



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

**AZERBAIJAN**



USAID works to increase the economic and social empowerment of local women.

Photo credit: Matthew Case/USAID

## Country Profile

Azerbaijan declared its independence from the Soviet Union in August of 1991. At the crossroads of the Middle East, Central Asia and Europe, Azerbaijan is bordered by the Caspian Sea and Caucasus Mountains, which span Asia and Europe. It is a secular state with a Muslim-majority population and strong traditions of religious tolerance. Azerbaijan has substantial energy resources, which have led to rapid growth since the early 2000s. However, the decline of global oil prices since mid-2014 has created a downturn in the economy and financial sectors. Efforts are underway to implement significant financial and economic reforms in order to stabilize Azerbaijan's economy.

## OUR WORK

USAID's overall aim is to create opportunities for social-economic development in Azerbaijan. USAID currently provides development assistance to achieve goals in two major sectors: supporting the agricultural development; and strengthening citizen participation in rural communities. USAID's assistance focuses on activities that: directly benefit the lives of the Azerbaijani people; create economic opportunities; and expand partnerships to rebuild civil society.

USAID has provided more than \$370 million in assistance since 1991 to assist with humanitarian relief, and health, economic and democratic reforms. The Government of Azerbaijan has contributed more than \$20 million in additional funds to USAID to help achieve economic reform goals for the country.

## GOVERNANCE

USAID's governance assistance supports civil society actors, aids vulnerable people, and fosters transferable advocacy and civic empowerment skills within the broader population. USAID aims to support independent voices, protect vulnerable populations, and empower citizens to engage their government constructively to promote the changes they seek. USAID works with public sector partners and civil society to strengthen the fight against corruption. USAID encourages citizens to engage and collaborate with their government on the national, regional, and local levels to solve community problems. USAID's women empowerment programs raise public awareness of issues that affect women and support their economic empowerment, protect women from gender-based violence, and prevent trafficking in persons, as well as strengthen their participation in political and decision-making processes. To combat human trafficking, USAID provides technical and financial support to shelters for women and children of victims of trafficking.

## ECONOMIC RESILIENCE

USAID supports the development of a competitive, transparent, and business-friendly environment that is conducive to job creation, private sector growth, and long-term prosperity. To expand economic partnerships, USAID advances Azerbaijan's economic integration and trade with Europe, as well as supports opportunities for regional trade integration, particularly market linkages of agricultural producers with Western buyers, and the elimination of impediments to harmonize regional trade and transportation. Due to the economic downturn, the non-energy sectors of the economy need further development. Within this context, USAID is helping the country diversify and strengthen its economy by targeting assistance in the agriculture sector. Specifically, USAID is helping local businesses and farmers increase the productive efficiency and quality of their products, and address issues of food safety, storage, and competitiveness. USAID also enhances the capacity of commercial banks to provide sustainable market-based financial services to small and medium enterprises. USAID works with civil society to improve the business environment by providing recommendations on policy issues, and with the government and international partners to increase the economic and social empowerment of local women, promoting youth employment by enhancing their job search and networking skills.

## CONTACTS

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USAID mobilizes communities across Azerbaijan to help them address their immediate social and economic needs.

Photo credit: East-West Management Institute



USAID agricultural recommendations help farmers and growers improve quality of products and hence income.

Photo credit: Vugar Naghiyev / USAID