Capacity Building and Change Management Program for Afghanistan's Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock

Quarterly Performance Report (April-June 2014) and Final Report

Contents

Common Acronyms

AGRED   Agricultural Research and Extension Development
ANDS   Afghanistan National Development Strategy
CBCMP   Capacity Building and Change Management Program
CBR   Capacity Building for Results
CMS   Change Management Specialist(s)
DAIL   Directorate for Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock (sub-national units of MAIL)
GCMS   Grants and Contract Management Services
HR   Human Resource(s)
ICMA   International City/County Management Association
IR   Intermediate Result
IWMP   Integrated Watershed Management Project
M&E   Monitoring and Evaluation
MAIL   Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock
NADF   National Agricultural Development Framework
NGO   Non-Governmental Organization
PMP   Performance Management Plan
TAF   The Asia Foundation
USAID   United States Agency for International Development
USDA   United States Department of Agriculture
USG   United States Government
VEGA   Volunteers for Economic Growth Alliance

Introduction

After years of war and internal conflict, Afghanistan's agricultural sector, which 80 percent of its population depends on for their livelihoods, was in tatters. The Afghan Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock (MAIL) had minimal capacity for service delivery. In fact, the ministry was reaching barely two percent of Afghan farmers and herders.

Through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)-funded Capacity Building and Change Management Program (CBCMP), MAIL's ability to manage human, financial, physical and donor resources have greatly improved. As a result of CBCMP, MAIL is better positioned to more efficiently deliver services to Afghanistan's farmers and herders in the future.

In November 2010, USDA awarded the $36 million program through the Volunteers for Economic Growth Alliance (VEGA) Leader with Associate award. The International Executive Services Corps (IESC) was the prime implementer, with support from additional VEGA members under sub-awards to IESC: the International City/County Management Association (ICMA), Land O'Lakes International Development Fund, the Institute of International Education and the Financial Services Volunteer Corps. The program ran through June 2014.

The document that follows constitutes both the final quarterly progress report as well as a final program report of CBCMP. Combining a summary of the performance indicators, anecdotal evidence, multimedia presentations, and notable project achievements, this document provides a comprehensive review of CBCMP's successes and challenges during its three and half years of implementation.

This final quarterly progress report covers the period of April 1 to June 30, 2014. It includes life-of-project targets and performance towards those targets for the project's two primary components. Capacity-building projects, and this one in particular, rely on institutional change that is rooted in human behavior and attitudes, and so this report includes more qualitative review and analysis to best capture the program's accomplishments. In fact, simply cultivating the desire for change is essential to meet the objectives of capacity-building and organizational reform projects. How do you measure desire?

IESC and its implementing partners conclude that because of CBCMP, MAIL is, quite simply, a better public agency. We know this because our small team of dedicated expatriate advisors and consultants worked side-by-side with our Afghan colleagues for more than three years and witnessed firsthand the transfer of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that we know will be necessary to sustain reforms. The video stories and testimonials that are included in this report provide a richer and deeper appreciation of CBCMP's impact.

Without a doubt, CBCMP would not have been a success without the participation of the many brave men and women of Afghanistan who worked as change management specialists

embedded at the ministry as part of our technical teams and their civil service counterparts. These specialists provided critical training, coaching, and mentoring to hundreds of civil servants to help MAIL adopt and institutionalize the changes in systems, policies, and procedures introduced through CBCMP.

As with any project—even a successful one such as CBCMP—there are always important lessons learned, which have also been included. It is our hope that this report, taken in its entirety, will highlight the elements of leadership, trust, cultural empathy, respect, and teamwork that were the hallmarks of CBCMP's success.

Final Quarter Program Activities

Activities undertaken during April to June 2014 centered on program closeout. The program ended field-based activities on April 30, 2014, in line with the USDA-approved closeout plan. During the period from April 1 to 30, the remaining field office staff conducted administrative closeout activities such as completing personnel exit clearances, securing inventory for disposition or storage, and decommissioning the program's villa.

To support these efforts, IESC program associate John Troup traveled to Kabul in late April. Mr. Troup provided guidance on IESC policies and procedures and acted as a liaison between the home and field offices.

CBCMP Closeout Events

MAIL Minister Rahimi speaks at the close out ceremony in Kabul, April 2014.

The program held two closeout events for partners and stakeholders. The first event was held on April 17 in Washington, D.C., and provided an overview of the program, detailed lessons learned, and offered future recommendations. Key personnel, including Herschel Weeks, Noor Seddiq, and Anant Singh gave presentations on their respective components. Representatives from USDA, USAID, VEGA, Land O'Lakes International, the Institute of International Education, ICMA, and IESC attended the event.

At the second event on April 23, held at the MAIL campus in Kabul, a panel of speakers from MAIL and U.S. government leadership reflected on the program's successes and impact. DM Kunduzi, noted the how the program served as a model for donor assistance: "Institutional building takes time, especially in Afghanistan which is not fully in peace. Being embedded and working within MAIL, CBCMP is an institutional building program and this is the way forward. Continuous, long-term and persistent capacity building and change management will change attitudes, minds, and hearts."

Other notable speakers and attendees included:

- · H.E. Mohammad Asif Rahimi, MAIL Minister
- · Mr. Saleem Kunduzi, Deputy Minister for Finance and Administration, MAIL
- · Mr. Scott Reynolds, Agriculture Minister Counselor, USDA
- · Mr. Peter Benson, Senior Agriculture Advisor, USDA
- · Ms. Dena Bunnel, Agriculture Advisor, USDA
- · Mr. William Hammink, Mission Director, USAID
- · Dr. Ken Yamashita, Program Coordination Director, U.S. Embassy
- · Mr. Steve Orr, Deputy Director, Office of Agriculture, USAID
- · Ambassador (Ret.) Thomas Miller, CEO and President, IESC

Program Background

Approximately 80 percent of the Afghan population depends directly or indirectly on the agricultural sector for their livelihoods, yet Afghanistan's agricultural base has been eroded by years of war and internal conflict. Development of the agricultural sector is critical to Afghanistan's internal stability, ensuring its food security, and paving the way for economic growth.

In 2008, the government of Afghanistan released the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). The five-year strategy for the country's security, governance, economic growth and poverty reduction put particular emphasis on the agricultural sector. Specifically, it called on Afghanistan's Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock (MAIL) to better serve this sector. A year later, in 2009, the United States Government developed the Agriculture Assistance Strategy for Afghanistan. Its primary goal was to increase the confidence of Afghans in their government, and it explicitly called for increasing the human and institutional capacity at MAIL to deliver improved services to rural farmers and herders and to better manage donor assistance.

Within this context, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) developed the Capacity Building and Change Management Program (CBCMP) to support

Video: CBCMP is now a stronger, more effective, more accountable ministry. http://youtu.be/6AHycrL-i6c.

MAIL and its ability to deliver agriculture-related public services. The request for applications was released through the Volunteers for Economic Growth Alliance (VEGA) Leader with Associate Award. In November 2010, USDA awarded the $36 million CBCMP to VEGA with the International Executive Service Corps (IESC) as the prime implementer. Additional partners on the program, as sub-awardees to IESC, were the International City/County Management Association, Land O'Lakes International Development, Institute of International Education, and the Financial Services Volunteer Corps.

Program Overview

Despite 9,600 employees across all 34 provinces and 364 districts, MAIL had minimal capacity for service delivery and was reaching less than two percent of Afghan farmers and herders. Moreover, it was only able to translate about 25 percent of its annual development budget into actual agricultural programs and activities.

In 2008, MAIL sought international support to radically change the ministry's structure and style of management so that it could serve the vision presented in the Afghanistan National Development Strategy. The goal was to create a dynamic agency that would serve 21st century needs.

The answer to this charge was the USDA-funded CBCMP program. The objective of CBCMP was to increase the managerial capacity and efficiency of the ministry to manage national and international funds; improve planning, procurement, and personnel systems in all 65 directorates and to serve the managerial needs in the provincial offices of the Directorates of Agricultural, Irrigation and Livestock (DAIL) offices.

The story of CBCMP is one of organizational transformation. From a government ministry with high rates of absenteeism, minimal accountability, and poor record-keeping, MAIL has become, through CBCMP, a measurably better public agency—more effective, more efficient, and more accountable.

CBCMP was implemented through the use of "change management specialists" (CMS). A previous capacity building program at MAIL, led by The Asia Foundation, successfully utilized "change agents." CBCMP retained the best of these change agents and expanded that cadre to, at its peak, more than 200 CMS. Their role was to foment and support MAIL civil service personnel—*tashkeel*— in a mentorship role.

From the beginning of the program, CBCMP personnel began training the CMS and ministry personnel in a hallmark method called "Four Pillars." In this approach, they would (1) assess the processes and the organization of their department, (2) make suggestions for changes that are aligned with the directorate mission, (3) gain approval, and (4) use

- GOAL: Managers and Civil Servants taking ownership of planning and performance
- GOAL: Training institutionalized by MAIL and provided on an ongoing basis to create a high performing work force

WORK PLANNING

TRAINING, COACHING, AND MENTORING

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

ORGANIZATIONAL REALLIGNMENT AND PROCESS IMPROVEMENT

- GOAL: Management tied to MAIL's mission to provide direct, meaningful services to farmers
- GOAL: MAIL-wide realignment and ongoing process reform to promote efficiency

a score card to track changes. Using this approach, Afghan ministry personnel—who knew their departments—would receive mentoring and assistance from the CMS, but ultimately planned their own solutions. The Minister and other ranking deputies were in full support of this participatory method, thereby lending the approach a high level of legitimacy.

Component 1. Core Management Strengthening

> **Expected Intermediate Result**
> *Increased MAIL capacity to manage Afghan government and donor funds*
>
> **Sub-result 1**
> *Increase the competency of civil servant staff to manage MAIL assets*
>
> **Sub-result 2**
> *Improve the efficiency (management and control) of the grants and contracts management services*

This component focused on building MAIL's capacity to manage Afghan government and donor-funded programs in addition to the ministry's human and physical capital. Rather than creating a separate entity outside of and parallel to MAIL, CBCMP selected five key support directorates inside the ministry and worked with them. With this approach, MAIL was able to build its internal capacity on a sustainable basis. The five directorates were:

- Procurement and Contracts Management Directorate
- Finance and Accounting Directorate
- Administrative Directorate

- Human Resource Directorate
- Internal Audit Directorate

All of these directorates, with the exception of internal audit, are currently overseen by the Deputy Minister for Finance and Administration. Component 1 also worked with the Information and Communication Technology, Monitoring and Evaluation and Provincial Affairs Directorates in order to strengthen the linkages among MAIL's Kabul and regional (provincial and district) offices.

Systems and Process Improvements

The objective of this effort by CBCMP was to install and implement key automated systems and technology to increase internal control, accountability, efficiency and quality of decision-making.

The systems and process improvement interventions were largely based on assessments commissioned by USDA and USAID and conducted by Ernst & Young in 2011 and 2012. Ernst & Young was tasked with assessing MAIL's readiness to accept on-budget funding, particularly from the U.S. government. Ernst & Young made a total of 36 recommendations, of which four were deemed to be outside the control or influence of CBCMP. Of the 32 remaining recommendations, 19 have been fully implemented by MAIL as of the end of CBCMP.

Table 1. Summary of USDA Ernst & Young Recommendations

Summary of USDA Ernst & Young Recommendations*							
Directorate	Recommendations			Recommendations Completed			
	Total	High	Med	High	Med	Total	%
Finance and Accounting	5	4	1	3	1	4	80%
Procurement	6	1	5	0	3	3	50%
Administration (Fixed Asset Mgmt)	4	3	1	1	1	2	50%
Human Resource	6	1	5	0	2	2	33%
Internal Audit	6	4	2	3	2	5	83%
ICT	5	3	2	1	2	3	60%
Total	32	16	16	8	11	19	53%

One key criteria for CBCMP success in the design was the program's ability to facilitate on-budget funding at MAIL. In line with the Afghanistan National Development Strategy, the donor community anticipated that it would provide core budget support, meaning that donor resources would be managed by MAIL. CBCMP successfully strengthened many of the financial management indicators, as shown by progress on the Ernst & Young recommendations. Despite acknowledgments in the donor community that MAIL had improved, political considerations prevented much of the anticipated on-budget resources from being allocated, though the program was able to measure some increase in on-budget funding as a result of its intervention. As a result, in the last year of the program CBCMP intentionally minimized the

role of on-budget funding as a measure of the program's success , instead focusing on the measure improvements in the Ernst & Young recommendations.

Electronic Time Keeping and Attendance System

Before CBCMP, more than 1,100 employees at MAIL's Kabul campus would stand in line, sometimes for up to an hour, to sign in to work on handwritten ledger books. This same process was repeated at the end of the day. Time-consuming, non-transparent, and easily corruptible, this ledger system resulted in thousands of hours of lost productivity for MAIL and led to high rates of absenteeism. In addition, the ledger system meant that it took a long time for employees to get paid—up to a month in some cases—as the ministry had to manually review and reconcile hundreds of timesheets each month.

As part of CBCMP's overall efforts to automate MAIL systems, CBCMP instituted an automated time keeping and attendance system, or e-attendance, as a pilot program in late 2011. The e-attendance system requires each employee's unique thumbprint to clock in and out of work. The process is quick and creates an easily reviewable electronic record.

Video: After the new e-attendance system, there are no more long waits in line to sign in and out for the day. Workers are more accountable and more efficient. http://youtu.be/FDhQIDnW98o.

After e-attendance was introduced at MAIL and DAILs, CBCMP found that this process has encouraged increased attendance and punctuality. It has also drastically reduced payroll processing time. Most importantly, e-attendance includes a reporting function, so that leadership at MAIL can monitor attendance in their departments and better manage their staff.

On February 13, 2012, the e-attendance system officially was inaugurated in a ceremony attended by the Director of the Civil Service Commission, MAIL Deputy Minister for Finance and Administration, and Directors of Human Resources from multiple Afghan ministries. Based on the results at MAIL, the Civil Service Commission is interested in implementing this system throughout other ministries in Afghanistan.

At the conclusion of CBCMP, the e-attendance system has been rolled out across central directorates and installed at 11 provincial DAILs, which represents approximately 1,890 MAIL employees. Despite some remaining implementation challenges (e.g. official approval of the policy, issues related to salary advance and reporting requirements), the system is considered effective and well implemented at the national and provincial level.
It is clear that MAIL is a more efficient ministry as a result of adopting such an effective performance-based employee tracking system. Supervisors can track and analyze employee time and therefore allocate resources effectively.

Inventory and Asset Management System

When CBCMP began, MAIL had been using an antiquated manual inventory system for decades. Keeping records updated was a challenge, and there was a lack of confidence in their accuracy. Generating inventory reports could take weeks.

To address these problems, CBCMP worked in consultation with the MAIL Administration Directorate to introduce an automated inventory and asset management system. CBCMP CMS ensured the successful roll out of the new system at MAIL, including installing the software, training civil servants in the new system, and recording all assets in the system using a bar code machine. Powerful, fourth generation, browser-based software runs the database, which includes asset records, employee records, inventory records, work orders, basic inventory management, basic reporting, and preventive maintenance scheduling.

AUTOMATED INVENTORY AND ASSET MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

- Powerful software for assets and facilities management and inventory control
- Ability to register small and fixed assets;
- Bar code printers for tagging MAIL assets;
- Generates reports and barcodes;
- Includes damage forms, lost forms, and asset audit inspection forms

As part of the new system, all assets have been tagged with a unique bar code, which is printed on adhesive paper with the Zebra bar code printing machine and then pasted on the asset during the inventory process. All bar codes are noted on a data collection form for entry into the database.

With support from CBCMP, some of the CMS received web-based training on the software. They in turn trained other CMS and their civil servant counterparts, providing them with training manuals, standard operating procedures, and instructional slide presentations in several local languages. This entire process moved the ministry from hand-written to computerized records of its assets.

Following the successful implementation of the system at the MAIL campus in Kabul, CBCMP expanded the program to the eleven regional DAILs and even piloted the system at the Sarobi DAO near Kabul.

In early 2014, the Ministry of Finance reviewed the inventory system initiated by CBCMP and was so impressed with the system that it has expressed an interest in replicating it in other ministries.

Video: The ministry's new inventory and asset management system is a critical new tool introduced by CBCMP. http://youtu.be/OmduDFTjeQs.

8,814 of MAIL's assets have been tagged and inventoried. The objective is to register all assets (approximately 15,000).

Budget Preparation and Expenditure Tracking Database (AFMIS and BPET)

A strong, reliable and timely financial reporting system had always been a crucial demand of MAIL. Before CBCMP, the reporting capacity of the ministry was very low and it negatively impacted MAIL's reporting obligations to its stakeholders, both internal (e.g. the Afghan Ministry of Finance) and external (e.g. World Bank, USAID, Asian Development Bank). Previous attempts to establish stable reporting system had failed. Once these capacity-building projects ended and the contractors disappeared, the Ministry would go back to its usual manual reporting, a system riddled with accuracy and reliability issues.

In an attempt to avoid history repeating itself, CBCMP took a comprehensive approach to improving reporting at MAIL. This consisted of intensive training, coaching and mentoring for civil servants, and introducing the Automated Financial Management Information System (AFMIS) software established by the Ministry of Finance. Sixty highly educated and skilled CMS were hired and embedded in all relevant MAIL directorates, all of them focused on transforming the financial management of the Ministry into a stable, reliable, and sustainable system.

Civil servants were provided with a complete educational package: computer skills, financial management, planning, networking, human resources and business management. Initially, the CBCMP CMS had to overcome some significant psychological barriers and organizational resistance among the civil servants, who were accustomed to their manual bookkeeping system and were afraid of losing their jobs if they were unable to learn the new system.

After sustained effort, CBCMP achieved positive results: MAIL is submitting accurate and timely reports to the Ministry of Finance and other Afghan government entities, as well as to its external donors. In addition, the management at MAIL is now able to track its spending and better anticipate needs.

In conjunction with the AFMIS, CBCMP also spearheaded the effort at MAIL to adopt the Budget Preparation and Expenditure Tracking Database (BPET). This database enables MAIL to prepare financial reports electronically, including allotments and expenditures, which expedites the process and brings more transparency in MAIL's public financial management sector. CBCMP purchased the system and provided initial operations, management, and training support from a locally recruited company for one year. MAIL has made budgetary provisions to sustain its operation. This system may also serve as a model for other Afghan ministries.

Today, the Finance Directorate has much improved operations and can claim many critical achievements, among them are better cost projection for development projects, timely execution of budgets, computerization and tracking of bookkeeping and accounting, and

improved communications. In addition, the finance directorate has developed the capacity of some of its existing tashkeel staff, who are now empowered to fulfill their responsibilities at optimal levels. Finally, no longer do the simplest questions take days to get answered. The Finance Directorate can now report on MAIL's budget on a daily basis and provide senior management with detailed breakdowns by sector, which significantly improves decision-making at the ministry.

Performance Monitoring Dashboard

In order to improve overall functioning of MAIL, the Ministry needed a better understanding of its performance. CBCMP worked with MAIL to develop scorecards for key MAIL directorates and DAILs. This process was enabled by the implementation of other CBCMP systems (and the data that they generate), including the e-attendance system, the inventory and asset management system, and budget and finance system. All of the directorate and DAIL scorecards feed into a MAIL-wide scorecard to enable evidence-based decision-making by senior management. CBCMP worked with the relevant directorates at MAIL to develop and collect MAIL-wide indicators which are structured and presented as a performance monitoring dashboard.

Video: CBCMP intended for capacity-building to extend all the way down to the disctrict level to where the farmers are, including women farmers, who had been particularly neglected after the war. http://youtu.be/q2BZFN6DNf0.

The performance monitoring dashboard is meant to include approximately 50-70 program-level and administrative indicators that can provide a comprehensive picture of the ministry's performance and results. The objectives were to:

(i)   Build on existing data collection processes in the ministry; and

(ii)   Streamline key performance indicators at various levels, in order to provide comparable measures of performance, something which is still not possible through the current management information system (e.g. different units of measure are being used, which makes it difficult to analyze data).

CMS assisted MAIL monitoring and evaluation officers to develop a harmonized master set of S.M.A.R.T. (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound) results indicators common to all directorates and DAILs. The identified set of common indicators allow for comparison across multiple units. A special minister's dashboard was created with key performance indicators at MAIL.

The MAIL performance monitoring dashboard is part of a larger monitoring and evaluation system. The system will enable MAIL management to accurately track progress against the

goals and to make evidence-based decisions. The dashboard tool will be extremely useful to track and implement key reforms and provide evidence of improved institutional capacity.

Information and Communications Technology

Following the Ernst & Young assessment, it was determined that CBCMP should also support strengthening of the Information, Communications and Technology Directorate. CBCMP helped the directorate in three ways: securing a generator so the directorate and its servers could be operational around the clock, increasing the amount of data it can transfer, and training civil servants to run the ICT system on their own.

Preparing to lay the fiber optic cable for a higher speed internet connection at MAIL.

Like many places in Afghanistan, MAIL suffered from an unstable electrical supply, and suffered from frequent power outages. CBCMP purchased and installed an automatic generator which provides power for the entire system, which is now able to serve MAIL 24 hours a day. The fuel and maintenance for this generator is provided by MAIL.

> *CBCMP is a sustainable project inside the ministry which brought a lot of positive managerial and technical changes. Now it is our job to keep these changes and take it forward to institutionalizing it completely.*
> *– Mohammad Rahim Stanikzai, IT Director, MAIL*

In terms of increasing data transfer rates, CBCMP made significant investments to improve MAIL's bandwidth. With the support of MAIL, CBCMP installed modern fiber optic connectivity through Afghan Telecom. Previously at 2 MB speeds, the ministry now has a 30MB connection for the same price and is using a reliable internet and communication system at both the Kabul main campus and provincial levels. With the increased bandwidth, official documents can now be exchanged electronically between provinces, and the MIS unit can receive reports through its web-based database.

Video: "In order to teach someone new technologies. . .you have to work closely with them side by side." - Deputy Chief of Party Noor Seddiq. http://youtu.be/V-LbLCCwFUc.

Additionally, the ICT directorate recruited qualified technical staff, without whom CBCMP would not have been able to operationalize the system. In keeping with the CBCMP approach of Afghans helping Afghans, the program recruited local staff to transfer the knowledge to the civil servants.

Strengthening Internal Audit Directorate

A primary goal of the U.S.-led Agriculture Assistance Strategy for Afghanistan is to increase confidence of Afghans in their government, and accountability among its institutions is a key factor in increasing the government's legitimacy.

In order to foster greater accountability, one of Ernst & Young's primary recommendations was strengthening the Internal Audit Directorate of MAIL, and CBCMP focused on establishing an effective internal audit system within MAIL as a core initiative. The initiative included proper and standardized checklists for the directorate, a database for reports and recommendations, and standardizing the filing system. They worked closely with the civil servants to develop an annual work plan, operation plan, and action plan. Additionally, the CMS prepared a detailed training plan and training materials. Civil servants received three months of basic training, and intermediate trainings were delivered in subsequent months.

Audits were conducted in the ICT Directorate, Human Resource Directorate, and Finance Directorate. Change management specialists with CBCMP also conducted a process-based audit for civil servants in Balkh Province and for the first time, prepared a checklist for a cash management audit and inventory audit.

Before CBCMP, the auditors at MAIL had access to just 30 percent of MAIL's directorates and DAILs, now that number is about 70 percent. Where auditors used to spend hours searching for a particular document, now they can access it in a minute.

In 2014, a risk-based audit program was launched by the Internal Audit Directorate, which is an important initiative that will enable the Ministry to mitigate major risks in the public financial management sector, both in the center and the provinces. The transition from transaction-based to process-based audit required new documentation in the form of checklists, as recommended by the Ernst & Young assessment. Today, the risk-based audit plan has been developed and adopted by MAIL.

INTERNAL AUDIT CHECKLISTS

- Payroll checklist
- Standard financial system checklist
- Financial transactions checklist
- Procurement checklist
- ICT checklist
- Admin checklist
- HRM checklist
- Revenue checklist
- Investigation follow-up checklist

"In the past we had computers on desks but we didn't know how to use them. Now our civil servants are drafting and providing computerized reports. . . This directorate has existed since 1984, but the biggest change in our work happened during the last year CBCMP provided us huge support."

– Mohammad Alam Akrami, Internal Audit Dir., MAIL

Component 2. Technical Capacity Building

Intermediate Result 2
Increased the leadership and program management capacity of MAIL to meet farmer needs

Sub-result
Increased competency of Directorate staff to manage change

Sub-result
Improved capability of targeted directorates to implement programs and policy

Component 2 developed and implemented a program of change management to build the overall capacity of MAIL to increase its effectiveness in key technical areas that have the most immediate impact at the provincial and district level.

This component focused on building MAIL's capacity to provide effective leadership, management and technical assistance to the agricultural sector. The extension director was responsible for driving this component, with support from the directorates, which have the greatest impact on MAIL's mission. Component 2 focused on the following directorates:

- Extension Directorate
- Research Directorate
- Strategic Planning Directorate
- Forestry and Rangeland Development (previously the Natural Resource Management Directorate)
- Plant Protection and Quarantine Directorate
- Private Sector Development Directorate
- Communications Directorate
- Agricultural Statistics Directorate
- Change Management Office
- Strategic Crops Stock Directorate
- Livestock Directorate
- Policy and Legal Analysis Directorate

Human Resources and Capacity Development

The work CBCMP has accomplished in the area of human resources and capacity development was began by focusing on solving the challenges presented at the outset of the program. At that time, an assessment of MAIL's human capacity noted severe deficiencies in key administrative capabilities that would hamper its ability to effectively perform its core mandate or directly implement donor-funded programs.

Among the key challenges identified at that time were:

- Poor staff capacity across core functions (finance, procurement, HR, policy, planning and program management);
- Lack of familiarity with government laws and regulations;

- Existing government bureaucracy;
- Confusing roles and lines of reporting;
- Low capacity amongst key departments to manage large development programs. These included finance, procurement, HR and internal audit;
- Short-term, fragmented, and uncoordinated capacity-building efforts;
- Low staff remuneration and high staff turnover;
- Traditional donor-funded programs had their own systems and did little to contribute to MAIL's long-term capacity building in the above areas;
- Low implementation capacity found in both people and systems due to the need to modernize the Ministry;
- Lack of awareness of the procurement laws and a relatively limited staff capacity in procurement;

Change Management Specialists

Component 2 of CBCMP was built around and driven by the concept of 'change agents' introduced to MAIL under The Asia Foundation through an award funded by the Dutch government. These change agents, later renamed "change management specialists," are in many ways the key to CBCMP's success. The CMS transfer knowledge, promote local buy-in, and ensure sustainability. But much more importantly, the CMS are *local,* Afghan specialists, mentored by CBCMP's seasoned expatriate professionals, who were embedded in the ministry and closely working with Afghan civil servants to build capacity and sustain the ministry into the future.

Ultimately, the utilization of CMS in a training and mentoring capacity was the biggest key to the success of CBCMP in MAIL. More particularly, the counterpart approach, whereby CMS worked alongside designated tashkeel counterparts allowed them to make a significant difference from within the ministry, by being accepted and becoming "part of the team".

More specifically, the role of CMS was as follows:

- Provide on-the-job training and coaching to civil servants across MAIL and DAILs. At the outset of CMS deployment, baseline performance evaluations were conducted for all

the MAIL civil servants being given on-the-job training. Subsequently, CMS were assessed based on how much their counterparts had learned from them.

- Implement the four pillars and targets of CBCMP's performance management approach, including (1) annual work plans; (2) balanced scorecards; (3) organizational restructuring; and (4) process mapping.

The development of the expertise and skills of the CMS themselves was a continual process. During the project implementation, CMS fostered the development of local expertise and capacity, while helping to reduce the need for expatriate management and technical assistance. CMS sought to build capacity of MAIL civil servants as rapidly as possible. In this way, the process was designed to increase the depth and efficacy of on-the-job training for civil servants, while embedding leadership and management expertise within MAIL.

Under CBCMP, more than 200 CMS were embedded in the following directorates:

- Procurement
- Finance
- Human Resources
- Monitoring and Evaluation
- Administration
- Internal Audit
- Information Technology
- Provincial affairs
- Private Sector Development
- Plant Protection   Strategic Planning
- Extension
- Research
- Livestock
- Policy Analysis and Legal Advisory
- Strategic grain reserve
- Communications
- Change Management Office
- Other key DAIL departments

By and large, this approach proved very successful, with counterparts in various departments now able

WORKING SIDE BY SIDE

Embedding change management specialists was key to CBCMP's success, but it would not have been sufficient on its own. The key, as it turns out, is not simply staffing the ministry with skilled people, but rather, having the CMS work side-by-side with their civil service counterparts. Director General of Finance and Accounting Mohammad Waheed Etabar recalled that when he first assumed leadership for the directorate, the CMS and civil servants were segregated. They had overlapping responsibilities but worked from different offices. This isolated the CMS and the civil servants, fostered resentment among the civil servants, and made a mentoring relationship nearly impossible.

So Waheed moved the CMS into the same offices with their counterparts. "That was the key to our success," said one of the CMS. The civil servants received daily training in computers and software—using email and internet for the first time in their jobs. Initially, the directorate relied on the CMS for 100 percent of its functioning. But after a period sharing their workspace, the directorate had shifted 50 percent of that work, and the knowledge required, to the civil servants. At this point, Waheed and the CMS feel that the civil servants are capable of taking over the remaining responsibilities.

to perform their tasks at optimal and required levels. This was made possible because of the "counterpart approach" implemented by CBCMP, whereby each CMS was assigned a minimum of two designated civil servant counterparts, and they learned from each other.

Over the past three years, MAIL civil servants have been coached, mentored and taught technical and management skills as well as other professional skills. This was possible, in part, because CMS were given effective tools—computers, software, etc.—to support their capacity development efforts. However, each counterpart department was required to sustain operational and management costs over time. This approach, different from many other similar projects, required the Ministry to allocate *internal resources* for the long-term maintenance and operation of these tools and equipment through the government's procurement system and budget. Staff planned for the program's own sustainability, which led to an increased investment in the process.

Although not directly coordinated with MAIL's HR department, the recruitment of CMS was mostly done on the basis of merit (i.e. many of them hold master's degrees from credible international academic institutions) and in a relatively transparent and competitive manner. Some CMS had previous work experience at the Ministry or in the rural development sector, both of which helped facilitate their integration and effectiveness. CMS are Afghan professionals, typically with more advanced experience and more education than their civil service counterparts. They are selected based not only on their education and experience, but also on critical skills (e.g. English language, computer, or financial management skills). CMS receive higher pay than their civil service counterparts, but are viewed as temporary employees.

Challenges

- Despite notable and significant capacity improvements, a sample survey of beneficiary directorates revealed that some tashkeel staff were still dependent on CMS to complete their tasks at required levels of performance. At best, they may need minimal supervision and, at the opposite end of the spectrum, a few CMS were 'replacing capacity' by conducting operational tasks directly. As such, if MAIL is to achieve its performance and service delivery objectives, continuous capacity development is required for a significant number of civil servants. A few of CMS were involved in direct technical work and service delivery support, particularly when and where tashkeel staff were either not yet capable or actually missing (e.g. development budget reporting, private sector development, new extension model and reporting system). Although this practice runs against the CBCMP methodology, this form of 'capacity replacement' is almost inevitable given the circumstances and to some extent even desirable in cases where the lack of human resources and capacity is most dire.

- MAIL's ability to incorporate CMS into its existing tashkeel staff, as well as retaining qualified and trained civil servants will be a particular test of sustainability for change management. An example is IT connectivity at the provincial level. Before investing in IT hardware at the DAIL level, CBCMP received MAIL's agreement to include an IT position at

every DAIL in by the end of 2012. It is also important to understand the complexity and subtlety of transferring CMS onto the MAIL tashkeel through the World Bank CBR initiative, and to identify potentially vulnerable areas when CBCMP will end. This process is already taking place in critical departments such as Finance and Planning, under the leadership of the HR Department.

Training

CBCMP has supported and implemented a number of training activities to build the capacity of MAIL's civil servants in key managerial and technical areas, including (but not limited to):

- **Basic English and computer skills** for MAIL and DAIL staff, notably through a standing agreement with the American University in Afghanistan. English training and testing was particularly important to enable civil servants' access to international, donor-funded courses and materials relevant to their work.
- **Public Finance training** held at India's National Institute of Finance Management, including bilateral meetings with relevant government counterparts at federal, state and district level. In some cases, it was the first time that civil servants from the Finance department had the opportunity to travel abroad for training.
- **Leadership and Integrated Public Administration training** in Malaysia for MAIL's leadership team and selected DAIL staff; and
- **Information and Communications Technology training** and capacity building in MAIL and all 34 DAILs.

Other training activities were also conducted by CBCMP in the areas of provincial budgeting, process improvement, extension, research, as well as monitoring and evaluation, which were critical to improving performance and service delivery. In total, 1,341 individuals attended CBCMP trainings over the duration of the program. For sustainability, CBCMP also helped establish Resources Centers at MAIL and the eleven provinces, which are utilized by MAIL's employees for classes and self-study.

Challenges

- Remaining inability of most low-ranking civil servants to undertake training in more advanced English and computer courses;
- Limited coordination with Human Resource Directorate on the selection of participants;
- Limited impact assessment of training effectiveness to improve the performance of civil servants;
- Sustainability issues regarding some training activities implemented (e.g. costs, time investment, etc.);

Way Forward

Based on the approach, best practices and lessons learned from CBCMP training activities (e.g. international public sector standards), as well as established networks (e.g. education partners, vendors), in coordination with the World Bank funded program, MAIL prepared a comprehensive Capacity Building for Results (CBR) Training Strategy which aims at consolidating the knowledge developed and skills transferred within the Ministry through CBCMP. This will allow MAIL's civil servants – including newly transferred CMS into CBR tashkeel positions – to continue applying and further developing CBCMP-learned skills through future training and professional development opportunities.

In addition to short-term trainings, current and future CBCMP training activities should also consider opportunities for MAIL staff to undertake degree courses. Interviews revealed that some employees may be willing to contribute up to 25% of tuition fees for bachelor programs offered in Kabul universities, a model that is currently implemented by the World Bank-funded National Horticulture and Livestock Productivity project.

Performance Management

An important achievement of CBCMP was to introduce and implement a performance management approach in the Ministry. As part of their capacity building strategy, each CMS had to work with counterpart departments and civil servants on four key pillars:

1. **Annual work plans.** This standardized approach helped civil servants to develop their own benchmarks and performance indicators. It was implemented across 14 central directorates, including Finance, Procurement, Administration, Provincial Affairs, Chief of Staff, HR, and in some of the targeted DAILs.

2. **Balanced scorecards.** This CBCMP tool measured the effectiveness of CMS against annual work plan indicators and objectives, including: (1) common indicators; (2)

business indicators; (3) program indicators; and (4) strategic indicators (i.e. NADF, CBR, Performance Management Pillars).

3. **Organizational restructuring.** CMS supported counterparts in developing organizational alignment reports for their departments, including at provincial level, which have been used to make revision to the Ministry's tashkeel and also served as references for the directorates' assessment prepared within the framework of MAIL's comprehensive application to the CBR Facility.

4. **Process mapping.** CMS identified key processes and developed step-by-step approaches to map them (e.g. wheat seed distribution at district level, decentralization of procurement). A number of them have been completed, approved and are being implemented in relevant directorates, including at provincial level.

These performance management pillars represent a combination of short-term and long-term outputs necessary to achieve tangible and measurable results for organizational and capacity development. Although these processes have not yet been fully institutionalized across the Ministry, including as part of MAIL's strategic HR management, they achieved a significant and important change in the Ministry's corporate culture by introducing a results-based approach to organizational development linked to the Ministry's core processes and strategic objectives.

By and large, despite some expected resistance, CMS were quite effective in ensuring acceptance and buy-in from their counterparts, at least at director level and including at times at provincial level. That said, cross-function improvements - those requiring collaboration from across departments - were more difficult to achieve (e.g. planning processes).

Challenges
- Limited buy-in and implementation of annual work plans by some directorates; and
- Limited linkages between some directorates' organizational plans and the Ministry's overall reform strategy (e.g. CBR).

The sustainability of this performance management approach depends upon how management will use these tools and the data they generate. The next phase of implementation should place greater efforts on the 'institutionalization' of this methodology by including it in the Ministry's strategic HR management policies and official documents. In doing so, it will be important to set a realistic scope and incremental targets in order to be feasible.

Policy and Planning Support
By embedding CMS including a legal coordinator, legal analyst and policy analyst in the Policy and Planning Directorate, CBCMP was particularly instrumental in maintaining a high level and quality of service in a critical directorate of the ministry, including through:

- Training and capacity development of tashkeel counterparts and other relevant departments working on legal and policy issues;

- Implementation of performance management tools as well as process mapping and improvements (e.g. policy development process, filing system, database for tracking policy and legal documents);
- Support for the development, review and approval of key policy and legal documents and regulations (e.g. Cooperatives Law and procedures);
- Support for the implementation of key planning processes (e.g. Provincial budgeting exercise).

Cross-Cutting Issues

Sustainability

Sustainability issues continue to be a high priority for MAIL Minister Rahimi and the U.S. government. Ultimately, the sustainability of the changes introduced through CBCMP will depend largely on MAIL's ability to continue allocating its own resources to sustain and replace equipment, and maintain new systems that have been put in place. A primary challenge is MAIL's lack of operational funds. The scarce resources for purchase of goods and services ($2.5 million for more than 9,000 employees) rarely make it out of Kabul, so the situation is even more dire at the DAIL level.

MAIL's ability to incorporate CMS into its tashkeel, as well as retaining qualified and trained civil servants will be a particular test of sustainability. MAIL civil servants will have been taught English and computer skills, among other skills, and MAIL must be competitive on salary to retain them. As CBCMP concludes, the MAIL civil servants will have been coached and mentored by CMS for three years, which is critical experience they could potentially take elsewhere.

Communications

In order for MAIL to adopt the necessary reforms and to be able to communicate more effectively to the provinces, increased internet and other connectivity among MAIL headquarters, district levels, and farmers and herders has been and will continue to be a huge priority. CBCMP has worked hard at strengthening MAIL communications, both internally and externally. MAIL now has a webmaster who has improved the website so that it can now post job announcements, RFPs, and agricultural information. The goal is to enhance customer service, and when the communication lines are fully open, requests and knowledge from herders and farmers can be transferred to MAIL quickly. However, with additional requests and knowledge coming from the field, MAIL will need to have systems to handle this information.

COORDINATION WITH THE CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

One of the needs to modernize MAIL was a cadre of new job definitions and salary scales that would attract talented professionals as well as support the new vision. CBCMP facilitated coordination between the Civil Service Commission and MAIL and provided CMS and training to prepare job descriptions for the personnel needed after going through the four-step participatory change method for departmental reorganization. This HR effort, plus the work of the strategy of imbedding CMS in the departments, is likely the reason for the high levels of satisfaction of civil servants with supervisors and MAIL management in general.

Performance Indicators Summary

The approved performance monitoring plan for CBCMP included 21 indicators (see Table 2). Of these 21 indicators, our data indicates that for two of the indicators, it was not possible to define life-of-project actuals (Intermediate Result 1b; and Sub-Intermediate Result 2.2a). Of the 19 remaining indicators, the data indicates that 7 indicator values (37 percent) were met or exceeded and 12 indicators (63 percent) were under met. However, of those 12 that were under met, several were very nearly met, in some instances were just a few percentage points away from being met.

The following are some of the factors that contributed to the lower numbers in those 12 performance indicators:

1. The targets set in the beginning were too ambitious and the project failed to revisit and review these aggressive targets during implementation. Specifically, the project's goal of fully and satisfactorily implementing all 33 Ernst & Young recommendations within a 2.5 year period was too ambitious. Note that E&Y conducted the assessment in July 2011 and project activities ended around March 2014.
2. Performance improvement in civil servants mentored by CMS were measured annually. There were multiple instances where the civil servant left his/her post for various reasons before the annual cycle was completed.
3. There were delays in procuring and rolling out the timekeeping and inventory management systems. Once it was apparent that the targets were not going to be achieved because of these delays, the project should have revised them accordingly.

Ultimately, numbers do not tell the entire story, and it is challenging to provide a holistic view of CBCMP's impact based solely on indicator data. For example, the videos included in this report represent the sentiment on Afghanistan about the program and the impact it had. The project achieved impressive results given the above considerations, in addition to the fact that it was working with a very conservative ministry in a less-than-stable environment.

Figure 1. CBCMP Results Framework

Results Framework with Indicators

CBCMP Assistance Objective: A sustainable, thriving agricultural economy through improved delivery of agricultural-related public services

IR 1 (GCMS): Increase MAIL capacity to manage donor and GIRoA funds invested in MAIL

IR 2 (CM): Increase the leadership and program management capacity of MAIL to meet farmer needs

1.a Amount of foreign direct assistance that is processed and managed directly by MAIL
1.b % disbursement of MAIL's development assistance budget to sub-national levels

2.a: Percent of CBCMP Employee Satisfaction Respondents who have trust in their immediate supervisor 2.b: Number of applications for service delivery across target directorates

Sub-IR 1.1: Increase the competency of Civil Service staff to manage MAIL assets

Sub-IR 1.2: Improve the efficiency of the GCMS management and control processes

Sub-IR 2.1: Increase the competency of directorate staff to manage change

Sub-IR 2.2: Improve the capability of targeted directorates to implement programs and policy

1.1.a: # of target civil servants showing annual improvement on performance evaluation
1.1.b: # of GCMS civil servants successfully completing GCMS training

1.2.a: % improvement in processes due to automation of systems
1.2.b % of Ernst and Young recommendations implemented for approval of MAIL to receive on budget funding from USG

2.1.a: # of target directorate staff successfully attaining knowledge goals through CM skill development
2.1.b: # of target civil servants showing annual improvement on performance evaluation

2.2.a: % of targets achieved on CM scorecards, capacity building and organizational development section, across directorates
2.2.b: # of processes assessed and recommended for approval in target directorates

Common Indicators

3.1: # of civil servants registered on time keeping system
3.2: Number of person days of training
3.3: # of financial transactions generated through FMIS
3.4: # of scorecards/work plans/organizational alignment reports developed for directorates by civil servants working with Change Management Specialists

3.5: # of Civil Servant counterparts mentored by Change Management Specialists
3.6: % change in bandwidth at MAIL and DAILs
3.7: # of coordination events held at provincial level
3.8: # of assets logged into inventory system
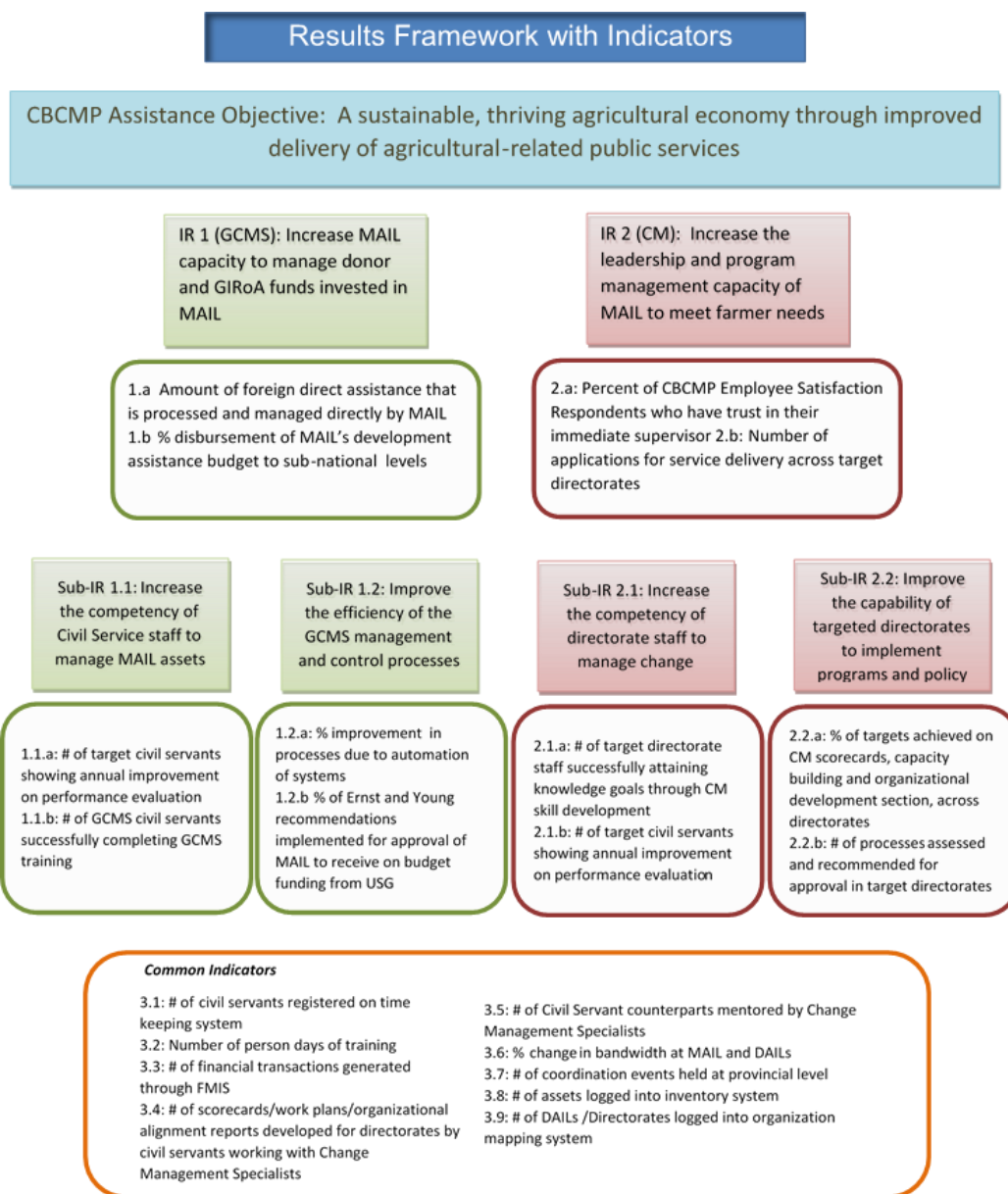3.9: # of DAILs /Directorates logged into organization mapping system

Table. 2. Performance Monitoring Summary Table

The table below does not show a discrete column for Q2 targets or actuals (April to June 2014). The reason for this is that CBCMP began close out in March of 2014 and all meaningful project activities were in the official closeout period (April to June 2014). Data on performance indicators remain the same from Q1 to Q2 2014. However, the table does include life-of-project targets and actuals which VEGA and IESC feel are more appropriate and meaningful for commentary for this final quarterly performance report.

No.	Result	2011 Target	2011 Actual	2012 Target	2012 Actual	2013 Target	2013 Actual	2014 Q1 Target	2014 Q1 Actual	Life of Project Target	Life of Project Actual
1.a	Amount of foreign direct assistance that is processed and managed directly by MAIL	$0	$101M	$90M	$116M	$110M	$143M	$125M	$128M	$325M	$488M
1.b	Percent disbursement of MAIL's development assistance budget to sub-national levels	0%	56%	50%	53%	65%	68.2%	75%	42.5%	N/A	N/A
2.a	Percentage of CBCMP Employee Satisfaction Respondents who have trust in their immediate supervisor	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	98%	95%	98%	95%	98%	95%
2.b	Number of applications for service delivery across target directorates and DAILs	0	0	3000	3711	4000	7380	1,000	2,528	8000	13,619
1.1.a	Number of target civil servants showing improvement in annual performance evaluations	0	0	80	0	150	153	80	22	310	175
1.1.b	Number of GCMS staff successfully completing GCMS training	0	0	250	110	100	133	50	52	400	295
1.2.a	Percent improvement in processes due to automation of systems	0	0	20%	15%	25%	27%	30%	21%	30%	28%
1.2.b	Percentage of Ernst & Young recommendations implemented for approval of MAIL to receive on budget funding from USG	60%	52%	100%	52%	100%	60%	100%	60%	100%	60%
2.1.a	Percentage of target directorate staff successfully attaining knowledge goals through CM skill development and mentoring through change agents	0%	0%	66%	75%	80%	76%	85%	85%	85%	85%
2.1.b	Number of target civil servants showing improvement in annual performance evaluations	0	0	75	0	135	90	75	33	285	123
2.2.a	Percentage of targets achieved on CM scorecards, capacity building and organizational development section, across target directorates	0%	0%	60%	84%	85%	78%	90%	60%	N/A	N/A
2.2.b	Number of processes assessed and recommended for approval per targeted	0	0	40	41	75	52	21	26	136	119

No.	Result	2011 Target	2011 Actual	2012 Target	2012 Actual	2013 Target	2013 Actual	2014 Q1 Target	2014 Q1 Actual	Life of Project Target	Life of Project Actual
	directorates and DAILs										
3.1	Number civil servants using timekeeping and attendance system	0	0	2000	1091	3000	1606	3,300	1890	3300	1890
3.2	Person days of formal/classroom training	0	15605	10000	2283	15000	12626	2500	1134	27500	31648
3.3	Number of financial transactions generated using FMIS software	0	1237	5000	1255	1,500	2771	300	629	6800	5892
3.4	Number of scorecards/work plans/organizational alignment reports developed for directorates and DAILs by civil servants working with change agents	0	0	42	44	108	83	42	23	192	150
3.5	Number of Civil Servant counterparts mentored by Change Agents	120	104	300	303	300	516	300	516	300	516
3.6	Percent change in bandwidth at MAIL and DAILs (reflected in change in Mbps)	0%	0%	100%	96%	200%	253%	200%	253%	200%	253%
3.7	Number of coordination events held in DAILs	0	0	400	789	500	1805	125	417	1025	3011
3.8	Number of assets logged into inventory management system installed at MAIL	0	0	7500	0	12000	6182	15000	8814	15000	8814
3.9	Number of DAILs/Directorates entered into organization mapping system	0	0	73	39	73	39	73	39	73	39

Key

	Life-of-project numbers		Not met
	Very nearly met		Met or exceeded

Lessons Learned and Recommendations

An improved MAIL is critical to the development of Afghanistan, and it can make a significant contribution to the peace, stability, and economic growth of the country. Efforts to continue transforming the ministry into an effective and efficient institution are critical to Afghanistan's decade of transition and transformation. Despite significant progress and the promise of ministry-led reforms, MAIL still requires external assistance in order to safeguard these achievements to complete its transformation. Further change will take time and a number of critical barriers have yet to be overcome. CBCMP believes that in adapting future programs based on the lessons learned and recommendations outlined below, they can ensure effective and impactful implementation.

- Donor and Beneficiary Integration
- On-Budget Support
- Provincial Support
- Personnel Retention
- Coordination
- Leadership

Donor and Beneficiary Integration

CBCMP had to create the resources, both human and physical, to allow MAIL to communicate across directorates for reforming systems to improve efficiency. Many successful international donor programs establish program management units, staffed by donor employees that are outside the target ministry. This configuration allows for donor control of the management of grant funds, but does not build capacity in the ministry of interest. The CBCMP approach assumes that the capacity to manage program funds should be an integral part of the effort; in other words, project planning and funds management work together. Personnel from the Ministry of Finance were embedded in the directorates of MAIL so that MAIL personnel would learn how to design proposals and budgets that would meet Ministry of Finance standards. This eliminated the back and forth of submissions across ministerial boundaries.

Any future capacity-building or change management program at MAIL should strive to work even more directly through government systems, as much as accountability requirements and risks can be managed. Project functions and expertise such as HR (recruitment, salary levels and promotions), financial and administrative systems (procurement), as well as monitoring and evaluation, should be better coordinated and decentralized to counterpart departments.

This will ensure that the ministry is increasingly capable of managing and sustaining similar activities implemented on-budget. It would also ensure that the performance-based management culture introduced by CBCMP is effectively institutionalized. Although more challenging and time-consuming, greater integration and coordination through ministry systems and processes will ensure higher returns on capacity development.

Video: "CBCMP is different, because CBCMP is embedded." A conversation with Director of Human Resources and Capacity Building Mohammed Jaqob Hotak http://youtu.be/cRNKztP0lzM.

Working through government systems, however, requires strong oversight and accountability mechanisms. Having donor staff subject to as many of the Afghanistan Independent Administration Reform and Civil Service Commission's standards and ministry HR procedures as possible would further reduce the perceived institutional gap between contract and tashkeel staff. It would also facilitate integration between the two moving forward and set high standards for civil servants to learn from and follow.

On-Budget Support

One of the main objectives of CBCMP was to help MAIL manage and implement its budget, which also has the effect of increasing confidence of donors to provide on-budget support.

Independent assessments of MAIL, such as those conducted by Ernst & Young (2012) indicated that there have been significant improvements regarding public financial management and certified that the ministry presents an adequate risk level to increasingly accept on-budget funding, with sufficient levels of transparency and accountability. In light of the upcoming reduction of foreign presence in Afghanistan, including more limited technical assistance, donors will be compelled to find creative ways to provide support to line ministries.

Donors should gradually and increasingly channel their capacity-building and change management funding through on-budget systems and mechanisms (e.g. CBR Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund). It is important to note the crucial role that the U.S. government can play in leading by example and providing the necessary incentives for success.

Change management assistance to MAIL should also strive to support the ministry in better planning and managing its operations and management budget, with a view to sustaining and further institutionalizing improved processes through the government's own mechanisms. Although MAIL has already made provisions to take over the costs of new systems implemented through CBCMP, there may be a need for additional budgetary support, either through on- or off-budget interventions. This would ensure that operations and management allotments received by MAIL from the Ministry of Finance increase over time.

Institutional Capacity Development

The overall goal of CBCMP was to improve delivery of agriculture-related public services by increasing the ministry's capacity to manage donor and Afghan government funds invested in MAIL and increasing the leadership and program management capacity of MAIL to meet farmers' needs. The ultimate objective was to contribute to a sustainable, thriving agricultural economy. This coherent, overarching approach provided an effective framework for change in the ministry. Indeed, the interconnectedness of CBCMP's activities was an important strength of the program.

Moving forward, it is critical for the ministry and stakeholders to keep building and investing on CBCMP's successes. Although the World Bank-funded CBR program offers a promising, ministry-led opportunity and framework for consolidating some of these achievements, it may not provide sufficient resources in the short- to mid-term to sustain and institutionalize key systems and processes. MAIL still needs some form of external technical assistance to guide its overall strategic reforms. Internal and external partners must therefore continue to provide the most suitable and relevant advice for public sector reform. A five-year holistic vision for MAIL was developed in December 2013 by a United Nations Development Program consultant and this document should be reviewed periodically moving forward.

Future institutional and capacity development activity needs to align with MAIL's CBR strategic plans, including the CBR Results Framework. It is important to develop a consensus on overall capacity building and institutional development results and benchmarks for the ministry. Focus should be placed on key indicators such as budget execution and provincial capacity development, among others.

Retention of Qualified Personnel

The recruitment or retention of highly qualified staff, such as CMS or similarly qualified individuals, into the MAIL tashkeel is vital to the ministry's operations. While CBR provides an opportunity for MAIL to retain personnel the CBR recruitment is not an easy process. For instance, many potential candidates are concerned about the Afghanistan Independent Administration Reform and Civil Service Commission's procedures and capacity to implement merit-based recruitments (e.g. not fully transparent, unreasonable delays, etc.).

Many potential candidates are not motivated by the government's salary levels as compared to donor project levels, particularly at grade 3 and below. Others, however, want to stay in government, particularly with the right incentives, benefits and professional development opportunities. This is partly why CBR is able to recruit high-capacity staff in tashkeel positions, notably at grades 1 and 2.

Future capacity building at MAIL will need to focus on enabling MAIL's capacity to implement CBR in the ministry. Since the Ministry of Finance will hold MAIL accountable for its performance and the implementation of key reforms under CBR, future capacity building in this direction would help to ensure greater relevance, effectiveness and sustainability of CBCMP's interventions.

Future capacity building projects at MAIL should also assess the value of retaining former CBCMP CMS and recruiting new ones as necessary. At the same time, future capacity building projects should also consider engaging with MAIL's leadership and relevant directorates in order to define a new role for CMS, including the following:

- Support the development of strategic plans for counterpart departments, in accordance with CBR guidelines;
- Support the development of new policies, procedures and strategies that are necessary to increase the performance and service delivery of the Ministry;
- Strengthen knowledge management, information sharing, coordination within the institution;
- Provide mentoring and support system for new CBR recruits.

Recruitments should be linked with the ministry's strategic organizational development and/or capacity building objectives (e.g. CBR Recruitment Plan, etc.), and use the ministry and government standards for job analysis, salary scale, and competency profile, which will help facilitate the future transfer of CMS into the MAIL tashkeel. It will also avoid creating parallel structures and facilitate capacity building efforts.

Provincial Support

MAIL remains highly centralized. The majority of funding, projects, and activity assignments come directly from MAIL to the DAILs. Although some success has been achieved to develop capacity at the central level, current and future interventions need to further increase efforts at provincial and district level in order to sustain the change that is taking place in MAIL. This is particularly critical for a ministry that delivers services to rural communities.

- **Extension to DAILs**. Future capacity building projects at MAIL should continue work at DAILs to implement key process improvements: e-attendance, asset management system, basic ICT infrastructure, training centers, and implementation of the workforce management system, among others (as identified in the MAIL CBR Results Framework);

- **Budgeting and prioritizing**. Another key area of focus for future capacity building projects could be to support DAILs in accurately budgeting and prioritizing projects, including operations and maintenance costs (i.e. for upkeep of existing assets and outreach to farmers), which will facilitate the transfer of responsibility from the central to the field level. The presence of CMS in DAILs will also ensure an adequate level of transparency and accountability, and facilitate reporting on expected results.

- **Training**. New interventions should also aim at providing further management and technical training to key civil servants in English language, IT, public budget and expenditures management, public administration, internal audit, and international certification programs, among others.

MAIL organized four agricultural fairs with support from CBCMP, the last being the Kabul International AgFair at Badam Bagh Fairground, October 30 to November 1, 2013. Supported by an intense communications campaign, the AgFair attracted numerous cooperatives and business associations and was a great opportunity for farmers to directly present their products to consumers. There were 180 booths and approximately 70,000 attendees.

- **Operational support**. Some level of operational support in remote provinces and districts may also be warranted to achieve a critical momentum, including communications and transportation support. Current monthly allocations from MAIL to the DAILs are not sufficient to purchase fuel and electricity in several parts of the country. Furthermore, more resources and well-trained extension agents are needed in remote districts. For instance, dormitories and training opportunities will help attract more participants.

Coordination

At the outset, there were conflicting priorities for CBCMP between MAIL, USDA, USAID and experienced CBCMP staff. For its part, USAID was relying on CBCMP to facilitate on-budget funding in order to complete the agency's programming. CBCMP understood that one of the indirect goals of the program was to help build and sustain effective coordination and a higher state of collaboration between U.S. government agriculture programs and NGO agriculture programs so that the actors involved could leverage their collective strengths and enhance the opportunities for improving agriculture within Afghanistan.

An advisory board provided a useful venue for high-level buy-in, so that all stakeholders started with the same objectives and work plan for achieving them. While this did not eliminate all disagreements in implementation, the work of the advisory board provided a common reference point to ensure the program remained on track. In addition to advisory boards, CBCMP utilized its CMS to facilitate coordination on a lower level, primarily at the DAIL level. To

help in this regard, CBCMP required that all completed CMS action plans include coordination as a fundamental part of the work plan. CBCMP collected supporting documentation for this coordination in the form of meeting agendas, minutes, and attendance sheets.

Future programs will need to ensure that adequate coordination is achieved between the various donor and beneficiary stakeholders. They should do this through similar vehicles as an advisory board and local staff members.

Leadership

Minister Rahimi undoubtedly played a critical role—perhaps the most critical—in ensuring the success of CBCMP. His participation in the advisory board engaged him in the institutional change process, ensured that he understood the process, and demonstrated that his support could be relied upon to mitigate challenges. The project was able to establish a relationship with him that was built on openness

Minister Rahimi, whose leadership was critical to the success of CBCMP, visits the one of the provincial DAILS.

and trust, and Minister Rahimi did not hesitate to challenge the project when he felt it necessary. At the same time, he was committed to successful reforms when others in MAIL resisted the process. Furthermore, Minister Rahimi facilitated close working relationships between CBCMP staff and the directors general and other leaders within MAIL and the DAILs, thus ensuring they could moderate disagreements with tashkeel staff.

As shown by Minister Rahimi, the success of change management in MAIL ultimately depends on the Ministry's taking ownership of the reforms and its commitment to change. There are difficult decisions that come with change, and MAIL needs effective leadership that can make those decisions. As the ministry takes increasing ownership of its change management process, MAIL will have to resist a number of internal and external political pressures. It will have to stay the course, endorse and enforce good government principles, and make critical decisions in the interest of better performance and increased accountability.

To improve and support MAIL's decision-making on crucial policy issues, future capacity building projects at MAIL should work with senior management to endorse performance-based management principles and tools. MAIL should take advantage of the IT infrastructure that

CBCMP has installed to institutionalize a performance monitoring dashboard as a corporate process. Future donor funded assistance, should also focus on extending the system to the DAILs and districts.
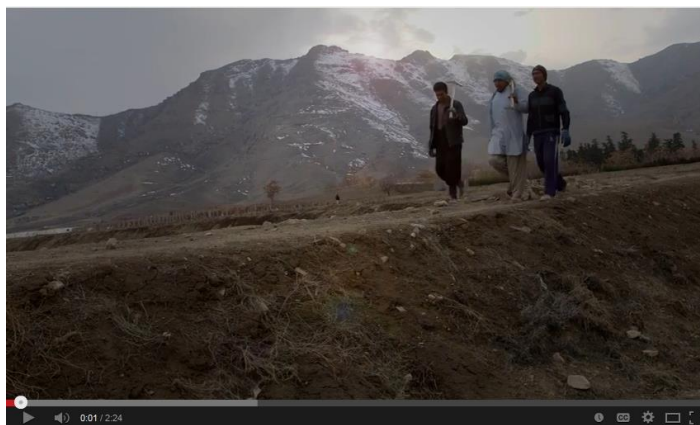
Conclusion

Much of CBCMP's success can be attributed to design and implementation. Right from the beginning, MAIL was a true partner and active participant in the process, rather than merely a recipient of assistance, beginning with MAIL's direct input and approval of the CBCMP work plan. Furthermore, CBCMP operated within the MAIL organizational system and with current personnel, instead of setting up a distinct structure parallel to an existing one. CBCMP staff worked side-by-side with MAIL civil servants and used the very same e-attendance system whose implementation was part of the project.

By Afghans, for Afghans: Point of View (Herschel Weeks)

International Executive Service Corps
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Video: CBCMP Chief of Party Herschel Weeks is interviewed about the program, which he calls the most successful development projects he has ever seen. http://youtu.be/e-flADWcMAM.

That being said, building effective relationships between CMS and their counterparts took time and patience, and success that could vary based on age, education, or social background. Although some departments struggled initially, eventually a relationship based on trust was established. These trusted, bi-lateral relationships led to significant achievements at both the individual and the organizational level.

Another successful feature of this program is that when CBCMP provided assistance to MAIL, it required reciprocal action to ensure sustainability. For example, when CBCMP provided internet at the district level, it required MAIL to budget, pay for, and staff the new service at those locations.

On a higher level, CBCMP tailored its assistance targets with those of the ministry and the government of Afghanistan so the program was aligned with larger development goals for the future stability of Afghanistan. In the words of Chief of Party Herschel Weeks, "I have never seen a project as successful as this project."