



# PRESS RELEASE

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## Afghanistan Customs Department and USAID Launch Internship Program for Female University Students

**KABUL, AFGHANISTAN | FEB. 2** –Twenty women university graduates began internships on Saturday under a new program at the Afghanistan Customs Department's (ACD). The women will spend six months working in different components of ACD, possibly paving the way to permanent positions in the government agency.

The internship program offers the women an opportunity to support one of the government's most vital agencies and allows ACD to diversify its workforce and benefit from the capabilities of talented women. ACD is committed to supporting the government's National Development Strategy goal to raise the percentage of women in leadership positions in the civic sector to at least 30 percent by 2013. Currently, 18 percent of government employees are women.

The women will receive training at ACD including risk management, information security, customs procedures, transit, legislation and tariff rates. During their internships, the women will rotate among the three main directorates of ACD to gain an understanding of customs activities. Each intern will be allocated a senior management mentor from ACD to help her throughout the internship.

ACD collects about \$1 billion in customs and other revenue each year, accounting for about 50 percent of the government's revenue. ACD is in the midst of reforming its procedures and organizational structure to align with international standards to streamline trade, boost revenue and improve the economy.

ACD is facilitating its female university internship program with the support of USAID's Trade Accession and Facilitation for Afghanistan (TAF) project. TAF identified the qualified university students, many of the graduates are from Kabul, Jalalabad, and Balk universities, and were chosen based on educational performance and experience. During the internship, they receive a monthly stipend to cover travel and meal expenses. The program works in partnership with USAID's Women in Government (WIG) project.

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