



Quarterly Project Report [2nd Quarter, 2008]

United Nations Development Programme

Afghanistan

CISCO-USAID-UNDP NETWORKING ACADEMY ALLIANCE

01-04-2008 – 30-06-2008



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Unfunded	

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I. Implementation progress

Output 2 - A specialized cadre of men & women in the areas of information technology and network security trained

1.1 Kabul University Regional Academy (KURA) receives Testing Centre

In collaboration with Cisco System and Pearson Vue (Cisco Authorized testing center) the Cisco Networking Academy Programme (CNAP) is establishing a testing centre at the Kabul University Regional Academy. The centre will be housed in a spacious hall covering an area of 83.75 sqm and will have advanced and state-of-the art facilities, in line with Cisco standards. It will have capacity to test at least 6 students at any one sitting. This will make the centre the biggest in Afghanistan. The premises have been secured within the Faculty of Science, and the needed furniture has been procured and installed. Procurement of the technical equipment in form of computers, a video surveillance system and internet connection is expected to be completed by mid July and the testing centre should be functional by the end of July. The centre will be an important step towards sustainability of the academies as funds that have been hitherto spent to test students out of the country will be retained within the academies and put to other uses.

1.2 Bolstering gender, sustainability & workforce development

Gender, Sustainability and Workforce development Initiatives (GSWI) are an important aspect of the programme to ensure its continuity in the academies. To this end, the Project Manager and the Project Coordinator undertook site visits to a number of academies in order to introduce, explain and sensitize stakeholders to the importance of the three initiatives and the imminent demise of donor assistance.

At Balkh University Cisco Academy, Mazar, the CNAP Team met and agreed with the University Chancellor to provide the academy with a bigger room for the lab activities as the current room is rather small. The Chancellor welcomed the GSWI idea and promised all the assistance needed for its realization.

A meeting was held with the Deputy Minister (Administration) of the Ministry of Women Affairs (MoWA), highlighting the benefits granted to women through the programme and the need to ensure its continued sustainability. The Deputy Minister pledged that MoWA would continue to support the academy.

Site visits to the academies of the Telecommunications Training College (TTC), Kabul Education University (KEU), Herat University (HU) and Kabul University Regional Academy (KURA) revealed a resolute stance to embrace the initiatives and the readiness of the institutions' stakeholders to cooperate and work with CNAP in realizing the GSWIs. The GSWI will form the main task objective for the extended period of July – December 2008.

An understanding between UNDP Afghanistan, CNAP and Roshan was reached to provide scholarships to students, especially women, undertaking the Cisco Networking programme within the country. Roshan committed a total of US\$20,000 disbursed to the two academies of Balkh and MoWA. A record 120 students benefited from this initiative and have all graduated from their respective courses – Cisco Certified Networking Associate (CCNA) Discovery and IT Essentials 1&2. In order to sustain the program activities, Roshan has dedicated US\$40,000 for the period August 2008 to August 2009, thereby doubling the number of students and academies benefiting.

Output 2.1 - A specialized cadre of men & women in the areas of networking / hardware trained

1.3 New curriculum launched

A new curriculum will be added to the existing programme in order to meet the ever-changing technological advances. The Cisco Certified Networking Professional (CCNP) programme will help in producing professional network personnel. CCNP is a step further for the CCNA graduates. With the testing centre in place, the programme will provide the country with professionals in the network industry. The two instructors KURA are scheduled to be trained at the end of June on CCNP at the college of Higher Education Cisco Training Center in Dubai. These trainers, who will be CCNP certified, will train other trainers from the local academies. In line with this, a new CCNP lab has been introduced at the Kabul Regional Academy to meet the needs.

1.4 More students graduate from academies

During this quarter an impressive number of students have graduated. We have noticed an increase of 50% enrollment of students in all the academies compared to the first quarter of this year. A total of 1132 students attended classes in all the academies with 31% being female, which is the highest number of female participants in the Cisco Networking programme in the region. With the Roshan initiative doubling to US\$40,000, more students will be enrolled and it is expected that the percentage of females attending will also go up. During the second quarter a total of 218 students graduated from IT Essential I&II and CCNA Discovery 1. The IT Essential graduates will be enrolling in CCNA Discovery classes.

On April 7th, Balkh University Academy in Mazar graduated a total of 72 students (3 females and 69 males) in CCNA Discovery 1 and IT Essentials I&II. The MoWA Academy had its graduation on April 9th, in which 60 students (all females) graduated from CCNA 1 and IT Essentials I&II. Graduation for TTC Academy was conducted on May 8th. A total of 28 female students received their certificates at a colorful ceremony attended by dignitaries from the Ministry of Telecommunications and IT. The graduation from the Kabul Education University took place on May 13th with a total of 43 graduates, including 18 females. The graduation at Herat University Academy was held on June 3rd with the participation of the UNDP Country Director, the university representative and other dignitaries from the UNDP Country Office. A total of 15 students graduated from CCNA discovery (for additional information on enrolment and graduation see Annex 1).

II. Project implementation challenges

Updated project risks and actions

Institutional Capacity

One risk that was identified during this quarter and last year is the ability of the Regional Academy to manage the programme with its stretched resources. Although the Regional Academy is building its capacity and playing an important role in managing the programme, the academy is part of the computer science department of the university. This department will be upgraded to a faculty and the instructors will have increasing responsibilities outside of the academy programme. As a consequence they have not been able to attend training on the new curricula because of their conflicting schedules with their Master Degree programme. The Master Degree programme is important for the faculty and improves the skills of the instructors in general, but it limits the time they can invest in the academy programme. Furthermore, the same 10 instructors have received much of the training due to lack of Government funding to hire new professors, which means that the programme is very vulnerable to the possible loss of its present instructors. A potential mitigating measure to help ease the burden on the instructors is for the Academy to use some of the funds it receives through fees collection to hire top students to be trained as backup instructors.

Human resources quality and retention

Another risk identified during this quarter is the capacity to attract quality human resources and retain these. Since the Cisco project is competing with many other organizations and Government bodies for high standard employees, the recruitment and retention of good and capable trainers is becoming increasingly difficult. The programme trains its instructors at some of the best training institutions in the world but these eventually find better paying jobs. The Khost University regional academy is also in dire need of qualified instructors. Although three new candidates for instructor positions from Khost University were identified and trained on IT Essential I&II it will take a least a year for the instructors to receive the required training on the new curriculum at the Khost University regional academy.

Security

Security, particularly in the provinces, still remains a major risk. Visits to Khost academies cannot be undertaken due to the lack of security in those areas. Also, travel to the province of Nangarhar requires more security precautions and preparation due to the recent deterioration in the security situation and plans to open up an academy in Kandahar have been shelved. Action to be taken to

mitigate this risk is to follow UNDP security precautions. The project is looking into the possibility of sending Kabul University Regional Academy instructors on site visits as part of the evaluation and monitoring efforts of the project.

Updated project issues and actions

Female Enrolment

Female enrolment in the academies is still decimal despite the efforts made by the project to decrease the gender gap. Apart from the MoWA academy, other academies continue to show low enrolment numbers for females. The low numbers reflect both cultural aspects of the Afghan society, compounded with wars and institutional breakdown, as well as the very limited spoken and written English communication skills possessed by especially female Afghans, which is the medium of learning and testing for the Cisco programmes. These are among the reasons that women shy away from attending the programmes. The way forward is to sensitize both males and females to the importance of female learning and bring out examples of outstanding and successful women in politics, business and other industries, both within Afghanistan and worldwide, so as to encourage other women.

Reliability of Internet Access

Most academies have unreliable internet connections. This is normally due to the high cost of internet and the limited and small bandwidth that the Internet Service Providers (ISPs) are offering. This is an issue because it impacts on service delivery. Serious warning is to be given to the ISP to upgrade their systems and provide reliable services. It is the hope that by next year, with the completion of the fiber ring across the country, the cost of internet usage will decrease and more bandwidth with reliable service will be introduced.

Misunderstanding with supporting institutions

There is a growing trend towards an increase in misunderstandings between the programme and the institutions hosting the academies. Most of the stakeholders in the institutions do not understand the role and mandate of the academies. Some imagine that there is a lot of money being generated through the programme. A case in point is the threat to cut off electricity by the Ministry of Women Affairs (MoWA) to the MoWA academy. The reason given was that there was an overload on their supply line. However, after deliberations it was agreed that the line will remain open and functional. Another example is the Khost University Academy, where the authorities have refused to endorse the trainer, since he was not part of the faculty staff. To address this, the Project Manager met with the Chancellor of the university and the Ministry of Higher Education's ICT directorate and explained the role and benefit of the networking academy, in particular highlighting the fact that these academies will eventually remain the property of the very institutions in which they are based when the Cisco project comes to a close.

III. Financial status and utilization

Financial status

Table 1: Contribution overview [-Sep-2004 – Jun-2008]

DONOR NAME	CONTRIBUTIONS	
	Committed	Received
USAID	1,337,686	1,337,686
Cisco	138,750	138,750
GSI	968	968
TOTAL	1,477,404	1,477,404

Financial utilization

Table 2: Quarterly expenditure by activity (01-Jan-2008 to 30-June-2008)

Activity	BUDGET [2008]	EXPENDITURES	BALANCE	DELIVERY (%)
Project ID: 00042210				
Activity 1 - Project Management	193731	95765	97966	49 %
Activity 2 -CCNA&CCNP Courses	79903	53566	26337	67 %
Activity 3-V&D Cabling Courses	18500	-	18500	0 %
Activity 4- Gender and Sustainability	86543	42292	44251	49 %
Activity 5- Testing Centre	36068	13923	22145	38 %
UNDP GMS 5%	22283	11420	11581	51%
Total	437,028	218723	218305	50 %

Table 3. Annual expenditure by donor (01-Jan-2008 to 30- June -2008)

Donor	Activity (as per approved budget)		2008 Budget	Q1 Exp Jan-Mar 08	Q2 Exp Apr-June 08	Total Exp Q1 & Q2	Balance as 30/06/08	Delivery %
USAID	Activity 1	Project Management	180081	34625	61140	95765	84317	53%
	Activity 2	CCNA & CCNP Courses	79903	14313	39253	53566	26337	67 %
	Activity 3	KEU New Lab	18500	-	-	-	18500	0 %
	Activity 4	Gender & Sustainability	86543	13129	29163	42292	44251	49 %
	Activity 5	Testing Centre	36068	-	13923	13923	22145	38 %
UNDP GMS 5%		22283	3448	7972	11420	11581	51%	
Sub-Total Donor II		423,378	65,515	153208	218723	204655	50 %	
Cisco	Activity 1	Project Management	13,650	-	-	-	13,650	0%
UNDP GMS 0%		0	0	0	0	0	0%	
Sub-Total Donor III		13,650	-	-	-	13,650	0%	
Total		437,028	65,515	153208	218723	218305	50%	

Annex 1

Table 1: ITE and CCNA enrolled students in the Academies for the 2nd Quarter 2008

Academy	CCNA/ITE Female	CCNA/ITE Male	Total CCNA /ITE	% Female	IT EI&II Graduates	CCNA 1 Graduates
Kabul University	83	144	227	37	0	0
MoWA	80	0	80	100	40	20
TTC	69	111	180	38	28	0
Herat University	15	104	119	13	0	15
Balkh University	28	153	181	12	45	27
Khost University	0	14	14	0	0	0
Kabul Educ. University	63	173	236	27	43	0
RANA	18	77	95	19	0	0
Total	356	776	1132	31%	156	62