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U.S. ASSISTANCE TO AFGHANISTAN

KEY ISSUES & EVENTS

On May 2, 2023, UN Secretary-General António Guterres announced UN operations will continue in Afghanistan despite Taliban bans on women working for the UN and NGOs.

On June 5, 2023, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs announced a 30% reduction in the funding request for the 2023 Humanitarian Response Plan.

The Taliban issued an oral directive on June 6, 2023, demanding international NGOs turn education-related operations over to local organizations and submit transfer plans to the ministry of education within 40 days.

On June 26, 2023, the Afghan Fund's Board of Trustees held its third meeting, and announced new co-chairs and an executive secretary.

The United States remains the largest donor to the Afghan people, having appropriated more than \$2.35 billion since the Taliban takeover in August 2021.¹

After the collapse of the former Afghan government, the U.S. government reviewed all non-humanitarian assistance programs in Afghanistan. State and USAID paused the majority of development-assistance programs to assess the situation, including the safety and ability of implementing partners to continue operations. Beginning in September 2021, Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) issued a series of licenses authorizing the delivery of assistance to Afghanistan. Concurrently, State and USAID restarted several programs addressing critical needs of the Afghan people in key sectors—health, education, agriculture, food security, and livelihoods—as well as supporting civil society, with a focus on women, girls, and human rights protections more broadly, alongside ongoing humanitarian activities.

These efforts 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.²

USAID/Afghanistan Policy on MOUs with the Taliban

The Taliban have pressured NGOs to sign memoranda of understanding (MOUs) as part of their efforts to oversee and control NGO activities. This poses a key challenge for U.S. implementing partners because USAID/Afghanistan's policy prohibits its implementing partners from signing MOUs with the Taliban unless they are (1) approved by USAID/Afghanistan (per the mission order); and (2) justified as necessary for implementation or the safety of partner staff or beneficiaries. Previously, USAID/Afghanistan advised its implementing partners against entering into MOUs with the Taliban because the United States does not recognize the Taliban as the government of Afghanistan.

In January 2023, USAID/Afghanistan informed SIGAR that MOU approvals may be given on a case-by-case basis and must be justified based on the criteria above. According to USAID/Afghanistan, MOUs should facilitate necessary communication and coordination by the implementing partner with local authorities to carry out activities; facilitate the safety of staff and beneficiaries; or if it is required for project registration, obtain permits, license plate transfers, and other necessary authorizations, provided that communication and coordination occur at the lowest level possible and the MOU does not call for interaction with individuals listed on Treasury's OFAC Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons List.

USAID/Afghanistan's criteria for approval include:

- the MOU must be a non-obligating agreement—no funds and no direct or technical assistance may be provided by the implementing partner to the Taliban
- the MOU may not call for Taliban approval of project interventions, activities, modalities, or budgets, may not provide for discussion of policy or budget information with the Taliban, and may not permit Taliban participation in design meetings, assessments, or field implementation
- the MOU may not permit Taliban involvement in partner staffing or volunteering, selection of vendors or the geographic focus for assistance
- USAID is not asked to sign or witness the MOU and the MOU does not appear to confer legitimacy to, or recognition of, the Taliban as the government of Afghanistan.

USAID/Afghanistan policies on MOU requirements do not apply to USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) and the State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM). BHA and PRM policy includes requirements that an MOU may not: restrict the geographic scope of work; call for Taliban involvement in management of assistance activities, such as sharing or providing access to beneficiary lists or Taliban involvement in beneficiary selection, staff recruitment, and vendor selection; require the payment of various taxes or fees beyond those present under the Ghani administration; or contain any language that might indicate the MOU is binding or enforceable.

Sources: USAID, BHA, correspondence with SIGAR, 2/8/2023; USAID/Afghanistan, response to SIGAR vetting, 1/11/2023; Catholic Relief Services, Supporting Transformation for Afghanistan's Recovery (STAR) Quarterly Report FY22 Q3, April 1 to June 30, 2022, 8/1/2022, pp. 5–6; USAID/Afghanistan, response to SIGAR vetting, 7/12/2023.

In addition to direct U.S. assistance to the people of Afghanistan, the United States is also the single largest donor to the United Nations' humanitarian response in Afghanistan.³ Through the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP), the UN leads international efforts to deliver humanitarian assistance directly to Afghans, including food, shelter, cash, and household supplies. USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) currently supports several humanitarian programs in Afghanistan as part of the UN's HRP. According to BHA, USAID is prioritizing direct food assistance and other sectors that help reduce food insecurity, including promoting health, nutrition, water, sanitation, and hygiene.⁴ Table E.1 provides an overview of these ongoing programs in Afghanistan and the total cost of each.

U.S. ASSISTANCE

TABLE E.1

USAID BHA ACTIVE PROGRAMS IN AFGHANISTAN			
Program Supported	Start Date	End Date	Award Amount
Afghanistan CSP IDA	3/4/2021	7/31/2023	\$310,621,579
Emergency food and nutrition assistance and the provision of humanitarian air services	12/7/2022	12/6/2023	267,134,491
Emergency food assistance to the people of Afghanistan (Ukraine Wheat)	1/1/2022	6/30/2023	76,465,509
WASH response in Afghanistan (Daykundi, Badghis, Farah, Herat, Khost, and Paktika) and humanitarian assistance program across all 34 provinces in Afghanistan	7/1/2022	6/30/2024	54,800,000
Integrated lifesaving support for the most at-risk men, women, boys, and girls	12/19/2022	11/18/2024	40,000,000
Humanitarian response to support crisis-affected households to meet their multisectoral basic needs	12/19/2022	11/18/2024	36,000,000
Provision of humanitarian nutrition, cash, WASH, and protection assistance to children, women, and families	12/15/2022	12/14/2023	35,000,000
Strengthen coordination of emergency food security response planning, implementation, and monitoring	1/1/2022	6/30/2023	30,500,000
Lifesaving assistance of integrated health, nutrition, WASH, and protection services for crisis-affected populations in eastern, southeastern, south, and central Afghanistan	1/1/2023	11/30/2024	28,000,000
Lifesaving integrated emergency response to vulnerable crisis-affected populations	1/1/2023	11/30/2024	20,500,000
Humanitarian response to support crisis-affected households to meet their multisectoral basic needs	5/1/2023	3/31/2025	14,900,000
Holistic and multisectoral emergency response, using settlements approach, for the population living in and around informal settlements in northern, western, and eastern Afghanistan	12/1/2022	10/31/2024	13,000,000
Fostering Resilience in Afghanistan through Multi-Sector Emergency Support II (FRAMES II)	12/1/2022	10/31/2024	10,500,000
Provision of GBV prevention and response for at-risk and vulnerable women and girls	6/10/2022	12/31/2023	6,500,000
Scale-up plan for health cluster coordination structure	12/26/2022	12/25/2023	6,000,000
Information Management for Disaster Risk Reduction and Response in Afghanistan (IM-D3R)	3/1/2022	12/31/2023	4,756,243
Humanitarian response to support crisis-affected households to meet their multisectoral basic needs	5/1/2022	8/31/2023	4,500,000
UN OCHA Program	1/1/2023	12/31/2023	1,200,000
UN WHO Program	1/1/2022	6/30/2023	1,000,000
UN FAO Program	1/1/2023	12/31/2023	500,000
Scale-up GBV in emergencies coordination country-wide	1/1/2022	6/30/2023	361,800
Total			\$962,239,622

Source: USAID, BHA, response to SIGAR data call, 7/10/2023.

As part of the 2023 Humanitarian Response Plan issued in March of this year, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) originally sought \$4.6 billion to assist 23.7 million Afghans with lifesaving and protection assistance in 2023.⁵ On June 5, 2023, the UN revised downward its HRP request to \$3.2 billion due to donor fatigue and constraints in providing aid after the Taliban banned Afghan women from working for the UN. In a statement on the funding decrease, the UN said, “[t]he recent bans on Afghan women working for... NGOs and the UN have added yet another layer of complexity to what is already an incredibly challenging protection environment, and further constrained the operational capacity of partners.”⁶ As of June 2023, the 2023 HRP was only 14% funded. The United States remains the single largest contributor, having donated \$74.4 million thus far.⁷

USAID PROGRAMS IN AFGHANISTAN

ECONOMIC GROWTH PROGRAMS

USAID’s Office of Livelihoods (OLH) continued supporting economic growth activities in Afghanistan with total estimated costs of more than \$152 million.⁸ USAID’s four active economic growth programs are shown in Table E.2.

Two of these programs conducted activities in Afghanistan this quarter: 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. The Livelihood Advancement for Marginalized Populations (LAMP) program remained suspended this quarter due to the Taliban ban on women’s employment with NGOs.⁹

Another program, the Extractives Technical Assistance by the U.S. Geological Survey, has conducted no physical work in Afghanistan since the Taliban takeover and is being closed out.¹⁰

TABLE E.2

USAID ACTIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH PROGRAMS				
Project Title	Start Date	End Date	Total Estimated Cost	Cumulative Disbursements, as of 7/10/2023
Afghanistan Competitiveness of Export-Oriented Businesses Activity (ACEBA)	1/27/2020	1/26/2025	\$105,722,822	\$59,014,005
Livelihood Advancement for Marginalized Populations (LAMP)	8/1/2018	8/1/2023	18,481,505	10,805,291
Extractive Technical Assistance by USGS	1/1/2018	6/30/2023	18,226,206	14,538,850
Carpet and Jewelry (TMT)	1/31/2019	4/30/2023	9,941,606	9,808,371
Total			\$152,372,139	\$94,166,519

Note: Numbers have been rounded.

Source: USAID, response to SIGAR data call, 7/18/2023.

Afghanistan Competitiveness of Export-Oriented Businesses Activity

USAID’s five-year, \$105.7 million Afghanistan Competitiveness of Export-Oriented Business Activity (ACEBA) was designed to support export-oriented businesses by providing technical assistance and grants to small and medium enterprises. Since the Taliban takeover, ACEBA has shifted priorities to livelihoods support, focusing on domestic production activities and humanitarian goods and services.¹¹

From January to March 2023 (the most recent data available), ACEBA helped 12 carpet businesses expand exports to international markets, increasing combined year-end sales from an estimated \$5.6 million to \$10.1 million. In the same quarter, 1,382 individuals (72% women) received livelihood opportunities, and an additional 8,098 individuals benefited from



Afghan women entrepreneurs showcase their products at a tradeshow in Kabul, July 2023. (Twitter photo from @unwomenafghan)

related work as at-home wool spinners and carpet weavers. In addition to wool and cashmere markets, ACEBA supported five saffron companies and continued its apprenticeship program, with 9,677 apprentices (77% women) having gained employment as of March 31, 2023. Implementing partners reported some program constraints, including increased U.S.-required security screening measures for all vendors, payees, project beneficiaries, and recruitment candidates which are necessary to comply with Treasury OFAC licenses (to ensure the activity is not directly benefiting the Taliban), as well as Afghanistan's partially functioning banking systems.¹²

Data from ACEBA's most recent quarterly report indicate that in its initial two years, ACEBA generated 25,210 new full-time equivalent jobs within targeted export-oriented value chains, 72 firms received technical assistance for exports, and 83 firms received technical assistance for improving business performance. In the next three years, ACEBA expects to support 1,100 small and medium-sized enterprises, assist 82,000 individuals through livelihood restoration, provide 27,900 telemedicine consultations, and supply 940 firms with working capital. Livelihood restoration and support includes facilitating access to credit, supporting private sector efforts to increase liquidity, helping the jobless to secure apprenticeships, and aiding private sector suppliers of humanitarian goods to start or sustain production. Telemedicine efforts support 90 physicians to access patients remotely, helping alleviate physician unemployment or underemployment.¹³

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

Beginning in 2019, this four-year, \$9.9 million project, aimed to create jobs within the carpet weaving and jewelry sectors by providing development assistance to micro, small, and medium-size enterprises in Kabul, Jowzjan,

SIGAR Audit of Afghanistan Competitiveness of Export-Oriented Business Activity (ACEBA)

SIGAR's ongoing audit of ACEBA is reviewing USAID's oversight and management of ACEBA from its start in January 2020 through January 2023. Specifically, this audit will assess the extent to which USAID and its partners (1) conducted the required oversight of ACEBA, and (2) achieved stated program goals and objectives, including those related to sustainability.

and Bamyan Provinces. Slated to end April 30, 2023, USAID extended this program until 2025 and provided it an additional \$5 million. The most recently available data from March 31, 2023, recorded that TMT created a total of 24,028 jobs in the Afghan carpet and jewelry sectors, exceeding the activity's target.¹⁴

Last quarter, the Taliban's restrictions on women working with NGOs affected six women staff workers, who were forced to work from home. USAID further reported over 19,000 weavers working with the project were already home-based and were unaffected by the ban. USAID reported that Taliban officials have voiced support for women's home-based enterprises, especially in manufacturing carpets.¹⁵

While in-home monitoring of beneficiaries was difficult with the restrictions in place, USAID reported in January that 70% of activity beneficiaries were women. As of January 2023, the activity was supporting 12 carpet producer companies and 16 jewelry businesses.¹⁶

Livelihood Advancement for Marginalized Populations (LAMP) in Close Out

The five-year, \$18.5 million Livelihood Advancement for Marginalized Populations (LAMP) program was initiated in 2018 to create sustainable jobs and livelihoods for especially vulnerable individuals in Kabul, Khost, Ghazni, and Balkh Provinces. USAID extended LAMP from August 1, 2022, to July 31, 2023, but the Taliban ban on women's employment with NGOs, caused the implementing partner to suspend all project activities in Q1 and Q2 of FY 2023. The implementing partner wrote in a January 2023 letter to USAID, "[g]iven the restrictions imposed by the current de facto government and the impact on [our] mission and values, we have suspended our project activities as women are an essential part of our operations."¹⁷ Due to the project timeline, LAMP is in the process of permanently closing down its operations, although it has been functionally inoperable since January.¹⁸

LAMP was designed to assist vulnerable individuals to secure work and build essential skills. Implementing partners typically worked with local councils in target districts to identify eligible beneficiaries according to the following criteria: low income, internally displaced people, those affected by natural disasters, widows, heads of family, and/or the disabled.¹⁹ In 2022, LAMP added a humanitarian plan to its portfolio, providing winterization kits and cash assistance for both current beneficiaries and families in locations with LAMP programming. USAID reports that the activity reached approximately 6,000 households by July 2022.²⁰

Extractives Technical Assistance by the U.S. Geological Survey Ends

The \$18.2 million interagency agreement (IAA) between USAID and the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) was initiated in January 2018, and closed

out this quarter. Before the Taliban takeover, USGS trained and mentored Afghan Ministry of Mines and Afghanistan Geological Survey staff and developed comprehensive country-wide geologic data. The IAA was suspended in September 2021 immediately after the Taliban takeover, and restarted in February 2022 after a second review by the U.S. Interagency Policy Committee chaired by the National Security Council.²¹

In January 2023, USAID said “the final deliverables that USGS will provide are important to understanding the economic potential of the extractives sector and describing the critical mineral potential in Afghanistan. These reports document the types of gemstones, commercial and industrial, and critical minerals in Afghanistan including their extent, estimated value, and accessibility to regional and world markets. This information was deemed valuable by the National Security Council, and other federal agencies, and was a significant factor in the resumption of the USGS extractives program in 2022.”²²

USAID implemented this program despite a history of challenges in helping build Afghanistan’s extractives sector. In January 2023, SIGAR found that the USGS did not perform the required oversight of its Extractives Technical Assistance program and while it did lead to significant information and data collection on Afghanistan’s mineral deposits, it resulted in marginal and unsustainable outcomes.²³

SIGAR’s Critical Oversight of U.S. Efforts to Build Afghanistan’s Extractives Sector

Since at least 2004, the United States has spent nearly \$1 billion to develop Afghanistan’s extractives industry, but could not overcome numerous challenges. In 2015, 2016, and 2018, SIGAR reported on the efficacy of DOD Task Force for Business and Stability Operations (TFBSO) and USAID efforts to develop Afghanistan’s extractives industry, and found that tangible progress was negligible and not sustained.

In 2015, SIGAR found that TFBSO and USAID pursued divergent approaches in implementing their respective projects, with the U.S. Embassy in Kabul doing little to coordinate interagency activities. In 2016, SIGAR found that Afghanistan’s Ministry of Mines and Petroleum never demonstrated the capacity to manage its funding or responsibly address transparency and corruption concerns. In 2018, SIGAR found that TFBSO and USAID’s extractives projects produced mixed results and wasted funding due to interagency conflict, a lack of a clear mission and strategy, and poor coordination, planning, contracting, and oversight; those programs consistently underestimated their time and cost projections, while simultaneously overestimating revenue projections; and TFBSO and USAID extractives programs did not achieve their goals of developing mineral tenders or generating mining royalty revenue.

Nevertheless, in 2018, USAID initiated two new programs intended to continue building Afghanistan’s extractives industry, the \$18.2 million Extractives Technical Assistance (ETA) program conducted by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), and the \$19.9 million Multi-Dimensional Economic and Legal Reform Assistance (MELRA) program implemented by the Department of Commerce’s Commercial Law Development Program (CLDP).

SIGAR reviewed these programs and issued a report in January 2023 that found U.S. agencies did not perform required oversight of these programs and that USAID, USGS, and CLDP made progress toward but did not ultimately achieve program goals, due in part to the same challenges that plagued previous U.S. efforts in the sector. While U.S. efforts led to significant information and data collected on Afghanistan’s mineral deposits, the collapse of the former Afghan government negated all other progress made. USAID continued to support the development of Afghanistan’s extractives industry, despite the failure of prior USAID and DOD programs to achieve their intended outcomes or address obstacles to success. The ETA and MELRA programs resulted in similarly marginal and unsustainable outcomes in building capacity in Afghanistan’s extractives industry and reforming Afghanistan’s extractives laws to better attract foreign investment.

Source: SIGAR, Afghanistan’s Extractives Industry: U.S. Programs Did Not Achieve Their Goals and Afghanistan Did Not Realize Widespread Economic Benefits from Its Mineral Resources, SIGAR 23-10-AR, 1/2023, p. 2, pp. 1, 6; SIGAR, Quarterly Report to the United States Congress, 1/30/2023, p. 19.

AGRICULTURE PROGRAMS

This quarter, USAID’s Office of Livelihoods (OLH) continued to support agriculture activities in Afghanistan with total estimated costs of over \$240 million.²⁴ USAID’s active agriculture programs are shown in Table E.3.

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.²⁵

TABLE E.3

USAID ACTIVE AGRICULTURE PROGRAMS				
Project Title	Start Date	End Date	Total Estimated Cost	Cumulative Disbursements, as of 7/10/2023
Strengthening Rural Livelihoods and Food Security (SRL-FS)	7/25/2022	7/24/2026	\$80,000,000	\$40,000,000
Afghanistan Value Chains - Livestock	6/9/2018	6/8/2023	75,672,170	47,664,087
Afghanistan Value Chains - Crops	8/2/2018	8/1/2023	54,958,860	51,924,298
Agricultural Marketing Program (AMP)	1/28/2020	9/30/2023	30,000,000	26,493,472
Total			\$240,631,030	\$166,081,859

Note: Numbers have been rounded.

Source: USAID, response to SIGAR data call, 7/18/2023.

Strengthening Rural Livelihoods and Food Security Activity

USAID’s four-year, \$80 million, Strengthening Rural Livelihoods and Food Security Activity launched in July 2022, intends to minimize the impacts of recent shocks on vulnerable and at-risk agricultural communities in targeted Afghan provinces and districts. The UN’s Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) operates the program in eight provinces (Badakhshan, Daykundi, Ghor, Jowzjan, Nimroz, Nuristan, Paktika, and Parwan). As of June 15, 2023, OLH reported that the Taliban have not interfered with implementing partner activities this quarter.²⁶

According to USAID, the program’s goal is to improve food security, nutrition, and resilience for vulnerable small households in environmentally sustainable ways. The eight targeted provinces are all classified at the Phase 4 (Emergency) level of the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), meaning that households have very high acute malnutrition and excess mortality.²⁷ Activities include increasing the efficient production 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 capacities of farmers, farmer groups, women vegetable growers, and livestock holders on climate smart cultivation/production practices; and linking them to domestic markets to provide a short-term income boost.²⁸

Afghanistan Value Chains Programs Merge and Two Programs to Address Food Insecurity Extended

This quarter, USAID merged two agriculture activities—AVC-Livestock and AVC-Crops—into the Afghanistan Value Chains Program (AVCP). AVCP will run for two years, working with anchor firms in livestock and crop value chains. The activity will focus on maximizing the productivity of these value chains, in order to support food security and women in agriculture. AVCP is a market-driven, private sector program, aiming to increase income, employment, commercial viability, and productivity.²⁹

The former AVC-Livestock (AVC-L) program supported vulnerable households through livelihoods strengthening activities to stabilize the rural and farming families' economic conditions. According to USAID, this was done by linking private sector firms operating in the livestock value chain with primary producers, “creating a symbiotic relationship that supports the growth of the private sector while improving the ability of farm families to durably adapt to external shocks.”³⁰

AVC-L implementing partners previously reported that female staff worked from home due to the Taliban's December 2022 ban on female employment with NGOs. Some women-focused activities have been paused, while others in the northern provinces were able to continue operations. According to USAID, the situation remains dynamic and variable by province.³¹

The former AVC-Crops (AVC-C) program supported emergency and lifesaving responses described in the UN 2023 HRP and Transitional Engagement Framework for Afghanistan through nutrition gardening, winter wheat production, the provision of food baskets, and seed distribution. AVC-C aimed to increase the resilience of vulnerable households to economic shocks by improving access to livelihood opportunities and protecting rural food sources.³²

In its most recently published FY 2023 Q1 quarterly report, AVC-C partners reported that the activity benefited over 45,000 households, and over 35,000 farmers had increased access to quality inputs and production techniques. Further, “the project's partnership with over 80 Afghan firms that quarter contributed to the success of activities and further reinforced [the U.S. government's] presence and continued support in the country.” AVC-C efforts were particularly targeted to the winter months of December through February when daily wage employment is extremely limited. The activity provided 10,000 vulnerable individuals with weekly



An Afghan potter displays a clay pot inside his shop in Kabul in July 2023. (AFP photo by Wakil Kohsar)

food baskets in exchange for agriculture infrastructure rehabilitation work. Food baskets include 10kg (22 lbs.) of wheat flour, 3kg (6.6 lbs.) of red kidney beans, 5kg (11 lbs.) of white rice, 2 liters of cooking oil, and 5kg (11 lbs.) of white sugar.³³

Agriculture Marketing Program, Focused on Female Economic Empowerment, Closing Down

The \$30 million Agriculture Marketing Program (AMP) was a follow-on award to USAID's Commercial Horticulture and Agricultural Marketing Program. USAID reported that AMP primarily focused on women, with grants and incentives aimed at supporting female economic empowerment. As of July 2023, AMP is closing down operations per its program lifecycle.³⁴

This quarter, USAID reported that the program was active in all 34 provinces this quarter, and focused on increasing farm production and domestic sales through interventions aimed at farmers and agribusinesses. AMP's Grant and Incentive Program is the primary mechanism for providing agricultural assistance to women-owned businesses and women-focused NGOs. Since March 2023, AMP has issued 51 grants (total cost \$310,000), between \$907 and \$10,000 each, to support 5,000 women with kitchen gardening, domestic and small-scale food processing, supermarket promotion, processing facility renovations, and solar power adoption.³⁵

USAID reports that Taliban policies have had a limited impact on AMP grant activities. There has been little Taliban interference this quarter, although there were four-to-five instances where female trainers were

unable to train female farmer grantees. USAID said AMP's female personnel are still employed and work from home, as they did during the COVID-19 pandemic. When required to travel to meet beneficiaries, female personnel are accompanied by male employees' wives and sisters.³⁶

EDUCATION PROGRAMS

USAID's Office of Social Services (OSS) supports education development activities in Afghanistan, with total estimated costs of over 146 million as shown in Table E.4.³⁷ USAID continues to support education for girls in primary school and women's higher education, but reported that OSS activities related to higher education have been directly impacted by the Taliban ban on girls' secondary and higher education. As a result, OSS is now focused on sustaining higher education opportunities in fields granted special exemptions by the Taliban ministry of health, such as midwifery degree programs, and through virtual, online, and distance learning modalities, while prioritizing the safety and privacy of female students and educators.³⁸

According to USAID, primary schools remained operational this quarter and girls were able to attend. However, on June 6, 2023, the Taliban issued a verbal directive for international NGOs to transfer education-focused programs to local organizations. USAID reported to SIGAR that International NGOs (INGOs) had 40 days from the directive's issuance to submit transition proposals to the ministry of education, which will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. USAID anticipates that the verbal directive will have a limited impact on its education programs, but if all community-based education programs managed by INGOs are disrupted due to the directive, it would negatively impact 510,000 children and 17,000 teachers.³⁹

USAID also confirmed an earlier report that on April 16, 2023, that the Taliban ministry of education issued a notice to all INGOs to suspend community-based education activities in Kandahar and Helmand. USAID told SIGAR that it is not currently funding any of these programs in Helmand, and that activities in Kandahar had ended prior to the notice. One implementing partner did pause planned supplementary skills training for 227 girls in the region who had previously graduated. OSS programs did not face any direct interference or threats from the Taliban this quarter.⁴⁰ For more information on education in Afghanistan under the Taliban, see page 99.

Girls' Education Challenge

The Girls' Education Challenge is a collaborative effort between USAID and the United Kingdom's Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office, and implemented by a large consortium of partners. The project provides

TABLE E.4

USAID ACTIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMS				
Project Title	Start Date	End Date	Total Estimated Cost	Cumulative Disbursements, as of 7/10/2023
Strengthening Education in Afghanistan (SEA II)	5/19/2014	12/31/2023	\$49,828,942	\$47,580,349
Keep Schools Open	7/11/2022	12/31/2023	40,000,000	40,000,000
Girls' Education Challenge Programme (GEC)	6/29/2016	12/31/2023	29,000,000	29,000,000
Supporting Student Success in Afghanistan (SSSA)	1/1/2023	12/31/2026	27,284,620	1,122,940
Total			\$146,113,562	\$117,703,290

Note: Numbers have been rounded.

Source: USAID, response to SIGAR data call, 7/18/2023.

SIGAR's Evaluation of Afghanistan's Education Sector

SIGAR is examining the conditions of Afghanistan's education sector since August 2021 and the extent to which the Taliban and other prohibited parties are benefiting from education-related donor assistance. Specifically, SIGAR is assessing (1) the condition of the Afghan education system following the Afghan government's collapse

in August 2021, including the challenges affecting the access to and quality of education; and (2) donor funding for teachers' salaries and for school administrative and maintenance costs, and the extent to which those funds have directly benefited the Taliban or other prohibited entities and individuals.

students in 15 rural provinces with critical resources and opportunities to earn an education through community-based classes and accelerated learning programs. It is currently in its last six months of implementation, and students will complete their learning programs by August 2023.⁴¹

USAID reported that the Taliban ban on women NGO workers continues to affect operations. One implementing partner in Parwan Province shifted to a remote learning and phone-based model that will allow girls to attain the qualifications to complete schooling through the sixth grade. Activity staff monitor the girls' learning and offer teachers support remotely. USAID said student work is graded and assessed with exams administered by teachers. Results are logged by implementing partners, who track each grade level students complete. All classes in other provinces are held in-person.⁴²

This quarter, USAID reported that female project staff were able to travel with the accompaniment of a male guardian to conduct in-person mentoring visits in Kabul, Badakhshan, Bamyan, Parwan, and Baghlan Provinces. Last quarter, one implementing partner noted that women in administrative positions were allowed to work from their office in shifts in Bamyan Province. Another partner reported that only male NGO staff monitored school programs in-person in Ghazni, Khost, Paktiya, and Kapisa Provinces.⁴³

Strengthening Education in Afghanistan

The Strengthening Education in Afghanistan (SEA II) activity, started in 2014, has the stated objective of improving institutional capacity, operations, management, and programming of educational institutions and civil society organizations in Afghanistan. According to USAID, SEA II currently operates to improve the organizational capacity and assist in diversifying funding streams for 80 female-led affordable private schools, which are seen as a higher quality alternative to public schools. SEA II also supports 150 women with enrollment and study in a two-year midwifery program (midwifery programs are currently exempt from the Taliban ban on higher education for women).⁴⁴

USAID did not report any Taliban interference into SEA II activities this quarter. Highlights from the most recently published SEA II quarterly report included successfully assisting 145 Afghan scholars who earned degrees in India receive attestation from the Taliban ministry of human resources so that the degrees are recognized in Afghanistan; 4,500 downloads of the SEA II STEM app which allows girls access to educational videos on math, physics, chemistry, and biology from their homes; and 150 midwifery scholars, funded by the activity, completing their second semester of training.⁴⁵

Supporting Student Success in Afghanistan

In January 2023, USAID began supporting a new American University of Afghanistan (AUAF) activity entitled Supporting Student Success in Afghanistan (SSSA) after the U.S.-funded technical capacity building program for AUAF ended on December 31, 2022. SSSA aims to sustain access to and improve retention in local higher education opportunities for students living in Afghanistan.⁴⁶

Following the closure of AUAF's Kabul campus after the Taliban takeover, AUAF opened a satellite campus in Doha, Qatar, and implemented an online education model.⁴⁷ USAID reported that SSSA aims to support 900 students, including 540 female students, in completing a higher education degree through virtual learning. This quarter, AUAF had 548 students in Afghanistan, 98 in Doha, and 216 in other countries. All 862 students use online learning. On May 26, 2023, 44 women and 96 men graduated from AUAF.⁴⁸

Keep Schools Open

UNICEF's Keep Schools Open project, supported by USAID, operates the "Education Cash Plus" program across several provinces. The Education Cash Plus program aims to keep girls in school, despite Taliban policy, 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 notes girls are still able to attend grades 1–6 in formal schools, madrasas, and

community-based schools under the Taliban regime. According to a May 2023 UNICEF report, within their targeted provinces an estimated 87,105 eligible households should receive \$40 a month as an unconditional cash transfer through the program.⁴⁹

In July 2022, USAID contributed \$40 million to the Keep Schools Open initiative. The contribution is focused on continuity of education in rural and urban areas, and increasing adolescent girls’ enrollment, attendance, and retention in public and community-based schools. In the first quarter of 2023, UNICEF identified benefits-eligible households, and in the second quarter it planned to begin cash disbursements. UNICEF and its partners continue to negotiate the inclusion of female workers with the Taliban ministry of education during the cash distribution and post-payment verification phases of the activity.⁵⁰

PUBLIC HEALTH PROGRAMS

USAID continues to implement public health initiatives in Afghanistan valued at over 295 million as shown in Table E.5.⁵¹ This quarter, the status of these programs’ services remained precarious, in part due to the Taliban ban on Afghan women working for the UN. USAID told SIGAR that while some reports indicate the ban does not extend to female health workers, the Taliban have not confirmed this in writing, underscoring the ongoing

TABLE E.5

USAID ACTIVE HEALTH PROGRAMS				
Project Title	Start Date	End Date	Total Estimated Cost	Cumulative Disbursements, as of 7/10/2023
Assistance for Families and Indigent Afghans to Thrive (AFIAT)	7/10/2020	7/9/2025	\$117,000,000	\$37,851,230
Urban Health Initiative (UHI) Program	10/14/2020	10/13/2025	104,000,000	36,965,092
New DEWS Plus	2/2/2022	9/30/2031	50,000,000	7,497,906
Afghanistan Demographic and Health Survey (ADHS) Follow-On	10/9/18	9/9/2023	10,500,000	2,225,690
Consolidated Grant - COVID-19 Response	9/30/2021	9/29/2026	6,000,000	5,234,324
Central Contraceptive Procurement (CCP)	4/20/2015	11/28/2023	3,599,998	3,642,694
Sustaining Technical and Analytic Resources (STAR)	5/01/2018	9/30/2023	2,186,357	1,274,222
Modeling American Healthcare, Standards & Values in Afghanistan	10/01/2020	9/30/2024	1,092,601	816,862
TB Data, Impact Assessment and Communications Hub (TB DIAH)	9/24/2018	9/24/2023	600,000	600,000
Meeting Targets and 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	4,200,167
Local Health Systems Sustainability (LHSS)	*	*	*	1,988,046
Total			\$295,425,524	\$103,451,237

Note: Numbers have been rounded. *Start and end dates, and total estimated costs were not provided for this program.
 Source: USAID, response to SIGAR data call, 7/18/2023.

instability of access to women’s health services. USAID’s Office of Social Services is monitoring the ban closely and working with the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF to understand and adapt to the impacts on project activities. The WHO reported to USAID that activities operated normally this quarter, and said that women are essential to all aspects of WHO’s work; if women are forced to leave their positions, the roles will not be backfilled by male employees. WHO said it provides a flexible work modality for female staff. Women who work from home are provided internet access and solar panels to generate electricity, and women who travel to work are provided additional security.⁵²

Assistance for Families and Indigent Afghans to Thrive

The Assistance for Families and Indigent Afghans to Thrive (AFIAT) program aims to improve the health outcomes of the Afghan people, particularly women of childbearing age and preschool children, in rural and peri-urban Afghanistan. AFIAT conducted work in 14 provinces this quarter, with the objectives of improving health and nutrition services and access to those services, increasing the adoption of ideal health and nutrition behaviors in communities, and working with partners to plan, finance, and manage the public health system.⁵³

AFIAT’s most recent report on the first quarter of 2023 noted that the activity conducted competency-based training sessions for targeted support teams to improve clinical skills and counseling. AFIAT also supported the national tuberculosis program to improve access to testing and TB case-finding and sample management. In coordination with the Urban Health Initiative, safe obstetric surgery practices were introduced into four provinces. Implementing partners continued limited engagement with the Taliban, primarily at the provincial level.⁵⁴

SIGAR Audit of Healthcare in Afghanistan

<p>In May 2023, SIGAR issued a performance audit of U.S. Agency for International Development’s (USAID) two largest public health activities, the Assistance for Families and Indigent Afghans to Thrive (AFIAT) and the Urban Health Initiative (UHI), totaling \$221 million. SIGAR found that the programs could not overcome several challenges, including</p>	<p>(1) inconsistent USAID oversight of healthcare programs and (2) incomplete, inconsistent, and poorly developed performance indicators. SIGAR also found that USAID did not perform required oversight of the AFIAT and UHI programs and that USAID made progress toward, but did not ultimately achieve either program’s goals. For more information, see p. 10.</p>
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Urban Health Initiative

The Urban Health Initiative (UHI) activity aims to improve health outcomes for Afghans in urban areas, with a focus on women, children, and other vulnerable populations. UHI conducted work in five cities this quarter: Mazar-e Sharif, Herat,

Kabul, Kandahar, and Nangarhar. Objectives included strengthening the health service delivery system, improving access to primary, secondary, and referral health care services, improving the quality of primary, secondary, and referral care services, and improving awareness, demand, and care-seeking for services.⁵⁵

UHI reported that following the Taliban ban on women working with international NGOs, the UHI offices in all five cities remained open and functional with male staff attending the office. UHI obtained letters of support from the five relevant public health provincial directorates to enable female clinical staff, midwifery and maternal care staff, and community support teams to restart activities and service provision. Female staff are provided separate transportation services and IT support.⁵⁶

UHI reported one instance of Taliban interference this quarter. In late April, the Taliban-appointed Kandahar provincial health directorate restricted women from participating in COVID mobile vaccination teams. As a result, UHI halted all Kandahar-based COVID vaccination activities. Following discussion with the directorate, UHI female vaccinators were authorized to resume work at the end of May.⁵⁷

Local Health Systems Sustainability

The five-year, \$8 million Local Health Systems Sustainability (LHSS) activity, supported by USAID, aims to increase the use of priority health services by expanding private sector approaches in the health care system. Through a partnership with the Afghanistan Social Marketing Organization, LHSS promotes affordable, socially marketed health products focused on women and children. This quarter, LHSS selected six additional grantees to help increase product coverage and improve service provision.⁵⁸

This quarter, LHSS helped their local partner distribute family planning and health commodities in markets across 21 districts. According to LHSS, this supported the private sales of family planning methods generating 19,756 years of couple protection, iron folate and other micronutrients generating 4,092 person years of protection, and 31,330,000 liters of disinfected water through the sale of chlorinated water treatment solution. LHSS reported facing challenges due to the long wait times to import medical products such as oral contraceptives, iron folate tablets, and micronutrient powder, but is working the Global Health Supply Chain Program to reduce adverse impact of delays.⁵⁹

World Health Organization Initiatives

USAID provides support to the World Health Organization for three initiatives—polio eradication, national disease surveillance reporting, and COVID-19 response.⁶⁰ WHO reported seven attacks on health care workers in six provinces between January and May 2023. Five of the attacks were violent with individual weapons, which killed three people. The other two attacks involved abduction, arrest, and detention. In its most recent health

cluster update, WHO reported that on May 15, 2023, a vaccinator living at a health facility in Paktika was reportedly killed inside the facility. On May 22, a surgeon in Badakhshan Province was physically assaulted and beaten.⁶¹

WHO completed one polio vaccine campaign in May 2023 and reported to USAID that the Taliban restrictions have not negatively affected polio campaign activities. According to WHO, this can be attributed to the general understanding that female health care workers are exempt from formal bans. Polio vaccinators are also not WHO frontline staff, but rather volunteers from targeted communities, who undergo a selection and approval process by WHO administration.⁶²

There are currently 613 functional surveillance sites operated by WHO, and 228 mobile health workers conducting disease surveillance work.⁶³

The second phase of a two-phase COVID vaccination campaign began on April 29, 2023. According to WHO, approximately 196,000 individuals were vaccinated in April. Both UHI and AFIAT support COVID vaccine administration through fixed and mobile health service delivery, technical assistance, and distribution of ancillary vaccination supplies.⁶⁴ As of June 3, 2023, WHO estimated that 13,990,264 people were fully inoculated against COVID-19, and 1,754,338 were partially inoculated.⁶⁵

DEMOCRACY, GENDER, AND RIGHTS PROGRAMS

As seen in Table E.6, USAID continues to manage several democracy, gender, and rights programs in Afghanistan focused on providing support to civil society organizations, the media sector, Afghan women and girls, and conflict-affected civilians; USAID is no longer providing support to Afghan governing institutions.⁶⁶

TABLE E.6

USAID ACTIVE DEMOCRACY, GENDER, AND RIGHTS PROGRAMS				
Project Title	Start Date	End Date	Total Estimated Cost	Cumulative Disbursements, as of 7/10/2023
Women’s Scholarship Endowment	9/27/2018	9/26/2028	\$60,000,000	\$50,000,000
Conflict Mitigation Assistance for Civilians (COMAC)	3/12/2018	6/30/2023	49,999,873	48,840,341
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	7/31/2023	19,997,965	14,211,699
Supporting Media Freedom and Access to Information for Afghan Citizens	*	*	6,100,000	*
Afghan Support Project	*	*	*	2,556,206
Total			\$159,997,838	\$136,899,494

Note: Numbers have been rounded. *Information on project start and end dates not available from USAID. Source: USAID, response to SIGAR data call, 7/18/2023.

Conflict Mitigation Assistance for Civilians (COMAC) Program Ends

COMAC was a five-year, \$49 million, nationwide program that began in 2018 and was closing operations as of June 2023. The program was established to aid Afghan civilians and their dependent family members who have experienced loss of life, injury, or lack of economic livelihood due to military operations, insurgent attacks, unexploded ordnance such as landmines, improvised explosive devices, or cross-border shelling. COMAC's support activities included tailored assistance (TA), such as physical rehabilitation, counseling, economic reintegration, medical referrals, and immediate assistance (IA) in the format of in-kind goods, including essential food and household sanitary items for up to 60 days.⁶⁷

According to USAID, COMAC completed successful program activities in 33 provinces this quarter despite the ongoing Taliban ban on women working for NGOs and the operating environment's volatility. Staff distributed 2,290 IA packages to 1,222 recipients and 950 TA packages, including 548 income generation kits. Staff also provided medical assistance to 64 individuals, psychosocial referrals to 255 people, and livelihood referrals to 83 people.⁶⁸

As of June 15, all regional offices were closed, equipment was disposed, and the main Kabul office was closing. A final report by the implementing partner is pending.⁶⁹

Supporting Transformation for Afghanistan's Recovery (STAR) to Close Out

USAID's STAR program aimed to build the resilience of Afghan communities in some of the poorest and most conflict-affected areas by strengthening food and livelihood security through a consortium of implementing partners. STAR began in 2021 and will initiate its close out at the end of July 2023. The activity provided cash assistance, agricultural and livestock support, and supported market skills and linkages across 26 districts in Ghazni, Ghor, Herat, Jowzjan, Khost, Kunar, Nangarhar, Paktika, and Sar-e Pul Provinces.⁷⁰

STAR reported that some activities were temporarily paused from one to three months in the most recent reporting period January–March 2023 due to the Taliban ban on female employment. However, during this period STAR implementing partners successfully served 883 new beneficiaries with food and livelihood assistance, employed 578 cash-for-work laborers, provided safe drinking water to 473 new beneficiaries, and completed six water systems in Ghor Province. As of March 2023, STAR partners completed 75% of the program's targeted projects, with additional projects to be completed this quarter.⁷¹



Afghan women hand-weaving carpets in Bamyan, 3/2023. (Twitter photo from @USAIDAfMD)

USAID and UN Women Continue the Enabling Essential Services for Afghan Women and Girls Program

On August 12, 2022, USAID announced \$30 million in development assistance to support gender equality and women’s empowerment in Afghanistan. These new funds, programmed through UN Women, support the Enabling Essential Services for Afghan Women and Girls activity, and aim to increase Afghan women and girls’ access to protection services; provide resources and support directly to women-led civil society organizations working to advance women’s rights in Afghanistan; and increase women’s economic empowerment through skills and business development training and entrepreneurship support.⁷²

In a report issued this quarter, UN Women commented, “[w]hile UN Women is committed and continues to work with partners to navigate on the implementation of the project amid the ban on women working in INGOs and NGOs... [the ban] will increasingly have a dramatic impact on UN operations and UN Women specifically as a mandated agency to promote gender equality and empowerment of women.”⁷³

UN Women is working with implementing partners to adapt programming around the Taliban’s December and April edicts banning women from NGO and UN work. In collaboration with USAID, a women’s protection center was funded in January 2023, and is still operational, providing safe accommodation to 56 women and 17 children escaping domestic violence. A separate family resource center has supported 271 women through alternate service delivery modalities in 2023.⁷⁴ These modalities include online

counseling and training, outreach, home-based services, and partnership with health centers and community development centers.

UN Women also gave a grant to Radio Begum, a Kabul-based broadcast program for women by women, to implement a project titled “Educational Radio and TV Programs for Afghan Women and Girls.” The grantee created a new website and produced 104 educational videos. Radio Begum also engaged a team of teachers to produce educational content for girls grades 7–12.⁷⁵

Women’s Scholarship Endowment Program Extended for Five More Years

The ban on women’s university education in December 2022 has affected all students in Afghanistan supported by the Women’s Scholarship Endowment (WSE), USAID’s five-year, \$50 million program to support Afghan women pursuing higher education in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM).⁷⁶ In July 2023, USAID extended WSE by five years, with an end date of September 26, 2028, and increased the award to \$60 million. WSE also incorporated fields of study beyond STEM, and is expanding career readiness and leadership training activities.⁷⁷

This quarter, studies for 221 female WSE scholarship recipients remained paused, while 12 WSE students continued their studies at the American University of Afghanistan’s satellite campus in Doha, Qatar. WSE developed an online training course in career readiness this quarter, which 14 scholars completed. USAID reported that WSE gave scholars the opportunity to transfer their scholarships and enroll in AUAF’s online degree programs; one enrolled this quarter. An additional scholar enrolled in a midwifery program. No students transferred to other regional universities.⁷⁸

Afghan Support Project

In late 2022, USAID launched the Afghan Support Project (ASP) with a total estimated cost of \$20 million 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.⁷⁹ ASP provides support through rapid response grants, professional development grants, window of opportunity grants, innovation grants, and its legal advisory defense fund.⁸⁰

USAID reported this quarter that ASP issued seven grants to civil society organizations and media outlets and provided technical support to a civil society organization network to reconstitute and resume operations. ASP has received over 100 grant applications, which are under review. ASP also provides technical assistance training, including sessions for journalists on digital media literacy, cybersecurity, and professional safety. There were 209 trainees (including 86 women) as of June 7, 2023.⁸¹

Information, Dialogue, and Rights in Afghanistan Extended Until 2026

In September 2022, USAID signed an agreement for the \$6.1 million Supporting Media Freedom and Access to Information in Afghanistan program.⁸² This quarter, USAID modified the award to include a second component called “Supporting National Dialogue and Rights Advocacy,” and changed the program name to Information, Dialogue, and Rights in Afghanistan. The award was increased to \$11,798,379 and the performance period was extended to June 30, 2026.⁸³

The program’s objective is to provide assistance in delivering news and educational content nationally that strengthens Afghanistan’s human capital and enables citizens to freely organize and communicate. The activity aims to accomplish this by supporting independent media and reporting on rights and governance issues; developing a strong cadre of female journalists and producers; helping journalists operate safely; and informing Afghan citizens about critical issues of public interest.⁸⁴

The scope of work and budget for the extension are under final review, and templates for activity monitoring have been developed. A local Afghan media partner began implementing the critical reporting component of the project, and produced 366 reports on key political and human rights issues.⁸⁵

STATE DEPARTMENT PROGRAMS IN AFGHANISTAN

DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

This quarter, the State Department continued to provide assistance to the Afghan people. State’s Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL) currently runs two programs supporting civil society organizations in Afghanistan. State does not provide support to the de facto government of Afghanistan.

Emergency Support for Afghan Civil Society

The Emergency Support for Afghan Civil Society Program provides short- to medium-term program provides short- to medium-term emergency financial support for up to 12 months to a broad range of Afghan civil society members (including journalists). This program does not coordinate logistics such as securing housing, booking transportation, initiating visas, but it does provide the financial means to do so; DRL has provided \$2,475,201 for this support, as of June 2023.⁸⁶ State did not provide any updates on its emergency support programs this quarter.⁸⁷

Reporting Safely in Afghanistan

DRL also supports Afghan journalists with its \$1.7 million, Reporting Safely in Afghanistan. This program has four main objectives (1) provide emergency support to journalists at-risk; (2) promote the safety of journalists; (3) support media outlets to safely produce and disseminate public interest content in Afghanistan through offshore entities; and (4) work to counter mis/disinformation and track censorship and shutdown. This program also helps secure platforms and communication channels to enable journalists to continue working in Afghanistan and communicate securely with diaspora journalists, as well as tracking and raising awareness of media violations with the international community.⁸⁸

COUNTERNARCOTIC PROGRAMS

From 2003 until the fall of the Afghan government in August 2021, the State Department'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.⁸⁹ Since the first quarter of FY 2022, following the Taliban takeover, INL has obligated \$11 million from the International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE) account for counternarcotics programs in Afghanistan.⁹⁰

As of June 2023, INL programming supports counternarcotic 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 \$24.2 million for the Afghanistan Opium Surveys from 2006 to June 2023, and \$10.3 million for AOTP between December 2011 and June 2023.⁹¹ The AOTP monitors and analyzes trends in the Afghan opiate industry to support the international response to the illicit drug economy.⁹² 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.⁹³ INL also funds an inter-agency agreement with the U.S. Agency for Global Media to implement public information and counternarcotics messaging programs, with a total disbursement of \$3.9 million from February 2017 to June 2023.⁹⁴

INL's treatment and prevention services and alternative livelihood programs continue to be active in Afghanistan. To date, INL has disbursed approximately \$86 million to implement these programs.⁹⁵ For more information on Afghanistan's narcotics production, see page 110.

REMOVING EXPLOSIVE REMNANTS OF WAR

Since 1989, more than 56,900 Afghan civilians have been killed or injured by landmines and explosive remnants of war (ERW). From May 2023 to June 2023, explosive remnants of war attributed to 45 civilian casualties, with

children being the majority of victims (16 killed and 23 wounded), according to UNAMA. UN humanitarian mine action partners have cleared over 19 million items of unexploded ordnance from Afghanistan, but the threat remains high, especially for children.⁹⁶ Due to the ongoing risk to civilians, the State Department continues to fund on-the-ground mine and ERW clearance activities through implementing partners. Direct assistance to the former Afghan Directorate for Mine Action Coordination, an Afghan government entity, was canceled on September 9, 2021, in compliance with international sanctions against Specially Designated Terrorist Groups.⁹⁷

State's Bureau of Political-Military Affairs' Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement (PM/WRA) manages the conventional-weapons destruction program in Afghanistan.⁹⁸ PM/WRA currently supports six Afghan NGOs, one public international organization (United Nations Mine Action Service), and four international NGOs to help clear areas in Afghanistan contaminated by ERW and conventional weapons (e.g., unexploded mortar rounds).⁹⁹ As of June 12, 2023, no U.S.-funded CWD projects were impeded, disrupted, or being interfered with by the Taliban.¹⁰⁰

From March 2023 to June 2023, PM/WRA implementing partners cleared 8,534,956 square meters of minefields, and destroyed 349 anti-tank mines and anti-personnel weapons, 130 items of unexploded ordnance, and 3,481 small arm ammunitions.¹⁰¹ PM/WRA expects to have obligated all \$15 million in FY 2022 allocated funds before they expire on September 30, 2023.¹⁰²

From 1997 through June 12, 2023, State allocated over \$473 million in weapons-destruction and mine-action assistance to Afghanistan. During this period, PM/WRA implementing partners have cleared a total of 362,184,966 square meters of land and destroyed 8,506,804 landmines and other ERW.¹⁰³ However, the exact amount of land mines and ERW yet to be destroyed is unknown. After the third quarter of FY 2023, PM/WRA estimated there are 1,080 square kilometers of contaminated minefields and battlefields remaining, but this estimate fluctuates with additional surveys and clearance activities' completion.¹⁰⁴

SUPPORT FOR REFUGEES AND INTERNALLY DISPLACED PEOPLE

This quarter, USAID and the State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) continued to implement assistance provided in FY 2022 and 2023 to support Afghan refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs).¹⁰⁵ This assistance included:¹⁰⁶

- More than \$80 million from State PRM to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Afghanistan under the 2022 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP), as well as over \$39 million to UNHCR under the 2023 HRP
- Roughly \$2.3 million from USAID and more than \$20.2 million from State PRM to the United Nations Population Fund to support health and protection programs in Afghanistan and Pakistan

- Roughly \$63 million from USAID and \$13.5 million from State PRM to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to support health, shelter and settlement, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) programs in Afghanistan and Pakistan

For more information on Afghan refugees and internally displaced people, see page 90.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE PROGRAMS

U.S. SECURITY CONTRACT CLOSE-OUTS

Following the Taliban takeover, the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) dissolved and U.S. funding obligations for them ceased, but disbursements to contractors continue, as necessary, until all Afghan Security Forces Fund (ASFF) obligations are liquidated, the Department of Defense (DOD) told SIGAR.

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). Whether the contracts were awarded using ASFF funds, for which the Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (CSTC-A) received obligation authority from the DOD Comptroller, or using ASFF funds for which the Defense Security Cooperation Agency received obligation authority and then passed it through to the military departments to implement using pseudo-**Foreign Military Sales** (FMS) cases, all contracts being closed out were awarded by a contracting entity within one of the military departments.¹⁰⁷

Contract vendors must submit claims to begin the close-out process. Vendors typically have a five-year window before expired funds are cancelled by DOD, and DOD cannot force vendors to submit invoices for payment. For these reasons, DOD cannot at this time provide complete information on contract closing dates, the amount of funds available to be recouped, or the approximate costs of terminating each contract.¹⁰⁸

As seen in Table E.7, ASFF funds that were obligated by CSTC-A, or its successor DSMO-A (which was disbanded on June 1, 2022), for new contracts awarded locally by Army Contract Command-Afghanistan or as military interdepartmental purchase requests to leverage already-awarded contracts, have total remaining unliquidated ASFF obligations of \$81.8 million. The Departments of the Army, Air Force, and Navy manage \$343 million in unliquidated ASFF obligations to support pseudo-FMS case contracts.¹⁰⁹

Foreign Military Sales: The portion of U.S. security assistance that require agreements or contracts between the United States and an authorized recipient government or international organization for defense articles and services for current stocks or new procurements under DOD-managed contracts, regardless of the source of financing.

While pseudo-FMS cases are administered through the FMS infrastructure, they diverge from regular FMS cases whereby a “pseudo-Letter of Offer and Acceptance” (LOA) is generated to document the transfer of defense articles or services, but the partner nation receiving the articles or services does not sign the pseudo-LOA and does not enter into an agreement or contract to receive the materials or services.

Source: DOD, “DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms,” 11/2021, p. 87; DSCA, “Security Assistance Management Manual, Chapter 15,” available at <https://sammm.dsca.mil/chapter/chapter-15>.

U.S. ASSISTANCE

Between FY 2002 and FY 2021, Congress appropriated \$88.9 billion to the Department of Defense to provide assistance to the ANDSF. This accounts for more than 60% of all U.S. reconstruction funding for Afghanistan since FY 2002.¹¹⁰ The U.S. government ceased providing funds for Afghan security forces following the Taliban takeover in August 2021.

TABLE E.7

SUMMARY STATUS OF ASFF OBLIGATED CONTRACTS				
	Cumulative Obligations	Cumulative Expenditures	Unliquidated Obligations (ULO)^a	ULO as of:
Defense Security Cooperation Management Office-Afghanistan Obligations				
Contracts	\$251,711,334	\$169,893,581	\$81,817,752	6/5/2023
Department of the Air Force Obligated Contracts				
A-29s	\$1,031,492,000	\$992,831,000	\$38,661,000	5/25/2023
C-130	153,090,000	110,930,000	42,160,000	5/31/2023
PC-12	40,671,848	19,387,272	21,284,573	1/30/2023*
C-208	120,903,024	115,620,239	5,273,857	3/1/2023*
Munitions	25,363,000	9,054,000	16,306,000	6/5/2023
Department of the Army Obligated Contracts				
ASFF	\$433,466,007	\$356,492,136	\$76,973,870	6/13/2023
UH-60	399,693,336	379,086,893	20,604,783	7/14/2023
ASFF Ammunition	61,180,123	39,829,682	21,351,863	6/8/2023
PEO STRI (simulation, training, and instrumentation)	500,591,346	434,040,650	66,552,697	6/13/2023
Department of the Navy Obligated Contracts				
Contracts	\$34,604,760	\$10,724,117	\$23,855,137	6/23/2023
Total	\$3,052,766,780	\$2,637,889,571	\$414,841,534	

^aUnliquidated Obligations (ULOs) are equal to undisbursed obligations minus open expenses.

*DOD did not report any updates this quarter.

Source: DOD, response to SIGAR data call, 6/23/2023, 7/14/2023; DOD, "DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms," 11/2021, p. 295.

DOD IG Audit of the DOD's Financial Management of the Afghanistan Security Forces Fund

On June 13, 2023, the Department of Defense Office of Inspector General (DOD IG) released its *Audit of the DoD's Financial Management of the Afghanistan Security Forces Fund*. The audit report found that the DOD did not manage appropriated Afghanistan Security Forces Fund (ASFF)

funds in accordance with applicable laws and regulations, resulting in violations of these and other laws and regulations; DOD inefficiencies in managing ASFF funds; and improper DOD accounting and reporting of ASFF obligations and disbursements.

U.S. ASSISTANCE ENDNOTES

- 1 State, SCA, response to SIGAR vetting, 7/14/2023.
- 2 Treasury, response to SIGAR vetting, 7/12/2023;
State, SCA, response to SIGAR data call, 3/16/2022; State, SCA, response to SIGAR vetting, 4/13/2022; State, SCA, response to SIGAR data call, 12/14/2022.
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