

German Cooperation with Afghanistan

Stabilising Northern Afghanistan by Strengthening Local Governments



Context

North-Eastern Afghanistan is a remote region with limited resources. The majority of its inhabitants are dependent on agriculture and animal husbandry for their livelihoods. The security situation is fragile and unpredictable, and young people are increasingly choosing to migrate to other parts of the country or abroad.

The Stabilisation Programme for Northern Afghanistan (SPNA) builds on the successful National Solidarity Programme (NSP) set up by the Afghan Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD). In recent years, the NSP has strengthened services and administrative structures in the communities of northern Afghanistan.

Objective

By means of socio-economic measures focused on developing infrastructure, the programme seeks to improve the living conditions of residents in the respective districts. Civil society

representatives in the districts plan development projects and implement them independently. They also cooperate more closely with each other and work more effectively with state institutions.



Around **7,000** members of the district development councils have received training

Measures and Results

Infrastructure expansion

The Stabilisation Programme for Northern Afghanistan (SPNA) supports communities in 52 districts in developing local infrastructure. Infrastructure projects are selected in consultation with the local population and municipal institutions. The districts receive grants for the implementation of small to medium-sized projects. The district development councils play a central role in the selection process, identifying the most important developmental requirements in their district. Decisions on selection are based on the existing district development plans.

332 projects have so far been completed as part of the project, including 250 schools and 34 roads and bridges that have been either newly constructed or renovated and equipped to

Overview	
Programme	Stabilisation Programme for Northern Afghanistan (SPNA)
Commissioned by	German Federal Foreign Office
Partner	Aga Khan Foundation Afghanistan (AKF-A)
Implementing organisations	KfW Aga Khan Foundation Afghanistan (AKF-A) Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED) Mercy Corps (MC)
Provinces	Badakhshan, Baghlan, Kunduz, Takhar
Programme objective	Stabilise fragile regions by improving socio-economic infrastructure and strengthening local development councils

an adequate standard. These construction measures have had a positive impact on the socio-economic situation and living standards in the respective districts, providing local people with access to education, economic activity and administrative institutions.



250 schools have been built/renovated and equipped

Training for district councils

Members of the district development councils (DDCs) have received high-quality instruction in the areas of project selection and monitoring as part of training measures delivered to a total of 52 district administrations. This has enabled them to better identify the needs of local residents and to develop more efficient and effective processes for the implementation of infrastructure measures. As a result, their overall competence has improved. DDC members also receive training in areas such as conflict management, improving opportunities for women and managing community resources.



Ground breaking for a new hospital in a rural area in Afghanistan | © KfW



A new bridge in Bangi connects villages and helps to improve the local population's living conditions | © KfW

Survey on the effectiveness of activities

- In November 2013, KfW commissioned a survey on the effectiveness of the activities carried out as part of the Stabilisation Programme. 95% of respondents said they had better access to social and/or economic infrastructure as a result of the NSP measures. Some respondents reported that the programme had brought about a stronger state presence and greater visibility on the part of state institutions. The fact that district development councils were involved in both project selection and project implementation was singled out as an especially positive development. This has brought the provision of basic infrastructure more in line with demand and ensured high levels of transparency.
- The local population is actively involved in construction activities, enabling them to generate income.
- The involvement of various governmental actors at district level provides them with an opportunity to get to know each other. This is an important first step towards better networking and the successful coordination of future projects.
- Each individual infrastructure project is monitored and evaluated by numerous engineers from partner organisations, construction companies, district development councils and monitoring consultants. This ensures that project activities are carried out to a high standard and that knowledge is shared among all actors.

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