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Volunteers for Economic Growth Alliance

**VEGA Afghanistan: Community  
Development Agriculture Program in Paktia, Paktika,  
Khost and Southeast Ghazni  
(CDA-P2K)**

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***QUARTERLY REPORT***  
***April 2008 – June 2008***

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**LEADER WITH ASSOCIATE AGREEMENT (LWA)**  
**EEM-A-00-04-00002-00**

**Associate Cooperative Agreement**  
**306-07-023**

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*Implementing Organizations:*



**The Grand Council of Kuchis**



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## **1. Executive Summary**

The VEGA Alliance concluded a Leader with Associate Agreement (LWA) EEM-A-00-04-00002-00 (Associate Cooperative Agreement 306-07-023) with US Agency for International Development (USAID) November 16, 2007 for the Community Development Agriculture project in Paktia, Paktika, Khost and Southeastern Ghazni provinces (P2K). The project has signed leases for facilities in Gardez and Khost. While these facilities are outfitted for electricity, heat and cooling, furniture and furnishings, the project team continues to operate from PRT Gardez.

The deteriorating security situation in the region resulted in the team's decision to initially focus on the Khost and Paktia, and recently only the selected districts of Gardez, Amad Abad, Zaeed Karam and Jaji in Paktia Province. During the reporting period, the project team met with representatives of various producer and trading associations, community shuras and individual entrepreneurs to discuss proposals for training, new processing and storage technology, sales and market access. PRT Gardez has agreed to collaborate on an integrated development program for the Amad Abad District of Paktia whereby the PRT would provide restoration of several canal systems for the community and P2K would work with individual farmers, community flour mills and growers associations. The project team also worked with several women's groups to define specific services for training and support of post harvest processing, handicrafts and livestock. The Grand Council of Kuchis, a P2K implementing partner continues to provide support and outreach with the local tribal and business community.

Achievements during the reporting period include the following:

- Regional Farm Store input needs survey, security and situation analysis completed
- Potential farm store market sites identified
- Farm Store investor and agribusiness survey completed
- Twenty seven potential Farm Store investors identified
- Support and collaboration with Gardez PRT for the medical and veterinary outreach exercise
- Ahmadabad village identified for PRT and CDA P2K agriculture support projects and canal improvement

## **1. Program Overview**

Background on the project is presented below. This is followed by a discussion of the CDA-P2K implementation strategy.

### **2.1 CDA-P2K Background**

The Southeast Region of Afghanistan includes the Provinces of Paktia, Paktika, Khost and southeast Ghazni. This area is characterized as small farmers, little commercial production and dominated by trade with Pakistan. Although there has been a presence by the UN Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA), the region has not received the same development attention and funding as other areas in Afghanistan as served by the Alternative Development Program,

Afghanistan Small and Medium Enterprise Development (ASMED) and Afghanistan Sustained Agriculture Program (ASAP) and others.

The goal of CDA-P2K is to ‘*Generate increased income, employment and sales of agricultural products for communities in the region.*’ To contribute to the achievement of this goal the CDA-P2K program will undertake activities to accomplish the following five specific objectives:

- Objective 1:** Identify and exploit markets that can be profitably served by the agricultural enterprises in the P2K region.
- Objective 2:** Increased production and improved quality of horticultural, livestock and agro-forestry products through improved genetics, management practices and use of inputs.
- Objective 3:** Mobilize the services and supply industries to create opportunities for P2K rural enterprises to improve storage, handling and processing of agricultural products.
- Objective 4:** Rehabilitate community irrigation and market infrastructure to support improved production, handling and marketing of horticultural, livestock and agro-forestry products.
- Objective 5:** Establish associations and other agricultural support institutions to provide services and support to agribusiness in P2K.

By attaining these objectives it is anticipated that improved inputs and techniques will result in improved health of livestock, improved quality of production, expanded markets and increases in net income of those parties targeted by the project.

## **2.2 Implementation Strategy: Private Sector Involvement with Community and Provincial Input**

CDA-P2K will develop initiatives with individual community and tribal stakeholders, associations and enterprises. The team will then provide ongoing support through training, technical assistance, improved inputs and agricultural techniques, post harvest treatment and access to markets. The overriding focus of the CDA-P2K program is involvement of the private sector, and there is a cross-cutting emphasis on support for women, youth and the disadvantaged. Each activity will be reviewed to determine potential involvement and impact on these groups. CDA-P2K will also develop targeted programs for each of these groups as appropriate.

To build a genuine sense of ownership of the project by all participants, target groups are involved in the planning process. The CDCs are the initial focus for these contacts in targeted districts. Rather than focusing upon a “wish list” of equipment purchases, the project team will review supply chains to determine the greatest potential benefit to communities and will develop activities appropriately. Interventions could include new seed varieties, improved orchard management, nursery operations to accelerate seedling growth and survivability, methods to reduce post harvest loss, and value added processing.

## **Seed Capital**

The design of each individual intervention will take into account local conditions, and support will be conditional on a genuine commitment to the project by the target groups. With a focus on sustainability, funding will support efforts by stakeholders to ensure that activities continue well after the project's completion. Funding will be regarded as seed capital that will be used to jump-start development in the community preferably with existing business operators, rather than as a give-away for its own sake. Priority will be given to opportunities and proposals that include arrangements for cost recovery and replication. The benefits from all investments must be capable of being sustained by participants using their own resources.

## **Approach to CDA-P2K Sub-projects**

Implementation will focus on:

- Selected districts in the target provinces and selected clusters of villages within those districts
- A limited number of projects with a relatively large number of participants rather than a large number of very small diverse projects
- Projects that may be implemented simultaneously in a target village cluster, integrated or stand alone, all contributing to achieving the project purpose (specific project objective)
- Utilize the CDC as the initial point of contact at community level for the CDA-P2K activities. Where the CDC is not active other reference points will be identified. At the district level the DDA will be the point of contact.
- Projects that are identified and prioritized as part of a planning process and taking due account of the Provincial Development Plans.
- Projects implemented through contract agreements with implementing partners

To successfully implement the CDA-P2K project a number of steps must be taken, including:

1. Project activity identification
2. Partner selection
3. Development of methodology for implementing actions

CDA-P2K will call for proposals and award contracts to private sector partners where appropriate, for example in situations where development of infrastructure has already taken place, the area shows considerable agricultural potential, and communities are willing to invest in improving production of commodities with identified market demand. The project team will then work with these partners, including NGOs and private enterprises, to implement an agricultural improvement program that will include procurement of improved inputs, farmer training, post harvest handling, and other appropriate activities.

## **3. Quarterly Results**

Quarterly results are described below, by objective, and within each objective, by technical area or project type.

### **3.1 Objective 1 – Identify and exploit market opportunities**

A potential investor, introduced by the Grand Council of Kuchis, approach P2K to discuss a proposed wool wash and yarn spinning operation to be located in Gardez. During a subsequent meeting to finalize a working arrangement, the investor informed the project team that a feasibility study had concluded that the operation would not be a viable. Changing plans, the investor has now proposed a project involving a juice manufacturing enterprise in Gardez. The investor submitted a proposal to P2K, but it lacks detail and requires follow-up to ensure that it would benefit the community and be in accordance with project objectives.

Fruit processors in the targeted regions have tried unsuccessfully to diversify production by drying fruit, particularly apricots and grapes. There is potential for value addition, but currently most production is for home consumption or selling in local bazaars. The quality of most apricot samples is poor, and the fruit is over-dried and has a dark or uneven color. To address this opportunity, P2K will conduct demonstrations on sulphuring and fruit drying. Samples will be showcased in different market outlets to gauge potential demand and acceptance of the product. The project will continue to explore new opportunities to develop the dried fruit value chain.

Khost province offers considerable opportunity for vegetables, with potential for year-round production in some areas for some commodities. P2K has made arrangements to work with the Khost vegetable traders' union and selected farmers groups to prepare cropping calendars, identify commodities in demand locally and regionally and identify price windows. Considerable opportunities exist for import substitution in the provincial market. In addition, larger, more profitable markets will also be targeted, especially in Kabul and adjoining provinces.

#### **Institutional Markets**

A study conducted by a food safety expert resulted in a recommendation to establish a vegetable and fruit packing house, which would supply directly to an international catering company. This company provides produce to several national institutions, and could become an important buyer for farmers in the region. The company has indicated that it is prepared to source produce within Afghanistan provided that adequate safety procedures are in place, quality standards are met and prices are competitive. The food safety consultant's report outlined the requirements for Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP), Hazard Control and Critical Control Points (HACCP) traceability and recall plans, food defense and security plans. P2K is actively seeking to identify a private sector stakeholder to invest and manage the operation. The project anticipates providing grants for start-up and training.

### **3.2 Objective 2 – Increase production and improved quality of horticultural, livestock and agro-forestry products**

#### **Fruit**

The P2K Agricultural Specialist visited several fruit tree nurseries in Paktia to assess the quality of saplings. While the nurseries are generally well-run, the quality of saplings appears to be universally poor. Problems identified include the following:

- Bud material is taken from commercial orchards and may not be true to type varieties
- Both root and scion material appear to be diseased
- Grafted trees will not be early bearing and fruit size will likely be reduced relative to fruit produced on trees propagated on known clonal rootstocks

There are no reliable estimates regarding the number of fruit tree saplings planted in the project area each year. Judging by the number of nurseries, interviews with farmers and anecdotal reports, however, it is likely that several hundred thousand are planted in Paktia alone. Nursery owners do not appear to be aware of the poor quality of produce.

P2K participated in the inaugural meeting of the Paktia Fruit Tree Nursery Association during the quarter, and will continue to educate the members on quality and production technology to improve the quality of planting material. In addition, the P2K team will provide educational material on good quality propagation to establish a mother stock nursery. This will ensure the availability of quality material available for the commercial nurseries. The project anticipates receiving a grant proposal in the upcoming quarter to provide material to the association for distribution to the members.

Pruning is another opportunity for the project to address. Migrant teams of pruners come into Paktia from Wardock province, and move through the province pruning trees for a fee that varies with the size of tree. These migrant pruners also give technical advice to farmers. While the standard of pruning observed by P2K is good, it also appears to be variable and some farmers have had poor results. To address this, the project asked the shuras to identify local youths who can be trained in proper pruning techniques for different fruit and tree sizes. This training will help with the quality of yields and health of the trees, while creating jobs for the youth.

In addition to variable pruning, other causes have been found to be of greater detriment to the low-yielding fields. Many fruit trees may be of such poor genetic quality that pruning will not make a difference. In addition, farmers often do not know which varieties they have, and are generally not aware of the importance of having correct pollinators properly spaced in their orchards. Thus, the second component of activities related to fruit trees will consist of training on the specific requirements for increasing output and improving the quality of fruit.

## **Wheat**

During the quarter under review, the project team also assessed the quality of wheat production in the area. Working with the community, P2K is developing approaches that will improve wheat seed quality including cultivars better adapted to the area, better disease resistance and improved germination. Discussions and technical planning activities are ongoing and are targeted to the development of improved disease resistant seed and potentially seed multiplication programs.

## **Training**

The technical knowledge base around farming is low for both farmers and input suppliers. During the past decades of conflict, there have been no advances in technology and much of the knowledge base has been lost. This has contributed to declining productivity in agriculture.

Meanwhile, advances in production and packaging have been made in neighboring Pakistan, which makes it easier for traders to procure supplies from Pakistani farmers and markets. It is important to set demonstrations and trainings that spread the use of adequate technology. P2K's assessment of the current state of the agricultural landscape has determined the above mentioned trainings as the most immediate priorities to begin a steady supply of local produce.

### **Agricultural Colleges**

Both Paktia and Khost Universities have agriculture faculties. The university in Khost is now located on a modern campus, and the agriculture faculty of Paktia University will soon move from the facilities it shares with the education faculty into a new campus funded by USAID. Students studying agriculture receive virtually no practical training in modern production techniques and the university conducts no trials or demonstrations. Discussions also indicate that many of the lecturers never received any practical training and require training themselves.

### **Paktia University**

PRT Gardez is evaluating a proposal to jointly assist Paktia University to establish a demonstration farm. USDA is also a potential contributor and discussions will be held with the Agricultural Development Team (ADT) advance team in July. The following sites were inspected:

1. An area inside the perimeter fence of the Afghanistan National Army (ANA) base at Camp Thunder, near PRT Gardez. The possibility of extending the demonstration farm to an area outside the fence was also considered.
2. The old university campus
3. The new university campus
4. An area owned by the Paktia Department of Agriculture approximately 2 kilometers from the ANA base.

The new university campus was identified as the most appropriate site for the demonstration farm. While it still needs to be developed further, it is fenced, will have security in place, the students are located on the same site, and it is a high visibility site that is readily accessible to target groups. P2K has proposed working with NGOs to set up and manage specific components of the demonstration farm. As the university develops capacity, there can be a gradual handover of responsibilities. This is a long-term activity, and P2K will support the university in identifying alternative funding sources.

### **Khost University**

The PRT in Khost has installed infrastructure for a demonstration farm at Khost University but the farm remains unused. The university has no budget to purchase the remaining equipment necessary, or to operate the equipment that is already installed. The university has submitted an initial list of equipment and personnel needed for the farm, but has not yet provided an operational plan. The P2K team will continue to hold discussions with the university to determine the possibility of assistance.

There is currently no significant work being done by NGOs in agricultural development in Khost province. A similar model to that established by Patkia University would be appropriate for Khost, assuming that NGOs would be prepared to establish a presence in the province.

### **3.3 Objective 3 – Mobilize the services and supply industries to create opportunities for P2K rural enterprises to improve storage, handling and processing of agricultural products**

#### **Farm Stores**

During the quarter under review, the Farm Store activity moved forward in staffing. CNFA now has three regional managers for Paktia, Paktika and Khost Provinces, respectfully, as well as a finance manager and a programs/office manager. These staff members received training to ensure that they have the tools necessary to fulfill their responsibilities. Training topics included English language skills, business development, business plan writing, monitoring and evaluation methodology, grants and proposal development, USAID regulations, CNFA financial controls, and background in farm store development. Training will be an ongoing activity.

#### **Regional Farm Store Situation Analysis**

The three Farm Store Regional Managers' first assignment was to travel to their respective regions to complete a farm store survey and situation analysis. This included a questionnaire in Pashto asking about agriculture activities and immediate needs of farmers and community dwellers. In addition, it included specific questions to businessmen already engaged in various activities catering to farmers and supplying agriculture and veterinary inputs, and questions to businessmen already outside the agriculture input supply industry. The survey revealed that the most salient issues for farmers and herders were in order of priority:

1. Lack of security, which restricts movement and limits farming activities
2. The need for more water for irrigation and household use
3. Lack of adequate roads, which restricts movement and inhibits access to household necessities, agro-inputs, veterinary services and opportunities to sell and ship farm surplus

The analysis also provided staff with a greater understanding of the constraints and needs of businesses. This feeds into P2K's own considerations for the project's security needs for implementation.

#### **Farm Store Field Trip**

In May, P2K staff traveled to Jalalabad to visit a farm store developed under CNFA's Agriculture Development Project (AADP). The team also visited the USAID-funded, Alternative Development Program/East's greenhouse and vegetable market projects. The visit familiarized the staff with the farm store model and generated significant discussion regarding adapting the



**CDA P2K Farm Store Staff Receive Farm Store Development Training**

farm store model to each region's specific needs. The Farm Store team returned from their Jalalabad trip with much enthusiasm. After a one-day review of the plans and methodology for moving the P2K farm store agenda forward, the team departed for their respective provinces to continue identifying potential farm store participants.

### **Farm Store Investor Survey**

During the reporting period P2K staff conducted a Farm Store Needs and Business Survey. The survey ascertained the level and sophistication of agro-input business activity, needs of farmers and constraints inherent in the operational area. From this endeavor, 27 potential farm store candidates were chosen and will begin to be vetted in the coming quarter. The candidates will also be provided an orientation to the concept of a farm store which utilizes improved business practices to provide agricultural inputs, horticulture and veterinary extension services, machine services and other improved farming and herding services. After choosing farm store participants it will be necessary to involve them in a training process to be compliant with CNFA and USAID regulations, understand accounting and business processes, develop business plans, amongst other skills. A Terms of Reference has been developed for a short term consultant to adapt existing CNFA farm store training modules for Afghanistan.

The Khost Farm Store Regional Manager had meetings with the Khost Chamber of Businessmen and collected information on potential farm store dealerships in Khost city. He conducted a general survey of chemical, fertilizer, agriculture and seed outlets in Khost city. In addition, he met with farmers, chamber members, and agriculture and veterinary outlets in Mattoon and Tani districts.

The Paktika Farm Store Regional Manager met with the Paktika Provincial Director of Agriculture and his Advisor in Sharana to explain to them about the Regional Manager's progress. One businessman in Sharana is willing to invest but does not want to be identified as working with the project as the "Taliban fighters will attack every day" (if they become aware of his efforts).

The Paktia Regional Manager coordinated with the Paktia Director of Agriculture to organize an introduction seminar for potential farm store participants in Gardez. The P2K Deputy Chief of Party (DCOP) led this event and explained the concept and goals of the farm store model.

Through these endeavors several farm input distributors have been identified that can participate in the farm store program. It is anticipated these farm stores will employ agronomists, veterinary experts, horticulturalists, and potentially farm machinery and equipment trainers who will take extension to the field on behalf of the farm store and conduct scheduled as well as spontaneous in-store training.



**Potential Farm Store Investor in Paktia**

## Storage

Apples are the most important perennial fruit crop in Paktia province with most of the crop exported to Pakistan. While it is generally believed that most apples exported from Afghanistan are stored in Pakistan and re-imported when prices rise during the winter and spring, there is little empirical evidence of this. What is certain is that there is a substantial difference between prices at harvest and three to four months later. In 2007 the price at harvest was 13 AFS per Kg. the same apples taken out of store sold for 30AFS per Kg in February/<sup>1</sup>. Storage of potatoes and onions offers similar potential to add value.

Demonstration underground stores have been built in Gardez district by the PRT and Global Partnership for Afghanistan (GPFA). While these stores have been effective and offer a good Internal Rate of Return, no instance has been discovered to date of any replication or self-funding of this technology by individual farmers or investors in the area. Even farmers who have been assisted with grants have not replicated the technology. There are three possible reasons for this lack of investment and replication:

1. The technology is too expensive and the orchard owners do not have access to capital either from their own resources or by borrowing
2. Orchard owners are not aware of the actual benefits, but this cannot be the case with orchard owners who have received stores as a grant.
3. There is a perception or expectation that donors will provide storage.

In 2007 the cost of constructing an underground store with natural ventilation was estimated at \$350 per ton of storage space<sup>2</sup>. A similar amount must be added for the cost of stackable plastic crates. This gave a total per ton capital cost of about \$700. It is estimated that in 2008 this cost will be in the region of \$800 to \$900 per ton. The cost of a well constructed over ground cold store including generators is estimated at about \$900 to \$1,000 per ton of storage space/<sup>3</sup>.

To support the search for more affordable storage systems P2K is preparing to test a model discussed with the Turquoise Mountain Foundation, an NGO that works to revive or maintain traditional Afghan crafts. This store will be constructed entirely of bricks made from a mixture of mud and straw, and will be a combined underground/above ground facility. The excavated soil will be used to make the soil/straw bricks to be used in the construction of the walls and roof, and a ramp will be used for access rather than concrete stairs. If steps are required they can be excavated from the soil and wooden poles used to retain them. P2K will also explore means to procure cheaper crates for storing apples.

Discussions were held with potential private investors for the construction of above ground conventional cold stores. To date, a viable business plan has not been proposed.

The Khost Meat Traders Union approached P2K for assistance to upgrade the slaughter house in Khost. A feasibility study is proposed to be commissioned in the next quarter. Pending the results of that study and the investment required, a decision will be made on whether to proceed.

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1 Verbal report GPFA Director Zundi.

2 Based on construction of store by GPFA in Baladah village, Gardez district. 2007

3 Cuneyt Pulas, Pulas Construction & Projects Co., private communication

A request for a new slaughter house and cold store in Gardez will also be explored further in the next quarter, as will be opportunities for feedlots in association.

### **Additional Activities**

The P2K team conducted additional activities during the quarter related to Farm Store development and other potential and ongoing project work under this objective. Staff met with the Paktia Provincial Director of Agriculture and explained the farm store concept and other CNFA potential activities. In addition, Directors of Agriculture for the other two provinces were contacted by the respective Farm Store Regional Managers.

Several farm store proprietors are sophisticated and their businesses offer an impressive array of products and services, including extension and veterinary. The P2K team will determine the possibility of working with these businesses to improve and strengthen agriculture and livestock services.

The DCOP traveled to Kabul to attend a three day livestock sector conference sponsored by Global Livestock/CRSP, to meet and discuss the project with Kuchi representatives, to meet CNFA/AFSA staff, Mercy Corps, the Afghanistan PEACE Project (reducing risk for nomadic herders) which works exclusively with the Kuchi community, and to follow up on pending procurement and operations tasks.

A safe area not far from Gardez is a site of collaboration between the PRT and VEGA. The community of Ahmad Abad requested assistance to repair, clear and clean canals and irrigation systems neglected by years of instability. The area is home to several thousand individuals and the irrigated farmland and gardens are extensive. After VEGA security assessed the area, the agriculture advisor visited Ahmad Abad's farm land and together they did an initial survey of the canals. Based on a site report, the PRT Commander and engineers accompanied VEGA staff to the site to initiate an engineering assessment. There is good collaboration, and support for the idea, and the community leaders expressed their assurances of the safety for all involved.

### **Constraints**

Access is restricted by both security and poor infrastructure. International staff must manage implementation through employed intermediaries to ensure the safety of both the client and the practitioner. As a result, inexperienced local staff and/or indigenous NGOs implement on behalf of experienced development practitioners.

There is a severe need for all types of reliable, fresh and cost effective agricultural and veterinary inputs. Improved seed, seed farms and vegetable nurseries are rare and agro-chemicals are oftentimes of undetermined or questionable origin. Basic livestock medications, artificial insemination, and sophisticated veterinary services, are scarce. Relevant modern farming techniques such as drip irrigation, greenhouses and trellising, for example, are rare.

In spite of much hard work and effort by the ISAF and international donors to rehabilitate P2K's canals and irrigation systems, most of these systems remain inefficient. Anecdotal reports say the

water table is dropping and drought seems to be continuing. The CNFA farm store portion of the VEGA project can help improve the lives of farmers and herders by assisting with agro-inputs and veterinary services and we are beginning that now. Improved infrastructure and security (as well as some luck with the weather) could help cement this and other P2K initiatives.

As a result of the conflict, NGOs or government channels occasionally offer free or nearly free seeds, high quality fertilizers, veterinary medicines and farm chemicals. While these free materials can help farmers begin activities quickly, they can also be a disincentive to business. This is a significant challenge to P2K as it seeks to support enterprise activities that can offer farmers sustainable sources of these materials. The project will need to design activities appropriately and work to transform communities to ensure that activities are conducted in a manner that will lead to sustainability.

### **3.4 Objective 4 – Rehabilitate irrigation and market infrastructure**

In response to a request from the elders of the Ahmad Zai tribe from the Ahmad Abad District of Paktia Province, P2K conducted an initial exploratory visit to the area and attended a shura chaired by the local police commander. Following the assessment and the receipt of commitments from the district shura, P2K is considering implementing an integrated agricultural development project in the district. A request has been submitted to PRT Gardez for assistance with rehabilitation of the canal irrigation infrastructure, which serves approximately 15,000 families. The P2K team also surveyed some karez systems in Gardez and Sayed Karam districts and is studying the viability of grant aiding rehabilitation.

### **3.5 Objective 5 – Establish association and community outreach to provide services**

The discussion below presents an overview of activities related to association strengthening that were conducted during the quarter under review. This is followed by a review of community outreach and gender activities.

#### **Association Strengthening**

During the quarter, P2K held several meetings with the Gardez Apple Growers Association (GAGA) to determine the possibility for support. The project will continue to explore these opportunities, and the possibility of working with individual growers.

P2K met with the management committee of the Baladah Fruit Growers Cooperative (BFGC) to discuss potential collaboration. The main purpose of BFGC is to lobby for assistance for its members. As with other cooperatives, it seems to have been formed at the behest of the Paktia Department of Agriculture as part of a doctrinaire program to form cooperatives rather than for any strong desire on the part of the members to cooperate for some specific purpose. P2K will continue discussions with BFGC to gauge the member's interest in project activities.

## **Outreach and Gender**

During the reporting period P2K met with a number of women's NGOs including the Hambastagi Foundation, Afghan Women Association for Rehabilitation and Development, Afghan Women's Educational Centre and Rehabilitation Organization for Women. The project also met with the PRT Gardez Women's Advisory Group consisting of members of the Provincial Council, District Women's Shuras, Provincial Women's Shura and NGOs. The NGOs and the advisory group were briefed on P2K activities and in particular it's component dealing with gender, youth and vulnerable groups and the development of economic opportunities for women. A number of proposals for livelihood projects are expected from these NGOs during the next quarter.

Other NGOs met during the period to discuss specific development proposals in the P2K area include the Afghan Technical Organization, The Global Partnership for Afghanistan, Afghan Development Association and the Tribal Liaison Office.

The Global Partnership for Afghanistan (GPFA) is the principal NGO working in agriculture in Paktia district and has established strong networks in a number of districts in the province. Its activities are confined to tree crops including agricultural and forest trees. A number of meetings were held between P2K and GPFA in Kabul and Gardez. GPFA was instrumental in the formation of the Paktia Fruit Tree Nursery Association, and there will be close cooperation between GPFA and P2K in the development of this association. During the next quarter GPFA will submit proposals for potential P2K funding.

During the period P2K staff met with Directors and staff of GTZ, UNAMA, LGCD, DRRD, Paktia Departments of Extension, Irrigation, Water and Energy. Staff also attended Paktia Provincial Development Council and Provincial Agriculture Sector Committee. These meetings were essential in conveying and coordinating various technical assistance and proposed grant activities.

## **Village Medical Outreach Engagement**

In June the P2K project provided support to PRT Gardez to conduct a Village Medical Outreach Engagement to a Kuchi village on the outskirts of Gardez City. Logistical and security support was provided by the project, and P2K security staff controlled access to treatment centers. The local P2K implementing partner, the Grand Council of the Kuchis (GCK) provided tents in which the 300 men women and children were seen by Afghan medical teams under the supervision of the Cooperative Medical Assistance Team from Bagram Air Field. National veterinarians under the supervision of veterinarians from Bagram also treated over 500 animals including goats, sheep, cattle and camels. GCK also arranged for people and animals from surrounding villages to be brought to the site for treatment.



**P2K's Agricultural Specialist Izzathullah Mourad observes Cpt. Trevor Ambrose of PRT Gardez treat Kuchi boy**



**Veterinary staff provide de-worming solution to Kuchi goat**

### 3.6 Quarterly Progress and Objective Measurements

The P2K team has identified objectives and indicators that have been approved by USAID in the project's M&E plan. The team is conducting baseline surveys, which will be used to identify appropriate targets. As such, the targets are currently listed in the following table as "TBD." Proposed targets will be submitted to USAID for approval and subsequent quarterly reports and monthly M&E reports will include this data.

<b>Objective Measurements</b>		
<b>Objective1. Identify and exploit market niches that can be profitably served by agricultural enterprises</b>		
<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Quarterly Progress</b>
1.1 Dollar value of horticulture, livestock and agro-forestry commodities sold	TBD	0
1.2 Number of new market linkages/opportunities created	TBD	0
1.3 Number of agriculture related firms benefiting directly from supported interventions	TBD	0
1.4 Percent change in value of intraregional exports of targeted agricultural commodities	TBD	0
<b>Objective 2. Increased production and quality of horticultural, livestock and agro-forestry products</b>		
2.1 Dollar value of commodities produced and sold (agricultural, livestock, forestry)	TBD	0
2.2 number of individuals who have received short-term agricultural enabling environment training	TBD	0
2.3 Number of additional hectares under improved technologies or management practices	TBD	0

Objective 3. Mobilize services and supply industries to create opportunities for P2K rural enterprises		
3.1 Number of new technologies (innovations) or management practices transferred as a result of assistance	TBD	0
3.2 Dollar value of new, leveraged investments in agribusiness	TBD	0
3.3 Percent change in value of purchases from smallholders of targeted commodities as a result of assistance	TBD	0
3.4 Number of firms receiving supported assistance to invest in improved technologies	TBD	0
<b>Objective 4, Rehabilitate community irrigation and market infrastructures</b>		
4.1 Number of hectares with improved or rehabilitated irrigation systems	TBD	0
4.2 Number of market facilities rehabilitated	TBD	0
4.3 Number of new technologies or management practices or products under research or development	TBD	0
4.4 Number of producer organizations, water users' associations, trade and business associations and CBOs receiving assistance	TBD	0
<b>Objective 5. Establish associations and community outreach to provide services</b>		
5.1 Number of institutions/organizations making significant improvements based on recommendations made via supported assistance and training	TBD	0
5.2 Number of rural households benefiting from newly established institutions/organizations	TBD	0
5.3 Number of women's organizations/associations assisted as a result of supported interventions	TBD	0
5.4 Number of vulnerable households benefiting from newly established institutions/organizations	TBD	0

### 3.7 Upcoming Program Activities

September will coincide with Ramadan and likely slow down implementation of all projects in Afghanistan. It is expected that the following can be accomplished in the first two months of the next quarter:

1. Vetting of potential Farm Store investors from Gardez, Khost, Sarana and Zurmat.
2. Begin investment, training and establishment of at least two farm stores to serve P2K
3. Extend a grant to the Afghanistan Veterinary Association to establish multiple Veterinary Field Units in Paktia, Paktika and Khost

4. Establish several training grants for skills development and income generation for returnees women head of households
5. Conduct trial production of new techniques for apricot drying and sample various traders and wholesale accounts

Specific baseline assessments and program grants and contracts will be prepared for review and approval on the following projects:

- Pine Nut and other Non-Timber Forest Products Supply Chain Assessment in Jaji District of Paktia Province
- Vocational training needs assessment in Paktia and Paktika Provinces

#### **4. Program Management and Administration**

##### **4.1 Staffing**

The staffing for the project includes the following individuals:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Date of Hire</b>
Timothy Ham	Chief of Party	ACDI/VOCA	November 29 2007
Tom Cunningham	Agricultural Specialist	ACDI/VOCA	December 9, 2007
Robert Thompson	Security Director	ACDI/VOCA	December 8, 2007
Willem Wiid	Deputy Security Director	ACDI/VOCA	December 8, 2007
Nicholaas Vermeullen	Deputy Chief of Party	CNFA	February 3, 2008
Carl Harris	Security Advisor	ACDI/VOCA	April 3, 2008
William Bradley	Technical Specialist	Winrock International	July 2, 2008

Local staff hires included Office Manager and three Regional Field Managers for CNFA. The recruitment process for other key staff was initiated in June for agricultural marketing, grants and contracts, communication, M&E, agro-forestry and gender staff and will continue. The agricultural marketing specialist is anticipated to start July 1, 2008.

##### **4.2 Facilities**

P2K has leased facilities for office/residence in Gardez and Khost. These facilities are in the process of being stocked with generators for electricity, air conditioners, furniture and furnishings. Interim facilities at PRT Gardez continue to serve as office/residence until such time as the facilities are ready. It should be noted that the community has voiced its concerns about meeting in the PRT due to the security risks this implies. As such, the facilities in Gardez and Khost will further enhance the capacity of the team to implement the project and integrate with the community.

### **4.3 Security**

The three months of the reporting period experienced a dramatic monthly upsurge in reportable security incidents. By June, the ability to travel in the area of operation as well as from Gardez to Kabul by road was no longer possible. Latest figures and reports indicate the first six months of 2008 saw a 40% increase in attacks, kidnappings, IEDs and armed insurgent maneuvers over the same period of 2007. By the second week of June, the project security team advised travel in P2K should be restricted to within five kilometers of Gardez city.

The 27 potential farm store candidates all refuse to meet at the Gardez PRT or in Gardez with P2K senior staff to avoid being targeted. It is also not possible or advisable to meet them at their business locations. They and CNFA field staff feel that the only safe place to meet is in Kabul.

The project will respond to the increases unstable environment by concentrating its major efforts in Gardez for the next few months. The initial stages of the Farm Store will also be focused in Gardez, developing a model farm store taking advantage of the potential collaboration between the Ahmadabad work and farm inputs that can be supplied by a farm store. This will be a center-out approach, as Gardez is the main trading city in the region.