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AFGHANISTAN

SUCCESS STORY

Treasury Officials Train in DC, NY

A study trip gives an overview of state, federal and corporate finance



Photo: Myla Yee, FSVC

Afghan treasury officials met with executives from Financial Management Services in Washington, DC, to discuss cash management.

“They have benefited a lot from the training and have already started applying the new experience in every day work,” said Treasury official Mujeebullah Sulaimankail.

In 2003, the Afghan Ministry of Finance created the Offices of Cash and Debt Management (OCD) in an effort to improve its ability to manage donor assistance and administer taxes. Like most Afghan government agencies, the OCD is staffed with young university graduates who have general backgrounds in economics, statistics or information technology, but limited practical experience.

To help develop their on-the-job skills, USAID organized a specialized training program that took three OCD staff members to Washington, DC, Albany, NY, and New York City in March 2005 for a practical overview of debt and cash management in more developed markets.

More than 60 experts from 12 prominent institutions took part in the program. The World Bank provided the delegates with a full day of training in debt sustainability and senior debt specialists introduced them to the debt management software currently used by different countries. This bird’s eye view was followed by three days at the U.S. Treasury Department where they learned about government borrowing and federal cash and debt management systems. The delegates then complemented their federal training with a review of state-level processes in Albany, NY, meeting with representatives from the State Division of the Budget and Office of the Comptroller. In New York City, the study tour concluded in meetings with senior representatives from major corporations to learn more about banking, trade finance, public finance and stock trading.

Upon their return to Kabul, two of the delegates presented what they had learned to senior officials at the Ministry of Finance. They also offered recommendations for improving OCD operations and functional capacity. Despite the challenges that affect the pace of reform in Afghanistan, they are committed to “trying their best to apply the lessons” gained from their two weeks in the United States. One delegate already has plans to create workshops in cash and debt management for Treasury personnel throughout the country, similar to those he participated in on the tour.

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Telling Our Story

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