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Acronyms

AAEP II	Afghan Agriculture Extension Project II
ACBAR	Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief
ACOR	Alternate Contracting Officer's Representative
ACSI	Afghanistan Civil Service Institute
ALDO	Afghan Learning and Development Organization
AMEP	Activity Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
AOP	Administrative Office of the President
APPF	Afghan Public Protection Force
ATVI	Afghan Technical and Vocational Institute
AWCC Afghan	Wireless Communication Company
AWLE	Afghan Women Leadership in Economy
CDS	Career Development Center
COP	Chief of Party
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
DoWA	Department of Women's Affairs
DOWA	Directorate of Women Affairs
EA	Equal Access
EPD	Equality for Peace and Democracy
FAIDA	Financial Access for Investing in the Development of Afghanistan
GIRoA	Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
HR	Human Resources
IARCSC	Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission
IDIQ	Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity
IDLG	Independent Directorate of Local Governance
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MAIL	Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock
MMS	Multimedia Messaging Service
MP	Member of Parliament
MoCI	Ministry of Commerce and Industries
MoCIT	Ministry of Communication and Information Technology
MoCN	Ministry of Counter Narcotics
MoD	Ministry of Defense
MODE	Modern Organization for Developing Education
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoEc	Ministry of Economics
MoEW	Ministry of Energy and Water
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoHE	Ministry of Higher Education
MoHRA	Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs
MoI	Ministry of the Interior
MoIC	Ministry of Information and Culture
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
MoLSAMD	Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled
MoPW	Ministry of Public Works
MoTCA	Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MoWA	Ministry of Women's Affairs

MPs	Member of Parliament
MRRD	Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development
NPA	National Procurement Authority
PAC	Promote Advisory Committee
PSA	Public Service Announcements
RADP-S	Regional Agriculture Development Program-South
SMS	Short Message Service
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WCSA	Women's Civil Service Association

A. Project Overview

- Period of Performance: April 21, 2015 – April 20, 2020
- Name of Prime Implementing Partner: Chemonics International Inc.
- Names of Subcontractors/Sub-awardees:
 - Equal Access (EA)
 - Afghan Learning and Development Organization (ALDO)
 - Afghan Technical and Vocational Institute (ATVI)
 - Equality for Peace and Democracy (EPD)
 - Tadbeer Consulting
 - Dreshak Hotel Services
 - Services International, LLC
 - Afghanistan Public Protection Force (APPF)
- Geographic Coverage: Afghanistan

Promote is a joint commitment by the U.S. and Afghan governments that will work to empower 75,000 women between the ages of 18 and 30, and help ensure these women are included among a new generation of Afghan political, business, and civil society leaders. Promote aims to empower women to become leaders alongside their male counterparts, and ensure they have the skills, experience, knowledge, and networks to succeed.

USAID Promote: Women in Government, a task order under the Promote Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) contract, was designed to increase and advance the number of women in the Afghan Civil Service. In close coordination with the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA), USAID Promote: Women in Government aims to ensure women are represented at the highest levels of policy and decision-making in Afghan society and government. This component of Promote facilitates women's entry into decision-making roles in government service by establishing an internship program for high school- and college-level female students interested in working within government ministries, encourages policy reform which support women working within the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) at both the national and regional levels, increases local stakeholder support for women in government.

The USAID Promote: Women in Government program has three objectives:

- Facilitate women's entry into decision-making roles in government service;
- Encourage a hospitable environment for female staff in government by addressing policies; and
- Increase local stakeholder support for women in government.

Through the advancement of these objectives, USAID Promote: Women in Government aims to achieve the following results:

- At least 3,000 female university graduates and high school graduates complete one-year government internships and transition to full-time employment;
- 70 percent of Women in Government participants employed by GIROA within 24 months of finishing their internship;
- 75 percent of GIROA workplace policy reforms benefit and protect female employees; and
- 50 percent increase in local stakeholder buy-in for support of women working outside the home;

B. Executive Summary

USAID Promote: Women in Government is pleased to present its first semi-annual report covering the activities from the award of the task order on April 21, 2015, through the project's first fiscal year ending on September 30, 2015.

Upon implementation of the major activities, the USAID Promote: Women in Government project has been proactive during its start-up phase. The project team has taken many initial steps to ensure the scheduled launch of the pilot internship program, hired 70 percent of the staff, and developed its Year One Work Plan. Additionally, the project has finalized several other deliverables, such as the GIROA Partnership Assessment Report, the Gender Analysis Report, the Internship Manual, the Activities Monitoring and Evaluation Plan, and monthly Success Stories.

During its first year of the project, USAID Promote: Women in Government successfully built relationships with key governmental organizations and signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission (IARCSC) to train 3,000 interns over the five years of the project. The project team received 226 applications for its first group of pilot internship positions, of which 25 qualified interns were selected. The 25 pilot interns started their internship training lessons on August 22, 2015 at the Afghanistan Civil Service Institute (ACSI), marking the official program launch. Since then, the pilot interns have been receiving soft and hard skills training at ACSI five days a week, which will prepare them for employment with the Afghan civil service.

Moreover, the project management team met with the following key ministries: the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL), the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (MoCIT), the Ministry of Counter Narcotics (MoCN), the Ministry of Finance (MoF), the Ministry of Energy and Water (MoEW), the Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs (MoHRA), the Ministry of Commerce and Industries (MoCI), the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), the Ministry of Defense (MoD), the Ministry of Education (MoE), the Ministry of Economics (MoEc), the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE), the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development MRRD, the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled (MoLSAMD), and the Ministry of Public Works (MoPW). Project staff also met with potential partners, such as the Office of the President, Members of Parliament (MPs), and the Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG) to introduce the USAID Promote: Women in Government project and obtain buy-in for Component 1, the Women's Internship Program. High-level meetings were also held with the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA) to discuss collaboration between the USAID Promote: Women in Government Component 2 policy initiatives. In this meeting, project staff and MoWA representatives also proposed holding an award ceremony to celebrate both male and female champions of women's empowerment.

C. Component I: Facilitate women's entry into decision-making roles in government service

1. Women's Internship Program

Year One Work Plan: On June 9, 2015, the USAID Promote: Women in Government team successfully submitted its first-year work plan to USAID.

Development of Interns Recruitment Procedure: The project team developed a standard recruitment process for internship applications, involving calls for applications, selection criteria, interview procedures, and final selection criteria.

Internship Documents: The project team developed several administrative and technical documents, such as calls for applications, application forms, selection criteria, mentor commitment letters, acknowledgement letters for interns' families, and interns' agreement letters. Mid-term and final

evaluation forms for the interns were also developed to evaluate interns' activities and assess their improvement during the internship program. Additionally, a list of entities for public outreach efforts was also developed. The list identifies civil society organizations (CSOs), media entities, public and private universities, and governmental and non-governmental organizations that will announce the internship program.

Introductory and Orientation Presentations for Applicants: The project team developed two presentations – one for USAID Promote: Women in Government applicants and another for selected interns. The introductory presentation provided applicants with information about the internship program process, including an overview of the transparent selection criteria, benefits, stipend, and job placement opportunities. This initial presentation was used as a recruitment tool and was delivered prior to the applicants' written tests. After the interns were selected, they received an orientation presentation before commencing the actual training activities to inform them of the code of conduct, the training program curriculum, time commitments, policies, and procedures throughout the life the internship program.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU): On August 12th, an MOU was signed between USAID Promote: Women in Government and IARCSC to train 3,000 interns over the five years of the project's life. This training objective aims to facilitate women's entry into the civil service and to promote women in decision-making roles in the government. This momentous event was attended by notable members of the Civil Service Commission, USAID Promote representatives, project staff, and Afghan press representatives. This MOU serves as the basis for developing a detailed implementation plan with ACSI and civil service representatives, demonstrating a united commitment to support the project with other ministries.



MOU Signing Ceremony with IARCSC

Recruitment of 25 Pilot Interns: On July 2, 2015, the advertisement for the pilot internship program was posted on the ACBAR website, with additional flyers sent to ACSI, Kabul, and private universities. The project team received 226 applications for these 25 slots. On July 16th, and 21st, 57 applicants attended the written assessment test. After two days of testing, on July 26th, 39 applicants who passed the written assessment were interviewed by ACSI and the USAID Promote: Women in Government recruitment team. Among these applicants, 25 interns were selected for the pilot program. On August 18th, the selected interns confirmed their commitment for the duration of the internship program to



Written test of 25 pilot interns

seek entry into the civil service upon graduation. The interns will participate in a six-month comprehensive training at ACSI, which will enable them to secure a job within the government. An Internship Coordinator was assigned to monitor and evaluate interns' progress on a weekly basis at

ACSI. During the internship orientation program, mobile money accounts with the Afghan Wireless Communication Company (AWCC) were activated for all interns to disburse the monthly stipend upon confirming their internship participation.

Internship Manual: On August 21st, the USAID Promote: Women in Government Internship Manual was submitted to USAID. The Internship Manual was developed to serve as an operational manual for the interns. This manual covers the intern selection process; evaluation processes for interns, mentors, and supervisors; protocols and codes of conduct; and processes for conflict mitigation. The manual also includes position descriptions, internship start and end dates, training requirements, work schedules, and requirements for continuing and completing the program. Upon approval, the Internship Manual will be distributed to interns, supervisors, mentors, and HR departments of partner organizations.

Gender Analysis Phase I: On August 21st, Phase I of the Gender Analysis was submitted to USAID. Phase I analyzed the status of men and women as they relate to project activities and assessed how local gender norms would shape project design, implementation, and opportunities for male engagement. Phase I focused on Kabul to accompany the Year 1 internship program there. The second phase of this analysis will focus on Mazar, Jalalabad, Herat, and Kandahar to prepare for the implementation of the internship program in these areas in Year 2. This approach aims to provide the most up-to-date information that will be applied when designing and implementing activities. The analysis team collected both quantitative and qualitative data from surveys, focus groups, and structured interviews with counterparts, partners, and project beneficiaries. Of the total survey respondents, 17 percent represented civil society organizations (CSOs) or other implementing organizations, 25 percent represented ministries or government actors, and 58 percent represented community members. These respondents emphasized that to address structural and cultural challenges, project researchers must consider persistent problems with transportation, infrastructure, policy, and advocacy. The resulting recommendations highlighted the importance of ensuring that existing project activities are designed and implemented in a gender sensitive way. Namely, project activities must consider the differing ways in which women and men perceive women working in government.



Interviewing female focus group for gender analysis

USAID Promote: Women in Government Launch Reception: On August 22nd, USAID Promote: Women in Government launched the Internship Program with a ceremony at the U.S. Ambassador's Residence Hall. Mr. P. Michael McKinley, Ambassador of the United States of America; Dilbar Nazari, Minister of Women's Affairs; Asad Zameer, Minister of MAIL; Nasir Ahmad Durrani, Minister of MRRD; Kamila Sediqi, Deputy Chief of Staff of the President's Office; Dr. Mushahid, Chairman of IARCSC; representatives of USAID Promote: Women in Government partners; HR Directors; deputy ministers; gender unit heads from various ministries; USAID program and operational staff; and USAID

Promote: Women in Government interns and project staff were in attendance. The ambassador started his speech with welcoming remarks and congratulated the 25 selected USAID Promote: Women in Government interns. “Investing in women is an important part of the U.S. foreign policy,” said Mr. McKinley. “We know women’s participation is essential to meeting every challenge that society faces and over the five-year program of Promote we hope to reach 75,000 young Afghan women to develop their skills in leadership across society.” Dilbar Nazari, Minister of the Ministry of Women’s Affairs,



Promote: Women in Government launch reception

spoke about the significant roles of men and women, and their equal participation in the government. “Both men and women are an essential part of society, and they should work together to promote the country economically, politically, and socially. Currently, 27 percent of civil service employees are female and of which 10 percent are at the decision-making level. USAID Promote: Women in Government program is an excellent opportunity to raise the number of women’s participation in the government at the leadership level, and this program should be expanded to remote areas as well.” These notable speakers set the tone of collaboration as the USAID Promote: Women in Government internship program will be conducted in close coordination with the Ministry of Women’s Affairs and IARCSC. The launch reception was also designed to provide networking opportunities for interns with their future civil service counterparts, USAID counterparts, and project staff.

GIRoA Partnership Assessment: on August 28th, Phase I of the Partnership Assessment report was submitted to USAID. The assessment was conducted to evaluate the mandate, political will, capacity, resources, system, and processes of potential government partners from the Afghan ministries. The assessment outlines viable potential partners where future interns could be placed; mentors for the interns; available facilities and resources for interns within the identified government systems; and systems and processes that will provide opportunities for the interns to engage in meaningful work that will contribute to their professional development. During the data gathering period for the Partnership Assessment, the tashkeel of potential GIRoA partners was analyzed to gauge the interest of ministries to hire interns into full-time tashkeel positions at the conclusion of the program.



Interviewing DoWA Director of Parwan province

Additionally, the assessment examined the specific structural and policy-related barriers facing women in government.

A total of 23 ministries, independent agencies, and Governors’ Offices were visited during this collection period. Ministers, deputy ministers, HR Directors, and Gender Units in Kabul and Parwan were consulted during the assessment period. During this assessment, a total of 353,024 (226,783 male and 81,208 female) positions were analyzed and 45,033 vacant positions were identified. Ministries committed to a total of 1,428 interns and 352 mentors for the first two years. Moreover, the assessment provided an overall picture of available resources, systems, and processes that need to be developed in order to establish a viable partnership. Potential partners were also identified, and their capacity and willingness to host project interns were assessed.

Coaching and Mentoring Training for Mentors: The USAID Promote: Women in Government Training Team is developing mentoring and coaching training curriculum based on a pre-determined training design and development template. The training curriculum aims to build the capacity of grade 3 and 4 employees of receiving ministries in order to become effective mentors for the internship program. The two-day training will focus mainly on the key concepts of coaching and mentoring, skills and approaches to effective coaching and mentoring, and ways to provide coaching and mentoring services to interns in the host ministries.

Implementation Manual: The project developed a draft implementation plan to guide the USAID Promote: Women in Government team and ACSI in implementing the internship program smoothly throughout the life of the project. The draft manual includes sections on training, recruitment, administration, logistics, and procurement, and outlines mechanisms for effective program implementation at the national and subnational levels. Once the manual has been completed, the project team will send it to ACSI for approval and will ensure its proper execution.

ACSI Training Curriculum: The USAID Promote: Women in Government team reviewed the ACSI and WLD training curriculum to assess the similarities, differences, and overlaps. As a result, the project team developed recommendations for further improvement of ACSI's curriculum for the next round of the internship program. The project team also translated the first two chapters of the ACSI training curriculum – “Introduction to Concepts of Organization” and “Management and Office Management Skills” – into English. The entire 10 chapters of the curriculum will be translated during the upcoming month to further assess the existing training curriculum for interns and to identify any training gaps. Based on the ACSI training curriculum, the project developed a baseline questionnaire to assess interns' capacity at the beginning of the internship program. The aim of conducting this assessment was to measure the interns' level of knowledge before and after the training and also to determine any additional technical needs of interns. The project team will collaborate with the ACSI training team to revise the curriculum accordingly.



Interns in ACSI training class

Internship Database: During this performance period, the project team designed and developed an internship database. The purpose of the database is to store the interns' demographic and educational information, as well as to document their recruitment history with the USAID Promote: Women in Government internship program. This database will eventually be used to track the interns' progress throughout their engagement with the program. Aside from the internship database, the project also developed two trackers. One tracker is used to track phone calls received from interested applicants from Kabul and the provinces. This tracker will help the project team understand applicants' concerns and questions about the internship program, enabling the project to respond to these concerns in the next round of announcements and recruitment campaigns. Another tracker was developed to document the needs of each ministry to absorb interns by identifying the departments and the number of interns they need. The request for interns from each department of the various ministries will be recorded for placement purposes during the intern's ministry internship.

Internship Announcement for 200 Interns: The USAID Promote: Women in Government team prepared the announcements for the next round of the internship program. The team identified media channels and tools to announce the second round of the internship program in Kabul and drafted the announcement content. In consultation with project partner Equal Access, the media channels TOLO TV and Arman Radio were used for the announcement, as they provided the most comprehensive reach for the target audience. The distribution of flyers also reached students at public and private universities, as well as other non-academic public areas. The "Request for Applications" for the internship opportunity for 200 interns was posted for two weeks on the Promote and ACBAR web sites starting September 27, 2015. The link for the internship application advertisement was emailed to Kardan University, Kabul University, American University, in addition to Human Resources (HR) directors at 23 Ministries, 24 independent agencies, and two youth associations. As part of the announcement, the printed copies of the internship application forms were sent to MoWA and DoWA in Kabul, Parwan, and Kapisa to be distributed to interested applicants.

The USAID Promote: Women in Government team



Posting Announcement for internship applications at ACSI board

Weekly Supervision of Interns at ACSI: Pursuant to the executed MOU, the USAID Promote: Women in Government Internship Coordinator visits interns once a week at the ACSI to evaluate the progress of interns' training and learning. The USAID Promote: Women in Government interns completed three training courses at ACSI. The training covered topics on office management and organization, report writing, and different types of formal writing, such as letters, memos, proposals, requests, and topics related to communications skills. At the beginning and end of each training course, ACSI conducted a pre- and post-assessment test on course topics to evaluate the level of interns' knowledge on the topic. The ACSI training was conducted through PowerPoint presentations, lectures, group work, and a written exam. In addition to the in-class training, the interns received theoretical and practical computer lab training. Interns have been using the ACSI library and computer lab as part of their course curriculum and for completing their assignments.



Current interns at ACSI working on a project

In addition to scheduled weekly visits to ACSI, the project management team conducted an ad-hoc meeting with the current cohort of interns to discuss the ACSI training as well as other challenges they face. During this meeting on August 24, 2015, the pilot interns provided feedback on the ACSI training schedule and topics. In general, interns' feedback was positive, as they were satisfied with the training methodology and curriculum. The USAID Promote: Women in Government Interim Chief of Party (COP) shared the importance of the ACSI training and internship program and assured interns that if any problems arise during their internship program, the team will take action to resolve it quickly.



Current interns using ACSI computer lab

Relationship Building and Meetings: from May 2015 to September 2015, the project team had several meetings with key ministries and potential partners to introduce the USAID Promote: Women in Government project and to obtain commitments to hiring program graduates. Below is a summary table of meetings:

#	Date	Name of Key Attendees in the Meeting	Organizations/ Ministries
1	May 31, 2015	USAID Promote: Women in Government Interim COP, Government Liaison Lead, HR Director and HR Advisor of the Ministry Rural Rehabilitation and Development	Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD)
2	May 31, 2015	USAID Promote: Women in Government Interim COP, Government Liaison Lead, HR Director and Director of Home Economy	Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock (MAIL)
3	June 1, 2015	USAID Promote: Women in Government Interim COP, Government Liaison Lead, HR Director, Recruitment Manager	Ministry of Finance
4	June 1, 2015	USAID Promote: Women in Government Interim COP, Government Liaison Lead, Minister and Head of Gender Unit of the MoCN	Ministry of Counter Narcotics (MoCN)
5	June 2, 2015	USAID Promote: Women in Government Interim COP, Government Liaison Lead, Deputy Minister, Director of Policy and Planning	Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA)
6	June 2, 2015	USAID Promote: Women in Government Interim COP, Government Liaison Lead, Financial and Administrative Deputy	Administrative Office of the President (AOP)
7	June 15, 2015	USAID Promote: Women in Government Interim COP, Government Liaison Lead, Minister, Media Advisor,	Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE)

		and HR Director of the Ministry Higher Education	
8	August 24, 2015	USAID Promote: Women in Government Interim COP, Advisor to the National Procurement Authority	National Procurement Authority
9	Sep 14, 2015	USAID Promote: Women in Government Interim COP, USAID ACOR, Head of Women Rights, Human Rights and Civil Society Commission of Parliament	Human Rights and Civil Society Commission of Parliament
10	Sep 15, 2015	USAID Promote: Women in Government Training Specialist, Director of MODE	Modern Organization for Development of Education (MODE)

Meeting with the Afghanistan Agriculture Extension Project II (AAEP II): On June 14, 2015, the USAID Promote: Women in Government team met with [REDACTED], AAEP II Deputy Chief of Party, and seven female interns of AAEP II at the USAID Promote: Women in Government office. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the interns who had completed a three-month internship as Agriculture Extension workers, but who were now jobless and looking for opportunities within the government or the private sector. All seven interns had completed a two-year diploma from the National Agriculture Education College (NAEC), as well as the three-month internship, which taught them skills in agricultural business management, plant science, and rural development. Since there are no vacancies at the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL), AAEP II would like the USAID Promote: Women in Government project to include the seven women in their internship program. USAID Promote: Women in Government Interim COP explained that unfortunately, since ACSI and the government ministries in Kabul require at least a Bachelor's degree, the USAID Promote: Women in Government project could not accept the interns into their Kabul-based program. Interns with less than a Bachelor's degree are accepted outside of Kabul, as there are limited numbers of women with Bachelor's degrees in the regional and provincial areas.



Promote: Women in Government team, Ms. Sophia Wilcox, AAEP II Deputy Chief of Party, and seven female interns of AAEP II

Meeting with the Afghanistan Civil Service Institute (ACSI): On June 14, 2015, the USAID Promote: Women in Government's Interim COP and Government Liaison Lead met with Dr. Farhad Osmani, Director General; Monir Mubasher, Senior Program Coordinator; and Soroush Wahab, Director of Coordination at ACSI to discuss their roles in training the interns. Dr. Osmani assured the USAID Promote: Women in Government team that ACSI is ready to train the 25 pilot interns. Dr. Osmani proposed that the USAID Promote: Women in Government team recruit only university graduates in Kabul for two reasons. First, there are many graduates with Bachelor's and even Master's degrees who are unemployed. Second, ministries rarely recruit anyone who does not have a four-year academic degree. High school graduates have a better opportunity to be hired in the provinces. During the meeting, Dr. Osmani clarified ACSI's internship curricula, certifications, recruitment process, stipends, trainers, schedule, lunch provisions, transportation, and other considerations to finalize the coordination of the internship training.

Meeting with the Independent Afghanistan Reform Civil Service Commission (IARCSC): on July 8, 2015, the USAID Promote: Women in Government Interim Chief of Party and [REDACTED] the Alternate Contracting Officer's Representative (ACOR) at USAID, met with Dr. Moshahid, IARCSC

Commissioner, to formally introduce the project and to lay the groundwork for forming a partnership for training the interns.

Meeting with Equality for Peace and Democracy (EPD): On July 13, 2015, USAID Promote: Women in Government Project Director and Interim Chief of Party, met with Maurits Rade, an Associate at EPD, and Edrees Omarzad, the Deputy Director of EPD. The purpose of this meeting was to begin initial discussions on the scope of work for EPD to determine how EPD could contribute to the project's work plan.



Project management team meeting with EPD team

Meeting with the Afghanistan Civil Service Institute (ACSI): On July 13th, 2015, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] met with Dr. Farhad Osmani, Director General of ACSI. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the proposed curriculum for the pilot internship program, the interview and recruitment processes, the length of the program, the budget, and the signing of an MOU. Detailed plans for executing the internship training were solidified and presented jointly to USAID.

Meeting with Equal Access (EA): On August 3, 2015, the USAID Promote: Women in Government management team met with Equal Access, a project subcontractor. The purpose of this meeting was to brief them on current project activities and begin technical discussions on their scope of work. This discussion allowed the project and EA to finalize plans on how EA could best contribute to the project's Year One Work Plan. This meeting focused on upcoming priorities concerning the project's communications and outreach component.

Meeting with Afghanistan Civil Service Institute (ACSI): During the month of August, the project's senior management team had three meetings with Dr. Osmani, Director of ACSI. The first was held on August 4th to finalize terms of the MOU. The second meeting was held on August 15th to discuss the duration of the training, which was confirmed to consist of a six-month training period at ACSI followed by three months of practical work in a ministry. The training was scheduled from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm, Saturday to Wednesday. It was decided that interns would have an hour lunch and prayer break from 12:00 to 1:00 pm and up to two days of sick/emergency leave per month. If an intern is absent for two consecutive weeks, their internship agreement will be terminated. ACSI shared the hard copy of their curriculum for the project to distribute copies to the interns. ACSI also presented a list of stationary and other expendable supplies for which they requested project assistance in procuring. The third meeting was held on August 31st to discuss the development of an operational manual for the internship program, which would define the scope of work and ongoing responsibilities of the USAID Promote: Women in Government team and ACSI, in accordance with the signed MOU. These continued meetings and open communications with ACSI have allowed for a more collaborative relationship between the two parties and a clear understanding of expectations.

The Afghanistan Civil Service Institute Presented a Plan for the Training of 3,000 Interns: On September 1, 2015, the project's senior management team met with General Director, Senior Academic Coordinator, and Operation Specialist of ACSI. During the meeting, the ACSI team presented their plan to train 3,000 interns, detailing the anticipated resources for training in Kabul and the provinces over the course of five years. ACSI recently conducted an assessment in Herat and Kandahar provinces, among others, on the political will, infrastructure and job vacancies to ensure that the internship program would be successful in these provinces. Based on the assessment results, ACSI presented the

recommendations for the training schedule, training facilities, trainers, and the number of interns to be trained in Kabul and the provinces throughout the life of the project.

D. Component II: Policy Reform

1. Encourage a hospitable environment for female staff working in the government

Meeting with the Gender Director of IARCSC: On September 16, 2015, the project team met with Ms. Naila Naseri, the Gender Director of IARCSC. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the following: technical assistance for implementing their gender policy, curriculum updates for the Career Development Centers (CDCs), and possible opportunities for the USAID Promote: Women in Government project to provide support for expanding the Women’s Civil Service Association (WCSA). As a result of the meeting, the discussed topics were identified as areas for future engagement. A separate meeting will be scheduled to discuss the specifics of the partnership.

Meeting with Ministry of Women’s Affair (MoWA): On September 28th, the USAID Promote: Women in Government Interim COP, USAID ACOR, Mr. Rahimi, and USAID Activity Manager, Mr. Hussein, met with MoWA’s Policy and Planning Director. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the areas of cooperation and support needed for the proper implementation of the anti-sexual harassment regulation that was recently approved by the Afghan cabinet. MoWA expressed that the anti-harassment regulation is one of the biggest achievements for Afghan women. During the meeting, MoWA’s Policy and Planning Director expressed the importance of regulation and how it is connected to international agreements of GIRoAs’ London Commitments. For the effective implementation of this regulation, MoWA discussed support through the following actions: issuing a letter from the Minister of MoWA to form a technical working group representing government and non-government entities, arranging a gathering of 150 high-ranking female figures to introduce the regulation, and organizing an introductory workshop and conference for relevant actors. MoWA will also need the project's support in developing an action plan for implementing guidelines and procedures, establishing monitoring mechanisms, and raising public awareness (through TV, radio spots, training workshops, conferences and other means of public awareness at the national and subnational levels) about the new regulation. The next steps are to work on the MOU between MoWA and Chemonics to further clarify the roles and responsibilities for future engagement.



The Project team met with MoWA’s Director of Policy and Planning

2. Ensure safe workplaces for young women by tackling sexual harassment, discrimination, and policy gaps that impede women’s workforce participation.

Workplace Obstacles: Analysis and Recommendations: The Workplace Obstacles: Analysis and Recommendations report was submitted to USAID on October 27, 2015. The project team developed a timeline and finalized the survey and interview questionnaire as tools for gathering data for the Workplace Obstacles: Analysis and Recommendations report. To test the Workplace Obstacles: Analysis and Recommendations survey and interview questions, two meetings were held – one on September 21st with the Reform and Implementation Unit of the Ministry of Finance (MoF), and the other on September 22nd with a technical team from MAIL. Based on the feedback



The project policy and research team lead is interviewing Interim HR director of MAIL for the Workplace Obstacles Analysis and Recommendations

from these ministries, the project team revised the survey and interview questions.

During the month of September, the project team conducted interviews with HR directors, administrative directors, employee relations directors and female staff members from the Ministry of Counter Narcotics (MCN); the Ministry of Defense (MoD); the Ministry of Communications, Information and Technology (MCIT); the Ministry of Energy and Water (MEW); the Ministry of Commerce and Industries (MoCI); the Ministry of Education (MoE); the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE); the Ministry of the Interior (MoI); the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled (MoLSAMD); and the Ministry of Finance (MoF). The purpose of these visits was to collect data for the Workplace Obstacles: Analysis and Recommendations report by gathering responses to questionnaires and identifying ministry policies, cultural norms, and infrastructure related to women working within the government.

E. Component III: Outreach and Communications

1. Increase local stakeholder support for women in government

Formative Research: To gain support from the communities and stakeholders and to facilitate the design of communications and outreach content that is age-appropriate and culturally-relevant for the implementation of the project, the project subcontractor, Equal Access completed a desk review to identify problems for women working in government. Equal Access then drafted a research plan and developed a suitable research methodology to gather additional information for the formative research activities that will begin next month.

2. Reach out to local stakeholders on an individual and mass level.

Outreach and Communications Strategy: The USAID Promote: Women in Government subcontractor, Equal Access, developed a robust outreach and communications strategy for Component 3 of the project. The purpose of the communications and outreach strategy is to define clearly the various activities and outputs to achieve the outreach and communications goals of the project. The strategy will outline a number of activities and outputs to change the attitudes and behaviors of the primary and secondary target groups and other project stakeholders, as identified in the gender analysis. Additionally, the strategy includes relevant outreach templates for recurring outreach and communications activities. The final strategy will be shared with the technical project team for further input.

Multi-Media Campaign: Equal Access developed and disseminated announcement flyers, as well as TV and radio public service announcements (PSAs) in Dari, Pashto, and English to announce the second round of the internship program at the national and subnational levels. For the second round of the internship program, the flyers were posted at different governmental and non-governmental offices, civil society organizations, and other public places with access to the target population. The TV and radio PSAs will be broadcasted at the national and subnational levels through TOLO TV and Arman Radio, as these two media outlets provide the most comprehensive coverage.

F. Year One Progress Against Indicators

1. Year One Indicator Progress Report

According to the USAID/Afghanistan Mission Results Framework, the Promote: Women in Government project falls under Development Objective 2: Gains in Health, Education, and the Empowerment of Women Maintained and Enhanced; and Intermediate Result 2.3: Women's Equality and Empowerment Increased. While the project is designed as a standalone project, the project team will work to reinforce the goals and objectives of the other three activities under the Promote umbrella and the overall USAID/Afghanistan Development Objective 2 goal.

The project's results framework is derived from the project goal and three objectives. The project's intermediate results (PIRs) are structured to demonstrate how each activity contributes to the overall Promote program goal. Promote: Women in Government's three components are inextricably integrated and interdependent to achieve increasing opportunities for women in the Afghan civil service. Within this integrated framework, the project will build on existing government structures, systems, and procedures to implement the internship program, deliver training to interns and mentors, and assist with policy reform measures at the national and subnational levels.

Though Promote: Women in Government is in its nascent stage, the project has begun to monitor progress based on project indicators applicable to each component as well as cross-cutting issues. The project has 19 indicators in place to help monitor progress towards project objectives. Given that the project has only recently begun the pilot internship program, completed necessary policy and workplace assessments and mobilized resources for an outreach and communications strategy, results against indicators are only in the tracking stage and have yet to be collected. The project's AMEP will be fully operational in the coming months.

G. Results and Key Achievements

- Successfully developed and submitted its Year One Work Plan.
- Developed and submitted project Activities Monitoring and Evaluation Plan.

Component I

- Execution of an MOU with IARCSC to train 3,000 interns throughout the life of the project.
- Successfully launched the Internship Program and recruited pilot interns.
- Developed and submitted Internship Manual.
- Conducted and submitted the Gender Analysis Phase I Report.
- Built relationships with key ministries and potential government partners.
- Twenty five pilot interns successfully started their internship training at ACSI.
- Announced the call for applications for the second round of the internship program to recruit 200 interns from Kabul, Parwan, and Kapisa.

Component II

- Conducted and submitted Phase I of the GIRoA Partnership Assessment.
- Conducted an assessment for the Workplace Obstacles Analysis and Recommendations report. The final report was submitted to USAID on October 27th, 2015.
- Established commitment with MoWA to assist them with operationalizing the anti-sexual harassment regulation. A formal MOU will be signed between MoWA and Chemonics in the coming months.

Component III

- Developed a Communications Strategy.
- Launched the formative research to inform project outreach and communication campaigns.

H. Lessons Learned

1. Constraints and Critical Issues

- Security concerns limited movement throughout Kabul and delayed meetings with key partners and government officials.

- Delays were often encountered when trying to secure an appointment or obtain responses from government ministries during the assessment process.
- The project team encountered a lack of cooperation from MoWA in distributing internship application forms to interested candidates. To eliminate similar situations in the future, an MOU will be signed with MoWA to hold them accountable and to gain their cooperation in all project goals.
- During the research phase of the Workplace Obstacles: Analysis and Recommendations report, the project team was denied access to visit the office of the two security ministries - the Ministry of Defense (MoD) and the Ministry of the Interior (MoI). The project team sought to assess their infrastructures, such as washrooms, daycare facilities, restrooms, dining areas, and prayer rooms. However, the officials requested a formal letter and approval from their respective ministers to allow the team to visit these premises. In the future, to avoid such problems, the request for meetings and the purpose of the visit will be clearly communicated and the needed letter and approval will be facilitated well in advance to make sure the research team is given access to the required information.
- Ministries were reluctant to provide information requiring the research team to return a second and potentially third time to gather additional information and to distribute/collect questionnaires. Ministries referred to the sensitive nature of their policies and the project team's lack of authority to share this information as reasons for not providing requested information.

2. Evaluations and Assessments: Lessons Learned

Based on the lessons learned from the recruitment process of the 25 pilot interns, the project team revised the interns' recruitment checklist and expanded its public outreach campaign to create a pipeline of applications for the internship program. In addition to mass public outreach efforts, the project printed application forms in Dari and Pashto and distributed them to MoWA in Kabul, DoWA in Parwan and Kapisa to reach potential applicants without internet access. Additionally, in anticipation of a few interns who will not complete the program, the project team will keep a list of at least 50 backup candidates.

I. GIROA and Donor Collaboration

1. Links with GIROA

The USAID Promote: Women in Government's Interim Chief of Party, and Government Liaison Lead were actively engaged with key ministries and executive offices, facilitating relationships at the national (and soon to be subnational) level. During this performance period, USAID Promote: Women in Government's engagements have been particularly focused on Components 1 and 2 of the project to build a foundation for future activities. Meetings were held with the MoF, MoWA, the Administrative Office of the President, the MCN, ACSI, MoHE, MAIL, MoE, Kabul university, ACSI, IARCSC, MoJ, MoPW, MoEC, Parwan Governance Office, and MRRD. Once project activities expand outside of Kabul, USAID Promote: Women in Government will work closely with IDLG to facilitate government relationships at the subnational level.

2. Links with Donor Agencies

On June 30, 2015, USAID Promote: Women in Government's Interim COP attended the launch of the Action Plan for the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 – Women, Peace & Security at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan. President Ashraf Ghani opened the event while the First Lady, Minister of MoWA, Minister of Foreign Affairs, ambassadors, Afghan Cabinet, members of Parliament and the Senate, civil society representatives, and private sector activists were present. The resolution emphasizes the rights and status of women in peacebuilding and conflict prevention.

The project team conducted market research of various internship programs at government organizations, international donor-funded and other USAID-funded internship programs to assess

whether the current stipend figure provides adequate transportation and meal coverage. The internship stipend has since been updated to reflect current market costs for transportation and meals.

3. Links with USAID Projects

On June 23, 2015, the Promote: Women in Government team met with [REDACTED] USAID Promote: Women's Leadership Development (WLD) COP, [REDACTED] Deputy COP for WLD, [REDACTED] USAID Gender Team Leader, [REDACTED] Promote Contracting Officer's Representative, [REDACTED] Gender Specialist and [REDACTED] USAID Activity Manager. The purpose of the meeting was to facilitate coordination between the two Promote task orders. Although WLD and USAID Promote: Women in Government are two independent programs, their challenges will be similar in reporting requirements and both are expected to speak in one voice for Promote. As a result, it was decided that USAID Promote: Women in Government and WLD will develop a coordination strategy and share it with USAID.

4. Meetings with USAID's M&E Team

On July 12, 2015, USAID Promote: Women in Government Project Management team, met with [REDACTED] COR, [REDACTED] ACOR, [REDACTED] M&E Manager, [REDACTED] M&E Manager, and [REDACTED] Deputy Gender Team Lead, in charge of M&E for Promote at the USAID compound. The purpose of this meeting was to meet with USAID's M&E staff to discuss their comments on the project's Activity Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (AMEP). USAID explained that the mission level performance management plan had recently been approved and asked the Promote: Women in Government team to revise the AMEP to reflect the new mission indicators.

Following the M&E discussion, project administrative and technical issues were discussed, including clarifications on deliverables, billing of Chemonics cost share staff, the length of the internship program, subcontractor staff approvals, and recruitment for a long term Chief of Party.

On August 3, 2015, the project management team was invited to the USAID/RADP-S Women in Agriculture conference. The USAID Promote: Women in Government Interim COP spoke about project activities and shared the project email address with the audience to encourage young and qualified women to apply for the internship program and become a part of the government to support women in the private sector.

On August 4, 2015, the project management team met with USAID Promote: Afghan Women Leadership in the Economy (AWLE) project. The purpose of the meeting was to introduce AWLE and discuss how the three Promote task orders will work together. Moving forward, this will be a recurring meeting among all Promote task order leadership to facilitate continued collaboration.

On September 5, 2015, the USAID Promote: Women in Government Interim COP and Interim Deputy Chief of Party met with RSI to discuss the beneficiary selection criteria and proposed M&E system under the project. The beneficiary selection criteria will feed into the intake forms RSI will be using for the baseline survey analysis.

On September 6, 2015, the USAID Promote: Women in Government Interim COP and Interim Deputy Chief of Party attended the Afghanistan Women's Leadership in the Economy (AWLE) orientation at the Kabul Q Hotel. The team met with AWLE's project staff and subcontractors and received a presentation about AWLE's activities. The team used this as an opportunity to discuss how the Promote program teams can collaborate with each other for the shared success of the program.

On September 16, 2015, the USAID Promote: Women in Government Interim COP and Communications and Outreach team attended the Promote IDIQ Outreach and Communications Working Group meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss how the four Promote task orders can share information and establish common outreach tools to be used by all projects. The overall aim was to build a universal identity of Promote rather than individual task order identities. It was also recommended that Promote activities should be expanded not only in Kabul but also in all 34 provinces of Afghanistan to create a pipeline of applicants.

The project team conducted an assessment of other USAID-funded internship programs to collect lessons learned about internship objectives, duration and stipend amounts. On September 28th, the project assessed Chemonics' Financial Access for Investing in the Development of Afghanistan (FAIDA) and Regional Agriculture Development Program – South (RADP- S) projects. The assessment will cover other USAID projects as well, and a complete report on other USAID projects' internship programs will be provided.

J. Management and Administration

1. Personnel

The USAID Promote: Women in Government Project hired both technical and operational staff to meet the demands of the approved work plan. To date, around 70% of current positions are mobilized and presently working. Given the amount of time that passed between proposal and project implementation, a few of the proposed project positions remain vacant however, the project team is actively engaged in recruitment efforts for all vacant positions. Vacant positions include the project COP, Internship Coordinator Team Lead, Outreach and Communications Lead, and M&E Manager. The project also reassessed the current organizational chart to ensure that staffing needs were met based on present and future work plan activities. As a result, additional positions were created including an M&E Assistant to provide supplementary support. Finally, the Provincial Regional Internship Coordinators will soon be mobilized to align with the rollout of the internship program in the provinces.

2. Procurement

During the start-up months, the project rapidly procured necessary operational items. Being mindful of the long-term procurement needs of the project and supporting counterparts, the project was able to obtain a number of disposition items from closed projects, including laptops, printers, and office furniture. As part of the agreement with ACSI to carry out the classroom training for the interns, the project provided procurement-related operational support. These included providing office chairs to furnish ACSI computer labs used as part of the internship training program, classroom stationary supplies, and other expendable goods. Procurement support is done directly by the project to ensure compliance with relevant U.S. Government and USAID regulations and policies, as well as Chemonics' best practices in procuring and managing commodity.

3. Administration

Subcontracts with Dreshak Hotel Services, Services International, LLC and Afghanistan Public Protection Force (APPF) were executed immediately upon contract award. Subcontract execution with the remaining project partners, Equal Access, EPD, ATVI, ALDO and Tadbeer is still in process. The project continues to engage with these partners to finalize their scopes of work and details of the subcontract budget. Given the immediate need of engaging project partner, Equal Access in Component 3, the project is working with EA under a letter of credit while waiting on the execution of their contract.

4. Adoption of the activity

The USAID Promote: Women in Government Project is dedicated to ensuring the sustainability and future government cooperation of the internship program. Immediately upon the start of project implementation, the project executed an MOU with the IARCSC, which confirmed that the internship's classroom-based training would be conducted by ACSI. Since ACSI has the mandate to train and develop Afghanistan's civil servants this arrangement provides maximum opportunity for sustainability and continuation of the internship program beyond the life of the project.

5. Modifications and Amendments

A fully executed task order modification 001 was effective starting September 10, 2015. The modification was in effect to revise the Task Order section F.3 – Key Personnel so as to change the minimum qualification requirements for the Chief of Party and Deputy Chief of Party positions. A contract modification will be requested at a future date to formalize budgetary changes as well as other technical changes as they arise.

K. Highlighted Activities for Next Fiscal Year

Component I:

- ***Recruitment of interns:*** The team will continue with a phased approach in rolling out the internship program beyond Kabul and into the provinces. A collection of applications for the internship program, screening, and shortlisting for written test candidates, and final candidate interviews will be done in coordination with representatives from MoWA, ACSI, and CSOs. Every six months, a new group of interns will be recruited in Kabul and the provinces. For the next fiscal year, the project will recruit a total of 400 interns in Kabul, 110 in Herat, and 110 in Balkh province.
- ***Establishing relationship with provincial entities and line ministries:*** The project will employ a multi-pronged strategy to engage its governmental counterparts at the subnational level. The leadership team will work through the central ministry offices in Kabul to identify opportunities in their line directorates and departments in the provinces. To engage provincial entities, the project team will work with the central-level counterpart in IDLG and directly through local representatives (including the governor, mayor, provincial council representatives) in each respective province.
- ***Creation of peer groups:*** The project will coordinate with USAID Promote: Women's Leadership Development to utilize the Promote Knowledge Management Platform and avoid duplicate efforts. The circles meet regularly, which will enable the project to leverage the limited number of female mentors available by allowing each to mentor a small group of girls. It also brings the added benefit of creating a peer network of women facing the same obstacles and challenges and providing a place to share and explore their experiences in a safe environment. Circles may be used by women to coordinate advocacy for policy change and/or adoption or changes to make their workplace more welcoming. The project's communications and outreach partner Equal Access will assist the recruitment and placement team in selecting women employed in government and training them in facilitation and group mobilization to mentor interns in "women's professional circles."
- ***Review of needs assessment for target ministries:*** The USAID Promote: Women in Government project has begun working with MAIL, MRRD, MoF, the Administrative Office of the President, MoHE, Ministry of Counter Narcotics (MCN) and the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled (MoLSAMD). To prepare interns for these ministries, the project will review previously completed needs assessments to allow the project to design and deliver appropriate training curriculum for interns that meet the needs of the ministries.
- ***Designing and launching training and capacity building program:*** Although ACSI provides training in the five common functions (financial management, project management, HR management, procurement, and policy/strategic planning), many government officials assert that this training does not adequately prepare employees for successful civil service careers. The project's training team, with assistance from our subcontractors ATVI and Tadbeer Consulting, will work with ACSI to assess its training materials, revise them as needed, and create supplementary materials to meet the needs of Afghanistan's civil service.

- ***Upgrading of career development center:*** The IARCSC has a Women’s Career Development Center (CDC) in Kabul where women can review job listings, receive help on CV writing, prepare for interviews, and learn about HR, finance, management, and computer software programs. Based on our commitment to building on existing resources and improving project sustainability, our training team will help update their curriculum to meet the needs of the target ministries and government offices, train trainers, and offer to train women outside of the internship program.
- ***Establish a Database for Alumni Network:*** The project team will establish a database for the intern alumni network that will include each intern’s field of study, internship location, professional interests, and contact information.
- ***Creating women’s association in the civil service:*** With the assistance from the gender directorate of the IARCSC and the MoWA Director of Policy and Planning, we will create an Association of Women in the Civil Service with the ownership of GIROA partners.
- ***Create selection committee to monitor placement of interns:*** To oversee the placement of interns, USAID Promote: Women in Government will create a selection committee.
- ***Train supervisors on coaching and mentoring:*** The project’s training staff will design and deliver a course for male and female supervisors in government on the differences between supervising, mentoring, and coaching. The course will cover communication skills, including active listening, strategies for mentoring men and women, and an introduction to gender sensitivity.
- ***Work with other programs offering scholarships:*** To provide professional benefits to current civil servants, the alumni and scholarship team will help current employees wishing to pursue higher education find the right scholarship funding through donor programs, such as USAID’s Promote Scholarship Activity or programs funded by a government ministry, such as the MoF and MAIL.
- ***Collect baseline data:*** The project will collect baseline data for the following: Component 1: intern capacity; and Component 2: an enabling environment for women to work in government. The project’s M&E team will create a short capacity assessment survey for the interns to complete prior to beginning the internship program.

Component II:

- ***Initiate and build relationships with MOWA, IDLG and IARCSC staff:*** To lay the foundation for the policy reform and implementation process, the team will meet with the technical deputy ministers, DG Civil Service Management Department/IARCSC and representatives from the policy planning and human resources departments of various ministries and IDLG, and with provincial offices, to discuss their needs for policy support and explain how the project can help them address these needs and meet national priorities.
- ***Assist MoWA and IARCSC in developing implementation guidelines for the Anti-sexual Harassment policy:*** The project team will also support MoWA and IARCSC in implementing

effective anti-sexual harassment policies to affect meaningful changes throughout the public and private sectors. The team, with support from the project's Afghan partner EPD and IDLG, which already has an anti-harassment policy and procedure for reporting complaints, will work with MoWA to determine what technical assistance is needed to develop guidelines for implementing the regulation.

- ***Provide technical assistance to support policy reform measures:*** The project will provide targeted assistance, depending on the status and nature of the policies proposed. For example, if the MoF decides to propose an anti-sexual harassment policy, the policy and research team would provide support to the relevant ministry staff to develop, discuss, and enact the policy, creating enforcement and monitoring mechanisms. The team will assist with communicating the policy process within the ministry and to the public.
- ***Conduct analysis and make recommendations:*** After reviewing the gender analysis and GIRoA partner assessment, the policy and research team will conduct additional research, including interviews with and surveys of women and men working in government, ministers, deputy ministers, provincial governors, CSOs, and other donor project staff and visits to government offices in Kabul and in the provinces. Beginning with the government offices selected to receive interns, the project team will collaborate with relevant staff to recommend policies, regulations, or infrastructure that need to be implemented or improved and identify how these government entities will support, sustain, or maintain them.

Component III:

- ***Complete formative research:*** The team will complete the research to assist in developing age-appropriate and culturally relevant outreach and communication content for our various target audiences.
- ***Hold a stakeholder workshop:*** The team will then organize a stakeholder workshop that will bring together USAID, the Afghan government, technical experts, local CSOs, universities, community, and religious leaders to review the results of the study and work together to develop key messages.
- ***Establish and convene a content advisory group:*** The team will then convene a content advisory group made up of members from the human resource directors and heads of gender units from key ministries, as well as members drawn from participants in the larger stakeholder group.
- ***Create interactive feedback loop:*** Finally, the team will create a process for an interactive feedback loop to receive constant feedback on messaging via SMS, MMS, social media, letters, and in-person discussions. The outreach and communications team will track all feedback and report on it to the content advisory group and the project team.
- ***Develop champions strategy:*** In partnership with Afghan CSOs and representatives from MoWA (such as a deputy minister and HR director), the team will develop a strategy to identify and empower male and female champions of women's rights in government.
- ***Identify, empower and reward champions:*** With input from the project's Government Liaison Lead, the outreach and communications team will identify deputy ministers and other senior staff known to support women's rights and encourage them to set clear expectations for their

staff on how to treat women in the workplace, for example during staff meetings, in performance reviews, and through their own behavior.

- **Promote male champions:** The project's outreach and communications team, with a local partner, will produce a series of change maker videos focused on men working outside the government, scholars, religious leaders, and fathers who support women's participation in the Afghan civil service.
- **Establish an annual award program:** The Government Liaison Lead, with support from MoWA, will begin steps to establish an annual award program to recognize mentors and acknowledge strong mentoring as a professional goal to be celebrated.
- **Identify local media partners to deliver messaging:** USAID Promote: Women in Government will build on Equal Access' experience and relationships with media partners in Afghanistan to select the best partners to deliver the project's messaging.
- **Develop and implement a multi-media campaign:** The communications and outreach team will create effective, customized content to reach conservative and progressive audiences and various sub-audiences within those groups (potential interns, male and female government workers, and the general public) to break down stereotypes about women, change behavior toward women, and improve attitudes about women in government.
- **Identify key influencers and messaging:** To attract young women to the internship program, USAID Promote: Women in Government, will work to make the idea of a government internship. This will work outside the home attractive not only to the women, but also to key influencers in Afghan society, namely religious leaders who will then help the project influence the men living in each woman's home.

Annex A: Year One Activities Table

PIR	Activity	Status	May	June	July	Aug	Sept
1	Women's Internship Program						
1.1	<i>Internship program established and operational</i>						
	Conduct gender analysis	Completed	■	■	■	■	
	Conduct GIROA partnership assessment	Completed	■	■	■	■	
	WIG technical working group	On- going				■	■
	Selection of initial government partners		■	■	■		
	Prepare internship manual	Completed	■	■	■		
	Identify recruit and select mentors	On - going			■	■	■
	Identify recruit and select interns	25 pilot interns hired. Recruitment of 200 interns on – going.	■	■	■	■	■
	Launch of internship program	Completed					■
1.2	<i>Interns trained in work and life skills</i>						
	Review of needs assessment for target ministries	Work will continue				■	■
	Design and launch training and capacity building program	Work will continue					■
	Upgrade of career development center	Work will continue					■
1.3	<i>Number of interns hired for full time positions increased</i>						
	Internship program linked to placement	Work will continue			■	■	■
1.4	<i>Enhance professional development for women who work in government</i>						
	Train supervisors on coaching and mentoring	Work will continue			■	■	■
	Design and deliver course for supervisors and staff on supervising, leadership and communication	Work will continue			■	■	■
	Work with other programs offering scholarships	Work will continue					■
2	Encourage a hospitable environment for female staff in government						
2.1	<i>Improve and implement policies that benefit women in government</i>						
	Initiate and build relationships with MOWA, IDLG and IARCSC Staff	Continuing	■	■	■	■	■
	Assist MOWA and IARCSC in developing implementation guidelines for the anti-sexual harassment policy	Work will continue			■	■	■

	Provide technical assistance to support policy reform Measures	Work will continue						
2.2	<i>Identify and recommend solutions to address women's obstacles in the workplace</i>							
	Conduct analysis and make recommendations	<i>The final report will be submitted on October 21, 2015</i>						
3	Increase local stakeholder support for women in civil service							
3.1								
	Conduct formative research	Work will continue						
	Hold a stakeholder workshop	Delayed						

Annex B: Success Stories
1. Quarter III Snapshot



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SUCCESS STORY On the Path from Start-Up to Full-Scale Implementation

Promote: Women in Government is building the capacity of women to gain entry into Afghan Civil Service



Promote: Women in Government staff

“Since only 3% of MAIL employees are women, we can fill many vacant positions by women interns; but very few women apply because they are either not motivated or not well trained to work with government. The Promote: Women in Government Internship program can be an opportunity for new intern graduates to enter the government workforce.”

-HR Director Yaqub Hotak, MAIL

U.S. Agency for International Development
www.usaid.gov

Photo Credit: WIG/USAID

In Afghanistan's volatile, complex, and unpredictable operating environment, strong communications and defined responsibilities are critical for a rapid start-up. The Promote: Women in Government task order was awarded to Chemonics International on April 21, 2015. Immediately thereafter, a three-person team was deployed to establish the administrative and operational infrastructure needed for startup and recruit project staff, set-up project office space, and lay the groundwork for technical implementation.

Promote: Women in Government's start-up strategy is structured to allow technical activities to begin alongside operational setup, to capitalize on existing momentum for women's rights in Afghanistan, and to facilitate stakeholder buy-in through visible, immediate results. In addition to quickly hiring qualified professionals, the project will be utilizing shared operations platform in Kabul, which includes housing, office space, and security to rapidly initiate operations. This has also resulted in a significant cost-savings to the project. Also, by procuring necessary office furniture, mobile phones, electronics and IT equipment that have been proposed for disposition from other USAID projects, additional cost savings have been realized.

After the Promote: Women in Government kick-off meeting in May, the project focused on actively developing strategic partnerships with key stakeholders to evaluate the most pressing issues facing women in government. This included meetings with the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) and the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL). The goals of the project were consolidated by the project team, and actionable items were adapted into a work plan.

Promote: Women in Government is successfully positioning its local partners Afghan Learning and Development Organization, Afghan Technical and Vocational Institute, Equality for Peace and Democracy, and Tadbeer Consulting, to begin technical implementation by collaboratively working with local partners to refine their scopes of work and to finalize their mobilization plan for the rollout of technical activities.

2. Quarter IV Snapshot



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FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

SUCCESS STORY

An Opportunity to Learn and Shine

Well-Structured Training Materials and a Methodology is Essential for the Progress and Development of Interns



Photo Credit: WGA/USAID

Mina Yousufzai, one of the USAID Promote: Women in Government pilot intern at the ACSI library.

"The training materials and methods are relevant to interns' specific needs, and I have found that upon completion of the internship training, I will be well prepared for a job. The ACSI instructors are professional and approachable, and they understand our needs both before and during the training."

- Mina Yousufzai current intern

(Quote translated by the USAID Promote: Women in Government project.)

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Mina Yousufzai, a 23-year-old woman who graduated from Kabul University in 2014, was in search of an internship program in order to gain the experience and skills needed to obtain a job with the Afghan Government. One day Mina's husband shared with her information about the USAID Promote: Women in Government internship program that would, in partnership with the Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Services Commission and the Ministry of Women's Affairs, help Afghan women obtain key roles in the Afghan government.

This opportunity gave Mina hope that she could reach her career goals and build her professional skills. Mina sees the USAID Promote: Women in Government internship training as a practical solution to boost opportunities for Afghan women and prepare them for fulfilling careers within the Afghan civil service.

The launch of the USAID Promote: Women in Government Internship Program training course took place on August 22, 2015 at the Afghanistan Civil Service Institute (ACSI). Mina was one of 25 pilot interns who started training at ACSI. During their one year internship program, the interns will take a six month comprehensive civil service training at ACSI that covers technical skills in the core competencies of civil service and soft skills training. Following the six months, the interns will receive a three month on-the-job training at the ministries in order to increase their qualifications and potentially secure a job within the government. Interns will receive three months of management and leadership training through Promote: Women's Leadership Development project.

Before starting the first course of training, a pre-training assessment was completed by ACSI to evaluate interns' level of knowledge on management. Mina's score of her pre-training assessment was below the satisfactory grade however, after completing the first training course, she received a perfect score of 100 in the post-training assessment. Following receipt of her perfect score, Mina said, "when I completed the first course of training, I felt like a strong woman who has the potential to be a good manager."

ACSI's training methodology is based on international standards and conducted through presentations, lectures, group work, and one-on-one coaching. Mina stated in the first two courses of the training program, "I can see significant positive personal and professional progress in myself and these changes have been motivating me to use every possible training opportunity offered by USAID Promote: Women in Government in order to reach my goal within the Afghan government."

Annex C: Organizational Chart

USAID PROMOTE: Women in Government Organizational Chart (Updated 10/21/15)

