



Provincial Reconstruction Teams

Summer 2007



PHOTO: USAID/AFGHANISTAN

PRT staff visit a local school.

SNAPSHOT OF PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAMS

- The first PRT was created in Gardez in December 2002.
- As of January 2007 there are 25 PRTs in Afghanistan.
- A PRT typically consists of 60-250 military personnel, a USAID field officer, and a State Department political officer.
- PRTs do not engage in combat operations, however they retain robust force-protection capabilities that are used to facilitate the work of civilian representatives

BACKGROUND

There is broad-based support for the national government in many parts of the country. Elections for the National Assembly and Provincial Councils gave Afghans, for the first time, elected representatives from a sub-national level. Economic growth is accelerating, agricultural output has doubled since 2002, and food security is improving. Enrollment in primary school has increased dramatically, particularly for girls, and access to quality basic health care is improving.

Despite these and many other successes, severe under-development in the 34 provinces, exacerbated by continuing violence, undermines citizen confidence in the legitimacy of the central government and threatens to reverse hard won gains made to date. The U.S. Government is therefore shifting attention to Afghanistan's provinces. While national programs are beginning to adjust to this shift, their geographic reach is still limited in many areas.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) have been an important vehicle for the delivery of U.S. and international assistance outside of Kabul, particularly in unstable provinces. PRTs are small, joint civilian-military organizations that were established at the end of 2002. They are designed to improve security, extend the reach of the Afghan government, and facilitate reconstruction in priority provinces. Their core objective is to implement projects that will improve stability so that more traditional forms of development assistance can resume.

ACTIVITIES

From 2003 to 2006, USAID implemented the Quick Impact Project (QIP), managed through the PRTs. This program provided USAID representatives located at the PRTs with the ability to implement small projects that furthered the core objectives of stability, reconstruction, and building support for the central government of Afghanistan.

During this period, 469 projects were completed. Many of these were small infrastructure projects, such as community irrigation systems, clean water supply, road improvements, small power systems, and the construction or rehabilitation of government buildings, schools, and clinics. The QIP program will end in September 2007.

In October of 2006 a new PRT-managed Local Governance and Community Development (LGCD) project was inaugurated and shifted PRT program activities towards those offering to improve provincial population access to – and partnerships with – district, provincial and national governance entities. Replacing QIP, this new program includes: 1) Building the capacity of provincial and local government officials to deliver services and address citizen needs, particularly in at-risk areas; 2) Encouraging local communities to take an active role in their own development and, by linking



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Provincial Reconstruction Teams (continued)



PHOTO: USAID/AFGHANISTAN

Chaghcharan is a village at the foot of the mountains and the capital of Ghor Province. This remote area receives the support of the central government and international donors largely through the PRT.



PHOTO: USAID/MONICA MCQUEARY

The Hungarian PRT distributes much-needed supplies to residents of Baghlan province during the winter months.

LGCD, USAID and other resources to local development needs; and 3) Promoting stability by addressing the underlying causes of local conflict and support for insurgency. LGCD is implemented in both coalition- and ISAF-commanded PRTs.

FIELD OFFICERS

USAID posts field officers in 20 of the 25 Coalition and International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF) PRTs around the country and Development Advisors to 6 of the 9 ISAF Military Regional Commands and Task Forces. As USAID's primary representative in the provinces, field officers help assess, plan, implement, and monitor all U.S. reconstruction and development efforts in remote locations. They work to build relationships with local leaders, identify local needs, report on significant developments, and work with the USAID mission in Kabul to design, facilitate and monitor all USAID activities in the area. The field officer is also responsible for identifying and managing LGCD-funded activities in a province, as well as facilitating other USAID national development projects in the PRT area of responsibility.

Another key component of the field officer mandate is to help our military colleagues understand the range of civilian reconstruction and development projects in a province, so that military-funded projects and activities can complement and strengthen civilian efforts. In addition, USAID field officers are frequently involved in security, political and other matters, working in concert with military, U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of State officials co-located in the PRT. This interagency approach has been one of the most successful aspects of the PRT program.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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On behalf of the American people, the U.S. government has provided humanitarian assistance and economic development to those in need around the world since the Marshall Plan.