

SIGAR

**Special Inspector General for
Afghanistan Reconstruction**

OFFICE OF SPECIAL PROJECTS

STATE DEPARTMENT'S GOOD PERFORMERS
INITIATIVE: STATUS OF SEVEN COMPLETED
PROJECTS IN BAGHLAN PROVINCE



JULY 2018

SIGAR-18-59-SP



SIGAR

Office of the Special Inspector General
for Afghanistan Reconstruction

July 16, 2018

The Honorable Kirsten D. Madison
Assistant Secretary, Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs

The Honorable John R. Bass
United States Ambassador, U.S. Embassy, Kabul, Afghanistan

Dear Assistant Secretary Madison and Ambassador Bass:

I am writing to inform you of the results of site inspections conducted by SIGAR at seven Good Performers Initiative (GPI) infrastructure projects in Baghlan province, Afghanistan funded by the State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL).¹ GPI provided direct assistance to the Afghan Ministry of Counter Narcotics and off-budget funding to incentivize provincial governors' counter narcotics activities.² The GPI program was intended to offer Afghan provincial governors a tangible way of demonstrating to their constituents the benefits of reducing poppy cultivation.

The seven projects examined in this report were completed at a cost of about \$2.28 million. We conducted site inspections as part of our ongoing effort to verify the location and operating conditions of facilities built, refurbished, or funded by the U.S. as part of the reconstruction effort in Afghanistan.³ This review shows that the INL-maintained location information for the seven infrastructure projects was accurate. In addition, three of the seven projects— Road Structures in Andarab District, the Provincial Conference Hall, and the Provincial Council Administrative Building—appeared to be in generally good, useable condition. However, we observed structural damage or other problems at the other four projects. Specifically, the class-C sports stadium's structure and grounds were in severe disrepair, and, according to the stadium staff member we spoke with, the two staff members who work at the stadium had not received their salaries for the past 16 months. At another site, a portion of the irrigation intake canal was destroyed which hindered its utility. Finally, while structurally sound and in generally good condition, both GPI-funded schools in Baghlan had serious construction design flaws, and one showed problems with electricity and water systems.

In order to help protect the INL investment into these infrastructure projects and help ensure they are maintained and functioning as intended, we recommend that INL alert the appropriate Afghan ministries of the disrepair and lack of functioning systems we observed at the schools, sports stadium, and irrigation intake canal.

¹ One additional GPI project was completed in Baghlan at a cost of \$159,680 but we were unable to inspect the site due to security concerns.

² Direct assistance is a type of on-budget assistance that includes host country contracts and government-to-government awards (see SIGAR, *Direct Assistance: Review of Processes and Controls used by CSTC-A, State, and USAID*, SIGAR 15-14- SP, October 2014, p. 2). Off-budget procurements used funds that are separate from the Afghan national budget and not managed through Afghan government systems.

³ See, e.g., SIGAR, *Review Letter: State Department's Good Performers Initiative: Status of Two Completed Projects in Kunduz Province, Afghanistan*, SIGAR 18-34-SP, March 20, 2018; SIGAR, *Review Letter: State Department's Good Performers Initiative: Status of Six Completed Projects in Faryab Province, Afghanistan*, SIGAR 18-21-SP, January 10, 2018.

We provided a draft of this report to INL for comment on June 19, 2018. INL provided comments on July 5, 2018. In its comments on a draft of this report, INL acknowledged that the two schools contained inner staircases, even though the schools were only one-story buildings. INL stated that the schools were constructed using a “standard design that was provided to GPI by the Ministry of Education’s (MOE) Design Department” and that the “staircases allow for possible future structural expansion of the school.” While we did not have access to the schools design drawings, we believe INL’s approval of that design and its decision to construct staircases leading directly into the ceilings of one-story schools is unsupported and that construction of these staircases resulted in wasted funds. First, we saw no assessment determining that the schools may need to be expanded. Second, if the schools were to ever need expansion, based on INL’s assertion regarding the design and construction, at least a portion of the schools’ current roofing would need to be destroyed, a second floor built, and a new roof constructed. Such a substantial effort could include the construction of a complete and usable staircase, if the need were to ever actually materialize. INL also stated that once formal handover of the schools had occurred, the schools’ electrical wiring and clean water issues were the responsibility of the MOE’s provincial directorate.

Regarding the disrepair we observed at the class-C sports stadium, INL stated that Baghlan Province’s Afghan Olympic Committee took over responsibility for ongoing maintenance of the facility on January 13, 2014, to include all necessary repairs and payment of staff salaries. We agree, but we believe that INL has a responsibility to help protect its investment and should alert appropriate Afghan authorities of the poor state of the facility. Finally, INL pointed out that the damage at the irrigation intake canal occurred while the project was still under warranty. GPI notified the contractor of its responsibility to correct the damage. INL was notified in late June, 2018 by the contractor that the repair had been completed. INL’s comments are reproduced in appendix I.

We conducted this special project in Washington, D.C. and in Baghlan and Kabul, Afghanistan, from October 2017 to June 2018 in accordance with the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency (CIGIE) Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation. SIGAR performed this work under the authority of Public Law No. 110-181, as amended, and the Inspector General Act of 1978 and the Inspector General Reform Act of 2008. 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

In 2007, the Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) initiated the Good Performers Initiative (GPI) program in Afghanistan. The program provided direct assistance to the Afghan Ministry of Counter Narcotics and off-budget funding to incentivize provincial governors' counter narcotics activities. The GPI program was intended to offer Afghan provincial governors a tangible way of demonstrating to their constituents the benefits of reducing poppy cultivation.

Despite this laudable goal, no new GPI projects have been approved since April 30, 2016, and INL decided to end the program, due to the Afghan government's inability to implement the program efficiently and effectively.⁴ Despite cancellation of the program, understanding the current condition of completed GPI projects may be instructive for any similar future programs. For example, INL is providing funding to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) for an alternative development project called Boost Alternative Development Intervention through Licit Livelihoods. This program is expected to supplement activities previously performed under GPI and follow through on INL's commitments to those provinces most affected by the GPI cancellation.

As of February 28, 2018, INL had provided contracts for 286 GPI projects in Afghanistan, with a total value of \$126.3 million.⁵ This review focused on seven GPI infrastructure projects completed in Baghlan province between 2010 and 2016 at a cost of about \$2.28 million. Prior to September 2010, INL directly engaged contractors to complete projects in Baghlan province using off-budget procurement.⁶ For projects initiated after September 2010, in Baghlan province, INL used a cost-reimbursement method to disburse its direct assistance funds for GPI, which required both the ministry and State INL to review and approve invoices and supporting documentation prior to funds disbursement.⁷

In order to carry out our work, we reviewed relevant documentation, such as GPI project data sheets, GPI-INL monthly project progress reports for Baghlan province, and building contracts between the Ministry of Counter Narcotics and Afghan construction companies. We also conducted site inspections at each of the seven project locations. At each site inspection, our team took time, date, and location-stamped photographs. Wherever appropriate, we also completed the following activities during the course of site inspections:

- An overall assessment of each project (outside and inside), recording, among other information, the geospatial coordinates of the project, whether the project appeared to be open and operational, and whether the project had access to electricity and water;
- An interview with a staff member on the site of the completed project to gain insight into the operational status and maintenance arrangements for the project; and
- An interview with a member of the community served by the project to gain insight into the extent to which the project has benefitted the community.

We conducted our site inspections in December 2017. Our inspections were limited in scope to a walk through and did not include comprehensive engineering evaluations of structures, or complete technical testing of key systems (for example, electrical or water). We also assessed the reliability of

⁴ See, Afghan Ministry of Counter Narcotics, *Good Performers Initiative (GPI), Annual Report, 2014*, pp. 8, 38-39. The report states that the Ministry had "unprofessional" staff responsible for procurement which was slowing down implementation. The 2014 Ministry report also stated that the Ministry of Finance was slow to administer payments, further hampering project implementation.

⁵ Of the 286 projects, 262 projects have been completed; 24 were still in progress as of February 28, 2018

⁶ Off budget procurement encompasses donor funds that are excluded from the Afghan national budget not managed through Afghan government systems.

⁷ INL also required, among other things, the Ministry of Counter Narcotics to provide bank statements, monthly reports on the use of the funds and photographs of projects in various stages of completion (see SIGAR, *Direct Assistance: Review of Processes and Controls used by CSTC-A, State, and USAID*, SIGAR 15-14-SP, October 2014, p. 4).

INL-maintained location coordinates for the projects and the extent to which the projects were being maintained and used as intended.⁸

LOCATION INFORMATION AND OPERATIONAL CONDITIONS AT THE SEVEN GPI INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS WE VISITED IN BAGHLAN PROVINCE

Using the geospatial coordinates obtained from INL as a starting point, we were able to confirm the location of the seven infrastructure projects.⁹ Our site inspections revealed that the actual geospatial coordinates for the seven projects were within one kilometer from the coordinates provided by INL.

As SIGAR has stressed previously, robust program oversight requires specific knowledge of the project location, and accurate location information is critical to ensuring that the project is being maintained and used for its intended purpose.¹⁰ INL has recognized the importance of accurate geospatial information, and demonstrated a commitment to ensuring the information it maintains is accurate.

Our site visits to the seven GPI-funded infrastructure projects in Baghlan province also revealed that each project was being used as intended and community members we spoke with found them to be very useful. However, we found one project (a sports complex) that was in severe disrepair, and where the employees of the facility stated that they had not been paid for the last 16 months. We also found that one of the two schools lacked functional electric and water systems as required by its contract, and both schools had significant design or construction flaws.

Class-C Stadium

The Afghan Ministry of Counter Narcotics signed a contract in October, 2010 with M/s Ariana Emroz Construction Company using GPI funding to construct a class-C stadium and supporting infrastructure (water, sewage, power systems, etc.) in Baghlan province, Afghanistan. In addition to the stadium building, the facility contained a soccer field, volleyball and basketball courts, and a running track. The project was completed in June 2011, at a cost of \$576,504.

The stadium was vacant when we visited it in December 2017. The structure and grounds were in severe disrepair. The sports fields lacked a functioning irrigation system, the basketball court had no hoops, and sections of the bleachers and overhead roof were falling apart. The stadium building was riddled with bullet holes, most of its windows were either broken or gone, it lacked electricity, and the interior rooms were filthy and showed no sign of maintenance. Stadium officials and a community member we spoke with told us that the Taliban attacked the area in the summer of 2017, and that the Afghan National Police confronted them by taking up positions within the stadium. The ensuing battle caused much of the exterior damage. Further, according to the stadium staff member we spoke with, the two staff members who work at the stadium had not received their salaries for the past 16 months. Photos 1-4 show the poor condition of the stadium.

⁸ Our objectives were not to determine the feasibility of individual projects or whether GPI achieved its broader goals related to sustained reductions in poppy production, and we did not assess the extent to which projects met program requirements or fulfilled program objectives. Similarly, this review did not assess the contracting process used by the program or the extent to which program funds were accurately and fully accounted for by program officials.

⁹ We used the geospatial coordinates for each infrastructure project based on the August 2017 Ministry of Counter Narcotics GPI data sheet for Baghlan province provided by INL.

¹⁰ Previous SIGAR letters that stressed the importance of accurate geospatial information include: SIGAR, *Review Letter: Good Performers Initiative: Status of Two Completed Projects in Kunduz Province, Afghanistan*, SIGAR 18-34-SP, March 20, 2018; SIGAR, *Review Letter: Good Performers Initiative: Status of Six Completed Projects in Faryab Province, Afghanistan*, SIGAR 18-21-SP, January 10, 2018.

Photo 1 – Broken Windows and Bullet Holes From Small Arms Fire



Source: SIGAR, December 21, 2017.

Photo 2 – Damaged Inside of Stadium Building



Source: SIGAR, December 21, 2017.

Photo 3 – Damaged Roof over Bleachers



Source: SIGAR, December 21, 2017.

Photo 4 – Broken and Poorly Maintained Bathroom



Source: SIGAR, December 21, 2017.

12 Classroom Primary School in Markazi District

The Afghan Ministry of Counter Narcotics signed a contract in January 2013 with M/s Yusuf Abdul Hadi Construction Company using GPI funding to construct a 12 classroom primary school and supporting infrastructure (water, sewage, power systems, etc.) in the Markazi district of Baghlan province. The project was completed in May 2014, at a cost of \$276,622.

When we visited the school in December 2017, classes were not in session due to winter break. However, the building appeared structurally sound and we did not observe any major issues with the foundation, walls, or roof, and the windows and doors were intact. The school had clean drinking water and functional toilets. However, the school did not have access to reliable electricity, as required by the contract. In addition, we observed what appeared to be a significant design or construction flaw at the school. Specifically, the contract required construction of two staircases in the school's main hall, even though the school itself was supposed to be only one level. The contractor appears to have reconciled these requirements by building a staircase leading directly into the ceiling. We did not have access to the design drawings or invoices, but this observation indicates a lack of oversight of both the design and construction. Photos 5-6 show the outside of the school and a classroom. Photo 7 shows the improperly designed and constructed stairway.

Photo 5 –School Exterior



Source: SIGAR, December 7, 2017

Photo 6 –Classroom Interior



Source: SIGAR, December 7, 2017

Photo 7 –Staircase to Nowhere



Source: SIGAR, December 7, 2017

12 Classroom Girls' High School in Deh Salah District

The Afghan Ministry of Counter Narcotics signed a contract in January 2013 with M/s Hoshanyar Construction Company using GPI funding to construct a 12 classroom girls' high school and supporting infrastructure (water, sewage, power systems, etc.) in Deh Salah district of Baghlan province. The project was completed in April 2014, at a cost of \$330,678.

When we visited the school in December 2017, classes were not in session and students were on winter break. The school appeared structurally sound, and we did not observe any major concerns with the foundation, roof, or walls, and the school's windows and doors were intact. However, the school did not have access to clean drinking water or reliable electricity, both of which were required by the contract. In addition, as with the other GPI-funded school in Markazi district, we observed what appeared to be a significant design or construction flaw at the school. Specifically, the contract required construction of two staircases in the school's main hall, even though the school itself was

supposed to be only one level. The contractor appears to have reconciled these requirements by building a staircase leading directly into the ceiling. We did not have access to the design drawings or invoices, but this observation indicates a lack of oversight of both the design and construction. Photos 8-9 show the exterior and interior of the school. Photo 10 shows the improperly constructed stairway.

Photo 8 - School Exterior



Source: SIGAR, December 16, 2017

Photo 9 - School Interior



Source: SIGAR, December 16, 2017

Photo 10 - Staircase to Nowhere



Source: SIGAR, December 16, 2017.

Road Structures in Andarab District

Using GPI funding provided by INL, the Afghan Ministry of Counter Narcotics signed a contract in October 2009 with M/s Ettifaq Muhammadi Construction Company for the construction of retaining walls measuring 1.2 kilometers and 28 culverts in Baghlan's Andarab district. The project was completed in December 2010, at a cost of \$521,679, and turned over to the Afghan government. When we inspected the road structures in December 2017, we found them to be in generally good condition and well-maintained. Photo 11 shows a culvert beside the road and Photo 12 shows a road retaining wall.

Photo 11 – Culvert by Andarab Road



Source: SIGAR, December 16, 2017

Photo 12 – Culvert and Retaining Wall for Andarab Road



Source: SIGAR, December 16, 2017

Baghlan Provincial Conference Hall

Using GPI funding, the Afghan Ministry of Counter Narcotics signed a contract in January 2011, with M/s Naway Motahed Construction Company for the construction of a conference hall and supporting infrastructure (water, sewage, power systems, etc.) in Baghlan province, Afghanistan. The project was completed in January 2012, at a cost of \$326,145.

The conference hall was vacant when we visited it in December 2017. A security guard allowed us to enter the hall, and the only other staff member present was a member of the cleaning crew who informed us that the hall is used for official ceremonies, and none were underway during our visit. The hall did not appear to have any major structural deficiencies, and it had access to water and electricity, the windows and doors were intact, and the toilets were functioning. In general, the conference hall appeared to be in good, usable condition. Photos 13-14 show the outside and inside of the conference hall.

Photo 13 –Conference Hall Exterior



Source: SIGAR, December 25, 2017

Photo 14 –Conference Hall Interior



Source: SIGAR, December 25, 2017

Provincial Council Administrative Building

The Afghan Ministry of Counter Narcotics signed a contract in December 2011 with M/s Ron srak Construction Company using GPI funding to construct an administrative building and supporting infrastructure (water, sewage, power systems etc.) for the Baghlan Provincial Council. The project was completed in January 2013, at a cost of \$206,875.

The building was open and in-use when we visited in December. Generally, we found the building to be well maintained and in good condition. The building had access to clean water and electricity, the windows and doors were intact, and the toilets were functioning, clean, and well-maintained. We did observe what appeared to be structural cracks and settlement along the building's foundation and along some of the exterior walls, but the damage did not appear extreme and was not hindering operations. Photos 15-16 show the outside and inside of the Provincial Council Building.

Photo 15 – Front of Provincial Council Building



Source: SIGAR, December 25, 2017

Photo 16 – Interior Office



Source: SIGAR, December 25, 2017

Deh Salah Irrigation Intake Canal

The Afghan Ministry of Counter Narcotics signed a contract in April 2016 with Ramin Ramish Construction and Road Building Company and Khalid Yaqin Construction, Road Building and Building Material Company using GPI funding to construct an irrigation intake canal in Deh Salah district of Baghlan province. The project was completed in December 2016, at a cost of \$44,435.

We found the irrigation intake canal to be in disrepair and not functioning as intended. Specifically, one 20 meter wall of the canal was destroyed, reportedly by seasonal flooding in 2017, and had not been repaired. The engineer we interviewed stated that, when fully functional, the canal was very useful to the surrounding community because it provided the surrounding area with water to irrigate their crops. Photos 17 and 18 show the intake canal and the flood damage section of the intake canal structure.

Photo 17 – Intake Canal



Source: SIGAR, December 18, 2017

Photo 18 – Intake Canal Damaged by Flood



Source: SIGAR, December 18, 2017

CONCLUSION

Our review showed that the INL-maintained location information for the seven infrastructure projects was accurate. In addition, three of the seven projects—the road structures in Andarab District, the Provincial Conference Hall, and the Provincial Council Administrative Building—appeared to be in generally good, useable condition. However, we observed structural damage and other problems at the other four projects. Specifically, the class-C sports stadium’s structure and grounds were in severe disrepair, and, according to the stadium staff member we spoke with, the two staff members who work at the stadium had not received their salaries for the past 16 months. In addition, a portion of the irrigation intake canal was destroyed which hindered its utility. Finally, while structurally sound and in generally good condition, both of GPI-funded schools had what appeared to be erroneously constructed stairways that led directly into ceilings, and one had issues with electricity and water systems required by the contract.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to help protect the INL investment into these infrastructure projects and help ensure they are maintained and functioning as intended, we recommend that INL alert the appropriate Afghan ministries of the disrepair and lack of functioning systems we observed at the schools, sports stadium, and irrigation intake canal.

AGENCY COMMENTS

We provided a draft of this report to INL for comment on June 19, 2018. INL provided comments on July 5, 2018. In its comments on a draft of this report, INL acknowledged that the two schools contained inner staircases, even though the schools were only one-story buildings. INL stated that the schools were constructed using a “standard design that was provided to GPI by the Ministry of Education’s (MOE) Design Department” and that the “staircases allow for possible future structural expansion of the school.” While we did not have access to the schools design drawings, we believe INL’s approval of that design and its decision to construct staircases leading directly into the ceilings of one-story schools is unsupported and that construction of these staircases resulted in wasted funds. First, we saw no assessment determining that the schools may need to be expanded. Second, if

the schools were to ever need expansion, based on INL's assertion regarding the design and construction, at least a portion of the schools' current roofing would need to be destroyed, a second floor built, and a new roof constructed. Such a substantial effort could include the construction of a complete and usable staircase, if the need were to ever actually materialize. INL also stated that once formal handover of the schools had occurred, the schools' electrical wiring and clean water issues were the responsibility of the MOE's provincial directorate.

Regarding the disrepair we observed at the class-C sports stadium, INL stated that Baghlan Province's Afghan Olympic Committee took over responsibility for ongoing maintenance of the facility on January 13, 2014, to include all necessary repairs and payment of staff salaries. We agree, but we believe that INL has a responsibility to help protect its investment and should alert appropriate Afghan authorities of the poor state of the facility. Finally, INL pointed out that the damage at the irrigation intake canal occurred while the project was still under warranty. GPI notified the contractor of its responsibility to correct the damage. INL was notified in late June, 2018 by the contractor that the repair had been completed. INL's comments are reproduced in appendix I.

APPENDIX I - COMMENTS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

July 3, 2018

Mr. Matthew Dove
Director, Special Projects
Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction
1550 Crystal Drive, Suite 900
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Mr. Dove:

The Department of State welcomes the opportunity to comment on this draft Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) report entitled, “State Department’s Good Performers Initiative: Status of Seven Completed Projects in Baghlan Province” (dated July 2018). The Department respects SIGAR’s role in safeguarding U.S. taxpayer investment, and we share your goals of implementing programs free from waste, fraud, and abuse.

In its report, SIGAR found that the structure and grounds of the class-C sports stadium were in disrepair. As SIGAR’s interviews with stadium officials and community members revealed, the Taliban attacked the area in the summer of 2017, and the Afghan National Police engaged the Taliban, taking up positions within the stadium. Baghlan Province’s Afghan Olympic Committee (AOC) took over responsibility for ongoing maintenance of the facility on January 13, 2014, including all necessary repairs and payment of staff salaries.

SIGAR also found that two school buildings funded under the GPI program included inner staircases even though the schools are one-story buildings. INL would like to clarify that this is a standard design that was provided to GPI by the Ministry of Education’s (MOE) Design Department. The staircases allow for possible future structural expansion of the school in the event that the number of students going to the school increases. SIGAR further noted concerns about the lack of electricity and water systems at the schools. INL would like to clarify that the interior wiring and electrical systems and a water well with a hand pump to provide clean water were installed as required by the project contracts. Following construction completion and formal handover to MOE, the MOE’s provincial directorate is responsible for ongoing maintenance and operations of the buildings, including ensuring that the buildings are connected to city power and have access to clean water.

In addition, SIGAR found structural damage to the Deh Salah irrigation intake canal. INL would like to note that the damage occurred while the project was still under warranty. GPI notified the contractor of its responsibility to correct the damage on April 4, 2018. GPI reported that the contractor subsequently notified GPI that the required repair work was completed in late June 2018. GPI is now in the process of verifying completion of the repair work.

The Department of State appreciates SIGAR's thorough examination of U.S. foreign assistance programming in Afghanistan's counternarcotics sector. INL looks forward to continuing to work with SIGAR and other relevant authorities on these issues.

Sincerely,



Patricia A. Thomas
Acting Executive Director
Bureau of International
Narcotics and Law
Enforcement Affairs

This project was conducted under code SP-189

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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