



## German Cooperation with Afghanistan

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### Reconstructed Road to Benefit 22,000 Citizens in Samangan

**Aybak, Samangan, 13<sup>th</sup> August 2020** – Today, provincial officials of Samangan province and representatives of the Afghan-German Cooperation inaugurated a reconstructed 3.8-kilometre long road. The asphalt road connects Aybak city to Dara-e Zhouwandon village and with the Mazar-e Sharif to Kabul Highway. More than 22,000 citizens will benefit from the improved infrastructure. Personnel from the provincial Roads Operation and Maintenance Department (ROMD, formerly Public Works Department) supervised the reconstruction works. The Afghan-German Cooperation's Regional Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF) financed the measure at a total cost of about AFN 94 million.

Samangan's Provincial Governor, Mr Mohammad Dawod Kalakani, stated, 'Today, I am very proud with the inauguration of this important road. We strongly support the continuation of German Cooperation activities. We hope that other roads in Aybak City will also benefit from this programme, so that the new town will be a suitable place for citizens living in the area.'

The newly asphalted road enables easier mobility between Aybak and the districts of Khuram-wa-Sarbagh and Roy-e-Doab as well as to Mazar-e Sharif, north-eastern provinces and Kabul. Residents are now benefiting from improved access to schools, local agricultural markets, health centres, nearby districts and provinces, stimulating economic growth and improving the locals' overall living conditions.

Due to the easier access to and between cities and job markets, the reconstructed road will enable employment and income opportunities in the future. During the road's reconstruction, more than 300 local people were employed in daily job opportunities. The smoother surface of the road is safer for drivers, reducing costs for fuel and decreasing carbon dioxide emissions.

Mr Zikrullah Nazari, the provincial director of Samangan's ROMD, said, 'I would like to thank the technical support and advice of RIDF engineers during the implementation of the project for increasing the capacity of our staff. We are willing to implement more projects with their cooperation, so that in the future we can execute projects independently. We are committed and will maintain and take care of the newly built road.'

The road between Aybak and Dara-e Zhouwandon village and the road connection with the Mazar-e-Sharif to Kabul Highway is now equipped with highly visible pavement markings, specific traffic lanes and traffic signs. It also has gravel shoulders, allowing pedestrians to walk along the roadside safely. The drainage systems have been improved, protecting the road from drainage overflow and flooding. The reconstruction took 18 months.

In addition to implementing the project, RIDF offered on-the-job training, coaching and mentoring sessions for engineers and managers working at Samangan's ROMD. These activities aimed at developing the department's capacities for identifying, managing, implementing and maintaining similar projects independently in the future. The ROMD is responsible for operating and maintaining the newly reconstructed road.

*The KfW Development Bank implements the programme Regional Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF) on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). RIDF aims to improve the living conditions in northern Afghanistan by providing basic infrastructure and empowering administration and citizen groups to plan, implement and operate infrastructure projects. Infrastructure measures include the construction of roads, irrigation canals, flood protection walls, and schools as well as the development of the power grid. Since 2010 the programme has funded, constructed and rehabilitated more than 270 km of roads, 98 km of irrigation canals and 15 flood protection dams. Furthermore, the programme has constructed 29 school buildings and connected 5,750 households to the power grid. So far, 5,500 government employees have taken part in RIDF training courses that aim to train provincial governmental personnel. This will enable Afghan institutions to implement projects like these independently in the future.*