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# REGIONAL AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM-SOUTH (RADP-S)

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## DISCLAIMER

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## ACRONYMS

ABISC	Ahmad Baryali Improved Seeds Company
ADA	Afghan Development Association
CBPP	Contagious Bovine Pleura Pneumonia
CCHF	Crimean Congo Hemorrhagic
CHA	Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance
DAIL	Directorate of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock
DCA	Dutch Committee for Afghanistan
EEU	Enabling Environment Unit
FEG	Farmer Extension Group
HVC	High Value Crop
IPM	Integrated Pest Management
KCFC	Khurasan Cub Fish Company
KIP	Key Implementing Partner
MAIL	Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
PDC	Provincial Development Council
PSA	Public Short Announcement
RADP-S	Regional Agricultural Development Program-South
TOT	Training of Trainer
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VCU	Value Chain Unit
VFU	Veterinary Field Unit
VTSC	Veterinary Training and Support Center
ZNAC	Zulmai Nasim Agriculture Company

Cover Photo: Farmers visit SISSCO, a RADP-S supported wheat processing company in Kandahar City.

## **SECTION I: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

## **Program Description**

The purpose of the Regional Agricultural Development Program-South (RADP-S) is to improve food and economic security for rural Afghans in the provinces of Kandahar, Helmand, Zabul, and Uruzgan. To accomplish this goal, RADP-S focuses on improving the productivity and profitability of the wheat, high value crops, and livestock value chains, while addressing policy, legal and regulatory constraints affecting value chain development. This agricultural development program supports the consolidation of licit economies to fuel sustainable long term economic growth, including providing alternatives to poppy cultivation.

The implementation approach of RADP-S dovetails with Afghan and U.S. government strategies in its focus on advancing food security, regenerating agribusiness, and increasing agriculture sector jobs and incomes. RADP-S aims to strengthen the capacity of producers, associations, traders, and agribusinesses to respond to market demands; facilitate lasting market linkages between value chain actors; and support an enabling environment that allows the private sector to thrive. The program places the Afghan private sector at the forefront of implementation and addresses key crosscutting issues of women's empowerment, agribusiness value chain facilitation, and alternative development in all facets of the program. Embodying USAID's vision for sustainable Afghan-led development, RADP-S lays the foundation for greater and more socially inclusive growth in the agricultural economy.

## **July 2015 Program Highlights**

During the reporting period, RADP-S trained 5,490 farmers on wheat crop rotation and 5,004 farmers in grape and orchard harvest and post-harvest methods and winter vegetable greenhouse maintenance. In addition, RADP-S key implementing partner Dutch Committee for Afghanistan (DCA) trained a total of 1,028 farmer extension group (FEG) members, 588 women and 440 men, in controlling and preventing blood parasite diseases, Hemorrhagic Septicemia, and Contagious Bovine Pleura Pneumonia in large ruminants.

In July, 18 out of 19 new veterinary field units (VFUs) became operational and began delivering animal health services in their respective districts. One paravet from Uruzgan province is finalizing a VFU location in coordination with DCA, and is expected to begin operations in August. RADP-S supported VFUs throughout Kandahar, Helmand, Uruzgan, and Zabul provinces now number 42. Seventeen paravets graduated from the Charikar Veterinary Training and Support Center (VTSC) on July 2 and will also be provided with VFU start-up kits. RADP-S anticipates supporting a total of 59 VFUs by the end of the project's second year.

As of July, RADP-S has successfully concluded grant activities with four wheat companies and one high value crop company based in Kandahar City. Five livestock companies and one high value crop company continued training activities during the reporting period. RADP-S has begun preparations for the release of a second Annual Program Statement and is consulting with businesses in Helmand province to extend the reach of the project's support to small and medium enterprises.

The RADP-S Gender Unit conducted a training of trainers (TOT) for 21 key implementing partner (KIP) gender specialists. The gender specialists received training in the Taraqi Saba entrepreneurship curriculum, previously developed by USAID. Taraqi Saba is an introductory course for students that promote business idea generation and basic business management skills. The RADP-S iteration will concentrate on developing agribusiness with special considerations for companies working in food processing.

## **SECTION II: WHEAT**

### **Farmer Trainings in Wheat Topics**



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**Wheat crop rotation training in Daman, Kandahar.**

During the reporting period, RADP-S master trainers trained 5,490 farmers in crop rotation. Crop rotation is routinely practiced in the agricultural sector but rarely practiced in the southern provinces. When properly executed, crop rotation balances soil nutrients and reduces soil toxicity to create a more hospitable soil environment for the next planting season. Crop rotation also helps plants absorb more nutrients, regulate plant growth, and bolster natural defense mechanisms against pests, insects, weeds, and disease. The practice has significant implications for increasing wheat and high value crop yields. RADP-S also introduced farmers to sulfur powder application as a technique to improve soil pH for the next growing season.

### **Wheat Harvest on District Demonstration Farms**

Demonstration farms in Kandahar, Helmand, Uruzgan, and Zabul provinces completed wheat harvesting in July. During the reporting period, RADP-S closely monitored wheat yields to measure and determine productivity as a result of RADP-S promoted techniques. With the conclusion of the wheat harvesting season, the RADP-S Productivity and Production Unit and Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Unit will analyze wheat yield data, with report findings to be finalized in the next reporting period.



USAID/RADP-S

**Harvested wheat bundles in Helmand province.**

### **Completion of Wheat Company Grantees Training Activities**

During the reporting period, the SISSCO wheat company completed its promotional training activities. SISSCO trained 94 farmers in Arghadab, Zheri, and Dand districts of Kandahar province on topics such as the benefits of SISSCO certified wheat seeds, proper land preparation, and wheat sowing. As of July, RADP-S has supported trainings for four wheat companies.

## **SECTION III: HIGH VALUE CROPS**

### **Farmer High Value Crop Trainings**



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**Grape picking demonstration in Dand, Kandahar.**

demonstrated.

During the reporting period, RADP-S trained 5,004 farmers on vineyard and orchard harvest and post-harvest management and greenhouse vegetable maintenance. The orchard trainings focused on apricots, peaches, plums, almonds, figs, and pomegranates. Farmers were taught how to identify plant maturity, properly pick fruit, grading, cleaning, packing and storing techniques for orchard fruits and grapes. Farmers were also trained in sanitary methods for grape drying, the most common treatment of grapes, as the lack of cold storage facilities makes fresh grape storage difficult. Cost-effective measures for transporting fruit were also taught. Farmers were also trained in vegetable maintenance. Trellising techniques for tomatoes and cucumbers, along with plant thinning methods were

### **High Value Crop Company Grantees Training Activities**

During the reporting period, the Zulmai Nasim Agriculture Company continued trainings for grape farmers in Arghandab district. Farmers were taught how to identify signs of powdery mildew, safe handling during agrochemical applications, and an integrated pest management approach to vineyard care.

## **SECTION IV: LIVESTOCK**

### **Farmer Extension Group Trainings**

In July, DCA conducted trainings for farmer extension groups (FEGs) in all 15 target districts of Kandahar, Helmand, Uruzgan, and Zabul provinces. The first training session taught farmers the life cycle of blood parasite diseases and liver fluke. Men and women livestock owners learned techniques to prevent and mitigate blood parasite diseases. The second training session for FEGs focused on hemorrhagic septicemia and contagious bovine pleura pneumonia (CBPP) disease. Information was provided on identifying early signs of hemorrhagic septicemia and CBPP as well as controlling for the disease in large ruminants. During the reporting period, DCA trained a total of 1,028 farmers, 588 women and 440 men.



USAID/RADP-S

**A women farmer extension group in Qalat, Zabul.**

### **Livestock Health Services**

During the reporting period, RADP-S supported the start-up of 18 new veterinary field units (VFUs), with an additional new VFU in Uruzgan province anticipated to begin operations in August. The current number of RADP-S supported VFUs is 41 in 15 districts across Kandahar, Helmand, Uruzgan, and Zabul provinces. In July, the 41 VFUs medicated a combined total of 26,282 animals, vaccinated 22,423 animals, and provided other veterinary services to 575 animal.



USAID/RADP-S

**Refresher training on animal pharmacology for paravets.**

### **Refresher Trainings for Paravets**

In July, DCA conducted two separate five-day refresher training courses for RADP-S supported paravets and Directorate of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (DAIL) officials. In total, participants included 23 paravets and seven DAIL officials. From July 5-9, 16 trainees participated in a pharmacology course and from July 26-30, 14 trainees were taught differential diagnosis of highly contagious and zoonotic diseases. Training courses focused on small and large ruminants and taught trainees how to properly assess medicinal diagnosis for different animals and early warning signs of common diseases.

### **Progress of Charikar Veterinary Training and Support Center Paravets**

On July 2, 17 out of 18 paravets graduated from the Charikar Veterinary Training and Support Center (VTSC). One student did not pass his examinations and was granted a Basic Veterinary Worker certificate. RADP-S will distribute veterinary equipment to the 17 newly graduated paravets in the next reporting period and anticipates VFUs to begin operating shortly after.

### **Response to Crimean Congo Hemorrhagic Fever**

In July, reports of Crimean Congo Hemorrhagic Fever (CCHF) outbreaks in Herat and Kabul provinces prompted RADP-S to initiate public awareness campaigns. RADP-S provided VFUs with fact sheets and posters on how to mitigate CCHF transmission from ticks to humans, aired one-minute public short announcements in all four provinces on transmission and CCHF symptoms, and DCA livestock experts answered listeners' questions related to the disease on the RADP-S "Better Cultivation, Better Livestock" radio program. RADP-S will continue to monitor the situation should further interventions be needed.

#### ***Livestock Company Grantees Training Activities***

During the reporting period, two livestock companies began promotional training activities. The Mostamand Etihad Pvt Ltd company began trainings in Dand, Daman, Arghandab, and Panjwei districts for livestock owners on nutritional feed and rations for cows and preparing feed blocks. The Sayed Sadat Group also began training farmers from Dand, Daman, Arghandab, and Zheri districts of Kandahar province on broiler farm management, poultry feed, and medical treatments. Three livestock companies (Khurasan Cub Fish Production Company, Afghan Sadaqat Chicken Slaughterhouse, and Ahmad Shahi Agriculture Chicken Farm) delayed July trainings due to Ramadan and will begin activities in August.

## **SECTION V: ENABLING ENVIRONMENT**

#### ***National Horticulture Policy Revised***

During the reporting period, RADP-S completed the revision of the National Horticulture Policy. Per discussions with the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL), RADP-S made several changes to the policy. Most significant is the inclusion of a three-tiered system for horticulture extension services. In the updated policy, this system would be comprised of public sector, private sector, and international donor collaboration. The public sector would be responsible for building the capacity of MAIL staff in the Extension Directorate. The private sector (predominantly input suppliers) would take advantage of the government's extension services and reach farmers through farmer-to-farmer field days. Lastly, donor agencies would be responsible for strengthening the financial and technical capacities of relevant public stakeholders. In addition, the revisions promote an extension system for women extension agents, specifically tailored to their role in livestock care and needs. The revisions to the National Horticulture Policy also promote: the intensive production of high value crops, effective land usage, and export incentives like tax breaks, subsidized transportation, and tariffs to encourage international trade.

## **SECTION VI: CREATING MARKET LINKAGES**

#### ***Focus Group Discussion with Poultry and Dairy Businesses***

During the reporting period, the Value Chain Unit conducted a focus group in Kandahar with seven poultry and dairy agribusiness owners. The discussion centered on constraints to production and product transportation in Kandahar province. Major recommendations included business trainings, facilitation of linkages with input suppliers, and exposure visits to other companies regionally. RADP-S will continue to work with agribusiness owners to identify appropriate interventions.

## **SECTION VII: CROSS-CUTTING THEMES**

## Gender

### ***Taraqi Saba Training of Trainers***

From July 26-30, the Gender Unit provided a training of trainers (TOT) for ADA and CHA gender specialists on the Taraqi Saba entrepreneurship curriculum. Previously developed for USAID and implemented in the Northern provinces, Taraqi Saba will provide women and girls with basic business planning skills. RADP-S will focus on the needs of agribusinesses, especially how to obtain inputs, product development, and promotional and marketing consideration. Additional skills promoted during this training include presentation skills, communications, negotiation, and team building. ADA and CHA gender specialists will conduct trainings in August throughout the four provinces.



**RADP-S TOT for gender specialists on entrepreneurship.**

## Communications and Outreach

### ***Live Call-In Radio Broadcasts and Public Short Announcements***

During the month of July, RADP-S broadcasted 12 episodes of the “Better Cultivation, Better Livestock” radio program in Kandahar, Helmand, Uruzgan and Zabul provinces. The radio program received 246 calls from live listeners, 57 of which were taken on-air (approximately 9 calls per episode) and discussed with an in-studio agricultural technical expert. A ten minute session was also aired in July on women’s role in the diagnosis and care mastitis in small ruminants. Radio topics discussed include orchard water management, greenhouse maintenance, and livestock blood parasite diseases,

Throughout July, Public Service Announcements (PSAs) were also broadcasted four times per week in all four provinces. To supplement the ongoing implementation of RADP-S technical activities, topics broadcasted included wheat cleaning, the effect of over-watering vineyards, livestock mastitis, and grape harvesting and pre-cooling.

### ***Mobile Theatre Performances***

During the month of July, four mobile theatre performances were successfully conducted after Ramadan in four targeted districts of Kandahar, Zabul, and Helmand provinces. The topic for the mobile theatre performance was vineyard harvest and post-harvest management, the same as the pre-Ramadan shows in June. Approximately 320 spectators participated and enjoyed the performances.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

During the reporting period, the M&E Unit monitored 77 farmers training activities throughout the four targeted provinces. The M&E team conducted site visits and M&E field monitors conducted field interviews. RADP-S began the implementation of a new pre- and post-test to measure the percentage increase of farmers’ knowledge and streamline data collection. Due to security restrictions, the M&E team was unable to travel to sites in Helmand, Zabul and Uruzgan provinces during the reporting period.

## SECTION VIII: PARTNER & STAKEHOLDER COLLABORATION

## **Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan**

### ***Kandahar***

RADP-S participated in the Provincial Development Council (PDC) meeting held at the Kandahar Governor's Compound on July 27. RADP-S discussed ongoing project activities and discussed coordination with the provincial government. During the meeting, the Governor emphasized the need for continued collaboration among the government, donor agencies, and implementing partners. In addition, RADP-S key implementing partner DCA attended the agriculture sector meeting held in Kandahar at DAIL. The meeting discussed the project's quarterly activities and outlined future activities.

### ***Helmand***

RADP-S key implementing partner CHA met with the Director of DAIL to coordinate future activities. The meeting discussed RADP-S activities at the demonstration farms and provided an update on farmer trainings during the month of July. At the end of the meeting, the DAIL Director promised his full cooperation with RADP-S to ensure successful implementation.

### ***Uruzgan***

RADP-S key implementing partner ADA attended coordination meetings held at the DAIL directorate. The meeting discussed RADP-S's ongoing activities and future coordination plans. In addition, DCA also participated in the Uruzgan DAIL meeting on behalf of RADP-S to share project work plans.

### ***Zabul***

ADA and the DAIL extension department met to discuss the Qalat demo farms and shared the August 2015 training plan. The DAIL extension manager expressed his appreciation for the RADP-S demo farm activities and emphasized the importance for farmers to receive practical, hands-on training from RADP-S. In addition, RADP-S submitted the August training plan to the DAIL director and provided updates regarding July trainings. On July 2, DCA held a meeting with the DAIL director. At the meeting, DCA submitted an activities report and shared future plans. Both DAIL and DCA emphasized the need for continued cooperation to address implementation challenges.

## **SECTION IX: IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES**

In July, vegetable plots and fruit saplings were affected by pests at demonstration farms in Uruzgan province. Uruzgan demo farms will investigate further methods for pest control and re-planting. Security continues to limit technical implementation throughout the south. In Uruzgan, Helmand, and Zabul security concerns limited movement and project activities for ADA, CHA and DCA extension workers along with RADP-S M&E activities.