



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

AFGHANISTAN



USAID works with Afghan stakeholders to increase transparency and legitimacy, build institutional capacity, and empower the Afghan people through democratic processes:

- In 2013, USAID support helped increase revenue generation by 79 percent in 33 municipalities.
- USAID supported the creation of Salam Watandar, a national network of 66 independent local radio stations with an audience of approximately 14 million Afghans.

Photo credit: USAID/Afghanistan

Democracy and Governance

Afghanistan has made significant progress towards rebuilding its political system and institutions. Political participation – especially among women – is growing. Afghanistan’s 2014 elections saw historic turnout, and the inauguration of President Ashraf Ghani marked the country’s first democratic transfer of power. These accomplishments are the result of work and investments by Afghans and international partners. Since 2001, Afghanistan has adopted a new constitution; organized presidential, parliamentary, and provincial council elections; established Ministries to deliver services to the Afghan people; and, developed a vibrant media and committed civil society. According to The Asia Foundation’s 2014 Survey of the Afghan People, more than 75 percent of Afghans rate the performance of the national government as somewhat or very good.

OUR WORK

Since 2002, USAID has supported participatory, democratic processes that empower Afghan citizens, promote accountability and transparent governance, encourage national unity, and serve the needs of the Afghan people. Promoting gender equality and women’s civic and political leadership is a priority for USAID. By developing the capacity of key electoral, representative, judicial, and executive branch institutions, USAID supports Afghan-led development and the capacity of institutions to advocate for and implement society-led reforms.

GOVERNANCE

USAID focuses on connecting Afghan citizens to the government, strengthening government legitimacy and effectiveness, and broadening the reach of the government to remote and difficult to access areas. Since 2012, USAID has supported over 1,200 community improvement activities, such as construction of potable water pumps and maintenance for local schools and clinics. These projects have enabled local governments to deliver essential services and brought together communities in decision-making and reconstruction. By helping the government respond to constituents’ needs and ex-

tend its reach into unstable areas, USAID supports Afghan-led development that improves communities, builds government systems, and creates linkages between central and sub-national levels of government. USAID also provides technical assistance and training to the Afghan Parliament and to civil servants in the national, provincial, district, and municipal governments. USAID supports advocacy training for female members of Parliament, and in May 2014, female Parliamentarians announced the creation of Parliament's first Women's Caucus.

RULE OF LAW

With the Afghan government, USAID is building the capacity of judges and court officials, and strengthening the judicial branch. By September 2014, USAID had trained more than 650 judges and 650 court administrators on management, leadership, and court administration. USAID has also worked directly with elders and religious leaders to link the formal and traditional justice systems, increase access to justice, and bolster stability through conflict resolution.

SUPPORTING ELECTORAL PROCESSES

Afghanistan's 2014 elections saw record voter participation, including the highest female turnout in Afghanistan's history – with over 38 percent of the vote coming from women. Despite threats of violence, Afghans turned out in courageous and historic numbers to cast ballots in presidential and provincial council elections. Since 2004, USAID has supported Afghan electoral institutions – the Independent Election Commission, the Independent Electoral Complaints Commission, and the Media Commission – to conduct inclusive and transparent elections, building confidence in democracy and strengthening political participation. Further, USAID has supported civic and voter education programs and Afghan-led electoral reform through political party and civil society partners.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND MEDIA

A vibrant and independent media is critical to a healthy democracy, and according to The Asia Foundation's 2014 Survey of the Afghan People, Afghans have strong confidence in their media. Afghan civil society organizations have also emerged as vocal, persistent, and influential stakeholders. During the 2014 elections, Afghan organizations fielded twice as many observers as they did in the 2009 elections, providing independent oversight of the entire election process. Further, several organizations collected pledges from presidential candidates on issues including anti-corruption and women's rights.

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A journalism training.
Photo credit: USAID/Afghanistan



A community improvement project in Pashtun Zarghun District. Photo credit: USAID/Afghanistan