

QUARTERLY PROJECT REPORT [FIRST QUARTER, 2009]

United Nations Development Programme Afghanistan Disbandment of Illegal Armed Groups (DIAG) 01-01-2009 – 31-03-2009



Weapons handed over by illegal armed groups in Samangan Province, February 2009

Project ID: 00043604

Duration: January 2005 – March 2011

Strategic Plan Component: Crisis Prevention and Recovery

Total Budget: USD 25,063,595

Unfunded: USD 17,861,562

Implementing Partners: Disarmament & Reintegration Commission, Ministry of Interior (Mol), Office of the National Security Advisor (NSA), National Directorate for Security (NDS), Ministry of Defence (MoD), and Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD)

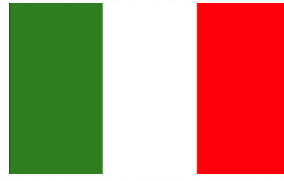
DIAG DONORS



Switzerland



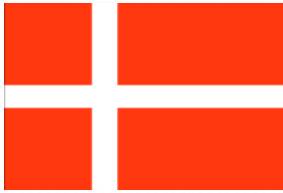
Canada



Italy



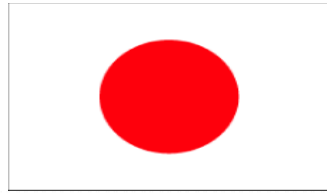
United Kingdom



Denmark



Norway



Japan



United States



UNDP



Netherlands

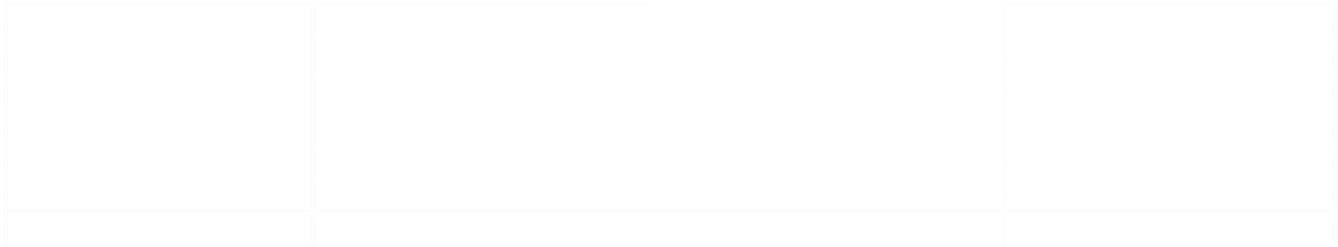


Table of Contents

I. Implementation progress	4
II. Project implementation challenges.....	9
Updated project risks and actions.....	9
Updated project issues and actions.....	10
III. Financial status and utilization	11
Financial status.....	11
Financial utilization.....	11

I. Implementation progress

Output 1 – Implementation of weapon collection and disbandment of illegal armed groups fully supported.

Activity 1.1 – Enhance the capacity of Government to ensure community security through weapons reduction.

A. Capacity building for DIAG Unit

The core activity through 2009 is the capacity building for the Ministry of Interior (Mol). Disbandment of Illegal Armed Groups (DIAG) training for Mol commenced in November 2008 and continued through the first quarter of 2009. In this first phase, the national-level DIAG Unit was trained until the end of March. The second phase starts in April and will involve capacity building for regional Mol DIAG officers. During the first quarter, most of the 33 Mol DIAG Unit officers were trained on DIAG operations, weapons registration, and private security company licensing, with two staff trained in DIAG public information. The DIAG operations training consisted of English and computer skills, managing databases, coordinating efforts and information with the Joint Secretariat and the regions, processing weapons and illegal armed groups (IAGs) data sets, and managing weapons registration and licensing and private security company licensing. The public information training included media monitoring, organising media databases, and preparing media announcements.

The Afghanistan's New Beginnings Programme (ANBP) tracked the Mol DIAG trainees' progress throughout the training and evaluated their skills at the end of the programme. The assessment of the first round of Mol DIAG trainees reflects there are still some shortfalls in meeting the required level of skills and knowledge, and further training maybe required.

The regional Mol DIAG staff are currently being appointed with inputs from ANBP and its regional office managers and the Office of the Second Vice President. Approximately 150 people will be appointed to regional and provincial DIAG Units. Training for these officers will commence in April or May 2009 once they have been selected.

Procurement of the equipment required for the DIAG Unit is ongoing, including vehicles and computer hardware. However, the vehicles are being held up by the need for clarification on a tax payment issue. The computer equipment has already gone through the request for proposal phase and one vendor was selected. The delivery of the equipment is expected by the end of April 2009.

B. Private security companies

In January 2009 the High Commission Board (HBC) agreed to submit the registration papers for 39 private security companies (PSCs) to Cabinet following the advice of Interior Minister Hanif Atmar and Vice Chairman of the D&RC Minister Masoom Mohammad Stanekzai. In February 2009 the HBC ratified the 39 PSCs and declared that no more PSCs would be given licenses for the time being. However, some companies are appealing this decision. To date USD 3.7 million has been collected from PSCs for the initial registration, and these funds have gone into the Government's central revenue. The PSC licenses are valid for one year and must be renewed annually. Thus far nearly 17,000 weapons belonging to PSCs have been registered through DIAG.

Four staff from Mol were trained to manage the PSC database. The database is still with ANBP because the equipment necessary for the DIAG Unit to manage the database has not been procured. The server and required Internet access for the database are expected to be in place by next quarter.

C. Weapons registration and licensing

Under the mentorship of ANBP, the DIAG Weapons Registration and Licensing (WRL) Cell within MoI began archiving weapons applications and other forms related to registration and licenses. International best practice entails maintaining these records for 10 years in safe keeping for tracking purposes and keeping sensitive information secure. In support of the archiving, plans were submitted to the Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA) for containers that will store the archives.

ANBP provided over USD 114,000 in “bridge” funding to enable the purchase of new weapon identification card printers for the WRL Cell. The costs for the printers will be refunded to ANBP by LOTFA. By the end of this quarter, over 15,000 weapons have been registered along with the issuance of identification cards.

Job descriptions for the MoI WRL Cell were translated into Dari and meetings were organised by ANBP to discuss the responsibilities of the officers. The core staff of the cell includes one head, two coordinating officers, and three database operators. The weapons licensing and registration mentor from ANBP also assisted the head of the WRL Cell with management by preparing a one year work plan.

The WRL Cell officials received training for verifying information contained in the identification cards when applicants seek to renew their licenses. ANBP also engaged a trainer who will look after the training needs of the DIAG WRL Cell at the central and regional levels. The trainer identifies specific skills needed by the staff, coordinates training programmes, and finds training providers such as computer schools to deliver the required courses.

ANBP completed the Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) database in February 2009 and installed it at the DIAG WRL Cell that same month. The database, which is in Dari and English, contains 11 sections about types of firearms, types of ammunition, firearms manufacturers, gun laws and policies, and several other categories.

The Standing Operating Procedures (SOPs) for WRL initiated in 2008 underwent revisions upon the directive of the Minister Atmar. Minister Stanekzai and ANBP provided inputs for the revised SOPs. The revisions entail a comprehensive policy for WRL and private security companies that will be submitted to the HBC.

D. Remapping procedure

In preparation for candidate vetting in the upcoming presidential and provincial elections as well as to make improvements in current and future DIAG activities, the Second Vice President ordered in September 2008 the remapping procedure that will update the database on IAGs. All governors were required to prepare a current list of IAGs in their province, their estimated size, and the level of threat posed to the government. The remapping procedure was scheduled for completion by the end of December 2008; however, some governors delayed taking action, resulting in delays into late March 2009. Other governors did not submit anything or were not releasing their lists. As of the end of March 2009, two provinces had not submitted a complete list of IAGs (Daikundi and Zabul). The Disarmament and Reintegration Commission (D&RC), with the help of the Independent Directorate for Local Governance (IDLG) which is responsible for governors, encouraged the late provinces to complete the remapping in time for the candidate vetting process for the upcoming elections.

The updated IAG database that will emerge from the remapping procedure will be used by the D&RC to support the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) in vetting candidates for the 2009 and 2010 elections. D&RC and IEC have taken action to decide on the vetting process details and came up with a joint procedure in early April. ANBP will provide the updated database on IAGs and assist the D&RC and IEC in using the database. ANBP is currently translating the database into Dari.

E. Government officials linked to illegal armed groups

An important aspect of DIAG is to remove government officials who have existing links to IAGs. Out of 72 Government Officials Linked to Illegal Armed Groups (GOLIAGs) targeted, 31 have become compliant (i.e., breaking their ties to IAGs), 23 were terminated, and five others have different status (e.g., dead or not found in the provincial government structure). At the end of 2008 there were 20 non-compliant GOLIAGs, but seven of them were removed from the list and placed on the IAG list instead as they no longer held official positions in the government. IDLG continues to apply pressure on the 13 non-compliant GOLIAGs to either remove them from office or terminate their links with IAGs.

Activity 1.2 – Disarm targeted illegal armed groups, collect weapons and transfer weapons to government control.



Participants of a weapons handover ceremony in Faryab, March 2009

A. Weapons collection

During the first three months of 2009 DIAG collected 1,053 weapons. To date, DIAG has assisted the Government in collecting 43,809 weapons.

B. District DIAG Implementation

District DIAG Implementation (DDI) round 5 officially commenced in December 2008 but activities in the field began the following month. DDI round 5 covers 20 districts, bringing the total number of targeted districts to 105. DIAG has made excellent progress with DDI early in 2009. Between January and the end of March, 15 districts were declared as “peace districts.” Five of

these districts are in Nangrahar, where a special ceremony was held by the provincial governor and participants included Provincial Committee members, IAGs, tribal leaders and several district governors. The 15 newly compliant districts are: Surkhrod, Chaparhar, Kot, Dar-e-Noor and Mohmand Dara (Nangrahar), Keshنده (Balkh), Bharak (Badakhshan), Dahana e Ghori (Baghlan), Khwaja Ghar (Takhar), Shibar (Bamyan), Qurghan and Dawlatabad (Faryab), Feroz Nakhchir (Samangan), Gulran (Herat), and Lal wa Sarjantal (Ghor). Through March 2009, a total of 63 districts, including the new 15, are now considered peace districts through their compliance with DIAG.

In another sign of rapid progress, 129 IAGs were disbanded in the first quarter. By the end of the first quarter of 2009, a total of 531 IAGs have been disbanded, with their commanders signing declarations that their weapons have been handed in and the groups disbanded.

ANBP’s regional offices and the local security agencies continue to monitor these former commanders and their units to ensure they do not illegally take up arms again. Six months after compliance, ANBP’s monitoring and evaluation (M&E) team conducts a post-compliance survey, which involves surveying local people about security, governance, and popular support for the government. A second method for monitoring former IAGs is through regular exchanges of information and discussions among the ANBP Regional Office Managers (ROMs), governors, Provincial DIAG Coordinators, and security agencies. The resumption of IAG activities in a peace district can be detected through information gathering, which is then communicated to the Provincial Security Committees, the Disarmament and Reintegration Commission (D&RC), the Joint Secretariat, and the national security agencies.

The DDI process has collected 5,542 weapons since its inception in April 2007, with 4,509 of these weapons operational.

C. Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation is an important aspect of DIAG. ANBP conducts baseline and post-compliance surveys to assess security, governance, popular support for the government, and socio-economic development. Between January and March 2009 ANBP conducted post-compliance surveys for DDI round 2, which covered 30 districts. Surveys of 21 out of the 30 districts are complete, while the remaining nine had to be postponed due to weather conditions.

ANBP also upgraded its M&E system in the first quarter by developing a DIAG logic model and improving the set of indicators and measures used to assess conditions both at the district level and nationally. The new system will be launched in May in time for DDI round 6. M&E staff also prepared a report evaluating the Mol computer course trainees in Windows, Word, and Excel programmes.

Activity 1.3 – Change general public perceptions, values and behaviour regarding illicit weapons possession and misuses through a public awareness campaign.

ANBP continued to build on the momentum generated in 2008 for public information activities. In February 2009, Radio Television of Afghanistan (RTA) Radio ran a 30 minute talk show on the disbandment of IAGs and the implications for the upcoming elections. Minister Stanekzai, Pulwasha Kaker (Deputy Minister of Women’s Affairs), and Sher Mohammed Ibrahim (Director of Mosques) participated in the show.

A new major public information activity for ANBP was the production of television and radio spots about DIAG and the need for peace and security in Afghanistan. These public service announcements were aired in late March 2009 during primetime through local and government radio and television stations. Continuing along these lines, request for proposals were announced for the production of new television and radio spots on DIAG and its implications for the upcoming elections. Production is expected to finish in mid-April and then be broadcasted at the end of that month.

Efforts are underway to produce new display billboards. The designs were approved by Minister Stanekzai and production took place in March 2009. During April the billboards will be placed in prominent locations in Kabul and surrounding regions, with messages about incentives for compliance with DIAG. The campaign will last for eight weeks.

A workshop with the Ministry of Tribal Elders and Border Affairs was originally scheduled for March but had to be postponed until April due to key participants being unavailable in March. The workshop will progress the cooperation started last year with the Ministry and seeks to acquire support for DIAG from tribal elders in the south and southeast provinces.

To commemorate the Afghan New Year and take the opportunity to promote DIAG, ANBP produced tabletop calendars. These calendars containing messages about DIAG have been distributed to various DIAG stakeholders and the donor community.

Finally, the revised ANBP and DIAG web sites were launched in the first quarter. The upgraded web sites contain more information in a more accessible format. Work is underway on the Dari and Pashto versions of the web sites, which will be online in early April 2009.

Activity 1.4 – Handover of all responsibilities from ANBP (DIAG) to Government of Afghanistan.

The Mol Capacity Building Action Plan is designed to give Mol full capabilities to implement DIAG by March 2010. Additionally, the DIAG Transition Working Group (consisting of Mol, Japan Embassy and ANBP) meets every two weeks to discuss policy and operational issues in order to ensure that the transition is progressing.

ANBP is in the process of hiring four national staff to assist with the transition to Mol. These four officers will identify training needs for DIAG Unit staff, assist with the training, and assess the training outputs.



Weapons handed over during a ceremony in Faryab, March 2009

Output 2 – Identification and monitoring of socio-economic community development and governance interventions fully supported.

Activity 2.1 – Development consultative mechanisms established in each of the 34 provinces to cover up to 365 districts.

This activity was subsumed under Activity 1.1 in 2007. Earlier in the project various mechanisms were set up in every province, such as Provincial Community Development Teams and Development Committees.

Activity 2.2 – Deliver socio-economic community development projects; improve governance structures; involve disbanded group members in the participation of community development and social affairs.

The delivery of DIAG district development projects normally slows down during the winter months, and thus no additional projects were completed in the first quarter. As of March, five DIAG district development projects were completed and 16 are under construction. The eight DIAG engineers hired last year by the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) are showing tangible results: another 30 projects were signed or announced and will commence soon. During this quarter 15 projects were under the design and planning process. In total, 66 projects were either completed or in various stages of selection, design, and implementation at the end of the first quarter.

DIAG district development projects are advertised in the province where the project is to be implemented. This ensures that local companies benefit from the procurement instead of firms in the capital. However, procurement continues to be handled by MRRD at the central level since there is no evaluation committee at the Provincial Rural Rehabilitation Departments (PRRD). ANBP is actively advocating local procurement similar to the “Kandahar model,” but this requires a waiver or decree from the President which is not yet forthcoming. The Kandahar model decentralizes the procurement process to the provincial level, instead of conducting it at the central MRRD.

MRRD calculates that the average time from pre-selection to implementation is 10-12 months. However, the main obstacle to the completion of DIAG district development projects is the low capacity of Afghan construction companies. All of the contracted firms have failed to meet the contract obligations (on average eight months for completion) and they frequently request six-month extensions (sometimes more than once) to complete the work. To facilitate the delivery, MRRD holds progress meetings with the contracted firms once a month and also conducts site monitoring.

Activity 2.3 – Establish DDAs in DIAG targeted districts if not already established. DDAs are used for DIAG project identification.

District Development Assemblies (DDAs) are set up by MRRD under the National Area-Based Development Programme and their main functions are to formulate the District Development Plans (DDPs) and conduct needs assessments for district development projects. In the first quarter of 2009, MRRD established 15 new DDAs in Kabul and Herat. With the addition of these new DDAs, Afghanistan now has 326 DDAs out of 365 districts. Another 30 DDAs are expected by the end of June 2009, and MRRD predicts all districts will have DDAs before the end of 2009.

II. Project implementation challenges

A. Updated project risks and actions

While overall the Government has shown considerable commitment to DIAG, insecurity in various parts of the country impedes implementation and sometimes causes a lack of cooperation from provincial authorities. For example, continued insecurity in Jawand district in Badghis and the whole of Badghis Province halted DIAG activities as well as discouraged the authorities to take an active part in the process. Anti-government elements in Badghis Province also affected DIAG implementation and the conditions in previously secure districts. DIAG relies on the Provincial Committees to initiate negotiations with IAGs, and thus without their cooperation progress is limited.

ANBP and MRRD are trying to address the gap between a district's compliance with DIAG and the completion of a development project. Frustrations have arisen within districts about the long wait for a project, and this could affect the willingness of IAGs in other districts to disarm and disband. In addition to the low capacity issue of local contractors for DIAG district development projects, delays in implementing and completing projects are caused by two other factors. First, the Joint Secretariat and MRRD must jointly consult with other ministries to determine if the selected project is consistent with the master plans of the ministries. This step occurs during the pre-selection phase of a DIAG project. Second, the designs for the development projects must be approved by other ministries if they have not been previously approved by the ministries concerned. These factors contribute to the gap between a district's compliance with DIAG and the delivery of a development project.

Unfortunately there is very little that either ANBP or MRRD can do about these factors. Both processes are necessary and cannot be bypassed. For this reason, the expectations of communities must be managed properly to ensure continuous support from communities for DIAG. This would entail providing communities with realistic timelines for the planning, design, and implementation of projects, and also ensuring regular communication with district leaders to keep them abreast of progress or delays.

In regard to the Mol capacity building programme, the most evident risk is a lack of institutional and political will to enable capacity-building to take place in a structured manner within the ministry. Mol must ensure participation and commitment of the selected DIAG officers in the capacity building programme and avoid to the extent possible shifting these trained officers to other non-related duties. Otherwise the institutional capacity will be lost. ANBP has raised this issue repeatedly with senior officials in Mol and at the DIAG Unit during the first phase of the capacity building programme.

At a higher level, there is the risk of a lack of political will or ability to provide the necessary authority to Mol to take the lead role in the DIAG process. Possible opposition from other security agencies such as the Ministry of Defence and the National Directorate for Security could adversely affect DIAG implementation, and the problem could be compounded by a possible failure of the National Security Council to provide the necessary strategic vision and oversight. At the moment, with the existence of the Joint Secretariat, DIAG Steering Committee, and D&RC, potential opposition and a lack of strategic leadership are not anticipated. However, with the goal being to handover the whole DIAG process to Mol, then such problems could arise when ANBP steps back and merely provides oversight. ANBP is mitigating those risks by engaging with the government at all levels, including the National Security Council.

Rising regional tensions involving Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India could lead to increased security infractions and troop movements. From an Afghanistan point of view, the most likely area to be affected by regional tensions is the southeast part of the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. DIAG already has limited operations in this area and the inability to operate could spill over to more districts.

B. Updated project issues and actions

As the central level DIAG Unit capacity building progressed, it became apparent that more attention needs to be paid to sequencing the capacity building components. Many of the Mol DIAG officers require sufficient English language training before they can effectively operate computers. Hence, the regional capacity building that will commence in April 2009 should provide the English training prior to computer and DIAG operations training.

The strategy for DDI has been to implement DIAG in districts deemed relatively easy for the project's operations because of the security situation and the readiness of local government agencies. However, as DDI prepares to embark on round 6, the "easy" districts have nearly been depleted. ANBP must actively seek new methodologies to implement DIAG, including improved development delivery initiatives, embracing UNAMA's "critical districts," and conducting more in-depth district analysis to select potential favourable DIAG districts.

The delivery rate of DIAG development projects has not achieved satisfactory levels. ANBP and MRRD recognize the need to make improvements wherever possible, given the procedures that must be followed. For this reason, ANBP plans to initiate pilot project in two districts that would involve a more holistic development approach in partnership with key stakeholders. ANBP will expand its in-house development team for this new strategy.

III. Financial status and utilization

A. Financial status

Table 1: Contribution overview [January 2005 – March 2011]

DONOR	CONTRIBUTIONS		CONTRIBUTION BALANCE
	Committed	Received	
Japan	10,237,867	10,237,867	-
UK	4,711,770	4,711,770	-
Canada	3,623,544	3,623,544	-
CIDA	1,472,031	1,472,031	-
Switzerland	1,500,000	1,500,000	-
Denmark	1,362,916	1,362,916	-
Italy	2,612,860	2,612,860	-
Netherlands	1,204,819	1,204,819	-
Norway	1,839,543	1,839,543	-
UNDP Core	476,716	476,716	-
USA	200,000	200,000	-
TOTAL	29,242,066	29,242,066	-

B. Financial utilization

Table 2: Quarterly expenditure by activity [1 January – 31 March 2009]

Activity	BUDGET [2009]	EXPENDITURES	BALANCE	DELIVERY (%)
Activity 1 [Project Management]	1,480,837	1,521,869	-41,033	103%
Activity 2 [Arms and Ammunition Collection]	551,323	329,517	221,806	60%
Activity 3 [Regional Development Capacity]	1,120,070	1,141,070	-21,000	102%
Activity 4 [Community Development]	27,500		27,500	0%
Activity 5 [Integrated Technology Systems]	228,269	141,461	86,808	62%
Activity 7 [Public Information]	362,982	169,564	193,419	47%
Activity 8 [D & R Commission]	477,622	458,637	18,985	96%
Total	4,248,604	3,762,119	486,485	89%

The delivery rate of 89% for the first quarter of 2009 is based on the existing funds and a budget for only the first quarter. As new funds are acquired, the 2009 budget and expenditures will be revised accordingly.

Table 3: Quarterly expenditure by donor [1 January – 31 March 2009]

DONORS	ACTIVITY (as in ATLAS)	BUDGET [2009]	EXPENDITURES	BALANCE	DELIVERY RATE (%)
Canada	Activity 1: Project Management	2,262	0	2,262	
Subtotal [Canada]		2,262	0	2,262	0%
Japan	Activity 1: Project Management	462,484	1,019,360	-556,876	
	Activity 2: Arms and Ammunition Collection	201,321	18,593	182,728	
	Activity 3: Regional Development Capacity	805,682	636,408	169,274	
	Activity 4: Community Development	27,500	0	27,500	
	Activity 5: Integrated Technology Systems	58,824	113,448	-54,624	
	Activity 7: Public Information	68,938	124,334	-55,396	
	Activity 8: D & R Commission	230,514	458,637	-228,123	
Subtotal [Japan]		1,855,263	2,370,781	-515,518	128%
Netherlands	Activity 8: D & R Commission	247,108		247,108	
Subtotal [Netherlands]		247,108	0	247,108	0%
Italy	Activity 1: Project Management	434,143	303,678	130,465	
	Activity 2: Arms and Ammunition Collection	205,812	76,308	129,504	
	Activity 3: Regional Development Capacity	0	302,758	-302,758	
	Activity 5: Integrated Technology Systems	0	7,700	-7,700	
	Activity 7: Public Information	0	19,243	-19,243	
	Activity 8: D & R Commission	0	0	0	
Subtotal [Italy]		639,955	709,686	-69,732	111%
UK	Activity 2: Arms and Ammunition Collection	0	118,487	-118,487	
	Activity 3: Regional Development Capacity	0	2,976	-2,976	
	Activity 7: Public Information	294,044	25,987	268,057	
Subtotal [UK]		294,044	147,451	146,594	50%
Switzerland	Activity 1: Project Management	55,620		55,620	
Subtotal [Switzerland]		55,620	0	55,620	0%
USA	Activity 2: Arms and Ammunition Collection	70,218	24,725	45,493	
Subtotal [USA]		70,218	24,725	45,493	35%
Denmark	Activity 1: Project Management	8,172		8,172	
Subtotal [Denmark]		8,172	0	8,172	0%
Norway	Activity 1: Project Management	518,156	196,933	321,222	
	Activity 2: Arms and Ammunition Collection	0	18,186	-18,186	
	Activity 3: Regional Development Capacity	314,388	198,927	115,461	
	Activity 5: Integrated Technology Systems	169,445	19,413	150,032	
Subtotal [Norway]		1,001,989	433,460	568,529	43%
CIDA	Activity 1: Project Management	0	1,898	-1,898	
	Activity 2: Arms and Ammunition Collection	73,972	73,217	755	
	Activity 5: Integrated Technology Systems	0	900	-900	
Subtotal [CIDA]		73,972	76,015	-2,043	103%
TOTAL		4,248,604	3,762,119	486,485	89%