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Afghan Agricultural Research and Extension Development Program (AGRED)



Monthly Report

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Afghan Agricultural Research & Extension Program (AGRED)

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Contracting Officer's Representative	Mark Kelly
Contracting Officer's Representative	Mohammed Junaid
Contract Officer	Paul Martin
Chief of Party kingsley.bash@rootsofpeace.org	Kingsley Bash, PhD,
ROP CEO	Heidi Kuhn, heidi@rootsofpeace.org
ROP President	Gary Kuhn, gary@rootsofpeace.org



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PROJECT INFORMATION

AGRED PURPOSE

In partnership with Afghan farmers, the USAID/AGRED Program supports the Afghan government to build enduring, effective research and extension systems. The result will include increased agricultural jobs and incomes.

AGRED PROGRAM COMPONENTS

1. **Communication** - More effective communication with and increased access to improved technologies, knowledge and education with emphasis on agriculture best practices by Afghan farmers
2. **Infrastructure** - Improved applied research and extension infrastructure in 7 target sub-national Research Centers and fifty target districts
3. **Training** - Training and capacity building of research and extension staff to deliver services to Afghan communities
4. **Research and Extension** - Applied research and provision of extension and advisory services

AGRED PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this program is to increase agricultural productivity and income through the application of science and technology. The Afghan Agricultural Research and Extension Development (AGRED) program will build the capacity of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan's (GIROA) Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) and Directorates of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (DAIL) to sustainably procure, develop and deploy productivity-enhancing technologies and good farming practices. The program will strengthen the technical skills of research and extension professionals in state-of-the-art extension and advisory service delivery approaches and methods through on-the-job and formal trainings. AGRED will facilitate farmers' access to improved technologies and practices, integrate research and extension systems, and rebuild critical assets of selected Research Centers.

The capacity development work will focus on MAIL and DAILs in seven provinces - Balkh, Herat, Kabul, Kandahar, Kunduz, Nangarhar and Paktya, and on 50 MAIL priority districts in these and 19 other provinces: Kapisa, Parwan, Wardak, Ghazni, Helmand, Zabul, Uruzgan, Laghman, Kunar, Takhar, Baghlan, Bamyān, Badakhshan, Jawzjan, Samangan, Sar-i-Pul, Logar, Faryab and Badghis.

HIGHLIGHTS

The program start-up phase continues with meetings between the AGRED team and USAID, followed by a series of meetings with USDA, USDA's AAEP and CBCMP programs, and with MAIL. The AGRED team proceeded in this sequence to first ensure

agreement with USAID on key program objectives, strategies and plans. Then it briefed other USG programs to develop a unified message that fits the overall USG strategy. Finally, AGRED briefed MAIL on its relationship with other USG programs. The briefing included AGRED's participatory and collaborative approach to planning MAIL on-budget activities. This approach takes longer due to the need to train MAIL on each step of the process. A typical USAID program might already be implementing activities in its second month of operation, but AGRED's collaborative approach required bringing MAIL to the same level of understanding as the AGRED team and USAID.

Participatory Research and Extension Planning Process - AGRED briefed the MAIL's Technical Working Group on the participatory process required to access on-budget funding for research and extension activities. This process will begin with seven stakeholder workshops in November. Workshop participants will include farmers, agribusinesses and government institutions responsible for agricultural development. The workshops will identify weaknesses in agricultural value chains that can be addressed by MAIL and DAIR research and extension programs. The Technical Working Group will consolidate the research and extension needs identified in the workshops into a proposal for on-budget funding under USAID Implementation Letters.

The AGRED team drafted the Work Plan and the PMP. The PMP will be a unique effort due to a dual set of indicators reflecting both the AGRED team performance against their objectives, but also indicators to monitor MAIL performance.

Performance Monitoring Plan - USAID recognizes that AGRED's success will depend upon MAIL accessing on-budget funding from USAID. AGRED will assist MAIL in identifying research and extension priorities to address using on-budget funding, but the MAIL must apply for the funding and use it according to the "conditions precedent" of USAID Implementation Letters (ILs). AGRED will monitor progress toward its own indicator targets, and also toward the MAIL's targets, as defined in ILs. As a result, AGRED's Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP) must include separate targets for AGRED and MAIL. USAID and AGRED agreed to extend the PMP submission deadline and commit additional M&E resources to design a PMP that will provide guidelines for future projects involving on-budget funding to ministries working in agriculture and other fields, in Afghanistan and other countries.

While these briefings were progressing, we hired the majority of the AGRED team, secured and occupied new offices, established our security, organized project vehicles, and procured the initial supplies to build the program.

ACHEIVEMENTS IN SEPTEMBER

- Recruitment
COP Kingsley Bash and six Afghan staff members were hired in July and August.

Another expats - Director of Women's Program Dr. Hasina Rasuli – and three local staff members were hired in September. Another 35 local staff members were identified and will be hired in October. These include five Regional Research Coordinators, five Regional Extension Coordinators and 18 Provincial Extension Coordinators, for a total three expats and 42 local staff. (See Table 1 below and the organization chart in Appendix A).

- Meetings with USAID

The ROP AGRED team met with USAID and USDA in Kabul to ensure a shared understanding of the program strategy and coordinate activities. Several meetings were conducted at the US Embassy in Kabul to introduce the ROP AGRED team to their USAID and Civil Affairs Team counterparts. These meetings were held prior to AGRED's meetings with MAIL to insure that MAIL and DAILs received consistent information on key issues including the:

- Strategy and general approach of the AGRED program
- Collaboration of three USG programs - Capacity Building and Change Management (CBCMP), Afghanistan Agriculture Extension Program (AAEP) and AGRED –to build MAIL's capacity to respond to the needs of Afghan farmers.
- MOU between USAID and MAIL defining AGRED's roles and responsibilities
- Future agreement between USAID and MAIL for on-budget funding

AGRED met with a USAID monitoring and evaluation specialist who reiterated USAID's satisfaction with AGRED's draft PMP submitted for review the previous week. AGRED's success will depend on "on-budget" funding from USAID to MAIL through Implementation Letters. While AGRED is responsible for assisting the MAIL in applying to USAID for ILs that will result in on-budget funding, and for monitoring the use of on-budget funds from USAID, AGRED will not control the actions of MAIL in applying for or using USAID funds. AGRED's monitoring or its own activities and those of MAIL will require a new approach to its M&E program and PMP. USAID/Kabul wants to use the AGRED PMP as an example for future "on-budget" M&E programs. It proposed to develop a team to define a new approach to M&E for programs involving on-budget funding. USAID assured AGRED that revising the PMP will not affect the work plan or slow implementation activities.

- Meetings with MAIL

AGRED continued to meet with MAIL Extension Director Hukum Khan Habibi and to participate in the meetings of the MAIL's Technical Working Group, established to support the MAIL's work with AGRED.

Mr. Habibi described how his directorate is linked with those of forestry, natural resource management and livestock. He wants AGRED and its subcontractors WSU, UCD and TAMU to provide technical and management training to all of these departments.

The MAIL will provide temporary office space for AGRED. In early 2013, AGRED will have permanent offices in a building currently under construction at MAIL.

- **Technical Working Group (TWG) Meetings**
AGRED conducted two meetings with MAIL's TWG to define the process, activities and schedule of deliverables required to apply for on-budget funding provided under Implementation Letters (ILs) issued by USAID. The TWG meetings also resulted in the establishment of an IL Committee to manage the logistics of subsequent stakeholder workshops designed to identify the priority research and extension needs that can be addressed using funding from ILs in 2013. TWG meeting notes are provided in Appendix below.
- **Meetings in Herat**
AGRED COP Bash and National Research Coordinator Khalid Wadan conducted a series of meetings in Herat with USAID/Herat, CBCMP/Herat, Perennial Horticulture Development Program (PHDP), AAEP/Herat and Herat University, thereby establishing institutional and collegial relationships that resulted in subsequent exchanges of information and coordination of activities.
- **Meetings with AGRED Subcontractors**
A consortium of (Washington State University, University of California – Davis, Texas A&M University) will work with Roots of Peace (RoP), the prime contractor on the project, to provide specific training and capacity building to MAIL/DAIL research and extension personnel. Training topics will be informed by past assessments and ideas from the USAID Design and Implementation Plan for Agricultural Research and Extension Centers in Afghanistan. The consortium's training plans include:
 - December 2012 – Leadership Training
 - January 2013 – Principles of Research and Extension
 - February 2013 – Applied Research Methods
 - Late Winter to Early Fall – Seeding Practices, Crop Health, Irrigation, Weed Control, Livestock Feed and Forage, Harves, Post-Harvest Management and othe topics.
- **Initial Procurements**
ROP took delivery of two of the armored vehicles in Helmand. Another two vehicles are in Kandahar, and will be delivered to Kabul in October.
- **Program Plans**
The AGRED team submitted the Branding & Marking Plan, Mobilization Plan, and the Baseline Survey Plan.

ACTIVITIES FOR OCTOBER

- **AGRED Meetings with MAIL**
AGRED will continue meeting with the Technical Working Group responsible for fulfilling

MAIL's responsibilities as defined in its MOU with USAID and AGRED. The first Technical Working Group meetings will focus on educating the MAIL members on the AGRED program, other USG related programs, and the process of developing MAIL's proposal to USAID for an IL.

- **Mobilization**
AGRED will continue mobilizing during September with the goal of having all the Kabul-based positions filled by the end of the month. We expect to have the new office and guesthouse operational.
- **Participatory Research and Extension Planning Process**
AGRED will brief the Technical Working Group on the participatory process required by USAID to access on-budget funding for research and extension activities. This process will begin with stakeholder workshops.

Workshop participants will include farmers, agribusinesses (agricultural input suppliers, farm services providers, traders, processors, transporters, wholesalers and retailers) and government institutions responsible for agricultural development (MAIL, DAILs, MOCI, ACCI and AISA). The objective of the workshops is to identify weaknesses in agricultural value chains that can be addressed by MAIL and DAIL research and extension programs. The Technical Working Group will summarize the research needs, identified in the workshops, in a national work plan.

This demand-driven approach to planning will provide the basis for a proposal to USAID for an Implementation Letter providing funds for MAIL and DAIL research and extension activities in 2013, and defining the process required to access additional on-budget funds until 2017.

- **Program Plans**
The team will complete and submit the Continuity Plan, Demobilization Plan and draft PMP.

MAIL / DAIL CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP

AGRED focused on briefing the Technical Working Group on AGRED goals, objectives and strategies. Capacity building training activities have not begun. The Technical Working Group met twice in August, focusing primarily on: 1) briefing TWG members on the AGRED program, and 2) TWG activity schedule required to access research and extension funding for 2013.

CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTATION

- **Jointly Implemented Program**
This program includes many activities required to develop two major MAIL directorates. Since this program is envisioned as a joint effort with MAIL, each activity requires a consensus agreement with MAIL counterparts. This type of partnership arrangement is unusual for USAID program. The AGRED team will not directly implement program activities like other USAID project. Instead, AGRED will do its work through the MAIL. AGRED's goal is to have MAIL implement research and extension at a speed that is typical of USAID programs.
- **Key Personnel**
Arrival of Key Personnel during Ramadan and the ensuing Eid holidays both helped and hindered AGED efforts. The team was able to accomplish many tasks without interruptions common to normal business days. On the other hand, access to MAIL was limited during these holiday periods.

SEPTEMBER PRIORITITES

- **Technical Working Group**
The AGRED team will continue meeting with the TWG to maintain the momentum of program rollout. Monthly objectives include establishing a chairman for the TWG and insuring that key groups within MAIL are represented in the meetings will be high priorities.

MAIL RESEARCH PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

MOBILIZATION

The program to build the capacity of MAIL and DAIL research program will begin in October with Post-Harvest Management training courses to be conducted in Kandahar and Kabul.

IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES

Members of the TWG remain relatively passive and reluctant to assume leadership of the program to apply for funding under Implementation Letters. AGRED and CBCMP will train and begin traveling with MAIL TWG members in October, thereby establishing rapport and identifying ways to promote leadership behavior.

NEXT MONTH PRIORITIES

Hiring Research Field Team. AGRED expects to hire Regional Research Coordinators in late September or early October.

MAIL / DAIL EXTENSION DEVELOPMENT

MOBILIZATION

AGRED's National Extension Coordinator Nisar Ahmad, re-assigned from ROP's CHAMP project to AGRED, began recruiting his extension team. A short-list of candidates was developed in August and interviews began in September.

CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTATION

AGRED continues to contact Afghan universities and other institutions to solicit recommendations for newly graduated agricultural scientists.

Women's Program Director Dr. Rasuli will travel to Balkh and other target provinces to recruit Regional Gender Coordinators.

NEXT MONTH PRIORITITES

- Hire Regional Extension Coordinators and Provincial Extension Coordinators.
- Confirm target provinces and districts. Two Research Centers are in provinces that do not contain target districts. The AGRED team has developed a revised list of target provinces and districts (Table 2 below).

Table 2: AGRED's Target Provinces and Priority Districts

#	Province*	Priority Districts
1	Kabul	Shakar Dara, Char Aysab
2	Kapisa	Khohistan 2 nd
3	Parwan	Charikar, Sayed Khil
4	Wardak	Maidan Shar
5	Ghazni	Ghazni Center, Khoja Omari, Jaghori
6	Kandahar	Dand, Daman, Arghandab
7	Helmand	Nadali, Garmsir
8	Zabul	Qalat
9	Uruzgan	Trinkot
10	Nangarhar	Mohmand Dara, Kama, Sorkhrood, Rodat
11	Laghman	Qargae
12	Kunar	Narang, Khas Kunar
13	Kunduz	Kunduz Center, Khan Abad
14	Takhar	Taloqan
15	Baghlan	Markazi Baglan
16	Bamyan	Bamyan
17	Badakhshan	Kishim
18	Balkh	Nahre Shahi, Dehdadi
19	Jawzjan	Aqcha
20	Samangan	Aybak
21	Sar-i-Pul	Sancharak
22	Paktya	Gardiz, Ahmad Abad
23	Logar	Mohd Agha
24	Herat	Gozara, Pashton Zarghon
25	Faryab	Khoja Sabzposh
26	Badghis	Qadis

*The seven initial target provinces are highlighted in bold

GENDER ACTIVITIES

MAIL PLANS FOR WOMEN FARMERS

- AGRED COP Bash and Director of Women's Programs Rasuli met with MAIL Extension Director Habibi to discuss his plans for developing MAIL's Home Economics Department into a major extension program targeting women. He plans to expand the Home Economics program to have at least one woman Extension Officer in each district of Afghanistan. AGRED is positioned to help him design and implement this plan.

CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTATION

- MAIL gender programs will need to be revised and expanded, requiring close coordination between AGRED and MAIL's Home Economics Department.

NEXT QUARTER PRIORITIES

- Mobilize the Director of Women's Program to work with MAIL in re-engineering the Home Economics Directorate.

AGRED Calendar of Future Events: September 2012

Proposed Date	AGRED Results Framework Activity	Events/Activities	Purpose	Person Responsible	Venue	Partner/s and Expected Level of GOP Representation	Applicable for Branding & Marking
8-Sep	NA	AGRED COP arrives in Kabul	AGRED start-up	ROP/HQ	Kabul	NA	NA
10-Sep	NA	Planning meeting	Intro to USAID and Civil Affairs Team	COR Kelly	USAID	NA	NA
11-Sep	NA	MAIL Technical Working Group meeting	Specifications of MAIL proposal for Implementation Letter	National Extension Coordinator Nisar	MAIL	MAIL extension and research managers	NA
Sep 15-18	NA	Field visit to Herat	Herat: DAIL Research, CBCMP, PHDP, AAEP, Herat University Meetings	COR Kelly, COP Bash	DAIL/Herat	DAIL/Herat	NA
20-Sep	NA	Implementation Letter Committee meeting	Schedule preparation of MAIL proposal for IL	Rafi Qazizad of CBCMP	MAIL	MAIL extension and research managers	NA
23-Sep	NA	Technical Working Group meeting	Plan for stakeholder workshops to ID research, extension needs	National Extension Coordinator Nisar	MAIL	MAIL extension and research managers	NA

25-Sep	NA	Telcon w/ Paktia ADTs:	Intro to AGRED: objectives and activities	COR Kelly	USAID	NA	NA
25-Sep	NA	Introduction meeting w/ MAIL Research and Extension	MOU, AGRED staffing, offices	Dir. Habibi	MAIL	Director of Extension and Research Habibi	NA
27-Sep	NA	PMP meeting w/ A. Heurta and COR Kelly	Review draft PMP	COR Kelly	USAID	NA	NA
28-Sep	NA	Telcon w/ subs: WSU, UCD, TAMU	Define initial training activities	COP Bash	NA	NA	NA

AGRED Calendar of Future Events: October 2012

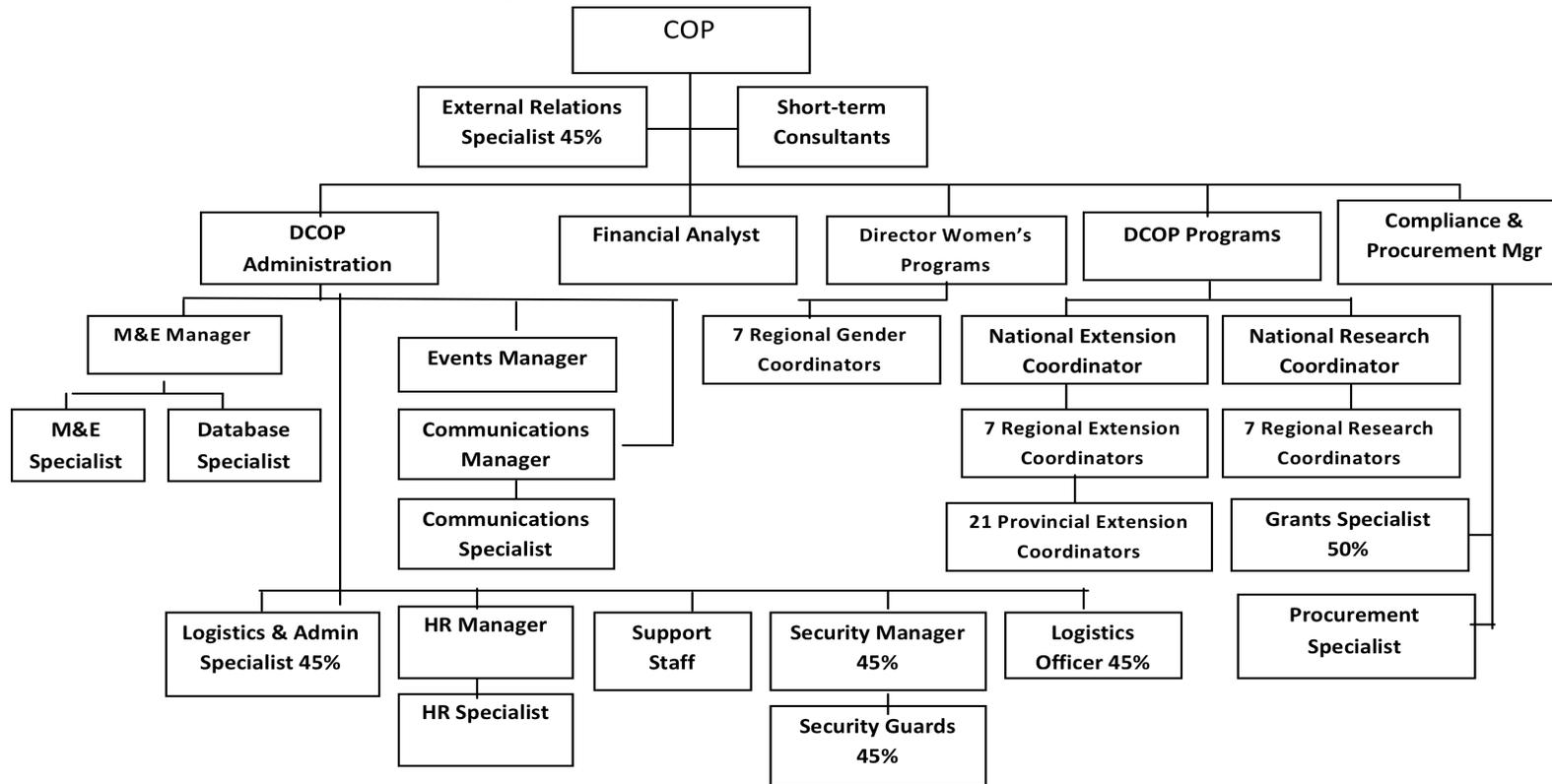
Proposed Date	PSSP Results Framework Activity	Events/ Activities	Purpose	Person Responsible	Venue	Partner/s and Expected Level of GOP Representation	Applicable for Branding & Marking
1-Oct	NA	PMP review meeting	Revised requirements for PMP for on-budget program	COR Kelly	MAIL	NA	NA
4-Oct	NA	Trip to Balkh province	Recruiting Provincial Extension Coordinators	National Extension Coordinator Nisar	Mazar	NA	NA
5-Oct	IR 1: Effective communications	Women's Programs mtg w/ Dir. Habibi	Role and vision of MAIL Home Econ extension	Dir. Women Program Dr. Rasuli	MAIL		
Oct 5	NA	Staff recruitment in Kunduz province	Recruiting Provincial Extension Coordinators	National Extension Coordinator Nisar	Kunduz	NA	NA

Oct 8-9	IR 3: Training and capacity building of research and extension staff to deliver services to Afghan communities	Post-harvest management training	AGRED Intro and training in post-harvest grape and pomegranate management	ROP Country Dir. Osmani, AGRED Training Dir. Anwari	DAIL/ Kandahar	Kandahar, Helmand, Zabul DAILs	USAID/CHAMP Banner
Oct 14-15		Post-harvest management training	AGRED Intro and training in post-harvest grape and apple management		MAIL/ Kabul	Kabul, Logar, Wardak, Ghazni, Paktia, Parwan DAILs	USAID/CHAMP Banner
Oct 13-14	NA	Training in Extension Management	STTAs share lessons learned in AGRED-like project in Vietnam	AGRED National Extension Coordinator Nisar	AGRED	NA	NA
11-Oct	NA	Mtg w/ C. Huger re: Implementation Letters (ILs)	Define IL process and responsibilities of USAID and AGRED	COR Kelly	USAID	NA	NA
Oct 22-23	IR 1: Effective communications	Training Workshop Facilitators	Train facilitator for regional stakeholder workshops	ROP Country Dir. Osmani	AGRED/ROP		

AGRED Calendar of Future Events: November 2012

Proposed Date	PSSP Results Framework Activity	Events/ Activities	Purpose	Person Responsible	Venue	Partner/s and Expected Level of GOP Representation	Applicable for Branding & Marking
Nov 4-5	IR 1: More effective communication with and increased access to improved technologies, knowledge and education with emphasis on agriculture best practices by Afghan farmers.	Stakeholder Workshops	AGRED Intro and Workshop to ID stakeholders' research and extension needs	ROP Country Dir. Osmani, AGRED Training Dir. Anwari	Jalalabad	DAIL research and extension: Nangarhar, Kunar, Laghman	USAID/AGRED Banners
Nov 4-5					Mazar-e-Sharif	DAIL research and extension: Balkh, Jawzjan, Samangan, Saripol	
Nov 11-13					Kunduz	DAIL research and extension: Kunduz, Takhar, Baghlan, Bamyán, Badakhshan	
Nov 11-13					Paktya	DAIL research and extension: Paktya and Logar	
25-Nov					Kabul	DAIL research and extension: provinces TBD	
Nov 9-11		AgFair	Establish contacts with agribusinesses				

Appendix A: AGRED Organizational Chart



Acronyms

AAEP	USDA Afghan Agricultural Extension Program
ACBAR	Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief
ADT	US Military Agriculture Development Team
AGRED	USAID Afghan Agriculture Research & Extension Development
CBCMP	USDA Capacity Building and Change Management Program
CHAMP Program	USAID Commercial Horticulture & Agricultural Marketing
COP	Chief of Party
CDC	Community Development Council
DAIL	Directorate of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock
EC	European Community
GIRoA	Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
IPM	Integrated Pest Management
LOE	Level of Effort
MAIL	Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MRRD	Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development
PMP	Performance Management Plan
RADP	USAID Regional Agriculture Development Program
ROP	Roots of Peace
TAMU	Texas A&M University
UCD	University of California, Davis
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USG	United States Government
WSU	Washington State University