



Capacity Building and Change Management Program

CASE STUDY FACT SHEET



Photo: DAIL Training Center in the Badam Bagh research field.

For 35 years Afghanistan has been a nation in conflict. Continued strife has destroyed irrigation systems, damaged transportation and storage infrastructure, spurred an exodus of skilled agriculturalists, and weakened the country's Ministry of Agriculture. But, in spite of continued conflict, the government of Afghanistan and international donors have made a renewed commitment to building capacity in the agriculture sector.

BACKGROUND

In 2008, the Afghanistan Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) began the quest for international support for a change management program that would radically change the Ministry structure and style of management. The key goals of the Program included: increasing capacity of the Ministry of Agriculture; improving planning, procurement, and personnel systems; and serving the management needs of Afghanistan's provincial agriculture offices (Directorates of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock offices or DAILs).

The U.S. Department of Agriculture responded with a four-year **Capacity Building and Change Management Program (CBCMP)**, implemented by the **International Executive Service Corps (IESC)** under the **Volunteers for Economic Growth Alliance (VEGA)**.

CBCMP worked to build capacity in the Ministry of Agriculture and meet Program goals by:

- Implementing financial management systems;
- Responding to audit recommendations;
- Establishing grants management capabilities;
- Providing training and resources;
- Standardizing organizational structure and work-planning processes;
- Improving human resource practices; and
- Expanding use of CBCMP methodology and programming.

FAST FACTS

Program Name: Capacity Building and Change Management Program (CBCMP)

VEGA Lead Member: International Executive Service Corps (IESC)

Other VEGA Members: International City/County Management Association (ICMA), Land O'Lakes International Development, Institute for International Education (IIE), International Senior Lawyers Project (ISLP)

Organization Assisted: Afghanistan Ministry of Agriculture (MAIL)

Years Implemented: November 2010 - June 2014

Country: Afghanistan

IMPACT

CBCMP worked to change the style and structure of management of MAIL, a bureaucracy consisting of over 9,000 employees in 65 departments. In time, CBCMP realized the visionary challenge of changing MAIL's structure from a typical, vertical line ministry into a modern ministry with a decentralized and participatory managerial style.

LOCAL CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

The methodology for ministry modernization drew from participatory planning practices coupled with the technique of placing change agents in each department working side by side with the civil service employees. The recruitment of change agents from the local population of professionals - instead of short-term technical assistance - to strengthen the Ministry greatly increased its sustainability. It also created a measurable increase in the satisfaction of employees with management and their role in the organization in general.



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LESSONS LEARNED

CBCMP implemented strategic reforms that transformed MAIL's large bureaucracy. These lessons can be used to inform similar programming. For a full list of the lessons learned, see the Capacity Building and Change Management Program case study. A few key lessons include:

- Advisory boards of stakeholders are necessary to ensure plans and strategies have the full support of stakeholders;
- A project team embedded within the bureaucracy builds rapport and teamwork;
- Enthusiastic leadership committed to change from the beginning provides vision and legitimizes change;
- Recruitment of local professionals for medium-term positions is more economical and effective than short-term technical assistance; and
- Linkages between independent ministries increase efficiency.

THE VEGA ALLIANCE

The Volunteers for Economic Growth Alliance (VEGA) is the world's largest member-directed consortium of nonprofit economic growth organizations that designs and delivers high impact programs, incorporating skilled volunteer professionals into its work with donors, philanthropic institutions, private enterprise, and developing country organizations. VEGA was established as a 501(c)3 organization in 2004 through a United States Agency for International Development's Leader with Associate Award. When it began a decade ago, VEGA was established as a rapid and efficient mechanism that utilized a competitive process to award USAID funding to its member organizations. Now, VEGA continues to champion its model and its alliance members' breadth of expertise to other partners. VEGA supported the research and publication of this case study as part of its commitment to knowledge management and sharing lessons learned among its member organizations and the international development community.



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