



Citation

This case story submitted by the National Rural Access Program, Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development has been selected the Runner-Up for Afghanistan for SAPIA 2018. The case story presents how improvements in project management cycle speeded up project implementation. These improvements addressed the challenges of budget allocation, imbalanced development in rural accessibility, inaccurate cost estimates, contract extensions, etc.

Summary

The main challenges of NRAP were budget allocation, imbalanced development in rural accessibility, difference between estimated and awarded costs, social and environmental issues, time extensions in contracted sub-projects and variation claims. Improvements in the management cycle processes helped the Program provide services in an equitable manner to all rural people and extend its activities to all provinces. These improvements started with planning and related to considering the Rural Accessibility Index as the core for budget allocation and sub-project selection; conducting social surveys along technical and environmental surveys using modern tools and approaches; preparing designs using modern methodologies and software based on customized design standards; using up-to-date approaches for construction; and building contractors' capacity through on-the-job and annual trainings. As a result, it helped the team achieve the project objectives within the allocated budget before the planned closing date. Social issues have been minimized, proper system of reporting has been established, quality of work enhanced, the survey, design and procurement and implementation procedures are speeded up and the process cycles shortened.



**SAPIA
2018
RUNNER-UP**



SAPIA18279 – AFGHANISTAN



Improvements in Project Management Cycle that Speeded up Project Implementation

(This article is a summarized version of the submission entitled “Improvements in Project Management Cycle that Speeded up Project Implementation” made by Mr. Mohammad Nader Temory, Executive Director, National Rural Access Program (NRAP), Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, Kabul, Afghanistan, for the South Asia Procurement Innovation/Good Practice Awards.)

The main challenges of NRAP were budget allocation, imbalanced development in rural accessibility, difference between estimated and awarded costs

In surveys, the total station and Trimble GPSs and DGPSs replaced the ordinary GPSs. These innovations brought precision to the data captured from the site and provided high quality data to design engineers

The innovation provided a centralized location for all program data where any type of report can be generated in a short time and with the best quality

Challenge(s) Addressed

Beginning from the planning stage, the innovation resulted in addressing the following challenges:

- Criteria for selection of sub-projects are developed;
- Rural Accessibility Index (RAI) is determined for all provinces to ensure balanced development;
- A methodology was developed for maintenance of constructed rural roads;
- A result-based monitoring and evaluation system has been developed to evaluate the outcome of projects at the middle and end of the projects;
- Communities' awareness regarding beneficiary and impacts of the projects are raised;
- Grievance Redresses Mechanism was established;
- Modern technologies, tools and approaches were used for surveys; and
- Procurement risk identification and mitigation system introduced.

Logical application of criteria for selection of sub-projects, allocation of budget for each province, and consideration of RAI, helped the program to cover the whole country and was accepted as a real national program. The M&E section based on agreed indicators set a baseline of planned sub-projects and at the mid-line of the projects a follow-up survey was conducted. The improvements in survey through the



application of high technologies and approaches helped the design team to estimate workload and work quantities realistically and according to the site. This innovation in survey reduced the time extensions requested by private sector contractors and communities. Also, considering the climate, terrain and time regimes for each province, reduced the delays in implementation and helped them complete tasks in a timely manner. Improvements minimized deviations between estimated, awarded and implemented costs significantly. The information management system facilitated the procurement processes to be efficient through providing the historical data of the past years and paved the way to analyze those processes that take longer time. The processing of payment and of other management documents are expedited and the contractors can get their payments within 28 days after certification by the project manager as per contract documents.

Impacts

The improvements paved the way for just and correct allocation of budgets; reduced the deviation of accessibility among the rural people and minimized social problems caused during implementation. The innovation in survey and design reduced variation of estimated, awarded and implementation costs and time extensions in projects. Innovation in construction methodologies helped the program to achieve its objectives ahead of plan in implementation. It provided a centralized location for all program data where any type of report can be generated in a short time and with the best quality.

Level of Innovation/Good Practice

Budget has been allocated to provinces based on RAI. More budgets are allocated to provinces with low level of accessibility. In a province, priority was given to sub-projects with high social and economic benefits and multi-criteria process focusing on social and economic impacts. Maintenance activities covered all the constructed roads by NRAP. Though the budget was limited, the program still saved and the sub-projects were kept serviceable. Monitoring is currently done by MRRD team and a third-party monitoring. Evaluation is carried out by conducting a survey at the beginning of each project followed by mid-line and





end-line surveys. Results for each indicator shows that projects implemented under NRAP overachieved the expected results. Project information dissemination, beneficiaries and impacts were explained to the community, CDC elders, and Project Affected Family (male and female). In addition, the Grievance Redresses Mechanism recorded, categorized and resolved the complaints on time. In surveys, the total station and Trimble GPSs and DGPSs replaced the ordinary GPSs. These innovations brought precision to the data captured from the site and provided high quality data to design engineers.

Lessons Learned

We work on the foundation of quality and integrity complying with ICAI standards, and are well focused on the goals to achieve. Improvements in project management cycle can speed up project implementation by addressing the challenges of budget allocation, imbalanced development in rural accessibility, inaccurate cost estimates, contract extensions, etc.

