



Australian Government
AusAID

Afghanistan

APPROACH TO HUMANITARIAN AND DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

2007–2010



AUSTRALIA'S OVERSEAS AID PROGRAM SUPPORTS DEVELOPING COUNTRIES TO REDUCE POVERTY AND ACHIEVE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, IN LINE WITH AUSTRALIA'S NATIONAL INTEREST, INCLUDING FOREIGN POLICY AND SECURITY IMPERATIVES.

TOWARDS A SECURE, STABLE DEMOCRATIC STATE

The goal of Australia's reconstruction and development support to Afghanistan from 2007–2010 is to assist the Afghan Government and people to achieve a stable, self-sustaining democratic Afghan state.

This will enhance stability and security in the region and create an environment for positive political, economic and social development.

Australia has an important strategic interest in Afghanistan as a front-line state in the international efforts against terrorism. We are working with the international community and Afghan Government to prevent Afghanistan from becoming a haven for terrorists.

Under the Taliban regime (1996–2001), Afghanistan's already poor development status regressed even further. The world's fifth poorest country, Afghanistan has one of the lowest life expectancy rates, one of the highest maternal mortality rates, as well as one of the highest under-five death rates in the world. Fewer than 30 per cent of Afghans over the age of 15 are literate and two million children, mostly girls, are not in school.

Important political progress has been made since the signing of the Bonn Agreement in 2001 to recreate the state of Afghanistan, with a new constitution, successful elections and the inauguration of the new parliament.



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Despite substantial achievements, many humanitarian and development challenges remain. Many people remain in poverty, particularly in rural areas where instability, crime and conflict affect basic services. Security is undermined by the endemic drug trade as well as by anti-government elements including the Taliban. Opium cultivation in Afghanistan is still more profitable than legitimate crops and profits from the illicit drug trade help fund insurgent activity and fuel widespread corruption.

AFGHANISTAN'S DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

The Afghanistan Government is working with the international community to address the many challenges facing the country. The Afghanistan Compact (2006–2010) was agreed and signed with over 50 participating countries and organisations, including Australia, in January 2006. The Compact articulates the country’s most immediate needs and outlines benchmarks and timelines for the achievement of Afghanistan’s development goals.

HELPING TO REBUILD GOVERNANCE, SECURITY AND SERVICES

In addition to the \$110 million that Australia has distributed in development assistance since 2001, Australia has pledged a further \$150 million of support up to 2010.

Australia’s assistance is aligned with the Compact’s priorities. Our programming targets are: strengthening state institutions and civil society; removing remaining terrorist threats; meeting the challenge of counter-narcotics; and supporting the better delivery of basic services with a particular emphasis on women’s and children’s health and education. Australia

will continue responding to Afghanistan’s humanitarian needs.

From a development assistance and humanitarian perspective, Afghanistan remains a complex and difficult environment in which to work to reduce poverty. Current insecurity erodes development gains and increases the cost of aid interventions. With this in mind Australia is maximizing the impact of our aid by channelling development and humanitarian funds through multilateral organizations, international NGOs and larger donor agencies with a proven record of accomplishment to operate and deliver on objectives in Afghanistan’s challenging environment.

AusAID programs are part of a whole-of-government commitment to Afghanistan involving departments including the Australian Defence Force, the Australian Federal Police, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Department of Immigration and Citizenship.

Australia, through the Australian Defence Force, is contributing a Reconstruction Task Force to the Netherlands-led Provincial Reconstruction Team in southern Afghanistan’s Oruzgan province for two years from late-2006. The initial focus will be to establish a secure environment that will enable reconstruction and development activities.

PHOTOS

TOP LEFT: *Afghan girl weaving carpet.*

PHOTO: AusAID

MIDDLE LEFT: *Girls in school. Since the end of the Taliban regime, girls have been given the right to education.* PHOTO: Fredrik Naumann

BOTTOM LEFT: *Grain for sale at the market in the city.* PHOTO: Martin Roemers

This paper has been produced following consultation with all relevant Australian Government departments and agencies. It guides the delivery of aid to Afghanistan for 2007–10. It is aligned with the key themes of the 2006 White Paper on Australia’s overseas aid program, namely accelerating growth, fostering effective functioning states, investing in people and promoting stability and cooperation.