

PRESS RELEASE

United Nations Development Programme

Afghanistan Country Office, Shah Mahmood Ghazi Watt, Kabul



The Ministry of Communication and Information Technology and The Ministry of Higher Education Will Jointly Manage The Information and Communication Technology Project

Kabul, March 5, 2009— A Memorandum of Understanding was signed today between the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (MoCIT) and the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) to jointly manage implementation of the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Cisco Capacity Building Project.

The ICT/Cisco Capacity Building Project was launched in 2004 by UNDP to assist the Government of Afghanistan (GoA) in its efforts to narrow the digital divide with the rest of the world as well as its citizens and enable the country to further benefit from ICT by joining the global information society. The project also represents national ownership and a sustainable transfer of capacity and responsibility of previous project activities funded by donors including USAID, Cisco, French Trust Fund, Microsoft, and European Commission (EC) to the GoA after it was handed over to the MoCIT in December 2008.

“It is very important to build capacities and train skilled people in the area of ICT” said the Minister of Communication and Information Technology, Mr. Amirzai Sangin. “We are planning to expand provincial coverage of this project while we thank UNDP and donors on behalf of the Afghan people for their support to this very important project” he added.

UNDP has been providing support to the MoCIT under the ICT Capacity Building Project to build the capacity of the MoCIT to develop and regulate IT and communication related policies, enhance government efficiency through E-Governance and expand ICT skills and access among the general population through training and assisting to build advanced ICT capacity in the country.



The project has also supported pillar three of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) to improve the communication infrastructure by supporting MoCIT’s efforts towards building and renovating the District Communication Network (DCN), Government Communication Network (GCN) and tele-centers (MPCT) in 120 districts.

The project also developed the Afghan ICT Policy, established and handed over the country code top level domain name (.af) to MoCIT and expanded the Cisco Networking Academies which

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provide a comprehensive ICT e-learning programme and training in the areas of information technology, network security and networking/hardware.

More than 1000 students graduated from the Cisco Academies while 34% of new students are female, which is the highest number of female participants in the Cisco Networking programme in the region. In addition, some 36 university lecturers were trained as trainers for the programme in the provinces, in turn training hundreds of students.

The Cisco Networking Academy Programme (CNAP) established nine academy training centers throughout the country, one at Kabul University which serves as the regional academy and 8 local academies based at the Ministry of Women Affairs (MoWA), the MoCIT Training Centre (TTC), Kabul Education University in Kabul City and one in each of the five provinces of Herat, Balkh, Khost, Nangarhar and Bamyan.

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