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STABILIZATION IN KEY AREAS (SIKA) – WEST

WEEKLY REPORT
(SEPTEMBER 29-OCTOBER 3, 2012)

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STABILIZATION IN KEY AREAS (SIKA) – WEST

WEEKLY REPORT

Submitted to:

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Prepared by:

AECOM International Development

DISCLAIMER:

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BACKGROUND

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) awarded AECOM International Development the Stabilization in Key Areas (SIKA)-West program on January 29, 2012. The SIKA-West 18-month contract (with an additional 18-month option period) is intended to increase stability and pave the way to transition in the western provinces of Herat, Farah, Badghis, and Ghor. The program will be led by the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) in partnership with USAID and SIKA-West.

KEY PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

SUMMARY OF WEEKLY REPORT

This was an important week for DRRD and the SIKA-West program in moving forward with its stabilization program, following the signing of the Implementation Letter (IL), reported last week. A key meeting was held by the Bala Baluk District Stabilization Committee (DSC) with the Bala Baluk Ulema Council. The Pusht Rod DSC was established and began work immediately on identifying Sources of Instability (SOI) in an inaugural meeting with strong support and participation from the District Entities (DEs) and community. The weekly Strategic District Stabilization Matrix (DSM) Meeting for Bala Buluk District resulted in the SIKA-West Program Departments moving forward together with the processing of eight projects for the District Project Portfolio (DPP). A letter from MRRD was received giving a green light for DRRD/SIKA-West to engage in the key districts of Shindand and Pusht Rod. DRRD and the SIKA-West program made preparations to hold an inaugural meeting next week in Shindand District to establish the DSC.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE WEEK INCLUDE:

INTERMEDIATE RESULT 1

Highlights:

- **Third Bala Baluk DSC Meeting - attended by 13 DSC Members, 15 Mullahs and 22 community observers:** On October 1st, the Bala Baluk DSC held its third meeting in the District Governor's office despite an early morning security incident in the immediate vicinity of the district center. The main focus of the meeting was for the DSC members to have an open discussion with the mullahs about insecurity in the district. The SIKA-West Farah Provincial Support Team (PST) led the review and discussion of the Bala Baluk DSM, which identified the Sources of Instability (SOI) root causes and mitigation activities.

During the meeting the DSC members requested the presence of the tribal leaders at the next DSC meeting due to their influence in the district. In addition, the *Ulema* offered their assistance to the DRRD and DG to invite an even larger group of the *Ulema* to another meeting. Mowlawi Abdull Zaher from Zeerkoh *Ulema*, stated that the government does not respect the *Ulema*, which is one of the main root causes for destabilizing the region and for the people joining the insurgent groups. He stated that the Mullahs would support the government under the condition that the government respects the *Ulema*.

The DSC members and *Ulema* expressed their strong support for Bakhsh Abad Dam, they promised to offer their lands and their family's assistance to secure the area and help the government if it is willing to build the Bakhsh Abad Dam. The DG also requested assistance to activate the existing local radio station in Bala Baluk District in order to respond to Taliban propaganda and broadcast campaign programs to support stability in the community. The meeting was attended 13 DSC Members, 15 Mullahs and 22 community observers.

- **Inaugural Pusht Rod DSC meeting – attended by 45 people:** On October 2nd, the Pusht Rod DSC was formally established in an inaugural meeting in the district center. A total of 45 people attended

the meeting included 22 DSC Members (six DDA members and 16 from government line departments). The DG welcomed the participants and expressed his willingness to support the DRRD/SIKA-West program and urged the other participants for their cooperation with the programs. On behalf of the DSC members, Mr. Habib Khan, an influential elder from the Massow village, offered the communities strong support for the program and to spare no efforts to improve peace and stability.

The Farah PST briefed the DSC on the objectives of the DRRD/SIKA-West program and requested the community elders to support the program as a way to end violent conflict in their community. The PST Farah IR1 Stability Officer led the DSC program orientation, explaining the members' roles and responsibilities. After the DSC orientation process, IR1 conducted training on the SAM and then led the discussion on identifying Sources of Instability (SOI), root causes and mitigation activities. The DSC Members identified one SOI: District Insecurity and the following root causes: Illiteracy (Lack of Education), Unemployment, Presence of Insurgents Groups, GIROA Corruption, Poppy Cultivation and Trafficking, and Community Conflicts. The Mitigation Activities for all root causes will be discussed in the next DSC Meeting, the date for which was not set due to security reasons.

- **Review and analysis of District Stabilization Matrix (DSM) leads to eight projects in the District Project Portfolio (DPP):** The Stability Program Department (IR1) moved forward with its review and analysis of the Bala Baluk DSM, which resulted in the initiation of eight projects in the Bala Baluk DPP. The DPP was then delivered to IR4 for further processing through the SIKA-West Program Departments in preparation for Chief of Party (COP) review and submission to USAID for approval.
- On October 3rd, USAID and SIKA-West representatives met with the Deputy Director of the Herat DRRD to discuss the engagement plan for Shindand District. SIKA-West is making preparations for an inaugural meeting on October 10th in the Shindand District Center.

Challenges

- NTR

Coming Week:

- Preparations for the establishment of the Shindand DSC and the holding of the inaugural meeting on October 10th.
- Follow up on the DSC Meeting in Pusht Rod District and preparations for the completion of the DSM
- Follow up on the DSC Meeting in Bala Baluk District, updating the DSM and making arrangements for another meeting with the *Ulema*
- Holding the SIKA-West HQ Weekly Strategic DSM Meetings for Bala Baluk and Pusht Rod.
- Follow up on the District Project Portfolios
- Follow up recruitment for HQ IR1 Stability Program Officers, IR Stability Officer Badghis and DST Team Leaders in Shindand and Pusht Rod Districts

INTERMEDIATE RESULT 2

Highlights

- On September 29th, the IR2 lead developed a plan for data collection in Herat and Badghis. According to the plan the PST Manager and Deputy Manager, in coordination with DRRD counterpart, will gather information about available services and service providers at the provincial and target district level.
- In Farah Province, data on Agriculture, Health and Education was collected by PST staff for Pusht Rod District.
- A graphic illustrator was selected to draw sketches for the SPC publication. This person will be a short-term contract, and will work closely with IR2 and IR3 staff.

Challenges

- NTR

Coming Week

- IR2 will follow up on the data collection process in Pusht Rod, with a first draft expected to be by October 9th.
- Information gathering for the Shindand SPC started on September 28th, with the IR2 lead working closely with the PST focal point and DRRD-Herat.
- A four day mission to Badghis has been organized from October 7-10 to provide an orientation on roles and responsibilities to the IR2-Resource Development. Along with PST Manager and DRRD focal point, the IR2 lead will also conduct meetings with relevant Government line Ministries, UN agencies and other international organizations to gather information about services being provided in the provincial and target district of Muqur and Qadis.

INTERMEDIATE RESULT 3

Highlights

- On September 30th, a Herat-based communication officer traveled to Farah and met the DRRD Deputy Director and communications counterpart in the Farah DRRD office. The goal of the meeting was to discuss the communication plan, which was developed by the DRRD counterpart and the PST communication officer. They also discussed a possible DRRD publicity brochure and a DRRD press release announcing the Pusht Rod rollout. As part of this publicity campaign, the DRRD will develop a contact list of all known journalists in the Western Region and a DRRD-drafted press release will be sent to the list by mid-October.
- On October 1st, the two communication officers conducted interviews with five selected candidates for the DST communications officer position in Bala Baluk. One of the candidates, who is a resident of Bala Baluk, has communication experience and influence in the community was selected.
- On October 2nd, a communication officer participated in the SIKA-West gender working group in Farah, which was attended by several government directorates, including DoWA. The group discussed producing a DoWA brochure. It was agreed that DoWA will finalize the topic of the brochure and gather the required information and photographs.
- On October 2nd, a Herat-based communication officer conducted a training on “*How to Develop a Communication Plan*” for the PST communications officer and the DSC communications focal point. This training will be repeated next week with additional DSC members. The Communications Department will then work with the DSC to produce a communications plan to help identify and prioritize communication strategies and activities to address SOI’s in Bala Baluk district.
- On October 3rd, two communication officers visited the only Farah radio station, “*Radio Faryad*” in order to obtain information on its programs. The radio broadcasts three hours in the morning and three hours in the afternoon. The main program is entitled, “*The People and Music*,” in which people contact the radio station to request their favorite music. No government news or information is announced on the radio. The radio station has recently received funds to produce a radio program on government activities. The PST communications officer will explore ways to collaborate with the radio station to disseminate information on government activities in Farah province.

Challenges

- NTR

Plans for the coming week

- On October 7th, the IR3 PST member plans to conduct training for DSC and DRRD counterparts on “*How to Develop a Communication Plan*”.
- The IR3 team will continue to gather information and meet with different INGO and NGOs to produce the Herat Provincial Profile.

INTERMEDIATE RESULT 4

Highlights:

- The Community Development Team (CDT) held a remote training for Bala Baluk DST staff on September 29th in preparation for field visits to Shiwan, Dehzak and Kanisk communities to conduct

pre-feasibility surveys of three community center refurbishment projects, which have been listed in the DPP.

- The CDT is currently working on developing five projects for the Bala Baluk DPP, covering vocational training programs in Dehzak, Shiwan and Kanisk Communities.
- During the week, the Community Development officers compiled a vocational training guideline to be used for all vocational training projects at the regional level.
- On October 1st, the Grants team conducted cost negotiations with a potential vendor regarding their budget for a computer training program for the Farah DRRD. The Grants team also conducted a technical and a cost evaluation for a proposal for English language training for Farah DRRD on October 3rd.

Challenges:

- An ongoing challenge is the issue of secure accommodation for national staff in Farah and Badghis. A guesthouse has now been identified in Farah and negotiations are ongoing with the owner to rent the property.

Coming Week:

- The CDT will push ahead with all tasks listed above, focusing on updating the DPP and negotiating outstanding RFPs.

PROVINCIAL ACTIVITIES

As part of capacity building, M&E is providing PST Managers with ongoing training to improve report writing abilities. To this end any information provided in the provincial activities section is kept as basic as possible, and as the program grows and the capacity of the PST Managers increases, then this section will expand in both quality and quantity.

FARAH PST

During the past week Farah PST staff focused on the following activities:

- Supporting the Resource Development Department by collecting data for the SPC in Pusht Rod District
- PST staff worked with their communications counterpart in the DRRD to come up with designs for a number of brochures covering the formation of a development council, publicizing National Solidarity Program (NSP) reconstruction projects, and publicizing successful water projects. Staff provided support to the DRRD on the production of a communications strategy, which will be implemented later in the year.
- Farah PST staff were also instrumental in organizing the two DSC meetings in Bala Baluk and Pusht Rod District. Working with the Provincial Governor and the Afghan National Police, they organized a security detail of 10 police and two vehicles to provide over watch to the meeting while traveling between the provincial center and Bala Baluk District.
- The weekly Gender Group meeting was held on October 2nd, with 15 people from different organizations (DoWA, WADAN, Education Department, DRRD, SIKA-West, NABDP and HOLD) in Farah Province. During the meeting, the representatives discussed potential gender-oriented vocational training courses in Bala Baluk and the production of a brochure for DoWA.
- PST staff were also involved in conducting initial surveys for projects listed in the DPP for Bala Baluk. Details of these projects are included in IR1 and IR4 activities.
- Staff moved ahead with a literacy program aimed at women, administering written tests for 16 female and male teachers, and interviewing 10 teachers who passed the test last week. Five teachers have been selected to act as trainers for the literacy program.

BADGHIS PST

During the past week Badghis PST staff focused on the following activities:

- Met with influential tribal leaders in two target districts in order to introduce the objectives of the SIKA-West program to them, as preparation for future DSC meetings lead by the DRRD and District Governors.
- Staff also spent the week collecting information for the Capacity Building and Gender Department to guide future vocational trainings in Badghis Province.
- The PST has identified three buildings that are potential guesthouse locations for visiting SIKA-West staff from the Herat HQ. Negotiations are ongoing.
- The PST M&E Officer collected Key Informant data to set a baseline for the IR3 indicator 3.4 in Muqur and Qadis Districts

HERAT PST

During the past week Herat PST staff focused on the following activities:

- On October 3rd, the Herat PST staff accompanied the ACOP to meet with the DRRD to discuss program roll-out activities in Shindand District, and to discuss relocation of the PST staff from the SIKA-West HQ to the DRRD premises.

GENDER AND CAPACITY BUILDING

SIKA-West Gender Programming HQ

- The Gender Department chaired the weekly Internal SIKA-West Gender Working Group on October 2nd, which allows for gender related discussions, updates and guidance between all IR's and other departments. During this week's meeting the following issues were discussed and decided upon:
 - **IR1-** Continue establishing contact with female members of the Bala Baluk DDA, as well as contact senior female members of the communities represented by the DSC members. These communities include Ganjabad, Dehzak, Shewan, Kanesk, Nawbahar, Aref Abad, Tapa Sadat, Gerani, Kal Kala, Said Noormamad, Zamardan, Pooza Langar, Kashman and Kariz Nabi.
 - **IR2-** Identify the services available for women and placing these services in the SPC. Over the past week, IR2 has updated a list of Service Providers that cater to the human development needs of men, women and children in Bala Baluk District. This list will be reviewed and the Gender Department will identify areas where existing services may be expanded and/or improved. WADAN Clinic is exploring ways of garnering DRRD support through the SIKA-West program, to fund a drug treatment center, which currently supports 20 beds for women and 15 beds for children.
 - **IR3-** Move forward with communications support on a brochure/poster campaign titled "Educated Women & Healthy Society". This messaging support will teach DOWA how to draft and write their own messaging through brochures and posters.
 - **IR4-** Prepare for vocational training programs and infrastructure programs for men & women In Bala Baluk. Over the past week, the following Bala Baluk DSC sponsored vocational training programs and infrastructure projects have been identified.
 - **M&E-** tracking all activities toward meeting program gender indicators. Over the past week, M&E has redesigned the reporting requirements for program activities and will provide training to the Gender Working Group and Field Trainers on these new requirements next week.

Capacity Building Headquarters Component

- In total 57 training modules covering IR1-IR4/M&E and Gender have been completed and translated into Dari and Pashto and shared with the SIKA-West program.
- Training Calendar for HQ, Farah, Herat, and Badghis updated as of September 26, 2012 and shared with all departments.

- Two CBD RFP's are currently being evaluated, RFP FH001 Adult Computer Programming for GIROA Personnel and RFP FH002 Adult English Language Programming. CBD plans to roll these programs out by the end of the month.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Highlights

- The M&E Department worked on producing drafts of the PMP and Work Plan, which have been forwarded to the Home Office for production.
- M&E also explored ways it can start capturing beneficiary data on “war affected families” in order to include this information in Afghan Info Database updates.
- M&E staff collected key informant interviews to set an IR3 indicator baseline in Bala Baluk and Pusht Rod Districts.

Challenges

- M&E continues to experience ongoing challenges in the report writing capacity of some staff members, particularly at the provincial level. To improve capacity, the M&E lead has designed a simplified report writing template, and will be holding weekly critique sessions for staff from all IRs.

Plans for the coming week

- Ongoing training presentations to Herat HQ staff and Herat PST staff, including Introduction to Gender Indicators.
- The M&E lead will also be completing the Bala Baluk Six-Month Engagement Plan and updating the Afghan Info Database, and completing the September Monthly report, following feedback from IR leads.

HR & RECRUITMENT

- To date, 87 employees (28 female, 59 male) have been hired and 49 positions are the recruitment process.

SIKA-West Recruitment				
Staff	Herat Office	Herat Province	Farah Province	Badghis Province
Hired	60	9	11	7
In process	14	9	16	10
Females hired	24	2	2	0
Males hired	38	7	9	7

DELIVERABLES

- Weekly Report
- Grants Manual

SECURITY OPERATIONS

- Security personnel conducted various Herat City moves without any incidents.
- APPF staff conducted security during a recent recruiting visit from September 15 -19 in Farah Province. The trip went smoothly with no incidents to report.
- The Embassy Air flight schedule has been erratic over the last week due to the terrorist attack in Kabul. Numerous flights have been cancelled, and field trips for expatriate staff will be put on hold until the schedule firms up.
- Continue to liaise with other projects operating within the Herat area.
- Conduct ongoing weapons training with APPF MST personnel.
- Conduct compound defense plan with expatriate personnel.

- Additional security upgrades have been submitted, and vendors have been visiting the compound to conduct a site survey
- Security SOPs are currently being reviewed by the SIKA-West Operations Manager

IMAGES



Inaugural meeting of the Pusht Rod DSC on October 2



Third meeting of the Bala Baluk DSC on October 3