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One Hundred Women Complete Financial Sector Internship Program

Kabul, Afghanistan - The U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) Financial Access for Investing in the Development of Afghanistan (FAIDA) project and the Afghanistan Institute of Banking and Finance recognized 100 professional women who successfully completed a six-month Women in the Financial Sector Internship Program.

The internship program provided participants with the knowledge and networking opportunities needed to succeed in Afghanistan's private financial sector. Fifty percent of the participants have already secured employment in various financial institutions. Employment negotiations are underway for the rest of the graduates.

The internship program provided the young professional women an opportunity to train in financial matters with the Afghanistan Institute of Banking and Finance, to gain valuable work experience, and to obtain employment in the financial sector.

"Lack of capacity has not only pushed back Afghanistan's banking sector, but has also disconnected us from the global financial system," said Khan Afzal Hadawal, First Deputy Governor of Da Afghanistan Bank. "Thanks to this internship program initiative, we are producing new talent to incorporate and strengthen Afghanistan's banking sector, bridging the gap between male and female professionals."

"The Women in the Financial Sector Internship program was a big opportunity for me to develop my skills, increase my technical knowledge, and improve my capacity for critical thinking," said Samira Aslami, one of the interns who graduated from the program. "The invaluable experience I gained from the internship helped me land a full time job with Etisalat Afghanistan."

The FAIDA program assists Afghanistan to build a sustainable, diverse, and inclusive Afghan financial sector that can generate and sustain quality employment and meet the needs of businesses of all sizes. The \$108 million program began in February 2011 and ends in August 2016. FAIDA is just one of the many USAID programs working to shrink the gender gap in Afghanistan's workforce.

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