



Quarterly Project Report [1st Quarter, 2008]

**United Nations Development Programme
Afghanistan
Civil Service Leadership Development Project
01-01-2008 to 31-03-2008**



Project ID:	00043388
Duration:	May 2005 – April 2009
Component (MYFF):	Service Line 2.7 (Public Administration Reform & Anti-corruption)
Total Budget:	USD 9,320,138
Unfunded:	USD 2,507,097
Implementing Partners / Responsible parties:	UNDP and Independent Administrative Reform & Civil Service Commission (IARCSC)

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I. Implementation progress

OUTPUT 1: TRAINING PROGRAMMES ARE DEVELOPED AND DELIVERED TO THE TARGET GROUP

Design and deliver Senior Leadership Competency Development Programme (SLCDP) to the target group

In December 2007, the CSLD project completed delivering the three leadership-training programmes which were started in 2006, namely the Top Leadership Programme (TLP), the Senior Leadership Programme (SLP) and the Emergent Leadership Programme (ELP). In response to the successful completion of the planned previous training programmes, and in line with the development of the implementation of the public sector reform, the Government of Afghanistan requested the CSLD project to design and deliver a structured training programme. The new training programme will be used for assessing the competency of senior civil servants, who will be assigned to different leadership positions, in accordance with the new pay and grade scale.

The new training programme is named as the **Senior Leadership Competency Development Programme (SLCDP)**. The SLCDP is a comprehensive high-level training programme, which will be designed to equip civil servants who will be assigned in leadership positions, with the skills required to manage efficiently complex public sector operations. The course will be used to assess the competency of individuals who are currently holding leadership positions in Afghan Civil Service and those who will be assigned to such positions in future (grades 1 and 2 of the new pay and grade scale). The design of the proposed training programme and the selection process will take into account the long-term sustainability of the programme and capacity development of local trainers, as well as the creation of favorable environment for active participation of female civil servants. In this regard, the SLCDP will be accompanied by a comprehensive training of trainers (ToT) programme for the trainers of ACSI. The project is making all the necessary preparation for the designing and delivering the SLCDP in 2008 and 2009. It is planned to train 500 senior civil servants during the life of the project. The Project Board in its meeting of December 17, 2007 approved the plan.

During the reporting period, Request for Expression of Interest was floated to solicit interested firms to participate in a formal bid for delivering this training programme. Out of the nine companies who showed interest in the programme, a request for proposal was sent to seven of them, in accordance with the UNDP procurement procedures. The procurement process is expected to be finalized soon and the training of the first batch is planned to commence in the second quarter.

The Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission (IARCSC) is in the process of making necessary policy related preparations and adjustments to make competency based training programmes mandatory for civil servants in accordance with the implementation of the new pay and grade policy. The experiences and learning practices to be derived from this innovative training programme will be valuable in designing similar training programmes for other grades of the civil service. The implementation of SLCDP will accelerate the public sector reform implementation and will have very far-reaching repercussions in strengthening competency-based appointments in the civil service.

Design and deliver adapted Training of Trainers (ToT) course for ACSI and TDD trainers

As part of the long-term plan of the CSLD project of creating strong and sustainable local capacity, a comprehensive and structured Training of Trainer (ToT) programme will accompany the SLCDP. The training of trainers (ToT) programme will be for about 15 local trainers of the Afghan Civil Service Institute (ACSI). The ToT has the objective of equipping the local trainers with the necessary skills and expertise for delivering the SLCDP and other leadership training programmes, with the same quality and rigor, by the middle of 2009. An international Training and Curriculum Development Advisor is recruited to coordinate and lead this programme, in collaboration with the

firm that will deliver the SLCDP. Preliminary preparatory activities have taken place to fully launch the programme in the second quarter.

Design and deliver one Emergent/Senior Leaders Programme (SLP&ELP) for provincial participants with the UNDP ASGP Programme

The beneficiaries of the CSLD leadership training programmes that were delivered in 2006 and 2007, were mainly civil servants drawn from central ministries and independent agencies. Available figures indicate that the participants from provincial government institutions are only 11%. While the priority focus of the CSLD project will remain to build the capacity of civil servants in the central ministries, with creative collaboration modalities it is possible to lay the ground for addressing the training needs of provincial civil servants. In this regard, the project is collaborating with Afghanistan Sub-national Governance Programme, one of the UNDP projects, which has regional reaches and offices. During the reporting period, series of discussions and consultations have been made with colleagues in the ASGP project. The first batch of about 30 participants, to be drawn from about seven provinces is expected to commence the ELP training programme in the second quarter. A formal assessment will be made after the completion of the training programme, to identify lessons learned and devise modalities for sustainable linkages and synergies to ensure further internal collaboration among UNDP projects.

End of year review

In late 2007 and early 2008, the CSLD project's external evaluator carried out the end of year evaluation to assess the impact of the leadership training programmes that were carried out in 2006 and 2007, and suggest recommendations. The overall findings are:

- The programme has achieved its overall goal of equipping participants with basic concepts and techniques of managing public sector operations
- Participants indicated that they learned new concepts and skills which could easily be used in their workplace environments
- In some offices, participants attempted to impart the knowledge they gained to their colleagues

The evaluation also reflected some important recommendations, with respect to the need for mandatory training programmes for civil servants, programme sustainability, evaluation design and methodology, and about local trainers and coaches. The project will review the recommendations and will incorporate them in the implementation of project activities in the coming periods.

OUTPUT 2: CAREER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS ARE DEVELOPED AND DELIVERED TO THE TARGET GROUP

Alumni meetings

The reporting period was used to plan for the project's Alumni Meetings and to prepare the next edition of the CSLD newsletter. In 2008, a total of six Alumni gatherings will be organized on varieties of topics in the area of public sector reform and administration, and other topics that are of interest to senior civil servants. The CSLD newsletter and networking tools will also be launched with new and revised formats and contents, and in particular with the aim of aligning this output to the operational capacity building initiatives of the ACSI. Brochures and training materials have been revised, redesigned, and updated, and will become operational starting the 2nd quarter.

OUTPUT 3: EXTERNAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS ARE DEVELOPED AND DELIVERED TO THE TARGET GROUP

Skill upgrading and exposure visits

The project is in the process of finalization of preparations for sending the director of the Afghan Civil Service Institute and his senior staff for skill upgrading and experience sharing visits to reputed public administration institutions in the region. The purpose of such visits is to enable the leadership of ACSI to learn from the practices of other institutions in the area of institutional management and development, training programme development, and enhancing performance

of staff. Series of visits are planned to take place starting the second quarter. The visit programmes will culminate by signing a formal twinning agreement between ACSI and one of the selected regional public administration institutes.

OUTPUT 5: SUPPORT TO THE OPERATION AND SET-UP OF THE AFGHAN CIVIL SERVICE INSTITUTE (CSI)

Preparatory works that were started in the last quarter of 2007, for the implementation of this output has taken some shape. The CSLD project has identified four areas of focus for the implementation of this output. Repeated consultations, discussions, and meetings were carried out with the government counterpart and other donors who have stake in building the operational capacity of ACSI. A joint action plan that show the division of responsibilities of the three donors, namely, UNDP/CSLD, USAID/Capacity Development Program (CDP) and EC, has been prepared and will be used to monitor progress. The Working Group formed in the second half of last year is coordinating the implementation of plans related to the ACSI capacity building. With the recent appointment of a new director for ACSI, we have observed more proactive attitude and response from the government counterpart.

Implementation of ACSI Strategic Plan

The formulation of the strategic plan for the development of the Civil Service Institute, which was started by the end of 2007, has been finalized. Members of the Working Group have reviewed it, and agreement has been reached to use this document as a “road map” for implementing the capacity building initiatives for the CSI. The document will be adjusted and updated as implementation progresses to reflect the realities on the ground.

The CSLD project is in the process of recruiting an International Institutional Development Advisor, who will be the focal person to advise the director of ACSI and other stakeholders, in implementing the strategic plan. In addition to advising on the implementation of the strategic plan, the advisor will also develop and implement different guidelines and manuals that will be used for efficiently managing the different functions of the institute, and train the staff of CSI. The Institutional Development Advisor is expected to start his job during the second quarter.

Building the Training Management and Delivery capacity of ACSI

The CSLD project will support the capacity development of ACSI trainers and the development and adaptation of the CSLD training modules and other materials to come up with ACSI specific standard training materials. An International Training and Curriculum Advisor have already been recruited to coordinate and lead this effort, in alignment with the implementation of the comprehensive Training of Trainers (ToT) programme. The Advisor is expected to commence work early in the second quarter. In addition to the international expert, CSLD project has finalized the recruitment of a Senior National Training Coordinator, and three National Training Assistants. The implementation of this activity as per the plan will significantly enhance the capacity of the institute to deliver training programmes that are responsive to the needs of the civil service. Most important of all, this will guarantee the sustainability and national ownership of the successful CSLD leadership training programmes.

Building the Capacity of the CSI Library

One of the areas of support for CSI is to improve the library and documentation centre. Preparatory activities for the procurement of necessary materials and equipments are finalized. An International Library Advisor and a National Library Assistant will be recruited in the second quarter and implementation will commence thereon. Preparatory activities to identify needs have been carried out in the quarter.

Building a Learning and Training Materials Production Centre

CSLD will support the establishment of a well-equipped and functioning learning materials production centre. Such a facility will enhance the institute’s capacity to produce standardized and high quality training materials in both paper based and electronic form. Preparations are underway to recruit an International Training Materials Production Advisor and a National Training Materials Production Manager. The recruitment of the professionals and procurement of equipments and

materials required for establishment of the centre is expected to be completed in the second quarter.

II. Project implementation challenges

Updated project risks and actions

Recruitment and retention challenges

Although the CSLD project has been successful in hiring a strong project team, staff retention is still one of the major challenging problems faced by the project in the reporting period. While most national staff stayed with the project in the 2007 and early 2008, it has been noticed that highly experienced staff have left the project and joined other international organizations for much higher salary and benefits. We have also observed instances where competent and qualified applicants who were recruited for important positions, subsequently declined to accept the offer. Such a problem coupled with the lengthy recruitment process will have a negative effect on the output of the project and on the long-term goals of the project.

To address the problem, the CSLD project has been trying to provide additional incentives for staff to stay, and promote to higher grades those staff members who have served the project diligently over the past periods. With the job market for qualified national staff crowded with very competitive international employers, particularly in Kabul, the problem is bound to continue for good number of years to come.

Challenges in attracting more service providers due to deteriorating security situation

Due to the recent escalation in the security situation in Afghanistan, there has been a trend for most qualified service providers to take caution before they decide to bid for contracts in Afghanistan. A case in point is the low turn out in interested firms for the request for interests and subsequent request for proposal we floated for the SLCDP. Several of the reputed firms in the area did not respond to our request. Most of the firms who do not have previous Afghan experience tend to be not interested, considering the negative media reports on the security situation in Afghanistan. Such a situation will leave us to choose from very few candidates, and sometimes might not comply with established procurement procedures. Firms who have prior experience and established presence in Afghanistan will continue to apply repeatedly. As this is a problem that needs to be tackled in a much coordinated manner, the project will flag the issue to the senior management.

Updated project issues and actions

Project Revision

Due to the inclusion of the Senior Leadership Competency Development Programme (SLCDP), and other related activities in the annual work plan of the project for the year 2008, the total project budget has increased from the original amount of USD \$ **6,813,041** to USD **\$9,320,138**. This has required a project revision, and the Country Director has formally signed it, on March 5, 2008. The revision of the project document will **not** change the project objectives, duration and outputs. It will only result in additional activities and revision of the project budget.

Financial support for the SLCDP is being sought from various donors. Letters of request and other documents have already been sent to donors who have expressed interest to support the programme. Subsequent presentations and requests to potential donors will be sent in the coming weeks. From the contacts and communications made so far, it looks optimistic that funding for the programme will be made available and implementation will proceed as planned.

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	
Australia	2,011,835	2,011,835	
Democratic Governance Thematic Trust Fund	100,000	100,000	
UNDP Core	456,231	456,231	
Germany	382,494	382,494	
Norway	3,300,117	2,184,414	1,115,703
Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC)	700,000	700,000	
TOTAL	6,950,677	5,834,974	1,115,703

Financial utilization

Table 2: Quarterly expenditure by activity

Activity	Budget 2008	Expenditure	Balance	Delivery (%)
ACTIVITY2: Top Leadership Programme Design	0	0	0	N/A
ACTIVITY3: PMU Operating Cost	559860	87340	472520	16%
ACTIVITY4: Training Programme	503133	-16127	519260	-3%
ACTIVITY5: Networking Alumni & Mentoring Programme	6961	0	6961	0%
ACTIVITY6: Training Resources Center	0	0	0	N/A
GMS 7% and 5%	87089	5796	81293	
Grand Total	1157043	77009	1080034	7%

Table 3: Quarterly expenditure by donor [start date – end date of quarter]

DONOR	ACTIVITY (as in ATLAS)	BUDGET [2008]	EXPENDITURE	BALANCE	DELIVERY RATE(%)
UNDP			-1200	(1,200)	N/A
	GMS 0%		0	-	N/A
Sub Total UNDP		0	-1200	(1,200)	
Australia	ACTIVITY3: PMU Operating Cost	0.84	-3475	(3,474)	N/A
	ACTIVITY4: Training Programme	0	0	-	N/A
	ACTIVITY6: Training Resources Center	0	0	-	N/A
	GMS 5%	0.05	0.00	0	N/A
Sub Total Australia		1	-3475	3,476	N/A
Norway	ACTIVITY3: PMU Operating Cost	322938	62402	260,536	19%
	ACTIVITY4: Training Programme	293329	0	293,329	0%
	ACTIVITY5: Network Alumni & Mentoring Programme	4973		4,973	0%
	GMS 7%	50564	5079	45,485	
Sub Total Norway		671804	67481	604,323	10%
Switzerland	ACTIVITY3: PMU Operating Cost	242721	29260	213,461	12%
	ACTIVITY4: Training Programme	214941	-16126	231,067	-8%
	ACTIVITY5: Network Alumni & Mentoring Programme	2038	0	2,038	0%
	GMS 5%	25539	1069	24,470	4%
Sub Total Switzerland		485239	14203	471,036	3%
Grand Total		1157044	77009	1,080,035	7%

Annexes

Annual Work Plan (Annexed Separately)