

Legal Aid Centres

The project is funded by ADB at the cost of US\$ 512,900 (PKR 30.77 Million) and will be implemented over two years. ERRA and NRC signed a Consultant Services Contract on 21st November 2007, whereby NRC was directed to establish and operate Legal Aid Centers (LAC) in 18 different Tehsils in NWFP and AJK. On 23rd November 2007 NRC notified ERRA confirming the commencement of the service.

The objective of consultancy services is to provide legal facilitation and assistance to earthquake victims in affected areas of NWFP and AJK to address legal issues pertaining to entitlements and succession; and help retain legal rights in a timely and effective manner and to Provision of advice on legal matters concerning entitlements and succession to the earthquake affectees and also provision of guidance to citizens in matters of access to such basic documents as birth, marriage, death certificates, property / land rights documents. It also include review and report periodically on the extent to which issues of legal aid at Tehsil level have been integrated into the planning priorities and projects under the governance head. The consultants will also identify, and disseminate lessons learned; best practices on legal aid to the most vulnerable the context of recovery and reconstruction initiatives;

All Tehsil Legal Aid Centers (LAC) are functional. All Tehsil offices are located in the District Courts of each Tehsil so as to make it as accessible for the beneficiary population to obtain legal aid. Each Tehsil Office has a Tehsil Legal Expert (TLE) present and also being assisted by an Assistance Legal Expert (ALE).

NRC's already existing Field Offices from the Earthquake Operations in four different Districts were handed over to the Project. The rationale behind these Field offices is that of administrative supervision. All 18 Tehsils are distributed among the following field offices:-

- **Muzaffarabad;** administrating Athmaqum, Hatian, Hajira, Rawlakot, Bagh. And Muzaffarabad Tehsils
- **Battagram;** administrating Dassu, Pattan, Puran, Alpurai, Bisham, Alai and Battagram Tehsils
- **Abbottabad;** administrating Abbottabad Teshil
- **Mansehra;** Balakot, Ughi and Mansehra Tehsil

The Field Offices are being headed by a Head of Office and assisted by an Administration Officer. The Field Office has been entrusted with the over all management of the LACs, Administrative and logistical support to the TLE and ALE and also for the financial Management of the LACs. The Field Office also has to Coordinate human resource management with the HR Coordinator, coordinate with local authorities at the district level and also has to monitor and evaluate activities with the M&E expert. An M&E expert has also been provided in the project staff.

Various avenues to introduce this project in the beneficiary population have been exercised by the implementing partner and some of these include; posters and pamphlets, calendars, and Masjid announcements. Other methods include meetings

and awareness raising in different authorities, offices and also utilizing the already existing network that NRC since developed in the past.

This overall monitoring and policy supervision will be carried out by District Oversight Committee.

As of January 31, 2008, 3518 cases registered and the status is as under:

Administrative Assistance:	303 out of 1341 resolved
Court Cases:	18 out of 98 resolved
Documentation Cases:	1732 out of 2079 resolved.