

# 4 U.S. ASSISTANCE TO AFGHANISTAN



# U.S. ASSISTANCE CONTENTS

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A woman in Bamyan Province spins wool, March 2024. (Photo by UN Women/Omid Begum)

## U.S. ASSISTANCE TO AFGHANISTAN

### KEY ISSUES & EVENTS

The UN is seeking \$3.06 billion for its 2024 Humanitarian Needs Response Plan (HRP) to assist 17.3 million of an estimated 23.7 million Afghans in dire need. The HRP was only 7.7% funded (\$237.1 million), as of April 2024.

Some 377,300 Afghans have returned to Afghanistan since Pakistan's "Illegal Foreigners' Repatriation Plan," which aims to repatriate over a million foreigners residing in Pakistan without valid documents, went into effect on November 1, 2023.

According to a February UN survey, 58% of Afghan women said enforcement of the hijab decree is "very strict," and an additional 29% said it is "somewhat strict." The same survey found that 57% of women do not feel safe leaving their homes at all; 70% of those respondents said their main safety concern was harassment by Taliban officials.

## U.S. ASSISTANCE TO AFGHANISTAN

The United States remains the largest donor to programs supporting the Afghan people, disbursing more than \$2.98 billion for humanitarian and development assistance since the Taliban takeover in August 2021.<sup>1</sup> Following the collapse of the Afghan government, State told SIGAR, "The United States remains committed to facilitating the provision of life saving assistance for all Afghans in need, provided according to humanitarian principles amid the humanitarian crisis. We coordinate with allies, partners, and the international community to do so."<sup>2</sup>



In October 2023, State released an updated Integrated Country Strategy for Afghanistan, outlining U.S. priorities as (1) achieving an Afghanistan that is at peace with itself and its neighbors and does not pose a threat to the United States or its partners; (2) alleviating suffering, building economic self-reliance, and transitioning to a private-sector led economy; (3) promoting a reconciliation dialogue among Afghans inside and outside the country and the meaningful participation of Afghans in a political process; and (4) supporting American citizens in Afghanistan and Afghan nationals relocating to the United States.<sup>3</sup> In pursuit of these goals, State is committed to continued humanitarian and targeted assistance, political engagement, and regional collaboration.<sup>4</sup>

U.S. assistance for health, education, agriculture, and food security has continued since September 2021 under a series of licenses authorized by Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) that allow for the provision of humanitarian assistance to the people of Afghanistan while maintaining sanctions against the Taliban, the Haqqani Network, and other designated entities.<sup>5</sup> U.S.-funded programs are implemented through nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), international organizations, or other third parties, which State said minimizes any benefit to the Taliban to the extent possible.<sup>6</sup>

Consistent with current U.S. policy, which does not recognize the Taliban as the legitimate government of Afghanistan, partner NGOs are prohibited from signing binding agreements with any Taliban ministry or entity. However, the Taliban have increasingly pressured NGOs to sign memoranda of understanding (MOUs) as a condition for operating in Afghanistan. These MOUs outline NGO-Taliban coordination and ensure NGOs follow the Taliban's "national standards." In cases where it is necessary to operate, or protect the safety and security of staff, U.S. agencies may authorize implementing partners to sign MOUs with the Taliban on a case-by-case basis in accordance with U.S. agency guidance. The United States Agency for International Development's Afghanistan Mission (USAID/Afghanistan) issues one set of guidelines to their implementing partners, while USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) and the State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) provide different guidelines to theirs. There are no standard operating principles used across all government agencies and multilateral institutions for signing MOUs with the Taliban.<sup>7</sup> For additional information on federal guidelines for signing MOUs with the Taliban, see pages 64–65 of SIGAR's January 2024 *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress*.

## UN Humanitarian Response Plan Update

In addition to providing direct U.S. assistance to the Afghan people, the United States is also the single largest donor to United Nations (UN) humanitarian programming in Afghanistan.<sup>8</sup> The UN, through its Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP), leads international efforts to deliver humanitarian assistance directly to Afghans, including food, shelter, cash,

### SIGAR Audit

In September 2023, SIGAR initiated an audit reviewing MOUs signed by State's implementing partners, the legality of those agreements, and the impact MOUs may have on U.S.-funded assistance.

# U.S. ASSISTANCE

and household supplies. The UN requested \$3.06 billion to fund humanitarian activities in 2024. As of April 17, 2024, the HRP was 7.7% funded, at \$237.1 million. The United States is its single largest funding source, contributing over \$80 million this year.<sup>9</sup>

USAID/BHA supports 17 HRP programs, prioritizing direct food assistance and other avenues to help reduce food insecurity, including by promoting health, nutrition, water, sanitation, and hygiene.<sup>10</sup> The total award amount for these programs, as shown in Table A.1, is more than \$803 million.

TABLE A.1

USAID BHA ACTIVE PROGRAMS IN AFGHANISTAN				
Program Supported	Implementer	Start Date	End Date	Award Amount
Emergency Food and Nutrition Assistance and Air Services	UN WFP	12/7/2022	4/30/2024	\$345,634,491
Emergency Food and Nutrition Assistance and Air Services	UN WFP	1/16/2022	1/15/2025	150,000,000
WASH Response and Humanitarian Assistance Program	IOM	7/1/2022	7/31/2025	86,230,000
Project Name Withheld at Request of USAID	(redacted)	12/19/2022	11/18/2024	43,000,000
Project Name Withheld at Request of USAID	(redacted)	12/14/2022	11/18/2024	36,000,000
Integrated Nutrition, Cash, WASH, and Protection Services	UNICEF	12/14/2023	12/13/2024	30,245,916
Project Name Withheld at Request of USAID	(redacted)	1/1/2023	11/30/2024	28,000,000
Project Name Withheld at Request of USAID	(redacted)	1/1/2023	11/30/2024	20,500,000
Project Name Withheld at Request of USAID	(redacted)	1/1/2023	3/31/2025	14,900,000
Project Name Withheld at Request of USAID	(redacted)	5/1/202	10/31/2024	13,000,000
Project Name Withheld at Request of USAID	(redacted)	12/1/2022	10/31/2024	10,500,000
Project Name Withheld at Request of USAID	(redacted)	3/1/2022	6/30/2025	9,756,243
Scale Up Plan for Health Cluster Coordination Structure	UN WHO	12/26/2022	5/31/2024	10,583,333
Provision of Lifesaving GBV Prevention and Response, MRH services in Emergency through Mobile Health Teams & Strengthen the AAP mechanism and capacity/human resources	UNFPA	8/7/2023	8/6/2024	3,450,000
Information Mgmt. for Disaster Risk Reduction and Response	UN OCHA	1/1/2024	12/31/2024	1,200,000
Information Mgmt. for Disaster Risk Reduction and Response	UN FAO	1/1/2024	12/31/2024	500,000
Information Mgmt. for Disaster Risk Reduction and Response	UNFPA	1/1/2024	6/30/2024	361,800
<b>Total</b>				<b>\$803,861,783</b>

Source: USAID, BHA, response to SIGAR data call, 4/12/2024.

## USAID PROGRAMS IN AFGHANISTAN

USAID/Afghanistan continues to fund development activities in Afghanistan through its Office of Social Services (Health and Education), Office of Livelihoods, Office of Democracy, Gender, and Rights, and Office of Program and Policy Development. There are currently 24 active programs in Afghanistan.<sup>11</sup> Quarterly updates are listed thematically below.

## ECONOMIC GROWTH PROGRAMS

USAID’s Office of Livelihoods (OLH) supports two active economic growth programs—the Afghanistan Competitiveness of Export-Oriented Businesses Activity (ACEBA) and the Turquoise Mountain Trust (TMT) - Exports, Jobs, and Market Linkages in Carpet and Jewelry Value Chains activity.<sup>12</sup> Together, these programs have total estimated costs of more than \$120 million as shown in Table A.2.

TABLE A.2

USAID ACTIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH PROGRAMS				
Project Title	Start Date	End Date	Total Estimated Cost	Cumulative Disbursements, as of 4/12/2024
Afghanistan Competitiveness of Export-Oriented Businesses Activity (ACEBA)	1/27/2020	1/26/2025	\$105,722,822	\$75,644,136
Carpet and Jewelry Value Chains (Turquoise Mountain Trust)	1/31/2019	4/30/2025	14,935,752	11,415,987
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$120,658,574</b>	<b>\$87,060,123</b>

Note: Numbers have been rounded.

Source: USAID, response to SIGAR data call, 4/12/2024.

### Afghanistan Competitiveness of Export-Oriented Businesses Activity

USAID’s five-year, \$105.7 million Afghanistan Competitiveness of Export-Oriented Businesses Activity (ACEBA) was designed to provide technical assistance and grants to small and medium export-oriented enterprises. Since the Taliban takeover, ACEBA has prioritized livelihood support in 22 provinces. Its apprenticeship activity focuses on four value chains: cashmere, saffron, carpets, and humanitarian goods and services.<sup>13</sup> Livelihood restoration or support includes facilitating access to credit, bolstering private sector efforts to increase liquidity, helping the jobless secure apprenticeships, and assisting private sector suppliers of humanitarian goods to start or sustain production.<sup>14</sup> Throughout its programmatic lifecycle, ACEBA expects to support 1,100 small- and medium-sized enterprises, assist 82,000 individuals through livelihood restoration, provide 27,900 telemedicine consultations, supply 940 firms with working capital, and see a 50% increase in sales of supported firms.<sup>15</sup>

ACEBA’s January 2024 quarterly report identified COVID-19 and the worsening security situation in Afghanistan as challenges in its first two years. However, data from ACEBA’s January 2024 quarterly report indicate that in its fourth year, the program has benefited 67,000 individuals through its livelihood restoration and new livelihood developments activities, supported 93 exporters and 750 small and medium enterprises, while 630 firms received working capital. Since ACEBA began, 82,000 individuals have received livelihood support.<sup>16</sup>

#### SIGAR Audit

A SIGAR audit issued this quarter reviewed USAID’s oversight and management of the ACEBA program from January 2020 through December 2023. It assessed the extent to which (1) USAID conducted the required ACEBA program oversight; and (2) ACEBA achieved program goals and objectives.

SIGAR found that USAID did not conduct all the monitoring and oversight of the ACEBA program mandated by USAID’s Mission for Afghanistan, did not document their oversight in Afghan Info—a central repository for all monitoring and performance data and administrative information, did not conduct site visits as required for the first half of the program (two and a half years), and did not ensure that its contractor met all contractually mandated reporting requirements. SIGAR found that during the program’s first two years ACEBA did not meet its performance targets, but showed some improvement in the next two years. For more details, see pages 106–108.

**Turquoise Mountain Trust - Exports, Jobs, and Market Linkages in Carpet and Jewelry Value Chains**

Turquoise Mountain Trust’s six-year, \$14.9 million project aims to create jobs within the carpet weaving and jewelry industries by providing development assistance to micro-, small-, and medium-size enterprises in Kabul, Jowzjan, and Bamyan Provinces. This program was initially scheduled to end on April 30, 2023, but USAID extended it until 2025 and increased the award by \$5 million.<sup>17</sup> According to the most recently available USAID implementer report from December 2023, Turquoise Mountain Trust created a total of 6,103 jobs in the Afghan carpet and jewelry industries. Turquoise Mountain Trust also reported that it supports 12 carpet producing companies and 15 jewelry businesses.<sup>18</sup>

**AGRICULTURE PROGRAMS**

This quarter, USAID OLH continued to support two agriculture activities in Afghanistan with total estimated costs of more than \$155 million, as shown in Table A.3.<sup>19</sup>

USAID’s agriculture programs and activities aim to mitigate the immediate hardships of farm households and agribusinesses due to drought, political instability, and financial liquidity challenges, and assist with long-term economic recovery to improve food security and the sustainability of key agricultural value chains. Activities include (1) training, technical assistance, and agriculture extension services (education, marketing, health, business assistance) to smaller-scale farmers; (2) supplying seeds, fertilizer, and other items to farmers to help increase production; (3) providing veterinary services and other support to the livestock and dairy industries to improve animal health, maintain productive assets, and increase production and incomes; and (4) improving domestic market linkages and creating additional value.<sup>20</sup>

TABLE A.3

<b>USAID ACTIVE AGRICULTURE PROGRAMS</b>				
<b>Project Title</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>	<b>Total Estimated Cost</b>	<b>Cumulative Disbursements, as of 4/12/2024</b>
Strengthening Rural Livelihoods and Food Security (SRL-FS)	7/25/2022	7/24/2026	\$80,000,000	\$40,000,000
Afghanistan Value Chains Program (AVCP)	6/9/2018	6/8/2025	75,672,170	56,720,131
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$155,672,170</b>	<b>\$96,720,131</b>

Note: Numbers have been rounded.  
Source: USAID, response to SIGAR data call, 4/12/2024.



An Afghan girl waits for her family to receive assistance at the Spin Boldak border crossing, March 2024. (Photo by IOM/Mohammad Osman Azizi)

### Strengthening Rural Livelihoods and Food Security

USAID's four-year, \$80 million, Strengthening Rural Livelihoods and Food Security launched in July 2022, and aims to enhance food security, nutrition, and resilience among vulnerable households in specific areas where Afghans face significant food insecurity.<sup>21</sup> The UN Food and Agriculture Organization implements this activity in eight provinces (Badakhshan, Daykundi, Ghor, Jowzjan, Nimroz, Nuristan, Paktika, and Parwan). These provinces are all classified at the Phase 4 (Emergency) level of the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, meaning that households have very high acute malnutrition and excess mortality.<sup>22</sup>

This program aims to establish 2,000 Farmer Field Schools involving 60,000 male and female farmers across the program area, and plans to train and introduce farmers to climate smart and conservation agriculture practices.<sup>23</sup> Activities include improving the efficiency and productivity of food and staple crops such as wheat, beans and legumes, and fresh fruits and vegetables; increasing access to nutritious food at the household level; maintaining and enhancing livestock; increasing production of fodder crops (for livestock grazing); strengthening the capacities of farmers, farmer groups, women vegetable growers, and livestock holders regarding climate smart cultivation/production practices; and linking them to domestic markets to provide a short-term income boost.<sup>24</sup>

As of December 31, 2023, the program had selected 26,132 smallholder farming and vulnerable households as direct beneficiaries; completed the procurement process of 1,866 metric tons of concentrated animal feed during the reporting period; and established 84 wheat Farmer Field Schools to support 2,100 farmers. The program's main challenges as reported were the Taliban's December 24, 2022, decree banning women from work in national and international organizations, the lack of a political framework for drought risk analysis, and high staff turnover among its implementing partners.<sup>25</sup>



### Afghanistan Value Chains Program

USAID’s Afghanistan Value Chains Program (AVCP), a combination of two former programs—AVC-Livestock and AVC-Crops—is a \$75.6 million activity that operates throughout Afghanistan with regional offices in Kabul, Herat, Mazar-e Sharif, Jalalabad, and Kandahar. AVCP is a market-driven, private sector program, aiming to increase the income, employment, commercial viability, and productivity of anchor firms in livestock and crops value chains to support food security and women in agriculture. AVCP’s activities support the expansion of sustainable agriculture-led economic growth across Afghanistan. Specifically, AVCP partners with and supports anchor firms through a market systems development approach, including providing credit and collaborating with key stakeholders to better perceive and respond to market opportunities. Updated information was not available this quarter. Last quarter, 3,818 households benefited directly from AVCP activities. Since the start of FY 2023, 10,227 households have benefited, exceeding the target of 8,000 by 28%.<sup>26</sup>

**Benefited directly:** “Households where one or more members received goods or services, [including] farm inputs, such as feed, fertilizer, farm tools,” and so on. Indirect beneficiaries are those households that receive assistance that is “not significant or enough to result in progress that can be attributed to AVCP interventions.”

Source: USAID, response to SIGAR vetting, 10/12/2023.

### EDUCATION PROGRAMS

USAID’s Office of Social Services (OSS) supports three education development activities in Afghanistan, with total estimated costs of \$111 million, as shown in Table A.4.<sup>27</sup> USAID continues to support primary school education for girls and boys as well as women’s and men’s higher education, but reported that the Taliban ban on girls’ secondary and higher education has directly impacted OSS activities.<sup>28</sup> OSS focuses on sustaining higher education opportunities for women and girls in fields granted special exemptions by the Taliban ministry of health, such as midwifery degree programs, and through virtual, online, and distance learning, while prioritizing the safety and privacy of female students and educators.<sup>29</sup> Last quarter, USAID reported that it awarded two new education activities: Accessible Quality Basic Education and Young Women Lead.

TABLE A.4

USAID ACTIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMS				
Project Title	Start Date	End Date	Total Estimated Cost	Cumulative Disbursements, as of 4/12/2024
Accessible and Quality Basic Education (AQBE)	10/1/2023	9/30/2028	\$79,249,987	\$1,758,714
Supporting Student Success in Afghanistan (SSSA)	1/1/2023	12/31/2026	27,284,620	5,964,401
Young Women Lead (YWL)	9/28/2023	09/27/2025	4,935,797	210,117
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$111,470,404</b>	<b>\$7,933,232</b>

Note: Numbers have been rounded.  
Source: USAID, response to SIGAR data call, 4/12/2024.

## Accessible Quality Basic Education

Accessible Quality Basic Education (AQBE) is a five-year, \$79.2 million activity that began in October 2023 and aims to improve safe and equitable access to quality education for primary-aged girls and boys and secondary school-aged girls. AQBE has identified four goals at its preliminary stage: (1) to achieve improved delivery of quality instruction in foundational skills and delivery of support for student well-being by educators; (2) to reinforce community school management and family engagement to sustain access to safe public and community-based education; (3) to increase the transition rate of community-based education students into public primary schools; and (4) to sustain secondary education engagement and learning opportunities for adolescent girls.<sup>30</sup> SIGAR will report on program performance metrics when more data become available.

## Young Women Lead

Young Women Lead (YWL), which started in September 2023, is a two-year, \$4.9 million activity that plans to expand post-secondary education opportunities for young Afghan women. YWL aims to reach 650 Afghan youth, the goal to have a minimum of 85% female participants, and provide them with post-secondary education opportunities, as well as enhanced job readiness skills and professional networks. To support students inside Afghanistan, YWL will focus on post-secondary programs in female-specific, exempted fields of study such as allied health fields (anesthesia, dental prosthesis, medical technology, midwifery, nursing, and pharmacy), education, agriculture, and information technology.<sup>31</sup> SIGAR will report on program performance metrics when more data become available.

## Supporting Student Success in Afghanistan

In January 2023, USAID began supporting a new American University of Afghanistan (AUA) activity entitled Supporting Student Success in Afghanistan (SSSA) after the U.S.-funded technical capacity building program for AUA ended on December 31, 2022. SSSA aims to sustain access to and improve retention in local higher education opportunities for students living in Afghanistan.<sup>32</sup>

Following the closure of AUA's Kabul campus after the Taliban takeover, AUA opened a satellite campus in Doha, Qatar, and implemented an online education model.<sup>33</sup> AUA continued to provide a hybrid-flexible model of education to its students, offering in-person classes to students in Qatar and online classes to students elsewhere.<sup>34</sup> This quarter, AUA reported a 100% retention rate for its students at the Doha campus, and a 91% retention rate for its students enrolled remotely from Afghanistan.<sup>35</sup> According to USAID, SSSA provides the majority of funding for AUA operations. USAID told SIGAR last quarter that AUA also receives funding from other sources, but did not specify from whom.<sup>36</sup>



Girls and women read the Quran. (Photo by UN Women)

## Keep Schools Open Finished

UNICEF's \$40 million Keep Schools Open project, supported by USAID, ended on December 31, 2023. Keep Schools Open implemented "Education Cash Plus," which aimed to keep girls in school by providing cash assistance to Afghan families with at least one adolescent girl in primary school, especially those at risk of dropping-out due to ongoing humanitarian, economic, and political crises. UNICEF said that girls are still able to attend grades 1–6 in formal schools, madrassas, and community-based schools under the Taliban.<sup>37</sup> According to a November UNICEF report, UNICEF completed a final installment of cash distributions to 14,458 households, meeting the overall program target of supporting over 87,000 households with adolescent girls.<sup>38</sup> The final report for Keep Schools Open is due on April 30, 2024.<sup>39</sup>

## PUBLIC HEALTH PROGRAMS

USAID's OSS currently implements seven health-related programs. Across programmatic offices, USAID-funded health-related programs have a total estimated cost of \$502 million, as seen in Table A.5.<sup>40</sup> Last quarter, the Taliban ministry of public health issued a letter banning specific health services and activities, including public health awareness campaigns, women-friendly health centers, social behavioral change, and mental health services.<sup>41</sup> According to one health activity implementing partner that addresses women's health and family planning, "these restrictions augment existing barriers to creating demand and addressing reproductive health-related myths and misconceptions prevalent among women and men. The imposition of restrictive policies and Taliban threats have heightened awareness of and potential for insecurity among project staff."<sup>42</sup> USAID reported that the extent to which restrictions are enforced by local authorities differs by province.<sup>43</sup>

TABLE A.5

<b>USAID ACTIVE HEALTH PROGRAMS</b>				
<b>Project Title</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>	<b>Total Estimated Cost</b>	<b>Cumulative Disbursements as of 4/12/2024</b>
Local Health System Sustainability (LHSS)	8/29/2019	8/28/2024	\$209,425,195	\$5,264,591
Assistance for Families and Indigent Afghans to Thrive (AFIAT)	7/10/2020	7/9/2025	117,000,000	57,037,942
Urban Health Initiative (UHI) Program	10/14/2020	10/13/2025	104,000,000	52,954,981
New DEWS Plus	2/2/2022	9/30/2031	50,000,000	13,800,897
Afghanistan Demographic and Health Survey (ADHS) Follow-On	10/9/2018	9/9/2023	10,500,000	165,269
Consolidated Grant - COVID-19 Response	9/30/2021	9/29/2026	6,000,000	5,990,113
Central Contraceptive Procurement (CCP)	4/20/2015	11/28/2023	3,599,998	3,676,081
Modeling American Healthcare, Standards & Values in Afghanistan	10/1/2020	9/30/2024	1,092,601	1,084,065
TB Data, Impact Assessment and Communications Hub (TB DIAH)	9/24/2018	9/24/2023	600,000	600,000
Meeting Targets & Maintaining Epidemic Control	4/15/2019	4/14/2024	270,000	1,155,000
Global Health Supply Chain Management (GHSCM-PSM)	4/20/2015	11/28/2023	176,568	5,918,876
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$502,664,359</b>	<b>\$147,647,816</b>

Note: Numbers have been rounded.

Source: USAID, response to SIGAR data call, 4/12/2024.

### Local Health System Sustainability

The Local Health System Sustainability (LHSS) for Afghanistan is a project under the USAID Integrated Health Systems IDIQ [Indefinite Delivery, Indefinite Quantity contract], managed by the Global Health Bureau’s Office of Health Systems.<sup>44</sup> The activity aims to help low-income countries transition to self-financed health systems.<sup>45</sup> Through partnerships with the Afghanistan Social Marketing Organization (ASMO) and other grantees, LHSS helps reduce the cost of health care by supporting partner sales of affordable, socially marketed health products focused on women and children.<sup>46</sup>

According to the most recently available quarterly progress report from FY24Q1, LHSS supported its grantees in expanding health care coverage and access through a number of initiatives, including training 553 private health providers (70% women) in priority areas like sexual and reproductive health; reaching 393,240 people through mass media campaigns about positive social behavior changes, including child-specific nutrition; and serving 155,660 patients (75% women) with health services in areas such as maternal health, non-communicable diseases, pediatric care, malnutrition, and tuberculosis.<sup>47</sup>

LHSS provided an in-depth FY 2023 progress review for ASMO, and through virtual mentorship, helped them finalize their FY 2024 work plan to address issue areas and strengthen organizational capacity. Objectives for 2024 include developing a strategy to help grantees increase sales, focusing



on high selling and high margin products, and refining sales pitches.<sup>48</sup> LHSS also analyzed financial data from seven of its grantees to examine the efficacy of its technical assistance in improving revenue and optimizing business models. LHSS found that five of the seven grantees saw significant revenue growth and cost recovery.<sup>49</sup>

## Assistance for Families and Indigent Afghans to Thrive

The Assistance for Families and Indigent Afghans to Thrive (AFIAT), an OSS program that began in 2020, aims to improve health outcomes for Afghans, particularly women of childbearing age and preschool children, in rural and peri-urban Afghanistan. AFIAT worked in 14 provinces this quarter to improve health and nutrition services and access to those services, increase the adoption of ideal health and nutrition behaviors in communities, and help partners plan, finance, and manage Afghanistan's public health system.<sup>50</sup> Earlier this quarter, the Taliban halted AFIAT's field activities in Ghazni Province because the project did not have a signed MOU with the Taliban ministry of public health.<sup>51</sup> USAID said the MOU was signed on March 10.<sup>52</sup>

AFIAT activities in the other provinces remained active this quarter, including clinical competency-based training and counseling sessions for 155 members of its targeted support teams in 14 provinces. Additionally, targeted support teams conducted 18,469 visits to 249 health facilities to mentor 2,754 health service providers.<sup>53</sup> In the first quarter of its fourth project year, AFIAT focused on advocating for the institutionalization of its interventions within the Afghanistan Resilience Trust Fund's Health Emergency Response project, such as adopting its safety bundle for expecting mothers, safe cesarean surgery procedures, and group antenatal/postnatal care.<sup>54</sup>

## Urban Health Initiative

The OSS Urban Health Initiative (UHI) is a five-year cooperative agreement funded by USAID and led by a consortium of implementing partners. UHI aims to support the health service ecosystem and improve access to primary care and lifesaving secondary and referral care for Afghans in urban areas, with a focus on women, children, and other vulnerable populations.<sup>55</sup>

In the first quarter of its fourth year, UHI coordinated health activities with the Taliban ministry of public health at the national and provincial levels, including on technical working groups, task forces, and subcommittees of the provincial public health directorates and public health coordination committees. Through this relationship, the public health coordination committee issued a letter of support for UHI's midwifery activities in Herat Province. UHI said the Taliban also supported its project in the areas of tuberculosis case identification, tuberculosis sample and patient transportation, and lab tests for drug-resistant tuberculosis patients.<sup>56</sup>

UHI also coordinated with two of USAID's other health projects (AFIAT and LHSS), various UN agencies, and professional associations. During the quarter, UHI conducted 45 supervisory sessions with health care providers to strengthen the delivery of health care services in five target cities. Other metrics recorded this quarter include improving service delivery readiness at 76 health facilities, conducting 54,914 antenatal care visits and 60,075 postnatal visits, and holding 301 mentorship sessions for health providers on essential care for infants. UHI also provided contraception to 97,252 women out of the 161,402 women who attended health counseling sessions on family planning.<sup>57</sup>

### **USAID Support for World Health Organization Initiatives**

USAID/Afghanistan provides support to the World Health Organization (WHO) for healthcare interventions related to infectious disease surveillance and response. In 2023, WHO issued a fact sheet reviewing the results from USAID-funded efforts from 2022–2023. This includes expanding disease surveillance sites from 519 to 613; responding to 1,221 disease outbreak alerts; training 2,296 participants in topics like surveillance, outbreak investigation and response, case management, and disease response; and delivering lab supplies to all 34 provinces, including 95,000 COVID-19 tests.<sup>58</sup>

According to the fact sheet, WHO faced challenges such as lengthy clearance procedures for lab equipment and supplies, political instability, frequent leadership changes in the Taliban ministry of public health, high turnover rate of their technical staff, and difficulty reaching remote areas in cold weather. Next steps for the program include strengthening event-based surveillance, expansion of electronic surveillance services, and continuing outbreak detection and response in all 34 provinces.<sup>59</sup>

USAID also reported that WHO is currently prioritizing cross-border vaccinations in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The Taliban are supportive of these vaccination campaigns, but prefer site-to-site vaccinations over house-to-house campaigns, especially in the southern provinces.<sup>60</sup>

For more information on public health in Afghanistan, see page 49.

### **DEMOCRACY, GENDER, AND RIGHTS PROGRAMS**

USAID continues to manage several programs in Afghanistan focused on providing support to civil society organizations, the media sector, Afghan women and girls, and conflict-affected civilians through its Office of Democracy, Gender, and Rights, and its Office of Social Services.<sup>61</sup> USAID reported Taliban interference into these programs this quarter, including the arrest of staff, arrest and detention of grantees, and scrutiny from the regime's general directorate of intelligence.<sup>62</sup> Some information about these programs have been withheld to protect staff and beneficiaries in Afghanistan. Total estimated costs for these active programs are \$156 million, as seen in Table A.6.<sup>63</sup>



Afghan women reporters at Radio Killid and Radio Mursal on World Radio Day. (Photo by UNAMA/Tahmina Osta)

TABLE A.6

USAID ACTIVE DEMOCRACY, GENDER, AND RIGHTS PROGRAMS				
Project Title	Start Date	End Date	Total Estimated Cost	Cumulative Disbursements, as of 4/12/2024
Women’s Scholarship Endowment (WSE)	9/27/2018	9/26/2028	\$60,000,000	\$50,000,000
Enabling Essential Services for Afghan Women and Girls	7/25/2022	7/24/2025	30,000,000	21,291,247
Supporting Transformation for Afghanistan’s Recovery (STAR)	2/18/2021	12/31/2024	28,338,901	19,328,700
Afghan Support Project	9/16/2022	9/15/2025	25,884,633	8,195,108
Information, Dialogue, and Rights in Afghanistan	9/23/2022	9/1/2025	11,798,379	3,100,000
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$156,021,913</b>	<b>\$101,915,055</b>

Note: Numbers have been rounded.  
 Source: USAID, response to SIGAR data call, 4/12/2024.

### Supporting Transformation for Afghanistan’s Recovery (STAR)

Beginning in February 2021, USAID’s STAR program has aimed to build resilience in some of Afghanistan’s poorest and most conflict-affected communities by strengthening food and livelihood security through a consortium of implementing partners. The activity provides cash assistance, agricultural and livestock support, and supported market skills and linkages across nine provinces.<sup>64</sup>

STAR provides four months of cash-for-food assistance and/or rapid cash-for-work (CFW) projects for immediate stabilization needs. USAID said CFW has the additional benefit of building social cohesion among Afghan returnees and host communities through joint work projects and it contributes to the improvement of living conditions for residents. In parallel

to these cash-focused activities, USAID added, STAR and partners will support the development of income generating activities of these primary target groups.<sup>65</sup>

According to STAR's most recently available progress report, STAR implementing partners began construction on 26 water supply projects in the first quarter of FY 2024. STAR also provided cash-for-work project opportunities to over 400 beneficiaries.<sup>66</sup>

A new STAR component is focusing on improved health and wellbeing services by addressing the loss of primary residence, loss of livelihood, displacement, conflicted-related injury, and loss of an immediate family member.<sup>67</sup> USAID said STAR will establish and operate health sub-centers in targeted districts to improve access to primary health care services and integrate nutrition and mental health and psychosocial support provided by the centers. USAID added that there are an estimated 27,100 individuals benefiting from primary health care, nutrition, and mental health and psychosocial support services from these facilities.<sup>68</sup>

### **Enabling Essential Services for Afghan Women and Girls**

The UN Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (UN Women) implements the USAID-funded Enabling Essential Services for Afghan Women and Girls activity in an effort to respond to violence against women, strengthen opportunities for women's economic empowerment, and safeguard spaces for women's civil society organizations.<sup>69</sup>

UN Women continues to work with Afghan women to advocate for their rights and ensure their voices are incorporated in UN meetings, resolutions, and recommendations. UN Women has also successfully signed UN-to-UN agreements, launching partnerships partially funded by USAID, to support women entrepreneurs and women in prisons.<sup>70</sup>

### **Women's Scholarship Endowment**

The Women's Scholarship Endowment (WSE) assists Afghan women to obtain a university or graduate degree in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).<sup>71</sup> Its objectives are to develop and implement a scholarship program for Afghan women, strengthen the organizational capacity at local partner universities, and provide WSE beneficiaries with career development and leadership training.<sup>72</sup>

This quarter, WSE focused on identifying regional universities willing to accept Afghan students for the Fall 2024 semester. Students unable to travel to regional universities have the option to enroll in American University of Afghanistan's (AUAF) online program. An additional cohort of students are currently enrolled at the AUAF Doha campus, where they are supported by WSE with financial grants, skills workshops, and extracurricular activities.<sup>73</sup>



## Afghan Support Project

The Afghanistan Support Program (ASP) aims to support civil society organizations, civic activists, human rights defenders, and journalists in their efforts to protect basic rights and freedoms and ensure access to credible media. ASP also supports efforts to combat trafficking in persons and raise awareness of the issue.<sup>74</sup>

ASP advances its objectives by providing financial, operation, and professional development support to media and civil society. Its activities are supported by a consortium of NGO and media partners.<sup>75</sup> This quarter, ASP awarded additional professional development grants, and a cohort of grantees completed the implementation of their grant activities. ASP also awarded two grants to help protect victims of human trafficking.<sup>76</sup> As part of its effort to address trafficking in persons, an ASP study identified a complex web of factors that contribute to trafficking, including economic stress, political change, socio-cultural practices, and international dynamics.<sup>77</sup>

## Information, Dialogue, and Rights in Afghanistan

In September 2022, USAID signed an agreement for the \$6.1 million Supporting Media Freedom and Access to Information in Afghanistan program.<sup>78</sup> The program's objective is to help deliver news and educational content to national audiences that strengthen Afghanistan's human capital and enable citizens to freely organize and communicate. It aims to accomplish this by supporting independent media and reporting on rights and governance issues; developing a strong cadre of female journalists and producers; supporting journalists to operate safely; and informing Afghan citizens about critical issues of public interest.<sup>79</sup>

In 2023, USAID modified the award to include a second component called "Supporting National Dialogue and Rights Advocacy," changed the program name to Information, Dialogue, and Rights in Afghanistan, and extended the performance period from September 2024 to June 2026.<sup>80</sup> In February 2024, USAID modified the award again to include a third component called "Enhanced Media Freedom and Afghanistan Regional Dialogue for South and Central Asia," and increased the award to \$14,079,528. USAID said this third component will support regional peace dialogues between South and Central Asia stakeholders and Afghanistan stakeholders to discuss key issues such as water, trade, education, among others. It will also support surveys on key regional priorities and future regional engagement with Afghanistan.<sup>81</sup>

## STATE DEPARTMENT PROGRAMS IN AFGHANISTAN

### DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

State's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL) supports a diverse range of programs intended to protect the rights of Afghanistan civil society, independent media, women and girls, and human rights actors. DRL aims to protect victims of gender-based-violence, strengthens and supports freedom of association by supporting civil society organizations and national NGOs, and intends to provide access to independent sources of information by supporting media outlets and journalists. It also attempts to promote respect for human rights, especially for ethnic and religious minority groups and other vulnerable communities. Since the drawdown of U.S. troops in 2021, DRL has provided more than \$26 million in emergency, resiliency, and advocacy assistance to almost 900 members of civil society, including Afghan women leaders, and over 1,600 women, girls, and their families, both inside and outside the country. At State's request, additional details of its DRL programs have been withheld to protect the safety of staff and beneficiaries in Afghanistan.<sup>82</sup>

### SUPPORT FOR REFUGEES AND INTERNALLY DISPLACED PEOPLE

USAID and the State/PRM continue to support Afghan refugees and internally displaced persons.<sup>83</sup> Humanitarian efforts have been concentrated on Afghan returnees from Pakistan since Pakistan's government began implementing its "Illegal Foreigners' Repatriation Plan" in November 2023, authorizing the arrest, detention, and deportation of all unregistered foreigners.<sup>84</sup>

In response, the UN's International Organization for Migration issued a Border Consortium Appeal to support the immediate needs of Afghan returnees at the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, including protection screening, shelter, and transportation to areas of origin or return. Last quarter, PRM provided \$3.6 million to the Border Consortium partners to help support newly returned Afghans at border reception and transit centers.<sup>85</sup>

PRM said there have been no significant changes to its Afghanistan assistance this quarter and returns from Pakistan have slowed to the pre-September 2023 level of less than 500 returnees per day. PRM said it continues to monitor the situation and prepare for a potential increase in the number of returnees from Pakistan.<sup>86</sup>

PRM also broadly supports the UN's Afghanistan HRP and funds its lifesaving, multisectoral humanitarian and protections activities across Afghanistan. In 2023, PRM made the following contributions to activities under the HRP:<sup>87</sup>

- \$39,300,000 to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees
- \$28,200,000 to the UN Population Fund
- \$13,500,000 to the International Organization for Migration.

PRM has not obligated any new funding for Afghanistan since January 1, 2024.<sup>88</sup> For more information on Afghan refugees and internally displaced people, see page 47.

## REMOVING EXPLOSIVE REMNANTS OF WAR

State's Bureau of Political-Military Affairs' Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement (PM/WRA) manages the Conventional Weapons Destruction (CWD) program in Afghanistan and—due to the ongoing risk to civilians—continues to fund land mine and explosive remnants of war (ERW) clearance activities through implementing partners. PM/WRA currently supports five Afghan NGOs, three international NGOs, and two public international organizations to help clear areas in Afghanistan contaminated by ERW and conventional weapons (e.g., unexploded mortar rounds).<sup>89</sup> From 1997 through March 6, 2024, State provided \$487 million in weapons-destruction and mine-action assistance to Afghanistan.<sup>90</sup>

### Operating Environment

Direct U.S. assistance to the Afghan Directorate for Mine Action Coordination (DMAC), an Afghan government entity, was canceled on September 9, 2021, following the Taliban takeover, in compliance with international sanctions against specially designated terrorist groups. PM/WRA implementing partners have signed MOUs with the now Taliban-run DMAC, but none have signed agreements with Taliban provincial and district officials this quarter.<sup>91</sup>

PM/WRA reported that DMAC does not conduct or fund operations or programs, and lacks the resources to fully operate the national mine database and conduct quality assurance practices.<sup>92</sup> PM/WRA said DMAC has supported humanitarian mine programs by working with the UN when local authorities have attempted to interfere with regular clearance operations.<sup>93</sup> Implementing partners and women employed in U.S.-funded CWD projects have not reported any interference from the Taliban this quarter.<sup>94</sup>

DMAC extended operational accreditation of U.S.-funded projects and implementing partners this quarter, which PM/WRA said were granted prior to August 2021 by the former Afghan government. DMAC accreditation certifies that an organization has the technical capacity to conduct demining programs and its procedures are consistent with international and national mine action standards.<sup>95</sup>



UNAMA Chief Roza Otunbayeva visits a demining site outside of Kabul. (Photo by UNAMA)

## Clearance Operations

This quarter, PM/WRA implementing partners cleared over five million square meters of minefields, and destroyed 136 anti-tank mines and anti-personnel weapons, 451 items of unexploded ordnance, and 851 small arm ammunitions. After the second quarter of FY 2024, PM/WRA estimated there are about 1,276 square kilometers of contaminated minefields and battlefields remaining. Since 1997, PM/WRA implementing partners have cleared a total of 383 million square meters of land and destroyed over eight million landmines and ERW.<sup>96</sup>

## Funding Update

Since September 2021, PM/WRA implementing partners have paid Taliban entities nearly \$1.3 million in taxes, including \$138,000 this quarter, the majority of which is withheld payroll tax.<sup>97</sup> PM/WRA has \$5 million in FY 2023 funds available for obligation, as of March 6, 2024.<sup>98</sup> For more information on State's contributions to the Nonproliferation, Anti-Terrorism, Demining, and Related Programs (NADR) Fund, see page 139.

## COUNTERNARCOTICS

From 2003 until the fall of the Afghan government in August 2021, State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) operated multiple programs in Afghanistan to reform the criminal justice system and limit the production and trafficking of illegal drugs.<sup>99</sup> Since the first quarter of FY 2022, following the Taliban takeover, INL has obligated \$11 million from the International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement account on counternarcotics programs in Afghanistan.<sup>100</sup>

As of March 2024, INL counternarcotics programming supported counternarcotics oversight and messaging efforts, including funding the Afghanistan



Opium Surveys and the Afghan Opiate Trade Project (AOTP) through the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). INL disbursed \$25 million for the Afghanistan Opium Surveys from 2006 to March 2024, and \$10.3 million for AOTP between December 2011 and March 2024.<sup>101</sup> The AOTP monitors and analyzes trends in the Afghan opiate industry to support the international response to the illicit drug economy.<sup>102</sup>

The Afghanistan Opium Surveys utilize data collected by UNODC through remote sensing, surveys, and global data collections on drugs to predict medium- and long-term trends in the narcotics industry.<sup>103</sup> INL also funds an inter-agency agreement with the U.S. Agency for Global Media to implement public information and counternarcotics messaging programs, with total disbursements of \$4.5 million from February 2017 to March 2024.<sup>104</sup>

INL's treatment and prevention services and alternative livelihood programs remain active in Afghanistan. To date, INL has disbursed approximately \$86 million to implement these programs.<sup>105</sup> For more information on Afghanistan's narcotics production, see page 67.

## DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE PROGRAMS

### U.S. SECURITY CONTRACT CLOSE-OUTS

Following the Taliban takeover, U.S. funding obligations of the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) ceased, but disbursements to contractors will continue, as necessary, until all Afghanistan Security Forces Fund (ASFF) obligations incurred prior to the U.S. withdrawal are liquidated.<sup>106</sup>

According to DOD, resolving ASFF-funded contracts is an ongoing contract-by-contract matter between contractors and the contracting office in the military departments (Army, Air Force, and Navy). ASFF obligation authority was granted by the DOD Comptroller to the Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (CSTC-A) and the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA), and these organizations then delegated obligation authority to the military departments. DSCA used pseudo-Foreign Military Sales (FMS) cases to manage ASFF funds in the FMS Trust Fund.<sup>107</sup>

Contract vendors must submit claims to begin the close-out process. Vendors typically have a five-year window after contracts are executed to submit claims, and DOD cannot force vendors to submit invoices for payment. Therefore, DOD said it cannot at this time provide information on estimated contract closing dates, the amount of funds available to be recouped, or the approximate costs of terminating each contract.<sup>108</sup>

As seen in Table A.7, ASFF funds that were obligated by CSTC-A and its successor the **Defense Security Cooperation Management Office-Afghanistan (DSCMO-A)** have total remaining unliquidated ASFF obligations of \$69.0 million. Contracts, used to support pseudo-FMS cases

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#### **Defense Security Cooperation Management Office-Afghanistan**

**(DSCMO-A):** The successor to Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (CSTC-A), which was disbanded on June 1, 2022. DSCMO-A uses ASFF funds on new contracts awarded locally by Army Contract Command-Afghanistan or as military interdepartmental purchase requests to leverage already-awarded contracts.

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Source: DOD, OUSD-P, response to SIGAR vetting, 10/11/2022; DOD, OUSD-P, response to SIGAR data call, 6/15/2022.

managed by the military departments, have total unliquidated ASFF obligations of \$203.3 million.<sup>109</sup>

Between FY 2002 and FY 2021, Congress appropriated \$88.8 billion to support the ANDSF.<sup>110</sup>

TABLE A.7

<b>SUMMARY STATUS OF ASFF OBLIGATED CONTRACTS (IN MILLIONS)</b>				
	<b>Cumulative Obligations</b>	<b>Cumulative Expenditures</b>	<b>Unliquidated Obligations (ULO)</b>	<b>ULO as of:</b>
<b>Military Departments</b>				
<b>Department of the Air Force</b>				
A-29	\$1,030.85	\$992.81	\$38.04	3/7/2024
C-130	153.07	112.68	40.39	11/30/2023*
PC-12	40.31	20.74	19.57	4/10/2024
C-208	120.90	115.62	3.18	9/29/2023*
Training	28.52	26.27	2.25	8/31/2023*
Munitions	10.88	10.73	0.15	3/7/2024
Subtotal	1,384.53	1,278.85	103.58	
<b>Department of the Army</b>				
ASFF	342.42	300.43	41.99	3/30/2024
UH-60	380.30	377.63	15.89	3/30/2024
ASFF Ammunition	59.21	44.45	14.76	3/30/2024
PEO STRI <sup>^</sup>	446.99	445.91	4.12	3/30/2024
Subtotal	1,228.92	1,168.42	76.76	
<b>Department of the Navy</b>				
All Programs	30.49	7.55	22.94	3/30/2024
Subtotal (All Military Departments)	2,643.94	2,454.82	203.29	
<b>Military Command</b>				
<b>Defense Security Cooperation Management Office-Afghanistan</b>				
All Programs	198.16	129.21	68.95	4/4/2024
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,842.10</b>	<b>\$2,584.02</b>	<b>\$272.24</b>	

Note: Numbers may not add due to rounding.

\*DOD did not report any updates this quarter. <sup>^</sup>The acronym STRI is used for simulation, training, and instrumentation.

Source: DOD, response to SIGAR data call, 4/10/2024; DOD, "DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms," 11/2021, p. 295.

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سر دفتر مفتش ویژه برای بازسازی افغانستان



اداره

سنتر مفتش

د پيار غاونې لپاره د خانگري



“If we do not invest in our development and reconstruction institutions to be ready for future contingencies, we will not succeed when conflict arises again.”

—*Inspector General  
John F. Sopko*