



USAID, Roots of Peace Conclude Ten-Year Afghan Horticulture Program, Announce Three-Year Follow-On Project to Support Agribusiness

Kabul, Afghanistan | June 16, 2020 — The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has concluded a ten-year program aimed at improving livelihoods for Afghan farmers and boosting high-value fruit and nut exports.

The USAID Commercial Horticulture and Agricultural Marketing Program (CHAMP) was launched in 2010 at a time when Afghan farmers were struggling after decades of conflict. Afghanistan's fruit and nut exports were minimal, and many Afghan agribusinesses lacked the basic skills and business linkages to reach international buyers.

By the end of the program, CHAMP facilitated exports worth nearly \$290 million to markets in India, the United Arab Emirates, Pakistan, Canada, and other countries. These export facilitation efforts resulted in the creation of at least 10,500 full-time jobs. USAID, through CHAMP, also planted nearly three million saplings to rebuild orchards and vineyards, trellised more than 700 hectares of vineyards to improve the exportability of grapes, and trained more than 117,500 farmers in horticultural practices.

"Expanding sales of Afghan products in important export markets means better incomes for farm families, dignified jobs for Afghan women and men, and increased revenue for the government," said USAID/Afghanistan Mission Director Peter Natiello. "The U.S. government, through USAID, remains committed to support Afghans in their quest for peace and prosperity," he added.

Following the success of CHAMP, USAID and Roots of Peace initiated the three-year Agriculture Marketing Program (AMP). The \$30 million agricultural development investment will support agribusinesses and seek market-led solutions to improve the livelihoods of Afghan exporters and farmers.

While CHAMP was aimed at a wide range of horticultural interventions starting at the farm level, AMP will focus on positioning Afghanistan to compete in the global marketplace. USAID's partner, Roots of Peace, will work with farmers in rural Afghanistan and traders in regional economic zones to improve product quality, advance value-added processing and diversify export markets. These efforts are expected to stimulate growth for Afghan exports to regional wholesale markets and supermarkets by up to \$450 million, increase domestic sales by at least \$50 million and add about 4,500 jobs to the Afghan economy.

Given its proven track record of achieving results and building trust in rural Afghanistan, Roots of Peace is uniquely positioned to support peace building.

"As the peace negotiations gain traction, there needs to be a clear pathway forward to create jobs for Afghan youth," stated Heidi Kuhn, CEO, Roots of Peace. "This program will turn swords into plowshares by transforming guns into shovels to firmly plant sustainable peace."

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Since 2002, USAID has supported Afghanistan to become a more self-reliant nation that can better partner with the U.S. Government on our national security goals. USAID partners with Afghanistan to ensure private sector led economic growth, to strengthen the country's nascent democracy, to advance the gains made by Afghan women, and to provide basic health and education services for all Afghans.

Roots of Peace is an international humanitarian non-profit dedicated towards replacing the remnants of war with sustainable agricultural farmland. Since 2004, Roots of Peace has partnered with USAID to plant over 5 million fruit trees in all 34 provinces impacting over one million farmers and families. Founded in 1997, the MINES TO VINES initiative has transformed minefields into thriving orchards, and provides exports to new trade markets benefiting families living in war-torn lands. www.rootsofpeace.org.