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# REGIONAL AFGHAN MUNICIPALITIES PROGRAM FOR URBAN POPULATIONS – REGIONAL COMMAND NORTH

**MONTHLY REPORT: JANUARY 2012**



*Photo: Mazar-e-Sharif municipal staff participated in the District 5 trash collection project initial clean-up campaign on January 27, 2012.*

**FEBRUARY 15, 2012**

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# CONTENTS

- ABBREVIATIONS & TERMS ..... II**
- ABOUT RAMP UP NORTH ..... 1**
- EXECUTIVE SUMMARY..... 2**
  - Programmatic Highlights .....2
  - Highlights by Municipality .....2
- PROGRAMMING ACTIVITIES ..... 4**
  - Capacity Building .....4
  - Citizen Engagement.....8
  - Sustainable Service Delivery Improvement Projects..... 10
- PLANNED FEBRUARY ACTIVITES..... 13**

## ABBREVIATIONS & TERMS

CLIN	Contract Line Item Number
CO	Contracts Officer
COP	Chief of Party
COTR	Contracting Officer's Technical Representative
DAI	Development Alternatives Incorporated
DoWA	Department of Woman's Affairs
EA	Embedded Advisor
GIRoA	Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
IDLG	Independent Directorate of Local Governance
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MMCBP	Municipal Management and Capacity Building Plan
MTL	Municipal Team Leader
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PAAG	Public Administration Advisory Group
PBB	Performance Based Budgeting
PBT	Project-based Training
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
RAMP UP program)	Regional Afghan Municipalities Program for Urban Populations (USAID
RC (E,W,N,S)	ISAF Regional Command East, West, North, South
RU-N	RAMP UP North
SDAG	Service Delivery Advisory Group
SIP	Service Improvement Plan
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
SOW	Scope of Work
TA	Technical Assistance
TAMIS	Technical Assistance Management Information System
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government

### Terms

<i>gozar</i>	Neighborhood
<i>nahya</i>	Municipal District
<i>wakil or kalanter</i>	<i>nahya</i> or <i>gozar</i> representative
<i>Tashkeel</i>	administrative structure of a GIRoA entity
<i>Safayi tax</i>	service charge and property tax

## **ABOUT RAMP UP NORTH**

The purpose of the Regional Afghan Municipalities Program for Urban Populations for Regional Command North (RAMP UP North) is to create effective, responsive, democratic, transparent, and accountable municipal governance in the nine provinces that comprise the International Security Assistance Force's (ISAF's) Regional Command North.

RAMP UP North will: (1) increase the capacity of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) municipal officials, (2) markedly improve the delivery of municipal services to citizens in target municipalities, and (3) increase municipal capacity to enable, support, and sustain economic growth. As a result of the RAMP UP North, Afghan citizens will receive better services, understand the responsibilities of municipal leaders, play an active role in the municipal decision-making process, and see local governance structures as legitimate.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the month of January, RU-N's focus was on building the capacity of municipal officials in areas such as planning, budgeting, and business registration and licensing. In addition, RU-N staff worked to engage citizens in municipal decision making through identification of proposed second round Sustainable Service Delivery Improvement Projects. Citizens were also involved in project-based trainings on community outreach mechanisms and project design and monitoring.

Several kick off ceremonies for first round Sustainable Service Delivery Improvement Projects also took place this month. Equipment was delivered to municipalities and in Mazar-e-Sharif, the initial clean up took place this month as well.

Finally, RU-N developed plans to increase municipal revenue through a business registration and licensing program. The program will be launched in five municipalities—Aybak, Faizabad, Pul-e-Khumri, Sar-e-Pul, and Taloqan—where other donors have not yet established such a program.

## PROGRAMMATIC HIGHLIGHTS

- In terms of capacity building, RU-N provided technical assistance, undertook consultations, conducted functional trainings, and/or provided guidance in drafting of Service Improvement Plans (SIP). RU-N staff has focused on capacity building with mayors, municipal officials, and citizens on various topics such as project selection and prioritization, planning and design, drafting scopes of work (SOWs), project monitoring, procurement, revenue generation, and budget preparation.
- RU-N staff prepared municipal officials for the implementation of the Municipal Management and Capacity Building Plans (MMCBP), which were completed and signed by all nine mayors last month.
- RU-N staff provided technical assistance and guidance to citizens and municipal officials in Aybak, Kunduz, Maymana, Mazar-e-Sharif, and Pul-e-Khumri to draft project-based Service Improvement Plans (SIPs).
- In terms of citizen engagement, RU-N conducted citizen beneficiary group surveys in Aybak, Mazar-e-Sharif, Pul-e-Khumri, and Sar-e-Pul on the subject of trash collection. Several citizen beneficiary group meetings were held as well. Service Delivery Advisory Groups (SDAGs) and citizen beneficiaries continued to be involved in project selection, planning, and monitoring this month as well.
- In terms of Sustainable Service Delivery Improvement Projects, several kick off meetings were held and equipment for trash collection was delivered to municipalities. The initial clean up for the Mazar-e-Sharif trash collection project took place this month as well, with four other municipalities to follow in early February.
- In terms of revenue generation, RU-N staff initiated the process of assisting the mayors and municipal finance managers with business registration and licensing in five municipalities.

## HIGHLIGHTS BY MUNICIPALITY

In this section, a particular activity or notable event that took place during the reporting period is highlighted for each of the nine municipalities.

- 1) Aybak—RU-N staff completed a citizen beneficiary post-project survey on the Aybak central park improvement project.

- 2) Faizabad— On January 11, citizen beneficiaries and *kalanTERS* met with RU-N staff in Faizabad to discuss the second round project selected by the SDAG—construction of public latrines. RU-N staff also updated citizens on the progress of the first round trash collection project.
- 3) Kunduz— RU-N Civil Society staff met with the Department of Women’s Affairs (DoWA) in Kunduz to obtain a list of the women most actively involved in their communities. The DoWA provided RU-N with the names of 14 enthusiastic women who agreed to assist in the public awareness campaign. However, in order to be as effective as possible, RU-N put together a Training-of-Trainers (ToT) course tailored to fit the objectives of the campaign. The ToT will be conducted on February 1.
- 4) Maymana— During January, the women beneficiaries in Maymana continued to be actively involved by contributing to the design and SOW and providing overall leadership of the women’s park improvement project.
- 5) Mazar-e-Sharif— A total of 56 participants, including citizens, municipal officials, RU-N staff, and local media attended the opening ceremony of the Mazar-e-Sharif District 5 trash collection project on January 26, 2012. The initial clean up took place for three days following the event.
- 6) Pul-e-Khumri— The RU-N team and RU-N Public Works Director conducted a series of consultations with municipal officials from various municipal departments and the Mayor to discuss the launch of the business registration program to increase municipal revenue.
- 7) Sar-e-Pul— On January 2, 2012, the RU-N team conducted the first transparent bid opening of 2012 in Sar-e-Pul. Eleven attendees took part in the process, including the Director of the Department of Women’s Affairs, the Head of the Sar-e-Pul Women’s Association, the Mayor, the Chair and Vice Chair of the SDAG, two Public Administration Advisory Group (PAAG) members, and some local contractors.
- 8) Sheberghan— On January 1, RU-N staff provided project-based training to 18 SDAG members to select the second round Sustainable Service Delivery Improvement Project. During that meeting, the 14 male and four female participants worked through the RU-N sustainability worksheet to assess whether or not their chosen projects were sustainable. The worksheet involves an assessment of current incoming revenue, potential revenue, and costs and is in spreadsheet format.
- 9) Taloqan— On January 31, the RU-N team provided technical assistance to four *nahya* heads and the Head of the Cleaning and Greening Department to develop a communications plan for the trash collection project, develop a schedule for trash collection, discuss the distribution of flyers, and specify the number of flyers for each *nahya*/household.



*From January 5-11, 2012, RU-N staff in Aybak conducted citizen beneficiary surveys on the central park improvement project.*

## PROGRAMMING ACTIVITIES

### CAPACITY BUILDING

#### Technical Assistance (TA)

During January, RU-N staff provided TA on several topics in all nine municipalities. Some examples are listed below:

- On January 16, the RU-N team met with the Head of the Cleaning and Greening Department in Kunduz to assist in the development of the map for door-to-door trash collection in District 2.
- Also on January 16 in Kunduz, the Municipal Engineer and RU-N staff provided technical assistance to survey the park that was chosen by the SDAG for the second round park improvement project. The team pinpointed locations for the latrines, benches, and sidewalks within the park in order to draft the bill of quantities (BOQ).
- On January 23, the RU-N Kunduz team, the Head of the Cleaning and Greening Department, and the Heads of *Nahya* 1 and *Nahya* 2 developed the trash collection schedule for the first round project. The flyer for public awareness was also designed.



*RU-N staff provided technical assistance to the Head of the Cleaning and Greening Department in Kunduz on January 16, 2012.*

#### Consultations

RU-N staff continued to collect necessary information to assess the needs of municipalities in terms of functional training.



*RU-N staff met with the Administration Manager and Head of Accounting in Faizabad to discuss budget formulation on January 18, 2012.*

The RU-N team in Taloqan met with the Head of the Procurement Department on January 15 to gather information on the procurement process being used by the Municipality. On January 23, a similar meeting took place in Faizabad. This information will be used to develop functional training materials for the municipal staff.

On January 15, the RU-N team and the RU-N Revenue Director met with the Maymana Municipal Administration Manager, the Municipal Accounting Manager, and the Municipal Revenue Manager to assess the budget preparation process. The RU-N team asked participants to voice their concerns and challenges in budget preparation, so that RU-N could prepare training materials on the subject. The Accounting Manager stated that there is a need

for decentralization of the Municipality budget approval from the central level to local authorities, since there are available funds for improving service delivery but very limited approval authority for the

municipal officials, causing serious delays. He also requested that RU-N assist in preparing next year's budget (1391).

On January 18, the RU-N team met with the Administration Manager and the Head of the Accounting Department in Faizabad to discuss capacity-building needs in terms of budgeting. The municipal officials indicated that last year's budget was submitted with several errors and took months to get approval from IDLG/GDMA. A similar meeting took place on the same day in Taloqan. There is a significant need for training on budget formulation. RU-N plans to conduct a formal training on budget formulation during the RU-N Mayors' Conference in February.

In Pul-e-Khumri, on January 26, the RU-N team, along with the RU-N Public Works Director, facilitated and conducted a series of meetings with municipal officials from various municipal departments and the Mayor. First, the team briefed the Mayor on creating a database to register businesses and how to enter the collected data into the database. This will help to increase the number of important revenue sources and easily issue business licenses.

In another meeting, the team met with the municipal Procurement Officer and Contract Officers to discuss their procurement procedures and processes. Both officers briefed the team on the procurement steps, processes, and procedures and raised their concerns regarding the time-consuming procedures and processes.

Then, on January 29, the RU-N team met with the Licensing Department Manager to ascertain the number of registered, unregistered, and total number of businesses in Pul-e-Khumri municipal districts. According to the Licensing Manager, there are a total number of 3,600 businesses in the municipal districts of which 3,300 of them are registered and have obtained licenses. Only around 300 businesses (i.e. shops, warehouses, etc.) are not registered and have not yet received licenses. To register these businesses, the Licensing Manager said that a lack of transportation facilities (i.e. motorbikes) and staff (surveyors/registrars) are the main requirements. In addition, He emphasized having a database and trained staff to enter the collected registration data into the database.

### **Regional Workshops/Conferences**

Although no regional workshops took place in January, RU-N staff began initial preparations for the RU-N Mayors' Conference, which will take place in early February. During the conference Mayors, municipal finance officials, GDMA/IDLG officials, and USAID officials will discuss topics such as budget forms and preparation and business registration and licensing.

### **Functional Training**

RU-N staff continued to utilize the Sustainable Service Delivery Improvement Projects as opportunities to build the capacity of both municipal officials and citizen leaders in various phases of project management.

In Sheberghan, on January 1, 18 SDAG members met with RU-N staff to select the second round Sustainable Service Delivery Improvement Project. During that meeting, the 14 male and four female participants worked through the RU-N sustainability worksheet to assess whether or not their chosen projects were sustainable. The worksheet involves an assessment of current incoming revenue, potential revenue, and costs and is in spreadsheet format.

On January 2, 2012, the RU-N team conducted the first transparent bid opening of 2012 in Sar-e-Pul. Eleven attendees took part in the process, including the Director of the Department of Women's Affairs, the Head of the Sar-e-Pul Women's Association, the Mayor, the Chair and Vice Chair of the SDAG, two

PAAG members, and some local contractors. First, the RU-N procurement team provided materials for training on the procurement process and Afghan procurement laws and regulations. They also stressed the importance of transparency throughout the process.

Some participants indicated that this was the first time they had been involved in such a process and found it to be a valuable exercise. One participant suggested that the Municipality follow the RU-N process for all development projects, not just those funded by USAID.

### **Project-based Training (PBT)**

On January 10, 2011, RU-N staff in Aybak facilitated the final inspection and invited SDAG members, municipal officials, and PAAG members to participate. RU-N staff first reviewed the contract and the SOW of the project and updated the group on the punch list items that were compiled after the penultimate inspection by RU-N and municipal engineers.



*Participants listened as the procurement process was explained at the Sar-e-Pul bid opening on January 2, 2012.*



*Citizens and municipal officials, with RU-N assistance, participate in the final inspection process for the Aybak central park improvement project on January 10, 2012.*

The group went through each item on the list, one-by-one to check that the work had been completed as requested. After checking on the ten punch list items, the group determined that the work had been completed and the contractor had met the requirements of the contract.

During the inspection, the SDAG members made suggestions for a public awareness campaign. They asked municipal officials to assist in spreading the word to citizens that the park must be used properly and that everyone must contribute to the maintenance of the park.

The final inspection was considered yet another capacity-building activity for citizens and municipal officials, since many of them had never participated in such a process before.

When designing the public awareness campaign for the first round trash collection project in Kunduz, RU-N Civil Society staff decided that women's involvement was essential to the success of the project. To that end, they met with the DoWA in Kunduz to obtain a list of the women most actively involved in their communities. The DoWA provided RU-N with the names of 14 enthusiastic women who agreed to assist in the public awareness campaign. However, in order to be as effective as possible, RU-N put together a Training-of-Trainers (ToT) course tailored to fit the objectives of the campaign. The ToT will be conducted on February 1.

On January 23 in Taloqan, the RU-N team met with the Head of the Administration Department to discuss the SOW for the park re-construction project, which was selected by the SDAG as the second round project. The RU-N team clarified the contribution of the Municipality related to the project. The Head of the Administration Department stated that the municipal contribution will be clearly stated in the SOW.



On January 26, the RU-N team worked on the modifications in design for the Sar-e-Pul first round park improvement project. At the Mayor's request, the RU-N team also assisted municipal officials in weekly monitoring of the ongoing municipal projects.

*On January 26, 2012 RU-N staff assisted the Taloqan Municipal Engineers during a project site visit.*

The RU-N team in Taloqan assisted the Municipal Engineering Department during a project area site visit on January 26 to sketch the area that will be re-constructed by RU-N under the second round project for improvement of service delivery. The information obtained from the project site will help the team to draft a SOW.

On January 31, the RU-N team assisted four *nahya* heads and the Head of the Cleaning and Greening Department in Taloqan to develop a communications plan for the trash collection project, develop a schedule for trash collection, discuss the distribution of flyers, and specify the number of flyers for each *nahya*/household. The *nahya* heads stated that they would be able to distribute the flyers with the help of *wakil gozars*, Imams, Municipality staff and local media. The public outreach campaign will take place at the beginning of the project. The idea is to inform the community in the project area of the launching of the project and ask for their contribution to the initial clean-up phase. Also each household will be notified of the trash collection day in their community via the flyers.

### **Municipal Management and Capacity Building Plans (MMCBP)**

The MMCBPs were completed and signed in all provinces by the end of 2011. RU-N staff is now working to assist municipalities in implementing the plans. The plans are tailor-made to the needs of the Mayors and municipal staff. RU-N staff continues to communicate with Mayors to assess their needs and the needs of their staff.

For instance, on January 15 in Aybak, the RU-N team met with the Mayor to discuss the capacity-building activities RU-N has conducted—such as those related to procurement and to ascertain the Mayor's level of satisfaction with the training. The Mayor indicated that the training was useful, and he then requested more capacity building related to budgeting.

In Sar-e-Pul, on January 18, the RU-N team held a meeting with the Finance Manager to identify capacity-building needs. The Finance Manager stressed the need for trainings on drafting both the development and ordinary (operations) budgets. RU-N plans to provide training on budgeting at the RU-N Mayors' Conference in February.

### **Service Improvement Plans (SIP)**

On January 1-3, RU-N staff in Pul-e-Khumri assisted in finalizing the selection for the second round project, sewer and waste management, and drafted the Service Improvement Plan with the SDAG and PAAG. During an SDAG meeting in Aybak on January 1, the SIP was drafted for the second round project there.

On January 2, during a citizen beneficiary group meeting the Kunduz RU-N team assisted in the development of the Service Improvement Plan for the second round project. Participants in the meeting included SDAG and PAAG members, citizens, and local media.

In Maymana, on January 15, a joint project beneficiary group and SDAG meeting was held with nine male and five female participants to develop the Service Improvement Plan (SIP) for the women's park improvement project.

On January 18, the RU-N team in Mazar-e-Sharif met with beneficiaries in District 3. The citizen beneficiaries (eight men and two women) participated in developing the Service Improvement Plan (SIP) for the second round project—trash collection in District 3. Participants were also informed of their roles and responsibilities in terms of sustaining the project.

## **CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT**

### **Service Delivery Advisory Groups**

On January 1 in Sheberghan, the RU-N team facilitated an SDAG meeting in which 16 members (including 3 women) participated. The Mayor also attended the meeting where the selection of the second round project was discussed. Due to the fact that the Municipality could not secure land for construction of a women's market, the second round project selection had to be re-visited, and the group selected a new project—construction of public latrines for the second round Sustainable Service Delivery Improvement Project. The meeting was an example of how the Mayor and citizens can work together to overcome challenges and find solutions that satisfy both sides.



*On January 1, 2012, the Aybak SDAG and PAAG met to select the second round Sustainable Service Delivery Improvement Project.*

Also on January 1, in Aybak, the RU-N team facilitated a joint SDAG and PAAG meeting to select the second round project and develop the Service Improvement Plan for the project. After discussions, the group chose to construct a public meeting room and developed the Service Improvement Plan. Local media covered the event.

### **Women's Participation in Municipal Decision Making**

RU-N has been highly involved in efforts to increase women's participation in municipal decision making. For instance, RU-N staff has coordinated with representatives from the DoWA to gather names and contact information of women who might be interested in joining the SDAGs. On January 18 in Kunduz, the Mayor and representative from the DoWA assisted the RU-N team in updating the membership list of the SDAG and agreed to recruit new members in the future.

In addition, RU-N has suggested that at least one round of the Sustainable Service Delivery Improvement Projects should be selected with the priorities of women in mind and with women at the helm of the design, planning, and monitoring of the project.

This has already begun in Maymana, where the first round project was selected based on the needs of women. During January, the women beneficiaries in Maymana continued to be actively involved by contributing to the design and SOW for the women's park.

On January 18, the RU-N team held a coordination meeting with USAID field representatives to update them on RU-N activities—especially in terms of the Sustainable Service Delivery Improvement Project and increased women's participation in decision making. RU-N plans to continue their efforts to involve women in all phases of project management.



*Women in Maymana met to discuss and design the women's park project on January 2, 2012.*

On January 19, the RU-N team met with the Administration Manager of the DoWA in Mazar-e-Sharif. The RU-N team requested that the DoWA assist in increasing women's membership in the SDAG. The Mazar SDAG contains members from 10 districts and it is supposed to be made up of 25% women. The DoWA immediately provided names and contact information for women who may be interested in joining the SDAG.

### **Beneficiary Group Meetings and Citizen Surveys**

Citizen beneficiary groups participated in surveys and meetings with RU-N staff in several municipalities this month. RU-N civil society staff has developed pre- and post-project surveys to assess citizen beneficiaries' willingness to participate in sustaining the RU-N Sustainable Service Delivery Improvement Projects.



*RU-N staff in Sar-e-Pul interviewed a citizen beneficiary on January 16, 2012 on the proposed park improvement project. Almost all of those surveyed indicated that they would be willing to pay entrance fees to use the newly renovated park and football pitch.*

On January 11, citizen beneficiaries and *kalanter*s met with RU-N staff in Faizabad to discuss the second round project selected by the SDAG—construction of public latrines. RU-N staff also updated citizens on the progress of the first round trash collection project. Due to weather constraints, construction of the 10 stone masonry bins was delayed, but preparations are being made by the contractor so construction can begin as soon as the weather improves.

During January, RU-N civil society staff conducted a post-project survey of 150 beneficiaries in Aybak (January 12) and pre-project survey of 150 beneficiaries in Sar-e-Pul (January 16). Concurrent to the surveys, RU-N staff held beneficiary group meetings to discuss projects in Maymana, Mazar-e-Sharif, and Sheberghan.

During the meetings, citizen beneficiaries were asked whether or not they would be willing to contribute to the sustainability of proposed projects, through taxes or other fees.

In Mazar-e-Sharif on January 18, 2012, the beneficiary group meeting focused on the sustainability of the proposed second round trash collection project in District 3. Ten citizens were asked about their willingness to contribute to the sustainability of the project.

Also on January 18, the RU-N team in Sherberghan held a citizen beneficiary group meeting with *kalanter*s and shopkeepers to discuss the second round project—construction of public latrines. The project, which was deemed a top priority by the SDAG, must be sustained through citizen buy in, and the RU-N team explained the roles and responsibilities of beneficiaries in sustaining the project. At the conclusion of the meeting, three of the *kalanter*s requested membership in the SDAG and showed great enthusiasm in participating in future SDAG activities.

In the Maymana beneficiary group meeting on January 15, 2012, the 14 participants were given information on developing a Service Improvement Plan (SIP) for the women’s park improvement project. This capacity-building exercise is meant to give citizens and municipal officials the skills to develop specific plans for improving services and indicators for measuring the quality of those services.

Other examples of citizen beneficiary involvement in meetings and surveys are listed below:

- On January 2, the RU-N team in Maymana facilitated a citizen beneficiary group meeting in which 9 women participated. The women, members of the SDAG, DoWA, or other community leaders, assisted in developing the SOW for the women’s park project.
- Also on January 2, the Kunduz RU-N team conducted a citizen beneficiary group meeting to discuss the SOW for the second round project—women’s park improvement. Participants in the meeting included SDAG and PAAG members, citizens, and local media.
- On January 3, the RU-N team in Mazar-e-Sharif completed a citizen beneficiary survey in District 5 on the first round trash collection project.
- In Pul-e-Khumri on January 9, the RU-N team conducted the citizen beneficiary survey for the first round trash collection project.
- From January 5 – 11, the RU-N team in Aybak conducted a post-project citizen beneficiary survey on the central park improvement project.

## **SUSTAINABLE SERVICE DELIVERY IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS**

During January, RU-N staff worked to organize kick off events and initial clean up campaigns for the various trash collection projects. For instance, a total of 56 participants (45 men and 14 women), including citizens, municipal officials, RU-N staff, and local media attended the opening ceremony of the Mazar-e-Sharif District 5 trash collection project on January 26, 2012.

The ceremony began with a few words from the Mayor. In his speech, he emphasized the importance of citizen buy-in to sustain the project. He stated, “This project has been selected by citizens...its sustainability requires your support. We should not rely on financial resources from outside forever.”

He went on to say, “Never forget one thing, the city is yours, not mine, not the governor’s. [We] are your official servants. We are here today in these positions but we may go [tomorrow]... you are always here in this city and your families are here. If you pay your *Safayi*, you will get services in return.”

Following the Mayor’s speech, the Head of the Cleaning and Department explained the trash collection process and the initial clean up phase.

The SDAG Chair and a *kalanter* from District 5 also encouraged citizens to support the project by paying their *Safayi* tax.

The event was covered by two television stations—the local Balkh station and *Aryana* national station. The broadcast aired on January 26 in Balkh and the following evening on the national news. RU-N is hopeful that the coverage of this event will encourage more citizens to get involved in municipal decision making and support these types of projects.



*The Mazar-e-Sharif initial clean up ran from January 27-29, 2012 throughout District 5.*

From January 27 – 29, the project commenced with the distribution of flyers to *kalanter*s, *Mullah Imams*, and citizens of District 5 for public outreach. During the three-day initial clean up, about 60% of all accumulated trash was collected and transported to the designated disposal site. Citizens came out of their houses and cleaned around their houses, and the Municipality contributed one front loader and two vehicles for the clean-up effort.



*RU-N staff and municipal officials accepted the delivery of equipment for the Pul-e-Khumri trash collection project on January 24, 2012.*

The Pul-e-Khumri Municipal Warehouse Manager and Mayor, along with the RU-N team received equipment and tools for the trash collection project on January 24. Included were: eight wheelbarrows, 20 shovels, 10 pitchforks, 36,000 heavy duty re-usable plastic bags, 23 pairs each of gloves and boots, and 23 hard hats.

On January 22, the RU-N team, the RU-N Chief of Party (COP), and the Mayor and other municipal officials met to discuss the current status of projects. Similarly, on January 25, the RU-N Chief of Party, the Regional

Municipal Governance Advisor/ CLIN 1 Team Leader and the MTL met with the Pul-e-Khumri and Kunduz Mayors and discussed the commencing of the trash collection project. In addition, the group discussed tax mapping and business registration as a means of increasing municipal revenue.

The delivery of equipment to the Sherberghan Municipality for the first round trash collection project was facilitated by RU-N on January 29. The Mayor gave a speech regarding the first round project which will start early next month. He explained the three components 1) delivery of equipment; 2) fabrication of 50 large trash bins and 50 small trash bins; and 3) trash collection services. At the end of the ceremony, the Mayor committed to sustaining the project with the help of citizens.

From January 29-30, the RU-N team obtained the following information for developing the SOW for the second round project in Aybak: 1) project location 2) direct beneficiaries 3) estimated budget 4) environmental protection information 5) sustainability 6) design and 7) municipal contribution.

In Sar-e-Pul, the RU-N team conducted a site visit on January 29 to obtain information for the second round project (Wheat and Flour Market). They discussed the needs and priorities with direct beneficiaries in terms of the reconstruction of the Wheat and Flour Market. They prioritized as follows: site leveling, PCC of the yard, iron column with iron frame roof, small ditch, repairing of water well and construction or installation of a one-room latrine. Participants also discussed the sustainability of the project during the meeting.

On January 31, in Maymana the RU-N team discussed the sustainability of the second round project with PAAG members. They discussed the sustainability of the proposed public latrines project. The PAAG members confirmed the idea of the SDAG members which was that “Everyone who uses the latrine should pay and the Municipality should submit it to the private sector”. At the end of the meeting, they decided that the project will be sustainable.

## **PLANNED FEBRUARY ACTIVITIES**

The first RU-N Mayors' Conference will take place on February 7-8. During the conference Mayors, municipal finance officials, GDMA/IDLG officials, and USAID officials will discuss the RU-N program in general as well as specific topics such as budget forms and preparation and business registration and licensing.

RU-N staff in all nine municipalities will launch a comprehensive budget preparation technical assistance program. RU-N will assist Mayors in organizing necessary information and preparing required form for timely GDMA submittal. RU-N will also assist Mayors and SDAGs in organizing community wide citizen budget meetings. The goal is to help mayors develop responsive, timely and high quality budgets.

RU-N staff in five municipalities—Aybak, Faizabad, Pul-e-Khumri, Sar-e-Pul, and Taloqan—will launch the business registration and licensing program. RU-N will assist Mayors in hiring teams and will provide equipment for those teams to complete tax mapping and assist business owners in the registration process. The goal is to generate business tax revenue for the municipalities.

RU-N teams in all nine municipalities will continue to conduct capacity building in the form of technical assistance, functional training, project-based training, and workshops. Topics will include procurement, budget formulation, business registration and licensing processes, and other topics requested by mayors and their staff.

The RU-N teams in all nine provinces will also continue to draft designs and SOWs for the second round Sustainable Service Delivery Improvement projects. The first round projects will all be underway by February.