



IMPROVING ACCESS TO IRRIGATION AND STRENGTHENING WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT IN AFGHANISTAN

Despite progress after long civil unrest, the rural population in Afghanistan faces high levels of food insecurity, even in years of good harvest. Improving this situation requires a dynamic agricultural sector, and irrigation development has been accorded high priority in the Government's development agenda. The Irrigation Restoration and Development Project (IRDP) was accordingly designed and implemented in response to these issues, as a follow-up phase of the Emergency Irrigation Rehabilitation Project (EIRP). While the EIRP focused on the quick rehabilitation of dilapidated irrigation infrastructure, the IRDP was designed to cover broader aspects of water sector management, keeping irrigation as the central focus. The project aimed to increase agriculture productivity and production by assisting local communities/farmers to rehabilitate irrigation schemes, enabling the preparation of improved designs of rehabilitation and development works, and continuing capacity building for preparing and implementing irrigation/water resource development projects.



WHAT DID THE PROJECT DO?

A total of 215 irrigation systems were rehabilitated during the project, covering an area of 284 391 ha, and supporting 611 483 beneficiaries. These irrigation systems were supported by developing the capacities of *Mirabs* (person/group that provides irrigation operation and maintenance services in traditional irrigation systems) in various irrigation management functions. In addition, 45.8 km of riverbank were strengthened, protecting over 67 746 households from flood threats. Another key project outcome was in various areas of water sector management. This included, among other things, enhancing the safety of dams, conducting a safety review of ten dams, and preparing dam safety and operational guidelines manuals. Hydromet stations were also established in the country, and a functional system of data collection, verification and analysis was initiated. The project also contributed substantially at the institutional level. A transboundary water unit was established in the National Water Affairs Regulation Authority (NWARA), and capacity support was provided to enhance the functioning of this unit. Government staff members were also trained in various aspects of water management. In addition, the revision of water law was supported.

KEY FACTS

Contribution

USD 34 704 076

Duration

December 2011 – December 2020

Resource Partners

Government of Afghanistan - Ministry of Energy and Water (MEW), now National Water Affairs Regulation Authority (NWARA)¹

Partners

Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL), Ministry of Finance (MoF), National Environment Protection Agency (NEPA)

Beneficiaries

Farmers, Mirabs and local communities, staff of MEW/ NWARA and relevant staff of line ministries and contractors

¹ MEW was changed to NWARA in 2019.

IMPACT

The project interventions enhanced the safety of dams and increased their water delivery performance, thus strengthening the resiliency of farmers against both flood and drought threats. Crop and water productivity was significantly increased, and the majority of farmers reported an increase in the value of their farmland. In addition, water-related conflicts were greatly reduced.

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

- Total of 2 674 km of canal length improved.
- Capacities of *Mirabs* developed in irrigation management functions, such as canal operation and maintenance, conflict resolution, resource mobilization.
- Riverbank protection guidelines prepared, and staff of River Basin Agencies trained in their application.
- Safety review of ten dams completed, and dam safety and operational guidelines manuals prepared, together with 12 source books (translated in local languages).
- Fifteen dam safety inspections undertaken on the ten existing dams, and dam safety inspection reports produced.
- Thirteen dam safety training workshops delivered.
- Detailed feasibility studies of six dams prepared.
- Minor safety works in two dams (Qargha and Darunta) carried out.
- 216 hydromet stations (160 hydrological and 56 metrological, including snow survey stations) established in the country, with 70 cableways, six sediment analysis laboratories and 63 guardrooms.
- Functional system of data collection, verification and analysis initiated, including provision of user-oriented services.
- Hardware and software required for hydrometrological data collection and management provided, together with adequate institutional capacity.
- Modelling of 14 subriver basins completed using available data from installed stations, and flood analysis and probability carried out from 2008 to 2018, as well as hydrological year status analysis, water potential analysis for all subriver basins, and sediment year books.
- Over 10 600 (7 050 professional engineers/technicians and 3 550 *Mirabs* and farmers) men and women participants from NWARA and other line ministries trained in various aspects of water management.

Project Code

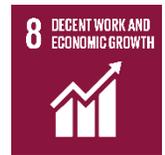
FAO: UTF/AFG/070/AFG

Project Title

Irrigation Restoration and Development Project (IRDP)

Contact

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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Partnerships and Outreach
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