

Quarterly Progress Report

Rebuilding the Agricultural Information System for Institutions of Higher Education in Afghanistan: Status, Issues, and Future Plans

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Project Overview: To support ongoing efforts to revitalize the overall agricultural education program in higher education institutions in Afghanistan, this preliminary project, supported by the IALC, has taken the first steps toward developing a modern agricultural information system. The opening of the first electronic library (called the Agriculture Electronic Library (AEL)) in the Faculty of Agriculture at Kabul University was accomplished in the spring of 2004. Since that time, personnel have been hired to maintain the facility, trainings of library staff and faculty have been conducted, and equipment and materials purchased (including CD-ROMs, Internet resources, and textbooks). It is the intent of this highly successful project to leverage current progress into an expanded activity to advance and provide critical support to the agricultural and veterinary sciences education programs at the regional universities as well as at Kabul University.

Recent Accomplishments

1. Afghan eQuality Alliances: 21st Century Universities for Afghanistan - Digital Libraries Project

Atifa Rawan and Han Yan continue to contribute time and expertise to this project..

The goal of the Digital Libraries Alliance is to develop the capacity of Afghan librarians to work with an open-source digital libraries software and to catalog open content and open educational materials that all Afghanistan universities could share. Achievement of the goal will require a short-term and long-term capacity building program for Afghan librarians.

The project is funded by USAID/Washington State University. The University of Arizona Libraries was awarded the contract to develop the full library integrated system for five higher education libraries in Kabul. The ultimate goal is to extend the digital libraries efforts into other localities in Afghanistan. Both Atifa Rawan and Han Yan are the project coordinators and work closely with other UA libraries staff and OCLC on this project.

2. Acquisitions

Discussions have been conducted about resources to provide to develop the Learning Technologies Center for Nangarhar University. LanTEEAL will be purchased, as well as the CABI Compendia: Crop Protection Compendium, Animal Health and Production Compendium, and Forestry Compendium. Also access will be provided to EOLSS (Encyclopedia Of Life Support Systems), an integrated compendium of sixteen encyclopedias, being developed by UNESCO.

3. *Personnel, Salaries, and Operations*

Kevin McNamara of Purdue expressed willingness to help us pay salaries for AEL personnel. We are checking with him about the best means for getting funds to him.

He notified us that Mr. Mohammad Haroon Zareef had been replaced at the AEL. Since we had been happy with his performance and since neither Mr. Zekrullah Safi, Field Coordinator or Dr. Mohsini, Dean of the College of Agriculture had consulted with us about the reasons or need for making a change of personnel, we are concerned about these event. Mr. Zareef has contacted Atifa about the situation. We will send the 3-months salary we owe him with Dr. McNamara. Atifa has emailed Safi and Mohsini that we will not pay salary for the replacement, since we were not consulted or advised about the change. Safi will go to Purdue in early August for a semester of training. We will send 4-months salary to him when he comes to the U.S.

Dr. Nasrat Wassimi has expressed his willingness to help us establish the Learning Technologies Center at Nangarhar University. We are currently discussing whether September or October would be better for this effort. If he feels October is better for his schedule, then we will need to request a no-cost extension to accommodate this.

4. *Equipment*

We are discussing further equipment needs for developing the Learning Technologies Center for Nangarhar University.

5. *Web site: The Agriculture Electronic Library in Afghanistan* *<http://alic.arid.arizona.edu/afghanistan/>*

A few pages have been created for this web site, including

- Library Resources -- <http://alic.arid.arizona.edu/afghanistan/libraryresources.html> there are links to information about TEEAL, AGORA, and CABI Compendia. Also included are powerpoint and pdf files of Atifa's training presentations for TEEAL and AGORA and powerpoint and pdf files of the Dari translations prepared by Mr. Abdul Khalid Madadi (the former Field Coordinator for TEEAL at AEL, currently enrolled in graduate studies in Plant Pathology at the Tokyo University of Agriculture and Technology).
- Training Manuals -- <http://alic.arid.arizona.edu/afghanistan/training/trainingmaterials.html> the manuals produced by John Santas' personnel for the UIUC component have been scanned and made into pdf files and are available on this web site. CD-ROM copies of the web site, including the manuals, will be produced and given to AEL and to the Learning Technologies Center that will be developed for Nangarhar University.

Future Activities for 2005-2006

- 1) ongoing maintenance and support for the AEL.
- 2) identify appropriate agricultural electronic resources for the College of Agriculture, Nangarhar University.

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