

## German Cooperation with Afghanistan

# Mazar-e Sharif International Airport



### Context

Mazar-e Sharif is the capital of Balkh province and the economic and transport hub for Northern Afghanistan. Although the regional economy is developing well, firms are locating there, jobs are being created and the service sector is growing, infrastructural expansion is still insufficient and is hampering the region's ongoing development. Many of the roads are in a poor state, especially in mountainous regions of the country. They present difficulties for drivers and are often impassable in winter. This adds to travel and transport costs and increases travel times. Additionally, the old airport in Mazar-e Sharif did not offer facilities for handling larger volumes of passengers and freight. Consequently, it was necessary to expand the airport in line with international standards. There was also a need for institutions to monitor Afghan airspace and coordinate take-offs and landings. Increasing air traffic volumes require that this be done in an orderly manner.

### Objective

Mazar-e Sharif is a national and international transport hub that meets international transport and security standards.

### Measures & Results

With financial contribution from the Abu Dhabi Fund, the German government assisted the Afghan government in expanding the airport in Mazar-e Sharif in line with international standards. In the long term, the airport is set to decisively improve economic development in the region as an international transport hub between Europe and Asia.



2013: opening of the expanded airport

### Opening in summer 2013

A new passenger and freight terminal financed by the German government was opened at Mazar-e Sharif airport in June 2013. The German government also provided funding for the construction and expansion of operating and administrative buildings, the central entrance area and the security building. The airport apron was also expanded and the land side and its access roads redesigned.

Overview	
Programme	Mazar-e Sharif International Airport
Commissioned by	German Federal Foreign Office, United Arab Emirates
Partner	Afghan Civil Aviation Authority (ACAA)
Implementing organisation	KfW
Province	Balkh
Programme objective	Expand civil aviation in Mazar-e Sharif by developing the regional airport into a national and international transport hub in line with international standards

## Potential

The expanded airport can now handle some 400,000 passengers each year. The tense security situation and unresolved issues with regard to air rights and commercial operations mean that the airport is not operating at full capacity at present. Nonetheless, there has been a steady increase in the volume of civil and military air traffic in Mazar-e Sharif in recent years. Two national airlines and one international airline operate regular flights to the airport.



## Air traffic control

The air traffic control facilities and take-off and landing navigation system at Mazar-e Sharif's airport have been modernised. Additionally, KfW is supporting the Afghanistan Civil Aviation Authority (ACAA) with expanding its national air traffic control activities.



Modernised airspace surveillance | © KfW



Mazar-e Sharif International Airport's new check-in hall | © GIZ

## Positive impetus

Overall, the new international airport will deliver a great deal of positive impetus for the economic development of Afghanistan's Northern regions. Over four million people in the airport's catchment area potentially stand to benefit from the expansion. There has already been some visible progress. Companies are settling in the area and creating new employment opportunities. The construction phase alone saw 450 people employed at the airport, over two thirds of them from the region. This promotes development in the city of Mazar-e Sharif and strengthens the region as a whole. It is now also possible to transport patients to Kabul or abroad.



Mazar-e Sharif International Airport | © GIZ

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