

# SIGAR

**Special Inspector General for  
Afghanistan Reconstruction**

**OFFICE OF SPECIAL PROJECTS**

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



**NOVEMBER 2018**

SIGAR-19-05-SP



**SIGAR**

Office of the Special Inspector General  
for Afghanistan Reconstruction

November 27, 2018

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

Ms. Karen Freeman  
Assistant to the Administrator,  
Office of Afghanistan and Pakistan Affairs, USAID

Mr. Herbert Smith  
USAID Mission Director for Afghanistan

Since 2003, USAID has spent at least \$2.3 billion on stabilization programs intended to extend the reach of the Afghan government to unstable areas, provide income generation opportunities, build trust between citizens and their government, and encourage local populations to take an active role in community development.<sup>1</sup> USAID's Stability in Key Areas (SIKA) East program was one such effort. SIKA-East was intended to reduce the impact of the insurgency in eastern Afghanistan by promoting good governance in unstable and high-threat districts and by increasing the Afghan public's confidence in the Afghan government to lead the country after the security transition. The SIKA-East program was one of four regional SIKA programs implemented by USAID between December 2011 and September 2015. On December 7, 2011, USAID awarded AECOM International Development, Inc. (AECOM) an 18-month cost-plus-fixed-fee contract valued at approximately \$177.1 million, to implement projects in the SIKA-East region. After extending the contract's period of performance, USAID ultimately spent approximately \$140.1 million to implement SIKA-East.

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

This fact sheet is the third in a series of reports that document SIKA's reach throughout Afghanistan, and provides detail of USAID's initiatives for the SIKA-East program.<sup>3</sup>

We provided a draft of this fact sheet to USAID on November 5, 2018. We received comments from USAID on November 19, 2018. In its comments, USAID reported that beginning in 2006 it worked in coordination with the Department of Defense and the Afghan Government to create stabilization programs to establish basic linkages between provincial government institutions and local communities. Since USAID's stabilization programs ended in 2015, USAID reported that it has gradually shifted towards long-term capacity building to provide the technical guidance needed to help the Afghan Government deliver essential services to the people of Afghanistan. USAID's written comments are reproduced in appendix II. We also received technical comments from USAID, which we incorporated as appropriate.

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

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

<sup>3</sup> SIGAR, *Fact Sheet: Information on USAID's Stability in Key Areas Program-Northern Region, Afghanistan*, SIGAR-18-23-SP, January 12, 2018 and SIGAR, *Fact Sheet: Information on USAID's Stability in Key Areas Program-Southern Region, Afghanistan*, SIGAR-18-53-SP, June 4, 2018.



**SIGAR**

Office of the Special Inspector General  
for Afghanistan Reconstruction

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

Should you or your staff have any questions about this project, please contact Benjamin Piccolo, Director of Special Projects, at (703) 545-2192 or [benjamin.j.piccolo.civ@mail.mil](mailto:benjamin.j.piccolo.civ@mail.mil).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John F. Sopko".

John F. Sopko  
Special Inspector General  
for Afghanistan Reconstruction

## BACKGROUND

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From September 2003 through December 2015, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) spent more than \$2.3 billion on stabilization activities and programs in Afghanistan. The programs were intended to solidify the U.S. military's gains in insecure areas by working with and supporting at-risk populations, extending the Afghan government's reach to unstable areas, providing job opportunities, building trust between citizens and their government, and encouraging local populations to take an active role in their development.<sup>4</sup> One of these programs was the Stability in Key Areas (SIKA)-East program, which was intended to reduce the impact of the insurgency in eastern Afghanistan by promoting good governance in unstable and high-threat districts and by increasing the Afghan public's confidence in the Afghan government to lead the country after the security transition, as well as assist district and provincial level Afghan government officials in eastern Afghanistan implement community-based projects to support institutions, processes, and projects that fostered stable political economic, and social development. Unlike other stabilization programs that focused on building the capacity of local communities to resist the influence of the Taliban, SIKA-East focused specifically on strengthening the capacity of district and provincial governments to target aspects of local instability.<sup>5</sup> Between December 2011 and September 2015, SIKA-East supported provincial and district government bodies with goals of implementing Afghan-led community-based projects, and helping to build trust and legitimacy in local governments to deliver basic services and increase local economic capacity.

Several SIGAR reports and USAID-funded third-party assessments addressed efforts to assess the effectiveness of SIKA programs and other government stabilization activities.<sup>6</sup> For example, we reported in July 2013 that USAID's failure to secure a formal agreement with key Afghan government partners in SIKA implementation "caused some district stakeholders [in SIKA-East] to accuse SIKA-East staff members of "incompetence or even deception."<sup>7</sup> The third-party assessments funded by USAID included a March 2012, contract with Management Systems International Inc. (MSI) for the Measuring Impacts of Stabilization Initiatives (MISTI) program, which was designed "to measure and map stabilization trends and impacts in areas such as security, rule of law, and economic activity; build a community of practice for rigorous monitoring and evaluation of Afghan reconstruction programs; and communicate lessons learned for the transition to Afghan-led sustainable development."<sup>8</sup> In its final performance evaluation of the SIKA program, MISTI found that SIKA was unsuccessful in reducing instability in Afghanistan, but that it helped to improve perceptions of

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<sup>4</sup> In February 2010, USAID/Afghanistan formed the Stabilization Unit to unite all U.S. government stabilization planning and programs under one office. The unit's responsibilities were managing, coordinating, and monitoring and evaluating USAID's stabilization programs. In addition to SIKA, USAID's other stabilization programs in Afghanistan included the Quick Impact Projects, which concluded in 2007; the Local Governance and Community Development program, which concluded in 2011; the Community Based Stabilization Grants Program and Afghanistan Stabilization Initiative, which concluded in 2012; and the Community Development Programs, which concluded in 2013.

<sup>5</sup> USAID believed that weak and ineffective local government structures fueled the insurgency and created instability, and that the lack of focused governance threatened to erode the legitimacy of provincial governments and their ability to deliver basic services. To help address instability at the local level in SIKA-East, SIKA-East's programming included programs intended to address factional influence, disparity in government capacity, absence of perceived legitimacy, lack of capacity and basic equipment, and problems with communication, access, and security.

<sup>6</sup> SIGAR, *Stabilization: Lessons from the U.S. Experience in Afghanistan*, SIGAR 18-48-LL, May 24, 2018. SIGAR, *USAID's Measuring Impacts of Stabilization Initiatives: Program Generally Achieved Its Objectives, but USAID's Lack of a Geospatial Data Policy and Standards Affected Its Implementation*, SIGAR Audit 17-10, October 26, 2016. SIGAR, *Stability in Key Areas (SIKA) Programs: After 16 Months and \$47 Million Spent, USAID Had Not Met Essential Program Objectives*, SIGAR Audit 13-16, July 29, 2013. SIGAR, *USAID Spent Almost \$400 Million on an Afghan Stabilization Project despite Uncertain Results, but Has Taken Steps to Better Assess Similar Efforts*, SIGAR Audit 12-8, April 25, 2012.

<sup>7</sup> SIGAR, *Stability in Key Areas (SIKA) Programs: After 16 Months and \$47 Million Spent, USAID Had Not Met Essential Program Objectives*, SIGAR Audit 13-16, July 29, 2013.

<sup>8</sup> SIGAR, *USAID's Measuring Impacts of Stabilization Initiatives: Program Generally Achieved Its Objectives, but USAID's Lack of a Geospatial Data Policy and Standards Affected Its Implementation*, SIGAR Audit 17-10, October 26, 2016.

community cohesion and resilience.<sup>9</sup> MISTI also found SIKA-East lacked systematic outcome measures to fully assess the effects of its programming, and SIKA-East's efforts to address local governance, leadership, and management were not effective.<sup>10</sup> MISTI's evaluation used qualitative methods, including observation, interviews, and a desk review of project documents to evaluate SIKA's performance and assess the views of local community members on SIKA's successes and failures.

This fact sheet is the third in a series of reports that document SIKA's reach throughout Afghanistan, and provides detail of USAID's initiatives for the SIKA-East program.<sup>11</sup> In June 2017, SIGAR sent an inquiry letter to USAID requesting that the agency provide a complete list of SIKA projects by title, type, location, completion status, and cost.<sup>12</sup> In response to our inquiry, USAID provided SIGAR with an excel spreadsheet documenting all the SIKA projects implemented in the four SIKA regions between December 2011 and September 2015, including 2,554 projects in the SIKA-East region.<sup>13</sup> The information USAID provided concerning SIKA was generated from historical data inputted into Afghan Info, the official system of record for the SIKA program.<sup>14</sup> SIGAR used the information in Afghan Info to categorize SIKA projects to determine the types of projects that were conducted, project location, completion status, and the overall scope of SIKA operations throughout Afghanistan. USAID did not require its implementing partners to report on, and Afghan Info does not contain, the costs associated with individual SIKA projects. As a result, USAID cannot identify the specific costs spent by USAID, through its implementing partners, for each SIKA project using historical data from Afghan Info.<sup>15</sup>

While we did not assess the effectiveness of SIKA-East projects in reducing instability throughout Afghanistan, this fact sheet provides information on the different types of projects conducted for stabilization operations in five provinces in southern Afghanistan.<sup>16</sup> In conjunction with the other assessments that took a more comprehensive look at outcomes, the output-based information contained in this report can assist decision-makers and government officials in better understanding U.S. efforts and expenditures intended to help stabilize Afghan communities.

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<sup>9</sup> Stability in Key Areas: Final Performance Evaluation, MSI, September 2015, Pg. 1.

<sup>10</sup> Stability in Key Areas: Final Performance Evaluation, MSI, September 2015, Pg. 25, 41.

<sup>11</sup> See SIGAR-18-23-SP and SIGAR-18-53-SP.

<sup>12</sup> SIGAR 17-49-SP.

<sup>13</sup> The period of performance for SIKA-South began in April 2012. SIKA-North started in March 2012; SIKA-East began in December 2011; and SIKA-West began in January 2012. USAID reported a total of 1,055 projects reported for SIKA-South, 2,554 projects reported for SIKA-East, 1,843 projects reported for SIKA-West, and 825 projects reported for SIKA-North.

<sup>14</sup> According to USAID, Afghan Info allowed USAID to track the location of projects to the nearest geospatial coordinate, monitor the performance of development projects, and meet the Afghan government's requirement that USAID provide information to the Afghan Ministry of Finance in order to track ongoing and completed donor-sponsored development activities. USAID required that implementing partners record SIKA program information into Afghan Info on a quarterly basis.

<sup>15</sup> In 2015, SIGAR received project data from USAID on SIKA-East project implementation. The data we received in 2015 included contractor-reported data on 753 projects in the SIKA-East region. This data included the total amount awarded for each project, geo-spatial coordinates for project location, as well as individual project start and completion dates. The contractor data we received reported a total cost of around \$37 million for these 753 projects.

<sup>16</sup> In May 2018, we reported that the \$4.7 billion spent on "stabilization programs" by multiple government agencies in Afghanistan between 2002 and 2017 was largely unsuccessful in building and reforming government institutions in Afghanistan, and large sums of U.S. stabilization dollars often exacerbated conflicts, enabled corruption, and bolstered support for insurgents. See, SIGAR, Stabilization: Lessons Learned from the U.S. Experience in Afghanistan, SIGAR 18-48-LL, May 24, 2018.

## LOCATION OF SIKA PROGRAM REGIONS

The SIKA program comprised four regional programs—East, West, South, and North—which supported USAID’s stabilization efforts across Afghanistan. SIKA programs were implemented in a total of 17 provinces across Afghanistan. USAID created the four regional SIKA programs through separate contracts costing the U.S. government approximately \$364 million upon contract completion.<sup>17</sup> Figure 1 shows the location of each of the four SIKA regions.

**Figure 1 - Location of SIKA Program Regions**



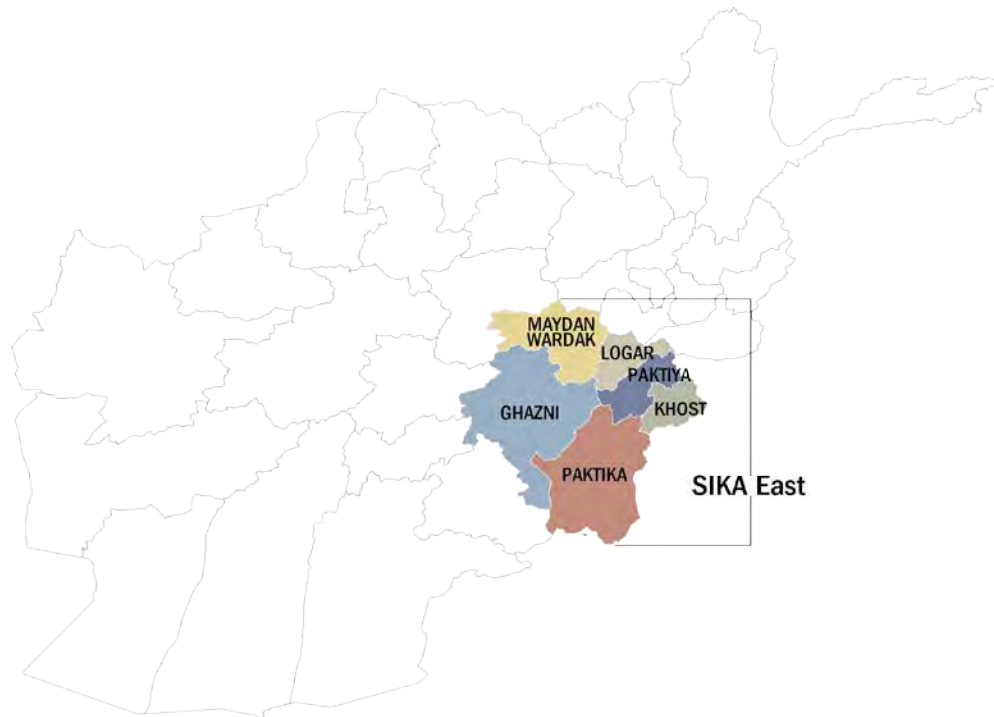
Source: SIGAR Audit 13-16/Stability in Key Areas.

In December 2011, USAID awarded AECOM International Development, Inc. (AECOM) an 18-month cost-plus-fixed-fee contract valued at approximately \$177.1 million, to implement projects in the SIKA-East region. In March 2013, USAID extended SIKA-East’s initial period of performance by 9 months, from June 2013 to March 2014. Over the course of the contract, USAID spent approximately \$140.1 million to implement SIKA-East.

<sup>17</sup> AECOM International Development, Inc. received the contracts for SIKA-East, SIKA-West, and SIKA-South, and DAI received the contract for SIKA-North. Each of the contracts had an 18-month base period of performance with additional 18-month option periods.

During the three years of the SIKa-East program, USAID and AECOM implemented SIKa projects in six provinces in the SIKa-East area of responsibility. These provinces were selected for SIKa activities because they contained Key Terrain Districts (KTD), which were insecure and unstable areas identified by U.S. military commanders to be the most critical to the success of the U.S. counterinsurgency mission.<sup>18</sup> SIKa-East projects were implemented in KTDs to support the U.S. military's counterinsurgency strategy.<sup>19</sup> See figure 2 for the location of SIKa-East program operations.

**Figure 2 - Location of SIKa-East Program Operations**



Source: SIGAR analysis of USAID project data.

Note: Because only one project was implemented in Kabul province, we did not include Kabul in our graphic representation of SIKa-East locations.

AECOM implemented on behalf of USAID a total of 2,554 projects in SIKa-East. Of the 2,554 projects implemented in SIKa-East, all but one was implemented in Paktiya, Ghazni, Khost, Maydan Wardak, Logar and Paktika provinces. The remaining project was implemented in Kabul province. Because only one project was implemented in Kabul province, we did not include Kabul in our graphic representation of SIKa-East locations. In total, USAID and AECOM implemented SIKa projects in 33 districts across the six provinces. Of the 2,554

<sup>18</sup> KTDs were developed by the International Security Assistance Force and the government of Afghanistan in 2010. KTDs were areas where the bulk of the population was concentrated, and that contained centers of economic productivity, key infrastructure, and key commerce routes connecting such areas to each other and to the outside world. These districts roughly follow the line of the three major highways in Afghanistan through the most densely populated portions of the country. A total of 80 KTDs and an additional 41 area of interest districts were identified.

<sup>19</sup> USAID required that AECOM use community-based contracting, known as the Kandahar Model, when implementing projects in SIKa-East. The Kandahar Model emphasized (1) the use of local labor, (2) avoidance of red tape, and (3) less reliance on sub-contractors to enable the quick delivery of services. This approach was designed to help local government bodies gain experience with project prioritization, implementation, and monitoring, as well as financial management.

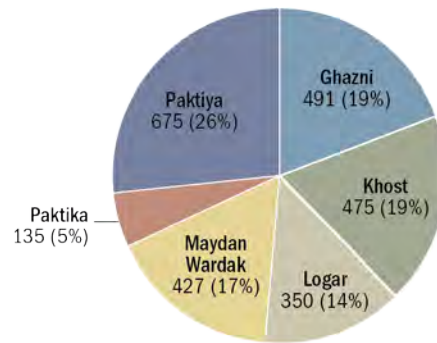
projects, approximately 26 percent, or 675, were located in Paktiya. The remaining 74 percent were relatively evenly distributed between Ghazni, Khost, Maydan Wardak, and Logar provinces, with Paktika having the smallest percentage of SIKA projects. According to USAID data, 2546 projects, or 99.7 percent were complete when the SIKA-East contract expired.<sup>20</sup> See figure 3 for the total number of SIKA projects implemented in SIKA-East.

## SIKA-EAST PROJECTS BY PROVINCE

We categorized SIKA-East projects into two main categories—“hard projects” and “soft projects.” Hard projects consisted of infrastructure-focused activities, such as the construction of roads, culverts, and playgrounds.<sup>21</sup> Soft projects consisted of capacity-building activities, such as vocational training, teacher training, education, and conflict resolution, and focused on reducing instability by building trust in local government bodies.<sup>22</sup> Figure 4 shows the percentage of total projects in each SIKA-East province.

Approximately 80 percent of the projects implemented in SIKA-East (2,050 projects) were soft projects, and approximately 12 percent of the projects were hard projects (306 projects). We were unable to categorize 198 projects, or eight percent of the total projects implemented in SIKA-East. Figure 4 shows the types of SIKA projects implemented in SIKA-East.

**Figure 3 – Total Projects by Province in SIKA-East**



Source: SIGAR analysis of USAID’s SIKA data. One project was implemented in Kabul which we did not include in our pie graph.

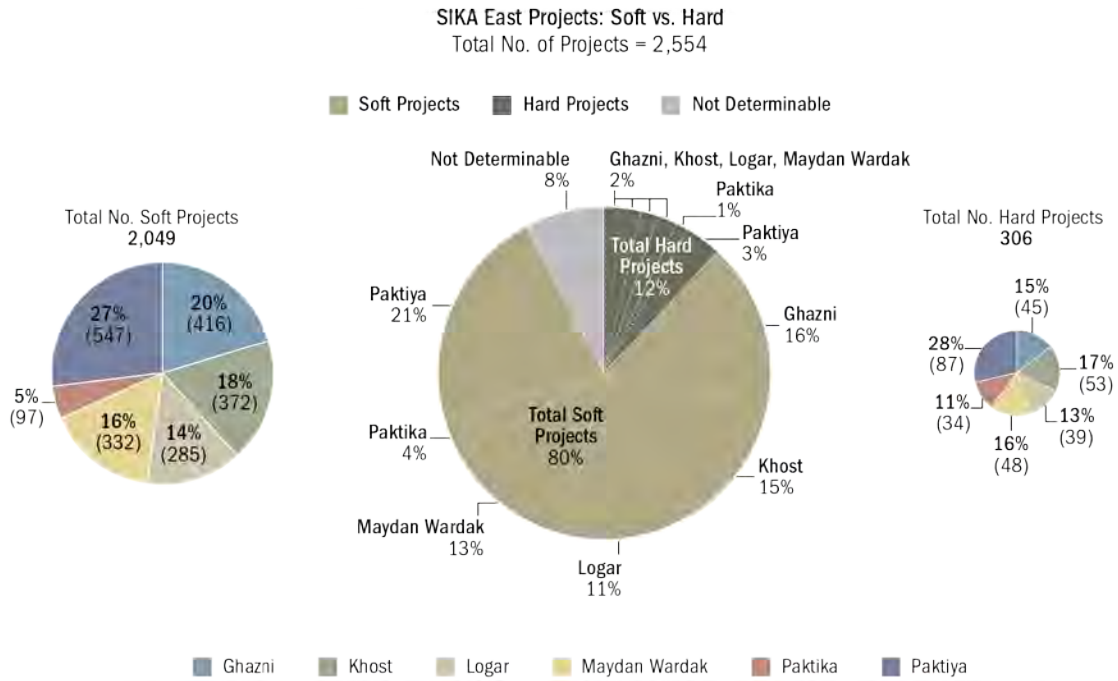
<sup>20</sup> Based on data provided by USAID, we categorized projects as complete or incomplete. We could not determine the completion status of eight projects.

<sup>21</sup> According to MISTI’s mid-term evaluation of SIKA-East, infrastructure projects like irrigation, roads, culverts, protection walls, and potable water wells were highly valued by the recipient communities.

<sup>22</sup> According to MISTI’s final performance evaluation of the SIKA program, USAID recommended that each SIKA program include gender programming in its activities because research had found that women have the greatest impact on reducing support for the Taliban and other anti-government elements. According to MISTI, SIKA-East was the only SIKA program to address gender as a fundamental aspect of all project activity programming, and its efforts led to highly successful programming that empowered women and gave them a real voice in the districts’ decision-making process. According to MISTI’s final performance evaluation of the SIKA program, the vastness of gender programming and communications training in SIKA-East resulted in considerable social gains in the region.



**Figure 4 - Types of SIKA Projects in SIKA-East**



Source: SIGAR analysis of USAID’s SIKA data.

Note: Of the 2,554 projects implemented in SIKA-East, one was implemented in Kabul. We did not depict Kabul in this graph.

## SIKA-East Projects by Category

We grouped individual SIKA-East soft projects into 11 project subcategories, which include: agriculture, capacity building, conflict resolution, education and youth, election-related, gender and human rights, general public engagement, governance and anti-corruption, sports development and promotion, project planning and support, and other, which includes a variety of projects such as providing furniture and office equipment. We categorized hard projects in the infrastructure category into six subcategories. These include: walls, roads, culverts, bridges, irrigation structures, mixed projects (which consist of more than one infrastructure project) and other. We assigned each individual SIKA project to one category. See Appendix I for examples of the types of projects that were placed into each category.

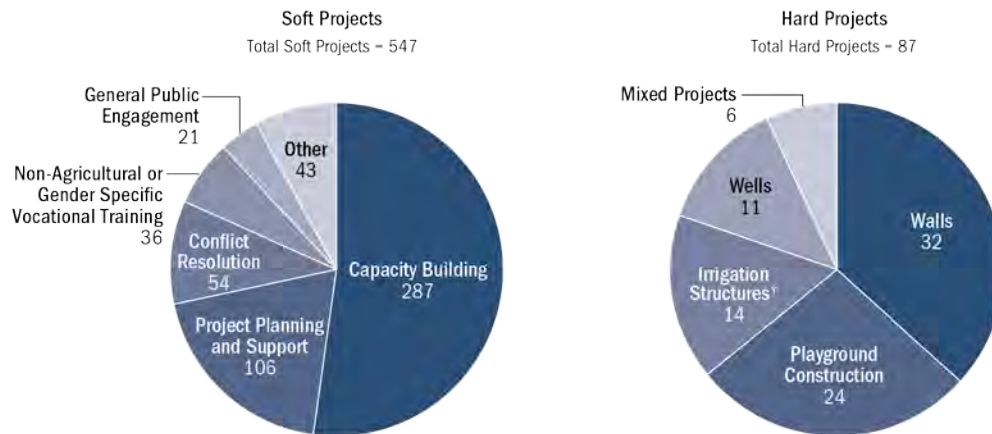
### SIKA-East Projects in Paktiya

Of the 675 SIKA projects implemented in Paktiya, approximately 81 percent (547 projects) were soft projects, and 13 percent (87 projects) were hard projects. We could not categorize six percent (41 projects). The majority of soft projects (287) implemented in Paktiya were intended to support the capacity of the local government to support local needs through training, grant managements training, advocacy and lobbying. According to MISTI’s final performance evaluation of the SIKA program, SIKA-East had so many districts to manage within its budget that there were not enough funds to allow for any meaningful construction that had proven stabilizing effects. However, according to the final performance evaluation of the SIKA program, SIKA-East had a “particularly effective and adept communications team that conducted highly impactful and well-received communications trainings which taught communities how to develop agendas and communications

strategies and how to communicate their problems and concerns with local government authorities.”<sup>23</sup> According to MISTI’s final performance evaluation of the SIKA program, these trainings significantly improved bottom-up communication from the village to district and provincial levels. The majority of hard projects (70) in Paktiya consisted of constructing walls, playgrounds, and irrigation structures. See figure 5 for the types of projects implemented in Paktiya.

**Figure 5 – Types of SIKA Projects in Paktiya**

Paktiya Province



Source: SIGAR analysis of USAID’s SIKA data.

Note: The ‘other’ category for Soft Projects includes the following categories: election-related, gender and human rights, governance and anticorruption, and other projects that could not be identified.

Note: The ‘project planning and support’ category primarily consists of efforts to train local district entities in understanding the different components of infrastructure projects and in infrastructure project planning and budgeting.

Note: The ‘irrigation structures’ category for Hard Projects includes a variety of infrastructure projects, such as constructing intake gates, canals, streams, and water reservoirs, and irrigation projects.

Twenty-one projects related to general public engagement were primarily designed to help train the community in how to communicate and develop messages.<sup>24</sup> All of the projects in the conflict resolution subcategory involved either coalition (unity) building or negotiation strategy training. All of the soft project planning and support projects focused on planning and budgeting for infrastructure project implementation. The 17 irrigation structure projects in Paktiya consisted of irrigation development and the construction of canals, intake gates, water reservoirs, and streams.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>23</sup> MSI, *Stability in Key Areas (SIKA) Program – Final Performance Evaluation*, September 2015, p. 25.

<sup>24</sup> According to MISTI’s final performance evaluation of the SIKA program, SIKA-East encouraged participation in radio dramas and call in shows. These popular engagements supported local government and increased awareness of service delivery in local communities.

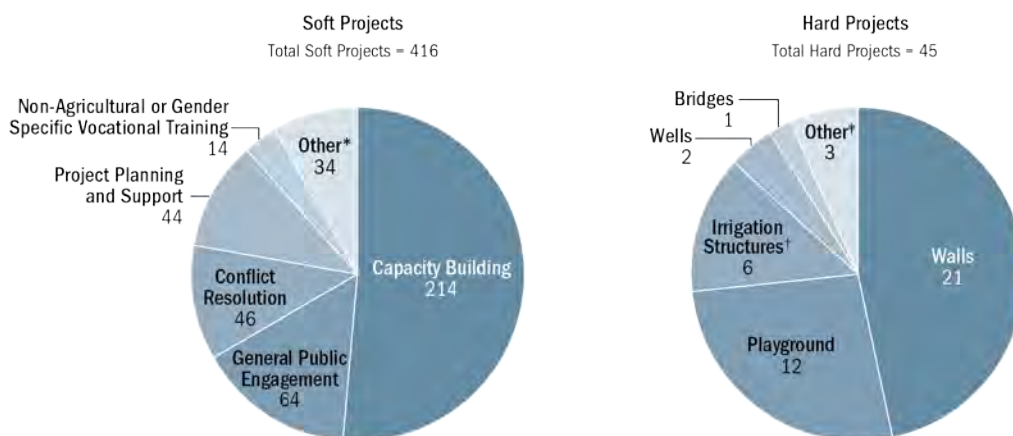
<sup>25</sup> One concern raised by MISTI’s final performance evaluation of the SIKA program was that a large number of small-scale infrastructure development projects were conducted in SIKA-East in highly insecure areas without sufficient oversight and monitoring.

## SIKA Projects in Ghazni

Of the 491 projects implemented in Ghazni, 85 percent (416 projects) were soft projects, and nine percent (45 projects), were hard projects. We could not determine the project category for six percent (30 projects). The majority of soft projects (214) implemented in Ghazni were designed to build local government capacity through offering trainings on identifying sources of stability, advocacy, grants management, lobbying, and fundraising. According to MISTI’s final performance evaluation of the SIKA program, “district governments in particular saw the governance trainings as much too theoretical and impractical,” and believed that the leadership trainings were too wide and varied and given to a number of individuals who were not in leadership roles.”<sup>26</sup> The majority of hard projects (27) supported infrastructure projects such as the construction of protection walls around schools and farmlands, and irrigation structures. Twelve hard projects were for the construction of playgrounds under the PLAY! Initiative. According to MISTI’s final performance evaluation of the SIKA program, “PLAY! combined sports and fitness activities with opportunities for youth to gain leadership and teamwork skills and play a role in district and provincial decision making.”<sup>27</sup> All projects were completed. Figure 6 shows the different types of projects implemented in Ghazni.

**Figure 6— Types of SIKA Projects in Ghazni**

Ghazni Province



Source: SIGAR analysis of USAID’s SIKA data.

Note: The ‘other’ category for Soft Projects includes the following categories: agriculture, election-related, gender and human rights, governance and anticorruption, and other projects that could not be identified.

Note: The “project planning and support” category primarily consists of efforts to train local district entities in understanding the different components of infrastructure projects and in infrastructure project planning and budgeting.

Note: The ‘other’ category for Hard Projects includes a variety of infrastructure projects, such building culverts, livestock infrastructure, and mixed projects.

Projects related to general public engagement sought to increase the awareness of local government services by conducting communications and outreach activities and training, and supporting the inclusion of women into these activities. According to MISTI’s final performance evaluation of the SIKA program, SIKA-East

<sup>26</sup> MSI, *Stability in Key Areas (SIKA) Program – Final Performance Evaluation*, September 2015, p. 25.

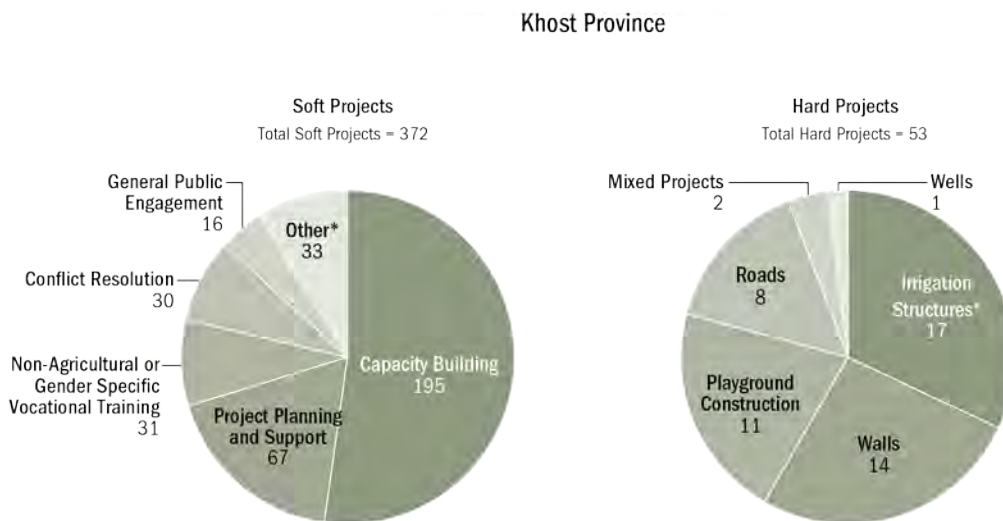
<sup>27</sup> MSI, *Stability in Key Areas (SIKA) Program – Final Performance Evaluation*, September 2015, p. 18.

programming “used the support of male and female allies to promote female involvement in the planning, design, and implementation phases of activities” at the provincial and district levels<sup>28</sup> In the other category, one project focused on setting up office space while 33 others were related to various projects on gender, leadership, and civic education, among other things. Hard projects in the irrigation structures category included the construction of irrigation canals, siphons, streams, and water reservoirs.

## SIKA Projects in Khost

Of the 475 projects implemented in Khost, 78 percent (372 projects) were soft projects, and 11 percent (53 projects), were hard projects. Another 11 percent, 50 projects, were indeterminable, and we were unable to identify the type of project implemented because the description of the project was missing from the data. About 50 percent of the soft projects (195) implemented in Khost were designed to support capacity building efforts to train local officials on, among other things, stability working groups, fundraising, and advocacy and lobbying. Eleven of these programs were designed to assist local government leaders identify sources of instability. According to MISTI’s final performance evaluation of the SIKA program, SIKA-East was the most effective SIKA program to empower local districts to effectively communicate concerns and issues to relevant parties. Over half of all hard projects (39) implemented in Khost were for the construction of walls, irrigation structures, and roads. Eleven supported the PLAY! initiative. All projects were completed. Figure 7 shows the different types of projects implemented in Khost.

**Figure 7— Types of SIKA Projects in Khost**



Source: SIGAR analysis of USAID’s SIKA data.

Note: The ‘other’ category for Soft Projects includes the following categories: election-related, gender and human rights, governance and anticorruption, and other projects that could not be identified.

Note: The “project planning and support” category primarily consists of efforts to train local district entities in understanding the different components of infrastructure projects and in infrastructure project planning and budgeting.

Note: The ‘irrigation structures’ category for Hard Projects includes a variety of irrigation projects including the construction of canals, siphons, intake gates.

Projects related to general public engagement were designed to improve awareness of local government services through communications and outreach activities and training. All of the conflict resolution projects supported coalition building and negotiation strategy training. One project in the other category was for a

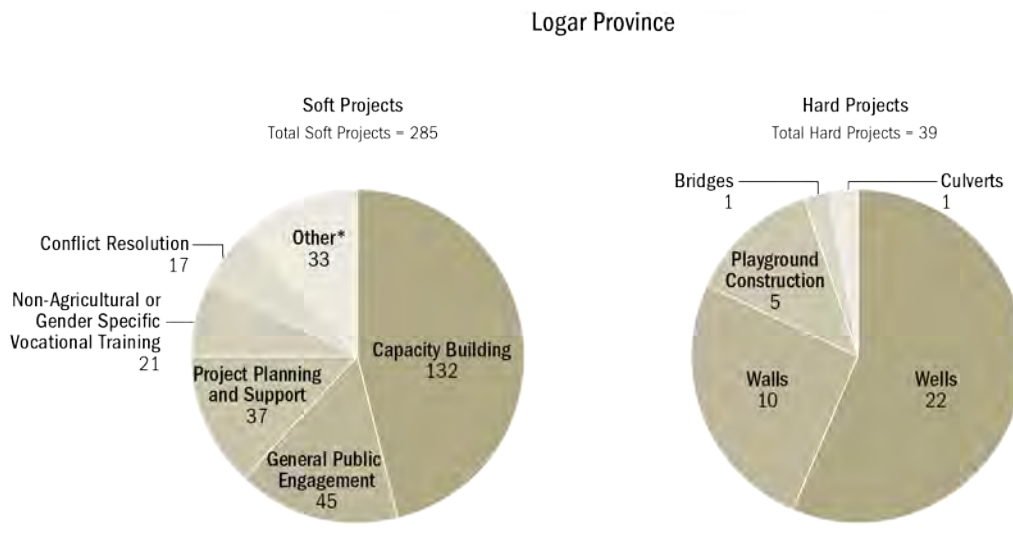
<sup>28</sup> MSI, *Stability in Key Areas (SIKA) Program – Final Performance Evaluation*, September 2015, p. 16.

service provider fair.<sup>29</sup> Non-agricultural or gender specific training mostly consisted of technical training for SIKA project operation and maintenance. Two of these 31 programs related to embroidery and tailoring training. Of the 16 wall projects in the hard category, nine were built as protection walls, three were built as school boundary walls, and four were built as retaining walls.

## SIKA Projects in Logar

Of the 350 projects implemented in Logar, approximately 81 percent (285 projects) were soft projects, 11 percent (39 projects) were hard projects, and seven percent (26 projects) were not determinable. Capacity building projects were designed to train local government leaders on basic governance skills, including administration and project management, fundraising, stability analysis, advocacy and lobbying, among others.<sup>30</sup> All capacity building projects in SIKA-East consisted of a five-module training package to help support advocacy, fundraising, lobbying, coalition building, and negotiation efforts in the local districts. Hard projects implemented in Logar included the construction of protection walls, wells, culverts, playgrounds and a bridge. Figure 8 shows the different types of projects implemented in Logar.

**Figure 8— Types of SIKA Projects in Logar**



Source: SIGAR analysis of USAID’s SIKA data.

Note: The ‘other’ category for Soft Projects includes the following categories: election-related, gender and human rights, governance and anticorruption, and other projects that could not be identified.

Note: The “project planning and support” category primarily consists of efforts to train local district entities in understanding the different components of infrastructure projects and in infrastructure project planning and budgeting.

Forty-five projects related to general public engagement were designed to engage the local community by promoting SIKA projects through communications and outreach activities and training. Projects in the conflict resolution category consisted of coalition and unity building efforts alongside negotiation strategy training. Of

<sup>29</sup> According to MISTI’s mid-term evaluation of SIKA-East, SIKA-East helped to improve local government performance through its outreach efforts. In SIKA-East this event, known as a Service provider fairs, held in SIKA-East, gave government and non-government service providers an opportunity to showcase their services to the communities and residents within a province and were valued method for linking government and business services to the people.

<sup>30</sup> According to MISTI’s final performance evaluation of the SIKA program, SIKA-East was also effective at conducting project management cycle trainings particularly for district governments who were not as active before in monitoring development projects.

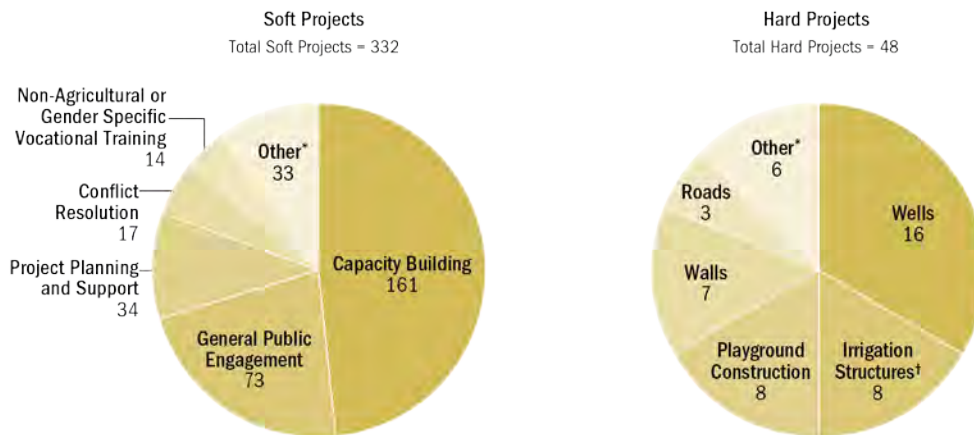
the 22 wells identified in the hard category, eight well projects were designed to rehabilitate existing wells while the remaining 14 were projects designed to extend the wells.

## SIKA Projects in Maydan Wardak

Of the 427 projects implemented in Maydan Wardak, 78 percent (332 projects) were soft projects, 11 percent (48 projects), were hard projects and 11 percent (47 projects) were not determinable. All of the capacity building projects implemented in Maydan Wardak were designed to train local government officials in a variety of subjects including grant management, advocacy, lobbying, fundraising, and identifying sources of instability. The majority of hard projects implemented in Maydan Wardak supported infrastructure endeavors included the rehabilitation and construction of roads and wells, playgrounds, and irrigation structures, such as culverts, dams, and canals. Two projects were incomplete. See Figure 9 for the different types of projects implemented in Maydan Wardak.

**Figure 9— Types of SIKA Projects in Maydan Wardak**

Maydan Wardak Province



Source: SIGAR analysis of USAID's SIKA data.

Note: The 'other' category for Soft Projects includes the following categories: election-related, gender and human rights, governance and anticorruption, and other projects that could not be identified.

Note: The "project planning and support" category primarily consists of efforts to train local district entities in understanding the different components of infrastructure projects and in infrastructure project planning and budgeting.

Note: The 'irrigation structures' category for Hard Projects includes a variety of infrastructure projects, such as the construction of canals, siphons, intake gates, dams, water dividers, and a water reservoir.

Note: The 'other' category for Hard Projects includes a variety of infrastructure projects, such as installing mixed projects, culverts, and building rehabilitation. Mixed projects are projects that include more than one project, such as the installation of a culvert and road rehabilitation.

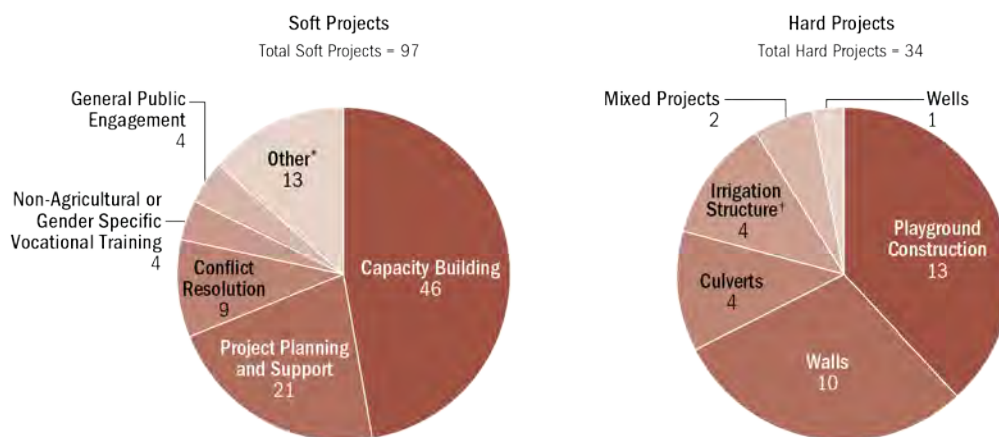
Projects related to general public engagement typically sought to, among other things, inform the community about SIKA projects through communications and outreach training and activities. Projects in the non-agricultural or gender specific training subcategory primarily supported technical training for SIKA project operation and maintenance. In the other subcategory, projects involved training on gender, civic education, and projects related to resource and information sharing, among other things. Like in other provinces in SIKA-East projects in the conflict resolution category consisted of coalition building efforts alongside negotiation strategy training. In the hard category, nine of the 16 well projects were designed to rehabilitate existing wells.

## SIKA Projects in Paktika

Of the 135 projects implemented in Paktika, 72 percent (97 projects) were soft projects, 25 percent (34 projects), were hard projects, and three percent (4 projects) were not determinable. All of the capacity building projects implemented in Paktika were designed to train local government officials in a variety of subjects including fundraising, grant management, advocacy, and lobbying. Hard projects implemented in Paktika supported infrastructure endeavors included the rehabilitation and construction of playgrounds, boundary walls, and irrigation structures, such culverts and intakes construction. Six projects in Paktika were incomplete. Figure 10 shows the different types of projects implemented in Paktika.

**Figure 10— Types of SIKA Projects in Paktika**

Paktika Province



Source: SIGAR analysis of USAID's SIKA data.

Note: The 'other' category for Soft Projects includes the following categories: election-related, gender and human rights, and governance and anticorruption.

Note: The "project planning and support" category primarily consists of efforts to train local district entities in understanding the different components of infrastructure projects and in infrastructure project planning and budgeting.

Note: The 'irrigation' category for Hard Projects includes a variety of infrastructure projects related to irrigation, such as construction of intake gates and streams.

Projects related to general public engagement typically sought to, among other things, inform the community about SIKA projects through communication training and building community trust. The nine projects under conflict resolution focused on coalition building and negotiation strategy training. Projects in the gender specific vocational subcategory supported the implemented projects through operation and maintenance training. Within the hard category, of the 10 walls built, seven were built as protection walls and three were built as school boundary walls.

## AGENCY COMMENTS

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We provided a draft of this fact sheet to USAID on November 5, 2018. We received comments from USAID on November 19, 2018. In its comments, USAID reported that beginning in 2006 it worked in coordination with the Department of Defense and the Afghan Government to create stabilization programs to establish basic linkages between provincial government institutions and local communities. Since USAID's stabilization programs ended in 2015, USAID reported that it has gradually shifted towards long-term capacity building to provide the technical guidance needed to help the Afghan Government deliver essential services to the people of Afghanistan. USAID's written comments are reproduced in appendix II. We also received technical comments from USAID, which we incorporated as appropriate.



## APPENDIX I– PROJECT CATEGORIES AND PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS

SIGAR used the information provided by USAID in Afghan Info to categorize SIKA projects to determine the types of projects that were conducted, project location, completion status, and the overall scope of SIKA operations throughout Afghanistan. The categories we identified are listed below, and contain examples of the different types of projects we placed into each category.<sup>31</sup>

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

Sub-Category	Sample Project Descriptions	
Agriculture	Irrigation Agriculture outreach Fruit and vegetable processing Water dividers Canals Dams	Water reservoir construction Water gates Tractor repair training Crop-specific Training Plant, Pest, and Disease Training
Capacity Building	Training, such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inventory asset management</li> <li>• Management and leadership</li> <li>• Financial management</li> <li>• Procurement</li> <li>• Fundraising</li> </ul> District Social Workers (DSW) Program SIKA local program oversight meetings	Advocacy and lobby SIKA board member training Monitoring of projects Stability Working Group District Kickoff Meeting Publicize Capacity Building Training <sup>31</sup> Stability Analysis Stability Technical Assistant Program Stability and Security Meeting
Conflict Resolution	Conflict resolution training Conflict Resolution Committee Peace journalism training Negotiation strategy training Peace meeting	Installation of community complaint boxes Tribal Conflict Resolution Committee Resolve tribal conflict Unity Building Coalition Building
Counter-Narcotics	Anti-poppy cultivation meeting	Provincial Counter-Narcotics Directorate (CND)
Education and Youth	All school-related activities, including construction of schools and playgrounds Teacher training Playground construction University exam prep Public awareness for education programs Provide school equipment Youth English courses Community, teachers, and education dialogue	Pashto literacy courses Celebration of teacher day PLAY (Physical Education, Leadership, and Youth Development) Provide Heating for School Youth Council Education Promotion Rehabilitation of Schools Provision of Furniture to Schools Provision of Educational Material Provision of Basic Educational Supplies
Election-Related	Raise awareness of elections Civic outreach voting for gender	Civic education for elections Election logistics and support
Gender and Human Rights	Gender and Human Rights training Human rights Women's rights Gender mainstreaming training	Vocational training for women <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• in handicraft</li> <li>• bead weaving</li> <li>• tailoring (sewing)</li> </ul>

<sup>31</sup> We added additional project descriptions into the 11 project subcategories since we completed our review of SIKA-North (SIGAR-18-23-SP). We also added in one additional project subcategory, project planning and support, to support our analysis of SIKA-East.

	Gender Topics Public Outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>embroidery</li> <li>public speaking</li> </ul>
General Public Engagement	<p>Communications and outreach</p> <p>Project promotion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Radio broadcasts</li> <li>mobile theater</li> <li>Posters</li> <li>Photographs</li> </ul> <p>Public relations</p> <p>Signboard</p> <p>Media affairs</p> <p>Reporting on trends in SIKA projects</p>	<p>Hashar (Volunteer coordination)</p> <p>Public Awareness</p> <p>Poetry Reading</p> <p>Poetry Contest</p> <p>Community Trust</p> <p>Notice Board</p> <p>District Information Center</p> <p>Direct Stabilization Committee (DSC) meetings</p> <p>Assess Program Needs</p> <p>Theatre</p>
Governance and Anti-Corruption	<p>Anticorruption training</p> <p>Linking citizens to leaders</p> <p>HR and civil service law</p> <p>Governance and Development Coordinators</p>	<p>Access to GIROA services</p> <p>Community Based Disaster Risk</p> <p>Disaster and environmental management Strategy and Planning</p>
Non-agricultural or Gender Specific Vocational Training	<p>Vehicle (automobile) Repair</p> <p>Generator Repair</p> <p>Motorcycle Repair</p> <p>Refrigerator Repair</p> <p>Electrical Solar Training</p> <p>Carpentry Training</p> <p>Computer Training</p> <p>Photojournalism Training</p> <p>Video Editing Training</p>	<p>Provide Toolkits for Students to Start Business in Tailoring</p> <p>Technical Training for Projects</p> <p>Sewing Training</p> <p>Electrical Wire Training</p> <p>Handicraft Training</p> <p>Plumbing Training</p> <p>Unspecified Vocational Training</p>
Infrastructure	<p>Walls (retaining wall, protection wall)</p> <p>Culverts (box culverts, slab culverts)</p> <p>Roads</p> <p>Siphons</p> <p>Wells</p> <p>Building rehabilitation</p> <p>Testing of construction materials</p> <p>Provision of water storage containers</p> <p>Stream construction</p> <p>Gutters</p> <p>Intake gates</p> <p>Supplying electricity</p>	<p>Mixed Projects (two or more infrastructure projects funded under one project)</p> <p>Provision of furniture or equipment to schools</p> <p>Infrastructure Project Implementation</p> <p>Providing Infrastructure (except to schools)</p> <p>Solar Panels/Electricity</p> <p>Spillway</p> <p>Sanitization Fittings</p> <p>Flood Protection Walls</p> <p>Hand Pump</p> <p>RCC Slabs</p>
Project Planning and Support	<p>*This category primarily consists of efforts to train local district entities in understanding the different components of infrastructure projects and in infrastructure project planning and budgeting. Projects included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing checklists for infrastructure project completion</li> <li>Training in project planning and budgeting</li> <li>Discussing project feasibility and complexity</li> </ul>	
Sports Promotion and Development	<p>Cricket field construction</p> <p>Football field construction</p>	<p>Volleyball playground construction</p> <p>Sports Program Development</p> <p>Sports Teams</p>
Other	<p>Not Identifiable/Unable to Determine</p> <p>Service Provider's Catalogue</p>	<p>Provide Office Equipment</p> <p>Provision of Furniture</p>

Source: SIGAR analysis of USAID data

## APPENDIX II– AGENCY COMMENTS

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# USAID | AFGHANISTAN

FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

### MEMORANDUM

November 19, 2018

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

**FROM:** Jeffery P. Cohen, Acting Mission Director 

**SUBJECT:** Mission Response to SIGAR Fact Sheet Titled:  
“Information on USAID’s Stability in Key Areas – Eastern  
Region, Afghanistan” (SIGAR  
SP-185/SIGAR-19-XX-SP)

**REF:** SIGAR Transmittal email dated November 06, 2018

USAID thanks SIGAR for the opportunity to comment on this draft fact sheet.

Beginning in 2006, and in coordination with the Department of Defense (DoD) and the Afghan government, USAID initiated stabilization programs to establish basic linkages between provincial government institutions and local communities. USAID worked directly with communities to identify and respond to local populations’ needs and concerns. USAID’s efforts included training local government officials in how to manage local projects, producing educational materials that informed the public about how to tap into government services, and providing support for small-scale public works projects. Over the years, USAID gradually shifted towards long-term capacity building, providing the technical guidance needed to help the Afghan government deliver essential services to the people of Afghanistan. USAID’s last stabilization program concluded in 2015.

During implementation, USAID monitored its stabilization programs regularly and conducted evaluations that led to programming changes and improved

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impact. As part of these efforts, USAID implemented the Measuring Impacts of Stabilization Initiatives (MISTI) project, which was the largest and most comprehensive trends analysis and independent impact evaluation of stabilization interventions. Thanks to MISTI, USAID was able to adapt its projects as they were being implemented to make them more effective.

Attachments: Appendix A – Technical Comments

cc: Elizabeth A. Chambers, Controller, USAID/Afghanistan  
Kristian Moore, U.S. Embassy/Kabul  
OAPA Audit

This project was conducted  
under project code SP-185.

## 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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## Public Affairs

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