

SIGAR

**Special Inspector General for
Afghanistan Reconstruction**

OFFICE OF SPECIAL PROJECTS

**INFORMATION ON USAID'S STABILITY
IN KEY AREAS PROGRAM – NORTHERN
REGION, AFGHANISTAN**



JANUARY 2017

SIGAR-18-23-SP



SIGAR

Office of the Special Inspector General
for Afghanistan Reconstruction

January 12, 2018

The Honorable Mark Green
Administrator, U.S. Agency for International Development

Mr. Gregory Huger
Assistant to the Administrator,
Office of Afghanistan and Pakistan Affairs, USAID

Mr. Herbert Smith
USAID Mission Director for Afghanistan

Since 2003, USAID has spent at least \$2.3 billion on stabilization programs intended to extend the reach of the Afghan government to unstable areas, provide income generation opportunities, build trust between citizens and their government, and encourage local populations to take an active role in community development.¹ USAID's Stability in Key Areas (SIKA) North program was one such effort. It was intended to reduce the impact of the insurgency in northern Afghanistan by promoting good governance in unstable and high-threat districts and increasing the Afghan public's confidence in the Afghan government to lead the country after the security transition. The SIKA- North program was one of four regional SIKA programs implemented by USAID between March 2012 and July 2015. In March 2012, USAID awarded Development Alternatives, Inc. (DAI) a \$23.7 million, 18-month cost-plus-fixed-fee contract to implement projects in the SIKA-North region. Over the course of the program, USAID spent approximately \$37 million to implement SIKA-North.

In June 2017, SIGAR sent an inquiry letter to USAID requesting that the agency provide a complete list of SIKA projects by title, type of project, location, project status, and cost.² SIGAR used this information to categorize SIKA projects and determine the types of projects undertaken, project location, completion status, and the overall scope of SIKA operations in SIKA-North.

This fact sheet is the first in what is intended to be a series of reports that document SIKA's reach throughout Afghanistan, and provides detail of USAID's initiatives for the SIKA-North program. We provided a draft of this fact sheet to USAID on December 21, 2017. We received comments from USAID on January 11, 2018. In its comments, USAID reported that it began its stabilization programs in 2006 to establish basic linkages between provincial government institutions and local communities, and worked directly with communities to identify and respond to the local population's needs and concerns. USAID also stated that it concluded its last stabilization program in 2015, and now works to provide technical guidance to help the Afghan government deliver essential services to the people of Afghanistan. USAID's written comments are reproduced in appendix II. We also received technical comments from USAID, which we incorporated as appropriate.

We conducted this special project in Washington, D.C. from August 2017 to December 2017, in accordance with SIGAR's quality control standards. These standards require that we carry out work with integrity, objectivity, and independence, and provide information that is factually accurate and reliable. SIGAR performed

¹ In our January 2016, *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress*, we reported that USAID had "no plans to continue stabilization activities, and that they have not received resources from Congress for peace and security programing for FY 2015."

² SIGAR, *Inquiry Letter: Stability in Key Areas*, SIGAR 17-49-SP, June 28, 2017. USAID provided SIGAR with a total list of 6,277 SIKA projects that were implemented in the four SIKA regions between March 2012 and September 2015.



SIGAR

Office of the Special Inspector General
for Afghanistan Reconstruction

this special project under the authority of Public Law No. 110-181, as amended, and the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended. Should you or your staff have any questions about this project, please contact Mr. Matthew Dove, Director of Special Projects, at (703) 545-6051 or matthew.d.dove.civ@mail.mil.

Sincerely,

John F. Sopko
Special Inspector General
for Afghanistan Reconstruction

From September 2003 through December 2015, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) spent more than \$2.3 billion on stabilization activities and programs in Afghanistan. The programs were intended to solidify the U.S. military's gains in insecure areas by working with and supporting at-risk populations, extending the Afghan government's reach to unstable areas, providing job opportunities, building trust between citizens and their government, and encouraging local populations to take an active role in their development.³ One of these programs was the Stability in Key Areas (SIKA)-North program, which was intended to be a way to assist district and provincial level Afghan government officials in northern Afghanistan implement community-based projects to support institutions, processes, and projects that help foster stable political economic, and social development. Unlike other stabilization programs which focused on building the capacity of local communities to resist the influence of the Taliban, SIKA-North focused specifically on strengthening the capacity of district and provincial governments to target aspects of local instability.⁴ Between March 2012 and July 2015, SIKA-North supported provincial and district government bodies with goals of implementing Afghan-led community-based projects, and helping to build trust and legitimacy in local governments to deliver basic services and increase local economic capacity.

Efforts to assess the effectiveness of SIKA projects and other government stabilization efforts include multiple SIGAR reports and USAID-procured third-party assessments. For example, we reported in July 2013, that SIKA-North had only provided training sessions, meetings, and workshops; nothing tangible had actually been built, constructed, or delivered; and, at that time, "the SIKA North chief of party and the USAID contracting officer's representative both stated that they prefer having services provided to communities rather than by the communities."⁵ The third-party assessments procured by USAID included a March 2012, contract with Management Systems International Inc. (MSI) for the Measuring Impacts of Stabilization Initiatives (MISTI) program which was designed "to measure and map stabilization trends and impacts in areas such as security, rule of law, and economic activity; build a community of practice for rigorous monitoring and evaluation of Afghan reconstruction programs; and communicate lessons learned for the transition to Afghan-led sustainable development."⁶ In its mid-term performance evaluation of SIKA-North program, which examined a sample of 62 projects to determine whether they had an impact in reducing instability, MISTI found that overall SIKA-North activities and grants appeared to be having a stabilizing impact in the area.⁷ However, when evaluating the overall success of the SIKA program, MISTI found that SIKA program efforts were unsuccessful in reducing instability in Afghanistan, but helped to improve perceptions of community cohesion and resilience.⁸

³ In February 2010, USAID/Afghanistan formed the Stabilization Unit to unite all U.S. government stabilization planning and programs under one office. The unit's responsibilities were managing, coordinating, and monitoring and evaluating USAID's stabilization programs. In addition to SIKA, USAID's other stabilization programs in Afghanistan included the Quick Impact Projects, which concluded in 2007; the Local Governance and Community Development program, which concluded in 2011; the Community Based Stabilization Grants Program and Afghanistan Stabilization Initiative, which concluded in 2012; and the Community Development Programs, which concluded in 2013.

⁴ USAID believed that weak and ineffective local government structures fueled the insurgency and created instability, and that the lack of focused governance threatened to erode the legitimacy of provincial governments and their ability to deliver basic services. To help address instability at the local level in SIKA-North, SIKA-North's programming included programs to address factional influence, disparity in government capacity, absence of perceived legitimacy, lack of capacity and basic equipment, and problems with communication, access, and security.

⁵ SIGAR, *Stability in Key Areas (SIKA) Programs: After 16 Months and \$47 Million Spent, USAID Had Not Met Essential Program Objectives*, SIGAR Audit 13-16, July 29, 2013.

⁶ SIGAR, *USAID's Measuring Impacts of Stabilization Initiatives: Program Generally Achieved Its Objectives, but USAID's Lack of a Geospatial Data Policy and Standards Affected Its Implementation*, SIGAR Audit 17-10, October 26, 2016.

⁷ USAID, *Stability in Key Areas-North: Mid-Term Performance Evaluation*, Management Systems International, July 17, 2014, p. 2. According to MSI, MISTI's evaluation of SIKA-North used qualitative methods, including observation, interviews, and a desk review of project documents to evaluate SIKA-North performance up to January 31, 2014.

⁸ USAID, *Stability in Key Areas (SIKA) Program Final Performance Evaluation*, Management Systems International, September 2015, p. 5.

This fact sheet is the first in what is intended to be a series of reports that document SIKA's reach throughout Afghanistan, and provides detail of USAID's initiatives for SIKA North program. In June 2017, SIGAR sent an inquiry letter to USAID requesting that the agency provide a complete list of SIKA projects by title, type, location, completion status, and cost.⁹ In response to our inquiry, USAID provided SIGAR with an excel spreadsheet documenting all the SIKA projects implemented in the four SIKA regions between December 2011 and September 2015, including 825 projects in the SIKA-North region.¹⁰ The information USAID provided concerning SIKA was generated from historical data inputted into Afghan Info, the official system of record for the SIKA program.¹¹ SIGAR used the information in Afghan Info to categorize SIKA projects to determine the types of projects that were conducted, project location, completion status, and the overall scope of SIKA operations throughout Afghanistan. USAID did not require its implementing partners to report on, and Afghan Info does not contain, the costs associated with individual SIKA projects. As a result, USAID cannot to identify the specific costs spent by USAID, through its implementing partners, for each SIKA project using historical data from Afghan Info.¹²

While we did not assess the effectiveness of SIKA-North projects in reducing instability in northern Afghanistan, this fact sheet provides valuable information on the different types of projects conducted for stabilization operations in two provinces in northern Afghanistan. In conjunction with more formal assessments, this information can assist decision-makers and government officials in better understanding U.S. efforts and expenditures intended to help stabilize Afghan communities.

BACKGROUND

The SIKA program comprised four regional programs—East, West, South, and North—which supported USAID's stabilization efforts across Afghanistan. SIKA programs were implemented in a total of 17 provinces across Afghanistan. USAID created the four regional SIKA programs through separate contracts costing the U.S. government over \$306 million upon contract completion.¹³ See figure 1 for the location of each of the four SIKA regions.

⁹ SIGAR 17-49-SP.

¹⁰ The period of performance for SIKA-North started in March 2012. SIKA-East began in December 2011; SIKA-West began in January 2012; and SIKA-South began in April 2012. USAID reported a total of 1,055 projects reported for SIKA-South, 2,554 projects reported for SIKA-East, 1,843 projects reported for SIKA-West, and 825 projects reported for SIKA-North.

¹¹ According to USAID, Afghan Info allowed USAID to track the location of projects to the nearest geospatial coordinate, monitor the performance of development projects, and meet the Afghan government's requirement that USAID provide information to the Afghan Ministry of Finance in order to track ongoing and completed donor-sponsored development activities. USAID required that implementing partners record SIKA program information into Afghan Info on a quarterly basis.

¹² In 2015, SIGAR received project data from USAID on SIKA-North project implementation. The data we received in 2015 included contractor-reported data on the total obligated and disbursed amounts spent on 862 SIKA projects, as well as individual project start and completion dates. The contractor data we received reported a total cost of around \$11 million. Due to limitations in Afghan Info, the system of record, USAID cannot account for spending at the subnational level.

¹³ AECOM International Development, Inc. received the contracts for SIKA-East, SIKA-West, and SIKA-South, and DAI received the contract for SIKA-North. Each of the contracts had an 18-month base period of performance with additional 18-month option periods.

Figure 1 - Location of SIKA Program Regions



Source: SIGAR Audit 13-16/Stability in Key Areas.

In March 2012, USAID awarded Development Alternatives, Inc. (DAI) a \$23.7 million, 18-month cost-plus-fixed-fee contract to implement projects in the SIKA-North region. USAID extended DAI's period of performance for SIKA-North for an additional 22 months.¹⁴ Over the course of the contract, USAID spent approximately \$37 million to implement SIKA-North.

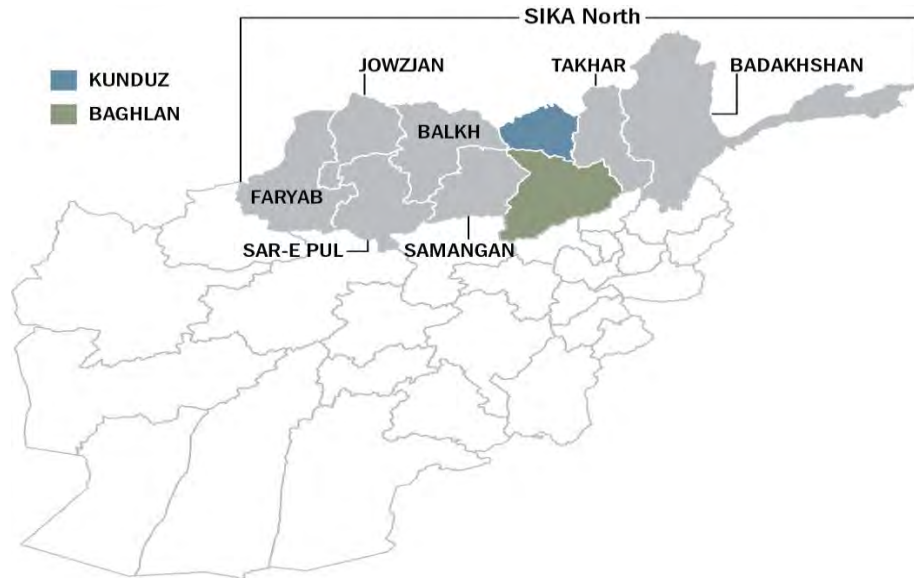
During the two and a half years of the SIKA-North program, USAID and DAI implemented SIKA projects in just two of the nine provinces in the SIKA-North area of responsibility—Baghlan and Kunduz.¹⁵ These provinces were selected for SIKA activities because they contained Key Terrain Districts (KTD), which were insecure and unstable areas identified by U.S. military commanders to be the most critical to the success of the U.S.

¹⁴ In May 2013, USAID issued DAI an additional 4-month extension to the contract's base year in addition to utilizing the 18-month option year.

¹⁵ According to the SIKA-North contract, DAI oversaw six subcontractors executing programs in SIKA-North. They included ACSOR Surveys, Pax Mondial, Sayara, The Liaison Office, Training Resources Group, and URS Corporation.

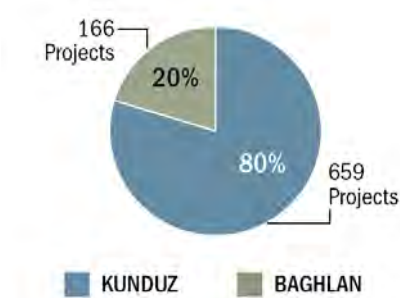
counterinsurgency mission.¹⁶ SIKA-North projects were implemented in KTDs to support the U.S. military's counterinsurgency strategy.¹⁷ See figure 2 for the location of SIKA-North program operations.

Figure 2 - Location of SIKA-North Program Operations



Source: SIGAR Audit 13-16/Stability in Key Areas.

Figure 3 - Total Projects by Province in SIKA-North



Source: SIGAR analysis of USAID's SIKA data.

USAID implemented 825 projects in Baghlan and Kunduz. In total, USAID and DAI executed SIKA projects in 9 districts across the two provinces. Of the 825 projects, the majority, or approximately 80 percent, were located in Kunduz, and 20 percent were located in Baghlan. According to USAID data, all 825 projects were marked as 100 percent complete. See figure 3 for the total number of SIKA projects implemented in SIKA-North.

¹⁶ KTDs were developed by the International Security Assistance Force and the government of Afghanistan in 2010. KTDs were areas where the bulk of the population was concentrated, and that contain centers of economic productivity, key infrastructure, and key commerce routes connecting such areas to each other and to the outside world. These districts roughly follow the line of the three major highways in Afghanistan through the most densely populated portions of the country. ISAF and the Afghan government identified a total of 80 KTDs, and an additional 41 area of interest districts in Afghanistan.

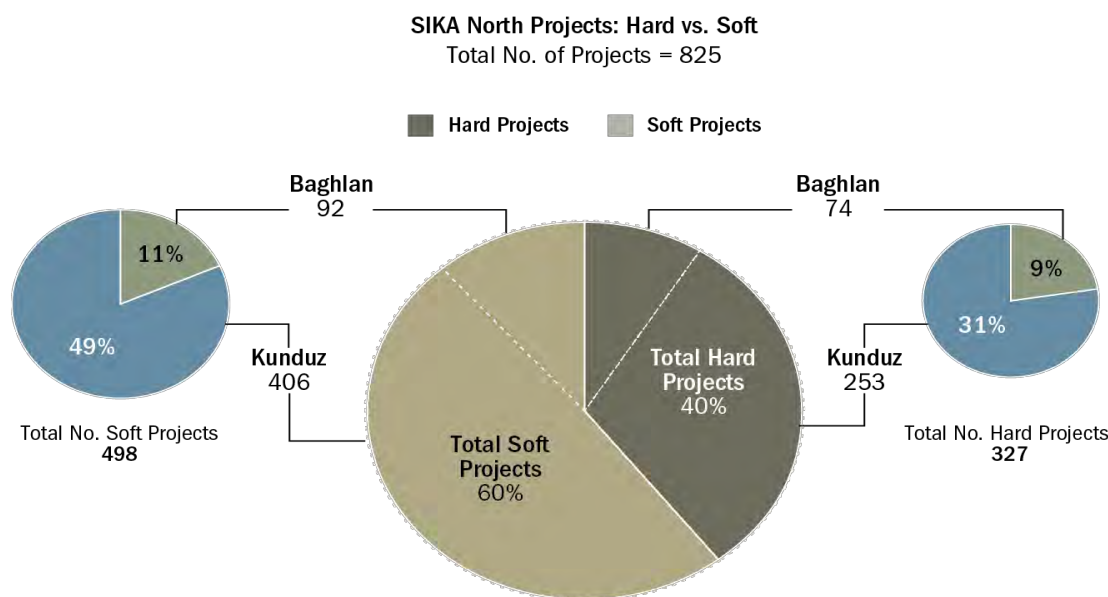
¹⁷ USAID required that DAI use community-based contracting, known as the Kandahar Model, when implementing projects in SIKA-North. The Kandahar Model emphasized (1) the use of local labor, (2) avoidance of red tape, and (3) less reliance on sub-contractors to enable the quick delivery of services. This approach was designed to help local government bodies gain experience with project prioritization, implementation, and monitoring, as well as financial management.

SIKA-NORTH PROJECTS

We categorized SIKA-North projects into two main categories—“hard projects” and “soft projects.” Hard projects consisted of infrastructure-focused activities, such as the construction of roads, wells, and schools.¹⁸ Soft projects consisted of capacity-building activities, such as providing supplies to schools, vocational training, education, and conflict resolution, and focused on reducing instability by building trust in local government bodies.

We found that approximately 60 percent of the projects implemented in SIKA-North (498 projects) were soft projects, and approximately 40 percent of the projects implemented in SIKA-North were hard projects (327 projects). The majority of both soft and hard projects were implemented in Kunduz. See Figure 4 for a description of the types of SIKA projects implemented in SIKA-North.

Figure 4 - Types of SIKA Projects in SIKA-North



Source: SIGAR analysis of USAID’s SIKA data.

SIKA-North Projects by Category

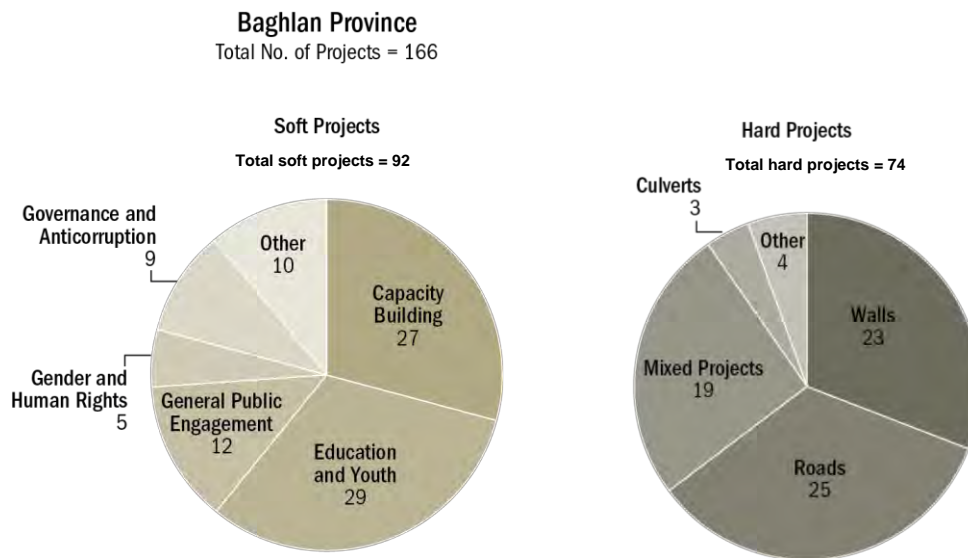
We analyzed the project descriptions of individual SIKA-North projects and grouped soft projects into 11 project subcategories. The 11 project subcategories include: agriculture, capacity building, conflict resolution, education and youth, election-related, gender and human rights, general public engagement, governance and anti-corruption, sports promotion and development, non-specific infrastructure (which included all hard projects), and other. We categorized hard projects in the infrastructure category into five subcategories. These include: walls, roads, culverts, mixed projects, which consist of more than one infrastructure project, and other. We assigned each individual SIKA project to one category. For an example of the types of projects that we placed into each category, see appendix I.

¹⁸ According to the USAID-procured MISTI evaluation, projects to build or rehabilitate roads were greatly valued by the community, improved access to government offices, and improved access to medical facilities, schools, and farms. Infrastructure projects, such as the building of protection walls or providing solar panels and drinking water were also valued by the community, as they provided protection over farm lands and enhanced local community services. See USAID, *Stability in Key Areas-North: Mid-Term Performance Evaluation*, Management Systems International, July 17, 2014, p. 18.

SIKA-North Projects in Baghlan

We found that of the 166 SIKA projects implemented in Baghlan, approximately, 55 percent (92 projects) were soft projects, and 45 percent (74 projects), were hard projects.¹⁹ The majority of soft projects (56) implemented in Baghlan were intended to support education or build the capacity of the local government to increase stability in the region. The majority of hard projects (48) in Baghlan consisted of constructing walls and roads. See figure 5 for the types of projects implemented in Baghlan.

Figure 5 – Types of SIKA Projects in Baghlan



Source: SIGAR analysis of USAID’s SIKA data.

Note: The ‘other’ category for Soft Projects includes the following categories: agriculture, conflict resolution, election-related, non-specific infrastructure, sports promotion and development

Note: The ‘other’ category for Hard Projects includes a variety of infrastructure projects, such as installing wells, providing electricity, installing community complaint boxes, and rehabilitating schools.

Approximately 56 of the soft projects implemented in Baghlan provided workshops, training classes, enhanced educational opportunities, or building the capacity of the local government to increase stability in the region. The majority of projects implemented to support education and youth (14), included providing equipment to schools. For example, two projects provided heaters and firewood to heat classrooms in local schools. Other soft projects aimed at capacity building and education included four projects to “help foster dialogue” between the community, teachers, and local government on district-level education issues. The majority of soft projects (20) implemented in the capacity building category were designed to support and train local government leaders to manage community concerns related to instability. For example, one project “coordinated a discussion” between local influential leaders and security stakeholders to discuss public concerns over security and the Afghan Local Police. In the third largest category, general public engagement, two projects were designed to support local community members. One project was designed to “connect the government with local youth” by celebrating international youth day. Another project celebrated international woman’s day.

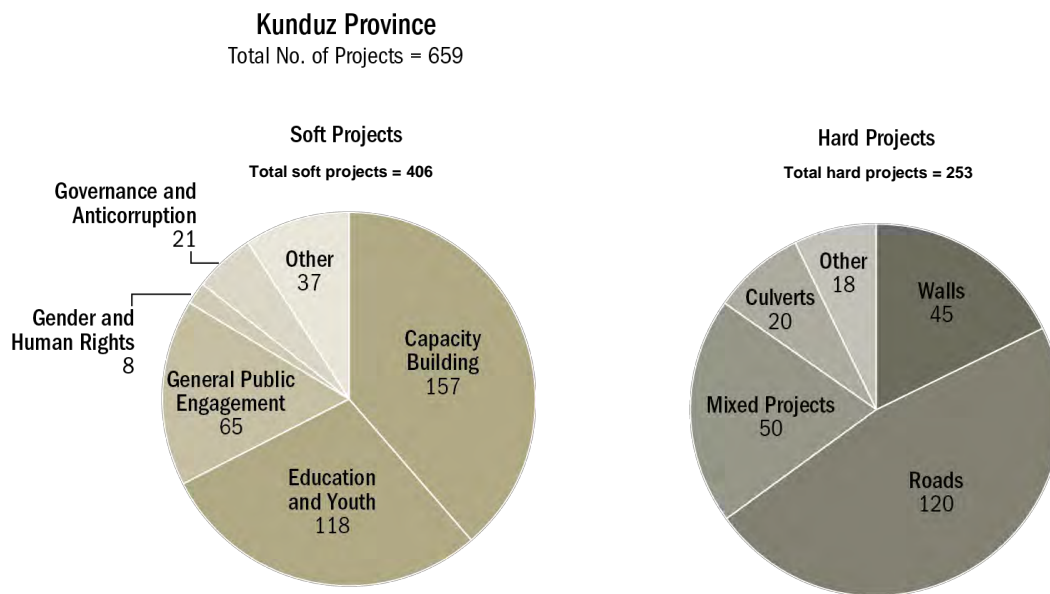
¹⁹ According to the USAID-procured MISTI evaluation, instability was addressed in Baghlan through infrastructure projects, outreach activities aimed at bridging the gap between the government and the people, and teacher trainings. USAID, *Stability in Key Areas-North: Mid-Term Performance Evaluation*, Management Systems International, July 17, 2014, pp. 14-15.

The majority of hard projects (48) in Baghlan consisted of constructing walls and roads. Walls were constructed primarily for protection around local villages and around schools. Road construction consisted of graveling roads for local villages or the rehabilitation of local roads. Mixed hard projects included the construction or repair of more than one type of hard infrastructure. For example, typically mixed projects included the construction of culverts and road graveling or rehabilitation.

SIKA Projects in Kunduz

We found that of the 659 projects implemented in Kunduz, 62 percent (406 projects) were soft projects, and 38 percent (253 projects), were hard projects.²⁰ Like in Baghlan, the majority of soft projects (275) implemented in Kunduz were designed to organize workshops, training classes, or facilitate discussions in support of enhancing educational opportunities or building the capacity of the local government to increase stability in the region. Approximately half of all hard projects (120) implemented in Kunduz were for the graveling or rehabilitation of roads, and mixed projects typically included the construction of culverts and road graveling or rehabilitation. Wall construction, the third largest hard project category, was primarily for protection around local villages and schools. One project in the other category was designed to respond to grievances against the local police through “the installation of community complaint boxes.” See Figure 6 for the different types of projects implemented in Kunduz.

Figure 6— Types of SIKA Projects in Kunduz



Source: SIGAR analysis of USAID’s SIKA data.

Note: The ‘other’ category for Soft Projects includes the following categories: agriculture, conflict resolution, election-related, non-specific infrastructure, sports promotion and development. The ‘other’ category for Hard Projects includes a variety of infrastructure projects, such as installing wells, providing electricity, installing community complaint boxes, and rehabilitating schools.

²⁰ According to the USAID-procured MISTI evaluation, the projects that resulted in the greatest reduction in instability in Kunduz were effective at working through traditional Afghan structures to address local and tribal conflicts. See USAID, *Stability in Key Areas (SIKA) Program Final Performance Evaluation*, Management Systems International, September 2015, p. 19.

Approximately half (62) of the soft projects intended to support education and youth projects in Kunduz went to providing equipment or supplies for schools, and the majority of capacity building projects (135) were designed to support and train local government leaders to manage community concerns related to instability. For example, one program was designed to coordinate a meeting between the provincial Governor and local stakeholders to discuss election safety. Another program sought to strengthen the relationship between community elders and the district Governor “to improve communication between the local government and people.” Projects related to general public engagement, the third largest project category, typically sought to increase the community’s perception of local government services. For example, 28 projects in this category were designed solely to publicize on-going and completed infrastructure projects, such as roads. Five projects sought to increase stability through poetry readings.²¹ Approximately, half of the hard projects (120) implemented Kunduz were for the gravelling or rehabilitation of roads. Like in Baghlan, mixed projects typically included the construction of culverts and road gravelling or rehabilitation. Similarly, walls were constructed primarily for protection around local villages and schools.

AGENCY COMMENTS

We provided a draft of this fact sheet to USAID on December 21, 2017. We received comments from USAID on January 11, 2018. In its comments, USAID reported that it began its stabilization programs in 2006 to establish basic linkages between provincial government institutions and local communities, and worked directly with communities to identify and respond to the local population’s needs and concerns. USAID also stated that it concluded its last stabilization program in 2015, and now works to provide technical guidance to help the Afghan government deliver essential services to the people of Afghanistan. USAID’s written comments are reproduced in appendix II. We also received technical comments from USAID, which we incorporated as appropriate.

²¹ According to the USAID-procured MISTI evaluation, activities such as poetry reading competitions had questionable impacts on stability. See USAID, *Stability in Key Areas-North: Mid-Term Performance Evaluation*, Management Systems International, July 17, 2014, p. 24.

APPENDIX I – PROJECT CATEGORIES AND PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS

We used professional judgment to assess SIKA project descriptions, and place each into designated project subcategories. We assigned each individual SIKA project to one subcategory. The categories are listed below, and contain examples of the different types of projects we placed into each category.

Table 1 - Examples of Project Descriptions Assessed and Placed into Each of the SIKA Project Categories

SubCategory	Sample Project Descriptions	
Agriculture	Irrigation Agriculture outreach Fruit and vegetable processing Water dividers Canals Dams	Water reservoir construction Water gates Tractor repair training Crop-specific Training Plant, Pest, and Disease Training
Capacity Building	Vocational training, such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inventory asset management • Management and leadership • Financial management • Procurement • Fundraising 	District Social Workers (DSW) Program SIKA local program oversight meetings Advocacy and lobby SIKA board member training Monitoring of projects Stability Working Group Strategy and Planning
Conflict Resolution	Conflict resolution training Conflict Resolution Committee Peace journalism training Negotiation strategy training Counter narcotics	Installation of community complaint boxes Peace meeting Tribal Conflict Resolution Committee Resolve tribal conflict
Education and Youth	All school-related activities, including construction of schools and playgrounds Teacher training Playground construction University exam prep Public awareness for education	Provide school supplies Youth English courses Community, teachers, and education dialogue Pashto literacy courses Celebration of teacher day
Election-Related	Raise awareness of elections Civic outreach voting for gender	Civic education for elections Election logistics and support
Gender and Human Rights	Gender training Human rights Women's rights Gender mainstreaming training Gender Topics Public Outreach	Vocational training for women <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in handicraft • bead weaving • tailoring (sewing) • embroidery • public speaking
General Public Engagement	Communications and outreach Project promotion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Radio broadcasts • mobile theater • Posters • Photographs 	Public relations Signboard Media affairs Reporting on trends in SIKA projects Volunteer coordination

Governance and Anti-Corruption	Anticorruption training Linking citizens to leaders HR and civil service law Stability and Security Meeting Governance and Development Coordinators	Access to GIRA services Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction Management training Disaster and environmental management
Infrastructure	Walls (retaining wall, protection wall) Culverts (box culverts, slab culverts) Roads and road rehabilitation Siphons Wells Building rehabilitation	Stream construction Gutters Intake gates Supplying electricity Mixed Projects (two or more infrastructure projects funded under one project)
Non-Specific Infrastructure	Testing of construction materials Provision of plastic water containers for water storage	Provision of furniture or equipment to schools
Sports Promotion and Development	Cricket field construction Football field construction Soccer team publicity	Volleyball playground construction Sports Program Development
Other	Not Identifiable/Unable to Determine Unrelated to categories above	Provision of furniture and office equipment

Source: SIGAR analysis of USAID data.




USAID | AFGHANISTAN
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

MEMORANDUM

January 11, 2018

TO: John F. Sopko
Special Inspector General for
Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR)

FROM: Herbert Smith, Mission Director 

SUBJECT: Mission Response to Draft SIGAR Fact Sheet titled
“Information on USAID’s Stability in Key Areas Program
– Northern Region, Afghanistan” (SIGAR-18-XX-SP)

REF: SIGAR Transmittal email dated 12/22/2017

USAID thanks SIGAR for the opportunity to comment on this fact sheet. Beginning in 2006, in coordination with the Department of Defense (DoD), Department of State, and the Afghan Government, USAID initiated stabilization programs to establish basic linkages between provincial government institutions and local communities. USAID worked directly with communities to identify and respond to the local populations’ needs and concerns. USAID’s efforts included training local government officials in how to manage local projects, producing educational materials that informed the public on how to tap into government services, and providing support for small-scale public works projects. Over the years, we have gradually shifted our programming away from stabilization, towards providing technical guidance to help the Afghan Government deliver essential services to the people of Afghanistan. Our last stabilization program concluded in 2015, as this fact sheet notes.

USAID monitored and evaluated our stabilization programs regularly. As part of these efforts, USAID designed the Measuring Impacts of Stabilization Initiatives (MISTI) project, the largest and most comprehensive trends analysis and impact evaluation of stabilization interventions the U.S. government has ever undertaken, to independently evaluate the impact of our stabilization programs and develop lessons learned to inform our work moving forward. Thanks to MISTI, USAID was able to adapt our projects as they were being implemented to make them more effective. We are pleased

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that, as the SIGAR fact sheet notes, “MISTI found that overall SIKA-North activities and grants appeared to be having a stabilizing impact in the area.”

Attachments: Appendix A – Technical Comments

**cc: Ravi Suaris, Controller, USAID/Afghanistan
Joan Simon Bartholomaeus, U.S. Embassy/Kabul
OAPA Audit**

This project was conducted
under project code SP-174.

SIGAR's Mission

The mission of the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) is to enhance oversight of programs for the reconstruction of Afghanistan by conducting independent and objective audits, inspections, and investigations on the use of taxpayer dollars and related funds. SIGAR works to provide accurate and balanced information, evaluations, analysis, and recommendations to help the U.S. Congress, U.S. agencies, and other decision-makers to make informed oversight, policy, and funding decisions to:

- improve effectiveness of the overall reconstruction strategy and its component programs;
- improve management and accountability over funds administered by U.S. and Afghan agencies and their contractors;
- improve contracting and contract management processes; prevent fraud, waste, and abuse; and
- advance U.S. interests in reconstructing Afghanistan.

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- Phone DSN Afghanistan: 318-237-3912 ext. 7303
- Phone International: +1-866-329-8893
- Phone DSN International: 312-664-0378
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