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# Regional Agricultural Development Program—South 306-C-13-00018

FY2014

Quarter III



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# REGIONAL AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM-SOUTH (RADP-S)

FY2014

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## **DISCLAIMER**

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**Cover photo:** Dutch Committee for Afghanistan (DCA) livestock extension training course at the DCA Kandahar Training Center, May 23. Photo credit DCA for USAID/RADP-S.

## ACRONYMS

ACCI	Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industries
ADA	Afghan Development Association
AFE	Action for Enterprise
AMMC	Afghan Management and Marketing Consultants
AREDP	Afghanistan Rural Enterprise Development Program
BVW	Basic Veterinary Worker
CAOD	Communications and Outreach Department
CDC	Community Development Council
CHA	Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance
CLIN	Contract Line Item Number
COR	Contracting Officer Representative
DAIL	Directorate of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock
DCA	Dutch Committee for Afghanistan
DCOP	Deputy Chief of Party
DDA	District Development Assembly
DOWA	Directorate of Women's Affairs
DQA	Data Quality Assessment
EAA	Equal Access Afghanistan
EE	Enabling Environment
EMMP	Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Plan
GIROA	Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
GIS	Geographic Information System
HACCP	Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points
HVC	High Value Crops
IFA	Invitation for Application
INL	Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement
KIP	Key Implementing Partner
MAIL	Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
PMP	Performance Management Plan
PPU	Productivity and Production Unit
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team

PVD	Provincial Veterinary Department
PVT	Provincial Veterinary Team
RADP-S	Regional Agricultural Development Program-South
RTA	Radio & Television of Afghanistan
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
SRHHP	Small Ruminant Herd Health Package
TOT	Training of Trainers
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VCF	Value Chain Facilitation
VCFU	Value Chain Facilitation Unit
VFU	Veterinary Field Unit

## 1. Project Overview

The purpose of the Regional Agriculture Development Program-South (RADP-S) is to improve food and economic security for rural Afghans in the provinces of Kandahar, Helmand, Zabul and Uruzgan . To accomplish this goal, RADP-S focuses on improving the productivity and profitability of the wheat, high value crops, and livestock value chains, while addressing policy, legal and regulatory constraints affecting value chain development. This agricultural development program supports the consolidation of licit economies to fuel sustainable long term economic growth, including providing alternatives to poppy cultivation.

The implementation approach of RADP-S dovetails with Afghan and U.S. government strategies in its focus on advancing food security, regenerating agribusiness, and increasing agriculture sector jobs and incomes. RADP-S aims to strengthen the capacity of producers, associations, traders, and agribusinesses to respond to market demands; facilitate lasting market linkages between value chain actors; and support an enabling environment that allows the private sector to thrive. The program places the Afghan private sector at the forefront of implementation and addresses key crosscutting issues of women's empowerment, agribusiness value chain facilitation, and alternative development in all facets of the program. Embodying USAID's vision for sustainable Afghan-led development, RADP-S lays the foundation for greater and more socially inclusive growth in the agricultural economy.

## 2. Executive Summary

### 2.1. Summary of Results and Key Achievements

In Quarter III, RADP-S positioned itself to aggressively implement project activities upon execution of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock (MAIL) and USAID/RADP-S, which took place June 1.

The productivity and production unit focused on setting the stage for training of trainer (TOT) activities and establishment of demonstration farms. The unit completed 29 training modules spanning pre-harvest, harvest and post-harvest techniques for wheat and high value crops, environmental compliance, food safety and hygiene, nutrition and Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP). These modules will be immediately employed next quarter to build the capacity of RADP-S' key implementing partners' (KIPs) 54 master trainers at the AMTEX Technical Training Facility. The master trainers will then transfer this knowledge to 78 lead farmers through trainings at the KIPs' provincial offices. In the meantime, RADP-S and the KIPs coordinated the process and criteria for selecting lead farmers and landowners, identifying and leasing demonstration farms sites, and procuring the necessary materials to establish the farms.

Upon execution of the MOU, the KIPs organized coordination meetings with relevant district stakeholders such as district governors, directors of the Directorate of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (DAIL), the District Development Assembly (DDA), and *shura* members. At these meetings, they garnered the requisite cooperation to establish district offices and to collaboratively identify eligible lead farmer candidates and demonstration farm sites.

On June 22-23, RADP-S hosted the Provincial Governors, District Governors and DAIL Directors Coordination Meeting at the Baron. The meeting was attended by the provincial governor from each of the four target provinces, 11 district governors, provincial DAIL directors, KIP leadership, and members of USAID such as the Office of Agriculture Director Wayne Nilsestuen. At the meeting, RADP-S leadership presented an overview of the goals and activities of the program and focused on opportunities for mutually advantageous collaboration between RADP-S, the DAILs and provincial

leadership. Director Nilsestuen delivered the opening address, emphasizing that RADP-S is the first of four agricultural programs designed to improve food and economic security for rural Afghans over the long term.

The Dutch Committee for Afghanistan (DCA), RADP-S' implementation partner for livestock activities, made significant progress in the assessment and selection of veterinary field units (VFUs). Sixteen active veterinary field units (VFUs) signed service agreements with DCA in Quarter III and will now submit monthly activity and disease breakout status reports to DCA. Twenty-five sites for new VFUs were additionally identified. In the meantime, 37 villages agreed to train basic veterinary workers (BVWs) and 18 candidates qualified for a six-month para-veterinary course at DCA's Charikar Training and Support Center in Parwan. RADP-S and DCA collaboratively developed a training schedule for VFU extension training which rolled out in May and will continue through Quarter IV.

June 8-12, RADP-S hosted a value chain facilitation workshop at the Baron in Kabul titled "Value Chain Program Design: Promoting Market-Based Solutions for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)." The five-day workshop was attended by 21 representatives from RADP-S, ADA, CHA, Action for Enterprise (AFE), USAID and eight other technically relevant USAID projects. Facilitators of the event, AFE Director Frank Lusby and RADP-S VCF Advisor Carianne DeBoer, trained participants the design of programs which address MSME constraints (e.g. market access, input supply, technology or product development, finance access, management capacity, and policy reform) using market-based solutions. The training placed particular emphasis on improving the attendees' facilitation skills and introducing them to the latest thinking in value chain and market development principles.

Additionally, the RADP-S enabling environment unit and KIPs conducted a Total of 460 surveys and ten focus groups throughout the four provinces. Surveys targeted stakeholders – such as farmers, traders, enterprises and government entities – in RADP-S' selected value chains and sub-value chains for the purpose of identifying major enabling environment constraints. Three different surveys were conducted: 1) an agrichemical survey addressing the types and quantity of agrichemicals used and their impact on productivity in agricultural produce; 2) a vegetable production survey which asked producers and entrepreneurs about their size of business, value chain constraints and involvement of women in vegetable production; and 3) a gender survey where women producers and entrepreneurs were interviewed about the constraints affecting women in production and agribusiness.

The Kandahar Department of Women's Affairs (DOWA) initiated collaboration with RADP-S on the development of agricultural and agribusiness training opportunities at the new DOWA Aino Mino Women's Training Center. This will include establishing a demonstration farm on 2 jeribs of land adjacent to the center's main building and a vocational program utilizing jam and jelly equipment already in DOWA's possession. These plans were discussed in more length at a conference of DOWA directors from Helmand, Uruzgan, Zabul and Kandahar provinces, hosted by RADP-S at AMTEX on May 11. Should RADP-S move forward with this initiative, it will first enter into an MOU with the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA) and DOWA.

## **2.2. Constraints and Critical Issues**

For the first two months of Quarter III, the lack of an MOU with the MAIL presented a significant limitation to program implementation. Without endorsement of RADP-S by the MAIL to provincial and district authorities, the KIPs struggled to receive cooperation from local authorities. For example, in late May the district governor of Geldak in Zabul issued an instructive to stop of field activities until he received project documents and the MAIL/USAID MOU – a sentiment which was echoed by the Zabul provincial governor and DAIL director. Upon execution of the MOU on June 1, ADA, CHA and DCA conducted a series of coordination and collaboration meetings with provincial

and district authorities and RADP-S hosted a successful two-day Provincial Governors, District Governors and DAIL Directors Coordination Meeting in Kabul.

The KIPs also faced significant delays in the procurement of computers and furniture. Vetting approval for these procurements is still outstanding at the time of reporting, preventing the KIPs from properly setting up their provincial and district offices and affecting implementation.

### 3. Activity Implementation

#### 3.1. Productivity and Production: Wheat, High Value Crops, and Livestock

##### *AMTEX Technical Training Facility*

In Quarter III RADP-S continued to develop the AMTEX Technical Training Facility. The facility consists of a training hall and a 4275 square meter demonstration farm on AMTEX Village grounds. The hall serves as a venue to build the capacity of RADP-S key implementing partners (KIPs) – the Afghan Development Association (ADA), Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (CHA), and the Dutch Committee for Afghanistan (DCA) – in technical and administrative skills such as work-



planning, defining lead farmer selection criteria, and communications skills. The primary purpose of the demonstration farm is to build the capacity of ADA and CHA technical staff in skills such as post-harvest handling, utilization of greenhouses, field cooling and cold storage, and drip, furrow and basin irrigation. Orchard, vineyard, and high value vegetables crops are currently being cultivated and maintained for capacity building and demonstration purposes. These activities will strengthen the KIPs' capacity to effectively transfer improved productivity skills to lead farmers in the target provinces.

RADP-S staff erect shade net tunnels over the vegetable beds to protect the crops from hot dry winds and desert locusts, June. Photo credit: USAID/RADP-S.

##### **AMTEX Demonstration Farm**

During the reporting period, RADP-S planted a local variety of eggplant, bell pepper and tomatoes, and erected trellising for two hybrid varieties of cucumbers in the high value vegetable beds. Staff



Blossom rot on the tomato crops on AMTEX Demonstration Farm, June. Photo credit: USAID/RADP-S.

also prepared a raised bed in the nursery for the cultivation of hybrids seeds. In order to protect the young seedlings against the hot dry winds and desert locusts (which are a particular menace this time of year), RADP-S erected shade net tunnels over the vegetable beds. Staff also laid down wheat straw around the orchard trees, grape vines and vegetables for the purpose of demonstrating the following benefits to farmers: conservation of water, reduction of labor (less time spent watering), improvement of soil structure over time, weed reduction, and maintenance of cool temperature around the roots. In one section of the wheat plot, RADP-S

incorporated manure in order to compare the soil structure and crop yield from the rest of the wheat plot.

In June, RADP-S identified blossom rot in the tomato crop – a common problem which plagues the crops of Kandahar farmers. Locally, the problem has been misdiagnosed as a fungal issue and farmers have been wrongly advised to spray fungicide. However, blossom rot is actually a physiological disorder caused by calcium deficiency. RADP-S will use this opportunity to instruct master trainers how to treat this disorder during the ten-day Training of Trainers (TOT) Workshop scheduled in July.

The post-harvest component of RADP-S furthermore designated a space adjacent to the demonstration farm and initiated designs for a pack-house facility. RADP-S will use this space to train the KIPs' master trainers in sorting, grading, pre-cooling, post-harvest practices, and both immersion and forced air cooling methods for crops.

### **AMTEX Technical Training Hall**

Throughout the quarter, RADP-S hosted a series of conferences and workshops at AMTEX for RADP-S and KIP personnel. April 14-17, the provincial managers of ADA, CHA and DCA met with RADP-S at the AMTEX Training Hall for the Technical Management Working Group Conference. At the conference, participants established and finalized selection criteria for lead farmers, developed criteria for demonstrations with the DAILs, brainstormed potential outreach and communications interventions to enhance program activities, coordinated with the M&E and Enabling Environment

units, and received training in administrative processes such as procurement and grants. KIPs divided into technical working groups to continue developing their value chain-specific capacity-building interventions.



RADP-S PPU staff demonstrate newly-assembled tractors and seeders for the KIPs at the Technical Management Working Group Conference, April 14. Photo credit: USAID/RADP-S.

Twenty-seven representatives from ADA, CHA and Equal Access Afghanistan (EAA) attended a Technical Orientation Workshop at AMTEX on June 26 to finalize the selection criteria of lead farmers, settle the lease agreement details for 78 demonstration farms, and discuss what items should be placed on the demonstration farms. RADP-S also used the workshop as an opportunity to give an overview of the upcoming training of trainers (TOT) exercise, which will launch at the AMTEX Technical Training Facility on July 15.

### *Identification of Lead Farmers*

On June 4, ADA met with representatives of Sara Qala, Mandisar, and Qazi Kariz village in Daman district of Kandahar province to identify lead farmers for demonstration plots. However, most of the village leadership was engaged in election campaigns and was not available at that time to identify lead farmers. Likewise, a team consisting of HVC, wheat and enabling environment specialists from ADA traveled to Jaldak district in Zabul province on June 28 to share the criteria and procedure for selecting lead farmers with the district governor, District Development Assembly, and DAIL representatives. These district stakeholders agreed to recommend a list of eligible lead farmers and landowners to the ADA Zabul office who will then select two lead farmers for RADP-S consideration.

On June 13, RADP-S subcontracted with Alcis Holdings Ltd. to supply the program with geospatial data required for the identification of lead farmers. In collaboration with RADP-S, Alcis set the criteria and analysis methodologies to enable evidence-based selection of lead farmers, taking into account factors such as information from the Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL), irrigation and water resource data from the Army Corp of Engineers, and locations of markets, processing facilities and farm service centers. Alcis also provided RADP-S a prioritized workplan outlining the strategy and required resourcing for geospatial and other data analysis throughout the life of project.



ADA provincial leadership meets with the district governor of Jaldak in Zabul province to discuss lead farmer selection criteria, June 28. Photo credit: USAID/RADP-S.

### *CLIN 1: Wheat*

On April 16 – 17, the RADP-S Productivity and Production Unit (PPU) led a workshop with the wheat specialists from ADA and CHA at the AMTEX Technical Training Classroom. The purpose of the workshop was to finalize the capacity-building curriculum for wheat productivity and production. Participants worked diligently and completed such curriculum as harvest and post-harvest handling and water management. These curricula will be employed by RADP-S technical staff to train ADA and CHA’s district master trainers, selected lead farmers, and neighboring farmers in the surrounding areas of the demonstration farms. The PPU also drafted a wheat production annual calendar for winter and spring varieties, which the communications team will convert into an illustrated instructional brochure targeting farmers in the districts.



RADP-S communications and outreach manager surveys a wheat farmer in Helmand province on his radio preferences for a communications assessment, May 26. Photo credit: USAID/RADP-S.

Throughout Quarter III the Productivity and Production Unit (PPU) developed training modules for wheat including crop establishment, plant nutrition, water management, harvest, post-harvest and integrated pest management and weed control. Training modules for nutrition and food safety and hygiene (spanning all target crops) were also drafted by the post-harvest team. The capacity-building of master trainers will launch with the Training of Trainers (TOT) Workshop on July 15.

### *CLIN 2: High Value Crops (HVC)*

RADP-S High Value Crops (HVC) members of the PPU coordinated working groups with ADA and CHA HVC specialists to design the curriculum and capacity-building materials for the production and post-harvest handling of stone fruits (apricot, plum and peach), pomegranates, figs, grapes, almonds, and greenhouse winter vegetables. A total of 16 modules were completed on topics such as orchard establishment and post-harvest handling. The HVC team also began designing greenhouse and drip irrigation training for implementation on the projected 78 lead farms. These modules will be



RADP-S staff harvest the season's first cucumbers on the AMTEX Demonstration Farm, June. Photo credit: USAID/RADP-S.

delivered by ADA and CHA's district master trainers to the selected lead farmers and to the farmers of the surrounding lead farm communities

The PPU also drew up district training plans for year one. These plans were divided into four generic crop categories – orchard, vineyard, winter vegetables and wheat – then combined into one calendar for all four provinces, creating an all-inclusive capacity-building plan for all RADP-S target crops. RADP-S has submitted the individual crop calendars

to Equal Access Afghanistan for illustration in instructional booklets which will be finished and distributed in August.

### *CLIN 3: Livestock*

In Quarter III, RADP-S' key implementing partner for livestock activities, the Dutch Committee for Afghanistan (DCA), developed the large and small ruminant herd health packages (SRHHP) and the artificial insemination capacity-building program for the training of its staff and partner VFUs. Subsequently, DCA hosted an orientation workshop May 19-20, which was attended by its own provincial director, regional extension specialists, provincial extension coordinators, district extension workers, and the RADP-S livestock value chain team. The workshop provided an overview of RADP-S' framework and program goals, particularly under the livestock component, as well as discussion about the specific livestock objectives and activities that DCA will implement in the target districts.

DCA also held a Livestock Extension Training Course at the DCA Kandahar Training Center May 22-26 for 22 DCA extension staff. Other participants of the course included the RADP-S livestock team leader, DCA provincial director, DCA key personnel, and members of the RADP-S M&E unit. The course was facilitated by DCA leadership and included topics such as assessment and monitoring of veterinary field units (VFUs), de-worming and vaccinations, and an introduction to the SRHHP. Each day opened and closed with a test in order to measure the knowledge transfer related to the topics covered that day. The average pre-test scored around 22% while the final test averaged around 77%, indicating an increase in technical knowledge. The course also involved hands-on activities such as field training simulations and role-playing. DCA also facilitated a five-day extension training for 15 VFU operators at DCA's Kandahar Training Center from June 22-26.



VFU assessment in Chora district in Uruzgan province, June. Photo credit: DCA for USAID/RADP-S.

In June DCA assessed a total of 32 existing VFUs and 500 livestock owners, and identified 25 locations for the establishment of new VFUs. Sixteen active VFUs signed service contracts with DCA and will now be submitting monthly activity and disease breakout status reports to DCA and the Provincial Veterinary Department (PVD). Additionally, by the end of the reporting period, a total of 37 villages had agreed to train basic veterinary workers (BVWs). Upon completion of the VFU

assessment, RADP-S and DCA collaboratively developed a training schedule for VFU extension training.

DCA employed the following criteria to select new VFU locations:

- Distance between VFUs should be at least 15 kms
- Livestock population should be around 25,000 heads (small and large ruminants)
- Each VFU should be located as close to the center of a cluster of villages, livestock markets, and travel routes as possible
- When possible, VFU should be located along a Kuchi route, provided there is a migratory route identified
- The interest and cooperation of local stakeholders, and demand for VFU services should be present
- The number of villages that have access to the VFU should be at least 15, depending on livestock population and geographic location

DCA also coordinated with ADA, CHA, DAIL and existing para-vets in all four target provinces to identify 18 new para-vets who may attend a six-month para-veterinary course at DCA's Charikar Training and Support Center in Parwan commencing in July. Newly trained para-vets will operate as private sector businesses and will deliver veterinary services on a fee payment basis, as has been communicated by DCA to the members of the target communities.

Eligibility to be admitted into the para-veterinary course depended on the following:

- Candidate should be from the area of the VFU
- Completion of grade 10 is preferable but only literacy is required
- Must possess a background in agriculture
- Must have the approval of the local shura, the district Governor, DAIL, district veterinary department and any other relevant regional authorities

DCA carried out the assessment of existing VFUs, identification of new VFU sites, and selection of para-veterinary course candidates in coordination with the Community Development Council (CDC) and District Development Assembly (DDA) in Zhari and Panjwai, and district governors within Kandahar, Zabul, and Helmand provinces.

### **3.2. Value Chain Facilitation**

Throughout Quarter III, the RADP-S VCFU continued to implement the recommendations of VCF subcontractor Action for Enterprise (AFE) by carrying out abbreviated value chain analyses of tree fruit crops and their supporting markets. These abbreviated analyses created maps that presented the relevant market actors and their relationships with one another; described value chain governance structures and methods of inter-firm cooperation; identified constraints in the areas of market access, input supply, technology/product development, management and organization, policy, finance, and infrastructure; and assessed the potential, and requirements, of the end markets and key buyers of the selected value chains.

To inform its analyses, the VCFU coordinated meetings with 26 traders and companies (fresh and dried fruit), four producers, five consumers, five input suppliers and the Afghan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI). These entities individually informed the VCFU about their respective

role in the fruit tree crop value chain, access to the value chain's market, development of the market, government involvement in the value chain, their sources of finance, what challenges or constraints in the value chain they find most notable, and where they feel the most improvement is needed.

### *Integrating Women into the Value Chain*

On June 23, the VCFU also met with the Kandahar Director of Women's Affairs, Ruqia Achakzai, to gather information on current women-owned businesses and their respective value chains. They also interviewed Director Achakzai regarding any business opportunities, challenges or future plans for women-owned companies. Director Achakzai informed the VCFU that there are currently no large women-owned companies in Kandahar province, but there are potentially some small initiatives worth exploring.

### *Value Chain Facilitation Workshop*

June 8-12, RADP-S hosted a value chain facilitation workshop at the Baron in Kabul titled "Value Chain Program Design: Promoting Market-Based Solutions for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)." The five-day workshop was attended by 21 representatives from RADP-S, ADA, CHA, Action for Enterprise (AFE), USAID and eight other technically relevant USAID projects. Facilitators of the event, AFE Director Frank Lusby and RADP-S VCF Advisor Carianne DeBoer, trained participants the design of programs which address MSME constraints (e.g. market access, input supply, technology or product development, finance access, management capacity, and policy reform) using market-based solutions. The training placed particular emphasis on improving the attendees' facilitation skills and introducing them to the latest thinking in value chain and market development principles.



Participants at the Value Chain Program Design: Market-Based Solutions for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises workshop, June 12. Photo credit: USAID/RADP-S.

## **3.3. Enabling Environment**

### *Enabling Environment Constraint Survey*

During the reporting period, KIPs ADA and CHA continued to roll out a number of surveys designed by the RADP-S enabling environment (EE) unit. Surveys targeted stakeholders in RADP-S' selected value chains and sub-value chains – wheat, high value crop, dairy and poultry – for the purpose of identifying major enabling environment constraints. During Quarter III, ADA and CHA conducted 417 survey interviews with farmers, traders, associations, cooperatives, enterprise owners, nursery growers and GIROA officials across Kandahar, Zabul, Uruzgan and Helmand provinces. An additional 43 surveys were conducted by the RADP-S EE and gender units for a total of 460 surveyed. Three separate surveys were conducted: 1) an agrichemical survey targeting producers and input suppliers which addressed the types and quantity of agrichemicals used and their impact on productivity and pest and disease control in agricultural produce; 2) a vegetable production survey which requested

information from producers and entrepreneurs regarding size of business, value chain constraints and involvement of women in vegetable production; and 3) a gender survey where women producers and entrepreneurs were interviewed to garner information about their involvement in the agricultural and livestock value chains, and about the constraints affecting women in production and agribusiness.

Additionally, ADA, CHA and RADP-S surveyed a total of ten regional companies, associations, and cooperatives with agriculture-related business in their portfolio, such as the Bost Fruit and Vegetable Producer Association, the Kandahar Dried Fruit Export Association, and the Ethad Veterinary and Agriculture Cooperative. Three entities each were surveyed in Kandahar and Helmand, and two each in Zabul and Uruzgan. The purpose of these surveys was to identify agricultural organizations which may carry out RADP-S' EE advocacy activities at the regional level, and two associations to carry out advocacy activities at the national level.

### *Enabling Environment Focus Groups*

To support and expand on the survey data from the target provinces, the RADP-S EE unit continued to conduct a series of focus groups that generated more in-depth information about the constraints affecting RADP-S' target value chains in each of the four provinces. ADA conducted seven Total focus groups – three each in Zabul and Uruzgan (focusing individually on wheat, HVCs and livestock) and one in Kandahar addressing HVCs which was attended by representatives of the Afghanistan Nursery Growers Association. CHA conducted an additional three in Helmand: one per wheat, HVCs, and livestock. Five focus groups were held in Kandahar and Helmand in the previous quarter.

Attendees of the focus groups were mobilized by RADP-S and the KIPs in the process of conducting the constraints survey. Participants included farmers and representatives from agricultural associations, cooperatives, and enterprises. These individuals shared their experiences with existing value chain constraints affecting production, productivity and commercial activities, as well as their ideas for removing or overcoming these constraints.

### *Collaboration with Relevant USG Entities*

Throughout May, the EE advisor presented and met with various US Government counterparts and stakeholders including the regulatory reform division chief of the Office of Trade and Regulatory Reform, members of the INL, and the agricultural working group at the USDA's bi-monthly agricultural roundtable comprised of the head of USAID's Afghanistan Office of Agriculture, a senior USDA program officer, and the RADP-S COR among others. During these meetings, the enabling environment advisor introduced the RADP-S program, described the enabling environment methodology, and presented initial constraints analysis from the field. The division chief of the Office of Trade and Regulatory Reform expressed his general approval of RADP-S goals and activities and was particularly in-favor of an approach which increased the enabling environment capacity of MAIL while also aiming to advance policy within MAIL. The INL narcotics affairs officer solicited suggestions for useful enabling environment activities that may be conducted in Helmand. RADP-S began development of a written document to provide to INL with suggested activities.

## **3.4. Crosscutting Themes**

### *Gender*

The RADP-S Gender Team collaborated extensively with the Kandahar Directorate of Women's Affairs (DOWA) throughout Quarter III. On April 9, RADP-S met with Ms. Ruqia Achakzai, director of Kandahar DOWA, to discuss RADP-S plans to conduct capacity-building interventions in solar drying targeting those women whose incomes depend on the drying and processing of stone fruits. Ms.

Achakzai expressed her support for the intervention and offered to introduce women from the RADP-S target districts. Accordingly, on April 13 the Afghan Rural Enterprise Development Project (AREDP) introduced RADP-S to women involved in small-scale agribusiness activities in the Kandahar districts of Dand and Arghandab. The attending women emphasized to RADP-S their need for capacity-building and toolkits to carry out improved fruit drying and processing activities, particularly with the support of solar power. They extended an invitation to RADP-S to visit their villages and observe their activities first-hand.



Gender integration manager Belqis Barrai discusses agribusiness activities with the women of Enterprise Group in Naqibi Mena village in Arghandab district, May 6. Photo credit: USAD/RADP-S.

RADP-S accepted the invitation and on April 22 the gender team and one monitoring and evaluation (M&E) field monitor visited Rohabad village in Dand district. This was the first of a series of field visits in Quarter III to Rohabad village and Tabin village (Arghandab district) where RADP-S assessed the involvement and dynamic of women in agricultural and agribusiness activities at the community and household-level, evaluated opportunities for RADP-S to strengthen food and financial security for women in Kandahar, and identified potential participants for a solar-drying vocational training intervention to be held in Aino Mina. In Rohabad, the women RADP-S met with possessed either a kitchen garden or managed small orchards in their backyard and had at least some experience in drying fresh fruits, mainly turning grapes to raisins and selling their surplus produce in Kandahar markets. One group of women had successfully formed a central fund which is given to one member on a weekly and rotating basis. The member uses this fund to put toward income-generating activities in agribusiness or livestock.



A member of the Enterprise Group in Arghandab district displays some of the jams and jellies she has made and sold with the assistance of the Group's microloans, May 6. Photo credit: USAID/RADP-S.

In Tabin, RADP-S discovered that a number of women were working in orchards mainly consisting of pomegranate trees, as well as some grapevines, apricots, peach, plum and fig trees. When interviewed by RADP-S, women explained that the men in their families collect the superior quality fruits during harvest time and sell them in local markets. The women collect the remaining lower quality fruits to make fruit bi-products such as jams, jellies, sauces, and juice concentrates. A number of fruits, such as plums and figs are also sun-dried and sold in the local market. The women use this money earned from selling dried fruits and fruit bi-products to purchase their household items.

### *DOWA Aino Mina Women's Training Center*

Kandahar DOWA and RADP-S have taken a keen interest in collaboratively establishing agricultural and agribusiness capacity-building interventions at the new DOWA Aino Mino Women's Training Center. This collaboration will include development of a demonstration farm on 2 jeribs of land adjacent to the center's main building, pending approval from USAID. The farm will imitate the 78 project lead farms throughout the districts to which women will have limited to no access for trainings. In a series of coordination meetings which took place at the Aino Mina center and AMTEX Village, RADP-S and Director Achakzai discussed the logistics of establishing the demonstration farm as well as launching vocational modules utilizing jam and jelly equipment already in DOWA's possession. RADP-S is currently waiting on a list of the exact inventory of the respective equipment that DOWA owns.



Kandahar DOWA Director, Ruqia Achakzai, gives RADP-S' gender integration manager a tour of the DOWA Aino Mina Women's Training Center, April 23. Photo credit: USAID/RADP-S.

The same activities are being considered by RADP-S for the DOWA women's training centers in Helmand, Zabul, and Uruzgan. On May 1, the RADP-S gender integration manager met with director of the Helmand DOWA in Lashkar Gah city. At this coordination meeting the DOWA director agreed to provide one jerib of land in their office compound for the establishment of a demonstration plot for RADP-S gender-related training activities.

Furthermore, RADP-S hosted a conference of DOWA directors from Helmand, Uruzgan, Zabul and Kandahar provinces at AMTEX Technical Training Facility on May 11. The purpose of the conference was to collaboratively identify opportunities to increase the capacity of women in urban and rural environments to better contribute to family welfare through farming and agribusiness. Particular emphasis was placed on the vocational training center in Aino Mina.

### *Monitoring and Evaluation*

#### **Baseline, Household and SME Surveys**

During quarter III, the RADP-S monitoring and evaluation (M&E) unit continued overseeing the baseline survey. AMMC also collected the data for the primary household and small and medium enterprise (SME) survey. The survey will capture descriptive information about the project's target beneficiaries' demographic and food security situation and productivity and production statistics for target crops. Once complete, the project will use this information to understand the underlying economic and agricultural circumstances of RADP-S target beneficiaries' lives, then tailor and measure the outputs and outcomes of its programming. Survey teams collected primary data from households and SMEs in RADP-S' target districts and adjacent districts that will be used as a control group. In Quarter II, the team collaborated with USAID to develop surveys to collect data from SMEs and households that include male and female members. AMMC collected more than 4,000 responses from the target provinces. This data collection approach provided a control group that the M&E team can survey in subsequent years, compare with the beneficiary community, and draw conclusions about the impact of RADP-S' programming. Although AMMC was able to complete their target number of surveys, they encountered security challenges in the districts that delayed the data collection. AMMC informed RADP-S of the delay and proposed a two-week extension. RADP-S

extended the delivery date of the final report to August 4 and will continue to work with AMMC on the quality and timeliness of their deliverables.

Early in quarter III, RADP-S developed a Data Quality Analysis (DQA) method to review 10% of the completed baseline surveys and ensure rigorous quality control. Starting in May, the M&E team used the DQA method to confirm the validity and reliability of 560 surveys. Specifically, RADP-S randomly selected surveys from the completed household and SME survey data set. AMMC provided RADP-S the hard copies for all of the surveys and a spreadsheet of the coded data. The M&E team confirmed the information for each survey through a combination of call backs and site visits and compared the hard copies with the spreadsheet of the coded data. By the end of the quarter, the M&E team completed the DQA process for Kandahar, Helmand, and Zabul provinces; however, the team was unable to visit Uruzgan due to security concerns. During the next quarter, the team will aggregate the data and travel to Uruzgan when security permits.

### **Staff Capacity-Building**

RADP-S completed staffing of the M&E unit in April, including one female field monitor per province. Subsequently, RADP-S drafted a training needs analysis to identify strengths and weakness in its team. Based on the needs analysis, the team's leadership is developing training modules to ensure that all staff are trained in data collection and analysis best practices. In May, RADP-S' GIS specialist provided an introductory presentation to the M&E team, instructing them of the purpose, function, and objectives of the GIS is and how it supports the program. In addition, the specialist downloaded and presented relevant maps that could be used during GIS activities. The M&E unit also began collecting learning materials including lessons learned and bibliographies that will be used to improve data that is collected by various RADP-S sources and uploaded into a share drive that is available in AMTEX. These materials are being aggregated on share drives.

At the close of Quarter III, the M&E Team Leader submitted the draft Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP) to USAID.

### **Project Training Indicators and Benchmarks**

In May the M&E unit participated in a livestock extension training conducted by the Dutch Committee for Afghanistan (DCA) for its 22 staff, including six women. The goal of this two-day training for the RADP-S M&E participants was to test the process for obtaining performance data. The M&E unit designed a template for collecting data and participant feedback, which will be used by the KIPs during internal and partner training. The RADP-S M&E team also attended a TOT intervention for livestock extension activities from June 22-26. This intervention was designed for VFUs by DCA and was attended by 15 participants. RADP-S conducted a pre-test a week before the training and a post-test after to measure the effectiveness of the intervention.

### *Communications and Outreach*

In Quarter III, the RADP-S communications and outreach team continued to carry out a communications assessment designed to gauge the capacity of existing media in the four target provinces to support project outreach interventions. In partnership with Equal Access Afghanistan (EAA), RADP-S evaluated 20 radio stations for their ability to produce live call-in radio episodes, experience broadcasting agriculture-themed programs, overall technical capacity, and geographical coverage. RADP-S subsequently traveled into the districts for the purpose of determining via interviews which radio stations were most frequently listened to by RADP-S' target audience (i.e. agricultural and livestock producers).

From August-October, RADP-S will be broadcasting 48 weekly live call-in agriculture-themed radio shows (12 per province) to support and enhance productivity, production, and gender training activities. Brief public service announcements will also be regularly broadcast in order to amplify key project messages. All stations in the communications assessment met the requirements for geographical coverage in the target districts and most possessed experience running agricultural radio programs. Popularity of the stations according to local farmers therefore became the deciding factor. At the conclusion of the assessment, RADP-S



Tarnak Radio Station in Zabul province during the RADP-S communications assessment, June 4. Photo credit: USAID/RADP-S.

selected the four following radio stations to partner with: Hewad Radio (Kandahar), Sabawoon Radio (Helmand), Paywastoon Radio (Uruzgan), and Radio Television Afghanistan (Zabul).

RADP-S also identified two mobile theater troops – Boost (Helmand) and PLAR (Kandahar, Zabul and Uruzgan) – who will be responsible for promoting improved agricultural practices via entertaining drama productions. Thirty mobile theater performances in each of the four target provinces are budgeted in the coming year.



RADP-S communications and outreach manager assesses the radio preferences of a local farmer in Zabul. Photo credit: USAID/RADP-S.

RADP-S took advantage of the communications assessment to visit the new district offices of ADA and CHA, and to introduce the outreach objectives of RADP-S to the provincial DAILs and Directorates of Information and Culture in Helmand and Uruzgan.

In Quarter III, EAA drafted the first of a series of crop calendar booklets which will be disseminated to participants of trainings on district lead farms. These booklets cater to the average farmer by consisting mainly of vibrant illustrations and basic Pashto instructions which guide the reader through improved productivity practices for a specific crop week by week. The first booklet covered the production of plums.

Finally, RADP-S and EAA collaboratively began organizing a series of workshops which will take place in Kabul July 21-24 including a radio producers training, community reporters training, and a stakeholder workshop which will be attended by KIP leadership, DAIL directors and radio station owners.

## 4. Collaboration with GIROA and Other USAID Projects

### 4.1. GIROA

On June 1, the Memorandum of Understanding between USAID/RADP-S and the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) was fully executed, clearing a critical obstacle to program implementation.

Subsequently, ADA and CHA initiated coordination with provincial and district authorities in the four target provinces. ADA shared reports of RADP-S' previous activities and extended formal invitations to the Provincial Governors and DAIL Directors Coordination Meeting, hosted by RADP-S in Kabul on June 22-23. CHA participated in four separate coordination meetings with the deputy governor of Helmand province, governor of Nawa district, director of Helmand provincial DAIL, and governor of Nad-e-Ali district. In these meetings CHA introduced the goals and planned activities of RADP-S and also extended invitations to the Provincial Governors and DAIL Directors Coordination Meeting in Kabul. Likewise, DCA held various meetings with stakeholders such as the Helmand deputy provincial governor, Helmand DAIL authorities, officers of the Kandahar Provincial Veterinary Department, and district governors of Panjwai, Zhari, and Shah Joy. At these meetings, DCA discussed RADP-S' strategy to strengthen and advance livestock practices in their respective districts and provinces, thereby paving the way for technical implementation in a cooperative and supportive environment.



CHA coordination meeting with Deputy Governor of Helmand (seated left), June 18. Photo credit: CHA for USAID/RADP-S.



Kandahar provincial governor Tooryalai Wesa and the district governors of Panjwai, Zhari, Daman, Dand, and Arghandab at the Provincial Governors and DAIL Directors Coordination Meeting, June 22. Photo credit: USAID/RADP-S.

On June 22-23, RADP-S hosted the Provincial Governors and DAIL Directors Coordination Meeting at the Baron. The meeting was attended by the provincial governor from each of the four target provinces, 11 district governors, KIP leadership, and members of USAID such as Afghanistan Agriculture Director Wayne Nilsestuen. The meeting marked the first time that provincial governors agreed to gather and coordinate with a USAID project in one place.

At the event, RADP-S leadership presented an overview of the goals and activities of the program and focused on opportunities for mutually advantageous collaboration between RADP-S, the DAILs and provincial leadership. Director Nilsestuen delivered the opening address, emphasizing the great stake that many Afghans share in RADP-S' success as it has the potential to improve the quality of life for a large number of farmer households. Kandahar Provincial Governor Tooryalai Wesa delivered closing remarks.

### 4.2. Other USAID Projects

Throughout the quarter, RADP-S and USAID Kandahar Food Zone (KFZ) held a series of coordination meetings to explore areas of technical and programmatic collaboration such as water management,

greenhouses, value chain facilitation, and gender activities. For example, both RADP-S and KFZ are responsible for water management programs. However, RADP-S targets improving on-farm water management while KFZ concentrates on primary water sources such as canal water distribution. As a point of synergy, KFZ has requested that RADP-S consider providing water management trainings to *meeraws* (those responsible for managing and dividing irrigation water among farms) in Panjawayi and Zhari districts.

Another area of overlap is the two projects' greenhouse programs. KFZ will be conducting greenhouse trainings then constructing 77 commercial greenhouse structures throughout its seven target provinces. Since RADP-S is implementing a greenhouse program focused on demonstration, the two parties agreed on the following: 1) KFZ will keep RADP-S informed of its beneficiaries in order to avoid duplication of efforts; 2) RADP-S will facilitate support to KFZ beneficiaries upon KFZ's close of contract; and 3) KFZ and RADP-S will allow the sharing of commercial and demonstration greenhouses for the training of project beneficiaries.

## 5. Management and Administration

### 5.1. Personnel

In April, Daniel Rhodes and John Haydu joined the project as acting chief of party and deputy chief of party, respectively. Dan Rhodes will serve in this role until the replacement COP Bruce Brower arrives mid-July. Carianne DeBoer arrived in May to serve as value chain facilitation advisor, Frans Botha assumed the position of ST capacity-building advisor for the PPU, and John Buckley started as ST post-harvest advisor.

### 5.2. Project deliverables

April 7-10, RADP-S leadership and USAID Agriculture Advisor Tom Love convened to revise the Year One Work Plan. RADP-S Contracting Officer Representative (COR) Freeman Daniels and Alternate COR Sayed Khalid Hashimi also attended on April 7. Participants identified first-year outcomes and supporting activities for each target value chain (wheat, HVCs, livestock) and component (productivity and production, value chain facilitation, and enabling environment). The RADP-S Year One Work Plan was submitted and officially approved by USAID on May 24.



Former DCOP Gordon Bremer (left) introduces his replacement, John Haydu (right), to KIP leadership the final day of work planning, April 10. Photo credit: USAID/RADP-S.

## 6. Planned Activities Next Quarter

### 6.1 Productivity and Production

In Quarter IV, the PPU will conduct a will host a nine-day Training of Trainers workshop with the Master Trainers of ADA and CHA. The workshop, running July 15-24 will cover nine of the 29 finalized training modules:

- Orchards establishment
- Orchards IPM & weed control
- Orchards water management

- Vineyard establishment
- Vineyard IPM & weed control
- Crop establishment (wheat)
- Plant nutrition (wheat)
- Plant Nutrition (vegetable crops)
- Greenhouse establishment

Meanwhile, the PPU will also engage in selecting lead farmers and establishing demonstration farms across the 15 target districts. Upon finalization of this process, the PPU will supervise and support the KIPs' lead farmer training activities. DCA will additionally launch its six-month para-veterinary training course at the Charikar Training and Support Center, running July through December.

On the AMTEX Demonstration Farm, the PPU team will complete development of the post-harvest training facility, including the commissioning of two 40 foot refrigerated shipping containers for the purpose of training in mechanical cooling.

## **6.2 Value Chain Facilitation**

In Quarter IV the VCFU unit will finalize the value chain analyses and the abbreviated value chain analyses reports for livestock input supply and wheat value chains and begin consulting companies for activities and market-based solutions that would address the specific constraints found in these value chains. Based on the companies' suggested activities, the VCFU will work with lead firms that meet the set criteria, develop agreements (MOUs and Addendums), and begin implementing. The VCFU will repeat this process for two additional value chains as well: vegetables (including seeds) and broiler chickens. In the meantime, the VCF advisor will continue to train the VCFU specialists in facilitation techniques for sustainable market development programs.

## **6.3 Enabling Environment**

In Quarter IV, the enabling environment unit will complete the analysis of identified constraints and collect and process constraint analysis pieces from the other RADPS as directed by USAID. The unit will also review the legal and policy framework of MAIL and carry out a capacity needs assessment of MAIL via interviews of MAIL employees. Moving forward, a quarterly Kabul-based policy update summarizing all policy research and present relevant activities within MAIL will be sent to field-based RADPs. Additionally, the unit will identify two national agricultural associations and three regional agricultural associations to promote policy awareness and advocacy, and to and disseminate policy information relevant to RADP-S targeted districts. This will require creating a list of active associations, interviewing and selecting associations, then creating an MOU between each entity and RADP-S.

## **6.4 Monitoring and Evaluation**

In July, members of the M&E team will attend the nine-day TOT workshop in order to understand the trainer's technical approach and confirm that they are appropriately equipped to verify project results. They will also continue to review and revise AMMC's primary baseline report, perform DQA on the household and SME surveys, revise the PMP per USAID's guidance, and complete the performance indicator reference sheets. Upon completion of the GIS software and hardware procurement, the M&E team will also develop the activities map. The team will also work with the programming team and KIPs to institutionalize data collection processes. Finally, before the end of Quarter IV, the PMP will be completed.

## **6.5 Gender**

In Quarter IV, a ST gender specialist will be arriving to facilitate the creation of a gender strategy document which will include review and analysis of component activity plans and establishment of the Gender Advisory Group to work with other interested stakeholders throughout the target provinces such as government ministries, other donors, non-governmental organizations, and women's agriculture-related associations. The strategy document will also explore possible market-based solutions that will impact women's productivity, food security, income, and empowerment at the household, community, and market level. Other planned activities include exploring best options to promote dairy products, working with the provincial DOWAs to establish demonstration orchards within their compounds, lamb livestock activities, and training women in solar drying of fruits and vegetables. A LT gender advisor will also be hired by the end of Quarter IV to continue to carry out and develop the workplan established by the ST specialist.

## **6.6 Communications and Outreach**

RADP-S will launch a series of weekly live call-in radio shows in each of the target provinces starting in late August. Each one-hour show will focus on a timely agricultural issue as selected by the PPU and feature live call-in questions, expert panel discussions, voices from the field, and a 10-min drama. One or two listening circles consisting of around 16 people living in the target districts and a facilitator trained by EAA will accompany each broadcast. In each circle, the facilitator will guide discussion and ask a series of questions before and after to gauge how informative, applicable, and engaging the program was. RADP-S will also work with EAA to craft radio public service announcements which communicate concise key messages on a frequent basis, boosting stakeholder knowledge on a broader scale than project direct training interventions.

July 21-24, RADP-S and EAA will collaboratively host a series of workshops in Kabul including a radio producers training, community reporters training, and a stakeholder workshop which will be attended by KIP leadership, DAIL directors and radio station owners.

RADP-S and EAA will also coordinate the first mobile theater production to launch with 30 performances across the five target districts in Kandahar starting late September. As with the radio broadcasts, each production will address management of a key relevant agricultural issue, using entertainment to inform.

Finally, EAA will complete designs of the illustrated crop calendar booklets. These booklets will provide farmers with year-long week-by-week guidance on simple, improved productivity and production practices for a particular crop.

## **6.7 Management and Administration**

COP Bruce Brower will join the project in late July. Acting COP Dan Rhodes will then assume the position of DCOP of operations and John Haydu will continue to serve as DCOP of program activities.