

Strategy

By the end of what is referred to as the ‘transformation decade’ (2015–2024) – a phase of far-reaching change processes – Afghanistan is to have attained the status of a ‘normal developing country’. That means that Afghanistan would still be extensively reliant on foreign assistance, but would largely be capable of autonomously financing its budget and security costs. At present, however, the state has insufficient own funds to shoulder the country’s sustainable development.

The German Cooperation with Afghanistan helps establish the preconditions for Afghanistan’s long-term stability and peaceful development. It takes a comprehensive, networked approach that includes diplomatic efforts and projects of the ‘Stability Pact for Afghanistan’, involvement in NATO’s training and advisory mission, development cooperation, efforts to rebuild the police force and humanitarian aid. This approach is primarily implemented by the German Federal Foreign Office, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, the German Federal Ministry of the Interior and the German Federal Ministry of Defence. In the following, we take a closer look at the process of civil reconstruction, which is mainly supported by the German Federal Foreign Office and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development.

The German Cooperation supports Afghanistan in building a state that its citizens will accept as a legitimate representative of their interests and as a provider of services for their basic needs. In order to achieve this, the Afghan Government must be able to offer its citizens the prospect of a life without poverty, displacement, migration and extremism.

The international community is supporting the country on its path towards self-reliance and is accompanying the process of reform as well as efforts to achieve the objectives agreed with the Afghan Government. At the Tokyo Conference in 2012, it agreed to continue its commitment to civil society until 2024. Based on the reform objectives agreed with the Afghan Government, the international community confirmed at the Brussels Conference in October 2016 its commitment to civil society in Afghanistan and pledged financial assistance totalling up to USD 15.2 billion for the period 2017 to 2020. For this period, the German Government has approved support for civil society amounting to EUR 430 million annually (German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development: EUR 250 million; German Federal Foreign Office: EUR 180 million). The release of the approved funds is conditional on the actual implementation of the agreed reforms, particularly in the ambits of governance, human rights, rule of law and the fight against corruption as well as cooperation in refugee and migration matters. At the Geneva Ministerial Conference on Afghanistan on 28 November 2018, progress in the implementation of the agreed reforms is to be discussed and future reform objectives agreed.

Germany’s involvement in Afghanistan focuses on the following fields:

- **Advancing the peace and reconciliation process**

Alongside its work to strengthen state institutions, the German Government also supports civil society in Afghanistan. Approaches that contribute towards the peace and reconciliation process are supported in particular. In addition, the German Government is committed to preventing extremism and strengthening regional cooperation.

- **Stabilising civil society and building up the police force**

Stabilising civil society and building up the police force are essential supplementary measures to development cooperation and military support in the networked approach. The aim is to secure civil stabilisation’s positive results and create the preconditions for a peace process. In order to improve public security, the Afghan Ministry of the Interior is receiving support in building a police force capable of enforcing security while upholding rule-of-law principles.

- **Job prospects as an alternative to extremism**

Every year, around 400,000 young people enter the labour market. Measures to promote employment and create jobs aim to improve their prospects and help give both women and men equally a more secure future.

- **Building a future through education and vocational training**

Good education and vocational training afford the basis for access to employment and political participation. The aim is to improve people's opportunities to shape their own lives thanks to quality basic education and vocational training geared towards the labour market. With capacity building and infrastructure measures, we help improve the quality of vocational training as well as primary and secondary education. In addition, we take advantage of the functioning structures already in place, such as traditional apprenticeships, and develop them further.

- **Delivering justice through good governance**

Well-performing public authorities, administrations and institutions safeguard public order, peaceful social relations and legal certainty. Measures to improve the performance of the legal system and local governance will serve to build these bodies' expertise and capacities to perform their functions in a transparent manner, combat corruption and strengthen women's rights.

- **Economic development in rural areas**

Three out of four Afghans live in rural areas and the majority work in agriculture. Against this backdrop, we focus our support in particular on the creation of both long-term and short-term productive employment opportunities, such as through the expansion and strengthening of milk and wheat value chains.

- **Providing basic infrastructure**

Despite the progress made, Afghan citizens' access to public infrastructure, services and accommodation is still very limited, especially in rural areas. Our work aims to improve the supply of basic infrastructure, such as energy and water supply, to citizens, particularly vulnerable groups such as internally displaced persons, and to support urban development, in order to contribute towards sustainable rural and urban development. A functioning basic infrastructure also strengthens citizens' confidence in public institutions.

- **Strengthening local structures**

An important prerequisite for development is the assumption of responsibility by local partners. With this in mind, the German Government strengthens local decision-making structures and increasingly integrates them in planning decisions and in the implementation process. This approach also contributes towards the resolution of conflicts of interest. To the extent possible, construction work is performed by local workers using local building materials in order to create jobs and generate income locally.

- **Providing humanitarian aid**

Despite efforts to secure peace and development, people in Afghanistan need extensive humanitarian aid (this concerned approximately 4.2 million people in 2018 according to the United Nations). Afghanistan's population is suffering the consequences of frequent natural disasters and decades of armed conflict. Both factors have led to large numbers of internally displaced people who, like many of the Afghans returning from Pakistan and Iran, need humanitarian assistance.

- **The role of civil society**

Civil society has an important role to play in setting expectations on public institution's transparency and accountability and advancing change in society. Consequently, the German Government works closely with civil society organisations and provides them with advice to enable them to participate more intensively in state processes and thereby contribute to enforcing civil rights.

- **Support as an incentive for reform**

In return for its financial assistance, the German Government expects the Afghan Government to keep to its reform pledges in the fields of governance, the fight against corruption, women's rights and economic inclusion. In addition, the German Government expects the Afghan Government to cooperate in refugee and migration topics.

In future, the German Government intends to systematically expand cooperation with Afghan reform partners and increasingly set incentives for transparency, self-reliance and a focus on development.

In this context, the continuation of support will depend on the Afghan Government's implementation of the mutually agreed reforms. If sufficient reform progress is not evident, we will reduce or discontinue our support. Germany and the international donor community closely align their respective support efforts with each other.

German Cooperation with Afghanistan – Presence in a Fragile Environment

The German Cooperation operates in many areas, including those marked by crisis and conflict. These areas are in particular need of the broad-based commitment offered by the German government. National institutions and civil society organisations require support in guaranteeing a life in peace, political security and stability as well as in developing economic prospects and enabling participation for the entire population.

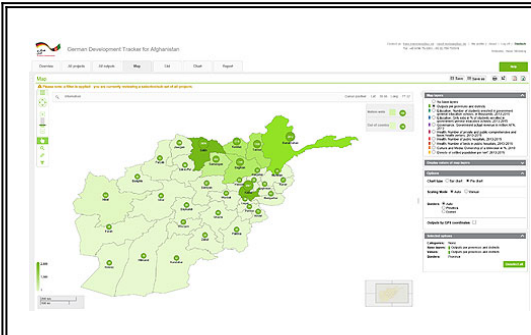
The German Cooperation focuses on close collaboration on equal terms with the Afghan population and national partners on the ground. After all, only these partners should and could be able to develop the necessary skills and unleash the essential momentum to plan and implement development programmes independently in the long term. For this reason, one of the German government's top priorities is to work in close consultation with Afghan partners to tailor programmes to specific conditions in Afghanistan and adapt them to local needs in the best way possible.

In these efforts, Afghan experts working for the implementing organisations play a particularly significant role. The approaches used in technical and financial cooperation consistently aim at familiarising the national personnel with the German Cooperation's processes and training them to manage implementation. The goal is to develop expertise on the ground, to gradually transfer responsibility to Afghan staff as they increasingly gain practical experience and, in doing so, involve them in management processes. Together with international experts, they need to be able to collaborate with Afghan partners to professionally plan programmes, manage their implementation and ensure effectiveness and sustainability of all activities.

The national and international staff's security in Afghanistan is a top priority for the German government. The situation is

continuously monitored. Appropriate safety precautions can be adapted and standards on the ground improved. In case international experts have to leave the country temporarily, activities will not grind to a halt. Resulting from strengthening the Afghan personnel's capacities, programmes continue to run uninterrupted. In addition, business continuity management is tested on an ongoing basis: When international staff are unable to be on site, constant business management is guaranteed. This model has proved its success and is continuously developed further. From the planning phase onward, programmes are designed to allow them to continue even if managed remotely from abroad. In respect of all necessary security standards, this is possible due to the active involvement of and close cooperation with national experts in all German Cooperation projects and programmes. Thus, German Cooperation programmes can be implemented under difficult security conditions and their quality and effectiveness ensured.

Results of the German Cooperation



Achieving, monitoring and critically evaluating results – how the German Cooperation with Afghanistan works

To continually optimise the approaches and impact of German Cooperation measures with Afghanistan, the German government monitors progress in strategy implementation, reviews the results of individual programmes and carries out regular evaluations.

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Downloads:

Strengthening Afghan Ownership – Position Paper on Development Cooperation with Afghanistan

Conclusions from the International Afghanistan Conference in Brussels 2016

Conclusions from the International Afghanistan Conference in Bonn in 2011 (EN)

Self-Reliance through Mutual Accountability Framework (SMAF)

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