect on perceptions of confidence in local government, so there are likely other factors responsible for the slight decreases. SIKA North

responded to SOIs in Baghlan through infrastructure projects, outreach activities aimed at bridging the gap between the government and the people, and through highly popular teacher trainings and Kankor courses. These mitigation activities may have prevented a steeper decline in confidence.

FIGURE 3. CONFIDENCE IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN SIKA NORTH DISTRICTS

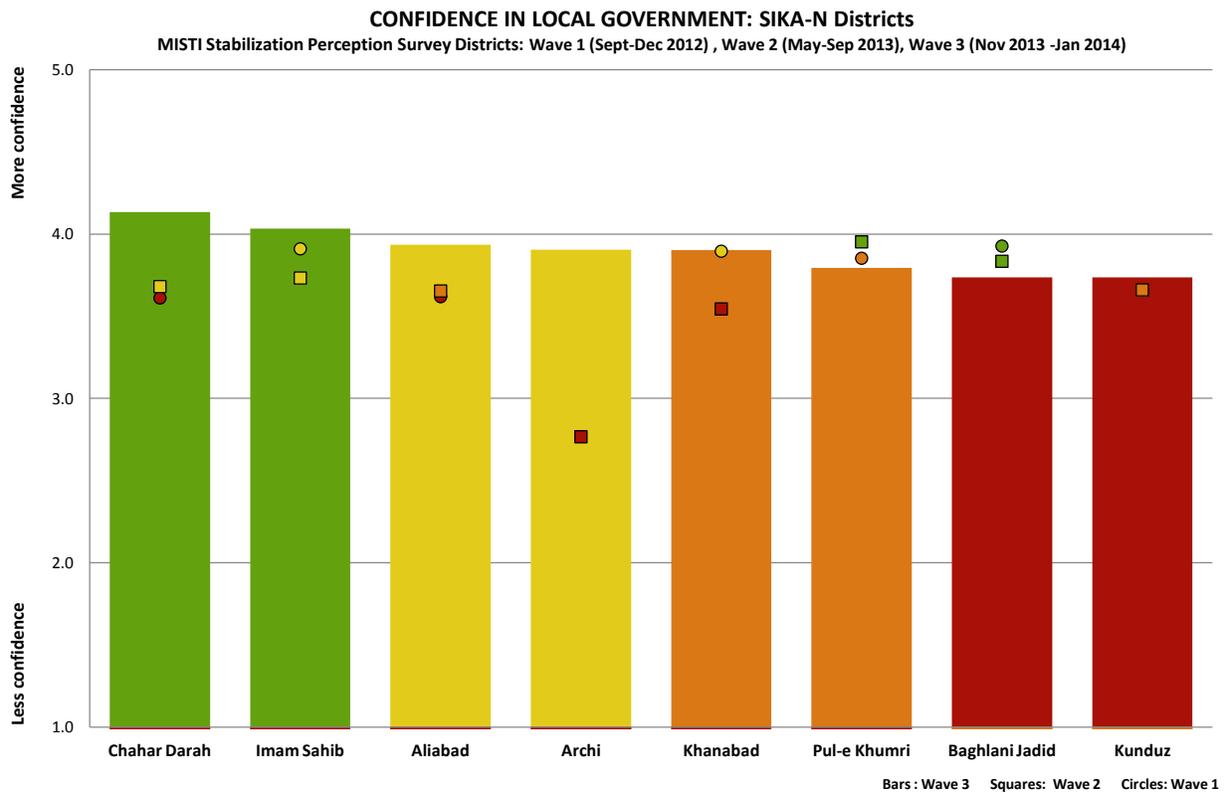


Figure 3: Confidence in local government improved in Kunduz, but remained relatively stagnant (slight decline) in Baghlan. SIKA North has experienced some programming issues in Baghlan. Baghlani Jadid did not have a district governor until early 2013 and security remains a bigger problem in Baghlan than in Kunduz.

Corruption in local government as seen in Figure 4 has been comparatively high since MISTI began surveying and most districts saw a large variance in perceptions of corruption since SIKA North began programming. While this causality cannot be ascertained through this performance evaluation (but will be through MISTI’s impact evaluation), it is important to note that SIKA North has facilitated increased coordination between the government and the communities as part of its stabilization programming. While this increase improves government accountability, it may also potentially demonstrate government dishonesty to communities who before SIKA North programming, did not have a chance to observe it firsthand. With additional capacity building on civil service topics, SIKA North may have a chance to improve perceptions on corruption.

FIGURE 4. CORRUPTION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN SIKA NORTH DISTRICTS

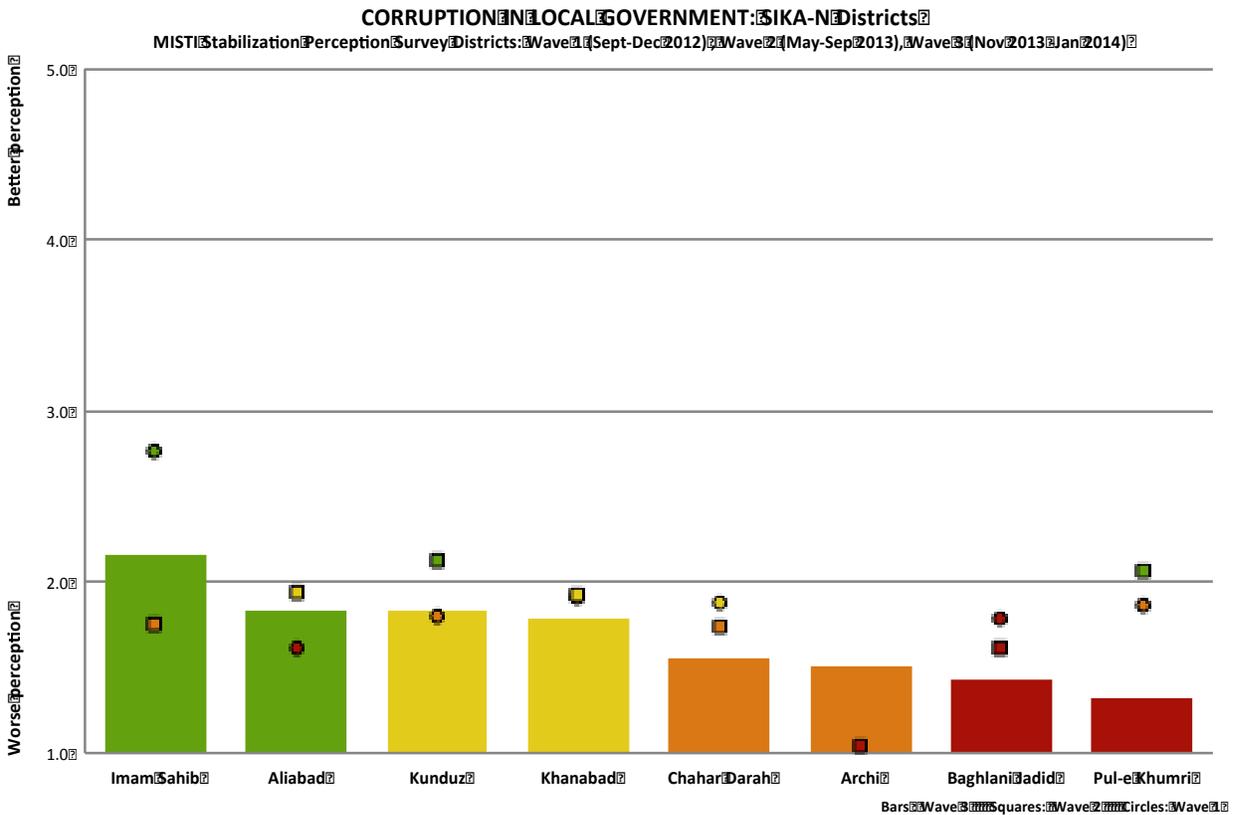


Figure 4: Perceptions of corruption are generally high in SIKA North and have seen some variance between MISTI survey waves.

Lastly, one of the main goals of good governance is to increase perceptions of improvements in services from the government. This is key in any stabilization program, particularly one that focuses so heavily on outreach activities, civil service capacity building, and development programming in line with IR4. SIKA North districts have seen considerable improvement in perceptions, particularly in Dashte Archi, Khanabad, Aliabad, Chahar Darah, and Imam Sahib. However, these perceptions saw relatively stagnant improvements in Gor Tapa (Kunduz City) and Puli Khumri, and a significant drop in Baghlani Jadid. MISTI did considerable data analysis on programming in Baghlani Jadid to discuss the issue and also conducted interviews with government officials from the MRRD and IDLG and with USAID. Unfortunately, there appears to be no clear reasoning for the drop in perceptions that can be discerned for this performance evaluation. However, MISTI’s impact evaluation may shed more light on these issues in Baghlan.

FIGURE 5. IMPROVEMENT IN SERVICES FROM THE GOVERNMENT IN SIKA NORTH DISTRICTS

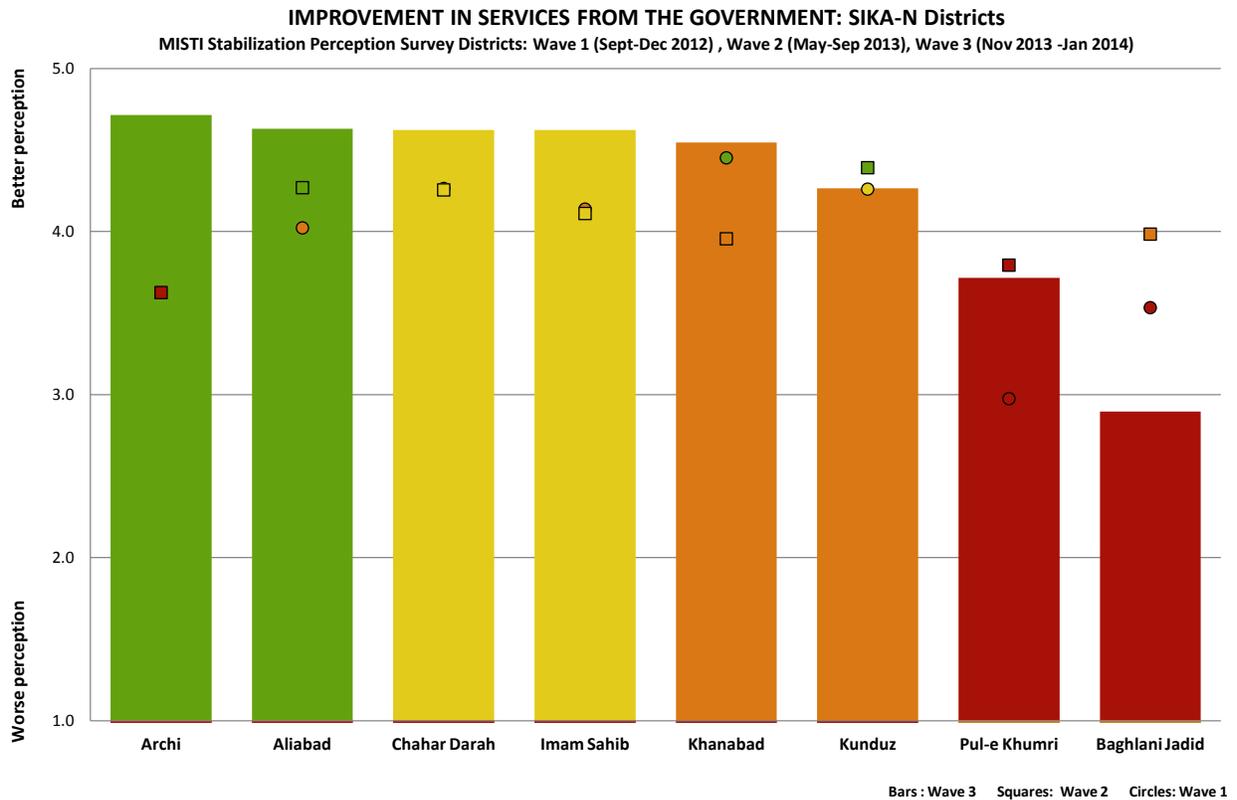


Figure 5: Perceptions of improvements in services from the government have increased in most districts, remained relatively stagnant in Kunduz City and Pul-e Khumri, and have decreased considerably in Baghlani Jadid.

It is important to note that MISTI surveys across the entire district area. Those sampled by MISTI’s survey outside of this “grants bubble” may have felt dis-served by their government, thereby expressing negative sentiments illustrated in the preceding figures which show decreases in perceptions.

Which Activities Undertaken by Sika North Had the Most or Least Contribution to Stabilization Objectives?

Stabilization efforts in Afghanistan work on reducing insurgency, increasing the legitimacy, reach, and capacity of the Afghan Government, and bolstering the resilience of communities to resist external threats and solve local problems. Stabilization programming needs to be highly responsive to local sources of instability and grievances against the local government⁶. While MISTI measures specific perceptions where stabilization is measured in improvements in these perceptions, the evaluation team utilized a modified assessment approach that sampled a cross section of Sika North’s completed mitigation activities (hard projects and equipment provision) as well as a cross section of completed and ongoing outreach, capacity building, and soft projects in Baghlan and Kunduz under the period of performance.

⁶ Stabilization Unit PMP

As SIKa North's focus is to identify and effectively respond only to those conditions that drive instability (SOIs), the following objectives must be met in order to qualify as having a stabilization impact:

1. Increase support for the Afghan Government;
2. Decrease support for Anti-Government Elements (AGEs);
3. Improve the normal functioning of society.

The evaluation team found that out of the 62 projects and activities sampled for this performance evaluation, SIKa North contributed to all three stabilization objectives. However, some activities merit further discussion within the context of stabilization programming.

Infrastructure – road rehabilitation, culverts, protection walls, and potable water wells were highly valued by the recipient communities.

Beneficiaries said roads improved access between communities (and different ethnic groups – often a source of instability), improved access to government offices, and improved access to medical facilities, schools, and farms. Given this improved access, communities are now more in touch with their district leadership. Having seen district entities implement and monitor the projects as well as participate in large opening and closing ceremonies has provided communities with a sense that their government cares about their well-being and is willing to provide necessary services. Road projects also involved some labor from recipient communities, providing them with a sense of ownership necessary for successful stabilization programming. Protection walls provide protection against soil erosion and flooding. Both of these issues are serious concerns for Afghan farmers who deal with annual spring flooding. Much like road rehabilitation projects, protection walls were built with direct district entity inclusion, improving recipient community support for the government.

Outreach / Soft Projects / Capacity Building – SWGs, Kankor (university) courses, teacher trainings, reconciliation jirgas and peace meetings, and SIKa North-funded district governor outreach activities in Aliabad, Khanabad, and Imam Sahib districts were highly valued by participants and indirect beneficiaries.

These activities improved people's perceptions of the district governments' ability to provide needed service delivery, bringing them closer to the government and indirectly reducing support for AGEs while also improving the normal functioning of society through the provision of long term quality of life enhancements and through conflict resolutions led by district and provincial governments. The SWGs and reconciliation jirgas were particularly effective at reconciling longstanding disputes and ensuring that the district government received credit for their success. Kankor courses and teacher trainings improved educational capacity within the districts they were conducted in while also raising the provincial profiles of Kunduz and Baghlan at the national level through improved success rates at national-level university entrance exams.

Further discussion within the context of stabilization programming:

In kind grants used for most infrastructure projects run against the Kandahar Model and the NABDP approaches required by the SIKa North contract. Road rehabilitation is considered a semi-complicated project under the NABDP model and should therefore be completed by the CDCs. SIKa North decided to subcontract some infrastructure projects with insufficient use of local labor⁷. While this was done due to

⁷ The 5 sub-contracts and corresponding 42 in-kind grants SIKa North is implementing (out of a planned number of 279 FOGs) are large projects which require the use of heavy equipment and which are going across several CDCs. SIKa North wanted to make sure standard quality would be obtained across communities involved. Also the higher efficiency of the sub-contracts allows in some case a more labor intensive project which directly benefits the communities of the CDCs than if the contracts had directly been implemented by the CDCs.

DAI's corporate aversion to giving communities FOG funds directly (corporate risk aversion) and due to the efficiency and cost savings associated with multi-CDC infrastructure subcontracting⁸, the use of in kind grants reduces community involvement, community monitoring, and community ownership.

Capacity building trainings provided to CDCs on finance and grant management were ineffective at properly building the CDCs' capacity to conduct project management. These trainings were too short, did not have enough repetition, and did not cover all the necessary modules. Beneficiaries complained that they just learned about SIKa North's milestone payment scheme and nothing else.

Soft activities like poetry reading competitions have questionable impact. While SIKa North said they provide for increased district government exposure in an activity that has strong cultural tones, the stabilization impact is not entirely clear. MISTI's evaluation team found that the single justification for these readings was to bring hundreds of people together and build cohesion through a culturally important activity. However, MISTI's evaluation team also found that many people showed up singularly for the free lunch. Nonetheless, the three poetry readings MISTI inquired about cost \$3,000 each – a small sum for a community cohesion activity involving several hundred people.

Certain equipment provision activities like DDA office electrifications can be counterproductive within a governance context. The IDLG has consistently asked for SIKa North to furnish the district centers. The IDLG's reasoning is that district centers are the central offices of the President's representatives. Proper furnishing in the main offices and waiting centers would elevate the status of each district governor in the eyes of the communities thereby directly increasing support for the Afghan government. On the other hand, should people visit a district center without adequate desks, chairs, and other furnishings, they are likely to denigrate the importance of the district governor and his ability to provide for essential services, regardless of what he has already done for them through SIKa North funding. Providing for DDA office electrification without also providing equipment for other district center offices leads to resentment and jealousy within the district government. Equitable and visible distribution of resources is important for effective stabilization programming within the governance sector.

The German military furnished most district centers in the North, therefore IDLG's request for SIKa North to do so as well does not make sense. Nonetheless, equitable distribution is important in Afghanistan's envious political and tribal environment. As DDAs are part of the MRRD, providing them with equipment without also providing the IDLG's local office with the same or similar can lead to unnecessary resentment.

Was the approach to women inclusion appropriate and effective in empowering women and increasing their participation in decision making in SIKa North's activities?

Cultural and religious norms in Afghanistan are two of the biggest obstacles to women's participation in SWGs and DDAs. Traditionally, women play a limited role in decision-making when it concerns community development. Nonetheless, USAID's gender policy requires implementing partners to ensure gender equality, female empowerment, and gender integration in all aspects of programming as part of USAID's strategy on human rights and effective and sustainable development outcomes. Moreover,

However, they go against the NABDP model of only subcontracting projects out if they are "complicated". All of SIKa North's projects are either "semi-complicated" or "simple" according to the NABDP model – of which the Kandahar Model is part. This is an alignment with the MRRD issue that the MRRD consistently objected to during discussions with MISTI.

⁸ SIKa North rehabilitated long stretches of road (often over 20km) by combining multiple CDCs into the same project, but through separate grants for each CDC. This was done to meet USAID contracting requirements and to connect multiple communities at the same time instead of doing one-off FOGs for each CDC. This maintained SIKa North's compliance with the MRRD/NSP blacklist which prevents road rehabilitations over 5km per CDC.

USAID’s contract with DAI stipulates: “the contractor shall integrate assistance to women into all stages of development, planning, programming, and implementation...”⁹

SIKA North has included women in SAM trainings and has separate female SWGs, but their role is limited to these two forums with limited participation in the male-dominated decision-making forums. SIKA North does not have an expat gender officer, nor is there an Afghan gender officer in the provincial offices or at HQ. While two were hired under the period of performance, both did not perform to SIKA North’s expectations and were removed from the program¹⁰.

SIKA North did not create new mechanisms to encourage female empowerment and decision making, instead relying almost exclusively on systems already setup by the NSP and NABDP (structures of DDAs are generally 10 women and 20 men). Women are included in the SWGs, but this is by default given the existing structure. When SIKA North conducts these meetings, women are taken to a separate room to share ideas amongst themselves. However, their input into the larger male-dominated meetings has not been encouraged.

While women were included in activities and certain trainings, the problem has been to empower them in decision making¹¹. When SIKA North briefly had a gender officer, there was one all encompassing training on gender mainstreaming, rights of men and women in society, understanding gender roles, and respect for the opposite sex, but this was a general leadership and civil society training for one day only. Nothing substantial has been done to empower women participation in the SAM process to the extent that their identification of mitigation activities is realized on a DPP signed by the Afghan government. While SIKA North conducted this SAM training for a total of 248 women in eight districts, identifying family disputes, endemic economic vulnerability, and lack of security limiting access to public services as the most common female-centric SOIs, there have been no female-specific mitigation activities conducted under the period of performance.

This is unusual for a SIKA program to neglect as other SIKAs have focused extensively on at least addressing the economic vulnerability SOI through vocational trainings (often coordinated through the Department of Women’s Affairs [DoWA]). Furthermore, while SIKA North’s gender-specific PMP indicator requires it to collect on the number of female beneficiaries for all activities and grants, the numbers (outputs) are misleading, as they do not adequately demonstrate how SIKA North activities supported women’s legal rights, public access, and/or employment. Instead, the indicator is largely a reflection of women’s participation in civil society, without the requisite USAID-mandated empowering of women in decision making requirement¹².

According to SIKA North leadership and provincial staff, there are a number of reasons for this lack of gender programming:

- Kunduz and Baghlan provincial staff are strongly opposed to having women in the office. Due to security and cultural considerations, SIKA North respected this opposition.
- One of DAI’s previous projects in Kunduz (Local Governance and Community Development) had its provincial HQ attacked by insurgents after a local mosque claimed it was a brothel (for

⁹ USAID contract with DAI for SIKA North, p 19 Section C.7 “Gender Requirements”.

¹⁰ Focus on gender programming has increased since November 2013. However, since this occurred at the later part of the evaluation period of performance, with results going to show after the evaluation period, such changes will not be mentioned in this report.

¹¹ Women have been included in Kankor (University Exam) courses and Training of Teachers activities, but these activities are not gender-specific. Nonetheless, these activities were highly valued by females interviewed by MISTI.

¹² SIKA North PMP Indicator #3 – “Number of SIKA North supported activities that support women’s legal rights, public access, employment or participation in government or civil society.”

having female Afghan and expat workers). The memory of this incident played a large role in convincing SIKA North leadership not to hire females.

- With budget reductions and issues with unqualified gender officers during the base period, SIKA North is not looking to hire a gender officer in the option period, and will continue to use short term female hires for trainings.
- Most community and district elders did not want SIKA North to include women in the SAM trainings and follow-on activities inclusive of women. However, the elders understood that this would violate NSP and NABDP rules, thereby preventing SIKA North from implementing projects. Therefore, they allowed women participation, but only symbolically. This led to most women participating in trainings and working groups without an appropriate requisite knowledge of the program or of the role they should play in activities. MISTI's field researchers also found that some of the short term hire female trainers were inadequately qualified to conduct SAM trainings.

According to SIKA North leadership, the program conducted a variety of different programming during their first months. After time, they realized what worked and what didn't and what was more efficient in the long term. Given the cultural considerations as well as the lack of a gender officer or female staff at the time, in addition to the incident with the DAI house in Kunduz, gender programming was deemed inefficient and likely to have a lower success rate than other programming. So instead of spending valuable programming time and funding on gender, SIKA North refocused on the other tasks that could have been accomplished with greater efficacy and impact.

This is a prudent decision from a management perspective as it has allowed SIKA North to focus its energy on efficient programming with known success rates. At the same time, however, this decision has neglected a key contractual requirement with USAID.

How Effectively Did SIKA North Incorporate the Spirit of the Kandahar Model as Defined in the Latest Modification to the Contract?

SIKA North appears to be following the Kandahar Model as best it can in a stabilization/local governance context, but the use of in kind grants is an unsustainable and potentially relationship damaging issue with the MRRD.

The SIKA North contract requires it to work within the existing framework and methodology of the NABDP and the Kandahar Model which features a decentralization of procurement and financial procedures, coupled with community contracting. When the NSP and NABDP established CDCs and DDAs, they were meant to serve as a platform for strengthening sub-national governance through direct community participation that fed into the district planning and budgeting framework, making decision making more transparent, accountable, and centered on community grievances. An essential aspect of the Kandahar Model has always been to hand finances directly over to the CDCs (or DDAs) so that local communities can manage their budgets themselves and take more appropriate localized decisions based on available resources with decidedly quick delivery.

As outlined in the MRRD's Kandahar Model brochure, the implementation of the model follows a three step process that ensures decentralization of development work and quick delivery:

1. Community Participation – CDCs and DDAs are involved in the following phases of project implementation:

- a. Identification of individual community needs and localized prioritization of projects (mitigation activities).
 - b. Implementation of prioritized and funded projects.
 - c. Monitoring of projects by the CDC (in addition to PRRD and central monitors from MRRD).
2. Faster Decision-Making Process, Quick Delivery, and a Reduction of “Red Tape”.
 3. Regionalized Project Cycle Management – through CDC facilitation, rapid decision making, reduction of red tape, combined with local labor and resources instead of external contracting, leads to rapid implementation.

The benefit of this model is that not only do communities respond to their own priority grievances quickly, but that a social asset base is created which can now prioritize, implement, manage, and monitor projects that have directly responded to community needs, but not identified sources of instability.

Identification of Individual Community Needs and Community Monitoring

All of SIKA North’s stabilization programming is identified through community SAM trainings and subsequently discussed at the SWGs. CDCs, DDAs, district entities, and relevant line departments are involved in this process and contribute to the identification of SOIs and mitigation activities. According to SIKA North leadership, CDCs are always involved in the monitoring of the implementation of the grants for which they are grantees. This is done in coordination with district engineers, the DDAs, PRRD social workers, PRRD engineers, and the district government offices. This is done at the onset of the projects during public ceremonies that are all documented through regular reporting. This is also done during the implementation of the projects at the various milestones. However, MISTI’s field research found that while the CDCs do conduct monitoring, it is not done systematically and the CDCs have not received all the necessary monitoring/reporting training required under the Kandahar Model.

Training every CDC to conduct monitoring/reporting is an arduous task that requires considerable time and effort, especially given the low education levels of most CDC members. It is understandable that SIKA North would not focus its limited budget and time on this inefficient Kandahar Model requirement. SIKA North has a strong internal monitoring department based on milestones. This monitoring includes detailed documentation and photos of project progress, particularly infrastructure projects. These are generally put together in weekly reports. The PRRD monitors projects as each district has two social workers paid for by SIKA North. These social workers and line departments related to the particular project go to the project sites and conduct the necessary monitoring for the PRRD/line department. MISTI found that they do not have any checklists or other monitoring forms, as their monitoring is done informally. Central monitors from the MRRD rarely conduct monitoring visits. For soft projects, the IDLG does its own monitoring through the district offices, but this is not relevant to the Kandahar Model.

Faster Decision-Making Process, Quick Delivery, and a Reduction of “Red Tape”

SIKA North has achieved quick delivery of projects and delivery has improved over time as seen in Figure 2 where there is a clear contraction of time between DPP approval and first project rollouts by district. Nonetheless, one issue of slow delivery did come up during MISTI fieldwork. Elders in Puli Khumri complained about the Baladori Canal project that was meant to clean the canal during the Spring in order to better irrigate agricultural land during the Spring/Summer planting season. Due to an eight-month approval delay this project was implemented too late for that year’s planting season. The delay was not due to USAID’s Vetting Unit as all Puli Khumri infrastructure grants have been under the \$25,000

threshold. While such delays have been rare in SIKa North, they result in a loss of confidence in community elders and a loss of trust in the program.

In Kind Grants

Under the Kandahar Model of community contracting, SIKa North must follow the NABDP's guidelines to implement community projects. Since community contracting ensures that CDCs and DDAs gain hands-on experience in project planning, execution, and management of finances, the NABDP strongly encourages projects that can be managed by the CDCs and DDAs without private contractors. According to the NABDP, there are three types of projects based on their technical complexity: complicated, semi-complicated, and simple.¹³ Only the latter two fall within the spirit of the Kandahar Model. SIKa North has not been fully compliant with this requirement during most of the base period.

Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction's (SIGAR's) Audit 13-16 of the SIKa programs dated October 17, 2013 identified that SIKa North violated the Kandahar Model and alignment with the Afghan government through the use of in kind grants. SIKa North's contract with USAID requires it to implement the Kandahar model and align with government processes and procedures- the MRRD in this case. SIKa North's continued use of in kind grants with USAID concurrence is an ongoing violation of the Kandahar Model.

Neither NSP, NABDP, nor any other program from the MRRD has used in kind grants for SIKa North-type small-scale projects. There is no precedent for this from the Afghan government. Under NABDP guidelines, procurement can be contracted out but only if the project is too complicated for individual CDCs to manage. SIKa North's use of in kind grants for projects such as road gravelling goes against NABDP guidelines under which it is contractually required to work under (gravelling is a semi-complicated project and cannot be contracted out).

Communities are not as adaptable to process changes coming from the same ministry. The CDCs and DDAs have been trained on a certain way of project management that rarely involved in kind grants. To change the approach under the auspices of the MRRD/PRRD creates confusion, misalignment with the government, and unsustainability because the MRRD adamantly opposes continuing in kind grants post-SIKa. There is also a loss of community participation and ownership as in kind grants are given to contractors and the implementation is often done without strong community involvement. This takes away from the transparency of community granting and reduces village empowerment.

The MRRD leadership has strongly stated during MISTI interviews that should SIKa North continue the use of in kind grants, the ministry will discontinue supporting the program. Moreover, while the Kunduz PRRD director has signed off on previous in kind grants, he has been instructed by the MRRD to no longer approve such projects.

A stabilization program must empower the communities to bring them closer to the government. In kind grants do not effectively involve the government or the community in the execution portion of the grant.

USAID has approved SIKa North's use of in kind grants, contrary to the Kandahar Model and USAID's own requirement of alignment with the Afghan government through a contract modification in November 2013 which stated on page 5 of the amendment: "In limited cases the contractor... may elect to use other grant mechanisms in order to satisfy the level of financial controls required for good financial oversight." For SIKa North this is a question of financial monitoring and quality. The program leadership feels that

¹³ Complicated projects require the use of a private contractor and are outside the capacity of the CDC/DDA. Semi-complicated projects are contracted directly with the CDC/DDA while the PRRD engineers provide assistance to the CDC/DDA to implement the project. Simple projects are contracted directly with the CDC/DDA and require no further support.

they would lose control over cost and quality of the assets if they give money directly to a CDC for implementation, and that this constitutes a corporate risk to DAI.

DAI does not usually accept infrastructure FOGs because most of the time the company carries all the risk. In order to have DAI accept to do so under the SIKa North contract, the program leadership had to put in place a thorough milestone system that allowed SIKa North to follow infrastructure grant implementation step by step and the use of the fund disbursements (five milestone in total per project). So far, according to SIKa North, the results have been satisfactory with only one FOG cancelled. Furthermore, the corporate risk aversion is one of the major reasons why SIKa North has decided to award small grants relative to the other SIKAs to limit the risk carried by one CDC. For example, of the 336 FOGs and activities conducted under this period of performance, only 18 were over \$25,000 – accounting for just over 5% of the total.

Aside from the issue with in kind grants, SIKa North has successfully aligned with the Afghan government and has involved the communities in a localized prioritization of projects. There is quick delivery and sufficient monitoring (although this can always be improved).

To What Extent Have SIKa Activities Been Successfully Presented as Government Activities, Connecting People to Resources (both Government and Non-Government) for Service Delivery?

Overall, SIKa North activities have been presented as government-led activities and major efforts have been made to work through government structures in order to provide service delivery. SIKa North has done an excellent job of staying in the background when it comes to project selection and implementation activities. During project opening and closing ceremonies, the provincial government line departments and district entities are present, showing an Afghan government face to every stabilization activity. Afghan government entities are involved in the monitoring of large infrastructure projects and the branding and logos at SIKa North sponsored events is of the Afghan government, not USAID or DAI. In addition, SIKa North's focus on publicizing activities through traditional media (radio and television) has given government officials increased exposure.

The evaluation team found that few beneficiaries knew there was an international donor behind activities and assumed the Afghan government, or more specifically the MRRD, was funding development. While more educated beneficiaries understood there was an international donor behind the activities, they still credited the government for connecting people to resources and for service delivery. Beneficiaries were appreciative of the government entities taking a leading role in project identification and with the work of the SWGs. Most SIKa North district residents have not experienced such a community-driven analytical resource development process and few residents have historically been consulted (and continuously re-consulted) by their government when it came to stabilization or development programming. This has drawn many beneficiaries closer to their district and provincial governments, exposing them to a government that listens to concerns, implements mitigation activities, and improves district service delivery.

How Effectively Did a Bottom-Up Communications Process Link MRRD-Developed DDAs to the District and Provincial Development Planning Processes?

The NABDP created DDAs shortly after NSP had established several thousand CDCs as a way to bridge the gap between village-level and provincial-level governance institutions, paving the way for a bottom-up framework for development. The intent was to accomplish this through district development plans

(DDPs – not to be confused with SIKa DPPs – District Project Portfolios). These DDPs are meant to outline the projects DDA members hope to implement in their district. In order to develop this DDP, a DDA is tasked with collecting all of their CDCs’ prioritization lists through a Community Development Plan. Given that DDA members are also CDC members, this is a wholly bottom-up approach. These DDPs are then presented to the provincial government and the PRRD for approval.

SIKA North works in a similar fashion. There is a SAM training for relevant district entities (inclusive of the DDAs) which results in identification of sources of instability which are mitigated against through various programming that makes its way onto a DPP. This DPP is discussed during SWGs at the district level and then signed off by the district governor who will then forward the DPP for final approval at the provincial government and PRRD levels.

It is important to note that after the SAM trainings, the SWGs are conducted biweekly or monthly. During these meetings at the district level, the communities discuss their problems/issues with the relevant line departments, often in the presence of the district governor. Each district has a SIKa North funded communications advisor and he is tasked to work with the line departments and district governors to improve the reporting capacity of the district entities to the provincial entities. In addition, these communications advisors assist the district entities to share community-based activities through traditional media as well as social media.

The normal structure of the SWG includes the DDA members, line departments at the district level, the district governor and the chief of police. If a district SWG is unable to resolve a particular issue, the issue is then elevated to the provincial SWG. The provincial SWG includes the provincial governor, chief of police, directors of related line departments (PRRD, DoWA, Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock, Education, etc.), district governors, two members of DDAs from each district, and select community elders who have sufficient influence to participate in a provincial working group. This provincial SWG also considers prioritized projects for the communities and the provincial governor is the ultimate signatory on the DPPs.

It is through these SWGs that community and district members, in particular the DDAs, have been able to form a highly efficient and effective communications channel to the district and provincial governance and development planning process. Previously, the community elders were unable to interact and share concerns with district entities or provincial authorities because there was no real mechanism to facilitate such communication. Under SIKa North’s guidance (and funding of SWG meetings) the bottom-up communications process has improved dramatically. This is also evident in MISTI’s survey where respondents in almost all SIKa North districts noticed an improvement in services and responsiveness from the government.

While the district and provincial development planning process has seen considerable positive input from SIKa North, there are still several problems from MRRD’s perspective:

- While the regional MRRD coordinator and the PRRDs are kept in the loop, it often happens after something has occurred. There is a ministerial insistence for better communication, especially at the early stages of development planning.
- Project planning is not shared early enough with the regional coordinators leaving them less time to develop their monitoring plans (a key NABDP and Kandahar Model requirement).
- Signatures and approvals on SIKa North facilitated DPPs have caused internal Afghan government issues.

Specific to the last bullet point, DPPs are currently signed by provincial governors before the PRRD. This causes internal Afghan government mechanism issues as the PRRD director cannot refuse to sign something the provincial governor has already approved, even if the PRRD strongly disagrees with the selection, implementation, and development impact of the project. While this is an internal Afghan issue, SIKA North may be unintentionally contributing to high level provincial political instability if the PRRD is the last to sign DPPs.

How Effective Were Capacity Building Initiatives Aimed at Teaching District Entities How to Plan, Design, Implement, and Monitor Various Types of Development Projects?

SIKA North's capacity building initiatives on project management cycles were only given to CDCs and DDAs for infrastructure activities with a focus on milestone payment training. Essentially, these were trainings on giving the entities an understanding of SIKA North's five step milestone payments scheme for FOGs and on how to properly procure supplies for infrastructure projects. These capacity building trainings were done internally through SIKA North provincial staff and were conducted on an as-needed basis. While SIKA North said it conducted four-hour trainings for each CDC, the reality per the evaluation team's field work is closer to one hour each. The trainings were valuable in ensuring that project recipient CDCs understood how SIKA North's payment scheme works and in ensuring that each CDC is able to properly procure the necessary items for construction. While the trainings focused on project implementation, there was very little systematic monitoring training given to CDCs or DDAs. SIKA North conducted project documentation training, including document control and management, filing systems, and distribution of labor salaries, but these trainings were largely for documentation of work done rather than on monitoring as it relates to M&E. This is partially the reason for why CDCs have been weak at properly monitoring (and documenting the monitoring) of their own projects.

PRRD social workers received what the evaluation team considers the most relevant and effective management, reporting, and M&E training. These social workers are the most active members of the team when it comes to assisting communities in the planning, design, implementation, and monitoring of various types of infrastructure projects. Other district entities such as the district governors, line departments, and district office staff have not received project management cycle capacity building trainings specific to implemented projects.

SIKA North's focus for these other district entities has been on providing capacity building on:

- What is civil service?
- Civil service according to Islam
- Social contract
- Rights and duties of civil servants
- Accountability in a state
- Development frameworks
- What is development
- Separation of powers
- Prioritizing projects
- Planning and participation

These trainings were only conducted in three out of eight districts during the period of performance (Chardara, Gor Tapa, and Imam Sahib). The district entities received these trainings from ATR, a subcontractor. SIKA North prudently conducted these capacity building trainings in these three districts right before the first rollout of soft and hard projects. This ensured that district entities had improved

capacity in connection with the preparation for implementation of IR4 activities. However, the same cannot be said for the other five districts where capacity building trainings occurred after projects were already implemented.

The taught modules were informative and detailed, but ATR did not spend enough time with participants to ensure that there was sufficient retention of information. Most modules were 1.5 hours and not repeated. This did not leave participants enough time to properly absorb the large amount of information. Furthermore, the lack of repetition hindered understanding as well. The evaluation team interviewed a number of district entities who participated in these ATR trainings several months after they were conducted and found that while most remembered having the training, few could recall exactly what was taught or how they are using the new skills in their day to day work. And not all modules were relevant for each district official. For example, the Director of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock procurement manager did not require civil service training, but was included in it anyway. A computer operator in Imam Sahib was given development training and a dormitory manager in Chardara was given civil service training – questionable relevancy given these individuals’ official duties. A cursory look at ATR’s capacity building spreadsheet shows how several of these questionable participants are likely related (as seen on the “father’s name” column).

While SIKa North has done well to comply with the capacity building requirements of its contract with USAID, the evaluation team questions ATR’s methods for choosing participants and the relevancy of the trainings for the involved district entities.

Lastly, all capacity building initiatives must align with Afghan Government processes in order to satisfy the demands of the SIKa North contract with USAID and to be sustainable. The IDLG has consistently and loudly complained how all of the SIKa’s capacity building and communications trainings do not align with the IDLG’s operational guidelines. This is the fault of the IDLG as it does not have a fully developed capacity building guideline in place currently, so SIKa North cannot be accused of not aligning with that strategy. The onus, however, is essentially on USAID when it comes to ensuring alignment. USAID-Kabul interacts regularly with IDLG and can better facilitate the sharing of such guidelines rather than having each individual SIKa request documentation from the IDLG in separate communications. This process was improving during the latter part of the period of performance but was not fully realized by January 2014.

What Lessons Learned from the SIKa North Program Implementation Can Inform Future USAID Programming?

LESSONS LEARNED	FUTURE USAID PROGRAMMING
COORDINATION AND ALIGNMENT	
<p>There is a flat structure in Afghanistan when it comes to governance. If the MRRD proposes a solution, the IDLG cannot object even if they disagree. There is still no clear line of authority of which ministry is responsible for what aspect of SIKa North’s programming and what the associated responsibilities are.</p>	<p>Implementation letters signed between USAID and relevant Afghan ministries should clearly outline what ministry (and specifically what department within the ministry) is responsible for overseeing programming, and what are the particular responsibilities, deliverables, communication channels, and necessary coordination activities. Also, the IL should include a method for addressing grievances by either the IP or the ministry.</p>

LESSONS LEARNED	FUTURE USAID PROGRAMMING
<p>SIKA North’s reporting chains to Afghan counterparts are often convoluted and result in governance issues. As an example, the MRRD is involved in development and the IDLG is involved in governance. PRRDs report directly to provincial governors and then to the MRRD. If the PRRD is not involved in SIKAs North’s work at the district center, the MRRD is left out of the loop. Furthermore, asking the PRRD to sign DPPs (or any other document) AFTER the provincial governor has signed prevents the PRRD from raising his objections as the provincial governor supersedes the PRRD. The correct protocol is for the PRRD to sign documents related to his department BEFORE the provincial governor. If this protocol is not followed, governance problems may escalate to the Kabul level.</p>	<p>Effective coordination can only occur when clear reporting requirements are enunciated in the IL. Also, having relevant ministry regional coordinators work directly with each IP is necessary to maintain a proper flow of information. These coordinators should be attached to IPs at the start of the contract in order to avoid early missteps. They should also be paid by the ministry rather than the IP as such dual parentage may cause conflict of interests. Lastly, it is important to follow government protocol. USAID and its implementing partners should better understand how the Afghan government structure works at the provincial levels in order to avoid damaging existing protocols. The case of the PRRD and provincial governor is a clear example of this misunderstanding.</p>
<p>SIKA North has not empowered women in the decision-making process at the district or provincial levels. Coordination with DoWA is minimal. Programming that involved women was by default (SAM trainings for women occurred because the MRRD mandates 1/3 female composition for DDAs). There was a management decision to avoid gender programming due to community aversion and inefficiencies. This ran counter to contractual requirements.</p>	<p>Gender is a vital component of USAID’s Afghanistan programming. It is unusual for the evaluation team to see that USAID did not pursue the lack of gender programming during the period of performance. Other SIKAs conduct gender programming (and often in more insecure areas). There appears to have been no substantive communication or coordination between the CORs on this issue.</p> <p>Gender programming during the option period should have strong coordination with DoWA from the beginning. Any activities should have buy-in from DoWA in order to be effectively implemented (as they can recommend trainers) and to be sustainable as DoWA may continue trainings once USAID ends a project.</p>
<p>Certain capacity building, communication, and other relevant district/provincial entity trainings did not align with MRRD and/or IDLG processes, procedures, or guidelines either because SIKAs North did not use those guidelines or because the guidelines are still in draft form at the ministry and have not been shared.</p>	<p>In order to ensure sustainable and relevant trainings are conducted, they must align with government processes, procedures, and guidelines. USAID should receive these before an IP begins implementation so that they may be included in the contract, PMP, and work plan. It should not be left up to the IP to procure necessary national-level documents from often unresponsive ministries.</p>
<p>SIGAR’s Audit 13-16 of the SIKAs programs dated October 17, 2013 identified that SIKAs North violated the Kandahar Model and alignment with the Afghan government through the use of in kind</p>	<p>A stabilization program must empower the communities to bring them closer to the government. In kind grants do not effectively involve the government or the community in the execution</p>

LESSONS LEARNED	FUTURE USAID PROGRAMMING
<p>grants. SIKA North’s contract with USAID requires it to implement the Kandahar model and align with government processes and procedures- the MRRD in this case. SIKA North’s continued use of in kind grants with USAID concurrence is an ongoing violation of the Kandahar Model.</p> <p>Communities are not as adaptable to process changes coming from the same ministry. The CDCs and DDAs have been trained on a certain way of project management that rarely involved in kind grants. To change the approach under the auspices of the MRRD/PRRD creates confusion, misalignment with the government, and unsustainability because the MRRD adamantly opposes continuing in kind grants post-SIKA. There is also a loss of community participation and ownership as in kind grants are given to contractors and the implementation is often done without strong community involvement. This takes away from the transparency of community granting and reduces village empowerment.</p>	<p>portion of the grant.</p>
<p>Vetting issues and other delays have plagued efforts to ensure the program conducts quick delivery interventions as required under the Kandahar Model. Positive perceptions of government service delivery have decreased in Baghlan in part because USAID vetting procedures are cumbersome, fraught with duplication of effort, and create impediments to effective stabilization programming.</p>	<p>Vetting can occur more expeditiously if that unit’s processes and procedures match the reality on the ground. Often IPs use the same suppliers/contractors, but the vetting unit vets them even if they have recently been vetted and are in current use by other IPs. This is wasteful.</p>
<p>Reconciliation jirgas and SWGs were effective initiatives in districts where the local government was capable and willing to take the lead on conflict resolution and stabilization activities.</p>	<p>Conflict resolution is a major stabilizing initiative when done correctly. Future programming should have a more nuanced component that aligns with the IDLG and relevant ministries to ensure these conflict resolution initiatives develop into sustainable processes.</p>
<p>SIKA North’s M&E unit relies on MISTI to provide it with an understanding of the causal relation between programming and impact. Its PMP only requires it to report on outputs, not outcomes.</p>	<p>Measuring the effects of stabilization programming is fundamental to understanding if particular interventions had positive outcomes. If an IP does not measure outcomes, USAID may not know the effects of its investment. PMPs should have measurable outcomes and a theory of change articulated within the results framework.</p>
HUMAN RESOURCES	
<p>SIKA North waited several months to hire an expat</p>	<p>IPs should be expected by USAID to fill key roles</p>

LESSONS LEARNED	FUTURE USAID PROGRAMMING
<p>M&E Manager and other essential staff due to uncertainty over the option period. This delayed programming, delayed performance, and resulted in a sluggish implementation of activities during the wait.</p>	<p>regardless of contract modifications or extensions. If the IP is not filling the role due to uncertainty over the option period, it is USAID’s responsibility to ensure that it does.</p> <p>Also, USAID should notify IPs well in advance if there will be a project extension. Last-minute notice considerably inhibits performance, results in loss of staff, inhibits IP human resources, and forces IP management to unnecessarily focus on closing out the project. This is inefficient and wasteful. Last-minute extension notices common to USAID Afghanistan are responsible for a good portion of IP poor performance during the uncertainty period.</p>

What Components of SIKa North Were Most and Least Valued by District and Provincial Entities?

Note: This is not a shopping list for what other programs should do in Baghlan and Kunduz. MISTI’s methodology for this section was to ask every individual interviewed (over 300 Afghans) what aspect of SIKa North’s programming they valued and did not value as well as their reasoning. The responses were compiled and rank ordered. This does not mean that road rehabilitation has a greater impact than teacher trainings. Rather, it means that road rehabilitation was slightly more valued than teacher trainings. Impact and effects on stability are not determined by this question. This is simply a portrayal of local responses and is not to be construed as an endorsement of one activity over another.

No	Most Valued	Project Location	Reasoning
1	SAM Trainings	Baghlan and Kunduz	SAM trainings throughout SIKa North districts connected the various communities to the district center. The forums for identification of sources of instability and the subsequent mitigation activities were generally done through a transparent democratic process. Government officials, stakeholders, and numerous other participants commented how these trainings connected the center and peripheries of the two provinces through a truly consultative decision-making process.
2	Road Rehabilitation (through gravelling)	Baghlan and Kunduz	Road rehabilitation was singularly the most important mitigation activity on the DPPs. The poor state of provincial roads has led to high transportation costs, limited mobility (and access to district/provincial centers), inefficient farm to market supply chain dynamics, and poor access to medical centers. With SIKa North’s road rehabilitation projects, not only did multiple CDCs join together to gravel long stretches of rural roads thereby increasing solidarity and mutual ownership, but now transportation is more frequent and less expensive, the community-government gap decreased, the security situation improved as the ANSF now have easier access to patrol/police, and a large number of job opportunities were created for unemployed men. Even with in kind grants, these were still highly valued.
3	Teacher Trainings	Baghlan and Kunduz	The quality of provincial teachers was low due to poor training and lack of sufficient experience. SIKa North conducted a highly valued teacher training program that improved teacher capacity, teaching methods, and increased their ability to teach subjects such as science and math, which were previously lacking in the provinces. This activity also included numerous female beneficiaries.

4	Kankor Courses (for university entrance exams)	Baghlan and Kunduz	Provincial youth and the Department of Education requested this project. The impact has been positive with roughly 69% of trained students successfully passing the Kankor Exam, thereby gaining access to Afghan universities. Low levels and varying quality of education in the provinces precludes many students from passing this exam and the SIKA North-funded training improved university access through the trainings. This activity also included numerous female beneficiaries.
5	Reconciliation Jirgas	Khan Abad and Aliabad	Several long-standing district conflicts affected personal relations between communities. These conflicts spilled over into lack of support for the government for not solving them. The reconciliation jirga, through SIKA North's intervention and direct involvement of the provincial governor of Kunduz, brought peace and reconciliation to the affected communities. This has improved overall stability in these two districts.
6	Water Wells (drinking water)	Dashtaki Village, Puli Khumri	This particular project received extraordinary beneficiary and DDA support as it provided potable water to villagers who previously had to carry river water from over 2km away.
7	Protection Walls	Lala Maidan 4, Aliabad	This particular project type received extraordinary beneficiary and DDA support as this village is beside the river and during Spring houses and agricultural lands were under severe threat of erosion due to flooding. The protection walls have served a dual purpose of protecting homes and crops.
9	Provision of Solar Panels for the Central Health Clinic	Aliabad	This project improved the provision of health services by cheaply electrifying the clinic and allowing patients to come at night.

No	Nominal Value	Project Location	Reasoning
1	English Courses	Aliabad	The quality of the facilitator and the quality of the course were good, but this was only for the district youth. Government officials requested similar courses, but did not receive anything. While a valued activity, the beneficiary reach wasn't large enough to warrant placement on the most valued list.

2	Involving Youth in the SAM Training	Baghlan and Kunduz	There was a SIKKA North push to involve youth in DDA activities. While this is a positive inclusion of youth in the district-level decision making process, many DDA members (generally older men) felt they were undermined by the inclusion of younger men, largely because they felt that they may be replaced by younger, more qualified individuals. This is an internal dynamic that may best be solved through the SWGs.
3	SWG Meeting with Central Government in Kabul	Aliabad	Only SWG members went to Kabul to lobby for project funding. While successful, the communities were not entirely aware of why their elders went to Kabul. This may be a result of ineffective communication/publicity of the trip.
4	District Tour	Aliabad	While the DDA's exposure to district projects is positive, the communities/beneficiaries took this event as an opportunity to grab free lunches at the ceremonies, rather than appreciate the district entity outreach activity.
5	DDA Office Electrification	Aliabad	This project was limited to the DDA and didn't appear to directly benefit others.

No	Least Valued	Project Location	Reasoning
1	Cleaning of Baldoori Canal	Puli Khumri	Late delivery of this project resulted in months of waiting and a lost planting/harvest season.
2	Capacity Building for Government Staff	Baghlan and Kunduz	While this training was planned for six days (three days to learn theory and three days of practical work), the capacity building actually lasted for four hours total. Government beneficiaries and the provincial governor of Kunduz were very disappointed in this training.
3	Soft Activity/Project Monitoring	Baghlan and Kunduz	This monitoring was not done well. Documents for monitoring soft projects were not seen in the provincial offices visited. Also, the methodology of this monitoring process was ineffective in showing the impact or lessons learned for future programming.

How Effectively did SIKA North Work Through Afghan Government Structures and Within Afghan Government Processes to Empower the District Governments in Decision Making and Community Engagements Under Existing District Level Interventions?

The evaluation team found that SIKA North was adept at empowering the district governments to engage communities under their existing district level interventions. The evaluation team also found that SIKA North was particularly effective at empowering the district governments in decision-making.

SIKA North has worked through Afghan government structures and within Afghan government processes most of the time. This has benefited the district governments in building local population support and improving service delivery through existing MRRD and IDLG mechanisms, albeit with funding from SIKA North. Improved government performance can be attributed in part to SIKA North's capacity building programs and in large part to the SWGs, significant number of activities and projects, and constant exposure through media outreach as well as opening and closing ceremonies. Such increased exposure has made district governments more accountable and responsive to their constituents, indirectly increasing the efficacy of government services and presence.

For purposes of this evaluation the district government consists of the following evaluated departments:

- District Governor: District engagements, conflict resolution, responsiveness to community needs, service delivery when funding is available, monitoring activities, coordinating with line departments working in the district.
- Line departments: DRRD is responsible for ensuring an active and responsive DDA as well as coordinating, implementing, and monitoring MRRD-funded projects. The DoWA is responsible for women's affairs. Various other line departments, where they exist and have an adequate tashkiel, work on their specific ministry's agenda.
- DDA: Elected district representatives who are in charge of selecting development activities, ensuring their implementation. They are also a bridge between the communities and the district government.

The evaluation team found that SIKA North succeeded in the following:

- The regular SWG meetings provide district entities with considerable exposure to their constituents. These meetings empower the district governments to discuss people's concerns and to use existing or newly funded district interventions to provide services.
- Conflict resolution through the SWGs and reconciliation jirgas has seen considerable success. SIKA North has been effective at working through traditional Afghan structures and incorporating those cultural norms into Afghan government sanctioned conflict resolution undertaken by the district and provincial governments.
- Aside from in kind grants, SIKA North worked under the operational guidelines of the NABDP, reactivating DDAs where they were inactive, ensuring the MRRD had an influential presence in each district. Generally, DDAs are only active when there are MRRD-funded projects. Through SIKA North programming, DDAs have become more active and influential, providing the district governors with needed insights into development issues at the community level.

- District entities responsible for conducting monitoring are empowered to take greater ownership in the mitigation activity. As the community sees a keen government interest in the success of the project and the wellbeing of the community, they become more responsive to future efforts.
- Activities and projects received considerable media exposure, providing an effective communications platform for showcasing government responsiveness and service delivery.

SIKA North did not perform well on the following key issues:

- Women are not an integral part of SIKA North’s programming. Female DDA members are included in SAM training and some SWGs, but this is by default as the MRRD mandates a 1/3 female representation. There is no encouragement for conducting programming in conjunction with DoWA (which is only consulted during implementation, and not in all cases).
- In kind grants run counter to the NABDP/Kandahar Model and are adamantly opposed by the MRRD. Their use constitutes an unsustainable practice that does not work through Afghan government structures and within established government processes.
- Capacity building sessions with government officials did not use IDLG materials. This has been a common complaint by IDLG officials. However, it should be noted that IDLG capacity building and communication guidelines are still in draft and have not been shared with SIKA North until early 2014 (after the period of performance).
- Finalized DPPs are signed by the provincial governors before the PRRD directors. This is incorrect protocol. Provincial governors are representatives of the President whereas PRRD directors are representatives of the MRRD Minister. Under Afghan norms, a PRRD director cannot refuse to sign a DPP he disagrees with if the provincial governor has already signed it as this would cause intra-governmental conflicts.

ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS

Based on the above evaluation question findings, the evaluation team offers observations as follows:

- The PMP is limited to measuring output indicators. There is no focus on outcomes as SIKA North relies heavily on MISTI survey data to understand the impact of its programming. The lack of a theory of change or any other casual model hinders effective internal M&E and does not provide USAID with lessons learned on how to contribute effectively to the stabilization process.
- Mitigating against SOIs requires more than just small grants and sporadic outreach activities. This is a design flaw of the SIKA model. Adequately addressing SOIs works best if more communities are involved rather than individual CDCs. SIKA North has successfully bypassed this design flaw by including multiple CDCs in a considerable percentage of its programming. For example, road gravelling projects often involved four or more CDCs in one continuous project.

- Infrastructure projects like road rehabilitation, culverts, protection walls, and potable water wells were highly valued by the recipient communities and met the three Stabilization Unit (STAB-U) stabilization objectives.
- Outreach/soft projects like SWGs, Kankor university courses, teacher trainings, reconciliation jirgas and peace meetings, and SIKA North-funded district governor outreach activities in Aliabad, Khanabad, and Imam Sahib districts were highly valued by the recipient communities and met the three STAB-U stabilization objectives.
- Soft activities like poetry reading competitions have questionable impact.
- The SWGs were effective at attracting the community to the district center, increasing the authority and exposure of district entities to their constituents. While many SWG participants come in anticipation of receiving projects, the SWGs have built very positive momentum that should be exploited.
- SIKA North appears to be following the spirit of the Kandahar Model as best it can in a stabilization/local governance context given limited USAID and MRRD guidance and process efficiency. In kind grants, however, are the only real issue with full adherence to the Kandahar Model.
- USAID's Vetting Unit appears to be the biggest cause of delays in IR4 programming.
- There appears to be an effective bottom-up communication process for DDAs, linking them to district and provincial planning processes. This is a result of the SWGs.
- Gender programming is passive in nature, including women only if they are required to be there by default. There has been no measurable push to conduct gender programming that empowers women in the district decision making process.
- Capacity building initiatives were appropriate for CDCs and DDAs given the type of programming SIKA North conducts. If SIKA North will fully phase out in kind grants, CDCs will likely need additional project management cycle trainings.
- Capacity building trainings for district entities were robust, yet only occurred in three out of SIKA North's eight districts under the period of performance. These trainings would have been better applied before or during initial IR4 implementation, rather than months after.
- A program does not need to be bound by one theory of change. SIKA North has four intermediate results and works with the IDLG and MRRD. They can have several theories of change that correspond to either each ministry or each IR. As long as each theory of change can be measured via the PMP indicators and tied directly to programming, SIKA North will have a viable causal model that will greatly improve performance management and indicator reporting to USAID.
- Programs are hampered when they receive mixed messages from Afghan counterparts and USAID. There appears to be discord between USAID and MRRD/IDLG officials on how best to conduct stabilization programming. Steering committees MISTI has attended have shown much disagreement between high level officials. This may be a ploy to get the SIKAs on-budget or part of legitimate complaints based on Afghan experience running NABDP. Regardless, bickering at the highest levels is not conducive to effective implementation at the lower levels.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the above evaluation question findings, the evaluation team offers recommendations prioritized as follows:

1. The SIKa North PMP indicators are limited to measuring inputs and outputs. There is no focus on outcomes and several indicators are misleading. The lack of a theory of change or any other casual model hinders effective internal M&E and does not provide USAID with lessons learned on how to contribute effectively to the stabilization process. A PMP revision is necessary and should include outcome indicators at the Intermediate Results (IR)-level that measure whether programs have had an effect on treatment communities. The current outcome indicators listed in SIKa North's PMP are in reality mislabeled output indicators. Rather than simply measuring the number of meetings held or percentage increases in activity participation, SIKa North's outcome indicators should focus on progress towards the IRs and the Assistance Objective, and be linked to the project's theory/ies of change.
2. A suggested approach to the development of the theory of change is to break it down into two separate but measurable theories. One focused on development and aligned with the MRRD and the other focused on governance and aligned with the IDLG. Since SIKa North programs in both domains it needs to differentiate causal relationships by programming type.
3. Gender programming is practically nonexistent. While some gender programming occurred, it was either through passive involvement of women already present or unsuccessful. This is unusual as far more insecure districts in other SIKAs have considerable gender programming. This goes against SIKa North's contractual requirement for empowerment and inclusion of women in the decision-making processes. There appears to have been no senior management sharing of gender programming ideas between SIKa North and the other SIKAs. USAID has not done its due diligence either in ensuring that SIKa North conducts the gender programming required under its contract. Gender programming needs to happen in the option period.
4. Certain activities have questionable relevance to stability. For example, poetry reading competitions may not have been the most prudent use of USAID funds. These types of activities should be reevaluated going forward to ensure they meet stabilization objectives and address SOIs as seen on DPPs. While the SIKa North field teams push back on activities that may not meet stabilization objectives, the ultimate choice of activities to pursue is the community's. If the community is choosing activities that clearly do not meet stabilization objectives, then this is likely a result of inadequate SAM training. If so, SIKa North should reevaluate the SAM training conducted in those communities to observe and rectify weaknesses.
5. SIKa North's activities in Kunduz and Baghlan should be linked to other USAID programming in the same provinces. USAID should facilitate synergy between STAB-U and other offices that are working on similar programming. For example, SIKa North teacher trainings should have been linked to USAID programs like EQUIP II and not just to the Afghan government at provincial and district levels. The COR should be responsible for ensuring SIKa North aligns not only with the Afghan government, but with other USAID programs as well. The new COR has ensured some of these linkages have occurred since November 2013, but more should be done with continued programming.

6. The Kandahar Model is only partially relevant to SIKa North. Quick delivery through CDCs, although important, should not be the sole focus of programming. In practice, SIKa North focuses on the most tangible aspect of stabilization programming – improving local governance – and that is not explicitly proscribed in the Kandahar Model. Furthermore, the Kandahar Model is described in a general six-page brochure that is completely inadequate as a guiding document. SIKa North should instead focus on community contracting in line with the NABDP methodology and guidelines for the monitoring of projects. The NABDP approach is codified in a lengthy, detailed manual available from the MRRD. USAID should formalize this change through a contract modification.
7. SIKa North’s contract requires it to align with the Afghan government. In kind grants do not align with any MRRD program that works directly with CDCs/DDAs. The MRRD has opposed in kind grants and told MISTI they will disengage from SIKa North should in kind grants continue. The PRRD director in Kunduz has been instructed to no longer sign off on in kind grant projects. This is because in kind grants prevent project funds from going directly to the community, prevent project management capacity building for CDCs and DDAs, stifle community ownership, and may prevent employment opportunities for communities. The continued use of in kind grants also violates the Kandahar Model and is not consistent with SIGAR’s recommendations. On the other hand, SIKa North’s use of in kind grants is a prudent management decision as it limits corporate risk should funds given directly to CDCs go missing. The use of in kind grants has also allowed for significant cost savings on multi-CDC projects such as lengthy road rehabilitations thereby allowing SIKa North to conduct more programming within the same budget. If USAID and MRRD can agree on allowing SIKa North to continue in kind grant programming, then some of the cost-savings can be transferred to additional capacity building, outreach activities, or to new gender programming. However, since in kind grants limit community involvement, SIKa North should devise a mechanism to ensure that community participation and ownership are not lost.
8. Finalized DPPs are signed by the provincial governors before the PRRD directors. This is incorrect protocol. Provincial governors are representatives of the President whereas PRRD directors are representatives of the MRRD Minister. Under Afghan norms, a PRRD director cannot refuse to sign a DPP he disagrees with if the provincial governor has already signed it as this would cause intra-governmental conflicts. The provincial governor needs to be the last to sign a DPP.
9. Capacity building initiatives must align with Afghan Government processes in order to satisfy the demands of SIKa North’s contract with USAID and to be sustainable. While IDLG processes, strategies, and guidelines do not exist for every type of capacity building initiative, SIKa North should coordinate with the IDLG to ensure they are aligned with the directorate’s strategy, as available. While much has been accomplished since November 2013 to rectify this, more coordination is warranted to ensure alignment. The same applies for NABDP guidelines, specifically if the Kandahar Model requirement is revised. USAID should assist with the alignment process as was requested by IDLG and MRRD at several high level ministerial meetings in late 2013 and early 2014.
10. Reconciliation jirgas (conflict resolution committees) were particularly effective at addressing local SOIs through local solutions, particularly when it came to ethnic, land, and security disputes. MISTI has observed how effective these jirgas are in other regions as well. SIKa North should actively continue this type of activity in every district as dictated by local needs.

11. There is a flat political structure in Kabul when it comes to governance. There is still no clear line of authority of which ministry is responsible for what aspect of SIKA North's programming and what the associated responsibilities are. USAID should revise the implementation letter with the MRRD to clearly outline what ministry (and specifically what department within the ministry) is responsible for overseeing programming, and what are the particular responsibilities, deliverables, communication channels, and necessary coordination activities as well as methods for addressing grievances by either SIKA North or the ministry. This needs to happen in the option period.
12. There should be a more robust district monitoring system to ensure effective and appropriate monitoring at the community level. Currently, DDA members conducting M&E activities are expected to cover the costs involved out of their own pockets. USAID and SIKA North should not expect people to conduct M&E work at their own expense. In order to encourage robust M&E, DDA members should be covered for administrative costs for travel to project sites as proscribed under the NABDP guidelines. This should have been part of the contract, implemented from the start, and applied to all government entities expected to monitor activities. Applying these administrative costs to FOGs via the NABDP model is recommended.
13. Prior to SIKA North, most district residents had not experienced a community-driven analytical resource development process. Indeed few Afghan residents have historically been consulted (and continuously re-consulted) by their government when it comes to stabilization or development programming. The SIKA North process has drawn many beneficiaries closer to their district governments, exposing them to a government that listens to concerns, implements mitigation activities, and improves district service delivery, albeit with considerable help from SIKA North district staff working in the background. These types of outreach activities should continue with a renewed focus on ensuring they can become sustainable (especially in a no-further-funding context).
14. USAID has asked SIKA North to phase out the paid media coverage of its activities during the last quarter of 2013. MISTI found these media activities achieved their intended purpose and were valued by the government and beneficiaries. MISTI survey results on governance perceptions, while not directly tied to media activities, have shown positive perceptions as well. MISTI recommends these activities not be phased out and that the SIKA North M&E department be given an opportunity to conduct impact assessments on them.
15. SIKA North's activities tracker data quality and accuracy are questionable. The tracker given to MISTI by the COR for the period of performance had inaccuracies and missing activities. SIKA North's subcontractor for capacity building also provided inaccurate trackers with important information missing. This is a data quality issue. The COR should ensure that data given to USAID by the SIKA North implementing partner is accurate, reliable, and valid (these discrepancies were being corrected by the time of the evaluation).
16. Branding of infrastructure activities should include MRRD (or Afghan government) signboards. This will encourage people to further support the government and give them greater ownership of projects they selected. While security consideration may preclude villagers from openly advertising their work with the government, these signboards are an important demonstration of ownership inherent to stabilization programming. Communities that refuse signboards may be requesting projects without adequately supporting the government. This provides SIKA North an opportunity to conduct

additional outreach activities to convince the community otherwise and strengthen their support for the government.

17. NABDP officials have expressed interest in monitoring SIKA projects. As this is part of MRRD alignment, the spirit of the Kandahar Model, and encourages more coordination with PRRDs, having NABDP included in the monitoring process is strongly recommended.
18. A reevaluation of ATR's capacity building modules, participant selection, and efficacy of trainings should be conducted.
19. As SWGs have proven themselves to be an effective stabilization mechanism, it is important to continue the momentum. However, it is common knowledge that many participants come in anticipation of projects. What will happen to them once SIKA North begins to scale back and close down? There appears to not have been much discussion on this at the senior management and USAID level. This should be discussed more thoroughly, especially with the IDLG and MRRD.
20. Impact assessments are limited to asking the activities staff questions rather than through a more thorough assessment using a cross section of beneficiaries and facilitators. These assessments are not grouped into same type reports that would help senior management identify cross-sectional issues. For example, a teacher training assessment is done after the activity and then filed away rather than conducting a single-type assessment on all educational activities that use the same subcontractor to better identify cross-sectional issues. The SIKA North M&E department should conduct impact assessments that assess cross-sectional programming by district in order to provide management with a better understanding of programming effects.
21. If SIKA North feels there is a distinct need to keep a finger on the pulse of the people, then only atmospherics on their media activities is recommended as this constitutes a proportionally large expenditure of the SIKA North budget and there has not been an M&E assessment on the efficacy of these media activities to date. A series of post-broadcast surveys is recommended.

CONCLUSION

This is a positive evaluation of SIKA North's performance to date. The project has done considerable programming on improving local governance, service delivery, and linkages of communities to district and provincial entities. This is done through an Afghan-led process that includes significant outreach, media, communication, and coordination activities. Senior SIKA North management have used their previous experience on stabilization programming in Afghanistan to prudently program workable solutions to local problems. This was done through a local consultative process that ensured each activity was conducted with the support of stakeholders rather than as a top-down implementation approach so common to previous Baghlan and Kunduz programming under the Provincial Reconstruction Teams.

SIKA North's management experience has led to effective mitigation activities that have to date improved local perceptions of governance. All of the sampled activities met the USAID Stabilization Unit's objectives. Furthermore, SIKA North was particularly adept at thinking outside of the proverbial box. They leveraged ISAF funding while waiting for USAID and the MRRD/IDLG to sign the implementation letter, cleverly combined multiple CDCs into lengthy road rehabilitation projects by keeping individual CDC costs under the vetting threshold, used existing local mechanisms without adding unsustainable

mechanisms of their own, and did not wait for unresponsive ministries to conduct capacity building initiatives and communications trainings even at the expense of not aligning with the Afghan government.

One of the biggest impediments common to SIKA programming nationwide is unclear guidance on guidelines, processes, and procedures from the MRRD and/or the IDLG. Often this is because either the guidelines do not exist on paper or because USAID and MRRD/IDLG disagree on correct approaches for effective stabilization programming. SIKA North has through no choice of its own been caught in the middle of this political battle. Nonetheless, the program has successfully maintained its programming despite the inherent Kabul-based political machinations.

The only two programmatic faults MISTI found with SIKA North have been the limited gender programming meant to empower women in the decision making process rather than passive inclusion of females in ongoing activities and the larger issue of in kind grants programming. Aside from these two larger-themed issues, SIKA North has to date succeeded in building and executing the platform necessary for stability in key areas within Baghlan and Kunduz provinces.

ANNEX A: COMPLETE LIST OF PROJECT SITES VISITED

No	S/N	Project name	District	Sector	Activity Type
1	ALI-A-034	Education- focused-foucs group-Discussions for Ali Abad	Ali Abad	Assessment	Soft
2	Ali-G-008	Road Gravlling and construction of culverts	Ali Abid	Infrastructure	Hard
3	ALI-A-002	Linking Afghan youth with District Entites through English Cours	Ali Abad	Outreach	Soft
4	ALI-G-011	Road and culverts project Arbab Gul Mohammad CDC	Ali Abad	Infrastructure	Hard
5	ALI-G-007	Road Gravelling and construction of Gutter	Ali Abad	Infrastructure	Hard
6	ALI-A-041	Provision of Solar Panels for Central Health Clinic of Aliabad	Ali Abad	Equipment Provision	Hard
7	IMA-G-008	Increasing Community's Trust in The District Government through Rehabilitation of Dehqan Qishlaq CDC Road	Imam Sahib	Infrastructure	Hard
8	IMA-A-011	District Governor Stability meeting with Key elders of Imam Sahib	Imam Sahib	Outreach	Soft
9	IMA-G-004	Increasing Community's Trust in the District Government through Rehabilitation of Now Abad Shahr Road	Imam Sahib	Infrastructure	Hard
10	KHA-G-009	Increasing Community's Trust in District Government Through Rehabilitation of Char Sari Gharochi Village Road	Khan Abad	Infrastructure	Hard
11	KHA-G-011	Increasing Community's Trust in District Government Through Rehabilitation of Joy Kohna Village Road	Khan Abad	Infrastructure	Hard
12	KHA-G-014	Increasing Community's Trust in District Government Through Rehabilitation of Naw Abad Choogha Village Road	Khan Abad	Infrastructure	Hard
13	KHA-G-002	Increasing Stability Among Youth through a University Prep Exam Course (Concur)	Khan Abad	Capacity Building	Soft
14	KHA-A-017	Expand the influence of the district government through peace coordination meeting	Khan Abad	Outreach	Soft
15	KHA-A-018	Linking citizens to their district government through a Stability Meeting with Influential Scholars in Khanabad	Khan Abad	Outreach	Soft
16	(KHA-A-008)	Tribal Reconciliation Jirga by intermediation of GIROA-II	Khan Abad	Outreach	Soft
17	KHA-G-006	Increasing Community's Trust in District Government Through Rehabilitation of Lala Kai Village Road	Khan Abad	Infrastructure	Hard
18	PUL-G-003	Increasing community's trust on the district government through rehabilitation of Ahmad Zai Bala village road	Puli Khumri	Infrastructure	Hard
19	Ali-A-035	Ali Abad stibility working gorup kabul visit to meet with ministers	Ali Abad	Outreach	Soft
20	ALI-A-034	Education- focused-foucs group-Discussions for Ali Abad	Ali Abad	Assessment	Soft

21	Ali-A-017	improving Marginazed communities' perceptions of the Ali Abad District Governor though a District tour	Ali Abad	Outreach	Soft
22	Ali-G-008	Road Gravlling and construction of culverts	Ali Abid	Infrastructure	Hard
23	Ali-A-047	DDA Office electrification	Ali Abid	Equipment provision	Hard
24	ALI-A-002	Linking Afghan youth with District Entites through English Cours	Ali Abad	Outreach	Soft
25	ALI-G-011	Road and culverts project Arbab Gul Mohammad CDC	Ali Abad	Infrastructure	Hard
26	ALI-G-009	Road and Culvert Haji Sakhi Dad CDC	Ali Abad	Infrastructure	Hard
27	ALI-G-007	Road Gravelling and construction of Gutter	Ali Abad	Infrastructure	Hard
28	ALI-G-010	construction of protection wall and culverts Lala Maidan 4	Ali Abad	Infrastructure	Hard
29	ALI-A-036	Support PDoE to respond to the Mirshikh community school need	Ali Abad	Equipment Provision	Hard
30	ALI-G-005	Increasing community's trust on the district government through rehabilitation of Mir Shikh-e-Bala road	Ali Abad	Infrastructure	Hard
31	ALI-G-006	Construction of culverts	Ali Abad	Infrastructure	Hard
32	ALI-A-041	Provision of Solar Panels for Central Health Clinic of Aliabad	Ali Abad	Equipment Provision	Hard
33	IMA-G-008	Increasing Community's Trust in The District Government through Rehabilitation of Dehqan Qishlaq CDC Road	Imam Sahib	Infrastructure	Hard
34	IMA-G-012	Increasing Community's Trust on the District Government through Rehabilitation of Kal Tapa Village Road	Imam Sahib	Infrastructure	Hard
35	IMA-G-009	Increasing Community's Trust in the District Government through Rehabilitation of Dewana Qishlaq Village Road	Imam Sahib	Infrastructure	Hard
36	IMA-G-007	Increasing Community's Trust in the District Government through Rehabilitation of Esta Ming CDC Road	Imam Sahib	Infrastructure	Hard
37	IMA-A-011	District Governor Stability meeting with Key elders of Imam Sahib	Imam Sahib	Outreach	Soft
38	IMA-G-019	Increasing Community's Trust in District Government through Rehabilitation of Qanjughra Shahr Road	Imam Sahib	Infrastructure	Hard
39	IMA-G-006	Increasing Community's Trust on the District Government through Rehabilitation of Momin Abad CDC Road	Imam Sahib	Infrastructure	Hard
40	IMA-G-005	Increasing Community's Trust on the District Government through Rehabilitation of Ortaboz Afghania Road	Imam Sahib	Infrastructure	Hard
41	IMA-A-014	Increasing Community trust in District Government through Survey and Rehabilitation of road	Imam Sahib	Infrastructure	Hard
42	IMA-G-010	Increasing Community's Trust in the District Government through Rehabilitation of Mula Afghan Village Road	Imam Sahib	Infrastructure	Hard
43	IMA-G-004	Increasing Community's Trust in the District Government through Rehabilitation of Now Abad Shahr Road	Imam Sahib	Infrastructure	Hard
44	KHA-G-009	Increasing Community's Trust in District Government Through Rehabilitation of Char Sari Gharochi Village Road	Khan Abad	Infrastructure	Hard

45	KHA-G-011	Increasing Community's Trust in District Government Through Rehabilitation of Joy Kohna Village Road	Khan Abad	Infrastructure	Hard
46	KHA-G-016	Increasing Community's Trust in District Government through Rehabilitation of Kohna Qala Village Road and construction of culverts	Khan Abad	Infrastructure	Hard
47	KHA-G-014	Increasing Community's Trust in District Government Through Rehabilitation of Naw Abad Choogha Village Road	Khan Abad	Infrastructure	Hard
48	KHA-G-002	Increasing Stability Among Youth through a University Prep Exam Course (Concur)	Khan Abad	Capacity Building	Soft
49	KHA-A-017	Expand the influence of the district government through peace coordination meeting	Khan Abad	Outreach	Soft
50	KHA-A-018	Linking citizens to their district government through a Stability Meeting with Influential Scholars in Khanabad	Khan Abad	Outreach	Soft
51	(KHA-A-008)	Tribal Reconciliation Jirga by intermediation of GIRoA-II	Khan Abad	Outreach	Soft
52	KHA-A-005	Tribal Reconciliation Jirga by intermediation of GIRoA	Khan Abad	Outreach	Soft
53	KHA-G-004	Increasing Community's Trust on the District Government through Construction of Taqa chinar Aqtash School Boundary Wall in Chopani CDC	Khan Abad	Infrastructure	Hard
54	KHA-G-006	Increasing Community's Trust in District Government Through Rehabilitation of Lala Kai Village Road	Khan Abad	Infrastructure	Hard
55	KHA-G-010	Increasing Community's Trust in District Government Through Rehabilitation of Ishan Toob Village Road	Khan Abad	Infrastructure	Hard
56	PUL-G-003	Increasing community's trust on the district government through rehabilitation of Ahmad Zai Bala village road	Puli Khumri	Infrastructure	Hard
57	(PUL-G-004)	Increasing community's trust on the district government through rehabilitation of Ahmad Zai Payen village road	Puli Khumri	Infrastructure	Hard
58	PUL-A-025	Improve financial capability among CDCs through Finance and Grant Management Training in Baghlan Jadid and Puli-e- Khumri districts	Puli Khumri	Capacity Building	Soft
59	PUL-G-007	Increasing Community's Trust in District Government through Providing Safe and Potable Drinking Water in Niazullah Village	Puli Khumri	infrastructure	Hard
60	Ali-A-027	Education- focused-foucs group-Discussions for Ali Abad	Ali Abad	Assessment	Soft
61	IMA-A-008	Education- focused-foucs group-Discussions for Ali Abad	Imam Sahib	Assessment	Soft
62	PUL-A-015	Poetry compotetion among the youth	Imam Sahib	Outreach	Soft

ANNEX B: NUMBER OF INTERVIEWS

Area	USAID	SIKA North	The Government	District Entities ¹⁴	Beneficiaries	Others	TOTAL
National	4		5				9
Mazar-e-Sharif		5					5
Aliabad		3	1	5	92		101
Khanabad		2	1	5	92		100
Imam Sahib		2	1	3	70		76
Puli Khumri		6	6	2	21		35
Baghlan-e-Jadid		2		5	2		9
Kunduz Center		8	8		2		18
Total	4	28	22	20	279		353

¹⁴ Includes DDAs, but not CDCs as they are listed under beneficiaries.