

USAID ENERGY POLICY PROGRAM

SUCCESS STORY

NEW TOWERS REVIVE SMALL BUSINESS

Contract No: AID-EPP-I-00-03-00004

Order No: AID-391-TO-12-00002

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April 6, 2015

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New 132 kV transmission line tower installed on Mardan Dargai Line at Mardan



New 132 kV transmission line tower installed at (Sardaryab) near Charsadda

Pakistan's aging electrical grid had often resulted in long power outages caused by high demand, equipment failures, and fuel supply issues. Power sites needed to be actively monitored to provide service during power outages. Old circuits tripped during rain storms with 10-12 hours of power outages. The need for frequent maintenance and repair and the lengthy duration of the outages had been causing heavy financial losses to Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO).

Nasir Iqbal, 40, runs a food business at the (Sardaryab) picnic spot near Charsadda where people come for boat rides and roadside eateries. A few years ago, a tower close to Iqbal's business was struck by floods and fell to the ground, where it remained. "This discouraged people from coming to the picnic area as it jeopardized their lives," he said. In January 2015, USAID rebuilt the 132 KV tower and built a protection wall around it, elevating the position of the tower so that was secure from future floods and natural disasters. The new higher tower also allows people to safely travel under it.

At the same picnic spot, Ehsanullah, 48, runs a stall selling fried fish. He says his business was also affected when the previous tower fell as people stopped coming. "Now that the tower has been placed securely at a good height, people have no problem in coming here and enjoying their time," he said.

To date, fifteen transmission line towers have been repaired on nine transmission line circuits. This has improved the reliability and safety standards of PESCO's grid stations. Raqib Shah, Assistant Engineer Transmission, Mardan Division, apprises that the previous tower in Mardan Dargai had a 132 KV line with a span that was precariously close to the ground. When a new road was built under the line and the population grew, the wire hung dangerously close to the people. Eventually, commuters were unable to cross the road in large trucks and other vehicles and had to take other longer routes. People living around the area felt unsafe and avoided being around the towers and power lines.

"USAID has now doubled the height of the tower making the lines taut and elevated," said Shah. In peak summer, power lines tend to heat up and expand, spanning lower than their original space. Now that the towers have been elevated to a greater height, the cables are not in the way of passenger or transport vehicles. Replacement and installation of the towers in the PESCO grid stations have translated into safety for the local inhabitants while also injecting new life into what had become the area's dying businesses.