



German Cooperation with Afghanistan

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Ground-Breaking Ceremony in Takhar for Road Project Benefitting 36,000 People

Taloqan, Takhar, 26 October 2020 – On Saturday, the reconstruction of a two-kilometre road in Taloqan District of Takhar Province began with the laying of the first stone. The reconstruction project starts at Pule-e-Jalat Village located five kilometres from downtown Taloqan along Kunduz-Takhar Highway and ends at Nowabad-e-Puleqak Village. Representatives of the local administration and Department of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (DRRD) attended the event. The Afghan-German Cooperation's Regional Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF) will fund the project at a total cost of about AFN 109 million and technically supports DRRD with its implementation.

Mr Abdullah Qarluq, Takhar's newly appointed provincial governor stated, 'I appreciate Germany's kind attention towards development of our province. I ask all involved partners to seriously take care of the quality of works during construction and to collaborate in its successful implementation.'

The road connects the three districts of Chaal, Bangi, and Eshkamesh and will benefit around 36,000 citizens living in its vicinity. Currently, residents in the three districts face difficulties in transporting goods, agricultural products and livestock to the city centre due to poor road conditions. Access to public, private and social services is constrained due to the dusty and sometimes muddy road conditions.

Upon completion, problems with dust pollution, caused by traffic during dry seasons, and the muddy road in winter will be resolved. The project will provide income opportunities to local residents during the entire construction works. In the long term, it will provide greater socio-economic benefits to the locals, improving living conditions through quicker access to social services such as schools, health facilities, and markets, and it will help foster security and cultural relations between villages.

Mr Sebghatullah Nazari, provincial director of DRRD said, 'This project will improve the living conditions of the residents and significantly reduce the travel time between three districts and 20 villages. At the same time, the reconstructed road can be used as an alternative for the Takhar-Kunduz main highway to prevent traffic jams.'

During the reconstruction, RIDF will offer 'on-the-job' training along with other training sessions for the DRRD engineers and managers at the provincial level. They aim at developing the department's capacity to design, construct and maintain rural roads independently in the future.

The existing gravel and dirt road will be reconstructed to include two-lane, six-metre-wide concrete or rigid pavement carriageways with a one-metre gravel shoulder on either side. The reconstruction will include drainage on both sides of the road to prevent water from pooling on the roadway surface and saturating the base. In addition, road crossing culverts will be extended or reconstructed as well as stone masonry retaining walls and wash structures to further protect the road. The concrete and rigid pavement surfacing was chosen by DRRD in close cooperation with RIDF. The effective rigid pavements can last up to 50 years, requiring little maintenance and offering better riding surface, skid resistance, night-time visibility and durability. Construction is due to take about 18 months to complete.

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.