

STABILITY IN KEY AREA – WEST PROGRAM (SIKA-WEST)

PROGRAM WEEKLY UPDATES: 24 Feb - 01 Mar 2012

- Six CCN Kabul based staff and five expatriate staff are currently based in Herat supporting the start-up of SIKA-West. Cindy Fair, DCOP, Amanda Willett, Start-up Team Leader, Ankit Sheth, Start-up Operations Coordinator, and Stephanie Agudelo, Start-up Recruitment Coordinator remain in Herat supporting the start-up have now been joined by Rayne Loken, PMP specialist and are supported by GardaWorld Security Manager, Steve Johnston.
- The first meeting with the SIKA team, MRRD Director Saddiqi and USAID took place on 27 Feb 2012. The director is very positive about the program with clear ideas of how it should be implemented but is awaiting official instruction from MRRD HQ.
- Discussions with USAID on the grants manual and process took place on 28 Feb. and the role of MRRD in monitoring grants was discussed and will be included in an MOU. MRRD and USAID both have lists for the types of projects to be supported under grants. The inclusion of CDCs and DDAs as DEs has been used in other USAID projects and it is expected they will be among DEs included for grants consideration in SIKA - W.
- Discussions with USAID 29 Feb included the inconsistencies in the wording of the IRs between the contract and the proposal and new wording was developed to be forwarded for approval.
- USAID and the SIKA team met with NSF and NABDP 29 Feb. and provided an overview of SIKA. The teams agreed the projects are all complimentary and to share information. SIKA met with NABDP 01 March to review the criteria currently used for working with and approving projects for DEs.
- USAID and SIKA met 01 March to discuss the development of the PMP and Workplan.
- Recruitment for CCN Operations, Finance and technical staff is underway. Offer letters for two Finance and two Operations Officers have been provided to the successful candidates and all are expected to begin work on/about 11 March 2012. Interviews for the remaining positions are conducted daily.
- Ramp Up West has identified staff currently applying to SIKA that is critical to its operations that SIKA will not hire.
- Recruitment for provincial management unit and district-based staff is pending an initial meeting with MRRD in Herat and agreement about the initial six target districts.
- Guest House and Office Space for the SIKA-West program was selected and negotiated; however the property owner declined to lease his property and alternative space is being considered.
- Suppliers for guest house and office furniture and office, IT equipment, and back-up generator have been identified and specifications are being developed.
- LTTA expatriate staff mobilization timeline:
 - The COP, Rajan Gill is expected to arrive in Kabul 02 March 2012 and in Herat 07 March 2012.
 - Financial Controller, Herawati Aziz is expected to arrive at post in early March 2012.

- IR3 Lead, Fiona Shukri is expected to arrive at post on/about 02 March 2012
- CCN staff salary scale was developed based on the USAID FSN scale and SIKA-West budget.
- Draft grants manual under review in Herat by Deputy Chief of Party and Start-up Team Leader with input from USAID.