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# Regional Agricultural Development Program—South 306-C-13-00018

FY2014

Quarter II



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

FY2014

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## **DISCLAIMER**

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Cover photo: RADP-S staff assemble a small scale tractor for demonstration purposes on the farm at the AMTEX Technical Training Facility. Photo credit USAID/RADP-S.

## ACRONYMS

ABADE	Assistance in Building Afghanistan by Developing Enterprises
ACE	Agricultural Credit Enhancement Program
ADA	Afghan Development Association
ADF	Agriculture Development Fund
AFE	Action for Enterprise
AGRED	Agriculture Research and Extension Development Program
AMMC	Afghan Management and Marketing Consultants
APPF	Afghan Police Protection Force
ALA	Afghanistan Land Authority
AREDP	Afghanistan Rural Enterprise Development Program
ATAR	Afghan Trade and Revenue Program
AVA	Afghan Veterinary Association
AVIPA	Afghanistan Vouchers for Increased Production in Agriculture
AWO	Afghan Women's Organization
BVW	Basic Veterinary Worker
CCN	Cooperating Country National
CHA	Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance
CHAMP	Commercial Horticulture and Agriculture Marketing Program
CLIN	Contract Line Item Number
CMOC-S	Civil-Military Operations Center-South
COP	Chief of Party
COR	Contracting Officer Representative
CST	Country Security Team
DAIL	Directorate of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock
DCA	Dutch Committee for Afghanistan
DCOP	Deputy Chief of Party
DoWA	Directorate of Women's Affairs
EA	Equal Access
EEU	Enabling Environment Unit
EMMP	Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Plan
FAIDA	Financial Access for Investing in the Development of Afghanistan
FAIDA Ag	Financial Access for Investing in the Development of Afghanistan's Agribusiness South component
GAP	Good Agricultural Practices
GDP	Gross Domestic Product

GIRoA	Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
GLP	Good Livestock Practices
GMP	Good Management Practices
GUC	Grants Under Contract
HACCP	Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point
HALC	Hewad Afghanistan Agriculture and Livestock Company
HR	Human Resources
HVC	High Value Crops
ICARDA	International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas
IP	Implementing Partner
KFFA	Kandahar Fresh Food Association
KFZ	Kandahar Food Zone
KIP	Key Implementing Partner
LOP	Life of Project
MAIL	Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MT	Metric Ton
NADF	National Agricultural Development Framework
NPP	National Priority Program
PMP	Performance Management Plan
PMU	Project Management Unit
PPU	Productivity and Production Unit
RADP-S	Regional Agricultural Development Program-South
S-RAD	Southern Regional Agricultural Development Program
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
SOW	Scope of Work
TOT	Training-of-Trainers
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
VCF	Value Chain Facilitation
VCFU	Value Chain Facilitation Unit
VFU	Veterinary Field Unit
VSU	Vetting Support Unit

## 1. Project Overview

The purpose of the Regional Agriculture Development Program-South (RADP-S) is to improve food and economic security for rural Afghans in the provinces of Kandahar, Helmand, Zabul and Uruzgan provinces. 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.

## 2. Executive Summary

### 2.1. Summary of Results and Key Achievements

In Quarter II, RADP-S positioned itself to aggressively implement program activities upon execution of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock (MAIL) and RADP-S.

In the month of February, RADP-S key implementing partners – Afghan Development Association (ADA), Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (CHA), and the Dutch Committee for Afghanistan (DCA) – all received fully-executed subcontracts, established provincial offices, and hired key staff. RADP-S outreach and communications subcontractor, Equal Access (EA), also received a fully executed subcontract and hired two Communications Managers who are now embedded in RADP-S Kabul and Kandahar offices. The subcontract between RADP-S and Afghan Management and Marketing Consultants (AMMC) was also fully executed in February enabling AMMC to develop RADP-S' baseline survey and to draft the secondary baseline report during Quarter II.

To facilitate efficient and compliant start-up operations of the KIPs, RADP-S hosted administrative and technical orientation workshops to provide them with crucial support as they mobilize key staff and draft their first year work plans. The first administrative workshop took place in Kabul on February 25 and built KIP capacity in recruitment and hiring policies, procedures, and best practices. The technical orientation took place on February 27 in the classroom of the AMTEX Village Technical Training Facility in Kandahar and was attended by 73 program staff from ADA, CHA, DCA, Equal Access and RADP-S. The all-day event provided KIP provincial leadership with initial direction for contributing to program deliverables as well as an overview of the project's technical vision.

During the reporting period, RADP-S established a 4,275 square meter demonstration farm located on the AMTEX compound outside Kandahar City. The primary purpose of the technical training facility will be to build the capacity of RADP-S key implementing partners (KIPs) – the Afghan

Development Association (ADA) and Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (CHA) – in technical skills such as post harvest handling, utilization of greenhouses, field cooling and cold storage and drip, furrow and basin irrigation. Wheat, high value vegetables, orchard and vineyard crops will also be cultivated and maintained for capacity building and demonstration purposes.

The classroom of the AMTEX Technical Training Facility served as the venue for a myriad of workshops for RADP-S and KIP technical staff. During the month of March, RADP-S' Productivity and Production Unit (PPU) and KIP key personnel formed technical working groups for the purpose of drafting train-the trainer and beneficiary focused curriculum for wheat and high value crop on-farm demonstrations that are scheduled for implementation during the Quarter II of 2014. Each value chain's technical working group was also attended by members of RADP-S' Communications and Outreach team who facilitated the identification of opportunities to amplify project impact through effective outreach media. These activities positioned RADP-S to roll out implementation of capacity-building activities immediately upon execution of the MoU between the MAIL and RADP-S.

RADP-S also engaged frequently with USAID counterparts during the reporting period, including hosting the Ag Implementing Partner (IP) Coordination Meeting on February 13. This meeting provided a rare and crucial forum for seven technically related implementers to form a joint enterprise in the spirit of common cause. Attending IPs identified points of synergy across and between each other, with emphasis on collaboration with RADP-S. The meeting also served as a valuable occasion for the IPs to introduce themselves and present their scopes of work to the new USAID Office of Agriculture Director, Wayne Nilsestuen, and to hear his vision for agriculture programs in Afghanistan.

RADP-S opened doors for strategic partnership with provincial leadership, generating buy-in for program activities. In January, the program sent an envoy to Helmand and Uruzgan to introduce RADP-S' goals and technical approach to each province's governor and Directorate of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (DAIL). RADP-S additionally coordinated introductory collaborative meetings with the Department of Women's Affairs (DoWA) in Uruzgan and Kandahar. These meetings successfully laid the initial groundwork for future support and cooperation which will facilitate the program's ability to create positive, sustainable impact.

On February 23, Action for Enterprise (AFE) Executive Director Frank Lusby and Senior Program Manager Scott Merrill arrived in country to assist RADP-S to identify ways to incorporate a value chain facilitation (VCF) approach into the program's work plan. The overall objective of the partnership was to identify methods to facilitate improved functioning of the markets in wheat, high value crops, and livestock value chains. During the reporting period, AFE engaged in activities to learn about RADP-S, its partners, and the working environment of southern Afghanistan. This included meeting the KIPs during a full day conference at AMTEX, interviewing project staff, participating in focus group meetings with local businesspeople, and conducting site visits to several local businesses.

In March, RADP-S immediately began implementing the recommendations outlined in AFE's "Technical Consultancy Final Report". For example, RADP-S reconfigured its staffing to include a new Value Chain Facility Unit (VCFU) which will support the initiatives of market actors from each RADP-S value chain to expand their markets, promote their competitiveness, and develop the products and services they provide to Afghan farmers. The VCFU will also provide key insights about the market systems of the targeted value chains to the PPU, such as end market requirements and opportunities, firms providing high quality inputs which could be promoted during trainings and demonstrations, and information about potential buyers of value chain products.

Finally, RADP-S' KIPs ADA and CHA rolled out the Enabling Environment Constraint Survey, developed and designed by the RADP-S Enabling Environment Unit (EEU). The survey targeted stakeholders in the project's selected value chains and sub-value chains – wheat, high value crop, dairy and poultry – for the purpose of identifying major enabling environment constraints. In total, the KIPs conducted 405 survey interviews across Kandahar, Zabul, Helmand, and Uruzgan provinces. The survey is ongoing and will be completed and analyzed early in Quarter III.

## **2.2. Constraints and Critical Issues**

Though progress was made throughout the second quarter towards establishing a Memorandum of Understanding between RADP-S and the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL), the MoU has yet to be fully executed. The lack of an MOU with the MAIL is a significant limitation to program implementation. An endorsement of RADP-S by the MAIL to Provincial and District authorities is needed to enable the KIPs to receive cooperation from local authorities.

## **3. Activity Implementation**

### **3.1. Production and Productivity: Wheat, High Value Crops, and Livestock**

#### *AMTEX Technical Training Facility*

In Quarter II RADP-S established the AMTEX Technical Training Facility, consisting of a classroom and a 4275 square meter demonstration farm on AMTEX grounds. The classroom serves as a venue to build the capacity of RADP-S key implementing partners (KIPs) – the Afghan Development Association (ADA), Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (CHA), and the Dutch Committee for Afghanistan (DCA) – in technical and administrative skills such as work-planning, defining lead farmer selection criteria, and communications skills. The primary purpose of the demonstration farm is to build the capacity of ADA and CHA program staff in technical skills such as post-harvest handling, utilization of greenhouses, field cooling and cold storage, and drip, furrow and basin irrigation. Wheat, orchard, vineyard, and high value vegetable crops will also be cultivated and maintained for capacity building and demonstration purposes. These activities will enable the KIPs to effectively transfer skills and implement project interventions which increase agricultural productivity and production in the target provinces.

During the reporting period, staff established the orchard, vineyard, high value vegetable patch, nursery (containing orchard and vineyard crops), and a section for developing hybrid vegetable seedlings. The farm is irrigated using raised bed furrow and basin methods. RADP-S furthermore assembled two tractors. One seeder, one harvester, and two tillers were also put together then attached to one or both tractors. RADP-S also identified five companies which could install the greenhouses on the demonstration farm during Quarter III.

The classroom hosted a series of conferences and workshops for RADP-S and KIP personnel covering topics such as value chain facilitation, market development, monitoring and evaluation, enabling environment, reporting and outreach, and designing interventions to strengthen productivity in each RADP-S target value chain.

### *Key Implementing Partners March Workshop*

On March 13, technical specialists from ADA, CHA and DCA convened with RADP-S staff at the AMTEX Technical Training Facility to determine the first technical program activities based on the agricultural production calendar. Attendees spent the day collaboratively developing the curricula which will serve as the basis for all capacity-building interventions with a focus on improving productivity in the districts, on the farms, and in village classrooms. Participants divided into the following technical working groups in order to develop capacity-building and demonstration activities: wheat, high value crops, livestock, and management. The wheat group initiated development of seven capacity-building interventions covering topics such as pest and disease management, water management, fertilizer application, appropriate harvesting technology, and on-farm storage. The high value crop working group also developed 21 interventions total for high value orchard, vineyard and vegetable crops. The livestock working group – consisting mostly of DCA attendees – discussed the paravet and basic veterinary worker (BVW) selection criteria and process, paravet BVW strengthening program, and livestock nutrition program rollout. They also exchanged ideas regarding how ADA and CHA can add value to DCA activities.

### *Commercial Poultry Production Technical Working Group*

From March 23-27, the RADP-S livestock team hosted a meeting at the AMTEX Technical Training Facility with ADA and CHA's provincial livestock specialists from each of the four targeted provinces. This technical working group convened for the purpose of developing the capacity-building interventions necessary to strengthening the commercial poultry sector in southern Afghanistan. Participants drafted nine distinct interventions over the course of the four days such as household poultry management, new and existing commercial poultry management, and common poultry disease management. The collection and review of capacity-building interventions for the livestock value chain are ongoing and future meetings at the AMTEX Technical Training Facility have been scheduled.

### **AMTEX Demonstration Farm**



**The desiccated soil of the AMTEX demonstration farm prior to tillage.**



**RADP-S tilled the demonstration farm in preparation for planting.**



**Laborers lay out irrigation furrows between the raised beds for vegetable production.**



**RADP-S staff test two small-scale tractors that the project assembled in March.**

### *High Value Crop Technical Working Group*

The high value crop specialists of ADA and CHA met with RADP-S' high value crop unit at The AMTEX Technical Training Facility on the dates of March 27, 29 and 30. The objective of these meetings was to develop the capacity-building interventions for almonds and stone fruits (i.e. peaches, plums and apricots). An individual capacity-building module was composed for each fruit and contained seven sub-modules: site selection, integrated pest management and weed control, plant nutrition, water management, orchard maintenance, harvest management, and post-harvest management. These modules will be used to build the capacity of lead farmers in order to improve their productivity and production. Collection and review of capacity-building modules for the high value crop value chains are ongoing and future meetings at the AMTEX Technical Training Facility have been scheduled.

### **3.2. Value Chain Facilitation**

#### *Action for Enterprise*

In Quarter II, RADP-S engaged Action for Enterprise (AFE) to develop a strategy for incorporating a value chain facilitation (VCF) approach into the project work plan which supports USAID's emphasis on market-led agricultural growth. AFE Executive Director Frank Lusby and Senior Program Manager Scott Merrill arrived in Afghanistan on February 23 to represent the Virginia-based nonprofit. Their objective was to analyze the value chain and small and medium enterprise (SME) development plans contained in the RADP-S draft work plan to identify: 1) facilitation tools for addressing weaknesses in the wheat, high value crop and livestock value chains; 2) system bottlenecks in the three value chains; 3) interventions required to address the effective functioning of those markets; and 4) opportunities to integrate the VCF approach into the existing RADP-S work plan.

From February 23 – March 13, AFE consultants engaged in activities to learn about RADP-S, its partners, and the working environment of

### **Cold Storage Container Park**



**RADP-S DCOP Gordon Bremer examines the state of the pomegranates.**



**Mohammad Salim leads RADP-S on a tour of his cold storage reefers.**



**Mohammad Salim shows off a pomegranate still fresh 4 months after the harvest.**



**1572 boxes of pomegranates were stored in the cold storage container park.**

southern Afghanistan. This included meeting the KIPs during a full day conference at AMTEX, interviewing project staff, participating in focus group meetings with local businesspeople, and conducting site visits to several local businesses such as the Rahat Nurani Processing Factory (a raisin processor located in Kandahar City). On March 9, they hosted a one-day workshop at the AMTEX Technical Training Facility which oriented RADP-S staff in concepts of intervening to improve market systems through facilitation methodologies.

In their final report, AFE provided the following recommendations:

- Reorganize RADP-S technical staff into two different units – a Productivity and Production Unit (PPU) and a Value Chain Facilitation Unit (VCFU) – whose work complement each other through regular meetings, information sharing and synergetic activities
- Base the RADP-S VCFU’s work on an understanding of value chain markets, inter-firm relationships, and the critical constraints that limit the targeted producers’ and enterprises’ growth and competitiveness
- Identify and promote market-based viable solutions to value chain constraints which result in sustainable impact (i.e. don’t depend on continued donor funding) and which don’t distort the local market
- Begin implementing the RADP-S VCF strategy by carrying out abbreviated value chain analyses of selected products and supporting markets. Abbreviated analyses should: a) create a map that presents the relevant market actors and their relationships with one another; b) describe value chain governance structures and methods of inter-firm cooperation; c) identify constraints in the areas of market access, input supply, technology/product development, management and organization, policy, finance, and infrastructure; and d) assess the potential and requirements of the end markets and key buyers of the selected value chains.

AFE consultants provided RADP-S staff with instructions for interviewing lead firms, guidelines for value chain mapping, and a sample abbreviated (five page) value chain analysis report – all of which were reviewed in depth with project staff.

RADP-S responded promptly to these recommendations by reconfiguring the RADP-S staffing structure to include a VCFU of nine people under the direction of an expatriate VCFU Team Leader who has already been identified and is pending approval. Over the next couple of months, RADP-S will identify and assess market-based solutions to constraints identified in the abbreviated analyses, develop targeted interventions for selected market-based solutions, and identify lead firms based on the developed interventions.

### *Cold Storage Container Park*

In February, RADP-S DCOP Gordon Bremer, PPU Team Leader Campbell Dunlop, and an interpreter traveled to Shorandum Industrial Park in Kandahar to visit a cold storage container park which held two reefers storing a total of 1572 boxes of pomegranates. This cold storage venture was the direct result of FAIDA’s Agribusiness South component (FAIDA Ag). The reefers were owned by Mohammad Salim and rented to Kandahar Fresh Fruit Association (KFFA) and Rahat Nurani Processing Factory who are engaged in a 60/40 joint venture.

Afghanistan experiences immense pre and post-harvest losses in pomegranates (approximately \$56 million per year) due largely to a lack of proper storage facilities which would enable farmers to sell out of season. Consequently, during the out of season months of October –February the price of

pomegranates regularly increases threefold. This cold storage container park at Shorandum represented the first time pomegranates had been stored for sale out of season in Kandahar using reefer containers, making KFFA-Rahat the sole enterprise selling pomegranates in Kandahar City in February and March 2014. Throughout the reporting period, KFFA-Rahat received genuine offers from both domestic and regional buyers, such as markets in Kabul and Pakistan.

However, RADP-S discovered upon their visit that various improvements still need to be implemented in order to maximize the length of freshness and thus the profits of the pomegranate stock. As of March 7, 130 boxes of pomegranates had rotted or were deemed unsuitable for consumption. Because the fruits were stored without plastic cling wrap and instead in paper shavings inside cardboard boxes, the cardboard attracted moisture to the pomegranates and both the fruit and boxes developed mold and mildew. The bottom rows of boxes were also in the process of being crushed under the weight of the stock on top.

RADP-S' current market strategy for pomegranates is to sell 85% of the fresh stock to regional, domestic and juice markets. This will reserve 15% to be cleaned, sorted, wrapped, packed and stored in reefer containers or permanent cold storage for sale in the domestic market December – February. In order to do so, RADP-S will have to rigorously address the value chain constraint of poor post-harvest practices which cause significant yet preventable losses in agricultural profits each year.

On February 20, KFFA met with RADP-S at AMTEX Village to discuss simple, cost-effective methods that KFFA could employ to increase their profits next year. RADP-S discussed the need to clean and wrap the fruits in cling wrap before storing them in plastic crates which won't attract moisture and will stack easily to prevent any of the stock from being squashed. KFFA was very receptive to the advice and showed interest in additional training for packing and storage. They also agreed to share information about imminent sales of the remaining pomegranates to assist RADP-S with its market assessment of pomegranates in the off-season.

### **3.3. Enabling Environment**

RADP-S ST Enabling Environment Advisor Matt Weber arrived in country for his second assignment on February 17, 2014. Subsequent to his arrival, the RADP-S completed the design of the Enabling Environment Constraint Survey. The survey targets stakeholders in RADP-S' selected value chains and sub-value chains – e.g. wheat, poultry, pomegranates, and veterinary services – for the purpose of identifying major enabling environment constraints.

On March 3, KIPs ADA and CHA rolled out the survey. During the reporting period, ADA conducted 301 survey interviews with farmers, traders, associations, cooperatives, enterprise owners, nursery growers and GIROA officials in nine total districts across Kandahar, Zabul and Uruzgan provinces. CHA likewise conducted a total of 104 enabling environment constraint surveys in five districts of Helmand province.

To support and expand on the survey data from Kandahar and Helmand provinces, the RADP-S Enabling Environment Unit (EEU) conducted a series of focus groups which generated more in-depth information about the constraints affecting each province's wheat, high value crop and livestock value chains. From March 2 to 10, five focus groups were conducted at the AMTEX Technical Training Facility in Kandahar. The first covered wheat, high value crops and livestock, while the subsequent four focused on only one of the respective value chains (livestock was covered twice). Each focus group was attended by individuals representing enterprises, associations, nurseries, traders, and cooperatives engaged in commercial activities within the RADP-S target value chains. These individuals were mobilized to attend by RADP-S and the KIPs in the process of conducting the constraints survey. Participants shared their experiences with existing value chain constraints

affecting production, productivity and commercial activities, as well as their ideas for removing or overcoming these constraints. Three additional focus groups each will be conducted in Zabul and Uruzgan provinces in April.

### **3.4. Crosscutting Themes**

#### *Gender*

On January 16, a RADP-S envoy to Uruzgan met with the director of Uruzgan's Department of Women's Affairs (DoWA), Rana Sami, and her deputy director. RADP-S representatives introduced their hosts to the program's goals, scope and technical approach, highlighting RADP-S' gender component which enforces the project target of 15% female participants/beneficiaries. RADP-S Gender Integration Manager expounded on RADP-S' gender activities which build on USAID recent successes empowering women through agricultural and agribusiness activities in Helmand, Kandahar and Zabul via the Agribusiness South component of the Financial Access for Investing in the Development of Afghanistan (FAIDA) project. She contended that at this time of economic instability, it is imperative to incorporate women into income-generating solutions. The DoWA Director enthusiastically agreed and pledged her support for RADP-S activities in Uruzgan.

On January 29, the Gender Integration Manager met with Ms. Lailuma, the Deputy Director of Kandahar's DoWA. Ms. Lailuma introduced RADP-S to two women's microfinance groups based in Panjwai and Arghandab districts. Each group consists of 50 women who contribute to a joint fund which is given to one woman a week to invest in agribusiness, poultry, or livestock. RADP-S is exploring the possibility of collaborating with these women's groups and via interventions which will strengthen and grow their agribusiness and agricultural activities.

On March 18, the gender unit met with ten female entrepreneurs in Kandahar's Arghandab District who are engaged in agribusiness activities. One of the participants at the meeting, Ms. Nargis, heads a women's association named the Enterprise Group which operates by collecting weekly membership dues (20 AFN per woman) that are deposited into a single revolving fund. Fifty women belong to the association and currently use the fund to run businesses in jams, jellies, pickles, vinegars, and pomegranate sauce. Their products are sold at small grocery stores in the Arghandab District Center and at a canteen based at the provincial DOWA office. A few of the members have used the fund to start businesses in dairy processing and poultry production. RADP-S is developing strategies using analyses of market constraints and capacity building activities with associations such as Enterprise Group to advance and strengthen women's integration into Afghanistan's agribusiness sector.

#### *Monitoring and Evaluation*

During the reporting period, the M&E Unit continued to oversee the development of the baseline survey under the direction of Technical Director Tom Fattori and M&E Advisor Brian Zuidema (arrived March 25). The unit collaborated with subcontractor Afghan Management and Marketing Consultants (AMMC) to develop household and small and medium enterprise (SME) survey instruments which were reviewed and approved by USAID. The team also translated, tested, and revised the tools in late March. AMMC will complete the surveys in the target districts in April and May after they train their enumerators. AMMC also provided a rough draft of their secondary baseline report to RADP-S and is currently revising the document in accordance with RADP-S' extensive feedback. Finally, the M&E Unit continued to expand its team to ensure robust geographic coverage and quality control. Project leadership revised the organizational chart to divide responsibility by province and the unit is projected to be fully staffed by the end of April.

## 4. Collaboration with GIRoA and Other USAID Projects

### 4.1. GIRoA

#### *Helmand Provincial Governor and the Directorate of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (DAIL)*

On January 6, RADP-S Capacity Building Director and Communications and Outreach Manager met in Lashkar Gah with Helmand's Director of the DAIL, Rohullah Rawan, his advisors, and the head of Helmand's forestry department. RADP-S representatives introduced the goals, activities, and technical approach of RADP-S. The DAIL director welcomed RADP-S to Helmand province, expressing the DAIL's deep thanks and stating that it was "an honor for the people of Helmand province to be supported by such an important program."

After highlighting areas of RADP-S that he believes particularly reflect strength and promise in Helmand, Mr. Rawan briefed his visitors on some challenges that have been confronted by other agricultural projects operating in Helmand and offered the collaboration of the DAIL to mitigate these issues. For example, he commented that projects have previously chosen lead farmers for demonstration plots through village heads and tribal elders, resulting in the selection of friends and relatives rather than the farmers most in need and best suited for the project's objectives. He recommended that RADP-S coordinate with the DAIL to develop its selection criteria for lead farmers in order to ensure a fair and effective process. Secondly, he remarked that most agricultural projects in Helmand have had a market-strengthening component, yet he has observed little to no improvement in the agricultural market. Therefore, he recommended that RADP-S share its plan for strengthening market linkages with the DAIL so that they can check program activities against lessons learned.

At the meeting's conclusion, Mr. Rawan promised the DAIL's long-term cooperation and support of RADP-S activities in Helmand. He offered the DAIL's collaboration to help the program identify crops with the highest potential value in each target district. He moreover invited RADP-S to utilize any of the DAIL facilities in the targeted districts – including demonstration plots, greenhouses, and 18 registered local seed centers – at any time.

**"Strengthening modern agriculture and agribusiness is central to improving Afghanistan's economic and social development. It contributes to peace between societies."**

**– Helmand DAIL Director Rohullah Rawan, stated during RADP-S introductory meeting**

The following morning, Helmand Provincial Governor Mohammad Naim Baloch met with the RADP-S representatives at his provincial compound. The RADP-S envoy again introduced the goals, scope and technical approach of RADP-S, emphasizing planned activities and the partnership with CHA in Helmand. The provincial governor thanked RADP-S for its commitment to helping his province and assured the envoy that such long-term agricultural programs are always welcome in Helmand. He also singled out RADP-S' target of 15% female participation as particularly crucial to improved agriculture and agribusiness in Helmand province.

#### *Uruzgan Provincial Governor and DAIL*

On January 15, a RADP-S envoy consisting of the Capacity Building Director, Communications and Outreach Manager, Gender Integration Manager, and Crosscutting Coordinator met with Uruzgan DAIL Director Sardar Mohammad Alko, his advisors, and the provincial manager of the USAID funded-project CHAMP. RADP-S representatives opened the introductory meeting by giving an

overview of the program's goals, technical approach, and scope of activities, emphasizing RADP-S' objectives in Uruzgan. The DAIL director and his colleagues warmly welcomed RADP-S, expressing their appreciation for the program's overall objectives and pledging the DAIL's long term cooperation and support.

DAIL Director Alko exhibited a keen interest in RADP-S activities. In order to enable RADP-S' success in Uruzgan, Mr. Alko informed the envoy that the DAIL has two research farms located in Tirin Kot that could use RADP-S' support in order to be equipped for the benefit of Uruzgan's farmers and Agriculture Faculty students. Moreover, Mr. Alko requested RADP-S' assistance in forming agribusiness and trading associations which would connect Uruzgan traders in targeted districts to the international market. (RADP-S will work with DAIL during its second year of implementation to explore assistance with the development and formation of such associations.) Finally, he remarked that the DAIL would appreciate RADP-S' technical expertise to support the establishment of demonstration plots inside the DAIL compound.



Uruzgan DAIL Director Sardar Mohammad Alko exchanges ideas with RADP-S envoy. Photo credit RADP-S/USAID.

On January 18, the RADP-S envoy met with Provincial Governor of Uruzgan Amir Mohammad Akhondzada and five of his technical staff at the governor's provincial compound. After the envoy presented governor Akhondzada with the objectives and technical scope of RADP-S, the governor promised his support and cooperation with program activities in Uruzgan. The meeting successfully laid the foundation for close coordination between RADP-S and Uruzgan provincial leadership. Governor Akhondzada recommended that RADP-S collaborate with several provincial initiatives which share RADP-S' focus on agriculture, trade, market-strengthening and food security in Uruzgan. He also endorsed working with the DAIL, provincial authorities and related stakeholders. Overall, Uruzgan's provincial leadership expressed great support for RADP-S activities which will increase local farmers' access to market-enabling services such as storage, transportation, processing, grading and drying. They also appreciated the increase in demonstration plots at the district level which will build the capacity of Uruzgan's farmers in practices which boost productivity and profitability of their crops.

### *Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock (MAIL)*

During the reporting period, progress was made towards establishing a Memorandum of Understanding between RADP-S and the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL). RADP-S submitted a revised draft MOU for USAID's consideration on March 28. Per USAID instructions, this draft MOU featured USAID and the MAIL as the principal parties to the agreement. It also contained two annexes: the first covered the formation and operation of a Program Coordination Committee; the second defined RADP-S and MAIL's specific responsibilities regarding the introduction of RADP-S to provincial authorities and the review of RADP-S' performance.

## **4.2. Other USAID Projects**

### *Ag Implementing Partners Coordination Meeting*

On February 13, RADP-S hosted the Ag Implementing Partner Coordination Meeting at the Baron Hotel in Kabul. Seven other USAID projects with activities in southern Afghanistan were in attendance: the Agriculture Research and Extension Development Program (AGRED), the

Commercial Horticulture and Agriculture Marketing Program (CHAMP), Assistance in Building Afghanistan by Developing Enterprises (ABADE), Financial Access for Investing in the Development of Afghanistan (FAIDA), the Afghan Trade and Revenue Program (ATAR), the Agriculture Development Fund (ADF), and Kandahar Food Zone (KFZ). USAID Alternative COR, Tom Love and the new Office of Agriculture Director, Wayne Nilsestuen, attended the meeting virtually.



**KFZ Provincial Office Director Javed Ahmad and Sr. Stabilization Advisor Bea Covington emphasize the importance of collaboration with other Ag program implementors in order to achieve KFZ's goal to reduce poppy cultivation in Kandahar province.**

The meeting provided a rare and crucial forum for implementing counterparts with a common cause and complementary goals to identify priority areas for collaboration. It also served as a valuable occasion for the IPs to be virtually introduced to Director Nilsestuen and to learn about his vision and priorities for agricultural programs in Afghanistan, such as to “harness the power of markets to create incentives to reward innovation.” In turn, each IP was given the opportunity to introduce themselves and present their scopes of work to Director Nilsestuen.

During the course of the four-hour meeting, participants learned about each IP’s goals in southern Afghanistan and jointly identified opportunities to synergize across and between each other with particular emphasis on collaboration with RADP-S. They additionally capitalized off of this opportunity to converge across offices and recognize the valuable

links and potential for greater combined efforts between Economic Growth and Agriculture Office programs. For example, ATAR recommends legal and regulatory reforms regarding plant protection, animal health, food safety, Global Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP); and RADP-S will link with ATAR to hold public-private advocacy workshops to improve the enabling environment while connecting commercial agriculture to regional markets.

### *Lime Sulfur Collaboration Training Workshop*

RADP-S’ Capacity Building Director, Value Chain Team Leader - High Value Crops, Post-Harvest Manager and Post-Harvest Specialist attended the Lime Sulfur Collaboration Training Workshop held at the Kandahar DAIL office February 19-20. The workshop was jointly organized by the Roots of Peace AGRED program and Kandahar DAIL extension department with financial support from USAID Afghanistan. Training topics included the effect of powdery mildew disease which, according to the Kandahar DAIL Director, is responsible for destroying 80% of Kandahar’s grape yields last year, as well as techniques for preventing and controlling the disease. On February 20, participants were trained in the preparation of a lime sulfur compound for use in treating powdery mildew disease. The workshop was attended by USAID Project Management Specialist Mohammad Wali Naseri, professors and students from the Kandahar University Agriculture Faculty, district heads of DAIL, representatives from the Department of Women’s Affairs, and provincial



**Capacity Building Director Altaf Rahimi and Outreach Specialist Hazratullah Irfan learn how to produce lime sulfur.**

staff from the USDA-funded Capacity-Building and Change Management Program.

RADP-S found the training very beneficial and seeks to complement and expand upon the scope of the workshop through its own program activities. For example, attendees of this workshop were limited to representatives from the university, government, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). RADP-S believes that private input supply companies should participate in these activities. Accordingly, RADP-S is currently finalizing a pamphlet covering the diseases affecting grapes based on lessons learned from FAIDA Ag to be distributed amongst private sector input suppliers and local farmers, thus expanding training beyond the government, NGOs and university community. These pamphlets will later be translated into illustrated instructions in order to reach farmers and suppliers who are illiterate. The workshop also served as a forum for RADP-S and AGRED to exchange lessons learned. For example, RADP-S attendees who previously (while on FAIDA Ag) sent samples of diseased grapes to a MAIL laboratory shared their finding that powdery mildew was not the sole cause of the massive loss in grape production last year. Attending DAIL extension head, Eng. Atiqullah Khan, expressed his appreciation for RADP-S and FAIDA Ag's work efforts and pledged his full cooperation and support to RADP-S program activities, especially the pending pamphlets.

### *Value Chain Development Approach Training*

Members of the RADP-S Market Development Unit attended the Value Chain Development Approach Training at the Baron on March 25 and 26. ACDI/VOCA Technical Director for USAID's Leveraging Economic Opportunities (LEO) project, Alex Pavlovic, and USAID Agriculture Development Officer Todd Flower delivered the training. RADP-S COR, Freeman Daniels, and USAID/Afghanistan Agriculture Advisor Tom Love were also in attendance.



**Attendees of the Value Chain Development Approach Training, conducted by the USAID LEO Project and hosted by RADP-S, March 25-26.**

Participants trained in a systems approach to markets which builds on the value chain approach (i.e. a participatory, stakeholder-driven approach to exploit opportunities for investment and growth in the private sector). Participants learned about the complex interrelationships between market actors, market and household systems, the policy environment, and sociocultural factors such as gender and poverty. RADP-S found the section of the training dedicated to analyses of value chain systems (e.g. determining key drivers, defining

effective performance, and identifying relationships within a value chain) particularly useful. Upon returning to Kandahar, RADP-S' Market Development Specialist created value chain maps and analyses of raisins, fresh grapes, and pomegranates using instruction from the training as part of the abbreviated analyses prescribed by AFE.

## 5. Management and Administration

### 5.1. Personnel

During the reporting period, two long term expatriate positions were added to the project. Rachel Rothgery started as Communications Specialist on February 9 and is overseeing the Communications and Outreach team. Brian Zuidema assumed the position of M&E Advisor on March 25 and is serving as head of the M&E Unit. Kevin Stupay also took on the key personnel position of Director of Finance in February. Additionally ST Production and Productivity Advisor Campbell Dunlop started January 20 and ST Enabling Environment Advisor Matt Weber arrived February 17.

Finally, in March RADP-S reconfigured the program's CCN technical staff into two different units – a Productivity and Production Unit and a Value Chain Facilitation Unit – whose work complement each other through regular meetings, information sharing and synergetic activities. This configuration serves to bridge gaps in understanding of VCF in order for RADP-S to effectively implement VCF activities.

### 5.2. Key Implementing Partners Start-Up

#### *Afghan Development Association (ADA)*

ADA's subcontract with RADP-S to implement in Kandahar, Zabul and Uruzgan provinces was fully executed on February 25. ADA will directly implement on-farm and on-venue demonstrations and training for wheat and high value crop farmers, in the three provinces, with robust oversight from RADP-S. They will also support the identification of policy constraints effecting the local environment. During the reporting period ADA rented provincial offices in the Aino Mina neighborhood of Kandahar, Qalat Center of Zabul, and Tirin Kot City of Uruzgan. To enable smooth management and implementation of RADP-S activities, ADA formed a qualified team to coordinate activities between ADA field staff, Chemonics, and government authorities from its head office in Kabul. ADA also hired 26 key technical and operations staff for its three provincial offices,

### KIP Technical Orientation, AMTEX, February 27



RADP-S Gender Integration Manager listens intently to the KIP orientation presentations.



RADP-S and KIP participants collaboratively brainstorm challenges and opportunities in technical working groups.



Representatives from each working group presented their group's conclusions.



Some KIP participants took advantage of the simultaneous translation delivered by RADP-S interpreters via headset.

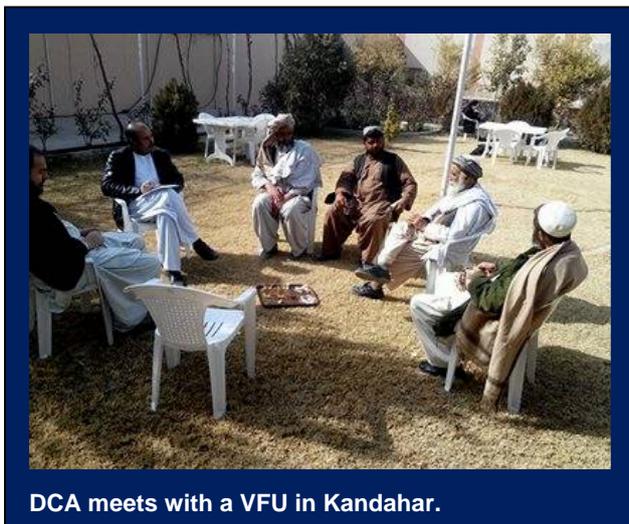
many of whom attended the RADP-S KIP Technical Orientation at AMTEX Village on February 27.

### *Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (CHA)*

CHA's subcontract with RADP-S to implement in Helmand province was fully executed on February 25. CHA will directly implement on-farm and on-venue demonstrations and training for wheat and high value crop farmers in Helmand, with robust oversight from RADP-S. They will also support the identification of policy constraints effecting the local environment. During this reporting period, CHA established a provincial office in Lashkar Gah City and hired eight key staff, seven of whom participated in the February 27 technical orientation at AMTEX Village. CHA's technical team held introductory meetings Helmand's Director of DAIL as well as various national and international NGOs as coordinated by the Directorate of Economy.

### *Dutch Committee for Afghanistan (DCA)*

DCA's subcontract was officially executed on February 18. DCA is responsible for implementation of livestock program activities such as analysis of animal health provision services, training of para-veterinarians, and development of Veterinary Field Units (VFUs) in all four target provinces. During the reporting period, DCA hired six local professional and five support staff and leased a building in Kandahar which will serve as DCA's Regional Livestock Program Office and will include offices for all



**DCA meets with a VFU in Kandahar.**

DCA regional staff and trainers. DCA conducted a scoping mission of existing veterinary field units (VFUs) in the four target provinces and held introductory meetings with stakeholders and partners such as DAIL, CHA, Mercy Corps, VFU Cooperative leaders and the Afghan Veterinary Association (AVA). The main conclusions drawn from the mission were that the VFUs are in need of technical and logistical support, that AVA is not currently supporting VFUs in the target districts, and that some VFUs have left or are inactive necessitating replacement VFUs. During Quarter III, DCA will begin its assessment of existing VFUs and conduct a needs analysis for potential new VFUs in all

four provinces.

### *Equal Access (EA)*

EA hired two Communication Managers to help manage project activities in Kabul and Kandahar. Ajmal Solamal commenced work on February 12 and is based in RADP-S' Kabul office. He will manage EA's relationship with Chemonics, production of media content, and overall project implementation. Hikmatullah Roohani started on February 26 and is based in RADP-S' Kandahar office where he will oversee implementation of field activities in the target provinces. Equal Access will lead outreach activities in all four provinces to establish and sustain effective channels for the dissemination of information to RADP-S beneficiaries and counterparts using innovative communications, media, and training techniques such as live radio, mobile theater and listening circles.

### *Operations and Administration Capacity-Building*

During the reporting period, RADP-S conducted the first of a number of administrative workshops for its KIPs' operations and administrative teams. The purpose of these workshops is to orient the KIPs to their responsibilities regarding HR, finance and procurement, among other administrative requirements, as stipulated in their organizations' subcontract agreements with RADP-S. On February 25, 2014 RADP-S hosted the first of a series of administrative start-up workshops for RADP-S Key Implementing Partners (KIPs). Twelve participants from the Dutch Committee for Afghanistan (DCA), Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (CHA), the Afghan Development Association (ADA), and Equal Access (EA) participated in the workshop which covered recruiting, biodata completion and verification, salary determination, and other related USAID recruitment policies and procedures. This training provided crucial support to the KIPs' staff mobilization efforts. The next in the series of administrative workshops will focus on finance and accounting, procurement, and time and materials subcontract management. Business conduct issues and the applicable USAID rules and regulations will be integrated into all workshops. RADP-S also will be providing a KIPs Subcontract Administration Manual for their future reference and guidance.

### *Key Implementing Partners Technical Orientation Workshop*

The RADP-S Key Implementing Partner Technical Orientation took place at AMTEX Village in Kandahar on February 27. Seventy-three people total attended the event, including the provincial directors and key program staff of ADA, CHA, DCA, and Equal Access. The all-day orientation consisted of presentations covering communications and outreach, monitoring and evaluation (M&E), environmental compliance, enabling environment, market development and value chain facilitation. Presentations provided KIP provincial leadership with initial direction for contributing to program deliverables as well as an overview of the project's technical vision. Each presentation was followed by a question and answer session. KIP participants then toured the AMTEX Technical Training Facility and Demonstration Farm which was in the initial stages of development.

## **6. Planned Activities Next Quarter**

### **6.1 Productivity and Production**

Upon execution of the MoU with MAIL, RADP-S' Productivity and Production Unit (PPU) will conduct initial meetings with provincial and district authorities and collaborate with the DAILs on the nature and extent of demonstrations and trainings. KIPs ADA and CHA will begin identifying district level office spaces and complete recruitment of district staff immediately.

RADP-S' PPU will finalize the curriculum for the capacity-building interventions in each of the target value chains and begin working through the KIPs to identify four to six lead farmers per district within each of the 15 targeted districts during Quarter III. In the meantime, the livestock team and DCA will finalize stakeholder mapping and a needs analysis of VFUs and household level livestock farmers in all target districts.

### **6.2 Value Chain Facilitation**

In Quarter III, AFE consultant Carianne De Boer will arrive for a one-year assignment as Value Chain Facilitation Team Leader (pending approval) and RADP-S will recruit nine CCN VCF specialists to staff the VCFU unit. Once the VCFU is staffed, the unit will carry out abbreviated analyses of RADP-S target value chains as prescribed by AFE in its final report during Quarter II. RADP-S will also conduct a five-day VCF training in Kabul to be attended by the key personnel of ADA, CHA and DCA.

### **6.3 Enabling Environment**

The EEU will finalize its pre-analysis of Year One constraint priorities and draft a manual to assist enabling environment KIP personnel conduct constraints identification, analysis and advocacy. It will additionally map Afghanistan's policy creation process and identify policy formulation stakeholders and policy advocacy groups.

### **6.4 Monitoring and Evaluation**

The M&E Unit will spend the duration of Quarter III revising the Project Management Plan (to be completed in Quarter IV) and supervising the baseline assessment conducted by AMMC. It will also work with the KIPs to develop and finalize a monitoring strategy for weekly and monthly data collection and submission while training the KIPs in M&E processes.

### **6.5 Gender**

Over the course of Quarter III, the RADP-S Gender Unit will supervise the selection and review of ADA, CHA, and DCA's female workforce at the provincial and district level, as well as draft the RADP-S Gender Strategy and Gender Advisory Group Strategy documents. With the assistance of an STTA Gender Advisor, the unit will also analyze component activity plans to identify opportunities to integrate gender into technical programming.

### **6.6 Communications and Outreach**

The RADP-S Communications and Outreach team will collaborate with each value chain technical working group to identify areas where outreach initiatives and innovative media should enhance program activities. In May and June, RADP-S' Communications Managers (embedded from Equal Access) will travel to the four target provinces to carry out a communications assessment and stakeholder analysis, enabling RADP-S and Equal Access to finalize a one-year communications work plan.

### **6.7 Management and Administration**

In April, RADP-S' COP and DCOP will transition off of the project. John Haydu will arrive the second week of April to assume the position of DCOP and Home Office Director Dan Rhodes will serve as Acting COP until the COP recruit is finalized. The final draft of the Year One Work Plan will also be submitted to USAID in April with a robust VCF component added and a reduction in target districts from 18 to 15.

## 7. Quarter II Snapshot



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

**AFGHANISTAN**

# SNAPSHOT USAID helps Afghan farmers extend life of produce to boost profit

**Afghan farmers are reducing post-harvest financial losses with guidance from USAID**



*Haji Nazar Mohammad learned from USAID how to earn three times the profit from his pomegranates.*

*"I had tried to work with cold storage before but I didn't have the technical knowledge and I lost a lot of product. So I attended a USAID FAIDA Ag training and learned how to properly clean, grade, and pack. By solving these issues I was able to store my pomegranates for much longer and generate greater profit to expand my business."*

**Haji Nazir Mohammad, Executive Director of Kandahar Fresh Fruit Association**

Telling Our Story  
U.S. Agency for International Development  
Washington, DC 20523-1000  
<http://stories.usaid.gov>

There was only one pomegranate supplier in all of Kandahar City this winter: Haji Nazar Mohammad. How did he achieve this feat? In 2013 he attended a training in post-harvest practices organized by USAID's Financial Access for Investing in the Development of Afghanistan's Agribusiness South component (FAIDA Ag). Applying this new technical knowledge, Haji Nazar made his enterprise, the Kandahar Fresh Fruit Association, the first and only in Kandahar to store pomegranates out of season using cold storage reefers. By waiting until the offseason, he was able to sell his produce for three times the harvest market price and generate extra profit to expand his business.

In southern Afghanistan, post-harvest financial losses in pomegranates amount to approximately \$16 million per year. This significant yet preventable loss is caused by a lack of post-harvest practices such as cleaning, sorting, grading, wrapping, packing, and refrigerated storage. According to Haji Nazar, "Most farmers don't know how to store their fruits properly. After the harvest, it is very hard to find these fruits in the local market unless they are imported from India." Nearly all of southern Afghanistan's pomegranates are sold in the harvest months of September and October, 80% of which are exported to Pakistan where traders have the technical capacity to store and sell them out of season. Without post-harvest practices, pomegranates produced domestically do not make it to the market after November, preventing local producers and traders from taking advantage of the significant increase in prices (approximately 300%).

USAID's Regional Agricultural Development Program-South (RADP-S) is building off of FAIDA Ag's success in empowering local entrepreneurs to maximize the length of freshness of their produce and thus amplify their profits. By 2018, RADP-S aims to facilitate the packing of 15% of southern Afghanistan's pomegranates into cold storage containers for sale in the domestic market from December to February. Haji Nazar credits RADP-S with providing him with the technical feedback necessary to increase the life of his produce even more next year. "Day by day, I am getting more experience and learning from USAID projects how to make my business stronger."