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**CENTRAL ASIAN REPUBLICS**

# AGRICULTURAL LINKAGES PLUS PROJECT (ALP)

## QUARTERLY REPORT (Q1 FY 2012)

OCTOBER 2011 – DECEMBER 2011

**JANUARY 2012**

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# AGRICULTURAL LINKAGES PLUS PROJECT

(ALP)

## Q1 FY 2012 QUARTERLY REPORT

OCTOBER 2011 – DECEMBER 2011

**AgLinks Uzbekistan**  
**12 Afrosiab Street – 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor**  
**Tashkent, Uzbekistan**

Telephone: (998) (71) 252-5414

Fax: (998) (71) 252-6756

For the

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The authors' views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

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## ACRONYMS

<b>ALP</b>	Agricultural Linkages Plus project
<b>ADB</b>	Asian Development Bank
<b>BDS</b>	Business Development Services
<b>BEO</b>	Bureau Environmental Officer
<b>BFU</b>	Business Forum of Uzbekistan
<b>CAR</b>	Central Asian Republics
<b>CCI</b>	Chamber of Commerce and Industry
<b>CE</b>	Categorical Exclusion
<b>CIS</b>	Commonwealth of Independent States
<b>CNFA</b>	Citizens Network for Foreign Affairs
<b>COP</b>	Chief of Party
<b>CPS</b>	Crop Protection Services
<b>DAI</b>	Development Alternative Inc.
<b>Dekhan</b>	backyard farm
<b>DPP</b>	Dynamic Planning Process
<b>EM/FMMP</b>	Environmental Manual and Framework Monitoring & Mitigation Plan
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>FFP</b>	Food For Progress
<b>FtF</b>	Farmer to Farmer
<b>FY</b>	Fiscal Year
<b>G&amp;A</b>	General and Administrative
<b>GOU</b>	Government of Uzbekistan
<b>GSB</b>	Growing Sustainable Businesses Initiative (UNDP)
<b>ha</b>	hectare (10,000 square meters, 100 meters by 100 meters, 2.47 acres)
<b>HACCP</b>	Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points
<b>HO</b>	Home Office
<b>HPLC</b>	High Performance Liquid Chromatograph
<b>IEE</b>	Initial Environmental Examination
<b>IER</b>	Initial Environmental Review
<b>IKS</b>	Islohotkonsaltservis, Ltd. (local consulting firm)
<b>ISO</b>	International Organization for Standardization
<b>JICA</b>	Japan International Cooperation Agency
<b>JSC</b>	Joint Stock Company
<b>Kholhoz</b>	collective farm (during Soviet era)
<b>LLC</b>	Limited Liability Company
<b>LOP</b>	Life of Project
<b>LSP</b>	Local Service Provider
<b>MASHAV</b>	Agency for International Development Cooperation (Israel)
<b>MAWR</b>	Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources of Uzbekistan
<b>M&amp;E</b>	Monitoring and Evaluation
<b>MERIT</b>	Ministry of External Economic Relations, Investment & Trade of Uzbekistan
<b>MOU</b>	Memorandum of Understanding
<b>NDC</b>	Negative Determination with Conditions
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>OAA</b>	Office of Acquisition and Assistance (USAID)
<b>ODC</b>	Other Direct Costs
<b>OH</b>	Overhead

<b>PD</b>	Positive Determination
<b>PERSUAP</b>	Pesticide Evaluation Report and Safe Use Action Plan
<b>PMEP</b>	Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
<b>PPI</b>	Plant Protection Institute (Uzbekistan)
<b>RBS</b>	Royal Bank of Scotland
<b>REI</b>	Regional Economic Integration Project (USAID/CAR)
<b>SABIT</b>	Special American Business Internship Training
<b>SDC</b>	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
<b>SEAF</b>	Small Enterprise Assistance Fund
<b>Shirkat</b>	production cooperative (Uzbek)
<b>SISF</b>	Social Initiative Support Fund
<b>SME</b>	Small and Medium size Enterprises
<b>TA</b>	Technical Assistance
<b>TCN</b>	Third Country National
<b>TIKA</b>	Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency
<b>TQSA</b>	Temporary Quarters Subsistence Allowance
<b>TCCTC</b>	Tashkent City Center for Testing and Certification
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Program
<b>USDA</b>	United States Department of Agriculture
<b>USG</b>	United States Government
<b>USAID</b>	US Agency for International Development
<b>UzKDB</b>	Uzbek-Korean Development Bank
<b>VAT</b>	Value Added Tax
<b>WFLO</b>	World Food Logistics Organization
<b>WUA</b>	Water User's Association
<b>WUASP</b>	Water User's Association Support Project

This report covers the first quarter (October-November-December 2011) activities of the AgLinks Plus (ALP) project in Uzbekistan in Fiscal Year (FY) 2012. This is the first quarter of ALP project activities since the project was awarded and initial financial obligations made at the end of September 2011. ALP is the follow-on project to the predecessor AgLinks Uzbekistan project.

## A. ADMINISTRATION

The contract for ALP was signed and the project officially started on October 1, 2011. Main activities this month were related to closedown of the predecessor project, Aglinks, and ALP startup. Christopher Reynolds, Project Team Leader, and Gwendolyn Armstrong, Project Coordinator, arrived in Tashkent from the DAI Home Office (HO) for two and three weeks, respectively, to assist with the start-up and closedown processes. Two new staff members were hired in October; Elena Abdramanova, Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Specialist, and Khurshida Gapirova, Receptionist. Total full-time staff in Tashkent now number nine (9).

In addition to drafting and submitting the FY 2012 Work Plan and related Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (PMEP) the ALP project received a number of USG and other donor visitors during the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of FY 2012. The final annual report covering the predecessor AgLinks Project for FY 2011 was also drafted and submitted during this quarter. A draft quarterly international travel plan was produced during the last month of this quarter and will be formally submitted to USAID in the new year per the guidance provided in Office of Acquisition and Assistance (OAA) Directive Notice #3-2010.

### A.1 USG Related.

**US Ambassador Visit.** On 21 November 2011 the US Ambassador to Uzbekistan, George A. Krol, visited Ferghana Province which included a stop at ALP partners involved in fruit tree pollination via bees. Ambassador Krol visited the Ferghana Beekeeper's Association and met with the director, Sherali Suyarkulov, and ALP staff member, Shuhrat Abrorov. Mr. Suyarkulov highlighted the importance of bee pollination in fruit production and described the pollination field test implemented with AgLinks in spring 2011.



**Photo #1:** Ambassador (center) meets Mr. Suyarkulov  
Ferghana City, Ferghana Province

**Denise Rollins Visit.** Denise Rollins, the Senior Deputy Assistant Administrator for USAID/Asia assisted by Erin McKee, Regional Mission Director for USAID Central Asian Republics, and John Pennell, USAID Uzbekistan Country Office Director, visited project sites in Namangan and Ferghana provinces in mid-October. The Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources (MAWR) was represented throughout the trip by the Deputy Head of the Complex for Economic Reforms in Agriculture, Mohammedjon Kasimov. Day one visits included the Turakurgan AgriFirm, a small-scale processing training targeted to women and a cold storage facility. Day two visits included trellising sites in Kuvasay District, Ferghana Province and the Fergana Beekeepers Association.

**REI Visitors.** The project received two visits during the quarter to introduce USAID's new Regional Economic Integration (REI) project. The project received Jeremy Strauss, USAID/CAR Senior Economic Specialist, along with project Chief of Party, Anar Shaikenova, and Home Office backstop, Roberto Toso (Chemonics) in early November. ALP staff shared information with the team on potential local partners, other donor programs of interest to REI, and local firms involved in organic agriculture (one of the REI targets). A second visit in late December by Erin Cole, USAID/CAR Senior Private Sector Development Specialist, again highlighted REI interest in organic agriculture plus textiles and exports to Afghanistan. Ms. Cole mentioned that REI had now settled on a local partner in Uzbekistan which is the Center for Economic Development.



**Photo #2:** Ms. Rollins (center) with Women's Training Participants Turakurgan District, Namangan Province

**Post Award Conference.** A post-award video conference was held with USAID/CAR representatives. Major issues regarding ALP were discussed including but not limited to: the Horticultural Exchange Program (HEP) US visa application process; Branding and Marking; Environmental Compliance; Program Planning and Reporting.

**Other State Department Visitors.** The project was visited this month by two other State Department representatives. Charles Sellers, the Uzbekistan Desk Officer in the Office of Central Asian Affairs, visited in mid December while Richard Stoddard visited in early November.

**Other USAID Visitors.** On November 24-25 Nina Kavetskaya, USAID Mission Environmental Officer (MEO), and Alexander Kalashnikov, Contracting Officer's Technical Representative (COTR), visited project sites in Samarkand Province to monitor compliance of project activities with USAID environmental requirements. On November 24<sup>th</sup> the delegation visited the drip irrigation demonstration site at Karshiboy Mirob Water Users Association (WUA) and the following day the CoolBot cold storage

installation at Istiqlol Meva Sabzovot AgriFirm. Recommendations on further improvements were received and will be implemented by the project.

## **A.2. Other Bilateral Partners.**

Development of the horticulture sector in Uzbekistan has started to attract attention from other donor organizations.

**KRASS.** Representatives from KRASS, a local consulting firm established by the German development assistance agency (GIZ), visited the project to learn more about project activities supporting orchards and vineyards. To-date, KRASS has limited its activities to Khorezm Province which is not presently targeted by AgLinks or ALP. Project staff shared insights and experience with the KRASS representatives and provided them with project produced training materials. KRASS expects GIZ to release a tender for local partners to take part in a new horticultural project (see GIZ below).

**GIZ.** The project was visited on several occasions this quarter by representatives of GIZ, especially the Regional Coordinator for the Development of Agricultural Service and Extension Centers, Dr. Stefan Krull. Dr. Krull visited the project office in Tashkent along with a two-person project design team consisting of a Senior Planning Officer, Karl Moosmann, and a Planning Officer, Kai Schultz, from their headquarters. GIZ is designing a horticultural project to target Syrkandarya, Kashkadarya and Khorezm provinces. These provinces were partially chosen to complement the provinces covered by ALP (i.e., no geographic overlap between the two donor programs).

Dr. Krull and the design team were very keen to hear the USAID experience in the horticultural area and expressed interest in further collaboration at both the design and implementation stages. ALP staff followed up this meeting by sending electronic background technical materials to the designers and arranging a field visit for Dr. Krull. Dr. Krull and project staff visited a private nursery partner of ALP in Tashkent Province to experience first-hand the possibilities and challenges of working in the horticultural sector in Uzbekistan. The first phase of the GIZ horticultural project is expected to begin in March 2012, last for two and a half years and cost 2 million euros. The project will begin with a needs assessment followed by establishment of demonstration plots and seeks to link farmers to local processors in the three targeted provinces.

Project staff also attended a workshop hosted by GIZ this past quarter focused on their experience with “reduced tillage” agriculture in Uzbekistan. GIZ has been working in this area for several years mainly in field crops; specifically wheat and maize. Other crops covered in the GIZ reduced tillage program included rice, cotton, mungbean, cowpea and sunflower. GIZ had not done any work in the ALP targeted horticultural crops.

## **A.3 Other Multilateral Partners.**

**UNDP.** The UNDP funded Foreign Trade and Investment Support Project (FTISP) visited to inquire of AgLinks experience, especially in Namangan Province, as they plan to implement a new two-year component to promote that province’s external trade. The project’s objective is to promote “aid for trade” and seeks to promote trade facilitation, particularly for small businesses. The program is funded by the Finish Government.

Project staff mentioned this UNDP funded program as a potential partner for REI during their visits (see A.1 above) and shared contact information on the local implementing partner.

**IWMI.** The International Water Management Institute (IWMI) is part of the Consultative Group for International Agriculture (CGIAR) which focuses on water availability and access, including adaptation to climate change; how water is used and how it can be used more productively; water quality and its relationship to health and the environment; and how societies govern their water resources. Project staff met with Dr. Mohan Reddy Junna, head of the Central Asia office of IWMI based in Tashkent, who was seeking partners with whom to collaborate. Project staff explained that while ALP was not a research project there may be opportunities for collaborative action between the project and IWMI. IWMI Tashkent was mostly interested in irrigation scheduling, strengthening capacity, drip irrigation and water requirements for orchard crops. Dr. Reddy proposed to submit a draft proposal to ALP to catalyze further discussion.

**IFC.** The International Finance Corporation (IFC) is the private sector lending arm of the World Bank. They also have an investment advisory division that works to put together business deals to finance bankable projects. The project was visited by the Team Leader and Investment Officer of the Central Asia Transactions Advisory division, Joseph Mik, along with the Country Officer, Zafar Khashimov, and Research Analyst, Sadjida Tashpulatova, of the IFC Uzbekistan office. This three person IFC Team was interested in the project's experience and insights into the cold storage sector in Uzbekistan. The IFC is looking to provide investment advice to the Uzbek Government on the installation of 9 to 10 cold storage facilities with between 2,000 to 5,000 metric ton capacity. Assuming financing and partners are identified, most of these cold storage facilities would be located in the Ferghana Valley or around Tashkent.

**A.3. Issue(s).** The major administrative issue this quarter is the project has been unable to make official visits to the new provinces targeted under ALP (Andijan and Bukhara) because the newly drafted ALP Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between USAID and the MAWR has not been finalized. Informal visits by project field staff have been made in these provinces to identify potential partners. However, no official project presence in these provinces, including MAWR introductions to the appropriate provincial and district officials, can be made until the MOU is signed. Significant progress was made this quarter with a draft MOU and at this writing it is still being reviewed by the Cabinet of Ministers.

## **B. TECHNICAL**

The first quarter of 2012 fiscal year was characterized by post-harvest, processing and storage activities of project targeted crops and the final fruit variety contest (apples) of the 2011 agricultural year.

### **B.1. Producers.**

***Apple Variety Contest.*** USAID's Aglinks project conducted fruit variety contests to promote farmer interaction, stimulate interest in agronomic best practices, identify new local varieties and disseminate agricultural information. Variety contests are held during the harvest season in specific geographic locales based upon their specialization and reputation for that particular produce.

The final variety contest of the 2011 season was held during the first week of October in Samarkand for apples. Contests for apricots, peaches, grapes and cherries were held earlier in the season during their respective harvests. Farmers from 4 districts of Bukhara and Samarkand provinces participated in the event which highlighted 10 different apple varieties and awarded prizes in 3 categories (sweetness, most marketable and most unique). A 3-person panel comprised of representatives from a local agricultural university, research institute and private nursery judged the contest. While judges evaluated the produce, participants shared information, experiences and knowledge on apple production techniques, technologies and management. Farmers agreed to pursue interaction through field visits to each other's farms and winning farmers were inundated with requests for transplants and grafting sticks of their prized plants. The majority of the 2011 apple contest winners originated from Payarik District of Samarkand Province.



**Photo #3:** Judges Review Apple Variety Contest  
Samarkand City, Samarkand Province

***Solar Fruit and Vegetable Dryer.*** The project and USAID's Farmer-to-Farmer program collaborated on a post-harvest training to introduce a new type of solar dryer to Uzbek farmers. Participating farmers constructed a fruit and vegetable dryer, suitable for home use, completely from local materials costing around \$50. Twelve people built the small-scale, low-cost solar dryer, which reduces production time from seven to two days; increases hygiene (insect access to the product is blocked); and functions with temperatures as low as 25 degrees Celsius. Participants were very excited about the technology but disappointed with the training timing since it was too late in the agricultural season to fully test the equipment. Given farmer interest, ALP plans to test and potentially promote this technology in the 2012 harvest season through integration with two other project activities, fruit variety contests and household processing training.

**Household Level Food Processing.** A fruit and vegetable processing training program was conducted for household women in Turakurgan District of Namangan Province (see Photo #2 above) on October 14 by AgLinks consultant and food technologist Marifat Nazarova. The following technologies were demonstrated: candied fruit from melon, watermelon and pumpkin; fried salad; jam and compote. A total of 38 women participated in the training which was also visited by Denise Rollins, USAID Senior Deputy Assistant Administrator for USAID/Asia (see Section A.1. above).

Processing training programs are organized in one of the trainee's homes to reduce participant travel time, assure support material are available (ex., water, gas, plates, electricity, etc.) and reassure female trainees in a familiar environment rather than more formal training premises. Printed handout materials on the training topic were given at the end of the training to all participants.

**Horticultural Exchange Program (HEP).** ALP has initiated an exchange visitor program under the new project in collaboration with subcontractor International House at Davis (California). This exchange program is entitled the "Horticultural Exchange Program" (HEP) and is designed to expose Uzbek visitors to training and practical experience in the US that they can adapt to their own circumstances. Uzbek visitors visit fruit producers and processors in California and receive lectures and seminars from experts at the University of California, Davis. HEP programs will be scheduled each quarter for 10 different Uzbek participants and accompanied by one ALP staff member to provide technical support, translation services (Uzbek-English and vice versa) and cross-cultural orientation.

Each HEP will focus on a main theme and support sub-themes of relevant agricultural activities corresponding to the time of year and agricultural calendar. The first HEP main theme is "Planting, Pruning, and Trellising of Fruit Trees and Grapes" with a total of 10 participants selected to participate; 3 from the public sector and 7 from the private sector. The public sector representatives include one from the Horticultural Research Institute (Shreder) and two from the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources (MAWR). All of the private sector participants are farm owner-operators. During this quarter the documents required for exchange visits to the US were prepared and uploaded to the Visa Control System (VCS) of TraiNet. The HEP01 exchange visitors will depart Tashkent on 13 January and return on 06 February 2012.

## **B.2. Private Sector.**

**BERAD ISO certification.** USAID's ALP project continues support begun under the predecessor AgLinks Uzbekistan project in assisting agroprocessors to upgrade both their input and output marketing systems. In mid-October, ALP was requested by AgLinks partner BERAD to provide assistance with their upcoming recertification visit for specific ISO standards. BERAD is a major agroprocessor in Uzbekistan working mainly in processed fruits, vegetables and spices; mainly dried produce. They are one of the largest exporters of raisins from Uzbekistan.

On October 26-27 project staff member Shuhrat Abrorov assisted the BERAD AGRO raisin production plant in Parkent District, Tashkent Province during their Food Safety System (ISO 22000) recertification process. Recertification is conducted every year and allows the company to export its products internationally thereby increasing sales

and profits. AgLinks had previously worked with BERAD on upgrades of their internal testing laboratory and cost-share marketing trips to international trade exhibitions.

The international auditor in this instance was TUV-NORD, an accreditation and certification company based in Germany, who spent 2 days checking the BERAD food safety system accompanied by Mr. Abrorov. They reviewed BERAD's food safety implementation, compliance with ISO 22000 standard requirements and noted recommendations for future actions. By the end of the review BERAD AGRO's Parkent plant was judged to be in full compliance with ISO 22000 international standards and recertification was awarded for another year.

The TUV-NORD representative also conducted a preliminary audit of BERAD's East-West Yangiyol vegetable dehydrator to determine if it meets US Food Safety System requirements for production of dried paprika. He provided additional recommendations and items to address to optimize the chances of passing the upcoming audit scheduled for this plant later in the year.

***Linking Producers to Local Supermarkets.*** ALP is exploring the opportunity to connect local producers to Tashkent grocery chains such as Korzinka. Project staff members met with Mr. Kabirov, Head of Purchasing at "KORZINKA.UZ" grocery store chain. The possibility of linking local farmers and fruit wholesalers directly to the grocery store were discussed that would bypass the urban wholesale markets. Mr. Kabirov explained their procurement procedures for fruits and outlined the major quality requirements of their grocery chain. ALP will provide training to partner farmers who are deemed ready to make this step along the value chain and will initiate pilot deliveries during the 2012 harvest season.

### **B.3. Public Sector.**

**PERSUAP.** Field work on development of an updated PERSUAP for Uzbekistan was undertaken during the month of December in collaboration with the Plant Protection Service of the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources. Visits were made to project clients in Ferghana, Namangan, Tashkent and Samarkand provinces along with the requisite local officials. Visits were also made to the Shreder Horticulture Research Institute in Tashkent and the branch office in Kuva District, Ferghana Province, the Plant Protection Research Institute and the Sanitary and Epidemiological Center of the Ministry of Health. See section C.2 below for additional information on the updated PERSUAP for Uzbekistan.

**Shreder.** ALP staff met with the Director and Deputy Director of the Horticultural Research Institute (Shreder) to review collaborative activities under the predecessor AgLinks Uzbekistan project and discuss potential new areas under ALP. Foremost among the previous activities that both sides agreed to continue and expand were the training manuals, variety contests, advanced irrigation systems (ex., drip, mist, spray, sprinkle) and improved plant material. ALP staff explained the Horticultural Exchange Program (HEP – see Section B.1. above) and requested Shreder to screen their applicants and provide a final list of nominees for each session once announced.

Shreder directors requested additional assistance from ALP, both physical and content creation, to support their newly installed training center. ALP responded warmly to this idea and committed to additional training manuals in collaboration with Shreder, the

production of training videos for use in their training facility and the multi-purposing of both informational products through a mobile extension information system. Shreder staff also requested ALP assistance in evaluating, and potentially supporting, the rehabilitation of the physical and human capacity for tissue culture mini-propagation of virus-free, fruit tree planting material at their laboratory facilities.

**B.4. Issue(s).** There were no major technical issues this quarter other than the delay in expanding official activities to the two new provinces mentioned in Section A.3 above due to the lack of a signed MOU giving authority to the project to enter these new areas.

## **C. ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE**

The first three technical activities initiated by the ALP during this quarter all involved support to the environmental compliance component of the project. The first activity approved was attendance at an environmental training program in the US (ALP-01) followed by the update of the Uzbekistan Pesticide Evaluation Report and Safe Use Action Plan (PERSUAP – ALP-02) and finally the development of an Environmental Manual and Framework Monitoring and Mitigation Plan (EM/FMMP – ALP-03).

### **C.1. Monitoring.**

Two major activities this quarter strengthened ALP capacity to monitor environmental activities under the new project. ALP staff member, Sunnat Djalalov, was designated the Project Environmental Officer (PEO) based upon his education, experience and inclination. He will be tasked to assure all project procurement, construction, installation, and rehabilitation works are being monitored for compliance with existing environmental rules and regulations. Mr. Djalalov was sent to the US for environmental training (ALP-01) to further strengthen the project's environmental compliance capacity. Secondly, the project began the process to develop a project Environmental Manual and Framework Monitoring and Mitigation Plan (EM/FMMP) that will be developed by Mr. Djalalov in collaboration with the DAI Home Office Senior Environmental Compliance Specialist, Dr. Steve Romanoff.

***Environmental Training.*** Sunnat Djalalov attended “The Original Environmental Compliance Bootcamp” training from 05-09 December organized by the Archer Institute of Environmental Management in Annapolis, Maryland. The major objective of attending this training was to augment the ALP background, information and experience base to implement a rigorous environmental compliance program for the life of the project. The Archer Institute (<http://www.archerinstitute.com>) is a highly respected training center focused on environmental compliance programs. Archer offers trainings throughout the US but the Maryland training was chosen because it was closest to the DAI Home Office (HO) and would allow Mr. Djalalov the opportunity to work with DAI HO staff on next steps in assuring ALP environmental compliance.

“The Original Environmental Compliance Bootcamp” training offered by Archer provides the most up-to-date and comprehensive material on the full range of environmental compliance requirements. The training program addressed major environmental laws and regulations, their practical application and compliance issues. The major laws that were discussed in the training included the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasures, National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System, and Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plans.

While in the US the ALP PEO visited the DAI home office to meet with the Senior Environmental Compliance Specialist, Dr. Steve Romanoff, to discuss plans to develop an ALP Project Environmental Framework/Mitigation and Monitoring Plan (EM/FMMP) later in December. While at the DAI HO they began initial reviews and screening of ALP activities presented in the 2012 Work Plan and planned the most efficient use of Dr. Romanoff's time for his visit to Uzbekistan. During the meeting an in-country schedule for Dr. Romanoff's Uzbekistan field visit was drafted including a list of activity

sites to be visited. Dr. Romanoff provided and instructed Mr. Djalalov on USAID's environmental compliance documents and compliance issues. Upon his return to Uzbekistan Mr. Djalalov collected local environmental laws, codes and decrees and other necessary information in preparation for Dr. Romanoff's visit to Uzbekistan scheduled to begin at the end of the quarter (December 29, 2011 to January 13, 2012).

## **C.2. Mitigation.**

ALP promotes environmentally friendly agrotechnologies and techniques to mitigate possible adverse impact of agricultural activities. Especially important is the proper selection and use of agrochemicals used in pest and disease identification and control in orchards. The basis for mitigation of potential negative environmental impacts of agrochemical use is the Pesticide Evaluation Report and Safer Use Action Plan (PERSUAP). The PERSUAP recommendations are then used to guide the creation of pest and disease identification and control informational products (ex., manuals, handouts, digital material, etc.) published by the project for farmers in collaboration with the National Plant Protection Institute (PPI). These informational materials are then integrated into each and every pest and disease identification and control training and special sessions are reserved to highlight safe use of agrochemicals.

**PERSUAP.** The project PERSUAP for Uzbekistan remains the basic guidance for the majority of environmental activities under the project. PERSUAPs are required of all USAID funded projects and activities which have an agrochemical component. The existing Uzbekistan PERSUAP was prepared in early calendar 2009 and required an update to 2012 based upon changes in both the US and Uzbekistan regarding the status of newly developed and existing agrochemicals.

USAID regulations require the PERSUAP be performed by an internationally recognized expert approved by the Bureau Environmental Officer (BEO). ALP preferred to work with Dr. Uwe Shultz because he had prepared the previous Uzbekistan PERSUAP, had done the first Tajikistan PERSUAP, spoke Russian and was familiar with Central Asia. Dr. Shultz completed the field work portion of the PERSUAP in the month of December by visiting the PPI and project activity sites. The resulting PERSUAP document will identify where pesticides will or might be used with the most common risks likely to be encountered, appropriate mitigation measures and international best practices to reduce each risk. Project use of these risk-mitigation pairings will inform and guide development of the necessary risk monitoring, mitigation and reporting plans, as required by USAID.

The ALP project requires the Uzbekistan PERSUAP include production, storage and processing of the crop commodities listed below. Not all of these crops are or will be supported by ALP and some were added at the request of USAID to support other planned activities not implemented under ALP.

- Stone fruits (apricots, peaches and nectarines, plums and prunes, almonds, sweet and sour cherries);
- Pome fruits (apples, pears, quince);
- Subtropical fruits (pomegranates, persimmons);
- Nuts (walnuts, pistachio);
- Table and wine grapes;
- Mulberry;
- Rice;

- Tomato;
- Melons (cucurbits especially melons, including watermelons , and cucumbers);
- Onion;
- Cotton;
- Wheat.

The draft PERSUAP should be completed by the end of March 2012. ALP staff will use the PERSUAP guidance to inform decisions on equipment purchases (ex., sprayers), reference material development (ex., pesticide management, safety and use) and farm level trainings for all project supported crops.

### **C.3. Issue(s).**

ALP made a good start to assure environmental compliance under the new project with the US training of the project environmental officer, the update of the PERSUAP and fieldwork in support of an EM/FMMP. All of the efforts were either completed (training) or underway (PERSUAP and EM/FMMP) at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of FY 2012. The project will integrate environmental reviews in its regular technical approval submissions in 2012. No other major issues were identified during this quarter.

## **ANNEX A**

Monthly Report for October 2011

Monthly Report for November 2011

**USAID AgLinks Plus Project**  
 Monthly Report #1 – October 2011

Contract # EDH-I-00-05-00004-00  
 TO # AID-176-TO-11-00002-00

**ADMINISTRATION.** The contract for AgLinks Plus (ALP) was signed and the project officially started on October 1, 2011. Main activities this month were related to closedown of the predecessor project, Aglinks, and ALP startup. Christopher Reynolds, Project Team Leader, and Gwendolyn Armstrong, Project Coordinator, arrived in Tashkent from the DAI home office for two and three weeks, respectively, to assist with the start-up and closedown processes. Two new staff members were hired in October; Elena Abdramanova, M&E Specialist, and Khurshida Gapirova, Receptionist. Total full-time staff in Tashkent now number nine (9).

A USAID delegation led by Denise Rollins, Senior Deputy Assistant Administrator for USAID/Asia assisted by Erin McKee, USAID Central Asian Republics Regional Mission Director, and John Pennell, USAID Uzbekistan Country Office Director, visited Aglinks project sites in Namangan and Ferghana provinces in mid-October. The Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources (MAWR) was represented throughout the trip by the Deputy Head of the Complex for Economic Reforms in Agriculture, Mohammedjon Kasimov. Day one visits included the Turakurgan Agrifirm, a small-scale processing training and a cold storage facility. Day two visits included trellising sites in Kuvasay District and the Fergana Beekeepers Association.



Panel Members Evaluate Apples. Samarkand District, Samarkand Province.

**TECHNICAL.** October marks the beginning of the last quarter of activities for the 2011 agricultural season and includes late season harvest and post-harvest events.

*Apple Variety Contest.* USAID's Aglinks project conducts fruit variety contests to promote farmer interaction, stimulate interest in agronomic best practices, identify new local varieties and disseminate agricultural information. Variety contests are held during the harvest season in specific

geographic locales based upon their specialization and reputation for that particular produce.

The 2011 apple variety contest was held during the first week of October in Samarkand following contests for apricots, peaches, grapes and cherries held earlier in the season. Farmers from 4 districts of Bukhara and Samarkand provinces participated in the event which highlighted 10 apple varieties awarded prizes in 3 categories (sweetness, most marketable and most unique) by a 3-person panel comprised of representatives from a local agricultural university, research institute and private nursery. While judges evaluated the produce, participants shared information, experiences and knowledge on apple production techniques, technologies and management. Farmers agreed to pursue interaction through field visits to each other's farms and winning farmers were inundated with requests for transplants and

grafting sticks of their plants. The majority of the 2011 apple contest winners originated from Payarik District of Samarkand Province.

*Household Level Food Processing.* A fruit and vegetable processing training program was conducted for household women in Turakurgan District of Namangan Province on October 14 by AgLinks consultant and food technologist Marifat Nazarova. The following technologies were demonstrated: candied fruit from melon, watermelon and pumpkin; fried salad; jam and compote. A total of 38 women participated in the training. Processing training programs are organized in one of the trainee's homes to reduce participant travel time, assure support material are available (ex., water, gas, plates, electricity, etc.) and reassure female trainees in a familiar environment rather than more formal training premises. As mentioned above, this training was attended by the visiting USAID delegation.



USAID Delegation and Participants from Household Food Processing Training, Turakurgan District, Namangan Province

*Sharing Experience.* Representatives from KRASS, a local consulting firm established by GIZ and operating in Khorezm Province, sought insights on horticultural activities in Uzbekistan and potential partners. They are preparing a response to a local tender offered for Khorezm, Syrdarya and Andijan provinces by GIZ. The UNDP funded Foreign Trade and Investment Support Project (FTISP) visited to inquire of AgLinks experience, especially in Namangan Province, as they implement a new two-year component to promote the province's external trade funded by the Finish Government.

**NEXT MONTH.** The following major activities are anticipated for November 2011 :

- 1<sup>st</sup> week – draft ALP 2012 Work Plan, AgLinks Final Report
- 2<sup>nd</sup> week – Namangan visit to check on cold storage sites
- 3<sup>rd</sup> week – draft PMEP and Branding and Marking Plan
- 4<sup>th</sup> week – Post-award workshop, annual survey of farmers

**USAID AgLinks Plus (ALP) Project**  
 Monthly Report #1 – November 2011

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**ADMINISTRATION.** A post-award conference was held by digital video conference with USAID CAR and USAID UCO staff to clarify questions and establish joint interpretation of the new contract. Major issues regarding ALP were discussed including, but not limited to,; the Horticultural Exchange Program (HEP) visa process; Branding and Marking; Environmental Compliance; Program Planning and Reporting. Project staff also met with the COTR and USAID implementing partner (Chemonics) of the Regional Economic Integration (REI) project as well as the State Department Country Assistance Officer for Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, Richard Stoddard.

**ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE.** From November 24-25, Nina Kavetskaya, USAID Mission Environmental Officer (MEO) and Alexander Kalashnikov, COTR, visited project sites in Samarkand Province to monitor compliance of project activities with USAID environmental requirements. The delegation visited a drip irrigation demonstration site at Karshiboy Mirob Water Users Association (WUA) and a CoolBot cold storage facility at Istiqlol Meva Sabzovot AgriFirm. USAID representatives provided recommendations on how to enhance existing efforts at environmental mitigation of project activities.

Based upon the recommendations environmental compliance documentation was prepared to support procurement and installation of portable power generators for the cold storage locales. Adequate electricity to run the cooling units of the cold storage facilities, particularly in the winter months, was raised as an issue by both participants and observers. Generator procurement and installation were guided by the environmental review. All recommended safety rules were obeyed by the qualified generator specialist and electrician hired to install the generator. Generator safety rules and procedures were presented and explained to the cold store operator(s).

**TECHNICAL.** November marks the beginning of winter and was marked by a variety of activities.

*US Ambassador Visits Ferghana Province.* On November 21<sup>st</sup> 2011 US Ambassador to Uzbekistan, George A. Krol, visited Ferghana Province including the Ferghana Beekeeper's Association. Ambassador Krol met with the director of the association, Sherali Suyarkulov, and ALP staff member, Shuhrat Abrorov. Mr. Suyarkulov highlighted the importance of bee pollination in fruit production and described bee pollination field tests jointly implemented with AgLinks project last spring. Mr. Krol enjoyed the visit and expressed his interest in demo plot research results.



Mr. Suyarkulov (right) presents cooperation with AgLinks. Ferghana City, Ferghana Province

*Annual Farmer's Survey.* USAID's Aglinks project conducts an annual farmer survey at the end of the agricultural season (November-December) to capture information on

farmers' production, yields and income data and monitor impact from project introduced technologies. Farmers completed the survey forms provided and results began arriving at the ALP office. Project staff began data entry and upon completion will begin analysis that should be completed early in the new year.

*Solar Dryer for Fruits and Vegetables.* ALP collaborated with the Farmer-to-Farmer program (FtF) to organize a joint training on the construction, use and maintenance of a fruit and vegetable solar dryer. The joint training was held at ALP partner Pungan WUA in Pop District, Namangan Province with a total of 12 people participating, including farmers and backyard orchard owners. FtF volunteer, Ralph Bucca, supervised construction of a new small-scale, low-cost dryer (\$50 per unit) made entirely of local materials. The dryer reduces production time from 7 days to 2,



Mr. Bucca demonstrates operation of newly constructed dryer-Pop District, Namangan Province

keeps the product free of insect infestation and works with external temperatures as low as 25 C. Participants were very excited about the technology but commented that the training timing was not optimal for immediate use given the season. Based upon the positive response, interest and low cost of this FtF-initiated activity, ALP plans to further promote this technology among target audiences via the 2012 fruit variety contests and household postharvest training programs.

**NEXT MONTH.** The following major activities are anticipated for November 2011 :

- 1<sup>st</sup> week – field site visits to local public and private fruit tree nurseries
- 2<sup>nd</sup> week – prepare & submit all HEP01 documents to TraiNet-VCS
- 3<sup>rd</sup> week – complete PERSUAP field work
- 4<sup>th</sup> week – begin Environmental Plan fieldwork