



## United Nations Development Programme Afghanistan

### Strengthening State Building through Strategic Government Communication (SSBSGC)

July 1 – September 30, 2008

### Quarterly Project Report [Third Quarter, 2008]



Project ID:	00059207
Duration:	January 2008-December 2010
Component (MYFF):	Public administration reform and anticorruption.
Total Budget:	USD 3,543,214
Implementing Partners/Responsible parties:	UNDP in collaboration with the Office of Presidential Spokesperson (OPS)

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## I. Implementation progress

The first Strengthening State Building through Strategic Government Communication (SSBSGC) project board meeting was conducted with active participation of the Department for International Development (DFID), the Spokesperson of the President, the Deputy Country Director of the UNDP, as well as project and programme staff. In addition, USAID and the Director of the Presidential Media and Information Centre's (PMIC) participated as observers to contribute to improved coordination between projects supporting the Office of the Presidential Spokesperson (OPS)..

SSBSGC project staff continues to provide support to the OPS on day to day basis in production/facilitation of quality press conferences and news on the President's meetings/visits with senior international officials inside and outside the country to ensure that material for meetings, speeches, press conferences, protocol signings of the President and the Presidential Spokesperson were produced in a quality manner.

### **Output 1: An effective government communication strategy prepared and government communication with its citizens improved.**

Under output one, the SSBSGC project undertook the below initiatives to progress towards the envisaged output.

The recruitment process of the Communication Expert is at its final stage and the candidate will be onboard in late October or late November. The expert will ensure formulation of an overall draft communication strategy for OPS and government with a firm sub-national focus through a participatory consultation process.

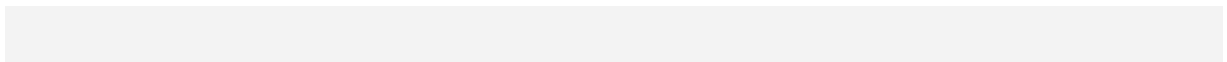
Strategic steps are being taken towards the creation of a coordination mechanism amongst involved stakeholders, concerned departments of the government, various donors, The Asia Foundation (TAF) involved in the establishment and running of the Media and Information Centre, spokespersons of the 26 ministries, the Independent Directorate for Local Governance (IDLG), Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) Secretariat and Director, and provincial governors of Kunduz and Balkh, which has provided important initial input to feed into the assessment to be carried out by the Communication Expert and will enable the candidate, once onboard, to readily engage with all relevant stakeholders. It has also provided a foundation to improve ties and coordination with the provincial hubs. Meetings with the governors of other provinces will take place in the coming months.

### **Output 2: Capacity of the OPS and provincial information ability developed for the implementation of an effective communication strategy**

A number of strategic steps were taken to ensure quality staffing and continuation of support to the OPS in providing quality media production. The position of the Organisational Re-engineering Consultant has been advertised and CVs received. Interview will be undertaken shortly and the candidate is expected to be onboard during the month of December, as it will be important for the work of the Communication Expert to be well underway and the preliminary assessment near completion for the Organisational Re-engineering Consultant to commence his or her assessment on the need for restructuring and capacity development at the OPS in the light of result of communication assessment.

Once onboard, the Organisational Re-engineering Consultant will review the present structure, individual staff roles and the capacity development needs of OPS and recommend a more efficient organizational structure of the OPS and a capacity development strategy covering both the national and sub national level. Based on the recommendations by the Organisational Re-engineering Consultant, quality technical assistance will be injected into the OPS commencing during the first quarter of 2009.

A successful joint mission by the UNDP project and programme teams and government counterparts to Kunduz and Mazar to evaluate sub-national project activities (mainly within the provincial hubs) and meet with provincial authorities on related issues. These missions have provided valuable input for the communication and capacity assessments as they have provided important insights into the challenges facing the provincial structures of the OPS.



## II. Project implementation challenges

### *Updated project risks and actions*

Since the project outputs are interlinked with each other, it is important to ensure an overlap between the Communication Expert and the Organisational Re-engineering Consultant, allowing for coordination and continuation of consultations with relevant stakeholders. If this is not ensured, there is a risk that the restructuring and capacity development efforts at the OPS are not fully aligned with the result of the assessment, consultation process and strategy formulation carried out by the Communication Expert.

Existence of vacancies in the present organizational set up of the OPS risks hampering the capacity of the OPS and the quality of its productions. To mitigate this risk, there is strong focus needed to ensure rapid and quality recruitments to fill the vacancies. These should, however, be in accordance with recommendations of the strategic advice of the international consultants and should thus not be rushed as current project funds were not planned to support additional recruitments.

Another substantial risk to the project is the deterioration of security in particularly the Eastern and Southern provinces of the country, limits accessibility and communication and badly affects the project sub-national level activities in these provinces, as well as the ability of the project to support these. This risk has decreased the vital communication links with the provincial hubs and also runs the risk of decreasing the access of the consultants to the provinces decreasing their ability to provide comprehensive inputs on needed initiatives at the sub-national level. To mitigate this risk, the collection of security related information from different reliable sources can be used as a basis for the formulation of realistic implementation plans. In addition, UNDP security procedures should be followed and the advices of the UNDP Security Advisor sought prior to the set up of structures in the provinces.

### *Updated project issues and actions*

Effective coordination amongst the government ministries, relevant departments and agencies in the communication sector is lacking. Setting up a coordination mechanism between the SSBSGC project and other related initiatives and stakeholders is an effective measure towards mitigating this current lack of coordination at the national and sub-national level. This issue will also be important for the international consultants to keep in mind when considering the consultation mechanisms to be set up as part of the assessment and strategy formulation process.

The working environment at the provincial level is characterized by insufficient office facilities in terms of space, equipment, furniture and stationary, limiting the ability of the provinces to provide quality input and convey communication from the OPS to the public. These capacity constraints will have to be approached by the project and the consultants. Aside from this, the number of provincial hubs envisaged needs to be assessed during the needs assessment, as provinces are presently unevenly covered and it is vital to ensure an equitable and country wide flow of information from the President to the people and vice versa on everything from security, reconstructions and development issues. In addition to the assessments by the consultants, the programme and project teams will continue to carry our evaluation missions to the provincial hubs, building on the success of the Kunduz and Mazar missions already undertaken.

### III. Financial status and utilization

#### Financial status

Table 1: Contribution overview [September, 2005 – June, 2009]

DONOR NAME	CONTRIBUTIONS		CONTRIBUTIO N BALANCE
	Committed	Received	
UNDP	150,000	150,000	-
DFID	3,393,214	894,632	2,498,582
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,543,214</b>	<b>1,044,632</b>	<b>2,498,582</b>

#### Financial utilization

Table 2: Quarterly expenditure by activity [01/01/2008- 30/09/2008]

Activity	BUDGET [2008]	QUARTERLY EXPENDITURE	BALANCE	DELIVERY (%)
Activity 1 [Government Communication Strategy]	89,749	33,699	56,050	38%
Activity 2 [Capacity Building of OPS]	751,048	496,447	254,601	66%
Activity 3 [Management Costs]	136,501	0	136,501	0%
UNDP GMS 7%	67,338	34,190	33,148	51%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,044,636</b>	<b>564,336</b>	<b>480,300</b>	<b>54%</b>

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

DONORS	ACTIVITY (as per approved budget)	2008 Budget	Q3 EXPENDITURES 01/01/08 - 30/09/08	BALANCE as of 30/09/08	DELIVERY RATE %
UNDP	Activity 1: Government Communication Strategy	45,000	-	45,000	73%
	Activity 2: Capacity Building of OPS	75,000	110,127	-35,127	
	Activity 3: Management Costs	30,000	-	30,000	
GMS 0%			-	-	
<b>Subtotal DONOR I</b>		<b>150,000</b>	<b>110,127</b>	<b>39,873</b>	
DFID	Activity 1: Government Communication Strategy	44,749	33,699	11,050	51%
	Activity 2: Capacity Building of OPS	676,048	386,320	289,728	
	Activity 3: Management Costs	106,501		106,501	
GMS 7%		67,338	34,190	33,148	
<b>Subtotal DONOR III</b>		<b>894,636</b>	<b>454,209</b>	<b>440,427</b>	
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,044,636</b>	<b>564,336</b>	<b>480,300</b>	<b>54%</b>

## Annexes



President's activities including visits, meetings ceremonies, inside and out side the

