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USAID Clean Power Asia

Quarterly Report

Fiscal Year 2016: June 27, 2016 to September 30, 2016

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Contract Number: AID-486-C-16-00001
Activity Period: June 27, 2016 – June 26, 2021
AOR Name: Sithisakdi Apichatthanapath

Submitted by: Dana Kenney, Chief of Party
Abt Associates
Silom Complex, 17th floor
191 Silom Road, Bangrak
Bangkok, 10500 Thailand
Tel: +66 2 683 3488
Email: Dana_Kenney@abtassoc.com

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ACRONYMS

ACE	ASEAN Center for Energy
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AFD	Agence Française de Développement
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BAFO	Best and Final Offer
CEADIR	USAID Climate Economic Analysis for Development, Investment, and Resilience
COP	Chief of Party
COR	Contracting Officer's Representative
DEDE	Department of Alternative Energy Development and Efficiency (Thailand)
DCOP	Deputy Chief of Party
DOC	Development Outreach and Communications
DOS	U.S. Department of State
ECCIL	European Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Lao PDR
EAC	Electricity Authority of Cambodia
EDC	Electricité du Cambodge
EDL-GEN	Electricité du Laos-Generation
EGAT	Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand
EGCO	Electricity Generating Public Co., Ltd.
EMMP	Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Plan
EPPO	Energy Policy and Planning Office (Thailand)
ERC	Energy Regulatory Commission (Thailand)
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
MEM	Ministry of Energy and Mines (Lao PDR)
MME	Ministry of Mines and Energy (Cambodia)
NARUC	National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners
NREL	National Renewable Energy Laboratory
PD	Project Director
PFAN	USAID Private Financing Advisory Network
RE	Renewable energy
RDMA	USAID's Regional Development Mission for Asia
RENAC	Renewables Academy
SEI	Stockholm Environment Institute
SPT	South Pole Thailand
TICA	Thailand International Cooperation Agency
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government
V-LEEP	USAID Vietnam Low Emissions Energy Program

I. PROGRAM OVERVIEW/SUMMARY

Program Name:	USAID Clean Power Asia
Activity Start Date And End Date:	June 27, 2016 – June 26, 2021
Name of Prime Implementing Partner:	Abt Associates Inc.
Contract Number:	AID-486-C-16-00001
Name of Subcontractors/Sub-awardees:	In process
Major Counterpart Organizations:	<i>Thailand:</i> Energy Regulatory Commission, Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand <i>Cambodia:</i> Electricity Authority of Cambodia, Electricité du Cambodge <i>Lao PDR:</i> Ministry of Energy and Mines, Electricité du Laos-Generation <i>Vietnam:</i> TBD
Geographic Coverage:	Thailand, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Vietnam
Reporting Period:	June 27, 2016 to September 30, 2016

I.1 Program Description

Energy demand in Asia is expected to increase dramatically in the next decade. Without a concerted effort to promote a low emission power system, the region will continue to rely heavily on conventional energy sources such as coal and large-scale hydropower to meet this demand. Further expansion of conventional power plants will have far-reaching negative impacts, both for global greenhouse gas emissions as well as for ecosystems, human health, fisheries, and livelihoods throughout the Mekong River Basin.

The United States Agency for International Development’s (USAID) Clean Power Asia initiative works with Lower Mekong countries and other Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) member states to encourage power sector investments in environmentally friendly, clean energy sources. The initiative specifically focuses on bringing greater quantities of renewable energy into the region’s electricity grids.

The goal of USAID Clean Power Asia is to *accelerate the regional transition to a high performing, low carbon power sector*. The program goal is to be accomplished through three interconnected outcomes:

1. High renewable energy scenarios included in energy planning.
2. Improved enabling policy, regulatory, and technical environment for renewable energy deployment.
3. Increased deployment of grid-connected renewable energy projects.

Running through June 2021, the \$16.3 million USAID Clean Power Asia contract was awarded in June 2016 to Abt Associates, Inc. This quarterly report covers the first three months of program implementation, which were largely focused on startup activities in Bangkok, Thailand (the base for operations), as well as consultations and engagement with potential counterparts, beneficiaries, and USAID bilateral missions in Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Vietnam. Significant progress was made by the designated startup team in Bangkok with support from a wide range of Abt U.S. headquarters staff in establishing an operational and technical framework in which USAID Clean Power Asia will be implemented. As the quarter comes to a close, the program team is well positioned to begin implementation of activities per the work plan (approval pending) while simultaneously concluding remaining startup tasks.

This first quarterly report for USAID Clean Power Asia is structured on the format provided by USAID's Regional Development Mission for Asia (RDMA). Many of the sections that would normally detail progress on technical issues are without information to report, given the focus on operations and startup during this reporting period by the USAID Clean Power Asia management team. In addition to startup activities, the field-based management team, Chief of Party (COP) and Deputy Chief of Party (DCOP), with support from the Communications Manager and several home office staff, including the Program Director (PD), completed the Year 1 work plan, which was submitted to RDMA as required by the contract on September 5, 2016. Development of the work plan was achieved through engagement with RDMA counterparts, namely the contracting officer's representative (COR) and the Climate Change Team Lead, as well as representatives from USAID Washington and USAID bilateral missions in the region. The work plan was further informed through many formal and informal meetings and consultations with government counterparts, donors, experts, potential partners, beneficiaries, and a wide range of stakeholders in the energy sector throughout the region. At the time of submission of this quarterly report, the Year 1 work plan is under revision based on feedback received from RDMA. A revised work plan for Year 1 (June 27, 2016 through September 30, 2017) will be submitted for approval by the end of October 2016.

2. ACTIVITY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS

2.1 Progress Narrative

Key Achievements

The information in section 2.1 is a brief summary of key program activities during the reporting period. More detail on each of these follows in section 2.2.

This reporting period covers the first three months of program implementation, which was largely focused on startup activities and work plan development.

- The USAID Clean Power Asia contract was signed by Abt Associates on June 27, 2016. On July 6, 2016, an introductory conference call was held between RDMA, Abt Associates (U.S.) management, and the designated key personnel (COP/DCOP) for USAID Clean Power Asia.
- On July 11-12, 2016, a formal kick-off meeting was held at RDMA, involving USAID staff, Abt Associates home office management, and five program staff (COP, DCOP, Program Director, Sr. Finance and Contracts Manager, and Communications Manager).
- The project team concluded consultations with proposed subcontractors (those put forth in Abt Associates' proposal) and potential new subcontractors and developed a schedule for signing subcontracts and subsequent implementation engagement.
- A temporary office was established in Bangkok on July 25, 2016. As staff mobilized during the reporting period, they had a ready workspace and the equipment necessary to begin working.
- A permanent office for the program was identified, a lease for that space signed, and engagement of a contractor for fit-out of the space concluded. The program will begin operating from the new office on November 14, 2016.
- All key personnel were mobilized as follows: DCOP James Grall mobilized in Bangkok on July 11, 2016; COP Dana Kenney mobilized in Bangkok on August 1, 2016; Task 3 Team Lead Boonrod Yaowapruerk mobilized in Bangkok on September 21, 2016.
- Recruitment for locally hired staff in Thailand and other countries was initiated. Applications were screened, interviews were conducted, and a number of offers were made. At the end of the quarter, seven of 10 planned positions in Bangkok have been offered and accepted by well qualified candidates, with most having started their employment prior to the end of the reporting period.
- Working closely with RDMA, the COP and DCOP determined the most effective ways to engage key counterparts in the region. Initial meetings and consultations were held in Thailand, Cambodia, and Lao PDR and significant time was spent consulting with others via conference calls or virtual meetings.
- The USAID Clean Power Asia team delivered the Year 1 work plan including the Communications Outreach Plan, Gender Implementation Plan, Environmental Mitigation and

Monitoring Plan (EMMP) and Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) Plan to RDMA as required by contract on September 5, 2016.

- The USAID Clean Power Asia team delivered the Branding and Marking Plan to RDMA as required by contract on August 3, 2016. Following revisions at the request of USAID staff, the Branding and Marking Plan was approved by USAID on August 8, 2016.
- The USAID Clean Power Asia team delivered the Rapid Mobilization plan to RDMA as required by the contract on July 18, 2016. Following revisions at the request of USAID staff, the Rapid Mobilization Plan was approved on July 22, 2016.
- Subcontractors that will be officially engaged in Year 1 implementation have been determined and subcontracts will be issued in FY17Q2 pending approval of the work plan. Per the proposed year 1 work plan, some subcontractors may not be engaged until year 2. Subcontract scopes will be drafted for approved year 1 activities as required for implementing the activities and USAID consent to subcontract will be sought for any subcontracts requiring Contracting Officer approval.

2.2 Implementation Status

Further detail is provided here on key program activities during the reporting period.

Program Commencement

USAID Clean Power Asia key personnel and Abt Associates home office management participated in an introductory teleconference with RDMA on July 6, 2016, during which USAID discussed the critical importance of this new program and the need for a strategic plan for engagement with regional governments, U.S. government (USG) partners, and regional players like ASEAN. On July 11-12, 2016, a kick-off meeting was hosted by RDMA in Bangkok. In attendance was the Abt Associates home office PD, the designated Abt home office Senior Finance and Contracts Manager for the program, and a senior member of the Abt home office management team. They were joined by the COP, DCOP, and Communications Manager. The team spent considerable time in discussions with the COR and Climate Change Team Lead, but was also briefed by representatives of other RDMA offices, and had an initial in-brief with the RDMA Mission Director.

All key personnel mobilized during the reporting period. The DCOP mobilized on July 5, 2016, and initiated startup activities. The DCOP was joined in Bangkok by the Abt home office Senior Finance and Contracts Manager, who spent eight weeks working in Bangkok on startup activities, and the COP mobilized on August 1, 2016. Per section F.6.1 of the contract, a Rapid Mobilization Plan covering the first 90 days of operations was submitted to RDMA on July 18, 2016, and comments were issued by the COR. A revised Rapid Mobilization Plan was submitted on July 20, 2016, and subsequently approved. The Abt Associates team—key personnel, staff, and home office personnel—have largely delivered on the critical elements of this plan, positioning the program to begin implementation of activities as presented in the work plan in FY17Q2.

To maximize project startup efficiency, key personnel and program staff utilized Abt's standard management tools and resources, designed to support rapid startup. For the majority of the reporting period, there were only three full-time staff working in Bangkok: the COP, DCOP, and Communications Manager. With USAID approval, the Abt home office Senior Finance and Contracts Manager was also present in Bangkok from July 10 – September 7, 2016, and was followed by the home office Finance and Contracts Analyst dedicated to the program, who was present in Bangkok

from September 11 – October 8, 2016. The team operated during the first quarter of the program with an internal startup plan to manage deliverable due dates. Many elements of project startup were impacted by the fact that Abt Associates is not yet registered as a business entity (branch office of Abt Associates (USA)) in Thailand. The management team worked with home office personnel to develop as many workarounds as possible to challenges this situation presented. The registration of Abt Associates in Thailand is in process and is expected to take between 3-6 months to complete.

An important early task for the management team was the identification of a Thai counterpart with whom USAID Clean Power Asia can programmatically and technically engage and support, and who in turn can provide the concurrence required by the Thailand International Cooperation Agency (TICA), allowing the program to officially operate and providing the means for expatriate expert staff to be issued official visas. As the reporting period came to a close, the Thailand Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC) had been selected as the program’s counterpart from a group of those identified and engaged by USAID and the program team, and the management team is in the process of developing the required documents to formalize the relationship.

Staffing

In order to recruit, mobilize, manage, and retain local staff, USAID Clean Power Asia used a number of outlets to disseminate information on open positions, including the Thai NGO Forum, Thai Development Forum, the Abt website, LinkedIn, UNJOBS.org, and other websites, and key personnel also distributed information on openings through their networks. The Rapid Mobilization Plan envisioned being fully staffed with all local hires on board by September 2, 2016. Offers to candidates had been made for nearly all local positions by that date, but start dates for most were delayed until late September/early October 2016. Management selected the best candidates for each position and several of them had commitments to existing/closing RDMA programs or other jobs that required a longer notice period than anticipated.

The Task 2 Lead and the Country Coordinators were to be provided by subcontractor South Pole Thailand (SPT), as detailed in Abt’s proposal. A mid-level Finance and Investment Specialist position was added later in place of the proposed Climate Finance STTA. USAID did not provide consent to subcontract with the contract award. Abt Associates spent considerable effort negotiating the details of a subcontract with SPT, which has led to delays in hiring the Task 2 Lead and the Country Coordinators.

The table below summarizes the current staffing status of the program and notes the anticipated hire date for open positions.

Position	Name	Start Date (or anticipated)
1. COP/RE Planning Lead (Task 1)	Dana Kenney	August 1, 2016
2. DCOP/Coordination and Learning Lead (Task 4)	James Grall	July 11, 2016
3. Enabling Environment Lead (Task 2)	TBD	<i>November 2016</i>
4. Mobilizing Investment Lead (Task 3)	Boonrod Yaowapruerk	September 21, 2016
5. Communications Manager	Michael Wykoff	August 1, 2016
6. M&E Manager	Pakprim Oranop na Ayuthaya	September 26, 2016

7. Finance & Administration Manager	Jiraporn Chotipanich	September 26, 2016
8. Accountant	Wanthana Intharapithak	October 3, 2016
9. RE Planning Expert	TBD	<i>FY17Q2/Q3</i>
10. Finance & Investment Specialist	TBD	<i>FY17Q2/Q3</i>
11. Country Coordinators, part-time (Lao PDR, Cambodia, Vietnam)	TBD	<i>FY17Q2</i>

Office

The USAID Clean Power Asia office in Bangkok serves as the base for all key personnel and long-term staff. Abt Associates originally envisioned sharing space with, or securing space in the same building as, a proposed subcontractor, but determined that the location of that office would have presented logistical and travel challenges, and in the end was not in the best interest of the program. Therefore, a temporary serviced office in the Silom area of Bangkok was secured and personnel began working from that location on July 26, 2016. A search then began for permanent office space, engaging the assistance of a local agent. The team assessed a number of available options that provide value, are within the planned budget, and which are in close enough proximity to USAID to facilitate ease of in-person meetings. An appropriate and suitable office space was identified at Abdulrahim Place on Rama IV Road in Bangkok’s central business district. A lease has been signed and the space is currently being prepared for occupancy, with a planned move-in date of November 14, 2016.

Counterpart Consultations

The program team worked closely with RDMA during the quarter to determine the best way to engage key counterparts and a wide range of other organizations and individuals who could help ground-truth technical assumptions and inform the development of the Year 1 work plan. A series of introductory meetings was held with both organizations and individuals (a complete list of meetings and consultations is included in Section 4), frequently accompanied by RDMA staff, in which management shared the overall vision for the program and explained preliminary approaches to implementation. The meetings served a critical function, allowing program management and RDMA to gain valuable insight into the renewable energy landscape in the region. Further, these meetings allowed the team to solicit feedback on planned activities, ground-truth assumptions, and better understand current and planned programming in the renewable energy sphere, to avoid duplication of effort and design means to cooperate where opportunities exist.

Work Plan Development

The COP and DCOP led development of the Year 1 work plan, with support from the Task 3 Lead, Communications Manager and Abt home office PD, and submitted the work plan to RDMA as required on September 5, 2016. In addition to the technical work plan, the team submitted, as required, the following separate plans: Monitoring and Evaluation Plan; Gender Implementation Plan; Communications and Outreach Plan; and Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Plan. The Gender Implementation Plan was approved without comment. The team continued its consultations with counterparts, primarily in Cambodia and Lao PDR, after the work plan was submitted, and therefore, is now revising the work plan to take information from those meetings into account, as well as the feedback provided by RDMA. Final versions of all work plan components will be submitted to RDMA for approval by the end of October 2016. As most staff other than the COP/DCOP began work after submission of the work plan, there is now an opportunity to include their expertise as well. For example, the M&E Manager joined the program on September 26, 2016,

and immediately began to revise the M&E plan, concurrent with leading a full-day workshop for all staff to discuss the applicable Theory of Change for the program, which will strengthen the theoretical foundation of both the work plan and M&E plan.

Internal Communications

One of the keys to success in managing USAID Clean Power Asia will be robust and continuous communication between the program team, USAID, and Abt's home office. To ensure that this coordination takes place, program management has developed comprehensive communication guidelines to reduce duplication of effort and ensure the proper engagement of RDMA personnel and other counterparts. Managing internal communications ensures program management and USAID can prioritize decision-making and require only necessary resources and information to do so.

To ensure communication among all program team members, including key personnel, technical personnel, and subcontractors, the COP is conducting weekly meetings with staff to monitor activities and ensure the overall program adheres to requirements and timelines set forth in both the contract and work plan. Regular meetings are also being supplemented by more informal day-to-day communication between team members.

The COP serves as the main point of contact for USAID, with input from Abt's PD where required or requested. The COP and team regularly meet with the COR and Climate Change Team Lead to brief one another on program progress and to discuss issues or challenges related to implementation. These meetings help ensure the program is on target in all aspects of delivery and have proven a useful forum for the candid exchange of ideas, opinions, and experiences.

To maintain a constant flow of communications between the home office and field-based staff, the COP/DCOP and the PD hold weekly calls, bringing others into the conversation as required.

2.3 Implementation Challenges

Implementation as used in this reporting period relates primarily to plans, actions, and outputs related to establishing a program presence and all of the operational tasks associated with the start of a new USAID program. Broadly speaking, implementation falls into two categories: operations and technical or programmatic. Abt Associates staff from the home office, those mobilized to Bangkok, and those hired locally, faced a variety of challenges during this startup period. While none of them were insurmountable, some required more effort, time, or financial resources to address and overcome, others could have been avoided (see Section 6), while still others can be chalked up to the "cost of doing business" in this field and region.

Operational Challenges

While the registration of an Abt Associates Inc. branch office under Thai law is now underway, the process leading up to the submission of the documents required was time consuming, costly, and often confusing. Due in part to these reasons, Abt did not complete its Thailand registration prior to or in anticipation of a contract award from USAID. While program management did an outstanding job in dealing with a difficult situation and often were able to find workarounds to obstacles the circumstances presented, those actions consumed precious time that would have been better directed to other tasks.

Registration, allowing a company or organization to legally operate in Thailand, is not a USAID requirement, rather that of the host country, and beyond the gravitas of the USAID name associated with our personnel and their actions, there is little USAID can do to alter or improve this process. Without registering, a process that should take 2-3 months but sometimes takes upward of a year or

more, a company faces restrictions and in some cases outright prohibition on certain activities. The list is extensive, but includes the ability to open a bank account, enter into lease agreements, execute various service agreements, employ local staff, and obtain appropriate immigration, residency, and work permit approvals for foreigners. The previous experience of team members implementing donor projects in Thailand, particularly the DCOP, was invaluable in helping the larger Abt Associates team navigate this sometimes ambiguous space. Creative and sometimes interim solutions were developed that have enabled uninterrupted implementation by Abt, bringing the program to its current state of readiness within the 90-day rapid mobilization period.

One area where USAID leadership is required—and where it was provided—is in assisting implementing partners (in this case Abt Associates) to engage counterpart Thai government bodies and leadership to present and promote the new program and to engage in negotiations with one organization to serve as the official counterpart to USAID Clean Power Asia. Taking on that role generally means that the counterpart at worst has no objections to the proposed activity and at best, the counterpart actively supports the program and its objectives, provides meaningful input to development of the work plan, and may benefit directly or indirectly from USG assistance. Most critically, they endorse the program to TICA which provides many benefits to implementing partners, including VAT exemption, relaxation of import duties, non-immigrant residency status for expatriate staff, and *de facto* legitimacy in the eyes of Thai authorities. RDMA was instrumental in working with the COP and DCOP to approach multiple Thai government bodies for this purpose and, by the end of the reporting period, a verbal agreement with the Electricity Regulatory Commission to assume the role of official counterpart to USAID Clean Power Asia was reached and negotiations on a Memorandum of Understanding to govern that relationship are underway.

Programmatic Challenges

While establishing a presence in a foreign country to implement a USAID activity presents operational hurdles, so too does completing a comprehensive programmatic framework, even for the best and most experienced USAID implementing partners. The Abt Associates team, in this case, met that challenge head-on, delivering a complex and ground-truthed Year 1 work plan to USAID within 65 calendar days from contract effective date.

The USAID request for proposals, background research, and the Abt Associates proposal provided a foundation on which to develop programmatic plans. But as is always the case, extensive consultations in-country are required after the contract is awarded, as are discussions with USAID to ensure that planned activities reflect realities on the ground, changing priorities, and other developments. Abt addressed these realities by having the DCOP mobilized within 15 days of contract award, and the COP within 35 days. Together, and often with USAID, they met counterparts in Thailand and consulted via phone with others in the region, and delivered a work plan to USAID as required by September 5, 2016. Together with USAID, the team planned consultations in Lao PDR and Cambodia for the month of September, with Vietnam and potentially other countries to follow before the end of the calendar year. This was done recognizing that the work plan would be revised to reflect information gained from these meetings.

Allowing this flexibility ensures that USAID Clean Power Asia will have a set of activities and targets for Year 1 that take into account the realities and priorities of not only RMDA, but USAID bilateral missions and host country governments and beneficiaries who are the primary targets of assistance.

While the Bangkok-based team that comprises USAID Clean Power Asia is nearly complete, the COP, DCOP, and Communications Manager were the only program staff through most of the reporting period. Abt Associates previously identified other individuals to join the team, but faced delays in getting them on board due to their previous commitments or the fact that they were to be provided

through a subcontractor. Program management endeavored to staff up as quickly as possible, but had to work within given parameters including respecting notice times for individuals already employed and the fact that the Task 3 Lead was not available until later in the quarter due to the contract being awarded earlier than Abt expected.

Despite these and other challenges, the initial and growing team implementing USAID Clean Power Asia in Bangkok and the home office team supporting that work have put in place the fundamental elements enabling the program to begin operations, meet contract requirements, and position itself for quick ramp up in FY17Q2.

2.4 Performance Management Plan Update

The Performance Management Plan (PMP) is an integral part of program management, providing the framework in which the team can measure progress against targets and report on results, while assisting program managers and USAID in making timely decisions concerning program direction. As described in the PMP, the analysis of data the program is collecting against its indicators inform program management, staff, and partners about progress in achieving objectives, and helps inform where adjustments may be needed. Regularly reviewing progress towards targets provides opportunities for continuous improvement, quickly addressing issues that could further affect results. The PMP, together with plans for M&E, were presented as part of the year one work plan.

The program M&E Manager joined the team on September 26, 2016, and immediately began to revise the PMP and M&E plan. She also organized a full-day workshop to discuss the applicable Theory of Change for the program with the entire USAID Clean Power Asia team.

2.5 Communications

Telling the USAID Clean Power Asia “story” effectively can be one of the best means of helping to drive program success. The key is ensuring the right information is in the right hands at the right time. The story that USAID Clean Power Asia tells can help influence the development of policies, regulations and incentives, which can lead to an improved enabling environment for renewable energy. Effectively communicating program achievements can bolster the confidence of investors and financial institutions considering backing new renewable energy projects and well-crafted communication products can present complex, technical details in ways that are easily understood by a variety of audiences. Ultimately, all communications and outreach developed by the program will not only help to drive and celebrate program successes, but advance the goals of USAID throughout the region.

During the reporting period, the Communications Manager completed the required Branding and Marking Plan and submitted it to RDMA within 30 days of award, as specified in the contract. Comments were received from the COR and addressed, with the plan being resubmitted and approved by USAID in August 2016.

Working closely with the Development Outreach and Communications (DOC) specialist at RDMA, a program factsheet was created and approved. It has been posted on the USAID website and shared in program consultations and meetings. The two-page document provides an overview of the program and highlights key objectives to be achieved, and is among the first results when searching for “clean power Asia” on the internet.

In conjunction with work plan development, a separate Communications Plan was submitted to RDMA on September 5, 2016. The COR and the DOC specialist provided comments on this plan, which are being addressed in the plan revision, and which will be submitted along with the revised work plan in October 2016.

Initial steps were made during the reporting period to scope out a program website, and plans were undertaken for a program presence on social media. Progress will be made against these communications channels during the current quarter and status provided in the next quarterly report.

3. INTEGRATION OF CROSSCUTTING ISSUES AND USAID FORWARD PRIORITIES

The crosscutting issues normally detailed in this section have been discussed with USAID staff during the initial Clean Power Asia kick-off meeting in Bangkok on July 11-12, 2016 and taken into account in the development of the Year 1 work plan. Apart from consultations and planning, no specific activities have been implemented thus far.

3.1 Gender Equality

USAID Clean Power Asia developed a separate Gender Implementation Plan, which was submitted on September 5, 2016, and approved by the COR. The program identified a gender expert at Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) Asia, to be engaged with USAID Clean Power Asia through a pending subcontract with SEI. Specific gender-related activities will be developed in partnership with SEI, and the program intends to take gender sensitivity into account in all aspects of program implementation.

3.2 Environmental Compliance

USAID Clean Power Asia developed a draft Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Plan, which was submitted on September 5, 2016. Further improvement of the plan is needed, and the program may engage an Abt Associates home office employee who specializes in this area to assist with the completion of the EMMP.

3.3 Global Climate Change

The entire USAID Clean Power Asia program and its component objectives contribute to the overall goal of mitigating global climate change.

3.4 Policy and Governance Support

USAID Clean Power Asia will support policy and governance support. Specific activities are being finalized as part of the Year 1 work plan.

3.5 Local Capacity Development

USAID Clean Power Asia will support local capacity development. Specific activities are being finalized as part of the Year 1 work plan.

3.6 Public Private Partnership and Global Development Alliance Impacts

USAID Clean Power Asia will support public private partnerships and engage with the private sector to further program objectives and leverage funding. Specific activities are being finalized as part of the Year 1 work plan.

3.7 Science, Technology and Innovation Impacts

USAID Clean Power Asia will integrate science, technology, and innovation into planned activities. Specific activities are being finalized as part of the Year 1 work plan.

4. STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION AND INVOLVEMENT

During the first quarter, USAID Clean Power Asia met with many organizations and individuals in order to inform the work plan, ground-truth assumptions, determine beneficial areas for collaboration, and ensure the program is not replicating the efforts of other donors and/or programs.

The draft work plan contains plans for the development of specific relationships and platforms in support of the program objectives. Some were included in the first round of consultations, while others will continue to be developed in the next quarter.

Below is a list of meetings and consultations held during the quarter.

USAID Clean Power Asia Meetings and Consultations July-September 2016

Organization	Contact Name	Location
Energy Planning and Policy Office, Ministry of Energy	Dr. Prasert Sinsukprasert	Thailand
Office of Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC)	Dr. Narupat Amornkosit	Thailand
Department of Alternative Energy Development and Efficiency (DEDE), Ministry of Energy	Mr. Thammayot Srichuai	Thailand
GIZ Thailand	Mr. Thomas Chrometzka	Thailand
International Finance Corporation	Ms. Helen Han	Thailand
Renewable Energy Industry Club	Mr. Suwat Kamolpanus	Thailand
Electricity Generating Public Co., Ltd. (EGCO)	Mr. Voravit Potisuk	Thailand

Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (EGAT)	Ms. Somruedee Tipmabutr	Thailand
National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL)	Mr. Dan Bilello Ms. Jessica Katz	Thailand
Asian Development Bank (ADB) – Thailand Resident Mission	Mr. Pradeep Tharakan	Thailand
USAID Private Financing Advisory Network (PFAN)	Mr. M.K. Balaji	Thailand
Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) Asia	Ms. Bernadette Resurrecion Ms. Kalpana Giri Mr. Niall O’Connor	Thailand
South Pole Thailand (SPT)	Mr. Ingo Puhl	Thailand
Department of New and Renewable Energy, Ministry of Mines and Energy (MME)	Mr. Toch Sovanna	Cambodia
Department of Rural Electrification Fund, Electricite Du Cambodge (EDC)	Mr. Loeung Keosela	Cambodia
Electricity Authority of Cambodia (EAC)	H.E. Dr. Ty Norin	Cambodia
Sun-eee	Dr. Sov Leang	Cambodia
Kamworks Ltd.	Mr. Arjen Luxwolda	Cambodia
Solar Partners Asia (Cambodia) Ltd.	Mr. Jim Gramberg	Cambodia
Mekong Strategic Partners	Mr. John McGinley	Cambodia
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	Mr. Julien Chevillard	Cambodia
Agence Française de Développement (AFD)	Mr. Glenn Andre	Cambodia
UNIDO	Mr. Narin Sok	Cambodia
NRG Solutions Cambodia	Mr. Daniel Pacheco	Cambodia
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	Ms. Setsuko Yamazaki	Cambodia
Solar Energy Association of Cambodia	Dr. Romina de Jong	Cambodia
Palladium Group	Morten Kvammen	Cambodia
EuroCham Green Business Committee	Dr. Ramona de Jong	Cambodia
Leonard Capital	Mr. Evan Roe	Cambodia
Kerry Worldbridge SEZ Co. Ltd	Mr. Charles Esterhoy	Cambodia
LCH Investment Group Co, Ltd.	Mr. Bob Anderson	Cambodia
USAID Cambodia	Ms. Polly Dunford	Cambodia
Sunlabob Renewable Energy	Mr. Andy Schroeter	Lao PDR
Department of Energy Policy and Planning, Ministry of Energy and Mines (MEM)	Mr. Chansaveng Bounngong	Lao PDR
Institute of Renewable Energy Promotion, MEM	Mr. Anousack Phonsavanh	Lao PDR
Director of Department of Generation, Electricite Du Laos-Generation (EDL-GEN)	Mr. Phetsamone Luangaphay	Lao PDR
European Chamber of Commerce and Industry in	Dr. Ramon Bruessler	Lao PDR

Lao PDR (ECCIL)		
Renewable Energy and New Material Institute, Ministry of Science and Technology	Mr. Bounchanh Douangvilay	Lao PDR
Pacific Start Capital Management, Inc.	Mr. Robert Khoonsrivong	Lao PDR
nValid Precision Engineering	Mr. Dominik Winger	Lao PDR
United Nations Development Programme	Dr. Margaret Williams	Lao PDR
DFDL	Ms. Kristy Newby	Lao PDR
World Bank Lao PDR	Ms. Karen Lazarus	Lao PDR
US Embassy Lao PDR	Mr. Michael F. Kleine Mr. Machut Shishak Mr. Noah Geesaman Mr. James Gallagher	Lao PDR
Dragon Capital	Mr. Bob Schiffer	Vietnam
Asian Development Bank (ADB) – Vietnam Resident Mission	Ms. Hyunjung Lee	Vietnam
U.S. Department of State (DOS)	Ms. Anna Shpitsberg	United States
National Renewable Energy Lab (NREL)	Mr. Dan Bilello Ms. Jessica Katz Ms. Jaquelin Cochran	United States
World Bank SE Asia	Ms. Julia Fraser	Teleconference (Multiple Locations)
GIZ – RESP (Renewable energy in Southeast Asia)	Ms. Maria-Jose Poddey	Teleconference (Thailand and Jakarta)
USAID Vietnam Low Emissions Energy Program (V- LEEP)	Mr. Michael Ellis	Teleconference (Thailand and Vietnam)
ASEAN Center for Energy (ACE)	Mr. Beni Suryadi	Teleconference (Thailand and Indonesia)
USAID Climate Economic Analysis for Development, Investment, and Resilience (CEADIR)	Ms. Mikell O’Meally	Teleconference (Thailand and U.S.)
USAID Bureau for Economic Growth, Education and Environment	Ms. Jennifer Leisch Ms. Sarah Lawson	Teleconference (Thailand and U.S.)
National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC)	Ms. Erin Hammel	Teleconference (Thailand and U.S.)

5. MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

Section 2.3 on challenges largely addresses the core management and administrative issues faced by the Abt Associates team both in the field and at the home office during the reporting period. The field office benefited from several factors, including the presence for eight weeks and four weeks, respectively, of the Senior Finance and Contracts Manager and the Finance and Contracts Analyst. Given the time required to recruit and place local staff, especially operations staff, their presence to keep administrative issues moving toward completion, coupled with their ability to quickly transfer Abt-specific knowledge, tools, and procedures to field office personnel, was invaluable. The program benefited further from the rapid deployment of the DCOP, who brought extensive experience in Thailand and the region, a familiarity with RDMA specifically, and expertise in program startup and operations. The COP in turn was on site within 35 days of award, and brought the technical

knowledge and expertise to lead the work plan process. The complimentary skills and experience of the COP/DCOP team meant that even without a full complement of staff on board during the first quarter, there were few tasks that could not be accomplished. As the program enters the next quarter, both the Finance and Administrative Manager and the accountant will be full-time in the Bangkok office and operational issues will quickly become routine.

6. LESSONS LEARNED

Operational and programmatic challenges presented in previous sections naturally lend themselves to some degree of reflection and lessons learned, to allow for improvements in planning and execution of program startup. Even so, startups are, by their nature, always complex, with many moving parts that rarely align no matter the planning involved. Program startup also requires a good deal of flexibility and patience and necessitates the ability to think creatively and problem-solve on the go—all while ensuring every action taken moves the program forward, is in the best interest of the client, and meets or exceeds requirements established by the contract and the implementer's own policies.

There are three broad issues, which on reflection, the management team highlights as providing lessons to be learned for both the implementing partner and USAID.

1. **Anticipate a win.** Competitive procurements under USG regulations mean that no offeror knows the outcome of the process until award, at which point implementation begins and the countdown clock to the first deliverables starts ticking. The USAID Clean Power Asia program was awarded to Abt Associates without going through a Best and Final Offer (BAFO) phase, as is usually the case with USAID. From the perspective of the client, this reduces time spent on pre-award and evaluates all offers based on the proposals put forward rather than giving a select few the chance to improve their offer and thus create a more leveled playing field. Word spreads quickly in the community of USAID implementers/offerors, and when a procurement enters BAFO stage, some offerors are forced out, while others are on notice that an award is imminent.

While excited about the award to Abt Associates, there is no shame in admitting that an award for the procurement came earlier than anticipated, meaning the Abt Associates team had to react quickly to lay the groundwork for startup, while knowing that contracts still have time-bound deliverables that wait for no one.

Not having a BAFO phase means that prior to startup there is no opportunity for USAID to express any technical or programmatic issues they may wish to have the implementing partner adjust. A post-award debrief and the in person kick-off meeting with RDMA allowed mission staff to express certain ideas for Abt Associates to consider. Understandably however, an award with no negotiation creates the impression for some that everything as presented in the offer is acceptable when in fact some elements of the proposal may need to be reconsidered or adjusted for a variety of reasons. It becomes an issue for the implementing partner to manage, especially regarding expectations of potential subcontractors, as it is their responsibility, but it is worth keeping in mind the impact this can have overall.

To facilitate rapid mobilization of the USAID Clean Power Asia team, including staff and subcontractors, Abt Associates submitted all needed waivers for program staff and request for consent to subcontract along with the proposal. On other programs, it is Abt's

experience that along with program award, consent and staff approvals follow. However, on USAID Clean Power Asia, renegotiation of the role and scope of subcontractors and additional information for staff waiver requests necessitated revision and resubmission after award. This process created unanticipated delays that compounded the operational challenges of having limited staff on-board.

- 2. Secure government counterpart early.** A critical aspect of startup is the ability of the implementing partner to secure the appropriate visas for expatriate staff, in this case, an “official” visa, which is granted by TICA upon approval of the program by the official Thai counterpart. Once that approval is received the process can still take several weeks to several months to complete, during which time expatriate program staff face limits on mobility and travel and/or are required to spend valuable program funds to remain compliant with Thai immigration and Department of Labor rules requiring work permits in an environment where rules frequently change or are difficult to interpret. This compliance is difficult even when a company is registered, as Thai requirements for issuing work permits for expatriate staff (including the ratio of expatriates to Thai employees and funds required to be deposited in the bank) can be a significant burden to implementing partners and/or require significant program resources. In addition to the ability to secure the proper visa, having a Thai counterpart provides a new program with an immediate partner that can provide valuable insight into program development and also a platform to which or through which the program can deliver early assistance and contribute to the program’s legitimacy in a fluid political environment.

A significant amount of effort by USAID personnel is put into the development of new programs, from concept and inception to award, and this includes laying the groundwork in country with a variety of government counterparts to avoid any duplication and secure the support of the host-country. Ideally, a government counterpart would be identified and more or less have bought into supporting the program by the time of award, regardless of the details of the work plan, which can only come at a later date. If implementing partners can hit the ground to mobilize and be meeting with that counterpart together with USAID in the first week to initiate the processes required for approval, significant time and human, as well as financial, resources can be saved.

- 3. USAID-implementer partnership.** The best USAID programs—measured by more than just outcomes and indicators—are often those where a true partnership exists between the implementing partner’s key personnel and other program staff and the members of the USAID team. Beyond regular communication and meetings, when these two sides of the program can truly engage in a partnership where ideas are shared openly, no idea is unworthy of exploration, and no challenge can’t be overcome together, then the foundation of a successful program are established and, with care, can truly flourish and greatly add to program impact. To date, the Abt Associates team has enjoyed just such a partnership with USAID, due to the efforts of everyone involved. The USAID Clean Power Asia team (personnel from both Abt and RDMA) has completed its first quarter of operations and, it is the desire of the Abt Associates team to continue this good relationship.

7. PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR NEXT QUARTER INCLUDING UPCOMING EVENTS

Upcoming major activities and events for USAID Clean Power Asia in the next quarter are normally presented here. As the work plan is still under revision, no firm schedule has been set for any events.

8. HOW IMPLEMENTING PARTNER HAS ADDRESSED COR COMMENTS FROM THE LAST QUARTERLY REPORT

As this is the first quarterly report required under the contact, there are no previous comments from the COR to be addressed.