

Weekly Bullets

Farah Province

- On April 21st, a project inauguration ceremony was held for five CDCs in Bala Boluk District. MRRD/Stability Program staff met with CDC representatives at the Farah DRRD offices to mark the start of the first five projects listed on the District Project Portfolio.
- The Bala Boluk and Pusht-e Rod Districts Governors' received support to produce factsheets highlighting local government services, and providing a contact list to help citizens access these services. These materials are part of the district government communications plan.
- On April 20th, a coordination meeting was held with the Farah DRRD Director and Khak-e-Safayd District Governor to discuss the upcoming DSC introductory meeting. This DSC meeting has since been postponed to early May due to insecurity issues in Khak-e-Safayd and ongoing fighting between the ANSF and the Taliban
- On April 17th, 16 sewing machines were purchased for the Ganj Abad village vocational training course in Bala Boluk, which provides tailoring training to 15 local women.
- During the week, seven CDCs signed Fixed Obligation Grants Agreements and first milestone payment documents for water divider projects in Bala Boluk District.
- The Farah DRRD computer class has been suspended due to a lack of attendance from DRRD staff. The main reason given was because staff were not provided with their own computers. The program is exploring options to resume the class once the MRRD/Stability Program purchases laptops for a mobile computer lab by the middle of May.
- To date, USAID has approved 22 Grant Applications put forward by the Bala Boluk DSC and four for the Pusht-e Rod DSC.



“These projects for Bala Boluk District are the result of your hard work and dedication,” said the Farah DRRD Director at a project inauguration ceremony on April 21st.

Badghis Province

- On April 18th, the Qadis Youth Association served up a volleyball tournament aimed at increasing school registration and attendance. For nine days, a total of six teams will be competing for a championship trophy provided by the Information and Culture Directorate. The association also produced banners encouraging school enrollment and highlighting the importance of education, a message which is part of an ongoing education campaign.
- On April 17th and 22nd, the Muqur District Governor organized a meeting with the DDA head to gather a list of influential elders as part of first steps to improve Tribal Engagement - a soft mitigating activity proposed by DSC members.
- On April, 20th, the Badghis PST Gender Officer was provided with ToT Nutrition training. Her knowledge will be cascaded down to female DSC members and to the local community.



Qadis youth take part in a volleyball tournament aimed at increasing school registration and attendance.

Herat Province

- On April 22nd, the 4th Pashtun Zarghun DSC meeting was held with participation of 82 people including 18 DDA members, 25 line departments' representatives and 39 community observers. The meeting updated the DSC members on the status of proposed mitigation activities, discussed a potential advocacy campaign for a proposed bridge project. By the end of the meeting, DSC members confirmed the previous proposed projects and also recommend eight hard mitigating activities and five tailoring vocational trainings for women.
- On April 22nd, in line with the Shindand District Governor's communications plan, a public meeting was held with sixty *mullahs* and DDA members to improve engagement with traditional religious leaders. The Governor discussed key roles that *mullahs* and religious leaders can play in promoting peace in the region, and to support ongoing poppy eradication campaigns in the district. During the meeting a number of attendees expressed their dissatisfaction with the some decisions made by local and central government, which may be a potential 'soft' mitigation activity for the MRRD/Stability Program in the future.



The Pashtun Zarghun DSC members proposed eight hard mitigating activities, and five tailoring vocational trainings for women on April 22nd.

Ghor Province

- The first DSC meeting in Chaghcharan has been scheduled for May 1st. Local government have already thrown their support behind the program and it is predicted that the meeting will be a successful one with both 'soft' and 'hard' mitigation activities rolled out at a fast pace.

Additional Herat-based HQ Support

- On April 21st and 22nd, a two-day Communications training was provided to all PST and DST communications staff. The training focused on building the communications capacity of district government officials to engage with district residents. Topics included communications skills, work-planning, and district government communications needs and capacities and producing communications materials such as brochures and posters.
- A baseline survey of community members in all seven districts of Herat, Badghis and Farah Provinces continued this week. To date 68 villages have been surveyed and over 1,000 people interviewed of the planned 3,000 surveys in 200 villages. The survey will provide a better initial understanding of the public's perception of government, and data will be used in the final program impact assessment.
- On April 22nd, a coordination meeting was held between the MRRD/SIKA-West Regional Coordinator, USAID representative, Herat Economy Director, DRRD representative and SIKA-West senior staff. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss reports requested by the Herat Provincial Governor and Economy Director. The participants agreed that program staff will prepare a presentation and include all activities, expenses and budgets used for the proposed projects in the districts. The presentation will be shared with the Economy Director and once approved by him the presentation will be provided to the Provincial Governor.



A local woman in Changan village in Shindand District is being interviewed for SIKA-West baseline survey on April 20th.