PamirEnergy: Connecting Bartang Valley

A project company of the Aga Khan Development Network

Expanding energy provision to alleviate poverty is a core objective of PamirEnergy, and a key priority for the Government of Tajikistan. PamirEnergy is a Public-Private Partnership with a commercial and social mission: to bring light and warmth to each household of Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast (GBAO) and to improve the quality of energy service delivery. Expanding electricity services to rural and isolated areas creates the critical infrastructure needed for poverty alleviation efforts to succeed.

Despite PamirEnergy’s success to date (see related project brief), there remain several remote and isolated districts of GBAO that are not fully served by its main generation and distribution network. This note outlines plans to improve the supply and distribution of energy in Upper Bartang, Rushan District.

FINANCIAL NEED €285,200

- Access to electricity is a major challenge in Bartang Valley, population 6,355 (25% of the total population of Rushan District). Due to the difficult terrain, there is no unified power grid in place. Around 14% of villages do not have access to electricity in winter while 5-10% of villages do not have electricity all year.

- After the breakdown of the Soviet Union, the valley ceased to receive subsidised charcoal supplies and the inhabitants remained without reliable power supplies. From 1994 to 2001, the Aga Khan Foundation built 21 mini-hydropower plants (HPPs) serving 19,000 people. The plants operated for more than 15 years and are now in desperate need of repair. Pamir Energy has been entrusted to investigate and find solutions to improve power supplies in the region. To date, rehabilitation of two HPPs, Pasor and Basid (238 households), have been identified for investigation and further allocation of donor funding.

- Roshorv village still has no reliable power supply. Currently, there are 4 small HPPs with a rated capacity of 5 to 12 KW that were designed and put into operation by the local community in the Roshorv river. However, due to low water levels and maintenance issues, the generated power does not exceed 3.5 KW in summertime, and 1.5 KW in winter. The power produced is only sufficient for minimal lighting.

- PamirEnergy is proposing the construction of a new 100-KW mini-hydropower plant in Roshorv village, a 3-km transmission line, and the installation of 2 transformers of 0.4/10 KV. This investment will help provide reliable energy to even the most remote areas of Bartang Valley and connect an additional 1,200 people (164 households) for the first time.
Expected impacts of the Roshorv mini-hydel

1. Clean, affordable energy will be available for the first time to 1,200 people (in 164 households across seven villages)

2. Deforestation and smoke-related health issues will be reduced as electricity replaces firewood for heating and cooking

3. Improved learning: Students will be able to study in the evenings and teachers will be able to prepare for their classes

4. Schools and medical centres will be operational year-round, and have improved services and technological options

5. Time saved harvesting shrub for fuel will be invested in income-generating activities (food processing, sewing, tourism)

Top to bottom: People will no longer have to travel 50km a day on foot to harvest the teresken shrub for fuel. The significant time saved can be invested in income-generating activities. Smoke-related health issues are reduced when electricity replaces firewood for heating and cooking.

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