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## AED hosts Industry Day for Contractors

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Representatives from more than 200 construction companies attended the AED Industry Day event. During the event, a traditional Afghan lunch was served inside the auditorium, allowing participants to remain in-place and network with each other. [USACE Photo by Bruce Huffman]

**KABUL, Afghanistan** — Representatives from more than 200 construction companies braved the cold and waited in line for almost an hour to clear security to attend the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Afghanistan Engineer District (AED) Industry Day event held Feb. 17 at the Inter-Continental Hotel in Kabul. "There were three reasons for this conference," said AED Commander Col. Thomas E. O'Donovan. "The first was to inform contractors about upcoming construction missions that we have for the District. The second was so our technical experts could explain different aspects about working with the Corps of Engineers, and the third reason was to give the construction companies an opportunity to meet and learn each others capabilities and create business opportunities for them to work together."



AED Commander, Col. Thomas E. O'Donovan conducted interviews with both Noorin and Tolo Television during the Industry Day event, reaching out to the broader Afghan audience. [USACE Photo by Bruce Huffman]

In his opening remarks, O'Donovan explained that ongoing projects from 2008 combined with new contract awards in 2009 would total about \$4 billion in construction and that there would be even more work for AED in Afghanistan in 2010. "Our workload is growing by a factor of four because of the U.S. forces expansion in southern Afghanistan and also because of the U.S. decision to divert funds from Iraq," O'Donovan told the crowd.

A buzz of excitement filled the room and each contractor listened closely as Corps personnel briefed about AED's various construction programs. The Corps staff also gave the attendees tips on proposal preparation and quality assurance management. Guest speaker Naeem Yassin, president of the Afghanistan Builders Association, gave a presentation urging Afghan construction companies to come together and establish unified business practices and construction standards. "As one, the ABA can be very powerful and influential at all levels," said Yassin. "Only you as company directors can make that happen."

Currently more than 70 percent of AED's construction contracts are awarded to Afghan firms, and nearly 90 percent of all workers on AED projects are Afghan. "With our increased workload, we will need even more qualified firms to accomplish our mission," said AED Contract Specialist Tim Robbins. "Events like this are designed to help Afghan and International construction firms navigate the intricate solicitation process."



AED Contract Specialist, Jesusa "Suzette" Labial checks-in two Afghan contractors at the AED Industry Day event held Feb. 17 at the Inter-Continental Hotel in Kabul. [USACE Photo by Bruce Huffman]



At the end of the day, the floor was opened up for questions. Dr. Zabi Mojaddidy from Technologists Inc. asked the AED panel a question about contracting with Afghan firms. [USACE Photo by Bruce Huffman]

According to Robbins, the response to the Industry Day event was so great that some companies had to be turned away. "To meet this demand, more Industry Day events are planned for the near future," said Robbins.

For information on upcoming Industry Day events: [aed.contracting@usace.army.mil](mailto:aed.contracting@usace.army.mil)  
For information about the Afghanistan Engineer District: [www.aed.usace.army.mil](http://www.aed.usace.army.mil)