



USAID | AFGHANISTAN

FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



Since 2002, USAID has worked with the Afghan government, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and international partners to:

- facilitate over \$306 million in increased sales of licit farm and non-farm products;
- create more than 358,000 jobs through alternative livelihood and stabilization activities; and
- bring more than 1 million hectares under improved natural resource management in areas where the ecosystem is particularly fragile.

Photo credit: Task Force for Business and Stability Operations

Agriculture

Agriculture is critical to Afghanistan's food security and a key driver of economic growth. Sixty percent of Afghans rely on agriculture for their livelihoods and their family's sustenance. The sector accounts for about 40 percent of Afghanistan's gross domestic product. Prior to decades of conflict, Afghanistan's agricultural products earned a global reputation for excellence, particularly almonds, pomegranates, pistachios, raisins, and apricots. Decades of war and neglect devastated Afghanistan's farmland, displaced millions of people, and largely destroyed the country's existing infrastructure.

OUR WORK

U.S. assistance to Afghanistan's agricultural sector focuses on creating jobs, increasing incomes and productivity, enhancing food security, creating export markets and strengthening the Afghan government's ability to promote broad-based growth. USAID makes a tangible impact on the lives of farmers and their families while laying the foundation for Afghanistan's economic growth.

RESTORING AFGHANISTAN'S AGRICULTURE STRENGTH

Since 2002, USAID has supported the distribution of vouchers for seed, fertilizer, tools and technology to approximately hundreds of thousands of farmers to jumpstart production. By 2014, USAID interventions have generated more than \$306 million in sales and services for farmers and agribusinesses. USAID has trained more than 1.5 million people, and provided more than 24,600 households with access to credit, while providing financing to agribusinesses that has generated 2,913 jobs (direct and indirect). In total, USAID investments in agriculture have helped create over 358,968 new agricultural jobs.

USAID investment in rehabilitating irrigation infrastructure has increased water availability for approximately 106,000 hectares of agricultural land. As a result, farmers are able to grow more than one crop, increasing the total land farmed and the volume and value of crops produced. In western Afghanistan, rehabilitating 12 canals and associated water containment structures has increased cultivatable land by almost 9,000 hectares, benefitting over 17,000 households across the country. To prevent environmental degradation and enhance land productivity, USAID has supported tree planting, improved water management, reduced soil erosion, and increased water retention.

USAID supports every link in the agricultural value chain by promoting and supporting production, processing, and sales of commodities. USAID will continue to safeguard food and economic security, increase post-harvest storage capacity, encourage market-led agricultural growth, and promote women's participation in the agriculture sector.

INCREASING ACCESS TO CREDIT AND STRENGTHENING AGRIBUSINESS

USAID has helped to create the Agriculture Development Fund dedicated to serving the agriculture sector and facilitating access to specialized credit lines, including financial products designed specifically for business women and farmers, USAID is supporting development of new agribusinesses and enabling farmers to improve the quality and quantity of their products. Since 2010, USAID has provided \$53 million in loans to farming households and agribusinesses to increase farmers' access to credit, generating more than \$25 million in household income and creating thousands of full time jobs.

CONNECTING FARMERS TO REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL MARKETS

The future of Afghanistan's agricultural sector depends on expanding the customer base beyond Afghanistan's borders. USAID has helped open new markets to Afghan goods by helping farmers meet international packaging and shipping standards and by organizing international agricultural trade fairs, USAID has facilitated agriculture export sales of fresh and dried fruit, nuts, and cashmere worth over \$54 million to India, Pakistan, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom and other countries. USAID funding for various commercial horticulture value chains has helped 1.1 million households, planted over 3.9 million fruit saplings and grape cuttings, established over 25,000 hectares of fruit orchards and vineyards, and built 200 raisin drying facilities and cold storage rooms.

STRENGTHENING FOOD SECURITY

USAID is fighting hunger by providing critical food assistance to Afghanistan's most vulnerable populations, including pregnant women, malnourished children under five, orphans, the indigent, and the elderly. In 2013, about 2.3 million Afghans received humanitarian assistance. USAID also responds to natural and man-made disasters, price shocks, severe winter weather and deteriorating security by providing immediate help to displaced and suffering families.

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Afghans visit a wholesale market in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Photo credit: USAID/Afghanistan



A produce sorting and packaging training for women in Herat. Photo credit: USAID/Afghanistan