



## Democracy and Governance

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. By enhancing the ability of key electoral, representative, judicial, and executive branch institutions to serve Afghan citizens and by supporting the growth of media and civil society organizations, USAID is equipping Afghans with the capacity to both advocate for and implement society-led reforms. Gender equality and women’s civic and political leadership is essential to the success of these efforts.

### Major Highlights

- USAID has supported the steady emergence of Afghanistan’s independent media, by training more than 8,600 media professionals, including more than 2,100 women
- USAID trained hundreds of judges and court administrators on management, leadership, and court administration

## Recent Highlights

- Since June 2016, USAID has helped more than 98,600 victims of conflict obtain food, blankets, and other essential household items
- Building upon previous gatherings and with support from USAID, members of Afghan civil society organizations met with the Afghan government and representatives from 75 nations and 26 international organizations in October 2016, raising the profile of Afghan citizens’ advocacy for reform to a global stage
- In November 2016, with support from USAID, the first International Conference for Persons with Disabilities brought together 430 representatives from all 34 provinces to advance government policies to improve the lives of the more than 1.2 million people living with disabilities throughout Afghanistan
- In July 2017, USAID launched the Rasana (media) program, which will train and support Afghan female journalists, equip them with skills to protect themselves and their data, and support the expansion of media reach to remote areas

## Governance

USAID is helping the Afghan government to better serve Afghan citizens by supporting efforts to boost the transparency and accountability of its institutions and management processes, make government processes more efficient, improve public outreach, enhance financial management, and strengthen the linkages among central and subnational levels of government.



## Rule of Law

USAID is helping the Afghan government to strengthen the quality of its justice system, to ensure that fair, impartial justice is accessible to all citizens.



## Anti-Corruption

Complementing efforts by other US government partners aimed at enforcement and prosecution, USAID assistance focuses on preventative measures that reduce opportunities for corruption while improving the quality of services offered to Afghan citizens.



## Supporting Electoral Processes

Working in close coordination with other donors and the United Nations, USAID continues to invest in programming that supports the Afghan government, civil society organizations and other stakeholders in promoting credible and transparent elections.



## Civil Society and Media

A vibrant and independent media and vocal civil society organizations are critical to a healthy democracy. USAID has helped to support the establishment of a thriving civil society and independent media environment where courageous reporters and activists inform their fellow citizens of current events and hold public officials accountable.



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FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

## **DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE**

In 2001, the government institutions, civilian organizations, and independent media that tie a nation together were virtually nonexistent. Since that time, Afghanistan has made significant progress toward rebuilding its political system and institutions. Political participation – especially among women – is growing. 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.

## **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. By enhancing the ability of key electoral, representative, judicial, and executive branch institutions to serve Afghan citizens and by supporting the growth of media and civil society organizations, USAID is equipping Afghans with the capacity to both advocate for and implement society-led reforms. Gender equality and women's civic and political leadership is essential to the success of these efforts.

## **RECENT HIGHLIGHTS**

- Since June 2016, USAID has helped more than 98,600 victims of conflict obtain food, blankets, and other essential household items
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advance government policies to improve the lives of the more than 1.2 million people living with disabilities throughout Afghanistan

- In July 2017, USAID launched the Rasana (media) program, which will train and support Afghan female journalists, equip them with skills to protect themselves and their data, and support the expansion of media reach to remote areas

## GOVERNANCE

USAID is helping the Afghan government to better serve Afghan citizens by supporting efforts to boost the transparency and accountability of its institutions and management, make government processes more efficient, improve public outreach, enhance financial management, and strengthen the linkages between central and subnational levels of government. At the local level, USAID is helping local government institutions deliver essential services, engage with the community and establish well-governed, fiscally sound institutions that are responsive to citizens and capable of meeting the needs of a growing, increasingly urban population.

In addition, USAID is providing short-term assistance to civilians impacted by continued fighting in Afghanistan. In the last twelve months, USAID assisted more than 4,412 victims with economic reintegration packages, provided immediate assistance to more than 98,600 individuals, provided physical rehabilitation services to 14,726 individuals, and trained 4,663 government employees on landmines and remnants of war issues.

## RULE OF LAW

USAID is helping the Afghan government to strengthen the quality of its justice system, to ensure that fair, impartial justice is accessible to all citizens. USAID trained hundreds of judges and court administrators on management, leadership, and court administration. USAID has worked directly with elders and religious leaders to link the formal and traditional justice systems, strengthen the Afghan Supreme Court, and support efforts to reduce land disputes.

## ANTI-CORRUPTION

Complementing efforts by other US government partners aimed at enforcement and prosecution, USAID assistance focuses on preventative measures that reduce opportunities for corruption while improving the quality of services offered to Afghan citizens. These efforts include research and analysis to identify corruption vulnerabilities, technical assistance to develop systems and processes that will reduce opportunities for corruption, and targeted financial assistance to catalyze government-led reform efforts in key citizen-facing business processes. USAID is especially targeting vulnerabilities to corruption within the processes where Afghans are most likely to interact with the government, including applying for a driver's license and registering a vehicle.

## SUPPORTING ELECTORAL PROCESSES

Working in close coordination with other donors and the United Nations, USAID continues to invest in programming that supports the Afghan government, civil society organizations and

other stakeholders in promoting credible and transparent elections. Afghanistan's 2014 elections saw record voter participation, including the highest female turnout in Afghanistan's history; in the second round of voting, over 38 percent of the vote came from women, according to the Afghanistan Independent Election Commission. Despite threats of violence, Afghans turned out in courageous and historic numbers to cast ballots in presidential and provincial council elections.

## **CIVIL SOCIETY AND MEDIA**

A vibrant and independent media and vocal civil society organizations are critical to a healthy democracy. USAID has helped to support the establishment of a thriving civil society and independent media environment where courageous reporters and activists inform their fellow citizens of current events and hold public officials accountable.

USAID is gearing up to support the upcoming Parliamentary and Presidential elections in 2018 and 2019, respectively. During these elections, as in the elections in 2014, USAID plans to support Afghan organizations that field observers to provide independent oversight of the election process and collect commitments from presidential candidates on issues including anti-corruption and women's rights.