



United Nations Development Programme
Afghanistan
[CISCO-USAID-UNDP NETWORKING ACADEMY ALLIANCE]
[01-07-2008 – 30-09-2008]

Quarterly Project Report [3rd Quarter, 2008]



Project ID	: 00042210
Duration	: September 2004 – December 31, 2008
Component (MYFF)	: 2.5 Access to Information
Total Budget	: 1,402,304
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

New Cisco Networking Academy established in Bamyan

Following a visit by the project management and in line with the urgent need of Cisco programmes in the region, the establishment of a new academy is underway at Bamyan University and is expected to be fully established and equipped by mid November 2008. To this effect, a Memorandum of Understanding between UNDP and the University of Bamyan has been signed. Bids for the procurement of the computer and networking infrastructure for the academy to become operational have been received and the chosen company will be announced within weeks. Prospective instructors have been trained at Kabul University Regional Academy and are ready to begin training of students in IT Essentials I & II and Cisco Certified Network Associate (CCNA) Discovery as soon as the necessary hardware and software are delivered and installed at the academy premises. The Bamyan University will provide the electricity and the Internet connectivity to the Cisco lab computers, which will increase the sustainability and continued success of the programme.

Bolstering gender, sustainability and workforce development

Gender, Sustainability and Workforce development Initiatives (GSWI) remains an important aspect of the programme. As the project prepares to close and hand over the academies to the relevant institutions in which these are currently located, or another management arrangement is agreed upon, measures have been put in place to ensure sustainability through establishment of gender-affirmative programmes and workforce training.

An administrator and experienced Cisco programme instructor has been recruited at the Ministry of Women Affairs (MoWA) to implement the programme activities and ensure effective management of the academy. Through her initiative, an understanding has been reached between the project and the Afghan Wireless Communications Company (AWCC) for AWCC to recruit the top 10 female graduates from MoWA. AWCC has also agreed to fund the enrollment of a minimum of 30 graduates under an internship programme each year. These will be trained and may later be absorbed by AWCC through the AWCC initiative called 'Young Engineers.' In addition, AWCC has provided over 100 sim cards to MoWA students to enable them communicate more effectively. This initiative has now also been extended to other academies.

Roshan Telecom has also extended sponsorship initiative to female students similar to the one provided last year, in which 120 students from MoWA and the Balkh University Academy benefited.

A total of 240 students will benefit under the new sponsorship arrangement and US\$40,000 will be granted to sponsor female students from MoWA, the Kabul Education University and the Balkh and Herat Academies through this second initiative for the period 2008-2009. The project management team and Roshan Telecoms are currently exploring means and ways through which Roshan can play an increased lead role in the recruitment of some of the students sponsored by the above initiative.

In order to highlight the Cisco programme activities in Afghanistan, a website (www.netacad.af) has been developed and launched. It is envisaged that this initiative will help to provide focus on the achievements of the Cisco Networking Programme in Afghanistan (CNAP) and that it will act as a medium of interaction between employers seeking information telecommunications (ICT) talent and graduates in search of employment opportunities. Furthermore, the website is expected to facilitate online resource archiving and improve student knowledge and learning by acting as a one-stop shop for ICT information and related activities within the country and beyond.

During the 6 years of its existence, CNAP has rolled out graduates that have been very instrumental in the development of the country especially, in the field of Information Communication Technology (ICT). All the graduates from Kabul University Regional Academy received jobs within the first three months of their graduation. Graduates from TTC Academy are normally absorbed by the Ministry of Communications and IT, while at least 70% of graduates from the other academies from within Kabul and in the provinces receive jobs within their first year of graduation.

Overall, at least 700 students out of the 1000 enrolled in the various Cisco programmes have graduated, 34% of which are women. Eighty per cent of these graduates are now employed in various IT and telecom within the government and private sectors.

Project Evaluation and Sustainability

An evaluation specialist has been hired to evaluate the activities of the programme and the plan for the imminent project closure towards ensuring the onward sustainability of the academies and related initiatives. From a record 47 applicants, 8 were short-listed out of which 4 were interviewed on 29 September. A candidate was selected and is scheduled to start the evaluation on 15 October and submit his report on 30 October.

In order to ensure a sustainable and coordinated hand over of the academies following project closure, several meetings have been held between UNDP, CNAP, Afghanistan Information Management Services (AIMS) and USAID. There was agreed understanding that the hand over arrangements need to be agreed on with the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development and the Ministry of Communication and IT as soon as possible since time is now of the essence and the transfer of assets needs to be completed. Organs that could take over the oversight role

include the Ministry of Communications and IT, AIMS and the institutions in which the academies are located.

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

Regional academy instructors trained

Instructors from the regional academies received training from the Kabul University Regional Academy (KU/RA) for a period of two weeks during the month of September. Through the training, which was facilitated by senior instructors from KU/RA, 10 instructors acquired enhanced skills in the new Cisco Certified Network Associate (CCNA), Discovery and Cisco Certified Network Professional (CCNP) curricula. Providing this training was required, as the Cisco programme has been changed to incorporate new ideas and concepts so as to be in line with the changing ICT technologies world-wide and to meet the needs of the developing world. The instructors were drawn from the regional academies and thus the training increased instructor capacity in the provinces.

Graduates trained in office management and communication skills

In order to increase the ability of academy graduates to secure national or international employment after ended training a training programme in office management and communication skills was developed and launched at MoWA. The programme helps the students to understand the basic use and application of MS Office programmes, such as Word and Excel, and exposes the students to basic writing communication skills improving their ability to write professional and effective Curriculum Vitae, resumes, job applications and cover letters. The programme is taught to graduates at the end of their academy training free of charge. The programme started at MoWA and will be introduced to the other academies before project closure.

II. Project implementation challenges

Updated project risks and actions

Institutional Capacity

The ability of the Kabul University Regional Academy to manage the programme with its stretched resources continues to be a matter of concern. Although the project has tried to build technical and institutional capacity of the academy through training, expansion of the lab facilities and establishment of the Testing Centre, there is still a problem with having and keeping a dedicated cadre of instructors. All the instructors are also lecturers within the science faculty and have other demands taking their time. So far some instructors have left for other employment or to pursue more studies. A possible mitigating measure to help ease the burden on the instructors is for the academy to use some of the funds it receives through fee collection to hire top students to be trained as backup instructors.

Security

Security is still a major risk, especially in the provinces. Visits to the Khost academy have been put on hold several times and plans to open an academy in the Southern parts of the country has been shelved. Action to be taken to mitigate this risk is to follow UNDP security precautions, but this will do little to ensure expansion to the South. 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

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 our 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.

Logistical bottlenecks

Lack of timely service delivery from most suppliers of equipment needed by the project to effectively running its activities continues to be a problem. For example, opening of the testing centre at Kabul Regional University academy has yet to take place because the company

contracted to supply monitoring cameras have not yet done so. Furthermore, all the ordered items are not delivered, as they have gone missing on the way or the wrong items were shipped in the first place. These delays and mix-ups cost time and resources and affect the timely delivery results.

Uncertainty of the future

The Cisco project will be closing at the end of the year. This poses the question of the onward sustainability of the academies. Concrete planning is needed from all stakeholders to formulate and agree on an effective and achievable plan that will enable the proper functioning and sustainability of the programme within the academies. Different ways and options are being explored through stakeholder consultations to this effect.

III. Financial status and utilization

Financial status

Table 1: Contribution overview [01-07-2008 – 31-12-2008]

DONOR NAME	CONTRIBUTIONS	
	Committed	Received
USAID	1,337,686	1,337,686
Cisco	13,650	13,650
GSI	968	968
UNDP Core Fund	50,000	50,000
Total	1,402,304	1,402,304

Financial utilization

Table 2: Quarterly expenditure by activity

Activity	BUDGET [2008]	QUARTERLY EXPENDITURE	BALANCE	DELIVERY (%)
Activity 1 – Project Management	193,012	118,186	74,826	58%
Activity 2 – CCNA & CCNP Courses	79,903	58,382	21,521	69%
Activity 3 – Kabul University New Lab	18,500	0	19,528	0%
Activity 4 – Gender & Sustainability	86,543	70,939	15,604	78%
Activity 5 – Testing Centre	36,068	25,881	10,187	68%
UNDP GMS	23,002	9,547	13,455	41%
Total	437,028	282,935	151,793	64%

Table 3: Quarterly expenditure by donor [01-07-2008 – 30-09-2008]

DONORS	ACTIVITY (approved budget)	2008 Budget	Q1 Exp	Q2 Exp	Q3 Exp	Total Q1-Q3 Exp	Balance	DELIVERY RATE %
USAID	Activity 1 Project Management	180,081	34,625	61,140	20,272	116,037	60,673	63%
	Activity 2 CCNA&CCNP Courses	79903	14,313	39,253	4,652	58,218	20,544	
	Activity3 Kabul University New Lab	18500	-	-	-	-	18,500	
	Activity4 Gender and Sustainability	86551	13,129	29,163	28,247	70,539	19,717	
	Activity5 Testing Center	36068	-	13,923	10,071	23,994	11,439	
GMS 5%		22275	3,267	7,551	3,329	14,147	7,270	
Subtotal DONOR I		423,378	65,334	151,030	66,571	282,935	138,143	
Cisco	Activity1 Project Manajement	12932	-	-	-	-	12,932	0%
GMS 5%		718	-	-	-	-	718	
Subtotal DONOR II		13650	-	-	-	-	13,650	
Total		437,028	65,334	151,030	66,571	282,935	151,793	64%

Annexes

Table 1: ITE and CCNA enrolled students in the Academies for the 3rd Quarter 2008

Academy	CCNA/ITE/WLAN Female	CCNA/ITE/WLAN Male	Total CCNA/ITE	% Female	IT EI&II Graduates	CCNA 1 Graduates
Kabul University	75	147	222	34%	0	0
MoWA	98	0	98	100%	0	0
TTC	2	141	143	1%	0	0
Herat University	45	8	53	86%	0	0
Balkh University	10	80	90	11%	0	0
Khost University	0	75	75	0%	0	0
Kabul Educ. University	79	32	111	71%	0	0
RANA	18	40	58	45%	40	0
Total	327	523	850	39%	40	0