



Annual Progress  
Report

2022

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*The order is by the size of contributions.*

# PARTICIPATING UN ORGANISATIONS



**Delivering  
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United Nations  
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United Nations Human  
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United Nations Population  
Fund



United Nations Conference  
on Trade and  
Development



International Trade Centre



International Labour  
Organization



United Nations Office on  
Drugs and Crime



United Nations Industrial  
Development Organization



United Nations Refugee  
Agency



United Nations Entity for  
Gender Equality and the  
Empowerment of Women



International Organization  
for Migration



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



United Nations Office for  
Project Services



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the United  
Nations



United Nations Capital  
Development Fund



**UNMAS**  
United Nations Mine  
Action Service



**World Health Organization**  
World Health Organization

The UN organisations are listed in the order of joining STFA

## LIST OF ACRONYMS

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ABADEI	Area-Based Approach for Development Emergency Initiative
ACG	Afghanistan Coordination Group
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AFPs	(UN) Agencies, Funds and Programmes
AHTF	Afghanistan Humanitarian Trust Fund
ANC	Antenatal Care
ARTF	Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund
BHN	Basic Human Needs
CBE	Community Based Education
CBO	Community Based Organization
CDC	Community Development Council
CfW	Cash for Work
CME	Community Midwife Education
DaO	'Delivering as One' (approach, modality, initiative)
DfA	De Facto Authorities
DIC	Drop in Centres
DTC	Drug Treatment Centre
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FHH	Family Health House
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team
HDP	Humanitarian-Development-Peace (Nexus)
ICCT	Inter-Cluster Coordination Team
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IFI	International Financial Institution
IG	Income Generation
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IP	Implementing Partner
JP	Joint Programme
MHPSS	Mental Health Psychosocial Support
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPI	Multi-Dimensional Poverty Index
MPTF	Multi-Partner Trust Fund
MPTFO	Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OPD	Outpatient Department
PDM	Post-Distribution Monitoring
PNC	Postnatal Care
PSS	Psychosocial Support
PUNO	Participating United Nations Organization
RCO	(UN) Resident Coordinator's Office

RH	Reproductive Health
RMNCAH	Reproductive, Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
STFA	Special Trust Fund for Afghanistan
TEF	(UN) Transitional Engagement Framework (for Afghanistan)
T-FHH	Temporary Family Health House
TFMU	Trust Fund Management Unit
UCT	Unconditional Cash Transfer
UN	United Nations
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UN-HABITAT	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNODC	United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UNSFA	United Nations Strategic Framework for Afghanistan (under development)
UNWOMEN	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WHO	World Health Organization

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# FOREWORD

Against the backdrop of the new context that emerged in Afghanistan after August 2021, the Special Trust Fund for Afghanistan (STFA) was established, in just two months, with a clear objective: to help address the basic human needs of vulnerable Afghans – women, men, girls and boys- across the country, complementing the more immediate humanitarian assistance that was already underway. The intent was to provide much needed basic human needs assistance in a well-coordinated manner – ensuring a robust ‘Delivering as One’ approach.

Today, as this report illustrates, the objective that the UN and its partners set out to achieve through the establishment of STFA, just over 18 months ago, is indeed becoming a reality: over 3.5 million Afghans have benefited, as direct and indirect beneficiaries of UN joint interventions funded by the STFA.

Examples of the tangible impact that the STFA and its participating partners have had on the day-to-day lives and livelihoods of Afghans are described in more detail in this report. Such interventions constitute community-owned and bottoms-up solutions in support of the provision of basic services, community infrastructure, income generation, disaster risk management and social cohesion – including activities to advocate for human rights and women’s empowerment at community level. Participation and inclusion have been an integral part of the delivery of these interventions, these principles remain part of the ‘DNA’ of the STFA portfolio.

The STFA represents a remarkable achievement: a testament of the intensive work that was conducted - over a very short period of time- by UN agencies, funds and programmes and by members of the wider international community that supported STFA since its inception.

The leadership that UNDP provided in the establishment and the operation of the Fund was equally remarkable and should be collectively acknowledged. UNDP laid out the programmatic foundation for the STFA through its ABADEI strategy,

it assumed the chairmanship of its Steering Committee for most of 2022, and it enabled the operational viability of the Fund through the Trust Fund Management Unit that it administered and funded in 2022.

On the 7th of December 2022 I assumed chairmanship of the steering committee, but the starting point was already robust thanks to the efforts of UNDP: STFA is indeed a very good example of how UNDP can assume its ‘integrator role’, in support of the wider UN system, and in very effective collaboration with the UN RCO.

I would like to thank the leadership of the UNDP Administrator, Achim Steiner; the Assistant Secretary General and UNDP Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, Kanni Wignaraja; the UNDP Resident Representative for Afghanistan, Abdallah Al Dardari; and the Trust Fund Manager, Hiroko Massey and her team, for their commitment and active role in making STFA the reality it is today.

I would like to further extend special thanks to Sweden, as co-chair, for their important leadership role in this tremendous joint venture, and for coordinating with other contributing partners to ensure that diverse voices were heard. Sweden’s very valuable, substantive insights and inputs as co-chairs have contributed to shaping the work of the STFA.

However, we are facing serious challenges. Following recent developments in the country, the progress that was made last year is at risk due to various restrictions imposed by the de facto authorities, most notably the ban of Afghan female workers from NGO and UN offices. But one thing is clear: under my watch, and the watch of my successors, STFA will remain committed to delivering in a principled manner, with no discrimination, and with the meaningful participation of all – including the participation of women as workers, as beneficiaries and as agents of the country’s development.

Moving forward, I have also asked the STFA Secretariat to redouble efforts to advance the agenda for Gender Equality and Women's empowerment, engaging with PUNOs to develop innovative programmatic initiatives, under the existing regional joint programme portfolio, that are well adapted to the emerging context. Indeed, the challenges are not a reason to pull back support to Afghan women and girls: on the contrary, these challenges should prompt us to redouble efforts to ensure such outreach, and the quality of support, is indeed maintained or expanded.

Furthermore, the STFA will be even more integrated into the 'One UN Funding Framework' for Afghanistan - complementing various other multilateral funds (ARTF, AHTF, AITF) and the humanitarian pooled funding mechanisms (AHF and CERF). In that regard, the STFA will be the UN's pooled funding instrument under the emerging UNSFA (currently under formulation).

It is also important to provide greater support alongside greater accountability: it is critical to capitalise the fund. It is my hope that donors will continue to see the value of the STFA and that we can jointly - through stable, predictable, multi-year funding - continue to implement more effective programming and greater efficiencies.

I believe STFA potentially provides an important reference for other countries and regions, beyond Afghanistan and the Asia-Pacific: it demonstrates an effective pathway to enable, and accelerate, UN (development system) reform- i.e. a proven instrument to catalyse greater inter-agency collaboration, higher operational efficiencies and, ultimately, greater programmatic impact through well-targeted investments in 'Delivering as One initiative. Such experience is relevant not only for enhancing cooperation within the UN, but within the international community as a whole (including in crisis and post-crisis settings). The UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office has indeed leveraged the experience of STFA to inform the setup or development of other country-wide, multi-partner, pooled funds across the globe.

So much has taken place since the Fund was established. I would like to commend all STFA partners for this ground-breaking joint venture, despite all the challenges that we are confronting daily. This STFA experience should continue to be showcased regionally and globally. This is an excellent example of how, together, we can 'Deliver as One', even in complex settings such as in Afghanistan.



**Ramiz Alakbarov**

Deputy Special Representative  
of the Secretary-General United  
Nations Resident and  
Humanitarian Coordinator



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Special Trust Fund for Afghanistan (STFA) was established on 20 October 2021 to help address basic human needs in Afghanistan, at a time when communities across the country were confronting a severe socio-economic crisis. It constitutes an important instrument to enable well-coordinated international assistance through joint UN interventions, while facilitating robust linkages with humanitarian actions on the ground. STFA was established as a Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) to support the implementation of the UN Transitional Engagement Framework (TEF)'s strategic priorities<sup>2[a]</sup> and <sup>3[b]</sup>. As part of these priorities, STFA seeks to enable the implementation of the

ABADEI<sup>[c]</sup> strategy, which provides the programmatic foundation for the fund's existing portfolio.

The ABADEI Strategy represents one of the first large-scale attempts to operationalise a basic human needs approach within the complex and fast-evolving context of Afghanistan. Conceptually, it provides an articulation of investments in essential services, livelihoods and community resilience that complement humanitarian efforts by helping households (including women-headed households), communities, and the private sector cope with the adverse effects of the crisis.

The ABADEI Strategy aims to promote more effective and integrated responses by strengthening the collaboration, coherence, and complementarity of interventions with those covered through the Humanitarian Response Plan. STFA is also being strategically positioned to become part of the One UN Funding Framework from 2023.

Future programming of the STFA will be guided by the successor document to the UN Transitional Engagement Framework (TEF), which will serve as the strategic planning framework for the United Nations in Afghanistan.

Activities under the result areas of the four thematic windows of the Fund cover the (i) provision of essential services, (ii) community-based livelihoods and local economies, (iii) protection of farm-based livelihoods from natural disasters, and (iv) the promotion of social cohesion and community resilience. As of December 2022, 17 UN Agencies<sup>[d]</sup> have signed the memorandum of understanding to participate in the STFA, with an invitation remaining open for any interested UN agencies to join the Trust Fund.

Eight regional joint programmes (JPs), covering the entire country, were developed and approved by the STFA Steering Committee in 2022. The STFA regional programme portfolio is being rolled out in stages, subject to the availability of funds and based on the STFA resource allocation strategy.

In January 2022, joint programmatic activities were launched in the Northern and Southern regions of Afghanistan; in August 2022, new allocations were approved to initiate JP activities in the Eastern region. In addition, a joint health sector programme, to support one of the major paediatric hospitals in Afghanistan, began implementation during the second quarter of 2022. All in all, four joint programmes have been launched during the period under the purview of this report.

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[a] "Essential services are sustained that address basic human needs for the people in Afghanistan"

[b] "Afghanistan will preserve social investments and community-level systems essential to meeting basic human needs, protect gains towards the SDGs, and develop scenarios for future engagement."

[c] Area Based Approach to Development Emergency Initiatives

[d] The 17 PUNOs that have joined STFA are: UNDP, UN-Habitat, UNFPA, UNCTAD, ITC, ILO, UNODC, UNIDO, UNHCR, UN Women, IOM, UNESCO, UNOPS, FAO, UNCDF, UNMAS and WHO.



By the end of 2022, STFA mobilised approximately US\$176 million, of which US\$143.7 million has been allocated to the three aforementioned joint regional initiatives (for Southern, Northern and Eastern Afghanistan) and to the health sector project. So far, thirteen out of seventeen PUNOs have been awarded grants through the ongoing Regional JPs and the joint health sector programme.

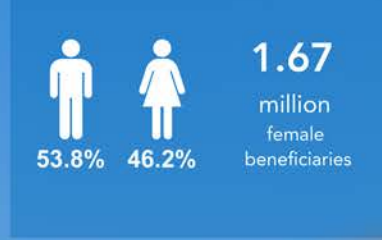
Activities for STFA joint programme began at a time when the Afghan people were facing serious challenges: after the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan's government had suddenly collapsed, many people had lost their jobs, and poverty was on the rise. Many Afghans, particularly from the country's rural parts, had taken perilous routes to seek refuge in neighbouring countries. Despite several obstacles, by the end of 2022, the STFA Joint Programmes had supported 3.63 million people, including 1.67 million (46.2%) female beneficiaries.

2.93 million people, including 1.5 million (52.4%) female beneficiaries, had improved access to essential services, including basic, community-level, service infrastructure (e.g. for water and sanitation); health services; renewable energy; and education services. To meet the most immediate livelihood requirements of their households,

a total of 280,838 persons, including 53,293 (19.0%) women, received livelihood assistance. Cash for Work (CfW), UCT, agriculture-based livelihood activities, and provision monetary and in-kind support to MSMEs were the primary components of STFA's livelihood support initiatives. Thousands of new and existing jobs were made possible through the support provided by STFA. Communities in disaster-prone areas also benefited from investments in more resilient, basic, community infrastructure –such as flood retention walls. These activities were conducted through a bottoms-up, community-driven, approach to programming – with inclusion and participation (of women and men) at the core of the design of such interventions.

Throughout 2022 – and particularly at the end of the reporting period- the enabling environment has become more challenging, including with respect to the operating space for women's engagement in programmatic activities. Notwithstanding these challenges, the Fund Secretariat, PUNOs, and implementing partners have been working together to identify solutions to such challenges, to continue to ensure a principled approach to programmatic delivery.

## STFA PROGRESS IN 2022 AT A GLANCE



## Key STFA results in 2022



- Irrigation
- Water supply
- Sanitation infrastructure
- Roads
- Energy
- Shelters



# 1. INTRODUCTION: SCOPE OF STFA SUPPORT



# 1. INTRODUCTION: SCOPE OF STFA SUPPORT

The Joint Programme portfolio under STFA offers a common framework for PUNOs to provide coordinated assistance to address priority needs of the most vulnerable people of Afghanistan. Based on the four thematic windows of the ABADEI Strategy, the JPs intend to contribute to the following four outputs, which, in turn, fall under TEF's Outcomes 2 and 3:

- **Output 1** – Essential services and community infrastructure – including for health, agriculture, education, and energy supply - are functional, sustained and expanded to meet different needs of women and men.
- **Output 2** – Livelihoods, businesses and the local economy can recover, become more sustainable and be more resilient to instability.
- **Output 3** – Communities have improved infrastructure, access to water and preparedness mechanisms to protect farm-based livelihoods and cope with climate and environment shocks and natural disasters.
- **Output 4** – Social cohesion, respect for human rights – including, in particular, the rights of women and girls and access to justice are progressively strengthened at the local level – contributing to greater community resilience.



*STFA geographical coverage*

The STFA Joint Programmes build on the wide range of expertise and longstanding experience of PUNOs in Afghanistan, as well as on the findings and lessons learned in early 2022, during the implementation of the Joint Programme initiation plan (JPIP) for the Northern and Southern regions. The JP interventions were designed to capitalise on the different mandates, capacities, and footprints of PUNOs - avoiding duplication of efforts and promoting meaningful collaboration and synergies. Such joint efforts, in turn, translate into more significant and more sustainable impact, at a larger scale, in the lives and livelihoods of Afghans in the target regions.

A total of seventeen UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes are participating organizations under STFA. Thirteen, out of these seventeen organizations, received funding allocations for the implementation of STFA JP activities in Northern, Southern and Eastern regions. The Ataturk Health Support Project is currently being implemented, jointly by WHO, UNDP and UNFPA. The below table presents the line-up of STFA PUNOs which have been supported through STFA allocations.

PUNO	Joint Programmes			
	Northern	Southern	Eastern	Health
ILO	Yes		Yes	
FAO	Yes	Yes	Yes	
IOM	Yes	Yes	Yes	
UN Habitat	Yes	Yes	Yes	
UN Women	Yes	Yes	Yes	
UNCTAD	Yes	Yes	Yes	
UNDP	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
UNESCO	Yes	Yes	Yes	
UNFPA	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
UNODC	Yes	Yes	Yes	
UNOPS	Yes		Yes	
UNHCR	Yes	Yes	Yes	
WHO				Yes

*List of STFA PUNOs which received allocations per JP*



## 2. STFA GOVERNANCE: 2022 UPDATES

The Special Trust Fund for Afghanistan has a two-tier decision-making and coordination structure. Strategic decision-making is led by the STFA Steering Committee. At the technical level, programming is coordinated by the Technical Coordination Working Group (TCWG). Both tiers and their decision-making processes are supported by the Fund Secretariat - the Trust Fund Management Unit (TFMU).

During the year 2022, six STFA Steering Committee meetings took place. The key decisions adopted by the SC in these meetings are summarized in the below matrix. The SC meetings were preceded by discussions and deliberations at the TCWG level, which helped to inform the decision items tabled for the consideration of the SC.

Steering Committee Meetings Decisions Items	Date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revision of STFA TORs, to introduce a co-chair for the STFA Steering Committee, was approved.</li> <li>First batch of STFA regional Joint Programme (N, S, E, W) approved.</li> <li>First round of allocations to PUNOs in 2022 was approved.</li> <li>The quarterly reporting template was approved.</li> </ul>	(2022.03.07)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sweden (SIDA) became the first co-chair of STFA</li> <li>Joint health sector programme was approved.</li> <li>and allocation of US\$2.59M was approved.</li> </ul>	(2022.04.07)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Second batch of the STFA regional joint programme (SE, NE,C, CH) was approved</li> <li>STFA quarterly Steering Committee meetings were approved</li> </ul>	(2022.05.23)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>US\$41.5M\$ allocation to the Eastern Region was approved,</li> <li>endorsement of allocation of STFA funds for the continuation of TFMU - Full TFMU Project Document (2023-2025) approved.</li> <li>Delegation of Authority for Sub-regional allocation to PUNOs and technical-level modifications to TCWG were approved.</li> </ul>	(2022.08.30)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>STFA Chairmanship handover from UNDP Resident Representative to UN Resident Coordinator was approved</li> </ul>	(2022.12.08)

Among the decisions adopted by the Steering Committee in 2022, it is important to highlight the following key milestones for 2022 (i) the approval of STFA Regional JP portfolio (covering all eight regions of Afghanistan), with an aggregate budget of over US\$1.2 billion; (ii) the co-chairmanship of Sweden, and (iii) the handover of the Chairmanship from UNDP Resident Representative to the UN Resident Coordinator.





### 3. OUTCOME-LEVEL RESULTS: STFA CONTRIBUTIONS TO TEF

The STFA Joint Programme Portfolio was designed to contribute to address the basic human needs of the Afghan people—and it is positioned under Outcomes 2 and 3 of the UN Transitional Engagement Framework (TEF)

#### TEF Outcome 2:

Essential services are sustained that address basic human needs for the people in Afghanistan

By the end of December 2022, approximately 3.63 million people, including 1.67 million (46.2%) women and girls, benefited from STFA Joint programme activities in the Northern, Southern, Eastern and Central Regions of Afghanistan.



The STFA Joint programme activities resulted in provision of essential services, including basic service infrastructure (e.g. for water and sanitation), health, and education services, to approximately 2.9 million people, including an estimated 52.7% female beneficiaries. The infrastructure support activities assisted over two million people in meeting their basic requirements, such as access to clean water, shelter, electricity, roads, and sanitation infrastructure. They also assisted communities in improving and expanding local irrigation schemes, and provided them with more resilient basic infrastructure – e.g. for flood protection. When implementing infrastructure support activities, PUNOs adhered to an area-based strategy, giving preference to local skilled and low-skilled labour. Such projects also resulted in the creation of significant employment opportunities within the target communities (cross-fertilizing progress under Joint Output 2 as well).

About 0.93 million people, 59.3% females, benefited from access to health services under the STFA JPs. Such health support services mainly entailed Reproductive, Maternal, Neonatal, Child and Adolescent Health (RMNCAH) services, drug prevention and treatment, mental health and psychosocial counselling services and Covid-19 related services.



The health support services were mostly delivered in remote areas where access to health services is almost non-existent. Many of the beneficiaries who had received initial treatment had re-visited the health centres to seek additional treatments –which also provides an clear indication of the timeliness and relevance of such assistance in target areas.

Over 280,838 people, including 53,293(19.0%) females received livelihood support under the STFA JP activities. The livelihood activities included Cash for Work (CfW), Unconditional Cash Transfer (UCT), MSME support, vocational training, and agriculture-based livelihood support.

4,524 MSMEs, including 3,222 (71%) women-led MSMEs, received cash and in-kind support to sustain and expand their businesses. The livelihood support under the STFA JPs was delivered at a time when poverty had started to rise, employment opportunities in the country were declining, and a large part of the population, especially in rural areas, were resorting to migration to neighbouring countries, often through perilous routes. The STFA CfW support created temporary job opportunities for Afghan households to fulfil their immediate financial needs – and, at the same time, yielded positive ‘multiplier’ effects through the revitalization of local economies and through improvements in basic community infrastructure within target areas. Furthermore, the MSME support resulted in hundreds of new MSME start-ups; and in the retention and/or creation of jobs for thousands of men and women in the target locations.



### TEF Outcome 3:

## Afghanistan will preserve social investments and community-level systems essential to meeting basic human needs, protect gains to the SDGs, and develop scenarios for future engagement.

Throughout the reporting period, STFA Joint programmes contributed to promote social cohesion in and to protect community-level systems in target areas- through a range of interventions. The JP activities ranged from awareness raising and training on gender and human rights; skills-development of community ‘peace builders’, capacity development support to civil society organizations and local media, and strengthening of community planning processes and community level governance structures (including CDCs). Indeed, STFA-supported Joint Programmes leveraged CDCs and community structures to inform locally-driven, bottoms-up, solutions.

Over 334,099 people, including 46,695 (14.0%) females, benefited from awareness raising and capacity building activities under the STFA JPs. Furthermore, multiple country-wide radio and social media campaigns reached an estimated 15-20 million Afghans across the country. The radio programmes delivered contents tailored and designed for women, sensitizing them about their rights and providing them with unique learning opportunities. The contents from the radio programmes were also published on social media to reach wider audiences.

In the post-August 2021 context of Afghanistan, women face increasing restrictions to practice their basic rights. It is more critical than ever before to ensure women participate and meaningfully engage and benefit from JP interventions. At the same time, however, the operating environment has become more challenging, particularly at the end of 2022. As the DFA’s announced ban on women working for I/NGOs was introduced during the last week of 2022, its full impact on the STFA JP activities was yet to be seen during the reporting period. Notwithstanding such challenges, PUNOs and implementing partners have been active in exploring appropriate measures to maintain a principled approach to delivery – and that women continue to actively engage as workers, beneficiaries and agents of development. Such measures are expected to continue to be expanded during 2023, and their impact regularly monitored.



## 4. OUTPUT-LEVEL RESULTS: STFA ACROSS FOUR PILLARS

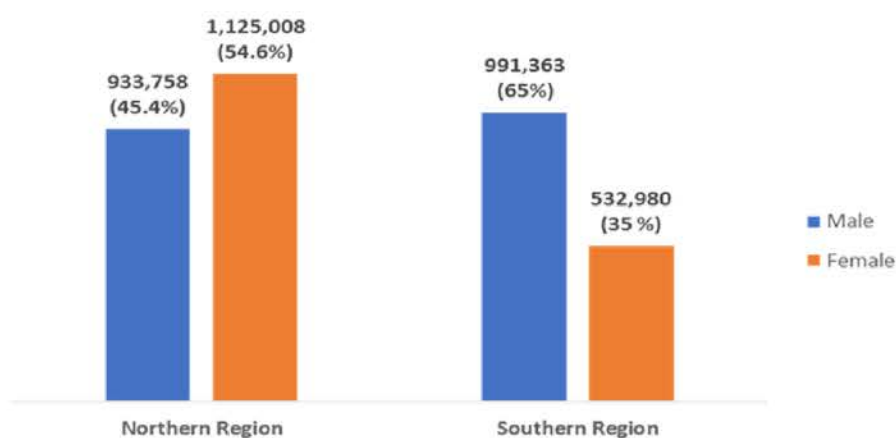
By the end of December 2022, approximately 3.63 million people, including 1.67 million (46.2%) females, benefited from the STFA Joint programme activities in the Northern, Southern, Eastern and Central Regions of Afghanistan. The majority of the STFA beneficiaries (81.8%) had improved access to basic services (Output 1), followed by 9.4% who benefited from social cohesion activities (Output 4), 7.7% from livelihood support (Output 2), and 1.1% from disaster risk management activities (Output 3).

When comparing beneficiaries by regions, following one year of implementation, the number of beneficiaries remains higher in the Northern region. The proportion of beneficiaries who accessed basic services under Output 1 in the Northern region is more than twice the number in the Southern region. This difference could be attributed to the number of infrastructure projects implemented in the two regions and delays in starting FHHs in the Southern region.

STFA Joint Programmes	Joint Programme Output Areas			
	Provision of Services (Output 1)	Livelihood Support (Output 2)	Disaster risk management (Output 3)	Social Cohesion (Output 4)
Northern Region	1,933,207	100,527	16,953	8,079
Southern Region	989,857	179,841	22,352	332,293
Eastern Region	0	470	0	0
Ataturk Hospital	47,245	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,970,309</b>	<b>280,838</b>	<b>39,305</b>	<b>340,372</b>

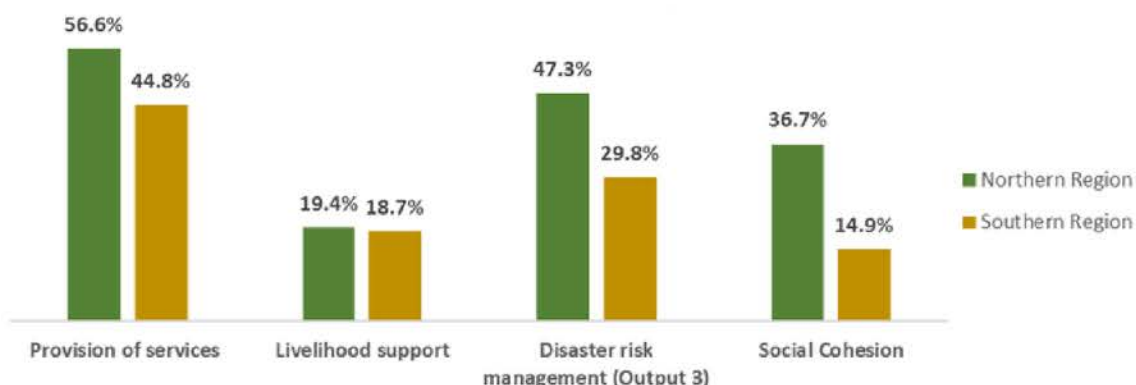
*STFA Beneficiaries by Region and Output area*

Similarly, when comparing the proportion of female beneficiaries by region, it is evident that more females benefited in the Northern region (54.6% vs. 35.0% in the Southern region); moving forward, PUNOs will be engaged to identify proactive measures to reduce such gap across regions.



*Ratio of Female Beneficiaries by Region*

The same trend appears to be the case when comparing the proportion of female beneficiaries by output area, with the northern region outnumbering the southern region in all four output areas.



*Comparison of Northern and Southern Regions' Beneficiaries by Output*

Output 1- Essential services and community infrastructure – including for health, agriculture, education, and energy supply - are functional, sustained and expanded to meet different needs of women and men.

2.97 million people, including 1.56 million (52.9%) females, accessed essential services under the STFA joint programmes (Output 1). The following are key services accessed by people in the targeted communities under this Output:

### 1. Access to basic community infrastructure

About 2.06 million people, including 1.01 million (49.1%) females, accessed improved community infrastructure under the STFA Joint Programmes.

- 506,628 meters of irrigation canals had been constructed/rehabilitated which benefited more than half a million people (50%) females in the Northern and Southern regions to irrigate their lands.
- 11,168 meters of flood retention walls and of 3 Karees cleaning projects were completed. These projects were estimated to improve access to irrigation water and provide protection from floods for close to 200,000 people in the targeted communities—50% beneficiaries were females.
- 160 Kms of communal roads and 155 culverts were constructed/rehabilitated to improve connectivity for over 600,000 people in targeted communities, with 50% of the beneficiaries being females.
- 1,650 energy kits were installed benefiting approximately 200,000 people with improved access to electricity. Approximately 54 health facilities also received solar energy kits resulting in these health centres now benefiting from uninterrupted electricity supplies.



- 36 waste collection points were constructed benefitting approximately 262,000 people, half of which were females. In addition, 300 households (approximately 21,000 people) now have access to clean drinking water as a result of the drilling of 10 borehole wells in the Southern region.
- 83 Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) scheme/systems, four water reservoirs and 10 boreholes well projects were completed benefitting close to 300,000 people in the target communities.
- 711 shelters were newly constructed and/or repaired, benefitting 711 households (20% female-headed households), who did not previously have shelters.



The majority of PUNOs had reported that, in line with area-based programming, they engaged local labour when it was available, thereby creating employment opportunities for thousands of skilled and unskilled members of target communities.

## 2. Access to Health Services

By the end of December 2022, some 930,199 people, including 551,844 (59.3%) females, accessed medical services under the STFA JPs. The following are some of the key highlights of health services delivered:

### Mental Health and Psychosocial Counselling Services (PSS)

Approximately 19,385 people, including 10,762 (55.5%) females, benefited from mental and psychosocial counselling services in the Southern region. In addition, 7,325 affected individuals (2,227 males and 5,098 females) received educational and awareness-raising sessions on health and mental health issues.

Two family resource centres resumed operations in Helmand and Nimroz provinces. The centres provide dedicated services, including psychosocial counselling services to female survivors of violence. Furthermore, five FHHs (T-FHHs) in the Kandahar province of the southern region started GBV-integrated services, including psychosocial counselling to females. The GBV-integrated services are expected to be rolled out to all 29 FHHs in 2023.

Lastly, capacity-building interventions for service providers were also delivered under this output: for instance, 30 NGO personnel received training on mental health and psychosocial counselling areas under the STFA JP; a six-day training on basic counselling skills and on the establishment of peer support groups was organised to enhance the know-how of local counsellors.



## Reproductive, Maternal, Neonatal, Child and Adolescent Health (RMNCAH) services

STFA supported 90 FHHs across the Northern and Southern regions (61 in the Northern and 29 in the Southern region) to deliver the provision of RMNCAH services in difficult-to-reach areas within target provinces. Out of the 90 FHHs, 32 of them were supported to ensure the continuity of RMNCAH services in Faryab province. The other 58 FHHs (29 in Balkh, Faryab and Samangan provinces in the North and 29 in Helmand province, in the South) were to be newly established in 2022. However, this activity did not progress as anticipated due to consecutive delays in obtaining no objection certificate (NOC) from the DFA MoPH to safely, and in an unhindered manner, start the construction of the FHHs. In addition, new considerations in the FHH design were incorporated during the implementation period, enhancing the quality of the final structures. The NOC was obtained at the end of quarter 3 of 2022. The concerned PUNO was still not able to start the construction works, particularly in the North, due to the cold weather conditions. The construction of permanent FHHs is now expected to be completed in 2023.

As a mitigation measure and not to delay the access to RMNCAH services to communities, the concerned PUNO established 58 (29 in the Northern and 29 in the Southern regions) temporary FHHs (T-FHHs) in rental houses. The rental houses were renovated and modified to suit their new purpose as a health facility and to make them appropriate for the provision of RMNCAH services. Furthermore, a total of 65 qualified but unemployed community midwives were hired and provided with two months in-service refresher training. These midwives have successfully completed the refresher training programme and were deployed to the 58 T-FHHs.

They started to provide care services in their respective communities during the last quarter of 2022.

To support the capacity-building component of the project, three Community Midwife Education (CME) Schools were established in Helmand, Nimroz and Balkh provinces. A total of 121 female midwifery students who graduated from 10th grade, from the same local communities where the FHHs have been established, were enrolled under the CME programme. These student midwives will be trained for two and half years under the CME school and once graduate, they will be deployed in the FHHs. The CME program in the three locations will continue until the end of 2024, and early into 2025.



By December 2022, a total of 433,748 people, including 355,779 (82.0%) women and girls benefitted from the Provision of RMNCAH services through the STFA supported-T-FHHs.

Furthermore, 11 FHHs (6 in the Northern region and 5 in the Southern region) started GBV integrated services, where hundreds of people have received counselling support during the last quarter of 2022. The GBV services are expected to be integrated into all 90 T-FHHs during 2023.



## Drug Treatment and Drug Prevention Services

During 2022, drug use prevention, psychosocial counselling, social support (including food provision and hygiene kits) and drug use harm reduction services were provided to 31,335 people (including 11,923 or 38.1% females) with, or at risk of, drug use disorders in Kandahar province.

To promote HIV, Hepatitis and STI testing services among drug users and/or people at risk of communicable diseases, STFA procured and supplied 11,000 HIV, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and Syphilis diagnostic kits to voluntary counselling and testing centres in the Northern and Southern regions.

Furthermore, to promote evidence-based, rights-oriented and gender-responsive drug treatment and drug use harm reduction services, PUNOs under STFA organized the following training/capacity building programmes:

- 205 youths (115 males and 90 females) have been trained on evidence-based drug use prevention approaches, empowered on coping mechanisms and protection. Such training equipped them to lead the early identification of drug use problems in their local communities and to build a healthier environment.
- Training on gender responsive health and harm reduction services to women drug users, including effects of drugs during pregnancy and lactation, and prevention of HIV and hepatitis transmission from mother to child and gender-based violence was provided to 25 female medical doctors, who are engaged with women drug users at the community level.
- Training on evidence-based drug use harm reduction, outreach services to homeless drug users and voluntary counselling and testing services for HIV, Hepatitis and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) was provided to 85 NGO service providers and CSOs working in Kandahar province.
- To increase access of people who use drugs and their families to basic social assistance, a total of 3,500 hygiene kits have been distributed among homeless drug users (both male and female) in the Northern and Southern regions, as part of a broader awareness-raising campaign.

## Covid-19 Screening and Treatment

By the end of December 2022, over 400,000 people were screened for Covid-19 in the Southern region. Also, the population benefited from Covid-19 specialised care leading to the following achievements:

- 522 (450 women, 172 men) cases were managed under hospital isolation (107 Male, 117 Female) in Helmand and Kandahar respectively.
- 5,315 (2,458 women and 2,857 men) were treated under home isolation (1,072 Male, 1485 Female) Helmand and Kandahar respectively.

Furthermore, 5,278 COVID -19 kits were procured and distributed to 32 health facilities and schools benefiting 5,278 individuals including 3,265 or 61.9% females.

Lastly, awareness-raising sessions on COVID-19 prevention, misinformation, and personal hygiene were delivered benefiting approximately 9,489 people (6,316- 67% females) in the Northern region. In addition to topics such as COVID-19 prevention, these sessions also covered psychosocial counselling, nutrition, Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM), environmental hygiene, GBV, children and adolescent rights and women's rights.

## Output 2 – Livelihoods, businesses and the local economy can recover, more sustainable and more resilient to instability

By the end of December 2022, approximately 280,838 people, including 53,293 (19.0%) females, benefited from livelihood support under the STFA JPs. The following presents a breakdown of beneficiaries who received such livelihood support.

### Income Generation and Cash for Work support

STFA's cash-for-work and income generation support schemes jointly created 523,702 workdays, benefiting 125,073 people, including 12,603 (10.1%) females. Additionally, close to a million workdays were created for skilled and unskilled labour in the target communities under the infrastructure activities. Activities carried out under the CfW scheme include solid waste transportation, cleaning of canals and side ditches, reforestation activities/tree planting; cleaning and renovation of communal infrastructure, snow removal, etc.

The CfW scheme resulted in the creation of much-needed employment opportunities for vulnerable people enabling them to meet their basic needs such as food, healthcare, etc. However, greater efforts need to be placed to increase the engagement of women beneficiaries (notwithstanding the increasingly challenging enabling environment) – as their participation in the CfW and IG activities was low, at 19%, compared to a JP target of 30%.





MSME received cash support in Kandahar

### Unconditional Cash Transfers (UCT)

A total of 162,038 people, including 46,335 (28.6%) females, benefited from Unconditional Cash Transfer (UCT) support under the STFA JPs. The Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM) showed that over 90% of the beneficiaries were able to meet their critical household needs, with the main expenditure being on food, debt repayment, and healthcare. The PDM findings also indicated that after running out of the distributed cash, beneficiaries tended to lapse into vulnerability. Therefore, moving forward, a more sustainable approach that will help beneficiaries to sustain their livelihoods for a longer-term need to be considered. Similar to CfW, the proportion of female beneficiaries was lower than the JP target of 80%.



UCT Support Northern Region Mazar Province

### MSME Support

By the end of December 2022, a total of 4,524 MSMEs, including 3,222 (71%) women-led MSMEs, received a combination of cash and in-kind support under the STFA JPs. The MSME support of STFA aimed to enable MSMEs to sustain their businesses and to create new employment opportunities for the Afghan people.

Interventions under this component enabled both the establishment of new micro or small businesses (tapping into significant entrepreneurship potential), and supported existing micro and small businesses to sustain and/or expand their operations. In turn, MSME support also helped to retain existing jobs or create new job opportunities for Afghans across the Northern and Southern regions.



MSME Support Northern Region Mazar Province



### Output 3 – Communities have improved infrastructure, access to water and preparedness mechanisms to protect farm-based livelihoods and cope with climate and environment shocks and natural disasters.

By the end of December 2022, about 39,305 people, including 14,693 (37.4%) females, benefited from community resilience and disaster risk management interventions under STFA joint programmes as detailed below:

#### Agriculture-based Livelihoods

About 13,025 people, including 5,788 (44.4%) females, benefited from agriculture-based livelihood support. This includes training on climate-smart agriculture (CSA) and livestock management (CSL), early warning systems, anticipatory mitigation actions at the community level and preparedness mechanisms. Furthermore, farmers were provided with improved cereal crop seeds and farm implements to promote and support (climate-smart) farm-based agriculture.

#### Climate resilient infrastructure

Approximately 19,985 individuals, including 6,866 (34.4%) females, benefited from rehabilitated and/or newly constructed disaster-resilient community infrastructure such as irrigation canals, flood protection walls and restoration of traditional water canals. These support activities did not only contribute to protect people from disasters, but they also improved public infrastructure and the preservation of cultural heritage sites.

#### Building the Capacity of local communities: disaster preparedness and coping mechanisms

A total of 6,295 people, including 2,039 (32.4%) females, acquired knowledge and skills on disaster preparedness and climate-resilient livelihoods. Additionally, 75 Disaster Management Committees (DMC) were established, with a total of 1,070 members (out of whom 258 were women). These Committees play an important role in mobilising and sensitising other community members, in early warning as well as search and rescue activities; delivery of first aid; shelter management; and in the management of pre-positioned tools and materials. They are indeed expected to play a vital role in identifying the vulnerabilities and needs within their communities, through an understanding of the

local risk exposure; the history of disaster events and seasonal calendars; and the mapping of safe locations from various types of disasters. Furthermore, 5,255 people (53% females) participated in disaster risk and environmental awareness-raising sessions. The aforesaid interventions have resulted in building the resilience of target communities towards environmental hazards and shocks.



*Check dam Complete in Zabul Province*

#### Output 4 – Social cohesion, respect for human rights – including, in particular, the rights of women and girls and access to justice are progressively strengthened at the local level – contributing to greater community resilience.

About 340,372 people, including 52,340 (15.4%) females, have benefited from the STFA joint programme activities under Output 4. The followings describe some of the key interventions undertaken under this output across the JPs:

##### **Awareness Raising**

Approximately 334,099 people including 46,695 (14%) females, benefited from awareness-raising activities mainly on gender, human rights, the consequences of anti-social practices, peace-building and conflict resolution.

Furthermore, country-wide radio and social media campaigns were launched with STFA support. The programme was run by a women-led radio—one of the few operational women-led radio stations in Afghanistan. The radio station delivered content exclusively tailored and designed for women, sensitising them about their rights and providing them with unique learning opportunities. The station ran radio programs on topics related to health and counselling, and safe spaces for women through call-in radio programs, six days a week. The station has also moved its content onto social media platforms – Facebook and YouTube – to expand its reach.

Cumulatively, the station's work is providing a rare platform for women to exert their position in a context marked by the exclusion of women from the public sphere. Further, the station is leading the way in encouraging the media to challenge gender stereotypes and gender discriminatory narratives surrounding the current context (e.g., views of women as victims of conflict in need of protection) and to build pro-inclusion interests among journalists, editors, producers, photographers, etc.



Meeting in PD10, GA#15 with Women's Sub-committee to Introduce their Responsibilities, Mazar-e-Sharif City, Balkh province, May 2022, UN-Habitat

### Socio-Economic Reintegration through Alternative Livelihoods

Approximately 6,273 people, including 5,645 (90%) females, who were dependent on poppy cultivation, were provided with integration and alternative livelihood support. This support helped target beneficiaries to shift reliance on poppy cultivation and reintegrate into society through alternative livelihood options that provided them with more sustainable means of self-reliance.

#### Media Support

Under the STFA JPs, PUNOs supported specific media houses in producing and disseminating content developed based on professional standards, focused on the provision of factual, verified, and life-saving humanitarian information, conflict-sensitive reporting, and educational broadcasting.

A total of 210 news stories and media coverage reports were published by the media houses that received support under the STFA JPs. The stories focused on humanitarian aid and needs, the status of education in the country with a focus on girls' education and local-level conflicts in the five southern provinces – Kandahar, Helmand, Zabul, Uruzgan, and Nimroz. These reports were based on research, special interviews, and live programs produced and transmitted through Radio Killid, social media platforms, websites, and online radios.

Furthermore, radio broadcasts reached approximately 13-15 million Afghans. Meanwhile, the contents were also raised through the social media of the implementing media partner. Approximately 592,000 people are estimated to have been reached through social media, with approximately 40,000 people engaging in content. Moreover, in the last three months of 2022, more than 220,000 people visited the Killid website to access information.



Female Media Group Staff Delivering a Radio Programme

### Protection of Cultural Heritage Sites and Local Livelihoods

The social cohesion activities in some cases were combined with livelihood support interventions. A total of 1,938 individuals were sensitised on the importance of preserving cultural heritage sites. Unfortunately, challenges were encountered to ensure an adequate participation of women in most of



Female Media Group staff delivering a radio programme

these sessions. However, preserving the cultural heritage sites such as Karezes[5] will also benefit women, as women are often responsible for collecting water from the family from these water sources.

When organising the training and awareness-raising sessions, the participants also received cash-for-work support. A total of 180 male members of the community benefited from the 5,400 workdays created.

### Support for Community-based Structures

About 108 community structures including, Community Development Councils (CDCs)[6] and Gazar assemblies (Gas)[7] were supported to strengthen social cohesion among community members. Such support equipped these social structures with tools to (i) better identify, in an inclusive manner, community development priorities through a local consultation process; (ii) support the implementation and monitoring of priority projects as and when funding was made available. PUNOs have supported the design of 45 local projects fully identified and developed by local communities. Such community projects include the construction of water supply systems, retention walls and women empowerment centres.



Community Planning Session, Southern Region, Kandahar Province

### Capacity Building of Women Peacebuilders

A national women's organisation successfully engaged with 40 women peacebuilders (20 in the northern and 20 in the southern region) equipping them with a broad range of skills: on leadership, research, conflict resolution, advocacy, proposal development, and networking. During a two-month mentorship programme, senior peacebuilders shared their experience with mentees and discussed a variety of topics. They shared information, discussed lessons learned and best practices, and urged the younger generation to strengthen women's rights in a volatile environment and precarious humanitarian situation. The mentorship programme, which was a novel approach for the partner organisation, was effective and produced favourable outcomes, based on participants' feedback. Both peacebuilders and youth participants were highly satisfied with the activity and asked for its extension beyond the scope of this programme.

[5] A community level water collection point

[6] A community level local governance structures established by the previous National Solidarity Programme (NSP)

[7] Local governance structures established in urban areas





## 5. CHALLENGES

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During 2022, the implementation of activities under STFA programmes faced a number of challenges, including, inter alia, lack of appropriate access, insufficient liquidity in local currency, and security concerns. The following are a few of the most significant challenges reported by STFA PUNOs:

### 1. Managing complexity in the face of uncertainty

The rapid-evolving socio-economic crisis in Afghanistan, after the August 2021 events, called for a 'business unusual' approach: the launch of a rapid programmatic response (complementing the immediate humanitarian assistance) that, at the same time, was able to embed flexibility for course corrections during implementation. The regional Joint Programmes for Northern and Southern Afghanistan commenced with a 6-month joint initiation plan (JPIP), developed and approved in December 2021- only two months after the Fund was established. This allowed only a very limited time to co-design and plan a relatively complex set of joint interventions, in a context that was also very fluid and marked with a high degree of uncertainty. In some cases, it became clear, during implementation, that the original degree of ambition (in terms of milestones, targets; input requirements or low costs) was very high: with the benefit of hindsight (given the greater clarity on challenges

that have come to the surface since August 2021), specific activities, milestones or targets could have been revisited to better reflect field challenges.

Nevertheless, to provide more space for all relevant JPIP interventions to be completed, relevant milestones and targets of the JPIP were accommodated under the Regional Joint Programmes, which were approved later in 2022. The JPs themselves also embedded space for adjustments and course corrections, as it featured high-level JP Outputs and umbrella activities. Moving forward, as greater knowledge about the new context in Afghanistan is generated through field experience, lessons learned will continue to be incorporated into future programming cycles. Furthermore, a multi-year funding framework, with greater predictability in resources, will facilitate the development of a more realistic programming cycle.

### 2. Access challenges and DfA-announced restrictions

During the reporting period, a number of interventions could not be fully implemented in a timely manner, as initially planned, due to the challenges associated with the lack of safe and unhindered access to target beneficiaries—including with respect to the lack of safety guarantees by local DfAs.

Indeed, the operating environment, on the whole, has become more challenging. Restrictions on women's mobility have been imposed, as they are not permitted by DfA from travelling beyond 78 kilometres without a male family member or a 'Mahram'.

Furthermore, the DFA imposed bans on women forbidding them from entering public locations such as parks. One of the most recent restrictions occurred in December 2022, when women were prohibited from attending colleges/universities. Following the ban on education, on 24 December 2022 a ban<sup>[8]</sup> on women working in Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) was imposed -with exceptions given to frontline health and education workers.

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*[8] Health sector is exempted from the ban*

Such restrictions have affected initially-planned activities under some of the Regional JPs' outputs – although such effects vary across regions and sectors, and are very fluid – in some cases, solutions have been effectively rolled out to address some of the challenges encountered. In one case, for instance, PUNOs had to pause literacy education programmes and several rounds of training (targeting female beneficiaries) under STFA. However, after PUNOs' advocacy efforts, such literacy courses were later able to proceed, without obstructions by the DfA MOE. Due to this delay, however, the respective PUNO was only able to achieve two-thirds of its annual target.

There are other instances of how such impact is being addressed: during the reporting period, PUNOs could not start a vocational training and in-kind assistance programme for 40 female beneficiaries in the Southern region, as a result of restrictions imposed on female education. The respective PUNO is now working on alternative options to safely deliver these training activities in a more secure place, acceptable to the community and beneficiaries.

In general, however, whenever a principled approach cannot be implemented in a safe manner (e.g. no replacement of female beneficiaries with male beneficiaries is to be entertained), activities have been put on hold, until such time when a conducive local operating environment can be secured. In cases when the operating space for a principled approach can be secured, activities have been able to resume, but often causing delays vis-à-vis original plans.

Prevailing behavioural practices, in certain locations, and in rural areas, also posed challenges for PUNOs and implementing partners to expand women's participation as per the initial degree of ambition. The disparity between targets and progress was most notable in cash for work, UCT, and income-generating endeavours. In the southern region, only 8.8% of women benefited from cash for work, compared to the 30% JP target, and only 18.4% of women benefited from UCT support. During the second year of implementation, it will be critical for PUNOs to continue to engage with local communities and local stakeholders to manage these challenges, and to seek alternative (and innovative) solutions to be able to continue to implement planned interventions in line, as much as possible, with the originally set targets.

More recently, restrictions on Afghan women's participation as NGO workers, imposed at the end of the reporting period (with certain exemptions) have added new challenges to the implementation of originally planned activities. The full effects of these restrictions have yet to materialise – the situation remains fluid and uncertain and is beyond the period under the purview of this report. PUNOs and TFMU are closely monitoring the situation - including the implications on STFA programming and exploring alternative measures to continue the implementation of programmatic activities in a safe, principled and unhindered manner.



### 3. Limited and unpredictable funding

The original Regional JP Portfolio was designed with an average budget (per region) of approximately US\$150 million. However, in 2022, only a fraction of the expected resources have been allocated, to only three regions[9]. Basic needs remain significant across all regions – and unless BHN interventions are expanded and sustained, the risk of an increasing humanitarian caseload – with associated population displacements- will in all likelihood continue to increase. More robust, and more predictable, funding allocations into STFA will be critical for more robust, multi-year programming – which, in turn, will contribute to greater efficiencies, greater space for economies of scale, and enhanced knowledge management – e.g. on evidence-based DaO approaches. This will also contribute to more efficiently addressing the challenges generated by a fluid local operating environment.

### 4. STFA operational challenges

- **More challenging labour market:** difficulty hiring qualified labour on time. Following the power shift of August 2021, a significant proportion of the qualified labour force have left Afghanistan, making it more challenging to find qualified staff, particularly female staff, on time.
- **Complex data management processes:** STFA reached close to a million beneficiaries every quarter. Collecting and analysing data on the beneficiaries has been challenging. TFMU constantly applied measures to facilitate PUNO reporting and data quality control. The STFA quarterly reports which were submitted through 'offline' documents and worksheets, are now being reported through a simplified online digital reporting form. Furthermore, the TFMU is currently in the process of hiring third-party M&E services which will serve as an additional layer of corroboration, enabling the verification of progress and results of the STFA JPs, and progress reported by each PUNO. The recruitment of the TPMA services is expected to further enhance data quality.
- **Security risks:** While the overall security situation and access to remote areas has improved after August 15, 2021, the PUNO staff, particularly those engaged in sensitive programming activities such as addressing gender-based violence and human rights violations, face the risk of being targeted by anti-DfA/insurgent elements or facing maltreatments from the DfA based on the nature of their activities. PUNOs have continued to implement stringent security measures to ensure situational awareness and the protection, security and safety of staff.
- **Reduced banking operations:** As a result of DfA's restrictions on financial transactions through banks, the STFA PUNOs encountered difficulties transferring funds to cover their programming and operational expenses. PUNOs were compelled to use alternative cash transfer methods, thereby increasing their transaction costs. However, such operational difficulties eventually diminished as the DFA progressively lifted restrictions on the banks.

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[9] In addition to a limited allocation to a Joint Health Sector programme (US\$2.5m)



## 5. Marginal discrepancies between target and actual (locations)

In one instance, under the Regional JP for Northern Afghanistan, there was a marginal discrepancy between the target and actual locations identified in 2022 – a vulnerable population in Kunduz province, which is adjacent to Balkh province (and not part of the original target provinces under the original Regional JP) benefited from livelihood support, awareness-raising activities, educational/library services and psychosocial counselling. In terms of substantive scope, these activities were indeed aligned with the ABADEI Strategy. They were directed to a very vulnerable demographic: benefiting vulnerable female groups- including adolescent girls, survivors of GBV and women who were deprived of higher education. Such interventions were implemented in close coordination with UNICEF, and represented a very small fraction of the original programme budget (about 0.23%, or US\$325,000). The support has contributed to providing much-needed support to the aforesaid group of beneficiaries, in particular, victims of gender-based violence.

While such activities are indeed addressing the basic human needs of key demographics under the ABADEI Strategy, reflect a 'Delivering as One' approach (including with non-STFA agencies) and such discrepancies are relatively marginal, additional measures are being rolled out, including through the TPMA mechanism, amongst others, to reduce such discrepancies in the future and to ensure closer alignment between targets and actuals.



## 6. LESSONS LEARNED

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The following are key lessons learned during 2022:

### (a) A gradually evolving 'Delivering as One' modality

STFA has adopted a 'Delivering as One (DaO)' approach as the key modality for the design and implementation of regional JPs.

A DaO (approach or initiative) refers to 'a coordinated and/or conjoined set of interventions which reflect the comparative advantages of, and complementarities between, two or more UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes (AFPs)'. DaOs ultimately seek to contribute to the following:

- (a) *greater quality in programmatic interventions (i.e. they allow to tap more effectively into the advantages of greater division of labour);*
- (b) *greater cost-effectiveness in the use of limited programmatic resources (reducing unnecessary overlaps or duplications), and*
- (c) *improved knowledge generation and dissemination.*

#### **Such benefits, in turn, contribute to:**

- (i) *improved coverage (outreach to end users/end-beneficiaries), and greater socio-economic impact (i.e., higher return on programmatic investments);*
- (ii) *more sustainability, and*
- (iii) *improved advocacy (i.e., helping to communicate more effectively, and with 'one voice', with other stakeholders)*

The DaO initiatives under the STFA Programme Portfolio have indeed facilitated greater convergence among UN AFPs towards a collective approach to addressing basic human needs in the emerging context of Afghanistan. At the same time, the experience of 2022 also highlights the complexity and value to continue investing in, developing, in greater depth, robust DaO initiatives. As PUNOs gain a greater collective understanding, through field experience, of their complementarities and of potential entry points for collaboration, opportunities for deeper 'DaOs' are expected to emerge. The articulation of 'DaOs', therefore, should not be expected to be 'completed' through 'one-off' design or planning exercises: it is a continuous, iterative process, that allows field experience to inform the incorporation of new knowledge on synergies throughout all the stages of the programming cycle.

### (b) Use of MPI as key criteria to prioritise programmatic investments

STFA uses the population-adjusted Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) as one of the key criteria to guide the prioritisation of resource allocations by regions, provinces, and participating UN agencies. This allocation strategy helps STFA prioritise activities and target locations across the region – and to allocate resources through a needs-based approach.

Allocations are also informed by community engagements, and by PUNO's comparative advantages and programmatic footprint within a particular region.

### (c) Support to Basic Community Infrastructure

STFA's support to basic community infrastructure was considered to be durable in terms of its impact on target communities. Such investments contributed to addressing basic human needs in target locations through improved access to clean drinking water, expanded irrigation systems (contributing to increased food security within target communities), access to clean energy sources, improved sanitation facilities and access to housing. Through an area-based approach,

PUNOs hired skilled and unskilled labour from local communities, which also generated job opportunities in target areas. However, it is also worth to note that since infrastructure projects are relatively resource-intensive, vis-à-vis other types of intervention, they require more regular monitoring to ensure the technical quality of the physical structures.

### (d) Support to health services

Health services delivered with the support of STFA were effective, as ascertained by the fact that people from the community were indeed making use of the health centres, immediately after their opening; and often revisiting the health centres after their initial visit. STFA health support services were mostly delivered in remote,

hard-to-reach, communities where access to health services was previously non-existent.

Furthermore, STFA health services mainly benefited relatively vulnerable demographic groups, including women/pregnant women; children; and people suffering from drug addiction issues.

### (e) MSME Support

MSME support resulted in more effective and sustainable job creation when it is provided to micro and small enterprises. The provision of such support has enabled thousands of entrepreneurs to launch their own micro or small businesses. STFA's M&E data suggests that most of these micro-businesses are owned by women in the community, and they are established based on the business ideas and skill sets that the target beneficiaries already possess or have developed with the support of STFA JPs. These businesses have significant potential for growth. Additionally,

the cost of supporting the start-up of these micro businesses is relatively low (sometimes less than 1,000 USD). In contrast, support for medium or large enterprises, even though they can contribute to local employment, can be more costly (multiple times higher than the value of support provided to micro or small enterprises) - those enterprises can be supported through other means such as the provision of microfinance, business development training modules, connections to local and international markets, cross-border trading, adherence to quality standards and quality certification, among other strategies.

### (f) Cash-for-Work and social capital

Cash for work initiatives contributed to longer-term impact for target communities, when directed towards community infrastructure activities such as cleaning of irrigation canals, construction of tertiary roads, and reforestation activities. Cash for work activities need to be carefully selected, in order not to replace the existing good practices of Hashar<sup>[10]</sup>

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[10] A voluntary community work which all people in the community commit to collectively perform.

### (g) Community engagement

A key strategy that led to the successful implementation of STFA interventions has been the continued engagement with key members of target communities – including through the CDC. Prior and constant communication and coordination with CDCs and local community groups provided the basis for a shared understanding of the nature and scope of STFA activities, particularly activities that were women-focused.

This, in turned, contributed to paving the way for smooth implementation and strong community ownership.

Therefore, the recommendation would be to always obtain the buy-in of the local communities at first: meeting them in person, sharing and discussing the plans and objectives of the program with them first, and seeking their views and their support to enable the smooth implementation of field activities.

### (h) Continuous adaptation

The fluid socio-political landscape in Afghanistan calls for flexibility and innovation, to develop solutions to challenges that had not been anticipated at the onset of an intervention. While several restrictions might be imposed by the current DfA, posing an impediment to the implementation of originally-planned activities, there is a continuous need to consult local communities and explore alternatives to introduce or adapt new solutions to meet the initial goals of intervention. Such alternative solutions seek not only to enable and sustain a principled approach to delivery,

but to ensure that communities themselves become champions and advocates for the promotion of human rights within their localities. In some cases, these interventions may involve additional measures, to ensure, for instance, unhindered and safe movement of personnel (ensuring no discrimination on the basis of gender). Such measures, and their associated costs, remain critical to ensure that a human rights approach to programming continues to be upheld throughout implementation.

### (i) Potential trade-off: the immediacy of support and durability of impact

UCT and Cash for work interventions under STFA can have a more immediate impact on the livelihoods of target beneficiaries, but, unless mitigated with longer-term solutions, there is a potential risk that community reliance on external assistance might be deepened. Yet, the provision of support to MSMEs have contributed to starting-up hundreds of new small businesses and created or sustained jobs for thousands of Afghans. Moving forward,

there are opportunities to further develop DaO initiatives that more closely link UCT and CfW to other longer-term interventions, such as support to MSMEs, with a view to contributing to more sustainable results. Such an approach would contribute to ensuring both immediate basic human needs support, and longer-term socio-economic impact.





## 7. QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT

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### a. Overview of achievements

STFA was launched in October 2021 and only within three months from its inception (by December 2021) STFA was able to launch the Joint Programme Initiation Plan (JPIP) for the Northern and Southern regions, budgeted at approximately US\$92.5 million. Furthermore, by May 2022, the STFA Steering Committee had approved eight Regional Joint Programmes, covering all of Afghanistan, with budgets of approximately US\$150 million each. These were significant achievements in terms of engagements and consensus-building (among PUNOs and STFA contributing partners), prioritisation and joint programming.

The number of contributing donors and STFA participating UN Agencies rapidly increased and, as of December 2022, 12 contributing donors and 17 Participating UN agencies joined STFA – with aggregate financial contributions of approximately US\$176 million, which were received through the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office. Only seven months following its inception, STFA’s transition into a One UN Funding Framework had been suggested, and in December 2022, the UN Resident Coordinator was appointed as the Chairman of the STFA Steering Committee. In less than a year after its establishment, STFA was recognized as one of the five key funding streams for Afghanistan and the key funding mechanism for the UNCT to address basic human needs in the country.

The STFA JPs provide a unique opportunity for the international aid community, UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes, along with a wide range of implementing partners – which have years of experience working in Afghanistan - to work together through a ‘Delivering as One’ (DaO) approach. Such DaOs have been instrumental in addressing, through an area-based strategy, the basic human needs of the Afghan people in a more efficient and effective manner. The DaO approach enables PUNOs to avoid unnecessary duplication or overlaps,

and to capitalise on each other’s strengths and technical expertise.

Through the roll-out of the DaOs, STFA joint programmes have achieved significant milestones across regions. Some 3.58 million people, including 46.3% females, have benefited from the STFA joint programmes in the Northern, Southern, Eastern and Central regions. This includes enabling over two million people better access to basic services, including safe drinking water, shelter, electricity, education, irrigation schemes and agriculture extension services. Close to a million people received critical health services, including child and maternal health services, drug treatment and drug prevention services, mental health and psychosocial counselling support, COVID-19 diagnosis/ treatments, and health education. These services were essential at a time when most of the public service institutions in the country faced severe interruptions and reduced operations, following the collapse of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

A total of 280,838 people, including 35,254 (12.6%) females, benefited from STFA livelihood support activities - under the income generation, Cash for Work and UCT schemes of the Regional JPs. Furthermore, 4,524 MSMEs, including 3,222 female-led MSMEs, received in-kind and small-grant support from STFA-supported PUNOs. The CfW initiatives of STFA resulted in 353,702 workdays for target beneficiaries; in addition, hundreds of thousands of skilled and unskilled labour days were created through the STFA infrastructure activities. STFA support to MSMEs also contributed to generating sustainable jobs for thousands of Afghans, mostly women, in target regions. Such opportunities, and

the indirect economic benefits ('multiplier effect') of such initiatives for local communities constitute, indeed, a significant contribution of the JPs which ought to be highlighted: the new job opportunities were generated at a critical juncture for hundreds of thousands of Afghan households across the target regions, following the August 2021 powershift and the ensuing socio-economic crisis.

STFA also contributed to improving social cohesion by building the capacities of community governance structures to support inclusive, locally-driven, planning processes, and the promotion of Women and Human Rights. Some 340,603 people, including 52,376 (15.4%) females, benefited from social cohesion support under the STFA Joint Programmes.

During 2022, STFA JPs faced a number of programming and operational challenges that impacted the implementation of the JP activities, which are described in other sections of the report. STFA PUNOs unanimously reported that the operating environment has become increasingly restrictive, which often caused delays against original plans, and, in some cases, constraints in fully achieving annual milestones - especially in relation to female beneficiaries. At the same time,

PUNOs have unanimously converged on the need to proactively identify alternative means to engage female beneficiaries to ensure that they benefit from the JP activities in a meaningful manner.

Despite the challenging circumstances, a positive trajectory, across the four quarters of 2022, emerged in terms of impact – particularly, in terms of the overall number of beneficiaries and in terms of the ratio of female beneficiaries. Nevertheless, the joint programme targets for female beneficiaries are yet to be achieved – as currently progress has been slowed down as a result of an increasingly restrictive operating environment, which requires to be navigated with new, innovative, solutions for improved outreach. Only 8.8% females compared to 30% JP target benefited from cash for work and income generation projects and 18.4% females benefited from the UCT support under the STFA JPs. New measures are being explored by PUNOs, to ensure that women and girls continue to meaningfully benefit from STFA supported JP initiatives throughout the programming cycle, notwithstanding the very challenging context.

## b. Cross-cutting issues

The following are the key highlights of the cross-cutting issues related to the results reported in 2022:

### **Human Rights:**

Overall, against the backdrop of an increasingly challenging context, STFA activities contributed to improve the exercise of key human rights in target areas – including with respect to socio-economic rights, protection rights (against domestic violence) and the right to information. Throughout the reporting period, vulnerable Afghan communities have been able to have improved access to basic health services, education (in particular, vocational education; literacy), decent employment; measures to address gender-based violence and improved awareness about basic human rights and how they can be claimed.

## Gender Equity and Women's Empowerment

The current context in Afghanistan has posed significant challenges to the advancement of women's rights and women's empowerment, and the prevention of Gender Based Violence (GBV). After the collapse of the previous government and the take-over of the DFA, regular restrictions on women's access to education, public spaces and employment, women's mobility and rights to speech have been imposed. This situation, combined with the pre-existing high levels of gender-based violence has left a large number of Afghan women in a very vulnerable situation. At the same time, the capacity of civil society and women rights' defenders to fight for women's rights and address gender-based violence have been curtailed. The entire system of support to address gender-based violence has been significantly eroded, the majority of women's rights activists have either fled the country or have seen their activities either suspended or severely restricted; instances of threats to CSO personnel have increased.

Such is the challenging backdrop against which activities under the STFA Regional JPs have been implemented. Notwithstanding (and because of) such challenges, STFA PUNOs have continued to actively identify alternative means to improve the reach and quality of support to women and girls: more than half of the STFA beneficiaries (54.6%) are women. Although the actual impact of the DFA ban on Afghan women I/NGO workers was yet to be seen in 2022, moving forward, in 2023, STFA and the entire UN system are working together through a harmonised approach to monitor, adapt and respond to the evolving context – with a view to ensuring that women and girls continue to benefit – as beneficiaries and agents of development - from STFA programmatic activities.

## Environmental Due Diligence

Based on field reports and TFMU's field visits, no significant issues negatively affecting the environment, as a result of the implementation of STFA activities, have emerged. Each PUNO follows its respective environmental due diligence processes and practices –in 2022, there was also consensus reached on the value of developing a harmonised, fund-level, approach to environmental due diligence. Moving forward, during 2023, with support from STFA contributing partners, an environmental assessment will be conducted at Fund (inter-agency) level to identify the following:

- (a) opportunities for positive environmental impact from the STFA programme portfolio on the environment;*
- (b) risks for environmental impact from the STFA programme portfolio and relevant measures to mitigate such risks;*
- (c) risks stemming from disasters and other environmental factors that can affect the ability of the STFA programme portfolio to achieve its objectives, and to achieve longer-term sustainable results, and relevant measures to mitigate such risks.*

Such exercise will then contribute to developing a harmonised approach to guide, at an inter-agency level, joint programming exercises: identifying common environmental risks and opportunities, as well as common measures to mitigate such risks and capitalise on such opportunities.



## 8. PARTNERSHIPS

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**Foundational for STFA: Partnerships.** From its very inception, STFA has been the co-creation of a wide range of partners. Starting with only two agencies as Participating UN Organizations (PUNOs) in October 2021, by mid-2022 STFA had secured the engagement of seventeen UN entities as PUNOs. Six contributing partners extended their support to STFA during the fourth quarter of 2021; by the end of 2022, twelve contributing partners have joined STFA. The initial capitalisation of the fund moved from US\$96.6m in 2021, to \$176.0m, by the end of 2022. At least three other partners have, since then, reached out to STFA/TFMU to express interest in potentially becoming STFA contributing partners.

**Unprecedented joint venture.** Such collaborative platform is unprecedented in Afghanistan. STFA is a joint venture that reflects a collective commitment among its stakeholders: to contribute to addressing the basic human needs of vulnerable Afghan communities across the country, to complement the ongoing humanitarian response. Such an objective was being set out at a critical juncture for the country, which was facing a rapidly deteriorating socio-economic crisis at the time of the establishment of STFA.

**UNDP's integrator role and UN RC's vision.** The leadership of UNDP in the establishment and operations of the Fund was remarkable and should be collectively acknowledged: it laid out the programmatic foundation for STFA - through its ABADEI strategy; it assumed the chairmanship of its Steering Committee for most of 2022, and it enabled the operational viability of the Fund (through the Trust Fund Management Unit that it administered and funded in 2022)

The role of UN RC was also critical, as Chair of the High-Level Board, in establishing the strategic objectives and overarching vision for the fund. At the end of 2022 the baton of the Chair of the Steering Committee was passed from UNDP Resident Representative to the UN Resident Coordinator, contributing to moving STFA closer to a 'One UN Funding framework' vision.

**Co-leadership: Sweden's role as co-chair.** As a co-chair of the STFA Steering Committee (since April 2021), Sweden also played a leading and pivotal role in shaping STFA and its programmatic portfolio. Such active engagement – including through their leadership in TCWG, SC and donor platforms - was critical in shaping a common vision on the scope and direction of the fund and its portfolio, and to reaching a consensus among all STFA stakeholders.

**An increasingly familiar term: 'DaO'.** Another success story for partnerships in STFA became evident soon after its set-up. The ensuing inter-agency dialogues triggered by STFA joint programming exercises enabled the articulation of increasingly robust 'Delivering as One' ('DaO') programme initiatives, to unprecedented levels for the UN in Afghanistan. Indeed, the term 'DaO', championed by STFA, has become part of the 'day-to-day vocabulary' of AFPs in Afghanistan to indicate the presence of, or intention to develop, collaborative initiatives that capitalise on inter-agency complementarities [11] under (STFA-supported) joint programmes.

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[11] In terms of mandates, expertise and capacities

**Joint programming of 'DaOs', at scale.** Under the eight regional Joint Programmes designed during the first two quarters of 2022, a total of over US\$ 1.2b were programmed and budgeted to support such 'DaO initiatives'. This experience signaled not only the viability, but the effectiveness, of a unique, and complex, set of partnerships for basic human needs (BHN) programming at scale in Afghanistan: it brought together seventeen UN agencies and over 10 contributing partners, MPTFO, TCWG and SC towards a shared understanding of key BHN challenges across eight regions of the country, and of key programmatic interventions to address such challenges (under the programmatic chapeau provided by TEF). Throughout 2022, the delivery of such DaOs has indeed contributed to tangible impact on the lives and livelihoods of tens of thousands of households across the country, as captured in this particular report and others.

**Partnerships for implementation.** PUNOs' implementing partners - including NGOs, CDCs and other community-based organizations- have also been pivotal for the progress achieved under the fund: they have been an important backbone for effective, and bottoms-up, programmatic delivery.

**Proactive outreach.** In 2022, STFA/TFMU organized a series of engagements with partners overseas – including in Europe and Gulf Countries. TFMU indeed took a key role in the organization of STFA Steering Committees in Doha (March 2022), Brussels (April 2022) and missions to donor capitals (from 2-13 April 2022, for Europe, and in May and June, for Gulf Countries). Such efforts are also an integral part of the Fund's operations, as they are not only instrumental to generate greater awareness about STFA and its portfolio, but they also facilitate trust-building, and more robust, direct and field-informed engagements among key STFA stakeholders.

**Developing a common understanding on resource allocation priorities.** In 2022, STFA partnerships were also instrumental developing an allocation strategy to guide the prioritization of programmable resources under the regional JPs.

The Multi-Dimensional Poverty Index (MPI) was established as a key parameter to guide region-wide priorities and allocations, alongside a bottoms-up and consultative process to inform DaO and PUNO-wise allocations. In addition, at the end of 2022, a series of multi-partner 'Lessons Learned' dialogues, brought together PUNOs and contributing partners, to take collective stock of the experience and the challenges faced by STFA since its inception – many of these lessons and associated recommendations, eventually fed into the STFA Operations Manual. STFA partners should be acknowledged for the constructive feedback they have provided, drawing from experience, in ensuring the Fund is 'Fit for Purpose' and resilient vis-à-vis increasingly complex challenges.

**Beyond country offices: sub-national partnerships.** STFA has also catalyzed stronger partnerships at regional level among PUNOs. UNDP Area Managers have indeed played an important convening and coordination role at sub-national level, helping to ensure greater collaboration among PUNOs and its implementing partners in the target regions. Such partnerships have indeed enabled the reaching of consensus at sub-national level, and the effective, joint, delivery of 'DaO' initiatives.

**Beyond BHN: HDP Nexus - complementing the humanitarian response.** In 2022, STFA was also actively engaged with OCHA, ICCT, AHF management, and with humanitarian agencies to ensure complementarities in (BHN-Humanitarian) programmatic interventions and to identify broader synergies across the HDP spectrum. Information and data sharing has also been part of the regular engagements with the humanitarian stakeholders. At the beginning of December 2022, when the UN RC (who is also the UN Humanitarian Coordinator) assumed the chairmanship of the STFA SC, such HDP linkages have gained a more robust footing; engagements with OCHA and ICCT have indeed been actively supported by the Head of the RCO. The fact that STFA is now regularly attending, as an observer, both

the UN Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) and the UN Country Team (UNCT) engagements, has further built momentum for a stronger, and well-informed, partnership between STFA, as a key BHN pooled funding instrument, and humanitarian stakeholders.

**Beyond the UN: International Financial Institutions (IFIs), funding streams and Afghanistan Coordination Group (ACG).** In 2022, STFA also engaged with partners beyond the UN –the World Bank/ARTF, ADB, the Islamic Development Bank (ISDB)/Afghanistan Humanitarian Trust Fund (AHTF). Such engagements have helped to ensure that STFA is well positioned as part of the broader BHN funding stream architecture for Afghanistan. This has contributed to better define complementarities, avoid unnecessary duplications and overlaps, and facilitate information/knowledge-sharing among funding streams. These engagements are also feeding directly into the wider ACG platform – which brings together the larger international community (i.e. the UN -including UNAMA and humanitarian and BHN agencies; IFIs/funding streams and contributing member states) to facilitate well-informed and well-coordinated international assistance to Afghanistan.

**Potentially a global milestone.** STFA, as an inter-agency pooled financing instrument, has demonstrated to be well-suited to help address basic human needs in one of the world’s most difficult contexts of fragility and crisis. The Fund supported a joint UN approach to programming, and it ensured a response aligned with priorities on the ground. It brought both strategic direction as well as much-needed flexibility in directing resources to where they are needed the most. The fund allowed the pooling of resources from key contributing partners, and leveraged standard legal agreements and joint programmatic tools, bringing greater cost-effectiveness and economies of scale to this complex operation engaging multiple stakeholders.

The STFA has advanced the UN reform on the ground. With 17 UN Organizations working together under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator, through well-designed and implemented area-based programming - in the difficult context of Afghanistan - has indeed already provided an excellent reference for other Funds across the world to model their operations and programming cycles on.

**Moving forward - Beyond TEF.** Moving forward, STFA is anticipated to transition more strongly as part of a ‘One UN Funding Framework’ for Afghanistan under the leadership of UN Resident Coordinator - complementing the humanitarian pooled funding mechanisms (under AHF and CERF). It is already being positioned as the UN’s main pooled funding instrument to enable the delivery of outcomes under the emerging multi-year UNSFA (currently under formulation). STFA is therefore poised to further reinforce its role as platform for partnership-building and collaboration to enable ‘Delivering as One’ approaches in Afghanistan.

**The STFA promise: beyond the symptoms.** STFA has already laid down strong foundations for durable solutions that ‘go beyond the symptoms’: it is helping to address some of the root causes of socio-economic challenges being faced by millions of Afghans (including women and girls) – from food insecurity and heightened exposure to disasters and climate change, to lack of access to essential services and limited livelihood opportunities. This is, in the words of STFA beneficiaries, contributing to preserve an important asset for Afghans: hope for a better, and more self-reliant, future.





# ANNEX I. Indicator-based Performance Assessment

JP Output Indicators	Achieved Indicator Targets	Reasons for Variance with Planned Target	Source of Verification
Output 1: Essential services and community infrastructure – including for health, agriculture, education, and energy supply - are functional, sustained and expanded to meet different needs of women and men.			
1a. Number of people that have benefited from UN-supported essential services and/or new/rehabilitated infrastructure, disaggregated by type of service and sex. Unit (People) Baseline: 344,968 Target: 3,026,011 Female target: 1,443,567	Progress: 2,937,834  Female progress: 1,544,624	The target is 97% achieved. Delays in the construction of FHH is one reason for under achievements	PUNO reports
1b. Number of people that have benefited from UN-supported maternal/reproductive health care services (health). Unit (People) Baseline: Target: 403,903 Female target: 315,350	Progress: 433,748  Female progress: 355,825	Target achieved	PUNO reports
1c. Number of people that have benefited from drug-treatment, drug rehabilitation services (health). Unit (People) Baseline: 4,200 Target: 8,000 Female target: 2,400	Progress: 31,335  Female progress: 11,923	Target achieved	PUNO reports
1d. Number of functional, UN-supported, facilities providing basic health assistance (including basic health assistance services for women and girls). Unit (Facilities/Infrastructure) Baseline: 128 Target: 62,989 Female target: 35,807	Progress: 146  Female progress: 40	The target is under achieved due to delays in the construction of FHHs	PUNO reports
1e. Number of COVID-kits distributed to health centres/clinics. Unit (Kits) Baseline: 68,288 Target: 16,000	Progress: 3,484  Female progress: 519	Activities under this indicator were delayed	PUNO reports
1f. Number of children, adolescents, and adults (including adolescent girls and women) who benefit from primary and secondary education, basic general literacy and vocational education programmes (at least 50% female). Unit (People) Baseline: Target: 13,400 Female target: 6,900	Progress: 1,140  Female progress: 713	Targets underachieved due to partial suspension of activities	PUNO reports

[1] The target and progress under indicator 1b is also included under indicator 1a

JP Output Indicators	Achieved Indicator Targets	Reasons for Variance with Planned Target	Source of Verification
1g. Hectares of rehabilitated and/or newly irrigated land for agricultural activities. Unit (Hectares) Baseline: Target: 200 Female target: 60	Progress: 0 Female progress: 0	Activities under this indicator were delayed	PUNO reports
1h. Percentage of target beneficiaries satisfied with the quality of UN-supported services, disaggregated by type of service and sex. Unit (%) Baseline: Target: 90% Female target: 90%	Progress: To be confirmed (TBC) Female progress: TBC	A beneficiary survey will be conducted by the TFMU to confirm progress against this indicator by Q2 2023	PUNO reports
1j. Kms of road rehabilitated and/or maintained. Unit (Kms) Baseline: Target: 10 Female target:	Progress: 10 Female progress: 0	Target achieved	PUNO reports
Output 2: Livelihoods, businesses and the local economy are able to recover, more sustainable and more resilient to instability.			
2a. Number of people who benefited from UCT (at least 80% women). Unit (People) Baseline: Target:166,468 Female Target:41,464	Progress: 162,038 Female progress: 46,335	97% target achieved	PUNO reports
2b. Number of people who have benefited from newly created income-generation opportunities, disaggregated by sex, age and province. Unit (Other) Baseline: 802 Target:387 Female Target:15	Progress:47,289 Female progress: 11,345	Target overachieved	PUNO reports
2b. Number of people who have benefited from newly created income-generation opportunities, disaggregated by sex, age and province. Unit (People) Baseline: 2,105 Target:33,118 Female Target:2,687	Progress: 41,015 Female progress: 5,699	Target overachieved	PUNO reports

JP Output Indicators	Achieved Indicator Targets	Reasons for Variance with Planned Target	Source of Verification
2b.1. Number of people who have benefited from productive employment through CfW schemes (at least 30% women; 50% youth). Unit (People) Baseline: Target:92,518 Female Target:8,236	Progress: 77,785 Female progress: 1,259	Target overachieved	PUNO reports
2c. No. of worker-days generated with UN-support. Unit (Workdays) Baseline: Target:170,494 Female Target:38,051	Progress: 523,792 Female progress: 37,188	Target achieved by 84%. Some activities were delayed due to DFA interference	PUNO reports
2f. Number of MSMEs that benefit through financial capital support, training and/or other forms of asset support, disaggregated by women-led and men-led MSMEs. Unit (MSMEs) Baseline: 73 Target:6,215 Female Target:3,113	Progress: 4,524 Female progress: 3,222	Target achieved by 73%. Some PUNOs were unable to achieve their performance targets due to delays in their implementation of activities	PUNO reports
2g. Proportion of beneficiaries who confirm sustained or improved livelihoods as a result of programme-supported activities (random sampling) Baseline: 0 Indicative Target:70%. Unit (%) Baseline: 30% Target:90% Female Target:90%	Progress: TBC Female progress: TBC	A beneficiary survey will be conducted by the TFMU to confirm progress against this indicator by Q2 2023	PUNO reports
<b>Output 3: Communities have improved infrastructure, access to water and preparedness mechanisms to protect farm-based livelihoods and cope with climate and environment shocks and natural disasters</b>			
3b. Number of people who acquired knowledge and skills on disaster preparedness and climate-resilient livelihoods (at least 30% women). Unit (People) Baseline: Target:4,071 Female Target:748	Progress: 6,295 Female progress: 2,039	Target overachieved	PUNO reports
3c. Number of farmers who benefited from training and assets for improved, climate-smart, agriculture (at least 30% women). Unit (People) Baseline: 11,880 Target:25,217 Female Target:8,576	Progress: 23,525 Female progress: 8,938	Target achieved by more than 90%	PUNO reports
3d. Number of people that benefit from rehabilitated and/or newly constructed disaster-resilient community infrastructure and nature-based solutions. Unit (People) Baseline: 120,875 Target:82,551 Female Target:32,850	Progress: 9,485 Female progress: 3,716	Some PUNOs could not achieve their targets under this indicator. Target beneficiaries in this indicator area also benefit from progress under indicator 1a.	PUNO reports

JP Output Indicators	Achieved Indicator Targets	Reasons for Variance with Planned Target	Source of Verification
Output 4: Social cohesion, respect for human rights – including, in particular, the rights of women and girls- and access to justice are progressively strengthened at local level – contributing to greater community resilience.			
4a. Number of CBOs/CSOs with improved capacity for participatory and inclusive community planning (at least 20% women-led). Unit (CSOs) Baseline: Target:207	Progress: 110  Female progress: 0	Progress underachieved due to restrictions from the DFA, specially related to engaging women beneficiaries in the social cohesion activities	PUNO reports
4b. Number of people with better awareness about human rights, social cohesion and conflict prevention (at least 50% women). Unit (People) Baseline: 6,820 Target:213,580 Female Target:34,957	Progress: 340,372  Female progress: 52,340	Target overachieved – an estimated 15-20 million people also received awareness raising sessions through national media campaigns	PUNO reports
4c: Number of districts with counselling and legal aid services. Unit (Districts) Baseline: 9 Target:1	Progress: 0  Female progress: 0	This activity could not be completed due to a restrictive operating environment; alternative measures to deliver on this activity will be explored in 2023	PUNO reports

## ANNEX II. Key Results per Programme

### a. Regional Joint Programme for Northern Afghanistan

The STFA Regional JP for Northern Afghanistan is one of the eight regional JPs approved by the STFA Steering Committee (SC) in 2022. Although an initial budget of US\$150 million was proposed for the Northern region, due to limited funding, only US\$50 million was allocated to initiate activities for the North. It is envisaged that further allocations can be made to this Regional JP, when more resources are made available.

Five provinces are covered under this Joint Programme - including Balkh, Samangan, Jowzjan, Sar-e-Pul and Faryab. The region is estimated to house 11% of the country's overall population. It neighbours Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan, serving as a major trade route connecting Afghanistan with Central Asia.

Twelve PUNOs have received funding allocations to implement joint programme activities in the Northern Region. Allocations to the respective PUNOs were informed by local priorities identified through their respective workplans, under 'Delivering as One' initiatives. The table below presents an overview of allocation per PUNO per window in the Northern region.



PUNO	Window 1 - Provision of Essential Services	Window 2 - Livelihood Support	Window 3 - Community Resilience and Disaster Risk Management	Window 4 - Social Cohesion
FAO	5,000,000			
ILO	693,273	3,499,481		
IOM	4,432,856	4,488,884	464,985	350,943
UNCTAD		310,300		
UNDP	8,235,458	3,159,415	1,463,506	1,535,250
UNESCO	1,568,227		17,883	228,915
UNFPA	1,338,656			
UNHABITAT	1,240,854	254,711	653,760	849,036
UNHCR	3,203,087	3,997,076	283,908	26,825
UNODC	139,100			
UNOPS		1,600,618	599,115	
UNWOMEN		180,830		148,463
<b>Total</b>	<b>25,851,511</b>	<b>17,491,315</b>	<b>3,483,157</b>	<b>3,139,432</b>

*Allocations (US\$) per PUNO, per window under the Northern Region JP*

By the end of 2022, about 2.06 million people including, over 1.13 million (54.6%) females have benefited from the STFA programmatic activities in Northern Afghanistan. The following outlines the breakdown of beneficiaries by window:



- 1.93 million people, including 1.09M (56.6%) females in the Northern region benefited from the provision of basic services—Output 1—mainly through enhanced infrastructure and access to health services. The infrastructure support services under the NR JP included primarily construction or rehabilitation of irrigation canals, water supply networks, sanitation infrastructure, primary and secondary roads, provision of energy, basic shelters, among other basic community infrastructure. The health support services included provision of child nutrition and reproductive health services, Covid-19 diagnostics and treatments, drug prevention and treatment and mental health and psychosocial counselling support.
- 100,527 people including 19,553 (19.5%) females benefited from livelihood support including, income generation, Cash for Work (CfW), Unconditional Cash Transfers (UCT) and support to micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs)—Output 2. The STFA livelihood support activities helped the target beneficiaries access temporary and longer-term employment opportunities and receive cash-based support to fulfil their immediate livelihood needs.
- 6,953 people, including 8,021 (47.3%) females, benefited from community resilience and disaster risk management services—Output 3, including access to climate resilience infrastructure, training on disaster risk management and coping mechanisms.
- 8,079 people, including 2,968 (36.7%) females benefited from social cohesion support—Output 4. under the NR JP which mainly includes awareness raising, training activities and support for community-based planning activities.

Output Areas	# of Female Beneficiaries	# of Male Beneficiaries	Total Beneficiaries	% of Female beneficiaries
Provision of services (Output 1)	1,094,466	838,741	1,933,207	56.60%
Livelihood Support (Output 2)	19,553	80,974	100,527	19.50%
Community resilience and disaster risk management (Output 3)	8,021	8,932	16,953	47.30%
Social Cohesion (Output 4)	2,968	5,111	8,079	36.70%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,125,008</b>	<b>933,758</b>	<b>2,058,766</b>	<b>54.70%</b>

STFA beneficiaries per output areas



## b. Regional Joint Programme for Southern Afghanistan

The STFA Regional Joint Programme for Southern Afghanistan was approved by the STFA SC in 2022, building on the Joint Programme Initiation Plan (JPIP) for the Northern and Southern regions. US\$150 million was budgeted under this JP; however, due to funding constraints, only US\$50 million was approved as part of the first round of allocations for the Southern region. It is envisaged that further allocations can be made to the southern regional JP, when more resources are made available.

Five provinces are covered under this JP, including Kandahar, Helmand, Nimroz, Zabul and Uruzgan provinces. The Southern region is home to an estimated 10.08% of the overall country's population; it shares a border with Pakistan and serves as one of the major border-crossing trade points of the country.

Ten PUNOs have received funding allocations to implement joint programme activities in the Southern region. Joint programme activities in the Southern region were prioritized based on the identified needs, which were reflected in PUNO workplans under the respective 'Delivering as One' (DaO) initiatives. The below table presents an overview of allocation per PUNO, per window, for the Southern region.

PUNO	Window 1 - Provision of Essential Services	Window 2 - Livelihood Support	Window 3 - Community Resilience and Disaster Risk Management	Window 4 - Social Cohesion
FAO	5,000,000			
IOM	2,361,784	3,107,375	254,529	222,713
UNCTAD	500,000	506,800		
UNDP	12,131,672	3,417,347	1,242,868	1,648,370
UNESCO	1,202,266		21,211	589,659
UNFPA	2,004,710	122,089		80,308
UNHABITAT	935,096	1,405,212		1,060,538
UNHCR	3,274,153	4,740,603	336,721	31,816
UNODC	389,100	474,700	1,088,500	464,000
UNWOMEN	820,333	180,829		148,463
<b>Total</b>	<b>28,619,114</b>	<b>13,954,955</b>	<b>2,943,829</b>	<b>4,245,867</b>

*Allocations (US\$) per PUNO, per window under the Southern Region JP*



By the end of 2022, approximately 1.5 million people, including 532,980 (35.0%) females, benefited from Regional Joint Programme Activities in Southern Afghanistan. The following provides an overview of key results per window:

- 989,857 people, including 443,289(44.8%) females, benefited from provision of services—Output 1, mainly through access to infrastructure and health services. The infrastructure support services under the SR JP mainly covered construction/rehabilitation of irrigation canals, water supply networks, sanitation infrastructure, primary and secondary roads, provision of energy, and construction of shelters, amongst other basic community infrastructure. The health support services included provision of child nutrition and reproductive health services, Covid-19 diagnostics and treatments, drug prevention and treatment and mental health and psychosocial counselling support.
- 179,841 people, including 33,647 (18.7%) women, benefited from STFA cash-based schemes (income generation, CfW and UCT)—Output 2, in the Southern region. In addition, 1,084 MSMEs, including 337 (31.1%) female-led businesses, were supported through STFA. STFA livelihood support activities helped target beneficiaries access temporary and longer-term employment opportunities and receive cash-based support to fulfil their immediate needs.
- 22,352 people including 6,672 (29.9%) females benefited from community resilient and disaster risk management services—Output 3— including access to climate resilient infrastructure and training interventions on disaster risk management and coping mechanisms.
- 332,293 people, including 49,372 (14.1%) females, benefited from social cohesion support—Output 4, under the SR JP which mainly included awareness raising, training and community-based planning support.

Output Areas	# of Female Beneficiaries	# of Male Beneficiaries	Total Beneficiaries	% of Female beneficiaries
Provision of services (Output 1)	443,289	546,568	989,857	44.80%
Livelihood Support (Output 2)	33,647	146,194	179,841	18.70%
Community resilience and disaster risk management (Output 3)	6,672	15,680	22,352	29.80%
Social Cohesion (Output 4)	49,372	282,921	332,293	14.90%
<b>Total</b>	<b>532,980</b>	<b>991,363</b>	<b>1,524,343</b>	<b>35%</b>

*STFA beneficiaries per output areas*



### c. Regional Joint Programme for Eastern Afghanistan

The Eastern Region under STFA comprises Kunar, Laghman, Nuristan, and Nangarhar provinces, and borders Pakistan. The Eastern Region is vulnerable to natural hazards and conflicts. Communities across the region have often been impacted by seasonal floods, earthquakes, landslides, and droughts, as well as conflict-driven displacements, loss of lives and livelihoods, destruction of property, and derailment of development initiatives. These factors have consequently created a fragile humanitarian situation, which is exacerbated due to the fact that access to the population remains a challenge as a result of insecurity and the remoteness of some rural areas.

Although the Eastern regional joint programme was approved in March 2022, the funding allocation to the region was only approved in October 2022. The region received a total allocation of US\$41.5 million, based on the STFA Resource Allocation Strategy, which is guided by the population adjusted Multi-dimensional Poverty Index (MPIs).

In the Eastern Region, PUNOs further systematized a joint programming approach described as 'Delivering as One' or 'DaO', in short. This initiative aims to bolster inter-agency value chains by ensuring that an output of one PUNO becomes the input for other PUNO(s). This strategic approach was designed to optimize cost-effectiveness and capitalize on the unique strengths of each PUNO in the delivery of joint, STFA-funded, interventions.

A joint working session between the TFMU and PUNOs was held in 2022, in Jalalabad, to initiate discussions as part of a regional resource prioritization exercise. During this session, PUNOs identified key intervention areas and prioritized districts based on the situational analysis, and other available information such as the Multi-Dimensional Poverty Index (MPI), Priority Areas of Return and Reintegration (PARR), White Areas, food security data from the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, and disaster-prone regions. PUNOs actively shared their expertise in specific areas to lead the dialogues on prioritization.

The DaO activities and the prioritized districts were presented to the Technical Coordination Working Group (TCWG) on 12 October 2022 and subsequently approved by the Steering Committee (SC) on 27 October 2022. A total of US\$41.5 million allocation was approved for the Eastern Region to support 13 DaO initiatives.

No.	DaO	Sub-DaO Initiative	PUNO
DaO 1	Improved access to Health Services	Drug prevention, treatment and rehabilitation services	IOM
		FHHs	UNFPA, UNDP
DaO 2	Support Education Sector (TBC)	Education Data Monitoring	UNESCO
DaO 3	Urban Development and Provision of Basic Urban Services	N/A	UN Habitat
DaO 4	Durable solutions for IDPs and Returnees	Livelihood improvement for IDPs	IOM, UNDP, UN Habitat, FAO
		Provision of Essential services for IDPs	IOM, UNDP, UN Habitat, UNODC
DaO 5	Enabler DaO: Facilitating the importation of Essential and relief consignments	N/A	UNCTAD
DaO 7	Support Rural Livelihood and Agriculture value chains	Livelihood Development	IOM, UNDP, FAO
		Strengthen water management and restoration and rehabilitation of critical irrigation systems (inc. Karez) for improved livelihood.	FAO, UNESCO
		Supporting soyabean value chain to improve food security and farmers livelihood	FAO
DaO 8	Support to MSMEs and to the economic empowerment of women and youth	Economic empowerment and recovery programme	IOM, UNDP, UN Habitat
		Heritage, resilience, and livelihood	UNESCO
		Increase capacity of the private sector	UNCTAD
		Provision of access to SRH and GBV information and services through livelihood and income generating activities for women and girls	UNFPA
		Support women entrepreneurship	IOM, UNFPA, UN Women
DaO 9	Post-earthquake recovery and DRM	Flood disaster response and prevention	IOM, UNDP, UN Habitat, FAO
		Protecting livelihood from natural disasters	IOM, UNDP, FAO
DaO 10	Community empowerment for locally led solutions	N/A	IOM, UNDP, UN Habitat
DaO 11	Advocacy and inclusive practice for Human Rights, Women empowerment and gender equality	Support Media Outlets	UNESCO

*List of DaO activities by PUNOs in Eastern region*

Twelve PUNOs have received funding allocations to implement DaO initiatives in the Eastern region as presented in the below table. Activities in the East started during the last quarter of 2022. As a result, PUNOs could mainly undertake preparatory work during the reporting period; before the end of the year, there was, however, some early progress reported for limited CfW initiatives (with a total of 470 people benefiting - through a total of 12,220 working days created at the end of the year); in 2023, however, it is expected that programme implementation will start yielding results at a much larger scale.

PUNOs	Window 1 – Provision of Essential Services	Window 2 – Livelihood Support	Window 3 – Community Resilience and Disaster Risk Management	Window 4 – Social Cohesion
FAO	2,105,947	3,272,067	3,121,988	-
ILO	-	500,000		-
IOM	4,000,000	3,930,000	65,000	115,000
UNCTAD	1,024,686	232,021	-	-
UNDP	2,529,559	5,432,906	1,182,185	1,583,049
UNESCO	468,304	-	229,019	52,679
UNFPA	1,508,967	541,420		
UNHABITAT	497,550	1,157,256	-	405,194
UNHCR	2,800,000	1,500,000	500,000	-
UNODC	1,500,000			750,000
UNWOMEN	-	500,000		
<b>2,105,947</b>	<b>3,272,067</b>	<b>3,121,988</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,105,947</b>

*Allocations (US\$) per PUNO, per window under the Eastern Region JP*



#### d. Ataturk Health Support Joint Programme

The health sector Joint Project ‘Sustaining Essential Services in Ataturk Hospital’ is the only STFA’s sectoral joint project and was approved by the STFA Steering Committee in April 2022, in Brussels, with a total budget of US\$2.5 million. As part of the immediate response to avoid the imminent total collapse of the health systems in the country following the power shift in August 2021, STFA launched the joint project in partnership with three PUNOs, i.e., WHO, UNDP and UNFPA, to support the operations of the Ataturk Hospital—the second largest children’s specialized hospital in the country—located in Kabul, Central region. The hospital is not only providing healthcare services to the population of Kabul, but it also serves as a referral hospital for the other 33 provinces of Afghanistan. The joint project was indeed successful in ensuring the provision of uninterrupted healthcare services at this critical facility. During 2022, a total of 47,245 people, including 19,505 (41.3%) females received medical services at this hospital.

PUNOs	Window 1 – Provision of Essential Services	Window 2 – Livelihood Support	Window 3 – Community Resilience and Disaster Risk Management	Window 4 – Social Cohesion
WHO	\$2,144,750	-	-	-
UNFPA	\$250,000	-	-	-
UNDP	\$80,250	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,475,000</b>	-	-	-

*Allocations (US\$) per PUNO, per window under the Health Sector JP*

# ANNEX III: RISK ANALYSIS

During the design of the STFA Programme Portfolio, a risk matrix was developed to identify key risks in several categories - including Contextual (Political, Security), Programmatic, Operations/finance and organisational risks. In 2022, some of the pre-identified risks materialised and one new risk was identified, as presented below.

Risk Description (as per JP document)	Type	Rating	Owner	Response Implemented
Risk#7. Abuses of human rights or unlawful behaviour is committed by de facto authorities and/or local authorities.	Contextual	Likelihood: Likely Consequence: Major Risk Rating: High	Programme Management, PUNOs	Increased regularity of engagements between the UN and international community on the one hand, and between the UN leadership and DfA on the other hand, to advocate for a reversal of the ban on women work in I/NGOs.
Risk#18. Further restrictions on women and girls' participation in social and economic life. (De-facto Authorities (DfA) issued a decree banning women from working in NGOs (national and international)	Contextual	Likelihood: Very Likely Consequence: Major Rating: Very High	PUNOs/TFMU	PUNOs are assessing the situation on the ground and seeking alternative work modalities/approaches for female staff to work and also reach out to female beneficiaries that are in need (retaining a principled approach to delivery, in line with IASC's principles).  Work from home modalities have been facilitated/enabled by IPs, whenever the local operating environment is not conducive and safe to female personnel.  PUNOs have also been engaging with shuras, village literacy committees, religious leaders, and community elders, to assess and monitor the situation and continue advocacy for participation of women and girls in the activities.
Risk#17. Programme unable to mobilize required financial resources. (The Joint Programmes for North, region remain significantly underfunded vis-à-vis initially plans, i.e., \$150 million)	Programmatic	Likelihood: Possible Consequence: Moderate Rating: High	Programme Management & PUNOs	STFA, in close consultation with PUNOs have allocated available resources based on priority needs. More efforts by all STFA stakeholders, including, in particular, STFA contributing partners, need to be made to mobilise resources to capitalise the Fund. This will be critical to be able to support more people in need – and to prevent a rapidly increasingly humanitarian caseload. Such additional resources will also contribute to strengthen measures to improve and expand the outreach to women and girls, given the increasing challenging context.

## Joint Programmes Risks

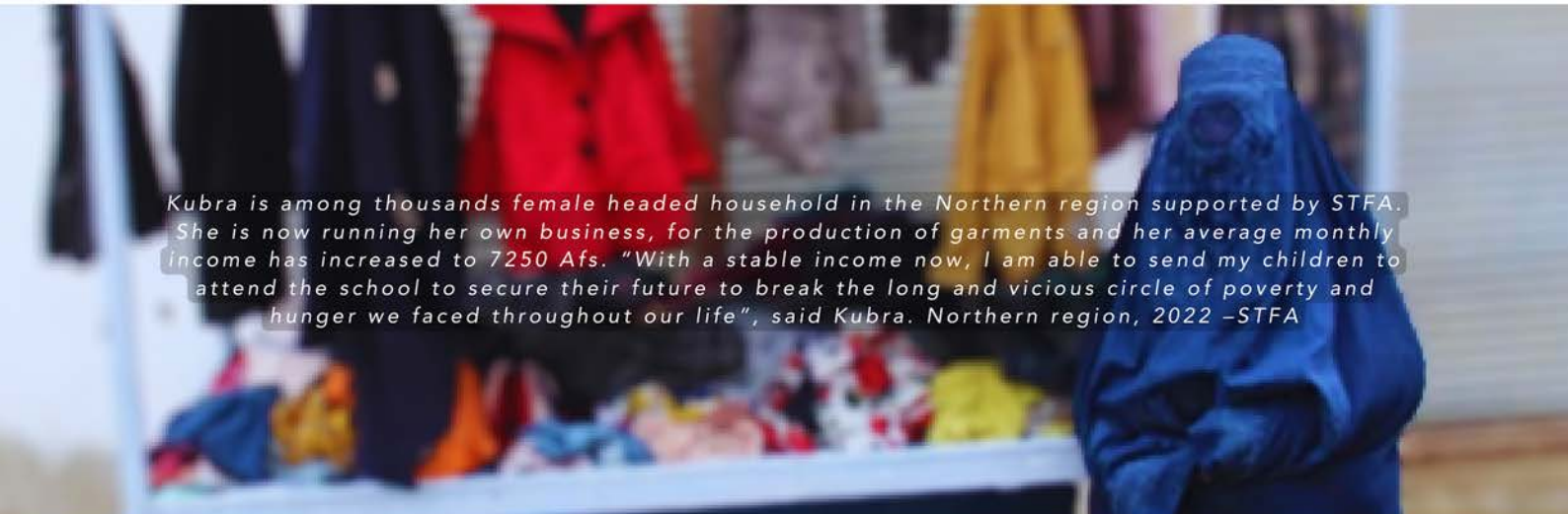
## ANNEX IV. Voices from the Field: Real-Life Stories

### "THE UNBREAKABLE SPIRIT: KUBRA'S TRIUMPHANT JOURNEY AS A WOMAN ENTREPRENEUR"

Kubra's story is a touching tale of resilience, determination, and the power of perseverance. As a single mother of 9 children, she faced countless challenges and obstacles on her journey as a woman entrepreneur. Despite the odds against her, she never gave up on her dreams of providing for her family and creating a better life for them.

Kubra lost her husband many years ago, leaving her to shoulder the responsibility of supporting her family on her own. With no other source of income, she had to find a way to make ends meet and provide for her children. This was not an easy task, especially when her eldest son left for Iran and became addicted to drugs.

*"Previously, my children were not going to school for formal education, but with stable income I am sending my children to attend the school to secure their future to break the long and vicious circle of poverty and hunger we faced throughout our life", said Kubra.*



*Kubra is among thousands female headed household in the Northern region supported by STFA. She is now running her own business, for the production of garments and her average monthly income has increased to 7250 Afs. "With a stable income now, I am able to send my children to attend the school to secure their future to break the long and vicious circle of poverty and hunger we faced throughout our life", said Kubra. Northern region, 2022 –STFA*

Despite these setbacks, Kubra refused to let her circumstances defeat her. She worked hard every day, selling second-hand clothes as well as sewing garments for her female customers. She did everything in her power to provide for her family, and her determination inspired those around her.

Kubra had been running her business for a long time, and when situation worsened due the economic downturn and most of the population lost purchasing power, she lost her customers and was on the verge of closing her business. She was selected as a woman entrepreneur among 20 members of a saving group, she saw this as a chance to take her business to the next level, through STFA. With the financial support of 46,000 Afs, she was able to purchase critical assets for her enterprise - including sewing equipment - to improve production and increase her average monthly income from 4,000 Afs to 7,250 Afs.

The effects of STFA's support on Kubra's life was significant. With a permanent set-up now, Kubra is selling the garments in Dawlat Abad market, as she has been able to save time and focus on marketing and selling her own products. Her increased income has allowed her to improve the living conditions of her family and provide them with the stability they need.

Kubra's journey is a testament to the power of hard work and determination. Despite facing countless obstacles and challenges, she never gave up on her dreams and continued to work towards a better life for herself and her family. Her story is a reminder that anything is possible with a little perseverance and a lot of heart.





*A joint delivering as One (DaO) initiative under STFA to support IDPs in the eastern region of Afghanistan. Over one million Afghans are internally displaced, including women headed households. A carpet weaving training centre in Jalalabad city for the IDP camp is established, jointly supported by UNDP, UN-Habitat, UNHCR, and IOM through STFA- Eastern regional JP, 2022 –STFA.*

## **Economic Empowerment of Afghan Women in IDP settlements: Implementing Livelihood Initiatives Amidst Restrictions in Eastern Afghanistan**

In response to the recent restrictions on females in Afghanistan, UNDP and UN-Habitat are joining forces to support local women in six IDP settlements around Jalalabad. The initiative aims to establish small-scale carpet manufacturing units and a vocational training program to enhance community resilience through women's empowerment.

Carpet weaving is an ideal employment opportunity for women, as the home-based nature of the work allows them to earn a livelihood without being impacted by the externally-imposed restrictions. This initiative will provide carpet weaving training to help rehabilitate the economic status of women in the IDPs settlements.

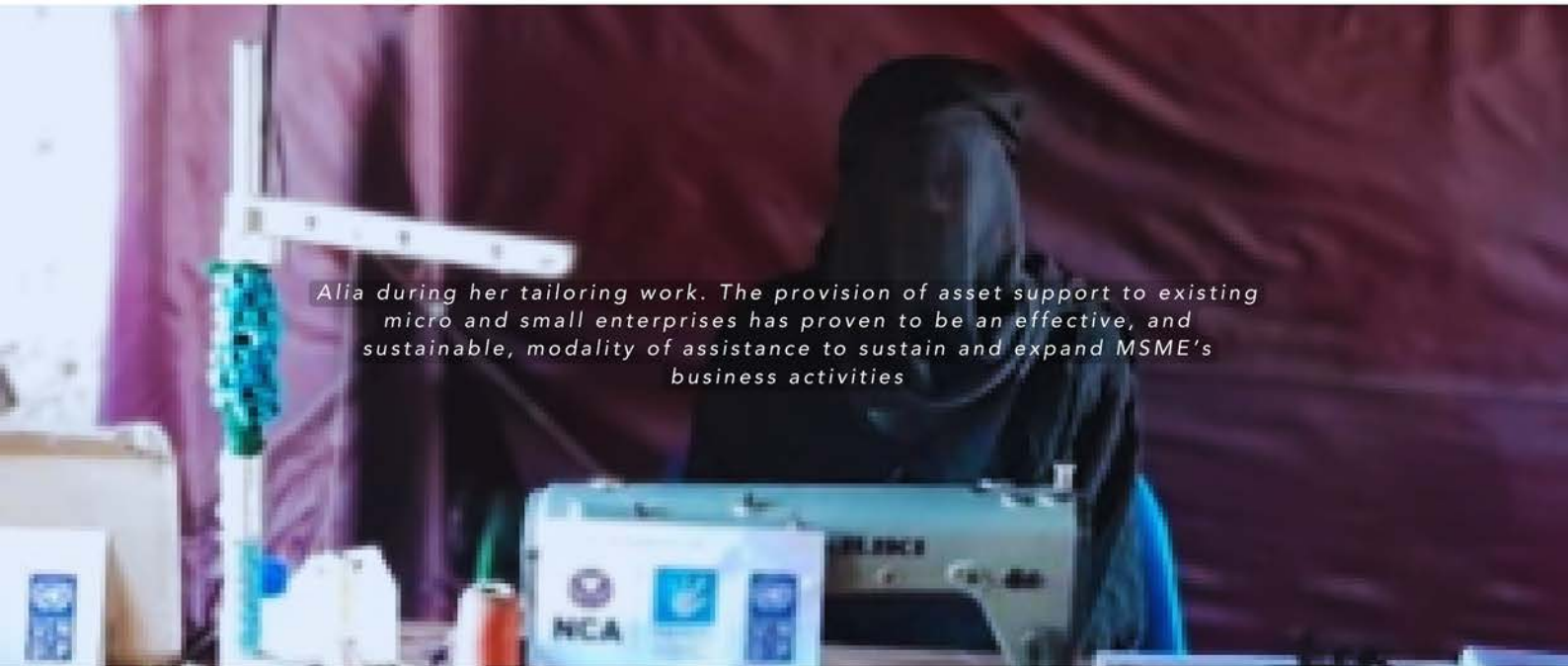
The primary objectives of this project are to enhance community resilience, alleviate poverty, create job opportunities for women, and establish revenue-generating units. The project also aims to provide productive assets and raw materials, as well as to support the female beneficiaries through on-the-job training. The expected outcomes include the establishment of six carpet weaving production centers and the training of 120 women in carpet weaving.

These trained women will gain the necessary skills to produce traditional Afghani carpets and support their families financially.

In total, project will support more than 900 people, including the trainees and their families. The project will promote workshop products to local markets and connect them to carpet production companies, ensuring market access within current restrictions.

UN-Habitat will provide training and mentoring, while UNDP will supply necessary materials and support the establishment of centers. Moreover, it is envisaged that UNHCR and IOM may join the initiative with their expertise to achieve a positive synergetic effect. The project is designed for women, particularly internally displaced individuals, female-headed households, and women with disabilities.

The collaboration between UNDP, UN-Habitat, UNHCR, and IOM is a powerful step towards empowering these communities economically and socially, even amidst the recent restrictions on females. By providing training, resources, and market connections, this initiative will help uplift women and their families, preserving and promoting the rich cultural heritage of traditional Afghani carpet production in a challenging environment.



*Alia during her tailoring work. The provision of asset support to existing micro and small enterprises has proven to be an effective, and sustainable, modality of assistance to sustain and expand MSME's business activities*

## Unstoppable: Supporting women micro-entrepreneurs through home-based businesses

The new restrictions imposed by the DfA has had a direct impact on women's social and economic space— particularly for women-headed families. STFA, through the ABADEI programme, enabled the implementation of alternative approaches to empower and support women's economic activities around their own communities. One of the modalities, rolled out with STFA support, was the distribution of grants to Micro Enterprises (MEs) – whereby women are supported to work in their own homes, enabling them to meet their household economic needs, while, at the same time, creating a platform for them to transfer their skills to other women and girls within their own community.

UNCTAD, under the Regional JP for Southern Afghanistan, led the provision of training interventions to enhance their technical knowledge, skills and to improve their marketing strategies. Once foundational skill sets for these MSMEs were developed, they received cash grants from UNDP/STFA (ranging \$1,000 - \$10,000 per MSME) and UNHCR/STFA (\$570 per MSME) to increase supplies, purchase better and modern equipment and machineries and create additional employment opportunities for youth. UNDP/STFA reached out to 433 MSMEs while UNHCR supported 150 MSMEs in the region.

Some SMEs had businesses which were not viable because of the prevailing economic challenges in the country, and they were failing to retain staff. IOM/STFA supported such SMEs through its Employment Retention Scheme, by covering the salaries of 2,837 employees of selected SMEs in high-need sectors (dairy, tailoring, manufacturing, etc.) to help staff retention and create new job opportunities. Some SMEs were supported with in-kind machinery, equipment, tools, raw material and solarization of their businesses.

19-year-old Alia, resident of Ghorghori ( غورغوری ) - a village in Khashroad district, Numruz province - is one of the micro-entrepreneurs who received support. She learned the basics of tailoring from her sister when she was 11 years old. She and her brother are responsible to cover their household expenses. Alia used to make garments for women and children in the community with her old sewing machine. "My sewing machine was not working properly and that is why I couldn't deliver the clothes to customers on time and customers were no longer willing to give me business" Alia stated. She mentioned that, on occasions, her father took the machine to the bazar for repairing up to two times a day.



With support from STFA, she was able to acquire sewing machines, a solar panel, a battery, and other necessary tools. Now she can produce garments during the evening time - which was not possible for her before. With the help of the new machines, she can make 3 pieces of garments per day, compared to only one piece of garment, prior to STFA support. Her income increased to AFN 300 a day, which can cover basic needs and support the treatment of her ill mother. Currently she is teaching tailoring to 3 other girls from her neighborhood.

The supported MSMEs confirmed that they have experienced an increase in profits of approximately 23%; an sustained increase in labor opportunities for local community members (including retention of those already employed) has also been evidenced. The initiative, however, could not be expected to cover every MSME in need of support, due to limited resources – notwithstanding the fact that the number of failing businesses is increasing as the economic situation continues to deteriorate. The need is still great and additional support is still required.

## ANNEX V. A Brief Note on Resources

Resource mobilisation remains a critical issue for STFA. By December 2022, only US\$176 million was received by STFA. During the establishment of the STFA, the need for the Fund coverage were estimated at US\$1.2 billion to support eight regional joint programmes. Based on the available and forecasted resources, a phased approach was adopted. The STFA Resource Allocation Strategy, based on the population-adjusted MPI, provided the basis for a resource mobilisation benchmark: US\$318 million, for the first phase, to implement key activities across all eight regions.

The STFA is in urgent need of continued replenishment and to continue its DaO initiatives to address basic human needs; unless the needs are addressed, and durable solutions are enabled, the humanitarian crisis is likely to worsen, with additional pressures on displacements. It is critical for STFA stakeholders to secure predictable and multi-year funding.



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