



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Regional Agricultural Development Program (RADP)–North Contract No. AID-306-C-14-00002

FY2015

Quarter 1



January 30, 2015

CONTENTS

- ACRONYMS3**
- FY2015 Q1 REPORT: OCTOBER 1–DECEMBER 31, 20144**
 - PROJECT OVERVIEW4**
 - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY4**
 - ACTIVITY IMPLEMENTATION4**
 - PROGRAM APPRAISAL 10**
 - COLLABORATION WITH GIROA, OTHER DONOR AGENCIES AND OTHER
USAID PROJECTS 12**
 - MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES 17**
- ANNEX I: PERFORMANCE INDICATOR TABLE 19**

ACRONYMS

ACDI/VOCA	Agricultural Cooperative Development International and Volunteers in Overseas Cooperative Assistance
ARD	Agriculture and Rural Development
CARD-F	Comprehensive Agriculture and Rural Development Facility
CBCMP	Capacity Building and Change Management Program
CLIN	Contract Line Item Number
COR	Contracting Officer's Representative
DAI	Development Alternatives, Inc.
DCA	Dutch Committee for Afghanistan
DAIL	Department of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock
DoWA	Department of Women's Affairs
DRRD	Department of Rural Rehabilitation and Development
dTS	Development and Training Services, Inc.
FSC	Farm Service Center
GIRoA	Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
Ha	Hectare
HVC	High Value Crop
IDEA-NEW	Incentives Driving Economic Alternatives for the North, East and West
JDA	Joint Development Associates
kg	Kilogram
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MT	Metric Ton
NHLP	National Horticulture and Livestock Program
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OFWMP	On Farm Water Management Project
PCC	Production and Commerce Cluster
PDC	Provincial Development Committee
PIM	Provincial Implementation Manager
PMT	Program Management Team
PSP	Private Sector Partners
RADP-North	Regional Agricultural Development Program–North
SMFM	Sell More For More
STIP	Science, Technology, Innovation and Partnerships
ToT	Training of Trainers
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VFU	Veterinary Field Unit
WASH	Water Access Sanitation and Hygiene

FY2015 Q1 REPORT: OCTOBER 1– DECEMBER 31, 2014

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Activity Start/End Dates

May 21, 2014–May 20, 2019

Prime Implementing Partner

Development Alternatives, Inc. (DAI)

Sub-Contractors/Sub-Awardees

Agricultural Cooperative Development International and Volunteers in Overseas Cooperative Assistance (ACDI/VOCA), Development and Training Services, Inc. (dTS), Dutch Committee for Afghanistan (DCA), Joint Development Associates (JDA), Pax Mondial Risk Management Company, RSI Consulting, Afghan Public Protection Force

Project Description

RADP-North advances food and economic security for rural Afghans in six Northern provinces. To achieve this, the program strengthens the capacity of farmers in improved production in the wheat, high value crop and livestock value chains. Its activities enable farmers to increase their commercial viability and competitiveness in response to market demand, thereby generating greater income opportunities and empowering families to better meet their household needs. RADP-North uses a value chain facilitation approach to address numerous bottlenecks and identify lead firms within area capable of leveraging positive change. The final piece of RADP-North's holistic framework is supporting a policy environment through advocacy and dialogue that strengthens the private sector.

Geographic Coverage

Badakhshan, Baghlan, Balkh, Jowzjan, Kunduz and Samangan provinces

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The first quarter of FY2015 began with RADP-North technical staff conducting desk research and interviews with a wide variety of stakeholders in its wheat, high value crop (HVC) and livestock value chains in support of its value chain strategies and FY2015 work plan. In addition, the program's Environmental Manual, Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) plan and household baseline survey report were all submitted to USAID for review. The program's first activity, a series of mobile seed marketing activities in Balkh province, was implemented by CLIN 1 staff in early December. The HVC team identified over 190 potential stakeholders across seven districts of Balkh province and began developing four concept notes for activities that will be launched in the coming quarter. The CLIN 3 team assessed 30 Veterinary Field Units (VFUs) to gauge their potential interest and capacity in serving as cashmere collection centers as part of RADP-North's cashmere production and commerce cluster (PCC).

ACTIVITY IMPLEMENTATION

CLIN 1: Wheat Value Chain

The CLIN 1 team conducted a thorough study of the wheat value chain that included a

document review and more than 95 interviews of wheat stakeholders along seven nodes of the value chain, including seed companies, input dealers, cooperatives, traders, large, medium- and small-sized flour mills, and bakeries. Interviews and desk research were conducted throughout October and the information collected fed into its value chain strategy and RADP-North's FY2015 annual work plan.

The value chain strategy observed seven areas in which the dynamics of the wheat value chain must be understood:

- Demand and supply, production for home versus commercial consumption and the role of imports;
- End markets, two distinct consumer taste profiles;
- Sub-optimal production techniques;
- Significant yield differences between rainfed and irrigated areas;
- Farmer decision-making, risk, and innovation;
- Diet and nutrition; and
- Enabling environment.

The first year's activities were based on this information, which will focus on on-farm productivity; private sector partners (PSPs) and market linkages across the value chain.



Sher Abad Seed Company unloads certified wheat seed during RADP-North's mobile seed distribution pilot project in Dawlat Abad district

CLIN 1's agricultural team worked intensively with representatives from seed companies and farmers' cooperatives to address the issue of limited direct sales of seed.¹ Program staff met with different seed companies, cooperatives and Ag Depots in Balkh, Samangan and Jowzjan provinces. Five private seed enterprises in Balkh expressed interest in marketing seed directly to farmers as they had certified seeds stored in their warehouses but required RADP-North's assistance in linking them to farmers as none of them had any direct ties to farmers. RADP-North then developed a mobile seed marketing activity—its first—that would enable the companies to sell their certified wheat seed to members of farmers' agricultural cooperatives. RADP-North encouraged

companies to reduce their prices from 1,850 AFN (\$31) per 50 kg bag to 1,500 AFN (\$25) to make it more affordable for farmers without risking companies' profit margins. In the end two firms—Sher Abad Seed Company and Balkh-e-Sabz Seed Company—agreed to lower their prices. A set route of villages in Balkh, Dawlat Abad, Dehdadi, Nahre Shahi, Sholgara and Khulm districts was agreed upon in late November and the mobile market took to the road on December 4th and 8th.

Altogether, 121 farmers purchased 155 bags of certified wheat seed during the mobile marketing activity. Both seed enterprises stated that mobile marketing was an innovative way to engage a previously untapped customer base. The owner of Sher Abad Seed Company, Haji Shah Mohammad, said "We never marketed seed like this before. I was surprised by farmers'

¹ Private seed enterprises sell the majority of their inputs to government seed distribution programs and international donor-funded programs at higher prices than if they sold directly to farmers. In recent years this has led to increasing uncertainty surrounding seed companies' and farmers' supply as subsidized distribution programs have been reduced.

motivation to buy it. This was a success for us because this seed would have been stored in the storehouse but instead we sold it! I think farmers know the value of improved seed and now they know my company has it.”

The success of mobile marketing resulted in Sher Abad and Balkh Sabz scaling up their direct marketing beyond the scope of the activity once they saw that it could work. This resulted in an additional 1,037 bags of seed being sold to 310 farmers. A breakdown of sales by district is presented in the following table.

	Districts ²	Quantity of bags sold (50 Kg/Bag)		Total # of Bags Sold	Number of Farmers that Bought Seeds		Total # of Farmers	Total Revenue (AFN)
		Mobile Marketing	Direct Sales		Mobile Marketing	Direct Sales		
1	Balkh	71	105	176	62	78	140	264,000
2	Dawlat Abad	11	-	11	7	-	7	16,500
3	Dehdadi	63	324	387	57	110	167	580,500
4	Nahre-Shahi	-	194	194	-	60	60	291,000
5	Khulm	10	-	10	3	-	3	15,000
6	Sholgara	-	64	64	-	10	10	96,000
7	Sheberghan	-	350	350	-	52	52	525,000
Total		155	1,037	1,192	129	310	439	1,788,000

In addition, CLIN 1 technical staff developed a concept note for herbicide training to take place in February, just prior to the wheat growing season. A single, well-timed herbicide spray can result in 30% higher yields than in non-sprayed check strips. RADP-North will deliver a training of trainers (ToT) on weed control to farm service centers (FSC) and Ag Depots who will then replicate the training directly to farmers. Each ToT session will be two days and will require an 11.5% cost share by ToT recipients.³ Program staff coordinated closely with these PSPs throughout November and December to solicit their participation and to gather their feedback on defining the activity.

Training locations were set as follows:

- Balkh province—Balkh, Sholgara, Dehdadi and Khulm districts;
- Samangan—Hazrat Sultan, Aybak and Khuram districts;
- Baghlan—Puli Khumri and Baghlani Jaded districts;
- Jowzjan—Sheberghan, Aqcha and Faizabad districts.

CLIN 1 staff worked together with the Environmental Compliance Officer to prepare paperwork the Environmental Report Review, Environmental Review Form and Pesticide Clearance Form for submission to USAID in December.⁴ Training posters, brochures and flip charts were also developed in collaboration with the RADP-North communications team and submitted to USAID for approval.

² Mobile seed distribution took place in the first six districts listed in the table, while additional, unplanned direct sales also occurred in Sheberghan.

³ Cost share has been calculated as \$10 labor/day for a total of \$20 per ToT participant, which comes to 11.5% total.

⁴ RADP-North submitted the second draft of its Environmental Manual to USAID on December 21, 2014. It was approved on January 5, 2015.

Technical staff met with representatives from 35 cooperatives in Khulm (four), Sholgara (10) and Balkh (21) districts of Balkh province and nine cooperatives in Center district of Jowzjan province to outline the upcoming weed control training and to discuss beneficiary selection from their respective members. Coordination meetings were also held with relevant village leaders and Department of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (DAIL) extension staff.

CLIN 2: High Value Crop (HVC) Value Chains

The CLIN 2 team's main focus during this reporting period included recruitment of national staff and the development of the FY2015 annual work plan and the three HVC value chain strategies. The analyses helped draw value chain maps, identify actors and determine opportunities and constraints within the grapes/raisins, dried fruits/nuts and melon value chain. Strategies were then developed for each HVC based on these analyses. Staff designed sub-activities and specific interventions to address the gaps RADP-North identified in its strategy analyses and to target a large variety of actors within the PCC. The CLIN 2 team members reached out to potential partners and beneficiaries, including Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) offices and other agricultural programs.⁵ As of December 31, 2014, CLIN 2 staff have identified 195 potential stakeholders—eight agricultural associations, 31 agricultural cooperatives, 71 farmers, 52 green house operators, 14 National Horticulture and Livestock Program (NHLP) extension agents and 19 agribusinesses—in Balkh province that are active in at least one of RADP-North's HVC value chains.

Preparations for the following four HVC activities also began in December:

- **Integrated Pest Management Workshops (Dried Fruits/Nuts):** The workshops are aimed at increasing the knowledge of ag retailers and lead farmers working with pesticides and will have a specific focus on improving interaction between these two groups and to ensure that a safe pesticide application protocol is in place. RADP-North will hold seven training workshops, each consisting of 30 participants, to promote the use of dormant oil which is applied on HVC trees in winter to protect them in the summer when the trees produce fruit and are more susceptible to pests and diseases. This activity builds off the introduction of dormant oil application by previous donor-funded programs, which was done on a limited basis.
- **I and T Grape Vine Trellising Demonstrations (Grapes/Raisins):** RADP-North will showcase the cost share opportunities available to farmers who are interested in trellising their vineyards by demonstrating how to properly prune trellised grape vines. Staff will also share the potential increases in harvest (up to 30% in three years) that can result from adopting this technology. RADP-North will use existing trellised vineyards converted under the USAID-funded Incentives Driving Economic Alternatives for the North, East and West (IDEA-NEW) program to conduct these demonstrations.
- **Melon Varietal Test Plots (Melons):** RADP-North will establish four demonstration plots in four provinces to test three new melon varieties' resistance to melon flies and climatic adaptability.⁶ These varieties were recommended to the CLIN 2 team by the Program Management Team's (PMT) Senior Technical Advisor as they have already produced positive results when they were planted in Uzbekistan, which has a similar climate to northern Afghanistan. RADP-North secured a commitment from the Helal Agricultural and Seeds Company to provide the seeds for the trials at no cost to the program. The CLIN 2 team will also test at least two local melon varieties by planting greenhouse-produced seedlings earlier in the season to see whether melons will be more resistant to

⁵ Details of these meetings can be found below under 'Collaboration with GIROA, Other Donor Agencies and Other USAID Projects.'

⁶ The new varieties are Meiron, Raymond and Segev.

melon fly larvae because their skin will have had more time to harden prior to the insertion of the larvae by melon flies.

- **Mobile Marketing:** RADP-North will replicate the SMS marketing system that was championed by IDEA-NEW, with great success, in 2014. SMS is already being used successfully by ag wholesalers, retailers, input companies and others in other countries around the world. IDEA-NEW identified interest among wholesalers to introduce SMS as a marketing tool into the Afghanistan market and take advantage of the opportunity to establish direct and targeted communication between actors along the supply chain. Wholesalers can use mobile messages to increase business in three ways:
 1. Increase loyalty of customers through provision of information
 2. Increase sales through promotion of products
 3. Improve application and outcomes to increase repeat sales

Implementation of CLIN 2 activities is slated to begin early in the coming quarter.

CLIN 3: Livestock Value Chain

After signing its sub-contract on October 1, the livestock team engaged in a rigorous start up process. The first month of the reporting period was dominated by hiring national staff and meetings with numerous CLIN 3 stakeholders—market retailers, butchers, slaughterhouses, relevant associations and agribusinesses—to gather information for the livestock value chain strategy. The team identified obstacles, such as inadequate wool collection from local livestock owners and the resulting need for importing wool from other provinces (Ghor and Kandahar) or countries (Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia), that focused its activity development for the coming year.

In mid-November, CLIN 3 staff met with Abdul Basir Hotak, the owner of the Herati Cashmere Plant, who expressed strong interest in purchasing around 100,000 karakul pelts from northern traders. A series of discussions took place over the next six weeks to determine how RADP-North could support Herati Cashmere's plans to open a new cashmere and karakul processing plant in Mazar-e-Sharif. Potential areas for collaboration included the preliminary feasibility study, improving the productivity and fiber quality of cashmere goat breeders, and organizing cashmere collection through VFUs. In late November, technical staff began gauging the interest of VFUs to join the RADP-North-facilitated cashmere PCC. To date, 18 VFUs agreed to take part in the spring 2015 cashmere collection—four each in Jowzjan and Samangan provinces and 10 in Balkh. CLIN 3 will also work with local ag depots, FSCs and farmer associations to ensure their harvested cashmere is also sent to local VFUs. The collected cashmere will then be transported from these 18 VFUs to the two main collection centers in Jowzjan and Balkh where it will be sold to cashmere traders.⁷

A series of internal meetings took place throughout the quarter between senior CLIN 3 managers and the PMT to discuss submission of grant concepts and other program management issues.

The CLIN 3 team established its provincial offices in Baghlan, Kunduz and Badakhshan in November with staff recruitment continuing into the coming quarter. The Samangan office opened in December and staff recruited extension workers for Aybak, Feroz Nakhchir and Hazrat-e-Sultan districts.

CLIN 4: Enabling Environment

N/A for the reporting period.

⁷ These 18 VFUs agreed to serve as cashmere collection points without being paid for this service.

RADP-North received the following feedback from USAID during the drafting of its M&E plan in mid-November: “Our biggest concern is with CLIN 4 and not as a measurement problem per se but with the contract line item itself. We think the effort should be minimized to try to accomplish something more manageable. CLIN 4 could be more focused to supporting an “enabling environment” via local policies, cooperatives, associations, etc. In this case, the effort would be more successful and have more direct impact on attaining the goals of CLINs 1-3.” RADP-North plans to discuss this with USAID in the coming quarter so that it can start planning activities.

Gender

RADP-North’s Gender Outreach Manager joined the program in late November 2014 and introduced herself and the program to relevant Department of Women’s Affairs (DoWA) officials. She also met several times in December with CLIN 1 staff to familiarize herself with their Water Access Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) program.

Nutrition

In late December, CLIN 1’s WASH team began developing their nutrition curriculum. Curriculum development will include benchmarking with existing nutrition training materials, especially those developed for Afghanistan. The initial concept note draft will be submitted to the PMT next quarter.

Science, Innovation, Technology and Partnerships (STIP)

Please refer to the mobile marketing bullet point at the end of the CLIN 2 section.

Upcoming Plans

RADP-North’s key expected activities in the coming quarter include:

- Conduct weed control training of trainers to Ag Depots and FSCs who will then replicate the training to 3,000 farmers;
- Develop two CLIN 1 concept notes
 - Strengthening Seed Systems: Working with seed companies to develop private sector market, increase farmers’ access to improved seed by 1) introducing and promoting sampler packet sizes; 2) increased sales outlets; and 3) mobile seed marketing
 - Increase seed companies’ awareness:
 - Field level demonstrations and mobile seed marketing
 - Work with seed companies to utilize their strengths to develop improved grain supply enterprises
 - Developing knowledge of milling requirements
 - Working with Industrial Millers
 - Develop a detailed knowledge of specification requirements for milling grain and quality testing needs
 - Developing an open pricing structure for milling grain
 - Exploring contracting opportunities for suppliers of quality milling grain
 - Finalize plans for CLIN 1’s nutrition and hygiene training
 - Complete recruitment for the five remaining CLIN 2 national staff positions as well as CLIN 3 deputy director post and provincial staff roles
 - Complete a minimum of five CLIN 2 concept notes
 - Integrated Pest Management Workshops (described above)
 - I and T Grape Vine Trellising Demonstrations (described above)
 - Melon Varietal Test Plots (described above)
 - Sell More For More (SMFM)

	<p>non-zero women's contributions to at least some form of household income. On average among those households, women were estimated to have contributed 12.35% of the total household income.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The estimated contribution of women to income was greatest in livestock income. Households where women contributed to livestock income saw, on average, a 23.3% contribution from women's work, while in other income areas the estimated contribution from women's work averaged 10.3% or lower. <p><u>IRRIGATION SOURCES</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The majority of households made use of either one or two irrigation sources. A total of 5.28% of surveyed households had no reliable irrigation sources at any point during the year and relied on rain for their agricultural crops. ▪ Only 9.76% of the surveyed households had access to reliable irrigation year-round. Most households had at least one reliable source of irrigation only in the spring. <p><u>LAND OWNED AND TENANTED</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ On average, surveyed households worked 15.18 jeribs of agricultural land, or roughly three hectares. The largest farm reported worked 1,040 jeribs or about 208 hectares (ha). Farm sizes were relatively consistent across the entire surveyed region, with provincial averages ranging from 2 ha in Badakhshan to 4.1 ha in Jowzjan. ▪ Wheat was the most common use for land, and accounted for the bulk of most households' operations. A total of 76% of the surveyed households planted at least one jerib of wheat, with an average planting size of 11.76 jeribs, or 2.35 ha. ▪ About 85% of households had access to their own water source for household use (as opposed to irrigation, although in many cases the source was the same). Well or spring water was the most common source of household water, followed by river water. 	<p>concerns about the disparity between its value chain approach and targets listed in the contract and come to a suitable agreement.</p>
--	---	---

	<p>MARKET ACCESS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Nearly all of the households surveyed (96%) described themselves as having access to roads. The majority (63%) had access to gravel roads. Other road types were less common but still present across all provinces, and in many cases households had access to more than one type of road. ▪ Respondents reported it took an average of 54 minutes to transport their goods to market, with estimates as low as one minute (for goods sold from the household or farm gate) and as high as 450 minutes. ▪ Asked to name obstacles that hindered their goods from reaching market, 43% specified that they had no obstacles, and were able to get their goods to market without difficulty. Among named factors, bad roads were the most commonly cited, and instability the least. 	
--	---	--

Lessons Learned

M&E staff that observed the mobile wheat seed distribution pilot project in early December also noted the following:

- Future mobile distribution tours should occur earlier, preferably in October;
- Seed companies lacked marketing abilities, both in terms of having informational leaflets or other printed materials ready to hand to farmers and also in oral salesmanship skills. Program staff should encourage firms to develop marketing tools and provide training on how to engage new potential customers who may be uncertain about purchasing seeds.

These recommendations were shared with technical teams so that similar activities planned for next season can be amended accordingly.

COLLABORATION WITH GIROA, OTHER DONOR AGENCIES AND OTHER USAID PROJECTS

RADP-North and GIRoA Coordination

RADP-North CLIN teams met with various GIRoA officials during the reporting period. At each meeting, program staff presented RADP-North’s objectives, geographic coverage, target value chains and planned activities. Introductory meetings were held with the following GIRoA personnel between October 1 and December 31, 2014:

October 2014:

October 2: Jowzjan DAIL Director and Cooperatives Director

October 9: RADP-North’s Jowzjan Provincial Implementation Manager (PIM) met with the Sheberghan Municipality’s Marketing Manager to collect information on the number of flour

retailers and wholesalers, city- and home-based bakeries in the province for use in the wheat value chain strategy.

October 12: The Deputy Chief of Party attended the Balkh Provincial Development Committee (PDC) meeting, which was also attended by the Balkh Deputy Governor, the Directors of DAIL, Education, Health, Municipality, Rural Rehabilitation and Development, Environment, Economics, Women's Affairs, Public Service Affairs as well as various non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other USAID partners, such as the Agricultural Development Fund, Financial Access for Investing in the Development of Afghanistan and Assistance in Building Afghanistan by Developing Enterprises.

October 15: The PMT's PIM for Samangan met with the heads of the Samangan Extension Department, Livestock Department and DoWA. The latter informed RADP-North that no women's cooperatives existed in the province. She also mentioned that 20 provincial-level women's shuras have been established in Aybak as a mechanism to help solve critical problems facing women in villages, particularly familial issues. Each shura consists of volunteers and they are introduced as DoWA's formal representatives in the village. If a shura cannot solve an issue they are responsible for reporting it to DoWA. The shuras have also been tasked with assisting organizations (NGOs, donor-funded projects, etc.) in identifying beneficiaries for upcoming capacity building trainings.

October 15: RADP-North's Jowzjan PIM met with DAIL's head of livestock to collect data on the number of provincial households involved in livestock, the cost of sheep and other information for use in the livestock value chain strategy.

October 16: Balkh DAIL office manager, Admin/Finance Manager and the heads of the Cooperative and Extension Departments.

October 23: DAIL and Natural Resources Directors from Samangan Province.

October 27: The Samangan PIM met with the DAIL's livestock officials and gathered information for Provincial Implementation Manager visited DAIL in Samangan, according to collected information on the number of families involved in livestock on a commercial basis and the estimated number of cows, sheep and goats in the province.

November 2014:

November 5: Samangan DAIL Director

November 10: Conducted a meeting with Sher Abad Seed Company, Amiri Seed and Agricultural Services Company, Karwan-e-Sabz Ag Depot, various flour mills and officials from the Balkh Cooperative Department to introduce CLIN 1 stakeholders to each other.

November 10: Met with the Assistant of the Samangan DAIL Cooperative Department and the heads of the Larghan Farmers Agricultural Cooperative, Abash Farmers Agricultural Cooperative and Zhwandoon Farmers Cooperative.

November 13: Balkh Agriculture and Rural Development (ARD) sectorial meeting held at the DAIL conference hall

November 16: Kunduz staff conducted an introductory meeting with the Department of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (DRRD) for Kunduz province. Program staff explained the program's focus and planned activities. The DRRD Director welcomed RADP-North to Kunduz

and stated his department was ready to cooperate as needed with program staff. The DRRD's Deputy Director shared the contact list of CDC's for all Kunduz districts.

November 17: Samangan ARD meeting

November 23: Director of the Balkh Cooperative Department

November 26: RADP-North's provincial staff began working from their temporary base at the Kunduz DAIL, who graciously agreed to rent two rooms to the project for a three month period while the project found a long-term space, negotiated a lease, furnished the office and hired staff.

November 27: CLIN 1 team held a value chain meeting that was hosted by the Balkh DAIL. The agenda focused on marketing wheat seed and securing DAIL's support of RADP-North's mobile distribution pilot project in Balkh, Dawlawtabad, Khulm and Sholgara districts in early December.

December 2014:

December 12: RADP-North PMT members participated in the Jowzjan ARD meeting that took place in the DAIL office. The Jowzjan DAIL Director reported that 400 MT of wheat seed was sold to farmers at the subsidized price of 560 AFN/bag. Seeds were subsidized by the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) in 11 districts during the wheat cultivation season.

December 14: The Balkh ARD meeting, where the DAIL Director recommended that RADP-North distribute certified wheat seed to farmers at subsidized prices and introduce new technology to the farmers instead of applying chemicals (herbicides).

December 17: HVC staff visited Khulm district's DAIL staff to discuss RADP-North's HVC activities in 2015. DAIL officials expressed their interest in cooperating with RADP-North throughout its implementation and shared a list of lead farmers and extension workers operating in Khulm District.

December 17: The Samangan ARD meeting. The DAIL Director shared that 200 MT of wheat seed was distributed at 30% subsidized prices (546 AFN/50 kg bag) to 4,000 farmers in five districts: Roy du Ab, Aybak, Feroz Nakhchir, Hazrat Sultan, Darai Suf Bala and Darai Suf Payeen. MAIL subsidized the wheat seeds. The DAIL Director suggested that RADP-North establish a provincial office to ensure stronger implementation of the program.

December 18: The CLIN 2 team visited Sholgara District's DAIL staff at their office in Sholgara and introduced the RADP-North high value crop value chains development programs. The Sholgara DAIL staff stated their readiness to cooperate with RADP-North team. A list of lead farmers and extension workers operating in Sholgara District was collected.

December 22: CLIN 2 team members met with the Balkh DAIL's Planning Officer and Agriculture Services Officer to discuss planned HVC activities and received a complete list of DAIL extension agents operating in seven districts of Balkh Province.

December 25: The Kunduz Regional Manager met with the head of the Kunduz Provincial Council to introduce the program's objectives and activities. The head of the Provincial Council welcomed RADP-North and confirmed the Council's support of the project's activities in Kunduz. Both parties agreed to keep each other updated on future activities.

December 30: RADP-North's Kunduz Regional Manager met the Alia Abad District Governor and head of the Aliabad Qaram Quli Agriculture Cooperative and Improved Wheat Seed Enterprise to discuss RADP-North's planned activities in the province.

December 31: The Kunduz Regional Manager met the District Governor of Chardara, who promised to support RADP-North's work in the district.

Links with Other Donor Agencies or Programs

October 16: The HVC team met with the DFID- and Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs-funded Comprehensive Agriculture and Rural Development Facility (CARD-F) Cotton Production Specialist to discuss each program's activities. RADP-North found that CARD-F is only focusing on developing the cotton value chain and livestock (milk cows).

October 22: RADP-North staff had an introductory meeting with the Project Manager for Balkh province of the World Bank-funded On Farm Water Management program (OFWMP).

December 18: CLIN 3 Project Manager, RADP- North Deputy Chief of Party and Senior Technical Advisor met the Program Team Leader of the GIZ-funded Sustainable Economic Development and Employment Promotion (SEDEP) project to discuss coordination as both programs work in the same areas and similar value chains. Both teams agreed to meet regularly in order to avoid the duplication of activities.

Collaboration with Other USAID Projects

On October 19, HVC team members met with NHLP's Regional Coordinator in Mazar-e-Sharif. NHLP is one of the main programs working in the development of tree crops in northern Afghanistan. The Value Chain Advisor introduced RADP-North to NHLP and explained the program's objectives. NHLP also shared its goals and briefly explained its past and future plans regarding tree crops. NHLP's focus is more on the production side with the establishment of new orchards while RADP-North's planned activities focus more on harvest and post-harvest of the select high value crop value chains. It is clear that there is a lot that RADP-North can leverage, such as inclusion of the most successful NHLP-developed lead farmers, with NHLP. In fact, that information was requested at another meeting that was held on November 5. A month later, the HVC team met again with NHLP's Regional Coordinator for the North in order to get a list of lead farmers that NHLP has been working with. However, NHLP requested that RADP-North introduce a primary point of contact to them via formal letter before they can provide this information. In order to speed up the process, staff are now collecting lead farmer information via extension agents in the districts



RADP-North team member with NHLP's Provincial Coordinator at the grape drying house in Jowzjan province.

In late October, HVC staff conducted a joint visit with NHLP's Provincial Coordinator for Jowzjan to one of

the grape drying houses that NHLP is building for a lead farmer in Pirmazid village of Sheberghan City.⁸ These raisin drying houses have the capacity to process 15 MT of grapes into high quality, clean raisins and they are the appropriate infrastructure wherein RADP-North could demonstrate improved grape drying practices to its beneficiaries.

Also in October, the HVC team met with one member from the Afghanistan Almond Industry Development Organizations to discuss the constraints they have documented so far in almond production and marketing. The shared information was valuable in developing CLIN 2's dried fruits/nuts value chain strategy, which was submitted to USAID on October 30 along with RADP-North's other value chain strategies.

November 2: CLIN 2 and PMT staff met with Checchi personnel who are conducting the irrigation preliminary inventory and assessment study for USAID. Both teams shared their areas of work, implementation strategies and identified areas of potential collaboration in RADP-North's districts.

November 16: RADP-North technical staff participated in a Global GAP presentation that was conducted by the Afghan Farm Service Alliance project, which aims to convert subsistence agriculture to commercial agriculture. It provides capacity building training, high quality inputs (seeds, fertilizer, and machinery) and market linkages to HVC farmers that commit to Global GAP requirements.

December 2: RADP-North's Gender Outreach Advisor and Chief of Party attended USAID's workshop on Integrating Nutrition and Gender into the three current RADPs.

December 9: RADP-North's Deputy Chief of Party participated in an On Farm Water Management meeting organized by USAID in Kabul. The General Director of Irrigation from MAIL, representatives from the World Bank, Capacity Building and Change Management Program (CBCMP), Afghan Agriculture Extension Project, the three RADP programs and USAID's Office of Agriculture were in attendance. The purpose of the event was to share information about the World Bank-financed OFWMP and explore the following points:

- How USAID implementing partners might enhance their project's results by contributing to irrigation agriculture, i.e. increasing agricultural productivity after OFWMP, which has renovated irrigation systems and contributed to more efficient water course management through improved management and modernization of the Mirab system.
- The potential of USAID project intervention, methodology and resources to address farmers' access to and utilization of inputs; extension and improved agronomic practices for irrigated agriculture, value chain based linkages to markets enhancing farmers' access to more remunerative markets.
- The scope of current projects to contribute to improve irrigation technologies and practices including precision land leveling, drip irrigation, sprinkler irrigation, Flexi Flume piping and other technologies suitable for horticulture production.

December 27: RADP-North's Kunduz PIM attended a coordination meeting with the USAID-funded CBCMP II at the joint CBCMP II/Kunduz DAIL office. Representatives from both projects shared their objectives and activities in the province.

⁸ The lead farmer owns over five jeribs of vineyards and covered 20% of the development and construction costs and NHLP provided a grant for the remaining 80%.

MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

Personnel

The following table lists the permanent personnel changes that occurred during the reporting period.



Adaption of the Activity

RADP-North submitted the first draft of its FY2015 work plan to USAID on October 30, 2014. Initial comments from USAID resulted in the CLIN 3 team deciding not to establish a VFU association as it would compete with the existing Afghan Veterinary Association. The work plan is scheduled for wider USAID review in mid-January 2015, so other activities may be modified based on future feedback.

Modifications and Amendments

RADP-North submitted its first contract modification to its Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) on November 27. The proposed modification included the following changes:

- Increased the amount of obligated funding; and
- Replaced Section E.3 (M&E) with the current mission's wording and updated it to match the intermediate results and indicators listed in the approved M&E Plan.

A branding waiver covering all of RADP-North's VFU activities under CLIN 3 was submitted to the COR on December 11. RADP-North is requesting the waiver to ensure the continuity of VFUs' branding and marketing approaches under previous and current USAID-funded programs, including RADP-South. As of the end of the reporting period, the waiver is being reviewed by USAID.

ANNEX I: PERFORMANCE INDICATOR TABLE

Please see the attached Excel document.