



Democracy and Governance

Summer 2007



USAID promotes public awareness of constitutional rights and the formal justice system through information campaigns.

DEMOCRACY & GOVERNANCE SNAPSHOT

- Developing capacity to improve administrative procedures, hire civil service professionals, and improve service delivery.
- Training judges and strengthening the Supreme Court to manage its caseload more transparently and efficiently.
- Supporting National Assembly for more effective oversight of the budget and legislative processes.
- Improving municipalities' basic service delivery for trash collection, road maintenance, energy and water distribution.
- Assisting the Electoral Commission prepare for 2009 elections.
- Strengthening the Afghanistan Human Rights Commission.
- Training civil society and providing \$5.7 million in grants to local NGOs.
- Funding 36 community radio stations and training journalists.

BACKGROUND

Afghanistan has made significant strides since the fall of the Taliban. In five years, the country has drafted a new constitution and democratically elected the President, Parliament, and Provincial Councils. Over the past year, the Government of Afghanistan has shifted its focus to building its capacity to provide basic services throughout the country; recruiting competent and credible professionals to public service on the basis of merit; establishing a more effective, accountable and transparent administration at all levels; implementing measurable improvements in fighting corruption, upholding justice and the rule of law; and promoting respect for human rights.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

USAID's Democracy and Governance program supports the establishment of a broadly accepted national government to promote national unity and effectively serve the needs of the Afghan people. USAID accomplishes this by developing the capacity of key institutions of democracy, including the Independent Electoral Commission, the National Assembly, the Supreme Court, the Independent Human Rights Commission, and target ministries and institutions of the executive branch such as the Ministries of Education, Higher Education, Interior, Agriculture and the Civil Service Commission. In addition, USAID funds the establishment of independent community radio stations and provides training and small grants to Afghan civil society organizations and journalists.

INCREASING THE COMPETENCE AND ACCESSIBILITY OF THE FORMAL LEGAL SYSTEM

USAID's rule of law program has three main components: building sustainable capacity for the formal court system; helping the Ministry of Justice collect, index and disseminate Afghan law; and educating citizens about their legal and human rights and how the courts operate. The program supports the Supreme Court in its role of managing the courts by providing professional training to judges and strengthening the institutional capacity of the courts in data collection, budgeting, and management. In cooperation with the Ministry of Justice, all of Afghanistan's laws since 1964 have been compiled and distributed in digital and print formats to the National Assembly, the Supreme Court and law schools. This program is also engaged in implementing a new legal education curriculum throughout the country, and has built or substantially renovated 40 justice facilities in 18 provinces.

STRENGTHENING POLITICAL PROCESSES

A strong Independent Electoral Commission and a civil voter registry will enable the Government of Afghanistan to carry out valid, acceptable elections with its own resources and expertise. USAID helped facilitate the successful Emergency and Constitutional Loya Jirgas in 2003 and 2004 by providing logistical support and assistance to the



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USAID/Afghanistan

USAID trains sitting judges on legal foundations.



USAID/Afghanistan

USAID supports municipalities and increases employment through city works programs.

Constitutional Commission. USAID also provided funding, training and logistical support to the 2004 presidential elections and the 2005 National Assembly and Provincial Council elections. Ongoing projects involve training members of the National Assembly, providing technical assistance to the National Assembly's Budget Committee, and training members of Provincial Councils.

INCREASING PRESENCE, ACCOUNTABILITY AND PERFORMANCE OF THE NON-GOVERNMENTAL SECTOR

USAID promotes a strong and active civil society, with an emphasis on women-focused organizations, by providing training and grants to non-governmental organizations (NGOs). To date, USAID has provided over \$5.7 million in small grants to over 200 NGOs. In collaboration with the Government of Afghanistan, USAID helped pass the new NGO Law which defines eligibility requirements to become classified as a non-profit organization and receive tax-exempt status. USAID also provides support to free media through journalism training and support for the establishment and development of 36 community radio stations. These stations, which are governed by community boards, currently reach over 60% Afghanistan's population. During the coming year, USAID hopes to fund up to 20 independent radio and television stations.

STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONS FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE

USAID, together with DFID and UNDP, is providing assistance to the Office of the President, focused on streamlining and modernizing office functions to facilitate more effective policy support to the Presidency. USAID actively works with the members and professional staff of the Afghan National Assembly. Assistance focuses on establishing effective committee structures, facilitating specialized seminars for members and staff, and developing the research infrastructure for required information.

In addition, USAID is assisting the Government of Afghanistan at both national and provincial levels as it defines the structures of provincial government. USAID provided facilitators and trainers to work with Provincial Councilors in 33 of 34 Provinces for basic skills training in budgeting, strategic planning and constituency outreach. Future Provincial Council efforts will focus on input to the provincial development plans.

Additionally, USAID is supporting target ministries and institutions of the Government of Afghanistan to improve its ability to provide basic services nation-wide; recruit competent and credible public service professionals based on merit; establish a more effective, accountable and transparent public administration at all levels; and implement measurable improvements to fighting corruption.

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