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STABILIZATION IN KEY AREAS (SIKA) – WEST

WEEKLY REPORT (SEPTEMBER 15-19, 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 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

During the week IR1 held the weekly Strategic Stabilization session, where identified Bala Baluk SOI mitigation activities were presented to USAID representatives. Interview panels were held in both Herat and Farah Provinces to recruit applicants for Provincial Stabilization Team (PST) and District Stabilization Team (DST) positions. All IRs in Farah Province provided mentoring to their identified DSC and MRRD counterparts as part of DE capacity building. In collaboration with IR1, Capacity Building identified stabilization project activity for the Bala Baluk DPP. In addition, the DSC observers will now include a number of mullahs from across the district as well as CDC representatives from targeted communities. Vocational training programs for men and women have been identified in Bala Baluk District, which the CBD/IR1 will coordinate on.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE WEEK INCLUDE:

INTERMEDIATE RESULT 1

Highlights

- On September 15, IR1 Stabilization Program Officers (SPOs) held the weekly Strategic Stabilization Session, presenting a list of root causes and mitigation activities derived from the Bala Baluk District Stabilization Matrix (DSM) to the USAID Contracting Officer Representative (COR) and Alternate Contracting Officer Representative (ACOR). The root causes included the presence of insurgents; a lack of GIROA led services; and a lack of trust between GIROA and communities. Mitigation activities included providing conflict resolution trainings to the traditional *Ulema* Council, and engaging them to mediate between GIROA and local communities. Other mitigation activities, as identified by the District Stabilization Committee (DSC), included vocational trainings including carpentry, masonry, plumbing etc., and projects providing support to the agricultural sector. The USAID representatives provided feedback on the list of activities, and any changes will be made following input from District Entities.
- Also on September 15, the IR1 SPO conducted an orientation training session for the Badghis Provincial Stabilization Team (PST) staff on DSC formation, sharing lessons learned from the Bala Baluk roll-out process. The Badghis PST staff will now be better prepared for their own roll-out into Muqur and Qadis Districts. On September 17, similar training was held for the Herat PST staff, preparing them for roll-out into Shindand and Kusk-e Rabat-e-Sangi Districts.

Challenges

- At a DSC counterpart training session on September 18, the DSC members requested that SIKA-West provide pro-government Mullahs with an allowance to encourage them to actively take part in stabilization programming. SIKA-West staff again explained that the SIKA-West program was different to previous programs, and allowances or stipends would not be paid to community members.

Coming Next Week

- IR1 SPOs will be travelling to Farah to facilitate the Farah PST/DST/DSC lessons learned training.
- IR1 staff will also start focusing on roll-out plans for other key districts, as well as continuing to update the Bala Baluk DSM.

INTERMEDIATE RESULT 2

Highlights

- Throughout the week, IR2 was engaged in receiving training from other IRs and attending meetings held by other IRs. The IR2 lead also modified a presentation slide, based on lessons learned during the Bala Baluk roll-out, and collection of information for the Service Provider Catalog (SPC).
- On September 17, the IR2 lead provided training to the Herat PST staff on the roles and responsibilities of the IR2 department, and shared lessons learned in collecting and verifying data collected for the Bala Baluk SPC.
- The IR2 lead also chose an illustrator, who will be responsible for sketching pictures of service providers in the SPC, enabling illiterate members of the community to access these services.

Challenges

- NTR

Coming Next Week

- The IR2 lead will conduct a field trip to Badghis PST from September 23 – 26, to provide training to PST staff and identified DRRD counterparts on the roles and responsibilities of IR2, and data collection methods. During this trip IR2 will also initiate SPC data collection with the support of the Badghis MRRD.

INTERMEDIATE RESULT 3

Highlights

- On September 15, the IR3 acting lead provided the recently recruited Communications Officer with a Training of Trainers (ToT) session. Delivering training to DSC, DG and MRRD counterparts will be one of the main activities of IR3 in the future, and ToT trainings will enable staff to effectively reach program objectives.
- On September 18, IR3 staff conducted training for their Farah DSC and MRRD counterparts. The training covered a brief overview of IR3 activities, goals and objectives, and was followed by an introduction to the main elements of communication.
- IR3 staff also collected information on existing Radio-in-a-Box in Bala Baluk District. As one of the proposed SOI mitigation activities, IR3 is researching sustainable ways to reactivate the radio, including the use of solar panels to generate electricity. In the past the radio broadcast music and ISAF related news to villages up to 8 kilometers away.

Challenges

- IR3 had to cancel a training trip to Farah PST due to the bombing in Kabul, which cancelled all Air Embassy flights.

Plans for the coming week

- On September 22, the IR3 Communications Officer will fly to Farah to sit on an interview panel for the Bala Baluk DST Communications Officer position.
- IR3 will work with MRRD counterparts in Farah to finalize the Communication Plan

INTERMEDIATE RESULT 4

Highlights

- The Herat HQ IR4 Technician revised and edited surveying training material which will be used for all community based infrastructure projects.
- On September 18, the IR4 Community Development Officer presented a session for all IR Field Trainers in Farah PST, covering IR4 objectives and information collection templates.
- On September 18, the IR4 Bala Baluk DST Community Mobilizer worked with identified IR4 DSC and MRRD counterparts in order to build their capacity on maintenance, sustainability, and stabilization practices. At the end of the mentoring session the IR4 representative arranged a discussion with the DSC to identify training needs in Shewan, Dehzak and Kanisk communities.

- On September 15, the IR4 lead travelled to Farah to take part in an interview panel searching for Farah DSC Community Mobilizers, Community Development Technicians and Grants & Compliance Officers. The panel also interviewed for Pusht Rod DSC Community Mobilizers and Community Development Technicians. The panel interviewed 17 shortlisted applicants and chose five candidates.

Challenges

- IR4 was unable to recruit for the Herat-based position of Environmental Specialist, due to the applicants not meeting criteria during the interview panel. It has been decided that all future applicants will have to take a written test prior to being selected for an interview.

Plans for the coming week

- The IR4 lead will continue interviewing for advertised IR4 posts based in Herat-HQ and Herat PST.
- The IR4 Grant Officer will sit on an RFP evaluation panel for IR4-related proposals.
- The IR4 CDO will make a trip to Badghis early in the week to conduct maintenance and sustainability training.
- Next week IR4 plans to improve the capacity of PST and DST staff, and District Entities in Farah Province through training on Maintenance, Sustainability and Stabilization from September 10-13.

PROVINCIAL ACTIVITIES

As part of capacity building, M&E is providing PST Managers with ongoing training to improve report writing abilities. To this end any information provided in the provincial activities section is kept as basic as possible, and as the program grows and the capacity of the PST Managers increases, then this section will expand in both quality and quantity.

FARAH PST

- Representatives from all IRs were involved in a mentoring session of Bala Baluk DSC and Farah MRRD counterparts on September 18. IR1, IR3, IR4 and M&E were all represented at the four hour long meeting. Other issues covering potential SOI mitigation activities were also discussed.
- An interview panel recruited for a number of IR4 positions in Farah, as well as a cleaner and security guard. Selected applicants will be contacted during the coming week.
- PST staff raised the issue of insecurity in key areas as the main challenge to the project.
- Next week PST staff plan to collect SPC data in Pusht Rod District, conduct the next Bala Baluk DSC meeting, and start preparing for implementation of SoI mitigating activities proposed by the Bala Baluk DSC.

Farah Gender Programming

- The Farah Gender Working Group with representatives from Farah PST, DRRD (NABDP), DOE and DOPH, Wadan Afghanistan and WOLD met on September 17, 2012 and discussed the following points:
 - Provided an update on the gender components of the current Bala Baluk DSM process, with regard to the inclusion of DOWA in the monthly DSC meetings and the upcoming roll out of vocational and infrastructure programming.
 - Confirmed the attendance of a Farah DOWA representative at the next Bala Baluk DSC meeting.
 - Discussed the current WOLD English and Computer programming in Farah Provincial Center and are now gathering information on this programming and identifying ways in which SIKA-West can support this programming.
 - Discussed WADAN's current efforts to treat female drug addicts and discussed ways in which SIKA-West can support the current services.
- In addition, the Farah Gender Officer completed the following activities over the past week:
 - Conducted "Introduction to Gender Awareness" training for Farah PST personnel and Farah DRRD Counterparts.
 - Conducted a meeting with DOWA to finalize their participation in the monthly Bala Baluk DSC meetings.

- Conducted a meeting with WHO to identify areas where SIKA-West can collaborate on vaccination programs within Bala Baluk District.

BADGHIS PST

- During the week, PST staff participated in five training sessions conducted by SIKA-West HQ staff from IR1 and the M&E department.
- Applications for six advertised DST positions in Qadis and Muqur Districts were collected and will be forwarded to Herat HQ once the closing date has been reached.
- An interview panel recruited for a number of IR4 positions in Farah, as well as a cleaner and security guard. Selected applicants will be contacted during the coming week.
- Next week PST staff will collect and verify data requested by IR3 staff.
- Two PST staff members will also travel to Farah to participate in preparations for the Pusht Rod DSC opening, and to receive feedback on lessons learned during the Bala Baluk rollout-process.

Badghis Gender Programming

- The Badghis Gender Officer completed the following activities over the past week:
 - Conducted “Introduction to Gender Awareness Training”, “Gender Mainstreaming Part I” and “Gender Mainstreaming Part II” for Badghis PST personnel
 - Facilitated CBD trainings in Badghis, with logistic support, distribution of materials, collection of attendance sheets, feedback forms and photographs.

HERAT PST

- During the week, PST staff participated in interviews for the IR4 Community Mobilizer candidate.
- Next week the Herat PST Manager and the PST Communications & Public Outreach Officer will travel to Farah to take part in a lessons learned session at the Farah PST.

Herat Gender Programming

- The Herat Gender Officer completed the following activities over the past week:
 - Conducted “Gender Mainstreaming Part I” for Herat PST personnel.
 - Provided support to the Gender Department in HQ in terms of tracking the SIKA-West gender activities.

GENDER AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Gender Component

Highlights

SIKA West Gender Programming HQ

- The Gender Department chaired the Internal SIKA West Gender Working Group on September 17, which allows for gender related discussions, updates and guidance between all IR’s and other departments. During this week’s meeting the following issues were discussed and decided upon:
- **IR1-** Establish contact with female members of Bala Baluk DDA as well as contact senior female members of the communities represented by the DSC members. The communities will include Ganjabad, Dehzak, Shewan, Kanesk, Nawbahar, Aref Abad, Tapa Sadat, Gerani, Kal Kala, Said Noormamad, Zamardan, Pooza Langar, Kashman & Kariz Nabi.
Over the past week, IR1 identified two vocational training programs for men (Auto-Mechanic Program in Shewan and Mobile Phone Repair in Kanesk) and one vocational training program for women (Embroidery Vocational Training Program in Kanesk For 15 women) through the Bala Baluk DSC. The CBD will move forward with the design and launch of this program.
- **IR2-** Identify services available for women and include these services in the SPC.
Over the past week, IR2 has provided a list of the Service Providers that cater to the human development needs of men, women and children in Bala Baluk District. This list will be reviewed and the Gender Department will identify areas where existing services may be expanded and/or improved.
- **IR3-** Move forward with a communications release with Farah DOWA on services provided.

Over the past week, IR3 has agreed to undertake a brochure/poster campaign for DOWA on the subject of Educated Women & Healthy Society. The CBD Gender Department is working with IR3 on gathering the necessary information for this brochure/poster campaign.

- **IR4-** Prepare For Vocational Training Programs & Infrastructure Programs For Men & Women In Bala Baluk.

Over the past week, IR4 has learned that three vocational training programs and two community center refurbishment projects have been identified. IR4 will follow up to highlight the gender component of this programming and the impact of this programming as it relates to men, women and children in Bala Baluk District.

- **M&E-** Tracking all activities towards meeting program gender indicators
M&E has redesigned the reporting requirements for program activities and will provide training to the Gender Working Group and Field Trainers on these new requirements next week.
- In addition to the Gender Working Group, the SIKA West Gender Department has completed the following activities:
Completed the advertising period for Literacy teachers in Bala Baluk District. CV's are now being shortlisted to choose 4 Literacy Teachers, one from each of the following communities, Shewan, Gerani, Ganjabad and Dehzak. 25 illiterate female students from each community have been selected.

Capacity Building Headquarters Component

- Fifty Seven Training Modules covering IR1-IR4/M&E and Gender completed and translated into Dari and Pashto and shared with the SIKA West program.
- Training Calendar for HQ, Farah, Herat, and Badghis updated as of September 19 and shared with all departments.
- Two CBD RFP's are currently being evaluated, RFP FH001 Adult Computer Programming for GIROA Personnel and RFP FH002 Adult English Language Programming. CBD will plan to roll these programs out by the end of the month.
- CBD is still waiting on proposals for five more RFP's.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Highlights

- On September 9-17, an M&E Officer held a one-week M&E training session in Badghis for the PST M&E Officer and other PST IR staff, as part of preparations for roll-out into the key districts. The basics of M&E, such as project site visits and the use of monitoring technology such as Tracksticks and GPS cameras were covered. While in Badghis, the M&E Officer also checked the state of the PST's filing and information storage systems, and proposed changes as necessary.
- On September 15, the Herat-HQ M&E officer conducted an 'Introduction to Site Visit' training session for the Herat PST, while similar training, by another Herat-HQ M&E officer, was also conducted for staff at the Badghis PST.
- From September 15-20, a Herat HQ-based M&E Officer conducted training and capacity building sessions in Farah for PST staff. He was also tasked with evaluating the PST information storage systems and advising modifications.
- During the week the M&E lead made modifications to the 102-page Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP), bringing it in line with recent contract modifications. Changes to the Work Plan are due to occur next. An RFP calling for proposals for a Baseline Survey was published late in the week.
- On September 18, a new training presentation was produced covering 'Improving Photography'. This has now been translated into Dari and will be presented to Herat HQ staff next week.

Challenges

- M&E continues to experience ongoing challenges in the report writing capacity of some staff members, particularly at the provincial level. To improve capacity, the M&E lead has designed a simplified report writing template, and will be holding weekly critique sessions for staff from all IRs.

Plans for the coming week

- Ongoing training presentations to Herat HQ staff and Herat PST staff. The M&E Officer in Farah will also be extending his trip in the province until at least September 22, so will be conducting additional trainings for PST staff.
- The M&E lead plans to complete a Database RFP early next week in order to move ahead with data storage as per the PMP.

HR & RECRUITMENT

- To date, 82 employees (28 female, 54 male) have been hired and 40 positions are the recruitment process.

SIKA-West Recruitment				
Staff	Herat Office	Herat Province	Farah Province	Badghis Province
Hired	60	6	11	5
In process	14	8	7	11
Females hired	23	2	2	1
Males hired	37	4	9	4

DELIVERABLES

- Weekly Report
- August Monthly Report

SECURITY OPERATIONS

- Security personnel conducted various Herat City moves without any incidents. Staff movements were also conducted in the Farah Provincial Center with NSTR.
- In Herat, the SIKA-West compound was placed on lockdown on September 14 due to potential anti-American protests stemming from the inflammatory 'Innocence of Islam' video released on the Internet. On September 16, the compound was again put on lockdown, and all national staff sent home following a report that Afghan civilians were holding a demonstration in the city. As a precaution SIKA-West staff will also be on limited movements on September 20, and restricted to mission essential movements only.
- APPF staff conducted security during a recent recruiting visit from September 15 -19 in Farah Province. The trip went smoothly with no incidents to report.
- On September 19, APPF staff, one international Garda World advisor and three national staff from Herat were forced to extend their stay in Farah, following the cancellation of all Embassy Air flights due to the loss of several pilots in a bombing attack in Kabul.
- Continued to liaise with other projects operating within the Herat area.
- Conducted ongoing weapons training with APPF MST personnel.
- Conducted compound defense plan with expatriate personnel.
- Additional security upgrades have been submitted, and vendors have been visiting the compound to conduct a site survey
- Security SOPs are currently being reviewed by the SIKA-West Operations Manager

IMAGES



IR3 Communications Officer conducting training for Bala Baluk DSC and DRRD counterparts in Farah



IR4 Community Mobilizer Officer mentoring PST and DST staff staff in Farah Province