



Press Release

Rural Roads Connect Villages to the World

25 May 2009

Kabul, Afghanistan – Capacity development and community participation are being placed at the centre of the Afghan government’s National Rural Access Programme (NRAP), a programme that continues to enhance year-round access to basic services and facilities for target communities in rural Afghanistan.

Since June 2002 the Minister of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) and the Ministry of Public Works (MoPW) have jointly implemented the NRAP, with implementation support provided by UNOPS.

Capacity development activities are designed to increase the Government’s ownership of the project, while community participation helps ensure compliance with environmental and social management standards.

NRAP has thus far generated 12.4 million labour days and created critical livelihoods for Afghan people in need. A total of 9,632 km roads have been constructed or rehabilitated, connecting rural Afghanistan in all 34 provinces. The programme has also constructed or rehabilitated 66 bridges with a total length of 1,684 meters, 14 airfields and 73,097 meter relevant road structures, such as culverts and protection walls. As part of its employment creation efforts, the programme has also built essential community infrastructures, including irrigation schemes, water and sanitation facilities, and schools and clinics, using labour-based approaches.

With contributions from multiple donors, the programme has successfully improved access to markets and basic services such as health and education.

“Its socio-economic impact on the lives of Afghan people has been enormous. It has given many rural women better access to pre-natal services and hospital births where health facilities had previously been inaccessible,” said UNOPS Director Bruce McCarron.

The programme has also reduced transportation costs and travel time, created opportunities for employment, facilitated economic activities and trade. The donors have included the World Bank, UK Department for International Development, US Agency for International Development, Swedish International Development Agency, Canadian International Development Agency, Governments of Japan, Australia and Spain.

The Government of Afghanistan has now started implementing the National Emergency Rural Access Project (NERAP) to build on the previous achievements and within the overarching programme objective of NRAP. With the current funding of USD 112 million provided by the



World Bank, the three-year project aims to improve approximately 2,000 km of secondary and tertiary roads nationwide and building the capacity of the Line Ministries to further expand management and works delivery.

The successful implementation of NERAP is critical towards the realization of goals set by the Afghanistan National Development Strategy.

For further information, please contact Katsui Kaya, UNOPS AGOC, Tel: +93 798 900 685, E-mail: katsui@unops.org or Website: www.unops.org