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STABILIZATION IN KEY AREAS (SIKA) – WEST

WEEKLY REPORT (JULY 18 – 25, 2012)

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STABILIZATION IN KEY AREAS (SIKA) – WEST

WEEKLY REPORT

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Prepared by:

AECOM International Development

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BACKGROUND

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

KEY PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

SUMMARY OF WEEKLY REPORT

The start of Ramadan on July 20, the holiest time of the Muslim year, did not bode well for SIKA-West stabilization activities in Shewan Village in Bala Baluk. Shewan was the first area identified for SIKA-West rollout. Insurgents broke a recent cease-fire agreement in Shewan Village by attacking a police convoy. On July 23, an ANP commander and 13 subordinate officers, manning a checkpoint in Shewan, defected to the Taliban. In spite of these obstacles, SIKA-West refined its District Stabilization Matrix (DSM) for upcoming use in Bala Baluk. New stakeholder mapping in Bala Baluk will allow for a more representative and empowered stabilization committee to drive the process forward. Background documents such as the Service Provider Catalog and District Profile for Bala Baluk are nearing completion. A communications needs assessment of 20 Farah GIROA officials revealed that they have computer equipment and Internet access, but still rarely connect or communicate with the general public.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE WEEK INCLUDE:

INTERMEDIATE RESULT 1

- The COP, IR1, and IR4 reviewed and discussed the Bala Baluk DSM with a view toward using it as a teaching tool to ensure that effective stabilization programming informs all mitigation grant activities. The review and discussion was followed by a practice exercise on completing the Bala Buluk District Project Portfolio (DPP).
- IR1, in coordination with the IR4 Team, updated the Bala Buluk engagement plan and laid out new activities for the next three weeks. The plan foresaw an enlarged District Stabilization Committee (DSC) to better represent the most influential people in the district and obtain more accurate and detailed sources of instability. A more representative and effective DSC would allow for enhanced community buy-in and empowerment, and broaden local support for stabilization activities such as mediation, re-connection with government, and reconciliation ceremonies.

INTERMEDIATE RESULT 2

- IR2 collected, analyzed, and updated information on services and service providers for the Bala Buluk Service Provider Catalog. Once completed, the catalog will be the first district catalogue produced by IR2. A first draft is planned for August 4.

INTERMEDIATE RESULT 3

- A Rural Rehabilitation and Development (DRRD)-supported television commercial highlighting the start of Ramadan, was aired on Farah television twice each evening on July 23 and 24. With a backdrop of the holy cities of Mecca and Medina, the 45-second commercial was the first communications product prepared by SIKA-West to improve DRRD's image in Farah and refute the unfounded allegation that GIROA officials are bad Muslims.

- IR3 analyzed the Farah government communications capacity needs assessment, which had been conducted on July 18. The assessment sampled 20 government employees from nine government departments in Farah Province. The assessment revealed that most of the officials had computers and Internet access, and used social media at the office, but rarely communicated with the public. No Farah-based ministry had a regular system of external communication. Intra-governmental communication was mostly sent through official letters. The assessment will be used to inform upcoming Farah communications trainings and help DRRD and possibly other ministries to develop communication plans and products to reach out more regularly and effectively to Farah Province citizens.

INTERMEDIATE RESULT 4

- Based on the input provided by the Farah-based Project Support Team (PST), IR4 consolidated the district stakeholder lists of Bala Baluk and prepared a Stakeholder Assessment Report with a view to expand the existing DSM to include additional influential elders.
- IR4 worked with IR1 on improving the DSM.
- IR4 developed the terms of reference for community development technicians, and grants and subcontract officers who will be based in SIKA-West office.

DETAILED PROVINCIAL/DISTRICT ACTIVITIES

- The Herat PST collected Shindand and Koshk e Sangi District data for stakeholder analysis. The PST also collected a complete list of all CDCs in both districts, and responded to questions from all teams regarding the District Profiles and Service Provider Catalog for the Shindand and Koshk e Sangi. The PST also received training on report writing and computer skills.
- The Farah PST held an orientation session for new staff. The PST collected information on influential leaders and mullahs in Bala Baluk for possible inclusion in a larger district stabilization committee and continued to collect information for the Bala Baluk District Profile and Service Provider Catalog. The PST also coordinated the four-time broadcast of DRRD's Ramadan commercial on Farah television. They also started to discuss possible conflict mitigation activities, such as literacy classes, in Bala Baluk with potential local partners.
- The Badghis PST continued to collect data for District Profiles and the Service Provider Catalogue. PST staff conducted a series of meetings with line departments, district governors, DDA members, and community elders. The meetings concentrated on the verification of data gathered during the previous three weeks.

GENDER AND CAPACITY BUILDING

- Developed gender mainstreaming materials for upcoming PST/DST training.
- Gender mainstreaming was in progress with IR1 Stabilization Programming and IR4 Community Development in relation to the Bala Baluk rollout.
- In coordination with M&E, updated the SIKA-West training database to include recent capacity building programs (Communications and CBD Non-technical training) which were conducted in Farah.
- Completed 28 training modules covering IR1-IR4, M&E, and Gender; translated modules into Dari and Pashto and shared the modules with the SIKA-West program.
- Continued to work with IR1, IR3, and IR4 to develop RRD counterpart and district entity training materials.
- Coordinated orientation programming for SIKA-West Operations personnel to be conducted July 12-26.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- On July 22, the M&E team conducted an introduction workshop for SIKA-West Operations staff.
- Developed a project photo database.

OPERATIONS

- Office hours for Afghan staff during the holy month of Ramadan will be from 08:00 to 14:00 with no breaks.
- The Operations office released an RFQ on July 21 for a final round of security upgrades to the SIKA-West Headquarters. The RFQ included requirements for applying blast film on all windows; installing coded locks, swing arms, and slam-shut locks on the entry doors; installing bars on the office windows and doors that are similar to those on area houses; creating safe-floors in all buildings by installing steel doors in the stairwells; installing a siren/alarm system; constructing fortified HESCO positions in various locations; replacing the bamboo on the balconies with green mesh (sniper screen); and placing HESCOs around the new fuel tank.

HR & RECRUITMENT

- To date, 71 employees (27 female, 44 male) were hired and 30 positions were in process.

SIKA-West Recruitment				
Staff	Herat Office	Herat Province	Farah Province	Badghis Province
Hired	51	6	9	5
In process	23	2	3	4
Females hired	22	2	2	1
Males hired	29	4	7	4

- HR conducted interviews for the Herat-based senior HR recruitment officer and general maintenance positions. Document verification and reference checks were in process.
- HR reviewed 37 CVs for the senior technical manager and 29 CVs for the senior program officer. HR shortlisted candidates and will call selected individuals next week for interviews.
- HR prepared to meet during the week with the acting senior program officer and head of IR4 to plan for recruitment in the provinces.

DELIVERABLES

- NTR

SECURITY OPERATIONS

- Conducted various Herat City moves without incident.
- Continued to liaise with other projects operating within the Herat area.
- Admin and life support issues continued to persist with the APPF.
- Conducted weapons training with APPF MST personnel.
- Briefed APPF personnel on the compound defense plan.

LOOKING AHEAD/NEXT WEEK'S ACTIVITIES

- IR1 and Capacity Building will travel to Farah on July 28-30 to prepare the Bala Buluk DSM and do a needs assessment of Farah/DRRD.
- All teams will complete a GANTT chart updating their rollout activities in Farah Province and Bala Buluk District.
- IR1 will give stabilization programming training to the Herat PST.
- IR2 will travel to Farah Province on July 28-August 1 to provide technical support to Farah-based PST and conduct meetings with identified service providers to collect and verify data for the Bala Baluk Service Provider Catalog.
- IR3/PST Farah will help Farah DRRD to develop a communications plan for broader public outreach and connection to local citizens.
- IR3 will produce a draft Farah Provincial Profile as well as draft District Profiles of Bala Baluk and Shindand.
- IR4 will start to prepare the Stakeholder Assessment Report with the Herat PST team on Shindand and Koshk e Rabat Sangi, and with the Badghis PST team on Qadis and Muqur.
- IR4 will develop the Farah, Herat, and Badghis community development technician and officer terms of reference and request that HR advertise the positions.