



Afghanistan Access to Justice Project (AA2J)

2017

<i>AA2J phase budget</i>	<i>CHF 21.6 mio, 2016-2019</i>
<i>Swiss phase contribution</i>	<i>CHF 4 mio, 2016-2019</i>
<i>Swiss total contribution</i>	<i>CHF 4 mio, 2016-2019</i>
<i>Partner</i>	<i>UNDP</i>
<i>Geographic focus</i>	<i>Nationwide with specific focus on Kabul, Herat, Balkh and Nangarhar Provinces.</i>
<i>Other donors</i>	<i>UNDP</i>



Meeting with justice stakeholders, Mazar-e-Sharif, Balkh Province, 2014, © SDC.

Context

The long lasting Afghan conflict has resulted in the extensive destruction of the state justice sector institutions. Today, the Afghan justice system is weak in terms of institutional, material and human capacity, while access to justice severely restricted. For vulnerable and marginalized groups, women and children in particular, it is even more difficult to claim rights and receive legal remedies.

Part of the formal justice system ineffectiveness and low credibility is also linked to the existence of other justice mechanisms such as non-state informal and customary bodies providing justice services. Indeed, while the emergence of state legal codes is a relatively recent phenomenon, Sharia and customary practices have deep roots in the Afghan history and are considered more in line with local concepts of “justness” and “fairness” and more affordable and effective than the state justice services.

What aims AA2J to achieve?

Through the strengthening of the justice institutions, Afghanistan Access to Justice Project (AA2J) will increase trust in and access to effective and accountable rule of law services in accordance with applicable international human rights standards and the government’s legal obligations.

What has AA2J achieved so far?

The Legal Aid Grant Facility, which covers the fees of accredited defense lawyers for individuals who cannot afford to pay a lawyer themselves, has been reinstated. Since then, over 1,700 beneficiaries - out of whom 14% were women - received legal aid services in the form of legal representation in courts, mediation or legal advice, while access to justice in the districts could be increased.

AA2J also contributed to the establishment of Courts on the Elimination of Violence against Women (EVAW) in Kabul as well as 15 other provinces across the country, which represents a key milestone towards the protection of victims of gender-based violence and their rights. As part of the effort to consolidate the implementation of the EVAW Law, AA2J also provided technical support to key relevant institutions in the gender justice chain to improve their daily process and proceedings.

Finally, with the support of AA2J, legal drafting body of the Ministry of Justice has conducted inclusive and participatory consultations at national and regional level on new legislation (e.g. family law).