



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 17, 2012

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USAID Helps Launch Mobile Phone Electricity Bill Payment

KABUL, AFGHANISTAN | JULY 17, 2012 – Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat (DABS), Afghan electric power distribution company, and Etisalat Afghanistan, one of four mobile phone operators in Afghanistan, launched a brand new service today, which allows DABS customers to receive and pay their electricity bills using their mobile phones. U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) provided a grant which enables Etisalat to offer utility bills payments through its mobile money service.

“USAID knows mobile money is an investment that can fundamentally transform the lives of Afghans, just as we have seen in other countries around the world. We encourage all Afghan ministries to utilize mobile money to improve service delivery efficiency and effectiveness,” – said the Director of USAID’s Economic Growth and Infrastructure Office Charles Drilling at the ceremony marking the launch of the service.

Customers who want to register for this service need to take their latest electricity bill, along with their I.D. to their nearest selected Etisalat store and register there for this service. After registration customers will be provided a starter pack and an instruction manual to guide them through the process. Registered customers will henceforth receive their DABS electricity bills directly on their mobile phones via SMS.

“Etisalat is proud to be leading the way in empowering the Afghan people by giving them the possibility to pay their electricity bill via their mobile phones,” – said Etisalat Afghanistan CEO, Ahmed Alhosani. “DABS is constantly seeking innovative solutions that bring value to the lives of Afghans,” added DABS Chief Executive Officer Abdul Razique Samadi.

Once this pilot project becomes successful, DABS will embark on a nationwide rollout of the service and invite other Afghan mobile operators to participate.

USAID has signed innovation grants with three major Afghan mobile network operators: Etisalat, MTN, and Roshan M-Paisa to support the expansion of mobile money in Afghanistan. These grants enable more than 100,000 Afghan mobile phone customers to pay their utility bills, receive their salaries, transfer funds to friends and family members, and receive loans to grow their businesses.

In 2001, Afghanistan had only one mobile phone company with 21,000 subscribers. Today, there are four companies with more than 16 million subscribers.

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The American people, through the U.S. Agency for International Development, have provided economic and humanitarian assistance worldwide for more than 50 years.”



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