

THE ASIA FOUNDATION

Resource Summary

(\$ in thousands)

Appropriations	FY 2010 Actual	FY 2011 CR	FY 2012 Request
Funds	19,000	19,000	14,906

Program Description

The Asia Foundation (TAF) is a private, nongovernmental organization (NGO) that advances U.S. interests in the Asia-Pacific region. For 56 years, working through its network of 18 offices in Asia, TAF has been a well-recognized American organization, with programs grounded in Asia which help to solve local and regional problems in cooperation with and in support of Asian partners. TAF has local credibility, a nuanced understanding of the issues facing each country, and extensive access to and relationships with host governments, local nongovernmental groups and the private sector. TAF operates throughout Asia, including in key countries, such as Afghanistan, Pakistan, Indonesia, and China. TAF's longstanding field offices and country representatives are unique and proven resources for the U.S. Government, Congress, and the private sector. Authorized by the Asia Foundation Act of 1983, appropriated funds are the Foundation's single most important funding source, enabling it to maintain its strategic presence throughout the region.

TAF's program priorities are developed in consultation with the Department of State and are closely aligned with U.S. foreign policy priorities and goals in Asia. Within the strategic goals and priorities of the Department, TAF focuses at the country and regional levels to build democratic institutions and improve governance, the rule of law, and a strong and vibrant civil society; support policies and institutions required for open markets, trade, and environmental protection; increase opportunities for women's participation and empowerment and protection of women's basic rights; and encourage stability and cooperative relations among nations in the Asia-Pacific region. The Foundation's approach has always been one of local ownership and capacity building, working with partner organizations to improve policies that will contribute to improved governance and more open societies. Programs provide training, specialized expertise, exposure to new innovations and technology, and linkages and networking between the public and private sectors. TAF carefully monitors its programs to ensure their impact and effectiveness.

Democratic Institutions, the Rule of Law, and Civil Society

TAF's programs strengthen democratic institutions, governance and parliamentary processes, support democratic elections, foster accountability within governments, promote the rule of law and free and fair elections, and encourage a vibrant, tolerant civil society, including Muslim organizations, and work toward effective citizen participation in a democracy by developing strategies for conflict management and protecting human rights. TAF support extends to the reform of structures and improved performance of institutions.

Open Markets, Trade and Environmental Protection

TAF supports reform efforts that create more competitive markets, foster entrepreneurship, enhance the use of domestic capital, and attract vital foreign investment to Asian countries to bolster economic growth

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and create jobs. TAF's programs focus on removing barriers to economic growth through policy reform, including assessments of the business climate through economic governance indices.

Women's Political Participation

TAF's programs support increased opportunities for women's participation in political processes, economic empowerment, and protection of basic women's rights, including counter-trafficking and combating gender based violence. TAF also supports increased educational opportunities, through vocational training and university education, and expanded understanding of women's roles and rights under an Islamic framework in South Asia.

Stable and Cooperative Relations among Nations in the Asia-Pacific Region

TAF contributes to regional stability through training and educational opportunities that develop a more skilled and well-informed diplomatic corps, and through informal U.S.-Asian dialogue on issues such as democratization, human rights, civil society, climate change, and regional economic policy.

In addition, TAF will continue its support of Books for Asia, its best known and highly regarded English language book donation program. Books for Asia has provided over 950,000 volumes each year, over 43 million since 1954, to academic institutions, government agencies, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). TAF also contributes to American Corners centers throughout Asia in cooperation with U.S. embassy initiatives.

Justification of Request

The Department's FY 2012 request of \$14.906 million is a reduction of \$4.094 million below the FY 2010 Actual level, a 22 percent reduction from FY 2010 to FY 2012. Although operation and security costs in the field are increasingly expensive, TAF has managed to keep its program-to-operating cost ratio low. Operating costs are represented under TAF's Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA). The NICRA covers certain operational costs for organizations that receive assistance from the Federal government. At 13.45 percent of direct costs, the NICRA rate for TAF is considered low among other NGOs.

With the \$14.906 million requested in FY 2012, TAF will build on its programs with Asian governments and NGO's to improve governance, expand the rule of law and civil society, increase economic opportunity and reform, build opportunities for women's participation and empowerment, and facilitate peaceful regional relations.

TAF activities will include building the capacity of government leaders at the central and local levels in Afghanistan, Nepal, Indonesia, and China to improve governance, transparency, and accountability through improved financial management, service delivery, public participation, and training. TAF will sustain programs to increase political and economic opportunities for women throughout Asia, particularly in Afghanistan, Indonesia, Vietnam, and China, and counter trafficking and domestic violence in Cambodia, Laos, Mongolia, Thailand, and Pakistan. TAF will seek to bolster its conflict management programs, which have been successful in bringing together government and civil society in mediation, traditional dispute resolution by tribal leaders, and peace building in trouble spots such as Afghanistan, Khybur Pakhtunkhwa and Baluchistan in Pakistan, Mindanao in the Philippines, Timor Leste, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and southern Thailand, among other places. TAF will also provide training on decentralization in Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, and for counter-corruption for Vietnam, Mongolia, and Nepal. TAF will also expand its well recognized public opinion surveys in Afghanistan, Thailand, and Sri Lanka, and

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reduce barriers to economic growth through the economic governance indices in Indonesia, Cambodia, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka. TAF will continue its shipments of books to Asian countries, to improve educational opportunity for thousands of Asia's youth, bolster technical capacity, and build libraries across Asia.

Funds by Program Activity

(\$ in thousands)

Activities	FY 2010 Actual	FY 2011 CR	FY 2012 Request
Asia Foundation Operation	19,000	19,000	14,906
Total	19,000	19,000	14,906

Funds by Object Class

(\$ in thousands)

	FY 2010 Actual	FY 2011 CR	FY 2012 Request
4100 Grants, Subsidies & Contrb	19,000	19,000	14,906
Total	19,000	19,000	14,906