

# Accountability and Transparency Project (ACT)

2007 – 2012



The ACT project is a multi-donor programme that supports the government of Afghanistan in developing the necessary capacities to fight corruption at the national and sub-national levels.

## ANDS Pillar 2 and Kabul Communiqué Focus Area Governance, Rule of Law, and Human Rights

Proposed Budget

**\$13.7 mil USD**

Resources\*

**\$8.2 mil USD**

### Implementing Partners

High Office of Oversight (HOO)  
Ministry of Education (MOE)  
Ministry of Finance (MOF)  
Ministry of Interior (MOI)  
Control and Audit Office (CAO)  
Civil Society

### Donors

Canada, Denmark, Italy, Norway, UK



\* As of 1 May 2011

## Context

Corruption, both petty and grand, constitutes a serious problem in Afghanistan. According to a survey conducted in 2009,\* corruption has become a more significant problem in recent years relative to any other problem. Among others, the Afghan population as a whole paid twice as much in bribes in 2009 than in 2007. Only 23% of the respondents believed that the government has done enough to address the problem of corruption over the last five years.

In an environment where access to justice and law enforcement is limited, where the government still lacks the processes and procedures to provide service delivery, corruption has become a means for survival. As a result corruption has become a high-reward, low-risk activity.

There is no doubt that corruption poses a considerable threat to sustainable peace and development in Afghanistan, and fighting corruption is increasingly seen as one of the key priorities of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) and the international community. Fifty percent of respondent to a recent survey agreed that corruption within the state was facilitating the expansion of the Taliban. Ultimately, minimizing corruption is a prerequisite for rebuilding the country and the creation of a legitimate, peaceful and pluralistic state.

## Project Overview

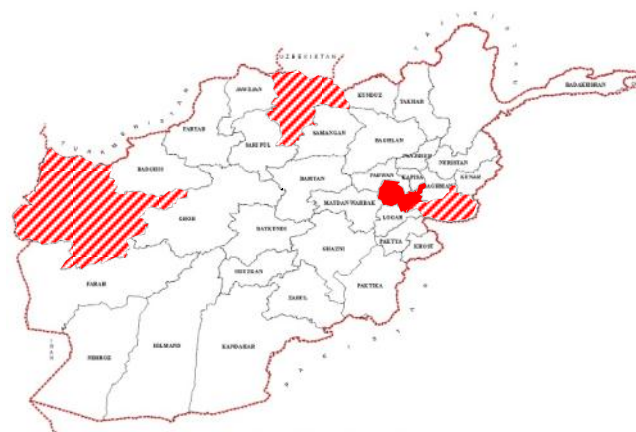
The Accountability and Transparency project (ACT) supports the state, government institutions and Afghan civil society to take the lead in the fight against corruption through capacity development, policy advice and advocacy in the area of prevention, awareness-raising and capacity development. The project engages with the government counterparts and civil society at the central and sub-national level.

Activities center around four main components:

- 1) Improved institutional and policy environment created to support the implementation of the national anti-corruption strategy.
- 2) Enhanced accountability, transparency and integrity in key government institutions.
- 3) Increased awareness and understanding amongst the public and enhance capacity of civil society and media to effectively contribute to the fight against corruption.
- 4) Enhanced independent monitoring of anti-corruption efforts undertaken by government and civil society.

The High Office of Oversight (HOO) is a key partner for the project given the central role that it has to play in overseeing the implementation of the National Anti-corruption Strategy (NACS), the prevention of corruption, training and advocacy and awareness raising. The project also engages with key ministries that have taken a lead in and showed a commitment to the fight against corruption.

To ensure that the population, civil society and the media become involved, the project seeks to engage with and strengthen civil society as a whole to play a technically and operationally active role in the fight against corruption.



### Coverage of ACT:

Kabul, with the Complaints office in the Ministry of Education (MOE) expanding to 3 provinces

\* Integrity Watch Afghanistan, 2010. "Afghan Perceptions and Experiences of Corruption."



## Ministry of Finance Complaints Office is making progress with UNDP support

*“There has been sixty seven percent (67%) increase in the revenue of the government, especially due to the Anti Corruption efforts in the Ministry of Finance”*

- H.E. Omar Zakhilwal, Minister of Finance addressing the Cabinet

In 2009, the Accountability and Transparency (ACT) project began working with the Ministry of Finance to develop a complaints handling system, including establishing procedures for receiving, recording and following up of complaints.

The Ministry of Finance has continued to collect data on complaints received from the public. Assisted by the UNDP ACT project, the Ministry collected and processed a total of 163 complaints in 2010. Over half of these, or 84 complaints, were related to complaints in Kabul, with Jalalabad receiving 13% of the complaints and nearly all provinces have had complaints.

The Ministry of Finance, with support from the ACT project, is looking to expand the complaints mechanism to the sub national level in 2011. The complaints mechanism has allowed the MoF to track distribution of complaints, and, importantly, identify the departments with the most complaints: in 2010, 67% of the complaints concerned the Customs department and 26% concerned the revenue department. As a result, the MoF is better informed to respond to issues.

## Key Results

- **High Office of Oversight enabled to fulfil its mandate:** Institutional capacity of HOO has been strengthened through provision of technical capacity and procurement of goods for various departments of HOO. The HOO law was revised vis-à-vis the UN Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC), which has provided the basis for HOO to coordinate its efforts more effectively with other government institutions.
- **Complaints, and Investigation Capacity Developed in 3 Ministries:** ACT assisted the Ministry of Finance to establish a new complaints office, which is directly involved in handling serious corruption cases through establishment of hotline, billboard and poster campaign. The project has also helped to establish the Office for Anti-corruption Implementation Plan in the Ministry of Education, and working closely with the Ministry of Interior on a similar mechanism.
- **Capacity of CAO Strengthened to Enhance Financial Accountability in Government Institutions:** Institutional capacity of CAO has been improved through two trainings programs for 50 officials, including four female officers, from CAO and internal audit department of ministries and two workshops where senior officials of CAO participated on fraud and corruption detection.
- **Civil Society Actors and Media Involved in the Fight Against Corruption:** The project has established the Accountability and Transparency Grants Facility (ACT-GF) to provide support to civil society. Three CSOs including Integrated Approaches to Community Development (IACD), Integrity Watch Afghanistan (IWA) and Saba Media Organization (SMO) completed projects in the area of anti-corruption in 2009 related to monitoring of service delivery, capacity building of CSOs, and investigative journalism, respectively.

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