



## German Cooperation with Afghanistan

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### Construction of Flood Protection Wall to Benefit 24,000 People Kicks Off in Balkh

**Mazar-e Sharif, Balkh, 28 September 2020** – Yesterday, the Governor of Balkh and the Deputy Minister of Rural Rehabilitation and Development together with Provincial Government Officials laid the foundation stone for constructing a 1.5-kilometre flood protection wall along the Balkh River in Sholgara District. About 40 participants from different local institutions as well as local elders attended the event that was celebrated at the Governor's Office in Mazar-e Sharif. More than 24,000 inhabitants of five villages will benefit directly from this improved flood protection wall. The Afghan-German Cooperation's Regional Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF) finances the project at a total cost of about AFN 118 million. The Provincial Department of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (DRRD) will supervise the construction works with the technical support from RIDF.

Mr Mohammad Ishaq Rahguzar, Balkh's Governor, expressed his gratitude to the Afghan-German Cooperation for implementing stable and useful projects. He emphasised the need to cooperate with the contractor and monitor the implementation of the project to ensure quality and said, 'It is the people of the area who should take care of the operation and maintenance of their project.'

Currently, the villages of Sare-e Mang, Abdul Rahimzai Bala, Abdul Rahimzai Payan, Baghi Palwan and Borgi, situated along a valley in Sholgara District, are prone to heavy floods that cause severe damage to agricultural land, gardens and houses. The locally made protection wall that was in place until now was destroyed in recent flooding. The new flood protection wall will be built to last with compacted dyke, a gabion blanket and gabion spurs. It will protect residential houses, gardens, public buildings, and business areas, such as schools, small markets, shops, health clinics and agricultural land from future erosion and flooding.

The project will promote socio-economic development in the area, improve the living conditions of the local population, and will create local job opportunities. The construction works will last about 22 months. The project will be monitored by DRRD and RIDF to supervise and ensure the quality of the construction.

Mr Mirajuddin Shams, the Admin and Finance Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development said, 'It is a good idea to award the projects to local construction companies. They need to apply for the projects and be competitive, because we cannot ignore the procurement rules.'

Since the project identification and proposal stage, RIDF has conducted on-the-job training, coaching and workshops for engineers and managers working with DRRD. These activities aim at improving the department's capacities for identifying, managing, implementing and maintaining similar projects independently in the future.

*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.*