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## QUARTERLY REPORT

### Promote: Women in Government

IDIQ No. AID-306-I-14-00012

Task Order No. AID-306-TO-15-00044

FY2015 Quarter 3: April – June 2015



**July 31, 2015**

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## Acronyms

ACOR	Alternate Contracting Officer's Representative
ACSI	Afghanistan Civil Service Institute
ALBA	Assistance to Legislative Bodies of Afghanistan
ALDO	Afghan Learning and Development Organization
AoP	Administrative Office of the President
APPF	Afghan Public Protection Force
ATVI	Afghan Technical and Vocational Institute
CBR	Capacity Building for Results
CO	Contracting Officer
CO-OP	Country Operations Optimization Program
COP	Chief of Party
COR	Contracting Officer's Representative
CV	Curriculum Vitae
DMD	Deputy Mission Director
EA	Equal Access
EPD	Equality for Peace and Democracy
GEP	Gender Equality Project
GIRoA	Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
GSO	General Service Office
HR	Human Resource
IARCSC	Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission
IDIQ	Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity
IDLG	Independent Directorate for Local Governance
ISLA	Initiative to Strengthen Local Administrations
MAIL	Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock
MCN	Ministry of Counter Narcotics
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MoHE	Ministry of Higher Education
MoLSAMD	Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled
MORE	Ministry of Women's Affairs Organizational Restructuring and Empowerment Project
MoWA	Ministry of Women's Affairs
MRRD	Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development
NAEC	National Agriculture Education College
PLSO	Partner Liaison Security Office
RLA	Resident Legal Advisor
SHAHAR	Strong Hubs for Afghan Hope and Resilience
STTA	Short Term Technical Assistance
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

## 1. Project Overview

- Task Order: Promote: Women in Government, AID-306-TO-15-00044
- IDIQ: Promote AID-306-I-14-00012  
Period of Performance: April 21, 2015-April 20, 2020
- Name of Prime Implementing Partner: Chemonics International Inc.
- Names of Sub-contractors/Sub-awardees:
  - Equal Access (EA)
  - Afghan Learning and Development Organization (ALDO)
  - Afghan Technical and Vocational Institute (ATVI)
  - Equality for Peace and Democracy (EPD)
  - Tadbeer Consulting
  - Services International, LLC
  - Afghanistan Public Protection Force (APPF)
- Geographic Coverage: Afghanistan

### Project Description:

Promote is a joint commitment by the U.S. and Afghan Governments that will work to empower 75,000 women between the ages of 18 and 30, and help ensure these women are included among a new generation of Afghan political, business, and civil society leaders. Promote aims to empower women to become leaders alongside their male counterparts, and ensure they have the skills, experience, knowledge, and networks to succeed.

Women in Government, a task order under the Promote Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) contract, was designed to increase and advance the number of women in the Afghan Civil Service. In close coordination with the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA), Women in Government aims to ensure women are always represented at the highest levels of policy and decision-making in Afghan society and government. This component of Promote facilitates women's entry into decision-making roles in government service, encourages policy reform within the Government of Afghanistan at both the national and regional levels, increases support for women in government, and establishes an internship program for high school and college female students interested in working within government ministries.

The Promote: Women in Government program has three objectives:

- Facilitate women's entry into decision-making roles in government service.
- Encourage a hospitable environment for female staff in government.
- Increase local stakeholder support for women in government.

Through the advancement of these objectives, Promote: Women in Government aims to achieve the following results:

- At least 3,000 female university graduates and secondary school graduates complete one year government internships and transition to full-time employment.
- 70 percent of females employed by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) within 24 months of finishing their internship.
- 75 percent of reforms made to GIROA agency workplace policies are those which benefit and protect female employees.
- 50 percent gain in number of local stakeholder supporters for women working outside the house.

## 2. Executive Summary

### 2.1 Summary of results for the reporting period and key achievements

**Startup:** Initial project conference calls were held between Chemonics and USAID on May 2 and May 15 to discuss salary and international travel approval for Promote: Women in Government startup team, the pilot internship program for 20 inaugural interns, baseline data collection, approval protocols for staffing, travel, deliverables, etc.

On May 19 an initial startup meeting was held with the Promote: Women in Government startup team and USAID. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the Promote project and expectations for the Women in Government task order. Following a message from the Deputy Mission Director, presentations were given by each USAID department for the purpose of sharing guidance on processes and the working environment, leading discussions on technical issues, and providing overall support and suggestions for a successful startup.

**Relationship Building:** During the third quarter, Promote: Women in Government project team had several meetings with key ministries and potential partners, in order to introduce the Promote: Women in Government project and obtain buy-in for Component 1, the Women's Internship Program. Meetings were held with the Ministry of Finance (MoF), Ministry of Counter Narcotics (MCN), Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA), the Administrative Office of the President (AoP), the Afghanistan Civil Service Institute (ACSI), the Afghanistan Agriculture Extension Project II, the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE), Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD), and the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL). Also, a meeting was held between Promote: Women in Government, USAID and the Ministry of Women's Affairs. The meeting's purpose was to discuss the timing for the Promote: Women in Government's Component 2, which is projected to begin in the project's sixth month (September 2015). Also discussed was the idea of holding an awards ceremony to celebrate both male and female champions of women's empowerment.

**Preparation for Women's Internship Program:** During this quarter, many initial steps were taken to ensure an on-time startup for the pilot internship program which will begin in early August. These steps included compiling the first draft of an Internship Manual which is a deliverable due to USAID by August 21, 2015; instituting intern recruitment and response procedures for intern applicants; creating internship application forms, evaluation forms, and commitment letters for mentors, interns and their families, and the ministries; creating an introductory presentation for the interns; and drafting a memorandum of understanding for the Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission.

**Deliverables:** Deliverables submitted during the third quarter included the May and June Monthly Progress Reports, the quarterly Financial Accruals Report, two iterations of the project's First Year Work Plan, the first project Success Story, and the first draft of the project's Activity Monitoring and Evaluation Plan.

### 2.2 Constraints and critical issues

- Delays are often encountered when trying to secure appointments or obtain other responses from the government ministries.
- Security concerns often limit movements around Kabul and delay meetings with key partners.
- Some of the property that was disposed to the Promote: Women in Government project is of poor quality and has technical problems, including many of the laptops. These issues may require the project to purchase new equipment.
- Due to the uncertainty associated with the transition to the Unity Government, there are rumors that all current Deputy Ministers will be replaced. When the Women in

Government team met with the current Deputy Ministers, they were concerned about whether or not they would remain in their positions. Most of the Deputy Ministers are heavily involved in lobbying and networking to hold onto their posts.

### **3. Activity Implementation**

#### **3.1 Indicator/Activity Performance**

As mentioned above, the Promote: Women in Government project's Activity Monitoring and Evaluation Plan is in draft form and the project's indicators are still being refined and finalized. Reporting again indicators will take place in the next quarterly report: FY2015, Quarter 4.

#### **3.2 Key Activities Accomplished during the Quarter.**

- ***Development of Intern Recruitment Procedure:*** A Standard Recruitment Procedure for Internship Applicants was developed that describes the processes required to bring an intern into the program.
- ***Development of Standard Response for Internship Applicants:*** Project staff developed a standard response for internship applicants and assigned an email address and phone number for applicants to inquire about the Promote: Women in Government Internship Program.
- ***Drafting of Internship Forms:*** The project staff prepared and worked with USAID to obtain their approval on several draft internship documents. These included an internship application form and commitment letters for mentors, interns, and their families, as well as the ministries. Mid-term and final evaluation forms for the interns were also created to evaluate interns' activities and assess their improvement during the internship program.
- ***Drafting of Internship Manual:*** The first draft of the Internship Manual was drafted, which covers the overall introduction, goals and objectives of the internship program, and the interns' recruitment and placement processes.
- ***Development of Introductory Presentation for the Applicants:*** A presentation designed to introduce internship applicants to the Promote: Women in Government project was developed. This presentation will provide the applicants with information about the internship program process, including eligible and transparent selection criteria for the interns, the internship program cycle, benefits and job placement opportunities. The presentation will be used as a recruitment tool and will be delivered in both public and private universities to potential internship applicants.
- ***Drafting of Outline for GIRoA Partnership Assessment:*** The project team completed the first draft outline for the GIRoA partnership assessment. The outline is in the process of being reviewed internally before being submitted to USAID for approval.
- ***Submission of April/May Success Story:*** Promote: Women in Government's first success story was submitted to USAID on June 28, 2015. It was entitled "On the Path from Start-Up to Full-Scale Implementation" and focused on the Promote: Women in Government project's rapid and cost-efficient start-up.

- **Submission of Work Plan:** The Promote: Women in Government’s first year revised work plan was submitted to USAID on June 9, 2015. This version took into account comments received from USAID on May 27, 2015.
- **Creation of Internal Action Plan:** Promote: Women in Government staff developed an action plan for the next five months with the aim to break down and prioritize the main activities of the three project components.
- **Meeting with the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE):** On June 15, 2015, [REDACTED], Promote: Women in Government’s Interim COP, and [REDACTED], Government Liaison Lead, met with Farida Momand, Minister of Higher Education, Omid Farooq, Senior Media Advisor to the Minister, and Najibullah Sahim, Human Resource Director. The purpose of the meeting was to introduce the Promote: Women in Government project to the MoHE, as well as to request Ministry assistance for the project by speeding up the verification process of bachelors degrees for internship candidates. Degree verification is one of the criteria for the Promote: Women in Government Internship program, as well as a government requirement for all civil servant employees. During the meeting, the Minister appeared to be very supportive of the internship program to increase the number of female civil servants. Government team and to share upcoming vacancies that could be filled by the interns. Mrs. Momand confirmed her commitment to assisting the Promote: Women in Government internship program by ensuring that the interns will be placed in long-term positions at the end of the internship, and stated that MoHE will select knowledgeable mentors for the interns.



[REDACTED] Government Liaison Lead, [REDACTED] Minister of Higher Education, and [REDACTED] Interim COP, discussing the Promote: Women in Government internship program.

- **Meeting with the Afghanistan Agriculture Extension Project II ( AAEP II):** On June 14, 2015, the Promote: Women in Government team met with [REDACTED] AAEP II Deputy Chief of Party, and seven female interns of AAEP II at the Promote: Women in Government offices. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the interns who had completed a three-month internship as Agriculture Extension workers, but who were now jobless and looking for opportunities within government or the private sector. All seven interns had completed a two-year diploma from the National Agriculture Education College (NAEC) as well as the three-month internship, which taught them skills in Agricultural Business Management, Plant Science and



Promote: Women in Government team, [REDACTED], AAEP II Deputy Chief of Party, and seven female interns of AAEP II

Rural Development. Since there are no vacancies at the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL), AAEP II would like Promote: Women in Government project to include the seven women in their internship program. Promote:

Women in Government Interim COP [REDACTED] explained that unfortunately since ACSI and the government ministries in Kabul require at least a bachelor's degree, the Promote: Women in Government project could not accept the interns into their Kabul-based program. Interns with less than a bachelors degree are acceptable outside of Kabul, but all of the interns from AAEP II were Kabul-based, so the internship program would not work for them.

- **Meeting with the Afghanistan Civil Service Institute (ACSI):** On June 14, 2015, [REDACTED], Promote: Women in Government's Interim COP, and [REDACTED], Government Liaison Lead, met with Dr. Farhad Osmani, Director General, Moneir Mobbashar, Senior Program Coordinator, and Soroush Wahab, Director of Coordination of the ACSI to discuss the possibility of training the Promote: Women in Government interns at ACSI. Dr. Osmani assured the Promote: Women in Government team that ACSI is ready to train the 20 inaugural interns. Dr. Osmani proposed that the Promote: Women in Government team recruit only university graduates in Kabul for two reasons. First, there are many graduates with bachelors and even masters degrees who are jobless. Second, ministries rarely recruit anyone who does not have a four years academic degree. It will be possible to hire the high school graduates only in the provinces. During the meeting, Dr. Osmani clarified the internship curricula, certification, recruitment processes for interns, stipends, trainers, timing, lunch, transport and other considerations.
- **Meeting with the Administrative Office of President (AOP):** On June 2, 2015, [REDACTED], Promote: Women in Government's Interim COP, and [REDACTED], Government Liaison Lead, met with Kamela Sidiqi, AOP's Financial and Administrative Deputy, and Ahmad Waheed Shakib, Director of Organizational Structure and Cadre Affairs of the State. The meeting was aimed to brief the participants about the Promote: Women in Government pilot internship program and to urge their commitment to hiring the potential intern graduates. Since the Office of President and Office of Administrative Affairs emerged, the number of female staffs has increased. During the meeting, Ms. Sidigi promised that she will talk about the Promote: Women in Government Internship program in the AOP's senior management team meeting and will confirm the number of interns that they can take, which according to her, could be up to eight interns for now. AOP is committed to recruiting the interns in their Tashkeel. Mr. Shakib stated the government is working on a "Golden Handshake" policy to replace the old generation of government staff with university graduates, and he confirmed that the Tashkeel of the ministries would not be increased. He requested two interns with Public Policy and Economics degrees for his department, and he assured the Promote: Women in Government team that he would recruit them upon graduation from the internship program.
- **Meeting with the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA):** On June 2, 2015, [REDACTED], Promote: Women in Government's Interim COP, and [REDACTED], Government Liaison Lead, met with Fawzia Habibi, Deputy Minister, and Rahima Zarifi, Director of Policy and Planning, of the MoWA. The purpose of the meeting was to initiate a relationship with the MoWA and to discuss their needs for policy support and national priorities. Ms. Habibi stated that the first step should be for a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to be signed in order to clarify the roles and responsibilities of MoWA, the Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission (IARCSC), and the Promote: Women in Government project. MoWA would like to be kept up-to-date about the Promote: Women in Government project's progress. Moreover, the Ministry stated that Promote: Women in Government is welcome to use MoWA's training centers in the provinces, and that MoWA is willing to help identify qualified interns.

- **Meeting with the Ministry of Counter Narcotics (MCN):** On June 1, 2015, [REDACTED], Promote: Women in Government's Interim COP, and [REDACTED], Government Liaison Lead, met with Salamat Azimi, Minister of MCN, and Adalatjo, Head of Gender Unit, of the MCN. The purpose of the meeting was to introduce the pilot internship program and to receive information and a commitment from the Ministry to hire the potential intern graduates. During the meeting, Ms. Azimi stated that only 33 out of 460 Ministry employees in both Kabul and the provinces are female, which is the equivalent of only eight percent. Within the management level of the MCN, there is only one female director (grade two) and three managers (grade three). The Minister requested Promote: Women in Government to provide two high-level advisors: one expert on public relations and one on gender and communications. For the moment, the Ministry can take only two interns in Kabul, and in the second year of the program, one intern in each province (equaling a total of 34 interns over the first two years of the project).
- **Meeting with the Ministry of Finance (MoF):** On June 1, 2015, [REDACTED], Promote: Women in Government's Interim Chief of Party (COP), along with [REDACTED], Government Liaison Lead, met with Musa Kamawi, Human Resource (HR) Director, and Agha Saheb, Recruitment Manager, of the MoF. The purpose of the meeting was to introduce the Promote: Women in Government program and to explore the opportunity of placing interns into MoF's offices. According to Mr. Kamawi, one of the priorities of the new Minister in his first-hundred-day work plan is to recruit 100 female staff in the Tashkeel of ministry, bypassing the open competition requirement. The senior management of MoF is very committed and eager to increase the numbers of female staff. Mr. Kamawi requested a high-level meeting between USAID, MoF, and the Promote: Women in Government team for the Minister to be informed and involved. According to Mr. Kamawi, MoF has significant experience in managing internship programs, and they would like to partner with the Promote: Women in Government project. Currently, MoF can take 20 interns that they are willing to recruit in the next few months.
- **Meeting with the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL).** On May 31, 2015, Interim COP [REDACTED], along with Government Liaison Lead [REDACTED], met with HR Director Yaqub Hotak and Director of Home Economy Nazira Rahman, of the MAIL. The meeting aimed to brief the participants about the Women in Government internship program and request their immediate assistance for placing the first group of interns. MAIL expressed their interest to work with the Women in Government internship program, and they are especially interested in recruiting interns who have graduated from Agriculture, Economics, Veterinary or Pharmacy studies. According to Mr. Hotak, only three percent of all MAIL employees in Kabul and the provinces are female. MAIL is one of the ministries that always encourage female graduates to apply for the vacant positions. The main challenge for recruiting women in MAIL is that very few women apply for vacant positions within the ministry. MAIL requested that Women in Government train women for senior level positions, as they are eager to recruit and bring on board more women for senior positions within the ministry. MAIL will accept ten interns. The HR Director requested that the Women in Government team organize a high-level meeting between USAID and the Minister to sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU) defining the responsibilities of both parties.
- **Meeting with the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD).** On May 31, 2015 Promote: Women in Government's Interim COP, [REDACTED], along with Government Liaison Lead [REDACTED], met with Human Resource (HR) Director Tahir Ayub, and Senior HR Advisor Azim Atarud, of the MRRD. The

purpose of the meeting was to introduce MRRD to the Women in Government program and to explore the opportunity of placing some of the first 20 inaugural interns into MRRD's offices. MRRD is currently hosting a large number of senior students who are fulfilling a three-month internship requirement to complete their bachelor's degrees. Following the completion of this current internship program at MRRD, they are open to recruiting 34 interns for the first round of the Women in Government internship program. According to MRRD, the Afghanistan Civil Service Institute (ACSI) trainings are somewhat useful for the interns, but are not sufficient as their trainings tend to focus on general management rather than on the technical knowledge that interns should acquire in order to facilitate a successful start to their careers.

### **3.3 Planned for Next Reporting Period**

- ***Conduct GIRoA partnership assessment: and gender analysis:*** Gender Analysis Assessment tools will be prepared and for the GIRoA Partnership assessment form will be developed. The short term Gender Specialist will arrive in Kabul to begin in the Gender Analysis and Partnership Assessment Report which due to USAID on August 21, 2015.
- ***Women in Government technical working group:*** During the partnership assessment and gender analysis, Women in Government will identify members from GIRoA officials and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) for the Technical Working Group who will provide advice and introductions for USAID to connect with various agencies and mentors
- ***Selection of initial government partners:*** Based on the partnership assessment and in coordination with USAID, the COP and Government Liaison Lead will finalize selection criteria for the primary ministries, agencies, governors' offices, provincial councils, and municipal offices. During the selection process, the project team will also determine the number of positions open to interns and identify substantive projects that they can undertake at the receiving organization.
- ***Prepare internship manual:*** the project team will continue the work on the draft internship manual due to USAID on August 21, 2015.
- ***Identify and select mentors:*** During the GIRoA partnership assessment, the Internship Coordinator Team Lead and the Recruitment/Placement Advisor will ask the HR directors of the selected ministries to identify potential mentors for the interns. They will also ask ministers to send out a call for mentors as part of an internal campaign to promote the internship program and publicize incentives for mentors.
- ***Recruit and select interns (Pilot -25 interns):*** The Project team will create selection criteria for the inaugural cohort of approximately 25 internship candidates in Kabul and will start intern selection process including call for application, collect applications, screen, shortlist and select the interns.
- ***The launch of the internship program:*** Promote: Women in Government will launch the internship program and begin with an orientation for the interns, their families, and mentors.
- ***Commitment letters:*** Commitment letter will be signed by the interns, interns' family, and mentors.
- ***MOU with the IARCSC:*** An MOU will be signed with the IARCSC to solidify the agreement for ACSI to provide training for the interns.
- ***Creation of peer groups:*** The Project team will coordinate with Women's Leadership Development / Tetra Tech to utilize the Promote Knowledge Management Platform and to avoid duplication of efforts. The project's communications and outreach partner, Equal Access will assist the recruitment and placement team in selecting

women employed in government and training them in facilitation and group mobilization to mentor interns in “women’s professional circles.”

- **Review of needs assessment for target ministries:** Some ministries have conducted basic needs assessments. The Women in Government Training Specialist will review these assessments and the GIRoA partnership assessment with the Recruitment/Placement Advisor, the recruitment and placement team, and the relevant regional internship coordinator.
- **Design and launch training and capacity building program:** The project’s training team with assistance from Women in Government sub-contractors ATVI and Tadbeer will work with the ACSI to assess its training materials, revise them as needed, and create supplementary materials to meet the needs of Afghanistan’s civil service.
- **Upgrade of career development center:** The IARCSC has a Women’s Career Development Center (CDC) in Kabul where women can review job listings, receive help writing and preparing for interviews, and learn about HR, finance, management, and software. To build on existing resources and build sustainability into Women in Government, the training team will help update their curriculum to meet the needs of the target ministries and government offices, train trainers, and offer training to women outside of the internship program.
- **Internship program linked to placement:** In addition to their training, the interns will gain position-specific skills to help them meet the requirements of open positions. Promote: Women in Government will work with the IARCSC to establish experience equivalencies for Women in Government interns as it has done for other internship programs, so that Women in Government’s one-year program can be considered as one year professional work experience.
- **Establish database for alumni network:** The project team will establish a database for the intern alumni network that includes each intern’s field of study, internship location, professional interests, and contact information
- **Create Women's Association in the Civil Service:** With the assistance from the gender Directorate of the IARCSC and the MoWA Director of Policy and Planning, Women in Government team will create an Association of Women in the Civil Service with the ownership of GIRoA partners.
- **Create selection committee to monitor placement of female interns:** To oversee the placement of interns, Promote: Women in Government will utilize the Technical Working Group to create an advisory board with representatives from HR and gender units at the ministries. The advisory board will report the placement figures quarterly to stakeholders, including MoWA, IARCSC, IDLG, and Women in Government’s recruitment and placement services team, who will meet to discuss progress and resolve challenges.
- **Train supervisors on coaching and mentoring:** Led by the training specialist, the project’s training staff will design and deliver a course for male and female supervisors in government on the differences between supervising, mentoring, and coaching. The course could cover communications skills, including active listening, strategies for mentoring men and women, and an introduction to gender sensitivity
- **Design and deliver a course for supervisors and on supervising, leadership and communication:** The training specialist and the training team will provide this course emphasizing supervisory, leadership, and communication skills for current supervisors.
- **Work with other programs offering scholarships:** The alumni and scholarship advisor will help current employees wishing to pursue higher education find the right scholarship funding through donor programs, such as USAID’s Promote Scholarship

Activity or programs funded by a government ministry, such as Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock.

- **Policy Reform:** Long term and short term project staff will assist MoWA and IARCSC in developing implementation guidelines for anti-harassment policies.
- **Workplace Obstacles Analysis:** A concept paper for the workplace obstacle-analysis and recommendations report will be completed.

### **3.4 Lessons learned**

Since the Promote: Women in Government project is still in its startup phase, lessons learned will be better assessed in later reporting periods.

#### **Evaluations, Assessments, or Audits**

No evaluations, assessments or audits were completed on the Promote: Women in Government program during this quarter.

## **4. Collaboration with GIRoA, other donor projects, or other USAID projects**

### **4.1 Links with relevant GIRoA ministries**

██████████, Promote: Women in Government's Interim Chief of Party, and ██████████, Government Liaison Lead, were actively engaged with key ministries and executive offices, facilitating relationships at the national (and soon to be subnational) level. During this quarter, Promote: Women in Government's engagements have been particularly focused on Component 1 of the project. Meetings were held with the MoF, MoWA, the Administrative Office of the President, the MCN, ACSI, MoHE, MAIL, and MRRD. Once project activities expand outside of Kabul, Promote: Women in Government will work closely with the Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG) to facilitate government relationships at the subnational level.

### **4.2 Links with other donor agencies**

On June 30, 2015, ██████████, Promote: Women in Government's Interim COP attended the launch of the Action Plan for United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 – Women, Peace & Security, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan. President Ashraf Ghani opened the event while the First Lady, Minister of MoWA, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassadors, Afghan Cabinet, members of parliament & Senate, civil society, and private sector activists were present. The resolution stresses the rights and status of women in peacebuilding and conflict prevention.

### **4.3 List and discuss links with other USAID projects**

On June 23, 2015, the Promote: Women in Government team met with ██████████ Promote: Women's Leadership Development (WLD) COP, ██████████ Deputy COP for WLD, ██████████ USAID Gender Team Leader, ██████████ Promote Contracting Officer's Representative, ██████████ Gender Specialist, and ██████████ USAID Activity Manager. The purpose of the meeting was to facilitate coordination between the two Promote task orders. Currently, WLD and Promote: Women in Government are two independent programs, but their challenges will be similar in reporting requirements and both are expected to speak in one voice for "Promote". As a result, it was decided that Promote: Women in Government and WLD will come up with a coordination strategy and share it with USAID.

██████████ recommended that the two teams discuss the utilization of the WLD knowledge management portal for reporting purposes. He stressed that we need to be meticulous on reporting data into the portal for the 75,000 Promote beneficiaries.

On June 29, 2015, an Implementing Partner meeting was held by USAID to introduce the new Mission Director ██████████ ██████████ USAID Mission Director and ██████████ ██████████ USAID Deputy Assistant to the Administrator for Afghanistan from DC were present. The security situation and project challenges were discussed.

## **5. Management and Administrative Issues**

### **5.1 Personnel**

Promote: Women in Government project has been proactive during this quarter to onboard staff as quickly as possible. As of June 30, 18 long term personal were in place.

### **5.2 Adaption of the activity**

During the third quarter, discussions were held between the Promote: Women in Government startup team, Interim COP, Government Liaison Lead and USAID's COR/ACOR regarding the due date of the Gender Analysis Report, which falls on July 21, 2015, just following the Eid-ul-Fitr holiday. The project team discussed the option of adjusting the due date for the report so that it coincided with the due date for the GIRoA Partnership Assessment Report, on August 21, 2015. Since the data gathering period for the Gender Analysis Report would need to occur during the month of Ramadan to meet the July 21 deadline, access to local stakeholders would be challenging. USAID approved the request to extend the due date for the Gender Analysis report on June 9, 2015

### **5.3 Modifications and Amendments**

A contract modification will be requested at a date in the future to formalize the changes to deliverables mentioned above, as well as other technical changes if they arise.

## 6. Success Stories and Photos



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## SUCCESS STORY On the Path from Start-Up to Full-Scale Implementation

### Promote: Women in Government is building the capacity of women to gain entry into Afghan Civil Service



Promote: Women in Government staff

*“Since only 3% of MAIL employees are women, we can fill many vacant positions by women interns; but very few women apply because they are either not motivated or not well trained to work with government. The Promote: Women in Government Internship program can be an opportunity for new intern graduates to enter the government workforce.”*

*-HR Director Yaqub Hotak, MAIL*

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In Afghanistan's volatile, complex, and unpredictable operating environment, strong communications and defined responsibilities are critical for a rapid start-up. The Promote: Women in Government task order was awarded to Chemonics International on April 21, 2015. Immediately thereafter, a three-person team was deployed to establish the administrative and operational infrastructure needed for startup and recruit project staff, set-up project office space, and lay the groundwork for technical implementation.

Promote: Women in Government's start-up strategy is structured to allow technical activities to begin alongside operational setup, to capitalize on existing momentum for women's rights in Afghanistan, and to facilitate stakeholder buy-in through visible, immediate results. In addition to quickly hiring qualified professionals, the project will be utilizing shared operations platform in Kabul, which includes housing, office space, and security to rapidly initiate operations. This has also resulted in a significant cost-savings to the project. Also, by procuring necessary office furniture, mobile phones, electronics and IT equipment that have been proposed for disposition from other USAID projects, additional cost savings have been realized.

After the Promote: Women in Government kick-off meeting in May, the project focused on actively developing strategic partnerships with key stakeholders to evaluate the most pressing issues facing women in government. This included meetings with the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) and the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL). The goals of the project were consolidated by the project team, and actionable items were adapted into a work plan.

Promote: Women in Government is successfully positioning its local partners Afghan Learning and Development Organization, Afghan Technical and Vocational Institute, Equality for Peace and Democracy, and Tadbeer Consulting, to begin technical implementation by collaboratively working with local partners to refine their scopes of work and to finalize their mobilization plan for the rollout of technical activities.