

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

WEEKLY UPDATES: March 2-8, 2012

Program

- Discussions between the SIKA - East and West Programs in Kabul included an update on the progress of IR1 in the East and development of the Afghanized version of the DSF. SIKA - E is well advanced and the DSF is about 80% complete. SIKA - E is sharing the materials it has developed. SIKA - W shared learning on the inconsistencies of language in the contract. Discussions with USAID in Kabul included DSF and that SIKA-W should use and participate in any further development of the DSF SIKA-E is currently producing. The sharing of the DSF could result in savings in IR1 that may be shifted to IR4 in the future. Mike McParland is to meet with MRRD on March 10th to reach agreement on the MRRD SIKA units requested for Kabul and each province.
- On March 6, 2012, SIKA-W and USAID met with Mr. Haider MRRD, Senior Policy Advisor to the Minister. Mr. Haider outlined his request for a SIKA unit of 11 individuals to bridge the RRD offices which would be absorbed into the RRD tashkil at the end of the project. He suggested a MRRD workshop to be held in Herat on March 17th and 18th to kick start the workplan implementation while work on having an approved IL is underway. Mr. Haider suggested setting a meeting with the Minister on March 28th when the COP SIKA-W arrives and asked that a short-term work plan be prepared for the Minister.
- SIKA-W's Deputy Chief of Party, IR3 Lead, and Start-up team leader met with RRD staff working on NABDP to gather information about the current approach to supporting DDAs and specifically activities targeting women.
- The IR3 Lead met with a women's vocational training organization and University of Herat faculties to expand the reach of AECOM recruitment efforts and attract more qualified women applicants.

Administration

- Fiona Shukri arrived to post on March 02, 2012 to lead the IR 3 team.
- The SIKA W Grants Manual was submitted to USAID for approval.
- A lease agreement for office and accommodation is being negotiated with the landlord with occupancy 1 April 2012. USAID will vet the landlord prior to approving AECOM's moving forward with the lease.
- Recruitment for SIKA - W HQ, CCN Operations, Finance and technical staff continues and 23 individuals have been selected, reference checks are ongoing.
- RFQs have been posted on Peace Dividend Trust for computer, communications, and office equipment and some bids have been received.
- The Branding and Marking Plan is being developed.
- A contract amendment for clarification on wording in sections C and F as well as integration of the 4 IRs has been discussed with USAID and is being requested.

Security

- Garda World has secured its RMC license.

- Draft Security SOPs have been prepared.
- The security assessment for the proposed office and accommodation compound is underway.
- AECOM is working on the APPF transition.

Next Steps

- An agenda for the MRRD workshop will be submitted USAID and MRRD for confirmation.
- Workshop preparations underway.
- APPF transitions are ongoing.
- Recruitment and procurement ongoing.
- Exemption from USG max lodging will be requested for staff staying at the Nazary and Baron hotels.