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PRESS RELEASE

U.S. GOVERNMENT SUPPORTS CROSS-BORDER ENERGY TRADE BETWEEN TAJIKISTAN AND AFGHANISTAN

DUSHANBE — USAID, On the heels of the successful Fifth Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan (RECCA V), the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), together with the Aga Khan Foundation USA and in close collaboration with the Pamir Energy Company, signed an agreement to foster cross-border energy trade between Tajikistan and Afghanistan. USAID, through its Regional Energy Security, Efficiency, and Trade (RESET) project, will provide \$785,000 in addition to nearly \$140,000 donated by the Aga Khan Foundation USA to help Pamir Energy extend electricity lines across the border from Tajikistan to Afghanistan to meet the energy needs of the Shugnan District in Afghanistan's Badakhshon province.

The project will bring electricity to the Tizhmoy and Pidrud villages near Sarchashma, as well as to the village of Viyod. All work will be completed in 15 months. The expansion of cross-border distribution lines to these additional villages in Shugnan district will help promote energy cooperation in the region, foster regional economic activity, and facilitate the development of small-scale commercial enterprises in the district.

Commenting on the newly signed agreement, Ambassador Ken Gross noted, "This will significantly improve the local population's quality of life by providing affordable, reliable access to electricity for the first time, for lighting, cooking, and other basic human needs. Access to electricity will also help Afghans open or expand small businesses, thus improving their livelihoods. In combination with parallel investments in bridges, markets, and connecting roads, it will foster trade and economic development, exemplifying the U.S Government's support for regional partnerships to advance economic cooperation and integration to benefit people throughout the region."

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