



Infrastructure

June 2011



Photo: USAID/Afghanistan

The Kajaki Dam controls irrigation and provides power in the southern provinces.

INFRASTRUCTURE SNAPSHOT

- Donors cooperated to reconstruct 1,866 km (86 percent) of the Ring Road; the USG reconstructed 831 km
- USAID played a key role in assisting the Afghan Government to build power transmission lines and import lower-cost energy supplies from Uzbekistan, leading to a significant increase in energy supply
- Power consumption has increased by 18 percent, collections have increased by 30 percent, and revenues have nearly doubled – increasing cash for power utility operations by more than \$40 million
- New and improved power connections are providing better access to electricity for business, industry, government, and households

Data as of June 2011

BACKGROUND

Decades of war, harsh climatic conditions, and neglect due to extreme poverty have left the country's infrastructure in rubble and decay. In many remote areas, it was never developed at all. The lack of infrastructure has had a huge impact on Afghanistan's economic development. Nevertheless, Afghanistan has made substantial progress in recent years.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

U.S. Government assistance is helping to strengthen Afghan capacity to design, build, and maintain roads; increase the supply of reliable electricity; expand access to potable water; and design and construct schools, clinics, and hospitals. While constructing infrastructure in Afghanistan is critical to the U.S. Government's short-term stabilization objectives and long-term development goals, such projects face many challenges and problems. Most projects face security threats, physically remote and inaccessible sites, and difficulties moving equipment across rough terrain. Nevertheless, USAID infrastructure projects, in partnership with and in support of the Afghan Government and other donors, are successfully overcoming such obstacles in order to provide power, roads, water, and buildings that support job creation and economic growth.

ENERGY

Surveys indicate increased electricity supply is a top priority for Afghans. USAID efforts have significantly increased access to electricity among the Afghan population. The U.S. supported the Afghan government in coordinating multi-donor efforts to build the North East Power System (NEPS) needed to transmit low-cost power from Uzbekistan to Kabul and other population centers. The U.S. also rehabilitated two turbines at the Kajaki hydropower facility that doubled hydropower generation capacity of the dam. In addition, USAID constructed the Tarakhil Power Plant, which can provide electricity to more than 600,000 residents in Kabul and those living in communities supported by NEPS. USAID recently launched a new project to install a third turbine at the Kajaki hydropower facility and expand and improve distribution and transmission in Kandahar and Hilmand provinces. Planned U.S.-funded projects include connecting the isolated South East Power System (SEPS) to NEPS creating a national transmission grid.

A key component of the U.S. energy strategy is building the capacity of Afghans working in the power sector. In concert with this effort, USAID is actively supporting power sector reform and the commercialization of the national state-owned utility, Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat (DABS). DABS is expected to grow into a strong and viable commercial entity that can reduce electricity losses, increase revenue flow, and improve service delivery to millions of consumers. Collections improvements at DABS has doubled revenues in two years and increased power distributed by 18 percent.

In addition to large-scale projects, the U.S. assists more than 300 rural



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AFGHANISTAN

Infrastructure (continued)



Photo: UNOPS

Construction crews pave a roadway that will link major cities of Afghanistan. More than 80 percent of Afghans live within 50 km of the Ring Road, a highway linking Kabul, Kandahar, and Hirat. Provincial and district roads help farmers get their produce to market and allow Afghans greater access to schools and health clinics.



Photo: USAID/Afghanistan

USAID is training diesel generator technicians and operators to build the capacity, skills, and knowledge of Afghans.

communities gain access to advanced technologies to power their homes, schools, and businesses through clean, renewable energy, such as micro-hydropower, solar, and wind projects.

ROADS

An expanded and improved road network supports increased economic activity while enabling Afghans to access key services such as healthcare and education. USAID has funded the rehabilitation of more than 2,000 km of regional, national, provincial, and rural roads. Construction of a 103 km national highway in Badakhshan Province in the north (Kishim to Fayzabad) was completed in 2010, and highlights the economic gains from new and improved roads. The number of new businesses such as fuel stations and markets has more than doubled, commercial bus activity has increased, and market prices have declined along the road's path.

Ongoing and planned U.S.-funded projects include rehabilitation of two national highways linking Khost and Gardez to the Ring Road, emergency repair to the Salang Tunnel, construction of Section 1 of the Bamyan to Dushi highway, a critical north-south route, and ongoing rehabilitation of strategic provincial roads that connect villages to district centers. USAID is working closely with the Afghan government and the private-sector to maintain more than 1,700 km of roads nationwide. USAID projects strengthen capacity of government staff on road design and support national efforts to establish an independent road authority and road fund that will enable long-term management and maintenance of the transportation infrastructure.

WATER

Currently, only 23 percent of Afghan households have access to safe drinking water. USAID is working to provide clean drinking water in urban areas and drinking water and improved sanitation facilities in 1,000 rural communities. USAID also supports the government's water and sanitation sector reforms, which seek to commercialize the urban water sector, increase cost recovery, and improve management. In addition, USAID is working to develop river basin master plans that will allow the Afghan government to optimize its future water resource development.

BUILDINGS

USAID is constructing hospitals, mid-wife training centers, teacher training centers, high schools, residential and educational facilities for university students, and government structures, all built to modern seismic standards. USAID is supporting the construction of two campus-size high schools in Kabul City, specifically designed to accommodate the high demand for both boys' and girls' secondary education. Additionally, USAID is funding the design and construction of provincial teacher-training colleges, teacher-training facilities for higher education, midwife-training centers, and hospitals. These facilities will help the Afghan government provide critical health and education services throughout the country.

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