



Islamabad Office



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1- GEO-POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

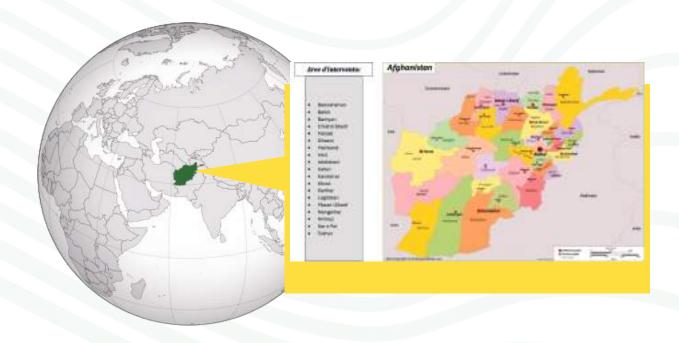
Afghanistan is a landlocked country in central and southern Asia. It is bordered by Pakistan to the south and east, Iran to the west, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan to the north, and China to the northeast. The country covers an area of about 652,230 square kilometres, making it one of the largest in the region.

Afghanistan's geography is defined by mountains, deserts, and plains. The most extensive mountain range is the Hindu Kush, which stretches across the country from the northeast to the southwest. This range divides Afghanistan into three main geographical regions: the Central highlands, the Northern plains, and the Southwestern plateau.

Afghanistan is composed of 34 provinces, each further subdivided into districts. The provinces are administered by governors appointed by the *de facto* government. Some of the main provinces include Kabul, the capital; Kandahar, located in the South; Herat in the Western part of the country; Balkh in the North, known for its historical sites and agricultural productivity; and Nangarhar in the Eastern region, bordering Pakistan, which serves as a key trade route.

Located at the crossroads of Central, Western, and South Asia, Afghanistan has a rich and complex history. Its strategic position has attracted numerous empires and peoples, resulting in a mosaic of ethnic and linguistic groups.

Afghanistan's geopolitical context has undergone significant changes since the return of the Taliban to power on August 15, 2021. This shift is affecting regional stability, international relations, and the humanitarian situation. As of January 1, 2022, geographical competence has been transferred from AICS Kabul office to the AICS office in Islamabad.



2- SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT

Afghanistan is marked by a **protracted humanitarian crisis**, fuelled by more than four decades of conflict and exacerbated by the Taliban's seizure of power in August 2021. More than three years after their establishment, the *de facto* government shows insufficient capacity to meet the basic needs of the population.

Access to basic services remains extremely limited: 73% of the population lacks adequate medical care, and 60% of households face difficulties in obtaining essential goods (OCHA, 2024).

Afghanistan's economy experienced modest growth in 2024, with a GDP increase of 2.7%, according to the World Bank (2024). However, this recovery is insufficient to offset the economic collapse of recent years.

In fact, between 2021 and 2022, GDP fell by approximately 30%, and the banking system faced a severe liquidity crisis (World Bank, 2024).

Inflation, with a 50% increase in food prices between 2021 and 2023, has worsened **food**

insecurity, which now affects over 15 million people (FAO, 2024). Although Afghanistan has recently experienced a degree of **relative stability**, the country remains highly dependent on imports. Meanwhile, exports — primarily agricultural products such as dried fruits and saffron — are insufficient to offset the trade deficit (IMF, 2024).

The agricultural sector, which employs over 60% of the population, has been severely affected by drought and the reduction of international support, compromising harvests and increasing the vulnerability of rural communities (FAO, 2024). The manufacturing sector is experiencing stagnation due to lack of foreign investment and a decline in domestic production. Trade with Iran, Pakistan, and China remains one of the country's key economic lifelines, yet deep structural challenges continue to hinder its development.

Economic hardship is also reflected in the **labor market**, where unemployment remains high and job opportunities are increasingly scarce — especially for youth and women. With an unemployment rate exceeding 40%, the lack of





employment prospects has further deteriorated living conditions and fueled social tensions across the country (Asian Development Bank, 2024).

The enactment of the Law on the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice (PVPV) in August 2024 institutionalized restrictions on women's participation in public life, reaffirming the prohibitions on access to female education beyond the sixth grade, imposing a guardian for movements away from home, and excluding woment from empoyment in many sectors. This law adds to the burdens imposed by the *de facto* Authorities (DFA), started in December 2022, on the NGO operations, including the gender

separation in offices and field operatoins (United Nations OCHA, 2024).

Restrictions in the education sector have led to the closure of secondary schools and universities for girls, resulting in a 78% decrease in enrollment compared to 2020 (UNESCO, 2024).

Despite limited openings for women's employment in local markets, participation in trade fairs, and involvement in the saffron value chain, the situation in Afghanistan remains extremely critical due to the low levels of civil liberties and civic engagement, particularly for women (UNGASC, 2024).



3- NEED ASSESSMENT

According to UN data, **nearly half of the population is in need of humanitarian assistance**. The human rights restrictions imposed by the *de facto* government have exacerbated the needs of women, children, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups by limiting access to essential services and livelihood opportunities, further deepening the crisis,

Since 2021, Afghanistan's economy has contracted by nearly one-third, primarily due to the effects of political isolation, financial system constraints, and the decline in international funding. Approximately 50% of the population lives in poverty, with 44% of the rural population and 58% of the urban population facing economic hardship.

High unemployment and economic stagnation are among the main drivers of widespread socio-economic vulnerability and the lack of essential services. Restrictions on women's work and education have marginalized a significant portion of the labor force, reducing household incomes¹. International humanitarian assistance is a necessary contribution to the survival of families.

Natural disasters, such as floods and harsh winters, affected millions of people in 2024. The floods affected more than 173,000 people, while low temperatures threaten especially vulnerable groups, including children, pregnant women, the elderly, displaced persons and returnees.

In 2024, approximately 14.8 million people faced acute **food insecurity**, with severe nutritional consequences. The country is also experiencing an alarming level of chronic malnutrition, with around 3 million children affected by stunting due to inadequate diets, lack of access to healthcare, and poor sanitary conditions.

The healthcare sector is severely compromised due to insufficient funding, inadequate infrastructure, and a shortage of professionals, worsened by restrictive policies that prevent women from participating in the workforce. Communicable diseases are on the rise, with 175,262 cases of acute diarrhea, 81,304 cases of malaria, and 59,753 cases of measles reported in 2024. Seasonal health dynamics, including respiratory infections and waterborne diseases, particularly affect vulnerable groups.

¹ Afghanistan Development Update December 2024



Photo Credits: IOM

The maternal mortality rate remains among the highest in the world, with 638 deaths per 100,000 live births. Whereas the infant mortality stands at 58 deaths per 1,000 live births. Vaccination coverage is also inadequate, with only 36.6% of children aged 12 to 23 months receiving basic immunizations.

Despite the end of active conflict in 2021, **Afghanistan remains one of the most heavily contaminated countries by explosive device**. In 2024, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) recorded 234 explosive incidents, resulting in 455 casualties — 359 of whom were children.

Compounding the situation, Afghanistan is facing a **returnee crisis**, **with approximately 2 million Afghans** having returned to the country from Pakistan and Iran between December 2023 and December 2024. This surge in returnees has placed additional pressure on basic services and the resources of host communities. Furthermore, there are approximately 6.3 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) within Afghanistan, further complicating the overall humanitarian landscape².

Humanitarian needs are acute and require urgent action. It is crucial to strengthen health infrastructure, improve access to essential services and provide targeted assistance for vulnerable populations. Without international commitment, the lives of millions are at risk.

4- STRATEGIC ORIENTATION AND PRIORITY SECTORS

In 2024, the intervention strategy included **support for essential services and humanitarian assistance**. In a complex and volatile context such as that of Afghanistan, it appears necessary to complement immediate aid with activities aimed at supporting durable solutions and contributing to the resilience of communities.

In line with the UN Strategic Framework for Afghanistan 2023-2025 (UNSFA), the 2024 initiatives aim to ensure access to essential services and foster economic opportunities and resilient livelihoods.

The strategic orientation of the AICS Islamabad office is in line with the 2024 - 2026 Three-Year Programming and Policy Document, which provides that the initiatives to be implemented in Afghanistan shall focus on assisting the populations affected by protracted humanitarian crises with a view to protecting lives, alleviating suffering and safeguarding the dignity of persons.

The activities supported by AICS focus on the following areas of action identified in the same document:

1. Health

2. Training and Decent Work.

3. Multisectoral

Multisectoral interventions cover the following areas: agriculture, food security and nutrition; protection of the most vulnerable groups including young people, women, children, persons with disabilities, displaced persons, refugees and returnees; life-saving assistance, as the provision of food and drinking water; as well as preparedness, prevention and response to natural disaster risks,

Within this framework, AICS Islamabad has identified 3 strategic outcomes for intervention, focusing on two key pillars for the 2030 Agenda: **Person and Prosperity.**

² Document - Pakistan - Afghanistan Situation Refugee Response Dashboard, December 2024



PILLAR PERSON

• Outcome 1 (SDG 2): Ensured food security and supported resilient and sustainable agro-food production systems, fostering the link between nutrition and health.

Sector: Multisectoral

• Outcome 3 (SDG 3/5): Improved access to quality social and health services for all, with a focus on vulnerable people and maternal, child, sexual and reproductive health.

Sector: Health

PILLAR PROSPERITY

• Outcome 3 (SDG 8.5): Promoted full and productive employment and decent work, with particular emphasis on young people and women.

Sector: Education, training and decent work

The AICS Islamabad initiatives, in a nexus perspective in fragile contexts³, contribute to the following objectives:

SDG 2:

Ending hunger, achieving food security, improving nutrition and promoting sustainable agriculture. In particular **target 2.1**, ensure access to safe, nutritious and sufficient food for all people, especially the poor and vulnerable, including infants.

SDG 3:

Ensuring healthy living and promoting well-being for all at all ages. In particular, **targets: 3.2**, end preventable deaths of infants and children under 5; **3.5**, strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including drug abuse and harmful alcohol use; **3.6**, to halve the number of deaths and injuries caused by road accidents.



Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all. In particular **target 8.5**, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including young people and persons with disabilities, and ensure equal pay for work of equal value.

³ In line with developments at international and European level, Italian Development Cooperation has also recognized the need, in situations of fragility, instability and protracted crises, to respond to the immediate needs of the civilian population, while addressing the structural causes of the crisis through coordinated interventions and humanitarian aid (including those of the very first emergency). It is also deemed significant to steer for the development and promotion of peaceful and cohesive societies, at both bilateral and multilateral levels MAECI/AICS Guidelines on the nexus between humanitarian aid, development and peace, July 2023.



Photo Credits: UNESCO

5- INTERNATIONAL COORDINATION

The main donor coordination mechanisms in which AICS Islamabad office participates include:

Afghanistan Coordination Group (ACG)

Established in May 2022, the ACG aims to coordinate the efforts of various actors, including international organisations, donors and civil society, to address the complex challenges Afghanistan is facing. Currently co-chaired by the European Union (EU), United Nations (UN) and World Bank, focusing on humanitarian aid, development and peace and reconciliation efforts.

Humanitarian Donors Group for Afghanistan

Chaired by the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, it is a platform that brings together on a monthly basis major humanitarian donors with the aim of discussing, planning and harmonising responses to the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan.

Donor coordination of the Afghanistan Resilience Trust Fund (ARTF) and the Special Trust Fund for Afghanistan (STFA)

The ARTF, managed by the World Bank, and the STFA, managed by UNDP, are tools for mobilizing and coordinating international funding for resilience and Basic Human Needs in Afghanistan.

EU+ Coordination Meeting

A forum involving the Member States of the European Union, together with Norway, Switzerland and the United Kingdom to promote coherence between EU-funded activities and bilateral donor programmes. This mechanism facilitates the alignment of donor strategies for humanitarian assistance and Basic Human Needs, establishing shared priorities and promoting a unified approach.

EU Development Counsellors Coordination Meeting

A coordination table chaired by the Delegation of the European Union in Afghanistan. The group promotes a joint analysis of the intervention context and encourages strategic discussion within the EU on key issues.

Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR)

An initiative of the UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) and its partners, designed to address the Afghan refugee crisis. The strategy focuses on supporting Afghan refugees, who have been forced to flee the country due to conflict and repression, in finding durable solutions.



6- GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT (GEWE)

The current Afghan context is marked by **institutionalized discrimination by the** *de facto* **authorities against women and girls**, who are excluded from most areas of daily and public life, including education after the sixth year and work. This highlights an element of additional gravity in the context of the Afghan crisis: on the one hand, the humanitarian emergency is characterized by food insecurity, the lack of life-saving services, from endemic poverty and the challenges imposed by migration phenomena and on the other hand the denial of women's rights, which increase the need for international assistance.

An **intersectional analysis of the situation of women** in the country clearly reveals that the ongoing crisis affecting the entire population is even more acute for women and girls.

This is evident in the **economic sphere**, where restrictions on women's education and employment have marginalized a significant portion of the labor force, reduced household incomes, further deepened poverty, and increased women's exposure to violence and abuse.

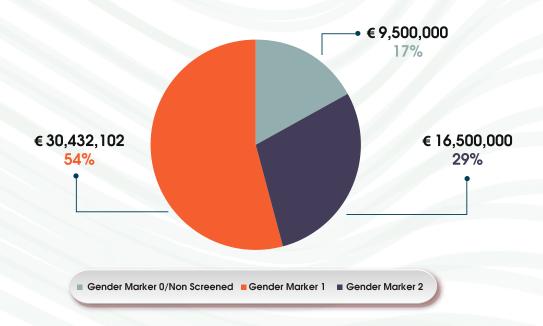
As for **food security**, coping strategies that force families to reduce food consumption have contributed to rising rates of acute malnutrition among women and children.

The **impacts of the climate crisis** further compound these challenges: water scarcity, inadequate sanitation services, and exposure to natural disasters are key factors contributing to the highest maternal mortality rate in the region⁴.

In this context, Afghan women and girls are an **essential resource**. Human capital development and social protection are **key to Afghanistan's long-term economic recovery and stability**⁵.

The central role of women and girls in sustainable development is recognised by AICS⁶, which integrates a gender perspective into funded initiatives through a twin-track approach⁷. This approach involves, on the one hand, the implementation of **specific initiatives solely focused on the promotion of GEWE** with Gender Policy Marker 2, that is "principal" and, on the other hand, Initiatives in which the gender component is mainstreamed, with Gender Policy Marker 1, meaning "significant".

Gender Policy Marker in 2024 Initiatives



Initiatives in the field of maternal, reproductive, neonatal, child, and adolescent health through Family Health Houses (FHH) align with **Gender Policy Marker 2**. This type of intervention is designed to reach remote and underserved areas, ensuring an integrated approach that provides women and girls with dedicated spaces for health services. In 2024, **17% of funding — equivalent to € 9.5 million —** was allocated to two interventions in support of FHHs, with gender equality as the primary objective.

Given the widespread needs across all sectors and the systemic discrimination faced by women and girls, the ongoing gender mainstreaming approach enables action in support of women's empowerment and the protection of their rights across various areas of intervention. Currently, **54% of funds invested in Afghanistan** — **amounting to € 30.4 million** — are allocated to eight initiatives marked with **Gender Policy Marker 1**, indicating that GEWE is a significant focus. These initiatives include clearly defined expected results, dedicated activities, and specific budget lines. Among them are contributions to the "Afghanistan Resilience Trust Fund" (ARTF) for the EMERGe programme (Empowering Microfinance and Enterprises for Resilience and Growth), which supports micro and small enterprises — particularly women-led businesses — and to the "Special Trust Fund for Afghanistan" (STFA) for drug use prevention and treatment programmes, with a particular focus on women and their families.



⁴MMR of 620 from 100,000 according to the WHO website

⁵ THE WORLD BANK, AFGHANISTAN FUTURES, "Afghanistan Development Update", December 2024.

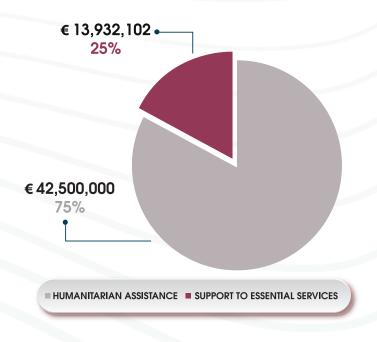
THE WORLD BANK GROUP, AFGHANISTAN FUTURES, Afghanistan Development Update, Presentation in Islamabad, 6 December 2024.

⁶ In line with the Guidelines AICS/MAECI on gender equality and women's empowerment (2020-2024)

⁷ AICS, MAECI, "Guidelines on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls (2020-2024)", Para. 3.1. The MAECI and the Directorate General for Development Cooperation (DGCS), Art. 80

7- PORTFOLIO OF INTIATIVES

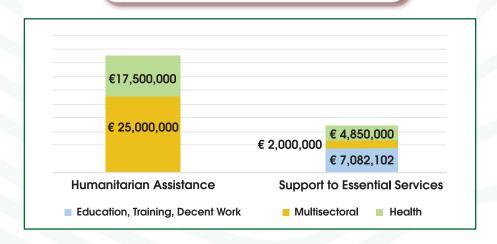
AICS Portfolio - Afghanistan 2024



AICS Islamabad's 2024 Afghanistan portfolio comprises 16 initiatives with a total value of approximately € 56.5 million.

It includes 10 **humanitarian assistance** initiatives on the emergency funding channel for a total value of 42.5 million euros. In addition, six initiatives to support **essential services** will be funded for a total of \in 13.9 million.

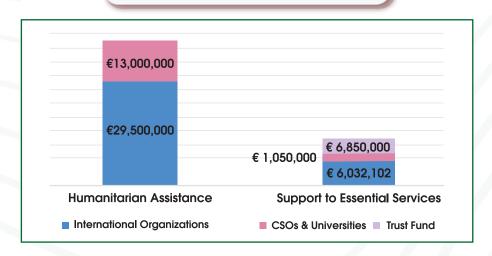
Funding Channel and Sector of Intervention



8- IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

The efforts of the Italian Cooperation are carried out in Afghanistan through solid and effective partnerships with civil society organizations (local, Italian and international), UN agencies, international organizations, universities and research centres.

Funding Channel and Implementing Entities



Civil Society Organizations: CESVI ETS, EMERGENCY ONG, INTERSOS, Nove ETS, People In Need, Vento di Terra Onlus, WeWorld Onlus.















UN Agencies: FAO, ILO, OCHA, IOM, WHO, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNODC.



















International Organizations: The World Bank and ICRC



Universities and Research Centres: University of Florence, Department of History, Archaeology, Art (SAGAS).



9-STRATEGY

The intervention strategy in Afghanistan aims to provide assistance to the population affected by the humanitarian crisis with the goal of protecting lives, alleviating suffering, and safeguarding the dignity of people. It contributes to the implementation of the Afghanistan Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan, as well as to the fulfillment of commitments made by Italy in the context of the World Humanitarian Summit, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Good Humanitarian Donorship Initiative, and the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid.

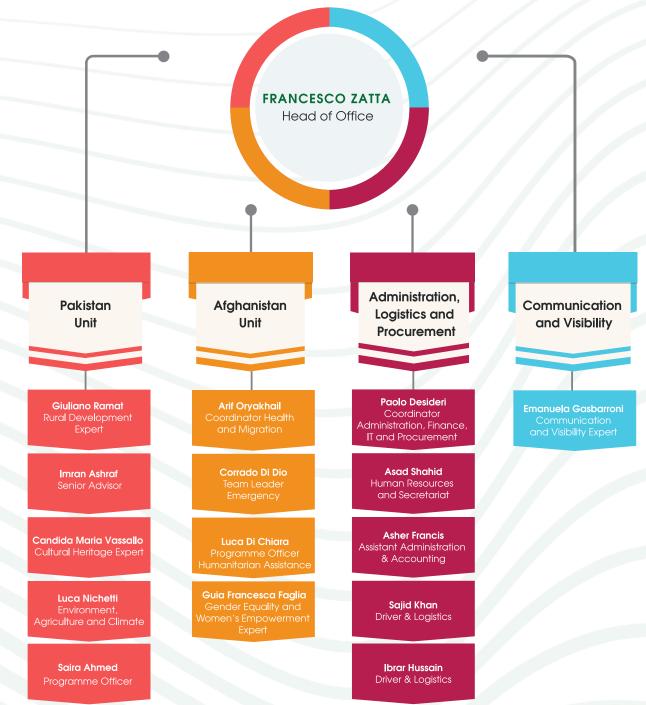
In Afghanistan, a serious humanitarian crisis persists, with some **22.9 million people in need of assistance**, requiring a multisectoral response focused on food, shelter, health care and protection, especially for vulnerable groups.

The most urgent needs relate to **food security, nutrition and access to life-saving services**. In addition, due to the restrictions implemented by the *de facto* authorities, the protection needs, particularly of **women and girls** are increasing.

Natural disasters, the impact of climate change and regional migration dynamics exacerbate existing vulnerabilities.



10- ORGANOGRAM - AICS ISLAMABAD OFFICE



During 2024, some experts served at AICS Islamabad before taking on new assignments: Pietro Del Sette Environment and Agriculture Coordinator, Jacopo Branchesi, Bilateral Cooperation Expert, Andrea Ferro, Emergency Humanitarian Expert, Muhameda Tulumovic, Humanitarian Aid Team Leader, Rita Chiara Mele, Environmental Expert/ Pillar Planet Pakistan, Marco Giallonardi, Communication and Visibility; Gianna Da Re, Consultant.





11- FOCUS: WOMEN AND GIRLS

Her Future at Risk. The Cost of Humanitarian Crises on Women and Girls.

The WeWorld report⁸ analyses the impact of humanitarian crises on women and girls in eight countries with an in-depth section dedicated to Afghanistan. WeWorld interventions and their operational modalities are also presented.

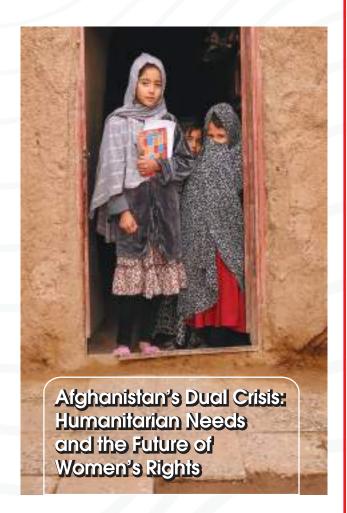
AICS funded six projects implemented by Civil Society Organizations within the "Emergency Initiative for the Most Vulnerable Segments of the Afghan Population" program, one of which is implemented by WeWorld.

The report was produced within this intervention and highlights the importance of strengthening the role of women and girls in the recovery phase which follows an emergency.

Protracted crises exacerbate gender inequalities and in Afghanistan the humanitarian emergency is interlinked with systematic human rights violations, especially of women and girls, dramatically increasing their vulnerability.

They cannot continue school beyond the sixth year, leave home if not accompanied, their voice is silenced and they have restrictions to work. This results in high exposure to early marriage, sexual exploitation, domestic violence, unpaid work, malnutrition and mental illness.

The voices and accounts given in the report also show the resilience and agency of Afghan women facing such adversity, and affirming their determination to tackle the challenges of the present for a future that sees them as active protagonists of social change.



The report concludes with actionable recommendations, underlining the need to address systemic inequalities and integrate women's and girls' voices at every stage of humanitarian response, adopting a transformative gender approach to promote long-term recovery and peace.

⁸ WEWORLD, Her Future at Risk, the Cost of Humanitarian Crises on Women and Girls. Focus. Afghanistan Dual Crisis, March 2025

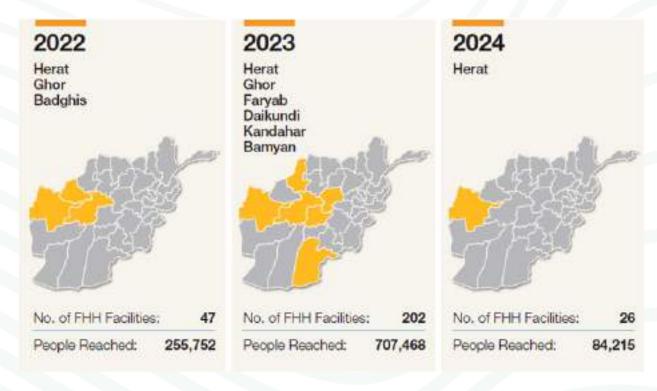
12- FOCUS: HEALTH

Italian support for Family Health Houses - FHH in Afghanistan

Women in Afghanistan, especially those living in poorly served and hard-to-reach areas, do not have access to life-saving maternal and reproductive health services, one of the reasons why the country has one of the highest maternal mortality rates in the world, with a rate of 638 deaths per 100,000 live births.

Providing access to quality maternal, reproductive, neonatal, child and adolescent health (RMNCAH) services through the Family Health Houses (FHH) saves lives and develops stronger families and communities.

According to the UNFPA simulation exercise, the cost of inaction would result in 6,163 maternal deaths by the end of 2025.



202 Family Health House supported by Italy since 2022, and 1,047,435 people reached

IMPACT

The Family Health House (FHH) has become a cost-effective element in the basic health services package, so much so that it has now been incorporated into Afghanistan's National Health Policy 2025-2030.

Family Health Houses have made significant improvements in access to maternal, reproductive, neonatal, child and adolescent health services that meet the needs of disadvantaged populations, especially women and adolescent girls, removing geographical, financial and cultural barriers.

Services provided by the FHH

- Prenatal and postnatal care
- Skilled assistance during child birth
- Family planning counselling and services
- Essential care of the newborn
- Integrated management of neonatal and childhood diseases
- Obstetric fistula screening and referral to UNFPA specialised treatment centres
- Referral of complicated cases and follow-up

Integrated services

- Nutrition
- Routine immunisation
- Health services for young people
- Psychosocial counselling services



13- PROJECT SNAPSHOTS 13.1 HUMANITARIAN AID INITIATIVES

There are **ten projects** under humanitarian assistance, two of which were carried out in partnership with civil society organizations and eight in collaboration with the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

1. Emergency Initiative for the Most Vulnerable Sections of the Afghan Population - AID 012682/01/0

The initiative adopts an integrated multisectoral protection approach for the most vulnerable sections of the population in order to ensure protection, particularly of women and children, food security, income-generating activities and to improve the quality of, and access to, essential basic health and education services. Expected results are: **R1**) Improved food security for the most vulnerable segments of the population and capacity to carry out income-generating activities in the provinces most affected by the food crisis; **R2**) Improved population health; **R3**) Promoted anticipatory response to recurrent crises resulting from climate shocks with the aim of reducing and managing disaster risk. The direct beneficiaries are about 245,000 people. Among these, particular attention is given to the most vulnerable groups, including: pregnant women and young mothers with children under 5 years of age; widows and householders; women and children at risk of vulnerability (for incidents of gender violence, substance addiction, issues caused by neglect, trafficking, etc.); people with disabilities; particularly vulnerable families; IDPs and returnees; communities at environmental risk.

Zone of Intervention	Laghman. Districts of Zinda Jar Ghoriyan and Herat (Herat pro (Kabul province). District of Zind	(Herat province). District of ce). Provinces of Kunar, Nangarhar and n., Pashtun Zarghun, Kohsan, Gulran, ovince). Districts of Surobi and Dehsabz dajan (Herat province) and Districts of Sabul (Surobi and Deh Sabz Districts)
Financing Channel	Bilateral	
Codification	Humanitarian	
Deliberation	VM 99 - 10/10/2022	
SDGs	SDG 1: Overcome poverty SDG 2: Defeat hunger SDG 3: Health and wellness SDG 4: Quality education	SDG 5: Gender equality SDG 11: Sustainable cities and communities SDG 13: Combating climate change
Sector of Intervention	Health, agriculture and food so	afety
Gender Marker	1	
Executing Entity	Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)	
Total Cost	€ 10,000,000	
Duration	24 months, from 30 May 2024	

The activities are carried out by the following executing entities:

osc	Project	Sector	
WeWorld - GVC Project Code: AFG/12682/WWGVC/01 € 1,200,000	Strengthening capacities for preparedness, prevention and response to food insecurity and disaster risk reduction of the Afghan population affected by the humanitarian crisis	Agriculture and Food Security, Disaster Risk Reduction	Wend
EMERGENCY Project Code: AFG/12682/EMERGENCY/02 € 1,197,813	Strengthen the life-saving, free and specialized medical - health response for the most vulnerable population in Helmand Province	Health	E EMERGENCY
NOVE ETS Project Code: AFG/12682/NOVE/03 € 1,191,164	The Seeds of Rebirth: A Path to Sustenance for Afghan Women - Agrifood Empowerment and Economic Growth,	Agriculture and Food security	NOVE CARRIE HUMANS.
Vento di Terra Onlus Project Code: AFG/12682/VDT/04 € 1,198,875.50	Hari Rud, the river that flows. Food security, agriculture and livestock for earthquake victims, returnees and vulnerable people in the Province of Herat	Agriculture and Food Security, Disaster Risk Reduction	VENTO DI TERRA
INTERSOS Project Code: AFG/12682/INTERSOS/05 € 1,200,000	Multisectoral assistance for the well-being and dignity of the most vulnerable communities in the underserved rural areas of Kabul	Agriculture and Food Safety, Health, Disaster Risk Reduction	INTERS 6 S
CESVI Fondazione ETS in ATS con PIN Project Code: AFG/12682/CESVI/06 € 1,800,000	AGRARIA: Agriculture, Risk Management and Water for Resilience and Inclusion in Afghanistan	Agriculture and Food Safety, Health, Disaster Risk Reduction	People in Need
INTERSOS in ATS con CESVI Fondazione ETS Project Code: AFG/12682/INTERSOS/07 € 1,200,000	PREPARA: Promoting Resilience and Preparedness for Active Community Response	Disaster Risk Reduction	INTERS S

2. Multisectoral Programme to Support the Resilience of Vulnerable Populations in Afghanistan – AID 013073/01/0

The initiative aims to support life-saving interventions and basic services in the areas of Health and Food Security for the most vulnerable segments of the Afghan population (women, children, displaced persons, returnees and host communities), at the same time, laying the foundations for strengthening their resilience through durable solutions. In line with the HNRP 2024, Civil Society Organisations (CSO) activities in the area of food security will contribute to improving access to food and livelihoods. It may include in-kind assistance, money transfers (CVA) and livelihood support. Gender-sensitive health interventions will aim at reducing mortality and morbidity in the vulnerable population and may include reproductive health services, trauma treatment, mental and psychosocial health support, prevention and response to epidemics/outbreaks. Activities will benefit communities affected by natural disasters, refugees, returnees, people with disabilities and women-led households, all highly vulnerable groups due to restrictions on movement and employment. Implementing CSOs will be selected via a Call for Proposals in the first quarter of 2025.

Zone of intervention	Across the country
Financing Channel	Bilateral
Codification	Humanitarian
Deliberation	VM 65 - 10/11/2024
SDGs	SDG 2: Overcoming hunger SDG 3: Health and wellbeing
Sector of Intervention	Health, agriculture and food safety
Gender marker	1
Executing Entity	Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)
Total cost	€ 3,000,000
Duration	24 months

3. Emergency Livelihood and Cash Assistance for Vulnerable Populations in Afghanistan – AID 012530/01/0

The initiative has not only met the most urgent needs for basic assistance, but also promoted, in the medium and long term, more resilient, socially cohesive and economically strengthened communities through a Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus approach. The project provided targeted cash assistance to vulnerable populations in Afghanistan — including internally displaced persons (IDPs), returnees, and host communities — to meet urgent needs such as food, health, hygiene, and shelter. In partnership with Save the Children, 9,860 households received cash assistance, contributing to improved food security, nutrition, and access to education, while preventing child labour.





Despite operational challenges, assistance continued without interruption. Moreover, the project bolstered economic stability in these communities by creating employment opportunities and supporting 316 vulnerable enterprises, thereby benefiting 3,480 employees and their families. All activities were completed on 15 March 2024.

Zone of Intervention	Across the country
Financing Channel	Bilateral
Codification	Humanitarian
Deliberation	VM 66 - 17/12/2021
SDGs	SDG 1: Eradicate poverty SDG 10: Reduce inequalities
Sector of Intervention	Material assistance and rescue services
Gender marker	1
Executing Entity	IOM Afghanistan in partnership with Save the Children
Total Cost	€ 4,000,000
Duration	December 2021 – March 2024

4. Provision of Life-Saving Services for Reproductive Health and Gender-Based Violence to the Vulnerable Population in Afghanistan – AID 012554/01/1

The intervention increased the provision of essential services for sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and against gender-based violence (GBV) in Afghanistan. The initiative has: i) increased access of underserved communities, including internally displaced persons (IDPs), returnees and host communities to essential reproductive health, maternal, neonatal, child and adolescent health information and services (RMNCAH) and GBV; ii) supported maternity services through support to health centres in the target provinces; iii)



strengthened the capacity of humanitarian partners to provide SRH and GBV prevention and response services; iv) supported vulnerable adolescents and increased young people's access to peer education, psychosocial support (PSS) and livelihood services through multi-purpose youth centres.

The initiative was implemented in the Provinces of Balkh, Kunduz, Kandahar, Nangarhar, Herat, Ghor, Nimroz, Kabul and Bamiyan and directly benefited 1,100,000 people: 539,000 women, 132,000 girls, 286,000 men, 143,000 boys and the activities have been completed on 31/03/2024.

Zone of Intervention	Balkh, Kunduz, Kandahar, Nangarhar, Herat, Ghor, Nimroz, Kabul e Bamyan
Financing Channel	Multibilateral
Codification	Humanitarian
Deliberation	n. 70 - 29/09/2022
SDGs	SDG 3: Health and well-being SDG 5: Gender equality
Sector of Intervention	Health and protection
Gender marker	2
Executing Entity	UNFPA Afghanistan
Total Cost	€ 8,000,000
Duration	November 2022 – March 2024

5. Providing Primary and Secondary Health Services to Afghan Populations in Underserved Areas-AID 012504/01

The Italian contribution enabled the World Health Organization (WHO) to support 31 health facilities located in areas with insufficient services — specifically in the Provinces of Helmand, Zabul, Nimroz, and Urozgan — delivering integrated primary and secondary care to 221,889 people. This support also included COVID 19 prevention and treatment, as well as management of other infectious diseases. The intervention comprised four components:



- 1. Support to the Anabah Regional Hospital in Panjshir (implemented by the NGO EMERGENCY).
- 2. Strengthening of health facilities in Kabul, Zabul, and Kandahar (implemented by the NGO INTERSOS).
- 3. Support to COVID 19 hospitals (WHO component delivered through national NGOs).
- 4. Coordination and leadership for health emergency preparedness and humanitarian response at national and local levels.

In addition, 379,127 residents of so called "white areas" — characterized by absent or inadequate basic health services — received healthcare through 44 supported primary level health facilities, including 379,127 outpatient department (OPD) consultations, 17,476 antenatal visits, 7,794 postnatal visits, 4,309 assisted deliveries, 55,222 vaccinations, 80,761 growth monitoring consultations, and 20,413 mental health consultations.

Furthermore, 334,721 people directly benefited from hospital level services — such as inpatient admissions, surgical procedures, skilled birth attendance, and caesarean sections — thanks to WHO support to three secondary level hospitals, All activities were completed on 30 June 2024.

Zone of intervention	Helmand, Zabul, Nimroz and Urozga, Lashkar-Gah
Financing Channel	Multibilateral
Codification	Humanitarian
Deliberation	VM 71 - 29/09/2022
SDGs	SDG 3: health and wellness
Sector of Intervention	Health
Gender Marker	0
Executing Entity	WHO Afghanistan
Total Cost	€ 6,000,000
Duration	March 2022 – June 2024

6. Support to Adolescent Women and Girls through the Strengthening of Family Health Houses (FHHs) as Central Hubs for the Provision of Life-Saving Reproductive, Maternal, Neonatal, Infant and Adolescent Health Services – AID 012901/01/0

The one year intervention, valued at \in 1.5 million, aims to expand the provision of essential sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services and gender based violence (GBV) response in Afghanistan. The expected results are:

R1: Increased access to life-saving reproductive, maternal, neonatal, child, and adolescent health services — facilitated by 27 Family Health Houses (FHH) serving as central "one-stop-shop" hubs.



R2: Improved availability and accessibility of essential maternal and reproductive health commodities within these FHHs.

This initiative will be implemented in Herat Province and will directly benefit 135,609 people: 126,571 women and girls, and 9,038 men and boys. UNFPA will deploy an integrated RMNCAH (reproductive, maternal, neonatal, child, and adolescent health) approach through the FHH Hub model, creating a single-entry point for women, adolescents, and communities. Funds were disbursed on 18 December 2024, and activities are scheduled to commence on 1 January 2025.

Zone of Intervention	Province of Herat
Financing Channel	Multibilateral
Codification	Humanitarian
Deliberation	n. 50 -19/09/2024
SDGs	SDG 3: Health and well-being SDG 5: Gender equality
Sector of Intervention	Health, gender equality, child protection
Gender Marker	2
Executing Entity	UNFPA Afghanistan
Total Cost	€ 1,500,000
Duration	December 2024 - November 2025

7. Italian Contribution to the ICRC 2023 Special Appeal on "Disability and Humanitarian Mine Action" - AID 012945/01/0

This initiative supports the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) 2023 Special Appeal on "Disability and Mine Action" in Afghanistan, by providing specialized healthcare and promoting the socio-economic inclusion of persons with disabilities — particularly mine victims. The ICRC will ensure access to quality rehabilitation services by strengthening the capacity of existing centers and promoting the inclusion of staff with disabilities.



In addition, the initiative aims to improve living conditions, access to education, and the sustainability of rehabilitation services, in collaboration with local authorities to support the social reintegration of persons with disabilities.

The ICRC will continue to guarantee and expand access to high-quality rehabilitation services in its seven centers, including for individuals referred by other health facilities or identified in remote areas through outreach activities. These centers are located in Kabul, Mazar-e-Sharif, Herat, Jalalabad, Gulbahar, Faizabad, and Lashkar-Gah.

The ICRC will also strive to employ a greater number of persons with disabilities in its rehabilitation centers across the country, as part of a broader effort to promote inclusive employment practices. Overall, the initiative aims to reach 169,530 beneficiaries. The ICRC's seven physical rehabilitation centers will receive support to expand and improve their infrastructure and services. Additionally, the ICRC will complete the construction of a new center in Lashkar-Gah and carry out a feasibility study for another center in Gulbahar. The initiative is funded under the 2023 Special Appeal.

Zone of Intervention	Kabul, Mazar-e-Sharif, Herat, Jalalabad, Gulbahar, Faizabad and Lashkar-Gah
Financing Channel	Multibilateral
Туре	Humanitarian
Deliberation	VM 59 - 31/10/2024
SDGs	SDG 3: Health and wellness SDG 10: Reduce inequalities SDG 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions
Sector of Intervention	Mine clearance
Gender Marker	0
Executing entity	ICRC
Total cost	€ 1,000,000
Duration	12 months

8. Italian Contribution to the ICRC 2024 Special Appeal on "Disability and Humanitarian Mine Action" – AID 013206/01/0

This initiative aims to support the implementation of projects under the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) 2024 Special Appeal on "Disability and Humanitarian Mine Action" in Afghanistan. It focuses on delivering specialized healthcare and promoting the socio-economic inclusion of persons with disabilities, particularly survivors of landmines and other unexploded ordnance.



The ICRC will continue to ensure that individuals with physical disabilities have access to assistive devices, physiotherapy, and other rehabilitation services through its seven managed or supported centers located in Kabul, Mazar-e-Sharif, Herat, Jalalabad, Gulbahar, Faizabad, and Lashkar-Gah. Efforts will be made to expand access to these centers, making it accessible also for patients referred by other healthcare facilities or coming from remote areas. The initiative is funded under the 2024 Special Appeal.

Zone of Intervention	Kabul, Mazar-e-Sharif, Herat, Jalalabad, Gulbahar, Faizabad and Lashkar-Gah
Financing Channel	Bilateral
Туре	Humanitarian
Deliberation	VM 72 - 19/12/2024
SDGs	SDG 3: Health and well-being SDG 10: Reducing inequalities SDG 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions
Sector of Intervention	Mine clearance
Gender Marker	0
Executing Entity	ICRC
Total Cost	€ 1,000,000
Duration	12 months

9. Ensure a Comprehensive, Data-driven Humanitarian Response for Vulnerable Returnees in Afghanistan – AID 013023/01/0

The intervention targets undocumented Afghan returnees from Pakistan and Iran, internally displaced persons (IDPs), cross-border migrants, and host communities.

Through both regular and *ad hoc* border assistance centers — including Torkham, Spin Boldak, Islam Qala, and Milak — as well as transit centers in the provinces of Herat, Nimroz, Kandahar, and Nangarhar, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) aims to support the most vulnerable populations, properly identified, by providing: humanitarian assistance; protection services and case management for individuals requiring protection (the support will continue at their final return destination); access to basic healthcare and referrals to secondary and tertiary health services; and monitoring of migratory flows at the borders to track Afghan population movements to and from Iran and Pakistan, and to enhance the delivery of targeted assistance.



The project seeks to provide a timely and adequate response to returning populations, helping to avoid increased pressure on basic services and already limited resources available to the host communities.

Direct beneficiaries: 25,341 people, including 12,471 returnees receiving post-arrival assistance (of which 2,352 also received specialized protection support) and 12,870 IDPs and host community members who benefited from health services.

Funds were disbursed on 20 December 2024, and activities are scheduled to begin on 1 March 2025,

Zone of Intervention	Border with Iran: Herat, Nimroz Border with Pakistan: Kandahar, Nangarhar Provinces with high return for the continuity of protection assistance started at the border under the Protection Case Management: Badakhshan, Balkh, Faryab, Herat, Kabul, Kandahar, Nangarhar, Nimroz, Sar-E-Pul and Takha
Financing Channel	Multibilateral
Type of Intervention	Humanitarian
Deliberation	n. 67 - 10/11/2024
SDGs	SDG 3: Health and well-being SDG 10: Reducing inequalities SDG 17: Partnership for objectives
Sector of Intervention	Health, Protection
Gender Marker	0
Executing Entity	IOM Afghanistan
Total Cost	€ 3,500,000
Duration	12 months

10. Voluntary Contribution to the Afghanistan Humanitarian Fund (AHF) 2024 - AID 013072/01/0

This 12-month initiative supports the Afghanistan Humanitarian Fund (AHF) in response to the growing needs generated by the Afghan crisis. The Fund focuses on rapid interventions to address funding gaps and emergency needs by supporting coordination activities, swift responses, preparedness, and resilience. The AHF contributes to achieving the objectives of the 2024 Humanitarian Response Plan through targeted actions aimed at meeting urgent needs, protecting women, girls, and vulnerable groups, and ensuring the continuity of services in key sectors such as health, WASH, agriculture, and education.



The initiative aims to deliver rapid, targeted, and integrated assistance in areas of highest need, while also acknowledging the widespread exposure to shocks and extreme fragility affecting the country. It also seeks to mitigate the humanitarian impact of *de facto* authorities' (DFA) policies on women, girls, and other highly vulnerable groups.

Through support to the AHF, the initiative further strengthens ongoing advocacy efforts to address the root causes of growing protection needs and to realize the "centrality of protection" principle. Lastly, it contributes to the Fund's work in close collaboration with partners engaged in delivering essential services to ensure continuity of basic humanitarian support for the Afghan population.

Funds were disbursed on 20 December 2024, and the initiative falls under the framework of the 2025 Afghanistan Humanitarian Fund.

Zone of Intervention	Across the country
Financing Channel	Multibilateral
Codification	Humanitarian
Deliberation	VM 66 - 10/11/2024
SDGs	SDG 1: Ending poverty in all its forms throughout the world
Sector of Intervention	Multisector - Country-Based Pooled Funds (CBPFs)
Gender Marker	1
Executing Entity	UNOCHA Afghanistan
Total Cost	€ 4,500,000
Duration	12 months

13.2 INITIATIVES TO SUPPORT ESSENTIAL SERVICES

There are **six projects** in the area of interventions to support essential services:

1. Contribution to the Afghanistan Resilience Trust Fund (formerly Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund - ARTF) - AID 008050/19/7

The Afghanistan Resilience Trust Fund (ARTF) is a multi-sectoral fund managed by the World Bank and represents the main instrument for supporting basic services for the Afghan people, with contributions from 34 donors. Since 2022, the ARTF has adopted a programmatic approach aimed at ensuring the continuity of basic services and supporting livelihoods through programmes implemented by United Nations agencies and partner NGOs.



Following the events of August 2024, Italy resumed its contributions to the ARTF with € 2 million disbursed on 20 June 2024, expressing a preference for the EMERGE – Empowering Microfinance and Enterprises for Resilience and Growth project, focused on women's economic empowerment. The project, valued at USD 16 million, is managed by the Aga Khan Foundation - US in partnership with AKF-Afghanistan and the German Afghan Credit Guarantee Foundation. Launched on 9 April 2024, the project aims to strengthen both the demand and supply sides of micro and small enterprise financing in Afghanistan, with a strong focus on women's financial inclusion. To date, the project has reached approximately 34,000 beneficiaries of financial services.

Zone of Intervention	_	myan, Daikundi, Faryab, Herat, Jowsjan, van, Samangan, Sar-e-pol, and Takhar
Financing Channel	Multibilateral	
Codification	Ordinary	
Deliberation	CC 27 - 09/04/2024	
SDGs	SDG 1: Eradicate poverty SDG 2: Eradicate hunger SDG 3: Health and wellness SDG 4: Quality education SDG 5: Gender equality SDG 6: Clean water and hygiene	SDG 7: Affordable and clean energy SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth SDG 9: Industry, innovation and infrastructure SDG 10: Reduce inequalities
Sector of Intervention	WEE - Women's Economic Empowerment	
Gender Marker	1	
Executing Entity	The World Bank	
Total Cost	€ 2,000,000	
Duration	9 April 2024 - 30 June 2025	



2. Contribution to the Trust Fund: Special Fund for Afghanistan - STFA - AID 12043/01/1

The objectives of the STFA have been aligned since 2023 with the priorities of the UNSFA, implementing an integrated program to address basic human needs. This program combines life-saving humanitarian activities with initiatives aimed at safeguarding livelihoods and strengthening community resilience. The interventions focus on three main areas:



- 1. Essential services
- 2. Support for resilient livelihoods
- 3. Disaster risk prevention and management, and social cohesion

The contribution to the STFA was negotiated with a preference for supporting vulnerable groups with substance dependency issues, particularly women. The agreed activities include the provision of essential services, as well as prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation in target locations in the Southeast of the country. The initiative also aims to contribute to the social reintegration of beneficiary groups by providing greater employment opportunities. Attention will be focused on priority areas with the highest prevalence of drug use, particularly in the Southeastern region. It is expected that 84,390 people from vulnerable groups – especially women and children – will directly benefit from the planned activities, while 100,000 people will benefit indirectly from the initiative. The total number of beneficiaries reached in the first semester is 22,468, of which 11.55% are women and girls.

Zone of Intervention	Logar, Ghazni, Khost
Financing Channel	Multibilateral
Codification	Ordinary
Deliberation	CC 31-27/01/2023
SDGs	SDG 3: Health and wellness
Sector of Intervention	Health and protection
Gender Marker	1
Executing Entity	UNODC, ILO, UNDP, WHO, UNFPA
Total Cost	€ 4,850,000
Duration	24 months, 1 July 2024 - 30 June 2026

3. Requalification of Informal Settlements and Population Flow Management in Bamiyan and Herat – AID 012090/01/3

The intervention aims to contribute to making cities and human settlements in Herat and Bamiyan inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable. The specific objective is to eliminate cases of improper use of UNESCO World Heritage sites and to improve the quality of informal settlements in Bamiyan. The direct beneficiaries of the program will be the 33,000 inhabitants of Zargaran and Gozargah, who will benefit from the improvement of the urban area quality through recovery plans and operational interventions.



In response to the events of August 2021, the project aims to prevent the "spontaneous" expansion of settlements and infrastructure that are inadequately equipped, and to invest in promoting participatory and inclusive practices that influence decision-making processes. These processes are aimed at ensuring effective heritage protection and guaranteeing the Afghan people the benefits of sustainable growth in the national tourism and handicrafts sectors.

Zone of Intervention	Bamyian, Northern and Eastern zones of Herat
Financing Channel	Bilateral
Codification	Ordinary
Deliberation	Director AICS, n. 96 - 24/12/2019
SDG	SDG 11 - Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.
Sector of Intervention	Urban Planning
Gender Marker	1
Executing Entity	University of Florence - Department of History, Archaeology, Art (SAGAS)
Total Cost	€ 1,050,000
Duration	1 January 2020 - 31 December 2025

4. Strengthening the Local Community and Conservation of Shar-e-Gholghola, Bamiyan World Heritage Site - AID 011044/01/4

The initiative aims at preserving the cultural heritage of the Bamiyan Valley, in particular the site of Shar-e-Gholgola, strengthening local capacities through economic and tourist development of the area.

The intervention carried out the following activities:

- 1. Conservation of the Shahr-e-Gholghola site and mitigation of soil erosion.
- 2. Training of the local community working in the cultural industry. In particular female producers and entrepreneurs who currently operate within the "Bazar of women" privately run and managed exclusively by women.



- 3. Maintenance and improvement of the site entrance, trails and fence work completed in October 2024.
- 4. Develop a peer-reviewed study report, updating the editorial product "Keeping history alive: safeguarding cultural heritage in post-conflict Afghanistan".

The main beneficiaries of the programme were 200 professionals who specialized through the cash-for-work and on-the-job training model implemented during 2024.

Zone of Intervention	Bamyian, Northern and Eastern zones of Herat
Financing Channel	Multibilateral
Codification	Ordinary
Deliberation	By the Joint Committee No. 143/2016
SDG	SDG 11 - Making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.
Sector of Intervention	Conservation and exploitation of tangible and intangible cultural heritage
Gender Marker	0
Executing Entity	UNESCO
Total Cost	€ 1,000,000
Duration	1 August 2017 - 10 March 2025











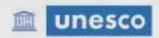






5. Conservation and Valorization of the Bamiyan Valley for Sustainable Culture-Oriented Development - AID 011704/01/1

The initiative aims to enhance national capacities and the operational framework for the safeguarding and management of the cultural heritage of Bamiyan, strengthening communities through the creation of public cultural spaces and employment and training opportunities in the cultural sector. The focus is particularly on the conservation and valorization of the Cultural Landscape of the Bamiyan Valley, a UNESCO World Heritage site.



UNESCO completed the development of the management plan as operational framework for the safeguarding of the Bamiyan Valley. Its approval by the World Heritage Committee is foreseen to take place in 2025. The absence of this plan is recognized as a contributing factor to the site's "in danger" status, which has been in place since its inscription in 2003.

Additionally, a public park has been designed to cover the archaeological sites of the Buddha Cliff, Shahr-e-Zohak, and Shahr-e-Ghulghulah. Due to ongoing controversy surrounding interventions in the Buddha niches, the focus of infrastructure and employment activities has been on Shahr-e-Ghulghulah and the rehabilitation of existing buildings at Shahr-i-Zohak for park management and services.

Zone of Intervention	Bamyian, Northern and Eastern zones of Herat
Financing Channel	Multibilateral
Codification	Ordinary
Deliberation	By the Joint Committee No.117/2017
SDG	SDG 11 - Making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
Sector of Intervention	Conservation and exploitation of tangible and intangible cultural heritage
Gender Marker	0
Executing Entity	UNESCO
Total Cost	€ 4,092,120
Duration	20 May 2019 - 31 March 2026





6. Ecosystem Services and Employment - AID 012006/02/04

The initiative aims to improve the living conditions of rural communities through the sustainable management of natural resources, particularly in mountainous areas, across five countries that are members of the FAO Mountain Partnership.

The project seeks to contribute to reducing land degradation, restoring biodiversity, and enhancing ecosystem services in selected areas through methodologies designed to analyze environmental and socioeconomic conditions and identify actions to address vulnerabilities in mountainous regions of Afghanistan, Albania, Kyrgyzstan, Montenegro, and Pakistan.



The activities in Afghanistan are being implemented in collaboration with the NGO CESVI, identified as FAO's local partner, and involve specialists from Kabul University. Following necessary training, the activities are aimed at preparing an action plan.

Zone of Intervention	Regional
Financing Channel	Multibilateral
Codification	Ordinary
Deliberation	No. 113 CC 18.12.2019
SDGs	SDG 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of the terrestrial ecosystem, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, and stop loss of biological diversity SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth for all SDG 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere SDG 5: Gender Equality to achieve equality and empower all women and girls
Sector of Intervention	Conservation and exploitation of tangible and intangible cultural heritage
Gender Marker	0
Executing Entity	FAO in collaboration with CESVI ETS and University of Rome 'La Sapienza'
Total Cost	€ 940,000
Duration	36 mothns







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