Improved Governing In Afghanistan

Challenge

Never before in Afghanistan's history has the central government been be able to communicate directly with all of the provinces, nor the provinces with each other. This lack of communication made it difficult for the country to govern effectively.

Photo by USAID

For the first time in the country's history, the central government can communicate with the provinces.

Initiative

USAID is working with Afghanistan's Ministry of Communication to link the Kabul-based Afghan national government with its thirty-two provincial governments through an electronic communications network. USAID is funding equipment purchases and personnel training on using the technology while the Ministry is covering operational costs including maintenance and repair.

The equipment, which include high frequency radio sets, can send voice messages, e-mail, and scanned documents, as well as operate as a telephone. The system, connected to the local and international phone/e-mail systems in Kabul, will enable central government officials to secure two-way communications with the provinces, and the provinces will be able to communicate with each other.

Case Study

Results

The first phase of the project began in mid-December 2002 with training and installation of radio sets in Kabul and the provinces of Khost, Paktia, Paktika, Bamyan, Nooristan, and Kunduz which were identified by the government as its highest priorities. Two of the provinces – Paktika and Nooristan – have never been connected directly to Kabul before.

The Ministry of Communication is committed to having all high-frequency radio sets in place which is a major step in the stabilization of the country. Improved governing through communications technology will greatly benefit the average Afghan citizen and contribute to a more efficient and more responsive government. An added benefit is that the system will also be open to the general public on a fee basis.