



**QUARTERLY PROJECT REPORT
2nd Quarter 2008**

**United Nations Development Programme Afghanistan
Support for an Effective Afghan Legislature (SEAL II) Project**

April 1 - June 30, 2008

Project ID: 00059607

Duration: March 2008 – February 2012 (Four years)

Component (MYFF): Fostering Democratic Governance (2.1)

Total Budget: USD 15, 316, 166

Unfunded: USD 14, 666, 166

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I. IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS

OUTPUT 1: ENHANCED PARLIAMENTARY CAPACITY TO EXERCISE LEGISLATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES.

During the Quarter SEAL II delivered a discussion paper and a draft bill to the justice committee of the Wolesi Jirga (National Assembly). The paper and bill are steps toward the possible creation of an ombuds office in Afghanistan. Produced by SEAL II, the paper draws on the models and experiences of other countries, including Islamic republics. The bill is a product of several months of partnership work with the committee, including a study visit for this purpose to Sweden in 2007. If the committee proceeds with the bill, it will be the first piece of legislation generated by a committee or private members.

At the request of the leadership of the Meshrano Jirga (Upper House), SEAL II prepared three workshops for elected members. The workshops for new chairs of committees, on private members bills and on plenary session management will be delivered immediately after the recess in July.

Meeting with the president of the Meshrano Jirga and other members of the admin board of the house, SEAL II agreed to prepare a discussion paper and draft code of conduct for parliamentarians. There is strong political commitment to this and agreed urgency. SEAL II will present the paper and draft code to the leadership of both houses after the recess.

OUTPUT 2 – PARLIAMENT EFFECTIVELY AND RESPONSIBLY OVERSEES THE ACTIVITIES OF THE EXECUTIVE

SEAL II supported the development of work plans for two Meshrano Jirga committees this quarter in order to improve committee capacity for government oversight. The international relations committee strengthened its work plan to include policy oversight issues and plans for in country visits. The committee on the disabled also improved its work plan.

At the annual meeting of the inter-parliamentary union, SEAL II supported the delegation drawn from both houses. SEAL II organized an Afghan-NATO countries meeting to provide a forum for parliamentary dialogue and discussion about NATO's role in Afghanistan. SEAL II also facilitated meetings for women MPs, and bi lateral delegation meetings. Discussion and exchanges at all of these meetings focused on oversight of government (s).

OUTPUT 3 – STRENGTHENED DIALOGUE BETWEEN PARLIAMENT AND CITIZENS

During this quarter SEAL II sponsored and organized an in country visit of the Meshrano Jirga international relations committee to Herat province. The committee held SEAL II organized public hearings at the university. Participants included business leaders, students and NGOs. Issues discussed included border commerce and foreign policy. The committee also met with local officials to discuss refugees and met with the local office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to discuss illegal diplomatic passports.

SEAL II also organized and sponsored an in country visit of the Mishrano Jirga committee on the disabled to Balkh province. The committee held public meetings to discuss the problems of the disabled and to discuss gender issues.

SEAL II continued to publish the official gazettes of both houses and moved forward with contractors on production of education material for school children and others, to be delivered in the next quarter.

OUTPUT 4 – STRENGTHENED CAPACITY FOR EFFECTIVE DECISION/POLICY MAKING

SEAL II organized and supported the participation of 5 members from both Houses at the spring meeting of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly (in Berlin). The Afghan parliamentarians were able to take part in discussions about the Afghan National Army, about NATO activities in Afghanistan, and about the future role of the alliance.

A workshop on management of plenary sessions for the leadership of the Meshrano Jirga has now been prepared, to be delivered in July.

All together 15 elected Members received basic computer training from SEAL II this quarter.

OUTPUT 5 – EFFECTIVE ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES ARE IN PLACE

In April SEAL II organized and hosted a 2 day retreat for the two Secretaries General of Parliament and senior directors to move toward a strategic development plan for all Parliament staff. The retreat included the Clerk (Secretary General) of the Australian House of representatives and a senior director. The Australians shared experience and a wealth of documents that will enable the Secretaries General to develop long term strategy and planning for staff development, in partnership with SEAL II.

Working with partners (USAID-SUNY, NDI) and Parliament, SEAL II also completed a Communications Strategy for Parliament during this quarter. The strategy will guide the work of the Public Information departments of both Houses and will help determine the nature and timing of support from others.

This was also a mile stone quarter in the completion of several major SEAL II activities that strengthen both administrative structures and practices. In June the staff electronic attendance system was inaugurated. The system serves 1000 employees in both Houses. It brings reliability, transparency and accountability to the attendance recording system.

The computerized payroll system for the Wolesi Jirga was also completed and inaugurated this quarter. The system ends cash payments and brings modern management and transparency to payroll (the Meshrano Jirga payroll system was completed in late 2007). To accompany the new

computerized payroll systems, SEAL II helped negotiate the establishment of a branch of a commercial bank in the Parliament compound.

During the quarter SEAL II organized and offered an intensive three month Basic Accounting course to twenty five Parliament admin/finance staff. SEAL II also organized a professional training trip for nine admin/finance staff in Berlin (funded directly by the German government).

Completion of the Annex Buildings offices for members of the Wolesi Jirga is close at hand. Funded from SEAL I (2005-2008) the project has provided office furniture, computers, carpets, telephone and internet services to the Annex offices, all delivered during this quarter.

During the quarter SEAL II worked with the ICT department of Parliament to audit IT services with a view to user needs and improvements.

II PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES

Updated project risks and actions

Security environment – immediate risks to parliament and project

As in previous quarters, the security situation in the country and the security situation in Kabul remain the sharpest and most immediate challenges to the implementation of the project. During the quarter another Member of Parliament was killed (and one injured) during an attack on President Karzai and guests and a public parade. This brings to seven the number of assassinated MPs in the past six months. The Ministry of the Interior provided written warning late in the quarter that Parliament is a specific, high level target for insurgents and terrorists.

Violence and the threat of violence to Afghan civilians, to foreigners and to symbols of State authority (e.g. police, army) continue to challenge the project goal of helping to establish a well functioning parliament, well connected to and respected by citizens in every region. The security situation prevents some in-country planning and potential outreach visits by Members and Committees. During the quarter the project cancelled one proposed in country Committee visit to an insecure province.

To help address security risks, SEAL II continues to assist the National Assembly Security Department in developing, organizing and conducting a range of security trainings. SEAL II also continues to provide and install security equipment.

Donor funding SEAL

The lack of delivered donor funding for SEAL II became a critical issue during the quarter. At project start-up, March 2008, UNDP provided \$400,000 core funding. Also in March the European Union (Commission: EC) delivered \$900,000 as the final installment of their committed funding to SEAL1 (2005-2008). This funding would have allowed project operations and delivery to

Parliament through most of 2008. However, in late May the EC advised that there was no spending authority for their funds for SEAL II. At the same time, committed donors to SEAL II had not yet delivered funding.

A donor group of European countries asked in mid May for a revised project document, with a focus on support to elected Members, in order to move forward on their funding commitments. The project and UNDP prepared a revised project document and resource plan for donors by June 1. In June UNDP provided an additional \$250,000 in core funding.

On June 19 Denmark and Sweden in partnership confirmed immediate and on going funding of around \$6 million to enable the project to carry out the operations and the activities outlined in the revised funding proposal. Other previously committed donors are expected to join. New donors are also being consulted and have expressed strong interest in support to the project and Parliament (2008-2012).

Updated project issues and actions

Parliamentary demands

As in the previous quarter, the demands of parliament on the project are growing. For example, more and more Committees want to travel abroad and expect the project to agree, to fund and to organize these trips. Committees expect an increasing level of expert support in their policy and legislative affairs. The Administration Boards have asked for a wider range of support activities from expert guidance. The Meshrano Jirga leadership expects the project to fund new offices for Senators.

Meanwhile, the project has a range of significant commitments to deliver on, mostly related to capacity building for MPs. As MPs approach (re) election year their scope and nature of demands can be predicted to increase further.

Project will continue to work with Administration Boards, Committees and Secretariats of both houses to align the activities into a strategic framework of support that the project can effectively deliver. With confirmation of funding under revised project documents, the support would be focused on priority areas and with the arrival of additional funding from other donors, the project will be able to expand its support to parliament to meet their immediate and long term requirements.

Lack of human resources

Staff shortages are a challenge to the project. The long vacancy of international experts in Capacity Building has a negative impact on the project's ability to deliver the wide range of expert advice sought by parliament.

Recruitment for these posts was completed this quarter. Offers will be made to selected candidates during the Parliamentary recess with a view to having Technical Advisors in place soon after resumption of Parliament in July. The vacant deputy project manager position and national head of capacity building will also be filled during the next quarter. Affirmative action to recruit women candidates is underway.

III. FINANCIAL STATUS AND UTILISATION

FINANCIAL STATUS

Table 1: Contribution Overview (March 2008 to February 2012)

Donor	Contributions		Contribution Balance
	Committed	Received	
UNDP	650,000	400,000	250,000
	650,000	400,000	250,000

FINANCIAL UTILIZATION

Table 2: Quarterly Expenditure by Activity (March 2008 – 30 June 2008)

Activity	2008 Budget	Expenditure March - June 2008	Balance as of June 2008	Delivery Rate %
ACTIVITY01 Enhancing Parliamentary Capacity	165,000	99,684	65,316	60%
ACTIVITY02 Strengthening Parliament Oversight		27,899	-27,899	
ACTIVITY03 Strengthening Dialogues between People and Parliament	55,000	19,786	35,214	
ACTIVITY04 Strengthening Capacity for effective Decision/ Policy Making		6,431	-6,431	
ACTIVITY05 Supporting the Administrative Structure	76,000	1,460	74,540	
ACTIVITY06 Project Management	104,000	107,421	- 3,421	
Grand Total	400,000	262,681	137,319	66%

Table 3: Quarterly Expenditure by Donor (March 2008 – 30 June 2008)

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UNDP	ACTIVITY01 Enhancing Parliamentary Capacity	165,000	99,684	65,316	60%
	ACTIVITY02 Strengthening Parliament Oversight		27,899	- 27,899	
	ACTIVITY03 Strengthening Dialogues between People and Parliament	55,000	19,786	35,214	
	ACTIVITY04 Strengthening Capacity for effective Decision/ Policy Making		6,431	- 6,431	
	ACTIVITY05 Supporting the Administrative Structure	76,000	1,460	74,540	
	ACTIVITY06 Project Management	104,000	107,421	- 3,421	
UNDP Total		400,000	262,681	137,319	
Grand Total		400,000	262,681	137,319	66%

Annexes

Annual Work Plan 2008