

- a) Insufficient funding, including lack of foreign exchange,
- b) Lack of qualified personnel,
- c) Outdated machinery and equipment, and
- d) Deficient institutional arrangements.

The Consultants have suggested the required remedial measures and also provided short, medium and long term plans for Road Maintenance Management (RMM) and Road Asset Management System (RAMS), and have organized capacity building training for MOT engineers. The reports are applicable to the project in hand as much as to the whole road network of Tajikistan. Road improvements must be followed by well-planned programs of road maintenance and

asset management. Without regular maintenance and road asset management, roads can rapidly fall into disrepairs. The Consultants have advised MOT to adopt a range of comprehensive and coordinated activities, from transport planning, through design, implementation, operations and maintenance in order to maximize benefits to the community.

The project road is now providing all weather connectivity bringing immediate benefits to communities through better access to healthcare, jobs, schools, markets and like others, enjoying greater speed, safety and comfort, and lower vehicle operating costs. Commerce, industry, farming all depend on efficient roads for transporting and delivering goods, products and services and for their growth. The rehabilitated project road is delivering all these.

The project started in November 2012 at an estimated cost of US\$ 85 million and was substantially completed under the budget and was opened to traffic by the President of the Republic last year. The overall completion is expected by the end of this year. The

author was the Road Maintenance Engineer to the project and carried out the study for the Consultants KOCKS- BCL Jv. □

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ROAD PROJECT IN NEPAL

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The Ratna Highway connects the towns of Kohalpur and Surkhet. The part of the road connecting Nepalganj and Rupendia on the south, leading towards the Indian border and a land port, has already been improved. The other part, connecting Surkhet and Birendranagar, the district HQ and capital of Province-6, will be improved under the project. The Government plans to upgrade the road from narrow single-lane to standard double lane (2-lane). The road passes through plains, rolling and hilly terrains of the Lesser Himalayan Range, gradually rising up to 1740m from the mean sea level. There are several tourist attractions in the region including Bardia and Banke National Parks, mountain trekking, river rafting, heritage temples and monuments. The Bheri River is well known for rafting.

The Siddhartha Highway connects the towns Butwal and Pokhara. The importance of the road, like in the case of Ratna, lies in the fact that south of Butwal it connects to a land port near Bairawa on the Indian border. Towards the north the



Ayni-Panjakent-Uzbekistan Border Road Passing through a Gorge