



PRESS RELEASE

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Feasibility Study for Khush Tepa Irrigation Canal Ceremony Held

Kabul, Afghanistan – The Office of the President hosted a ceremony to celebrate the launch of a feasibility study of the Khush Tepa Irrigation Canal in Kunduz, Jawzjan, and Balkh provinces. Upon completion, the proposed irrigation scheme will impact more than 60,000 households; with a 200 kilometer irrigation canal and a cultivated catchment area of 500,000 hectares. Afghan government officials, including President Ashraf Ghani, Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah, Minister of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock Nasir Ahmad Durrani, Acting Minister of Finance Mohammad Humayon Qayoumi, Acting Minister of Energy and Water Mohammad Gul Khulmi; deputy ministers and advisors attended the ceremony.

USAID's Strengthening Watershed and Irrigation Management (SWIM) program, in coordination with the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock and the Ministry of Energy and Water, is funding the irrigation scheme feasibility study to assist farmers to gain access to irrigation water. When farmers have access to irrigation water, they plant higher value orchard crops, grapes and vegetables, resulting in increased incomes from the sale of these high value crops.

“The U.S. government is committed to helping Afghanistan build a stable, prosperous country that creates opportunity for all citizens. Developing Afghanistan's agriculture sector provides great potential for employment and economic growth,” said U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan John R. Bass.

USAID is committed to working with the Afghan government to improve water systems for agriculture to increase agricultural production and to improve socio-economic development for the people of Afghanistan. USAID supports the expansion of water access through irrigation structures; the use of new technologies such as drip irrigation to improve the productivity of limited water resources; and the use of more profitable, shock-tolerant crops for livelihoods. SWIM is rehabilitating irrigation schemes in northern Afghanistan increasing the irrigated cultivated area by 57,000 hectares and assisting over 20,000 households over the next three years.

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With almost \$17 billion spent on development programs in Afghanistan since 2002, USAID provides the largest bilateral civilian assistance program to Afghanistan. USAID partners with the government and people of Afghanistan to ensure economic growth led by the country's private sector, to establish a democratic and capable state governed by the rule of law, and to provide basic health and education services for all Afghans.

The American people, through the U.S. Agency for International Development, have provided economic and humanitarian assistance worldwide for more than 50 years.”



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