



**USAID** | **AFGHANISTAN**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

# **The USAID/Afghanistan Plan for Transition 2015-2018**

USAID/Afghanistan Plan for Transition 2015-2018

## **1. USAID/Afghanistan's 2015 Plan for Transition**

### ***1.1. Development Objectives***

USAID/Afghanistan's 2015 plan for transition is based on the premise that private sector-led economic growth will become the main source of increases in government revenue to replace donor assistance and provide resources for quality service delivery. Sustainable economic growth and a favorable regulatory environment for business and trade, combined with strengthened Government of Afghanistan (GoA) ability to govern, control corruption and collect payments owed, will generate increased public revenue. As public revenues increase, and as GoA improves its ability to transfer and use funds, it will be able to take increasing responsibility for key services currently supported solely by donor funding. These key services — particularly in health and education — are the most highly-rated elements of government effectiveness. Delivery of these key services, along with security and the equitable rule of law, will ultimately generate increased confidence in the legitimacy and effectiveness of the government and, in turn, will foster stability.

Based on analysis of Afghanistan's stability and development challenges, USAID has developed a Results Framework encompassing three Development Objectives:

*Goal:* Afghan-led, Sustainable Development

- 1: Sustainable Agriculture-led Economic Growth Expanded
- 2: Gains in Health, Education, and the Empowerment of Women Maintained and Enhanced
- 3: Performance and Legitimacy of GoA Improved

### ***1.2. Critical Assumptions***

Below are the critical assumptions underpinning USAID/Afghanistan's programming during the Transformation Decade:

- GoA will remain committed to development initiatives and reforms as detailed in the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework (TMAF)/ Self-Reliance through Mutual Accountability Framework (SMAF), National Priority Programs (NPPs), and the Realizing Self-Reliance paper;
- The security environment around project areas will allow for activity implementation and monitoring;
- The political environment will allow continual partnership with GoA institutions, independent agencies, the private sector, and civil society;
- Neighboring countries harmonize trade and transit policies with Afghanistan;
- USG and other donors, as well as the GoA and Afghan security forces, will fulfill security and civilian assistance commitments;
- Donors and private investors make large-scale investments in transit infrastructure (ports, roads, rail, storage) and logistics services which are linked to Afghanistan;
- Programs will successfully address local partners' lack of education, experience, and limited resources; and

- USAID resources do not substantially decline beyond envisioned reductions, nor decline in a manner that does not provide a reasonably smooth glide path.

## **2. Country Context and Programmatic Evolution for USAID/Afghanistan**

Even after the successful formation of the GoA in September 2014, USAID faces uncertainty regarding the political, economic and security context in which projects are implemented. Uncertainty regarding the timing both of upcoming parliamentary elections and pending electoral reforms may delay or adversely affect the degree to which USAID programming can be tailored to local needs and problems. Furthermore, the drawdown of international military forces combined with reductions in international aid will likely have repercussions on security, physical access to project sites and economic development across the country. Such factors, together with the current decline in economic growth, could result in an increase in unemployment and underemployment, which are major drivers of instability.<sup>1</sup> Afghanistan's Transition therefore entails unique circumstances that necessitate changes in the Mission's strategic direction to better respond to future uncertainty and to achieve the Development Objectives set forth in this document.

### ***Recent Drivers of and Trends in the Evolution of USAID Programming in Afghanistan***

Due to the ongoing war in Afghanistan over the last 14 years, development funding was, to a large extent, driven to meet the most immediate needs of the country. As a result, much of USAID's portfolio was dedicated to stabilization projects consisting of quick-impact activities meant to provide immediate employment and income in insecure areas, promote alternative livelihoods to poppy production and insurgent activities, and address grievances and sources of conflict within communities.

The Mission wrapped up the last of its stabilization activities in 2015 and is now placing greater emphasis on building sub-national government institutions' capacity and strengthening the linkages between communities and the government. In agriculture, projects have already shifted to strengthening value chains for high-value crops and supporting long-term growth and diversification of the agricultural base. The Mission will likely complete its existing large infrastructure activities over the next three years and shift the emphasis of its portfolio away from large-scale construction to improving GoA's and the private sector's capacity to maintain existing infrastructure. Departing from past practice, the Mission's support to the country's health system now emphasizes a more harmonized approach across donors, relying on the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund to strengthen the GoA's ability to meet ongoing primary health care service delivery needs.

In early 2015, the Afghan Government asked USAID and other donors in Afghanistan to produce and present a "Portfolio Review" of current and planned development assistance programs. One purpose of the Portfolio Review was to take stock of the degree of alignment between donor programs and Afghan government development priorities set forth in the

---

<sup>1</sup>World Bank. 2013. *Afghanistan in Transition*.

GoA's Realizing Self-Reliance paper<sup>2</sup> prepared for the December 2014 London Conference on Afghanistan. The Review confirmed that USAID's current programming aligns closely with the GoA's development priorities.

## *2.2 Constraints*

USAID faces staffing reductions that will likely affect its programming. During 2014, the number of U.S. Direct-Hire positions fell by over 40%, while a substantial number of the Mission's Foreign Service Nationals have applied for the Special Immigrant Visa program. These developments imply a significantly shrinking footprint, and losses in institutional knowledge and delays to program implementation and management. Furthermore, tighter restrictions on travel for all Chief of Mission staff continue to create challenges for the Mission in designing, managing and monitoring programs. Recognizing the effects of staffing and ease of movement constraints on project implementation, the Mission has already taken steps to ensure that development programs achieve their intended results in an efficient and cost-effective manner. To ensure existing staff positions remain filled, the Mission has streamlined hiring processes using Washington support, and sought ways to retain experienced Foreign Service Limited staff in Afghanistan and in support positions in Washington, DC via the Afghan Hands Program. Furthermore, the Mission is exploring other options to off-shore certain positions. To reduce overall management burden, and to compensate for limited GoA capacity to oversee donor funds, USAID may explore increased use of multi-donor trust fund mechanisms managed by multilateral partners.

---

<sup>2</sup>Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. 2014. "Realizing Self-Reliance: Commitments to Reforms and Renewed Partnership." London Conference on Afghanistan (December).

### 3. Programming to Achieve USAID/Afghanistan’s Three Development Objectives

The following section details the programmatic interventions that support Afghanistan’s transition to sustainable, Afghan-led growth.

#### 3.1. *Development Objective 1: Sustainable Agriculture-led Economic Growth Expanded*

##### **Sustainable Agriculture-led Economic Growth Expanded**

- **Intermediate Result 1.1: Employment Opportunities Increased**
  - **Sub Intermediate Result 1.1.1:** Access to Electricity Increased
  - **Sub Intermediate Result 1.1.2:** Equitable Access to Financial Services Increased
  - **Sub Intermediate Result 1.2.3:** Competitiveness of Businesses and Entrepreneurs Increased
  - **Sub Intermediate Result 1.2.4:** Regional Trade Increased
- **Intermediate Result 1.2: Vibrant and Prosperous Agriculture Sector Developed**
  - **Sub Intermediate Result 1.2.1:** Productivity of Key Agricultural Crops Increased
  - **Sub Intermediate Result 1.2.2:** Commercial Viability of Agribusinesses Increased
  - **Sub Intermediate Result 1.2.3:** Public and Private Agricultural Service Delivery Strengthened
  - **Sub Intermediate Result 1.2.4:** Natural Resource Management Practices Improved

Afghanistan has experienced robust growth in its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) over the last decade, averaging 9% per year. Economic growth, however, has slowed considerably and is projected to rebound only to about 5% per annum from 2016–2020.<sup>3</sup> Decreased growth, along with declining donor funds, will tend to raise unemployment in the country and strain GoA’s ability to raise sufficient revenue to fund services. These trends have the potential to threaten the legitimacy of the government and the country’s stability. GoA relies heavily on external funds for service delivery — 60% of the government’s budget is funded by donors — and the future financing gap is projected by 2018 to be nearly \$550 million (or 2.7% of 2013 GDP).<sup>4</sup> It is imperative that donors fulfill Tokyo commitments to ensure that essential needs are met. Moreover, donor funds will be critical for continued economic growth to provide jobs and income in a country with high under-employment (48%) and a

<sup>3</sup>International Monetary Fund. 2015. *Uneven Growth: Short- and Long-Term Factors* (World Economic Outlook -April).

<sup>4</sup>World Bank. 2014. “Afghanistan Economic Update” (Presentation – October).

growing youth bulge: by 2018 the labor force is projected to increase by 1.1 million people.<sup>5</sup> To address these challenges, USAID will implement projects designed to increase agriculture-led economic growth, with a focus on private-sector development and improving the business enabling environment.

Afghanistan is a country of 31 million people, nearly 75% of whom live in rural areas and depend on agriculture for a living.<sup>6</sup> The agriculture sector is a major driver of economic growth, but returns to agriculture depend critically on rainfall. Such dependence results in volatile income flows and periodic droughts contributing to poverty and food insecurity: over 30% of the population does not consume the daily calories required for a healthy and active lifestyle.<sup>7</sup> Apart from agriculture, communications, transport and construction have been other drivers of growth over the past decade. Much of the activity in these sectors, however, has depended on significant levels of military and donor funding. The extractive sector's contribution to Afghanistan's economy is currently marginal but in the longer run, it offers considerable potential for revenue generation.

Sectors across the economy, including agriculture, have potential for greater growth and income generation, yet businesses currently lack the needed know-how, skills and inputs to increase productivity and scale up operations. Despite recent regulatory improvements and increased access to finance, the business-enabling environment in Afghanistan is one of the worst in the world. As an illustration, the country is ranked last among 189 countries in the World Bank's 2015 *Doing Business* index for protecting minority investors, and ranked 183 out of 189 on the ease of doing business overall. Although achievements in infrastructure have helped improve the business-enabling environment, ongoing conflict, corruption and donor dependence seriously threaten further development and sustainability of the road, power and water networks.

In order to increase employment, income and public revenue and to create a more food-secure and stable environment, USAID has made the development of agriculture-led economic growth a central part of its portfolio. While greater economic diversification is a fundamental long-term goal, Afghanistan's population will remain dependent on agriculture for the foreseeable future. USAID/Afghanistan's programming balances a focus on those segments of the economy that interact strongly with agriculture with investments to strengthen the enabling environment for sustainable growth across a more diverse range of sectors. Projects in implementation during the next three years will focus on building the capacity of businesses, the Afghan workforce and the GoA with the aims of increasing production and employment and establishing the foundation for vibrant and self-sustaining economic growth.

---

<sup>5</sup>World Bank. *World Development Indicators*; ILOSTAT Database (<http://www.ilo.org/ilostat>). Labour force by sex - Afghanistan.

<sup>6</sup>Central Statistics Organization and World Bank estimates.

<sup>7</sup>NRVA. 2012.

## **Agriculture**

The Mission's agriculture portfolio has shifted away from stabilization activities and towards longer-term development. Current efforts in the sector focus on increasing agricultural productivity and strengthening upstream and downstream linkages in the value chains for licit high-value produce such as grapes and orchard crops. Ensuring sustainable growth requires moving away from the distribution of subsidized agricultural inputs, since such practices distort markets and undermine private sector development.

Reducing poppy cultivation, particularly on the arable and better-irrigated lands where the government exercises its authority, is critical to the sustainable development of the agriculture sector. Rural communities need to have viable economic alternatives, however, if they are to transition away from poppy. Experience has shown that the rehabilitation of irrigation systems, combined with the promotion of high-value crops (such as orchards, vineyards and off-season vegetables), holds the most promise for accomplishing this transition and displacing poppy cultivation. By promoting such interventions, USAID will contribute to this transition.

To boost the agricultural sector, the Mission's agriculture portfolio will provide on-farm training in best practices and technology along with technical assistance to small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in agribusiness to strengthen their capacity. USAID will provide technical assistance to the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock and to its provincial Directorates to strengthen their ability to provide extension services and credit to farmers, improve policies and research aimed at increasing production and investment and build Afghan capacity in water resource and irrigation management.

### **Portfolio Highlights and Projected Results—Agriculture**

USAID supported the creation of the Agriculture Development Fund (ADF), increasing access to credit for farmers and agribusinesses by working with both financial and non-financial intermediaries. Between July 2010 and the end of FY 2014, ADF disbursed approximately \$60 million in loans, directly benefiting 30,000 farmers and agribusinesses in 33 provinces. Of the disbursed funds, 60 percent were Sharia-compliant and over 200 loans were provided to women through the Fund's innovative Zahra Program, a Sharia-compliant financial product for women entrepreneurs. Such initiatives ensure that the loans are responsive to business needs and consonant with the values of conservative communities.

Through the Commercial Horticulture and Agriculture Marketing Project (CHAMP), an investment and marketing activity, USAID supported the export to regional and international markets of more than 16,000 MT of fresh and dried fruits worth over \$17 million in FY 2014 alone, representing a 55 percent increase in program-supported exports over previous years.

By the end of 2015, several components of the multi-faceted, \$302 million Regional Agricultural Development Program (RADP) will be in implementation. This program will focus on developing the skills and productive capacity of farmers and agribusinesses along licit, high-value agriculture value chains with the goal of improving the lives of 300,000 farm families across 20 provinces.

### **Economic Growth**

All of USAID's Economic Growth programs directly address three key priorities of the GoA, namely, to realize the vision of Afghanistan as a trade and transit "roundabout," to create jobs and to increase domestic revenues to the GoA, all of which are urgently needed.

USAID's programs to stimulate the broader economy will focus on SME development along with assistance to the GoA to improve the business-enabling environment. Development of SMEs is crucial for Afghanistan's future as these firms are drivers of employment and poverty reduction. The Mission will emphasize promoting investment and growth in industries with high potential for employment and revenue generation. Programs will work with businesses and entrepreneurs to increase their access to finance and improve production processes to increase productivity and expand operations.

At the macroeconomic level, Afghanistan has experienced an economic slowdown due in large part to the uncertainties surrounding the security situation as well as international military and development funding commitments. Mission programs to address the economic slowdown and decreased government revenue will concentrate on developing GoA's capacity (1) to identify programs and policy changes that stimulate investment, and (2) to improve mobilization and management of public funds. To promote investment, technical assistance will support accession to regional trade agreements and the World Trade Organization (WTO), as well as efforts to reduce barriers to entry identified by the World Bank's *Doing*

*Business* report. Programs aimed at enhancing revenue generation will provide TA to the Afghan Revenue Department to implement a value-added tax and will work with customs to improve efficiency and transparency. To address the dual problems of high unemployment and a dearth of skills in the Afghan economy, the Mission will support technical and vocational institutes through public-private partnerships. USAID projects that, with this assistance, over 3,500 students will be able to find new or better employment by 2016.

Furthermore, TA to the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum will improve GoA's capacity to initiate, contract and manage mining and tenders as well as to improve mining laws for increased investment in the extractives sector. This sector will be an increasingly significant source of growth and GoA revenue during the Transformation Decade.

### **Portfolio Highlights and Projected Results—Economic Growth**

**In 2014, USAID promoted and supported trade policy liberalization, customs reform, trade facilitation, regional economic integration, and trade-related public outreach. With USAID assistance, the Export Promotion Agency of Afghanistan is now regularly helping businesses generate strong sales of high-quality food, carpets and stone products at international expositions. USAID facilitated 44 business-to-business meetings strengthening agricultural market linkages; facilitating connections between traders, buyers and producers and sustaining engagements between producers, processors, and exporters. With USAID support, the Afghanistan Investment Support Agency introduced a new fee schedule which reduced by nearly half the license fees for newly-registered small and medium enterprises.**

**USAID also supported the provision of 2,530 microenterprise loans in 2014, worth about \$2.4 million, to bolster the development of the private sector. A total of 739 of the loans, worth about \$606,000, were to women. In 2014, USAID assisted the Government of Afghanistan in the development of two key financial sector laws and supported the Central Bank in their implementation, helping to keep Afghanistan off of the Financial Action Task Force "blacklist." Additionally, USAID assistance helped place 1,125 job seekers into private firms, 25 percent of whom were women.**

### **Infrastructure**

The Mission will prioritize completion of four large-scale infrastructure projects—primarily in the power sector — and developing capacity to maintain and sustain the country's road, power and water supply infrastructure. Broader access to these services is critical to economic and social development. While past projects have put critical infrastructure in place, the government has struggled to maintain these assets in face of budgetary and capacity shortfalls. Specifically, the Mission will complete the third turbine of the Kajaki dam, the Gardez-Khost Road, the northern to southern power transmission network and the development of the Sheberghan gas field. Future initiatives will focus on improving the sustainability, management and commercial viability of the country's infrastructure through

technical assistance to the Afghan national power company, the Ministry of Energy and Water and the Ministry of Public Works.

### **Portfolio Highlights and Projected Results—Infrastructure**

The U.S. Government provided on-budget assistance to DABS, Afghanistan's national electric utility, to efficiently and reliably deliver power to the citizens of Afghanistan. Since DABS increased its total revenue to \$240 million in 2014, its subsidy from the Ministry of Finance was reduced from \$40 million in 2009 to zero.

Over the next three years, the Mission will be completing the last of its major infrastructure projects—Kajaki dam, Power Transmission Expansion and Connectivity (PTEC), Sheberghan gas field development, and the remainder of the Gardez-Khost Road.

Kajaki and PTEC will continue to expand power supply in the northeastern and southeastern regions of Afghanistan. The installation of another turbine in Kajaki dam will increase power generation by 18.5 megawatts while PTEC activities have an estimated 3.8 million beneficiaries and will result in a 17% increase in the number of Afghans having access to low-cost grid power. USAID's completion of the Sheberghan gas field will allow for the construction of a 200-megawatt gas-fired power plant, bringing private sector investment, jobs and power to the northeastern region of Afghanistan.

In the east, the completion of the last 25 kilometers of the Gardez-Khost Road in 2015 will mark the end of USAID's commitment to this crucial 100-kilometer highway. Once completed, the highway will render Khost province and surrounding areas readily accessible from the rest of Afghanistan as well as from major trading routes through Pakistan, benefiting an estimated 53,000 Afghans.

**3.2. *Development Objective 2: Gains in Health, Education, and the Empowerment of Women Maintained and Enhanced***

**Development Objective 2: Gains in Health, Education, and the Empowerment of Women Maintained and Enhanced**

- **Intermediate Result 2.1: Health outcomes Improved**
  - **Sub Intermediate Result 2.1.1:** Afghan Ownership to Ensure an Effective Health Response Strengthened
  - **Sub Intermediate Result 2.1.2:** Use of Quality Health Services Increased
- **Intermediate Result 2.2: Equitable Access to Quality, Relevant Education Increased**
  - **Sub Intermediate Result 2.2.1:** Reading and Numeracy Skills Improved
  - **Sub Intermediate Result 2.2.2:** Education Systems Strengthened to Prepare Afghans for Employment
- **Intermediate Result 2.3: Women’s Equality and Empowerment Increased**
  - **Sub Intermediate Result 2.3.1:** Women’s Contribution to Afghanistan’s Economy, Government, and Civil Society Increased
  - **Sub Intermediate Result 2.3.2:** Gender Policy Implementation Strengthened
  - **Sub Intermediate Result 2.3.3:** Afghan Perceptions toward Women’s Inclusiveness Improved

Economic development, the perception of government legitimacy and a stable, peaceful state are inextricably linked to continued advances in health, education and gender equality. Social sector gains also represent the most visible areas of progress in Afghanistan. In light of the international drawdown, these gains remain fragile. Strengthening Afghan ownership of the provision of quality health and education services and of Afghan women’s empowerment will be essential to ensure that social gains over the last 14 years are not dissipated. Accordingly, during the Transition, USAID will focus on developing Afghan institutions’ capacity to sustain and accelerate advances in health, education and women’s rights.

## **Health**

Afghanistan has seen a substantial increase in access to health services since 2002: an estimated 57% of the population can reach a health facility within one hour, up from only 9% in 2002.<sup>8</sup> Still, health service quality often suffers due to low staff competency and lack of supplies.

---

<sup>8</sup>NRVA. 2002; NRVA 2009.

Moreover, chronic malnutrition continues to undermine the country's future level of educational achievement and ultimately, economic productivity. The GoA directs the delivery of health services though delivery itself is accomplished largely by NGOs; private sector providers have emerging potential. Funding for the public health system, however, comes almost exclusively from external resources.

For more than a decade, health service delivery has depended largely on donor funds from USAID, the World Bank, and the European Union. Given declining donor budgets, GoA will gradually need to become the principal provider of funds to the health sector. Over the next three years, however, USAID—in partnership with the World Bank—will continue to fund delivery of the Basic Package of Health Services (BPHS) and the Essential Package of Hospital Services (EPHS) across all 34 provinces of the country.<sup>9</sup> The provision of essential health services to the Afghan population has been a critical driver of the substantial gains in health: between 2002 and 2010, maternal mortality decreased by 80% and infant mortality decreased by 50%.<sup>10</sup>

BPHS and EPHS delivery will be funded and contracted through GoA systems and accompanied by technical assistance to the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) to improve its managerial and leadership capacity to drive health care delivery, provide oversight of service delivery and strengthen capacity to draft policies that ensure reliable, equitable and high-quality services. Interventions will directly address quality, moreover, by providing technical training to health workers and technical assistance to the MoPH to identify, pilot and scale-up best practices and innovative approaches addressing maternal, child and reproductive health and nutrition as well as polio, tuberculosis and other public health threats. Programs will also work with the MoPH to promulgate policies fostering the development of private sector providers and to improve regulation in this emerging industry segment. USAID will strengthen the overall system with increased authority for financing and implementation at the provincial level, a more rational staffing pattern that the Ministry can afford and the development of a financing strategy to reduce large out-of-pocket expenses that Afghans pay for health care.

On the demand side, the health portfolio will emphasize prevention efforts and behavior change, combined with efforts to increase community participation in and ownership of health care delivery. USAID will fund development of communication materials for health promotion and will augment knowledge and reinforce behaviors leading to increased use of health services. Furthermore, activities will include training for influential community members to mobilize others to undertake effective health-promotion campaigns. Beyond funding service delivery,

---

<sup>9</sup>The BPHS is a set of interventions aimed at addressing the principal health problems of the population, including the supply of essential drugs, antenatal care, and child immunization. The EPHS links BPHS facilities with hospitals through a referral system.

<sup>10</sup>*Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey. 2002; Reproductive Age Mortality Study. 2002; Afghan Mortality Survey. 2010.*

USAID's work to strengthen the MoPH's capacity, enable the private sector and promote community health will improve the quality, sustainability and use of the health system over the Transformation Decade.

### Portfolio Highlights and Projected Results—Health

In addition to supporting service delivery across the country, the Mission's health portfolio dedicates substantial resources to strengthen Afghan systems to provide and manage quality health care. USAID assistance supports myriad activities to improve the health of Afghans—midwife trainings, vaccinations, capacity development, contraceptives and policy development, among others. With support from USAID, by 2017, 27% of the poorest Afghans should have access to skilled birth personnel while 25% of Afghans should be using contraceptives, up from 16% and 20% in 2010, respectively.

### Education

Inculcating a culture of peace, tolerance and diversity and preparing Afghan youth for global cooperation are critical for nation-building, and are accomplished through education. Education permits structural and cultural processes to unfold that allow young people to gain the ability and authority to make decisions and implement change. Widespread education of youth enables them to contribute significantly to economic, social, and political life, helps lift countries out of poverty and fosters greater stability. Conversely, when countries are unable to meet the basic educational needs of their youth, peace, progress and prosperity are held back.

Similar to trends in the health sector, although there has been a dramatic increase in access to education since the end of the Taliban's rule, quality remains low. Since 2002, student enrollment in primary, secondary and higher education has increased over sevenfold. However, improvement in the country's literacy rate has been more modest, improving from 24% in 2002 to 31% in 2011.<sup>11</sup> Importantly, the youth literacy rate has increased to 47% which indicates a positive trend and demonstrates the impact of education programming. Males are enrolled at a higher rate than females and access in urban areas is significantly higher than that in rural areas. The sector generally lacks adequate human and material resources to provide quality education: nearly half of primary-aged children—mainly females—are still estimated to be out of school despite the tremendous gains in access thus far.<sup>12</sup> Low enrollment and poor quality may result in

---

<sup>11</sup>Ministry of Education; *NRVA*. 2002, 2012.

<sup>12</sup>*Education Joint Sector Review*, GoA, 2012.

a growing cohort of youth that lacks the skills needed to prosper and find employment: two-thirds of Afghanistan's population is estimated to be under age 25.<sup>13</sup>

USAID basic education programs will support increased access to education services while also seeking to improve the quality of learning outcomes. In order to expand access to primary education, USAID will support the government's implementation of Community-Based Education (CBE). CBE involves working with communities to identify an existing facility that can be used as a classroom and a skilled individual from the community to work as a teacher. This approach will expand access to education in underserved areas and promote community ownership. USAID also provides funds to the Ministry of Education to support textbook printing and distribution. USAID will support the Ministry of Education to improve the quality of early grade reading service delivery and instruction. Finally, USAID and the World Bank will support the delivery of teacher and administrator training throughout Afghanistan.

USAID's higher education interventions aim to strengthen higher education systems to better prepare Afghans for employment. To that end, USAID will assist 11 public universities to establish new academic degrees and enhance existing offerings to better align these with labor market needs. Additionally, the Ministry of Higher Education will receive technical assistance to implement new reforms advancing the financial autonomy of universities and quality assurance standards. USAID also supports the American University of Afghanistan to provide a high-quality western-style university education to Afghan youths.

### **Portfolio Highlights and Projected Results—Education**

Given that an estimated two-thirds of the Afghan population is under 25 years of age, providing educational opportunities to the country's youth is crucial for long-term development. Through projects in primary education, tertiary education and technical and vocational education worth over \$400 million, the Mission is providing teacher trainings, scholarships, pedagogical materials and capacity development to the government to preserve and enhance gains achieved over the last decade. Over 5 million primary grade students benefited from USAID assistance in 2013 in support of the Millennium Development Goal of 100% primary education enrollment by 2020. In higher education, 1310 USAID-funded scholarships are projected from 2015-2018. With USAID's assistance, 30% of students enrolled at the American University of Afghanistan (AUAF) are females, one of the highest percentages of female enrollment in Afghanistan. Finally, Mission-supported workforce development programs will result in new or better employment for an expected 360 beneficiaries in 2015.

<sup>13</sup>Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat. "World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision." <http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/index.htm>.

## Gender Equality

Similar to advances in the health and education sectors, gains in gender equality and female empowerment over the last decade have been due mainly to the efforts of Afghan women and the donors. Throughout Afghan society, gender equality and women's empowerment have advanced since the Taliban regime, though as the international presence declines, progress could be reversed. Afghanistan now has protective legal frameworks centered on women, gender mainstreaming agendas in both public and private institutions, national long-term plans designed to empower women, three million girls in school, a law ensuring 25% women's representation in the *Wolesi Jirga* and laws protecting women against gender-based violence. Despite such advances, however, conditions for women in Afghanistan are still among the worst in the world. The laws, mandates and initiatives that exist to increase women's equality are generally poorly implemented. Furthermore, violence and repression toward women remain, and women's equality is not yet firmly anchored in Afghan society. For example, the 2009 Elimination of Violence Against Women Law remains largely unenforced as countless acts of violence against women continue unchecked. Notable recent examples include the assassination of the head of the Department of Women's Affairs in Laghman province during the summer of 2013<sup>14</sup> and, in March 2015 in Kabul, the brutal killing of Farkhunda, a woman falsely accused of burning the Quran. Overall, Afghanistan ranked 149<sup>th</sup> out of 152 countries on the United Nations' Gender Inequality Index in 2013. To address the root causes of these crimes and persistent inequities, USAID programs during the Transition will continue to work with the private sector, civil society, the GoA and educational institutions to empower a critical mass of female leaders across the country capable of advocating for and protecting the rights of women. The larger objective of this programming is to encourage the broad acceptance of women's full participation in Afghan society, a key prerequisite for economic growth and poverty reduction, and necessary for sustained stability.

Within GoA, USAID is assisting the Ministry of Women in Afghanistan (MoWA) at the central, provincial and district levels to implement policies to protect women's rights and foster diverse roles for women in Afghan society. The Mission will support civil society activities focused on gender equality and will work with activist groups of educated women to enable them (1) to forge alliances with major women's organizations regionally and internationally, and (2) to design and implement large-scale activities with the potential for high impact on women's rights and welfare. To enhance women's private sector employment prospects, young women will receive technical and vocational training and job-placement services. Activities will also facilitate access to credit for women entrepreneurs and provide state-of-the-art management and leadership education. To increase women's employment in government, programs will provide

---

<sup>14</sup>*Human Rights Watch World Report 2013.*

qualified university graduates with functional knowledge, skills and experience through job training and supervised on-the-job internships with government institutions, ultimately leading to long-term employment.

In addition, several initiatives will ensure that Afghan women have access to educational opportunities and will foster greater understanding of gender issues in Afghan society. During Afghanistan's Transition, USAID will establish an endowment to fund university scholarships for qualified women, targeted to support women's advancement into technical and management positions in high-growth sectors. A dormitory for female students will expand opportunities for women scholars at the American University of Afghanistan, and USAID is considering the creation of a Center for Excellence at Kabul University.

The Mission will also focus on Combating Trafficking in Persons (TIP) to respond to the threat that TIP poses for Afghanistan's vulnerable populations. This project is a necessary complement to economic growth activities. As infrastructure improves and trade and transit routes connecting Afghanistan and its neighbors develop, the risks of human trafficking will increase. Through the Counter Trafficking in Persons (C-TIP) program—a partnership with the International Organization for Migration—USAID will build the GoA's capacity to combat trafficking; develop an awareness-raising campaign to educate vulnerable populations and enhance the effectiveness of internal, cross-border and regional collaborative initiatives. In addition, USAID has established a new partnership with the World Health Organization to address gender-based violence (GBV). This GBV partnership and the C-TIP program constitute critical safety nets assisting vulnerable groups, particularly women and children.

### **Portfolio Highlights and Projected Results—Gender**

The 2014 launch of the Mission's Promote program marked the beginning of the Agency's largest gender program. The five-year, \$216 million program will engage approximately 75,000 women between the ages of 18 and 30 who have at least a secondary education and are poised to enter and advance into influential economic and decision-making positions in Afghan society. Promote will assist these potential female leaders with education, business support and job placement. Ultimately, the program will create a critical mass of females to serve as role models and pave the way for sustained advancement of women across all segments of Afghan society.

**3.3. Development Objective 3: Performance and Legitimacy of GoA Improved**

**Development Objective 3: Performance and Legitimacy of GoA Improved**

- **Intermediate Result 3.1: Citizens Hold GoA Accountable**
  - **Sub Intermediate Result 3.1.1:** Citizen Awareness of Rights and Responsibilities within the Afghan Constitution Increased
  - **Sub Intermediate Result 3.1.2:** Civil Society’s Ability to Advocate Reform Strengthened
  - **Sub Intermediate Result 3.1.3:** Political Participation Increased
  - **Sub Intermediate Result 3.1.4:** Access to Quality, Independent Information Increased
- **Intermediate Result 3.2: Governance at the National and Sub-national Level Strengthened**
  - **Sub Intermediate Result 3.2.1:** Access to Justice Services based on Afghan Law Increased
  - **Sub Intermediate Result 3.2.2:** Policies and Procedures Improved
  - **Sub Intermediate Result 3.2.3:** Transparency and Accountability Mechanisms Strengthened
  - **Sub Intermediate Result 3.2.4:** Public Financial Management Strengthened
  - **Sub Intermediate Result 3.2.5:** Capacity to Administer Elections Improved
  - **Sub Intermediate Result 3.2.6:** Sub-national Government’s Engagement with the Population Improved

As the Transition progresses, USAID programs will aggressively pursue GoA capacity development in order to improve the government’s ability to carry out core functions and to reduce corruption while increasing the voice and participation of civil society. Peaceful, transparent and inclusive parliamentary (and possibly district council) elections that produce results broadly seen as legitimate are vital for the country’s long-term development prospects and stability. Accordingly, USAID will provide assistance to increase electoral transparency and the accountability of electoral officials while also helping the electoral administration bodies and civil society to plan and conduct upcoming elections.

In addition to election management, governance activities over the next three years will strengthen the functional abilities and reach of central and local institutions alike by building skills in areas of financial management, budget formulation and execution, human resource management, policy and strategic planning, community outreach and representation, service delivery, safety, public works and revenue generation.

At the central level, assistance to the Afghan National Assembly will build Parliament's core functions of legislation, oversight and outreach. Technical assistance will improve the analyzing, reviewing and drafting of legislation, and will formalize interactions between the legislative and executive branches. In the judicial sector, activities will include education and training to lawyers, legal instructors and judges on laws, procedures, ethics and anti-corruption efforts. Due to the common use of informal dispute resolution in the traditional justice system, projects will also provide legal training to local leaders on Afghan law and basic human rights. Activities will also provide technical assistance supporting establishment of administrative procedures and tools such as a case-management system and a process to receive, review and register traditional dispute cases in collaboration with the formal system. TA also will develop the technical, organizational and management capacity of USAID civil society partners operating in the formal and traditional justice sectors.

USAID will work with formal justice sector institutions, including the Supreme Court, the Afghanistan Independent Bar Association (AIBA), and the Ministry of Justice (MOJ), to strengthen the professionalism of judges, lawyers and MOJ staff and the effectiveness of key legal and institutional processes. USAID will support the development of sustainable training systems by local legal professionals for new and experienced lawyers, judges and *Huquq*<sup>15</sup> staff on substantive law and professional skills and the creation of stronger ethical standards and disciplinary procedures. TA and training support will also be provided to improve and expand the use of case filing systems as well as personnel and budgeting processes. In the case of AIBA, USAID will support expansion of its institutional presence and its ability to serve its membership. The long-term objective of these activities is to build public confidence in these institutions and eventually to extend the writ of the formal justice sector throughout the entire country.

At the same time, USAID will work with the traditional justice sector actors to enhance their legal knowledge and skills so that their legal decisions are consistent with Afghan and Sharia law. Legal professionals from AIBA, civil society organizations, and the *Huquq* will train elders, religious leaders and local representatives on such key areas of substantive law as family and inheritance law, property law/deeds, understanding the difference between crimes and misdemeanors and gender-specific human rights issues such as alternatives to *baad*. USAID will also promote stronger linkages between the formal and traditional justice sectors by encouraging increased registration of traditional sector decisions with the *Huquq* and the courts as well as consultations on complex legal cases. Through these two outcomes, USAID seeks to increase legal certainty and protection of basic rights in the traditional justice sector. Activities will

---

<sup>15</sup>*Huquq* is a department of the Ministry of Justice that is one of the principal government entities responsible for adjudicating and registering civil legal cases, either directly or in concert with traditional dispute resolution stakeholders (tribal elders, religious leaders, etc.).

include education and training to lawyers, legal instructors and judges on laws, procedures, ethics and anti-corruption efforts.

Pervasive and predatory corruption is a significant threat to the functioning of the country and to maintaining and advancing development gains. To support improved governance and service delivery, USAID will work with GoA institutions, independent bodies (such as the Independent Joint Anti-Corruption Monitoring and Evaluation Committee, MEC), other donors, United Nations agencies, civil society and media organizations to identify systemic and procedural weaknesses that permit corruption to occur, develop plans to reduce those opportunities for corruption and monitor the implementation of reforms aimed at promoting accountability for the transparent provision of social services.

While civil society and media organizations in Afghanistan have made great strides, they continue to face challenges. To further strengthen these sectors, USAID will continue to support civil society organizations and media in building their capacities to increase transparency, improve monitoring and advocacy roles, promote citizens' participation, monitor GoA performance, engage in government dialogue and policy and advocate for reforms. USAID will engage civil society to empower citizens to monitor corruption and hold government accountable. This will be done in close collaboration with independent institutions and the media to strengthen the quantity and quality of information available to the Afghan people as well as increase journalists' technical knowledge while enhancing sustainability. These activities aim, ultimately, to increase citizen engagement in the public sphere and provide Afghans with access to news and information as well as a platform to express their views and debate public issues.

### **Portfolio Highlights and Projected Results—Democracy and Governance**

In 2014, the U.S. Government's governance-related efforts centered on supporting the 2014 Presidential and Provincial Council elections. Financial and technical assistance was provided to Afghan elections administration bodies, the IEC and IECC. Engagement with these commissions helped to ensure credible elections administration during the initial and second-round elections processes. Simultaneously, USAID-funded civil society and media programs improved the ability of civil society organizations and citizens to engage in public life, influence political processes, advocate for good governance as well as strengthen independent media. There was notably high representation of women in the 2014 elections, with women comprising over 35 percent of actual voters. The U.S. Government also invested in anti-corruption initiatives to support efforts by the GoA to be effective, transparent and accountable to its citizens by strengthening the institutional and technical capacity of a number of different governmental entities. USAID provided training and support to both the Meshrano Jirga (Upper House) and the Wolesi Jirga (Lower House) to fight corruption both within Parliament and within the Afghan Government.

Looking ahead, efforts in rule of law should result in 1,600 additional justice professionals trained to strengthen case management with an additional 70,000 cases using improved case-management systems by 2017, crucial for streamlining procedures and increasing access to justice services. Sub-national governance projects will roll out in 2015 providing direct support to provincial governments and 16 key municipalities. These activities will strengthen the ties between the central government and the provinces and improve the effectiveness and responsiveness of essential service delivery. Following the uncertainty of the 2014 election cycle, support to independent elections bodies will continue to apply the lessons learned from the challenges of the presidential election cycle to upcoming parliamentary elections.

**GLOSSARY**

AAEP II	Afghanistan Extension Program
ABADE	Assistance in Building Afghanistan by Developing Enterprises
ACAP III	Afghan Civilian Assistance Program
ACE II	Agriculture Credit Enhancement
ACEP	Afghan Civic Engagement Program
ADALAT	Afghanistan Development Assistance for Legal Access & transparency
AERCA	Afghanistan Electoral Reform and Civil Advocacy
AESP	Afghan Engineering Support Program
AITF	Afghanistan Infrastructure Trust Fund
ALBA	Assistance to legislative Bodies of Afghanistan
ALSE	Assessment of Learning of Outcomes and Social Effects in community-based Education
APFM	Afghanistan Public Finance Management
APSD	Afghan Private Sector Development
ARTF	Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund
ATAR	Afghanistan Trade and Revenue
ATVI	Afghan Technical Vocational Institute
AUAF	American University of Afghanistan
AWDP	Afghanistan Workforce Development Program
BELT	Basic Education Learning and Training
CB4MoPW	Capacity Building for Ministry of Public Works
CBCMP	Capacity building and Change Management Program
Community-Based Education	

USAID/Afghanistan Plan for Transition 2015-2018

	Increasing Access to Basic Education and Gender Equality
CBRF	Capacity Building for Results Facility
CCP	Central Contraceptive Procurement
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CEGADS	Gender and Development Studies Institute and Kabul University
Challenge TB	Challenge Tuberculosis
CHAMP	Commercial Horticulture & Marketing Development Program
CHEF	Construction of Health and Education Facilities
CLDP	Commercial Law Development Program
B-KR	Baghlan-Kunduz Road
CR25km-GKR	Construction of the Remaining 25 KMs of the Gardez-Khost Road
CTIP	Counter Trafficking in Persons
DCA-AIB	Development Credit Authority - AIB Guarantee Agreement
DCAR	Delegated Cooperation on Nutrition
MEC	Monitoring and Evaluation Committee
DELIVER	USAID Global Health Commodity Procurement Mechanism
DEWS	Polio Eradication and Disease Early Warning System
DHS	Afghanistan Demographic Health Survey
DIAAEA	Digital Integration to Amplify Agricultural Extension in Afghanistan (Digital Green)
E&W	Energy and Water
EGR	Early Grade Reading and Improved Access Program
EGRC	E-Government Resource Center
ELECT II-PE	Enhancing Legal and Electoral Capacity for Tomorrow (Phase II) - Parliamentary Elections
EQUALS	Engineering, Quality Assurance and Logistical Support

USAID/Afghanistan Plan for Transition 2015-2018

EQUIP	Education Quality Improvement Program
ERO&M	Emergency Road Operation and Maintenance
ERO&MS	Emergency Road Operation and Maintenance Support
ESP	Engineering Support Program
e-Taskera	Support to National Identity Management in Afghanistan
FAIDA	Financial Access for Investing in the Development of Afghanistan
FD-IQC	Facility Development - Indefinite Quantity Contract
FEWSNet	Famine Early Warning System Network
FPBS	Family planning Assessment and Behavior Study
FRDS for SKGHS	Fire rated door sets for Sardar Kabul Girl High School
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GOA	Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
GPE	Afghanistan's Global Partnership for Education Program
GRAIN	Grain Research and Innovation
HEMAYAT	Helping Mother's and Children Thrive
HPP	Health Policy Project
MoPH	Ministry of Public Health
HSR	Health Sector Resiliency
IAA	Inter-Agency Agreement
IDEA NEW	Incentives Driving Economic Alternatives for the North, East, and West
IEOP-DI	International Election Observation Program-Democracy International
IFC	Investment and Financial Cooperation

USAID/Afghanistan Plan for Transition 2015-2018

IHSAN	Initiative for Sanitation, Hygiene and Nutrition
ISLA	Initiative to Strengthen Local Administrations
KDU2	Kajaki Dam Unit 2
KFZ	Kandahar Food Zone
KHPP	Kandahar-Helmand Power Program
KSPP	Kandahar Solar Power Plant
KUWS - KfW	Kabul Urban Water Supply - German Development Bank
LMG	Leadership Management and Governance
MAR	Managed Aquifer Recharge
MED	Mineral Exploration Drilling
MIDAS	Mining Investment and Development for Afghan Sustainability
MORE	Ministry of Women's Affairs Organizational Restructuring and Empowerment
MoWA	Ministry of Women in Afghanistan
NDP	New Development Partnership
NUWS-KfW	New Northern Urban Water Supply- German Development Bank
NRVA	National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment
OFWM	On Farm Water Management
ORS	Oral Rehydration Solution
PAPA	Participating Agency Program Agreement
PCH	Partnership Contracts for Health
PIO	Public International Organization
PROMOTE	Promoting Gender Equity in the National Priority Programs
PROMOTE-AWLE	PROMOTE - Afghan Women Leaders in the Economy
PROMOTE-Musharikat	PROMOTE - Women's Rights Groups and Coalitions

USAID/Afghanistan Plan for Transition 2015-2018

PROMOTE-WLD	PROMOTE - Women's Leadership Development
PROMOTE-WIG	PROMOTE - Women in Government
PTEC	Power Transmission Expansion and Connectivity
PwDs	People with Disabilities
RADP-E	Regional Agriculture Development Program East
RADP-N	Regional Agriculture Development Program North
RADP-S	Regional Agriculture Development Program South
RADP-W	Regional Agriculture Development Program West
RI	Routine Immunizations
RSS	Road Sector Sustainability
RW, S&HP	Rural Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Project
RWMF	Regional Water Management Forum
RWSSP	Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Program
SAAF	Strengthening Afghan Agriculture Faculties Program
SEA II	Strengthening Education in Afghanistan
SEHAT	System Enhancement for Health Action in Transition
SEPP	Support for Elections and Political Processes
SEWA	Self-Employed Women's Association
SGA	Sheberghan Gas Activity
SGG	Sheberghan Gas Generation
SHAHAR	Strong Hubs for Afghan Hope and Resilience
SIKA-E	Stability in Key Areas - East
SIKA-S	Stability in Key Areas - South
SIKA-W	Stability in Key Areas -West
SM	Social Marketing

## USAID/Afghanistan Plan for Transition 2015-2018

SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
SIAPS	Systems for Improved Access to Pharmaceuticals and Services
SPECS	Strengthening Political Entities and Civil Society
SPS	Strengthening Pharmaceutical Services
S-RA	Solar - Reverse Auction
STM	Salang Tunnel maintenance
Survey	Survey of Afghanistan People
Survey EGR	Survey of Resources Skills, and capacities in Early Grade Reading
SWIM	Strengthening Watershed and Irrigation Management
TAPMPW	Technical Assistance Provided to the Ministry of Public Works
TMAF	Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework
TMSE	Turquoise Mountain Smithsonian Exhibition
USIP	U.S. Institute of Peace
USWDP	University Support and Workforce Development Program
VS	Vertical Structures
WIFS	Weekly Iron Folic Acid Supplementation
WTO	World Trade Organization