

Afghanistan-Pakistan Activities  
Quarterly Report XXI  
(October – November – December 2007)  
Sustainable Development of Drylands Project  
IALC-UIUC

Principal Accomplishments this Reporting Period

A. Item one in the “Specific Areas of Concentration” section of our FY08 Scope of Work, explains plans to strengthen and expand our working relationship with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations. Significant progress was made toward that objective through completion of two FAO-funded activities. Preliminary information on each of these activities was included in our previous quarterly report. Follow-up information and details on those activities are given below:

1. A technical short course, on the topic “Home-based Food Processing” was conducted at the Tarnab Agricultural Research Institute in Peshawar, Pakistan during the period August 19 to September 20, 2007. The twenty participants in that short course represented the following three employers or employing organizations: A). The FAO Representation in Afghanistan, located at the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) in Kabul. B). Selected MAIL employees who work in a counterpart relationship with FAO personnel. C). Representatives of selected NGO’s that work in partnership with the FAO country office in Afghanistan.

The work assignments and job responsibilities of all 20 participants made them ideal candidates for this hands-on, train-the-trainer technical short course. The final report on this training course was submitted to FAO-Kabul by our Field Office Director on October 18, 2007. When acknowledging receipt of the final report, the FAO Household Food Security Advisor stated that “Participants were very pleased with the training and very excited about all they learned. This training will really help us disseminate food processing activities in Afghanistan. Thank You.” The final report and complete details on this course are on file at UIUC. This training activity was formalized through a Letter of Agreement executed between FAO of the United Nations and the Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois. A separate account was established at Standard Chartered Bank in Peshawar to administer the funding provided by FAO for this training activity.

2. The final report on an FAO-funded “Survey of Oilseed Development in Herat and Balkh Provinces in Afghanistan: A Consideration of Production, Processing, Utilization and Marketing Feasibility” was submitted to the Kabul-based representatives of that organization on December 4, 2007. The Afghan Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) was also a recipient of that report. The field work and data collection portion of this

survey was carried out in Afghanistan by a three-person SIUC/UIUC team during the period of September 12 through October 7, 2007. An additional two individuals from UIUC assisted in writing the final report.

This project was formalized through a Letter of Agreement executed between FAO of the United Nations and the Board of Trustees of Southern Illinois University, followed by a subcontract between SIUC and UIUC for selected portions of this activity. Other cooperators in the data collection aspects of this survey were the Faculties of Agriculture at Balkh University and Herat University, the Faculty of Economics at Herat University, a volunteer Afghan/American who served as a coordinator and translator in Herat, as well as MAIL representatives stationed in those provinces. Analysis of the information gathered through this survey has resulted in several recommendations that can be considered by decision-makers in both the agriculture sector and the donor community in Afghanistan. The specific oilseed crops being considered through this survey activity are cotton, sesame, sunflower, flax, safflower, canola and soybean. This report provides a road map that can be followed to establish an oilseeds industry, beginning with crops that offer farmers viable options for alternative livelihoods and a departure from the production of illicit/illegal crops. This survey represents an important initial step toward resolving one of Afghanistan's deeply entrenched food and feed nutritional problems. The final report and complete details on this survey are on file at both Illinois Universities.

- B. During the second half of October, considerable time and effort was given to assembling materials for a proposal to be submitted in response to RFA 391-2007-030 issued by USAID/Pakistan for a project titled "FATA Livelihood Development Program (LDP)". Work on our response to this RFA was carried out in the Field Office and on campus at both Illinois universities. Our universities had received invitations from CNFA and IRD to join them in pursuit of this project. We elected to join the group being led by International Relief and Development (IRD) which is headquartered in Arlington VA. We provided IRD with a steady stream of materials so they could meet the November 2, 2007 proposal submission deadline. We were shocked to receive notice from IRD on October 31, 2007 that their organization had decided not to pursue the FATA LDP Project. Our experience in Pakistan and our relationship with the NWFPAU, with that university being uniquely positioned to work in the FATA, gave us a distinct advantage and made the Illinois universities a natural for this project. Most unfortunate!
  
- C. Given that USAID/Pakistan has released an RFA to support development activity in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), we have come to the conclusion that the Islamabad Mission will not need the services we have offered through a proposal submitted to the USAID Representative in Peshawar in June 2007. A major portion of that proposal presented our approach to expanding the NWFPAU Directorate of Outreach and Continuing Education, so that university

could deliver an assortment of agricultural development services to the FATA. Although we have not received notice to this effect, we are quite sure the forthcoming FATA LDP Project will address the needs and challenges that were anticipated by our proposal. The possibility remains that the NWFPAU may be invited to participate in the FATA LDP Project by the organization/contractor receiving this award. In that case, the NWFPAU may ask the Illinois universities to assist and become involved in this project.

- D. Last quarter's report included an explanation of our response (with New Mexico State University in a lead role) to the RFA Titled "Afghanistan Water, Agriculture and Technology Transfer Program (AWATT)". A mid-November request for clarification and additional information served as confirmation that our response is still being given active consideration at the Asia Regional USAID Mission in Bangkok. We remain confident that the Illinois connection with three regional/provincial universities in Afghanistan will meet an important RFA requirement and add strength to our proposal.
- E. In addition to his very active involvement in the FAO-funded short course and oilseed sector survey, our Field Office Director has found time to continue distribution of the six-volume set of text books to libraries in both Afghanistan and Pakistan. The text books were distributed to Kabul, Alberuni and Balkh Universities in Afghanistan during this reported period. These textbooks were written and published in 1994 near the end of the TIPAN project, then reprinted in early 2005 with Pakistan Mission buy-in funds.
- F. The ten MAIL students are making good progress toward completion of their M.Sc. degree programs in an assortment of disciplines. Most of them have completed required courses and are now ready to start work on thesis research. As preparation for their thesis research, a short course on Research Methodology was arranged for them during the period October 29 through November 17, 2007 to enable them to design their thesis research projects.
- G. During the upcoming quarter we will continue to focus on tasks that were identified in the FY08 scope of work. Our scope of work was part of the previous quarterly report.