



QUARTERLY PROJECT REPORT [FIRST QUARTER, 2008]

United Nations Development Programme Afghanistan

[Support to Center of Government]

[01, January, 2008 – 31, March, 2008]



Employees of OAA and CoS were awarded certificates for completing computer skills courses under the Support to Center of Government project on March 27th, 2008.

Project ID:	00046407
Duration:	3 years
Component (MYFF):	2.7. Public Administration Reform and Anti Corruption
Total Budget:	16,275,000
Unfunded:	878,899
Implementing Partners/Responsible parties:	UNDP in collaboration with Chief of Staff (CoS) and Office of Administrative Affairs (OAA) of the President and The Asia Foundation (TAF)

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I. Implementation progress

Despite the issues and risks that have had a direct impact on the pace of the project, the intended deliverables for the reporting period are being achieved. The significant deliverables in the Support to Center of Government (SCoG) Project work plan that have been achieved by each domain in the first quarter of 2008 are listed below.

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.

As a result of the transfer of management of the construction of the CoS Administration building to UNDP, the Facilities Domain deliverables have been completed earlier than anticipated. The procurement process for the selection of the construction company to build the new CoS building is in the final stages and the actual construction is expected to start during the 2nd quarter of 2008. A separate Completion Report has been prepared and is attached as ANNEX I

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

The SCoG Project continued to play a significant role in streamlining the critical administrative work processes in order to make them predictable, timely and transparent. The activities undertaken are leading to the attainment of the output and annual deliverables.

Office of Administrative Affairs (OAA)

The mobile shelving system was fitted in the new archive room and all classified documents were transferred and filed. This has enabled easy searching and retrieval of documents in the current archive. With the recruitment of the Management Analyst the OAA documents and relations process streamlining has been resumed and an electronic correspondence and document management system is under investigation. This will enable documents to be scanned, stored, searched, retrieved and transmitted in electronic format, further improving the speed of distribution and access to the documents.

The OAA Monitoring and Evaluation Directorate strategy was reviewed, the business case was prepared and submitted for approval and the annual work plan was revised and edited. The Monitoring and Evaluation Directorate plays a critical role in monitoring the effectiveness of the implementation of Presidential decrees and orders and Council of Minister's decisions.

The SCoG project developed the IT Vision for the CoM building and prepared a recommendation paper to enable BearingPoint to produce the RFP for the data and voice network for the Council of Minister's CoM building.

Chief of Staff (COS)

The Kitchen/Depot Pilot software development for requests, requisitions, receipts, inventory management, issues, meal planning and menus was continually reviewed in light of new procedures and change requests.

The SCOG team mapped the Financial Management Process to identify bottlenecks and opportunities for improvement. In addition, the project is facilitating the installation of Afghanistan Financial Management Information System (AFMIS) in conjunction with BearingPoint and the Ministry of Finance to streamline the payment process. Moreover, the team facilitated the selection and procurement of the furniture for the new CoS Building and the Telephone Khana.

The Human Resource Process at CoS was analysed, the three main processes of HR Directorate (Recruitment, Grading Review and Retirement) were mapped and recommendations were prepared. Furthermore, with the cooperation of MoCIT the Human Resource Management Information System (HRMIS) was installed in conjunction with the IT and HR domain teams. The HRMIS was customised to CoS requirements, installed in a “sandbox” or familiarization/training/learning environment so that staff are able to gain experience in using the system. With the establishment of deadlines for various activities in the HR process the HRMIS will enable significant reduction in process cycle time.

A review of the efficiency and effectiveness of the Office of the Spokesperson to the President was completed using a customised organization assessment tool. The review resulted in the preparation of a portfolio of improvement initiatives that were prioritised by importance and urgency and presented in an action plan phased over six days, six weeks and six months.

Output 3: The new CoS and OAA organizational structures are implemented per the PRR design;

Very good progress has been made towards achieving the deliverables and setting the foundation for leadership attitudinal change across the organization as it pertains to implementing sound Human Resource Management (HRM) policies and procedures. Through daily mentoring, coaching and frequent HR symposiums, the SCOG team has developed strong working relationships, which has greatly assisted in securing the achievements to date.

Challenges do exist with “buy-in” to the benefits of modern HRM practices by some personnel within OAA and CoS. It is anticipated that these challenges can be overcome with continued mentoring and coaching and reinforcement of successful policies, procedures and a “people first” philosophy.

Office of Administrative Affairs and Chief of Staff

Positive attitudinal change towards acceptance of modern HRM policies has taken root across the organization. The SCOG team developed and implemented modern, civil service-compliant policies for grievances, recruitment and leave. In addition, the Performance Appraisal Policy has been refined and is under final review.

The SCOG team also conducted Human Resource Management and Leadership symposia for all HR Staff. This was accompanied by daily coaching and mentoring to transfer knowledge and reinforce the changes in behavior.

Chief of Staff (COS)

The SCOG team completed the assessment of the Presidential Protocol office. The recommendations in the assessment received universal acceptance in CoS and the Presidential

Protocol staff. The assessment is currently under final review by CoS, and when the document has been signed off the SCOG team will assist the staff in the Presidential Protocol Office to implement the recommendations.

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

In the first quarter of 2008 the training domain has continued to implement the activities of the work plan within its area of responsibility. A needs analysis (part 2) is currently underway with a focus on job-specific training needs. These will provide the basis for courses offered at the Afghanistan Civil Service Institute and for focused three Exposure Visits, which are planned for the remainder of 2008.

Executive development has remained on-hold for the past 12 months but during the next quarter eight executive-level officers will attend training courses offered at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

124 staff at OAA and CoS are currently enrolled in English language courses. Furthermore, classes from basic to intensive are available as demands dictate. An additional 40 staff are enrolled in various computer application courses at CoS and OAA.

The SCOG Training Data Base continues to evolve as activities expand and more data needs emerge. This application served as the model for the Travel Monitoring application in OAA. A Management and Leadership Development Program will be designed in partnership with a local training institute and an IT training plan for Technical staff and Management is underway. Moreover, discussions are underway to develop a Policy Training programme for delivery of in-country training to Policy Experts at both organizations.

Of particular significance, the range of training activities that have been made available over the past 12 months have had a positive impact on the thinking and behavior of management and staff at both organizations. All staff interviewed during the current needs analysis is aware of the training activities available to them and most have participated in at least one activity. At the same time management are more likely to encourage their staff to engage in training and are willing to provide time away from the job to support it. Unlike twelve months ago, staff is better able to articulate their own training needs and generally training is more demand-based than previously. The apparent change in attitudes observed will have a mitigating effect on many, if not most, of the risks identified in the section entitled Project Implementation Challenges.

Output 5: Both the OAA and CoS have the necessary information technology and communications infrastructure to function at international standards.

Office of Administrative Affairs (OAA):

The IT team continued installing the information technology and communications infrastructure. It deployed a wireless voice and data connectivity solution between OAA and the Service Department, which previously had no communications capability with the rest of OAA. In addition, the team deployed the ICT infrastructure within the Service Department.

The SCOG IT team totally revamped the OAA server room. This included procuring Cisco security devices and additional switches, procuring and installing a Dell rack and accessories (KVM, LCD, Rails) and procuring and installing an additional Dell server. Air conditioning and an uninterruptible power supply were also installed. In addition SCOG purchased laptop and desktop computers for the IT department. SCOG developed and implemented travel record and asset management applications and, in cooperation with BearingPoint, prepared the RFP document for CoM building ICT infrastructure.

The team also provided full-time on-site helpdesk support and system/network administration and is actively training OAA staff in how to manage a complex ICT infrastructure on a daily basis. Staff has developed from a zero baseline to the extent that they can now configure servers, load images and applications and analyse and troubleshoot problems by themselves.

Chief of Staff (COS):

The SCOG team designed the Telephone Khana ICT infrastructure and began deployment. It commenced installation of raised flooring and the electrical system for the Telephone Khana server room. The IT team procured and installed high capacity power stabilizers for the server room to ensure that clean, uninterrupted power is available.

The team installed the HRMIS and specified the user requirements for the President's Scheduling Department Management Information System. The development work was subcontracted to AIMS. This application is used to manage Presidential meetings and visits and to record the nature of the meeting, the attendees, etc.

The team conducted a technical training needs assessment and developed an IT staff training plan, which is now being implemented. SCOG procured and delivered laptops for CoS staff who demonstrated a need for such equipment and who also had the capacity to use it. Furthermore, SCOG performed a current state ICT assessment to identify priorities in staffing and technology and provided on-site helpdesk support.

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

The Policy Domain team began coaching and mentoring OAA policy experts, following up on the operationalisation of the Cabinet Liaison Office network, and commenced the development of guidelines for submissions to the Council of Ministers.

Office of Administrative Affairs (OAA)

The Policy Team began coaching and mentoring OAA policy experts on all aspects of the public policy process with a greater focus on policy secondary analysis and coordination. The project team works on a one-on-one basis with the policy experts on actual policy proposals received at OAA. This exercise offers a learning opportunity for professional development with the ultimate aim of improving performance and changing behavior to submit sound policy proposals to the Council of Ministers for approval by HE (WHAT IS THAT?) the President.

The team has been facilitating meetings and roundtables between OAA relevant directorates and the Civil Service Commission to operationalise the Council of Ministers Liaison Officers (CLO) network in Ministries and Government agencies.

The team has continued to discuss project implementation challenges and any other policy process related issues, through joint SCOG-OAA policy working group meetings.

Chief of Staff (COS)

In light of the organizational structure changes within the CoS, especially with the addition of the new Policy Directorate, assistance was provided in development of terms of reference, and job descriptions as per the structure of the directorate. The team has been meeting with the Policy Directorate, in the Office of Presidential Programmes, to follow up on the produced documents

pending CoS feedback and approval. The team will continue to work with the Policy Directorate to track policy related issues and to deal with them professionally and in a timely manner.

The team continues to discuss and resolve policy process related issues, through joint SCoG – CoS policy working group.

II. Project implementation challenges

Updated project risks and actions

Risk (General): Low government salaries discourage OAA and CoS staff resulting in reduced productivity. There is a risk that even if staff receives training as an incentive to stay in OAA and CoS, external organizations such as banks and telecommunications companies will poach them.

Mitigation procedures implemented: Senior executives in OAA and CoS have been made aware of the risk.

Risk (Training): There is a lack of qualified training providers for relevant topics and issues and institutions are not able to deliver.

Mitigation procedures implemented: Considering alternate institutions to host exposure visits in the future, especially where specialised skills are involved and encourage local institutions to participate in curriculum development.

Risk (IT): Finding reliable ICT vendors in Afghanistan has proven difficult.

Mitigation procedure implemented: Locally available vendors have been researched and positive working relationships has been developed. A Service Level Agreement (SLA) has been prepared with authorized hardware distributors for warranty support

Updated project issues and actions

Issue (General/CoS): There is a lack of security passes for project members who need to visit the Arg on a regular basis. This results in an inordinate amount of wasted time and has a negative effect on morale. On several occasions CoS staff have omitted to provide SCOG staff names to President Protected Services(PPS) for the security schedule and SCOG staff have been refused entry to the Arg.

Resolution procedure implemented: Chief of Party (COP) has obtained access for three staff through PPS. Security clearance forms have been completed repeatedly and are now in process in the National Security Council.

Issue (General): Management decisions are not synchronized with project requirements and activities. This results in actions that cut across project activities.

Resolution procedure implemented: Increased communication with management and advice to them on the consequences of inappropriate decisions and actions.

Issue (IT): Ad-hoc request for ICT services and equipment continue; most of which are out of the scope of the SCOG project. This is mainly due to a lack of planning at management level.

Resolution procedures implemented: Prioritize requests via strategic planning processes and require ICT management to submit business cases documenting the organization's need for requested services and/or equipment.

Issue (IT): There is a lack of skilled technical staff in the IT departments.

Resolution procedures implemented: In addition to onsite mentoring and coaching, an IT training plan for technical and management staff has been developed. Technical staff will receive training, which will allow them to support the systems and network infrastructure.

Issue (IT): There is no support and acceptance of IT policies throughout the organization.

Resolution procedures implemented: Better familiarize senior management and the staff as to why policies need to be in place so that the ICT department can effectively support the organization.

Issue (IT): Due to security restrictions it is difficult to access the CoS compound. ICT vendors are delayed considerably during deployments.

Resolution procedures implemented: Security entry cards for several SCoG staff allowing seamless access to the Arg and close monitoring of ICT projects to ensure that vendors have access.

Issue (Training): There is a lack of participation or interest by senior managers.

Resolution procedure implemented: Encourage all Directors to participate in future visits.

Issue (Training): There is a lack of management commitment and/or support.

Resolution procedure implemented: Increased consultation with management

Issue (Training): There is a lack of interest by women and management is unwilling to allow women to be involved.

Resolution procedure implemented: Consultation with senior management regarding special learning needs of women. Work with the HR domain to promote women's involvement in training and career development activities. Work with the Women's Council to develop training plans for women employees.

Issue (Training): There is a conflict between work demands and training schedule.

Resolution procedure implemented: Provide fewer courses and allow at least five days between courses. Limit courses to three days where possible. Provide classes on a flexible schedule to maximise participation. Consider alternate approaches, other than classroom instruction, to minimise the impact on workflows and to maximise participation.

Issue (Training): Selection of staff to attend courses is based on criteria other than need. The selection process is weak with ill-defined criteria.

Resolution procedure implemented: Increased consultation with management regarding training needs and schedules.

III. Financial status and utilization

Financial status

Contribution overview [September, 2005 – June, 2009]

Resources

DONOR NAME	CONTRIBUTIONS		CONTRIBUTIO N BALANCE
	Committed	Received	
USAID	5,000,000	5,000,000	-
DFID	9,720,101	5,130,710	4,589,391
UNDP	630,000	630,000	-
TOTAL	15,350,101	10,760,710	4,589,391

Financial utilization

Quarterly expenditure by activity [01/01/2008- 31/03/2008]

Activity	BUDGET [2007]	QUARTERLY EXPENDITURE	BALANCE	DELIVERY (%)
Activity 1 [PD Formulation]	4,750,075	698,594	4,051,481	15%
Activity 2 [Leading SCoG reform]	45,372	2,279	46,093	5%
UNDP GMS (5%)	266,413	38,638	227,775	15%
Total	5,061,860	739,810	4,322,050	15%

Quarterly expenditure by donor [01/01/2008 – 31/03/2008]

DONORS	ACTIVITY	2008 Budget	Q1 EXPENDITURES 01/01/08 - 31/03/08	BALANCE as of 31/03/06	DELIVERY RATE %
	(as per approved budget)				
UNDP	Activity 1: PD Formulation	6	-	6	
GMS 0%		0	-	0	
Subtotal DONOR I		6	-	6	0%
DFID	Activity 1: PD Formulation	1,953,336	(1,959,742)	3,913,078	
GMS 5%		108,518	(108,874)	217,392	
Subtotal DONOR III		2,061,854	(2,068,616)	4,130,470	100%
USAID	Activity 1: PD Formulation	2,796,734	2,658,336	138,398	
	Activity 2: Leading SCoG reform	45,371	2,279	43,092	
GMS 5%		157,895	147,811	10,084	
Subtotal DONOR IV		3,000,000	2,808,426	191,574	93%
Total		5,061,860	739,810	4,322,050	15%

Annexes

SCoG Facilities Domain Completion Report February 2008

INTRODUCTION

Afghanistan has emerged from 23 years of war as one of the world's youngest democracies. The country's first Presidential election was held in the autumn of 2004 and was followed by parliamentary elections in September, 2005.

The Center of Government (CoG) institutions in Afghanistan are combined within the Office of the President and include the Presidential Chief of Staff (CoS), the Office of Administrative Affairs (OAA), the National Security Council (NSC), Ministerial Advisors and Presidential Advisors. The CoS and OAA are critical functions within the CoG. The CoS supports the President in his role as the head of state, whereas the OAA supports the President in his role as head of the government.

Both the CoS and OAA have had, and in some cases continue to have, serious deficiencies in the areas of facilities; information technology; administrative work processes; human capacity; organizational structure; and policy facilitation and decision making procedures, which in combination impede their mission of supporting the President.

The Support to the Center of Government (SCOG) project, which began in August 2006, has been assisting the CoS and OAA to transform their organizations over a three year period by building their capacity; rationalizing their organizational structures; redesigning their administrative work and policy making processes; and upgrading their building facilities and information technology to international standards. These six areas are referred to as "domains" in the context of the SCOG project

FACILITIES DOMAIN

The Center of Government (CoG) has historically been operating out of two locations, the Arg and the Qasr-e-Marmarin. These sites contain numerous facilities, some of which are historic landmarks. A quarter century of war and political turmoil has taken its toll on the buildings and grounds of these two important government centers. The historic buildings have been damaged as a result of war or have deteriorated due to negligence and lack of maintenance.

Furthermore, many low quality buildings have been erected as expedient measures, creating a chaotic physical environment not conducive to an effective and efficient work environment. This has reduced the government's ability to conduct its business. The deterioration and haphazard environment badly affects the image of the CoG in the eyes of visiting dignitaries. Extensive work was and is still needed in several areas including site and master-planning improvements, landscaping, removal of substandard buildings and torn up debris, renovation and upgrading of existing buildings, and fulfilling additional needs for high quality buildings to support a modern government organizational and managerial system.

DOMAIN OBJECTIVES

Work in the Facilities Domain began at the outset of the project in August, 2006. Its objectives were established as follows:

- ❑ To create a physical environment for the CoG through good design and planning that uplifts the image of the central Government, brings pride to those who work there and presents a good image to visitors;
- ❑ To coordinate the work of facilities improvement with the work of other project domains/teams in making the buildings serve the higher objectives of good government;

- ❑ To create a working environment that is aesthetically pleasing, physically comfortable and operationally efficient - all conducive to organizational efficiency and effective work flow;
- ❑ To renovate Qasr-e-Marmarin as the office building for the Office of Administrative Affairs (OAA);
- ❑ To design and construct a new building with modern systems and amenities for CoS offices. The existing unfinished Ministry of Defense barracks building inside the Arg grounds, with a potential of 5000 square meters of office space, to be designed and adapted for this purpose

DELIVERABLES:

According to the November 6, 2006 SCoG project Inception Plan, which was approved by the Project Steering Committee, this domain was to achieve the following deliverables:

Key Deliverable #1: Renovation of the OAA Marmarin Building

- ❑ Design drawings and contract documents for the OAA Marmarin building were to be developed (the deliverables included design drawings; working drawings; specifications; bill of quantities; and construction cost estimates);
- ❑ A fair bidding process and administration of bids for all building construction were to have been carried out (the main deliverable was a process for fair selection of the best construction subcontractor; signing of a subcontract; commencement of construction);
- ❑ Quality control and monitoring of construction including additional details and change orders; (the deliverable was a finished building).

Key Deliverable #2: Design/Construction of the CoS Office Building

- ❑ Development of schematic designs (the deliverables included drawings and 3-D visuals of schematic alternative designs. Comparative cost-benefit analysis);
- ❑ Development of the chosen design (the deliverables included architectural design drawings; structural, mechanical, electrical communication systems designs; a physical model; the preliminary construction cost estimate);
- ❑ Development of contract documents (the deliverables included working drawings; specifications, bill of quantities for architectural, structural, mechanical, electrical and communication systems; detailed construction cost estimates);
- ❑ Administration of bidding process (the deliverables included fair selection of the best construction subcontractor; signing of a subcontract; commencement of construction); and
- ❑ Construction monitoring and quality control; development of additional details and change orders as needed (the deliverable is a high quality finished building; as-built drawings; handover documents and legal handover of the building to its owners)

The above two activities will be managed directly by UNDP from February 2008, with DfID providing the funding.