



2020-21 AFGHANISTAN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM PROGRESS REPORT

The *2020-21 Afghanistan Development Program Progress Report* summarises progress for the reporting period 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021 of implementation of the Australia – Afghanistan COVID-19 Response Plan and program highlights.

Program Budget	2020-21 Budget Estimate \$m*
Bilateral	52.5
Regional	0.1
Global	1.0
Other Government Departments	0.0
Total ODA	53.6

*Actual expenditure is expected to be available in December 2021/ January 2022.

Our development program to Afghanistan contributes towards achieving the following Sustainable Development Goals.



CONTEXT

This report looks back on the reporting period 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021 but does not cover the period following the collapse of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (15 August 2021). The coming to power of the Taliban has radically changed the circumstances within which Australia delivers its Afghanistan program. The Australian Government will now pivot the development program to provide mainly humanitarian assistance. This assistance will be delivered in a way that meets needs and accords with the application of Australian sanctions laws. The Taliban takeover has exacerbated challenges already faced by the people of Afghanistan and jeopardised regional stability. In response, Australia announced a \$100 million humanitarian assistance commitment on 13 September 2021.

But this report looks back on the reporting period to 30 June 2021. Conflict, recurrent drought, poverty, and fragile governance, and since 2020 the COVID-19 pandemic, had already generated a protracted humanitarian crisis for the people of Afghanistan. Displacement was already extremely high as many Afghans move to survive, including to neighbouring countries. There are currently more than 5.5 million internally displaced persons, an estimated 80 per cent of whom are women and children. People with disabilities are overrepresented, and face additional barriers accessing assistance.

Afghanistan's capacity to manage COVID-19 was severely impacted by sustained conflict. An overwhelmed health system alongside low testing rates and cultural stigmatisation led to underreporting of infections. Official reporting reflected around 155,000 COVID-19 cases to early October 2021. Just over one per cent of Afghans had been fully vaccinated by early August 2021. The COVID-19-induced regional economic downturn triggered record numbers of returned persons—involuntary and voluntary—to Afghanistan. Lockdowns and border closures reduced incomes, impeded access to markets and contributed to food shortages and high food prices.

Women, children and people with disability were already disproportionately affected by Afghanistan's humanitarian and development challenges. They are particularly impacted by displacement; food and economic insecurity; gender-based violence; restrictions to their access to education, employment and basic services; neonatal and maternal health risks due to disruptions to healthcare programs; early and forced marriage; and targeted killings for participating in the public sphere. During the reporting period, non-state armed groups attacked schools, hospitals, and mosques—disrupting health services and education for an estimated 9.3 million children.

AUSTRALIA'S RESPONSE AND PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

In 2020-21, **Australia's standing as a valued partner enabled us to effectively contribute to Afghanistan's humanitarian and development priorities.** In a challenging operating environment, most delivery partners were able to prioritise the safety of their staff, adapt their activities to the context, and still make progress towards expected outcomes; although progress within some investments was uneven. Remote monitoring and evaluation arrangements were implemented that enabled Australia to safely track the impact of the program despite the pandemic and security concerns. **The program supported Australia's national interests, by addressing inequality and reducing the threat from terrorism, irregular migration and illicit resource flows.**

Reflecting the changed circumstances, for 2021-22 and beyond **Australia will pivot the development program to provide mainly humanitarian assistance which will be delivered in accordance with Australian sanctions laws.** We will adjust the objectives of the program, accounting for the unfolding humanitarian context, and will focus on (a) life-saving humanitarian support to those most in need; (b) supporting neighbouring countries hosting Afghan refugees to improve regional stability; (c) strengthening basic service delivery to Afghan people and monitoring anti-money laundering and terrorism financing provisions; and (d) empowering women and girls. We will have a continued focus on working with trusted partners with strong safeguarding and risk management systems.

Australia will continue to stand with the Afghan people and respond to those most in need. Australia is coordinating with the international community on engagement with the Taliban, including our expectations of safe passage, cessation of violence and upholding human rights – especially for women and girls. Pivoting the development program to provide mainly humanitarian assistance means we are still well-placed to deliver on the November 2020 Australian Government decision to contribute \$200 million towards Afghanistan's development (2021-2024); and the September 2021 commitment to provide \$100 million in humanitarian assistance (2021-2024).

Health Security

Australia responded to the humanitarian and pandemic crises by funding critical life-saving humanitarian assistance to more than 667,000 people through the Regional Humanitarian Strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan. More than 296,000 people, including over 10,800 gender-based violence survivors, received sexual and reproductive health assistance. About 189,000 people received food and nutritional support, along with almost two metric tonnes of food. The August 2020 Mid-term Review of the Regional Humanitarian Strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan 2018-20 found that Australia's provision of humanitarian assistance was appropriate, relevant, effective and efficient and that Australia's multi-year flexible funding and collaborative cross-border approach is highly valued by partners. The second phase of this Strategy (2021-2024) builds on this strong foundation, allowing Australia to respond quickly to the changed circumstances.

Australian support contributed to improved coordination among health agencies through the development of a national plan for COVID-19 vaccine procurement and deployment, which ensured 72 per cent of doctors and nurses in provincial hospitals were trained on World Health Organisation standards of clinical treatment for COVID-19. **Australia also helped to strengthen public health preparedness and response** efforts through improvements in the utilisation and quality of health, nutrition and family planning services; and in the availability of essential drugs and vaccines (as verified by third parties) at 87 per cent of basic health service facilities. Australia supported the **delivery of personal protective equipment and strategic communications for frontline security personnel** with a view to reducing COVID-19 transmission. Australia contributed \$130 million to the COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX) Advance Market Commitment that enables 92 low- and middle-income economies access to safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines. Afghanistan received 3.3 million doses through the COVAX to 30 June 2021.

Stability

Stability is an enormous challenge in Afghanistan, and a vital precursor to achieving health security and economic recovery. Over the last year, Australia worked constructively with Afghan stakeholders and implementation partners to help the most vulnerable weather the combined shocks of instability, COVID-19 and widespread drought. Notably, **Australia advocated for the rights of women and girls, promoting women as key agents of change, through our political**

advocacy and support in multilateral fora, including as a member and co-chair of the Friends of Afghan Women Ambassadors' Group. This advocacy complemented our investments in ending violence against women, which provided life-saving support services for over 3,240 women and children. A further 27,281 community members received gender violence prevention and response training. Training was also provided to almost 1,600 law enforcement personnel, judges, prosecutors and governmental organisations on case management, coordination, standard operating procedures and monitoring case resolution, to improve the experience of survivors seeking justice. These efforts sought to counteract the increased prevalence of gender-based violence during the pandemic.

In 2020-21, **Australia supported a pilot program testing social behaviour change through a targeted communication campaign to better engage with Afghans to recognise, respond to and prevent gender-based violence.** The project produced important research and the campaigns reached a wide audience (estimated in the millions) with messages that sought to undermine the notion of acceptance of **gender-based violence**. The campaign was supported by a dedicated hotline, which provided psychosocial counselling services to 2,145 women following the outreach activities.

An Australian-funded education program was successfully adapted to reduce the negative impacts of sustained conflict and COVID-19 on girls' safety and education. One-third of girls participating in the targeted program received support from community leaders to prevent early or forced marriage during COVID-19 lockdowns. Partners provided training on child protection, school management, peace education and conflict resolution, to over 1,000 education sector and community members (51 per cent women). In response to COVID-19 restrictions, Australia provided access to radio-based remote learning for female students and helped almost 7,000 students (85 per cent girls) access community-based education.

Australia supported the **Afghanistan peace process** by providing evidence-based advice and convening and connecting bilateral and multilateral donors to inform planning for a peaceful post-conflict transition. Through the Australian-funded Lessons for Peace project, research into Taliban revenue sources has provided critical insights for the international community to understand the Taliban's capacity to govern as well as influence sanctions policy-making.

Economic recovery

In 2020-21, most of Australia's financial support for Afghanistan's economic priorities was directed through the multi-donor, World Bank-managed Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF). This reduced the reporting burden on the Afghan Government, leveraged World Bank coordination and fiduciary oversight; and provided avenues for Australia to join our voice with the international community to **advocate for greater fiscal transparency, anti-corruption measures and gender and disability-inclusive practices.**

The inclusion of women and girls in Afghanistan's economic and social life is a priority for Australia. Through the ARTF, around USD17.5 million was leveraged through community groups and World Bank grants and distributed to Afghans (80 per cent women) in the form of catalytic entrepreneurial loans. ARTF also supported **critical governance and state effectiveness reforms** in 2020, including the implementation of taxation e-filing and e-payments which reduced compliance and transaction costs and opportunities for corruption. The Ministry of Finance implemented fortnightly financial reporting processes, providing an **unprecedented level of fiscal transparency**. ARTF's outcomes-level reporting progressed in 2021 with the World Bank producing an indicative program logic and results framework as part of the draft Partnership Framework and Financing Plan. Complementing the ARTF activities, the Institute for State Effectiveness provided expert advice to then Government of Afghanistan on economic responses to COVID-19; and the National Accountability Diagnostic supported the Ministry of Finance in driving public financial management and anti-corruption reforms.

Australia helped build resilient communities through sustainable farming practices. The Australia-Afghanistan Community Resilience Scheme assisted over 30,000 farmers with improved water management with more than 5,660 hectares being newly irrigated or protected from flood. This resulted in a significant increase in the average irrigated area available per households (60 per cent to 108 per cent) and increasing use of irrigated areas for double cropping. These farms have the potential to significantly improve food and nutrition security for their communities during dry years, as well as deliver important surpluses for sale.

ANNEX 1: PROGRESS AGAINST COVID-19 RESPONSE PLAN RESULTS INDICATORS

Health Security

Key Results Indicators	Progress/Result
Strengthened health systems including preparedness for health emergencies	<p>Trained 187 doctors (165 men and 22 women), 418 nurses (297 men and 121 women) in COVID-19 emergency response and health systems preparedness.</p> <p>The World Bank-managed Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF) supported the Afghanistan COVID-19 Emergency Response and Health Systems Preparedness project to strengthen essential health care service delivery. This included supporting the national plan for COVID-19 vaccine procurement and deployment.</p>
Number of women accessing sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) services through Australian support	<p>Supported health service delivery, including sexual and reproductive health services, to 214,170 women, girls, boys and men.</p> <p>10,538 survivors were provided with gender-based violence services with Family Protection Centres and Women Friendly Health Spaces in Nangarhar, Kunar, Laghman and Kabul provinces. 191,807 young people were provided with 'youth friendly' services.</p>
Number of vulnerable women, men, girls and boys provided with life-saving assistance in conflict and crisis situations	<p>Supported 2,659 violence against women survivors, including 583 accompanying children, with life-saving services across 11 Women Protection Centres and five Family Guidance Centres located in 12 provinces.</p> <p>Provided 667,701 people (186,318 women, 154,438 men, 127,387 girls and 128,549 boys) with life-saving humanitarian assistance, including 39,179 people with a disability (19,198 women).</p>

Stability

Key Results Indicators	Progress/Result
Strengthen governance systems and significant policy change achieved	Supported the Afghanistan Fiscal Performance Improvement Plan and improved domestic revenue and public expenditure management. Rules introduced to ensure 100 percent of large public investment projects properly appraised.
Numbers reached with new or improved social protection programs, including remote communities (M/F)	Provided emergency support including food staples and hygiene products to 9,469 people (disaggregated data unavailable) to targeted households with incomes under US 2 dollars per day under the ARTF COVID-19 Relief Effort for Afghan Communities and Households project.
Number of women and girls survivors of violence receiving services such as counselling	Supported 15,731 women survivors of violence with services such as counselling.
Support for policy and technical advice on building capacity for food security (including examples of assistance provided and results achieved)	Supplied about 210,000 farmers with emergency packages of certified seeds and assisted with the production of breeder seed, with an expected yield of 90 mega tonnes during the upcoming harvest season. Strengthened value chains for nutritional products through technical support and agricultural inputs to 38 flour mills in six provinces. This produced 150,000 mega tonnes of wheat flour fortified with micronutrients (a 20 per cent increase from 2019).

Economic Recovery

Key Results Indicators	Progress/Result
Support for policy and technical advice on gender-responsive stimulus measures and longer-term economic recovery (including examples of assistance provided and results achieved)	Supported expansion of bank credit to small to medium enterprises, simplification of procedures for mobile money and a reduction in public sector arrears to the state-owned energy utility. Incentivised economic reforms to reduce the cost of doing business with government.
Number of women entrepreneurs provided with financial and/or business development services	Supported 152 women entrepreneurs with financial and business development services
Number of additional girls and boys enrolled in school	Supported 7,752 children (3,150 girls and 4,602 boys) to enrol in school.
Percentage of total Australian development assistance provided 'on budget'	Thirty-three per cent.

ANNEX 2: INVESTMENT PERFORMANCE RATINGS

Investment Details	Year	Effectiveness	Efficiency	Gender
Afghan National Security Forces Sustainment Investment duration: 2015-24; Budget: \$106.1m	2021	4	4	4
	2020	4	4	4
Ending Violence Against Women Phase 2 Investment duration: 2017-22; Budget: \$22.5m	2021	4	4	4
	2020	4	4	4
CARE – Empowerment Through Education Investment duration: 2011-21; Budget: \$21.26m	2021	5	5	5
	2020	5	5	5
Institute for State Effectiveness Investment duration: 2017-23; Budget: \$22.16m	2021	5	4	4
	2020	5	4	4
Afghanistan Australia Community Resilience Scheme Investment duration: 2011-21; Budget: \$37.7m	2021	4	4	4
	2020	4	4	4

HUMANITARIAN INVESTMENT PERFORMANCE RATINGS

Investment Details	Year	Effectiveness	Efficiency	Gender
Humanitarian Action in Afghanistan Investment duration: 2014-21; Budget: \$114.39m	2021	5	5	4
	2020	4	5	5

FINAL INVESTMENT PERFORMANCE RATINGS

Investment Details	Year	Effectiveness	Efficiency	Gender
Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund Investment duration: 2009-21; Budget: \$454.2m	2021	4	4	4
	2020 IMR	4	4	4
Afghanistan Elections Assistance Investment duration: 2017-20; Budget: \$7.16m	2021	3	4	4
	2020 IMR	4	4	5

Definitions of rating scale:

Satisfactory (4, 5 and 6)

6 = Very good; satisfies criteria in all areas.

5 = Good; satisfies criteria in almost all areas.

4 = Adequate; on balance, satisfies criteria; does not fail in any major area.

Less than satisfactory (1, 2 and 3)

3 = Less than adequate; on balance does not satisfy criteria and/or fails in at least one major area.

2 = Poor; does not satisfy criteria in major areas.

1 = Very poor; does not satisfy criteria in many major area.