

# 3 U.S. ASSISTANCE TO AFGHANISTAN



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UN Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Afghanistan Indrika Ratwatte meets with UN-funded program beneficiaries in Balkh Province in August. (Photo by UNAMA/Julia Alinho)

## U.S. ASSISTANCE TO AFGHANISTAN



### KEY ISSUES & EVENTS

As of October 22, the UN's Humanitarian Response Plan was 37% funded, at \$1.1 billion. The United States is the single largest donor, having contributed over \$527.7 million this year.

USAID began three new programs this quarter: the Afghanistan Integrated Youth Activity; Women and Men in Agriculture; and Countering Trafficking in Persons III with combined estimated costs of \$126.4 million.

This quarter, State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration obligated an additional \$92.9 million for humanitarian assistance activities in Afghanistan.

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The United States remains the largest donor to programs supporting the Afghan people, having disbursed more than \$3.45 billion in humanitarian and development assistance since the Taliban takeover in August 2021.<sup>1</sup> The majority of this funding (64%) is funneled through the United States Agency for International Development's (USAID) International Disaster Assistance account and the State Department's (State) Migration and Refugee Assistance account. USAID and State use these funds to support the humanitarian work of various UN agencies and international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). In 2024, the United States disbursed over \$543 million from these two accounts. An additional \$256 million in development

assistance was disbursed this year through USAID's Economic Support Fund, State's International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement, and other accounts.<sup>2</sup>

The United States does not recognize the Taliban, or any other entity, as the government of Afghanistan. According to State, any steps toward normalization will be based on the Taliban's actions, including their initiating a "political process that promotes inclusion of all Afghans; fulfilling their counterterrorism commitments; and respecting the rights of all Afghans, including women and members of minority groups."<sup>3</sup>

Yet, State said that the United States "has undertaken significant efforts in coordination with the international community to assist the Afghan people during a period of humanitarian and economic catastrophe."<sup>4</sup> After the Ghani government collapsed in 2021, State committed to "facilitating the provision of life saving assistance for all Afghans in need, provided according to humanitarian principles amid the humanitarian crisis." In October 2023, State issued a new country strategy for Afghanistan that prioritizes security, economic self-reliance, intra-Afghan reconciliation, and humanitarian support.<sup>5</sup>

As an organization on the U.S. Specially Designated Global Terrorist list, the Taliban are subject to sanctions, thus limiting their access to foreign funds.<sup>6</sup> However, since September 2021, Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) has authorized a series of licenses allowing for the provision of humanitarian aid to the people of Afghanistan while maintaining sanctions against the Taliban, the Haqqani Network, and other entities.<sup>7</sup> U.S.-funded programs are implemented through nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), international organizations, or other third parties, which State said minimizes benefit to the Taliban to the extent possible.<sup>8</sup>

The Taliban exert some control over humanitarian activities and have at times required NGOs to sign memoranda of understanding (MOUs) as a condition for operating in Afghanistan.<sup>9</sup> These MOUs create a framework for coordination between implementing partners and Taliban officials where local regulations can be discussed.<sup>10</sup> Because the United States does not recognize the Taliban as the government of Afghanistan, USAID's Afghanistan Mission (USAID/Afghanistan) generally prohibits its partner NGOs from entering into any agreements with the Taliban.<sup>11</sup> But when it is necessary to operate or protect the safety and security of staff, USAID/Afghanistan may authorize implementing partners to negotiate and sign MOUs with Taliban officials on a case-by-case basis in accordance with agency-specific guidance.<sup>12</sup> USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) and State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) do not follow USAID/Afghanistan's administrative protocols and have coordinated to provide their own set of guidelines for implementing partners to consider when signing MOUs.<sup>13</sup> For additional information on federal

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guidelines for signing MOUs with the Taliban, see pages 64–65 of SIGAR’s January 2024 *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress*.

The UN, through its Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP), leads international efforts to deliver humanitarian assistance directly to Afghans, including food, shelter, cash, and household supplies. The UN requested \$3.06 billion to fund humanitarian activities in 2024. As of October 22, the HRP was 37% funded, at \$1.1 billion. The United States is the single largest donor, having contributed over \$527.7 million this year.<sup>14</sup>

USAID/BHA currently supports 17 humanitarian activities in Afghanistan, prioritizing direct food assistance and other avenues to help reduce food insecurity, including by promoting health, nutrition, water, sanitation, and hygiene. The total award amount for these programs, as shown in Table A.1, is more than \$770 million.<sup>15</sup>

**SIGAR Audit**

An ongoing SIGAR audit is reviewing MOUs signed by State’s implementing partners to determine the extent to which such agreements with the Taliban were completed and reviewed in accordance with applicable U.S. laws and agency requirements.

TABLE A.1

USAID/BHA ACTIVE PROGRAMS IN AFGHANISTAN				
Program Supported	Implementer	Start Date	End Date	Award Amount
Emergency Food and Nutrition Assistance and Air Services	UN WFP	1/16/2024	7/15/2025	\$280,000,000
WASH Response and Humanitarian Assistance Program	IOM	7/1/2022	7/31/2025	116,730,000
Project Name Withheld at Request of USAID	(redacted)	12/19/2022	5/18/2025	71,000,000
Project Name Withheld at Request of USAID	(redacted)	12/19/2022	8/18/2025	58,891,304
Project Name Withheld at Request of USAID	(redacted)	12/1/2022	12/13/2024	46,089,130
Integrated Nutrition, Cash, WASH, and Protection Services	UNICEF	12/14/2023	5/31/2025	40,245,916
Project Name Withheld at Request of USAID	(redacted)	1/1/2023	5/31/2025	39,000,000
Project Name Withheld at Request of USAID	(redacted)	1/1/2023	3/31/2025	28,000,000
Provision of Lifesaving GBV Prevention and Response, MRH services in Emergency through Mobile Health Teams (MHTs) & Strengthen the AAP mechanism and capacity/human resources	UNFPA	8/18/2023	4/30/2025	24,100,000
Project Name Withheld at Request of USAID	(redacted)	12/1/2022	10/31/2025	19,390,000
Project Name Withheld at Request of USAID	(redacted)	5/1/2023	6/30/2025	14,900,000
Scale Up Plan for Health Cluster Coordination Structure	UN WHO	12/26/2022	5/31/2024	10,583,333
Project Name Withheld at Request of USAID	(redacted)	3/1/2022	6/9/2026	9,756,243
Protection	UNDP	6/10/2024	8/17/2025	5,000,000
Scale Up Plan for Health Cluster Coordination Structure	UN WHO	8/1/2024	12/31/2024	3,250,000
Information Mgmt. for Disaster Risk Reduction and Response	UN OCHA	1/1/2024	12/31/2024	3,200,000
Information Mgmt. for Disaster Risk Reduction and Response	UN FAO	1/1/2024	7/31/2025	500,000
<b>Total</b>				<b>\$770,635,926</b>

Note: numbers have been rounded.  
Source: USAID, BHA, response to SIGAR data call, 10/10/2024.

**USAID PROGRAMS IN AFGHANISTAN**

USAID/Afghanistan continues to fund basic needs programs in Afghanistan through its Offices of Livelihoods; Democracy, Gender, and Rights (ODGR); Livelihoods (OLH); and Social Services (OSS). There are 26 active programs in Afghanistan with remaining unliquidated obligations in their periods of performance. Quarterly updates are listed thematically below.<sup>16</sup>

**Economic Growth**

USAID’s OLH supports two active economic growth programs—the Afghanistan Competitiveness of Export-Oriented Businesses Activity (ACEBA) and the Turquoise Mountain Trust (TMT) - Exports, Jobs, and Market Linkages in Carpet and Jewelry Value Chains project.<sup>17</sup> Together, they have a total estimated cost of more than \$120 million, as shown in Table A.2.

TABLE A.2

<b>USAID ACTIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH PROGRAMS</b>				
<b>Project Title</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>	<b>Total Estimated Cost</b>	<b>Cumulative Disbursements, as of 10/7/2024</b>
Afghanistan Competitiveness of Export-Oriented Businesses Activity (ACEBA)	1/27/2020	1/26/2025	\$105,722,822	\$92,530,702
Carpet and Jewelry Value Chains	1/31/2019	4/30/2025	14,935,752	12,299,573
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$120,658,574</b>	<b>\$104,830,275</b>

Note: Numbers have been rounded.  
Source: USAID, response to SIGAR data call, 10/15/2024.

**Afghanistan Competitiveness of Export-Oriented Businesses Activity**

USAID’s five-year, \$105.7 million Afghanistan Competitiveness of Export-Oriented Businesses Activity (ACEBA) is designed to provide technical assistance and grants to small and medium export-oriented enterprises. In its fifth year, ACEBA focuses on three value chains: cashmere, saffron, and carpets. Since the Taliban takeover, ACEBA has prioritized livelihood support in almost all provinces by facilitating access to credit, bolstering private sector efforts to increase liquidity, helping the jobless secure apprenticeships, and assisting private sector suppliers of humanitarian goods to start or sustain production. Throughout its duration, ACEBA expects to support 1,050 small- and medium-sized enterprises, assist 82,000 individuals through livelihood restoration, provide 27,900 individuals with telemedicine consultations, supply 750 firms with working capital, and see a 50% increase in sales of supported firms.<sup>18</sup>

According to its most recently available quarterly report, ACEBA has reached over 85,000 individuals since the program began, surpassing its initial target by 3,000 individuals. ACEBA reported that 77% of all 6,321 participants in FY 2024 Q3 were women and more than 97% of 1,100 new enrollees in its apprenticeship program that quarter were also women.<sup>19</sup>

Last quarter, ACEBA operations in Herat Province paused on several occasions, which prompted ACEBA staff to meet with the applicable officials to explain the program. ACEBA also reported the continuing challenges of women employees having to work from home due to Taliban restrictions on women’s travel and of OFAC sanctions screening compliance measures that have slowed award and recruitment processes.<sup>20</sup>

**Turquoise Mountain Trust - Exports, Jobs, and Market Linkages in Carpet and Jewelry Value Chains**

Turquoise Mountain Trust’s six-year, \$14.9 million project aims to create jobs within the carpet weaving and jewelry industries by providing development assistance to micro-, small-, and medium-size enterprises in Kabul, Jowzjan, and Bamyan Provinces. This program was scheduled to end on April 30, 2023, but USAID extended it until April 2025 and increased funding by \$5 million, to \$14.9 million.<sup>21</sup>

In FY 2024 Q3, its most recently available quarterly report, TMT reported helping 2,775 individuals obtain jobs. To date, over 43,000 artisan jobs have been created, compared to its goal of 28,750, and have largely supported Afghan women. TMT continued to provide technical support for carpet and jewelry industry artisans, with quarterly revenue reaching \$1.3 million, about 8% of the program’s total revenue goals for firms receiving TMT support.<sup>22</sup>

**Education Programs**

USAID’s OSS supports five education programs in Afghanistan, with total estimated costs of over \$233 million, as shown in Table A.3.<sup>23</sup> USAID continues to support primary school education for girls and boys as well as women’s and men’s higher education, but reported that the Taliban’s ban on girls’ secondary and higher education has directly affected OSS programs.<sup>24</sup> OSS focuses on sustaining higher education opportunities for women and girls in career fields granted special exemptions by the Taliban ministry of health, such as midwifery degree programs, and through online learning, while prioritizing the safety and privacy of female students and educators.<sup>25</sup>

TABLE A.3

USAID ACTIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMS				
Project Title	Start Date	End Date	Total Estimated Cost	Cumulative Disbursements, as of 10/7/2024
Accessible and Quality Basic Education (AQBE)	10/1/2023	9/30/2028	\$79,249,987	\$2,616,714
Afghanistan Integrated Youth Activity (AIYA)	10/1/2024	9/30/2029	62,000,000	-
Women’s Scholarship Endowment (WSE)	9/27/2018	9/26/2028	60,000,000	50,000,000
Supporting Student Success in Afghanistan (SSSA)	1/1/2023	12/31/2026	27,284,620	10,402,732
Young Women Lead (YWL)	9/28/2023	9/27/2025	4,935,797	843,008
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$233,470,404</b>	<b>\$63,862,454</b>

Note: Numbers have been rounded.  
Source: USAID, response to SIGAR data call, 10/15/2024.

### **Accessible and Quality Basic Education**

Accessible and Quality Basic Education (AQBE) is a five-year, \$79.2 million program that began in October 2023 and aims to improve safe, equitable access to quality education for primary-aged girls and boys and secondary school-aged girls. AQBE has four goals (1) to achieve improved delivery of quality instruction in foundational skills and delivery of support for student well-being by educators; (2) to reinforce community school management and family engagement to sustain access to safe public and community-based education; (3) to increase the transition rate of community-based education students into public primary schools; and (4) to sustain secondary education engagement and learning opportunities for adolescent girls.<sup>26</sup>

In FY 2024 Q3, the most recent data available, AQBE continued to prepare for program activities once it signs an MOU with the Taliban ministry of education. AQBE reported that Taliban directives, like changing curricula to a sharia-focused system and transferring Community-Based Education to local entities or provincial education directorates, constrained program preparations.<sup>27</sup>

### **Young Women Lead**

Young Women Lead (YWL), which started in September 2023, is a two-year, \$4.9 million program to expand post-secondary education opportunities and enhance job readiness skills and professional networks for young Afghan women. To support students inside Afghanistan, YWL focuses on post-secondary programs in female-specific, exempted fields of study, such as allied health fields (anesthesia, dental prosthesis, medical technology, midwifery, nursing, and pharmacy). YWL intended to also support women in the information technology, education, and agriculture sectors, but Taliban restrictions have largely prevented these activities. (Some educational institutions continue to issue information technology diplomas to women, but the ministry of education does not recognize them.) Partly at the request of the Taliban minister of education, YWL supports Afghan men pursuing information technology degrees, but did not report any updates on this initiative in its most recent reporting.<sup>28</sup>

In FY 2024 Q3, the most recent data available, YWL received Taliban approval for its budget as part of its registration with the ministry of economy and reported that close to 400 Afghan women were enrolled in its allied health activities. YWL also met with several Taliban ministers (education, public health, and higher education directorate of foreign and scholarship affairs) to discuss activity alternatives due to current Taliban restrictions limiting the program's initial plans of supporting students in information technology, education, and agriculture.<sup>29</sup>





Afghan girls at a UN-funded event in August. (Photo by UNAMA/Sampa Kangwa-Wilkie)

## Supporting Student Success in Afghanistan

Since January 2023, USAID's Supporting Student Success in Afghanistan (SSSA) aims to sustain access to and improve retention in local higher education opportunities for students by providing \$27.2 million to the American University of Afghanistan (AUAF).<sup>30</sup> Following the closure of AUAF's Kabul campus after the Taliban takeover, AUAF opened a campus in Doha, Qatar, and began online classes for students in Afghanistan and elsewhere. AUAF continues to provide this model of education to over 1,000 enrolled academy, undergraduate, and graduate students.<sup>31</sup>

In its most recently available report to USAID, AUAF held its commencement ceremony in June for over 100 students in Doha and online. AUAF also held virtual, weekly counseling sessions for students and faculty to engage on a variety of topics, such as managing nerves and anxiety, and self-care. SSSA did not report any challenges that significantly affected program activities last quarter. This quarter, SSSA said its activities would focus on career readiness and post-graduate opportunities, as well as preparing for phase two of the program, which received approval in September to begin on January 1, 2025.<sup>32</sup> In phase one, SSSA is required to assess the feasibility of AUAF in Afghanistan across legal, security, financial, and programmatic sectors before program activities continue.<sup>33</sup> In phase two, SSSA plans to establish remote partnerships with higher education institutes and reestablish undergraduate, graduate, and non-degree professional programs at AUAF in Kabul.<sup>34</sup>

## Women's Scholarship Endowment

The Women's Scholarship Endowment (WSE) helps Afghan women obtain a university or graduate degree in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). WSE aims to develop and implement a scholarship

program for Afghan women, strengthen the organizational capacity at local partner universities, and provide beneficiaries with career development and leadership training.<sup>35</sup>

Nine students are currently enrolled in online classes from Afghanistan, while 48 female scholars are attending classes in-person at the AUAF's Doha campus. These students are pursuing undergraduate degrees in business administration or computer science. This quarter, WSE planned to support the first cohort of about 100 medical students enrolling in universities outside of Afghanistan for the fall semester.<sup>36</sup>

**Afghanistan Integrated Youth Activity**

The Afghanistan Integrated Youth Activity (AIYA) is a five-year, \$62 million program that began on October 1, 2024. AIYA seeks to empower Afghan women and girls by equipping them with market-relevant technical skills to enhance income, food security, and economic resilience through vocational and post-secondary educational training. USAID's OLH and OSS support this program.<sup>37</sup> AIYA is in its initial start-up phase and SIGAR will report on its deliverables once they are available.

**Agriculture Programs**

USAID's OLH continued to support three agriculture activities in Afghanistan with total estimated costs of more than \$215 million, as shown in Table A.4.

TABLE A.4

USAID ACTIVE AGRICULTURE PROGRAMS				
Project Title	Start Date	End Date	Total Estimated Cost	Cumulative Disbursements, as of 10/7/2024
Strengthening Rural Livelihoods and Food Security (SRL-FS)	7/25/2022	7/24/2026	\$80,000,000	\$40,000,000
Afghanistan Value Chains Program (AVCP)	6/9/2018	6/8/2025	75,672,170	65,214,610
Women and Men in Agriculture (WAMA)	10/1/2024	9/30/2029	59,910,649	-
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$215,582,819</b>	<b>\$105,214,610</b>

Note: Numbers have been rounded.  
Source: USAID, response to SIGAR data call, 10/15/2024.

USAID agriculture programs aim to mitigate the immediate hardships on farm households and agribusinesses stemming from drought, political instability, and financial illiquidity, and to improve food security and the sustainability of key agricultural value chains. Activities include (1) training, technical assistance, and extension services (education, marketing, health, business assistance) to smaller-scale farmers; (2) supplying seeds, fertilizer, and other items to farmers to help increase production; (3) providing veterinary services and other support to the livestock and dairy industries

to improve animal health, maintain productive assets, and increase production and incomes; and (4) improving domestic market linkages and creating additional value.<sup>38</sup>

USAID OLH programs face continuing implementation challenges due to the Taliban banning women from working for national and international NGOs, in addition to varied interpretations of their other edicts.<sup>39</sup>

## Strengthening Rural Livelihoods and Food Security

USAID's four-year, \$80 million Strengthening Rural Livelihoods and Food Security (SRL-FS) program began in July 2022, and supports food security and resilience among vulnerable Afghan households.<sup>40</sup> The UN Food and Agriculture Organization implements this activity in eight provinces (Badakhshan, Bamyan, Badghis, Jowzjan, Nimroz, Nuristan, Paktika, and Parwan). These provinces are all classified at the Phase 4 (Emergency) level of the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), meaning that households have very high acute malnutrition and excess mortality. This program aims to improve the efficiency of staple crops such as wheat, beans and legumes, and fresh fruits and vegetables; expand households' access to nutritious food; support livestock; increase production of fodder crops (for livestock grazing); strengthen farmers' knowledge of climate smart cultivation/production practices; connect farmers with domestic markets to provide a short-term income boost; and collect data from all of Afghanistan's 34 provinces for the IPC Acute Food Insecurity Analysis.<sup>41</sup>

In FY 2024 Q3, the most recent program data available, SRL-FS provided over 14,600 households (112,100 people) with summer crop cultivation packages that included fertilizer and seed, about 73% of the total target households. SRL-FS also plans to distribute wheat cultivation packages to over 5,500 households by the end of 2024. Since it began, SRL-FS has provided assistance packages to 21% of its intended beneficiaries (42,210 of 201,000 households).<sup>42</sup>

## Afghanistan Value Chains Program

USAID's \$75.6 million Afghanistan Value Chains Program (AVCP), a combination of two former programs—AVCP—Livestock and AVC—Crops—operates throughout Afghanistan with regional offices in Kabul, Herat, Mazare Sharif, Jalalabad, and Kandahar.<sup>43</sup> AVCP is a market-driven, private sector program, aiming to increase the income, employment, commercial viability, and productivity of anchor firms in livestock and crops value chains to support food security and women in agriculture. AVCP also supports sustainable, agriculture-led economic growth by partnering with anchor firms, providing credit, and collaborating with key stakeholders to better respond to market opportunities. According to the most recent data available from September, 7,746 households **benefited directly** from AVCP activities and 42% of beneficiaries were women. AVCP has reached 93% of its target beneficiaries (16,754 of 18,000 individuals) since the program began.<sup>44</sup>

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**Benefited directly:** "Households where one or more members received goods or services, [including] farm inputs, such as feed, fertilizer, farm tools," and so on. Indirect beneficiaries are those households that receive assistance that is "not significant or enough to result in progress that can be attributed to AVCP interventions."

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Source: USAID, Mission, response to SIGAR vetting, 10/12/2023.

### Women and Men in Agriculture

USAID’s Women and Men in Agriculture (WAMA) is a \$59.9 million, five-year program that began on October 1, 2024. WAMA aims to improve food security, expand women’s empowerment, and support sustainable agricultural livelihoods by partnering with the private sector.<sup>45</sup> WAMA is in its initial start-up phase and SIGAR will report on the program’s deliverables once they are available.

### Public Health

USAID currently implements its public health programs through OSS. USAID-funded health-related programs have a total estimated cost of over \$583 million, as seen in Table A.5.<sup>46</sup>

This quarter, USAID reported that Afghanistan has approximately 3,000 functional health facilities with technical and financial support from donors who are helping vulnerable populations, including women and children, access health care.<sup>47</sup> However, in late 2023, the Taliban ministry of health issued a letter banning specific health services and activities, including public health awareness campaigns, women-friendly health centers, social behavioral change, and mental health services.<sup>48</sup> According to one implementing partner that addresses women’s health and family planning, Taliban restrictions worsen existing barriers to educating the public on health care and providing reproductive health care. In addition, Taliban threats have created a growing sense of insecurity among staff.<sup>49</sup> USAID reported this quarter that of 20 female Health Emergency Response health workers recently polled by UNICEF about Taliban restrictions, six had resigned and five were unable to report to their provincial offices.<sup>50</sup>

TABLE A.5

USAID ACTIVE HEALTH PROGRAMS				
Project Title	Start Date	End Date	Total Estimated Cost	Cumulative Disbursements, as of 10/7/2024
Local Health System Sustainability (LHSS)	8/29/2019	8/28/2025	\$251,772,216	\$7,509,997
Assistance for Families and Indigent Afghans to Thrive (AFIAT)	7/10/2020	7/9/2025	117,000,000	73,006,229
Urban Health Initiative (UHI) Program	10/14/2020	10/13/2025	104,000,000	64,178,303
New DEWS Plus	2/2/2022	9/30/2031	50,000,000	17,875,470
Rural Water Supply, Sanitation, and Hygiene (Ru-WASH)	6/24/2020	6/23/2025	35,841,332	35,841,332
Central Contraceptive Procurement (CCP)	4/20/2015	11/28/2024	25,000,000	3,676,081
Global Health Supply Chain Management (GHSCM-PSM)	4/20/2015	11/28/2024	176,568	5,982,049
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$583,790,116</b>	<b>\$208,069,461</b>

Note: Numbers have been rounded.

Source: USAID, response to SIGAR data call, 10/15/2024.

## **Local Health System Sustainability**

The Local Health System Sustainability (LHSS) program aims to help low- and middle-income countries transition to self-financed health systems.<sup>51</sup> Through partnerships with the Afghan Social Marketing Organization (ASMO) and other grantees, LHSS helps reduce the cost of health care by supporting partner sales of affordable, socially marketed health products to women and children.<sup>52</sup>

LHSS currently operates in Kandahar, Herat, Balkh, Kabul, and Nangarhar Provinces.<sup>53</sup> In FY 2024 Q3, LHSS completed its sixth annual assessment of ASMO's technical, financial, and institutional capacities and developed an action plan to expand their operations. LHSS also worked with its grantee partners to help equitably identify beneficiaries for LHSS-supported integrated financing schemes (mechanisms). In addition, LHSS approved a \$90,000 grant to establish a reproductive health center in Kabul, in coordination with the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation.<sup>54</sup>

## **Assistance for Families and Indigent Afghans to Thrive**

Assistance for Families and Indigent Afghans to Thrive (AFIAT), an OSS program that began in 2020, aims to improve health outcomes for Afghans, particularly women of childbearing age and preschool children, in rural and peri-urban Afghanistan. According to AFIAT, the program continues to adapt to Taliban restrictions and signed an MOU with the Taliban ministry of public health on March 10, 2024.<sup>55</sup>

In its fourth year, AFIAT reported supporting 397 health facilities and 1,251 health posts in 14 provinces. During FY 2024 Q3, AFIAT advocated for the replication and institutionalization of its interventions in health facilities, including maternal health safety bundles, safe practices for cesarean surgery, logistics management, and antenatal and postnatal care.<sup>56</sup> Following these protocols, 13,688 women received active labor care to identify and manage post-partum hemorrhage in 27 AFIAT-supported health facilities this quarter. In addition, AFIAT supported 714 cesarean surgeries, with a 74% compliance rate with their surgical safety checklist.<sup>57</sup> As part of its community outreach efforts, AFIAT engaged health shuras to help monitor and hold accountable health care workers at all 397 AFIAT-supported facilities. AFIAT also reported that their community dialogue efforts helped improve maternal and neonatal interventions.<sup>58</sup>

## **Urban Health Initiative**

The Urban Health Initiative (UHI) program is a five-year cooperative agreement funded by USAID and implemented by a consortium of partners. UHI aims to support the health service ecosystem and improve access to primary care and lifesaving secondary and referral care for Afghans in urban areas, particularly women, children, and other vulnerable populations.<sup>59</sup>

In FY 2024 Q3, UHI continued coordinating activities with the Taliban ministry of public health at the national and provincial levels, as well as through various committees and task forces with other health partners, including multiple UN bodies. UHI supported a capacity-building symposium for 109 participants in Jalalabad in June 2024, covering a range of topics related to maternal health. UHI staff (including technical teams, field implementers, and monitoring staff) also conducted 42 supervisory sessions to strengthen health service delivery in five cities.<sup>60</sup> UHI-supported health facilities conducted 52,990 first antenatal care visits, 64,319 first postnatal care visits, and supported 60,063 births.<sup>61</sup>

### **WHO Polio and Immunization II (formerly Strengthening National Disease Surveillance and Response in Afghanistan)**

USAID/Afghanistan currently supports national disease surveillance efforts, including polio surveillance, through the World Health Organization (WHO). The 18-month agreement, from September 2024 to March 2026, aims to prevent mortality and morbidity in Afghanistan through the early detection of, and efficient and appropriate response to, infectious disease outbreaks, by strengthening and expanding the capacity of Afghanistan's National Disease Surveillance and Response system.<sup>62</sup>

In FY 2024 Q3, 3,131,631 cases of infectious disease were reported through the national surveillance system. Over 6,700 samples were tested in WHO-supported laboratories, with 2,555 samples testing positive for Crimean-Congo Hemorrhagic Fever, Dengue Fever, Cholera, Chickenpox, and COVID-19.<sup>63</sup>

During the reporting period, WHO trained 26 lab technicians on diagnosing cholera by culture, and visited 10 labs to supervise work and ensure the labs were fully functional. While work will continue as planned, WHO reported that finding qualified female staff remains a challenge.<sup>64</sup>

### **BHA Support for WHO Initiatives**

USAID/BHA supports WHO to provide primary health care services, maintain a pharmaceutical pipeline for emergency health service providers, respond to disease outbreaks, and lead the Afghanistan Health Cluster coordination, a collective of 69 humanitarian health partners who provide conflict-related services and focus on improving access to and quality of services. In September, BHA reported a new \$3.25 million award to continue supporting WHO's work in Afghanistan.<sup>65</sup> For more information on public health in Afghanistan, see page 31.

### **Democracy, Gender, and Rights**

USAID manages several programs in Afghanistan focused on providing support to civil society organizations, the media, Afghan women and girls, and conflict-affected civilians through ODGR and OSS. Total estimated costs for these active programs are over \$102 million, as seen in Table A.6.

The Taliban continued to monitor USAID’s gender and rights programs through random office visits, reportedly intimidating implementing staff. USAID asked that some information about these programs be withheld to protect staff and beneficiaries in Afghanistan.<sup>66</sup>

TABLE A.6

USAID ACTIVE DEMOCRACY, GENDER, AND RIGHTS PROGRAMS				
Project Title	Start Date	End Date	Total Estimated Cost	Cumulative Disbursements, as of 10/7/2024
Enabling Essential Services for Afghan Women and Girls	7/25/2022	7/24/2025	\$30,000,000	\$21,291,247
Supporting Transformation for Afghanistan’s Recovery (STAR)	2/18/2021	9/30/2025	28,338,901	22,048,100
Afghanistan Support Program (ASP)	9/16/2022	9/15/2025	25,884,633	15,175,452
Information, Dialogue, and Rights in Afghanistan (IDR)	9/23/2022	9/1/2025	14,079,528	5,600,000
Countering Trafficking in Persons (CTIP III)	10/1/2024	9/30/2027	4,500,000	-
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$102,803,062</b>	<b>\$64,114,799</b>

Note: Numbers have been rounded.  
Source: USAID, response to SIGAR data call, 10/15/2024.

### Countering Trafficking in Persons

Countering Trafficking in Persons is a three-year, \$8.25 million program that began on October 1, 2024. Its goal is to reduce vulnerability to human trafficking in Afghanistan by empowering civil society organizations and providing support services to vulnerable communities. CTIP III is employing a flexible and adaptive implementation approach, USAID reported, to provide a wide range of services to counter trafficking, including public awareness campaigns, protection services, and support services.<sup>67</sup> SIGAR will report on the program’s deliverables when they are available.

### Supporting Transformation for Afghanistan’s Recovery

Since February 2021, USAID’s STAR program has aimed to build resilience in some of Afghanistan’s poorest and most conflict-affected communities by strengthening food and livelihood security through a consortium of implementing partners. The program provides cash assistance, agricultural and livestock support, and supported market skills and linkages across nine provinces. STAR, originally set to end on December 31, 2024, has been extended to September 30, 2025, to continue assisting vulnerable, conflict-affected households.<sup>68</sup>

During FY 2024 Q3, STAR operated in all nine of its targeted provinces reaching more than 158,000 **direct beneficiaries** and 640,417 **indirect beneficiaries** in 323 communities. STAR noted “significant progress” in improving water, sanitation, and hygiene services (WASH) in 18 communities, where

**Direct Beneficiaries:** individuals or households that receive goods or services.  
**Indirect Beneficiaries:** individuals or households that receive assistance that is “not significant or enough to result in progress that can be attributed to [project] interventions.”

Source: USAID, Mission, response to SIGAR vetting, 10/12/2023.

communal solar-powered water supply systems were constructed, benefiting 37,963 people. An additional five WASH facilities were completed in health centers and schools, benefiting 17,617 people.<sup>69</sup>

### SIGAR Audit

A SIGAR audit issued this quarter reviewed USAID's \$35.8 million Rural Water Supply, Sanitation, and Hygiene (Ru-WASH) activity in Afghanistan. SIGAR assessed the extent to which USAID (1) met the goals and objectives for its WASH projects in Afghanistan; (2) conducted oversight of the Afghanistan WASH projects; and (3) identified and documented the challenges encountered during implementation.

SIGAR found that USAID designed Ru-WASH to comply with the Water Act's long-term sustainability and maximum impact requirements. However, following August 2021, Afghanistan's new operating environment prevents Ru-WASH from ensuring the sustainability of its programming since it cannot engage with Afghanistan's host government or its national-level institutions. SIGAR also found that the Taliban's policies discriminating against women have undermined Ru-WASH's ability to promote women's access to water and sanitation resources, diminishing the program's ability to achieve the Act's maximum impact goal.

Despite these challenges, SIGAR found that Ru-WASH has met, or is on track to meet, its nine performance indicator targets.

### Enabling Essential Services for Afghan Women and Girls

The UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) implements the USAID-funded Enabling Essential Services for Afghan Women and Girls activity to prevent and respond to violence against women, strengthen opportunities for women's economic empowerment, and safeguard spaces for women's civil society organizations.<sup>70</sup> This quarter, UN Women continued to expand efforts to reach survivors of violence and those at-risk of violence, as well as invest in women-led and gender-focused civil society organizations. Detailed programmatic information has been withheld at the request of USAID due to its sensitive nature.<sup>71</sup>

Regarding economic development efforts, USAID reported that 860 women-owned micro-, small-, and medium-enterprises received support from this activity in the third quarter of 2024, in the form of skills training, financing, market access support, and coaching. These 860 supported businesses reportedly helped generate income for an estimated 2,000 women. UN Women trained 17 women to work as business development coaches, bringing the total to 65 women who can support other women entrepreneurs to start or expand their businesses. Another 946 women gained employment opportunities in 45 private sector companies, the majority of which hold agreements with UN Women to provide job opportunities to Afghan women.<sup>72</sup>

### Afghanistan Support Program

The Afghanistan Support Program (ASP), in USAID's ODGR, aims to support civil society organizations, civic activists, human rights defenders, and journalists in their efforts to protect basic rights and freedoms and ensure access to credible media. ASP also supports efforts to combat trafficking in persons and raise awareness of the issue.<sup>73</sup> ASP advances its objectives by providing financial, operation, and professional development support to media and civil society. Its activities are implemented by a consortium of NGOs and media partners.<sup>74</sup>

Last quarter, USAID reported that the Taliban general directorate of intelligence (GDI) had increased its surveillance of civil society organizations (CSOs), media, and individual activists. The GDI continue to raid, interrogate, and threaten CSO workers and journalists, and media and CSOs are pressured to hire Taliban staff.<sup>75</sup> USAID confirmed the threat to ASP beneficiaries remained high this quarter and requested that additional programmatic details be withheld for the safety of local staff and beneficiaries.<sup>76</sup>



## **Information, Dialogue, and Rights in Afghanistan**

In September 2022, USAID signed an agreement for the \$6.1 million Supporting Media Freedom and Access to Information in Afghanistan program.<sup>77</sup> USAID modified the program to include a second component called “Supporting National Dialogue and Rights Advocacy” and changed the program name to Information, Dialogue, and Rights (IDR) in Afghanistan. As of September 30, the program’s total estimated cost is \$14.1 million and it is set to operate until September 1, 2025.<sup>78</sup>

The program’s objective is to help deliver news and educational content to national audiences that strengthen Afghanistan’s human capital and enable citizens to freely organize and communicate. IDR aims to accomplish this by supporting independent media and reporting on rights and governance issues; developing a strong cadre of female journalists and producers; supporting journalists to operate safely; and informing Afghans about critical issues of public interest.<sup>79</sup>

USAID reported this quarter that IDR continued supporting independent journalism and coverage of human rights, services delivery, justice, and economic development. IDR also continued to advocate for journalists’ protection, empower women journalists, and enhance media literacy in Afghanistan. IDR noted ongoing challenges for female journalists, including mandatory mask-wearing during reporting and exclusion from government press conferences. Some media outlets also risk closure due to financial difficulties related to the constrained operating environment.<sup>80</sup>

## **STATE DEPARTMENT PROGRAMS IN AFGHANISTAN**

### **Democracy and Human Rights**

State’s Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL) supports a diverse range of programs protecting the rights of Afghan civil society, independent media, women and girls, and human rights actors. DRL helps protect victims of gender-based violence, strengthens and supports freedom of association by supporting civil society organizations and national NGOs, and provides access to independent sources of information by supporting media outlets and journalists. DRL also promotes respect for human rights, especially for ethnic and religious minority groups, as well as other vulnerable communities, and strengthens community resilience through cross-cutting interventions. Since the withdrawal of U.S. troops in 2021, DRL has provided more than \$26 million in emergency, resiliency, and advocacy assistance to almost 900 members of civil society, including Afghan women leaders, and over 1,600 women, girls, and their families, both inside and outside the country. At State’s request, additional details of its DRL programs have been withheld to protect the safety of staff and beneficiaries in Afghanistan.<sup>81</sup>

## Support for Refugees and Internally Displaced People

USAID/BHA and the State Department’s Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) continue to support Afghan refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs). In FY 2024 Q4, PRM obligated \$92.9 million for humanitarian assistance activities in Afghanistan.<sup>82</sup>

Humanitarian efforts have concentrated on Afghan returnees from Pakistan since November 2023 when Pakistan’s government began implementing its “Illegal Foreigners’ Repatriation Plan,” authorizing the arrest, detention, and deportation of all unregistered migrants.<sup>83</sup> In response, the UN’s International Organization for Migration (IOM) issued a Border Consortium Appeal to support the immediate needs of Afghan returnees at crossing points along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, including protection screening, shelter, and transportation to areas of origin or return. Last quarter, PRM provided \$2.5 million to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and \$5.0 million to other implementing partners working under the Border Consortium Appeal.<sup>84</sup>

This quarter, PRM reported that it is prioritizing funding along Afghanistan’s border crossing points with Iran and in areas of return within Afghanistan to support the approximately 2,000 people returning daily from Iran.<sup>85</sup> Humanitarian organizations have reported that at least some of the returnees have been deported without court orders or a formal complaint mechanism. Deportees reported experiencing physical violence, verbal abuse, overcrowded conditions, family separation, and loss of assets when being deported from Iran.<sup>86</sup>

For more information on Afghan refugees and IDPs, see pages 30–31.

## Counternarcotics

From 2003 until the fall of the Afghan government in August 2021, the State Department’s Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) operated multiple programs in Afghanistan to reform the criminal justice system and limit the production and trafficking of illegal drugs.<sup>87</sup> For more information on Afghanistan’s narcotics production and seizures see pages 44–45.

## Ongoing Programs

Since FY 2021 Q4, INL has obligated \$71.3 million for counternarcotics programming, including \$29.4 million in newly obligated funds and \$41.9 million in realigned funds from other State programs, to support research, alternative livelihoods, and prevention and treatment services programs in Afghanistan.<sup>88</sup>

## Research Programs

INL supports counternarcotics oversight and messaging efforts by funding programs through the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). The

Afghanistan Opium Surveys utilize data collected by UNODC through remote sensing, surveys, and global data collection on drugs to predict medium- and long-term trends in the narcotics industry.<sup>89</sup> The Afghan Opiate Trade Project (AOTP) monitors and analyzes trends in Afghanistan's opiate industry to support the international response to the illicit drug economy.<sup>90</sup> INL has disbursed \$28.4 million for the Afghanistan Opium Surveys since 2006 and \$10.3 million for the AOTP since December 2011.<sup>91</sup> Since 2019, INL has disbursed \$6.9 million for the Drugs Monitoring Platform that captures near-real time data on drug seizure and trafficking for drugs originating and produced in Afghanistan.<sup>92</sup>

### **Alternative Livelihoods Programs**

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has implemented INL-funded alternative livelihood programs in six provinces with a history of high poppy cultivation to support farmers with licit crop production and facilitate market linkages. Since 2016, INL has disbursed approximately \$85.4 million to implement these programs, \$28.4 million of which has been disbursed through one active program, the Consolidated Community-Based Agriculture and Rural Development—Access to Licit Livelihoods program, which began in January 2024.<sup>93</sup>

### **Prevention and Treatment Services Programs**

INL supports several prevention and treatment services programs implemented by the U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM) and the Colombo Plan. USAGM facilitates antinarcotics messaging via television, radio, and online news, with total INL disbursements of \$5.5 million since February 2017. The Colombo Plan supports over 20 drug treatment centers for women and children in Afghanistan, with total INL disbursements of \$11.2 million since September 2022.<sup>94</sup>

### **Removing Explosive Remnants of War**

State's Bureau of Political-Military Affairs' Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement (PM/WRA) manages the Conventional Weapons Destruction (CWD) program in Afghanistan and—due to the ongoing risk to civilians—continues to fund landmine and explosive remnants of war (ERW) clearance activities through implementing partners. PM/WRA currently supports four Afghan NGOs, three international NGOs, and two public international organizations to help clear areas in Afghanistan contaminated by ERW and conventional weapons (e.g., unexploded mortar rounds). State has provided \$492 million in weapons-destruction and mine-action assistance to Afghanistan since 1997.<sup>95</sup>

## Operating Environment

Direct U.S. assistance to the Directorate for Mine Action Coordination (DMAC), an Afghan government entity, was canceled on September 9, 2021, in compliance with international sanctions against specially designated terrorist groups following the Taliban's takeover.<sup>96</sup> PM/WRA implementing partners have signed MOUs with DMAC, with one partner signing two MOUs with the ministry of national disaster management this quarter; none signed agreements with Taliban provincial and district officials this quarter.<sup>97</sup>

### The Directorate for Mine Action Coordination

The Directorate for Mine Action Coordination is an Afghan government entity, now Taliban-run, that manages, coordinates, regulates, and monitors humanitarian mine action activities that are implemented by national and international NGOs and companies. DMAC is a directorate of the Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority. DMAC coordinates with the Mine Action Technical Cell, which is directed by the UN Mine Action Service.

DMAC does not conduct or fund demining operations or programs. It also lacks the resources to fully operate the national mine database and conduct quality assurance practices. DMAC has supported humanitarian mine programs by working with the UN when local officials have attempted to interfere with regular clearance operations.

Source: State, PM/WRA, response to SIGAR data call, 6/11/2024; State, PM/WRA, response to SIGAR vetting, 1/12/2024; Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, DMAC (Directorate of Mine Action Coordination), accessed 6/20/2024.

**Operational accreditation:** certifies that an organization has the technical capacity to conduct demining programs and its procedures are consistent with international and national mine action standards. These technical certifications are to assess and ensure safe and efficient operations, and not indicative of political support from any entity. Current DMAC accreditation of U.S.-funded projects and programs are extensions of those granted prior to August 2021.

Source: State, PM/WRA, response to SIGAR vetting, 1/12/2024.

DMAC continued **operational accreditation** of U.S.-funded projects and PM/WRA implementing partners this quarter, though PM/WRA reported several women employed by implementing partners were not allowed to work from the implementing partners' offices as of early September.<sup>98</sup>

## Clearance Operations

This quarter, PM/WRA implementing partners cleared over 3.6 million square meters of minefields, and destroyed 114 anti-tank mines and anti-personnel weapons, 395 items of unexploded ordnance, and 3,510 small arm ammunitions. After FY 2024 Q4, PM/WRA estimated there are about 1.2 billion square meters of contaminated minefields and battlefields remaining. Since 1997, PM/WRA implementing partners have cleared a total of 391.8 million square meters of land and destroyed over eight million landmines and ERW.<sup>99</sup>

## Funding Update

Since September 2021, PM/WRA implementing partners have paid Taliban entities over \$1.7 million in taxes, including about \$145,850 this quarter, the majority of these in withheld payroll taxes. PM/WRA obligated about \$5.7

million in FY 2023 bilateral and reclassified funds.<sup>100</sup> For more information on State's contributions to the Nonproliferation, Anti-Terrorism, Demining, and Related Programs (NADR) Fund, see pages 114–115.

## DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE PROGRAMS

### U.S. Security Contract Close-Outs

Following the Taliban takeover, U.S. funding obligations of the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) ceased, but disbursements to contractors continue, as necessary, until all Afghanistan Security Forces Fund (ASFF) obligations incurred prior to the U.S. withdrawal are liquidated.<sup>101</sup>

According to DOD, resolving ASFF-funded contracts is an ongoing contract-by-contract matter between contractors and the contracting office in the military departments (Army, Air Force, and Navy). ASFF obligation authority was granted by the DOD Comptroller to the Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (CSTC-A) and the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA), and these organizations then delegated obligation authority to the military departments. DSCA used pseudo-Foreign Military Sales (FMS) cases to manage ASFF funds in the FMS Trust Fund.<sup>102</sup>

Contract vendors must submit claims to begin the close-out process. Vendors typically have a five-year window after contracts are executed to submit claims, and DOD cannot force vendors to submit invoices for payment. Therefore, DOD said it cannot at this time provide information on estimated contract closing dates, the amount of funds available to be recouped, or the approximate costs of terminating each contract.<sup>103</sup>

As seen in Table A.7, ASFF funds that were obligated by CSTC-A and its successor the Defense Security Cooperation Management Office-Afghanistan (DSCMO-A), which was disbanded on June 1, 2022, have total remaining unliquidated ASFF obligations of \$46.9 million. Contracts, used to support pseudo-FMS cases managed by the military departments, have total unliquidated ASFF obligations of \$129.5 million.<sup>104</sup>

Between FY 2002 and FY 2021, Congress appropriated \$88.8 billion to support the ANDSF.<sup>105</sup>

TABLE A.7

<b>SUMMARY STATUS OF ASFF OBLIGATED CONTRACTS</b> (\$ MILLIONS)				
	<b>Cumulative Obligations</b>	<b>Cumulative Expenditures</b>	<b>Unliquidated Obligations (ULO)<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>ULO as of:</b>
<b>Military Departments</b>				
<b>Department of the Air Force</b>				
A-29s	\$1,019,121,578	\$1,019,121,578	-	10/10/2024
C-130	242,450,000	111,550,000	48,232,000	10/1/2024
PC-12	40,306,651	20,745,134	19,561,518	10/21/2024
C-208	120,903,024	115,620,239	3,181,662	10/10/2024
Munitions	10,881,000	10,730,000	148,900	10/10/2024
<b>Department of the Army</b>				
ASFF	\$256,503,676	\$215,410,555	\$41,093,121	9/20/2024
UH-60	225,250,362	223,009,247	3,241,115	9/20/2024
ASFF Ammunition	59,149,127	45,934,882	13,214,245	9/20/2024
PEO STRI (simulation, training, and instrumentation)	7,250,663	7,216,782	33,881	9/20/2024
<b>Department of the Navy</b>				
Contracts	\$8,825,470	\$8,075,625	\$749,844	10/7/2024
Subtotal (All Military Departments)	\$1,990,641,551	\$1,777,414,043	\$129,456,285	
<b>Military Command</b>				
<b>Defense Security Cooperation Management Office-Afghanistan</b>				
All Programs	\$180,786,743	\$133,904,411	\$46,882,332	10/7/2024
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,171,428,293</b>	<b>\$1,911,318,454</b>	<b>\$176,338,617</b>	

<sup>a</sup> Unliquidated Obligations (ULOs) are equal to undisbursed obligations minus open expenses.

Source: DOD, response to SIGAR data call, 10/10/2024; DOD, "DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms," 11/2021, p. 295.

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- 98 State, PM/WRA, response to SIGAR data call, 9/12/2024.
- 99 State, PM/WRA, response to SIGAR data call, 9/12/2024.
- 100 State, PM/WRA, response to SIGAR data call, 9/12/2024.
- 101 DOD, OUSD-P, response to SIGAR vetting, 10/15/2022.
- 102 DOD, OUSD-P, response to SIGAR vetting, 10/15/2022.
- 103 DOD, OUSD-P, response to SIGAR vetting, 10/15/2022; DOD, OUSD-P, correspondence with SIGAR, 9/25/2022.
- 104 DOD, OUSD-P, response to SIGAR data call, 10/8/2024; DOD, response to SIGAR data call, 6/15/2022; DSCMO-A response to SIGAR vetting, 1/18/2021.
- 105 See Appendix A.



سر دفترش ویژه برای بازسازی افغانستان



اداره

سنتر دفترش

د پیار غاونې لپاره د خانګړي سنتر دفترش د افغانستان د

“SIGAR continues to pursue investigations and criminal inquiries into theft and corruption relating to Afghanistan reconstruction and U.S. government-sponsored programs.”

—*Inspector General John F. Sopko*