

The UK and Afghanistan



"We are not here just for today, tomorrow, next week"

Tony Blair, Prime Minister (January 2002)

The UK has been a staunch supporter of the emergence of a prosperous and stable Afghanistan. We are especially focused on counter-narcotics, security sector reform, poverty reduction and developing a sustainable economy based on legitimate activity.

The UK has committed over £1,000 million to Afghanistan since 2001:

- £500 million in development assistance pledged over 5 years 2002-2007, for long-term bilateral support on counter-narcotics, state building, pro-poor initiatives and humanitarian assistance programmes.
- £295 million to the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund between 2002-2008 (the UK is the largest contributor).
- Over £338 million for UK military support since 2002.
- Over £67 million since 2002 for security sector reform.
- £27 million in 2004/05 to support counter-narcotics law enforcement and criminal justice reform.
- Over £20 million to support Afghanistan's presidential and parliamentary elections.
- The UK has also contributed 18% (around £125 million) of the European Commission's pledge of 1 billion Euros over the five year period 2002-2007.



Prime Minister Tony Blair and HE President Hamid Karzai

G8 lead nation on counter-narcotics

As G8 lead nation the UK is committed to supporting the Afghan National Drugs Control Strategy, focusing on all eight pillars of the 2005 Counter-Narcotics Implementation Plan.

- We are spending over £100 million between 2003-06 on activities to reduce opium production in Afghanistan. This includes £30 million to provide emergency support in 2005 to help farmers and others whose livelihoods are affected by the reduction in poppy cultivation.

- The UK has provided advice and funding to establish the Afghan Special Narcotics Force (ASNF) to carry out operations against major laboratory and storage targets and to make seizures. Since January 2004 over 135 tonnes of opiates and over 30 tons of precursor chemicals have been seized, over 130 drugs labs have been destroyed and a significant number of arrests made. Weapons and vehicles have also been confiscated.

- Together with the international community the UK is working to recruit and train a counter narcotics Criminal Justice Task Force of Afghan investigators, prosecutors and judges, capable of pushing through successful drugs investigations and prosecutions. May 2005 saw the first convictions of drug traffickers in Afghanistan. This is a real step forward.



Members of the Mobile Drugs Detection Team using a camera designed to search inside vehicles



- We are about to spend over £12.5million to strengthen counter-narcotics institutions, including the Ministry of Counter-Narcotics in Kabul. For long-term sustainable development, and to provide basic services to the people of Afghanistan, there is an urgent need to rebuild state institutions. The UK has allocated over £100 million since 2002 to support state-building activities including public administration reform, security sector reform and support for the democratic process; and an additional £338 million in military support.

The first Afghan women on the basic course learn about drug testing from a UK Customs officer

State-building

- Security: The UK was the first country to lead ISAF, the International Security Assistance Force, in 2002. We played a leading role in stage one of ISAF expansion in the North and continue to lead two Provincial Reconstruction Teams (in Mazar-e-Sharif and in Maimana) and a Forward Support Base there. We plan to increase our troop commitment further when the Headquarters of the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC) is deployed in early 2006 to take over the ISAF command.



A British ISAF officer on patrol in Afghanistan

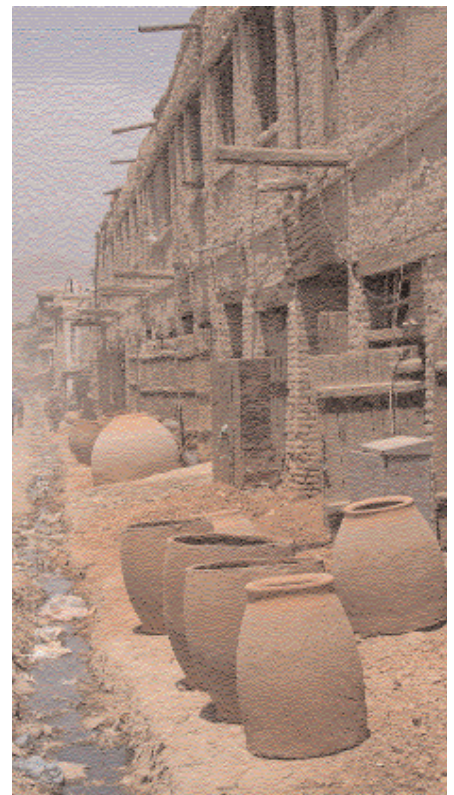
- Security Sector Reform: The UK has contributed £5 million towards reforming the Afghan National Police. 40,000 have been trained to date. We have also provided £10 million to the reform of the Afghan National Army, which through the US-led programme has trained over 27,000 soldiers, with nearly 7,000 deployed on operations beyond Kabul.

- DDR: The UK is the second largest donor to the disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration of militia forces. We have provided over £12 million to the DDR process. By end June 2005 over 60,000 soldiers had been disarmed. Of these 50,000 had either entered or completed the reintegration programme. We are now engaged in support for the process of disbanding illegal armed groups across the country.

- Public Administration Reform: Working with other donors, the UK is giving support for salaries of civil servants and teachers, and providing technical assistance to build up the effectiveness of key institutions. We have committed over £13 million to support capacity building in the Office of the President. We are also supporting activity aimed at restoring effective local government at district and provincial levels.

- Economic Management: The UK is working to build Ministry of Finance capacity to improve revenue collection, budget allocation and budget execution. This includes £6 million to help strengthen Afghanistan's customs and tax departments. A competitive private sector will fuel the Afghan economy and provide the necessary economic growth to make Afghanistan self-sufficient. The UK is providing £5 million to re-build institutions responsible for private sector development in Afghanistan.

- Regional co-operation and trade: Regional economic co-operation is crucial to Afghanistan's prosperity and stability. As G8 chair, the UK will co-host with Afghanistan a conference on regional economic co-operation later this year in Kabul. The UK is also hosting a seminar in London in July to promote private sector investment in Afghanistan.



British Council

The British Council returned to Afghanistan in July 2004, after a 24 year gap.

- The Council is providing English language training to 3000 civil servants and helping the Civil Service Commission to reform its pay and grading structure.
- The British Council has helped to set up the English Language Resource Centre at Kabul University, and plans to set up a new English as a Foreign Language Unit there. It has also provided support for a smaller resource centre in Balkh University in Mazar-e-Sharif.



British Council funded resource centre at Kabul University



British Council project to train aspiring Afghan women politicians

- Working with the BBC, the British Council has provided funding and support for the production of 20,000 work-books for a general adult English by radio course (English for Today), with particular focus on English for employment.

BBC World Service

The BBC World Service is estimated to reach some 73% of people in Afghanistan. The BBC World Service Trust is actively working in Kabul to provide media training, including for journalists in covering the elections. The UK is currently sponsoring a series of programmes promoting legal and rights awareness and information on political, social and cultural issues in 'Woman's Hour' broadcasts. We also fund the popular radio programme New Home New Life, which has gained widespread acclaim for getting educational messages across within an engaging programme.

Non-governmental organisations

British NGOs have operated in Afghanistan since the 1960s without interruption. Most of their employees are Afghans. Money donated by British citizens, and from government sources, is used in both emergency and development aid for the victims of natural disasters and of conflict. Primary areas of work with Afghan communities are agricultural rehabilitation, health, education, water and sanitation, income generation and micro-credit. British NGOs also work to increase the Afghan Government's capacity to implement development projects, and that of all components of civil society to play a key role in the future.