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Implemented by:



Water supply – Afghanistan

Clean business

To date, the population in Balkh, a small town in northern Afghanistan, has sourced its drinking water from wells in backyards or in public places. This presents an obvious health concern. KfW Development Bank is providing start-up financing for the town to modernise the water supply.

In contrast to other towns in northern Afghanistan where KfW funds infrastructure measures to improve the water supply, there has never been a drinking water system in Balkh. This is why KfW was able to design a new, self-contained supply system with its project partner, the Ministry of Urban Development Affairs (MUDA), from the very beginning.

While ramshackle and leaking pipe networks are rehabilitated in other towns, where sometimes almost half of the drinking water seeps away, Balkh is being equipped with a completely new and modern drinking water sys-

Context

Some 20,000 people live in the small town of Balkh in northern Afghanistan, a figure set to rise to 36,000 by 2030. They have so far been reliant on wells in gardens and backyards or in public places for their drinking water and the water required for their daily needs, but the water in the wells is of sub-standard quality.

The consequences are quite predictable: dirty drinking water is a health risk, and children in particular often fall ill with diarrhoea or gastrointestinal infections. Water tanks that sell clean drinking water are too expensive, especially for the poorest of the poor.

Project approach

This is all set to change by the end of 2014. On behalf of the German federal government and at the request of Afghan partners, KfW Development Bank is helping the town provide the population with clean drinking water. KfW Development Bank is funding the development of a modern drinking water system with an investment of roughly EUR 5 million: a new 30-kilometre long pipeline network, two pump stations, a water tower capable of holding 200 cubic metres, 750 household connections and 10 public standpipes. A building complex for administration, storage and workshop purposes is also to be erected as part of the project.

Project name	Water supply in small and mid-sized northern towns
Commissioned by	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Country/Region	Afghanistan, Balkh province
Lead executing agency	Ministry of Urban Development Affairs (MUDA) Afghanistan Urban Water Supply and Sewerage Corporation (AUWSSC)





Improving the water supply for the local population is one of the main development objectives in Afghanistan. KfW photo archives / Photo agency – auslöser fotografie

tem from the word go.

The population in Balkh has more direct access to water than in comparable projects. Since the drinking water supply was developed from scratch, the inhabitants were involved early in key decisions and were able to decide, for example, where conduit pipes or standpipes should be placed.

Furthermore, the project managers sought direct contact with the elders in the town to explain the future drinking water system to them and answer any questions promptly. This is because only with their understanding and consent can the town's population be convinced that a modern and hygienically safe supply of drinking water generates costs that both private and business users must pay for in the form of charges. In any event, the tariffs for piped drinking water will be lower in comparison to the prices charged by the water tankers.

KfW Development Bank's start-up financing will supply clean drinking water to roughly 750 households by the end of the project. The new operator – Afghanistan Urban Water Supply and Sewerage Corporation (AUWSSC) – will be responsible for the continued expansion of the water supply and the connection of the remaining households.

Impact

The new drinking water system was completed in 2016 and transferred to the new operating company - the Afghanistan Urban Water Supply and Sewerage Corporation (AUWSSC). The system provides separate connections for about 10,000 people. Additional urban areas declared their interest in the project. The forecast population growth of 36,000 people by 2030 was taken into account by the planners, and the network capacity was designed to cope with the rising demand from the very beginning. Thus, the operating company is able to extend the network on the basis of the German initial funding.

Clean, healthy piped drinking water – this will change peoples' lives. Clean drinking water will make a noticeable contribution to reducing the incidence of diseases, improving hygiene and cleanliness in the household and facilitating cooking as well as personal hygiene.



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