

# United States Senate

SENATE CAUCUS ON  
INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS CONTROL  
HART SENATE OFFICE BUILDING, ROOM 818-C  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 7, 2016

## Via Electronic Transmission

The Honorable Gayle E. Smith  
Administrator  
US Agency for International Development  
1300 Pennsylvania Ave NW  
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Administrator Smith:

We write to express our serious concerns about the US Agency for International Development's (USAID/Agency) ability to effectively monitor its development programs in Afghanistan, including so many critical to our counternarcotics strategy, and to ask what steps the Agency will take to address these concerns. It is our understanding that USAID is paying a contractor, Checchi and Company Consulting, Inc., over \$52 million for program monitoring services in Afghanistan.<sup>1</sup> Despite this, a recent report from the USAID Office of the Inspector General (OIG) indicates current USAID monitoring and evaluation programs in Afghanistan have significant shortcomings.<sup>2</sup>

On August 18, 2015, the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) issued a review questioning the accuracy of geospatial coordinates provided by USAID to locate health centers established under the USAID Partnership Contracts for Health program.<sup>3</sup> SIGAR found problems with the accuracy of "nearly 80 percent" of the facility locations provided by USAID.<sup>4</sup>

Given that one of the first steps of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is verifying the location of the project, we found this concerning. On September 15, 2015, our staff met with USAID officials to learn more about how inaccurate location data may have impacted M&E of counternarcotics projects in Afghanistan. During the meeting, the Agency officials stated that they rely on a 5-tiered monitoring approach to provide multiple levels of oversight on the projects. In addition to geospatial data, our staff was assured that the multi-tiered monitoring

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/special%20projects/SIGAR-15-82-SP.pdf> (SIGAR report), p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> <https://oig.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/audit-reports/f-306-16-001-p.pdf> (USAID OIG report)

<sup>3</sup> SIGAR report.

<sup>4</sup> Id. at p. 1.

system (MTM)<sup>5</sup> uses project management reports, photo evidence and third party verification at the local level to cross-reference project information and provide accurate information.

However, the USAID OIG audit released just three months later determined that MTM “could not provide the effective oversight as envisioned.”<sup>6</sup> Instead, the OIG found that the Agency was not, in fact, fully utilizing MTM and cannot verify that effective oversight is being conducted. The OIG found that the Agency has no “written standards for what constitutes effective, sufficient oversight” and “provided MTM plans for only 6 of the 127 project activities.”<sup>7</sup> It also noted that “[m]onitoring and evaluation [of programs] is especially important in Afghanistan because USAID has spent more than \$17 billion since 2002 to improve Afghans’ security and prosperity and to support U.S. national interests.”<sup>8</sup>

As part of MTM, the collected data is supposed to be monitored and analyzed by an “Implementation Support Team” and made widely accessible via the database Afghan Info.<sup>9</sup> Yet the OIG found that neither the Implementation Support Team nor Afghan Info has provided the support USAID envisioned. Afghan Info is “limited to storing documents, such as quarterly performance reports and agreements,”<sup>10</sup> while the Implementation Support Team is ad hoc in nature and the responsibilities were given to two employees with full time duties already.

USAID’s programs are an important aspect of sustaining a counternarcotics strategy in the country, so it is vital that effective monitoring systems are in place so that they achieve their intended effects. Moreover, we want to ensure that limited tax dollars are used as intended.

Therefore, we request the following information:

1. Please provide a list of all USAID projects currently operating in Afghanistan, and the amount of funding each has received since 2010. Please break down the list by project sector and total US funding for each project.
2. Please provide a list of projects that have been terminated since 2010 and the reason(s) for termination.
3. What steps are being taken by USAID to implement the USAID OIG recommendations in the December 10, 2015 audit report?
4. What steps are being taken to ensure that the Government of Afghanistan’s ministries collect and accurately report the data required to measure the success of USAID programs?

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<sup>5</sup> USAID OIG report at p. 1.

<sup>6</sup> Id. at p. 2.

<sup>7</sup> Id. at p. 3.

<sup>8</sup> SIGAR report at p. 1.

<sup>9</sup> Id. at p. 1.


<sup>10</sup> Id. at p. 5.



5. Does USAID intend to update Afghan Info database? If so, please provide a description of the design plans and the projected budget to complete the project. If not, what is being done to provide a platform for the Agency to analyze project data?
6. According to the Agency response to Recommendation #3 in the OIG report,<sup>11</sup> project managers are being instructed to use the Monitoring Capture Tool (MCT) to track monitoring efforts. Please explain how MCT fits into the overall MTM framework. Please also document when it is scheduled to be web-based and how much it is expected to cost.
7. Please document the amount of project funding used by contractors to clean up incorrect or inaccurate geospatial location data.

Thank you in advance for your prompt attention to this matter. We would appreciate your response by April 22, 2015. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to have your staff contact Janet Drew of Senator Grassley's office at (202) 224-5225 or Kelly Lieupo of Senator Feinstein's office at (202)-228-3081.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Grassley  
Chairman



Dianne Feinstein  
Co-Chair

Cc: The Honorable Ann Calvaresi Barr  
Inspector General  
U.S. Agency for International Development

The Honorable John Sopko  
Inspector General  
Special Inspector General for  
Afghanistan Reconstruction

The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on the Judiciary

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<sup>11</sup> Id. at p. 22.