

2025

# ANNUAL REPORT

SECTORAL PROJECT

PARTICIPATORY ACTION FOR  
INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENTAL  
ASSISTANCE TO  
AREAS OF RETURN - **PAIDAAR**

A community member in Kunduz Province,  
where PAIDAAR project was launched.  
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International Organization  
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The UN organizations are listed in the order of joining STFA



Programme <sup>1</sup> Title & Project Number		Country, Locality(s), Priority Area(s)/ Strategic Results <sup>2</sup>	
Programme Title: Participatory Action for Integrated Developmental Assistance to Areas of Return - PAIDAAR  MPTF Office Project Reference Number <sup>3</sup> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 141205</li> <li>• 141207</li> <li>• 141208</li> <li>• 141209</li> </ul>		Country: Afghanistan Region: North-Eastern - Kunduz and Baghlan provinces  Priority areas/Strategic Results: UNSFA Outcomes 1, 2, 3  Outcome 1: Sustained Essential Services Outcome 2: Economic opportunities and resilient livelihoods Outcome 3: Social Cohesion, Inclusion, Gender Equality, Human Rights, and Rule of Law	
Participating Organization(s)		Implementing Partners	
Organizations that have received direct funding from the MPTF Office under this programme: 4 PUNOs  1. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) 2. United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) 3. United Nations Programme for Human Settlements (UN-Habitat) 4. International Organization for Migration (IOM)		Please refer to PUNO-specific reports	
Programme/Project Cost (US\$)		Programme Duration	
Total approved budget as per project document:	23.01 million	Overall Duration	24 months
MPTF /JP Contribution <sup>4</sup> :	15,800,000		
Agency Contribution	N/A	Start Date <sup>5</sup>	1 Jul 2025
Government Contribution)	N/A	Original End Date <sup>6</sup>	30 Jun 2027
Other Contributions (donors):	N/A	Current End Date <sup>7</sup>	30 Jun 2027
Total Contributions:	23.01 million		
Programme Assessment/Review/Mid-Term Eval.		Report Submitted By	
Assessment/Review - if applicable please attach Yes No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mid-Term Evaluation Report – if applicable please attach Yes No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name: Peter Nordstrom</li> <li>• Title: Senior Trust Fund Manager</li> <li>• Participating Organization (Lead): UNDP is convening agent</li> <li>• Email address: peter.nordstrom@undp.org</li> </ul>	

[1] The term "programme" is used for programmes, joint programmes and projects.

[2] Strategic Results, as formulated in the Strategic UN Planning Framework (e.g. UNDAF) or project document;

[3] The MPTF Office Project Reference Number is the same number as the one on the Notification message. It is also referred to as "Project ID" on the project's factsheet page the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#)

[4] The MPTF or JP Contribution, refers to the amount transferred to the Participating UN Organizations, which is available on the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#)

[5] The start date is the date of the first transfer of the funds from the MPTF Office as Administrative Agent. Transfer date is available on the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#)

[6] As per approval of the original project document by the relevant decision-making body/Steering Committee.

[7] If there has been an extension, then the revised, approved end date should be reflected here. If there has been no extension approved, then the current end date is the same as the original end date. The end date is the same as the operational closure date which is when all activities for which a Participating Organization is responsible under an approved MPTF / JP have been completed. As per the MOU, agencies are to notify the MPTF Office when a programme completes its operational activities.

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# List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

<b>CAP</b>	Community action plan
<b>HLP</b>	Housing, land and property
<b>FHAG</b>	Family health action group
<b>IDP</b>	Internally displaced people
<b>LIC</b>	Local implementation committees
<b>LID</b>	Legal identity documentation
<b>MSMEs</b>	Micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises
<b>NRC</b>	Norwegian Refugee Council
<b>PAIDAAR</b>	Participatory Action for Integrated Developmental Assistance to Areas of Return
<b>PHVCA</b>	Participatory hazard, vulnerability and capacity assessments
<b>PUNO</b>	Participating United Nations organization
<b>STFA</b>	Special Trust Fund for Afghanistan
<b>UNSFA</b>	United Nations Strategic Framework for Afghanistan



# Executive Summary

PUNOs meet communities in Kunduz Province.  
© UNDO/Mohammad Haroon Hamdard



Under the Special Trust Fund for Afghanistan (STFA), the Participatory Action for Integrated Developmental Assistance to Areas of Return (PAIDAAR) project was formally launched on 10 July 2025. In its first phase, it primarily focused on preparatory activities in anticipation of a significant acceleration in implementation in 2026.

PUNOs supported the establishment of 12 local implementation committees (LICs), and the development of participatory hazard, vulnerability and capacity assessments (PHVCA), hazard and solution maps, and community action planning (CAP) activities. Site assessments as well as the selection and design of infrastructure projects started in August 2025. Mine action activities, beginning in December 2025, cleared 6,478 square metres of contaminated land and identified and destroyed 235 mines and explosive remnants of war in 11 communities.

A key achievement was a new partnership with the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC). Leveraging NRC's existing engagement with the *de facto* Ministry of Information and Culture and the Department of Justice, the project delivered legal information and assistance to 371 individuals (95 women, 25.6%) in Kunduz Province.

Overall implementation was hindered by a delay of 5.5 months in obtaining endorsement from the relevant *de facto* authorities. In addition, there were restrictions on women staff and project beneficiaries. Coordinated, high-level engagement by all PUNOs eventually led to the issuance of a formal authorization letter from the *de facto* Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation allowing activities to begin in Kunduz and Baghlan provinces. This enabled community sensitization and cleared the way for beneficiary selection.



DSRSG/RC/HC, PUNOs and STFA meet with women community members in Kunduz Province. © UNDP/Munisa Rashid

# Purpose

PAIDAAR began in July 2025. It seeks to improve access to housing, essential services, economic opportunities and living conditions for hosts, returnees and internally displaced people (IDPs) in 69 displacement-affected communities across three districts of Kunduz and Baghlan provinces. The initiative aims to stabilize the region, enhance the absorptive capacity of displacement-affected communities, foster social cohesion, and support the durable (re)integration of returnees and IDPs.



A family poses for a group photo in Kunduz Province. © UNDP/Mohammad Haroon Hamdard



# Results

## Outcome

Preparatory work began in 2025 on activities to realize three outcomes: sustained essential services, economic opportunities and resilient livelihoods, and social cohesion, inclusion, gender equality, human rights and rule of law. Following initial delays related to endorsement of the project by the *de facto* authorities, PUNOs successfully joined forces to secure approvals, establish community engagement mechanisms and select beneficiaries. This signaled a shift to operational readiness for accelerated progress in 2026. Even while endorsement was pending, notable advances in community mapping and CAP cluster formation created a detailed geographic and sociodemographic basis for area-based planning. Community orientation sessions helped clarify project objectives to diverse stakeholders, reducing risks of misinformation and strengthening community readiness for upcoming livelihood opportunities. The initiation of beneficiary selection laid groundwork for transparent, vulnerability-based targeting that is well aligned with the durable solutions framework.

## Output-level Results

### UNSWA 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.

The project is yet to achieve results, as it was still in the preparatory phase. However, progress was made in the following areas:

## 425

households identified for permanent housing solutions in areas with high-density returnee populations, including in the Chahardara and Dasht-e-Archi districts of Kunduz Province and the Baghlan-e-Jadeed District of Baghlan Province. A humanitarian multisectoral needs assessment and beneficiary selection tools enabled the measurement of household vulnerabilities and shelter needs and supported transparent and accountable beneficiary selection processes. The technical assessment of land plots began, helping to ascertain suitability for permanent housing construction, including by verifying that land is not prone to natural hazards (floods, landslides, low-lying conditions, etc.) and is sufficient to accommodate intended shelter construction.

## 28

small-scale infrastructure projects were prioritized based on participatory hazard assessments and CAP processes. They included protection walls, irrigation improvements and community access works, with an estimated total value of \$1.6 million.

## 9

projects were submitted for procurement, with more expected to follow in early 2026.

## UNSFA Priority Area 2: Economic Opportunities and Resilient Livelihoods

### Output

2



**Livelihoods, businesses and the local economy can recover, more sustainable and more resilient to instability.**

Overall, output 2 is on track in establishing systems, relationships and access conditions necessary for effective, inclusive and timely delivery of livelihoods support in 2026.

Coordinated field missions to Chahardara, Dasht-e-Archi and Baghlan-e-Jadeed districts engaged *de facto* district governors and relevant authorities and established a shared understanding of project objectives. In tandem, community orientation and sensitization sessions served as the first tangible interface with displacement-affected communities, creating a platform for transparent communication on targeting principles and beneficiary eligibility.

## 4

livelihood projects to support returnees' reintegration and economic self-reliance, with a combined budget of \$1.4 million, have been submitted for review and processing. All are designed to complement local infrastructure investments and respond to locally identified economic opportunities.

## UNSFA 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.**

Under output 4, the project made important preparatory gains in access. It strengthened joint advocacy, launched impactful legal support and prepared the foundation for participatory community planning. By visiting all communities and clustering villages (typically two to four per CAP unit), field teams produced comprehensive community profiles. This represented a critical first layer in the CAP methodology.

## 12

community mobilization activities in Dasht-e-Archi District in Kunduz Province resulted in the creation of 12 LICs with 29 members each (14 women, 48.3%).

## 348

LIC members were trained on governance, planning, leadership, financial literacy, budget management and monitoring, conflict resolution, gender-based violence, the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, and community development, with a focus on developing and implementing CAPs. Trainings strengthened community resilience by empowering LIC members to take ownership of community development.

## 12

PVHCAs; 12 hazard, strategic and land use maps; and 12 CAPs were developed.

## 371

people in priority villages in the Chahardara and Dasht-e-Archi districts of Kunduz Province gained legal awareness, counselling and individualized case management support through an expanded partnership with NRC. The majority of beneficiaries (360 people, 98.6 percent) were returnees, a population with acute vulnerabilities and documentation gaps. Women accessed legal identity documentation (LID) services despite ongoing gender-based restrictions. Services provided included:

- Information sessions for 150 returnees (all men) on housing, land and property (HLP) and LID
- Legal counselling for three individuals on inheritance-related HLP issues
- Legal casework for three individuals on inheritance and wasiqa documentation
- Assistance with e-tazkira<sup>[8]</sup> applications for 215 persons (95 women, 44.2%), including 210 returnees and five members of the host community.

## 6,478

square metres of mine-contaminated land was cleared in 11 communities in Kunduz and Baghlan provinces, with the support of an implementing partner, the Mine Clearance Planning Agency. It identified and destroyed 235 mines and explosive remnants of war (28 abandoned improvised mines, 45 small arms ammunition and 162 explosive remnants of war). Community-based reporting mechanisms resulted in five hotline calls and two call-outs.

[8] Tazkira (تذکره) is the official national identity document for Afghan citizens

## 25

explosive ordnance risk education sessions increased the awareness of 733 persons, including 328 women (44.7%), on prevalence, risks and mitigation measures for unexploded ordnance. Participants included IDPs, returnees, aid workers and host community members.

## 31,137

information materials were distributed to reinforce safety messages on explosive ordnance.



Community members during the PAIDAAR launch event in Kunduz Province. © STFA/Mohammad Omar Kamal





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## PAIDAAR LAUNCH EVENT: SUPPORTING DURABLE SOLUTIONS FOR DISPLACED COMMUNITIES

مراسم آغاز برنامه پایدار؛ حمایت از راه‌حل‌های دوام‌دار برای جوامع بی‌جا  
د پایدار پروگرام د پرائیسی مراسم؛ د بی‌خایه شویو ټولنو لپاره د دوام‌دارو حل لار

# Delays in Implementation, Challenges, Lessons Learned & Best Practices

Kunduz Province  
ولایت کندز | کندز ولایت

July 28, 2025  
۱۴۰۴ زمری ۶ | ۱۴۰۴ اسد ۶

## Challenges

1

The *de facto* authority access restrictions targeting UN national women staff in Kabul, which began in September 2025 and extended to field offices, significantly hindered the delivery of planned activities. This was exacerbated by the increased strict policing of women’s rights and freedoms by the *de facto* Ministry of the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice. Local authorities indicated that female staff participation could only proceed following formal authorization from the central Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation.

2

These challenges initially stalled field-level activities and prevented the deployment of mixed gender assessment and mobilization teams. Teams and local authorities initiated some “soft” components in the interim, such as site assessments, site selection, surveys and project design. Community mapping tasks involving objective data work were successfully carried out through male staff, ensuring continuity while negotiations for female access continued. Measures to “catch up” following delays have included hiring third-party engineers and expedited procurement processes.

## Lessons Learned

1

The use of community structures such as LICs is a critical, high-impact strategy for strengthening area-based approaches and ensuring sustainable outcomes. Community-owned methodologies, such as the PHVCA and CAP, helped in developing holistic approaches covering diverse economic, social and infrastructure needs, which improved the coherence of interventions.

2

The early phases of community engagement in 2025 revealed that communities are increasingly prepared for participatory planning, supported by detailed mapping and cluster profiles. Local acceptance grew as repeated negotiations clarified project intent and ensured alignment with local sensitivities. For returnee households, the ability to access legal rights has begun stabilizing their status and reducing risks of secondary displacement.

## Risk Analysis

From a risk analysis perspective, project delays confirmed that anticipated risks related to women’s access can fully materialize and require a higher level of political engagement than originally expected. While the project was endorsed to move forward, mitigating immediate barriers, the risk persists. Participation of women may again be restricted if directives shift, requiring continuous monitoring and proactive engagement.



## Qualitative Assessment

A crucial enabling project milestone was a formal endorsement letter from the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation that resolved months of access restrictions. This was not simply an administrative success; it was a structural change in the North-East, where restrictions have historically undermined equitable service delivery. The ability to deploy women mobilizers and engage women beneficiaries is essential for mitigating the gendered impacts of displacement and meeting STFA gender-responsive programming requirements.

Unified, high-level advocacy by PUNOs, at the central and provincial levels, proved decisive in securing endorsement. The experience demonstrated that collective negotiation yields significantly more leverage than individual agency advocacy, a critical lesson for future access-restricted environments. Establishing coordination channels with central and provincial *de facto* authorities and a replicable access protocol for future project phases has reduced the likelihood of additional protracted delays. Strengthened relationships between PUNOs and local *de facto* authorities have provided clarity and assurance to the latter. The process contributed overall to a more predictable environment, where the project can operate safely and inclusively in all target districts, in line with agreed access parameters.

Area-based coordination across PUNOs strengthened alignment around CAP findings and improved the consistency of community engagement across districts. CAP and LIC processes helped to institutionalize community participation, providing a structured platform for communities to articulate priorities and for PUNOs to synchronize interventions accordingly. Parallel LIC-related engagement by PUNOs in other STFA regions helped demonstrate the legitimacy of these structures and support messaging to authorities that they are project-specific, non-political mechanisms, not replacements for previously dissolved community councils. This distinction was crucial in overcoming misunderstandings that caused monthslong suspensions of activities in other provinces.

The NRC partnership, by delivering legal information and assistance, indicated a meaningful shift towards more diversified and technically specialized service delivery within the project. Early results provided a concrete example of how partnerships can accelerate community-level impact even when other components, such as CAPs and LICs, are temporarily delayed. NRC's engagement was possible because it maintained an active grant registration with relevant ministries in Kunduz Province. Although operations in Baghlan Province could not begin in 2025 due to pending registration processes, this operational constraint is expected to be resolved in early 2026.

## Partnerships

The project relied on the direct implementation modality, supported by coordinated PUNO engagement. A one UN approach strengthened negotiations with authorities and guided the application of complementary expertise, particularly in government liaison functions, community outreach and data validation. The NRC partnership delivered HLP and LID information, counselling and legal assistance, leveraging NRC's existing registrations and permissions for implementation in Kunduz Province and its expanding coverage in Baghlan Province. On mine action, the local implementing partner was the Mine Clearance Planning Agency.



# Annexes

A view of Chahardara District in Kunduz Province, where PAIDAAR was launched. © UNDP/Mohammad Haroon Hamdard



# Annex I. Indicator-based Performance Tracker

(The figures in brackets are female figures.)

Annex I - Indicator-based Performance Review	Unit	Baseline	Target	Progress	Reasons for Variance with Planned Target	Source of Verification
<b>Output 1. Essential services and community infrastructure - including for health, agriculture and energy supply - are functional, sustained and expanded to meet different needs of women and men.</b>						
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 percent female)	People	0	1,632 (163)	0	Delays in securing endorsement from <i>de facto</i> authority.	PUNO reports
<b>Output 2. Livelihoods, businesses and local economy are able to recover and are more resilient to instability</b>						
2b. Number of people who have benefited from newly-created income-generation opportunities, disaggregated by sex, age and province	People	0	210 (63)			PUNO reports
2f. Number of MSMEs that benefit through financial capital support, training and/or other forms of asset support, disaggregated by women-led and men-led MSMEs	MSMEs	0	30 (9)			PUNO reports
2g. Proportion of beneficiaries who confirm sustained or improved livelihoods as a result of programme-supported activities (random sampling) Baseline: 0 Indicative target: 70 percent	People	0	400 (120)			PUNO reports
<b>Output 4. Social cohesion, human rights, access to justice are strengthened at local level.</b>						
4a. Number of community-based/civil society organizations with improved capacity for participatory and inclusive community planning (at least 20 percent women-led)	CSOs	0	12 (0)	12 (0)		PUNO reports
	Others	0	12 (0)			PUNO reports
4b. Number of people with better awareness about human rights, social cohesion and conflict prevention (at least 50 percent women)	Households	0	3,000 (300)	0 (0)	Delays in securing endorsement from <i>de facto</i> authority.	
	People	0	1,580 (790)	371 (95)		

Annex I - Indicator-based Performance Review	Unit	Baseline	Target	Progress	Reasons for Variance with Planned Target	Source of Verification
4c. Number of districts with counselling and legal aid services.	People	0	1,608 (804)			PUNO reports
4f. Proportion of people in target areas who perceive that security situation has improved, disaggregated by gender (random sampling)	Communities	0	11			PUNO reports
4h. Number of enabling initiatives implemented or knowledge products produced.	Other	0	36	36		PUNO reports



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 **ONE**

The word 'ONE' is rendered in a large, bold, white sans-serif font. To its left is a circular icon representing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which is a ring of 17 colored segments.

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