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Afghanistan Civil Service Leadership Development Project

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Senior Leadership Competency Development Programme (SLCDP) group 3 participants in a training session

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I. Implementation progress

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

Design and deliver the Senior Leadership Competency Development Programme

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, which will support the implementation of the new civil service pay and grade structure. The new training programme will be used for assessing and developing the competency of senior civil servants, who will be assigned to different leadership positions.

The Senior Leadership Competency Development Programme (SLCDP) is a comprehensive high-level training programme, designed to equip senior civil servants who will be assigned in leadership positions, with the skills required to efficiently manage 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 of participants 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 have in-built comprehensive training of trainers (ToT) programme for the trainers of Afghanistan Civil Service Institute (ACSI).

The Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission (IARCSC) has made policy and legislative preparations to support the implementation of SLCDP and other competency based mandatory training programmes for the civil service as part of the implementation arrangements for the new pay and grade structure. The recently approved Civil Servants Law is the overall enabling legislative framework. The IARCSC will issue various regulations and detailed procedures to support the implementation of the Civil Servants Law. With regard to specific implementation to the SLCDP, the Independent Appointment Board (IAB) and the Civil Service Management Department (CSMD) would be the two principal focal points in IARCSC. The IAB will provide the list of appointees to grade 1 and 2, to the CSMD on a monthly basis. The CSMD with technical support from the project will select the candidates who will participate in the training programme, based on predetermined selection criteria.

The procurement process that was started in earlier quarters was finalized in the reporting period and a contract was signed with the international company which won the bid. Activities for implementing this high level training programme are underway.

Inception mission

The inception mission for the implementation of the Senior Leadership Competency Development Programme (SLCDP) took place from 4 - 11 August, 2008. The objective of the inception mission was to discuss with relevant stakeholders about the appropriate design, organization, and delivery of the training programme. The primary goal of the mission was to verify and complement information on the outline of the training programme, the target group, the methodological approach of the training, the involvement of ACSI leadership and the trainers in the delivery as well as on the requirements for the sustainable implementation of competency oriented training programmes in the institute. Furthermore, the identification of local resource persons / organizations was among the points discussed with official of IARCSC.

During the inception mission a total of 14 meetings were conducted with the leadership of IARCSC, and with specialists from donor and counterpart organizations. The inception mission team introduced the SLCDP and in turn received feedback and valuable information to verify and complement direction, structure, and content of the training programme. The most notable result of the inception mission can be seen in the confirmation of all stakeholders that the training programme will be directly linked with the reform programme of the Afghan civil service by providing training as well as professional assessment of participants to serve as basis for promotions under the new pay and grade - scheme of the IARCSC

Pilot phase of the training

The first workshop of SLCDP group one took place from 24 - 28 August in the premises of the ACSI. This workshop had two important purposes. The first was to pilot the training materials as well as the training modality in the light of the objectives of the new SLCDP and gather feedback from the participants to be incorporated in subsequent training programmes. The second purpose was to introduce the participants with the initial requirements for implementing competency based training programmes and to ensure that they have the capacity and potential to progress through the course and complete it within the specified time.

In the first workshop of SLCDP group one, 18 senior civil servants from seven ministries and agencies took part in the week training and assessment sessions. All the participants of the first workshop of SLCDP were selected in line with the predetermined selection criteria, from those senior civil servants, whose nomination and appointment process have been finalized by the IAB of the IARCSC. The assessment result at the end of the first workshop indicated that, all the participants had the required aptitude and potential to progress through such a high level and structured programme and complete all the required conceptual and practical training modules.

A detailed training and coaching schedule of the programme for the coming months have been prepared and distributed to all concerned. A formal inauguration of the programme and graduation of the first two batches of participants of SLCDP is scheduled to take place in the month of December 2008. Details will be worked out in due course.

Design and deliver adapted Training of Trainers course for ACSI trainers

As part of the long-term plan of ensuring sustainability of the CSLD project achievements, a comprehensive and structured Training of Trainer (ToT) programme will accompany the SLCDP. About 15 - 20 ACSI local trainers and trainers from regional training institutions will take part in the training of trainers ToT programme. Agreements have been reached and arrangements have been put in place for each of the 10 SLCDP groups that will be implemented in the coming months, where one or two ACSI trainers will be attached to have practical training exposure and understanding of the contents of the training programme. Towards the end of the workshops for each group, the local ACSI trainers will be given the opportunity to present selected topics to the participants, which will form the basis for their evaluation for the requirement of the award of a certificate of Lead Trainer. The practical training and capacity building support that the international training provider implements for the ACSI trainers will enable the institute to develop capacity for delivering the SLCDP and other leadership training programmes, with the same quality and rigor, by the end of 2009. All efforts and activities in this area will be coordinated and facilitated by the resident International Training and Curriculum Development Advisor, who is currently working at the ACSI.

Collaboration for enhanced synergies

The implementation of SLCDP is planned to take into account the synergic relationship among UNDP projects. In this regard, preparations are underway to involve the resident coaches of the Capacity for Afghan Public Services (CAP) project, who are assigned in the various ministries and agencies, to provide further support in terms of the coaching and implementation phase of the training. Series of discussions and meetings have been made with the leadership of the CAP project. There will be a separate training and familiarization workshop for the CAP coaches to introduce them with the concepts and topics of the SLCDP and the coaching framework that will accompany the implementation of this new programme. This idea of collaboration between the

two projects has been well received by the leadership of IARCSC, as it will have a multiplier effect in improving the working systems in the civil service institutions.

Design and deliver one Emergent Leaders Programme for provincial participants

The beneficiaries of the CSLD leadership training programmes 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 were only 11%. While the priority focus of the CSLD project will remain to build the capacity of civil servants in the central ministries, it is with creative collaboration modalities possible to lay the ground for addressing the training needs of provincial civil servants. The first workshop of the Provincial Emergent Leaders Programme (ELP) was conducted for one week from August 17- 21. A total of 18 participants, of which 5 were female participants, from three of the remotest provinces, namely, Bamyán, Ghor and Dikundi, and from selected central ministries took part in the training programme. The Provincial ELP training programme was designed to implement a pilot programme that would be used as a basis for rolling out the CSLD training programmes to the provinces and the emphasis was on what lessons could be drawn for collaboration between CSLD and UNDP Afghanistan Sub-national Governance Programme (ASGP). However, due to problem of coordination and communication, no participant was nominated from provinces where ASGP has regional presence. As the next workshops of the Provincial ELP are scheduled in November, CSLD will ensure proper communication and working modality with ASGP to nominate suitable candidates to participate in the upcoming workshops.

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

The work started with regard to integrating the project's Alumni Meetings practices and newsletter publications to formal structures of the Afghan Civil Service Institute (ACSI), has been included as one components of the institute's strategic plan. Series of discussions have been made at the ACSI Working Group meetings and with the leadership of ACSI. This will be considered as a major strategic issue in the implementation of the ACSI strategic plan. The Alumni meetings are directly related to the training programmes that would be implemented by the project. Since the SLCDP training workshop have started of late, implementation of Alumni meetings would be planned in tandem with the progresses to be made with the training workshops of SLCDP. Concerning the newsletter and communication activities, the project is in the process of installing a single pipe internet line for the ACSI and recruiting a communications expert to assist in the implementation of an integrated communication strategy. The 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.

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

Skill upgrading and exposure visits

The project has implemented the first of series of planned skill upgrading and exposure visit programmes. The visits to selected public administration training institutions in the region are aimed at exposing the leadership of ACSI and the IARCSC to learn from the practices of other institutions in the area of institutional management and development, training programme development and enhancing performance of staff. A delegation of six members led by the Director General of the Public Administration Reform Secretariat of the IARCSC has left for Thailand and Singapore to visit the Asian Institute of Technology and the Singapore Civil Service College. Subsequent visits are planned in the coming months to institutions in Malaysia, Philippines and India. It is important to mention that the assistance received from the Capacity Development Team at the UNDP Regional Centre in Bangkok in identifying suitable and reputable institutes, has helped the project to further focus the visit schedules more efficiently. 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)

The activities and sub-activities under this output relate to the support for the overall capacity development of the ACSI, in terms of designing and installing efficient institutional structure and provision of responsive training programmes for Afghan civil servants. Implementation of most of the activities required ensuring alignment with other parallel activities to avoid duplications of efforts and unwise use of resources. Preparatory works that were started in the last quarter of 2007 for the implementation of this output have now taken further shape. The CSLD project has been concentrating on four areas of focus for the implementation of output 5. With the recent appointment of a new director for ACSI, the project has observed more proactive approach from the government counterpart in accelerating the implementation of the activities under this output.

Implementation of ACSI Strategic Plan

A long term Institutional Development Advisor has been recruited and is on the ground to lead the revision and implementation of the strategic document. He is the focal point to coordinate all aspects of the changes that is required on the strategic plan and in the preparation of associated manuals of operation for the implementation. He has conducted series of internal discussions with the leadership ACSI and IARCSC. The strategic plan has identified the following mission statement and strategic goals for the ACSI.

Mission Statement

- To build the capacity of senior Afghan civil servants by way of providing quality training in efficient and transparent manner and thereby improve the operations of the government
- To regulate training centers in various Ministries and at sub-national level engaged in the training and development of Afghan Civil Servants to ensure their adherence to quality and standards
- To conduct research in the area of public administration and governance
- To provide technical advisory services to various departments and agencies of government on matters related to training and development of civil servants

In order to realize its mission statement, the ACSI will focus on the following functions as its major strategic goals:

- A. Training Delivery
 - a. Training programmes to support ANDS/PAR
 - b. Induction and Foundation Training Programme
 - c. Competency Based Training Courses
 - d. Need based on going Training Courses
 - e. Fast Track Management Development Programme
 - f. Training of Trainers for Faculties in Training Centers in Provinces and Ministries
- B. Research & Documentation
- C. Oversight & Standardization functions

Series of discussions in relations to components of the strategic plan have been made with internal stakeholders. A presentation for the leadership of the IARCSC is also under preparation, particularly to sensitize the leadership on the consequences and subsequent decisions that are required to be made in implementing the new strategic plan and associated structure. A detailed action plan has been developed which will be the basis to guide at the implementation of the strategic plan in a sequenced and integrated manner. 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 ACSI. A counterpart group was assigned within the ACSI to expedite his work and facilitate knowledge transfer.

Building the Training Management and Delivery capacity of ACSI

The planned activities in this area involve assisting the ACSI trainers to acquire the skills and knowledge required for independently delivering required training programmes, and the development and adaptation of the CSLD training modules and other materials to come up with ACSI specific standard training materials. The International Training and Curriculum Advisor, who was recruited to coordinate and lead this effort, in alignment with the implementation of the comprehensive ToT programme, has completed the second stage assessment of the trainers, which was started in earlier quarter. The overall findings reveal the following:

- Most of the trainers of ACSI (80% of those assessed) have participated in various methodology oriented ToT courses in the past
- Nearly all trainers who participated in the assessment exercise require strong support in the subject matters areas to bring them to the required standard to deliver responsive leadership training programmes
- Most of the ToT courses conducted in the past were general in nature and had different contents and focus with little emphasis on ACSI specific training needs
- Most of the trainers have good general presentation skills, however, their mastery of the subject matter in their area of specialization, in particular in the light of the high level training programmes that the institute is going to offer is not up to the required level.

In order to enhance the skills level of the trainers of the institute, the following series of integrated and sequenced activities will be implemented:

- The trainers of ACSI will be associated with the international trainers on a daily basis whilst the senior leadership competency development trainings are going on in order to grasp the contents of the subject matter, and share the experiences of the international trainers.
- Subject matter ToTs that would cover modern training and presentation methods, such as group discussions, case studies etc., would be organized on a case by case basis.
- Plans are under consideration for the trainers to be attached to the relevant ministries and departments of their areas of specialty so that they can gain hands on experience of the operations of the ministries.

The recommendation set out above will be integrated with the strategic plan and the action plans to be implemented will take into account these recommendations.

One important component of the support for the training management function of the ACSI is the assignment of a dedicated National Training Coordinator, who would be instrumental in coordinating and following up the implementations of the recommendations. CSLD project had recruited a suitable person to fill this position. However, the person resigned recently and the post is vacant at the moment. The assessment on the utilization of this individual by the ACSI and the integration of the post does not seem to have gone well to date. Prior to recruiting a replacement for the position, agreement on the need for such position is required with IARCSC and ACSI, in line with the proposed organizational structure of the institute.

Building the Capacity of the CSI Library

Preparatory activities for the procurement of necessary materials and equipments are in the process. Expression of Interest for the supply of books and other documentations for the ACSI library has been floated. The recruitment of an international library specialist has been finalized during the reporting period and is expected be on board soon. Once the international advisor is on the ground, a National Library Assistant will be recruited and implementation of activities will

commence thereon. The procurement of equipments and materials that are required for the implementation of this activity is underway

Building a Learning and Training Materials Production Centre

CSLD will support the establishment of a well-equipped and functioning learning materials production unit at the ACSI. Such a facility will enhance the institute's capacity to produce standardized and high quality training materials in both paper based and electronic form. This task will be coordinated and facilitated by an international expert. The recruitment of an International Training Materials Production Advisor was finalized during the reporting period and the specialist will be on the ground soon. Once the international advisor is on the ground, a National Training Materials Production Manager will be recruited. The procurement of the equipment needed for the production centre is underway and expected to be delivered in the coming months.

One of the important issues that emerged in connection with the implementation of this activity is whether to have a separate structure for housing the sophisticated machineries and equipments needed by the center, or to accommodate them in the existing buildings of the ACSI. This has been discussed at length in the recently held Project Board meeting. Decisions regarding the technical requirements for the establishment of the center, and other related matters will be made based on the technical assessment report of the International expert.

II. Project implementation challenges

Updated project issues 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 impact 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 to promote to higher grades those staff members who have served the project diligently over the past years. 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. Due to the repeated extension of proposal submission dates to invite more firms to participate in the bid, the project had to postpone implementation of the training schedules and reduce the activities planned for the year. Since this is a problem that needs to be tackled in a much-coordinated manner, the project will flag the issue to the senior management.

Furthermore, the ACSI, where the project is housed is located in an area that is outside the designated security box for Kabul city. Since some of the requirements that need to be put in place to make the project office MOSS compliant could not be implemented in the building where the offices are located, the issue requires the attention and guidance of senior management. As the number of international staff working in the institute under the project is increasing in the recent months, the matter needs to be addressed urgently.

III. Financial status and utilization

Financial status

Table 1: Contribution overview CSLD Project May 2005 – April 2009

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	528,231	528,231	
Germany	382,494	382,494	
Norway	3,300,117	2,184,414	1,115,703
Switzerland	700,000	700,000	
TOTAL	7,022,677	5,906,974	1,115,703

Financial utilization

Table 2: Quarterly expenditure by activity

Activity	Budget 2008	Expenditure	Balance	Delivery %
Activity1: Training Programme	657,052	514,305	142,746	78%
Activity2: Career Development Programme	76,000	0	76,000	0%
Activity3: External Development Programme	137,293	29,701	107,592	22%
Activity4: Management & Administration	72,000	20,105	51,895	28%
Activity5: Support to the Operation of ACSI	1,037,602	471,651	565,951	45%
GMS 5% (Norway Agr 1, Swiz, Aus)	45,808	26,016	19,791	57%
GMS 7% (Norway Agr 2)	78,1000	33,016	45084	42%
Grand Total	2,103,855	1,094,795	1009,060	52%

Table 3: Quarterly expenditure by donor

Donor	Activity	Budget 2008	Expenditure	Balance	Delivery %
UNDP	ACTIVITY4: Management & Administration	72,000	20,105	51,895	28%
UNDP Total		72,000	20,105	51,895	28%
Australia	ACTIVITY1: Training Programme	191,804	50,214	141,590	26%
	GMS 5%	10,095	2,511	7,584	25%
Australia Total		201,899	52,724	149,174	26%
Norway	Activity 2: Career Development Programme	76,000	0	76,000.00	0%
	ACTIVITY3: External Development Programme	137,293	29,701	107,592	22%
	GMS 5%	11,226	301	10,925	3%
	Total Norway Agr-1	224,519	30,003	194,517	13%
	ACTIVITY5: Support to the Operation of ACSI	1,037,602	471,651	565,951	45%
	GMS 7%	78,100	33,016	45,084	42%
	Total Norway Agr-2	1,115,702	504,667	611,035	45%
Norway Total		1,340,221	534,669	805,552	40%
Switzerland	ACTIVITY1: Training Programme	465,249	464,092	1,157	100%
	GMS 5%	24,487	23,205	1,282	95%
Switzerland Total		489,735	487,296	2,439	100%
Grand Total		2,103,855	1,094,795	1,009,060	52%

Annexes

Annual Work Plan (annexed separately)