



**Independent Joint Anti-Corruption
Monitoring & Evaluation Committee**

NEWS RELEASE: MEC Publishes Review of Selected Foreign-Assistance Programs in Afghanistan

November 8, 2015: Today, the Independent Joint Anti-Corruption Monitoring and Evaluation Committee (MEC) released its Review of Selected Foreign-Assistance Programs implemented in Afghanistan. In this report, MEC examined 14 projects funded by five different donors covering multiple sectors, ranging from road construction and prison reform to health care services and humanitarian assistance. With this report, MEC hopes to provide donors and the government with a sampling of some of the best—and some of the more problematic—aid practices and, therefore, contribute to the wider discussion on foreign-assistance programs.

Since the overthrow of the Taliban, international donors have pledged more than \$119 billion in foreign assistance to Afghanistan. Fourteen years later, most of the population still requires humanitarian assistance, a dependency facilitated by weak government institutions and public spending, a majority of which is funded by foreign aid. Aid programs could have significantly improved local livelihoods had they been better planned, executed, and coordinated with the Afghan government and other donors. MEC found that assistance was too often driven by donor priorities, instead of responding to Afghan requirements and needs.

MEC identified the following factors as most obstructive to the effective use of external aid:

- a lack of uniform aid-effectiveness indicators;
- complex delivery processes;
- high overhead and indirect costs;
- largely off-budget support from international donors;
- a lack of capacity in Afghan ministries and employment turnover in those ministries;
- widespread corruption; and
- the unstable security situation.

For this review, MEC staff conducted interviews, desk research, document analysis and site visits. Our team interviewed government officials representing 14 ministries, representatives from civil-society organizations, ordinary Afghan citizens and more than 30 individuals from various donor implementing partners.

Striking a balance between increased Afghan control and donor-managed oversight mechanisms that safeguard taxpayer funds against corruption is one of the major challenges ahead. MEC therefore recommends the following steps to improve aid effectiveness in Afghanistan:

- Improved leadership and management of development policy and strategy;
- Increased alignment of aid programs with national priorities and greater donor-government coordination;
- Reduced vulnerabilities to corruption in the aid-administration process;
- Improved alignment of foreign assistance with local needs;
- Improved donor-government monitoring and evaluation arrangements; and
- Increased “on-budget” assistance.

For further information, please direct all inquiries to contact@mec.af. For more information about MEC, please our website (www.mec.af) or our Facebook page ([mec.afghanistan](https://www.facebook.com/mec.afghanistan)).