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

FY2015

Quarter 2



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## ACRONYMS

AAEPII	Afghanistan Agricultural Extension Project II
ACDI/VOCA	Agricultural Cooperative Development International and Volunteers in Overseas Cooperative Assistance
ARD	Agriculture and Rural Development
CLIN	Contract Line Item Number
COR	Contracting Officer's Representative
DAI	Development Alternatives, Inc.
DAIL	Department of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock
DCA	Dutch Committee for Afghanistan
DoE	Department of Economy
DoWA	Department of Women's Affairs
dTS	Development and Training Services, Inc.
FAO	UN Food and Agriculture Organization
FSC	Farm Service Center
GIRoA	Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
Ha	Hectare
HVC	High Value Crop
IDEA-NEW	Incentives Driving Economic Alternatives for the North, East and West
IPM	Integrated Pest Management
JDA	Joint Development Associates
kg	Kilogram
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NHLP	National Horticulture and Livestock Project
OFWM	World Bank On Farm Water Management Program
PDC	Provincial Development Committee
PIM	Provincial Implementation Manager
PMT	Program Management Team
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
RADP-North	Regional Agricultural Development Program–North
SEDEP	Sustainable Economic Development and Employment Promotion (GIZ)
STIP	Science, Technology, Innovation and Partnerships
ToT	Training of Trainers
ToF	Training of Farmers
NFAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

USAID  
VFU

United States Agency for International Development  
Veterinary Field Unit

## **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), Alcis, 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 second quarter saw solid gains in activity implementation, yet progress continued to be constrained by management problems that led to the resignation of the COP on February 26. The change in management, first with Bob Richey as Acting COP until the arrival of Rich Magnani on March 5, has reestablished a positive and mutually supportive working environment. In addition, changes in structure of processing concept notes have markedly improved the speed from concept note draft submission to internal approval. And with the support of our grants specialist, the RADP-North team has the complete set of tools needed to begin filling the grants pipeline.

Highlights of the second quarter:

### CLIN 1

- Implemented weed control training for 3,139 wheat farmers in Baghlan, Balkh, Jowzjan, and Samangan provinces. Training of trainers (ToT) was conducted for 25 trainers, and they subsequently trained 270 groups of farmers (ToF).
- Continued development of the 10-part hygiene and nutrition training curriculum and hired four nutrition trainers for Balkh province. The incorporation of hygiene lessons were compiled including pictorial handouts.

### CLIN2

- Identified 187 potential high value crop stakeholders in Jowzjan and Samangan provinces (of which about one-half were potential lead farmers) and 30 lead farmers from Balkh, Jowzjan and Samangan provinces.
- Developed four concept notes for year one activities—World Food Uzbekistan International Agricultural Show, Trellising Technology, Melon Variety Demos, and Integrated Pest Management (IPM).
- Conducted six training sessions attended by 120 grape producers on introduction of T & I Grapevine Trellising Systems and Pruning of Vines, selected 11 lead farmers from four target districts in Kunduz Province and received has approval for implementation of melon varietal trials.

### CLIN 3

- Developed three concept notes – cashmere, karakul pelts, and hygienic meat slaughter - and staffed its provincial offices in Baghlan, Badakhshan, Kunduz, Samangan and Jowzjan.
- Conducted ToT for karakul pelt processing to 30 field staff including extension workers and VFU staff. They subsequently provided ToF to 1,200 farmers (1,000 men and 200 women).CLIN-3's labor and material revised budget was approved by DAI on Feb.
- Conducted coordination meetings with DAIL and CBCMPII/Baghlan, CARD-F and NHLP at Kunduz and Mazar regions, and RADP-North staff at Kunduz and Mazar regions participated in PDC, ARD and NGO forum meetings.

### CLIN 4

No activity this quarter

## Cross Cutting

- **Gender.** Conducted introductory visits to Nahreshahi and Dehdadi districts of Balkh province, and Shebergahan district of Jowzjan province with CLIN1 and CLIN 2 teams. respectively. Discussed opportunities with women members of Sadaqat cooperative in the Nahreshahi district of Balkh province, and women saffron famers in Sheberghan district of Jowzjan province.
- **Grants.** A grants specialist on STTA briefed all RADP-North CLIN technical leads on the grant award process and provided training on the grants administrative process for all technical staff. Discussions were also held on potential grant opportunities in line with program objectives considering that Grant awards will be made based on their potential for high returns, and their ability to strengthen the value chains.
- **Alternative Development.** For the five Balkh and Badakhshan poppy production districts, RADP-North proposed to conduct a baseline and impact surveys which will help the program understand the impact of poppy cultivation on local economies. It will improve our understanding of the land tenancy structure in these communities, and the balance between wheat, high value horticulture, and livestock and the implications for poppy cultivation and resource allocation within communities.

## ACTIVITY IMPLEMENTATION

### CLIN 1: WHEAT

#### Weed Control Training

CLIN 1 was focused throughout January on final preparations for February's weed control trainings. Technical team members met with agricultural depots and Farm Service Centers to secure 25 trainers to attend Training of Trainer (ToT) sessions in each of the four provinces. Once trainers were identified, staff met with district level cooperative departments from the DAILs in Balkh, Baghlan, Jowzjan and Samangan provinces to select trainings areas. At the same time, staff met with cooperative heads in Balkh, Dehdadi, and Sholgara districts (Balkh province) to explain the benefits of using herbicides and the weed control training program. The response was universally positive in support of the activity.

The activity's Environmental Review Form (ERF) was finalized on January 14 and was approved by USAID's Mission Environmental Officer the following week.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, PMT procurement staff began procuring backpack sprayers and personal protective equipment. The former was slowed due to limited available inventory among the qualifying bidders.<sup>2</sup> This led to a joint decision by CLIN 1 and PMT to postpone the first planned ToT by one week to allow for responses to the procurement notices. The PMT operations team contacted other eligible bidders and found one that met the technical specifications and the supply requirements within the activity's timeframe. That intervening week also allowed more time to translate training materials, arrange for printing, and ensure that technical teams were familiar with the training agenda.



*The second day of a ToF session in Agcha district, Jowzjan province*

The weed control ToT ran from February 2 through the 16<sup>th</sup> and trained 37 trainers from six Farm Service Centers (FSCs) and Ag Depots in 12 districts. Each session ran for three days, two of which were classroom-based learning. On the first day, trainees were led through a focus group discussion of their current perceptions and common understanding of weeds and weed control practices. Many lessons were exchanged between farmers during the first interactive session where mechanical and biological control methods are discussed. Mechanical means are currently the primary method of controlling weeds, but labor shortages can result in high weed control costs. Mechanical means integrated with the use of chemicals is an economically viable approach and can cover large areas. The second day focused on common misconceptions about the timing of weed control, and the trainers also introduced backpack sprayers. The third day addressed the handling and management of sharing sprayers among a group of farmers as well as a practical demonstration of proper weed control application in a field where participants can return to observe the impact. Shams Ur Rehman, a trainee from

<sup>1</sup> Waivers were subsequently submitted to USAID to allow RADP-North to purchase two herbicides (Fenoxaprop-p-ethyl, Clethodim and 2,4-D, Bromoxynil) for grass leaf and broadleaf control. They were approved on February 19<sup>th</sup> and March 16<sup>th</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> Bidders who stated they had sufficient numbers of sprayers in-stock in reality had none.

Chimtal district (Balkh), told CLIN 1 staff, “We love that you bring this training to us. Please tell them [USAID] that we appreciate the training like this, your help to us, and tell them to please continue to [provide the funding] to continue this training.”

Following the ToT, the newly qualified trainers replicated the weed control training to 3,139 farmers in 270 groups of about 12 farmers per group. The Training of Formers (ToF) covered the period from February 2 through March 31 and was very well received by beneficiaries. A typical response from one farmer was “This training is very useful for us. I am 36 years old and this is the first time I’ve been told about controlling weeds, please tell USAID to continue to provide these trainings.”

### Weed Control Training

Province	District	Name of Participating FSCs/Ag Association	Total # of Trainers Trained	Total # of Farmers Trained
Baghlan	Puli Khumri	Tri Elyans Farm Service Center	2	399
	Baghlan Jaded		2	357
Balkh	Balkh	Koh Toor Farm Service Center	2	273
	Dehdadi		2	172
	Khulm		2	143
	Sholgara		2	263
Jowzjan	Aqcha	Women’s Farm Service Center and Khurasan Agriculture Association	2	129
	Faizabad		2	261
	Sheberghan		3	363
Samangan	Aybak	Karwan Sabz Farm Service Center	2	309
	Hazrat Sultan		2	211
	Khuram Sarbagh		2	259
<b>Total</b>			<b>25</b>	<b>3,139</b>

Also in March, CLIN 1’s technical staff began working on the next round of concept notes, which will focus on the seed market system and consist of three separate activities with seed suppliers, mills and farmer cooperatives:

- Seed supplier activity. Seed enterprise companies received many years of support by FAO, but this support has ended and many of the enterprises are not able to market on their own. CLIN 1 plans to work with the enterprises and link them to farmers through Ag depots and other input suppliers, and also to flour mills and food processing companies which can inform the seed enterprises about the types of flour required and the varieties needed to produce those types of flour.
- Mill activity. Mills are interested in Afghan wheat but availability and price are constraints. The market is influenced by Pakistan and Kazakhstan wheat and flour imports. As local production increases, mills will increasingly be able to rely on local wheat, but it will be critical to identify the types of flour and the varieties needed.
- Farmer cooperative activity. We are conducting weed control activity through agricultural cooperatives because of their reach to farmers. We will continue to expand our interventions with cooperatives which are registered in the Department of Co-ops in DAIL.

### Planning for Nutrition Training - Hygiene & Nutrition Curriculum

Hygiene lessons with pictorial handouts were compiled during the quarter as well as nutrition lessons. The four nutrition lessons were outlined and prepared by JDA’s technical staff focusing on household nutrition needs. The four lessons for nutrition cover the following subjects:

1. Lesson 5- Good and Bad Nutrition
2. Lesson 6- Food Groups
3. Lesson 7- Mother and Child Nutrition (Including Pregnancy)
4. Lesson 8- Cooking Techniques

The nutrition lessons outline was translated into Dari and work continues on the pictorial handouts which require additional village-level photos to convey realistic messages to the communities. A simple survey was completed by the RADP-North project team to identify basic information on the education, health, water sources, nutrition, agriculture, and women's involvement in the communities. The survey was done in 9 villages of Balkh and Dehdadi districts Balkh province.



*CLIN 2 staff interviewing a female greenhouse operator in Dawlatabad (Balkh)*

## **CLIN 2: HIGH VALUE HORTICULTURE**

The CLIN 2 team continued collecting lists of associations, cooperatives, green houses and National Horticulture and Livestock Program (NHLP) extension workers in Jowzjan and Samangan provinces throughout January. Staff interviewed 63 lead farmers, 7 associations, 50 cooperatives, 38 greenhouse operators, 19 extension workers, and 10 agribusinesses. Among the questions were the following:

- Have you produced high value crops?
- How many jeribs of land do you use for high value crops?
- What are your annual sales of high value crops?
- How many seasonal laborers do you hire?
- Are you affiliated to any farmer organizations?

One of the next steps will be to conduct an assessment of the needs of selected associations and co-ops as formal organizations, and lead farmers in order to adapt the Sell More For More (SMFM) curriculum to best meet their needs for postharvest handling, aggregation, and marketing and organizational management.

Greenhouse operators may be also be involved as a result of the melon trials.

### **Lead Farmer Selection**

The lead farmer identification process was completed in February in all HVC-targeted districts of Balkh, Jowzjan, and Samangan Provinces. A total of 71 lead farmers were identified, 30 of which have confirmed their willingness to work with RADP-North—nine lead farmers for the melon value chain, 11 for grapes/raisins, and 10 for dried fruits/nuts. For Year 1, the target is to work with 48 lead farmers. Each farmer met RADP-North's lead farmer criteria, which included strong market linkages with the



*RADP-North VCS collecting information from a lead farmer*

markets, ability to manage ten seasonal employees not part of their household, and annual sales in excess of US\$ 20,000. Together, these 30 lead farmers own a total of 804 jeribs of land cultivated with grapes, nuts and/or melons. Every lead farmer was selected in collaboration with district level DAIL staff.<sup>3</sup> The CLIN 2 team will assess the needs of these lead farmers and their outgrowers as informal farmer groups in order to finalize the SMFM curriculum, and will deliver a shortened module of SMFM to the lead farmer groups.

The lead farmer selection process was completed in Kunduz Province as well with a total of 11 lead farmers selected with another 10 identified as prospective lead farmers. The lead farmer identification process will be completed by mid-April 2015.

### Training on T & I Grapevine Trellising

Six training sessions were conducted to introduce the T&I grapevine trellising system in Balkh, Jowzjan and Samangan provinces. A total of 120 grape growers attended these trainings. All were men. Each four-hour training session consisted of both theory and hands-on exposure with a special focus on the advantages of T & I trellises and how to prune grapevines onto the trellises. The trainings were delivered in the form of a farmer field school.

The trellising system requires a two- to three-years transition phase as the grapes adapt to the new concrete posts. Subsequently, yields can triple when compared to traditional grape-growing techniques. A quick assessment at the end of the trainings revealed that almost all the grape growers want to trellis their vineyards. However, the 50% cost-share is a serious constraint for many farmers. Therefore RADP-North is seeking to link them with potential sources of finance. The district DAIL extension workers initially helped the RADP-North team to identify beneficiaries, but when agents learned that RADP-North policy did not allow financial support for DAIL staff, they showed little interest in collaborating.



*RADP-North staff showing how to prune grapevine properly, Shbergha – Jowzjan*

The district DAIL extension workers initially helped the RADP-North team to identify beneficiaries, but when agents learned that RADP-North policy did not allow financial support for DAIL staff, they showed little interest in collaborating.

### T&I Trellis Training

Province	District	Farmers Trained	Training Date
Balkh	Chemtal	23	March 23
Balkh	Dehdadi	16	March 24
Balkh	Nahrishahi	21	March 25
Samangan	Hazrati Sultan	15	March 29
Jowzjan	Sheberghan	22	March 30
Balkh	Dawlatabad	23	March 31

### Melon Varietal Trials

Implementation of melon varietal trials commenced in April with plans to seed local varieties of melon seeds (Arkani and Zurmati) in four greenhouses in Balkh, Baghlan, Jowzjan, and Kunduz Provinces in the first week of April. The purpose of these trials is to test the resistance of new melon varieties against melon flies. Seeds of both varieties will be planted in the greenhouses followed by seedling transplanting to the field to determine potential impact on melon fly

<sup>3</sup> For more details about these meetings, please refer to the Collaboration with GIRoA, Other Donor Agencies and Other USAID Projects section of the report.

infestation. In addition three imported varieties will be tested with direct seed field planting as a contrast to the local varieties. The CLIN2 value chain specialist in coordination with the Project Management Team has selected lead farmers in targeted districts of Kunduz province.

### **Sell More For More (SMFM)**

One of the early lead farmer support activity will be SMFM training. The SMFM curriculum includes modules on post-harvest handling, aggregation, marketing, recordkeeping, operations and cost management. In April focus groups will be conducted with 14 lead farmer groups and 5 associations to identify their needs which will guide the design of the training material. The CLIN 2 team will also use SMFM to build the capacity of cooperatives and associations and to promote participatory training, business skills development, business services, information dissemination, bulk buying, and collective marketing. These organizations are also participating in focus groups as their learning needs will probably be different from the more informal lead farmer groups.

### **Science, Innovation, Technology and Partnerships (STIP)**

The CLIN 2 team organized an informational meeting on February 1, 2015 with 17 agricultural input suppliers (wholesale and retail services) in Mazar-e-Sharif, Jowzjan and Samangan that expressed interest in RADP-North's SMS marketing activity and are eligible to apply for grants. Program staff discussed how agribusinesses could use text messaging services to market their services to farmers in a timely and cost effective manner. Messages can be customized depending on location, weather, updated crop information, crop-specific timing of fertilizer and/or pesticide application, availability of inputs, the location of provider-sponsored farmer field days, and other training activities. RADP-North proposes to provide marketing training, assist agribusinesses setting up the SMS system with an Afghan telecommunications company and provide ongoing technical support to grantees over a six month period. Staff engaged in a lively question and answer session with attendees. Fifteen of the participants signed up to attend a daylong conference on February 3 in Kabul.



*Hamidullah, representative from Karwan Sabz retailer, during the SMS conference in Kabul*

This event was sponsored by the Incentives Driving Economic Alternatives for the North, East and West (IDEA-NEW) program, which launched the SMS marketing pilot activity in 2014 in seven provinces. The purpose of the conference was to introduce the SMS concept to new agricultural input suppliers by letting them hear directly from IDEA-NEW's grantees. RADP-North's beneficiaries actively participated in the question and answer sessions and came away energized by the positive feedback and the frank discussion of lessons learned.<sup>4</sup>

### **International Exhibitions**

In February, the CLIN 2 completed a concept note to support the participation of Afghan agribusinesses in the World Food Uzbekistan International Agricultural Show in Tashkent on

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<sup>4</sup> According to a recent IDEA-NEW survey, 73% of farmers who received the marketing SMS said the messages helped them farm more effectively. Many gave ultimate approval by spreading the SMS information within their social network. Sixty-six percent said they bought inputs as a result of the SMS, with 44% of those buyers saying they would not otherwise have bought that product.

March 25-27. The team identified a total of 11 agribusinesses to represent Northern Afghanistan at this event, which is one of the largest food exhibitions in the region and an ideal professional networking place for regional and international suppliers, producers and traders.<sup>5</sup> The emphasis was on companies well positioned to benefit from new trading partners to countries north of Afghanistan, i.e., they have products available for sale in commercial volumes and may have some experience trading with Pakistan, India, the United Arab Emirates, and Uzbekistan.

RADP-North vetted the companies through interviews to confirm the criteria necessary for participation, which included the following:

- Must be registered with GIROA
- Capable of exporting dry fruits/nuts (almond, dry apricot, pistachio, walnut, raisins)
- Capable of exporting fresh fruits (grapes and melons)
- Capable of buying significant volumes of fruits and nuts from farmers in the RADP-North operating area
- Must have proper packing system
- Must have an operational business in the RADP-North area
- Must be interested in participation and willing to cost-share
- Able to deliver 50 kgs of products to exhibit at the show

Each participating company was encouraged to have 2 people attend. Each company would have their own booth that would be manned by one representative at all times to greet visitors and answer questions. The second representative would be able to visit other exhibitors to attract new business and/or learn more about their goods. Two representatives per company would offer beneficiaries far greater exposure. The two representatives were selected based on their involvement in sales; they include sales managers, marketing managers, and or vice presidents of the companies.

Each agribusiness agreed to provide about 35% cost share by covering the full costs of promotional materials as well as their airfare, accommodations, and meals. RADP-North would be responsible for event registration, booth hire, visas, and arranging participants' roundtrip road travel from Mazar-e-Sharif to the airport in Termez, Uzbekistan as well as shipping products to/from the event. Upon returning, CLIN 2 staff would publish a report of the trade show and follow up with companies to further assist them through post-harvest sales. The program would also host a post-show luncheon where participants could share their experiences with other agribusinesses interested in attending similar regional trade shows.

The Pace Group was selected as the service provider to deliver all fair-related services including visas. Despite efforts by Pace Group and the RADP-North team, the Uzbekistan Embassy reported that they could not issue visas in time to allow for travel to the show. Unfortunately, the activity was cancelled.

The CLIN 2 team also developed a concept note to support participation in the World Food Azerbaijan trade fair to be held in Baku on May 21-23. The team identified eight agribusinesses from Balkh, Jowzjan and Kunduz Provinces. The concept was cancelled when the team learned that there was no Azerbaijani embassy or consulate in Afghanistan. As a result, visas would have to be processed at the Azerbaijan consulate in Islamabad, and the team could not be assured that the visas could be obtained in time.

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<sup>5</sup> In 2014, 151 exhibitors from 22 countries attended the World Food Uzbekistan event, which attracted over 6,100 visitors.

### CLIN 3: LIVESTOCK

In January, the CLIN 3 team engaged in an intensive recruitment schedule for its provincial offices in Balkh, Baghlan, Badakhshan, Kunduz, and Samangan. Candidates were selected for the majority of positions, with staff joining RADP-North in early to mid-February.<sup>6</sup>

#### VFU Support

Technical staff finalized questionnaires that will be used to assess Veterinary Field Units (VFUs) in all six of CLIN 3's target provinces in the third quarter. VFUs are specialized, community-based private businesses providing a range of quality services on a fee for service basis to local livestock owners. The purpose of the survey was to select VFUs based on their marketing potential. Thirty VFUs were selected to take part in karakul value chain and the 30 VFUs for cashmere.

Staff selected and trained on karakul value chain March 9-10:

No	Province	No. of VFUs	No. of local extension workers		Staff trained	Farmers trained
			Male	Female		
1	Kunduz	4	2	1	7	280
2	Balkh	9	3	3	15	600
3	Jozjan	5	2	1	8	320
	Total	18	7	5	30	1,200

Staff selected for training on cashmere value chain on April 7-11 in Mazar:

No	Province	No. of VFUs	No. of local extension workers		Staff trained	Farmers trained
			Male	Female		
1	Balkh	9	4	2	15	1500
2	Jozjan	4	2	1	7	700
3	Samangan	4	3	1	8	800
	Total	17	9	4	13	3,000

VFUs will undergo six months of classroom and practical training by CLIN 3 staff at the DCA training center. The training will improve the capacity of VFUs to provide quality services and products including extension and outreach training on livestock husbandry, animal nutrition and proper feeding practices, the importance of promoting market linkages in cashmere and karakul, hygienic meat slaughter and meat handling, animal health services (vaccination and de-worming), disease surveillance and reporting, and other topics based on community needs.



*Karakul TOT in Mazar e Sharif*

<sup>6</sup> Please refer to the Personnel table for more information on staff hiring.

## Cashmere and Karakul Training

In February, CLIN 3 technical staff developed two concept notes which were approved in early March:

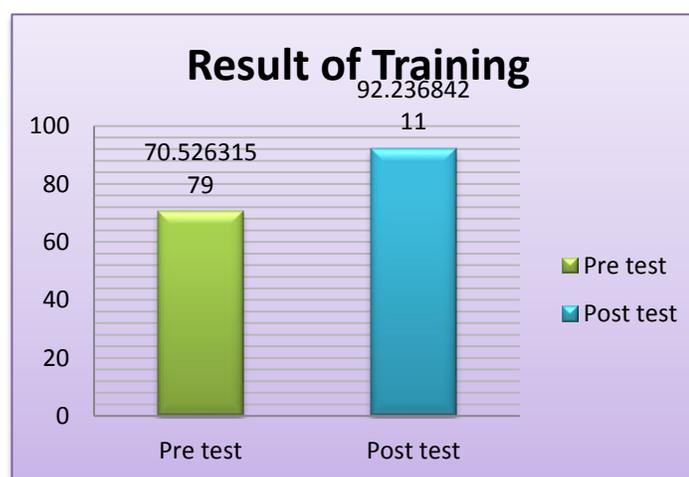
- Cashmere. Conduct a five-day cashmere harvesting ToT to 17 VFU staff and 13 local extension workers who will replicate the training (ToF) to 3,000 farmers. All trainees will then be linked to two cashmere collection points that will be established in Jowzjan and Balkh provinces. Cashmere from both of these locations can be sold to the Herati Cashmere Processing Plant.
- Karakul pelts. Train (ToT) 30 VFU staff and local extension workers on improved drying methods for processing karakul pelts. ToT participants will then train 1,200 karakul farmers (ToF) who will be introduced to karakul buyers. Training materials were developed in conjunction with staff from the Karakul Institute.

On March 9 and 10, CLIN 3 staff conducted ToT for karakul pelt processing in the Jaihoon conference hall in Mazar-e-Sharif for 49 participants from the six targeted provinces as shown in the table.

### Karakul Training of Trainers

	Position	Male	Female	Total
1	Provincial coordinator	2	0	2
2	VFUs	17	0	17
3	Provincial extension and value chain officers	4	1	5
4	Local extension workers	7	5	12
5	Trainers CLIN-3	2	0	2
6	DAIL/GIRoA	4	0	4
7	M&E CLIN-3	1	0	1
8	CLIN-3 coordinators Training Coordinator, Field Coordinator & extension and value chain	3	0	3
	<b>Total participants</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>46</b>

The training started with a pre-training evaluation to determine trainee knowledge and skills which has been compared with results from post-training evaluation. The chart below indicates comparisons of the average percentage for pre/post training assessment results of the trainees' knowledge and skills.





*Karakul Pelts Practical Training at Faizabad District of Jowzian Province*

processing.

Classroom training was carried out by a CLIN 3 training coordinator at the Karakul Institute. This was followed by practical training on proper slaughtering of sheep, cleavage of the skin, removal of tissues from the skin, and proper methods of waste management. Training also covered pelt processing and grading and sorting based on color, size, and quality. This training was conducted for 1,200 sheep owners (1,000 men and 200 women). Trainees were provided with a pelt processing kit which included 3 metal drying frames, scissors, protective glasses, face masks, plastic brushes, rubber shoes, Detol-soap, and two poster/tip-sheets carrying messages and information on karakul

### **Other Market Linkages**

In late January, CLIN 2 staff met with Rabia Maryam (a Balkh DoWA representative), owner of Rabia Maryam Handicrafts Company to discuss areas outside of RADP-North's current CLIN 2 value chains where women have greater presence. She suggested that RADP-North support the silk value chain because it is a good income-generating activity for women. She noted that RADP-North could work with up to 500 women per province in silk production. She also mentioned saffron and potato production. Potato production offer a counter seasonal opportunity when silk production is not available. Processing potato chips is an additional opportunity for women.

In early March the provincial female extension workers and the CLIN 3 value chain officer also met with the head of Rabia Mariam Handicraft Company. The company is working with 17 groups, each with 20 women producing wool in Samangan, Jowzjan, and Balkh provinces. The discussion covered CLIN 3's objectives to reach female beneficiaries. No concrete action plans emerged, but an agreement was made to continue the discussions in the near future to develop mutually beneficial activities.

In mid-March, CLIN-3 staff met with the president of Herati Cashmere and Skin Processing Plant in Kabul who agreed to participate in the cashmere quality and cashmere value chain training to be conducted in early April.

### **CLIN 4: ENABLING ENVIRONMENT**

As a result of consultations with USAID following the late October submission of the second draft of the Year One work plan, RADP-North recognized that policy initiatives requiring significant involvement with GIRA at the central level are beyond the project's purview. Instead, the project will focus on the enabling environment in the three commodity CLINs. Interventions will be designed based on continuing interactions with stakeholders. The start of these activities will be later in year one, extending through year two. Consequently, there is no substantive reporting for the second quarter.



*Female greenhouse farmer in Dehdadi district (Balkh)*

## CROSS CUTTING ACTIVITIES

### Gender

The first draft of a framework for gender integration strategy for RADP-North project has been developed for articulating the gender strategy within the 5DE<sup>7</sup> and GPI to the project's existing gender focused programs and activities.

In the second quarter the Gender Outreach Manager visited Nahreshahi and Dehdadi districts of Balkh province, and Shebergahan district of Jowzjan province. The visits were planned to meet with women downstream actors and collect information related to their roles in the value chains, access to productive resources, and their decision making over production related to on-farm activities, and their opportunities and challenges.

The Gender Outreach Manager and CLIN 2 staff met with women members of Sadaqat cooperative in the Nahreshahi district of Balkh province. The cooperative was established in 2011 by women farmers engaged in small scale commercial farming of onions, cotton, alfalfa, sesame, and wheat.

In Sheberghan district of Jowzjan province, one saffron farm with 15 women employees is working on a 1,000 square meter production area. One other 35 member women's group is also engaged in saffron farming. These women shared their interest in expanding into melon farming and silk rearing.

### Nutrition

In February, CLIN 1 hired 4 nutrition outreach workers. The outreach workers have completed hygiene training. The nutrition outreach team together with the CLIN 1 agriculture team identified locations and target farming communities in Baghlan, Samangan, Jowzjan and Balkh provinces. The team started mobilizing village elders and communities in sensitizing activities including preliminary meetings related to nutrition and agriculture and the scheduling of hands-on nutrition and agriculture training. The nutrition, training curriculum will be finalized early in the third quarter. In line with the needs identified in the 2013 National Nutrition Survey (NNS) for Afghanistan and USAID's nutrition strategy, the nutrition training curriculum is expected to address identified needs through an agriculture lens.

### Alternative Development

USAID requested that RAPD-North offer an approach to alternative development in the 5 poppy districts in Balkh and Badakhshan provinces. Included in the third draft of the year one workplan, RADP-North suggested a baseline study to be followed by an impact assessment. We discussed this general approach with David Mansfield, whose company conducted the recently published IDEA-NEW impact assessment. The unique feature of the suggested approach would be to add the baseline survey to permit enhanced impact analysis. The baseline will help the program understand the impact of poppy cultivation on local economies in which it will implement activities. It will also provide an opportunity to better understand the land tenancy structure in these communities as well as the balance between wheat, high value horticulture, and livestock and the implications for poppy cultivation and resource allocation within communities. A strong understanding of these dynamics will help ensure that RADP-North's activities do not have an adverse effect on vulnerable households, such as sharecroppers, day laborers, etc. The baseline results will assist in developing activities that

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<sup>7</sup> Five domains of empowerment (5DE) and Gender Parity Index (GPI), sub-indices of Women's empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI).

focus on increasing rural household incomes and employment, promoting crop diversification and improving food.

### **Grants Under Contract**

An STTA Grants Specialist arrived on March 21 to provide startup support to the Grants Program Market Development Fund (MDF). His focus is on the startup of the grants unit and providing training to the RADP-North program staff on the management of the grants portfolio in compliance with USAID and DAI rules and directives. He is also providing leadership and oversight of the grants implementation process for the first round of grants.

By the end of the second quarter, the grants specialist completed the following:

- Review of the RADP-North approved grants manual, program objectives, and the role of the MDF, which will be used by awarding grants under the contract to achieve specific objectives as detailed in the program's results framework.
- Meetings with all RADP-North CLIN technical leads to discuss and guide them on the grant award process. Discussions were also held on potential grant opportunities in line with program objectives considering that Grant awards will be made based on their potential for high returns, and their ability to strengthen the value chains.
- Started preparing grant presentation to provide training to RADP-North Staff of all CLINs.

## **THIRD QUARTER PLANS**

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

### **CLIN 1: WHEAT**

In early April CLIN1 will submit concept notes for Conservation Agriculture training, Contract Reaping training and PICS bags training. Further activity is described below:

#### **Activity 1.1: Develop private sector systems for input and technology supply**

*Sub-activity 1: Identify ways for seed companies to market and distribute directly to farmers*

- Marketing seed through new alternative outlets. Developing two concept notes around the seed market system including development of small seed pack size and supporting seed enterprises as new outlets to sell seed.

#### **Activity 1.2: Facilitate delivery of extension services to improve farming techniques**

*Sub-activity 2: Wheat variety extension using participatory approaches*

- Developing a concept note for participatory variety selection of wheat seed for farmers.

*Sub-activity 3: Advanced farmer groups for soil & water conservation systems*

- Conservation Agriculture concept note designed late in the second quarter for submission early in third quarter.

#### **Activity 1.3: Promote improved post-harvest handling techniques by farmers**

*Sub-activity 1: Develop model for contract harvesting with owners of tractors*

- Contract reaping concept note designed late in the second quarter for submission early in third quarter

*Sub-activity 2: On-farm, scalable storage solution: PICS training for women linked to 1.6*

- PICS bags grant designed late in the second quarter for submission early in third quarter.

#### **Activity 1.4: Improve market linkages among farmers, agribusinesses and consumers**

*Sub-activity 1: Assist seed enterprises in adapting their costs for a new market*

- Interviews with private sector seed companies started in the second quarter will continue in third quarter to map certified seed produced by each company by variety.

#### **Activity 1.6: Improve household health and nutrition**

*Sub-activity 1: Develop nutrition training course*

- Complete the nutrition curriculum and concept in April. Internal and USAID curriculum reviews in May, with early June training start date.
- Nutrition trainers will receive the full nutrition training curriculum.

## **CLIN 2: HIGH VALUE HORTICULTURE**

### **Grapes/Raisins Value Chain**

#### **Activity 2.1: Work with farmers to increase production**

*Sub-activity 1: Broader adoption of trellising technology*

- Identify post makers for trellising in Baghlan, Kunduz and Badakhshan and determine existing infrastructure from previous donor programs to guide implementation.
- Identify need and link to potential sources of finance for trellising. STTA advisor in May will examine available finance and farmer needs for those using 50% cost-share MDF that require financing for their 50% share.

*Sub-activity 2: Train farmers and work with MAIL extension workers in collaboration with AAEP/II*

- Conduct field search in Baghlan, Kunduz and Badakhshan to determine status of existing trellised vineyards for demo sites.

#### **Activity 2.2: Improve management of farmer organizations**

*Sub-activity 1: Provide business planning, HRM, and member services development training*

- Adapt management module of SMFM curriculum for training planned for fourth quarter.
- Needs assessment survey of 8 farmer organizations to modify SMFM modules.
- Select training provider(s) to deliver SMFM training to target groups using MDF.

*Sub-activity 3: Assist farmer organizations to aggregate commodities and link to buyers*

- Determine upgrading needs of farmer organizations and identify technical assistance and grants opportunities.

#### **Activity 2.3: Promote Improved Post Harvest Handling Techniques**

*Sub-activity 1: Promote effective PHH systems*

- Collect and analyze information on constraints to effective PHH system and adapt PHH module of SMFM.

#### **Activity 2.4: Develop lead farmers to mentor other farmers in their communities**

*Sub-activity 1: Identify lead farmers*

- Select 12 lead additional farmers for SMFM training and to lead informal farmer groups.

*Sub-activity 2: Mentor lead farmers in GAP*

- Demonstrate GAP to lead farmers and facilitate GAP training of farmer groups.

*Sub-activity 3: Support farmer organizations*

- Link with existing grape/raisin organizations.

**Activity 2.5: Improve market linkages among farmers, agribusinesses and consumers**

*Sub-activity 1: Trade Fairs*

- Select firms to participate in World Food Istanbul (September) and World Food Almaty (November). Provide training to trade show participants.

*Sub-activity 4: SMS marketing for input suppliers, farmers, and traders/aggregators*

- Design SMS marketing concept note that builds on IDEA-NEW's existing service for late third quarter/early fourth quarter grant implementation.

**Activity 2.6: Increase agribusinesses' management and technical capacities**

*Sub-activity 1: Conduct Business Edge training for agribusinesses*

- Identify target agribusinesses, design concept note for Business Edge training.

**CLIN 2 — MELON VALUE CHAIN**

**Activity 2.1: Work with farmers to increase production**

*Sub-activity 1: Introduce new melon varieties based on market demand*

- Test new varieties for melon fly susceptibility through demos in Balkh, Kunduz, Jowzjan and Baghlan provinces.

*Sub-activity 2: Melon seedling cultivation*

- Provide technical assistance to existing and new greenhouse managers. Four women-operated greenhouses contracted to produce melon seedlings.

*Sub-activity 3: Promote IPM*

- Determine proper pest control strategy through DAIL, donor programs, universities, and farmer service centers and prepare training curriculum based on best practices.
- Submit IPM curriculum for DOC review and concept note to deliver IPM training for 4,000 farmers; implement IPM training on/about June 1.

**Activity 2.2: Improve management of farmer organizations**

*Sub-activity 2: Improve management capacity of organizational leadership to build membership*

- Refer to grapes/raisins section.

**Activity 2.3: Develop lead farmers to mentor other farmers in their communities**

*Sub-activity 1: Identify lead farmers*

- Select 12 lead farmers based on baseline survey, community leaders, and DAIL input for SMFM training.

*Sub-activity 2: Support farmer organizations*

- Link with existing melon organizations.

**Activity 2.4: Improve market linkages among farmers, agribusinesses and consumers**

*Sub-activity 1: Trade Fairs*

- Refer to grapes/raisins section.

*Sub-activity 2: SMS marketing for input wholesalers*

- Refer to grapes/raisins section.

**Activity 2.5: Increase management and technical capacity of agribusinesses**

*Sub-activity 1: Conduct Business Edge training for agribusinesses*

- Refer to grapes/raisins section.

## **CLIN 2 – Dried Fruits/Nuts**

### **Activity 2.1: Improve management of farmer organization**

*Sub-activity 1: Provide strategic planning, business planning, HRM and member services development training*

- Refer to Grapes/raisins section,

*Sub-activity 2: Assist farmer organizations to aggregate commodities and link to buyers*

- Identify upgrading needs of organizations and design technical assistance and grants support.

*Sub-activity 3: Improve management capacity of organizational leadership to build membership*

- Refer to grapes/raisins section.

### **Activity 2.3: Develop lead farmers to mentor other farmers in their communities**

*Sub-activity 1: Identify lead farmers*

- Select 12 lead farmers based on baseline survey, community leaders, and DAIL input for SMFM training.

*Sub-activity 2: Support farmer organizations*

- Link with existing dried fruit/nut organizations.

### **Activity 2.4: Improve market linkages among farmers, agribusinesses and consumers**

*Sub-activity 1: Trade Fairs*

- Refer to grapes/raisin section

*Sub-activity 4: SMS marketing for input suppliers, farmers and traders/aggregators*

- Refer to grapes/raisin section.

### **Activity 2.5: Increase agribusinesses' management and technical capacities**

*Sub-activity 1: Conduct Business Edge training for agribusinesses*

- Refer to grapes/raisin section.

## **CLIN 3: LIVESTOCK**

### **Activity 3.1: Develop capacity of VFUs**

*Sub-activity 1: Provide funding and technical assistance to VFU owners to expand their offerings*

- Conduct assessment of 148 VFUs and assess market potential for income generation activities for VFUs. Provide training of for 70 VFUs on Small Ruminants Herd Health package (SRHHP) that covers proper feeding, housing, care of pregnant and new born animals, cashmere, health issues including vaccination, de-worming and several other small ruminant related topics.

### **Activity 3.2: Increase the availability of feed and fodder**

*Sub-activity 1: Promote production of natural forage crops*

- Identify intercropping opportunities and develop commercialization models
- Establish links with feed banks and other potential buyers

*Sub-activity 2: integrate existing feed banks into RADP-North*

- Assess 23 existing feed banks to determine support required to build their capacity.

*Sub-activity 3: Establish three new feed banks*

- Determine locations and secure community buy-in for new feed banks

### **Activity 3.3: Improve market linkages among farmers, agribusinesses and consumers**

#### *Sub-activity 1: Identify specific market opportunities*

- Identify potential new sales channels for cashmere sales
- Assess market viability of sales deals for meat and cashmere

### **Activity 3.4: Increase management and technical capacity of agribusinesses**

#### *Sub-activity 1: Provide technical assistance, training, and funding to existing and aspiring entrepreneurs*

- Conduct ToT with VFU staff and extension officers using SRHHP
- Conduct ToF on SRHHP. Refer to activity 3.1.
- Assess viability of re-establishing a cashmere collection point (CCP) and re-establish CCPs. Two cashmere collection points will be established through 18 VFUs for sales to primary cashmere buyers.
- Identify meat slaughtering improvement opportunities, and develop training curriculum to improve meat handling sanitation practices. Assess the knowledge, skills and training of 20 butchers on proper slaughtering animals, meat hygiene, proper cleaning of butcher shops, and proper waste management. Train butchers in meat processing practices.
- Train farmers on appropriate cashmere and wool harvesting techniques. April 6-10: ToT on cashmere value chain training conducted for 30 value chain and extension workers, plus 18 VFUs at Mazar E Sharif. April 12-30: Cashmere training for 3,000 farmers (2,600 men and 400 women).

## **CLIN 4: ENABLING ENVIRONMENT**

The third quarter time period will be used to design activities for fourth quarter implementation. The process will involve an analysis of constraints and obstacles to conducting business and the identification of the 4 local organizations that RADP-North will assist to strengthen their managerial and technical capacity.

## **CROSS CUTTING ACTIVITIES**

### ***Gender***

The gender action plan for the third quarter will explore avenues in reaching out to additional downstream and upstream value chain actors in the sectors coherence to CLIN 1, 2 and 3 respectively. Value chain maps<sup>8</sup> of women actors in CLIN 1, 2 and 3 will be developed in collaboration with the ACCI-Balkh<sup>9</sup> that is intended to expose and equip women in contributing proactively in the agriculture value chain.

### ***Grants***

The RADP-North team recognizes the challenge to programming the substantial MDF. CLIN leads and RADP-North management are clear about the need to be essentially single-minded in implementing activities through grants instead of direct implementation, though direct implementation will continue to be used infrequently. Anticipated activities for the third quarter include the following:

- Training in technical grants applications will be provided to all program staff early in the quarter.

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<sup>8</sup>Mapping will increase the visibility for women stakeholders in the agriculture value chain. Although women are participating in most value chains they tend to be invisible. The mapping helps understanding of how women participate in the value chain, and the functions of the various nodes in the value chain. The map generates the gender-specific picture of actors involved, linkages, and the percentage of women in each segment. It develops insight about the differences between men and woman in terms of activities, access and control over resources, identifies opportunities for women to upgrade as a chain actor, constraints and opportunities for women to participate in the value chain, and differences in power positions in value chain governance.

<sup>9</sup> Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industries

- Anticipated grant awards in the next quarter include:
  - Training to 3,000 women on PICS storage bags to improve post-harvest storage in the four provinces of Balkh, Samangan, Baghlan and Jawzjan. Grant implementation is expected to start in May 2015.
  - Multiple grant awards are anticipated for the Short Messaging System (SMS) based marketing tool that allows grantees to market their products and disseminate agriculture-related information to farmers. Grants implementation is expected to start in the first week of July 2015.

The grants specialist will continue with all CLIN technical teams to identify additional grant opportunities. During both grant award and implementation phases, the focus will also be given to build the capacity of Afghan private sector agricultural entities and the farmers. All grant awards will be made based on their potential.

## LESSONS LEARNED

### CLIN1

- Seasonal timing is critical. Weed control training began later than planned and the unseasonably short winter and variable weather in some locations allowed the weeds to mature to the point where herbicide was not effective. This underscores the importance of incorporating procurement planning based on detailed technical specifications into implementation timelines.
- Farmers prefer training at the village level instead of at a provincial or district center. This may increase future participation and adoption rates.
- Higher than expected farmer demand. We planned for farmer groups of 12, but excess demand resulted in groups as large as 17. Training loses effectiveness in large groups, so more groups will be organized in the future.
- Trainers should be from the local area. One Balkh FSC brought in trainers from outside (Chemtal district) and farmers expressed their dissatisfaction.
- Farmers responded well that the training was conducted by private sector agents of the Ag Depots and FSCs.
- Importance of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). For the practical training session on weed control ensure that trainers demonstrate the need for and the proper use of PPEs when spraying.
- Farmer feedback on safe and proper use, handling, and storage of herbicides was very positive.
- Provide translated versions of all contracts and provide detailed orientation for trainers so that they understand terms of consultant agreements.
- Poor quality of backpack sprayers. Demonstrating with high quality equipment has obvious merit, but cost and market availability are also important considerations. If locally available equipment cannot be used safely and effectively, then concept planning must consider the added cost and time required to procure other equipment.
- Improved communication about changes to training and activity schedules is needed to improve effective implementation as well as monitoring and evaluation.

### CLIN 2

- The cancellation of the Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan trade shows underscores the need for better project advanced planning. The visa process has been shown to require a

great deal of time. Consequently, CLIN 2 has added to the planning time horizons for the fall trade shows in Istanbul and Almaty.

- DAIL field agents have become dependent on previous donor programs to fund field visits and other activities claiming that they do not receive DAIL funds for transportation and many other costs. As a result, it is challenging for DAIL field agents to perform their duties in the office or field. RADP-North is designed to collaborate with and encourage DAIL field agents to attend our field training though we are not permitted to compensate those field agents to travel to the training sites. In some districts, the field agents are not supportive of our activities and in some instances being disruptive due to the lack of payments.

If RADP-North could cover the expenses of DAIL field agents (equal to the amount received by participating farmers) we can avoid potential disruptions or negative commentary about RADP-North from DAIL agents. In districts where AAEPH is active, we will coordinate with their program team so they can encourage field agent attendance and provide transportation support.

### CLIN 3

- The key positive lesson learned was to re-emphasize the role of demonstration to increase farmer adoption. Prior to the ToT and ToF for karakul drying with metal frames and jute cloth, the concept was not well received by farmers. However, the demonstrated results of smoother and cleaner pelts convinced farmers that they should be able to earn premium prices in the market.

## COLLABORATION WITH GIROA, DONOR AGENCIES AND OTHER USAID PROJECTS

### RADP-NORTH AND GIROA COORDINATION

RADP-North participates in monthly Provincial Development Committee (PDC) and Agriculture and Rural Development (ARD) meetings, which serve as a communal update on attendees (which include GIROA staff and representatives from the United Nations, NGOs, and other donor-funded projects) activities, implementation obstacles, and lessons learned. At each meeting, technical staff reiterate RADP-North's objectives and update current and planned activities. RADP-North staff attended the following ARD and PDC meetings during the reporting period:



*Attendees at February's Jowzjan ARD meeting*

- January 12: Jowzjan ARD meeting
- January 14: Balkh ARD meeting
- January 22: Kunduz PDC meeting
- January 22: Samangan ARD meeting
- February 9: Jowzjan ARD
- February 11: Balkh ARD

- February 19: Kunduz ARD meeting attended by PIM Kunduz
- February 25: NGOs form meeting attended by RM Kunduz
- February 25: ARD meeting attended by PIM Samangan
- March 11: ARD meeting attended by PIM Jawzjan
- March 11: ARD meeting attended by PIM Samangan
- March 15: Kunduz ARD meeting

In addition to the ARD and PDC meetings, RADP-North staff met regularly with individual GIRoA officials to share information and apprise them of the program's progress. These meetings are briefly described below:

### **January**

January 1: RADP-North provincial staff had an introductory coordination meeting with the Provincial Director of the Kunduz Department of Economy (DoE) to establish a relationship with the department and join the province's PDC meetings.

January 6: Project staff in Kunduz briefed the Khanabad District Governor on RADP- North's objectives and upcoming activities in the district. The Governor promised his full support to the program.

January 7: CLIN 3 technical staff members attended a meeting at the Balkh DoE and provided a progress report on its livestock activities.

January 11: The CLIN 2 team collected a list of lead farmers and farmer cooperatives operating in RADP-North's four target districts in Samangan province from the Deputy DAIL Director. Staff also discussed CLIN 2's interventions planned for the first year.

January 11: Staff of CLINs 2 and 3 and the Gender Outreach Manager met with home economics staff from the Balkh DAIL to discuss gender integration within DAIL and how to coordinate gender related activities with RADP-North.

January 11: CLIN 2 staff met with the Jowzjan DAIL Cooperatives Officer to identify cooperatives and lead farmers in RADP-North's target districts.

January 11–14: The Kunduz-based Regional Manager conducted a series of introductory and coordination meetings in Badakhshan province with the Deputy Provincial Governor, DoE and Department of Women's Affairs (DoWA) Directors, the Acting Head of DAIL/Badakhshan (the head of the DAIL Extension Department) as well as the heads of several cooperatives and associations.

January 12: The CLIN 1 team conducted a weed control training orientation at the Samangan DAIL office for DAIL staff and staff of cooperatives.

January 15: The CLIN 3 Regional Field Coordinator attended a meeting at the Balkh DAIL Veterinary Department and presented RADP-North's first year work plan.

January 25: CLIN 3 staff met the head of MAIL's Department of Livestock at DCA's Mazar office to brief him on RADP-North's planned livestock activities in each province.

January 27: CLIN 3 staff briefed the Baghlan DAIL Director on RADP-North's upcoming activities. The Director expressed support of RADP-North's work in the province.

## **February**

February 2: RADP-North's Gender Outreach Manager met with the head of the DAIL Cooperatives Department in Balkh and the president of the Hadia cooperative, which currently has 82 women working in livestock, knitting, poultry, greenhouses, carpet weaving and wool spinning. They discussed areas where Hadia members could be involved in RADP-North activities, but no concrete action steps resulted.



*CLIN 2 staff meeting with the Provincial DAIL Extension Officer in Sheberghan (Jowzjan)*

February 4: CLIN 2 staff met with the Provincial DAIL Extension Officer for Samangan province to collect high value horticulture production profiles for Khuram Wa Sarbagh, Aybak, Hazrati Sultan, and Feroz Nakhchir districts. This information helped to identify prospective lead farmers growing commercial quantities of CLIN 2's target crops.

February 4: CLIN 2 staff met with the Balkh DAIL's Gender Officer to gather information about saffron production in the province. Staff learned that in 2012, UNDP supported 125 women to produce saffron in five districts (Dehdadi, Dawlatabad, Nahri Shahi, and Sholagra); however, DAIL has been unable to continue working with these women because of a lack of external support.

February 9: CLIN 2 met with the DAIL Extension Officer for Jowzjan and received high value horticulture production profiles for Sheberghan, Aqcha, and Fayzabad districts. The Extension Officer also provided a contact list that helped program staff identify potential lead farmers in these districts.

February 10: The Samangan Program Implementation Manager met with the Acting Director of Samangan DAIL to collect information data on existing and planned irrigation activities in the province, such as system rehabilitation, water resource improvements, watershed management, and on farm water management activities.

February 12: Kunduz-based staff met with the Directors of the Kunduz DAIL, Department of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, and the Department of Energy and Water to collect information about current and potential irrigation projects.

February 18: CLIN 2 staff met with the Balkh DAIL's Extension Agent for Dawlatabad and discussed the status of horticulture production in the district. There are 3,000 hectares of orchard crops producing almonds, grapes, apricots, pears and other fruits. Melons are also produced in rain-fed land. The Extension Agent shared a list of potential lead farmers.

February 25: Kunduz Regional Manager participated in a NGO forum meeting hosted by Aga Khan Foundation (AKF). The representative of the UN assistance Mission for Afghanistan updated the participants with the provincial security status and representatives from Kunduz Economy Department, Norwegian Refugee Council, GIZ -SEDEP, Empowerment Center for Women, SIKAN-North, UN High Commission for Refugees, and Alia Abad District Governor presented a short status report of their activities.

February 25: The Gender Outreach Manager attended the 6<sup>th</sup> meeting of MAIL's women's empowerment working group.

### **March**

CLIN 2 staff conducted the following meetings with GIRoA staff to introduce RADP-North and to identify potential lead farmers.

- March 16: Executive Officer and Agricultural Services Officer of Aliabad District in Kunduz Province
- March 18: District Governor and Agricultural Services Officer of Chahar Dara District in Kunduz Province
- March 23: Deputy District Governor and Agricultural Extension Officer of Dahanai Ghori District in Baghlan Province
- March 24: District Governor and Agricultural Services Officer of Khan Abad District in Kunduz Province
- March 25: Agricultural Services Officer and Agricultural Extension Officer of Puli Khumri District in Baghlan Province
- March 29: Deputy District Governor, Agricultural Extension Officer and Agricultural Plant Protection Officer of Baghlani Jadid District in Baghlan Province
- March 30: Agricultural Services Officer and Agricultural Extension Officer of Kunduz District in Kunduz Province

March 2: CLIN 3 participated in meetings with potential stakeholders to coordinate activities with the Provincial DAIL and RADP-North, donor agencies, SEDEP, AAEP, Agribusinesses and the target veterinary field units (VFUs).

March 3: A coordination meeting was conducted by CLIN 3 staff with the head of Rural Micro Finance and Livestock Supporting Program in Baghlan province.

March 4: The Kunduz Regional Manager met the director of water distribution for Panj – Amu River Basin in Kunduz to collect information about the irrigation systems.

March 11: Provincial Implementation Managers for Jawzjan, Samangan, and Kunduz attended the Agriculture & Rural Development (ARD) meeting to coordinate activities among NGOs and others working in the agriculture sector, and to brief DAIL department on their activities. The RADP-N staff person updated participants on project activities, and requested a signed copy of signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between DAIL and RADP-North.

March 20 and 26: CLIN 1 technical staff attended the farmer festival day in Balkh and Samangan provinces.

March 30: CLIN1 Technical Program Manager and the project DCOP attended the Agriculture Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Meeting held in DAIL Mazar office.

March 30: CLIN 3 staff participated in a meeting with RADP-North DCOP, CLIN 1 Regional Area Manager, CLIN 2 Deputy Regional Manager, and the DAIL director of Balkh province to brief DAIL on project activities.

March 30, April 1, and April 2: DCOP participated in a coordination meeting with DAIL directors of Kunduz, Baghlan, and Balkh provinces to submit to MAIL an introductory letter and to update the DAIL directors about RADP-North.

March 31: CLIN-3's Baghlan provincial coordinator met the provincial DAIL director to discuss CLIN 3 activities for April and provided the RADP-North introduction letter.

## **LINKS WITH DONORS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS**

### **January 2015**

January 5: Kunduz-based staff had a follow up meeting with the Project Manager of the GIZ - funded Sustainable Economic Development and Employment Promotion (SEDEP) program. The conversation focused on project synergies and avoiding duplication of activities since SEDEP and RADP-North share some target value chains and geographic areas.

January 13: The Kunduz Regional Manager met with the Badakhshan Provincial Environment Department as well as representatives for Mission East, Afghan Aid, GIZ, Afghanistan Agricultural Extension Project II (AAEP II), National Horticulture and Livestock Productivity (NHLP) and United Nation's Office on Drugs and Crime to discuss RADP-North's planned activities in the province. Their feedback included:

- Work in the four districts (Baharak, Faizabad, Kishim and Yaftal Sulfa) will not help reduce/eradicate poppy cultivation because these districts are not planting poppy
- According to the United Nations Office on Drug and Crime (UNODC), the National Environment Protection Agency and relevant DoE's, the poppy districts are: Khash, Daraiem, Jurm, Argoo and Yaftal Sulfa
- Recommended activities to be considered as poppy alternatives are the production and processing of apples, peaches, apricots, almonds and potatoes
- The best areas for working on livestock are Pamir, Wakhan, Keran wa Menjan, Ishkashim and Sheghnanan districts

January 28: RADP-North's Kunduz Regional Manager participated in a non-governmental organization (NGO) forum facilitated by the United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA) and held at the Agha Khan Foundation's office. Attendees included representatives from all NGOs in the province. The agenda included a political and security topics and activity updates from each organization. UNAMA requested RADP-North Regional Manager to give an overview of RADP-North at the next meeting on February 26.



*CLIN 2 staff meeting with IDEA-NEW's Agribusiness and Knowledge Management teams in Jalalabad*

### **February 2015**

No updates

### **March 2015**

March 1: Technical staff including Regional extension and value chain coordinator, Regional training coordinator, regional field coordinator, and the CLIN 3 Project Manager met with the CLIN 1 team to discuss activity coordination.

March 9: RADP- North Acting COP, DCOP, and the CLIN 1 Lead had a coordination meeting with the Regional Manager of the World Bank On Farm Water Management (OFWM) project in Mazar. The aim of the meeting was to prepare for the March 12 meeting in Kabul to discuss expanded irrigation activity for RADP-North.

March 11: CLIN 3 regional field coordinator and the Project Manager attended the DAIL Agriculture sector coordination meeting in which DAIL asked the partners to coordinate for Farmers Day planned for March 26 at the DAIL compound in Mazar. Participants were asked to prepare short presentations about their activities and achievements.

March 12: The RADP-North Regional Manager in Kunduz had an introductory informational meeting with representatives from the Comprehensive Agriculture and Rural Development-Facility (CARD-F) project in the RADP–North Kunduz regional office.<sup>10</sup>

March 18: RADP-North Acting COP and DCOP were invited to meet with the USAID Deputy Development Officer for Northern Afghanistan, the USAID Mazar-based Project Management Specialist, and members of the GIZ Sustainable Economic Development and Employment Promotion (SEDEP) at Camp Marmal. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss potential project synergies and to avoid wasteful duplication of efforts. The group agreed to a follow-up meeting on April 1.

March 26: CLIN 3 staff participated in the Farmers Day event sponsored by DAIL. A booth was reserved in the exhibition site where CLIN 3 displayed value chain and extension materials.

## **COLLABORATION WITH OTHER USAID PROJECTS**

### **January 2015**

January 12: CLIN 2 staff traveled to Jalalabad to visit the IDEA-NEW program to learn about its SMS marketing activity. In addition to gaining a clear picture their beneficiary selection process and how the SMS system operates, RADP-North staff spoke with current grantees to hear how the activity affected their businesses. On their return to Mazar, CLIN 2 staff began developing a concept note to replicate this activity in the North and started identifying capable input suppliers.

January 13: The RADP-North COP and DCOP met USAID’s Agriculture and Economic Department Activity Manager at Camp Marmal to discuss activity updates

January 13: The RADP-North Regional Manager in Kunduz participated in a joint monitoring mission in the Dashte Quragh area of Faizabad with FAO, the World Food Program and AAEP. Representatives from each of these programs observed FAO’s current gender activities, including saffron cultivation, newly established fruit and nut tree nurseries, a small compost operation, and a women-run greenhouse and small plastic tunnel for vegetable cultivation.

### **February 2015**

February 9: The Balkh Project Implementation Manager attended the USAID coordination meeting called by Capacity Building and Change Management Program (CBCMP) at the Balkh DAIL’s office. CBCMP is a USAID-funded project implemented by IESC to improve coordination between DAILs and NGOs. The meeting purpose is to improve and avoid duplication of efforts between USAID projects operating in northern Afghanistan while establishing better coordination with DAILs on upcoming activities. Participants included representatives from

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<sup>10</sup> CARD–F is a joint entity established under the auspices of the Agriculture & Rural Development (ARD) Cluster Ministries. It is administered by the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL), the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD); the Ministry of Counter Narcotics (MCN) and the Ministry of Finance. The first phase of CARD – F was implemented in Parwan, Badakhshan, Nangrahar, Balkh and Helmand provinces and its second phase is covering the northern provinces including Kunduz province.

DAIL, CBCMP, and AAEP II. USAID did not participate in this meeting. The meeting chair, Senior Provincial Management Specialist, CBCMP II, requested that one project present its activities at each meeting.

February 18: CLIN 1's nutrition team met with AAEP II to discuss its planned nutrition training and to share training curricula. CLIN 1 will incorporate AAEP II's material into its nutrition training.

February 17: The CLIN 3 Lead hosted the DCOP and Regional Site Manager for AAEP II in Mazar-e-Sharif to discuss coordination of future livestock-related activities.

### **March 2015**

March 9: The Balkh Project Implementation Manager participated in the USAID Coordination Meeting in the AAEP II office located at the DAIL Balkh office. The meeting was arranged by the CBCMP II project to improve USAID project coordination. The DAIL planning manager suggested that RADP-North could work on improving pastures and grazing areas for small ruminants.

March 10: CLIN 2 staff met with the CEO of Balkh Chamber of Commerce and introduced RADP-North, including upcoming opportunities to sponsor agribusiness participation in national and international trade shows. BCCI provided a list of registered businesses to RADP-North. RADP-North will use this list to identify eligible agribusinesses.

March 15: CLIN 2 staff met with the president and one other female member of Faryab Women's Cultivation Association for Afghanistan. The association is capable of training women on grapes and dry fruit processing.

March 16: CLIN 2 staff visited the Gulistan Agricultural Cooperative working in Kampe Sakhi area of Mazar-e-Sharif. This visit was made as part of the search for women stakeholders within CLIN 2 value chains. The 65-member Gulistan Cooperative is working on production of vegetables and saffron.



*Meeting with Gulistan Cooperative, Mazar-e-Sharif – Balkh*

March 18: CLIN 3 staff met Terry Hutchen of AAEP II to discuss coordination between CLIN 3 activities and AAEP II.

March 31: The RADP-North DCOP conducted an introductory meeting with the head of CBCMP II/Baghlan at the DAIL's office.

## **MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION**

### **Operational Challenges**

Operational challenges in this quarter included the increasingly unstable security situation in some of the targeted district areas, particularly in Kunduz. Heavy snows and avalanches in the Salang pass caused some minor delays in delivery of some disposition items and vehicles from

Kabul. RADP North continued to wait for the delivery of new generators from the selected eligible vendor.

## Project Management

### COP

Rob Richey, RADP-North Project Manager, was acting COP following the resignation of Danilo Benavides on February 26. Rich Magnani arrived on March 6 to serve as acting COP while DAI conducted a search for a permanent COP.

### DCOP

A decision was made in late March not to renew the annual contract for DCOP, Ghulam Samim. His contract ends on May 20. Recruiting is underway and will emphasize value chain technical skills.

### Project Implementation Unit

The PIU component of the project management team was dissolved in March because it had failed to function as envisioned. Instead of enhancing the process efficiency for concept papers, the PIU process was cumbersome and the time period to develop approved concept notes became unacceptable. For the remainder of the second quarter, the acting COP will work with the CLIN leads to develop acceptable concept notes and approve them for implementation. The Operations Director and the acting COP will roll out a revised structure and process early in the third quarter to handle the expected increased volume of concept notes.

### CLIN 2 Leadership

ACDI/VOCA informed DAI in late March that they will not renew the annual contract for the CLIN 2 Lead. The annual contract for Bill Mays ends on July 3. ACDI/VOCA is recruiting for a replacement and is aiming for approval no later than June 30.

### Long Term Staff

The following table lists long-term expatriate and local staff that started during the second quarter.

#### Long Term Staff

Name	Implementing Partner	Position	Start Date
Jessica Melton	DAI	Program Operations Director	1/2/2015
Rich Magnani	DAI	Acting Chief of Party	3/6/2015
	JDA	Area Manager, Samangan	1/26/2015
	JDA	Area Manager, Baghlan	1/26/2015
	ACDI/VOCA	Provincial Implementation Manager	2/1/2015
	ACDI/VOCA	Provincial Implementation Manager	2/10/2015
	JDA	WASH & Nutrition Trainer, Balkh	2/15/2015
	JDA	WASH & Nutrition Trainer, Balkh	2/15/2015
	JDA	WASH & Nutrition Trainer, Balkh	2/15/2015
	JDA	WASH & Nutrition Trainer, Balkh	2/15/2015
	JDA	Area manager Samangan	03/01/2015
	JDA	Area Manager Baghlan	03/01/2015
	JDA	WASH & Nutrition Trainer, Balkh	03/15/2015



## Short-Term Consultants

Name	Implementing Partner	Position	Arrival Date	Departure Date
Peter How	JDA	Agriculture Program Director	1/21/2015	2/13/2015
Bob Hedlund	JDA	President	2/25/2015	3/18/2015
Michelle Stern	ACDI/VOCA	Value Chain Advisor	3/22/2015	4/12/2015
Rajesh Sail	DAI	Grants Advisor	3/21/2015	NA
Diego Valencia	DAI	Business Systems Analyst	1/7/2015	1/25/2015

## USAID Meetings

On March 12, Rich Magnani (Acting COP), Julie Berlin (M&E Communications Manager), and Tim Piper (CLIN 1 Lead) conducted several meetings with USAID staff in Kabul. The meetings covered irrigation activities, baseline and indicators, and project administration and management issues. Refer to the Annex for a summary.

## WORKPLAN, BASELINE, AND MILESTONES

Third drafts of the Workplan, Baseline Survey, Milestones and Deliverables Annex, and second drafts of the three Value Chain Strategies were submitted for review and approval to USAID on March 29.

## MODIFICATIONS AND AMENDMENTS

USAID approved the branding waiver for RADP-North's VFU activities under CLIN 3 on February 11<sup>th</sup>.

## PROGRAM APPRAISAL

### Evaluations, Assessments or Audits

Completed and/or Planned	Major Findings/ Recommendations	Actions Taken/ Planned
Revised RADP-North Baseline Survey Report & Women's Contributions to Household Economy and Implications for RADP-North Programming Targets Annex	<p><b>Summary of Women's Incomes</b></p> <p>49.8% of surveyed women reported contributing income to their households.</p> <p>Four most common ways that women in treatment and control groups contributed to household income: sewing clothes, carpet making, care of poultry or livestock, and embroidery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Only livestock is a RADP-North value chain</li> </ul> <p><b>Summary of Other labor contributions</b></p> <p>Many common activities pursued by surveyed women were not a direct source of income:</p>	<p>USAID review of RADP-North's revised baseline survey report. A second draft was submitted on March 5<sup>th</sup> that addressed numerous comments by USAID staff and included the Women's Contributions report. A third draft was submitted on March 29<sup>th</sup> that incorporated comments from Paul Crawford (shared at a meeting between RADP-North and USAID in Kabul on March 12<sup>th</sup>) and comments sent via email by</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Handicraft making was done by 52 women from the control group and 73 from the treatment group, but only nine from the control group and 10 from the treatment group reported being paid</li> <li>▪ Almost one third of surveyed women—196 control and 123 treatment—reported vegetable cultivation, but only 7 from the control group and 10 from the treatment group reported earning income from the activity</li> <li>▪ 73 control respondents and 50 from treatment groups reported cultivating land, but only 1 woman from each group reported having been paid</li> <li>▪ Respondents reported experiencing an average of almost 2 months per year in which they had difficulty satisfying household food needs; their agricultural labor may focus on food security rather than income</li> <li>▪ Some women’s labor contributes to a male family member’s business, even if the woman is not directly compensated, e.g., a woman cultivates family land while a male family member sells their agriculture produce</li> </ul> <p><b>Male perspectives of women’s contributions</b></p> <p>52.8% of male household heads estimated that women’s work contributed direct earnings to household income</p> <p>Men reported that women rarely earn their own income; commonly women support male head-of-household income rather than generating their own</p> <p><b>Women and Financial Access</b></p> <p>12% of the surveyed women said that they have borrowed money</p> <p>Meeting general household needs was the primary reason for taking loans among women</p> <p>Most women did not specify the source of the loan; this may indicate that some were informal loans between neighbors or family members rather than formal financial transactions.</p>	<p>Albert Wanous on March 21<sup>st</sup>.</p>
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## **ANNEX I: PERFORMANCE INDICATOR TABLE**

Please see the attached Excel document.

## **ANNEX II: ENVIRONMENTAL MITIGATION AND MONITORING PLAN**

Please see the attached Word document.

## **ANNEX III: USAID MEETING SUMMARY – MARCH 12**

### **Expanded Irrigation Activity**

The focus of the meeting, which included RADP-South and RADP-West staff, was to request that the three projects address the opportunities to increase RADP programming in irrigated agriculture. The meeting followed a conversation the previous week with the Directors General of Irrigation and Extension sections of MAIL, and other meetings with World Bank.

The focus of the discussion was on how the RADPs could expand irrigation activities in prioritized geographic areas primarily where the World Bank On Farm Water Management (OFWM) project has established water user associations and have completed infrastructure rehabilitation. Other related World Bank projects and USAID's AAEP II project are also to be considered. The three key activity areas include: laser levelling, appropriate irrigation applications for horticulture, and the proper agronomic practices that must be combined with irrigation improvements to maximize productivity. Important questions regarding laser levelling include the following:

- What are the costs?
- How much replication has occurred from past demonstration of laser land leveling?
- How was it done?
- How much area was covered?
- How do we demonstrate laser land leveling without incurring extraordinary costs?

Laser land levelling offers great potential yet there is scarce data available on costs and returns to laser levelling. The World Bank reports that their economic analysis is inadequate. USAID requested that the RADPs seek previous economic analysis of laser levelling or to conduct rudimentary analysis to the extent possible. The objective is to establish commercial fee-for-service based laser levelling input suppliers which will allow for scaling up.

Location issues include the following:

- Districts where RADP-N is working
- Areas where irrigation schemes have been rehabilitated
- Areas that intersect with OFWM
- Areas where other World Bank and USAID projects are working
- Areas where no rehabilitation has taken place

USAID requested proposals from the RADPs on how expanded activities in irrigation can be integrated with ongoing and future project implementation. On March 24, the COR sent a request to the Acting COP to prepare a concept note by April 11 which considers the following:

- RADP-North experience in on-farm water management (OFWM) activities
- The experience of other donors working in OFWM
- Rudimentary economic and social assessment of feasibility and sustainability
- An approach to demonstrate OFWM technologies that minimize subsidies and can be scaled-up through commercial services incorporating laser land leveling, horticulture irrigation systems, and improved agronomic practices

## Baseline and Indicators

*Baseline, indicators, and PMP.* The main point of concern was that the deliverables and milestones listed in Attachment 2 of the RADP-North contract be formally measured in the PMP, i.e., rewording deliverables to become indicators.

- USAID guidance on indicators
  - Number of households (HH) benefitted—RADP-North needs to look at overlap between the 3 CLINs and reduce its total number of HHs accordingly. This will affect the narrative surrounding the percentage increase in HH income, value of sales, gender, etc.
  - Consider removing indicator 9 and rewording the 3 post-harvest losses (PHL) to 1 deliverable to serve as a single PHL indicator.
  - When rewriting deliverables, use indicator 10 to gauge deliverable 3.6.
  - RADP-North will need to reword CLIN 4 deliverables to become indicators. See Enabling Environment notes below.
  
- RADP-North responses to USAID guidance
  - All of the deliverables/milestones from Attachment 2 are tracked in the approved M&E Plan with the current list of 25 indicators, which come from USAID/OAG's Agriculture Indicator Matrix
  - RSI and RADP-North will discuss ways of meeting USAID's concerns without creating 'new' indicators. This involves creating a matrix that shows RADP-North's progress towards various indicator targets with deliverables for each indicator. A special report for this would be created in the M&E database.
  - RADP-North also suggests removing indicator 11 and replacing it with percentage increase in hygienic meat production.
  
- USAID guidance on indicator targets
  - Households (HH)—Revise targets based on overlap analysis, i.e., increase numbers of livestock HHs and reduce the number of wheat & horticulture HHs
  - Percentage increase in HH income—OAG must justify LOP target of 25% (instead of 75%) to OAA. Thus, RADP-North must present a justification for that reduced number. Use theory of change regarding wheat and horticulture.
  - Value of sales—RADP-North to reassess wheat sales target.
  - Gender—Define the total number of beneficiaries to be 1 per HH. Then USAID can accept a gender target of 6,750 as meeting the 15% LOP goal. RADP-North will examine planned activities and tally anticipated female beneficiaries to reach a number above 15% of our total HHs.
  
- Other baseline comments
  - USAID requested the aggregated data that supports the analysis in the baseline survey results.
  - RADP-North will stratify beneficiaries by land size and wealth. Baseline analysis needs to identify wealth quintiles and where RADP-North's beneficiaries fall. This concern is linked to the detrimental effect on sharecroppers in the South as part of the Helmand Food Zone.
  - The land ownership vs tenants issue was revisited. RADP-North informed USAID that the baseline survey did not include questions about land ownership so additional surveying will be required.

## Administration and Reporting

- *Weekly calls/Monthly reporting.* Weekly written reports will be eliminated and be replaced by weekly telephone calls from the Acting COP to the COR & ACOR on Sunday. Written reports will be submitted on a monthly basis starting with the April report.
- *Multi-Tier monitoring and field visits.* The A/COR requested that DAI begin submitting attendance sheets from its training activities on a weekly basis. This will allow the COR and A/COR to follow up directly with beneficiaries and ensure that trainings did take place. Attendance sheets have been submitted on a regular basis since March 19.
- *Activity Managers.* There are 2 new activity managers for RADP-N. Mr. Zabir is currently posted in Mazar E Sharif, but will move to USAID/Kabul when the Mazar office closes in June of 2015. The second activity manager is USAID/Washington-based Albert Wanous.
- *Training/workshops/roundtables.* USAID requested a half-day session for all RADP-North CLIN lead staff so that representatives from OPPD/Gender, M&E and OAA can discuss the various regulations in their specific sector and ensure that CLIN lead staff understand these guidelines. There will be various other roundtables and meetings that USAID will host and RADP-North representatives will be expected to attend.
- *COR/DOC approval.* The A/COR requested that RADP-North include a training schedule, agenda, and an explanation of how trainings will be conducted when submitting training materials for branding/printing approval.
- *Recruiting outside intervention communities.* The COR noted complaints that qualified local people have been overlooked in communities where RADP-North has implemented activities. They claim that RADP-North has brought in local hires from communities outside the implementation cities/villages. RADP-North will be more vigilant about recruiting local staff that live in or near communities where we implement activities.

## ANNEX IV: RADP-N RESPONSES TO USAID Q2 COMMENTS

USAID comments on 2<sup>nd</sup> quarterly report. Copied from email sent by Sabinus Anaele on 5-13-15. RADP-North responses are in bolded font. The underlined/italicized text is what the reviewer/writer counted as complete.

1) There is nothing mentioned about monitoring of CLIN activities by RADP-N M&E team. If there was no monitoring at all, what is M&E team doing and how is DAI verifying output quality?

**The M&E field team conducted 14 monitoring missions between January 1 and March 1. A breakdown of visited activities is below:**

- **Four weed control ToT sessions; one each in Dehdadi (Balkh), Shibirghan (Jowzjan), Aybak (Samangan) and Puli Khumri (Baghlan)**
- **Four weed control ToF sessions; two in Puli Khumri and then one each in Baghlan-e-Jadid (Baghlan) and Khuram Sarbagh (Samangan)**
- **Two grape trellising trainings; one each in Dehdadi (Balkh) and Hazrat-i-Sultan (Samangan)**
- **One karakul TOT session in Mazar-e-Sharif (Balkh)**
- **Three karakul training of herder sessions; one each in Sholgara and Nahre Shahee (Balkh) and Faizabad (Jowzjan).**

**In addition, staff conducted additional field research for the Women’s Contributions to Household Economy and Implications for RADP-North Programming Targets report (Annex A of the baseline survey report) in all 26 of RADP-North’s target districts.**

2) RADP-N achievements against planned activities for the reporting quarter is less than impressive. Below is the list of activities planned for Q2 in the Q1 report, yet only a few (highlighted) have been achieved during the quarter. Underlined italics text represents activities that USAID recognizes as initiated or completed during the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter.

Upcoming Plans (copied from Q1 approved report)

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

### CLIN 1

- *Conduct weed control training of trainers to Aq 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

**This concept should not have been delayed, but was. It will be submitted for COP review by June 10 at the very latest. A great deal of field work has been done to develop this concept. This will ensure a high level of private sector collaboration. This includes meetings with 31 seed companies in 4 provinces to discuss the seed business development concept and to obtain verbal expressions of interest from 23 (of the 31) companies who identified specific target villages to work in with extension/marketing activities, i.e., Participatory Varietal Selection in 295 plots for over 6,000 farmers. This ties in with other components of seed marketing to deliver increased farmer understanding of available varieties and sales.**

**CLIN 1 staff has also met with more than 10 seed companies to assess the volume of durum wheat that could be aggregated for the pasta factories. These seed companies have expressed interest in the concept so this is an exciting area of work. They indicated they could aggregate over 234 tons durum wheat (for pasta) among them for 2015. (This number should be viewed with caution at this stage)**

- 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

**CLIN 1 staff met with 14 large scale commercial mills on quality specification and testing capacity and identified only 1 with any level of testing equipment. This mill is interested in enhancing their lab capacity to provide commercial testing services. Several of the others also expressed interest in developing quality testing labs. All of these mills are well structured to take clean poor quality grain. This allows them to buy at a low price and maintain good supply. They all produce variable quality flour with a clear orientation to the mass price-led market rather than the smaller high quality market. This allows them to compete with low cost imports. We have identified one smaller miller that is more focused on the high quality market. We plan to increase our exposure to medium sized mills to better understand these niche markets.**

**Of the 7 processors/wholesalers that we have been in discussions with 3 are pasta factories producing a combined 140 tons/month of pasta/noodles. Each are interested in sourcing high quality flour for pasta production and were previously unaware that durum wheat could be available in Afghanistan. Instead they have been making do with all purpose flour. These 3 companies, along with seed companies are entering an activity stream with RADP-N on improved milling and use of durum wheat via contracting opportunities. The objective will be to develop contract delivery of quality grain aggregated by seed companies following harvest, up to the volume of 200 tons or more this year. This would lead to contract growing of larger amounts of durum varieties by farmers for seed companies. There are a number of challenges and risks here, but this is a potentially exciting activity stream. RADP-N has exclusively made the link between the presence of durum wheat production and potential durum wheat demand.**

- Finalize plans for CLIN 1's nutrition and hygiene training

The plans were initiated but not completed during the second quarter. CLIN 1 underestimated the time required for comprehensive coverage of 10 lessons. The lessons have been submitted for USAID review.

#### CLIN2

- Complete recruitment for the five remaining CLIN 2 national staff positions as well as CLIN 3 deputy director post and provincial staff roles

During the quarter CLIN 2 hired three out the mentioned five positions. By now all CCN positions in the org chart are filled. The delay was due to two reasons:

1. Lack of qualified candidates within the limitations imposed by the LCP. Several staff were hired at rates below their historical rates.
  2. Early in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter the previous COP significantly CCN recruitment, even for position below grade 10 in the LCP. Hiring even a junior CCN took more than one month after a qualified candidate was interviewed and identified. Later CLIN 2 was instructed that COP concurrence for positions below grade 10 was no longer required. This intractable situation has been corrected.
- 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).

Two concept notes were developed and approved during the quarter; two concept notes rejected and one concept was still work in progress by the end of the quarter, as detailed below:

#### Rejected:

1. **Integrated Pest Management Workshops:** This concept note was developed and submitted to the project management team (under the previous COP and concept review structure) for review and approval, but was rejected for not being relevant to the workplan. This activity (for melon fly) has been revisited under the Acting COP and has been approved.
2. **World Trade Uzbekistan Agriculture Trade Show:** The concept note was developed and finalized during the quarter. However, the activity was cancelled because of failure to obtain Uzbek visas in time.

#### Work in progress:

**Sell More For More (SMFM):** Due to the lack of CLIN 2 staff, this was not completed during the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter. The Senior Business Development Specialist who was supposed to lead the concept note development resigned in January 2015. We were not able to fill his position until late April due to the issues detailed in response to Question 1. The

preparation of the concept note required a lot of background work such as carrying out assessment of the associations using M4 tool; identifying PHH current practices and best practices in all target VCs; customizing the curriculum based on the needs of the beneficiaries. The concept note has been developed and as of this writing is under review by the Acting COP.

Additionally, during the quarter we developed and submitted the following SOWs:

Value Chain training which was modified at USAID's request to provide support with the implementation of the CLIN's activities. Michelle Stern provided this support from late March

- Begin implementing HVC activities

Conducted six training sessions attended by 120 grape producers on introduction of T & I Grapevine Trellising Systems and Pruning of Vines. Selected 11 lead farmers from four target districts in Kunduz Province and received an approval for implementation of melon varietal trials.

### CLIN 3

- Complete a minimum of three concept notes for CLIN 3 and begin capacity building trainings for livestock (karakul and cashmere) owners
  - Cashmere—RADP-North will provide a two-day cashmere harvesting ToT to 18 VFU staff and 12 local extension workers who will then replicate the training to 3,000 farmers. All trainees will then be linked with two cashmere collection points that RADP-North will establish in Jowzjan and Balkh provinces. Cashmere from both of these locations will then be sold to Herati Cashmere Processing Plant
  - Karakul pelts—30 VFU staff and local extension workers will receive training on improved drying methods for processing karakul pelts. ToT participants will go on to train 1,200 karakul farmers, all of whom will also be introduced to karakul buyers
  - Small Ruminants Herd Health Package (SRHHP) —CLIN 3 will train 70 VFU staff and extension workers on how to properly inspect meat while 20 butchers will receive training on hygiene and how to correctly handle and process meat

This SRHHP activity was delayed in part because of USAID's concern that CLIN 3 activities would be too broadly spread if all 148 VFUs received similar level of capacity building effort. USAID requested that CLIN 3 focus on a subset of the 148 that demonstrated that they could be sustainable enterprises following the completion of RADP-North. CLIN 3 staff developed the questionnaire in quarter 2 and in quarter 3 has been conducting the survey of feed banks, VFUs, and butchers. The results of this survey will help direct 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter activity implementation of SRHHP.

### Operations

- Establish DAI's Kunduz and Badakhshan field offices; and

On February 9th and 10, RADP North staff visited and identified several options for the Badakhshan local office and posted the guard and driver positions on ACBAR for recruitment. After a week of initial negotiations, the technical selection committee met to review the office choices. The locations were ranked based on which spaces were move-in ready, safest for staff, and most reasonably priced. A second round of negotiations were conducted to obtain best and final offer prices; these final prices were obtained on February 25th. On February 26th, the former COP resigned. The office lease was signed on March 16th, but much of March was dedicated to planning project restructuring, so RADP North postponed staffing the Badakhshan office until the restructuring was complete.

- Conduct monthly monitoring missions of RADP-North activities (Tier 2).

**RADP-North will include information on monthly monitoring missions in the Program Appraisal section of all subsequent reports to USAID.**