

Afghanistan-Pakistan Activities
Quarterly Report XVII
(October - November - December 2006)
Sustainable Development of Drylands Project
IALC-UIUC

Principal Accomplishments this Period and Plans for the Next Quarter:

1. Our major accomplishment was the launching of M.Sc. degree study in Pakistan by ten Extension staff from Afghanistan's Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation (MAI). Following examination and selection by a high-level MAI committee, this group arrived Peshawar on November 20. The first phase of their graduate study consists of two months of preparatory specialized instruction, delivered by NWFPAU faculty, concentrating on English Language Skills and Computer Skills. On about January 20, 2007, they will register for courses and formally begin their 24 month M.Sc. programs; with six enrolled at the NWFPAU and four enrolled at the University of Agriculture in Faisalabad (UAF). A summary listing of these ten students is attached. Eight completed B.Sc. degrees in the Kabul University Faculty of Agriculture and two are graduates of Nangarhar University. After M.Sc. degree completion, all ten will return to the MAI Extension Department to serve as Subject Matter Specialists and National Program Leaders. Their cv's are on file at UIUC.

2. Our three-university consortium (UIUC/SIUC/NWFPAU) has completed all steps involved in executing Memoranda of Understanding (MOU's) that formally link us with the following three Afghan universities:
 - A. Balkh University in Mazar-e-Sharif
 - B. Nangarhar University in Jalalabad
 - C. Kabul University of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

These agreements give us a valuable presence, visibility, and status as a known quantity within Afghanistan's higher education sector. Our project to assist the Balkh University Faculty of Agriculture (BUFA) will continue through June 2007. The BUFA project is separate from this component, but is complementary to its objectives, and is funded by Higher Education for Development.

3. The two above accomplishments represent significant progress toward the objective of "Strengthening and Deepening our MAI Relationship." Specific examples are:
 - A. The MAI is using funds from monetized commodities (soybeans) for capacity-building, i.e., training; with heavy emphasis on its extension and outreach mandate. The ten extension staff sent to Pakistan for M.Sc. training represent the MAI's first significant capacity-building effort. Because of the overwhelming need for training within the ranks of the MAI Extension Department, there is a strong likelihood that we will receive requests for short-term specialized training and for more long-term M.Sc. training.

- B. The MAI plans to establish up to seven Centers of Excellence, that would be located in close proximity to a University Faculty of Agriculture and serve specific Agro-Eco zones within Afghanistan. It has already been determined that the Faculties of Agriculture at Balkh University and Nangarhar University will be an integral part of the MAI Centers of Excellence located in Mazar-e-Sharif and Jalalabad. Our relationship with these universities could lead to our involvement in the establishment and operation of these Centers of Excellence.
4. The NWFP AU English Language Resource Center (ELRC) was formally inaugurated during an October 22 visit by the NWFP Governor. Islamabad buy-in funds were used to establish that center. As mentioned above, the ELRC provides critically-needed English Language training to incoming Afghan M.Sc. students.
 5. Our Field Office Director, Dr. Qayyum, was an invited presenter at a symposium on “Agribusiness and Rural Economic Development” held November 12 and 13 at Nangarhar University. His presentation gave the audience an overview of our component’s accomplishments during the past four years and the impact that these investments in training will have on Rural Economic Development.
 6. A three-person UIUC/SIUC team made an October 3 visit to Purdue University for in-depth discussions with Kevin McNamara. In addition to his role as an Agricultural Economics Professor on that campus, Dr. McNamara serves as Agriculture Advisor to the Afghan Ministry of Higher Education (MHE). At the request of USAID-Kabul, Purdue and Prof. McNamara are establishing a Global Development Alliance (GDA) that will bring together universities, NGO’s and donors; to build institutions that can train the next generation of leaders for the agriculture sector in Afghanistan. One of the primary targets envisioned for this GDA is the improvement of MAI-MHE linkages and the development of joint programs. The Centers of Excellence (point 3B) are already on our radar screens and serve as an example of the potential for linkages. As the GDA concept continues to evolve, the connections that our component has established within the agriculture and higher education sectors may allow us to make unique and useful contributions to this development effort.
 7. Santas and Myers have made plans for a late January meeting with representatives of Chemonics International to explore the possibility of our involvement in the “Accelerating Sustainable Agriculture Program” (ASAP) in Afghanistan. ASAP is USAID-Kabul’s follow-up to the RAMP project, which was also implemented by Chemonics and provided our component with \$533,538 in supplemental funding.
 8. Our late January trip to Washington will also include a meeting with the USDA Afghanistan Reconstruction Team. Because USDA approves and monitors the disbursement of funds generated through monetized commodities, these discussions should allow us to plan for future training services that might be needed as part of on-going capacity-building efforts within various MAI departments and units.

9. The Afghanistan-Pakistan Training (APT) Group continues to meet twice each year and provide valuable advice to the three-person team that implements this component. The next APT meeting is scheduled for January 24, 2007 on the UIUC campus.

10. The annual briefing of USAID-Washington's Asia-Near East (ANE) Bureau is tentatively set for late February. The Component Manager will use that occasion to update ANE representatives on our accomplishments thus far in Human Capacity Development for the Agriculture Sector in Afghanistan.

LIST OF MAI M.Sc. PARTICIPANTS

(Arrival date: 11/20/2006)

	Name of Participant	Father's Name	Specialization	Institution
1.	Mohammad Ibrahim Karimi	Abdul Ghafar	Agronomy	NWFPAU
2.	Ahmad Zahir	Abdul Sattar	Agribusiness	UAF
3.	Abdul Qadim	Abdul Moqem	Horticulture	NWFPAU
4.	Allah Mohammad	Khair Mohammad	Extension	UAF
5.	Mohammad Rauf Yaqubi	Mohammad Ishaq	Horticulture	NWFPAU
6.	Walayat Khan Walayati	Dad Mohammad	Plant Protection	UAF
7.	Rahamatullah	Karimullah	Extension	UAF
8.	Hidayatullah	Mohammad Amir	Agronomy	NWFPAU
9.	Habibur Rahman	Amin Jan	Plant Protection	NWFPAU
10.	Sayed Jamaluddin	Sayed Jalal	Plant Breeding	NWFPAU

Abbreviations:

NWFPAU Northwest Frontier Province Agricultural University, Peshawar

UAF University of Agriculture, Faisalabad