Local business associations, chambers of commerce, and think tanks can actively participate in the democratic process by developing and contributing to policy platforms and discussion. CIPE programs equip these partners to advocate economic reform and engage in dialogue with the government. Advocacy tools such as coalition building, grassroots outreach, and business-led policy platforms give a voice to private sector needs and help to encourage strong, inclusive economic growth while bolstering democracy.
AFGHANISTAN

Helping the Private Sector Tackle Economic & Governance Challenges

Afghanistan faces growing security, governance, and economic challenges stemming from the international military drawdown and decreased levels of foreign development assistance. As a result, it is crucial that the Afghan private sector step up to generate economic growth, fight corruption, and build a prosperous and stable Afghanistan.

As the economic repercussions of the diminishing international presence have been felt most acutely outside of Kabul, CIPE spearheaded a Provincial Business Agenda (PBA) program focused on four key provinces that are major regional economic hubs — Nangarhar, Herat, Balkh, and Kandahar. Based on discussions at business-led summit meetings held in each province, CIPE produced PBA reports that outline the main barriers to commercial growth and propose policy solutions. Implementing these solutions will boost the economy, thereby creating jobs and reducing the pull of economic migration. The reports were presented to the provincial governments at public launch events attended by elected officials, policymakers, and private sector leaders. CIPE has since established an Advocacy Task Force in each province, composed of business association leaders, to advance the PBA recommendations.

CIPE further supports increased government accountability and democratic reform by providing training to members of the Afghan National Parliament on how to debate key pieces of economic legislation and better serve their constituents. In one case of that training in action, several female members of Parliament spearheaded parliamentary debate against an amendment to weaken a money-laundering law. CIPE also provides training on democratic governance and free market economic principles to Provincial Council members. This critical support helped Council members in Ghazni persuade the government to reduce the cost of land for small businesses, and members in Nangarhar to successfully pressure the Governor to address cases of alleged embezzlement.

UKRAINE

Increasing Private Sector Engagement in Democratic Reform

CIPE supports independent voices in Ukraine that contribute to dialogue on reform and hold the government accountable for its pledges, including on anti-corruption efforts, the main cause of economic problems since maidan.

Small and medium-sized enterprises — employing over 75 percent of Ukraine’s workforce — are crucial stakeholders in a democratic Ukraine. CIPE ensures that SMEs are able to provide input to economic policymaking by giving business associations and chambers of commerce the skills and tools to develop, propose, and advocate key legal and regulatory reforms.

CIPE collaborated with the National Business Platform, a broad-based coalition of business associations, to design Ukraine’s first-ever SME web portal to convene online policy discussions, and to provide economic and business news, information about advocacy campaigns, and training materials. The portal, which had more than 60,000 unique visitors in 2015, allows business leaders to assess, comment on, and vote on proposals for policy changes.

CIPE cultivated on-the-ground expertise by conducting training sessions on applying a methodology for anti-corruption analysis to local regulations in three cities — Kharkiv, Odessa, and Cherkasy — and by working with coalitions of business associations to conduct anti-corruption analysis of local regulations in three regions — Sumy, Ivano-Frankivsk, and Vinnytsia. These activities were followed by advocacy campaigns that resulted in the abolition or amendment of a number of local regulations, allowing SMEs to operate more freely and leading to better dialogue between local government and the small business community.