



Infrastructure

Summer 2007



PHOTO: USAID/AFGHANISTAN

The Kajaki Dam controls irrigation and provides power in the southern provinces.

BACKGROUND

Decades of war, harsh climate conditions, and neglect due to poverty have left the country's infrastructure in rubble and decay. In many remote areas, it was never developed at all. The lack of infrastructure has had a huge impact on Afghans who could not reach health facilities in time to give birth or farmers who could not get their produce to market before it spoiled. Most Afghans lack access to electricity or safe water; some mountain villagers have to walk two weeks to the closest road. However, Afghanistan has made incredible progress in the past five years.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Reconstruction in Afghanistan is a huge endeavor. Construction can be delayed due to intense weather or disrupted by insurgent attacks. The remoteness of villages and severe weather creates enormous engineering and transportation challenges. Whenever possible, USAID uses locally available materials and trains Afghans to construct roads and other infrastructure themselves to disengage dependence on foreign assistance.

USAID's building of roads, schools, and clinics began in 2002 to show immediate progress to the Afghan people. While these programs continue, USAID is shifting its focus to improve energy and power. The building and refurbishing of infrastructure boosts economic growth and agricultural yields, connects rural Afghans to services, and provides schools, clinics, and courthouses for its citizens.

RECONSTRUCTING ROADS

USAID is reconstructing a regional and national road system which links the major cities and economic centers. The "Ring-Road", a highway that connects Kabul to Kandahar to Herat, is critical to trade in that 60 percent of Afghans live within 50 kilometers of this road. USAID has completed the 389 km link from Kabul to Kandahar and the 326 km section between Kandahar and Herat. Three-quarters of the employees working on this project are Afghans gaining technical expertise. USAID is also reconstructing provincial and district roads to help villagers in outlying areas of the country.

WATER MANAGEMENT AND PRODUCE STORAGE

USAID has increased agricultural production through better irrigation. The construction of 605 km of canals and 340 irrigation structures have benefited farmers. USAID installed 18 km of water pipelines and provides water to Kabul, Kandahar, Ghazni, and Gardez with support from the ministries. The completion of 1,700 wells and 3,250 latrines boosts health and sanitation. To store the increased agricultural yields, USAID has built 147 storage and refrigeration units and market centers to preserve the freshness of fruits and vegetables.

ENERGY

Bolstering Afghanistan's energy sector through rehabilitating infrastructure and building the capacity of the power sector workforce will be critical to the economic growth of the country.

INFRASTRUCTURE SNAPSHOT

- Completed 715 km of the Ring Road, roughly equivalent to the distance between Washington, D.C. and Boston
- Built 605 km of canals and 340 km of irrigation structures boosting agriculture
- Built 40 courthouse and justice facilities in 18 provinces covering nearly 60% of the population
- Completed over 700 schools and 675 health clinics



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

AFGHANISTAN

Infrastructure (continued)



PHOTO: UNOPS

Construction crews pave a roadway that will link the major cities of Afghanistan. Over 60 percent of Afghans live within 50 km of the “Ring Road”, a highway linking Kabul and Kandahar to Herat. Provincial and district roads help farmers get their produce to market before it spoils and helps women reach clinics to give birth.



PHOTO: USAID/AFGHANISTAN

USAID is training operators and technicians to work with diesel generators. This is building the capacity, skills, and knowledge of Afghans.

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- USAID is rehabilitating Kajaki hydroelectric dam in Helmand, which will help supply power in the southern part of the country to about 1.7 million beneficiaries.
- In Nangarhar, work is underway in rehabilitating the Darunta hydroelectric power station near Jalalabad. When finished, it will provide power to 9,000 customers.
- In Kabul, USAID is funding a 100 MW power station with a total project cost of \$150 million, a critical source of electricity for the country’s capital. Additionally, USAID provided over \$130 million since November 2003 in emergency fuel supplies.
- USAID is currently providing technical assistance for the North-east Power System (NEPS), a \$700 million multi-donor effort. Other donors are financing the transmission lines for NEPS. Donors support will make low cost power available from the northern countries for the eastern part of the Afghanistan down to Kabul.
- USAID is developing gas supplies for Afghanistan and a 100 MW power station at Sheberghan.

USAID programs are providing training in diesel fuel procurement and technical training to diesel generator operators. Additionally, USAID constructed a complex for the Afghan Energy Training Center, operated under the Ministry of Energy and Water with the Afghan Geological Survey.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Communications networks are now operational in 26 of the 34 provinces. This marks the first step in the installation of provincial and district telecommunications networks, which will enhance private sector growth and assist local government. A number of Afghan universities are bridging to international universities through electronic alliances in a program that uses the internet to build the knowledge and skills of Afghans.

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Infrastructure development helps revive the economy. The construction of three industrial parks in Bagrami (Kabul), Kandahar, and Mazar-e Sharif will stimulate investment and minimize potential business risk to investors.

DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE

USAID is building judicial and administrative buildings to promote democratic reforms and extend the rule of law. USAID constructed 40 judicial buildings, including courthouses, Ministry of Justice offices, and prosecutors’ offices. An additional ten mixed-use district administration buildings and two courthouses are under construction. USAID established 36 radio stations to inform and encourage citizen participation.

EDUCATION AND HEALTH

USAID has constructed over 700 schools and 675 clinics to promote a better educated and healthier population. The rehabilitated Kabul Women’s Dormitory provides housing for 1,200 women and enables women from rural villages to attend one of seven colleges in Kabul.

On behalf of the American people, the U.S. government has provided humanitarian assistance and economic development to those in need around the world since the Marshall Plan.