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Kosovo Ministry of Foreign Affairs Support Project (KMFAS)

Quarterly Report January-March 2009

Contract No. DFD-I-00-05-00220-00 Task Order No. 8

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KMFAS

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The KMFAS made major achievements during this quarterly reporting period. The main achievements have been:

- Project consolidation and creation of a fully-functioning DAI project office.
- Preparation of the project design.
- Completion of a substantial body of deliverables providing basic policies, regulations and processes for the management of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and missions abroad.
- Establishment of close cooperative relationships with key officials of the Ministry and staff members at all levels, providing for the smooth and timely implementation of KMFAS recommendations.

During the first phase of the project, lasting from its inception in mid-November 2008 through March 31, 2009, the project progressed through its start-up phase, the initial needs assessment, the final needs assessment and completion of a project design, and revision and elaboration of the project design into a draft work plan with refined objectives and activities. Although further work remains to be done, depending upon the further views and decisions of USAID/Kosovo, completion of the final work plan and the accompanying PMP are in sight and are projected for May 2009.

The project office has now been fully established, with major installation of IT and other equipment having been accomplished in February, the arrival of the full complement of project staff, and the full operation of financial management and other office procedures. The interim Chief of Party (COP) completed his (extended) contract term on March 31, 2009, and new project leadership is required in Pristina and in the DAI Home Office. The long-term senior legal advisor and senior diplomatic management consultant have mobilized to Pristina and are leading the day-to-day technical assistance activities with the Ministry.

Overall, the KMFAS project is positioned for further success in its basic mission of assisting the foreign ministry to develop its managerial capabilities, operations of missions abroad, human resource base, and infrastructure. Based on the work plan targets and foreseeable projections, the KMFAS project should be able to achieve its objectives during the stipulated time frame by the end of March 2011.

II. PROJECT ADMINISTRATION

Since the beginning of January 2009, all of the requisites for the KMFAS office have been put in place. The office is conveniently located about three minutes' walking distance from the Kosovo Government building that houses the ministerial offices and the Public Services Ministry building where the bulk of the foreign ministry staff is temporarily located. Apart from basic furniture and furnishings, IT equipment, including printers, copiers, and VOIP telephones, were installed by a technician from the DAI Home Office in mid-February. The office is now fully functioning to accommodate the authorized staff of six.

On the personnel side, two short-term experts (STTA's) visited Pristina from January 19 to February 14 to provide technical assistance in public affairs/public diplomacy and consular affairs. Subsequently, the DAI project manager from the DAI Home Office arrived on January 30 and the DAI project coordinator arrived on February 4 to participate in the work plan assessment and project design. The project coordinator also assisted the project financial and operations manager regarding banking, financial reporting, and administrative procedures. There also was a review of the internal controls checklist used by DAI.

Meanwhile, the diplomatic management STTA arrived on January 30 for a six-week visit. Two weeks were spent on the work plan assessment and project design, while four weeks were devoted to the ministry's post management concerns. This STTA departed on March 13. It has been agreed that this expert will return as an LTTA in early April.

In addition to development of the work plan and the installation of IT equipment, project management attention was devoted to banking, financial management and accounting, branding project deliverables pursuant to DAI regulations, physical security and insurance, and follow-up on several IT matters.

The interim COP departed Pristina on March 30 upon completion of his (extended) contract term. The designation of a new COP has not yet been accomplished. The long-term senior legal advisor and senior diplomatic management consultant have mobilized to Pristina and are leading the day-to-day technical assistance activities with the Ministry.

III. WORK PLAN AND OBJECTIVES

The project design submitted to USAID began with a wide-ranging assessment that began on February 2. The assessment team was comprised of the DAI project manager, the project coordinator, all project staff, and the visiting STTA's.

A wide range of meetings was conducted between February 3 and 9 with foreign ministry officials at all levels, officials in the Prime Minister's and President's offices, and other ministries, including Internal Affairs, Justice, Treasury and Public Services. Meetings were also held with USAID, the U.S. Embassy and selected international agencies. The completed project design was presented to USAID on February 12 and there were further discussions of the project budget on February 13 and 15.

The instructions and views of USAID on the project design were received on March 11. Revisions were then made to the draft work plan and project design which were conveyed to

USAID on March 19. Further discussions were had with USAID and the Ministry, and the KMFAS tasks and objectives, and subtasks, have been formulated as follows:

Task 1: Establish functional Kosovo diplomatic missions abroad and develop the Ministry's management capacity to support and oversee the missions/posts

- 1.1: Post Openings: KMFAS will assist the ministry manage post openings in a methodical, step-by-step manner
- 1.2: Protocol: Help the Ministry establish brief, effective guidance for embassies and consulates, as well as to improve the capabilities of its domestic Protocol staff
- 1.3: Consular Operations: Support the development of regulations and procedures relating to the protection and welfare of Kosovo citizens abroad

Task 2: Build and strengthen the institutional capacity of the Ministry in performing its tasks and fulfilling its role in managing Kosovo's foreign affairs

- 2.1: Assist in the development of a strategic planning/policy and resource management process to identify achievable goals, benchmarks for performance and human and financial resources required
- 2.2 Provide advice and assistance to the Office of Legal Issues, Treaties and Human Rights to analyze and interpret laws and treaties, draft laws and regulations, and develop information-gathering and reporting mechanisms regarding Kosovo's international responsibilities in human rights.
- 2.3 Provide advice and assistance to the Office of the Permanent Secretary to the development of the MFA's management capabilities to support missions/posts abroad, maintain a career professional service, install effective personnel, infrastructure and logistics systems, and devise training programs to support diplomatic and consular operations.
- 2.4 Provide advice and assistance to the Office of the Director General to improve and strengthen coordination, tasking and the content of daily decision making, and communication

Task 3: Address short-term needs that develop to aid the effective functioning of the Ministry

As of the end of March, further changes to the draft work plan and development of a PMP are pending, together with fresh budget estimates keyed to the amount of the original project contract and funding of the work plan as designed. Decisions are also pending on the designation of a new COP and a new project manager in the DAI Home Office.

IV. DELIVERABLES AND PROJECT RESULTS

Based on the foregoing objectives and the activities that were identified in the work plan submitted to USAID on March 19, 2009, the DAI KMFAS project staff completed the following deliverables as of March 30:

Task 1: Regulation on the Competencies of Kosovo Diplomatic and Consular Missions

Task 1: List of Secondary Accreditations and Consular Districts

Task 3: Protocol Regulations for Overseas Posts

Task 1: Consular Regulations

Task 1: Consular Package, including an agenda for the training of new consular officers, a draft administrative instruction and vacancy announcement for the recruitment and hiring of consular officers, and a draft regulation regarding the operation of consular posts

Task 1: Post Management Handbook

Task 1: Simple Budget Tool (Format) for Overseas Posts

Task 2: Housing Policy and Leasing Regulations

Task 2: Integrated Personnel System

Task 2: Outline for a Recruitment and Hiring Procedure

Task 2: Hiring Decision Tool

Task 2: In-Service Training Concept

Task 2: New Employee Orientation Design

Task 2: Salaries and Allowances Template

Task 2: Administrative Instruction on Personal Allowances

Task 2: Administrative & Technical Staff and Locally Engaged Staff Regulations

In addition, KMFAS project legal staff has been developing a variety of draft regulations, including some of the above, to transform them into sub-normative acts pursuant to the Laws on the Foreign Service and Consular Service that were passed by the National Assembly on December 16, 2008. The ministry's objective is to issue these approved regulations by mid-April 2009.

Work is continuing on other aspects of the ministry's basic personnel, administrative and financial systems, as well as plans for standing up the Consular Service in June 2009. This work involves the completion of regulations and administrative instructions designed to support the basic systems. Pending a final decision by the ministry, plans have been made for the installation of the TAMIS intranet software designed to improve communications with overseas posts, facilitate the flow of information within the ministry to improve decision-making, create an electronic archives capability, manage financial, procurement and logistics systems, enhance intra-ministry e-mail communications, provide a platform for distance learning, and standardize personnel management, including performance appraisals and record-keeping.

Three STTA visits during the quarter provided momentum to DAI KMFAS project activity. Specifics included:

A. Public Affairs/Public Diplomacy

The STTA working on public affairs (inside Kosovo) and public diplomacy (outside Kosovo) identified three issues that had to be addressed before the ministry could create a functioning public affairs program. First, there were no structures in place to ensure that public statements and policy guidance flow from the minister to the working level. Second, there was no functioning management structure for the conduct of public affairs. Third, the website did not provide effective public diplomacy materials. During his consultancy, the STTA worked closely with senior levels of the Ministry to find the most appropriate ways to address these shortcomings.

Results of the STTA's visit included:

- Reorganization of the Office of Media to better manage public affairs issues, entailing the assumption by the Director General of management responsibilities for public affairs and public diplomacy programs.
- A system for recording and transcription of statements and press conferences.
- Models for press announcements, media guidance, and press releases.
- Tasking of substantive ministry offices with the creation of policy documents for dissemination and use on the MFA website.
- The inception of a weekly series of deputy ministerial background briefings for the media.
- A coordination system that allows the ministry to work more effectively on public diplomacy aspects of the president's and prime minister's overseas travels.
- Review and improvement of the ministry's website.
- The initiation of a public diplomacy planning process for overseas posts.
- Lecture on public affairs and public diplomacy.

B. Consular Operations

The Consular STTA worked with the director of the ministry's Office of Consular Affairs (OCA) on the full range of consular issues. First was the drafting of regulations based on the recently passed laws on consular services, foreigners, travel documents, family law, and notariats. Issues range from dealing with the death of Kosovo citizens abroad to the execution of simple notariats. Since the whereabouts and numbers of Kosovars living overseas dictates the number of consular offices, officers, and local clerks needed, as well as their location, priorities were developed, together with hiring and training plans. Consular training will be aided by a decision to add a consular handbook to the regulations in order to explain to new consular officers their duties and ways to perform them. The actual tools of the trade also need to be created: seals, stamps, forms, and other consular paraphernalia.

Specific results from this STTA visit included: draft consular regulations, a Consular Handbook, a draft plan for opening consular sections, the Identification of consular equipment and paraphernalia, and input for consular training plan. These plans and recommendations have now been turned into action documents with the completion of the consular regulations, a sub-normative act on the operation of consular posts, administrative instructions for the recruitment and hiring of consular officers, and the identification of secondary accreditations of embassies and the alignment of consular districts.

C. Management

The STTA for diplomatic management arrived on January 30, 2009, together with the DAI project manager. For the first two weeks, this STTA participated in the work plan assessment and preparation. The assessment served as a valuable in-briefing on the project work and he became immediately engaged in the management functions and the production of deliverables as detailed above. In this regard, the LTTA was invited by the Permanent Secretary to work in his office several hours a day to provide personal coaching regarding his job performance. Specific deliverables have been the Post Management Handbook and the Housing and Leasing Handbook which will form the basis of the ministry's regulations and procedures. A salaries and allowances scheme also has been devised, as well as the design of a focused oral assessment (Hiring Decision Tool) for the new intake of Ambassador/Charges d'affaires/Heads of Mission and diplomatic staff. Communications security and other regulations will be future deliverables.

Overall, the receptivity and cooperation of ministry officers at all levels was excellent throughout the quarter. The Deputy Minister, Permanent Secretary and Director General have been the primarily interlocutors for the KMFAS staff and they have demonstrated depth of commitment to management improvement and the substantive performance of the ministry through their quickness to adopt project recommendations in specific areas, covering almost every office within the ministry. Consequently, a wide range of recommended policies have been adopted that are now being turned into regulations and procedures, especially in the fields of personnel, post management, finance, protocol and in-service specialized training. These achievements have been important for the success of the KMFAS project in its initial phase that has encompassed the project start-up, initial needs assessment, final needs assessment and project design, work plan preparation, and creation of the management policy and regulatory infrastructure of the foreign ministry.

V. LOOKING AHEAD TO THE NEXT QUARTER

Uncertainties regarding personnel decisions are the main concern, both of the KMFAS staff and to the Ministry. With the return of the LTTA diplomatic management expert in early April, the KMFAS team is greatly enhanced to address requests for technical assistance from the Permanent Secretary and other ministry senior officials. The project will move into another phase of heavy activity in May with several months of intensive training courses for new Ambassadors/Heads of Mission, consular officers and diplomatic staff, followed by the annual Heads of Mission conference in Pristina. The ministry will rely on the assistance of KMFAS staff to develop training agendas and course modules for all of these training events.