



# PRESS RELEASE

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## USAID Supports Young Innovators Tackling Agriculture Problems

**Kabul, Afghanistan** – Today, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) sponsored the first Afghanistan National Young Innovators in Agriculture Competition, an activity aimed at engaging Afghan students in tackling the problem of post-harvest loss in high value crops. In Afghanistan, farmers lose more than a third of their harvest before it reaches the consumer.

Students from agriculture and veterinary vocational schools participated in an intensive six-month program that included courses in agribusiness, post-harvest science, and technology prototype development and design. Next, the students designed and developed equipment prototypes to combat post-harvest loss in one of three categories: fresh fruits, dried fruits, or nuts and spices. Students also received mentoring for the development of their prototypes and training on how to pitch their ideas to investors.

In September, over 100 students participated in regional competitions. Today, the finalists from Kabul, Balkh, Nangarhar, Herat, and Kandahar participated in the national competition held at Kabul's Technical and Vocational Education and Training Authority. The students from the top three teams will receive an internship at an agribusiness and a cash prize.

“USAID is excited and proud to support young Afghan innovators in agriculture and provide them with the tools to be part of creating innovative solutions that improve the lives of Afghan farmers,” said USAID Mission Director Peter Natiello.

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*Since 2002, USAID has supported Afghanistan to become a more self-reliant nation that can better partner with the U.S. Government on our national security goals. USAID partners with Afghanistan to ensure private sector led economic growth, to strengthen the country's nascent democracy, to advance the gains made by Afghan women, and to provide basic health and education services for all Afghans.*

*The American people, through the U.S. Agency for International Development, have provided economic and humanitarian assistance worldwide for more than 50 years.”*



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