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AFGHANISTAN

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FACT SHEET

Afghan Agriculture Research and Extension Development Program (AGRED)

OVERVIEW

The objective of the five-year AGRED program is to enhance the capacity of the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) and the Directorates of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (DAILs) at provincial and district levels. The aim is to sustainably develop and deploy technology and knowledge-based solutions, and provide extension and advisory services to Afghan farmers and herders.

MAIN ACTIVITIES

AGRED activities will be carried out through two program mechanisms. Under the first mechanism, Roots of Peace, the technical support contractor, will provide technical support services and capacity building to MAIL in support of MAIL-implemented AGRED activities. The second mechanism is an on-budget activity to be implemented by MAIL.

The extension and research activities to be implemented by MAIL with on-budget support include: (1) more effective communication to the Afghan farm community in terms of public outreach and education regarding agricultural best practices and technology (e.g. improved technology and knowledge transfer and provision of advisory services in fifty districts); (2) applied research and extension activities to support and sustain Afghanistan's capacity to improve production in its agricultural economy; (3) training and capacity building of research and extension staff to deliver services to Afghan farm communities; and (4) improved applied research and extension infrastructure in seven target sub-national research stations and fifty target districts in twenty eight provinces.

Off-budget technical support will include embedded technical experts (mostly Afghans) and on the job-training to support MAIL's design and implementation of research and extension activities, both at the national and sub-national levels.

PROGRESS TO DATE

- Working with MAIL, USAID has drafted a performance based benchmark system for on-budget funding. This system is designed to assist MAIL in making institutional and sustainable improvements to systems involved in research and extension services.
- Established AGRED technical working group consisting of different MAIL directorates. The Technical Working Group has drafted the AGRED Implementation plan which describes how MAIL, with AGRED assistance, will meet these performance benchmarks.
- MAIL and USAID have signed a Memorandum of Understanding outlining areas of cooperation and levels of effort.
- The majority of key Field and Headquarters staff and Technical Assistance personnel have been deployed to target areas.
- Inspections of the seven key regional research centers and a majority of the target district facilities have been completed to obtain firsthand knowledge of current conditions and capabilities.