

**ANNUAL
REPORT** **2023**

SPECIAL TRUST FUND FOR AFGHANISTAN

CONTRIBUTING DONORS



Government of Germany



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PARTICIPATING UN ORGANIZATIONS



Delivering as One UN



United Nations Development Programme



United Nations Human Settlements Programme



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



United Nations Mine Action Service



World Health Organization

The UN organizations are listed in the order of joining STFA



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LIST OF ACRONYMS

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
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
UN WOMEN	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WHO	World Health Organization



FOREWORD

Dear colleagues and partners,

I am pleased to present the 2023 Annual Report of the Special Trust Fund for Afghanistan (STFA) reflecting on the past year and recognizing the impact our collective efforts have had on the people of Afghanistan.

In 2023, Afghanistan continued to face multifaceted socio-economic and humanitarian crises including the disastrous earthquake in Herat that claimed thousands of lives and affected many more as well as over half million of returnees from Pakistan in Q4 which exacerbated the country's internally displaced people (IDP) crisis. These challenges directly underscore the critical need for global solidarity and support for all Afghans—particularly women and girls - through a sustained and robust international response. The United Nations, together with our partners including bilateral and multilateral donors and assistance partners, non-governmental organizations through UN (United Nations) agencies, remains committed to supporting the Afghan people in the areas of essential services, livelihoods, and social cohesion as outlined in the United Nations Strategic Framework for Afghanistan (UNSFA) 2023-2025.

Humanitarian aid alone is insufficient to sustainably address the growing resilience challenges of the Afghan people in the medium and long term; it must be complemented and strengthened with support for the basic human needs of Afghans—particularly women, girls, and other vulnerable groups. This approach is also crucial for identifying and implementing durable solutions for the millions of IDPs, returnees and those affected by natural disasters. Furthermore, the scope and scale of the support needed cannot be provided by a single organization or agency. Therefore, a joined up "Delivering as One" (DaO) approach is ever more critical where the United Nations and partners pool resources, identify comparative advantages and deliver to amplify the scale and scope of the impact. Through a DaO approach, we can ensure a more coordinated, coherent response across all agencies, maximizing the impact of humanitarian aid and basic human needs support.

At the forefront of DaO, the Special Trust Fund for Afghanistan (STFA), established in 2021, is emerging as the preferred programming and funding modality for the United Nations, demonstrating the essential benefit of coordinated and concerted efforts in support of the Afghan people under UNSFA. Since its inception, the STFA has mobilised over US\$200 million from 12 contributing donors and partners, providing critical support for the basic human needs via people-centric, area-based programming for approximately five million Afghan people, leveraging the complementarities and technical expertise of 17 Participating UN Organizations (PUNOs). However, our work extends beyond statistics. Whether it is a woman becoming an entrepreneur, an entire community benefiting from crucial infrastructure such as flood retention walls, or a family benefiting from improved health facilities, each story underscores our shared commitment to progress. This is about having sustainable and durable impact on the ground, through the delivery of community-owned, bottoms-up, solutions.

This report showcases the significant progress achieved by the UN and its partners through STFA, fostering inter-agency collaboration, operational efficiency, and ultimately, impactful programs through targeted investments in a joined-up approach. The report also offers detailed accounts of the tangible impact that the STFA and its participating partners have had on the daily lives and livelihoods of the Afghan people. These interventions have fostered community led solutions, focusing on essential services, community infrastructure, income generation, disaster risk management, social cohesion and championed human rights advocacy and women's empowerment at the grassroots level.

In 2023, STFA aligned its objectives with the priorities of the UNSFA by implementing a tailored area-based integrated programming approach to help address basic human needs, complementing short-term humanitarian life-saving assistance with initiatives to safeguard livelihoods and strengthen community resilience. STFA continues to champion the strengthening of the humanitarian aid and basic human needs nexus. It does so through complementary interventions in a range of sectors – including health, education, livelihood support, agriculture, disaster risk prevention, infrastructure recovery and others - in coordination with the other funding streams including the Afghanistan Humanitarian Fund.



These interventions are focusing on shifting from a food security assistance model towards strengthening food systems; ramping up assistance in livelihoods and social protection to help transition out of aid dependency; and strengthening cross-cutting thematic interventions in key areas of the HDP (Humanitarian-Development-Peace) nexus. This approach enables a more joined-up and integrated interventions through the sharing of data and analysis, joint planning, and coordinated response in line with the needs of Afghans.

I assumed the role of Chairperson of the Steering Committee in January 2024, building on the exceptional work done under the coordination and leadership of my predecessors, Ramiz Alakbarov, and Daniel Endres. I commend all STFA partners for their strong collaboration and dedication which were integral in the significant milestones that STFA has achieved since its inception - becoming an excellent example of how, together, we can Deliver as One. I believe that the STFA can be a meaningful vehicle to support investments towards meeting the Sustainable Development Goals even in complex settings like Afghanistan. The UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office has already leveraged the STFA experience to inform the establishment or development of other country-wide, multi-partner, pooled funds across the globe. Taking this opportunity, I also extend special appreciation to our Co-Chairs - to Sweden, which served as Co-Chair from March 2022 to June 2023 and to Norway, which is serving as Co-chair since September 2023 - for their vital leadership role which have significantly contributed to STFA's work.

Despite decades of compounding conflict and escalating crises, the resilience of the Afghan people remains extraordinary, as they continue to persevere and find ways to rebuild their lives against overwhelming odds with the support they receive through the STFA and other partners. However, enormous challenges lie ahead as we work toward achieving our vision outlined in the UNSFA where 'all people in Afghanistan, especially women, girls, children, minorities, and other marginalized individuals and groups, are empowered to protect and rebuild their lives and the lives of their families and communities.'

Across the board, we are witnessing a significant decrease in international aid and lack of resources in Afghanistan for both humanitarian and basic human needs which are curtailing our ability reach and support many more Afghan people who are in dire need of support. Furthermore, edicts issued by De facto authorities have created a challenging environment for carrying out our operations including the ability support reach underserved regions and Afghan women. However, edicts such as the ban on poppy cultivation which is having a positive impact give us the opportunity to scale up support to farmers impacted by the ban in terms of supporting alternate crop production and livelihoods. Nonetheless, despite the challenging operating environment, the STFA remains vital platform for enabling the delivery of assistance in a principled manner, without discrimination and ensuring the meaningful participation of all, embracing 'by women, for women' approach where women are workers, beneficiaries, and drivers of the country's development.

I express my deep gratitude to all partners and Afghan colleagues and communities who share their aspirations and desire to see a peaceful resilient country, especially, the Afghan women, who remind us daily of our responsibility to assist and empower them as they lead the course for a better future for themselves and their children. Your dedication and perseverance inspire us all.

As we look to the future, our resolve must remain unshaken. Despite the challenges, we must not waiver in our support and must redouble our efforts, our collaboration, and our commitment. The STFA remains as a tried-and-tested platform that can effectively deliver our joined-up, coordinated and support to the people of Afghanistan empowering them to be active agents of peace, prosperity, and transformation.

Thank you for your continued partnership and commitment to the STFA.



Indrika Ratwatta

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



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Special Trust Fund for Afghanistan (STFA) was established on 20 October 2021[1] to support UN joint programming to help address basic human needs in Afghanistan, complementing the ongoing humanitarian response. From 2022, STFA supported the implementation of two strategic priorities of the UN Transitional Engagement Framework (TEF), this was extended by six months until 30 June 2023. In July 2023, STFA aligned with the priorities of the UN Strategic Framework for Afghanistan, the successor to the TEF, which now serves as the strategic planning framework for the United Nations in Afghanistan until the end of 2025. The STFA enables strategic and systemic programming and programme implementation while capitalizing on complementarities and the technical expertise of 17 Participating UN Organizations[2], with an invitation remaining open for any interested UN agencies to join the Trust Fund.

STFA constitutes an important instrument to enable coordinated international assistance to vulnerable communities in Afghanistan with support from 12 Contributing Partners[3]. The STFA applies a tailored area-based integrated programming approach to support basic human needs, complementing short-term humanitarian life-saving assistance with the safeguarding of livelihoods and the strengthening of community resilience. The distinguishing feature of the area-based approach is that it is an integrated response that addresses multiple vulnerabilities simultaneously to avoid the socio-economic collapse of the country, in a context of severe instability. In 2023, joint programmatic activities continued in the North, South, East, and one health sector project in the Central region. In addition, in May 2023, the Steering Committee approved a new allocation to commence JP activities in the South-East region. Therefore, cumulatively, in 2023, STFA activities were implemented across five regions. Since inception of the fund, STFA has mobilised US\$203.8 million, of which US\$175.4 million has been allocated to the joint regional programmes (South, North, East and South-East), health sector project and the TFMU project. So far, 14[4] out of 17 PUNOs have received grants for programme implementation.

By December 2023, the STFA had supported approximately 5.1 million people, (2.4 million; 46.8% female beneficiaries)[5]. Approximately 4.2 million people, (2.2 million; 51.5% females) now have 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, 361,686 persons (85,862; 23.7% females) received livelihoods assistance. 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. Close to 81,986 people (31,860; 38.9% females) have benefited from STFA disaster risk management activities. Such activities mainly include disaster risk management trainings and construction of disaster risk management infrastructure. Such activities helped to protect thousands of households against the risks of natural disasters, including floods, and to improve water management systems.

[1] At inception, STFA was anchored against the Area Based Approach for Development Emergency Initiatives (ABADEI) Strategy, then transitioned to the UN Transitional Engagement Framework (TEF) until June 2023. From 1 July 2023, STFA has aligned with the UN Strategic Framework for Afghanistan (UNSFSA).

[2] UNDP, UN-Habitat, UNFPA, UNCTAD, ITC, ILO, UNODC, UNIDO, UNHCR, UN Women, IOM, UNESCO, UNOPS, FAO, UNCDF, UNMAS, WHO

[3] Germany, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland, Netherlands, UNDP, Luxembourg, Qatar, Turkey, Czechia, Iceland

[4] ILO, FAO, IOM, UN-Habitat, UN Women, UNCTAD, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNODC, UNOPS, UNHCR, UNIDO, WHO

[5] Beneficiary numbers are generally fluid and are subject to change following routine data verification and validation exercises that are conducted through the three layers of monitoring (PUNO – TFMU – TPMA). It is worth noting that the STFA figures reported in the 2023 UNSDG Afghanistan Report were draft figures; STFA was still reviewing the PUNO annual reports during that time. The STFA numbers provided in this report are more updated figures and a better reflection of STFA progress since inception of programme activities in 2022.





MSME support; Female beneficiary sewing clothes in Eastern Region Nangarhar

Lastly, 377,744 people (70,999; 18.8% females) benefitted from the STFA social cohesion services. Such services were of most value to ensure women participation and inclusion in community-based planning and development. These activities were conducted through a bottom-up, community-driven, approach to programming – with inclusion and participation (of women and men) at the core of the design of such interventions.

TFMU contracted a third-party firm to conduct a beneficiary survey to measure satisfaction with STFA programme interventions across the North and South Regions as well as the Health Sector Project. Around 1,300 people participated in the individual interviews and focus group discussions (50% female respondents). Preliminary results indicate that respondents in North (100%) and South (98%) regions were highly satisfied with the essential services support, mainly basic community infrastructure and health services. Further, 90 percent of the respondents who had received livelihood support through STFA in the North and South regions confirmed that the livelihood support was effective, and their situation had improved. On support to the Ataturk hospital, 96.4 percent respondents comprising patients and hospital staff were satisfied with the healthcare services they received.

Starting in 2022, and throughout 2023 – 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. In addition to the contextual challenges, STFA also faced a major decline in donor funding that hampered the STFA programme development and implementation activities. In 2023, STFA received US\$27.81 million from six contributing donors; this is a 65 percent decrease from \$79.42 million received in 2022. The downtrend of the STFA resource mobilisation could be linked to the overall level of international financial support to Afghanistan which is in downtrend mode. Over the year, competing global priorities and crises have been witnessed and could have also contributed to the decline of donor contributions into the country. Given the operational context in response to the bans and restrictions on Afghan women by the DfA, it could also be that the international community was observing the space and opportunities UN agencies had to continue to deliver in a principled manner – which they have been able to demonstrate, as explained in relevant sections of this report. What is important to highlight, however, is that unless this downward resource mobilization trend is reversed, the basic human needs of millions of Afghans, including, in particular, women and girls, will not be adequately supported– creating longer-term socio-economic challenges, worsening the humanitarian situation and prompting further population displacements.





PURPOSE



SCOPE OF STFA SUPPORT

In 2023, STFA became firmly positioned under the UN Strategic Framework for Afghanistan (UNSFA), the framework notes that “the UN will prioritize joint programming and pooled funding mechanisms, particularly the Special Trust Fund for Afghanistan, as the preferred programming and funding modalities”. Such positioning was reflected in a revised TOR for the fund in 2023, further strengthening the coordination role that the Trust Fund Management Unit plays to enhance collaboration and harmonization across the work of 17 Participating UN Organizations (PUNOs). The programme portfolio is now contributing to three strategic priorities of the UNSFA.

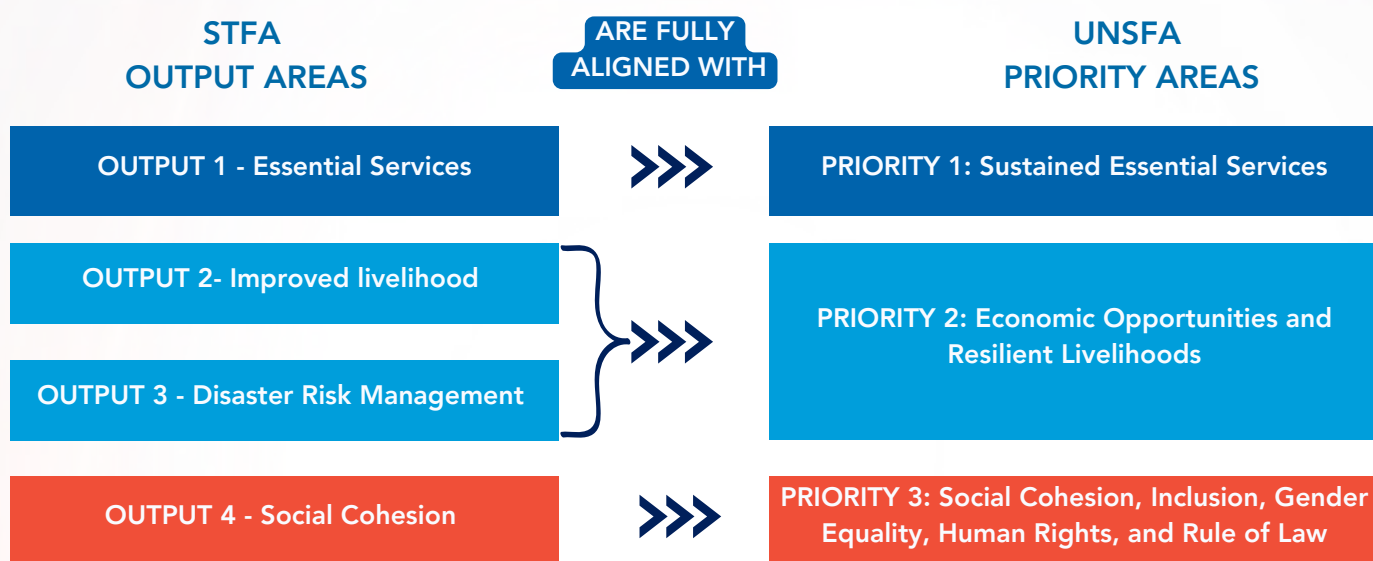
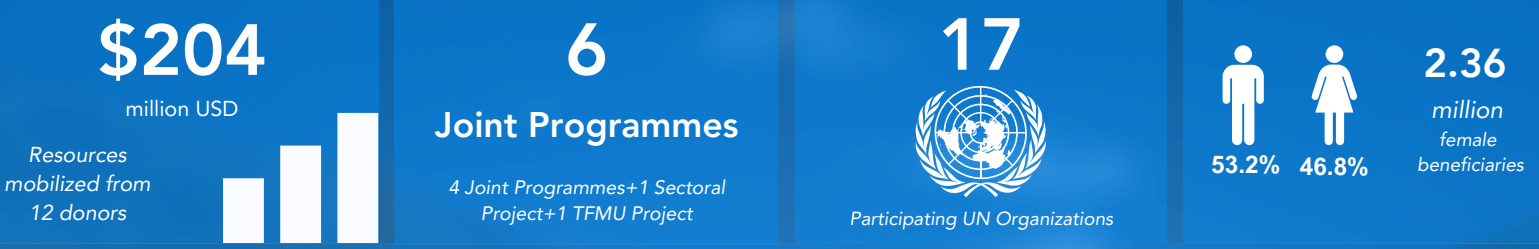


Figure 1: Illustrative alignment of STFA Outputs with the UNSFA Strategic Priorities

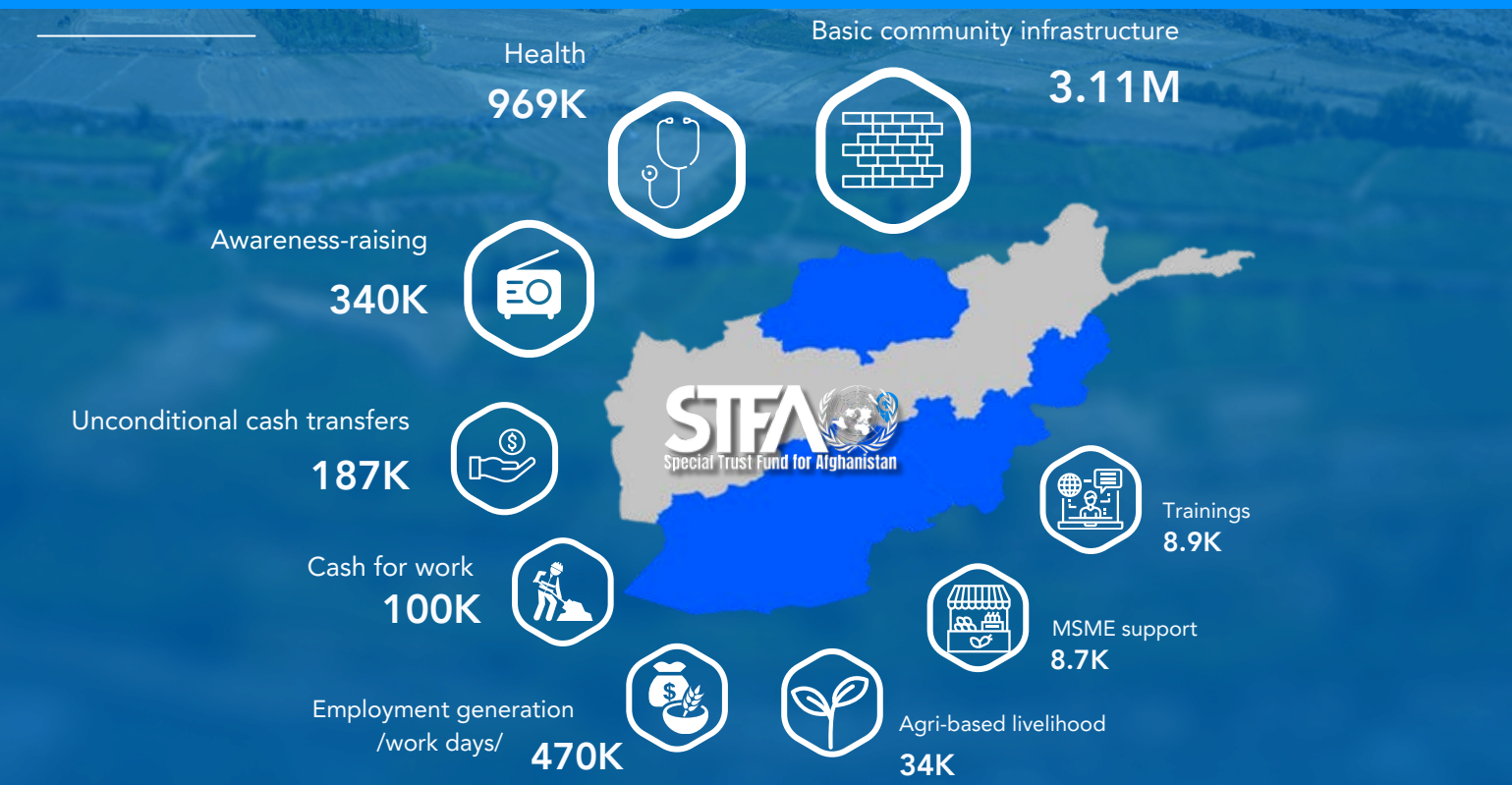
STFA OUTPUT AREAS

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, more sustainable and 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 local level – contributing to greater community resilience.

STFA progress as of 31 December 2023 since inception



Beneficiaries reached through STFA



PUNOS THAT HAVE RECEIVED ALLOCATIONS

Participating UN organisations	Joint Programmes				
	North	South	East	South-East	Health
 International Labour Organization International Labour Organization	Yes		Yes		
 Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
 IOM UN MIGRATION International Organization for Migration	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
 UN HABITAT FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE United Nations Human Settlements Programme	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
 UN WOMEN United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women	Yes	Yes	Yes		
 UNCTAD UNITED NATIONS United Nations Conference on Trade and Development	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
 UNDP United Nations Development Programme	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
 unesco United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
 UNFPA United Nations Population Fund	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
 UNODC United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
 UNOPS United Nations Office for Project Services	Yes		Yes	Yes	
 UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency United Nations Refugee Agency	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
 World Health Organization World Health Organization					Yes
 UNIDO United Nations Industrial Development Organization				Yes	

Table 1: List of STFA PUNOs that have received allocations for Joint Programmes

STFA GOVERNANCE

The Special Trust Fund for Afghanistan maintained a two-tier decision-making and coordination structure, notably the STFA Steering Committee (SC) and the Technical Coordination Working Group (TCWG). In 2023, STFA held six Steering Committee[6] meetings (3 extraordinary; 3 regular) and three TCWG meetings. The regular SC meetings were preceded by discussions at the TCWG level, which helped to inform the decision items tabled for the consideration of the SC. The key decisions and discussions of the SC meetings are highlighted in the table below.

Date	Type of Meeting	Key Decisions
26 January 2023	Extraordinary Steering Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No decisions taken. Overview and status update on the impact of DFA Ban on Female NGO/INGO workers on STFA activities.
16 February 2023	Extraordinary Steering Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No decisions taken. Status update on the impact of DFA Ban on Female NGO/INGO workers on STFA activities. Discussion on Concept of Operations (IASC Mission Report) and the development of a harmonized monitoring framework approach.
13 March 2023	Regular Steering Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (Draft) Operations Manual (Draft) Resource Allocation Strategy US\$44,000 resource allocation for environmental assessment (to TFMU) Resource allocation of US\$2.59 million unallocated funds (East Region) Resource allocation to South-East Region Appointment of new STFA SC Co-chair (annual rotation)
25 May 2023	Extraordinary Steering Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approval of extension of Ataturk Hospital Project (June-Dec 2023) and allocation of additional resources (July-Dec 2023, bridging period) Allocation of \$19.76 million to South-East Region Approval of revision of STFA Regional JP for North Afghanistan
26 June 2023	Regular Steering Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> STFA TOR Revision: Alignment with UNSFA Multi-year Allocation for TFMU (2024-2025)
25 September 2023	Regular Steering Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approval of STFA Regional Joint Programme extension in alignment with the UNSFA (2023-2025) Approval of Multi-year Allocation for TFMU (2024-2025) Also discussed STFA Funding, STFA alignment with UNSFA and potential areas of prioritization within UNSFA.

Table 2: Summary of 2023 Steering Committee decisions and discussions

[6] Under the overall leadership of the UN Resident Coordinator (RC), who assumed the role of Steering Committee Chair at the end of 2022.





RESULTS



UNSFA PRIORITY AREA 1: SUSTAINED ESSENTIAL SERVICES



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.



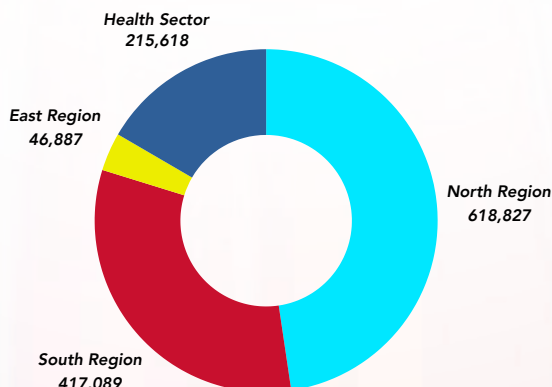
FHH- Bamiyan Sadbarg Village in the Eastern Region

OUTPUT 1 RESULTS – 2023

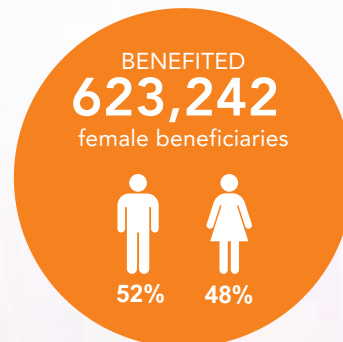
TOTAL NUMBER OF BENEFICIARIES



REGIONAL BREAKDOWN OF BENEFICIARIES



TOTAL NUMBER OF FEMALE BENEFICIARIES



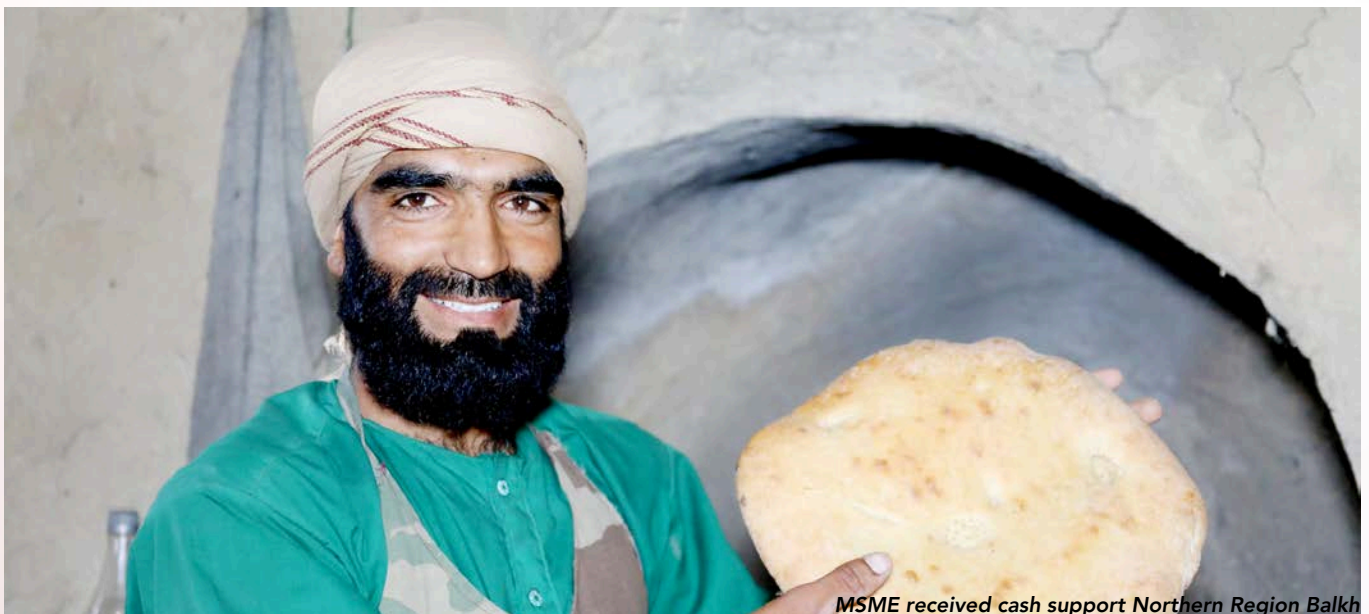
UNSFA PRIORITY AREA 2: ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES AND RESILIENT LIVELIHOODS

STFA OUTPUT AREAS 2 AND 3 ARE FULLY ALIGNED WITH UNSFA PRIORITY AREAS



By the end of 2023, cumulatively 361,386 people (85,862; 23.7% females) had received livelihood support through the STFA JP activities. It is positive to note that the ratio of female beneficiaries who received livelihood support increased by close to 5 percent from end of 2022 to the end of 2023. The livelihood activities included Cash for Work (CfW), Unconditional Cash Transfers (UCTs), MSME support, vocational training, and agriculture-based livelihood support.

Cumulatively 8,728 MSMEs (4,292; 49.2% 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 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.



MSME received cash support Northern Region Balkh

Some 100,368 people, including 1.7% females benefited from the STFA Cash for Work (CfW) support to targeted communities. The STFA CfW support created temporary job opportunities for thousands of Afghans, including both male and female 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. Some 470,685 man/woman workdays were created (45,321 by female community members) as a result of cash for work activities. Furthermore, nearly a similar number of workdays are also created through community-based infrastructure activities in the targeted communities.





Female beneficiary (Mariam) working in the paper recycling factory(solarization support) in the Eastern Region Nangarhar

Female participation in the STFA CfW activities were particularly challenging and was hampered in particular by cultural barriers. However, PUNOs sought proactive ways to engage females in appropriate CfW activities, when possible, following 'Do No Harm; principles. A total 187,322 people (31.7% females) benefitted from the unconditional cash transfers (UCTs). The UCT support mainly targeted vulnerable male and female in the community, including people with disabilities who could not participate in the CfW activities. Such support was vital to help vulnerable families fulfil their immediate basic needs.

OUTPUT 2 RESULTS – 2023

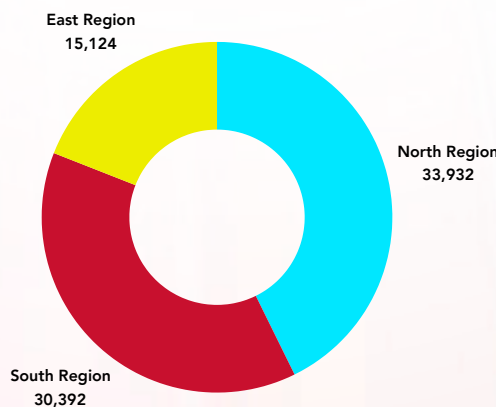


OUTPUT 2: Livelihoods, businesses and the local economy can recover, more sustainable and more resilient to instability.

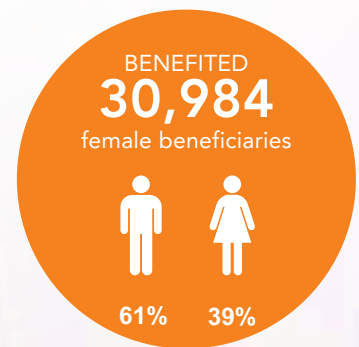
TOTAL NUMBER OF BENEFICIARIES



REGIONAL BREAKDOWN OF BENEFICIARIES



TOTAL NUMBER OF FEMALE BENEFICIARIES



UNSAFE PRIORITY AREA 3: SOCIAL COHESION, INCLUSION, GENDER EQUALITY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND RULE OF LAW



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.



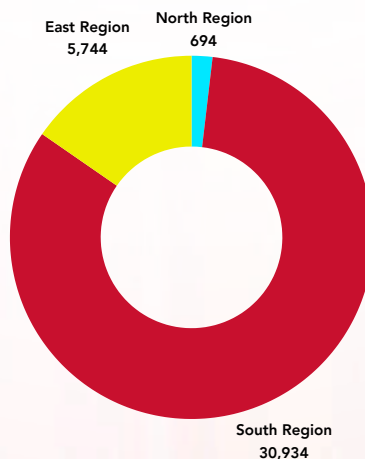
Training support; Female beneficiaries in the literacy course in Northern Region

OUTPUT 4 RESULTS – 2023

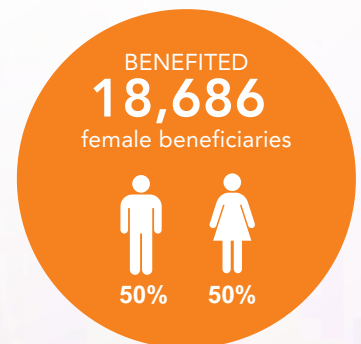
TOTAL NUMBER OF BENEFICIARIES



REGIONAL BREAKDOWN OF BENEFICIARIES



TOTAL NUMBER OF FEMALE BENEFICIARIES



REGIONAL SNAPSHOTS

STFA continued implementation of four regional joint programmes in the South, North, East and South-East regions of Afghanistan. However, the funding allocation to the joint programmes started at different time intervals and were prioritised and adjusted based on the Population-adjusted Multi-Dimensional Poverty profiles of the eight regions[8].

The funding allocation to the regional joint programmes was impacted by the reduced resource mobilisation[9]. In addition, STFA supported the implementation of a health sector support project at the Ataturk Hospital in Kabul (central region) which is successfully completed by the end of 2023.

Joint Programme	Provinces covered	Start Date	End Date	Cumulative Fund Allocation (In US\$)
North	Balkh, Samangan, Faryab, Sar-e-Pul and Jawzjan	1 January 2022	31 December 2025	49,965,414
South	Kandahar, Hilmand, Nimroz, Zabul, Uruzgan	1 January 2022	31 December 2025	49,763,763
East	Nangarhar, Kunar, Laghman, Nuristan	1 November 2022	31 December 2025	41,504,798
South-East	Logar, Paktia, Paktika, Ghazni	1 August 2023	31 December 2025	19,760,000
Health Support Project	Kabul	1 May 2022	31 December 2023	3,590,776

Table 3: Active regional joint programmes supported by the STFA and their timelines

After completing two years of implementation, more than 80 percent of the JP activities in the Northern and Southern regions are completed. The activities in the Eastern region completed their first year of implementation and South-East region started its activities during the reporting year. The Ataturk Health hospital support project is completed as of end of 2023. Below are some key highlights of comparison of progress across the four regional joint programmes.

[8] 1) North, 2) South, 3) East, 4) South-East, 5) Central, 6) Central Highlands, 7) West, 8) North East

[9] The JPs were designed based on expected allocation of US\$150 million/region, with the expectation that STFA will be able to mobilize US\$ 1.2 billion. However, with only US\$ 203.8 million resources available by the end of 2023, STFA resource allocation and targets per regional joint programme were adjusted accordingly.

Overall progress: The majority of beneficiaries (94% of the total STFA beneficiaries) are reported to have received STFA support in the North and South regions. With one year of STFA implementation in the East region, 74,344 people (54.1% females) have reportedly benefited from a number of interventions. Following approval of the funding allocation to the South-East region, the implementation of activities started in 2023, progress against STFA output areas will be reported in 2024. Also, at least 228,545 people (50.2% females) are reported to have benefitted from the health services in Ataturk Hospital and the integrated youth centre.

STFA Beneficiaries by Region

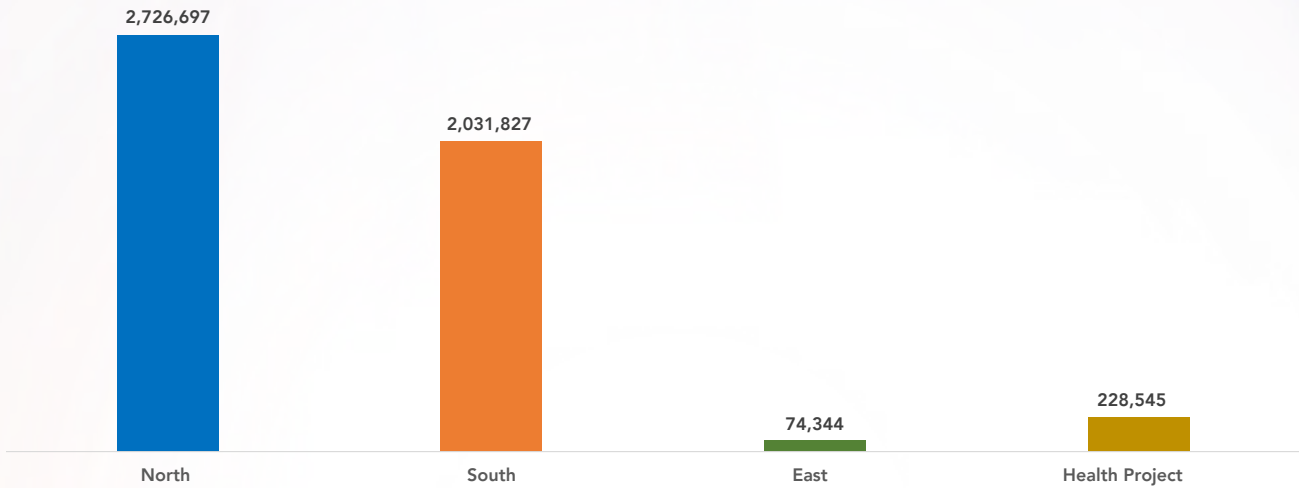


Figure 3: STFA cumulative beneficiaries by region and by JP

By output area: There is a similar trend as was observed in 2022; the majority of STFA beneficiaries continued to benefit from provision of services under Output 1. At least 83.8 percent of approximately 5.1 million beneficiaries are reported to have benefited from provision of services (Output 1).

STFA Beneficiaries by Output



By gender: 46.8 percent of the reported beneficiaries were women and girls. More women and girls have been reached in the Eastern region (54.7%) followed by the Northern region (53.4%), Health project (50.2%) and the lowest ratio was reported in Southern region (37.4%) where cultural sensitivities restrict the extent to which women and girls can participate in the JP activities. The extent to which cultural sensitivities affect participation of women and girls may need to be explored further.

Ratio of Female Beneficiaries by Region

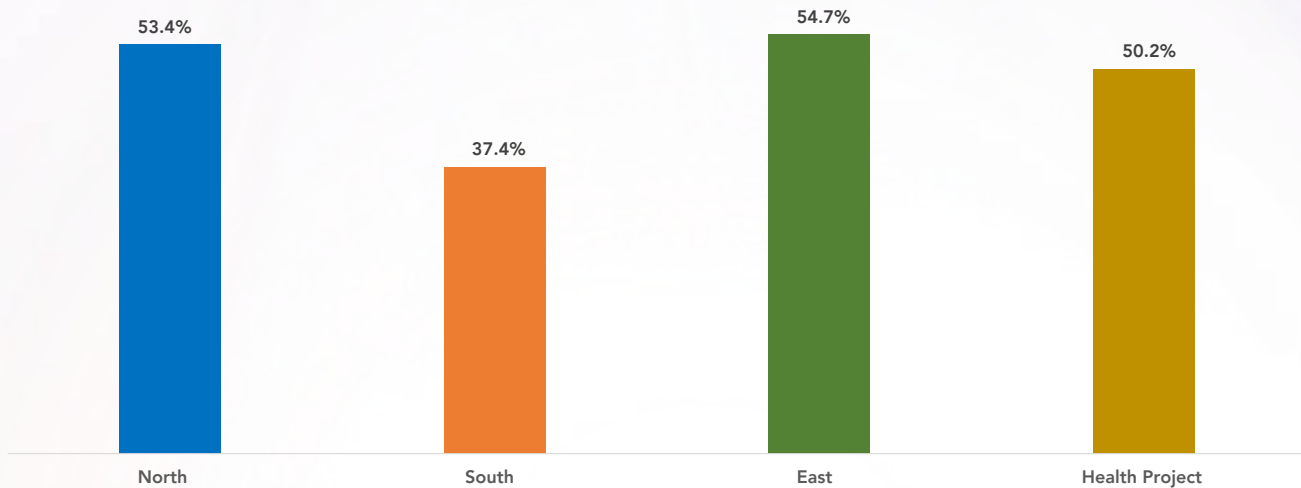


Figure 5: Distribution of female beneficiaries by regional programme/project

Ratio of female beneficiaries by output: An analysis of female beneficiaries by region and by output shows a high ratio of female beneficiaries under Output 1- access to services remains the same across all regions except the Eastern region where the highest ratio of female beneficiaries are reported under Output 2 – improved livelihoods. The lowest ratio of female beneficiaries is reported under output 4 on social cohesion (18%). This could be related to low levels of participation in community-based planning activities and mobility-related challenges for training, awareness raising workshops held in remote/external venues. Such challenges are prompting PUNOs to identify alternative, innovative, means to enhance outreach to women – including through peer-to-peer engagements that can leverage the existing social capital more effectively.

Ratio of female beneficiaries by output area and by region

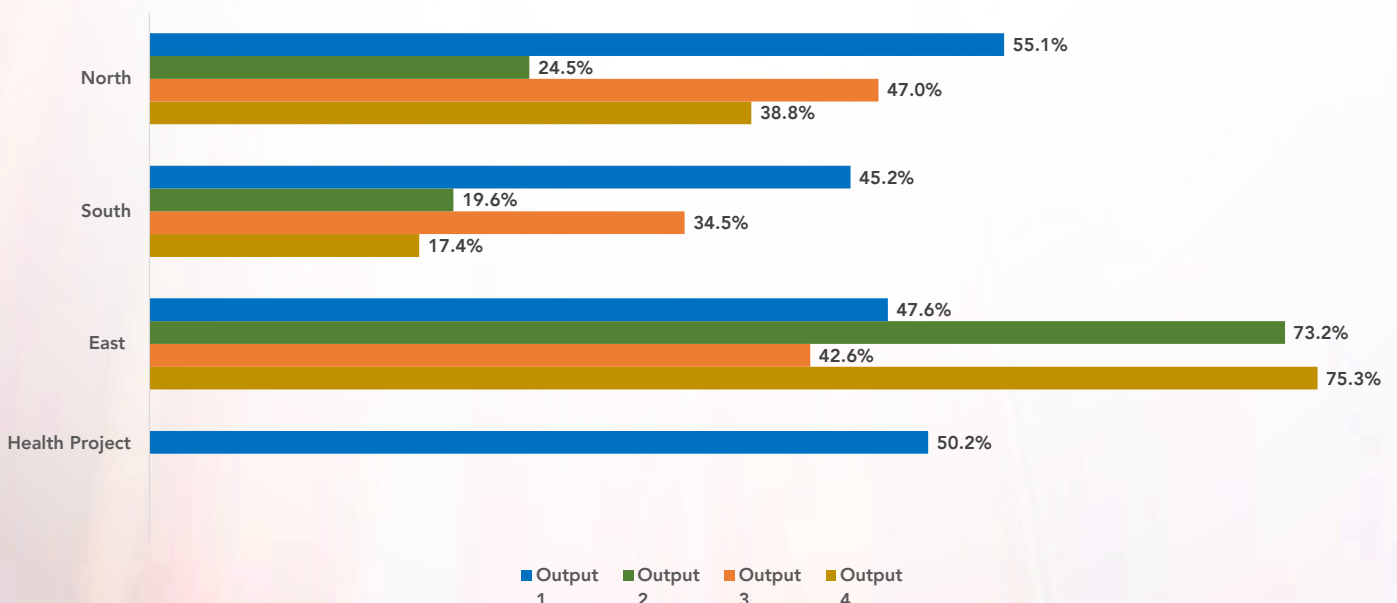


Figure 6: Breakdown of female beneficiaries by region and output



CHALLENGES, LESSONS LEARNED & BEST PRACTICES



CHALLENGES

DfA-announced restrictions: DFA announced new restrictions in 2023 affecting the participation of Afghan women in the UN – although the actual implementation of such restrictions varies across regions. Southern Afghanistan has evidenced more challenges than other regions – such as Central and Northern Afghanistan. Despite the changes in the operating environment, PUNOs have been able to introduce measures to continue to ensure the meaningful participation of female workers, and to reach women beneficiaries – including in critical sectors such as health and education, as well as in private-sector development/MSME promotion.

Limited and unpredictable funding: The original Regional JP Portfolio was designed with an average budget (per region) of approximately US\$150 million. However, with a sum of only USD 204 million mobilised by the end of 2023, STFA was only able to expand its activities to a fourth region and four[10] out of eight regions are yet to receive any funding allocation (as of December 2023). Given the limitations to STFA’s ability to expand into new regions, the funding allocation per region was also reduced. Considering that challenges to address basic human needs remain significant across the country, the reduced rate of the capitalization of STFA poses significant risks: it erodes STFA’s ability to expand to new regions in a geographically-equitable manner - but it also reduces the opportunities to ‘build on’ the gains already achieved in regions currently supported by STFA. STFA’s contributing partners are therefore called upon to sustain their support to UNSFA and to STFA – while outreach to new partners continue to be pursued.

Operational challenges with synchronization: Under ‘DaO’ initiatives, different agencies, on occasions, operate at different paces of progress on implementation, which can be a challenge when such interventions are expected to be sequential. There is often a need to revisit delivery targets and delivery timelines to ensure adequate collaboration – to put in place risk mitigation measures in the event of unanticipated delays from one PUNO, affecting the work of another PUNO. The lessons learned from field implementation ought to inform ‘smarter’ plans – with more realistic sequencing and mitigation measures in the event of unanticipated delays. Such lessons are expected to be reflected in the workplans of future pipelines. already conducted in the targeted regions.

LESSONS LEARNED

Relatively short process timelines: In order to ensure ‘DaO’ initiatives continue to gain greater programmatic depth, it is important to ensure adequate timelines prior to submissions. A two-tier and well-phased out process – comprising (i) strategic allocation of a ‘benchmark’ resource envelope on SC-agreed priorities and (ii) detailed (bottom-up) planning and budgeting - can contribute to ensure a more suitable timeline for inter-agency dialogues and joint programming.

Complex data flows: The TFMU constantly applied measures to ease data entry and data quality control. However, in light of the increasing complexity in data flows pertaining to JP implementation, the Stock-taking Co-creation Survey highlighted the need to revisit the interfaces of online workspaces to facilitate the collection and analysis of data and information from PUNOs, including through enhanced user-interfaces. At the same time, significant enhancements have been introduced in data visualization tools, allowing much more efficient oversight processes.

[10] West, Central, Central Highlands and North-East



‘DaO’ initiatives and enhanced knowledge management: All ‘Delivering as One’(DaO) initiatives being supported by STFA fall under Steering-Committee approved Joint Programmes. The DaOs flesh out in more detail the means by which PUNOs intend to collaborate under JP-defined outputs and umbrella activities.

As a matter of practice, they are being included as addenda/annexes to the JP Documents following the corresponding resource allocation approvals by the Steering Committee – such addenda makes due reference to the relevant minutes/SC decisions when allocations have been made. This will contribute to strengthen the documentation and knowledge management of joint ‘Delivering as One’ initiatives – and will help inform future pipeline development under STFA.

BEST PRACTICES

STFA website management: The STFA website migrated to the MPTF Gateway, which is a centralized platform for the STFA as a pooled funding mechanism. This migration facilitated integration with other MPTF initiatives, enabling synergies, collaboration, and cross-promotion opportunities. The MPTF Gateway receives substantial traffic and visibility from stakeholders, donors, and partners. By consolidating the STFA website within the MPTF Gateway, TFMU streamlined website management processes and reduced administrative overheads while maintaining consistency in branding and messaging.

PROGRAMMATIC REVISIONS UNDERTAKEN DURING THE REPORTING PERIOD

TFMU project document revision: The prodoc was revised in 2023 with a view to revisiting the budget requirements, the overall budget of the TFMU was reduced by approximately US\$1 million, as compared to the original proposal submitted in 2022. Further opportunities for greater efficiencies (by leveraging existing resources in UN’s coordination architecture and specialized PUNO expertise) have been explored in 2023 (see “Cross-Cutting Issues: Human rights and Gender mainstreaming”).

Joint Programme Document Revisions: In 2023, programme revisions/amendments were introduced and approved - including, inter alia, for Health sector[11]; East region[12]; SE region[13], North region[15]; the duration period of all eight Joint Programmes have also been aligned to the implementation period of UNSFA.

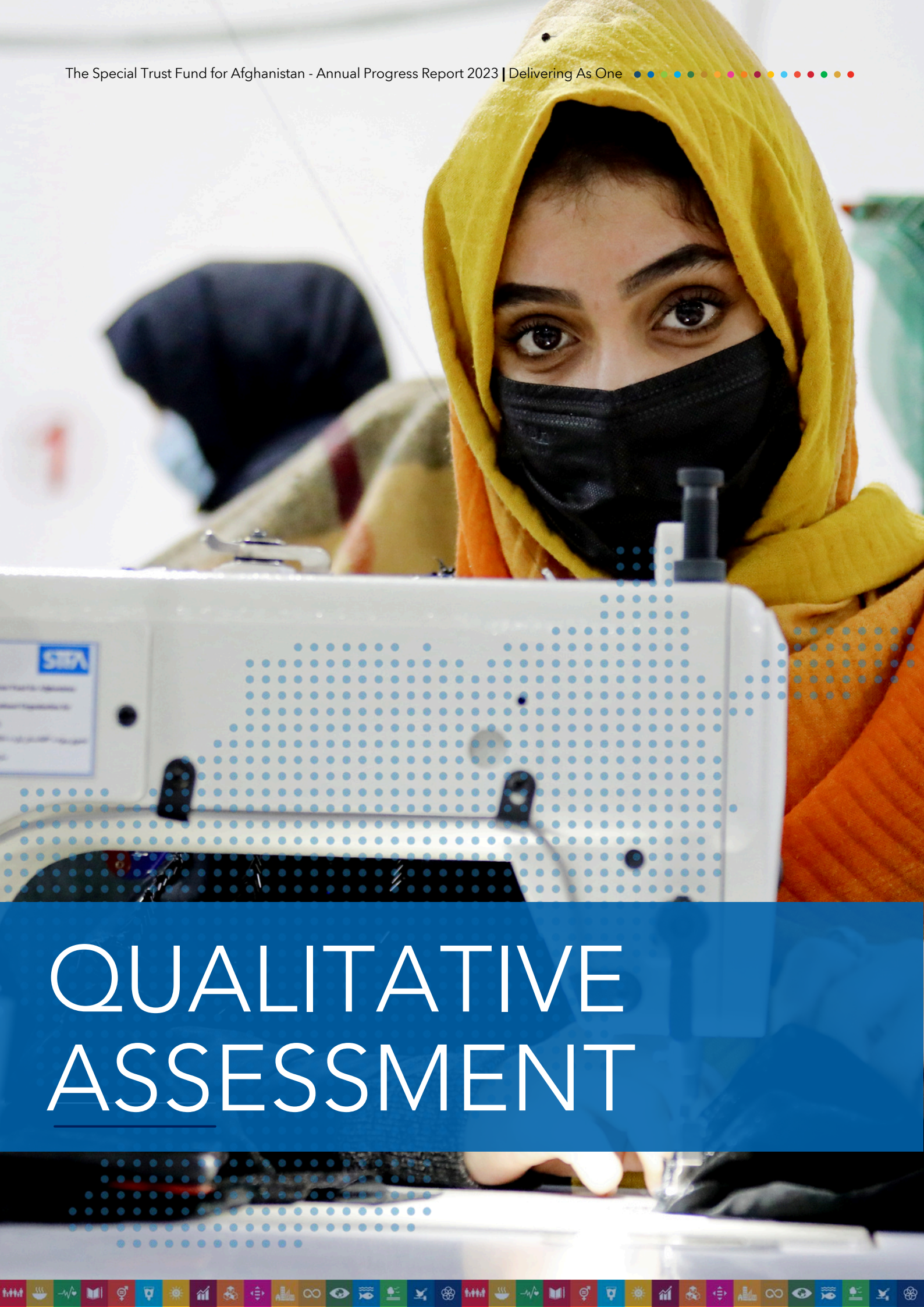
[11] Extension of project duration; revisions in targets/milestones and workplan/budget; and additional allocation.

[12] Introduction of new PUNOs for the JP for East region (ILO), with budgetary assignments

[13] Introduction of new PUNOs

[14] Adjustments in geographic coverage area; no change in budgets/allocations





QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT

OVERVIEW OF ACHIEVEMENTS

The joint programmes provided a unique opportunity for the international aid community, UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes, along with a wide range of implementing partners – with years of practical experience in Afghanistan – to work together through a ‘Delivering as One’ (DaO) approach. This approach has been instrumental in addressing the basic human needs of the Afghan people in a more efficient and effective manner. It has enabled JP PUNOs to capitalize on each other’s strengths and technical expertise and avoid unnecessary duplication or overlaps.

In 2023, there was considerable agility in firmly positioning STFA under the UNSFA. As the fund secretariat, TFMU took a leading role in the development and/or revision of guiding documents, notably a revised STFA ToR, Joint Programme Documents and TFMU Prodoc; as well as the Strategic Note for STFA and STFA Allocation Strategy. The STFA, by capitalizing on complementarities and the technical expertise of 14 actively implementing PUNOs, applied a tailored area-based integrated programming approach to support basic human needs, complementing short-term humanitarian life-saving assistance with the safeguarding of livelihoods and the strengthening of community resilience: approximately 5.1 million Afghans (46.8% women and girls) have benefited from this assistance.

The STFA’s resource allocation strategy developed, with the support of external and independent experts and following extensive consultations, centred on the use of the Multi-Dimensional Poverty Index (MPI) to guide strategic allocations, and a transparent (multi-layered and bottoms-up), consultative process, driven by data on socio-economic needs and community engagements, for sub-regional allocations. Such strategy, which benefited from inputs by PUNOs and was eventually approved by the Steering Committee, guided the allocation of US\$48.8 million for the joint programmes in 2023.

In 2023, the STFA – OCHA and TFMU worked together to identify complementary and well-sequenced interventions to support earthquake-affected communities in South-Eastern Afghanistan. The approach was to ensure a seamless transition from a (humanitarian-led) emergency phase to a (BHN-centred) recovery phase. Such coordination contributed to inform the ‘DaO’ priorities, under the existing JP for South-Eastern region. Indeed, BHN programmatic activities are ongoing in the South-Eastern region, complementing the humanitarian actions that concluded at the end of the initial phase of the response. Similarly, in both Eastern and South-Eastern Afghanistan, a ‘Durable Solutions’ DaO initiative was rolled out to support, in complementary manners, the humanitarian assistance being provided to internally displaced persons (IDPs) and returnees.



Female beneficiary, Carpet weaving, Northern Balkh



BENEFICIARY SURVEY ANALYSIS

The STFA, through a third-party firm conducted a beneficiary survey to assess the progress of STFA activities against specific JP performance indicators in the Northern and Southern regions and the health sector project, in Kabul (Central region). Additionally, this assessment examined the impact of restrictions imposed by the DfA on women's access to education and employment on STFA activities in the field. The survey results indicate high satisfaction levels among respondents in the Northern (100%) and Southern (98%) regions regarding the essential services support provided, particularly in basic community infrastructure and health services. Beneficiaries who received support expressed significant satisfaction with the health and education services in remote areas, where access was previously limited before the implementation of STFA-funded JPs.

Furthermore, 90 percent of respondents who received livelihood support affirmed its effectiveness, noting improvements in their situations through enhanced access to employment opportunities, initiation or expansion of businesses, income generation, and better provision for their families. Regarding support for Ataturk Hospital, 96.4 percent of respondents, including patients and hospital staff, expressed satisfaction with the healthcare services provided. While the DfA imposed restrictions on women participation in communal or societal life have affected women participation, STFA funded joint programmes were able to not only deliver services to the restricted women and girls in the communities, but also involved them to the possible extent in development activities.

KEY PARTNERSHIPS

The Trust Fund also engaged in targeted outreach efforts to promote relationships with diverse stakeholders, including potential new donors such as Arab states, European countries, and North America, as well as non-governmental organizations like Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief (ACBAR) and other implementing partners as well as local communities. In addition, the STFA further strengthened its engagements with other funding streams – particularly Afghanistan Humanitarian Fund (OCHA), Afghanistan Resilience Trust Fund (ARTF/World Bank), Asian Development Bank, and Afghanistan Humanitarian Trust Fund/Islamic Development Bank (AHTF/IsDB); cultivating a network of support and advocacy for 'Delivering as One' and HDP nexus approach to promote a sustainable solution for the current humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan. Consequently, the STFA became an observer of AHF's Advisory Board Meeting, as well as ARTF's Management Committee, while representatives of OCHA and ARTF/World Bank are regular attendees, as observers, in STFA's Steering Committee meetings. Joint events hosted by STFA-ARTF/WB were also held on the side of the Afghanistan Coordination Group in-person meetings. Such levels of engagement allow for strategic information-sharing which, in turn, helps to minimize the risk of unnecessary duplications or overlaps in downstream programmatic activities. The engagements between STFA and ADB also stepped up in 2023, at fund-management and senior leadership level, helping to ensure adequate strategic coordination.

Technical proposals for joint pilot initiatives on food security, public health and MSME promotion were finalized together with IsDB/AHTF early in 2023. Although the expected formal legal agreement between MPTFO and IsDB/AHTF is yet to concretise, the engagements between TFMU and IsDB/AHTF paved the way for the signing of a bilateral agreement between IOM and IsDB, complementing the work being supported by STFA. Such agreement was indeed instrumental to ensure the continuation of an ongoing 'Delivering as One' initiative in support of the expansion of 'Family Health Houses' network in Northern Afghanistan. This experience showcases that STFA and other sources of funding can work in synergistic ways, to expand the outreach and scale of joint investments towards common objectives.



Returnee beneficiary family , UNHCR

Besides the regular engagements that TFMU maintains with the PUNOs, the TFMU strengthened its working partnerships with other key UN stakeholders – including the Resident Coordinator’s Office (with seamless communications throughout the year in preparations for key decisions tabled at the TCWG and Steering Committee), the (UN-wide) Programme Management Team, the UN Risk Management Team, the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) network, the Durable Solutions Working Group, M&E Working Group, and the UN Communications Group. The TFMU also provided regular inputs on STFA into the Secretary General’s reports on Afghanistan, and the 2023 UN Afghanistan Annual Report. These engagements have contributed to broader Secretariat functions, as they help to ensure well-informed programming, improved oversight (including with respect to risk management) and more effective advocacy through joint outreach and messaging.

The participation of TFMU in these platforms, and the close collaboration with RCO, has helped to strengthen STFA’s positioning as a ‘coordination hub’ for Agencies, Funds and Programmes - in at least two distinctive ways: (a) by allowing the TFMU to be timely informed about emerging issues and priorities for the UN and for UNSFA, leveraging the insights of the UN leadership; and (b) by providing suitable forums for STFA/TFMU to bring common issues to the attention of relevant stakeholders (e.g. pertaining to programmatic challenges or risks), including UNAMA, PMT and RCO - avoiding the need to recreate parallel coordination structures and hence ensuring greater efficiencies in TFMU’s coordination role.

CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

The following are the key highlights of the cross-cutting issues related to the results reported in 2023:

Human rights and Gender mainstreaming: In 2023, STFA leveraged additional technical resources on human rights and gender from PUNOs and the RCO. The UNDP’s Social and Environmental Screening Procedure (SESP) and gender advisory services, and RCO gender advisor have been engaged to provide expertise on cross-cutting issues pertaining to gender and human rights – such insights have allowed to develop better-informed programming. In addition, the TFMU led gender-specific analysis of the impact of the ban on women and girls, which was shared with the Steering Committee in 2023.



The TFMU facilitated PUNO sessions to contribute to identifying opportunities to share good practices to confront the operating environment that has emerged. The TFMU was also able to coordinate with several PUNOs, with RCO's Gender Advisor and with the PSEA network to support the delivery of these PUNO-wide advisory functions. While the DfA imposed restrictions on women participation in communal or societal life, STFA funded joint programmes were able to redouble efforts to ensure principled delivery to women and girls. Localized strategies, including through the identification of locally-suitable venues, engagement of community leaders and community elders, 'packaging' of interventions (which streamline gender across interventions on infrastructure, services and livelihood support), and leveraging opportunities to directly reach women and girls in sectors that provide greater space for engagement (health services, private sector development/MSME promotion, media, etc.) proved to very helpful in ensuring such principled approach continues to be delivered, despite the challenging operating environment.

The leveraging of the wider UN coordination architecture and PUNO's specialized resources to strengthen the streamlining of human rights and gender also translate into greater cost-efficiencies: original plans to have 'stand-alone' gender and human rights mainstreaming functions, which would call for additional resources, can be revisited – for consideration of STFA stakeholders. Such functions can be more efficiently delivered through a coordinated and collaborative approach capitalizing on existing expertise and capacities.

Environmental Due Diligence: During 2023, with support from STFA contributing partners, an inter-agency environmental due diligence assessment was conducted to identify opportunities for positive environmental impact from the STFA programme portfolio. The Assessment allowed to establish an 'inventory' of the different policies, processes and practices that PUNOs peruse to ensure adequate environmental due diligence processes at field level. In doing so, the exercise contributed to map out the correspondence between environmental risks and PUNO's organizational tools to mitigate such risks. Risks stemming from natural disasters, climate change and other environmental factors were factored in the assessment. The review concluded by noting the congruence between such policies and organizational tools and the key risks – the higher the environmental risk levels, the greater the rigorousness of mitigation actions – including through the application of environmental screening processes that gain increasing thoroughness as the environmental risk profiles of interventions increase. The assessment provided greater clarity on the ability of the STFA programme portfolio to achieve its objectives in an environmentally-sustainable manner. Indeed, the conclusions of the assessment were positive – as they indicated that appropriate tools are being deployed in line with the level of environmental risks being identified in the field. The assessment also recommended the Fund to position itself as a 'Paris-aligned' fund, and this principle has been reflected in the STFA Strategic Note, which was developed in the last quarter of 2023.

Risk management: The STFA, through TFMU actively engaged in the UN Afghanistan's Risk Management Team (RMT), which allowed the unit to be well-informed on emerging, UN-wide, risks and issues, and relevant mitigation measures, and to escalate matters that called for collective action at UN level. The TFMU contributed to the UN Afghanistan's risk assessment in 2023 and led 'deep dive' discussions on the risks associated with inadequate coordination, and inconsistencies in donor conditionalities; two of the strategic risks identified in the UN risk assessment. In addition, the TFMU took the lead in the technical design and activation of an online dashboard to share real-time data on high-level risks and related risk management actions with the entire RMT, drawing from the existing (STFA-specific) dashboard. This was prepared in close consultation with UNAMA's Risk Management Coordination Unit (RMCU), which acts as Secretariat for RMT. The dashboard has now been streamlined in the work of the RMT and is benefiting the entire UN system in Afghanistan.





ANNEXES



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) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline: 344,968 • Target: 4,303,713 • Female target: 2,060,975 	Progress 2023: 1,411,702 Female progress: 677,174 Cumulative progress: 4,392,103 Cumulative progress female: 2,241,796	The target is 97% achieved. Delays in the construction of FHH are one reason for the underachievement	PUNO reports
1b. Number of people that have benefited from UN-supported maternal/reproductive health care services (health). (Unit: People) [15] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline: • Target: 15,900 • Female target: 7,950 	Progress 2023: 0 Female progress: 0 Cumulative progress: 0 Cumulative progress female: 0	Target achieved	PUNO reports
1c. Number of people that have benefited from drug treatment, and drug rehabilitation services (health). (Unit: People) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline: 4,200 • Target: 25,160 • Female target: 7,320 	Progress 2023: 13,475 Female progress: 3,320 Cumulative progress: 44,810 Cumulative progress female: 15,243	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) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline: 128 • Target: 63,219 • Female target: 35,807 	Progress 2023: 214 Female progress: 5 Cumulative progress: 402 Cumulative progress female: 45	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) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline: 68,288 • Target: 14,440 • Female target: 	Progress 2023: 90 Female progress: 30 Cumulative progress: 90 Cumulative progress female: 30	Activities under this indicator are delayed	PUNO reports

[15] 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
<p>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)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline: • Target: 14,214 • Female target: 7,592 	<p>Progress 2023: 12,030 Female progress: 7,899</p> <p>Cumulative progress: 13,670 Cumulative progress female: 9,202</p>	<p>Targets under-achieved due to temporary suspension of activities</p>	<p>PUNO reports</p>
<p>1g. Hectares of rehabilitated and/or newly irrigated land for agricultural activities. (Unit: Hectares)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline: • Target: 1,550 • Female target: 405 	<p>Progress 2023: 4,007 Female progress: 1,519</p> <p>Cumulative progress: 4,007 Cumulative progress female: 1,519</p>	<p>Activities are delayed under this indicator area</p>	<p>PUNO reports</p>
<p>1h. Percentage of target beneficiaries satisfied with the quality of UN-supported services, disaggregated by type of service and sex. (Unit: %)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline: • Target: 90% • Female target: 90% 	<p>Progress 2023: 100% Female progress: TBC</p> <p>Cumulative progress: Cumulative progress female:</p>	<p>A beneficiary survey will be conducted by the TFMU to confirm progress against this indicator by Q2 2023</p>	<p>PUNO reports</p>
<p>1j. Kms of road rehabilitated and/or maintained. (Unit: Kms)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline: • Target: 165 • Female target: 0 	<p>Progress 2023: 0 Female progress: 0</p> <p>Cumulative progress: 165 Cumulative progress female: 0</p>	<p>Target achieved</p>	<p>PUNO reports</p>
<p>Output 2: Livelihoods, businesses and the local economy can recover, more sustainable and more resilient to instability.</p>			
<p>2a. Number of people who benefited from UCT (at least 80% women). (Unit: People)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline: • Target: 192,793 • Female target: 55,627 	<p>Progress 2023: 25,284 Female progress: 13,015</p> <p>Cumulative progress: 187,322 Cumulative progress female: 59,350</p>	<p>97% target achieved</p>	<p>PUNO reports</p>
<p>2b. Number of people who have benefited from newly created income-generation opportunities, disaggregated by sex, age and province. (Unit: Other)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline: • Target: 68,568 • Female target: 22,882 	<p>Progress 2023: 44,475 Female progress: 22,408</p> <p>Cumulative progress: 86,890 Cumulative progress female: 31,424</p>	<p>Target overachieved</p>	<p>PUNO reports</p>



JP Output Indicators	Achieved Indicator Targets	Reasons for Variance with Planned Target	Source of Verification
<p>2b.1. Number of people who have benefited from productive employment through CfW schemes (at least 30% women; 50% youth). (Unit: People)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline: • Target: 114,272 • Female target: 8,584 	<p>Progress 2023: 24,486 Female progress: 456</p> <p>Cumulative progress: 89,812 Cumulative progress female: 1,764</p>	<p>Target achieved by 84%. Some activities were delayed due to restrictions in the operating environment</p>	<p>PUNO reports</p>
<p>2c. No. of worker days generated with UN-support. (Unit: Workdays)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline: • Target: 231,410 • Female target: 46,128 	<p>Progress 2023: 301,270 Female progress: 8,133</p> <p>Cumulative progress: 470,685 Cumulative progress female: 60,514</p>	<p>Target overachieved</p>	<p>PUNO reports</p>
<p>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)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline: 73 • Target: 10,311 • Female target: 3,737 	<p>Progress 2023: 1,838 Female progress: 1,204</p> <p>Cumulative progress: 6,362 Cumulative progress female: 4,426</p>	<p>Target achieved by 73%. Some PUNOs were unable to complete their performance targets due to delays in the implementation of activities</p>	<p>PUNO reports</p>
<p>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: %)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline: 30% • Target: 90% • Female target: 90% 	<p>Progress 2023: TBC Female progress: TBC</p> <p>Cumulative progress: Cumulative progress female:</p>	<p>A beneficiary survey will be conducted by the TFMU to confirm progress against this indicator by Q2 2023</p>	<p>PUNO reports</p>
<p>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.</p>			
<p>3a. Number of districts with functional early warning systems and other preparedness mechanisms for climate shocks and natural disasters.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline: • Target: 18 • Female target: 0 	<p>Progress 2023: 39 Female progress: 0</p> <p>Cumulative progress: 39 Cumulative progress female: 0</p>		



JP Output Indicators	Achieved Indicator Targets	Reasons for Variance with Planned Target	Source of Verification
<p>3b. Number of people who acquired knowledge and skills on disaster preparedness and climate-resilient livelihoods (at least 30% women). (Unit: People)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline: • Target: 35,483 • Female target: 1,138 	<p>Progress 2023: 2,979 Female progress: 836</p> <p>Cumulative progress: 9,274 Cumulative progress female: 4,268</p>	<p>Target overachieved</p>	<p>PUNO reports</p>
<p>3c. Number of farmers who benefited from training and assets for improved, climate-smart, agriculture (at least 30% women). (Unit: People)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline: 11,880 • Target: 87,308 • Female target: 21,227 	<p>Progress 2023: 15,427 Female progress: 4,210</p> <p>Cumulative progress: 38,952 Cumulative progress female: 13,148</p>	<p>Target achieved by more than 90%</p>	<p>PUNO reports</p>
<p>3d. Number of people that benefit from rehabilitated and/or newly constructed disaster-resilient community infrastructure and nature-based solutions. (Unit: People)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline: 120,875 • Target: 194,434 • Female target: 78,890 	<p>Progress: 24,275 Female progress: 12,121</p> <p>Cumulative progress: 33,760 Cumulative progress female: 15,837</p>	<p>Some PUNOs could not achieve their targets under this indicator. People in this indicator area also benefit from progress under indicator 1a.</p>	<p>PUNO reports</p>
<p>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.</p>			
<p>4a. Number of CBOs/CSOs with improved capacity for participatory and inclusive community planning (at least 20% women-led). (Unit: CSOs)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline: • Target: 285 • Female target: 30 	<p>Progress 2023: 110 Female progress: 33</p> <p>Cumulative progress: 220 Cumulative progress female: 33</p>	<p>Progress underachieved due to greater restrictions in the operating environment- especially in relation to the engagement of women beneficiaries in social cohesion activities</p>	<p>PUNO reports</p>
<p>4b. Number of people with better awareness about human rights, social cohesion and conflict prevention (at least 50% women). (Unit: People)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline: 6,820 • Target: 215,980 • Female target: 36,957 	<p>Progress 2023: 55,098 Female progress: 18,767</p> <p>Cumulative progress: 395,591 Cumulative progress female: 71,143</p>	<p>Target overachieved – an estimated 15-20 million people have been reached through awareness raising sessions through national media campaigns</p>	<p>PUNO reports</p>
<p>4c. Number of districts with counselling and legal aid services. (Unit: Districts)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline: 9 • Target: 1 	<p>Progress 2023: 0 Female progress: 0</p> <p>Cumulative progress: 0 Cumulative progress female: 0</p>	<p>This activity could not be completed due to a restrictive operating environment; alternative measures to deliver on this activity will be explored in 2023</p>	<p>PUNO reports</p>



ANNEX II: KEY RESULTS PER PROGRAMME

Below are snapshots from the regional joint programmes and health sector support project.

REGIONAL JOINT PROGRAMME FOR NORTHERN AFGHANISTAN

From January to end June 2023, the programme portfolio aligned with two strategic priorities of the TEF. Then, from July to end December 2023, the programme aligned with the three priority areas of the UNSFA. Approximately 2.7 million people, (1.5 million; 53.4%) women and girls have benefited from the regional programme activities since inception in 2022. In 2023 alone, at least 660,946 people (49.3% female) benefited from the STFA-funded JP in the Northern region. While an outcome level independent evaluation is yet to be conducted, the analysis of available data indicates that the programme has contributed to generating significant and tangible impacts on the lives and livelihoods of targeted beneficiaries in multiple dimensions.

OUTPUTS

The majority of beneficiaries benefited from the provision of essential services, most significantly access to improved infrastructure and healthcare and drug treatment services under Output 1 and livelihood support under Output 2, but it is important to note that the four output areas have cross-cutting impacts: ‘cross-fertilisation’ is common and indeed an objective across programmatic interventions. For instance, irrigation works implemented under Output 1 also contribute to the protection of people from flood hazards under Output 3. Similarly, community-level planning initiatives under Output 4 contribute to programming for the remaining three output areas. The following section provides a more detailed breakdown of all four STFA JP output areas for the Northern region.

OUTPUT 1 - Essential Services

In 2023, approximately 624,902 people, including 313,112 (50%) female in the Northern region, benefited from the provision of essential services under Output 1. They benefited from infrastructure; essential health services; and education.

OUTPUT 2- Improved livelihood

In 2023, 33,932 people (12,218 female) benefited from livelihood support. Key outputs included agricultural support packages and technical training, MSME support, including business training and financial support, and cash-for-work (CfW), income generation and unconditional cash transfer (UCT) schemes.

OUTPUT 3 - Disaster Risk Management

In the reporting period, climate change adaptation, disaster preparedness and early warning support activities progressed that benefited over 1,418 people (451 female), elevating their capacity and resilience.

OUTPUT 4 - Social Cohesion

In the reporting period, community outreach and engagement programmes benefited around 694 people (62.7% female) with JP activities focusing on participatory engagement, women’s empowerment, capacity building on community resilience and social cohesion, and media training and engagement.



Northern Region STFA Report Card - 2023



12

Participating UN Organizations



660,946

people benefited



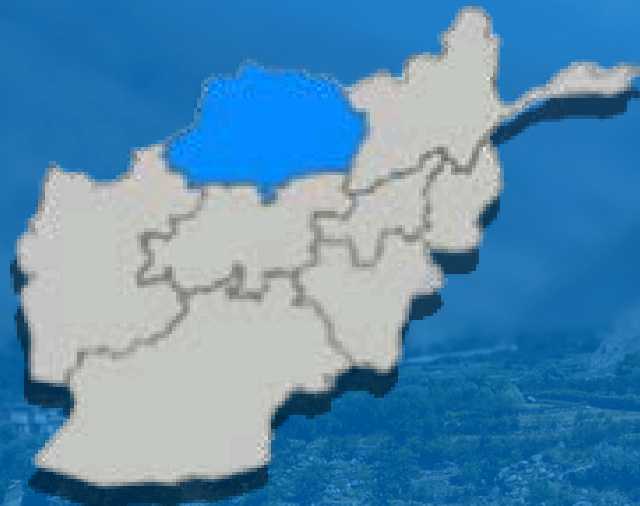
50.7%



49.3%

325K

female
beneficiaries



Beneficiaries reached through STFA in Northern Region

Health

20,671



Basic community infrastructure

597,723



Awareness-raising

694



Unconditional cash transfers

16,893



Cash for work

13,939



Employment generation
/work days/

129,978



Agri-based livelihood

3,932



Trainings

586

MSME support

793



REGIONAL JOINT PROGRAMME FOR SOUTHERN AFGHANISTAN

In 2023, 507,484 people (44.6% female) benefited from STFA JP activities in the region. While an outcome level independent evaluation is yet to be conducted, the analysis of available data indicates that the programme has contributed to generating significant and tangible impacts on the lives and livelihoods of targeted beneficiaries in multiple dimensions. Programme activities targeted priority needs, focusing on construction or rehabilitation of essential infrastructure, improving access to health services, including drug treatment and drug prevention services, livelihood support, and community engagement to promote social cohesion and gender equality.

OUTPUTS

OUTPUT 1 - Essential Services

In 2023, approximately 417,089 people, including 193,089 (46.4%) females in the Southern region, benefited from the provision of services from improved infrastructure and the provision of essential services including improved access to safe drinking water and electricity, public toilets, renewable energy, irrigation canals and education infrastructure.

OUTPUT 2- Improved livelihood

In the reporting period, over 30,392 people (24.9% female) benefited from livelihood support. Key outputs included agricultural support packages, income generation, cash-for-work (CfW) schemes, unconditional cash transfers (UCT), and MSME support, including training.

OUTPUT 3 - Disaster Risk Management

In the reporting period, 29,069 people (38.2% female) benefited from climate change adaptation, disaster preparedness and early warning support.

OUTPUT 4 - Social Cohesion

In the reporting period, community outreach and engagement programmes benefited over 30,934 people (44.9% female) with JP activities focusing on participatory engagement, women's empowerment, capacity building on community resilience and social cohesion, and media training and engagement.



Southern Region STFA Report Card - 2023



10

Participating UN Organizations



507,484

people benefited



55.4%



44.6%

226K

female
beneficiaries



Beneficiaries reached through STFA in Southern Region

Health

7,815



Basic community infrastructure

417,054



Awareness-raising

5,681



Unconditional cash transfers

8,391



Cash for work

8,644



Employment generation
/work days/

143,916



Agri-based livelihood

17,424



Trainings
590



MSME support
3,383



REGIONAL JOINT PROGRAMME FOR EASTERN AFGHANISTAN

Since the start of the joint programme in the Eastern region of Afghanistan 74,344 people, including 40,674 (54.7%) females have benefited. While an outcome level independent evaluation is yet to be conducted, the analysis of available data indicates that the programme has contributed to generating significant and tangible impacts on the lives and livelihoods of targeted beneficiaries in multiple dimensions. Programme activities targeted priority needs, focusing on construction or rehabilitation of essential infrastructure, improving access to health services, including drug treatment and drug prevention services, provision of permanent and adequate shelter, rural livelihood support activities, and community engagement to promote social cohesion and gender equality.

OUTPUTS

OUTPUT 1 - Essential Services

In 2023, approximately 46,697 people, including 22,222 (47.59%) females in the Eastern region, benefited from the provision of essential services, most significantly access to improved infrastructure and healthcare and drug treatment services.

OUTPUT 2- Improved livelihood

In the reporting period, over 13,221 people (85.50% female) benefited from livelihood support. Key outputs included agricultural support, MSME support, income generation and CfW schemes, and apprenticeship programmes and TVET training.

OUTPUT 3 - Disaster Risk Management

In the reporting period, climate change adaptation, disaster preparedness and early warning support activities progressed benefiting 5,593 people (37.6% female). These activities includes community-level infrastructures including local irrigation systems, livestock watering points, flood protection walls, soil-water conservation structures, karezes (traditional water management systems), and community-based drought early warning systems.

OUTPUT 4 - Social Cohesion

In the reporting period, community outreach and engagement programmes benefited over 5,744 people (75.3 % female) with JP activities focusing on participatory engagement, capacity building on community resilience and social cohesion, and media training.



Eastern Region STFA Report Card - 2023



11

Participating UN Organizations



71,255

people benefited



43.9%



56.1%

40K

female
beneficiaries



Beneficiaries reached through STFA in Eastern Region

Health

5,561



Basic community infrastructure

43,281



STFA
Special Trust Fund for Afghanistan



MSME support

28



Trainings

1,393

REGIONAL JOINT PROGRAMME FOR SOUTH-EASTERN AFGHANISTAN

In 2023, approximately 57,680 individuals and households (41% female or female-headed) benefited from STFA activities across all four output areas. The majority benefited from improved infrastructure to reduce risks of natural hazards – particularly flooding – improved mobility and access to services, and the provision of earthquake resilient shelter. However, it is important to note that the four output areas have cross-cutting impacts: ‘cross-fertilisation’ is common and indeed an objective across programmatic interventions. For instance, irrigation works implemented under Output 1 also contribute to protection from flood hazards under Output 3. Similarly, community-level planning initiatives under Output 4 contribute to programming for the other three output areas. The following section provides a more detailed breakdown of all four STFA JP output areas for the South-Eastern region.

OUTPUTS

OUTPUT 1 - Essential Services

In 2023, although only one PUNO reported completed activities in the region under Output 1, approximately 21,000 people (52% female) benefited from improved infrastructure.

OUTPUT 2- Improved livelihood

In 2023, over 1,780 individuals and households (12% female or female-headed) benefited from livelihood support. Key activities included CfW income generation and UCT schemes, MSME support, and TVET training.

OUTPUT 3 - Disaster Risk Management

In 2023, climate change adaptation, disaster preparedness and early warning support activities benefited over 18,200 people (60% female), elevating their capacity and resilience.

OUTPUT 4 - Social Cohesion

Some community outreach and engagement programmes benefited over 16,700 people (39% female). These activities largely focused on preparatory works including coordination with DfA and relevant stakeholders.



JOINT HEALTH SECTOR SUPPORT PROJECT

To address the critical situation following the power shift in August 2021 and prevent the collapse of Afghanistan's healthcare system, the Special Trust Fund for Afghanistan (STFA) implemented a Joint Sectoral Project (JP) called 'Sustaining Essential Services in Ataturk Hospital'. With a budget of \$3,627,046, the project aimed to support Ataturk Hospital, the second-largest national paediatric referral hospital in Afghanistan. The hospital, which had 200 beds and 252 healthcare workers, was on the verge of suspending its services. Running from 1 May 2022 to 31 December 2023, the primary objective of the project was to ensure the uninterrupted provision of specialized paediatric health services at Ataturk National Children's Hospital.

The JP's contributions directly aligned with two of the three main outcomes outlined in the TEF Outcome 2 - Sustain essential services and Outcome 3 - Preserve social investments and community-level systems necessary for meeting basic human needs. In 2023, the JP also aligned with two priorities of the UNSFA Priority 1 - Sustained Essential Services, and Priority 3 - Social Cohesion, Inclusion, Gender Equality, Human Rights, and Rule of Law.

During the course of the project, from June 2022 to December 2023, patient access to healthcare services increased by 195 percent for outpatients and 31 percent for inpatients. The overall bed occupancy rate rose from 58 percent in 2021 to 81 percent in 2023, demonstrating significant progress in maximizing bed utilization. The hospital's performance in major surgeries improved by 58 percent compared to 2021. Additionally, medical, and surgical supplies fill rates remained consistently over 90 percent throughout the project. Patient surveys indicated that 92 percent of respondents considered that they received the healthcare services they required. These positive changes have elevated Ataturk Hospital's reputation as a leading referral centre, with a 324 percent increase in inbound referral cases, highlighting its expanding role in providing specialized medical expertise and comprehensive healthcare services.

Output 1: A total 228,545 people benefited through the support to Ataturk Hospital. At least 180,628 children (90,674 female) received Outpatient Department (OPD) healthcare services, including the provision of medicines. In addition, throughout the implementation period, the centre reached 47,373 young people (23,761 female) through activities such as awareness raising, counselling, referrals, and intergenerational dialogues. Also 544 hospital staff (273 female) benefited from training and incentives.



Sustaining Essential Services in Ataturk Hospital STFA Report Card - 2022+2023



3

Participating UN Organizations



228,545

people benefited



49.8%



50.2%

114K

female beneficiaries



Beneficiaries reached through STFA in Sustaining Essential Services in Ataturk Hospital

Outpatients

180,628



Health Staff Trained

544



STFA
Special Trust Fund for Afghanistan

People benefited from
Integrated Youth Centre

47,373



ANNEX III: RISK ANALYSIS: UPDATE

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 2023, the risks and mitigation measures which were originally identified continued to remain, on the whole, very relevant. A few updates on the risk profile are however important to highlight – particularly for two specific risks: pertaining to human rights and resource mobilization (summarized below).

Risk Description (as per JP document)	Type	Owner	Response
Risk#7. Abuses of human rights or unlawful behaviour are committed by de facto authorities and/or local authorities.	Contextual	Likelihood: Likely Consequence: Major Risk Rating: High	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) announced restrictions on Afghan women employees working in the UN)		Likelihood: Very Likely Consequence: Major Rating: Very High	PUNOs continue to regularly assess the situation on the ground and to identify locally-suitable work modalities/approaches for female personnel to safely work; innovative ways of ensuring access to female beneficiaries (e.g. by identifying alternative, more suitable, venues) also continue to be rolled out. These measures are being adopted as part of the continues efforts to ensure a principled approach to delivery (in line with IASC’s principles). PUNOs continue to regularly assess the situation on the ground and to identify locally-suitable work modalities/approaches for female personnel to safely work; innovative ways of ensuring access to female beneficiaries (e.g. by identifying alternative, more suitable, venues) also continue to be rolled out. These measures are being adopted as part of the continues efforts to ensure a principled approach to delivery (in line with IASC’s principles). 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 mobilise required financial resources.	Programmatic	Likelihood: Possible Consequence: Moderate Rating: High	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, in light of the downward trend in resource mobilization. This will be critical to be able to support more people in need – and to prevent an increasing humanitarian caseload. Such additional resources will also contribute to strengthening measures to improve and expand the outreach to women and girls, given the increasingly challenging context.

Table 10 - Joint Programmes Risks



ANNEX IV: VOICES FROM THE FIELD: REAL-LIFE STORIES

BUILDING HOPE: A LIFELINE FOR PERSON WITH DISABILITY IN AFGHANISTAN



Abdul Satar, a person living and working with disabilities, EIPP project in the Northern Region Balkh

In the remote district of Shortepa, Balkh province, where poverty casts a long shadow, the EIPP project has become a beacon of hope. This initiative, funded by the Special Trust Fund for Afghanistan (STFA) and implemented by the International Labour Organization (ILO), aims to promote employment and decent work by integrating humanitarian assistance with the development of critical infrastructure. The project not only enhances local infrastructure but also provides vital income support to the most vulnerable, thereby improving their livelihoods.

As the project commenced, news of the programme spread through the surrounding villages, sparking interest among many residents desperate for stable employment. Among the hopeful was Abdul Satar, a man living with a disability in his left arm, who is also the sole provider for his family—including two wives and six children. His burden is compounded by the health conditions of his mother and a wife, both of whom are unable to work and require expensive medical treatment.

Abdul recalls, "When I learned about the project's initiative to employ disabled individuals, I was initially skeptical but decided to inquire about the hiring process". Motivated by necessity, he decided to learn more and approached the ILO Community Liaison Officer who provided him with detailed information about the recruitment process, including selection criteria, contractual details, safety and health provisions, environmental safeguards, and suitable activities for people with disabilities.

He notes, "After meeting with the Liaison Officer and learning about the various aspects, I felt a sense of hope as I live in an area where job opportunities, especially for disabled individuals, are scarce. He continues, "Following the opportunity provided to work on the project as an unskilled labourer, I have been able to support my family, take my wife to the doctor, provide for my children, and purchase necessary medicine for my mother." "Despite my disability, my working on this project has provided a golden opportunity for me and livelihood for the family, says Abdul.

For Abdul Satar, the EIPP project has been a lifeline, significantly enhancing his family's quality of life. Beyond providing employment to individuals like Abdul, the project has contributed to the broader community by improving road infrastructure, which benefits everyone in the area.

Expressing his gratitude, Abdul says, "From the bottom of my heart, I am thankful to the EIP project for providing decent jobs to disabled people and acknowledge the positive impact that it has had on disabled individuals like myself and the broader community. I do sincerely hope that the project will continue in the area, addressing not only the provision of essential infrastructure, but also the future livelihoods for a better future"

STORY OF A VILLAGE TRANSFORMED BY HEALTHCARE SERVICE ACCESS IN AFGHANISTAN



The final stages of construction of a FHH underway in Charcheshma village. Photo: IOM 2024



A worker cleans tiles as part of finishing works at an FHH in Charcheshma village. Photo: IOM 2024

In the remote reaches of Royee Duab district in Samangan province, Afghanistan, the rural village of Charcheshma faces a critical challenge—access to adequate healthcare, especially for its most vulnerable residents, pregnant women and children. The nearest clinic, located two hours away in the town of Royees, has been particularly inaccessible during the harsh winters, with roads becoming impassable and transportation costs skyrocketing.

In response to these challenges, the UNFPA, collaborating with a local NGO partner, deployed an experienced midwife along with necessary medications. While this initiative alleviated some difficulties for pregnant women, the community needed more durable solution. Seeking to address this need, IOM, in collaboration with UNFPA and UNDP with support from the Special Trust Fund for Afghanistan (STFA) and IsDB, initiated the construction of a Family Health House (FHH) in the heart of Charcheshma.

This facility features six rooms, including a dedicated delivery room, pre-checkup room, and a psychosocial consulting room, with two attached bedrooms that enable comprehensive care. With an aim to reduce child and maternal mortality rates, the facility offers medical services at no cost to all community members, thereby improving overall health outcomes. The FHH not only enables life-saving medical services to Charcheshma but also serves as an economic lifeline for the community. Employing 18 skilled and unskilled laborers, the project provides vital short-term employment. Among these skilled workers is Mohammad, a 28-year-old who had returned to the village after being deported from Iran four years ago.

For Mohammad, the project was more than just a job; it was a chance to rebuild his life in his hometown. Previously forced to travel long distances for work, he now enjoys the stability of being employed close to his family. With the birth of his first child, he experienced the hardships of traveling six hours to Aybak for medical care, grappling with high transportation costs and medical bills. Now, thanks to the FHH, such daunting journeys are a thing of the past for him and the community. Expressing his satisfaction, Mohammad highlighted the broader impact of the FHH on the community. Not only did it significantly reduce child and maternal mortality, but it also became a vital resource for treating common diseases such as colds and fevers. Mohammad said, "I am grateful for the initiative as now our community has a central hub for health services through this FHH."

POWERING INTERNALLY DISPLACED AFGHANS THROUGH RENEWABLE ENERGY AND JOBS



Mariam in the paper recycling factory in the Eastern Region Nangarhar



Workers in the paper recycling factory in the Eastern Region Nangarhar

In the heart of Nangarhar, Afghanistan, a groundbreaking solar-powered initiative is bringing opportunities into internally displaced communities, including returnees, offering hope through employment to those forced from their homes.

Mariam, a 23-year-old participant in the UNDP's renewable energy programme implemented as part of Special Trust Fund for Afghanistan (STFA)'s Joint Regional Programme, lives with her family of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Nangarhar Province, Afghanistan. Having displaced from Pakistan a few years ago, she now works at a local paper recycling factory that was rejuvenated through sustainable initiatives.

Previously shut down due to financial difficulties, the factory was revitalized after the UNDP's ABADEI project, funded by STFA, implemented solar power solutions. This innovation not only restarted operations but also provided crucial employment opportunities for the community, including Mariam and approximately 60 others, many of whom are returnees or displaced persons from Pakistan. A significant number of these employees are women, who now have stable incomes to support their families.

In addition, the factory indirectly supports another 200 individuals who collect recyclable materials from urban and other areas. These roles are essential in a region where economic opportunities are limited.

When asked about the programme and its impact, Mariam responded with saying:

"I am extremely grateful for my job, which provides stable employment for many of us, including young people. This job is a lifeline, steering us away from potential involvement in drugs and crime. The income I earn supports not only myself but also my family's daily needs."

She also values the environmental benefits of the solar-powered factory, stating, "The use of clean energy significantly reduces our carbon footprint and helps combat climate change. It feels empowering to contribute positively to the environment."

The factory is a testament to how sustainable energy solutions can catalyze social and economic development. Through job creation and environmental protection, STFA's funding is driving progress and empowering displaced communities in Afghanistan's Eastern Region.

A SWEET SUCCESS: BEEKEEPING TRANSFORMS THE LIFE OF A WIDOW IN DAMAN DISTRICT



Produced honey in Southern Region Kandahar



Female MSME receives cash support in Kandahar South region

In the lush fields of Daman District, Kandahar Province, Ruhnama, a 44-year-old widow and mother of six, has found new hope and a stable income through a beekeeping programme.

Struggling amidst an economic downturn, Ruhnama was selected for the UN Food and Agriculture Organization’s (FAO) initiative aimed at boosting bee populations in Afghanistan, supported by the Special Trust Fund for Afghanistan (STFA). This programme, locally managed by Future Generations Afghanistan (FGA), provides vulnerable households with five beehives and essential tools to start sustainable honey production.

Before entering the beekeeping world, Ruhnama could hardly make ends meet for her and her family by assisting her neighbours. However, in September 2023, she began her beekeeping farm with support from the programme and soon transformed it into a thriving business.

Her farm now produces up to 25 kg of high-quality honey each month, which she sells for about 900 Afghani (\$13) per kilogram. The local popularity of her honey, particularly the variety derived from basil pollen—an abundant local crop in Daman—has enabled her to significantly improve her family's financial stability. Such stability allows her to cover school fees and essential items for her three young children.

Through the programme, experts provided on-the-job training and advice complementing the comprehensive training as honey farming is not an easy trade: it requires both courage and very fine-tuned skills to be able to extract honey from hives, surrounded by a swarm of disturbed bees.

Ruhnama’s story is set against a backdrop of Afghanistan’s broader challenges, where conservative cultural norms limit women’s employment opportunities outside the home despite their home despite urgent need to ensure they are able to meet their basic human needs. This is why the targeted programme dedicated to providing durable and life sustaining solutions for Afghan people, particularly, women, can not only address immediate economic needs but also foster long-term community resilience and environmental sustainability.

Furthermore, Ruhnama's business has inspired other women in her community to explore similar opportunities. Her neighbours, seeing her success, have begun to advocate for their own participation in beekeeping, signalling a shift towards greater economic participation among women in rural Afghanistan.

In the second half of 2023, the programme distributed over 1,000 beekeeping kits across 16 provinces, highlighting the dual benefits of this initiative: enhancing livelihoods and contributing to the health of Afghanistan’s ecosystems through increased pollination.

SKILLING UP FROM DISPLACEMENT: NIKMAL'S JOURNEY OF RESILIENCE



Male beneficiary Nikmal in mobile phone repair training programme, Khost, South region

Nikmal, a young man of 19, carries the aspirations of his family on his shoulders. Displaced from the conflict-ridden Mosa Khail district seven years ago, his family found refuge in the Qalamwal Mina town of central Khost, Afghanistan.

Like many in his situation, the displacement brought financial strain and uncertainty about the future. But through a mobile phone repair training programme delivered by the local partner ACHRO through UNHCR as part of the Special Trust Fund for Afghanistan (STFA)'s Joint Regional Programme for South-Eastern Afghanistan, Nikmal is beginning to see a path forward.

With the skills acquired from the course, including the intricate skill of smartphone screen replacement, Nikmal envisions himself not just as a technician but as an entrepreneur— pathway to opportunity for his family and community.

This training is part of a broader effort to integrate vocational training and employment opportunities for displaced individuals and returnees in Afghanistan's Priority Areas of Return and Reintegration (PARRs). In Khost alone, 75 individuals have benefited from such training, acquiring skills that are not only marketable but also crucial in today's digital age. These initiatives are vital as they address the acute unemployment issues faced by displaced populations.

"I'm hopeful to earn an income through this work to support my family," Nikmal shares, his eyes reflecting a determination fueled by years of hardship. His aspirations extend beyond mere survival; they embrace the promise of economic independence and self-sufficiency.

Looking ahead, Nikmal envisions a future where he not only repairs phones but also expands into selling them. His plan to open a shop after graduating from the course signifies more than just economic activity; it symbolizes resilience and the rebuilding of a life disrupted by conflict. "When I graduate from this mobile phone repair course, I will borrow money to open a shop somewhere in the town and try to expand it," he states with optimism.

The economic hardships exacerbated by displacement requires targeted interventions such as this training that not only provide immediate relief but also pave the way for durable and self-sufficient future where humanitarian efforts align with the basic human needs of vulnerable populations. Through the lens of Nikmal's ambitions and achievements, we see the crucial role of skilling up programmes in empowering young individuals, enabling them to contribute positively to their communities, and laying the groundwork for a more stable and prosperous future.

FROM DESPAIR TO RECOVERY: THE TRANSFORMATIONAL CARE AT ATATURK CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL



Health support at Ataturk Hospital in Kabul city

Afghanistan faces a significant shortage of high-quality and professional pediatric hospitals, which compromises the healthcare accessibility for children. This gap in healthcare infrastructure exacerbates the challenges in a country already struggling with economic constraints and political instability, leaving its future generations at risk. Through our Joint Sectoral Programme supporting Ataturk National Specialty Children Hospital, STFA provided major support improving its capacities including infrastructure.

We are pleased to share testimonials from Mohammad, who is a software engineer.

"My son Ahmad was a very active 4-year-old at that time. Suddenly, he developed a fever and started losing weight. As his fever failed to settle, we took him to several doctors and many hospitals in Kabul, but no one could diagnose him correctly for three months. The unknown sickness kept weakening my son and we felt utterly helpless.

Finally, at the recommendation of our relatives, we took him to the Ataturk National Children's Hospital in Kabul for further diagnosis and investigation. As a father, it is difficult to describe the feeling when you are holding your child, trying to memorize their smile, and not knowing the next time you will see it. My son, despite being so little, understood he was ill and was going to a hospital. He was little but brave.

When we arrived at Ataturk hospital, a group of specialists jointly started the checkup process systematically including laboratory tests, imaging and other required examination inside the hospital. I was amazed upon observing the hospital transformation compared to four years ago. It was very clean and the staff were wearing beautiful uniform while tending to my son with modern equipment for diagnosis and well equipped in different wards including digital x-ray and functionalized ICU.

They decided to seek treatment of my son as soon as possible and discussed options with doctors and our family. I was told that my son would get better through systematic follow up and treatment inside the hospital. The moment we walked through the doors of the Ataturk hospital, our hearts were filled with calm and a great sense of faith.

This was indeed a very difficult period for us, but we held on to our faith and prayed to God. Gradually, we started seeing the positive impact of treatment. We are very relieved when Ahmad was admitted in Ataturk National Children's Hospital and accepted for treatment, without charges to the patient, and the hospital took care of him using the best available treatment just as a parent takes care of his child and was completely treated. Therefore, the maintenance of such standardized services highly recommended to be technically and financially supported by the international organizations and donors in the future."

This was indeed a very difficult period for us, but we held on to our faith and prayed to God. Gradually, we started seeing the positive impact of treatment. We are very relieved when Ahmad was admitted in Ataturk National Tertiary and Specialty Children Hospital and accepted for treatment, free of cost and the hospital took care of him using the best available treatment just as a parent takes care of his child and were treated completely. Therefore the maintenance of such standardized services highly recommended to be technically and financially supported by the international organizations and donors in the future."

ANNEX V: A BRIEF NOTE ON RESOURCES

In 2023, the STFA received US\$27.81 million from six contributing donors; this is a 65 percent decrease from \$79.42 million received in 2022. The downtrend of the STFA resource mobilisation could be linked to the overall level of international financial support to Afghanistan which is in downtrend mode. Over the year, competing global priorities and crises have been witnessed and could have also contributed to the decline of donor contributions into the country. Given the operational context in response to the bans and restrictions on Afghan women by the DfA, it could also be that the international community was observing the space available for UN agencies to continue to deliver in a principled manner.

Contributor/Partner	Commitments	Deposits
 Sweden	\$ 10,670,068	\$ 10,670,068
 Finland	\$ 9,867,456	\$ 9,867,456
 Norway	\$ 4,589,682	\$ 4,589,682
 Luxembourg	\$ 1,058,898	\$ 1,058,898
 Czechia	\$ 891,623	\$ 891,623
 Iceland	\$ 730,941	\$ 730,941
Total	\$ 27,808,668	\$ 27,808,668

Figure 7: Overview of resources received in 2023

STFA resource allocation status as of 31 December 2023

Regions	Allocation (US\$ million) Phase I Benchmark=North	Allocation in 2021-2023 (US\$ million)
North	67.9	49.8
South	50.0	50.0
East	41.5	41.5
South-East	37.2	19.8
West	36.7	-
North-East	35.2	-
Central	30.1	-
Central Highlings	19.4	-
Health Sector (Ataturk Hospital)		3.6
TFMU		10.8
Grand total		175.5

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