



Rebuilding Afghanistan

Weekly Activity Update for February 11 – February 16 2004

Issue 46

United States Agency for International Development

STRENGTHENING THE GOVERNMENT

Program Goals

- Support the Bonn process: the Constitutional, Human Rights, and Judicial Commissions; the elections scheduled for June 2004; and a free and independent media.
- Strengthen government budgeting, revenue generation (e.g., customs), monetary management, private-sector related legal and regulatory frameworks, and promote private enterprises.
- Build capacity to carry out other legitimate government functions and support reconstruction of health, judicial, education, economic, agricultural and transportation infrastructure.

Recent Progress:

- **Radio Arman Increases News Output:** Afghanistan's first commercial music radio station, Radio Arman (98.1 FM), has increased its number of news bulletins. As of February 7, the station delivers 15 news bulletins per day, on the hour. The bulletins are read in both Dari and Pashto and are 3 to 5 minutes long. Radio Arman reaches approximately 4 million people and broadcasts in Kabul, Logar, Paktia and Parwan provinces.
- **Other Radio Stations:** USAID grants and programs have helped establish 11 other radio stations in Afghanistan. In February, three new stations are scheduled to be launched in Logar, Kunduz and Ghor provinces.
- **Provincial Reconstruction Teams:** In order to help establish a more secure Afghanistan and to expand reconstruction programs beyond large cities, Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) have been established in various provinces throughout Afghanistan. PRTs are joint civil military units which include US Army Civil Affairs personnel, USAID, State, USDA and other agencies.
- **Bamyan Provincial Reconstruction Team:** In Bamyan province, USAID is working with the U.S. military, the Department of State, other U.S. agencies, the United Nations and the appropriate Afghan Ministries to construct local municipal buildings in four districts. In the spring, plans are being developed to build 14 Bailey bridges throughout Bamyan, which are needed during the flood season.
- **Mazar Provincial Reconstruction Team:** USAID is working with PRT staff to develop microfinancing programs that would help promote small industries such as poultry production. The PRT is also working to rehabilitate an existing water well that is currently broken, and construct a pipeline from a water reservoir to neighborhood street outlets.



Newly constructed culvert extension running underneath the newly paved Kabul to Kandahar highway.



Radio Arman Insignia.



Stone masons work on a perimeter wall for a school in Kabul.

REVITALIZING AGRICULTURE/CREATING JOBS

Program Goals

- 100% increase in average productivity for 500,000 farm families through improved technologies, better infrastructure, and access to markets.
- 615 irrigation projects repaired/constructed to increase water use efficiency by 50% and agricultural productivity by 20%.
- 1000 km of improved village feeder roads rehabilitated.
- 1000 village agricultural market centers built.

Recent Progress

USAID's Rebuilding Agricultural Markets Program (RAMP) is a three-year program aimed at enhancing the food security and incomes of Afghanistan's rural population. It has two principal objectives: increase agricultural productivity and output, and facilitate effective linkages between producers, processors and markets. The program's budget is \$150 million.

- **Introducing New Technologies to Afghan Farmers:** Crop yields in Afghanistan are low due to a reliance on traditional farming practices. In order to achieve high adoption rates of new technologies and best practices by Afghan farming families, a USAID contractor will hold on-farm demonstrations in 5 provinces this coming spring. Each demonstration will target 500 farmers with new information. To prepare for these on-farm demonstrations, a total of 216 demonstration plots have been planted, including 172 winter wheat plots, 29 potato plots, 10 onion plots and 5 tomato plots. Each demonstration plot features improved varieties of seeds tested in various provinces in Afghanistan.
- **De-silting Irrigation Canals:** USAID contractors are currently de-silting three major irrigation canal systems in Kunduz and Baghlan provinces. These labor-intensive projects employ a combined labor force in excess of 5,000 Afghan farmers, resulting in a secondary impact of providing much needed cash for local farmers to purchase essential agriculture commodities in preparation for the spring planting.
- **Rural Financing:** Through USAID's microfinance program, small Afghan businesses can take out average loans of U.S. \$200. The credit is used by Afghan entrepreneurs to develop and grow their businesses, whether to purchase raw materials and new equipment, or renovate workspace. As a result of the loans, Afghan businesses now have the resources to create much needed employment opportunities. The program builds on the entrepreneurial spirit of the Afghan people and supports them to rebuild their livelihoods and make the transition from dependence on humanitarian assistance to economic independence. Between 2003 and 2004, over U.S. \$4 million will be disbursed to Afghan businesses.
- **Expansion of Rural Financing:** By June, USAID's microfinance program will extend to 30 districts, and by December 2004, 100 districts—reaching approximately 20,000 Afghan agricultural entrepreneurs. It is expected that 50% of all loans will go to women. The World Bank, the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund, and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency are also major contributors to the program.



An Afghan dam showing an extreme amount of silt overgrown with grass.

CANAL	Percent De-silted	Work Days Created
Chara Dara	84%	200,000
Bala Doori	100%	100,000
Darqad	95%	150,000
Marja	60%	N/A

Graph showing de-silting progress for four irrigation canals, the process resulted in job creation for Afghan workers.



Afghan women waiting to receive their loans.