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Baseline Survey of

Social, Security and Economic Situation

In Herat, Badghis and Farah Provinces

Project Profile

Date:

15 April – 04 May, 2013



Summary

Project Title:	<i>Baseline Survey of 210 villages in three Western Provinces</i>
Project Coverage:	<i>Herat – Shendand, Pashtun Zarghun and Kushk Rabat Sangi Badghis – Qadis and Moqor Farah – Bala Boluk and Posht e Rod</i>
Major Milestones achieved	<i>Survey Completed in All 210 Villages</i>
Actual Survey Duration	<i>15 April – 04 May, 2013</i>

Introduction

This document details the overall implementation of the Baseline Survey which was funded by Stability in Key Areas-West (SIKA-W) – a project of USAID/AECOM and was conducted by Risalat Consultants International (RCI) in three western provinces of Herat, Badghis and Farah.

Through this survey, SIKA-W wanted to establish a baseline regarding the present situation of residents in the target districts/villages from security, social and economic points of view. The outcomes of the survey would serve as baseline for projects aimed at improving the overall living conditions of the residents to be implemented by SIKA-W in the target villages.

In collaboration with the project team, a questionnaire containing 25 (open and closed ended) questions for women, and 23 questions for men, was developed by SIKA-W.

Survey Team Composition

The project team included 25 surveyors' responsible collecting data from the seven target districts. The basic criterion for selection of (both male and female) surveyors was to be at least high school graduate. A Provincial Supervisor would monitor the activities of surveyors in every province, ensuring the implementation goes ahead as planned.

The table below shows detail of the survey team for all the three provinces.

No.	Province	District	Male	Female
1	Herat	Shendand	3	3
2		Pashtun Zarghun	1	1
3		Kushk Rabat Sangi	2	2
4	Badghis	Qadis	3	1
5		Moqor	2	1
6	Farah	Bala Boluk	2	1
7		Posht-e-Rod	2	1
		Total	15	10

Project Implementation

The project was implemented in two major steps – (i) Pilot Survey (ii) Actual Survey

(i) The Pilot Survey

For piloting the survey, a draft questionnaire was developed by SIKAW which needed to be field checked with actual target respondents. The purpose of the pilot survey was to identify any ambiguity, redundancy, confusion or any other problems existing in the text of the questions or the overall format of the questionnaire, so that these problems are removed before the actual survey is conducted in all the target provinces.

Pilot Survey Implementation

Kushk-e-Seerwan village of Pushtun Zarghon district in Herat province was selected for implementation of the Pilot Survey. With a population of around 6000 people, the village is situated to the north of the district center.

20 questionnaires were administered by one male and one female interviewers hired for Pushtun Zarghun district. In order to ensure randomness of the data the Kish Grid method was used for selection of households. In it, the interviewers were guided to interview one male or female respondent from every third house starting from the right side of every locality (mahalla) in the target village. The same method was used throughout the survey in all seven districts.

As a result of the Pilot Survey, the format of some questions was modified, some redundant questions were removed and the questionnaire was unified for both male and female respondents.

(ii) The Actual Survey

Surveyor Orientation

After the pilot survey was implemented and the outcomes incorporated in the final questionnaire, the Surveyors and Provincial Supervisors were called to Herat for a one day orientation on the implementation of the questionnaire in the field and what was the purpose of each of the questions included in the questionnaire.

Coordination with Local Authorities

Through the Provincial Supervisors, RCI contacted Provincial and District level authorities, in all three provinces and seven districts, informing them (in writing) about the purpose of the project and asking for cooperation in implementation of the survey. When needed, SIKAW's provincial level representatives also cooperated in introducing RCI to the concerned authorities.

Administration of the Questionnaire

After the orientation, all surveyors started their work in the third week of April. For selection of the respondents, surveyors would use the Kish Grid method, explained above. Normally they would go to every house and ask one of the male or female residents for an interview. However, in some cases, due to security and cultural limitations, a group of respondents would be called (from those random houses) to one place and then interviewed.

Names or any other personal information were not asked from the respondents giving them the confidence that they won't be asked again about what they said or why they said it.

The surveyors ensured that the village head (arbab) or the shura doesn't interfere in selection of the respondents. One occasion where the arbab of the village was present, the respondents would hesitate in some of the responses, with which the surveyors asked him to leave so that the respondents do not give biased responses.

For all target villages GPS coordinates were recorded except for some where due to security concerns, they supervisor or the surveyors were not willing to carry the GPS device with them, fearing that if someone stopped them and searched them, the device can put them in trouble.

Observations

A general observation was that people are generally cooperative for participation in such surveys. The only reason they hesitate is the fear of someone from government opponents knowing about it and harassing them later.

Also, it was noted that in majority of cases the trust on the local district level government is much lower as compared to the village level CDCs.

While working in the field, specifically in villages, educated people or those who are willing to work with some organization, are a bit hesitant about working with any projects related to the Government or USAID etc because of the image these entities have with the anti-government elements.

In general, the villagers in the target districts seem to be more content with their local CDCs than with the district level government for provision of some services and resolving their issues.

Monitoring and Evaluation

RCI management made sure that surveys were performed as per the plan and the interviewers follow standard procedures they were told about in the beginning of the project. For this, the Provincial Supervisors assigned for each province would accompany the surveyors on some of their visits to target villages and ensure they conduct perform their jobs as required. They would also make random visits to some villages and check with locals whether the survey team had been there.

Apart from this, representatives from SIKA-W's provincial offices also made random DQC (Data Quality Control) visits of the surveyed villages and observed the survey proceedings. Feedback from both RCI supervisors and SIKA-W's staff helped the Project Manager in making improvements in the surveyors' performance and the survey proceedings as a result.

Major Challenges

One of the major challenges facing the surveyors was the security situation in majority of the target villages. The surveyors for the project were intentionally selected from the target districts so that they can have ease of movement in the target villages. This solved the problem to a great extent, as in some instances, the surveyors would simply pose as guests visiting relatives in that village and then in one of houses call people for the survey.

Also for security reasons, in some villages, the female surveyors couldn't accompany their male colleagues and only male respondents were interviewed there.

For the very same reason, the surveyors/provincial supervisors could not record GPS coordinates for some villages where there was fear of being stopped and searched by anyone other than government authorities.