

Partners seek O&M solutions

*Story and photos by Brenda L. Beasley, public affairs specialist, Afghanistan Engineer District
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Kabul, Afghanistan — Operations and maintenance professionals from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Afghanistan Engineer District met with their counterparts at Camp Eggers in Kabul, Afghanistan, Sept. 30 to discuss current and future challenges in maintaining Afghan National Army facilities.

The first-ever Installation Operations and Maintenance Conference was hosted by the Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan to help foster cooperation between the parties involved in building and maintaining the ANA infrastructure. Over 50 O&M partners were in attendance.

“O&M has been really hard to execute,” said Navy Capt. Jeffrey D. Paradee, Commander, Combined Joint Engineering Directorate, CSTC-A. “We’ve got cultural challenges to overcome. The goal for today is communication.”

Army Cpt. Frank Tedeschi, O&M Program Manager in CJ-ENG, CSTC-A, served as the master of ceremonies for the conference. Participating partners included professionals from the Corps’ Afghanistan Engineer District, Military Professional Resources, Inc., the Air Force Center for Engineering and the Environment, Contract International, Inc., the Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix V, and CSTC-A’s Installation Management Department.

CJ-ENG supports CSTC-A in the planning and construction of Afghanistan National Security Forces facilities and mentoring ANSF engineer staffs in order to develop a stable Afghanistan, and deter and defeat terrorism within Afghanistan’s borders, according to Tedeschi.

“All of you here are helping us execute this mission,” said Tedeschi. “We’re building facilities here that the Afghans don’t always know how to use and we have to synchronize our actions.”

Over the next fiscal year, CSTC-A plans to execute about \$1.4 billion in construction providing permanent facilities for the ANA throughout the nation of Afghanistan. Rapid growth in a war zone, cultural issues, a high rotation rate among the U.S. Civilian and military support staff, water conservation, facility care and maintenance at the ANA bases, lack of adequately trained ANA drivers, theft of facility property at the ANA bases, and technical competency training of residual ANA facilities support staff are just a few of the challenges that are faced daily in Afghanistan.

The need for technical competency training for



AED’s Cheryl O. Sims (right) accepts a Certificate of Achievement on behalf of Sgt. 1st Class Brian Herbert for his outstanding facilities support to the National Military Academy of Afghanistan and CSTC-A. It was signed and presented by Navy Capt. Jeffrey D. Paradee, Director, CSTC-A CJ-ENG (left).

residual ANA facilities support staff is being addressed with an innovative program. “The good news is that we have a program to address this issue – The Off-Ramping Program”, said Tedeschi. This program will train ANA craftsmen in skill sets such as carpentry, masonry, electrical wiring, heating and ventilation equipment repair, plumbing, basic English language skills and other technical areas. The Off-Ramp Program will help build technical capacity in the ranks of the ANA facilities support staff and allow for the transition of the facilities to the Afghans. This program also consists of a parallel management training program. While the craftsmen are undergoing technical skill training, the management staff such as the ANA Directors of Public Works at the installation level and the Command staff at the Afghanistan Installation Management Directorate are receiving training in the management and operation of a DPW Command.

Another innovative program is the development of a design guide specific to Afghanistan that is being prepared by AED’s Chester S. Nakamura. All of these programs are being implemented with the goal that the facilities which are now being constructed will continue to be cared for after CSTC-A has completed their mission in Afghanistan.

The road ahead will call for synchronizing actions across CSTC-A, validating minor construction projects, developing a DPW Capacity in the ANA, developing an environmental/HAZMAT framework, properly maintaining facilities, curbing theft and waste on the ANA bases, and developing a sense of ownership in the ANA facilities by the ANA soldiers that are stationed there.

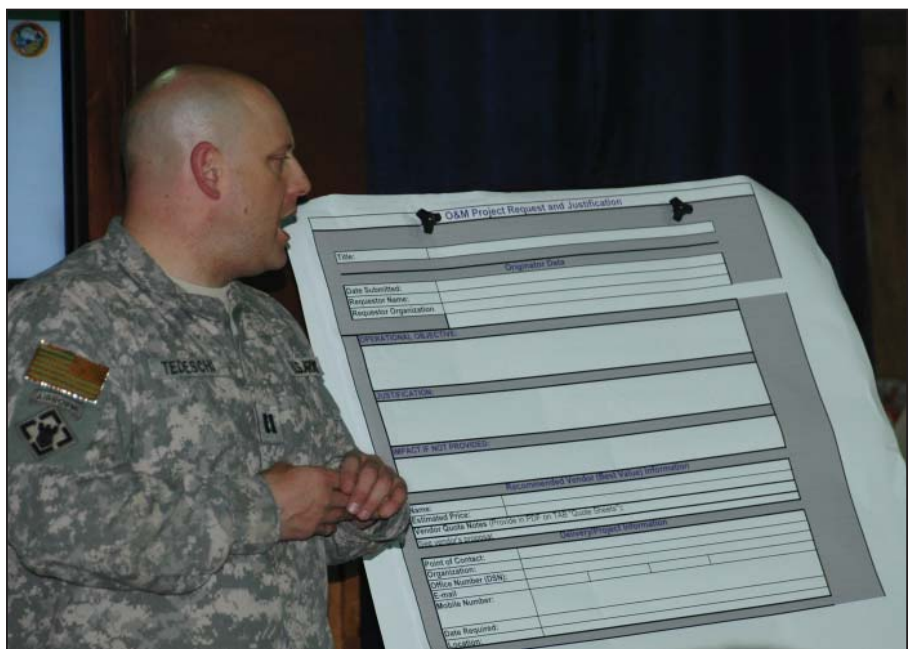
“Everyone here needs to be a mentor,” said Tedeschi. “There is a big push for developing environmental standards, and ownership at the ANA facilities by the ANA soldiers.”

Under the ANA construction program, nine brigades/garrisons were completed in fiscal year 2008 and in 2009 there are plans to build five more brigades and four more kandaks (battalions), according to the AED’s Terry L. Patton, Project Management Professional.

AED’s project management mission is to conduct project management, construction and engineering in the Central Asian Republics to facilitate the establishment of a secure and stable environment while promoting reconstruction and infrastructure development, said Patton.

The overall AED Operations and Maintenance Program is designed to preserve and maintain all facilities and infrastructure that are built for the ANA in such a condition that they may be effectively used for their designated functional purpose, and to support the U.S. Government’s policy of sustainability through training, and completing a phased turnover of facility engineer operations to the Afghanistan Ministry of Defense.

“We’re supporting construction and reconstruction of Afghanistan,” said Patton. “We have the workload of



Army Cpt. Frank Tedeschi, O&M Program Manager, CSTC-A CJ-ENG, explains the new O&M Project Request and Justification form that CTSC-A plans to use to help streamline the validation process.



Terry L. Patton
Project Management Professional, AED

worksite activities, providing feedback for lessons learned to construction activities, and serving as Contracting Officer Representatives for the countrywide O&M contract. This mission is carried out at over 25 Afghan National Army Sites in Kabul and seven active locations around the greater Afghanistan area, with nine locations coming on-line shortly. These sites also include garrisons, hospital complexes, ammunition supply points, logistics centers, and air corps facilities.

“A second fundamental goal of the AED O&M team is to transition this sustainment service capability to the Afghan people,” said Israel. “And our requirements are growing exponentially!”

Over the next year, many new bases will be added to the countrywide O&M contract. These bases will be located at Gamberi, Shindand, Gomal, Khairkot, Farah, Konduz, and Jalalabad, and more sites are planned because of the construction of Afghan National Police stations throughout the country, according to Israel. By March 2010, the ANP program will have over 500 sites that will be receiving contracted O&M support services under a countrywide ANP O&M support contract managed by AED.

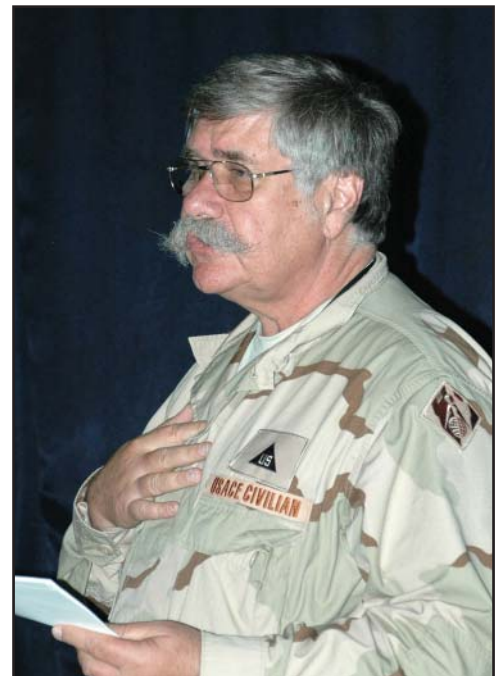
CTSC-A is also customer to the Air Force Center for Engineering and the Environment, according to Air Force 1st Lt. Brandon Rocker, who gave AFCEE’s program overview. AFCEE provides integrated

a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Division with only 370 Soldiers and Civilians to make it happen.”

The project management process includes being the primary point of contact for the customer, which in this case is CSTC-A, said AED’s Orrin M. Israel, the deputy of O&M Branch. It also includes determining the requirements and scopes of work; developing annual goals and objectives with the customer; overseeing the program funds; developing the base contract and the modifications to support the requirements; coordinating with the Contracting Officer on the funding and budgeting requirements in the contract; working with the Contracting Officer to execute the options in the contract; and coordinating with O&M execution offices on the contract requirements.

AED is the execution arm of a countrywide O&M contract that supports the ANA bases and facilities that have been constructed for the people of Afghanistan. The contract scope of work for the ANA facilities includes providing O&M services for ANA permanent facilities throughout Afghanistan, routine scheduled preventive maintenance, non-routine repair and replacement as needed, and providing 24-Hour emergency support, said Israel.

To help carry out this mission, the AED O&M Branch participates in mentoring ANA DPW staff, coordinating new



Orrin M. Israel
Deputy O&M Branch, AED

engineering and environmental management, execution and technical services to ensure sustainable installations optimize Air Force capabilities.

AFCEE has been involved in Afghanistan since 2006. Their challenges include staying ahead of the rapid ANA projected growth, acquisition timelines, increased internal and external scrutiny, and security, said Rocker.

“When we turn over a building, we’re just representatives of the client,” said Rocker. “We’re the middle man – the mediator for everything. We’re required to ensure the contractor has set up dates for turnover.”

To help accomplish turning over the facilities to the ANA, Contract International, Inc. comes into play, according to Country Manager Leroy Cobb, who provided their company overview. Their O&M Division provides quality services and supplies to the ANA through the guidance and resources of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Afghanistan Engineer District.

CII trains local national workers to perform functions needed on ANA Military installations. They provide round-the-clock maintenance services to installations all around the country; integrate environmental safety & health practices into the everyday lives of their workers; provide a workplace that ensures a better future for the local national workers by achieving better quality, better skills, and a well trained workforce that will be able to adapt to the changing needs of the customer; and improve the quality of life for the local economy by creating jobs and teaching skills that will work for any organization.

“We have a lot of challenges to get materials to the sites we provide O&M support services too and we’ve come up with innovative ways to get our materials to these austere locations,” said Cobb.

The Off-Ramping program will be performed through a training contract managed by AED. The program will be initiated through three stages of various degrees or levels of training, according to AED’s Off-Ramping Program Manager Neil Myers.

The first stage involves selecting two different types of candidates for training - skilled-trade workers and facility engineer managers. The candidates will be local hires by each garrison and only have to meet the ethnicity of that garrison. ETT’s and MPRI representatives will work with the Installation Command on best candidate selection, according to Myers. They’ll conduct basic skill testing and literacy assessments of the candidates. The candidates will then attend a combination of onsite and offsite training.

Formal classroom training is the second stage. Skilled-trade students are provided courses consisting of electrical, plumbing, HVAC, carpentry, painting, masonry, locksmith, heavy equipment operator, generator operation and maintenance, and language – literacy. The facility engineer managers are offered courses in DPW management orientation, budgeting and programming, office administration, logistics, warehouse management, purchasing, master planning and installation support report preparation, safety and fire protection, environmental protection, real property management, basic typing skills and the use of applicable computer programs.

The third and final stage will involve all students returning to the installation where they’ll receive on-the-job



E. Neil Myers
Off-Ramping Program Manager, AED

training. The skilled-trade students will be paired with selected O&M contractor craftsmen and the facility engineer managers will be partnered with O&M contractor facility managers. After completing this last phase of training, the students will receive final testing and a graduation certificate.

“Graduates will be given an appropriate increase in pay so that they won’t take their skills elsewhere,” said Tedeschi. “We need to make it financially attractive for them to stay on the base and take care of it.”

Other issues and challenges include getting the full support of the ANA senior leadership for the off-ramp efforts, enhancing the facility engineer staff involvement and responsibilities in the overall O&M, and teaching them accountability for tools, parts, and materials.

“At installations where they have a strong building manager program, the maintenance of the facilities greatly improved,” said Tedeschi. “We need to emphasis becoming a good building manager.” It’s also very important to educate the installation commanders on the building manager’s role and how to utilize the building manager, he added.

Communicating and coordinating is the key to successfully combating future O&M challenges. “We’re in a different culture, with a different language,” said Navy Cmdr. Joseph Y. Kan, Deputy Director CJ-ENG, CSTC-A. “We have constant turnovers, multiple services, and multiple acronyms. We have to be able to communicate and coordinate with each other to enable Afghans to stand on their own – educationally, culturally, and literarily. If we only build and maintain, we have not done our job. We have to mentor. We have to develop Afghans.”



For his outstanding facilities support to the National Military Academy of Afghanistan and CSTC-A, AED’s Jerry Buchanan (left) receives a Certificate of Achievement from Navy Cmdr. Joseph Y. Kan, Deputy Director CSTC-A CJ-ENG.