SMEC to Help Upgrade Major Highway in Afghanistan

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SMEC has been engaged by the Ministry of Public Works of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to undertake a feasibility study and detailed engineering design for the rehabilitation and upgrade of the Salang Corridor, a major highway which connects the capital Kabul with north Afghanistan.

Funded by the Asian Development Bank, this project aims to find an alternate route to the existing 2.7 km Salang Tunnel, the core of the corridor. Built in 1964, the tunnel was the highest in the world until 1973, when the United States built the Eisenhower Memorial Tunnel in the Rocky Mountains.

After more than 50 years of service, the tunnel has fallen into a state of severe disrepair. Present conditions within the tunnel not only constrain traffic flow, but are also dangerous to users, because of inadequate ventilation, poor lighting and safety, as well as a failing road surface.

The project will be implemented in two phases: Phase 1: Feasibility Study and Alignment Recommendation; and Phase 2: Detailed Design, Safeguards, and Procurement.

SMEC’s scope of work comprises a feasibility study of three alignment options for the rehabilitation and upgrade of the Salang Corridor and completing the detailed engineering design, procurement documentation, and project and safeguard documents for the selected option.

Upon completion, the upgraded Salang Corridor will reduce travel costs as well as improve travel time and reliability for users. It will play a key role in transportation and regional transit in Afghanistan, and improve connectivity between South Asia and Central Asia.

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