UNDP in Afghanistan

UNDP has been present in Afghanistan since the 1950s, providing development assistance to the country and helping build the capacity of many national institutions.

State building & Government Support

- Strengthening the Civil Service
- Bridging the Public Information Gap
- Developing Information and Communication Technology
- Supporting a Stronger Police Force
- Making Budgets Work
- Building Information Management Capacity

Democratization & Civil Society Empowerment

- Constitutional Commission
- Voter Registration and Elections
- Rebuilding the Justice Sector
- Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission
- Engaging Afghan Women in Governance
- Supporting Rehabilitation and Integration Services for Disabled Afghans

Promotion of Sustainable Livelihoods

- Promoting Recovery and Reconstruction
- Providing Short-Term Employment and Infrastructure
- Building a Strong Private Sector
- Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
- Mine Action
- Disaster Risk Management
- Promoting Human Development

There is a path to the top of even the highest mountain.

Afghan proverb
UNDP has been present in Afghanistan since the 1950s, providing development assistance to the country and helping build the capacity of many national institutions. During the 1990s, while many government institutions were jeopardized by civil war and neglected by the Taliban regime, UNDP continued to assist communities throughout the country. During that decade, UNDP delivered US$200 million of assistance to Afghanistan, using its own resources as well as those mobilized through bilateral partners and its extensive outreach throughout the country.

The human development challenge for Afghanistan is enormous. The Human Development Index ranks Afghanistan at 173 out of 178 countries worldwide and Afghanistan’s Millennium Development Goal (MDG) indicators are below the majority of Sub-Saharan African countries. There are only two countries with lower poverty indices than Afghanistan, where the majority of the population lives below the poverty line - 70 percent. The percentage of Afghans with access to safe drinking water is one of the lowest in the world - 23 percent - while just 12 percent of the population have access to adequate sanitation. The depth of poverty in Afghanistan is reflected consistently in all human development indicators, revealing a mosaic of a nation in need of sustained assistance. Not surprisingly, therefore, Afghanistan has been identified as a global priority for addressing the MDGs.
Since the Bonn Agreement was signed in December 2001, UNDP has delivered more than US$600 million of assistance to Afghanistan. Within Afghanistan’s broad National Development Framework (NDF) are many cross-cutting priorities that address gender equality, security and the rule of law, administrative and financial reforms, human rights, environmental integrity, the return of refugees and internally displaced persons to their communities, and reintegration of former combatants into society. Guided by the requirements set forth in the NDF, UNDP Afghanistan focuses its activities on the following UNDP global practice areas: poverty reduction, democratic governance, and crisis prevention and recovery.

All UNDP activities are undertaken in close collaboration with the Government of Afghanistan, UN agencies and donors. All UNDP programme activities aim to consolidate peace, enhance security and promote respect for the rule of law. UNDP projects also enhance government institutional capacity to provide public services and to create an enabling environment for legitimate livelihoods. UNDP works collaboratively with all partners to empower Afghan women and promote gender equality in Afghanistan, ensuring that gender issues are consistently mainstreamed and carefully paced.

The UNDP Afghanistan programme remains responsive to the changing needs of a nation still in transition from conflict to peace. Afghanistan is at a crucial point in moving from state building initiatives to emerging as a newly democratic state, and the opportunity to shift focus to longer term development and government support is at hand. Accordingly, the UNDP Afghanistan programme of activities is organized thematically into three pillars: State-Building & Government Support, Democratization & Civil Society Empowerment, and Promotion of Sustainable Livelihoods.

As UNDP develops and implements its regular Country Programme in Afghanistan, a major focus on results-based management will remain. Future activities concentrate on institutionalizing accountability, transparency and integrity in the public service, continuing to strengthen democracy and democratic institutions such as the Constitution of Afghanistan, and further promoting access to and respect for justice and human rights for all Afghan citizens.
State-building & government support

Faced with a long reconstruction process, national government services lack sufficient resources to meet all priorities. UNDP focuses on strengthening institutional capacity to enforce the rule of law and provide public administration services to Afghans. In its support to public administration, UNDP provides public sector management, information management, aid coordination and tracking of resources.

STRENGTHENING THE CIVIL SERVICE

Afghanistan’s pursuit of a successful, nationally-owned process of reconstruction and development requires the re-establishment of a merit-based civil service. The Government envisions a civil service system that exhibits efficiency, transparency, and accountability. However, some of the major challenges to this vision include the fragmented and overlapping structures of the current administration, poor policy and personnel management, and the near complete exclusion of women.

UNDP has supported the establishment of the Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission (IARCSC), which is the lead agency for the overall public administration reform process. UNDP is supporting the IARCSC to establish a national framework for training and development of Afghan civil servants, and has launched a project to promote gender balance and equal opportunities in public administration.

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<th>Partnerships and resources</th>
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<td><strong>Budget:</strong> US$454 000</td>
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<td><strong>Donors:</strong> France, UNDP Core funds</td>
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The Office of the President is building up capacity to provide information on the political and reconstruction processes to the Afghan people. Enhancing this capacity to communicate to citizens is essential in order to address frustrations with the perceived lack of benefits from the reconstruction process so far. The Office of the President has developed a comprehensive public information and communication strategy to ensure that the policies, messages and achievements of the Government are heard by Afghan audiences as well as the broader international community. UNDP supports infrastructure and capacity building in the Office of the Presidential Spokesperson to help implement this important strategy.

UNDP is supporting the Office in a number of capacities, including provision of tools and equipment, recruitment and training of public information officers, and the establishment of a website.

**Partnerships and resources**

**Budget:** US$2,671,000  
**Donors:** United Kingdom, United States

Afghanistan has a tremendous task to undertake in the next few years to ensure well-functioning state structures and its participation in regional and global communication platforms. Currently, there is a significant lack of citizens and civil servants who are literate in information and communications technology. There is an urgent need to ensure that the Afghan population, especially civil servants, are able to work in tandem with the work undertaken by international organizations.

UNDP is supporting the Ministry of Communications to expand access to information and communication technologies (ICT) and the applications of ICT for development. The project has successfully established and promoted Telekiosks throughout the country to promote the population’s access to computers. The current strategy includes capacity-building of the Ministry to focus on its role as policy-maker and regulator, the development of e-Governance, and advanced ICT training.

**Partnerships and resources**

**Budget:** US$21,681,000  
**Donors:** European Commission, France, United States/Cisco Systems/Microsoft, UNDP Core funds

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©UNDP, 2003
The re-establishment of a national civilian police force is essential for security in Afghanistan. The National Development Framework and National Development Budget envision a professional and disciplined police force that is loyal to the Ministry of Interior and widely visible to the public, creating a sense of comfort among the population, enabling the development of civil society and combating the drug trade.

The purpose of the UNDP administered Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA) is to finance priority police activities in Afghanistan. Under these arrangements, the Ministry of Interior is responsible for supporting the formation of a new police force and UNDP is entrusted with the fund management of LOTFA to address the priority activities of paying police salaries, procuring non-lethal equipment, rehabilitating police facilities, training for police and institutional development.

**Partnerships and resources**

**Budget:** US$226,445,000  
**Donors:** Belgium, Canada, Denmark, European Commission, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland, United States, World Bank, UNDP Core funds
### MAKING BUDGETS WORK

UNDP has actively responded to the Government’s request for support to aid management and budget coordination. This project aims to assist the Government, particularly the Ministry of Finance, in developing a unified national budget and establishing a comprehensive aid coordination mechanism. This mechanism includes tracking support to the National Development Budget, establishing a Donor Assistance Database, and capacity building in aid management. Now fully synchronized with the National Development Budget, which was adopted in June 2004, the Donor Assistance Database currently tracks over 85 percent of the total aid to Afghanistan.

The budget, aid flows, and information on international and national aid conferences are available on the Government’s website: www.af. The site displays information on aid flows to Afghanistan, and is maintained and updated with support from the project. The project also helped facilitate the Berlin donor conference in April 2004, during which US$8.2 billion was pledged by international donors toward the reconstruction of Afghanistan.

Further aims of the project include establishing a national team to provide leadership and support to the Government in administering grants and loans, and to assist in the maintenance of the National Development Framework.

### BUILDING INFORMATION MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

Transparency in management and sharing of information significantly improve efficiency and accountability in the civil service, increase alignment of external resources with national plans and priorities, and help to improve the effectiveness of reconstruction and development. Information management in Afghanistan is limited, often relying on complex or inappropriate processes, and rarely geared to promote transparency or sharing of information. Afghanistan is making concerted efforts to tackle this situation, particularly among key government ministries.

The Afghanistan Information Management Service (AIMS) sits at the forefront of attempts to develop and harmonize disparate approaches to information management. AIMS has a mandate to build information management capacity in the Government of Afghanistan and to provide information management services to government and the broader development community. AIMS promotes common data and technology standards and the free flow of information through focused customer service, product provision, capacity building, and support to information policy development.

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<td><strong>Donors:</strong> Canada, European Commission, ECHO, United States, UN Drug Control Programme, UNAMA, UNDP Core funds</td>
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<td><strong>Budget:</strong> US$6 445 000</td>
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<td><strong>Donors:</strong> Canada, Italy, Netherlands, United States</td>
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Democratization & civil society empowerment

Good governance is one of the most important factors in eradicating poverty and promoting development. In line with the Bonn Agreement and the Millennium Development Declaration, UNDP continues to support the Government of Afghanistan in its efforts to consolidate its institutions, to strengthen democracy and the rule of law, and to promote human rights and gender equality.

CONSTITUTIONAL COMMISSION

Based on the Bonn Agreement and supported by a joint project between the Transitional Government, UNAMA and UNDP, the Constitution-making process in Afghanistan has essentially followed a three-stage process: i) drafting of a preliminary Constitution by the Constitutional Drafting Commission; ii) deliberation on, refinement, finalization and distribution of the first draft Constitution by the Constitutional Commission; and iii) the adoption of the Constitution by the Constitutional Loya Jirga.


Partnerships and resources

| Budget: US$13 123 000 |
| Donors: Canada, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States, UNDP Core funds |
VOTER REGISTRATION AND ELECTIONS

One of the most important steps envisaged in the Bonn Agreement is the development of an inclusive voter registry in Afghanistan and the conduction of free, fair and credible elections. UNDP was tasked to assist the UNAMA electoral component in designing and implementing voter registration in Afghanistan. Specifically, UNDP provided UNAMA and the Joint Electoral Management Body (JEMB) with fund management, staffing, procurement, and advisory support to the registration process.

The registration process was initiated during the first week of December 2003 and closed on 20 August 2004. Within those nine months, more than ten million people registered to cast their ballot in the elections. Afghanistan’s first Presidential elections took place on 9 October 2004. There was massive popular participation and enthusiasm throughout the country, amidst relative stability and security.

Scheduled for 2005, elections for the Lower House of the Parliament, as well as the district and provincial shuras, represent another important step towards democratization and civil society empowerment. Whereas the overall UNDP elections project represents a multi-year commitment to governance in Afghanistan, the figures below represent 2004 contributions only.

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<th>Partnerships and resources - Voter Registration:</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Budget:</strong> US$95 872 000</td>
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<td><strong>Donors:</strong> Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, European Commission, Finland, Germany, Italy, Japan, Norway, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States</td>
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<th>Partnerships and resources - Elections:</th>
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<td><strong>Budget:</strong> US$102 283 000</td>
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Access to justice is a central requirement to maintaining peace and stability, and ensuring the protection of fundamental individual freedoms. After many years of conflict, institutions of justice in Afghanistan have been left in disarray.

The Judicial Reform Commission was established through the Bonn Agreement to lead the justice and law reform agenda. Through a joint programme with UNAMA, UNDP has assisted the Judicial Reform Commission in its operations and activities since its establishment. This project has also supported the permanent justice institutions of the Supreme Court, the Ministry of Justice and the Attorney General’s Office.

A new project is enhancing access to justice at the district level. Activities include rehabilitation of infrastructure, training of justice professionals and bringing legal awareness to communities. The programme pays considerable attention to enhancing the quality of legal education in Afghanistan, providing technical assistance to law curriculum reform and training Afghan students who participate in the annual Philip C. Jessup International Law Moot Court Competition.

**Parternships and Resources**

| Budget: | US$13 441 000 |
| Donors: | Canada, European Commission, Italy, United Kingdom |
The Bonn Agreement also contained a number of strong and specific human rights clauses, including the provisions binding the authorities to international human rights standards during the transitional period, securing political participation for women, providing for the establishment of an independent human rights commission, mandating human rights monitoring and investigations, and calling for a national programme of human rights education in Afghanistan. All of these, under the terms of the agreement, were to be supported by the United Nations.

The Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission was formally established by Presidential Decree in June 2002 and is now reflected in the Constitution under Article 58 as a permanent national human rights institution. It has established units to address each of the priority areas in its work programme, including a children’s rights unit.

UNDP, UNAMA and the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights will continue supporting the Commission’s institutional development and its programmes for human rights promotion and protection. Updated information is available at the Commission’s website - www.aihrc.org.af

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<td><strong>Donors:</strong> Canada, Denmark, Finland, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Norway, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States</td>
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ENGAGING AFGHAN WOMEN IN GOVERNANCE

UNDP has supported the Government of Afghanistan, particularly the Ministry of Women’s Affairs, to bring about greater representation of Afghan women in government. This project includes promoting the participation of Afghan women in the Constitutional Loya Jirga, in voter registration, and in the Government civil service. Currently the Ministry is providing gender training courses to eleven different ministries, which have encouraged the development of gender awareness and policy reform.

In late 2004, UNDP inaugurated a newly constructed Training and Advocacy Building at the Ministry, which will house a CISCO Networking Academy Programme to teach internet technology skills to women. Proposed to open in 2005, the project also plans to establish a gender-training institute at Kabul University.

**Partnerships and Resources**

- **Budget:** US$2 289 000
- **Donors:** Belgium, France, Luxembourg, UNDP Core Funds
SUPPORTING REHABILITATION AND INTEGRATION SERVICES FOR DISABLED AFGHANS

The Comprehensive Disabled Afghans' Programme (CDAP) has provided rehabilitation and socio-economic services to disabled people since 1991. It now supports the Government of Afghanistan in providing social protection support to persons with disabilities. Mandated to support persons with disabilities and the government in managing the risks associated with disability in Afghanistan, CDAP facilitates and enables the full participation of persons with disabilities in all spheres of activity.

CDAP is assisting the Government in developing a National Disability Strategy, supporting institutional reform of the welfare payments division of the Ministry of Martyrs and Disabled, initiating legislative reform on behalf of the Ministry and supporting policy development, particularly in the areas of special education and employment support. CDAP support to community and rehabilitation programmes currently reaches 20,000 persons with disabilities annually.

Partnerships and Resources

**Budget:** US$13,800,000  
**Donors:** Canada, France, Germany, Japan, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, United States, UNDP Core funds
Promotion of sustainable livelihoods

While national government services and physical infrastructure have been eroded, the population has also been worn down after years of conflict. Despite this challenge, the Afghan people represent the greatest asset and guarantee towards sustainable development. UNDP is providing training, employment and investment opportunities that assist Afghan communities to continue the physical reconstruction of their country, to remove the remnants of war and reintegrate former combatants, and to face future human development challenges.

PROMOTING RECOVERY AND RECONSTRUCTION

In the National Development Framework, the Government of Afghanistan is committed to an integrated and programmatic approach to build human and social capital. One large-scale government programme using this approach is the National Area-Based Development Programme (NABDP). The NABDP aims to promote urgent recovery and longer-term development in priority areas while building Government capacity to lead and coordinate participatory approaches to development in all provinces. The programme includes the immediate rehabilitation of local infrastructure and construction of shelters, capacity building for the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, and preparatory studies for large-scale economic regeneration.

Parternships and resources

Budget: US$54 260 000
Donors: Canada, European Commission, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Sweden, United Kingdom, United States, UNHCR, UNDP Core funds
The Recovery and Employment Afghanistan Programme (REAP) is a cash-for-work project that aims to contribute to employment generation and the rehabilitation of the devastated infrastructure in the country. In Kabul, Kandahar and Jalalabad, REAP has employed more than 45 000 people, including internally displaced persons, returnees and former combatants. REAP has undertaken the rehabilitation of small infrastructure, including drainage channels, schools, parks, public bathhouses and vocational training centers for women. Projects provide workers with tools, enabling them to offer their skills to other potential employers.

REAP is helping to build the capacity of more than twenty municipalities and ministries, more than thirty community groups, and is also providing technical assistance to the Ministry of Urban Development and Housing. REAP is shifting its focus away from quick-impact, directly implemented projects to capacity development of the government in the urban sector.
BUILDING A STRONG PRIVATE SECTOR

Years of conflict reduced much of Afghanistan’s industrial and commercial facilities to rubble, leaving the country dependent on imports and aid. What was not destroyed has depreciated from neglect, sometimes beyond recovery. Meanwhile, the productive capacity of the economic sector that remains has been starved of investment and is dependent on outdated technology.

Businesses have been slow to recover. Although much improved since 2001, the security situation still limits large investment, leaving much of the economic activity locked up in short term import/export trading. In addition, human and institutional capital in the business community has been critically depleted. Many investors, entrepreneurs and business people fled Afghanistan as voluntary refugees. Those who remained face many obstacles of state control and institutions beset with inefficiencies and corruption.

The UNDP Partnership for Private Sector Development project is designed to assist Afghan start-up businesses and enterprises to achieve profitable growth. In collaboration with the Ministry of Commerce, the project is developing a database of Afghan businesses, undertaking market assessments, establishing a network of Business Advisory Centres offering a range of business education and consultancy services, and developing links between Afghan and international businesses.

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<td><strong>Budget:</strong> US$2,460,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Donors:</strong> Germany, World Bank, United States, UNDP Core funds</td>
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There are an estimated 60,000 officers and soldiers that form the Afghan Militia Forces, an amalgamation of former professional officers and jihadi soldiers who fought at some point over the past two decades. In December 2002, President Hamid Karzai signed a decree on the Afghan National Army, broadly outlining the principles and conditions on security and the military. This was an essential step forward in creating the assets necessary for the government to assert control and to encourage commanders and their militias to reintege into Afghanistan's evolving political, social and economic life.

The Afghanistan New Beginnings Programme (ANBP) has engaged in an integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) effort to disarm these combatants and provide them with education, training, and/or job opportunities suited to their particular needs, interests and skills.

In addition to DDR, ANBP has also been tasked with the cantonment of heavy weapons such as tanks and artillery. Specialist teams have been formed to assist the Ministry of Defence with this operation as well as the collection and disposal of all forms of ammunition.

**Partnerships and Resources**

| Budget: | US$167,000,000 |
| Donors: | Canada, Japan, United Kingdom, United States |
On 28 July 2002, President Hamid Karzai declared Afghanistan a state party to the Mine Ban Treaty. The Government of Afghanistan officially ratified the Treaty in March 2003 with the determination to free Afghanistan from the impact of anti-personnel mines and unexploded ordinance.

In coordination with the UN Mine Action Centre for Afghanistan (UNMACA), UNDP is currently undertaking mine-action and mine-clearance projects in several regions of Afghanistan. UNDP is providing assistance to the Government in facilitating the transition of the mine action authority from the UN-coordinated Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan (MAPA) to a national structure, which will encompass the legislative and administrative aspects of transition. Capacity building within relevant areas of the Government is underway, helping to prepare Afghan officials to assume their coordination and policy-making roles for mine action in Afghanistan. This support will ensure a smooth and gradual transfer of responsibility for the coordination of mine action, and help the Government to carry out the stated objectives of the Mine Ban Treaty.

**Partnerships and Resources**

| Budget: | US$58 163 000 |
| Donors: | Australia, Contrak International, European Commission, Japan, United Kingdom, United States, World Bank, UNDP Core funds |
Afghanistan is recurrently hit by natural phenomena such as earthquakes and drought that cause loss of lives, livelihoods and property. In recent decades, these conditions have exacerbated problems of food insecurity and population exodus in the worst-hit areas. Between 1970 and 1998, the country experienced 57 large-scale disasters. Vulnerability to disaster risk has increased significantly as coping capacities have been reduced due to prolonged conflict.

UNDP has worked in collaboration with UNAMA, Asian Development Bank and the Government of Afghanistan to strengthen the capacity of key institutions such as the Government’s Department of Disaster Preparedness. A Disaster Management Framework has been developed and several key interventions identified. The Afghan Emergency Trust Fund has provided seed funding for projects for community-based disaster management, training, information systems, and regional management plans. UNDP is also working with the Government in its efforts to respond to disasters.

**Partnerships and Resources**

**Budget:** US$25 000 000

**Donors:** Afghanistan Emergency Trust Fund, Canada, United Kingdom, UNDP Crisis Prevention and Recovery funds
UNDP’s global Human Development Reports, published annually since 1990, have continued to promote the concept and drive the evolution of human development. Over the years, Human Development Reports have addressed themes of people’s participation, human security, technology, globalization, human rights and democratic governance. Their research and recommendations have received worldwide acclaim for supporting people in developing and transitional countries, as well as for engaging donors and other decision makers, as they search for solutions to national and regional human development hurdles.

UNDP developed and launched the first National Human Development Report in Afghanistan in February 2005. The broader project objectives aim to promote the concept of human development and to build the capacity necessary to prepare Afghanistan’s National Human Development Report. The goal is to provide support to policymaking through better and documented understanding of national development priorities, emerging trends and opportunities.

The project has gathered data and undertaken research on selected development indicators, built national research capacity, promoted national dialogue, encouraged constructive expression of various views, and identified development alternatives that impact human development in Afghanistan.

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