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STABILIZATION IN KEY AREAS (SIKA) – WEST

WEEKLY REPORT (SEPTEMBER 1–5, 2012)

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STABILIZATION IN KEY AREAS (SIKA) – WEST

WEEKLY REPORT

Submitted to:

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Prepared by:

AECOM International Development

DISCLAIMER:

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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 for 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 main highlight of the week for the SIKA-West program, MRRD counterparts and USAID representatives was the signing of the Implementation Letter (IL) on September 3 in Kabul. Plans are now being made for workshops in the respective Provincial Centers to convey the terms of the IL to RRD counterparts and SIKA-West staff, as well as other stakeholders. Another highlight of the week was the launch of the first Gender Working Group meeting held in the Farah Provincial Center, organized by the SIKA-W Capacity Building Department. Ongoing challenges continue to be travel stipends requested by potential District Stabilization Committee (DSC) members, particularly from the Farah Department of Women's Affairs (DoWA).

HIGHLIGHTS

INTERMEDIATE RESULT 1

Highlights

- On September 1, IR1 started the process of entering the previous week's Bala Baluk District DSC findings on sources of instability (SOIs), root causes and possible community-driven mitigating activities into the Bala Baluk District Stabilization Matrix (DSM). On this day a DSM strategy discussion was also held with the Chief of Party (CoP) and other Department Line Managers to begin planning and prioritizing mitigation activities. On September 2, a follow-up DSM strategy discussion was held, with further input from IR3 and IR4 on mitigation activities.
- On September 4, the IR1 Stability Program Officer (SPO) participated in a meeting led by the Acting Senior Program Officer, presenting the Bala Baluk DSC findings to the USAID Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) and Alternate Contracting Officer's Representative (ACOR). The USAID representatives stated that the DSC presentation was the best they had received from SIKA-West to date. During the presentation an IR1 SPO, who had attended the previous week's DSC meeting, shared the program's achievements, lessons learned and community concerns with USAID.
- On September 4, an IR1 SPO traveled to Kabul with an M&E Officer to participate in the Stabilization M&E Summit II, which focused on presenting the "State of the Art in Stabilization Analysis Methods".

Challenges

- NTR

Coming week

- Next week IR1 staff will hold the weekly SIKA-West HQ Strategic Stabilization Cycle meeting to discuss the final draft of the Bala Baluk DSM mitigation activity plan.
- IR1 staff also plan to complete a draft report covering the findings from the M&E Summit held in Kabul on September 5.
- Senior IR1 staff will continue with ongoing capacity building training for the recently hired IR1 SPOs.

- By September 10 the IR1 SPOs will have prepared a draft action plan for roll-out in Key Target Districts (KTDs) in response to this week's signing of the IL.

INTERMEDIATE RESULT 2

- As mentioned below in IR3 highlights, the draft Shindand Bala Baluk District Profile (DP) was completed on September 5. This information collection process was driven by the IR2 lead, and implemented by the Herat PST.

INTERMEDIATE RESULT 3

Highlights

- IR3 staff completed a draft of the Shindand District Profile on September 5, utilizing information gathered by the Herat PST. It is expected that the Shindand DP will be ready to be shared with USAID representatives on September 8.
- IR3 completed the recruitment process for the Communications and Public Outreach Officer, who will be based in the SIKA-West Herat Office, covering key districts in Farah Province. The applicant is due to start on September 8.
- The key IR3 district position in the Bala Baluk District Support Team, the Communications and Public Outreach Officer, was announced on August 28, and was due to close in 10 working days. Residents of Bala Baluk do not have internet access, therefore the position was announced on local television and through the Farah PST and Bala Baluk DST.

Challenges

- Challenges experienced by IR3 staff during the week included the resignation of the Farah DRRD counterpart. IR3 had already spent time building the capacity of the DRRD Media Officer, and with support, he had produced a number of public outreach video clips that had been aired during important dates on the Islamic calendar. IR3 staff will await the recruitment and arrival of a new DRRD staff member and re-establish relations once he/she is onboard.

Coming Week

- Next week IR3 will send a Communications Officer to Farah PST to sit on the Bala Baluk District Interview Panel. Final dates are still being worked out by the HR Department.
- IR3 staff also plan to complete the Farah DRRD Strategic Communications Plan. The resignation of the DRRD Media Officer slightly delayed the completion of this document.
- On September 10, the IR3 Communications Officer will travel from Herat to Farah to provide capacity building training to the Farah PST Communications Officer, in preparation for roll-out communications training to DRRD and DSC counterparts.

INTERMEDIATE RESULT 4

Highlights

- During the week the IR4 Lead prepared a shortlist of 36 people from 111 applicants for 10 positions based in Badghis, Herat and Farah Provinces. Positions advertised included the PST Manager for Badghis, Community Mobilizers, Grant Compliance Officers and Community Development Technicians for all three provinces. At the time of writing, SIKA-West Operations was still finalizing logistic plans for recruiting trips to the provincial offices.
- The IR4 Lead also developed a Scope of Work (SoW) for a Grant Account Manager in Herat HQ, which will be advertised next week.

Challenges

- The main challenge reported by IR4 was the lack of accommodation experienced by Afghan colleagues during field trips to Badghis and Farah. Currently SIKA-West Operations staff are evaluating a number of houses in the provincial centers that could be utilized to accommodate staff from Herat HQ during capacity building trips.

Coming Week

- Next week the IR4 Lead plans to develop technical training materials to be used in community driven stability programs
- From September 8, interviews will be held for IR4 positions in Herat PST and Badghis PST, and interviews for IR4 positions in Farah PST are expected to be held beginning September 15.

GENDER AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Gender Component

Highlights

- The Gender Officer chaired the second internal SIKA-West Gender Working Group weekly meeting on September 4, which allows for gender-related discussions, updates and guidance between all IRs and other departments. In this week's meeting each IR received a gender-related action point, comprising of:
 - IR1 – Recruiting female DSC members;
 - IR2 – Expanding the number of services for women included in the Service Provider Catalogue (SPC);
 - IR3 – Exploring gender-related communications strategies;
 - IR4 – Preparing a budget for vocational courses aimed at women; and
 - M&E – Tracking all activities towards meeting Program Gender Indicators.
- On September 3, the Capacity Building Department (CBD) also launched the Farah Gender Working Group, with membership from the Department of Women's Affairs (DoWA); the Department of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (DRRD); SIKA-West PST; the Ministry of Public Health (MPH); and a local NGO – Wadan Afghanistan. This group will meet weekly and discuss gender issues within the Districts of Bala Baluk, Pusht Rod and the Farah Provincial Center in order to find areas where SIKA-West can play a supporting role to established organizations.
- CBD continued developing Gender Mainstreaming materials for the upcoming PST/DST trainings planned for the month of September. CBD completed the Gender Mainstreaming (Part III) module and plans to roll it out to Farah, Badghis and Herat, starting next week. Currently CBD is working on developing the "Introduction To & Effects of Malnutrition" training module.
- During the week CBD kick-offed the process of gathering 150 names of female residents who will participate in vocational training programs in the Bala Baluk District Communities of Ganjabad, Shewan, Gerani, Kanesk, and Dehzak. This training program will be conducted by September 22

Challenges

- On September 1, the CBD Gender Officer met with the DoWA representative in Farah to revisit the issue of DoWA's role in the Bala Baluk DSC. DoWA stated that they would provide a representative to travel to Bala Baluk if SIKA-West would provide a travel stipend. CBD has refused this request and are continuing to engage with DoWA in the hopes they will send a representative to the next DSC meeting.

Coming Week

- Weekly sessions of the both the internal SIKA-West Gender Working Group and Farah Gender Working Group are scheduled to be held. Reports will be generated from both meetings and will be included in the SIKA-West Monthly Report.

CBD Headquarters Component

- The CBD was instrumental in developing and organizing the Bala Baluk DSC Meeting Presentation & Report, which was shared with USAID and other IR Leads on September 4. Feedback from the presentation is currently being reviewed.
- To date, an additional six training modules were completed this week, bringing the program total to 49 Training Modules covering IR1-IR4/M&E and Gender, which have been translated into Dari and Pashto, and shared with the SIKA-West program.

- The training calendar for September was updated and sent to all relevant staff. The calendar coordinates all IR/M&E and Gender training activities in the field for the month of September.
- The CBD team worked with IR1, IR3 and IR4 to develop training materials which will enable them to train RRD counterparts and District Entities (DEs) in the field.

CBD Farah Component

- “The Farah DRRD Capacity Needs Assessment” data was reviewed and will be used to guide upcoming capacity building training sessions to Farah DRRD. DRRD counterparts have been identified and will benefit from a targeted capacity building program as outlined in the draft six-month Bala Baluk Engagement Plan.
- Farah DRRD counterparts were identified and shared with all respective IRs for further capacity building efforts.
- “The Bala Baluk District Governor Capacity Building Needs Assessment” is underway, as is the Bala Baluk DSC Needs Assessment.

CBD Badghis and Herat Components

- CBD is coordinating IR1-IR4/M&E/Gender PST counterpart training for the Badghis and Herat PST between the 2nd and 3rd week of September.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Highlights

- On September 3, the M&E unit sent a M&E Officer to Kabul to attend the Stabilization M&E Summit II, which focused on presenting the “State of the Art in Stabilization Analysis Methods”. While in Kabul the M&E Officer also attended Afghan Info 2.0 training on September 4, and will also meet with MISTI GIS staff to discuss access to mapping coordinates prior to his return to Herat on September 11.
- The M&E Lead short-listed six potential applicants from 42 candidates for the Herat PST M&E Officer position.
- M&E produced a new training session, “M&E Recap and Project Site Visit”, which will be rolled out on September 8 for the weekly Herat PST and HQ staff training session.
- A M&E Officer collected information for a Success Story based on the APPF Security Transition for SIKA-West, following a request from the USAID COR.
- One Request for Proposal (RFP) covering Baseline Survey Collection was completed and sent to the Operations Manager for review.

Challenges

- Recruiting a female in the M&E team has proven difficult. An offer was made to a female applicant for the position of Reporting Officer; however this offer was rejected due to personal reasons. M&E is also exploring options of recruiting Female M&E Assistants at the District level.
- The M&E Lead identified potential challenges with utilizing DSC members in a M&E role, due to travel expectations and a potential conflict of interest, as beneficiaries of any projects implemented in the area. Lessons learned from the Bala Baluk DSC will be influential in developing M&E’s Community Participation model.

Week Coming

- On September 9, the M&E lead is scheduled to fly to Qali-i-Naw, Badghis Province to sit on an interview panel for a number of Badghis positions, predominantly IR4 PST. He will be returning to Herat on September 15, and will also conduct capacity training for the Badghis PST Officer during his visit. An M&E Officer will also be in Badghis from September 9-17 to build the capacity of all PST staff in preparation for a rapid rollout.

HR/RECRUITMENT

- To date, 79 employees (27 female, 52 male) have been hired and 35 positions are in process.

SIKA-West Recruitment				
Staff	Herat Office	Herat Province	Farah Province	Badghis Province
Hired	57	6	11	5
In process	10	2	1	4
Females hired	22	2	2	1
Males hired	35	4	9	4

As part of the SIKA-West response to the signing of the IL, and to lessons learned during the Bala Baluk engagement, the team leads are examining staff requirements and coming up with a revised staff plan, which will be approved by the CoP in the coming week.

DELIVERABLES

- Weekly Report

SECURITY OPERATIONS

- Conducted various Herat City moves without incident.
- Continued to liaise with other projects operating within the Herat area.
- Conducted weapons training with APPF MST personnel.
- Conducted “Compound Defense Plan” with expatriate personnel.

SUMMARY OF NEXT WEEK’S ACTIVITIES

- IR1 staff plan to complete a draft report covering the findings of the M&E Summit held in Kabul on September 5.
- On September 10, the IR3 Communications Officer will travel from Herat to Farah to provide capacity building training to the Farah PST Communications Officer, in preparation for the roll-out of communications training to DRRD and DSC counterparts.
- From September 8, interviews will be held for IR4 positions in Herat PST and Badghis PST, and interviews for IR4 positions in Farah PST are expected to be held beginning September 15.
- On September 9, the M&E Lead is scheduled to fly to Qali-i-Naw, Badghis Province to sit on an interview panel for a number of Badghis positions, predominantly IR4 PST. He will be returning to Herat on September 15, and will also conduct capacity training for the Badghis PST Officer during his visit. A M&E Officer will also be in Badghis from September 9-17 to build the capacity of all PST staff in preparation for a rapid rollout.