



## Coordinating Change Management in M/o Transport & Civil Aviation

### *Outsourcing security function at Kabul International Airport (KIA)*

#### *Making KIA secure and truly international*



Capacity is Development

Focus on safe air travel in the post 9/11 world, is like never before. Aviation security in the context of a post conflict society like Afghanistan with ongoing threat from terrorism, assumes even greater significance. For Kabul International Airport (KIA) to become an important international travel hub, the confidence of international airlines and travelers on airport security needs to be strengthened. Enhancing security is needed not just to secure the airport but is also a confidence building measure.

Till recently, Afghan National Border Police (ANBP), a paramilitary force trained to handle traditional law and order problems, but lacking expertise in airport security, was responsible for providing security at Kabul Airport. Further, they were posted at the airport without any orientation or training programmes. Frequent transfers of the ANBP personnel from the airport compounded the adhocism. There were thus serious gaps in the airport security staff management that needed to be filled. There were deficiencies in other areas of airport security like access control, passenger & baggage screening, aircraft security, baggage security, cargo security, catering, and employee-related security measures. Various assessment reports submitted by organizations like ICAO<sup>1</sup>(International Civil Aviation Organization),TSA etc highlighted these deficiencies and the need to address the same.

These reasons contributed to inadequate security measures at KIA and consequently most airlines avoided operating here. Therefore the challenge before Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation (MOTCA) was enormous: Upgrade security to ICAO international standards as embodied in ICAO Annex 17, IATA (International Air Transport Association) guidance and other applicable standards and recommended practices and make the security manpower professional. All this required coordination between various ministries, stakeholders, and above all creation of a civil aviation security authority to oversee all this.

Though this issue was treated as top priority by MoTCA, there were problems from the start. The initial ToR prepared by MoTCA for strengthening security facility at the international airport was not acceptable to the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Economy and other stakeholders. The ToR suffered from an important lacuna in that it did not account for the situation prevailing in Afghanistan or the rules and regulations of the country<sup>2</sup>.

It is at this juncture, that the CAP team started working on the issue. The first task was to decide the right implementation modality i.e. outsourcing. Thereafter, the challenge was to convince the senior management within the ministry that outsourcing was the best route for strengthening of security function till the time Afghanistan can develop its own expertise. The severe inadequacies of the arrangement where ANBP provided airport security were brought home during several discussion sessions on the topic. The CAP team along with other international experts<sup>3</sup> was instrumental in developing a convincing argument on this front.

As the next step, CAP team developed a comprehensive ToR based on rules and regulations of the country and while incorporating the dynamics of the ground reality in the country. This ToR was approved in the ministry. However, this was only round one of the battle. Even though the ToR was approved, the idea of outsourcing to private sector, that too in the civil aviation sector was still an uncomfortable one for most senior officers of the MoTCA and other important ministries like Ministry of Interior and they had lot of reservations about the process of privatization. Consequently no progress was made for few months in soliciting proposals for hiring services of a security company based on the approved ToR.

There were many a frustrating moments but the team persisted and finally a consensus emerged amongst the different stakeholders on the ToR and its implementation. From then on, progress started on the ToR as the procurement process for security services at KIA commenced beginning with calling of the expression of interest (EOI) for the tender by ARDS. CAP team assisted the Ministry in settling all issues raised by ARDS in during the procurement process. CAP international advisor worked as in house procurement consultant for the ministry and assisted the ministry in evaluation of the proposal and in developing consensus between ARDS and the ministry on the evaluation process.

<sup>1</sup> ICAO is implementing important projects in the ministry

<sup>2</sup> Several important reports and documents prepared in Afghanistan suffer from this problem and therefore find little favor with the senior management in Afghanistan government. CAP team has on many occasions stepped in to correct this lacuna.

<sup>3</sup> CAP team worked closely with other experts especially those from ICAO throughout the execution of this activity

At this juncture the UAE government offered services of an International security firm for strengthening security of Kabul Airport. CAP team assisted the ministry in negotiating the complete scope of work and working out the final modalities. Finally the security was handed over to a professional private security company at KIA in May 2009.

This case was a potent example of the importance of change management, especially in the context of a ministry in government of Afghanistan. When CAP team got associated with the issue, it recognized that the situation called for effective change management. Change management requires breaking down the resistance to change and to manage change by trying to achieve consensus, to allay fears and address genuine concerns of different stakeholders (in this case the policy makers). It was not just important that the ministry accepts or implements the project but of a greater significance was the need to create a sense of ownership and pride in the project. Some important elements of the change management strategy adopted by the CAP team were:

- Like-minded people from other projects such as ICAO, FAA were roped in to work in a cohesive group as change agents. The teamwork approach was helpful in convincing senior officers of the Ministry regarding benefits of engaging a professional private security agency.
- To appreciate and to address concerns of the stakeholders on the ToR and implementation process, numerous discussions were held with the officers of the Ministry of Finance and Interior. The ToR was modified several times in order to incorporate their comments without compromising the core concept.

Today, passengers are happy and the enhanced sense of security has provided confidence to the international carriers and has generated lot of interest in many international airlines to start their operations from Kabul. This is direct evidence that these countries are now more confident of the security scenario at KIA. An immediate example validating the above premise is that there is now a direct flight to Germany. Apart from providing wider choices to people flying out of Kabul, this may also have a multiplier effect in terms of airport revenue in future.

Though a major milestone has been achieved by MoTCA and KIA, the struggle is not over. Access control and parameter security is still with ANBP. Work has to be done so that in the near future the complete security of the airport would be in the hands professional security company and also that some day MoTCA would be in a position to develop its own professional Aviation Security Group in the ANBP to provide security to all airports in Afghanistan.