

Research Strategy

From 2010, AREU is structuring its research around the themes of “governance” and “legitimacy,” acknowledging the central role of effective governance in Afghanistan’s stability and development. Recognising that the legitimacy of institutions is essential for effective governance, AREU’s annual research programmes will build knowledge on how both informal and formal institutions are viewed by and affect Afghans in their everyday life, and on how institutional legitimacy has been or can be built. This perspective will be brought into research across a broad range of important topics, such as access to justice, electoral processes, security, education, natural resource use and management, local government, civil society, and the opium poppy economy.

AREU designs its research program annually to reflect changing circumstances and priorities. Projects are selected based on whether they align with the research strategy, address a knowledge gap, and are likely to inform and influence policy and practice; they must also be feasible in terms of security, and human and financial resources. For information on current AREU research projects, visit

www.areu.org.af.

RESEARCH FOR A
BETTER AFGHANISTAN

The AREU Library

Established in 2003, the AREU Library supports the research activities of AREU and provides public access to approximately 11,000 titles held about Afghanistan. The library is open to everyone. Contemporary materials produced inside Afghanistan and materials in Afghan languages are the focus of collecting, with an emphasis on long-term research value.

The library also aims to make available in Afghanistan research about the country and the region produced overseas. Materials of all types (books, journal articles, maps, posters, CDs, DVDs, databases and more) are available for use inside the library (no public borrowing is allowed). Photocopying facilities are available and the entire collection is listed online (see the “Library” page of AREU’s website).

The library, located in the AREU office in Kabul, is open from Sunday to Thursday (closed Friday, Saturday and public holidays), 9:00-12:00 and 12:30-16:00 (8:00-14:00 during Ramazan). Researchers are welcome to visit in person or email inquiries to library@areu.org.af.

THE AFGHANISTAN RESEARCH AND EVALUATION UNIT



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The Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit's Mission

is to inform and influence policy and practice through conducting high-quality, policy-relevant research and actively disseminating the results, and to promote a culture of research and learning.

AREU's niche as the foremost research institute based in Afghanistan is characterised by its:

Independence and impartiality

AREU independently develops its research programme and owns and makes public its findings. AREU's commitment to maintaining its independence has built its reputation as an impartial actor in Afghanistan's reconstruction and development debates.

Mandate to think and challenge

AREU's independence and impartiality provide it with a unique and respected voice with which to constructively challenge assumptions and offer alternative directions.

Afghanistan base, with field links

AREU's commitment to field-based research and its engagement with Afghans makes it unique in bringing often unheard voices into policy debates which could otherwise be dominated by elite and foreign voices.

Unique information services

AREU's public research library and generous approach to publication dissemination make it a rich source of information about Afghanistan.

In Afghanistan's rapidly evolving political and security environment, policymakers and practitioners are frequently forced to base their decisions on untested assumptions, which can have a negative impact on the quality of assistance. The need for reliable data and analysis is critical to the country's stabilisation, reconstruction and development.



Donors and Support

AREU was established in 2002 by the assistance community working in Afghanistan and has a board of directors with representation from donors, the United Nations and other multilateral agencies, and non-governmental organisations. AREU currently receives core funds from the governments of Finland, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. Specific projects have been funded by the Foundation of the Open Society Institute Afghanistan (FOSIA), the Asia Foundation (TAF), the European Commission (EC), the International Development Research Center (IDRC), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the World Bank.

Reaching Out

Through a variety of methods, AREU informs policymakers and practitioners in the Afghan and donor governments, the UN and the NGO community.

AREU's range of **research publications** communicate findings, analysis and recommendations from its research teams. Many AREU publications are translated into both Dari and Pashto. Publications are available in hardcopy from the AREU office in Kabul or electronically from AREU's website at www.areu.org.af.

AREU hosts **seminars, workshops, briefings and discussion forums** on a wide variety of relevant and timely policy issues to raise awareness, promote debate and disseminate AREU research findings.

AREU's flagship publication is the annual **A to Z Guide to Afghanistan Assistance**, a unique resource designed to enhance understanding of the array of actors, structures and government processes related to aid efforts in the country. It provides a glossary of assistance terms, an extensive contact directory, an overview of Afghanistan's system of government, a series of maps, and important national data.



Cover photographs: AREU file photos except for bottom left (courtesy of National Assembly of Afghanistan) and bottom centre (Hamish Nixon). Inside photograph: Mamiko Saito