



## **DRAFT**

### **Country Specific Information: Afghanistan**

United States Agency for International Development  
Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance  
Office of Food for Peace

Fiscal Year 2012: Title II Proposal Guidance

### **Title II Development Program**

*As this guidance is draft and subject to change, all potential applicants are strongly advised to wait for final guidance before starting to work on an application. Applications are submitted at the risk of the applicant, and all preparation and submission costs are at the applicant's expense.*

**Background:** The Office of Food for Peace (FFP) anticipates that funds will be available for Title II development programming in Afghanistan in FY 2012. This document supplements the Title II Request for Applications (RFA) with information on USAID/Afghanistan and FFP's food security programming priorities.

**Food Security Situation:** Afghanistan is classified as a least-developed and a low-income food-deficit country. High poverty rates (36 percent), limited access to basic health services, water and sanitation have led to increased vulnerability, malnutrition and food insecurity (the latter increased from 46 percent to 54 percent between 2005 and 2007). Since 2008, a rise in food prices and droughts add additional risks. The national nutrition survey conducted in 2004 reported 54 percent chronic malnutrition and 7 percent global acute malnutrition, with highest rates among the age group 1 to 2 years old<sup>1</sup>. About one fifth of the mothers suffer from chronic energy deficiency. Up to three quarters of the women and children were found suffering from micro-nutrient deficiencies<sup>2</sup>. There is no recent representative national nutrition assessment; however, non-representative emergency assessments indicate increased rates of acute malnutrition. A rapid nutrition assessment conducted in 2008 focused on most vulnerable areas affected by food insecurity and vulnerability. Results showed a prevalence rate of 16 percent global acute malnutrition, out of which, 4.7 percent were classified as suffering from severe acute malnutrition, which is above the emergency level cut-off based on World Health Organization criteria.

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<sup>1</sup> MoPH 2004 National Nutrition Survey: Using NCHS standards as recommended at that time. Same sample was re-analyzed using the WHO reference data released in 2005. Using recent WHO references, 61 percent of the children suffer from chronic malnutrition, 9 percent from acute malnutrition (19 percent among the 1 to 2 years old) and 34 percent from underweight. 21 percent of the mothers suffer from chronic energy deficiency (BMI below 18.5).

<sup>2</sup> Anemia 50 percent among the 6 to 24 months old, 48 percent in non-pregnant women, iodine deficiency among school aged children 72 percent and among women 75 percent, infant mortality rate 111 and under five mortality rate 161.

**Policy Environment:** The future Title II DP should support and align with the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan's (GIROA) efforts to reduce hunger and malnutrition; applications should clearly elaborate on how the proposed program and activities will align with relevant national policy frameworks, food and nutrition security objectives and priorities and describe how the planned DP complements ongoing government and non-government efforts.

The Afghan National Development Strategy (ANDS), released in 2008 and extended to 2020, provides the overarching guidance on reducing poverty, food insecurity and malnutrition. Based on the ANDS, sector policy frameworks have been developed, the most relevant are:

- The Agricultural and Rural Development Sector Strategy under the Social and Development pillar of the ANDS and the National Agriculture Development Framework (NADF)<sup>3</sup> developed by the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL).
- The MAIL's gender mainstreaming strategy aiming to strengthen the role of women in agriculture and rural development.
- The health and nutrition sector strategy, the infant and young child feeding strategy, the national child and adolescent strategy including child survival strategy as well as the national public nutrition policy and strategy developed by the MoPH.
- Guiding documents of the humanitarian emergency food and agriculture cluster as well as the nutrition emergency cluster.

**Geographic Priorities:** The applications should focus on areas where food assistance offers a comparative advantage as a program approach, relative to other program approaches, with an aim to maximize improvements in household food security and nutrition outcomes. As such, the applications should focus on areas of the country with the highest rates of poverty, food insecurity and malnutrition (i.e. where a lack of food availability, access and utilization converge). Priority consideration will be given to applications in the poorest and most food-insecure provinces. Justification of poverty levels and malnutrition should be drawn from the latest National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (NRVA). The 2007/8 NRVA lists the following provinces as the poorest, most food-insecure: South: Ghazni, Paktika, Paktya, Khost; East: Nangahar, Kunarha, Laghman, Nuristan; and West-Central: Ghor, Bamyan, Daikundi. This list could change when the preliminary readout of the 2011 NRVA becomes available. Overlaps with other food-assisted programs must be avoided.

In addition, the areas should be accessible to allow for community consultations during the planning stage, continued implementation, close supervision of implementation, monitoring and evaluation. The application should clearly elaborate on the rationale and selection criteria that were applied to select certain areas of the country over other regions, and clarify how the proposed program complements other development efforts and avoids overlaps.

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<sup>3</sup> The NADF consists of four main pillars which are described as follows: (1) Natural Resource Management – addressing the need to preserve and development the natural resource base; (2) Agriculture Production and Productivity – focusing on increasing the availability of food crops and agriculture commodities; (3) Economic Regeneration – calling for supporting agriculture-based livelihoods and business development; and (4) Program Support and Change Management – addressing the institutional challenges for public service provision.

**Program Length:** USAID FFP is considering one five-year award for the upcoming development program in Afghanistan. A mid-term evaluation would determine if progress was sufficient to warrant the development program's continuation during the final two years. However, final decisions on proposed program length will be made during the refinement of Title II RFA.

**USAID/Afghanistan and FFP Programming Priorities:** The DP's focus should be '*to reduce food insecurity and malnutrition among vulnerable rural populations in Afghanistan*'. Mission and FFP priority objectives and recommended activities for the Title II development programs in Afghanistan are summarized below.

For the development program priority component I, *reduce chronic malnutrition among children under five years of age and pregnant and lactating mothers*, please see the standard language on prevention of malnutrition in the RFA.

For the development program priority component II, *increasing the local availability and households' access to nutritious food by diversifying agricultural productivity, rural households' income and increasing resilience to shocks*, please consider the following:

- Strengthening and diversifying production of food crops for improved nutrition (focusing on homestead food production, including home, community and market gardening)
- Strengthening integration of livestock and poultry ownership in smallholder production to enhance availability and consumption of animal food products at the household level
- Supporting the processing and preservation of foods to improve family diets, in particular during the lean season, as well as to increase income and local trade of foods
- Promoting an integrated and sustainable farm management, promoting improved agricultural technologies and practices, and linking wherever possible to USAID agriculture research and extension program regional programs that are doing extension and value chain development and adaptive research
- Improving natural resource management, through improved and sustainable techniques for watershed management, soil conservation and land management, and support measures to prevent and manage the impact of disasters, linking wherever possible to USAID signature water program
- Identifying opportunities to improve local food marketing and establish linkages between local producers and markets and improve access to markets, linking wherever possible to USAID regional programs
- Supporting the construction of community assets, such as construction of village feeder roads, bridges and road network and water supply and sanitation facilities, linking wherever possible to USAID regional programs and Stabilization Unit programs
- Integrating approaches that increase availability and access to foods with nutrition promotion to improve utilization of foods

Food-for-work and food-for-assets are options for mobilizing the required human resources to create productive infrastructure and to address immediate food gaps at the same time.

### **Additional Key Considerations:**

**Program Integration:** Multi-sectoral approaches are necessary to address root causes of malnutrition increasing effectiveness and efficiency, the application, therefore, should aim for close inter-sectoral linkages, complementarities in program approaches and convergence in implementation. The program approach should aim to build local capacities for program management, and planning and implementation. Program implementation should align with GIRoA's MAIL and MoPH policies and priorities.

**Strategic Partnerships:** Lack of coordination was identified as one of the major challenges jeopardizing effective target achievements. The Title II development program partners should therefore ensure close coordination with relevant development and emergency partners, government and non-government entities at national, provincial, district and village level. Local coordination is essential. Academic institutions could support the design, implementation and evaluations (i.e. local and international universities, the Afghan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU), etc).

**Security:** Applicants should indicate measures to safeguard staff, commodities, and food distribution sites.