

Illuminating Rural Afghanistan

Almost all villages in rural Afghanistan lack basic electrical power, which is needed for lighting, grinding wheat and corn, running small businesses and many other activities vital for improving the lives of ordinary Afghans. In order to tackle this problem, MRRD's NABDP, through its Energy for Rural Development of Afghanistan (ERDA) initiative, is providing renewable energy for rural communities of Afghanistan. The types of renewable energy covered will include wind plants, solar panels, micro-hydropower turbines, biogas plants and mixed solar-wind units.

Although ERDA is only in its preliminary stages, it has already begun field work and surveys. To date, the District Development Plans (DDAs) of 24 provinces have been reviewed and 222 renewable energy projects have been identified. These projects include 198 micro-hydropower plants, 6 solar panels, 6 wind plant, 1 biogas plant and 11 extension projects from available mains power.



This identification phase will be followed by a feasibility survey of the proposed renewable energy projects. After the survey is carried out, a number of priority projects which are in line with the budget will be selected for implementation.

As a starting point, this year, NABDP's ERDA plans to launch 7 pilot projects in Ghor, Daikundi, Herat, Nimroz, Faryab, Balkh, Kapisa and Nangarhar provinces. The pilot projects will serve as a basis for following up with the remaining renewable energy projects. The successful implementation of the renewable energy projects will contribute to both a better livelihood and a boom in business environment of rural Afghanistan.