



Quarterly Project Report First Quarter, 2009
United Nations Development Programme Afghanistan
Support to Center of Government project (SCoG)
January 01, 2009 – March 31, 2009



Attendees at the 8th and final Steering Committee Meeting, 27th January, 2009

Project ID:	00046407
Duration:	01 Jan 2006 - 31 December 2009
Strategic Plan (2008 -2012)	Strengthening responsive Government Institutions
Total Budget:	16,275,000
Unfunded:	878,899
Implementing Partners/Responsible parties:	UNDP in collaboration with CoS ,OAA) and TAF

SCOG DONORS



United States



UNDP



United Kingdom

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I. Implementation progress

The SCoG project continued to work towards and achieve the major deliverables in the three main domains (Administrative Work Process Improvement (including Policy), IT and Training/Organisation/HR), of the SCOG second year work plan.

The focus for the quarter was on sourcing software applications to support automation of processes; completing the IT infrastructure to enable secure, widespread and appropriate access to the applications and other IT facilities; and providing ongoing training and education.

Details of achievements, notwithstanding the risks and challenges presented in part II, are presented under each project domain.

Output 1: The Buildings that house the Office of Administrative Affairs (OAA) and Chief of Staff (CoS) have been repaired or reconstructed to international standards according to a comprehensive architectural design for each building and their immediate surrounding grounds.

During the period under review, the activities of the project have been executed as per the AWP and the Detailed Programme of Work agreed on with the UNDP Contractor (NKC Company).

Indeed, the NKCC could majorly achieve the activities as per the work plan as much as the cold season could have allowed it: mainly, the Construction of RCC roof slab 1st , 2nd floor., 3rd floor (S-W) was completed and the brick work and plastering works finished up to 2nd floor. Moreover, the contractor could satisfactorily supply the raw material with the approval of the Project' Engineer for the inside partition walls.

The professional oversight work of the civil works was completed by the Project engineer as per the AWP: payment request for the 5th Invoice (covering Dec. Jan 2009) was processed on time and the money disbursed ; Regular Weekly progress meeting with Contractor and government counterpart's were held ; Inspection of Materials in connection with Electrical work (for additional works required in connection with CoS Admin building works-New works for ITB), Plumbing works and Mechanical work ; Preparation of doors and windows Schedule including the door for elevators.

Output 2: Critical administrative work processes are streamlined, predictable, timely and transparent.

Office of Administrative Affairs and Chief of Staff

The process team work with various departments/directorates continued. The work processes at the Documents and Relations directorates at both the Office of Administrative Affairs and the Chief of Staff Offices had been studied in detail earlier and the need was felt for an electronic document management system. Such a system would help with document storage and retrieval and would smooth the overall flow and management. A potential local provider of a popular electronic document management system has been identified and discussions are ongoing.

In addition the Human Resources Department processes were reviewed at both the Office of Administrative Affairs and the Chief of Staff and recommendations were presented to the management of both organizations. Human Resource Management Information System (HRMIS) was installed at Chief of Staff office. The HR recommendations are being piloted on Ajeers at CoS. Furthermore, the process team has started process mapping of the Program Directorate and Protocol Directorate at CoS and is in discussion with the management team to finalize recommendations.

At the CoS, the Kitchen Pilot Project which involves the automation of the Palace kitchen work processes was modified to reflect changes in user requirements. The Depot work processes at the Presidential Palace were also analyzed and the software requirements specification is being developed.

The evaluation of the work processes at the finance departments of the OAA and CoS revealed that the staff and the management would greatly benefit from process automation. Afghanistan Information Management Systems (AIMS) was identified as the software developer for a system that would mainly assist in automating the forms used in the office, provide timely reports and help in overall financial management. The automation would result in saving of time, effort and provide accurate and quick reports to the management to aid decision making. AIMS, in close discussion with the Deputy Directors of Finance at both the OAA and CoS, have prepared a Software Requirements Specification (SRS) document that will form the basis for the software development. After the approval of the SRS document AIMS will develop the software and is expected to deploy it by June 30th.

Output 3: The new Chief of Staff and Office of Administrative Affairs organizational structures are implemented per the PRR design.

Office of Administrative Affairs and Chief of Staff

Positive attitudinal change towards acceptance of modern HRM policies across Office of Administrative Affairs and Chief of Staff is evident and it is anticipated that continued progress towards implementing modern HRM policies in concert with Independent Administrative Reforms and Civil Service Commission (IARCSC) efforts could have long term positive effects.

The SCoG Organisation Development team, during the reporting quarter, has been able to work together with its CoS and OAA focal points through periodic mentoring, coaching and conducting HR symposiums. The completion of follow-on presentations by the participants on the HRM exposure visit to Malaysian Institute of International Institute of Public Policy and Management (INPUMA) highlighted the lessons learned and reinforced that exposure visits are a successful way of broadening minds and increasing the desire for improved policies and procedures. The visit provided the participants with the opportunity to observe implementation of the new HRM concepts they had learned in Kabul and to share their experience and challenges with other participants. This has enabled the participants to further assimilate the concepts and implement them in the perspective of the programme budgeting in Afghanistan.

SCoG has facilitated deployment of Human Resource Information Management System in OAA and CoS which has been developed by the Afghan Ministry of Communications and IT (MoCIT). Training has been provided to users of the system and implementation is in progress albeit slowly due to challenges associated with hiring data entry operators.

Output 4: All employees who required additional training in order to perform their jobs have received the necessary training.

Office of Administrative Affairs and Chief of Staff Directors have expressed enthusiasm about training and development activities that were provided under SCoG. All Directors reported that they or their staff had participated in the training programmes offered by the project training team. Many Directors reported changes in the performance of their staff and it was also reported that staff who attended these training courses were more effective during the PRR process.

Sixty eight staff graduated from the English and Computer skills courses in February. English language and computer courses continue to be well attended with other need-specific training offered as required. A training course for secretarial skills was developed and delivered twice during the quarter, and proved popular with the participants. Twenty eight staff attended the first course and fourteen attended the second.

Due to the issues of space for classrooms in Chief of Staff office and the difficulties in the instructors gaining access to the Arg, the decision was made to consolidate to a single training facility in Office of Administrative Affairs. This enabled the reallocation of twelve desktop computers from the Chief of staff training facility to staff to use in their daily work. An added benefit is that Chief of Staff and Office of Administrative Affairs staff participating on the same courses improves the communication between the staff of both offices.

As a result of a review of the cost and quality of the courses, the SCOG team decided to recruit trainers and manage them directly rather than outsource the courses to a training company.

Output 5: Both the Office of Administrative Affairs and Chief of Staff has the necessary information technology and communications infrastructure to function at international standards.

Office of Administrative Affairs

The SCoG IT team continued to provide dedicated onsite support to the OAA ICT department. Two SCoG IT technical staff have been embedded with the OAA ICT team providing day to day helpdesk support as well as systems and network administration. This support includes professional level troubleshooting, telecom support, server and network monitoring, maintenance and upgrades. This level of support has been a critical success factor in the smooth running of the ICT infrastructure and applications in use at OAA. The SCoG project recently procured server and client hardware and software and continues to support the OAA's internet communications needs.

In addition to the infrastructure support, the SCoG IT team provided ICT management mentoring including support for budgeting, policy and planning with the aim of raising the ICT department to a self sufficient level.

Chief of Staff Office

Substantial progress has been made on the deployment of the ArgNet ICT infrastructure following the agreement on the final design for the infrastructure. SCoG procured and delivered Dell server hardware and accessories, Microsoft server software including SQL, ISA Server, and Server 2003 as well as Symantec Antivirus software. In addition, a redundant backup solution including tape and NAS was procured and delivered. A suitable ICT helpdesk and asset management solution has been identified and beta testing has begun with a live deployment expected by June.

Cisco wireless bridges and additional networking devices were procured and delivered in order to connect the ARGNET server rooms. SCoG technical staff also configured and supported the installation of raised flooring and a dedicated electrical system for the alternate ARGNET server room.

The integration of the IT departments within OOP continues and a staff skills matrix was prepared. This review provides OOP ICT management with a clear idea of their current staffing situation and highlighted areas where capacity needs to be improved. The SCoG IT team is preparing a comprehensive training plan that will cover those needs.

The SCoG IT team in cooperation with OOP ICT management prepared a draft ICT policy and began work on the ICT strategic plan.

Output 6: Policy facilitation and decision making procedures are clear, effective and working as designed.

Office of Administrative Affairs and Chief of Staff

The UK National School of Government submitted a detailed proposal to deliver an education and training curriculum in the techniques and tools required to further enhance policy formulation, implementation and impact assessment, tailored to the Afghan context.

The project team reviewed the proposal and delivered it to Director General Office of Administrative Affairs and Deputy Director General Policy. The project is awaiting feedback from Office of Administrative Affairs on the proposal.

II. Project implementation challenges

Updated project risks and actions

As mentioned in the last project Steering Committee meeting, the project was increasingly being carried out by national staff as knowledge and skills were transferred from international TA. The objective was to develop local ownership.

Unfortunately three key staff left for more senior positions outside the organization and two other project staff (a national staff and an international consultant) had to take extended leave for reasons related to family and health. These unexpected events resulted in the project team being under-resourced for much of the quarter; however the earlier integration of the domains meant that all activities except coaching and mentoring continued on track. Moreover, a Management Analyst and an Administrative Intern have been recruited. Recruitment of an HR Adviser is at short-listing stage and an appointment will be made shortly.

Leadership support for improvement and streamlining efforts is improving but still needs to be strengthened by the Center of Government stakeholders. Counterparts clearly face lack of adequate human resources and the challenge of engaging in a change process while performing their day-to-day tasks under considerable pressure. It is becoming increasingly evident that the project is delivering the required inputs and the onus to improve work processes lies with leadership and staff in the Office of the President.

Updated project issues and actions

The lack of localized software applications means that they have to be developed from scratch. The Afghan software development industry is in its infancy and quality of development is a major issue. Staff turnover in the local IT companies is prevalent because staff will change employers frequently for minimal increments in salaries. The project has engaged AIMS to develop an application to automate the generation of forms used for financial management and reporting and the Deputy Finance Directors from CoS and OAA have been closely involved in developing the Software Requirements Specifications.

The project undertakes rigorous inspection of work performed by sub-contractors on behalf of CoS and OAA. On several occasions we noticed that components that were less expensive than those quoted were installed, or that the amount of ducting and cable on the invoice was more than estimated. On these occasions we met with the vendors and the either the inferior components were replaced with those specified or the invoiced amount was reduced accordingly.

III. Financial status and utilization

Financial status

Table 1: Contribution overview [start date of the project – end date of project]

DONOR NAME	CONTRIBUTIONS		CONTRIBUTION BALANCE
	Committed	Received	
USAID	6,000,000	6,000,000	-
DFID	9,702,377	9,702,377	-
UNDP	790,400	790,400	-
TOTAL	16,492,777	16,492,777	-

Financial utilization

Table 2: Quarterly expenditure by activity (01 January –31 March 2009)

Activity	BUDGET [2009]	QUARTERLY EXPENDITURE	BALANCE	DELIVERY (%)
Activity 1 [Upgrading of CoG facilities]	2,313,114	150,795	2,162,319	7%
Activity 2 [Project Management]	917,012	780,793	136,219	85%
Activity 3 [PD Formulation]	20,000	16,887	3,113	
UNDP GMS (7% and 5% based on donor agreements)	225,651	52,643	173,008	23%
Total	3,475,777	1,001,118	2,474,659	29%

Table 3: Quarterly expenditure by donor (01 January –31 March 2009)

DONORS	ACTIVITY (as per approved budget)	2009 Budget	Q1 EXPENDITURES 01/01/09 - 31/03/09	BALANCE as of 31/03/09	DELIVERY RATE
USAID	Activity 2: [Project Management]	772,022	772,022	-	100%
	GMS 5% (see agreement)	40,633	40,633	-	
Subtotal USAID		812,655	812,655	-	
DFID	Activity 1: [Upgrading of CoG facilities]	2,313,114	150,795	2,162,319	6%
	Activity 2: [Project Management]	144,990	8,771	136,219	
	GMS 7% (see agreement)	185,018	12,010	173,008	
Subtotal DFID		2,643,122	171,576	2,471,546	
UNDP	Activity 3: [PD Formulation]	20,000	16,887	3,113	84%
Subtotal UNDP		20,000	16,887	3,113	
Total		3,475,777	1,001,118	2,474,659	29%

Annexes:

Annual Work Plan 2009