**MISTI Open Data Release**

The raw data from the Measuring Impact of Stabilization Initiatives (MISTI) project is the largest and most comprehensive evaluations of stabilization interventions ever undertaken by USAID. The MISTI dataset contains five semi-annual iterations or “waves” of surveys conducted by Management Systems International (MSI) from September 2012 through November 2014 to assess the impact of USAID projects on stability and resilience at the district and village levels in Afghanistan.[[1]](#footnote-1) The data are available at the Development Data Library (DDL), USAID’s public repository of Agency-funded, machine readable data. The DDL is part of USAID’s commitment to evidence-based programming and rigorous evaluation, while supporting the principles of the President’s Open Government Initiative.

The main objective of the stabilization projects covered by the surveys, including the Stability in Key Areas (SIKA) programs, [the Community Cohesion Initiative (CCI)](https://www.usaid.gov/political-transition-initiatives/afghanistan), [the Afghan Civilian Assistance Program II](https://www.usaid.gov/news-information/fact-sheets/afghan-civilian-assistance-program-iii-acap-iii), and [the Kandahar Food Zone (KFZ)](https://www.usaid.gov/news-information/fact-sheets/kandahar-food-zone-program-kfz), was to promote good governance and stability by building connections between government leaders and local communities. USAID’s efforts in these projects included training local government officials on how to manage projects, producing manuals that informed the public on how to tap into government services, and providing support for small-scale public works projects.

**Insights from MISTI**

MISTI data analysis included village demographic characteristics, violent incident counts, stabilization and the [National Solidarity Programme (NSP)](http://www.worldbank.org/projects/P117103/national-solidarity-program-iii?lang=en) project activities. Perception indicators from interviews of 190,264 people conducted in 5,093 villages across 130 districts and 23 provinces in Afghanistan, has already yielded important insights that will inform U.S. and Afghan Government policy and practice related to transition. You can find all the MISTI Impact Evaluation reports on USAID’s Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC).

In addition to this impact evaluation, MISTI also provided independent, third-party monitoring and performance evaluations of USAID stabilization programs, which helped strengthen their implementation.

# Future Research

To garner additional lessons from MISTI, USAID is supporting a team of researchers from the Empirical Studies of Conflict Project at Princeton University, in collaboration with the U.S. Institute of Peace, to analyze and compare the MISTI data and other studies, articles, and datasets on stabilization programming in Afghanistan. This study aims to estimate the impact of stabilization programs in Afghanistan, and generate and disseminate key lessons for stabilization programs and other development programs currently being implemented in Afghanistan, from a governance, economic, and security lens. USAID hopes that this study will help inform U.S. and Afghan Government policy and practice related to transition, as well as stabilization efforts in other countries.

1. MISTI defined “stability” as the prevailing belief in and support for the decisions and actions of local leaders and government that affect the lives of people in a given community. People in stable areas judge physical security, quality of life, economic opportunities, and local leaders to be satisfactory, receive fair  
   treatment from their local government and legal authorities, and find that these things are predictable in the daily course of life. Stability is most evident where citizens believe that local leadership and government effectively serves their interests. “Resilience” was measured by an index of the following: how effectively villages are able to resolve internal and external issues; citizens’ ability to impact decision-making processes; cooperation between village leadership and district government; the presence of CSOs that cut across village/tribal/ethnic/sectarian cleavages; and, the ability of citizens to freely express their views/opinions about a number of public figures and organizations. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)