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Regional Agricultural Development Program in Northern Afghanistan (RADP- North) Contract No. AID-306-C-14-00002

FY2014

Quarter III

July 30, 2014

1. Program Overview

USAID awarded Development Alternatives, Inc. (DAI) the Regional Agricultural Development Program in Northern Afghanistan (RADP-North) on May 21, 2014, which will be implemented over a five-year period from May 2014 through May 2019.

RADP-North aims to improve food and economic security for rural Afghans in the northern provinces of Jowzjan, Balkh, Samangan, Kunduz, Baghlan, and Badakhshan.

RADP-North will work in three agricultural value chains to improve their production and productivity with the added effect of reducing the interest in and activity of poppy cultivation. Value chain foci are categorized by CLINs 1, 2, and 3, respectively, wheat, grapes/raisins and fruits/nuts, and livestock with the aim of: 1) training and mentoring farmers and agribusinesses in the use of appropriate technologies and agricultural practices; 2) improving post-harvest techniques and value-added processing; and 3) strengthening agribusiness management and market linkages to domestic and international markets. Cross-cutting themes of increased women's participation, empowerment, and status enhancement, broad dissemination and communication of program activities, and promotion of an improved legal and regulatory framework for the agricultural sector will be integrated within all program activities. The latter comprises CLIN 4. All activities build on sustainable interventions.

RADP-North is implemented by DAI, in conjunction with the following partners and their corresponding responsibilities: Joint Development Associates (JDA) (CLIN 1); Agricultural Cooperative Development International and Volunteers in Overseas Cooperative Assistance (ACDI/VOCA) (CLIN 2); Dutch Committee for Afghanistan (DCA) (CLIN 3); Development and Training Services, Inc. (dTS) (gender interventions); Rahman Safi Impact Consultancy (RSI) (M&E); Alcis (GIS and mapping services); and Pace Group (public outreach).

RADP-North will coordinate field activities with the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock (MAIL), Directorates of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock (DAILs), other USAID-funded programs, and sectoral firms, such as agro processors, local traders, exporters, and service providers to the selected value chains.

2. Executive Summary

The main activity during this quarter was mobilization of the Start-Up Team to the field to implement rapid operational efforts in support of technical programming. During this quarter, the project initiated the operational start-up of the program and began the technical planning of program-specific activities for implementation over the life of the project. The project mobilized key expatriate personnel, recruited local staff, established operational systems, and identified working and living space for staff.

The Post-Award Conference was held on June 23, 2014 in Kabul and included DAI's presentation of its vision for the program and contractual and technical discussions with USAID officials.

2.1 Summary of Results for the Reporting Period and Key Achievements:

Staffing

As of June 30, DAI identified the home office support staff who will fulfill the program management role for the life of the program. The Start-Up Manager and Start-Up Operations Specialist were on the ground in Mazar-e-Sharif on June 16 to begin identifying properties for the project and establishing project systems. DAI mobilized key personnel, confirmed the availability of local staff, and began identifying replacement candidates for the Compliance Officer position because the individual initially proposed is no longer available. At the end of the quarter, local staff recruitment was pending receipt of USAID approval of the Local Compensation Plan (LCP).¹

During this quarter, RADP-North signed a subcontract with PAX Mondial (PAX), the risk management company for the project. PAX mobilized its risk manager to coordinate security for expatriate staff arriving in the field. The project also signed a letter of authorization with ACDI/VOCA to facilitate mobilization of its Value Chain Advisor, a key personnel position, while the subcontract was being finalized.

During the start-up phase, the project is receiving operational support from the DAI Afghanistan Operations Office (AOO) as well as lodging and workspace from SIKA-North, another USAID/DAI program based in Mazar-e-Sharif.

As of June 30, the staffing plan shows the following achievements:

Start-Up Plan

The Start-Up Manager and Start-Up Operations Specialist proposed the former RAMP UP-North guesthouse as the RADP-North guesthouse. DAI's Country Risk Manager approved the site and determined that only minimal security upgrades were required for the property. The project has identified office space and both properties have been submitted to the USAID vetting office. The Start-Up Team coordinated with the USAID/Office of Acquisition and Assistance (OAA) Property Administrator to receive two B6 vehicles to facilitate the movement of expatriate staff. A third B6 will be disposed from SIKA-North to RADP-North at a later date. The team is continuing to liaise with the Property Administrator to receive additional items that can be used by the project.

The Chief of Party (COP) and the Deputy Chief of Party (DCOP) represented the field team at the Post-Award Conference along with DAI's Senior Technical Advisor, Project Team Director, and the Regional Managing Director from the home office. Following the conference, the COP and Project Team Director joined the Start-Up team to continue start-up activities.

Under direction from the Contracting Officer's Representative (COR), the project established a formal electronic approval procedure to facilitate the efficient processing of project requests. The project began identifying necessary modules in

¹ Within the first three weeks of the second quarter, local staff were hired, trained, and contributing to start-up efforts.

its Technical and Administrative Management Information System (TAMIS). Additional support staff from the home office will arrive in the next reporting period to advance system development.

2.2 Constraints and Critical Issues:

DAI continues to experience delays in receiving its AISA license renewal. This situation restricts the ability of Third-Country Nationals (TCNs) to obtain entry visas and creates problems in renewing visas for both expatriate and TCN staff. The delayed renewal has also impacted the project's ability to open bank accounts at the Afghanistan International Bank (AIB). At the end of this reporting period, RADP-North was unable to open project bank accounts.²

The Compliance Officer candidate listed in the technical proposal was unavailable to accept an offer of employment at the time of award. The project is currently identifying candidates to fill this key personnel position and expects to have the candidate identified, hired, and mobilized in the next reporting period.

In the initial start-up phase, RADP-North will submit several requests to USAID for vetting approval, which may take significant time to clear the vetting office. The COR has generously extended his support in assisting the project with expeditious vetting of crucial requests, such as the guesthouse and office space. The project expects that this issue will be managed in the immediate future and will not pose significant constraints.

3 Activity Implementation

This report covers staffing and start-up activities and does not include the Indicator/Activity Performance reporting. The Start-Up Workplan, Annual Workplan, and program implementation targets are under development.

3.1 Planned for Next Reporting Period:

In the next reporting period, the RADP-North team will continue staff recruitment and start-up implementation to position technical staff and partners for service provision to the target areas and populations. Key projected activities include:

- Ongoing recruitment and mobilization of expatriate staff, including the Compliance Director, Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) and Communication Manager, and the ACDI/VOCA Value Chain Advisor and Finance and Administration Manager; Upon approval of the LCP, final recruitment of administrative and technical Cooperating Country National (CCN) staff required for the Mazar-e-Sharif and provincial offices;
- Finalization of guesthouse accommodations and relocation of all expatriate staff into the guesthouse;
- Establishment of the main office in Mazar-e-Sharif, pending vetting approval.

² RADP-North successfully opened the bank accounts in mid-July.

- Initial establishment of regional offices in Kunduz and Faizabad and provincial offices in Balkh, Kunduz, and Badakhshan provinces;
- Design and implementation of project financial and management systems; and.
- Submission to USAID of subcontractor consent requests, finalization of subcontract agreements, and additional vetting request submissions, as needed.

Programmatic content in the following quarter will focus on commencement of activity implementation in the target sectors and areas. Specific team tasks will include:

- Annual workplan development and submission to COR for approval;
- Design and conduct the Baseline Survey in target areas and among target populations;
- Design the M&E and Performance Management Plan (PMP) systems for submission to USAID for approval;
- Collaborate with the COR and MAIL officials to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with MAIL and the DAILs;
- Conduct a subcontractor planning session to align program implementation and identify CLIN linkages;
- Survey private businesses throughout the region to identify potential partnership activities;
- Schedule coordination sessions with subcontractors and private agribusinesses to design value chain strategies for the target sectors; and
- Engage with other USAID-funded programs, GIROA provincial representatives, farmers, and private agribusinesses to strengthen program collaboration.

3.2 Lessons Learned:

The start-up and staffing plans demonstrate significant progress for this quarter. DAI has delivered a rapid response to many contractual commitments, but we did, however, misstep in submitting a workplan that was not up to DAI's and USAID's stringent content and quality standards. The document submitted as a data collection plan more closely resembled a performance management plan. In consultation with the COR, the team established new deadlines and parameters for the workplan and data management plan submissions.

After receiving feedback from the COR, the RADP-North home office management team and the COP candidly discussed how to both address the shortcomings in the submitted documents and ensure that the project has procedures in place to prevent a recurrence of the issue. From this point forward, all deliverable submissions will be more closely coordinated among field and home office staff. All contractual donor communications will be sent by the home office management team.

4 Collaboration with GIROA, Other Donor Programs, or Other USAID Programs

During this reporting period, SIKANorth -another USAID-funded program implemented by DAI - has provided significant operational support to RADP-North. SIKANorth loaned computer equipment to the start-up team for use until project equipment arrives from the U.S. SIKANorth also provided office workspace and temporary housing for two start-up team members.

5 Management and Administrative Issues

(Relevant updates appear above in Section 2 and 3.)

REGIONAL AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM in NORTHERN AFGHANISTAN (RADP-North)

**AGENDA
Post-Award Conference
23 JUNE, 2014
9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
Indiana 210 Conference Room**

In attendance:

Development Alternatives, Inc. (DAI)

- Danilo Benavides - Chief of Party
- Ghulam Samim – Deputy Chief of Party
- Bruce Spake - Vice President / Managing Director for MENA and Afghanistan
- Tom Brown - Senior Technical Advisor
- Robert Richey - HO Program Team Director

By phone from DC:

- Yousri Hanna - Director of Contracts for MENA and Afghanistan

USAID/Afghanistan:

- William Hammink, Mission Director or Deputy Mission Director
- Sonila Hysi, Director, Office of Acquisition & Assistance
- Maychin Ho, Contracting Officer, OAA
- Ross Hicks, Contracting Officer, OAA
- Seilkhan Yeleussizov, Senior Acquisition & Assistance Specialist, OAA
- Wayne Nilsestuen, Director, Office of Agriculture
- Mark Henderson, Contracting Officer's Representative
- Zmaryalai Tasal, Alternate Contracting Officer's Representative
- Julie Southfield, Senior Regional Legal Advisor
- Leigh Jones, Program Development Officer
- Joshua Mike, Monitoring Evaluation Team Leader
- Ahmad Jawid, Chief Accountant
- Stefan Korshak, Senior Development Outreach & Communications Officer
- Harry Bottenberg, Mission Environmental Officer

Time	Agenda Item	Presenting Officer
9:00 – 9:15	Welcome Introductions	William Hammink, Mission Director
09:15 – 9:30	Opening Remarks	Sonila Hysi, OAA Office Dir.
9:30 – 10:30	Presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USAID • DAI Presentation 	Wayne N Nilsestuen, OAG Office Director & Mark Henderson, COR Danilo Benavides, COP
10:30 – 11:00	Contract Administration Contracting Officer COR + Alternate COR Contractor Key Personnel Topics to be covered include: Contract Type Contract Modifications/Changes Subcontracts/GUCs Waivers and Deviations Special contract clauses and conditions Operationalizing M&E	Soni Hysi Ross Hicks Seilkhan Yeleussizov

11:00 – 11:20	Registration, Tax, & Related Legal Issues	Julie Southfield, RLA
11:20 – 11:40	Programmatic Matters USAID/Afghanistan Multi-Tiered M&E	Leigh Jones Program Development Officer Joshua Mike, Monitoring & Evaluation Team Leader
11:40 – 12:00	Financial Matters Billing/Accruals Voucher approval Payment procedures	Ahmad Jawid, Chief Accountant
12:00 – 12:20	Development Outreach and Communication (DOC)	Stefan Korshak, Sr. DOC Officer
12:20 – 12:40	Environmental Matters	Harry Bottenberg, MEO
12:40 – 1:00 PM	Questions & Answers Wrap-up	All Attendees