

Afghanistan-Pakistan Activities
Quarterly Report XVI
(July – August – September 2006)
Sustainable Development of Drylands Project
IALC-UIUC

Principal Accomplishments this Period:

Using the “Activities Planned” section of the previous report as a point of departure, the following were our principal accomplishments this past quarter.

1. Our annual visit to the field was completed during the September 8 to 22 period. The trip report is being prepared and will be distributed later. The Component Manager (Dr. Santas), Senior Adviser (Dr. Myers) and Field Office Director (Dr. Qayyum) were joined on these travels by Dr. John Russin (Associate Dean, SIUC College of Agricultural Sciences) in his capacity as PI for the Balkh University Faculty of Agriculture (BUFA) Project. Our team completed TDY assignments in Peshawar, Kabul and Mazar-e-Sharif, with entry and exit through Islamabad.
2. A Grant Agreement between the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and Afghanistan’s Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation (MAI) has been signed and will release \$266,692 to support a group of ten from the MAI Extension Department for M.Sc. degree study at the NWFPAU. This group will enroll in January 2007. They will receive 30 months of financial support, allowing them time to complete remedial English training and deficiency coursework in their designated fields of study.
3. A website describing this component has been completed, released, and can be viewed at: <http://www.aces.uiuc.edu/global/afghanistan/>. As this circulates among development assistance organizations operating in Afghanistan and the region, it will be much easier for them to access NWFPAU resources that might meet the needs of their project activity. We have already received positive feedback from users.
4. Our component’s Scope of Work (SOW) for FY07 (October 1, 2006 through September 30, 2007) has been submitted to IALC headquarters at the University of Arizona. This will lead to the release of \$278,208 in “core” funds made available through the IALC Cooperative Agreement with USAID-ANE. The narrative portion of the SOW is attached to this report. This will serve as our over-arching plan and road map for the final year of this project.

Activities Planned for the Next Quarter (October – November – December)

1. With funding arranged and participant selection nearly complete, much work needs to be done on formalizing NWFP AU admission for the ten students sponsored by the MAI Extension Department. Most of this work will be done by the Field Office Director in advance of their January 2007 enrollment.
2. We will work on strengthening and deepening the MAI relationship. The Ministry may decide to make additional investments in training that will upgrade staff from various departments. We want to maintain close contact with MAI plans to establish “Centers of Excellence.” This concept is still in the planning stages, but should lead to seven centers being established in selected Agro-Eco zones of Afghanistan. These centers will be located where a University Faculty of Agriculture exists in close proximity to MAI facilities used for research, extension and demonstration. Mazar-e-Sharif in Balkh province has been selected as one of these locations. Jalalabad in Nangarhar province is another.
3. USAID-Kabul has asked Purdue University to take the lead in establishing a Global Development Alliance (GDA) that will assist the Afghan Ministry of Higher Education in upgrading Faculties of Agriculture and Veterinary Science. These efforts are being directed by Purdue’s Kevin McNamara, in his role as Agriculture Advisor to the Ministry of Higher Education. Professor McNamara has invited SIUC/UIUC representatives to an early October meeting on the Purdue campus to discuss our potential participation in this Alliance.
4. Similarly, Washington State University (WSU) was assigned the lead role in efforts known as “Afghan eQuality Alliances” and “Afghans Building Capacity” which are also directed toward upgrading higher education capacity. We will work with the lead WSU person (Maria Beebe) to determine our role in these initiatives. Our first meeting with Maria took place in Kabul on September 12.
5. A dialogue will be initiated with the contractor selected for the ASAP Project, to determine whether our relationship with the RAMP Project (predecessor to the ASAP Project) can serve as a foundation for continued interaction.

Afghanistan-Pakistan Component
Scope of Work for Year Four
October 1, 2006 through September, 30, 2007
Of the IALC Cooperative Agreement with USAID's
Bureau for Asia and the Near East

Introduction

The fifth and final year of our Cooperative Agreement relationship with the IALC and USAID-ANE will be used primarily to consolidate, integrate and institutionalize accomplishments that have been reported over the past four years. During this time we have made significant progress toward our long-range goal of positioning the NWFP AU to serve as a regional resource base and center of excellence in agricultural education, research and outreach.

Background

Those of us who planned the component known as “Human Capacity Development for the Agriculture Sector in Afghanistan” often said it was “Long on Common Sense” and an example of serendipity. The validity of that statement is derived from the following three points.

1. The TIPAN project was designed and awarded to the Illinois universities (UIUC and SIUC) as a 15-year institution building contract. This project was terminated after ten years (in 1994) due to the Pressler Amendment. The TIPAN acronym, standing for “Transformation and Integration of the Provincial Agricultural Network” had real meaning and significance. We were expected to “transform” the Northwest Frontier Province Agricultural University (NWFP AU) and “integrate” that university with existing departments of provincial government, to create a teaching-research-outreach “network” that would serve and support NWFP agriculture. Many challenges and unfinished tasks remained after ten years of project activity. It was fortunate that this Cooperative Agreement gave us an opportunity to reconnect with the NWFP AU in a meaningful way after a nine-year period of minimal activity and contact. We are pleased to continue the institutional partnership that started in 1983.
2. The \$60 million USAID investment made in the TIPAN project has yielded immense benefits to Pakistan and the NWFP. This pay-off will continue for generations. The existing Cooperative Agreement has allowed USAID-ANE and the Kabul USAID Mission to cash in on this investment and earn a huge dividend, by using NWFP AU resources to accelerate the process of reconstructing Afghanistan’s agriculture sector. The need for training and human capacity development is absolutely staggering, given that the entire educational system has been shut down for more than a generation.
3. The NWFP AU has grown, expanded, and continued to function as a very impressive land-grant-type university since termination of the TIPAN project. They have earned genuine respect from Pakistan’s higher education community and they are ready for new

challenges. This Cooperative Agreement and resumption of their Illinois connection facilitated NWFPAU aspirations to move to the next level and take on a role that had not been envisioned during the TIPAN years, i.e., serving a regional clientele and becoming a resource base for the South Central Asia region.

A Transition in Training Emphasis

During the past three years (August 2003 to August 2006), heavy emphasis has been placed on short term training programs. In addition to the 21 completed technical short courses, a total of 24 specialized programs were arranged for Afghan research scientists. These training programs were usually one week in length and were conducted at research stations and institutes in the NWFPAU system. These short term programs delivered technology that had eluded the past generation of Afghan agriculturists.

These “train-the-trainer” short courses and “twinning” arrangements that were established between research staff and stations, have made a significant “early impact” on recovery of the agriculture sector. To sustain this recovery, we must give more attention to long-term degree training; especially for university staff. Support from the RAMP project allowed us to enroll a group of ten for M.Sc. degree study at the NWFPAU, beginning in August 2004. This group of ten (five from Kabul University and five from Nangarhar University) completed their degrees in July 2006 and will return to their universities for the fall term.

Training Activities Planned for the 2006-2007 Fiscal Year

A second group of ten students is being selected by the Extension Department of the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation (MAI) to begin M.Sc. work at the NWFPAU in January 2007. Support for their study will come from the Ministry. Upon degree completion, these nominees will return to positions as National Program Leaders and Subject Matter Specialists in the MAI Extension Department. This possibility was envisioned in the FY06 Scope of Work and described in the section “USDA Collaboration: Optimism with Uncertainty”. Funds that will support this masters-level study were generated through the sale of commodities (soybeans) that were donated by USDA. Proceeds from these “monetized commodities” have reached the MAI and are being used for “Capacity Building” in their Extension Department.

One or two technical short courses and perhaps other types of specialized short-term training may be offered during the coming months if reprogrammed funds become available. It is our intent however, to establish a trend toward more degree training. It is also our intent, to eventually select individuals who excel in M.Sc. degree programs at the NWFPAU and place them for continuing advanced degree study in U.S. universities that are appropriate to their disciplinary needs.

Position the NWFPAU as a Regional Resource

Sustainability has been our constant concern for the past four years. Project resources that passed through this component have been invested in institutions and people. These types of investments have consistently proven more sustainable and enduring when development assistance efforts are evaluated. The set of activities funded through the USAID-Islamabad buy-in have made a huge contribution toward positioning the NWFPAU to provide institutional support to the development and recovery process in Afghanistan. Those institution-strengthening activities were detailed in last year's Scope of Work, in the section titled "Buy-in Activities Continuing Through FY06".

Late in FY06 we released a website that explains and markets the NWFPAU capacity to deliver a wide range of training programs, i.e., technical short courses, specialized research training and long term degree programs. This new website represents another significant step toward positioning the NWFPAU to assume its role as a regional resource base. The site can be viewed at: <http://www.aces.uiuc.edu/global/afghanistan/>

Linkage Strengthening Activities Planned for the 2006-2007 Fiscal Year

It seems clear that the NWFPAU will need to have the Illinois universities "in the wings" to offer counsel and support while they take on an expanding and "center stage" role in responding to needs and requests from the South Central Asia region. The FY07 focus will be on institutionalizing the English Language Resource Center and the Office of International Programs and Services, to make these units a functioning part of the campus.

The past 18 months we have worked with the NWFPAU to secure funding from Pakistan's Higher Education Commission (HEC) to sustain the NWFPAU/UIUC/SIUC relationship; allowing our Pakistani partner institution to continue its trajectory toward increasing levels of responsibility in agricultural education, research and outreach. Near the end of FY06, the NWFPAU informed us of an allocation in the amount of Rs. 6,510,000 (US\$107,545) that had been received from HEC to support International Linkages. We had given generous assistance in the preparation of their proposal, so we were pleased to get this news. These funds are available during FY07 to invest in activities that will strengthen our relationship. The funds being disbursed by HEC were actually provided by USAID-Islamabad.

The three universities (NWFPAU/SIUC/UIUC) were awarded, after a highly competitive process, a grant by ALO/HED to carry out the Balkh University Faculty of Agriculture (BUFA) Improvement Project. This project has been extended through December 31, 2006 and a proposal has been submitted to USAID-Kabul requesting the transfer of additional funds to ALO/HED, so we can continue BUFA upgrading activities beyond the scheduled termination date. This becomes another one of our FY07 objectives.

Additionally, we will investigate a possible role for our universities in the relatively new Global Development-"e"-Alliance being initiated by USAID-Kabul.

Funding Balance: Core vs. Supplemental:

The team that is responsible for implementing this component has been fully aware of the expectation that core funds made available through the Cooperative Agreement are intended primarily to cover costs associated with generating supplemental support. We believe our record of attracting support from other sources is impressive up to this point and gives rise to objectives that we can pursue during FY07. Examples of these past accomplishments and the connections that are created to FY07 activities and opportunities are as follows:

- The Rebuilding Agricultural Markets Program (RAMP) provided our component with a total of \$533,538 in supplemental funding. The RAMP project ended June 30, 2006. The contract for the successor project, known as ASAP, will be awarded by USAID-Kabul in November 2006. When that contractor is identified, we will begin to explore the possibility of providing services and developing a working relationship.
- USAID-Islamabad awarded our component a traditional Cooperative Agreement buy-in totaling \$484,090 in late 2004. After that, all available Islamabad funds were used for earthquake relief. FY07 may present new possibilities because the Mission has recently placed a staff member in the Consulate in Peshawar. Combined with that, is USAID's interest in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). Given its proximity, there may be a role for the NWFPAU in FATA-based projects that are agricultural in nature.
- Afghanistan's Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation (MAI) signed a Grant Agreement with UIUC allocating \$266,692 to support M.Sc. degree study at the NWFPAU by ten staff from the MAI Extension Department. These students will enroll in January 2007. Funds in this Grant Agreement were generated through monetization of commodities (soybeans) donated by USDA. These commodity donations are a continuing process, so we may be able to access additional MAI funds during FY07 and the years ahead.
- The SIUC/UIUC/NWFPAU consortium was awarded a \$119,933 grant by ALO/HED to carry out the Balkh University Faculty of Agriculture (BUFA) Improvement Project. These funds had been transferred from USAID-Kabul directly to ALO/HED. In addition to supplementing our operational funds, this project has increased our visibility in Afghanistan and made us a known quantity in their higher education community.

The four above items account for a total of \$1,484,253 in supplemental funding generated by this component. We are proud of that number and we hope to increase this total during FY07. We are proud because this amount exceeds the total of \$1,320,672 in core funds that our component will have received during the current four-year Cooperative Agreement.