



FACT SHEET

USAID Engagement in Afghanistan – 2014 and Beyond

“This is a unique and important moment for the region: in Afghanistan, even as our troops come home, we continue to invest in the nation’s long-term development, ensuring the gains we’ve made over the last decade are lasting and meaningful.” – *USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah*



Afghan midwife attending her graduation ceremony in Kabul.
Photo - AFP

Over the past twelve years, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has been fully engaged in Afghanistan, helping it move toward a more secure, stable, and prosperous future in order to ensure that the country can never again be a safe haven for terrorists.

USAID, as part of a larger U.S. Government and international effort, is working to build the capacity of the Afghan government and people to take ownership of long-term

development and reconstruction efforts. Our partnership with Afghanistan will extend past the 2014 security transition as we seek to work with the Afghan government, private sector, and civil society to end extreme poverty through a focus on agriculture, private sector development, and maintenance of much-needed infrastructure. By supporting critical Afghan reforms designed to ensure mutual accountability, we will help Afghans build on the gains realized over the past twelve years, including in health and education.

USAID will assist Afghanistan’s economic transformation to a sustainable economy, less dependent on foreign assistance, and capable of providing stability and increased prosperity as well as increased regional cooperation with its neighbors through three new education, agriculture, and economic growth programs:

Afghanistan University Support and Workforce Development Program (5-year): USAID is working to partner U.S. Universities (University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and Purdue University) with Afghan companies and universities to establish seven new undergraduate degree programs in demand driven disciplines to help provide a highly skilled workforce that the Afghan public and private sector can utilize to meet employment demands in key areas, such as agriculture. The program will also work to provide training to enhance the qualifications of university faculty members, help establish quality assurance procedures, support private-public partnerships, and launch Associate Degree programs.

Afghanistan Trade and Revenue Project (5-year): This project seeks to expand on USAID efforts to generate economic growth, trade, and investment by improving the conditions for international trade and transit in Afghanistan through customs reform, implementation of regional trade agreements, and support of Afghanistan’s accession to the World Trade Organization. It will also support Afghanistan’s decision to improve its ability to generate revenue and reduce its dependence on donor through the creation and implementation of a value-added tax.

Regional Agriculture Development Project (5-year): This project will improve the value chains of wheat, high-value crops and livestock at every level from “field to fork” to increase output and the efficiency of production systems, reduce post-harvest losses, and improve processing capacity. This in turn will create new and better jobs and increase food and economic security for Afghan families. The program will target 400,000 farmers in provinces key to regional economic growth; resulting in the creation of 10,000 new jobs and provide a 20 percent increase in yields for wheat and other selected crops.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN AFGHANISTAN

With the support of USAID and the international community, Afghans have made dramatic achievements over the last 12 years:

- **Health** - Life expectancy has increased from 42 years in 2002 to over 62; maternal mortality rates have declined by 80 percent and child mortality rates by almost 50 percent.
- **Infrastructure** – In 2002, only 6 percent of Afghans had access to electricity, almost no Afghans owned a mobile phone. Now, 18 percent of Afghans have access to electricity, and the phone networks of Afghanistan cover over 90 percent of the country.
- **Gender** – Almost 20 percent of Afghans enrolled in higher education are women and there are over 3,000 women-owned businesses and associations.