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# Impact Evaluation: Rebuilding Agricultural Markets Program (RAMP)



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# Impact Evaluation: Rebuilding Agricultural Markets Program (RAMP)

## **DISCLAIMER**

The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

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## Acronyms used in the *Impact Evaluation*

<b>AACC</b> Alys Afghan Construction Company	<b>IFHOPE</b> International Foundation of Hope
<b>ABR</b> Afghanistan Bureau for Rehabilitation	<b>IR</b> Intermediate result
<b>ACAP</b> Afghanistan Capital Partners	<b>KRA</b> Kunduz Rehabilitation Agency
<b>ACTED</b> Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development	<b>KZCC</b> Khurasan Zameen Construction and Engineering Company
<b>ADF</b> Afghanistan Development Forum	<b>NESPAK</b> National Engineering Services Pakistan
<b>AFC</b> Afghanistan Finance Company	<b>NPV</b> Net Present Value
<b>AIB</b> Afghanistan International Bank	<b>MADERA</b> Mission d'Aide au Development des Economies Rurales Afghanistan
<b>AISP</b> Agriculture Input Supply Program	<b>MAIL</b> Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock
<b>ALP/S</b> USAID's Alternative Livelihood Program, South	<b>MISFA</b> Micro-Finance Investment Support Facility for Afghanistan
<b>AMPS</b> Agriculture Marketing and Production Support	<b>MRRD</b> Microfinance Investment and Support Facility Afghanistan
<b>ANDS</b> Afghanistan National Development Strategy	<b>PA</b> Protected Agriculture
<b>AREA</b> Agency for Rehabilitation & Energy Conservation In Afghanistan	<b>PEAP</b> Department of Policy, Economic Analysis, and Planning
<b>ARAO</b> Afghan Rehabilitation and Agricultural Organization	<b>PMP</b> Performance Monitoring Plan
<b>ASAP</b> Accelerating Sustainable Agricultural Program	<b>PRB</b> Pamir Reconstruction Bureau
<b>BCDIS</b> Bureau of Design and Construction	<b>PPQD</b> Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation's Plant Protection and Quarantine Department
<b>BCRC</b> Bakhtar Construction and Rehabilitation Agency	<b>RAMP</b> Rebuilding Agricultural Markets Program
<b>BDCIS</b> Bureau of Design, Construction Implementing Services	<b>RAFA</b> Reconstruction Agency for Afghanistan
<b>CADG</b> Central Asia Development Group	<b>RDRO</b> Rural Development and Reconstruction Organization
<b>CRS</b> Catholic Relief Services	<b>RI</b> Relief International
<b>CLIN</b> Contractor Line Item Number	<b>RoP</b> Roots of Peace
<b>DAI</b> Development Alternative Inc.	<b>RSSA</b> Reconstruction and Social Services for Afghanistan
<b>DCA</b> Dutch Committee for Afghanistan Bakhtar Construction	<b>SAS</b> Shorebank Advisory Services
<b>DCG</b> Design and Construction Group	<b>SO</b> Strategic Objective
<b>DWC</b> Development Works Canada	<b>SOW</b> Scope of Work
<b>EACC</b> European Afghan Construction Company	<b>SME</b> Small and medium enterprises
<b>FAO</b> Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	<b>STAAR</b> Social and Technical Agency for Afghanistan Rehabilitation
<b>FAO</b> Food and Agriculture Organization	<b>TCC</b> Taraqi Construction Company
<b>FI</b> Flag International	<b>UNDP</b> United Nations Development Program
<b>GIA</b> Grain Industry Alliance	<b>UNOPS</b> United Nations Office for Project Services
<b>GRC</b> Ghulam Rasul and Company	<b>VARA</b> Voluntary Association for Rehabilitation of Afghanistan
<b>HACCP</b> Hazard Analysis Critical Control Program	<b>VBSE</b> Village-based seed enterprises
<b>HADF</b> Humanitarian Assistance Development Foundation	<b>VFU</b> Veterinary Field Units
<b>HAFO</b> Helping Afghan Farmers Organization	<b>QCC</b> , Qoba Construction Campaign
<b>IALC</b> International Arid Lands Consortium	<b>QIP</b> Afghanistan Quick Impact Program
<b>IAM</b> International Assistance Mission	<b>WUA</b> Water Users Association
<b>ICARDA</b> International Center for Agricultural Research in Dry Areas	<b>WRA</b> Welfare and Relief Agency
<b>IFDC</b> International Fertilizer Development Center	

# Map of Afghanistan with “X” indicating sites visited by Evaluation Team



# Impact Evaluation of *Rebuilding Agricultural Markets Project* (*RAMP*)

## **I. Executive summary**

The *Rebuilding Agricultural Markets Project (RAMP)* was very successful at rehabilitating infrastructure and assisting farmers to increase their production and incomes. Given that it was operating in a conflict situation these accomplishments are even more praiseworthy. The Evaluation Team was particularly impressed with the ability of RAMP management to handle 53 different activities (job orders) with 63 implementing partners scattered throughout the country.

Some activities that particularly stand out as successes are (not necessarily in order of importance):

1. Irrigation system structures were complex and yet simple to maintain, they were innovative and resulted in vast improvements in the base of agricultural production in Afghanistan. We are concerned about the lack of funds for O&M and the possible compromising of long term sustainability.
2. The experimental Water User's Association in Injil is an example of a new and democratic solution to a serious problem. We are concerned that it continues to operate in legal limbo and these benefits might disappear.
3. Agricultural input dealers association development was a laudatory effort to involve them in helping solve problems of supplying inputs and marketing outputs without significant donor involvement.
4. Helping to develop new financial instruments and institutions. This was risky and difficult. USAID is commended for making the effort that continues to grow, albeit very slowly. Micro-finance work was very successful and is delivering micro-loans. Hopefully some of the institutions will develop models for small business loans. Even the total failure of the venture capital experiment was a useful effort from which we hope USAID learned lessons to be used next time.
5. The Village Based Seed Enterprises are an example of RAMP helping create an association of farmers and traders with a vested interest in making something work independent of continuous donor inputs.
6. The demonstration farms were an intelligent way to convince farmers of the validity of new methods of farming and new crops. These were harmed by the short time frame of the project. The Team believes sustainability could have been assured had funding continued for another growing season.
7. The Women and Poultry activity was an innovative effort to help develop an income source for women. The training was excellent and the inputs were supplied effectively. The project did not develop an input supply scheme to ensure continued supply. Promises of help from the World Bank did not materialize, but the FAO ought to have ensured continued input supply regardless of the World Bank. This failure demoralized many of the women involved.
8. The Veterinary Field Units set up an excellent immunization and treatment system for animals that has made an excellent transition from donor support to full cost recovery.

The Team is concerned about the lack of sustainability of many activities because inadequate attention was paid to this issue during the project. The Government of Afghanistan is not providing the funds necessary to provide maintenance for the RAMP infrastructure activities. Some activities like the *Women and Poultry* project and *greenhouses* did not make adequate arrangements for required inputs to continue to be available.

The impact analysis that was done was inadequate and often wrong. There was no baseline data, nor any effort to develop a baseline during the project. One gets the feeling that the impact assessment was done at the last minute. The major flaw in the analysis was the failure to use a discount rate in determining benefits. The Team frequently found that claimed benefits from irrigation activities were greater than appeared likely. Farmers were not growing some crops used in the analysis and not at the intensity claimed. All farms were assumed to operate optimally after irrigation rehabilitation even when there remained inadequate water for downstream users. The activity with the largest claimed benefits of the project, the Khanabad Dam, was massively overestimated. It cannot protect from a 1:100 year flood as most of the sluice gates do not exist: it is not really a dam! Further, you cannot claim the full benefits of protecting from a 1:100 year flood every year: the expected returns are 1% each year.

As a result the Team re-estimated the net benefits of the project and lowered the net benefits from \$1.7 billion claimed in the final report to \$643 million. This is still an incredibly successful result for which the RAMP team ought to be justifiably proud.

We encourage USAID to seek to develop projects that last longer than three years; this was too short a time period to achieve sustainability. We recognize the difficulty of doing adequate intra-project as well as intra-USAID coordination, let alone inter-donor coordination. Efforts must be redoubled and alternative approaches tried. Issues of sustainability must receive greater attention or the benefits we struggled to achieve will be lost and damage to people's hopes will mount.

## **II. Background**

### **A. Country Situation**

The latest episode in Afghanistan's history<sup>1</sup> began following the terrorist attacks in New York City and Washington DC, triggering the United States and foreign coalition partners to join with the anti-Taliban Northern Alliance in launching military action against the Taliban for shielding al-Qaeda and Osama Bin Laden. This began the struggle to reconstruct, rehabilitate and reintegrate Afghanistan into the world community, so that it never again would be a haven for terrorists or a threat to its neighbors. The UN-sponsored 2001 Bonn Conference established a process for political reconstruction of Afghanistan, which included the adoption of a new constitution and a presidential election in 2004 and National Assembly elections in 2005. Afghanistan's economy is currently recovering from decades of conflict and turmoil. It has improved significantly since 2001 largely because of the infusion of international assistance, good rains, and a modest recovery of the agricultural and service sectors. Real GDP growth exceeded 8% in 2006.<sup>2</sup> More than 80% of the labor force is in agriculture, which accounts for 30% of Afghanistan's non-opium gross domestic product (GDP).

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<sup>1</sup> Much of the information in this section is from *the World Fact Book, Afghanistan*, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/af.html>

<sup>2</sup> This is the CIA's figure. The IMF shows a 14% real growth in the Afghan year 2005/2006 (*IMF Selected Issues and Statistics* March 2006, page 75), and the World Bank shows a 5.3% real growth (*World Bank, Afghanistan at a Glance, September 2007*)

A small portion of Afghanistan's land (about 15 percent), mostly in scattered valleys, is suitable for farming; about 6 percent of the land is actually cultivated.<sup>3</sup> At least two-thirds of this farmland requires irrigation. Water is drawn from springs and rivers and is distributed through surface ditches and through underground channels or tunnels, which are excavated and maintained by a series of vertical shafts. Most of these irrigation systems are up to 700 years old. Wheat is the most important crop, followed by barley, corn, and paddy rice. Cotton is another important and widely cultivated crop. Fruit and nuts are among Afghanistan's most important exports. It is noted for its unusually sweet grapes and melons, grown in the southwest, north of the Hindu Kush, and the fertile regions in the west around Herat. Raisins are also an important export. Other important fruits are apricots, cherries, figs, mulberries, and pomegranates.

Livestock is nearly important as crops to Afghanistan's economy. Karakul sheep are raised in large numbers in the north. The light curly fleece of Karakul lambs is sold as Persian lamb and used for clothing. Other breeds of sheep, such as the fat-tailed sheep, and goats are also raised. Based on IMF<sup>4</sup> data the breakdown of animal population by number as percent of total animal weight is: Cattle 3,715,409 (56.8%), Sheep 8,772,351 (11.2%), Goats 7,280,866 (7.4%), Chickens 12,155,846 (0.6%), Horses 142,094 (2.6%), Donkeys 1,587,594 (18.2%), and Camels 175,270 (3.2%). Sixty percent of the cattle are milk producing cows.

## **B. USAID work in Agriculture**

USAID/Afghanistan's agricultural strategy<sup>5</sup> is within the objective of supporting private sector led economic growth. This SO's agricultural elements include rehabilitation of the rural economy, improving agricultural policy and governance, developing agricultural micro-finance organizations and services, increasing commodity trade and export, and repairing and expanding the infrastructure for irrigation, transport, and water services. The linkage between these activities is designed to create a pull-effect which is consistent with the Afghan Government's focus on creating an enabling environment for private sector led growth.

Over the past 25 years the agriculture and natural resources sectors, including irrigation, road, and market infrastructure, were severely degraded by war, civil conflict, and neglect. USAID developed a multi-pronged approach to assist the agricultural sector with emphasis on food security and increasing rural income. The objective to improve the effectiveness of agriculture was led by the \$145 million Rebuilding Agricultural Markets Program (RAMP). RAMP's approach focused on supplying farmers with improved infrastructure (irrigation and roads), technology, financial services, market intermediaries, and agro-processors. The strategy was to use a value chain approach, which seeks out the obstacles that impair the ability of farmers to secure their inputs, produce, and sell their outputs. RAMP has laid the foundation for follow-up projects and has been a catalyst for other donors to participate in growth-inducing agricultural activities, such as rebuilding dams, roads, irrigation canals, and raising agricultural incomes.

RAMP's integrated approach involved rehabilitation of infrastructure (farm-to-market roads, irrigation systems, and marketing centers); increased flow of capital for small and medium enterprises and for micro-finance income generating activities; dissemination of improved agriculture technology and extension services to help farmers become more efficient; and, identifying market niches – both domestic and international - and undertaking market analysis to support the development of a private sector. Market structures and infrastructure, like cold storage, were promoted to ensure product quality and competitiveness in a growing global market.

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<sup>3</sup> The information in this section is from [www.afghanistan.com/information/Economy/Agriculture](http://www.afghanistan.com/information/Economy/Agriculture)

<sup>4</sup> IMF data, Table 3.4, 2006

<sup>5</sup> USAID Strategic Plan 2005-2010

Support to the livestock subsector was primarily through veterinary services. The distribution of pullets to rural women, vaccination services, and market development aimed at reviving poultry.

The RAMP Project ended in September 2006 and was viewed by its contractor (Chemonics International) as having produced major accomplishments in all the areas of interest. (See Annex H for the last metrics<sup>6</sup> report on project results.)

### **C. Objectives, Goals, Purpose of Evaluation**

The overall objective of the “evaluation is to determine the impact of RAMP on [Afghanistan’s] agricultural sector, with special focus on food security and income of the rural population. The results of this evaluation are intended for use in the future design and implementation of USAID agriculture programs in Afghanistan.”<sup>7</sup> Because the evaluation took place more than 14 months after the end of RAMP it provides an opportunity to look at the sustainability of RAMP interventions.

### **D. Evaluation Methods Used**

The RAMP Evaluation Team, comprised of a economist (team leader), agricultural marketing specialist, and monitoring and evaluation specialist, arrived in country on October 28 2007. There were initial briefings with USAID/Kabul’s Office of Alternative Development and Agriculture and former senior RAMP managers. From these sources, the team obtained electronic and hard copies of key documents including annual work plans, performance monitoring plans, databases and spreadsheets, metrics reports, quarterly progress reports, activity area impact assessments, and job order final reports. Prior to arrival in-country, the team had received copies of the RAMP contractor’s end of project *Final Report* and *Economic Impact Assessment*.



**Meeting with project beneficiaries in Kunduz**

Using these documents and the initial discussions with USAID and former RAMP staff as the point of departure, the team developed a matrix of field activity sites which needed to be visited to allow for a comprehensive impact evaluation. This was cross-referenced with the project’s fifty-three job orders<sup>8</sup>. Advice from security personnel reduced the number of provinces to five, four of which were part of the original thirteen RAMP target provinces – Balkh, Kabul, Kunduz, and Parwan. Herat was added because of three especially important projects. To examine RAMP

activities, the team relied on key informant and stakeholder interviews, collection and review of documents, on-site observations, and small group discussions with beneficiaries. In one case, a female enumerator was retained to conduct interviews with beneficiaries of the RAMP woman’s poultry initiative.

<sup>6</sup> RAMP Metric Report July 2, 2006

<sup>7</sup> SOW Impact Evaluation of RAMP, page 1.

<sup>8</sup> The matrix is in Annex D.

To best take advantage of the limited time available and maximize subject area coverage, the team divided up in its first field trips, with one member working in Mazar-e-Sharif visiting a cross-river weir project and veterinary field units (VFUs). The other team members worked in Kunduz, where they visited road rehabilitation and irrigation activities and met with beneficiaries (plus visited site locations) of demonstration farms, the potato seed project, village based seed enterprises (VSBEs), seed storage warehouses, greenhouses and a government VFU. They also met with the provincial Director-General of Agriculture.

For the second set of field trips the team again split up. One team member working in Parwan where he visited a dehydration plant, four demonstration farms (fruits and vegetables), two irrigation activity sites, and a fruit and nut market center. He also met with beneficiaries of demonstration farms, potato seed efforts, VSBEs, and protected (greenhouse) agriculture. The other team members worked in Herat where they visited some half-dozen irrigation/flood control site locations met with members of the RAMP pilot water users association. They also visited VFU sites, cold storage locations (and met with the owners and managers of these), and a program supporting women in agro-businesses. On nearly all site visits the Team was assisted by former RAMP and implementing partner staff who explained what was done, how and why.

In Kabul, team members provided weekly progress reports to USAID's Alternative Development and Agriculture Office staff. The team also met with a dozen former RAMP staff,<sup>9</sup> representatives of implementing partners such as AIB, AFC, DCA, DWC, FAO, ICARDA, KRA, MISFA, RAFA, and RoP,<sup>10</sup> and officials of the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock. The team also visited the Ministry of Agriculture's seed laboratory and greenhouse program activities as well as meetings with RAMP-assisted financial institutions.

Lastly, the Evaluation Team faced a number of constraints and challenges in planning and carrying out its work. Most notable, the team was limited by security considerations in selecting provinces in which to conduct its fieldwork. Visits to proposed project activities in Ghazni, Helmand, Kandahar, and Nangahar provinces were ruled out by security advisors. Flying to some provinces was difficult due to ground condition (dust storm) and over-booking. The team had to overcome major hurdles resulting from the fourteen months since the end of RAMP and the beginning of the evaluation. This meant that some key documents could not be found and knowledgeable former RAMP and implementing partner personnel were not available. Regarding this latter point, however, there was also a very important up-side: the time since the end of the project and the evaluation provided a vehicle for gauge the near-term sustainability of RAMP's diverse activities.

### **III. Relevance of RAMP**

#### **A. Importance of RAMP to Afghanistan and USAID/Afghanistan**

The initial effort in Afghanistan's agriculture and rural sector after the end of the Taliban administration was the Afghanistan Quick Impact Program (Q-QIP), which ran from mid-2002 to mid-2003. This laid the foundation for the \$145 million, three-year Rebuilding Agricultural Markets Program (RAMP). USAID initiated RAMP in an effort to rehabilitate and revitalize the devastated agriculture sector and supporting infrastructure. Developing the private sector to support growth in the agriculture sector was a priority. RAMP was initiated in July 2003 and ran

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<sup>9</sup> Many of whom are presently working on RAMP's successor, the Accelerating Sustainable Agriculture Program (ASAP).

<sup>10</sup> Afghanistan International Bank, Afghan Finance Company, Dutch Committee for Afghanistan, Development Works Canada, Food and Agricultural Organization, International Center for Agriculture Research in Dry Areas, Kunduz Reconstruction Agency, Microfinance Investment and Support Facility for Afghanistan, Reconstruction Authority for Afghanistan, and Roots of Peace.

through July 2006, with an extension to September 2006 to complete the cropping year. It was implemented by Chemonics International. Training and capacity development were essential requirements to expand farmer knowledge regarding seeds and grains production, fertilizers, other inputs, fruits and nuts, and general income expanding practices.

### **B. Objectives of RAMP**

This project was initially focused on humanitarian issues and then morphed into an agricultural development project. With this emphasis the project rehabilitated the rural economy's infrastructure and selected high-value crops to increase private sector participation. Agriculture and agribusiness possibilities were used to provide additional incomes and employment through backward and forward linkages. The project expanded and improved access to economic infrastructure by improving irrigation and transportation. The livestock and poultry sub-sector activities affected food security while creating opportunities to engage women in increasing household incomes. Horticulture and fresh and dried vegetables offered opportunities to bring women into active involvement in production and marketing. RAMP promoted the production and marketing of perennials and other high-value seasonal vegetables (eggplant, cucumbers, okra, etc.) to offer alternatives to the production of opium poppy. Wheat being the staple grain of Afghanistan, a rapid increase in yields was projected to improve food security and reduce the hectares under wheat cultivation and correspondingly increasing plantings of high-value commercial crops like nuts, fruits, and vegetables. Finally, participation in global trade and investment was to be enhanced through improved policies in trade, transit, and export and the expanded training in the use of international standards and best practices.

RAMP targeted five commodity groups: food grains, fresh and dried vegetables, fresh and dried fruit, livestock/poultry and high protein nuts. It had four organizational components: management, design and administration of the project; infrastructure rehabilitation; agricultural technology and market development; and rural financial services.

### **C. Project Components**

The proposal was designed with four distinct components to address the Afghanistan agricultural sector:

#### **Management, Administration and Technical Assistance**

- Identify opportunities to create and strengthen market linkages and increased sales of agricultural products, increase the flow of capital to agribusiness and producers, and improve infrastructure vital for agricultural and rural sector development;
- Subcontract with implementing partners (IPs) to carry out specific activities;
- Monitor and evaluate the success of these activities, and quantify their impact.

#### **Physical Infrastructure reconstruction or repair**

- Repair of irrigation systems needed to expand and improve agricultural output;
- Rehabilitate farm-to-market roads that producers need to reach markets and access inputs;
- Develop marketing infrastructure, including collection centers and wholesale markets.

#### **Rural Financial Services**

- Expand the country's network of financial institutions;
- Support microfinance institutions;
- Work with the Afghanistan International Bank in Kabul to provide short-term credit to small-and medium sized agribusiness firms;

- Provide funds to Afghanistan Leasing and Finance Company to help entrepreneurs acquire the capital assets they need to improve value-adding operations (e.g. cold storage, improved processing, refrigerated transportation);
- Help create an equity fund – the Afghanistan Renewal Fund – to support private agribusiness development;
- Address the critical need for more business development services (BDS) through a grant to UNDP.

### **Agricultural and Market Development**

- Develop initiatives focused on “products that will sell; are in demand;”
- Create more effective links between producers, processors and markets;
- Complementary focus on markets and marketing systems;
- Introduce improved agricultural technology to help farmers access and use new crop varieties, fertilizers, and equipment to increase their productivity and efficiency.

### **D. Project Implementation**

**Objectives:** In July 2003 USAID/Afghanistan executed a contract with Chemonics International Inc. (Chemonics) to undertake the ambitious objective of rebuilding Afghanistan’s agricultural markets after decades of strife. The “strategic objective of RAMP was to enhance the food security and increase the incomes of Afghanistan’s rural population by a) increasing agricultural productivity and output, and b) increasing incomes by making the linkages between producers, processors and markets more efficient....[and] increase the marketable value of agricultural products by \$250 million over three years (July 2003 – June 2006).”<sup>11</sup>

**Implementation:** Primarily as a mechanism to expedite implementation Chemonics called for proposals to implement activities. These were contracted for via Job Orders which USAID had to approve. As a result there were at all times a very large number of activities taking place. RAMP estimated in its final quarterly report that there were 53 job orders (activities) working with 63 implementing partners (subcontractors or grantees), including 27 Afghan firms and organizations and 36 international partners.”<sup>12</sup> Chemonics did not implement these activities itself, except for the support to the Ministry of Agriculture which was viewed as part of the first component (management, administration and technical assistance). Chemonics had to take over the implementation of work to rehabilitate the Injil irrigation scheme due to problems with the sub-contractor.

**Problems:** The large number of implementing partners scattered all over the country doing a wide variety of activities placed an enormous management burden on Chemonics to monitor the implementation of activities. The large number of job orders, complexity of the work, physical diffusion, security problems and the separation of activities into components made it difficult to secure the desired degree of coordination.

**A positive aside:** In spite of the complexity of the project and Afghanistan’s reputation for corruption, there were not allegations of corruption; problems with improper implementation by sub-contractors were promptly dealt with. The project was able to mobilize and implement quickly. It was able to change its focus from being a humanitarian project initially to become more of a development project. USAID insisted on quick disbursing activities that benefitted the

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<sup>11</sup> Chemonics International Inc., *Rebuilding Agricultural Markets Program (RAMP) Afghanistan, 2005 Work Plan*, Kabul, December 2004, page 7. The project was subsequently extended to September 2006.

<sup>12</sup> The final report had different numbers. It was written in June 2006, while the final quarterly report was from 31 July 2006. There were 54 distinct numbers, but job orders 8, 27, and 41 had two separate elements while JO 36 had three elements. Job orders 12,31,34,37,45 and 47 were not issued.

people and supported U.S. foreign policy. RAMP was able to deliver on this. Many of the problems highlighted in this evaluation are the result of this insistence on moving quickly, sometimes without adequate attention to analysis, proper monitoring, or attention to sustainability.

#### **IV. Answering the Questions**

##### **A. Based upon program activities, program outputs and program outcomes, assess the extent to which its overall objective was achieved.**

1. Was the program successful in addressing the needs of Afghanistan's agricultural sector and its target beneficiaries?

Because of the constraints of time and security issues it was not possible to explore all of the activities represented by the 53 Job Orders. However, we did investigate nearly three-fourths of the types of activities.

There is little doubt of the overall successful impact of RAMP on the Afghan agricultural sector. The initial target of \$250 million growth in marketed agricultural output was exceeded in the first year of the project and far exceeded by the time the project ended in 2006. That target was reached within the first nine months of the project; the question is, by how much the total project exceeded its initial goal. The end of project report indicates that a \$1.7 billion value was placed on this final impact. This project conclusion is addressed later.

This section will categorize the degree of impact into major impact, minor, impact and diminishing impact of the different activities.

#### **MAJOR IMPACT**

**Rebuilding and rehabilitation** activities were the largest portion of RAMP, focusing on infrastructure projects including dams, weirs, canals, bridges, roadways, farm-to-market roadways, irrigation, etc. The responsibility and execution of maintenance of these infrastructure improvements is not being done as funds from the government of Afghanistan to repair and maintain have not been forthcoming. Thus, the positive effect of this work is likely to lessen over time unless an alternative solution is found.

**The input dealers** associations are one of the more lasting impacts derived from the development of the six groups. IFDC trained 2,000 agri-input dealers, improved market transparency through analysis and dissemination of market information, and developed business linkages between Afghan and regional suppliers of agri-inputs. This network was designed to be deeply involved in taking advantage of marketing opportunities offered by RAMP. The dealers associations are officially registered and can function fully as dissemination instruments of new methodologies and facilitate agricultural development throughout Afghanistan.

**The Livestock project** created a national network of private veterinary field units (VFU) capable of providing livestock health services in all 380 districts of Afghanistan. They trained sufficient numbers of paravets to staff and service the national network and create a livestock health, production, and marketing information system that link the private network with government departments on such issues as disease surveillance, livestock inventories, and trans-border issues.

**The demonstration plots** provided technical guidance by demonstrating new technologies directly in farmers' fields to facilitate rapid adoption and diffusion. The aim was to increase agricultural productivity and rural incomes by demonstrating improved technologies, improved varieties of field and vegetable crops that are adapted to local conditions, improved field irrigation management practices, and appropriate crop management practices.

**Clean-seed potato** implemented by RAMP/ICARDA provided technical guidance for operational efficiency, needs assessments, start-up machinery and equipment, start-up inputs, and relevant training for clean seed production, multiplication, and marketing to increase potato production.

**The VBSE program** provided technical guidance to establish and improve the efficiency of village-based seed enterprise development. Other essential services and assistance included providing information and advice on appropriate machinery, equipment, storage facilities, and start-up inputs, as well as the provision of relevant training (business management, marketing, accounting and seed technology). Village Based Seed Enterprises (VBSE) are flourishing and the target beneficiaries report they are pleased with the outcome. One VBSE in Parwan has grown from 10 to 250 members.

### **MINOR IMPACT**

**Grape and nuts program** was implemented by the Roots of Peace Consortium, which developed and disseminated technical courseware and materials and established a trainer-to-trainer program to train extension personnel. RAMP/RoP has revolutionized the fresh grape sector and made a significant impact on productivity.

**RAMP/DWC constructed a dehydration factory** consisting of a two story (6,200 square foot) production facility, which is being expanded to process chili-peppers (dehydration to start in December 2007). They also have a warehouse, a small laboratory for quality control, a classroom for research and training, and a 70 meter borehole to provide clean water to wash the produce and irrigate the research farm. The dehydrated vegetable project had several discouraging supply events that have thwarted its profitability. It is currently operating in the red. Being a private company it is continuously looking for ways to overcome its problems, with their latest effort being to bring chilies from Helmand to dehydrate in Parwan. This has a double benefit and hopefully will result in profits and a sustainable factory. The factory has about 90 employees, most of whom are women.

### **DIMINISHING IMPACT**

**Poultry-for-Women project** was implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) to introduce new knowledge and practical methods to increase income from the sale of eggs for over 28,000 women. New markets have opened in urban centers bringing additional revenue to participants. However, only 45% of the 28,000 women are still active 14 months after RAMP ended. The major issue is the lack of a mechanism for continued supply of quality new chicks and feed. Women in the project in Herat said they had “lost hope” due to the failure.

**Protected Agriculture** This RAMP/ICARDA activity had a very large positive impact. Because the greenhouses were viewed as part of the home, women were allowed to work in them. The project promoted the adoption of affordable and protected systems to produce high value crops, using minimal water on marginal or less productive lands. They established a demonstration and training site in Kabul and simple greenhouse structures at pilot sites elsewhere. While it was successful during the life of RAMP, problems have arisen because plastic sheeting, structural piping, special fertilizer, and cucumber hybrid seeds must be imported. No one yet has brought in these required inputs. CRS used a simpler technology in Herat that yields lower incomes, but all the inputs can be purchased locally.

#### 2. What difference did the program interventions have in the provinces visited?

RAMP activities produced significant and, in some cases, exceptional results in the five provinces – Balkh, Herat, Kabul, Kunduz, and Parwan – visited by the Evaluation Team, although there were some problems.

## Balkh

At the two Veterinary Field Unit (VFU) visited paravets were clearly providing needed animal health services, including vaccinations and treatments for diseases and other problems. Farmers who in the past were unwilling to pay for the services and the cost of vaccines and medicines have changed their minds and are now doing so routinely. Solar powered refrigerators provided by the project were operating and vaccines and medicines were being stored in them. The regional paravet training center in Mazar-e-Sharif was well staffed and equipped and included a large RAMP-supplied cold storage unit. Also in Balkh, the Samar Kandian Weir is nearing completion and promises to soon have a major impact on improving the water supply to an estimated 129,000 hectares of land, thereby benefitting thousands of families. The cross river weir – a low dam that allows water to flow over it to skim off canal-clogging debris and sediment – was completed by the end of RAMP last year. Follow-on work funded by the Asia Development Bank on four irrigation canals from this weir was expected to be immediate, but was delayed; it is to be finished by December 2007 or early 2008.

## Herat

CRS activities supported greenhouses and women-owned agri-businesses. The greenhouse project was successful. It used locally available building materials, seeds, and fertilizer. While the output gains were not as great as elsewhere, they were sufficient to result in more farmers wanting to join the program than there were funds available. The women-owned agri-business activity did not succeed as planned because many donors were giving away agricultural inputs making sustainable market approaches difficult. Loans would have allowed CRS to move on to new project areas, while revolving credit schemes limited expansion. They were still successful in helping women agri-enterprises.



**Injil Water Users Association Cleaning their Canal**

RAMP irrigation activities in Herat involved the Injil and Guzara Canals. According to a RAMP document, these activities have improved irrigation to 13,700 hectares of farmland. The team visited some half-dozen Injil Canal project sites, including the water control and sediment flush-out structures at the Haft Quib Canal intersection and the Siphon Bandy Reege. The latter structure regulates water flow and silt accumulation as well as preventing flooding of the canal with damage to the neighboring village and, potentially, Herat city. For the Guzara Canal, RAMP repaired the aqueducts to protect them from flash floods and constructed new bridges. However, problems arose when

upstream users refused to constrain their water usage so downstream people could benefit. RAMP was unable to fully complete its work on the Guzara owing to resulting security issues.

Closely related to the irrigation work, DAI successfully worked to establish an association to help water users become self-financing for the Injil Canal's management, operation, and maintenance. The water users association (WUA) elected a 55-member general assembly, representing some 8,000 families, and the assembly in turn elected an 11-member executive board to oversee day-to-day management. The WUA has succeeded in addressing one of the main issues that prompted its establishment – bringing about a more equitable distribution of water to downstream farmers. The team met with a group of a dozen or so users, who confirmed that they have been holding

meetings regularly since the end of RAMP and on at least two occasions had collected sizeable sums of money (\$30,000 in one case) to clean the canal after major flooding. Downstream users confirmed that they are receiving more water than in the past and that this has enabled them to irrigate previously unused land.

RAMP provided cold storage and freezer units to Herat Ice Cream, with a fifty percent subsidy. The company continues to expand. It is the only ice cream manufacturer in the country and provides ice cream to Kabul and Mazar-e-Sharif. It also supplies its local market with milk and yogurt. The factory provided training to female war widows from Helmand, while RAMP provided the women with financial help. The Helmand project was subsequently cancelled due to terrorist attacks on the project driver and manager. RAMP provided four cold storage units for an association of farmers and traders to store crops for market. They had serious problems exporting table grapes, but had more success at storing crops short term for the local market. They are optimistic about next year.

In a number of villages targeted as part of the RAMP women's poultry project, the overall effort was sabotaged by a high level provincial official who insisted that pullets to be distributed be purchased from his sources at \$5 each instead of the implementing partner's price of \$2 each. While the women underwent the project training, and had their hopes raised accordingly, the provincial official made it impossible for the implementing partner to follow up with the requisite supply of pullets, feed, and other resources. As a result the project was never fully completed in these villages and the women's hopes were crushed.

### **Kabul**

RAMP provided a grant to encourage the Afghanistan International Bank (AIB) to make SME loans and lend to rural areas for agriculture. This grant helped the Bank do what it had wanted to do but lacked the capital. The Bank's repayment rate is acceptable; it is gradually expanding its loan portfolio and is making more agricultural loans. Its current business loan approvals are \$4.2 million, forty percent of which is SMEs. Nearly half the loans have been made to traders and another twenty-one percent have gone for agriculture-related production or services. RAMP also provided a grant to the Afghanistan Leasing Company (AFC) to help it set up this new for Afghanistan-type of financial institution. AFC has had many problems convincing people of its value, but it is slowly expanding. Its current portfolio is \$1.5 million.

### **Kunduz**

The team met with 10 farmers and agri-business entrepreneurs plus a government extension agent who had participated in the four ICARDA projects (greenhouses, demonstration farms, VBSEs, and potato seeds). Each stated that they had learned how to increase production by using less irrigation and fertilizers. Some of the farmers illustrated the gains in production by citing before and after statistics. Crops included wheat, paddy rice, mung beans, okra, tomatoes, cucumbers, melons, onions, mint, and potatoes. However, several farmers who have been operating greenhouses pointed out that they can no longer attain the same yields they were getting under RAMP because appropriate inputs (plastic sheeting, hybrid seeds, and fertilizer for hybrid cucumbers) are not available locally. The team visited a small grain storage facility that was tied into a facility to clean, polish, and store rice. The team visited a large VBSE where seeds were being cleaned and sorted before being sent for certification. All certified seed bags have an EU tag, which builds confidence among farmers that they are getting quality seeds.

The team's visits to Kunduz infrastructure projects yielded mixed results. In the case of the Khanabad Dam, RAMP rehabilitated the north retaining wall to prevent damage from a 1:100 year major flood. However, water cannot flow to some nearby areas as the dam's sluice gates are permanently closed in that direction. There is no flood control because sluice gates on the main

dam are permanently open. Requests have been made without success to the Government for funds to improve the dam. RAMP also rebuilt bridges and rehabilitated the Jangal Bashi road, which runs through an irrigated area of Khanabad District. The villagers did not feel the road changed their production, but it improved access to agricultural inputs and eased the cost of marketing their output. They viewed the main benefits as improved security due to increased police patrols and faster access to medical care for their children. The team saw erosion that is threatening to cut a section of the road. Requests for funds from the Government to repair the road have been unsuccessful.

The team also visited a government-run VFU in Kunduz. Under RAMP the VFU was provided a cold storage unit, generator, training, and vaccines. Since the end of RAMP there has not been any money from the Government to purchase vaccines. The manager of the unit occasionally buys vaccines from other non-government supported RAMP VFUs out of his own pocket and gives the shots for a fee. The other RAMP-provided equipment is not in use.

### **Parwan**

The team met with a dozen farmers and a school principal who belong to the local VBSE. All of them had participated in other RAMP activities, including demonstration plots, the potato seed program, protected agriculture (greenhouses), the grape trellis program, and the mother nursery fruit tree program. The VBSE's original ten members have grown to 250 and the organization has expanded its scope of activity well beyond its initial seed focus to include new areas such as the acquisition and distribution of fertilizers and pesticides.

Greenhouse owners in Parwan have adapted a procedure of raising rose plants using a combination of greenhouse and open field growing. The procedure calls for pruning scions (4 plant cuttings from one mother rose plant) from the outdoor plants that are then transplanted in the greenhouse. Here they mature and grow into larger plants, which are then re-transplanted outside where they grow into \$1 to \$1.40 commercially-sold rose plants. This appears worthy of replication to other greenhouses which are having problems with non-available hybrid seeds.

The team also visited demonstration farms, where farmers confirmed RAMP-reported productivity gains. A visit to the Mir Bacha Koot fruit cold storage and repackaging center found that it is operating at capacity and is looking to expand. The team saw several shipments of fresh grapes, melons, and pomegranates that had been prepared for export to India and were being loaded on trucks. Also observed were almond shelling and packaging, plus raisin drying operations.

The dehydration facility built with RAMP assistance was in partial operation, awaiting completion of an expansion that will allow it to process chili peppers from Helmand. The chili pepper operation is scheduled to begin in December 2007. The plant's specially designed dehydration equipment was impressive and a variety of prepared products were awaiting shipment to EU countries.

An Evaluation Team-hired female enumerator met five women and a female village group leader who had participated in the RAMP women's poultry and market production program. The women confirmed that they learned a lot from the training they received, such as how to properly feed and take care of the chickens, how to construct a coop and keep it clean, and how to recognize, treat, and prevent diseases. All of the women said that at the end of RAMP they were making meaningful amounts of money selling the eggs produced by the chickens. The average figure mentioned was 400 afghanis (\$8) per week. This increase translates to an increase of \$69 per family member per year or 24% of the average per capita (\$294) income in Afghanistan. The village group leader, who represents women in 40 families, said that before the program her

village had about 100 chickens and by the end it had 700. She mentioned that as of the end of the program the village was earning between 5,500 and 6,000 afghanis (\$120) per week.

### 3. Did RAMP effectively support USAID/Afghanistan's agricultural objectives?

**Purpose:** “The purpose of USAID’s agricultural sector development program is to improve food security, increase agricultural productivity and rural employment, and improve family incomes and well being.”<sup>13</sup> To accomplish these purposes the Alternative Development and Agriculture Office has focused on: (1) infrastructure restoration; (2) technology transfer and market development; (3) financial services and production credit; and (4) institutional development. These are the same components as RAMP had. RAMP contributed significantly to agricultural output by improving productivity and this has improved food security. The Evaluation Team spoke with many farmers and almost all noted significant increases in their incomes. There were some activities that had problems and some sites where activities failed. This is hardly surprising in an activity as varied and complex as RAMP; this does not detract from the overall success of the project.

**RAMP supported** each of the above-mentioned programmatic areas of the mission’s agricultural program. It was primarily an infrastructure project with over 80% of spending being on infrastructure and this made a major contribution to achieving infrastructure restoration objectives. Through its demonstration farms, greenhouses, seed projects, grape and nut development programs and Veterinary Field Units (VFUs), RAMP helped Afghans use newer technology. Its help for agricultural input dealers and cold storage facilities helped in market development. RAMP’s work on financial services and production credit was varied, but only the micro-credit schemes can be viewed as unqualified successes. RAMP’s efforts to develop SME lending or leasing through local banks were innovative, but less successful. Those programs continue to operate but they have not expanded as had been hoped. RAMP’s work on venture capital (ACAP Partners) was a failure, with the implementing partner leaving the country before any deals were developed. Lastly, work on institutional development and strengthening the Ministry of Agriculture was late in starting but successful. Many of the associations of farmers or traders that RAMP helped establish have demonstrated sustainability by continuing to operate after the end of the project.

**Sustainability:** One of the team’s concerns about RAMP is the sustainability of many interventions. Just 14 months after the end of the project some activities are showing signs of non-sustainability. For example, many of the greenhouses were constructed with material that must be imported and those imports are not readily available. The high level of benefits achieved was only possible through use of hybrid seeds and special fertilizer, neither of which are commercially available in country. The current unavailability of these inputs reduces the impact of RAMP’s help to the USAID/Afghanistan agricultural strategy.

### 4. To what extent did RAMP support other programs/projects funded by USAID?

Just as RAMP was a very large and incredibly complex project, every other office in USAID/Afghanistan had large and complex projects. The sheer quantity of implementation activities and the demands on staff time make the recognized necessity of intra-USAID coordination difficult. Each implementing office employee was responsible for a portfolio far in excess of that experienced by almost any other USAID employee anywhere in the world. All know the wisdom of coordination, but time and staff constraints make intra-USAID coordination difficult.

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<sup>13</sup> USAID/Afghanistan, *Agriculture*, January 2006, Kabul

Each USAID/Afghanistan strategic objective contains many elements that make it large and complex. RAMP was within the first SO: *a thriving economy led by the private sector*, where the first IR was *rehabilitating the rural economy*. In this section we discuss RAMP's impact outside its specific SO/IR.

**IR 1.2.3: Financial sector growth:** The second element in the second IR was *enhancing the financial sector's contribution to economic growth*. Here RAMP was directly supportive through its catalytic efforts to help the Afghan banking system expand its small and medium business loans and lending in rural areas. For example, the RAMP assisted Afghanistan International Bank used its grant from RAMP to explore this area, which it wanted to develop anyway. As a result SME lending has become one of the focal areas of the bank. As of November 20, 2007, the bank's business loan portfolio of approved loans was \$4.3 million, around 44% of which were SMEs with the balance being to the slightly larger corporate and institutional (CIB) sector. However, in their CIB category are two agri-services loans and two loans to flour mills, making their SME plus agri-business/services loans approved a total of \$2.6 million<sup>14</sup>.

RAMP was also instrumental in developing the AFC (Afghanistan Finance Company), which has developed a new for Afghanistan product. Leasing appears to be potentially helpful for smaller enterprises since it solves the problem of a lack of collateral and does not require redress through the courts in cases of a default (the title remains with AFC). There were problems in getting started, partly human capital, financial capital, and lack of knowledge in the market about their product. They are still not making a profit, but their losses have been dropping. Currently they have \$1.5 million in disbursements with 3% at risk (which was a RAMP target). Approximately 60-70% of their portfolio is agriculture-related. They continue to very slowly expand their business and appear to be approaching sustainability.<sup>15</sup>

RAMP tried to develop a venture capital firm through ACAP partners. This failed and the proponents have left the country.

**IR 1.2.4: foreign trade:** RAMP needed help from this component of the first IR (enhanced participation in global trade and investment) as it identified problems with foreign trade policy, transit (through Pakistan to Karachi or India), and improved exports. Coordination would have been beneficial.

**IR 1.3: economic infrastructure:** RAMP's experiences, often not positive, on the inability of the government of Afghanistan to meet its commitments for road and irrigation system maintenance provides important experiences for subsequent road and water infrastructure programs.

**SO 2: citizen participation, democratic government:** RAMP created the first water users association with the Injil irrigation system in Herat. Their experiences operating in legal-limbo provides useful information and challenges for this SO's efforts under its IR 2.4 (increase the presence and performance of the non-governmental sector).

**SO 3: a better educated and healthier population:** This SO emphasizes support for women and RAMP tried, with mixed results, to support women through a loan program via CRS (which did not work due to problems with interest rates under Islam and a preference for micro-loans that do not allow the loan portfolio to expand) and support to FAO's women and poultry project.

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<sup>14</sup> This information is from a discussion on November 15, 2007 with Shahzad Haider of the AIB, and data from the bank's SME and CIB loans as of November 20, 2007.

<sup>15</sup> Discussion with CEO Sameh Panah and credit manager Kamran Gohar at Afghanistan Leasing Company, Kabul November 18, 2007.

**Overall:** RAMP provided key initiatives that have laid a useful foundation for the work of other IRs and SOs. However, the complexity and size of each office's program does not allow the degree of sharing of information and initiatives as would have been desired.

***B. To what extent has RAMP successfully trained and involved the Ministry of Agriculture staff in its activity planning and implementation?***

While the original project design did not include institutional capacity building, RAMP staff realized that MAIL had been playing a marginal role in the project and this lack of substantive involvement in large measure reflected the institution's lack of resources, inadequate skilled personnel, and widespread organizational deficits. Almost two years into the project this realization, and the need to do something about it, found a match in the appointment of Obaidullah Ramin as Minister of Agriculture in early 2005. Soon after his appointment, Minister Ramin called for a major effort to coordinate donor support to address key strategic issues and requested USAID's support. In response, in May, 2005 RAMP launched its institutional capacity building initiative, allocating \$878,994 for this purpose.

Over the ensuing months and up until the end of RAMP, a formidable number of capacity building activities were completed by the initiative's implementing partners, Chemonics and Abt Associates.<sup>16</sup> Most notably, a cadre of senior advisers was assigned to work with the minister and other MAIL staff on a variety of areas to increase the ministry's capabilities in policy and planning, alternative livelihoods, infrastructure, public and foreign relations, and national strategy design. These advisors contributed to developing and expanding institutional capacity in many ways, the most important among which was the key role they played in helping the minister and his senior advisors develop a five-year Master Plan for agriculture. The Master Plan provides the overall organizational and strategic framework aimed at bringing about a six percent growth rate for the agricultural sector, thereby doubling agricultural incomes in 12 years. The Plan calls for increased food security, emphasis on priority commodity groups, promoting livestock health, managing natural resources, establishing quality control measures, reduced poppy production, and wider private sector involvement.

Since its completion in the Fall of 2006, the Master Plan has begun to be implemented. According to a former RAMP advisor, at least two major activities – a \$50 million horticulture project funded by the World Bank and a \$17 million livestock and horticulture project funded by the EU – are underway. Pursuant to the Master Plan's call for reorganization of the ministry, a key institutional organ, the General Department of Policy, Economic Analysis, and Planning (PEAP) has been established and is operating. PEAP, which has six sections – policy and analysis, planning and program/project development, monitoring and evaluation, statistics and agricultural market information, foreign affairs, and legislation – has begun work on its envisioned responsibilities to advance agricultural policy goals. According to the same former RAMP advisor, this year PEAP prepared its own budget for the first time and also developed a reporting system for ministry activities.

As we acknowledge the above examples of RAMP-inspired accomplishments, former staff and project documents caution that these gains have to be kept in perspective. Afghan governmental institutions after the removal of the Taliban were in a virtual ground zero state and it will take an

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<sup>16</sup> The discussion here is limited to those activities the Evaluation Team could corroborate via interviews and analysis of documents. RAMP documents, such as the final report and the summary for job order #51, cite other contributions including the provision of communications equipment, assistance in "external relations," developing and facilitating relationships between the minister of agriculture and officials of other ministries, donors, and others, and supporting the development of a pastoralist support strategy and rangeland policy.

additional five years of outside assistance for PEAP (and by extension other ministry organizational units) to become viable.

**C. Was the general strategy of demand-driven approach a sound strategy considering the economic and political situation at the time of program implementation?**

Whether the job orders are project demand driven, market demand driven, or beneficiary demand driven is debatable. There are times they appear to have been driven by what type of proposals were received and thus might more appropriately be considered supply driven. The urgency of getting project activities started reduced the value of the PRAs (participatory rural assessments) that ought to have been used to determine beneficiary demands. These PRAs were seriously flawed (one senior RAMP official said they were useless) and were not used to determine potential job orders. The urgency to begin activities was also cited by officials to explain why analysis of what commodities were most likely to succeed in the market place was not done and the job orders left the decisions as to which commodities to emphasize to the implementing partners. While the lack of analysis is regrettable, this approach did expedite decision making.

There are several activities in RAMP that demonstrate both the demand-creates-supply, top-down approach and the supply-creates-demand, bottom-up approach; however they must be viewed in a micro-activity context. These opposing ideas can be illustrated by the dehydrated vegetable project which had the goal of developing export markets. They solicited overseas customers to identify their specific requirements (demand) and then went out to create the supply of the raw materials to grow and process the end products in Afghanistan using customer-designed specifications. This distinctly was a demand-creates-supply approach (top-down). The fact that supply failures have eliminated profitability is hopefully only a temporary situation.

Secondly, the greenhouse farmers of Parwan had identified ornamental plants to fill the desired demand for esthetic landscaping material (roses) in Kabul. They then developed a methodology using the greenhouse technology to grow the plants outside and inside the greenhouse in stages to create the supply. This is an example of a demand-creates-supply, top-down approach to supply creation.

Thirdly, a demand has been generated for large quantities of bagged straw. Large orange bundles can be seen along the highways. The straw is a by-product of wheat production. This new product has added value to wheat farmers' income, as well as to the merchants who transport and sell it. Again this is demand creating supply to create new income sources for the farmers. RAMP's assistance helped increase wheat yields created an increased supply of hay.

Fourthly, in the fresh grape and nuts project (subcontractor RoP) the productivity of grape and nut production was increased successfully without clearly knowing the final market demand for exports. Then with an increased supply (bottom-up approach) RoP struggled to increase the export demand, whereupon it found problems in the transportation and packaging processes. There had a few successes in exporting some fruits and nuts, but generally increases in export fresh grape activity were disappointing. RoP now believes that direct simultaneous discussions with the producer, the merchants, and government officials (to have them influence policy on dealing with border-barriers and trade regimes) should have been better aligned. In other words, in this instance supply-creates-demand failed and demand-creates-supply might have fared better in terms of generating an income source for this RAMP activity.

In conclusion, the failures or successes in the examples above indicate that the demand-creates-supply, top-down approach would seem to have been the more efficient and effective and, therefore, sounder strategy applicable to the economic and political situation during RAMP's implementation.

***D. The implementation of activities under market development and infrastructure was through implementation partners by issuing job orders for specific area activities. Was this implementation arrangement effective in terms of resource allocation and monitoring the progress of the program in achieving its goal?***

The monitoring aspect of this question will be dealt with under the overall monitoring question (section F)

RAMP at the end of three years of implementation was very different from RAMP in 2003. The early emphasis was on getting activities started quickly with less than the usual attention to issues that is normal in USAID projects. Efforts to research and develop a long term program for improvement had to be short-circuited because of the need for rapid interventions to increase incomes and jobs. RAMP was criticized for not being sufficiently in tune with the needs of U.S. foreign policy. It would not have been possible for any one contractor, no matter how large, to mobilize a sufficiently large number of people to implement all the activities. It also made sense to try to help strengthen the Afghan private sector and NGOs by having them help on implementation.

Chemonics served essentially as a team of infrastructure designers and monitoring staff who did quality control, monitoring, and activity coordination. Chemonics oversaw all work but, with a few exceptions, did not implement job orders.

The job order process is fraught with potential problems, such as losing control of what is happening because staff requirements exceed staff available. Securing long term staff to work in Afghanistan is not always easy and thus the Evaluation Team would not have been surprised to find that a number of activities had failed because of incompetent implementing partners. It is to Chemonics' credit that when their monitoring efforts discovered problems they were able to take quick action to correct them. The up-side of the Job Order system is that more work was undertaken quickly than would otherwise have been possible.

The Team did find some problems that arose because of the large number of partners and activities. These problems are highlighted in other parts of this evaluation and include: inadequate monitoring of impact, lack of baseline or even a mid-term baseline, lack of attention to sustainability, and lack of coordination between implementing partners, other USAID activities, and other donors.

To some extent these are understandable; the complexity of RAMP increased the management burden and reduced the time available for some of these issues. Donor or program coordination is time and staff intensive, two qualities in short supply. Thinking about sustainability is difficult when you are being directed to DO something and not worry about the more distant future. RAMP knew that the Government did not have the funds to maintain the new systems and thus infrastructure activities would begin to deteriorate soon after completion. But the alternative was to do nothing, so RAMP took the understandable risk of doing the work and hoping that others within USAID and the donor community who were looking at the government budget would figure out some way to address the lack of funds (which was sufficiently serious that the Government could not even fully meet its payroll, let alone provide funds for maintenance).

***E. Chemonics submitted an economic assessment of the impact of the program***

1. Review the soundness of the methodology and approach used in quantifying the program's impact

**Summary:** Doing an assessment of the impact of the project in just a few months is next to impossible. It is to RAMP's credit that they were able to do as good a job as they did. Project staff ought to have developed a baseline toward the beginning of the project and, if not then, then

sometime after implementation began. They also should have developed a methodology to keep track of what needed to be done to assure that the required information was collected and all activities used comparable approaches.

But, perhaps the biggest problem the Team found with the RAMP assessment was with its analysis and, most specifically, that it failed to use a discount rate to handle future improvements in income. In a country at war there is an exceptionally high preference for benefits now and a large discount for benefits in the future. All future benefits are subject to a large risk factor and increased uncertainty. Some activities used a three-year time horizon, some five, and some six (some for some reason assessed benefits for years 2-7 skipping year one for an unexplained reason. There is a need for consistency and thus the Team proposes a 15% discount rate and a consistent ten-year time horizon.

One project, the Khanabad Dam in Kunduz, had much greater benefits than justified, since the dam has no mechanism to control water flow and is of very limited value for flood control. In irrigation schemes the Team found that projected improvements in cropping were not being achieved. For example, farmers in Injil in Herat Province were not growing nuts on irrigated land. While road projects often included increases in production due to the improvements made, the Team's interviews with farmers suggested there was at most only a slight shifting of production toward vegetables but no increase in land under cultivated. Some of the analysis of benefits was sufficiently flawed as to make use of the resulting figures impossible.

Overall, therefore, the Team estimates the net present value (NPV) of the project at \$673 million and not the \$1.7 billion claimed. It should be noted, though, that this figure is still far in excess of the \$250 million target and yields an excellent return on investment.

The Team found problems with attribution of benefits when more than one donor worked on a scheme and possible double counting when two activities took place on the same land. While all the claimed kilometers of irrigation were improved, in many cases RAMP only worked on a portion of the system and it is likely that there was not any improvement for the extreme downstream people (as happened in the Guzara irrigation scheme in Herat Province).

On the other side of the ledger, the project did not quantify considerable benefits. The Injil irrigation system provides increased water to Herat City and this ought to have been included. There is a *multiplier* effect where increased farm production increases farmer incomes it also increases the incomes of traders, input suppliers, transporters, agri-enterprises, etc.. Had the project done a baseline it would have been possible to estimate these benefits, and it would not have been surprising if the multiplier had been 1.7-2.0 – essentially a doubling of the NPV of benefits due to the project.

**Discount Rate:** When benefits or costs from an activity occur over a number of years those numbers **must** be discounted back to the present. The assumption is that \$100 of benefits is worth more now than in the future. This assumption is truer in Afghanistan than most other countries because the decades of turmoil and devastation it has experienced heighten the need for quick benefits. In all cases, however, the RAMP impact assessment used undiscounted figures, even though the NPV figures were computed in the spreadsheets. RAMP sometimes used a 15% discount rate and sometimes a 12% rate, even though they only reported figures in the *RAMP Final Report* that did not use any discount rate.

The discount rate that is used ought to reflect the *social time preference* or the nation's preference for benefits now as opposed to benefits in the future, plus the risk and uncertainty of each

activity.<sup>17</sup> Usually the discount rate remains constant for all activities, but this is not necessary if risk factors differ. The discount rate used in RAMP's computations was derived from the interest rate charged by banks in Afghanistan at the time. Bank interest rates and the discount rate serve different purposes and one cannot be used as a proxy for the other. A factor influencing the bank interest rate is anticipated inflation as banks seek a rate of return in excess of inflation. Since inflation was nearly 10% in 2006, and almost all prices used in the RAMP calculations were real (unadjusted for inflation), the nominal bank interest rate is inappropriate. Elsewhere in the world we usually use a 3-5% discount rate (social time preference) to reflect society's social time preference and the fact that government ought to have a longer time horizon, and thus lower discount rate, than any individual.

In Afghanistan a very good argument can be made that the discount rate ought to be much higher given recent difficulties. USAID repeatedly emphasized to the contractor their desire for quick benefits, expressing their desire for a very high discount rate. Similarly, the riskiness of any activity as well as the uncertainty associated with development work are likely to be higher in Afghanistan than elsewhere, thus making a high discount rate justifiable. The RAMP concern that inadequate government funds for operation and maintenance of infrastructure projects will cause their deterioration also argues for a high discount rate.

**Attribution:** The benefits from all activities are due to a number of factors. Some of the benefits might exist because improvements in rainfall, or because a seed project by another donor complemented the work done by USAID. When USAID builds the bridges on a road and another donor improves the road surface, then both ought not claim all the benefits due to their specific activity. It is not easy to determine what the appropriate attribution is, but the project's claiming of 100% of the benefits is unjustified. If USAID puts in excellent bridges but the road surface is disastrous, then USAID cannot claim all the benefits as if there were an excellent road surface.

Benefit counting is made more difficult when there are different activities taking place in the same area. Donor collaboration on improving a road or irrigation scheme does not allow them all to claim all the benefits of increased output as their own. Each should only claim that portion of the total benefits that is appropriate to their input.

Output in an irrigation system can be boosted by the new infrastructure, but might also have been improved by the improved seeds provided by other RAMP project activities. Both activities cannot claim the same benefits; this is double counting of the same benefits.

Isolating the benefits from a RAMP input from the contributions of others is not easy. Many changes are the result of price changes that make some products more profitable or improved weather conditions. We have to isolate project-induced improvements in output from non-project induced changes. The analysis done by Bridges of the benefits from demonstration farms is an example of benefit estimation errors.<sup>18</sup>

**Claimed Irrigation Benefits:** When the Evaluation Team reviewed irrigation projects it also ran into problems. The coefficients on land use by crop were determined by the contractor before the project started and some were adjusted based on a RAMP M&E Irrigation Survey. In its field interviews, the Team found many instances where all the villagers with whom we spoke in the Injil and Gazara command areas disputed the claimed figures. For example, the RAMP analysts assumed that all land after the improvement in the irrigation system by RAMP was farmed at the

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<sup>17</sup> See Cambridge Resources International, *Integrated Investment Appraisal: Concepts and Practices*, March 2005

<sup>18</sup> Rebuilding Agricultural Markets Program (RAMP), *RAMP Impact Assessment #5, Adoption Rates of On-Farm Demonstration Farms*, RAMP-Bridges Afghanistan On-Farm Study, 2006, Kabul. There is a discussion of the methodological errors later in this report.

optimal level, no matter what work was done by the project. This illustrates an attribution problem when other projects were operating simultaneously in the scheme. When the Team discussed with farmers what they had produced on their land for the crop that had just been harvested, and what they would sow for the upcoming winter planting season, it received answers that did not agree with the coefficients used in RAMP's impact assessment spreadsheets. Farmers did not grow as many different crops or as many high value crops and did not achieve the level of outputs the coefficients imply. The reason might be that the Team's sampling was flawed, but RAMP did not verify the cropping patterns in each scheme before and after the project's interventions. RAMP's statement that many of the cropping coefficients come from the pre-activity contractor proposal increases the Team's disquiet, since the contractors had an obvious incentive to provide a low estimate of production before the project.

The winter cropping patterns planned by the farmers were almost exclusively wheat and did not indicate any substantial amount of winter vegetables. The project also assumed large increases in fruit and nut production due to irrigation, but the farmers and irrigation officials the Team spoke with in Injil, where these increases were projected to be very large, said that nuts were not being grown in these irrigation areas and generally fruits were grown outside project command areas. While RAMP claimed large increases in nut production as a result of their irrigation work, they did not include any of these benefits in their table showing project benefits by priority commodity group. Just the claimed improvements in nut production in the Injil irrigation scheme should have increased the value of increased nut production from \$18 million to \$28 million, and allowed RAMP to claim they achieved 56% of the increase in nut production target, not the 36% they did claim.

With the Guzara irrigation scheme in Herat, RAMP was unable to complete the activity due to problems with the upstream farmers and security concerns. This meant that many of the benefits that were to flow to downstream farmers were never realized. The benefit streams do not reflect that the project was able to do as much as anticipated. Claiming optimal use of the land by everyone in such a situation is unjustified.

For these reasons the Team has reduced the benefits to the Guzara scheme by the anticipated expansion in farm lands and the benefits to downstream users. Also reduced are the benefits to Injil by the amount anticipated for nuts. While the estimate for fruits in the command area is wrong, it is likely that these benefits were achieved, albeit outside the command area. We do not make any adjustment for lower than projected fruit production.

**Road Benefits:** The Team analyzed in detail the reported benefits for the Jangal Bashi road in Kunduz district. The team discussed the impact of the road with villagers. The villagers were extremely grateful to USAID for the road because it had improved their security (more police patrols) and enabled them to reach medical care for their children quicker. Because the irrigation system was fully operational before and no changes have been made to the system, they did not list any benefits to production. However, project forecasted reductions in travel time and spoilage are valid.

The analysis of the road makes a number of unsubstantiated assumptions: the project caused a 20% increase in wheat production and a 100% increase in rice production. These two assumptions accounted for nearly all the projected increases claimed for the project from production. There is no reason to assume any substantial increase in production of any item that does not have a high spoilage rate. The villagers did not say there was any change in production due to the road. The analysis also increased claimed benefits by up to 5% for price increases in commodities or transport. As the analysis is done in real terms, these increases are unjustified. The analysis also



**Jangal Bashi road in Kunduz Province serious road erosion**

assumed the average trip on the road was twice the full length of the road (vehicle from the storage area to the end of the road and back again). However, the average trip would be half that length as people are scattered all along the road, with some very close to the main road and some living further away. As the road links to the main road twice, the average distance is actually a quarter of the full length. The net impact of correcting these errors is to change the claimed benefits from \$2.2 million over seven years with no discount rate applied, to \$440,000 over ten years with

a 15% discount rate.

In addition, there is a very serious erosion of the road surface in one area due to its closeness to the canal (the canal is flowing strongly on the left hand edge of the picture, there is also a small irrigation canal just to the right of the road that is not causing any problems). In the distance in the picture one can see a “USAID RAMP” marker on the left hand side of the road. On the right hand side of the road is another marker for the implementing partner “KRA 2004.” The road is likely to be cut soon at about 5 kilometers in from the Kunduz town side. This will decrease future benefits from this road.

The Team analyzed ten other roads in other provinces and they all made similar assumptions on production increases and price changes. The only production increases that appear valid would be for perishable goods where the reduction in spoilage could convince people to increase the production of those items due to the road. A downward adjustment of the NPV of the benefits from these roads is justified and was made.

**Demonstration Farms:** The Team was greatly impressed with the methodology followed to help farmers in understanding and adopting new agricultural techniques. It does not have any doubts that this activity was very successful and worthy of replication. One of the implementing partners, ICARDA, estimated the impact of the farms on the economy, but did not provide their methodology and their figure was not used by RAMP in its final totaling of benefits. RAMP commissioned a study by BRIDGES to do this analysis.<sup>19</sup> In theory, it is relatively simple to estimate the benefits from demonstration farms by surveying the farmers who had or visited one, or who were visited by a trained extension worker. The project kept records of the number of

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<sup>19</sup> Dr. Rehan Mullick, Mudasser Naseer, Rabia Nusrat, Lyyle Khalid, Wasif Ali Mullick, Waqas Qureshi and Adeel Mahmood: Rebuilding Agricultural Markets Program (RAMP), *RAMP Impact Assessment #5, Adoption Rates of On-Farm Demonstration Farms*, RAMP-Bridges Afghanistan On-Farm Study, 2006, Kabul.

people visiting so it is possible through a survey to get figures that can then be used to estimate the benefits to all participants.

The major implementer of demonstration farms was ICARDA, with a limited number of others in Herat done by CRS. In Kabul and Kunduz it was done by International Assistance Mission. Roots of Peace's demonstration grape and nut farms were not included in the demonstration farms benefit category by RAMP.

BRIDGES did a survey of about a sixth of all the demonstration farms and obtained useful information on adoption rates and the socio-economic characteristics of the people surveyed. However, they did not have a proper sampling frame that would allow them to easily go from their sample to the impact of all the demonstration farms. With appropriate assumptions they can assume that the results from their sample of 150 farms can be multiplied by seven to get the impact on all farms. However, the Team does not have any information on whether their sample is random and thus could not take this approach.

They also estimated that the surveyed provinces accounted for nearly 30% of Afghanistan's cereal production and assume that it also accounts for 30% of overall agricultural production. This assumption does not appear justified, as the distribution of cereal production is not the same as the distribution of high value fruit, vegetable, and nut production.

Bridges then took the percentage share of adopters in the sampled demonstration farm areas and used that to separate provincial agricultural production between adopters and non-adopters. If 60% of production in demonstration farm areas was from adopters it **cannot** be assumed that 60% of provincial production was from adopters, since demonstration farm areas possibly account for only a small percentage of provincial production. Their survey was in the demonstration farm areas and was not a representative sample of the entire province. This makes the estimate for adopters' share of provincial agricultural GDP much too high

ICARDA estimates that adopters in their areas, over three-fourths of all demonstration farms, produced an additional \$19 million in output. This would be just under 1% of regional agricultural production, much less than the resulting BRIDGES estimate of over 4%.

Bridges took their overestimate of the importance of adopters to the region and multiplied it by the regression  $R^2$  between those who adopted and those who attended any RAMP demonstration. This figure merely tells us that only around a quarter of the people who attended demonstration activities adopted techniques. While this is an interesting figure, they had already divided the increase in production between adopters and non-adopters, so doing it a second time makes no sense. A further anomaly is that they have very substantial benefits, nearly 20% of the total, from 2003. ICARDA, responsible for over three-fourths of all demonstration farms was awarded its contract on November 10, 2003. The other implementing partners involved in demonstration farms only began in 2004. ICARDA mentioned to us that it took them until mid-2004 to get organized and begin to establish demonstration farms. In 2005 they convinced farmers of the benefits of their techniques of farming, so only in 2006 would there have been any substantial results. There could not have been any benefits in 2003, and Bridges' estimate that over half the benefits came in 2004 also appears invalid. Their result of decreased benefits in 2005 is also at variance with ICARDA's experience. By chance (as the methodology is sufficiently suspect as to give it much value) Bridges' estimate of benefits for 2005 is only 20% more than ICARDA's estimate for 2006. Still an additional flaw in the Bridges work is that there is no discounting of any benefits, nor any estimate of future benefits from improved techniques learned during RAMP's 3-plus years.

The resulting estimate of benefits from demonstration farms of \$90 million must be treated as sufficiently flawed as to be totally useless. The Team does not doubt that the activity was

beneficial, but it does not know how beneficial. Using ICARDA's estimate of benefits of \$19 million<sup>20</sup> (presumably for 2006) and assume that that can be maintained for ten years, then the NPV at a 15% discount rate would be \$95 million. The Team does not feel sufficiently comfortable with the assumptions required to get this number, so it uses the RAMP estimate based on the BRIDGES work of \$90 million, even though it too is critically flawed.

2. Review the validity of major results findings, especially the overall impact on the agricultural sector of \$1.7 billion and the 823 kilometers of irrigation canals rehabilitated

**Impact of Using NPVs:** RAMP's non-use of NPVs makes a large difference in the total benefits from the project. If we just use the NPVs **as RAMP computed them** (but did not use for some reason), then the net benefits to irrigation projects fall from \$1.2 billion to \$621 million. Comparable errors were made in every area under review reducing total benefits from \$1.7 billion to \$967 million. The Evaluation Team makes additional changes to the discount rate and time horizon and thus gets a different figure.

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<sup>20</sup> ICARDA, Final Project Report, Demonstration of New Technologies in Farmers Fields to Facilitate Rapid Adoption and Diffusion, May 2006, Kabul (see pages 4-5)

**Table 1: Adjustment of Benefits from the RAMP Project to Reflect Net Present Values and Other Changes**

Sector	RAMP claimed benefits	RAMP computed NPVs	Evaluation Team: NPVs (15% discount rate, 10 yrs)
Without any changes in nature of claimed benefits			
Irrigation	\$1,191m	\$621m	\$479m
Livestock (includes chickens)	\$257m	\$189m	\$189m <sup>21</sup>
Locust & Sunn pest control	\$171m	not computed	\$128m
Demonstration Farms	\$90m	not computed	\$70m
Roads	\$29m	\$12m	\$9m
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,749m<sup>22</sup></b>	<b>\$967m<sup>23</sup></b>	<b>\$875m</b>
<u>Adjustments to RAMP claimed benefits as explained in text</u>			
Khanabad Dam	(\$254m)	(\$155m)	(\$184m)
Roads Benefits	(\$13m)	(\$5m)	(\$4m)
Injil/Gazara irrigation	(\$21m)	(\$13m)	(\$14m)
<b>Adjusted results</b>	<b>\$1,461m</b>	<b>\$794m</b>	<b>\$673m</b>

**Khanabad Dam:** The Evaluation Team visited a number of project sites. Some appeared to seriously overestimate the likely benefits. The one it wanted to visit most was the Khanabad Dam in Kunduz Province. This \$227,000 activity has claimed benefits of \$256 million making it the single most beneficial activity in RAMP (a claimed benefit cost ratio of 1,128 to 1).

RAMP constructed a retaining wall on the north side of the dam to prevent a wash-out of the road and indeed the entire dam in the event of a cataclysmic flood (the so-called one in a hundred years flood for which dams ought to be designed). The economic analysis noted: “Without rehabilitation the area will be flooded and there will be a complete crop failure (if planted) and/or there will be no cultivation until the fields are drained and the structures constructed.”<sup>24</sup>

<sup>21</sup> We accept the RAMP claim to only include three years of benefits because vaccinations after that date cannot be claimed by RAMP. The project used a 15% discount rate for this activity. However, because immunizations appear to have continued after RAMP, it would be justified to adjust these figures up. This was not possible as the Evaluation Team does not have data on the proportion continuing with animal vaccinations

<sup>22</sup> The total RAMP claimed benefits for these five items is \$1,738 million. RAMP claimed total net benefits of \$1,749 million, the balance being relatively minor activities.

<sup>23</sup> The Team uses the average proportion of RAMP computed NPVs to RAMP claimed benefits to fill in the two missing numbers.

<sup>24</sup> Cell B31 of the *Irrigation Impact Khanabad Flood Protection – Revised.XLS* spreadsheet, RAMP/Chemonics, 2006, Kabul

One cannot claim as a benefit the full impact of the 1:100 year flood every year. The expected protection is 1% of the full impact each year. Thus the impact of a 1:100 year flood needs to be multiplied by 1% to reflect the anticipated damage each year. Because the retaining wall



undoubtedly provides benefits for lesser floods it ought to be multiplied by a larger number, say 3%. This dam, constructed around 30 years ago was never completed. None of the sluice gates can open or close and many are permanently open. The dam cannot restrain any water flowing toward the dam. There are no benefits from the dam to the farms just to the north, as that gate is permanently closed, and very few benefits to farms to the south that only receive overflow water. There is very little flood control, as

**The Khanabad Dam: none of the sluice gates can be opened and/or closed**

the gates to the west are permanently open allowing all water that flows toward the dam to instantly flow through the gates. There is a minimal amount of protection from the dam's sill, but this cannot be significant in any major flood. In short, the dam is not a dam. While the Team would have been willing to multiply the benefits by 3% if it functioned as a normal dam, it appears that even a 1% figure is too high. The Team uses the 1% insurance policy figure, a result that is overly generous.

**Length of Irrigation Canals Rehabilitated by RAMP:** The Evaluation Team visited nine irrigation activities and usually two to three sites per activity. This amounts to 29% of the 31 irrigation activities and 27% of the cost of irrigation work, but 44% of the claimed benefits from irrigation. The total length of all irrigation canals visited was very close to the figures used by RAMP and thus the Team believes its claim of 823 kilometers is probably correct. However, such a figure may be deceptive. In all the cases the Team visited RAMP did not rehabilitate the entire canal but only a portion. This may have been because other donors took part of the canal, as in Chardara, or because RAMP's work was only to improve a few aqueducts, bridges, or weir. Improving the weir is likely to help the entire irrigation canal, but in a narrow sense RAMP did not rehabilitate the entire system. The Team does not feel the difference is sufficiently important to question RAMP's overall conclusion.

**Lack of Formulas:** Doing the analysis of different activities was made more difficult because most of the spreadsheets had all the formulas removed. It would have been easier, and allowed for more accurate analysis, if the formulas had not been removed.

***F. Review the monitoring system used to evaluate the impacts of the activities.  
How effective was the monitoring system?***

To be effective in performing the role of providing ongoing input in project management, assessing results, and reporting impacts, a monitoring system must have sufficient staff, adequate

resources, a performance management plan (PMP), and database. On the basis of these criteria – staff, resources, PMP, and database<sup>25</sup> – the RAMP monitoring effort was clearly not up to the unique demands presented by the very large and complex project confronting it. This conclusion is based on the Evaluation Team’s review of voluminous documents, on-site observations of project activities, and interviews with six individuals<sup>26</sup> knowledgeable about RAMP monitoring efforts.

Foremost among the deficits in RAMP monitoring was the grossly inadequate number of staff and supporting resources available needed to keep up with the project’s 53 separate job orders and 63 implementing partners. The RAMP monitoring team consisted of just four individuals: one monitoring and evaluation (M&E) specialist, one economist, and two geographic information system (GIS) experts. The vast part of their time was spent in Kabul dealing with important required activities such as preparing bi-weekly metric and quarterly progress reports, organizing baseline and other surveys, updating and maintaining the GIS Geo-database, aggregating and analyzing data, developing reporting models and tools for implementing partners, and much more. However, this meant that comparatively little of their time was spent in the field performing such essential tasks as checking on methods being used to collect data and the accuracy of the data being collected.

Indeed, according to the former RAMP personnel interviewed on this subject, field monitoring and data collection were almost entirely the responsibility of implementing partners.<sup>27</sup> While some implementing partners, such as FAO and DCA, had long standing experience in data collection and results monitoring in the field many others – particularly those involved with infrastructure activities – did not. For example, individuals who carried out monitoring for implementing partners involved in road and irrigation projects were almost always engineers who focused their efforts on technical monitoring of construction. In this capacity they checked outputs (e.g., number of kilometers of road rehabilitated), quality of materials, design, etc. They did not, however, perform performance (results) monitoring.

Moreover, claims that technical monitoring was routinely done are open to question. One source to which the Evaluation Team spoke explained that while he was in the field checking up on an infrastructure activity he was told a project engineer was at the site almost every day. He subsequently learned that the same engineer was also responsible for another activity five to six hours away by vehicle and therefore could not have possibly been at both sites in accordance with that schedule.

The net effect of this situation – too few people spread too thinly, combined with inadequate capability among many implementing partners – meant that not enough technical or performance monitoring took place over the life of RAMP. As noted in USAID’s Contractor Performance Report for the period July 3, 2003 through December 31, 2005: “[there is a] need [for] more site visits for quality control and monitoring, particularly with regard to infrastructure projects.” Similar findings were reported by a USAID staffer who went on regular visits to the field to

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<sup>25</sup> The Evaluation Team did not find any notable issues or problems with the PMP and project databases. Documents show there was in fact a PMP (and results framework) with all the expected contents, e.g., strategic objectives, intermediate results, indicators, data collection, and timelines. The PMP itself appears to be well thought through and constructed.

<sup>26</sup> Four of these individuals were former RAMP personnel; two were key staff of the project’s monitoring and Evaluation Team and two were activity area program managers. The other two were a project implementing partner manager and a USAID/Kabul staffer.

<sup>27</sup> RAMP area program managers, e.g., infrastructure and animal health, were responsible for overseeing implementing partners’ data collection and monitoring efforts, but they too were severely constrained in their ability to regularly cover so many activities spread over so many provinces across the country.

observe RAMP activities during 2005 and 2006. On five of these occasions, between November, 2005 and April, 2006, he wrote summary reports that consistently found that “technical monitoring required by RAMP is not being done on a regular basis.”

That technical and performance monitoring in the field were both not done with sufficient regularity or at all links directly to perhaps the most important question that monitoring has to address: how accurate and reliable is the basic data being collected. As suggested above, the Evaluation Team did find cases of implementing partners who were absolutely first rate in this



**Paravet in Siagard Village, Balkh treating a horse**

regard. For example, the Team verified the accuracy of the vaccination and treatment data collected by DCA over the life of its livestock, health, production, and marketing project. While the final numbers reported – more than 28 million vaccinations and treatments – seemed hard to believe at first glance, DCA had in place a reporting system with a readily available paper trail that totally verified the accuracy of the numbers. Among others things, the reporting system captured data that matched the number of vaccinations performed by the program’s paravets with the amount of vaccines and medications distributed from DCA’s central facilities.

Aside from the above and the few other instances where the Evaluation Team found monitoring and data collection capability among implementing partners, the point remains that no satisfactory proof was received from any of the former RAMP staff with whom the Team spoke on the critically important question of data verification. There were claims by some among these sources that they believed the data from all implementing partners was accurate, but they uniformly conceded that

in most cases they did not have first-hand knowledge to support this assumption. Perhaps the most telling item that surfaced along these lines was discovered in a February, 2006 draft paper prepared by the head of the RAMP M&E Team: “RAMP – Lessons Learned and Implications for RAMP 2: A View from Monitoring & Evaluation.” In a section on data management, after distinguishing between upgrading data handling systems and processes and the far more difficult task of designing human processes to collect, vet, and share information, the author concludes the paragraph with the observation, “accurate, timely, and available information, as it stands now, are a significant shortfall of RAMP.”

Finally, in addition to these findings regarding monitoring and data accuracy, former RAMP staff reported a number of other related problems. One said that some reporting formats developed early in the life of the project were “unprofessional,” in that they failed to provide for the disaggregation of data. Later, in the middle of the project he was asked to disaggregate the data in the area for which he was responsible and after explaining he could not do so because of the way the original format had been prepared, he had to take the time to develop a new format. More than one source, moreover, raised questions about the soundness of the Participatory Rural Assessments (PRAs) upon which RAMP relied throughout the project to collect baseline agricultural and marketing information. PRAs were used in myriad ways during RAMP and late in the project were part of the effort to determine the activities’ economic impact. He said he knew of at least one instance where a PRA involving his subject area was conducted by someone who was not qualified to do so. Another former RAMP source who was even more directly

involved with monitoring bluntly characterized the PRAs done under the auspices of the M&E team as “useless.”

## **V. Other significant points**

### **A. Sustainability Issues**

Sustainability is rooted in program implementation, operational support, and the creation and maintaining of conditions under which the program participants can exist in productive harmony. Generally, most of the activities under RAMP display these attributes. In this regard, six of the activity groups look significantly sustainable, two are moderately sustainable, and three are diminishingly sustainable.

The six activities identified that have high levels of inherent sustainability were the aggregate training functions, the IFDC input dealer’s association groups, VFU operations, the ICARDA demonstration plot; clean potato seed; and the seed enterprise scheme VBSE. The training function of the RAMP activities has left an indelible mark throughout the Afghan agricultural landscape. Interviewee after interviewee could not stop applauding the quality and scope of training, instruction, and guidance they received regardless of which program they participated in. Additionally, the two Ministry facilities at Badam Bagh, the seed certification laboratory and the greenhouse operations facility, stand as a monument to the attributes of RAMP training.

The input dealers association is an extension of the training received by many RAMP participants, since these members became the trainers of the future once RAMP ended. Wherever they were observed by the Team these input dealers were teaching their customers new techniques as a service they provide for local farmers. This is how they find new business and continue the dissemination of the ended RAMP training. The three ICARDA programs have all demonstrated their strong impact by changing yields and teaching how to use less water and fertilizer and still increase productivity. Almost every interviewee was appreciative of what was learned from these three projects. The VBSE in Parwan is now a major force in the region, growing from ten farmers at the outset to 250 now.

The moderately sustainable group includes the RoP grape and nut program, the DWC dehydrated vegetable plant project, and the Injil Canal water users association. In these three programs we have the seeds for success. In the dehydrated vegetable case, it is still a question of getting the supply situation under control. Because the DWC has a major investment in the project, the Team fully expects that the entrepreneurial forces will eventually bring about the success the project expected. In the grape and nut project great productivity gains have been made in fresh grapes, although little progress has been made in exporting this added production because of the need for intervention by the Ministry of Trade to solve policy problems related to getting the products to consumers. However, great strides have been made for raisins, melons, and pomegranates for export, so there is much hope for the future. In the case of the water users association, while its members are meeting regularly and carrying out necessary functions the organization is still not registered with the Government. Efforts to accomplish this began while RAMP was still underway and some 18 months later still have not succeeded. Without being registered, the association does not have legal status, with all that this implies.

The three projects identified as having diminishing returns because of sustainability issues are the rebuilding and rehabilitation infrastructure projects, the poultry for women program, and the protected agriculture greenhouses. These three projects have the potential for large, long-term benefits, but because of project design flaws their future is in question.

The infrastructure projects, for example, have the same weakness in that funds for maintenance are unlikely to be forthcoming from government in the foreseeable future.. During its field visits the Team found washed out sections of roads that might completely cut the roadway during the

next high water incident. Locals mentioned that funds have been requested but no funds have been allocated. If not addressed, this problem could render the dollars invested by RAMP useless within a short span of time.

The women's poultry project has caused many women to lose hope. During RAMP they experienced great progress with their activities and then found needed support was not available once RAMP ended. Without feed, replacement chicks, or pullets their flock and egg production has diminished markedly and today only half the original participants are no longer active. The women are willing to pay for the new chicks, feed, and other supplies, but the women say they are unavailable.

Finally, the predicament with protected agriculture's requirements for currently unavailable, imported plastic sheeting, hybrid seeds, and special fertilizer is threatening the program's large increases in both farmer's income and the ability of women to work at home. The Team expects there must be some Afghan importer willing to bring in the needed items. If not, then the benefits gained will be lost.

### **B. Use of Value Chains**

Value chain analysis is a very useful tool for analyzing where the problems that impact agriculture are. It follows production from developing the seeds, providing the inputs (including knowledge) to the farmer, growing the product, transporting it to market, processing it (if necessary) and selling it to the consumer, whether within the country or as an export. It is useful as a tool because it encourages the analyst to look at all the steps involved. It does not make sense to improve the ability of the farmers to produce a crop that they cannot get to market, nor would it make sense to try to take advantage of potential high value exports if the foreign trade regime in the importing country would not allow the product in.

RAMP contains many of the elements of value chain analysis through its work on improving irrigation infrastructure, farm to market roads, improving seed distribution, demonstration farms and greenhouses, providing loan capital, and helping develop export markets. RAMP had planned when the project began to do analysis of each product group to determine what were the inputs that were necessary to improve incomes (where were the problems that needed to be addressed), but pressure to achieve quick results short-circuited the process. As a result RAMP was closer to a collection of activities that theoretically could have led to a true value chain, but each element was implemented by a different implementing partner. All too often each partner worked with a different group of farmers without attempting to choose farmers that were benefiting from rehabilitated irrigation or roads. The lending schemes were enormously successful, as were the demonstration farms, but there was no effort by RAMP to assure a linkage.

Similarly, efforts by FLAG to develop business development services and assist SMEs to secure bank loans were not targeted on the needs for more traders to supply inputs or market produce from schemes where the infrastructure people were working. This is important, as farmers commented to the Team that they wish there were processors within their province who could use their output.

The value chain would have had a better chance of working if RAMP had emphasized fewer provinces and tried to provide an integrated package for those provinces. By not coordinating they had a wider spread of the benefits, but did not have an effective value chain.

There is an example of a value chain approach that could have been used, but was not. There have been considerable problems with the exports of products from Afghanistan. While there is more profit to be made through these exports, and especially the table grape export effort that RoP was attempting, it is also much more difficult. RoP had considerable problems with border formalities that necessitated shifting cargo from one vehicle to another, inspections at Karachi port that

ruined a shipment, and import requirements in the receiving country. All of these problems suggest inadequate attention to the details of export and might have been addressable if there had been an export promotion or export information service within the project, or possibly if RAMP could have coordinated with other USAID work on trade policy. It does not make sense to heighten the expectations of farmers to grow the high value crop if at the end of the season they have that product ruined in transit to its ultimate consumers.

### **C. Coordination within RAMP and with USAID; coordination between donors**

There is always talk about the need to coordinate and that it is a good and a necessary thing. But, it is also recognized that it is time and staff intensive. The demands on RAMP, like the demands within the USAID/Afghanistan mission are such that it is difficult to do what is necessary and good. There is a good reason to coordinate and thus the Team has to urge projects and USAID to do what is possible to encourage coordination.

RAMP made enormous efforts to involve implementing partners from other coalition countries who would normally have only been funded by their own governments. This degree of coordination was a model and played a role in encouraging other donors to get involved in agricultural activities.

In the interests of sustainability RAMP began a number of credit programs that were only of marginal success. The banks felt that one of their problems was that people did not want to borrow because there were so many donors willing to give away the item. USAID was trying to move the banks toward sustainable market-oriented interest rates while others were unresponsive. Sustainability is harmed when one donor's approach contradicts the approach of another. Similarly the Team ran into USAID efforts to have the farmers purchase their inputs while other donors were providing them for free.

The Team noticed that there was insufficient coordination of activities within RAMP that made a mockery of the value chain approach. To use a value chain approach each activity ought to bring its expertise to bear on solving a problem of increasing rural incomes. RAMP work on irrigation ought to have been complemented by farm-to-market roads to get the output of that system to market and then help in developing value added products that use the farmer's output. Instead, each of these RAMP activities made separate decisions as to whom to help and where. The decisions were not coordinated. Might the dehydration plant in Charikar have benefitted if the demonstration farms or greenhouses had emphasized products that could be dehydrated? The VFUs were very successful but could have been even more productive if there had been help in marketing or other value added uses.

USAID and donors have to figure out a way to improve coordination and collaboration. The Team recognizes that while it is difficult and unlikely there is a need for some broad parameters on development assistance in areas such as gender emphasis, sustainability, moving people toward market interest rates, greater use of local contractors, human capacity development, etc.. Total success is not possible, partial success would be helpful.

### **D. RAMP as Catalyst**

The Team heard repeatedly from other donors about how RAMP's rapid fire entrance into the field, working in many areas and showing that it was possible to be in rural areas and achieve significant accomplishments, encouraged others to get involved. Given the turmoil in Afghanistan when RAMP started, and throughout its life, there was a natural hesitation about working in remote areas where security might be a problem. RAMP legitimized such efforts and showed that by and large security concerns could be addressed. When security concerns could not be handled, such as when RAMP had seven employees murdered, RAMP promptly closed down operations in Helmand and shifted to Herat.

## **E. Gender**

Among RAMP's more than fifty job orders, six mention women and one – FAO's village women's poultry production and market development program<sup>28</sup> – targets them specifically. Another job order, the Microfinance Investment Support Facility for Afghanistan (MISFA) made agriculture sector (including livestock) loans involving women and emphasized providing revolving credit for women. Among the other job orders, parts of CRS' western Afghanistan agri-business support program focused on activities directed at women and three others cite accomplishments that involved women.

Notwithstanding the comparatively small number of job orders involving women, RAMP activities clearly benefitted tens of thousands of women in the agricultural sector. For example, during the women's poultry project more than 28,000 women were trained and that training was highly effective, with impact continuing to be felt down to the present.<sup>29</sup> Village women in Parwan with whom the team spoke affirmed this point, emphasizing that they had learned how to feed and care for chickens, build a coop, and recognize and prevent diseases – and, continue to use what they had learned. They also said that as a result of the training the number of eggs per chicken increased markedly.

Under the CRS program five training centers for women were established for the processing of tomato paste, jam, and juices. Some of the women trained under this program have begun their own cottage businesses providing processing services to their villages. Under the grape revitalization project, the ROP women's program specialist provided production and marketing advice to 1,400 women almond tree farmers in Balkh and Samangand provinces. Likewise, as part of its dried vegetable program, DWC provided training for women in the small-scale production of sundried tomatoes. Problems with the purchase of tomatoes from farmers caused the end of this activity.

Closely related to training, RAMP assisted women in establishing networks and organizing groups to coordinate their activities locally and expand them through their districts and provinces. Under the women's poultry project, for instance, 1,020 village producer groups were established and, in turn, these groups selected 414 village group leaders. The group leaders played a critically important role, becoming the focal point for training and advisory services to their village women and facilitating the marketing of their eggs in major urban centers. The CRS project established two self help groups on the collective farming of small plots and, as part of its grain postharvest training, storage, and milling project, GIA helped create women's and widows associations that got involved in potato chip processing, dairy processing, and carpet weaving.

Finally, tens of thousands of women benefitted financially as a result of RAMP activities. For example, villagers' incomes from egg production increased significantly as a result of RAMP. The women the team spoke with in Parwan reported earning an average of about 400 afghanis (\$8) a week by the end of RAMP, in sharp contrast to pre-RAMP levels of 0-30 afghanis a week (very few were not producing eggs for sale). The women reported that half or more of this income has ended since RAMP ended. While the team was unable to obtain detailed disaggregated data showing loan amounts to women, MISFA's final report covering the period July 2003 through August 2005 indicates that about 77,000 of its nearly 90,000 "active women loan clients" were part of a single implementing partner's (BRAC) activities.<sup>30</sup> The MISFA report further indicates that a separate study had determined that slightly less than fifty percent of BRAC's loans were in

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<sup>28</sup> Also called the Development of Rural Poultry Production Program.

<sup>29</sup> As noted above, there are sustainability problems that have already eroded some of the gains achieved.

<sup>30</sup> MISFA Final RAMP Report, August 2005, Annex A, p.12.

the agricultural sector (including livestock).<sup>31</sup> According to a former RAMP staffer familiar with MISFA, clients have used loans for activities such as dairy production, poultry, livestock, and sheep/goat rearing, and woolen cloth weaving. During RAMP women from the CRS project's jam and juice centers were processing, bottling, and selling products in the Herat Bazaar and as of August 2005 had achieved modest profits (less than five percent). The Evaluation Team observed firsthand women working in the Parwan dehydrated vegetable factory who were trained by RAMP and have been earning income ever since.

## VI. Overall Assessment

### A. Major Achievements

**RAMP was a major success.** Its objective was to rebuild agricultural markets and it did rebuild irrigations systems and roads that helped to improve agricultural production and income. While it's overall success was not the \$1.7 billion that was claimed in the *Final Report* it still was an exceptional \$673 million or more than four times the cost of the project. What makes this accomplishment even more impressive is that it was achieved during a time of conflict and instability.

**Complex:** RAMP was an exceptionally complex project with many different activities scattered throughout Afghanistan involving 63 different implementing partners. The logistics and management of this process was difficult. While technical (or engineering) quality control was very high, monitoring of the impact on people was much weaker.

**Taking Risks:** USAID ought to take risks in any development program, as change is difficult and fraught with potential pitfalls. Some activities that were not highlighted in the *Final Report* ought to have received commendation. For example, there was no effective banking system in the country after the Taliban government fell. There were no private banks (other than the *hawala*) and the government banks were moribund. RAMP to its credit worked with new private banks to develop new financial instruments and make SME loans, loans in rural areas, and loans that benefit agriculture. That these have continued to be made is an accomplishment, even if their size is still too small. RAMP gambled with the establishment of a venture capital firm and while it failed miserably, the effort was commendable. Hopefully, what has been learned from the failure will increase the chances of success next time. The Team expects that USAID did not actually lose money on this effort, as the firm closed shop before it had made any deals. The micro-finance revolving credit model has been tried successfully in many countries and appears to be viable in Afghanistan even where people abhor the concept of interest.

Another example of taking a risk for development and trying something different is the water users association in Herat's Injil irrigation system. The irrigation systems are ancient and decision making has not been democratic. In the neighboring Guzara scheme the upstream users who were richer and more powerful refused to give up the water they were using in excess of their historic rights. This was the rule rather than the exception in irrigation systems that were rehabilitated. But in Injil the RAMP implementing partner was able to secure agreements and as a result a whole new democratic model exists. The Team is concerned about the association's sustainability because it remains in unregistered legal limbo, but RAMP is commended for at least creating it, helping it get organized and underway, and drafting the papers necessary for it to seek legal status, even if it has not yet been successful in actually gaining legal status.

**Traders and the Private Sector:** Afghanistan has traditionally been renowned for its traders. Decades of turmoil and disincentives under a communist government and then the Taliban, led to

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid, p. 13.

many of the best people fleeing the country and becoming successful elsewhere. Rebuilding this capability is difficult and it is possible that in the process of doing so through donor support the traders' inclination to seek profit will be blunted. It is too easy to learn the development game and how to get money from donors. RAMP worked commendably to develop associations of traders to improve input supply and it worked with groups of farmers (formed into associations) to develop seed enterprises (the VBSEs) and cold storage facilities.

It is possible that even one of the activities that the Team was upset about might work out in the end. ICARDA's greenhouses use plastic sheeting, seeds, and fertilizers that are not available in-country and efforts to set up a channel from Dubai were unsuccessful. But, farmer associations going through their normal input suppliers might convince regular traders that here is a profit that can be made if traders use their contacts in other countries. It may be that coddling traders is the wrong tactic and normal processes, which take time, will be most effective.

**Catalyst:** RAMP was a catalyst that convinced other donors to get into this area; RAMP had implementing partners from other countries and put USAID money into good activities being done by other donors and the UN. This degree of collaboration is commendable, and deserves recognition partly because it is so rare.

**Sustainability:** One unfortunate intervention was the *Women and Poultry* activity implemented by the FAO. It was a good idea, was well implemented and was showing results. But there was insufficient attention by RAMP to what would happen with the end of project. Some mechanism to continue the activity ought to have been sought, since many participating women were devastated at finding out that there was nothing after RAMP to enable them to get replacement pullets and feed, even if they had the money and were willing to pay. Having undergone the training and had positive experiences with the increased income from the project, they were left with hopes dashed. The program failed to anticipate and plan for what happens when the PACD is reached and no more project money can be disbursed. Moreover, too many RAMP activities were started in the last year of the project and could not possibly have been sufficiently off the ground to be sustainable.

The demonstration farms illustrate both the problem of sustainability and the problems that arise when the project life is only three years. The project implementers found that the first year was spent in getting the farms established on host farmer land. The second year focused on convincing farmers in the area of the value of the new farming techniques and crops. The third year was when adoption began and the benefits began to pour in. But, it was also found that a fourth year is needed to correct errors and build on the successes achieved. USAID ought to recognize the problems of three-year agricultural projects and consider the benefits of slightly longer ones, or allowing projects to have their end date shifted, even if it means an increase in funding.

**Benefits of Training:** USAID knows from long experience the benefits of training and human capacity development. The project ought to have begun earlier to strengthen the Ministry of Agriculture, but what it did do, albeit late, was exceptionally useful. More time for this work would have been helpful – another argument for a longer project life. The training provided for farmers, traders, agri-enterprises, and banks also resulted in many benefits. Had there been proper monitoring, these benefits would have been known to RAMP and ought to have resulted in shifting resources toward training.

**Developing Export Markets:** There were many problems with developing export markets. While the Team applauds RAMP's efforts, it feels they were ultimately poorly conceived. For a country that had been in turmoil for so long and had lost many of its export markets, it might have been better to begin with an emphasis on increasing stable crop production to improve food security, then to increase high value crops for the domestic market (initially consumption of fresh items

and later developing agri-processors) before looking to export markets. The failures in export markets were due to lack of experience and knowledge. More work is needed to figure out what are possible export items. The Team finds the search for fresh table grape export markets to have been ludicrous. Exporting fresh products was fraught with enormous difficulties that RAMPS's implementing partners could not overcome. It would have been better to develop the local market and maybe improve the raisin market, where Afghanistan used to excel.

**Coordination** is something that is always called for and we usually find that there was not enough of it. The Team can understand that the work was complex and there were not enough staff, but that is an excuse that could have been addressed better than it was. RAMP did not coordinate internally, since activities operated independently of each other and were not mutually reinforcing. Work with ag-input dealers could have been combined with demonstration farms and rehabilitated irrigation systems to do a better job of support for the value chain. Nearly all aspects of the value chain were covered, but they were not coordinated into a integrated program. USAID needed to assure greater coordination with other projects and with donors. The Team knows this is difficult, but there has to be a way to do it better.

## **B. Impact**

**Serious Errors:** The Team was surprised at some of the errors made in by the Project in determining impact. This is partly a problem of trying to do this work at the end without having properly done the baseline work earlier in the project. The Team understands that during the first year, when RAMP was essentially a humanitarian assistance project, development of impact baselines might not have been possible. However, that does not mean that the necessary work should have been allowed to lapse until the project's final year. The initial PRAs were a good idea, but were badly implemented and resulted in baseline data that was considered useless. The rush to judgment was such that there were many errors made in determining impact: projects had their benefits misestimated, the basis of estimating the value, NPVs, was violated, and issues like attribution were not addressed. Analysis that was done in the last months to determine impact was seriously flawed, resulting in estimates that were equally flawed. Someone ought to have been able to read the reports, follow the methodology and the statistical tools used and advised the consultants on how to re-do their work (as in the case of the BRIDGES analysis of demonstration farms).

The Team has emphasized and re-emphasized RAMP's failure to correctly value benefits and use a discount rate. Responsibility for this failure extends also to USAID, which ought to have caught the error earlier and had it corrected.

**Knowledge of Baseline:** This rush to judgment, combined with a lack of sound baselines, meant that major categories of benefits were excluded. Of the work the Team observed, the project did not take credit for water supplied to Herat city by the improved irrigation system in Injil and the obvious *multiplier* benefits to the local economy of increased agricultural production were not captured.

## **C. Lessons Learned**

### **1. Sustainability**

Too often in this evaluation the Team ran into problems where the sustainability of activities could not be assured. There are many reasons why the problem arises and the general point is that all activities need to look at the issue and endeavor to determine a solution. The Team found a number of activities, begun late in RAMP's life that were not sustainable. USAID ought to seek some way to provide additional funding, even when a project is over. In some cases a no-cost extension might work, or even a minor and limited cost-extension might be possible. The Team does not know the answer but hopes some solution might be found.

## **2. More attention needs to be paid for monitoring to do what it is supposed to do**

RAMP monitoring was largely ineffective because there was too few M&E staff for such a large and complex project and implementing partner capability to gather data was generally inadequate. In any future project, staff and resources must assure that the accuracy and reliability of data be verified through regular on-site visits and transparent and readily available documentation. Pressure from the White House and NSC led to the project focusing on selected physical outputs and not on impact. USAID/Afghanistan's PMP emphasizes impact and USAID has to emphasize to contractors that analysis of impact must be done properly.

## **3. Contemplate a five-year life of project**

After careful consideration and discussion with many RAMP project participants and beneficiaries an important conclusion is more time is needed to successfully implement and sustain a complex program where demonstrations plots are integral to success. Usually the first year potential participants are afraid to commit to new programs that might waste their time and money. By the second year a few more will join in and in the third year many more participate. But, it takes at least two crops to make a determination of success and, therefore, it is the fourth year or later where significant results across the range of farmers are realized. Contemplation of a five-year life of project for a complicated project like RAMP or its follow-on should be considered.

## **4. The women's poultry project should be re-thought and phase two mechanisms of resupply of inputs should be established**

It is recommended that the women's poultry project be reconsidered to include a phase two element that establishes input structures including feedstuffs, chick hatcheries, and pullet rearing facilities at the provincial level.

## **5. Responsibility for infrastructure maintenance and repair must be assured**

Discussed within this report is evidence of infrastructure deterioration occurring after installation by RAMP. Lack of maintenance threatens to unravel the gains achieved by the agricultural beneficiaries. It is recommended that in the near term design phase program developers seek alternative way to achieve after installation maintenance of structures.

## **6. Activities that require imported inputs should not be approved without due attention to long-term availability**

Gains derived from the protected agriculture program were enormous. However, unavailable imported inputs used in the design have threatened the sustainability of these gains. Projects implemented that require imported inputs should be reconsidered in light of their prospective sustainability when activities end.

## **7. Support the development of an Afghanistan protected agriculture input association**

It is recommended that steps be taken to develop an Afghanistan association of protected agriculture input dealers, whose sole purpose would be to secure a government import license and then gather funds to send a purchaser overseas to purchase inputs needed by members.

## **8. USAID assistance to legalize Water User Association**

RAMP was very successful in establishing a new way to organization irrigation systems: the water user associations. RAMP and USAID were successful in getting legislation passed to legalize the status of Water User Association but there have been delays in final registration. This significant benefit ought not be lost and the Team encourages USAID, possibly working through a contractor, to continue the effort to ensure this success.

## **9. Coordination**

Coordination is necessary and valuable, but it is also difficult and time consuming. The Team acknowledges the problems that USAID faces but still encourages the Mission to seek ways to improve intra-project coordination, intra-USAID coordination, and inter-Donor coordination. The Team believes that improvements are possible.

## **10. First Principles for USAID Activities**

The Team proposes that USAID consider establishing agreed principles for its activities in Afghanistan. This can relate to issues already highlighted like coordination and sustainability, but it can also relate to the use of the private sector, encouragement of associations, use of market interest rates, importance of impact assessments, and the like. Thinking through such a list might be helpful to USAID when it meets with other donors to attempt to get them on board. Too often the Team found that other donors were undercutting USAID efforts through give-aways of inputs where USAID was attempting cost sharing and loans.

## **11. Ornamental agriculture agri-business possibilities with protected agriculture technologies should be developed for expansion**

Potential opportunities in the ornamental/horticulture agriculture environment have appeared, mimicking the protected agriculture technology described earlier in this report. It is recommended that an effort be launched to investigate and promote the expansion of the techniques and methods incorporated into the greenhouse structure in order to tap into the huge potential for income gains

## **12. Engage the Ministry of Trade in negotiating less restrictive access for trucks crossing land borders**

It is recommended that an effort be made to engage the ministry responsible for negotiating trade regime policy to set an agenda aimed at eliminating or minimizing trade barriers (and especially trucking issues) for Afghanistan fresh fruit products being transported into Pakistan and India. Potentially large shipments of fresh fruit are at stake and government support is absolutely essential for such transactions to be realized. This is a good area for collaboration with other USAID programs working on trade policy.

## **13. Seek out investors to start manufacturing fertilizers in Afghanistan**

Many farmers interviewed stated that a major deterrent for them is the unavailability of reasonably priced fertilizers. Many requested assistance from donor organizations to identify potential investors to open a fertilizer manufacturing operation within Afghanistan.

## **14. USAID to Seek Help in Reviewing Technical Document**

The Team recognizes the enormous difficulty facing the USAID staff in trying to read, understand and comment on technical documents received. In this evaluation we have highlighted a number of documents that USAID ought to have reviewed and directly the contractor to make changes. An example of this is the Bridges assessment of the demonstration farms. The Team suggests that USAID/Afghanistan consider requesting help from technical staff at USAID/Washington to provide this expertise. Some of the staff required might be engineers, people with expertise in specialized areas of agriculture and livestock development, economists, sociologists, monitoring, rural sociologists, survey designers, etc..

## **15. USAID/Afghanistan ought to consider establishing an electronic library**

This Evaluation Team was fortunate in having USAID/Afghanistan put at their disposal all official files. Having members of the RAMP team still in Kabul and working on another

USAID/Afghanistan project, ASAP, provided the Team with electronic access to an enormous range of documents. It is not always likely that such files will be available and the Team suggests that USAID consider establishing an electronic library to store these documents so they might be available in the future.

#### **16. Preserve formulas and detailed methodologies**

While a relatively minor recommendation this would prove a benefit for anyone who has to review how results were obtained. Too many of the spreadsheets supplied to the Evaluation Team by RAMP were saved without any formulas. This makes it harder to determine how the results were obtained. Similarly in many of the final reports from RAMP's Job Orders there was insufficient information on how the results, especially the impact results, were derived. This makes it difficult to determine the accuracy of the resulting numbers.

## Annexes

### A. Statement of Work (SOW)

#### IMPACT EVALUATION OF THE REBUILDING OF AGRICULTURAL MARKET PROGRAM (RAMP)

##### Objective

The overall objective of this impact evaluation is to determine the impact of RAMP on the agriculture sector with special focus on food security and income of the rural population of Afghanistan. The findings and recommendations resulting from this evaluation will be used in future design and implementation of agriculture programs in Afghanistan.

##### Background

The \$145 million **Rebuilding Agricultural Markets Program (RAMP)** was implemented from June 2003 to September 2006 by Chemonics, Inc., as prime contractor and 35 other implementing partners. RAMP's completion date was originally June 30, 2006 but was extended to allow the completion of the CY 2006 cropping cycle. Moreover, a number of agriculture infrastructure activities could not be completed on time to allow the Contractor to process administrative and financial documents by June 30, 2006. At the request of the Minister the services of the senior technical adviser to the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) was extended as well.

During FY 2003, restoring food security was USAID/Afghanistan's highest priority. More than 20 years of conflict, exacerbated by years of drought, ruined the Afghan agriculture economy. Crops were uprooted, livestock lost, farmers heavily indebted, agricultural assets destroyed, exodus of managerial and technical expertise, research and extension were non-functional and Afghans were deprived of access to improved technologies and market information. To increase food availability and improve purchasing power, USAID provided the rural population access to food assistance, food-for-work programs through different mechanisms. The RAMP was one of the mechanisms used by the Mission.

The first year of implementation, RAMP focused on implementing the Mission's humanitarian assistance and cash for work programs (construction and repair of war-damaged and neglected agriculture facilities, and rehabilitation of small-scale irrigation systems, market facilities, and secondary and tertiary roads). A large share of the projects was implemented by NGOs and local contractors. RAMP initiated crop and livestock demonstrations, village seed production enterprises and integrated pest management and information on improved/new technologies and markets were communicated through mass media networks.

In FY 2004, RAMP expanded its geographic coverage from 13 target provinces to all 34 provinces. It established a network of veterinary service providers, financial service institutions and agricultural input dealer associations. It also broadened its thematic coverage to include business skills, and marketing development and microfinance. The program also engaged in enterprise capacity building to increase post harvest activities for market value-added processed products to reach consumers in the domestic and international markets.

By October 2004, RAMP report indicated that it was well along in its goal of achieving a marketable output of \$250 million over its three year life span. The Program increased the number of financial intermediaries and trained loan officers, and the development of processing, marketing and storage facilities for agricultural products. Agro-processors expanded the value and volume of traded inputs, equipment, machinery, and processed products. The Microfinance Investment and Support Facility Afghanistan (MIFSA), which is also supported by the World

Bank (WB), the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF), and the Japanese Social Development Fund provided credit services to small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

Towards the end of the Program, RAMP was way ahead of its target output of \$250 million. The Contractor estimated the program's contribution to Afghanistan's agriculture sector at about \$1.7 billion or a return on investment ratio of 11:1.

To achieve the \$1.7 billion value added for the agriculture sector, the Program

- rehabilitated agriculture infrastructure (539 structures and 823 km of canal) benefiting 494,876 hectares of farmland; and
- 567 km of farm to market road (reduced post harvest losses).

The Program also provided:

- 1) Extension services for improved technology and farm practices to about one million farmers, poultry production and management to 28,000 village women, improved post harvest facilities (50 cold storage rooms installed;
- 2) Built 140 market centers and one Dried Vegetable Factory);
- 3) vaccinated/treated about 25 million livestock;
- 4) Disbursed 28 million micro loans; and
- 5) Linked farmers, processors and traders to domestic and international markets and helped them meet market specifications.

RAMP reestablished trade relations with India, Dubai, Pakistan, Russia, Ukraine and United Arab Emirates (UAE) and introduced dehydrated vegetables to European market. It provided technical assistance to the Ministry of Agriculture.

### **RAMP Objective and Components**

The goal of RAMP was to enhance the food security and increase the incomes of Afghanistan's rural population by increasing:

- a) Agricultural productivity and output, and
- b) Incomes through market linkages - making the linkages between producers, processors and markets more efficient.

The quantitative indicator of the program was to increase the marketable value of agricultural products by \$250 million over the life of the contract (July 2003 – September 2006), distributed as follows:

- 1) Increased fresh and dried fruit value by \$100 million;
- 2) Increased nut value by \$20 million;
- 3) Increased fresh and dried vegetable value by \$50 million;
- 4) Increased livestock and poultry value by \$50 million; and
- 5) Increased wheat and food grains value by \$30 million.

The Program was comprised of four components/CLINs (Contract Line Item Number):

- (I) Management, Administration and Technical Assistance
- (II) Physical Infrastructure Reconstruction or Repair
- (III) Rural Financial Services
- (IV) Agricultural Technology and Market Development

The first (I) component allowed the prime contractor to:

- 1) Identify opportunities to create and strengthen market linkages and increase sales of agricultural products, increase the flow of capital to agribusinesses and producers, and improve infrastructure vital for agricultural and rural sector development;
- 2) Subcontract with implementing partners (IPs) to carry out specific activities; and
- 3) Monitor and evaluate the success of these activities, and quantify their cumulative impact.

Activities under its second (II) component were mostly managed by subcontractors. These activities included:

- 1) Repair of irrigation systems needed to expand and improve agricultural output;
- 2) Rehabilitated farm-to-market roads that producers need both to reach markets and to access inputs; and
- 3) Developed marketing infrastructure, including collection centers and wholesale markets.

The project's rural financial services component (III) expanded the country's network of financial institutions. It supported microfinance institutions and worked with the Afghanistan International Bank in Kabul to provide short-term credit to small- and medium-sized agribusiness firms. In addition, it provided funds to the Afghanistan Leasing and Finance Company to help entrepreneurs acquire the capital assets they need to improve value adding operations (e.g. cold storage, improved processing, refrigerated transportation). This component also helped create an equity fund – the Afghanistan Renew Fund - to support private agribusiness development. Finally, it addressed the critical need for more business development services (BDS) through a grant to UNDP.

The focus of the project's market development initiatives (IV) was to “produce what will sell” and create more effective linkages between producers, processors and markets. Complementing this focus on markets and marketing systems, the program introduced improved agricultural technology to help farmers access and use new crop varieties, fertilizers and equipment to increase their productivity and efficiency.

## **Terms of Reference**

### **A. Tasks / Questions**

The RAMP Evaluation will focus on answering the following key questions:

1. Based upon program activities, outputs, and outcomes, assess the extent to which the Program's overall objective was achieved with special focus on the following questions:
  - a. Was the program successful in addressing the needs of Afghanistan's agriculture sector and its target beneficiaries? (consider gender aspect)
  - b. What was the impact of the program interventions in originally targeted 13 provinces?
  - c. Did RAMP effectively support USAID/Afghanistan's objectives?
  - d. To what extent did RAMP support other programs/projects funded by USAID?
2. To what extent has RAMP successfully trained and involved the Ministry of Agriculture staff in its activity planning and implementation?
3. Was the general strategy of demand-driven approach a sound strategy considering the economic and political situation at the time of program implementation?
4. The implementation of activities under market development and infrastructure was through implementation partners by issuing job orders for specific area activities. Was this

implementation arrangement effective in terms of resource allocation and monitoring the progress of the program in achieving its goal?

5. Chemonics submitted an economic assessment of the impact of the program. Review the report and assess the following:
  - a. Soundness of the methodology and approach used in quantifying the program's impact;
  - b. Validity of major results findings, especially the overall impact on the agricultural sector of \$1.7 billion and the 823 km of irrigation canals rehabilitated (if possible identify the locations of these canals).
6. Review the monitoring system used to evaluate the impacts of the activities. How effective was the monitoring system?

#### **B. Team Composition and Level of Effort**

The review team will be composed of three consultants, namely: socio-economic specialist, project/program management/institutional specialist and a monitoring and evaluation specialist. Since women are a key component of an agricultural economy, it would be advantageous to have at least one of the specialists be a woman.

1. **Socio-economic specialist** – shall have at least 10 years experience of applied experience with experience in the design and implementation of development projects/programs, preferably with experience in semi-arid regions.
2. **Project Management/Institutional specialist** – shall have at least 10 years of applied experience with at least 5 years experience in project implementation and community development.
3. **Monitoring and evaluation specialist** – shall have at least 10 years of experience in the design and implementation and evaluation of development programs/projects.

**C. Period of Performance and Level of Effort:** The evaluation should take place over the period of 27 working days, with a breakdown roughly as follows:

1. Meet with key USAID personnel in Kabul and prepare inception report that includes a preliminary workplan (including identification of criteria for selecting provinces for field research) and an outline of final report: 3 days.
2. Conduct initial data collection in Kabul using data sources noted below: 6 days.
3. Field evaluations in three different Provinces (one specialist per Province): 6 days.
4. Complete data collection activities in Kabul: 3 days.
5. Prepare drafts of individual and final reports: 5 days.
6. Prepare and deliver briefing on findings to ADAG, key USAID staff (Mission Director and Deputy Director, SO5 Team, etc.) and stakeholders in Kabul, including ASAP staff and Afghan officials: 2 days.
7. Prepare and submit Final Report and make improvements in Individual Reports: 2 days.

#### **D. Methodology and Data Sources**

The review will rely on primary and secondary data sources, various project documents and interviews with key officials from government counterparts, project staff and other organizations/persons directly or indirectly linked with RAMP activities, including international organizations and interest groups.

## **E. Deliverables**

**1. Inception report** – within the first two days, the team will prepare a brief inception report for USAID/Kabul that will include a preliminary work plan (to be revised in consultation with USAID as needed) and an outline of the final report. The work plan will indicate the team’s proposed methodology, schedule for data collection, analysis, report writing and interim meetings for USAID. The outline of the final report shall be approved by USAID.

**2. Interim Briefings** – the team will provide USAID periodic interim briefings and feedback on the team’s findings, as needed. Initial briefing(s) will include discussion with USAID of criteria for selecting provinces for field research.

**3. Draft Final Report and Draft Team Member Reports** – Each team member will produce a report on his/her own work as assigned by the team leader. This report will be used by the Team Leader to draft the final report and these reports will be annexed to the final report for information.

**4. Stakeholder Briefing** – A final briefing will be prepared and presented to ADAG, key USAID staff (Mission Director and Deputy Director, SO5 Team, etc.) and stakeholders in Kabul, including ASAP staff and Afghan officials.

**5. Final Report** – Will have an Executive Summary and will include findings, conclusions and recommendations to USAID for future action. The main body of the Final Report will not exceed 40 pages (including Executive Summary). Annexes will include the Team Member Reports, lists of people interviewed (including organizational affiliation), locations visited, and other information as appropriate.

## **Annex**

### ***B. Evaluation Team***

Dr. Neal P. Cohen, Economist and Team Leader. Dr. Cohen was a USAID direct hire economist from 1979 to 2000 serving as a regional officer in southern Africa based in Swaziland and with REDSO/Eastern and Southern Africa. He also served with USAID in Sri Lanka, Nepal and South Africa. From 2000 to 2006 he was a USAID Personal Services Contractor in South Africa. Since 2006 he has been a short-term private consultant working for the Mitchell Group, SATIG, BankWorld, DAI, IRIS/University of Maryland, and TRG/

Dr. Harold Lippman, Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist. Dr. Lippman is a consultant who spent more than thirty years evaluating and investigating U.S. Government programs and activities. For twenty years he worked for the Government Accountability Office (GAO) and U.S. Senate and House of Representatives as an evaluator and investigator. For almost ten years he worked for USAID in several capacities, including senior evaluation specialist (CDIE) and program manager for monitoring and evaluation (OTI). Since 2005, he has done short-term, USAID-related consulting for the International City Managers Association (ICMA) and International Business and Technical Consultants, Inc. (IBTCI).

William Albanos, Senior Agriculturalist and Institutional Specialist. Mr. Albanos is an agro-processing consultant with 40years experience in the food processing business. He has spent time since the 1990's traveling to foreign countries to instruct local processors on modern techniques for sausage production, meat cutting and merchandising, farm and agro-business management procedures. Additionally, he instructed in latest sanitary and phyto-sanitary regulations applicable for exports to the EU. He has designed and installed Hazard Analysis Critical Control Programs (HACCP) at meat processing facilities as required for exports to the US. He has also advised on export requirements for livestock and meat export products. He has traveled to Russia, Poland, Estonia, Romania, Slovakia, Macedonia, Ukraine, Mongolia, Moldova and Azerbaijan to promote the above activities.

## **Annex**

### **C. Persons consulted**

Agul, Mohamed & Crul, Nazar: grape farmers, Saleh Khill town, Parwan Province  
Ahad, Haji Abdul: Farmer, Parwan Bastan Improved Seed Company, VBSE, Parwan Province  
Ahmad, Figer: Directorate of Agriculture, Herat  
Ahmad, Haji Sultron: farmer in Gazarah irrigation scheme, Herat  
Ali, Engineer Behram: Project Manager Ghulum Rasul & Company, Mazar-e-Sharif  
Ali, Mahram: Extension worker, Aliabad, Kunduz province  
Amir, Daad Mohammad: Deputy Director, Field Operation, DCA  
Anwari, Mohammed Afzal: head ICARDA/Kunduz, Kunduz province  
Arif, Mohammad: farmer and principal of high school, Sad Ramazan Nekpai, Khanabad District, Kunduz Province  
Azam, Sayeed: Administrative Assistant, Director of Agriculture, Kunduz Province  
Azif, Dr. Asadullah Jihun: Manager Pamir Reconstruction Bureau (PRB), Kunduz  
Azizi, Abdul: Manager Development Works Dehydration Plant, Parwan Province  
Bashir, Mula: Head of Village Based Seed Enterprise, Aliabad, Kunduz Province  
Bhattarcharyya, Dr. Kamal: Regional Technical Advisor, CRS South Asia, Director of Afghanistan Program, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Herat, Afghanistan  
Boban, Allas: Finance, Parwan Bastan Improved Seed Company, VBSE, Parwan Province  
Briscoe, Raymond: Country Programme Director, DCA  
Darwish, Dr. Miralam: Deputy Regional Program Director, DCA, Mazar-e-Sharif  
Dost, Haji Mema: Head of Village Based Seed Enterprise, Khanabad, Kunduz Province  
Esmail, Dr.: Head of government Veterinary Field Unit, Kunduz city  
Ewald, Guy: Alternative Livelihoods Program (ALP) South, agricultural marketing, Kandahar  
Faizi, Ghulam Hazrat: owner Herat Ice Cream Factory, Herat  
Fakhri, Dr. Hirat: DCA, Herat  
Faoro, Louis: Chief of Party, Accelerating Sustainable Agriculture Program (ASAP), ex-COP RAMP  
Farid, Ahmad: technical staff, government Veterinary Field Unit, Kunduz city  
Fattori, Thomas: Deputy Chief of Party, Senior Agribusiness Development Specialist, Accelerating Sustainable Agriculture Program (ASAP)  
Fayequdin, Member, Parwan Bastan Improved Seed Company, VBSE, Parwan Province  
Ferguson, Allen: Operations Manager – Asia, Development Works (Canada) (formerly finance manager)  
Fleming, Lorene: Team Leader for Capacity Building Component (ASAP)  
Foster, Jeremy: Field Program Manager, Alternative Livelihoods Program (ALP) North, USAID/Afghanistan  
Ghulam, Abdul: deputy head of Kunduz Rehabilitation Association (KRA), Kabul  
Gohar, Kamran: Head of Credit, Afghanistan Finance Company (AFC), Kabul  
Gul, Kaka: Farmer, Parwan Bastan Improved Seed Company, VBSE, Parwan Province  
Habib, Rahman: Senior Program Planning Manager (ASAP)  
Habibullah: owner of demonstration farm, Kunduz Province  
Hafiz, Abdul: Mint oil and water distillery farmer, Kunduz Province  
Haider, Shahzad: Head of Corporate and Institutional Banking (and small and medium enterprise manager), AIB (Afghanistan International Bank), Kabul  
Haizi, Nooralhaq: Herat Ice Cream Factory, Herat Industrial Area, Herat  
Hakim, Abdul: Merchant in Mir Bacha Koot (Cold Storage owner)  
Hakim, Mohammad: VFU Paravet, Siagard Village, Balkh Province  
Hamedullah: Owner of Demonstration Farm, Kunduz Province  
Haq, Ziaull: Administrative Manager, Herat Ice Cream Factory, Herat  
Haqtoosh, G. Mohammad: Director of Kunduz Rehabilitation Association (KRA), Kabul  
Hassan, Eng. M: RAFA, Kabul  
Hussain, Engineer Noor: Director of Pamir Reconstruction Bureau (PRB), Kabul (formerly program manager)  
Imarmuddin, Sofi: Member Village Based Seed Enterprise, Khanabad District, Kunduz Province

Injil Water Users Association representatives: Sheer Ahman (Injil Baluk); Said Mehboob Shah (Taryaaq village); Haji Abdul Raheem (Injil Baluk); Timor Shah (Sarano village); Sheer Ahmad (Qetmaan village); Abdul Wahid (Sarano village); Sultan Ahmad (Khishrood village); Sharaaf din Zabiullah (Joko village); and Noor Ahmad (Joko village)

Jan, Haji Lal: Head of Village Based Seed Enterprise, Chardarah District, Kunduz Province

Jensen, Lena: Alternative Development and Agriculture Office, USAID/Afghanistan

Jihun, Dr. Asadullah: Manager, PRB, VFU, subcontractor to DCA, Kunduz Province

Judeh, Andres: ASAP Regional Director, Herat (previously with RAMP)

Khail, Sadruddin Omar: Manger Badam Bagh Green Houses, Ministry of Agriculture

Kohistani, Mohammad: Institutional Development Manager, Ministry of Agriculture, Mazar-e-Sharif

Kohistani, Ruqia: Enumerator for women and poultry project field interviews, Parwan Province

Lazinica, Adriana, Senior Program Manager, Program and Project Development Office, USAID/Afghanistan

Lea, J.D. Zach: Country Director, Roots of Peace (RoP), Kabul (formerly chief of party)

Lemma, Teshome: Economist and Impact Analyst in RAMP Monitoring & Evaluation Unit, RAMP/Chemonics

Majid, Abdul: farmer (farming on land owned by uncle), Taryak village, Injil irrigation scheme, Herat

Manan, Abdul Rahman: Country Manager, ICARDA (International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas), Afghanistan Program

Manan, Abdul: Deputy President, Parwan Bastan Improved Seed Company, VBSE (Village Based Seed Enterprise), Parwan Province

Mohammaddin: Green house owner, Kunduz Province

Mowladrd, PAC Trainer and Mgr of Seed Cleaner, Parwan Bastan Improved Seed Company, VBSE, Parwan Province

Mugu, Tom: Information Coordinator, Program and Project Development Office, USAID/Afghanistan

Naimatullah: technical staff, government Veterinary Field Unit, Kunduz city

Naqshbund, Crhulam: Grape and Cherry Demonstration farmer, Pacha Belandy town, Parwan Province

Nasir, Abdul: greenhouse owner, Kunduz province

Nekzad, Abdul Aziz: Director General of Agriculture, Kunduz Province

Nelson, Kaitlin: Manager of Women's Programs, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Herat, Afghanistan

Nessar, Mohammad Haroon: Poultry Production Director (ASAP)

Paamyaya, Hajib: Manager, agricultural store, Herat Agricultural Cooperatives Council (Agrcutat Cooperative M. A. Jami), Herat

Panah, Sameh, CEO, Afghanistan Finance Company (AFC), Kabul

Parwan women and poultry project participants: Dull Jan (Bayan District); Nasim Gull (Group Leader, Bayan District); Rukhshana (Bayan District); Seddiqa (Day Molay Yousef District); Shakiba (Qallay Wazeer District); Zibba Gull (Day Molay Yousef District)

Payne, Chris: former Head of RAMP Monitoring and Evaluation Unit

Priest, John: Infrastructure Specialist (ASAP)

Qadir, Abdul "Nazri": Quality Control Mgr, Badam Bagh Seed Laboratory, Kabul

Qahir, Abdul: President, Parwan Bastan Improved Seed Company, VBSE, Parwan Province

Qattali, Sayed Abdul Wahab: General (ret.), Herat

Rahim: Abdullah: Irrigation Department, Herat

Rahim: Farmer, Parwan Bastan Improved Seed Company, VBSE, Parwan Province

Rahime, M. Salim: Poultry Logistics, FAO – Kabul

Razug, Haji Abdul: Member, Parwan Bastan Improved Seed Company, VBSE, Parwan Province

Rizla, Dr. S. Javed H.: Assistant Country Manager and Senior Communication Specialist, ICARDA (International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas), Afghanistan Program

Rlung, Lutfullah: National Livestock Field Manager, FAO-Kabul and

Saboor, Mia Abdul, Project Management Specialist, Agriculture & Rural Development Dept., USAID/Afghanistan

Sagal, Roohulleh: Agricultural Office, KRA/Kunduz

Sahib, Miz: Farmer, Parwan Bastan Improved Seed Company, VBSE, Parwan Province

Sharafi, Naseer Mohammed: Engineer, KRA/Kunduz

Siddigi, Shamsuddin: MDE Officer, ICARDA, Kabul

Stoddard, Loren: Director, Alternative Development and Agriculture Office, USAID/Afghanistan

Sultani, Mohammad Ibrahim, Director of Infrastructure (ASAP)

Toomey, Francis: Resident Advisor, MISFA (Microfinance Investment Support Facility for Afghanistan),  
formerly with Shorebank Advisory Services (SAS)

Wali, Haji Abdul: Member Parwan Bastan Improved Seed Company, VBSE, Parwan Province

Zameer, (Engineer): Site Inspector, (ASAP) Mazar-e-Sharif

## Annex

### D. Sites Visited

This matrix was constructed to help the team prioritize where to visit and assign responsibility for each. In the *implementing partner* column the number refers to the RAMP job order, followed by the name of the partner. If there is a “\*\*” after the partner’s name that means the team had a copy of the implementing partner’s final report. In each provincial (or national) column there are the initials of the team members interested in that site and if the name is boxed, then that team member wanted to take prime responsibility.

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Implementing Partner</i>	<i>Balkh (Mazar)</i>	<i>Herat</i>	<i>Kabul</i>	<i>Kunduz</i>	<i>Parwan (Charikar)</i>	<i>National (Kabul)</i>
Afg Finance Co, SMEs	42 AFC **						42 WA NPC
Afg Intl Bank (SME loans)	40 AIB						40 NPC
Afghan renewal fund, venture capital	39 ACAP **						39 NPC
Agribusiness program (women)	27 CRS		27 WA2 NPC				
Ag input dealers	24 IFDC ** 52 AISP AMPS 54 AISP AMPS						24/52/54 WA
Business Development Services	41 FLAG **						41 NPC
Business Mentoring Project UNDP	41 UNDP						41 NPC
Grain post harvest, milling, processing	28 GIAI **	28 HL4	28 NPC	28	28 WA1 NPC	28	Airport HL
Dam reconstruction	15 RAFA					15 WA8	
Demonstration farms	08A ICARDA **				08a WA1	08a WA7	
Dried vegetables	26 DWC **					26 WA1 HL3 NPC	
Grape and Nut Processing	29 RoP **	29 WA2				29 WA2 HL5	
Green Kabul reforestation	32 UNOPS			32			
Integrated Pest Mgmt	FAO/GOAL/CADG						

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Implementing Partner</i>	<i>Balkh (Mazar)</i>	<i>Herat</i>	<i>Kabul</i>	<i>Kunduz</i>	<i>Parwan (Charikar)</i>	<i>National (Kabul)</i>
Irrigation Canals	03 DAI ** 10 ACTED ** 16 RAFA ** 27 BCRC/AREO/QCC** ** &BDCI ** &BDCIS &RAFA &EACC &STAAR ** &TCC &AREO 53 HAFO/GRC	53 WA4 NPC	27 WA3 HL2 NPC		03	10/16 WB4 HL4 NPC	
Lab control of dried fruits Raisin and Dried Fruit Ex Promotion Institute	29 RoP ?						HL WA
Livestock health VFU 31provinces	13 DCA **	HL				HL2	13 WA
Locust control	30 FAO ** 31 GOAL ** 50 FAO **	30/31/50		30	30/31/50 WA?5		
Marginal/drought agriculture	09 ICARDA **			09 WA	09 WA2 HL5	09 WA3	MoA WA HL
Microfinance loans	01 MRRD to MISFA **	HL	27 HL3 NPC				01 HL NPC
Min Ag capacity building	51 Chemonics/Abt						51 HL NPC
Potato Seed	06 ICARDA **			06 WA	06 WA5 HL2	06 WA9	MoA WA HL
Road rehabilitation	04 KRA 10 ACTED 17 AREA ** 20 PRB ** 38 AREA/PRB/KRA	17/38 HL			04/20 WA3 NPC	10 WB6	
Seed Enterprises	07 ICARDA **				07 WA4	07 WA5	
Vet training/vaccinations			WA1 HL5				

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Implementing Partner</i>	<i>Balkh (Mazar)</i>	<i>Herat</i>	<i>Kabul</i>	<i>Kunduz</i>	<i>Parwan (Charikar)</i>	<i>National (Kabul)</i>
Water user associations	44 DAI **		44 WA4 HL1 NPC				44
Women poultry	05 FAO **		05 WA5 HL4		05 HL1	05 WA10 HL1	

## Annex

### E. Work plan Schedule

#### Schedule for RAMP Evaluation Team

Sun 28 Oct	arrive Kabul	
Mon 29 Oct	meet with USAID on evaluation; review documents in USAID files	
Tue 30 Oct	meet ex-RAMP COP and DCOP	
Wed 31 Oct	Security briefing (select provinces); review documents; outline/workplan/schedule to USAID	
Thu 01 Nov	set up interviews in Kabul and field, especially Mazar and Kunduz	
<b>Fri 02 Nov</b>	<b>off day</b>	
Sat 03 Nov	meet USAID on schedule/sites/documents/people; key people interviews	
Sun 04 Nov	schedule development Kabul; interviews	Hal fly Kabul-Mazar
Mon 05 Nov	Bill/Neal fly to Kunduz (couldn't land); return Kabul	Hal Mazar site visits
Tue 06 Nov	Bill/Neal drive to Kunduz, site visits	Hal Mazar site visits
Wed 07 Nov	Bill/Neal site visits Kunduz	Hal Mazar site visits
Thu 08 Nov	Bill/Neal site visits Kunduz, drive Kunduz-Kabul	Hal fly Mazar-Kabul
<b>Fri 09 Nov</b>	<b>off day (discussion of impressions; lessons learned; analytical weaknesses)</b>	
Sat 10 Nov	interviews Kabul, prepare for work in Herat; meet with USAID	
Sun 11 Nov	Hal/Neal fly Kabul-Herat, site visits Herat	Bill drive to/from Charikar site visits
Mon 12 Nov	Hal/Neal site visits Herat	Bill drive to/from Charikar site visits
Tue 13 Nov	Hal/Neal site visits Herat	Bill site visits Kabul
Wed 14 Nov	Hal/Neal fly Herat-Kabul	Bill site visits Kabul
Thu 15 Nov	Interviews, site visits Kabul	
<b>Fri 16 Nov</b>	<b>off day</b>	
Sat 17 Nov	site visits Kabul (if needed);	
Sun 18 Nov	discuss conclusions, fill gaps, write	
Mon 19 Nov	write	
Tue 20 Nov	write; meet with USAID	
Wed 21 Nov	write	
Thu 22 Nov	draft of complete document	
<b>Fri 23 Nov</b>	<b>off day; revisions to draft</b>	
Sat 24 Nov	polish document; final draft to USAID	
Sun 25 Nov	prepare and finalize presentation	
Mon 26 Nov	presentation of conclusions to USAID	
Tue 27 Nov	depart	
Wed 28 Nov	arrive US destinations	
Sat 01 Dec	receipt of comments from USAID	
Sat 08 Dec	final report sent to USAID	

## **Annex**

### **F. Documents Consulted**

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## Annex

### **G. Comments and Elaborations**

**The training functions** of RAMP stand out as one of the more successful mentoring and vocational undertakings. The training of direct and/or indirect Ministry of Agriculture (MAIL) individuals addressed the needs of the Afghanistan agricultural sector. Many venues were addressed directly with seminars, classes and demonstrations. The RAMP financed government Badam Bagh seed testing laboratory and protected agriculture center are prime testaments of the results. Not to mention the tens of thousands trained at the demonstration plots, grape-trellising seminars, poultry-raising classes, seed-cleaning and development of VBSE's classes and protective agriculture methodologies training.

**A team member visited the Mir Bacha Koot Market Center (Parwan)** and it was a revealing experience. RAMP/RoP should be proud of this facility and its privatized multiple activities. First it is a cold storage to hold fruits, and other perishables awaiting shipment. Secondly, it is a processing facility for repackaging (cartons manufactured in Chardahi, Pawan plant started by RAMP project) fresh fruit and or packaging dried raisins for exporting. Thirdly, it serves as a shelling operation for almonds or other nuts and are packaged for export and then shipped out. The building is also an education center, teaching those classes for trellises of grape vines--they use explicit diagrams and instruction and are being taught by Ministry extension agents. The operators mentioned that this region produces approximately 1,000 metric tons of fresh grapes and is increasing production rapidly. The merchant-in-charge claims this facility needs to be expanded to accommodate the growth.

**Ingenuity has shown a way** to use protected agriculture technology without imported inputs. The VBSE organization owns the greenhouse in Parwan and as adapted to the fact that hybrid seeds and special fertilizer are not readily available at this time. They have developed an alternative innovation and learning of this technology thru ICARDA/RAMP the farmers have discovered a new product, even more successful than the cucumber. These famers have adapted a procedure of raising rose plants using a combination of greenhouse and open field growing. The procedure calls for pruning scions (4 plant cuttings from 1 mother rose plant) from those starting plants grown outdoors. These scions that are transplanted in the greenhouse (10-15,000 rose saplings) where they mature and grow into larger plants, then they are re-transplanted outside and grow into \$1 to \$1.40 valued rose plant. The process is repeated over and over and they state that retail demand is high for esthetic landscaping requirements. This association owned greenhouse now has over 20,000 rose plants (to bloom in April) ready to be sold. This is a case wherein RAMP started a technology that had some quandary because of seeds and fertilizer but good old innovation stepped in to "snap success from the mouth of failure". Additionally, they plan to build another green house to do the same with tomato plants which they plan to produce 100,000 tiny plants.

**The reoccurring costs of maintenance** to be borne by the Afghanistan government entities must be addressed. This maintenance issue unless resolved (and/or build into the design of projects) could create failures in the infrastructure thus reversing the long-term benefits.

**Grape trellis demonstration plots have--** thought grafting and methodology increase the quality and quantity of production to an increase of 50-200% and price level multiplication (farmer verification was confirmed) this will have a major impact on the sustainability. Developing the markets both domestic and/or export must still be accomplished, to solidify project gains. Raisin drying technologies have had an impact on Afghanistan's ability to export, however little progress was demonstrated for extending the marketing of nuts.

**The clear potato seed project** was very high impact activity. Seeds of improved varieties, integrated crop and disease management, tissue culture and marketing were introduced to nearly 500 farmers and staff of the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Food (MAAHF). The average potato yield has increased 30% in four provinces (confirmed by actual interviews and documentation of records with farmers) and the introduction of fall season seed production led to the production of two crops per year. In an effort to find sustainable the project has constructed 15 county seed storages in four provinces. Increases of various other crops such as<sup>32</sup>: Wheat up 70%; Rice up 45%; Onion up 47%; Tomato up 50%; Okra up 46%; Mung Bean up 55%; Peanuts up 76% and cotton up 42% all indicate similar expectations (many of these yields confirmed by farmer interviews) of huge improvements in Afghanistan agricultural productivity. The question does arise thought is some of these improvements attributable to natural weather cycle changes (low hanging fruit syndrome) or are they truly assessable direct outcomes from RAMP activities.

**The Veterinary program** with its large number of vaccinations/treatments 27,036,542, the interviewees state it has had an enormous impact on the livestock sector. The change in mortality rates tells the story. Poultry has been reduced from 65% down to 5% for larger flocks. Sheep/Goat mortality rate estimated at down to only 7-10%, with donkey, camel and horses down to 5%. This is an enormous improvement in the income stream of livestock owners since the RAMP/DCA intervention.

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<sup>32</sup> RAMP, On Farm Demonstrations Impact Report, June 2006

## **Annex**

### ***H. Reported Project Accomplishments***

1. Kilometers of Irrigation Canals and Drains Rehabilitated:  
A total of 823 km of canals and drains were rehabilitated;
2. Irrigation Structures Rehabilitated:  
A total of 539 irrigation structures were completed;
3. Hectares Receiving Improved Irrigation  
Total 494,876 hectares of land received improved irrigation;
4. Kilometers of Farm-to-Market Road Rehabilitated  
A total of 587.2 kilometers of farm to market roads were rehabilitated;
5. Number of Loan Officers Trained, 1,150 officers;
6. Number of Loans Disbursed, 28,101 loans;
7. Number Livestock Vaccinated/Treated (head), the number of livestock vaccinated/treated by DCA and their subcontractor are 27,036,542;
8. Women Trained in Poultry Management/Chickens Distributed to Women, 22,230 women and 366,000 chickens;
9. Farmers Served by Extension: 1,248,717.
10. Number of Market Centers Constructed, 145 Centers build and installed.

I. PowerPoint Presentation

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**Impact Evaluation:  
Rebuilding Agricultural Markets  
Project (RAMP)**

Rebuilding Agricultural Markets Project (RAMP) is a USAID-funded project that aims to improve the livelihoods of rural Afghans by strengthening agricultural markets and value chains. The project focuses on providing technical assistance and training to farmers, input dealers, and market actors, as well as improving market infrastructure and services. RAMP is implemented by the Afghanistan Rural Enterprise Development Center (AREDC) in partnership with USAID.

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**DISCLAIMER**  
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**Site Visits**



**Overall Conclusions**

- Success
- Catalyst, mobilizer
- Concerns
  - Sustainability
  - Coordination
- Overall Impact

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**Answering the Questions**

**Question 1a: Was the program successful in addressing needs of the agricultural sector and target beneficiaries?**

- Major Impact
  - Irrigation and Roads; Input Dealers Association (IDFA); Livestock, parasites and VPLs (DCA); Clean Potato Seed, demo plots and VISE (CARDIA)
- Minor Impact
  - Grape/Nuts (RoP); Dehydration (DWC)
- Diminishing Impact
  - Protected Agriculture (CARDIA); Poultry for Women (FAO)



**Question 1b: What differences did the program have in the provinces visited?**

- What we saw
- Many successes, some problems
- Caveat – limited number of activities and provinces visited



**Question 1c: Did RAMP effectively support USAID/Afghanistan's agricultural objectives?**

- RAMP effectively supported each area of the Mission's agricultural program:
  - Infrastructure rehabilitation
  - Technology transfer and Market Development
  - Financial services/production credit
  - Institutional development strengthening
    - MoA
    - Farmer entrepreneurs, trade associations

**Question 1d: To what extent did RAMP support other programs/projects funded by USAID?**

- IR 1.2.3: Financial sector growth
  - IR 1.2.4: Foreign trade policy issues
  - IR 1.3: Economic Infrastructure
  - SO 2: Citizen participation, democratic government
  - SO 3: A Better Educated and Healthier Population
- Problem of sharing results and coordination

**Question 2: Has RAMP successful training and involved MoA staff in planning and implementation?**

- Not in original design – started near end of 2<sup>nd</sup> year
- Key role of Minister of Agriculture
- RAMP provides cadre of senior advisors
  - Master Plan
- Capacity building efforts taking root
- Caution: reality check

**Question 3: Was the demand-driven strategy sound considering the economic and political situation?**

- Dehydrated Vegetables
- Ornamental plants (roses)
- Bagged straw
- Fresh grapes/nuts
- Top-down more efficient

**Question 4: Were job orders with implementing partners an effective use of resources?**

- RAMP in 2003 and RAMP in 2005
  - Need for speed, increase jobs and incomes: DOJ
  - Lack of long term analysis
  - Strengthen private sector and Afghan NGOs
- Complexity, management difficulties
  - Physical monitoring, not impact monitoring
- Lack of intra-RAMP coordination, achieving complementarities

