

Afghanistan-Pakistan Activities
Quarterly Report XXV
(October-November-December 2008)
Sustainable Development of Drylands Project
IALC-UIUC

SUMMARY OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND FORWARD PLANS

The previous quarterly report indicated that our near-term attention would be focused on items two and three in the FY09 Scope of Work. Those items are: “Customized short term training programs delivered in Afghanistan” and “Strengthen the international dimension of the NWFPAU”. Arrangements have been made for January 2009 travel to Pakistan and Afghanistan that will allow the component manager (Santas) and Senior Advisor (Myers) to concentrate on these two areas. Our itinerary and scope of work is attached to this report. A large portion of our effort this past quarter was given to preparations and arrangements for this TDY.

The primary reason for our time in Pakistan will be to formalize the international dimension of the NWFPAU and to institutionalize that function as an “Office of International Programs and Services”. This has been an elusive long-range goal, but we will continue our efforts toward that end. While pursuing that goal, we will be able to work on less complicated tasks such as linkage activities between the NWFPAU and the Illinois universities. These activities are being supported through a grant the AU has received from the Government of Pakistan’s Higher Education Commission (HEC). During the Pakistan stop, we can also give AU administrators advance information on the topics of technical short courses that will likely be delivered in Afghanistan in 2009. This will permit the assignment of selected faculty to lead-instructor and support-instructor responsibilities for the courses on our tentative list. As we look ahead to the September 2009 termination of this training program, we are also obligated to extend sincere appreciation to our Pakistani colleagues for their cooperation with the IALC/UIUC effort and for the lasting contributions they have made to the recovery of Afghanistan’s agriculture sector.

The primary reason for our time in Afghanistan is to firm up plans for 2 or 3 technical short courses and begin making arrangements for what will be the final course-offerings in our seven-year training effort. There is a \$60,000 allocation in our FY09 budget for these last few courses. Given that these courses will be customized (meaning the number of participants will be less than the standard 20 and course length will be less than the standard 4 weeks) we anticipate being able to deliver up to 3 courses with this budget allocation.

Our earlier plan consisted of presenting two courses in Kabul in January 2009. Those courses were to be on “Extension Methodology” and “Irrigation Technology”. These plans did not materialize because of staff availability problems. Professor Jamal could not teach the irrigation course because there was too little time between his fall semester sabbatical at Colorado State University and the resumption of his spring semester duties at AU-Peshawar. Although Professor Zaidi was available to teach the extension methodology course, we asked him to use his January/February as an AWATT consultant, supervising the participatory rural appraisal

(PRA) process. PRA is our first step toward the long range goal of making Afghanistan's agricultural extension system more market-driven, client-focused and decentralized.

At this stage we are considering four topics for the remaining short courses. The topics are: Irrigation Technology, Extension Methodology, Integrated Pest Management and Soil Fertility Management. At least two short courses (and possibly three) will be delivered on these topics in Kabul during the first half of 2009. We hope to make these decisions and finalize these plans while in Afghanistan in January, thus using the FY09 short course allocation.

Our previous quarterly report also explained that the FY09 scope of work and corresponding budget were submitted to the IALC Project Director on September 4. This submission formed the basis for the next modification of our subcontract with the University of Arizona. This process seems to be stuck in the Arizona system because a subcontract modification has not yet reached Illinois. We are confident nonetheless, that we have accumulated carryover funds in the amount of \$262,130 that can be spent during FY09. As explained in the attached itinerary and scope of work, these funds are being used for the January 2009 Afghanistan-Pakistan TDY.

TDY Itinerary and Scope of Work

Traveler: Dr. John W. Santas, AWATT Campus Coordinator &
Associate Director,
ACES Global Connect,
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Dates of Travel : (Dr. Oval Myers will follow this same itinerary)

January 6-25, 2009, consisting of:

January 8-15 at the NWFP Agricultural
University in Peshawar, Pakistan working on :

1. Delivery of short courses in Afghanistan
2. NWFP / UIUC / SIUC linkage activities
3. Establishment of an international programs office at the NWFP
4. Conferences with ten Afghan Ministry of Agriculture (MAIL) Extension staff, now in their final semester of M.Sc. degree study at the NWFP-Peshawar.

January 15: Travel on PIA from Islamabad to Kabul

January 15-24 in Afghanistan, departing January 25 for return travel to Illinois

NOTE: AWATT funds are not being used for our travel and TDY expenses. Support comes from our existing IALC Cooperative Agreement with USAID's Asia - Near East Bureau (ANE) for the training project known as "Human Capacity Development for the

Agriculture Sector in Afghanistan”. This project was initiated in October 2002 and will be funded through September 30, 2009.

In my capacity as an International Agricultural Training Specialist, I will work on the following topics and issues while in Afghanistan:

1. Plans and arrangements for technical agriculture short courses that will be delivered in Afghanistan by professors from the NWFP Agricultural University (NWFP AU) in Peshawar. Faculty members from the AWATT universities will be encouraged to assist in the conduct and delivery of these courses.
2. Oversight and coordination for the PRA (participatory rural appraisal) and SREP (strategic research and extension planning) efforts that have been underway in Afghanistan and carried out by AWATT consultants since mid-August 2008. My work on PRA/SREP will be done from a training specialist’s perspective and as a proxy for Professor Emeritus Burton E. Swanson who, in his capacity as Senior Advisor to the Technology Transfer component of AWATT, is directing the PRA/SREP process from his base at UIUC.

Specific activities under part 2 (above) will consist of:

- A) Involvement in the training sessions that introduce selected Afghans to participatory, bottom-up, market-driven concepts that are inherent in PRA/SREP.
 - B) Determine where and how the Afghan extension personnel who were trained at MANAGE in Hyderabad, India can contribute to the PRA/SREP process.
 - C) Visit selected vocational agriculture high schools, to better understand the pre-service training being given to Afghan field-level extension staff. Take the initial steps toward developing a comprehensive plan for in-service training and professional upgrading of extension staff at all levels.
 - D) After the PRA/SREP process is moving ahead in an integrated and coordinated manner, I will brief Extension Director Fazel on work done up to this point and request his support for the PRA/SREP approach to an eventual and far-down-the-road transformation of the extension system in Afghanistan. Assuming that the process moves forward, PRA/SREP will expand beyond the pilot work now being done in Balkh and Nangarhar Provinces. Dr. Fazel and I also need to talk about where he will use the ten extension staff now enrolled in M.Sc. programs at the NWFP AU. They should be ready to step in to their new roles in June 2009.
3. Other tasks may be added to this Scope of Work by the AWATT Chief of Party.