



German Cooperation with Afghanistan

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Improving Infrastructure in Samangan and Balkh: More than 100,000 Beneficiaries

Aybak, Samangan, 9th March 2018 – Yesterday, Samangan's Department of Education and the Afghan-German Cooperation signed contracts for reconstructing two high schools. More than 5,400 students in Samangan will profit from an improved learning environment. Already on Wednesday, Balkh's Department of Rural Rehabilitation and Development signed contracts for rehabilitating two roads in Balkh. About 100,000 residents will benefit. The Afghan-German Cooperation's Regional Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF) funds the activities at a total cost of around AFN 282 million.

At the contract-signing event, the head of Samangan's Department of Education, Mr Abdul Matin Sarwari, stated, 'We look forward to the new school buildings. They will meet our students' most vital needs.' In 2015, an earthquake heavily damaged the main buildings of Ajani Malika Girls' High School and Kohna Aybak Boys' High School. Consequently, the schools moved classes to tents, open places or rental houses. German architects developed the new buildings' design in close coordination with the Afghan Ministry of Education's Infrastructure Service Department.

The earthquake-resistant facilities will be accessible for students with disabilities and offer thirteen fully equipped classrooms and two administrative rooms each. New bathrooms will substantially improve hygienic conditions, helping to prevent diseases. More than 5,400 students will benefit from an adequate learning environment.

In Balkh, the 1.5 kilometres long road between Mazar-e Sharif, Sholgara and Pul-e-Babu and the 3.7 kilometres long road from Sajadia to Amiri will be reconstructed. Traffic on both roads is heavy. In total, about 3,900 vehicles use the roads each day. The current streets are in bad condition and often adversely affected by floods and mud.

Balkh's Deputy Governor, Mr Mohammad Bashir Tawhidi, emphasised, 'We are thankful that the German government funds such projects in Balkh. We are willing to implement similar projects independently in the future.' The Consul General of Germany added, 'Soon, residents will have easy access to the city and markets.'

Economic and urban development heavily depend on infrastructure. The rehabilitated roads will stimulate economic growth and directly affect residents' livelihoods. It will be easier for locals to access the city of Mazar-e Sharif for day-to-day-business. A modern drainage system will prevent floods from compromising traffic in the future.

During the reconstruction processes, the German Regional Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF) offers on-the-job training, coaching and mentoring for engineers and managers at Samangan's Department of Education and Balkh's Department of Rural Rehabilitation and Development. The activities aim at building the departments' capacities for identifying, managing and implementing similar projects independently in the future.

The Regional Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF) is being implemented by KfW Development Bank on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The project aims at improving economic and social infrastructure in Northern Afghanistan while enabling provincial administrations to plan and implement development programmes independently in the future. For example, the project has funded about 160 kilometres of roads, 50 kilometres of irrigation canals



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and 11 protection dams against flooding or erosion since 2011. At the same time, the project has organised about 490 job-specific seminars for more than 2,300 people, facilitating the independent realisation of future infrastructure projects.