



Regional Refugee Response Plan
for Afghanistan Situation
2023



2023

REGIONAL REFUGEE RESPONSE PLAN FOR AFGHANISTAN SITUATION

January-December 2023

Cover Photograph:

Pakistan. Kausar Pervaiz (19) is being helped by her teacher in her bright and colourfully painted classroom. She feels that her life is back on track as she enjoys her school facilities and a conducive learning environment. Kausar is a 10-grade student at the Government Girls High School (GGHS) Killi Shaikhan, Quetta, Balochistan province of Pakistan. © UNICEF/Sami Malik

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At a Glance

Regional Planned Response

January-December 2023



8.2 M

Total current Afghan population



2.3 M

Targeted refugee/refugee-like population



2.8 M

Targeted Afghans of other status**



2.7 M

Targeted host-community members



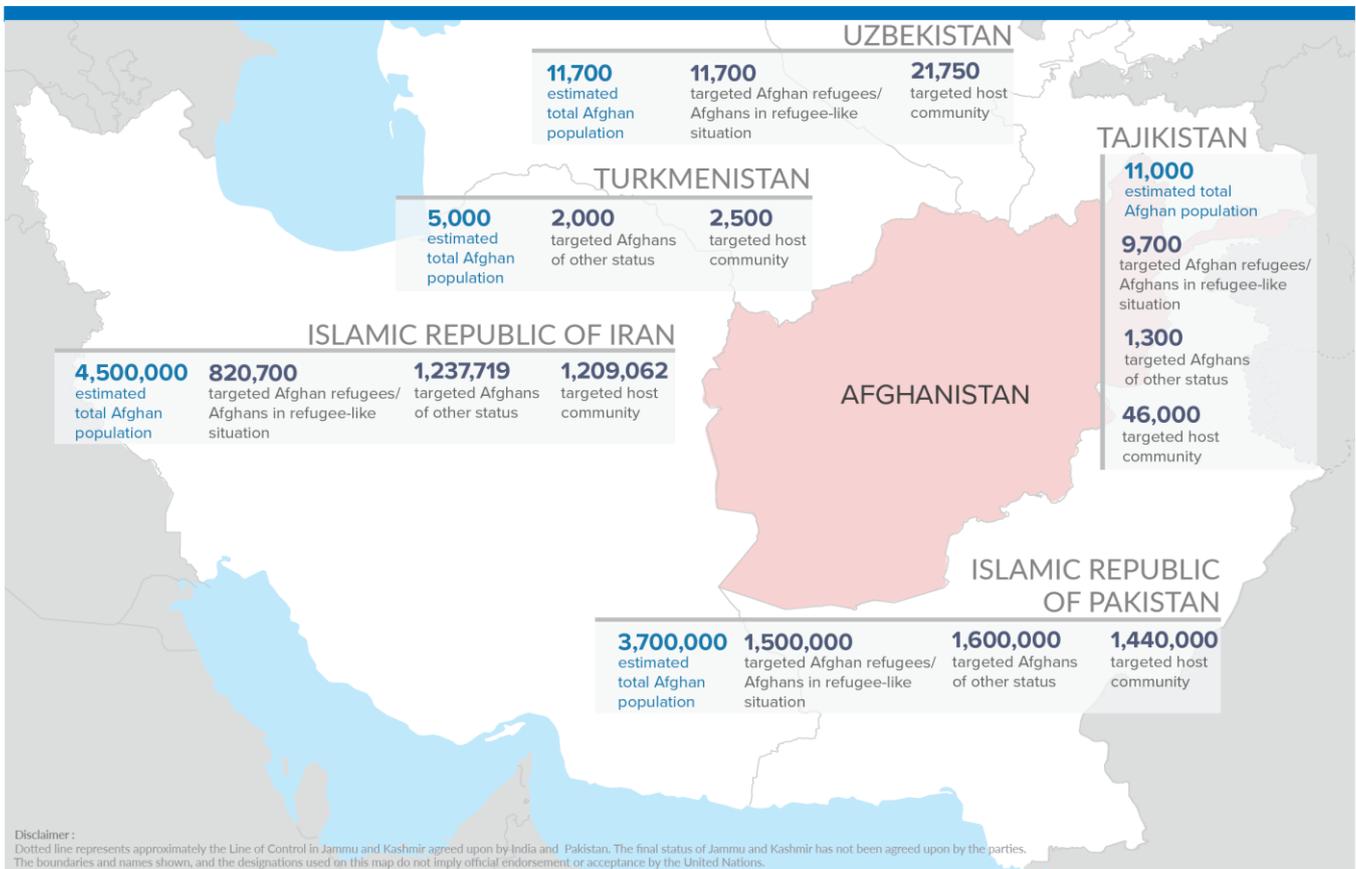
613.01 M

Total financial requirements



65

Partners Involved***



Country	Financial requirements in USD	Partners involved
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	USD 198,981,998	15
Pakistan (Islamic Republic of)	USD 383,764,416	56
Tajikistan	USD 17,487,628	11
Turkmenistan	USD 2,007,199	4
Uzbekistan	USD 10,771,746	5

* Targeted Refugee/refugee population like includes registered refugees as well as new arrivals who have approached UNHCR.

** includes potential new arrival projections for 2023

*** This figure represents the total number of partners operating regionally and counts partners only once even if operating in more than one country. The country chapters provide the absolute number of partners per country.

Regional Overview

Executive Summary

The situation for Afghans in host countries, especially recent arrivals, is challenging and of increasing concern. The economic situation has deteriorated, and the cost of living has increased dramatically due to inflation. Coupled with limited livelihood opportunities, this has eroded purchasing power and severely impacted vulnerable populations' ability to afford basic goods and services. Inside Afghanistan, access has improved but the humanitarian situation remains dire and human rights are increasingly in jeopardy, particularly for women and girls. Recent restrictions on women and girls' participation in society in Afghanistan have limited access to secondary and tertiary education, freedom of movement, and ability to work for non-governmental organizations, among other facets of life, increasing the risk of gender-based violence. Borders with neighbouring countries are likely to remain tightly regulated in 2023 but movements are expected to continue, including irregularly which will increase vulnerabilities and protection risks, as well as exploitation and abuse. New arrivals do not have access to predictable asylum procedures while those moving through irregular channels are at increased risk of deportation, in contravention of the principle of non-refoulement. The fundamental human right of asylum being afforded to people in need of international protection must be respected. UNHCR continues to maintain a non-return advisory against the forcible return of Afghans and advises that many Afghans – particularly women and girls - will have international protection needs – [UNHCR's Guidance Note on the International Protection Needs of People Fleeing Afghanistan](#).

In 2023, solutions will be pursued, in line with the [Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees \(SSAR\)](#). Inside Afghanistan, UNHCR has recorded over 1 million internally displaced Afghans who voluntarily returned since August 2021, but some 3.4 million people remain internally displaced by conflict. According to UNHCR planning figures, 300,000 IDPs could potentially return home inside Afghanistan in 2023 as well as another 60,000 refugees from neighbouring countries. However, over 8 million Afghans reside in neighbouring countries, mostly in Iran and Pakistan, including 2.1 million registered Afghan refugees and over 1.6 million Afghans who have arrived since January 2021, adding a significant additional burden on host countries. In addition to shocks like refugee influxes, the region is highly vulnerable to climate-related and other natural hazards and to the adverse impact of climate change, as witnessed by the devastating floods in Pakistan in 2022 which affected 33 million people and displaced half a million. Support for emergency preparedness in host countries is needed to respond to those newly displaced by conflict, climate-related disasters, and other crises.

With a mass return of Afghans unlikely in 2023, support continues to be vital to share responsibility and the cost of hosting refugees with countries who have welcomed Afghans on their territories for decades and whose national systems are under huge strain, particularly in the areas of health and education.

RRP 2023 takes an area-based whole-of-society approach to build resilient communities in line with the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) and the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR). Activities will be anchored in host community systems where possible, supporting inclusive national services. The plan has interagency requirements of USD 613 million and targets 7.9 million people across five neighbouring refugee-hosting countries (Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan), in support of host governments. Some 65 partners are participating in the response (14 UN agencies, 18 International NGOs, and 26 National NGOs, four faith-based organizations, and three women-led organizations).

While overall funding increased in 2022, the percentage of the response funded declined. RRP 2021 was 58 per cent funded, RRP 2022 was only 52 per cent funded, with USD 321 million received of USD 623 million requirements. The funding landscape will likely be increasingly challenging in 2023 for the Afghanistan Situation, with greater challenges foreseen due to global focus on other emergencies, but also because of the decreasing protection space in the region (and among traditional host countries) for new Afghan arrivals.

Part 1: Current Situation

Situation Overview

The current situation inside Afghanistan remains complex. There has been an improvement in overall security since August 2021 and a marked reduction in civilian casualties, enabling humanitarian access to all provinces, including areas which had been inaccessible for decades. However, the humanitarian, economic, and human rights situation continues to deteriorate significantly, particularly for women and girls. The recent restrictions on women and girls' participation in society in Afghanistan impact access to secondary and tertiary education, freedom of movement, and ability to work for non-governmental organizations, among other facets of life, and increase the risk of gender-based violence. In addition, widespread food insecurity, soaring inflation and high economic instability, exacerbated by sanctions, limited livelihoods, and more frequent and severe climate shocks have left vulnerable populations in an increasingly precarious situation. Afghanistan's GDP contracted by 20 per cent in 2021 and the [World Bank estimates](#) an accumulated contraction of close to 30-35 per cent between 2021 and 2022. Two thirds of households continue to report difficulties in covering their most basic expenses.¹ For 2023, the Afghanistan Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) inside Afghanistan (separate to this appeal) has identified 28.3 million people in need, an increase from 24 million in 2022.²

Since the start of 2021, according to government estimates, at least 1.6 million Afghans have arrived in neighbouring host countries. This is despite borders being tightly managed, with many Afghans making their way informally through unofficial border crossing points. The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran (GIRI) announced that over 1 million Afghans have arrived since the start of 2021,³ although deportations have occurred on a large scale and significant (seasonal) circular movements have continued. It is estimated that some 600,000 new arrivals have entered Pakistan since August 2021. According to the Government of Uzbekistan, some 13,020 Afghan citizens arrived in the country since January 2021,⁴ while UNHCR has recorded some 5,700 new arrivals in Tajikistan. In 2023, a steady flow of new arrivals is expected, including via unofficial border crossings. Meanwhile, in respect of onward movement, the [European Union Agency for Asylum \(EUAS\) reported](#) that in October 2022 applications lodged by Afghans in 27 European Union Member States plus Norway and Switzerland exceeded 15,000 for the first time since September 2021, in the aftermath of the Taliban takeover.

In total, neighbouring countries continue to host over 2 million registered refugees from previous waves of displacement, and a further 6 million Afghans of varying statuses, the vast majority being hosted by the Islamic Republics of Iran and Pakistan. The continued flow of new arrivals, combined with arrivals since 2021 and large in situ populations, will continue to place a significant additional burden on host countries if not resolved through durable solutions. Voluntary returns to Afghanistan are expected on a small-medium scale. Some 6,000 Afghan registered refugees have been recorded voluntarily returning to Afghanistan from neighbouring countries in 2022, which represents a significant increase compared to 2020 and 2021 but remains low compared to previous years. Inside Afghanistan, UNHCR has recorded over 1.3 million internally displaced Afghans who have already voluntarily returned since the end of the conflict, but some 3.2 million people remain internally displaced by conflict.⁵ UNHCR estimates that 300,000 IDPs may return to their homes inside Afghanistan in 2023 as well as another 60,000 refugees from neighbouring countries. Nonetheless, in light of the ongoing difficult situation in Afghanistan that continues to constrain the ability and willingness of Afghans to return (as highlighted in UNHCR's

¹ <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/d7d49962c0c44fd6bb9ba3bfe1b6de1f-0310062022/original/Afghanistan-Development-Update-October-2022.pdf>

² <https://humanitarianaction.info/article/regional-refugee-response-plans>

³ <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/afghanistan>

⁴ The majority arrived before August 15 with valid visas issued by the Uzbek consulate in Mazar-i-Sharif.

⁵ <https://data.unhcr.org/en/country/afg>

[Guidance Note on the International Protection Needs of People Fleeing Afghanistan](#), updated in February 2023), the number of Afghans hosted in neighbouring countries is not expected to alter significantly in 2023.

For 2023, it is expected that Afghan populations, including new arrivals, will remain in need of significant support in the Islamic Republics of Iran and Pakistan and in Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. As well as responding to the basic needs of the most vulnerable populations, investments in infrastructure including health, education, and water and energy networks require major attention and significant support is required from the international community in this respect, in line with national policies and planning.⁶ RRP partners will seek to take an area-based approach, which will assist host governments in their efforts to continue to improve access for Afghans to national services, while also supporting the refugee-hosting communities who use them. Opportunities for durable solutions will also be pursued wherever available, including resettlement and complementary pathways.

In the event of further large refugee movements to neighbouring countries beyond the level foreseen in this plan, or new needs being identified, this plan may be revised as required by the developing situation. In Iran, recent statements by authorities indicate, among other issues, a significant shortage of classroom space to accommodate Afghan children in schools in line with its inclusive policy. Further joint planning and consultations are taking place and additional resources (beyond those requested under the RRP appeal) may be required to enhance system capacity and educational outcomes for Afghans in Iran and this may require a review and potential revision of RRP 2023.

Population Planning Figures

Country	Targeted Afghan Refugee/refugee-like	Targeted Afghans of other Status*	Targeted Host Community	Total Population Target in 2023
Pakistan (Islamic Republic of)	1,500,000	1,600,000	1,440,000	4,540,000
Iran** (Islamic Republic of)	820,700	1,237,719**	1,209,062***	3,267,481
Tajikistan	9,700	1,300	46,000	57,000
Uzbekistan	11,700	-	21,750	33,450
Turkmenistan	-	2,000	2,500	4,500
Total	2,342,100	2,841,019	2,719,312	7,902,431

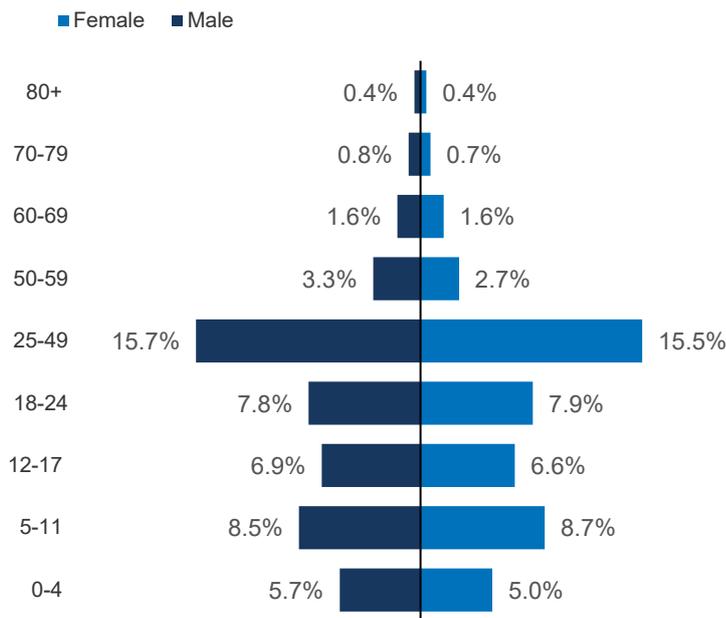
* Includes projections of new arrivals in 2023

** Afghans of Other Status in Iran includes the 2.6 million previously undocumented Afghans that, as per GIRI statements, have been included in the recently concluded headcount exercise conducted by GIRI, it also includes Afghan Passport holders, and Afghans who remain undocumented.

*** Targeted Host Community in Iran comprises directly and indirectly targeted population.

⁶ If requested by the respective host government in line with their national policies.

Age and gender breakdown*



16% of total**
Persons with disabilities



49%
Women and girls



51%
Men and boys

*Calculated based on UNHCR data of the targeted population of each country, where data is available.

** Global report on health equity for persons with disabilities, available at <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240063600>

Regional Protection Needs, Vulnerabilities and Risks

The situation for Afghans in host countries, especially recent arrivals, is challenging and of increasing concern. The economic situation has deteriorated, livelihoods opportunities have dried up and the cost of living has increased dramatically. Inflation has increased the cost of rent and basic staples which, coupled with limited livelihood opportunities, has eroded purchasing power and severely impacted vulnerable populations’ ability to afford basic goods and services.

Food prices have risen by over 50 per cent in Iran between May 2021 and May 2022. Global inflationary pressures play a significant role in this respect – Russia and Ukraine account for approximately 60 per cent of Iran’s supply of staples such as wheat, sunflower oil, and corn. Total annual inflation in Iran has now exceeded 35 per cent for a third year in a row, [reaching 54 per cent in July 2022](#), the highest level since June 1995. Inflation in Pakistan reached [31.5 per cent in March 2023](#), its highest level since 1975. Countries in Central Asia are also impacted by global inflation and supply chain issues. Inflation sits at over [12 per cent in Uzbekistan](#) (although this is down from a peak of over 20 per cent in 2018. It reached [8.3 per cent in Tajikistan](#) in July 2022, while [inflation in Turkmenistan reached 17.5 per cent](#) in 2022, its highest level since 1999.

Emergencies brought on by climate-related and other natural hazards continue to impact populations in host countries, as evident in Pakistan where the devastating floods have affected 33 million people and displaced half a million. Forty-one of the “calamity hit” districts host an estimated 800,000 Afghan refugees, with two thirds of these hosted in just four districts in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan, and Sindh provinces. A damage, loss, and needs assessment following the floods estimates total loss and damages due to the floods at over USD 30 billion (damages USD 14.9 billion; economic losses about USD 15.2 billion). Estimated needs for rehabilitation and reconstruction alone are at least USD 16.3 billion. Meanwhile, a [Post Disaster Needs Assessment \(PDNA\) Report](#) found that the national poverty rate may increase by up to 4.0 percentage points, potentially pushing between 8.4 and 9.1 million more people below the poverty line. The report was led by the Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives with support from the Asian Development Bank, the EU, UN Agencies, and the World Bank. Separate to the RRP, to cover the needs of the flood emergency, an [interagency Flood Response](#)

[Plan](#) was first issued in early September 2022, with a revised version launched on 4 October, seeking USD 816 million to support the Government of Pakistan with relief and early recovery activities until May 2023. Activities contained in the Flood Response Plan are not duplicated in the RRP but the huge scale of the needs in areas hosting refugees means that much of the response is cross cutting and additional activities not included in the Flood Response Plan have been included in the RRP.⁷

The entire South-west Asia region remains vulnerable to emergencies brought on by natural hazards, also highlighted this year by the devastating earthquake which struck south-eastern Afghanistan in June, leading to wide-scale destruction across already vulnerable districts in Paktika and Khost provinces resulting in thousands of deaths, injuries, and the destruction of critical infrastructure - including homes, health facilities, schools, and water networks.

Borders with neighbouring countries are likely to remain tightly regulated in 2023 but a certain level of population movement is expected to continue irregularly, increasing vulnerabilities and protection risks, including exploitation and abuse of those seeking documentation and crossing borders. Upon arrival, people moving through irregular channels are at increased risk of deportation, which may be in contravention of the principle of non-refoulement. RRP Partners continue to underscore the ongoing need for all countries to grant fleeing Afghans access to their territories and asylum procedures, and to respect the principle of non-refoulement. It is imperative that this fundamental human right not be compromised and that people in need of international protection be afforded it. In this context, it is equally important not to forcibly return Afghans, which UNHCR has cautioned against in its [Guidance Note on the International Protection Needs of People Fleeing Afghanistan](#), updated in February 2023. Non-refoulement includes rejection of individuals seeking international protection at the frontier. Inter-Agency partners will continue to monitor the situation in Afghanistan with a view to assessing the international protection needs arising out of the current situation.

Afghan refugee populations in neighbouring countries may alter slightly in 2023 due to population verification exercises like the 17th round of the Amayesh card renewal exercise, which is underway in Iran, as well as limited levels of return, resettlement, and complementary pathways for admission into third countries. In 2022, the GIRI conducted a headcount exercise which was open to all undocumented populations in Iran, including new arrivals. While final results have not been released, it is reported that 2.6 million Afghans enrolled in this exercise which provides them with a headcount slip and temporary protection from deportation. This is a positive indication that GIRI is committed to maintaining inclusive policies and identifying opportunities to provide documentation (and therefore facilitate predictable access to social services). It is a particularly positive initiative given the high levels of deportations of Afghans witnessed in Iran in 2021 and 2022. RRP partners will continue to monitor the protection situation and advocate for extension of the temporary protection from deportation, increased access to rights and services, and regularization through documentation such as longer-term residency permits.

In Pakistan, the Document Renewal and Information Verification Exercise conducted by the Government in conjunction with UNHCR concluded in 2022, having identified almost 1.3 million refugees with Proof of Registration (PoR) cards, verifying and updating refugee data to delivering them new smartcards as well as 141,000 unregistered members of registered families being documented.⁸ Following this, in 2023 the Government

⁷ The Government of Pakistan and the Ministry of SAFRON have worked in close collaboration with UNHCR on the formulation and content of this RRP. The Pakistan chapter is the result of detailed discussions and the culmination, at the sectoral and national level, of multiple consultations. This chapter outlines and represents the government's priorities and policies. Pakistan is fully committed to support Afghan refugees and their access to essential services and the facilities that have been made available to them for decades. Global solidarity is needed more than ever in view of the challenges facing Pakistan and Afghanistan at this time. Sustainable and substantial funding will be critical for the Government of Pakistan to continue to grant refugees' access into national systems.

⁸ Receiving related documents i.e. birth certificates, death certificates, family information certificates, etc are issued.

in conjunction with IOM plans to conduct a verification exercise for the Afghan Citizen Card population, which is also expected to be open to undocumented Afghans.

Afghans both inside Afghanistan and in host countries face a plethora of protection risks, with women and girls disproportionately affected. Some 74 per cent of new arrivals that approached UNHCR in neighbouring countries since the start of 2021 are women and children. Due to their precarious protection situation, these groups face a threat of, and exposure to, gender-based violence (GBV), exploitation and abuse, and trafficking, among other risks, which compounds the challenges already faced by those fleeing for their safety. GBV and child protection risks are long-standing and severe threats to women and girls, and the current crisis has also introduced or exacerbated many gender-specific threats. Afghan women and girls are at increased risk of GBV in Afghanistan, during flight and in neighbouring countries, who also have high rates of intimate partner violence⁹ and child marriage.¹⁰ Refugee and displaced women and girls may also be suffering from severe forms of distress given the events in Afghanistan and the specific threats to women. Refugee girls face barriers in attending school due to patriarchal norms as well as poverty. According to updated figures from the Documentation Renewal and Information Verification Exercise in Pakistan, 61 per cent of refugees reported having no education but of those reporting an education only 38 per cent are women.¹¹ Of the refugee women and girls who have an education in Pakistan, informal religious education is the highest level of education completed by 61 per cent (compared to only 32% for boys, indicating that boys go on to learn at a higher level), primary school is the highest level achieved by 27 per cent (compared to 32% for boys) and higher secondary school is the highest level achieved by only 5 per cent of refugee girls (compared to 16% for boys). Refugee, asylum-seeker and displaced women and girls in neighbouring countries face many barriers in accessing basic health, including sexual and reproductive health services, and in accessing livelihoods opportunities. A significant number of Afghans are reported to be persons with disabilities, many of whom have faced systematic discrimination and barriers to accessing essential services. According to a study conducted in 2019, almost 80 per cent of adults in Afghanistan aged 18 and over have some form of physical, functional, sensory, or other impairment (24.6 per cent mild, 40.4 per cent moderate, and 13.9 per cent severe).¹² Others face heightened risk due to their ethnicity, with ethnic Pashtun, Hazara (at particular risk), and Tajiks, making up most new arrivals in neighbouring countries. Specific risks and protection needs are also faced by Afghan refugees from some occupational groups, including former public sector workers, journalists, and NGO workers. Boys and men who have fled are also heavily impacted by the psychological effects of displacement while young men especially have faced high levels of deportation, particularly in Iran. Meanwhile, a 2020 study examining post-traumatic stress symptoms in resettled refugee minors from Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan found that 42 per cent of refugee minors from Afghanistan experienced symptoms of PTSD – the highest among all the countries included in the study.¹³

⁹ 50 per cent of women in Afghanistan and 24.5 per cent of women in Pakistan have experienced physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime. Statistics available at: UNFPA, Measuring the prevalence of violence against women in Asia-Pacific, <https://asiapacific.unfpa.org/en/knownvawdata>. Accessed on 31 August 2021.

¹⁰ 28 per cent of girls in Afghanistan, 17 per cent of girls in Iran, 18 per cent of girls in Pakistan, and 12 per cent of girls in Tajikistan are married before the age of 18. Girls Not Brides, <https://atlas.girlsnotbrides.org/map/>.

¹¹ <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/95845>

¹² <https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/model-disability-survey-afghanistan-2019>

¹³ <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33024451/>

Part 2: Regional Protection and Solutions Strategy

Most Afghans in neighbouring countries reside in urban and peri-urban areas, relying on national public services available to them. Despite their own challenges and the needs of their populations, for decades Iran and Pakistan, who host the majority of displaced Afghans globally, have upheld their international protection obligations and have pursued policies that provide refugees with access to public services, notably in areas of education, health care, and livelihoods. However, host governments are facing challenges to continue their progressive policies towards refugees. **The scale of needs necessitates an expanded response from the international community** to ensure that the immediate needs of Afghans and their host communities are met. Immediate multi-sectoral assistance is required in the areas of protection (e.g. registration, documentation, legal assistance, community-based protection initiatives, GBV and child protection programming and targeted assistance and support for vulnerable at-risk women, children, and people with other protection needs, including through case management); food security; health and nutrition; education; shelter; water, sanitation, and hygiene; and livelihoods.

However, **longer-term investments in public infrastructure** related to the existing and urgent needs in host countries are crucial to promote resilience, facilitate solutions, and stabilize displaced populations. Host governments have been and continue to be the primary responders to the Afghan situation and should be assisted to ensure that access to national systems is improved, including social protection systems wherever possible. This requires increased support from the international community to bolster existing services that are being made available to Afghans, in line with the objectives of the **Global Compact on Refugees**, to equip them to respond to the needs of displaced populations and ensure durable and sustainable interventions. Linkages are also made with national development plans wherever possible. **Area- and community-based programming** will be crucial in this respect. The presence of Afghan populations has placed additional pressure on a range of national services, particularly health services which have had a progressive approach to refugees for decades. The extra demand on public infrastructure and housing has placed a strain on overall availability and quality of service provision and can exacerbate tensions between the host community and the Afghan population, which has only been worsened during the pandemic.

Programmes to support the existing Afghan refugee populations in the region have been critically underfunded for 10 years prior to the current crisis and this has also had an impact on support available for host communities. This further highlights the need for programmes aimed at fostering co-existence and strengthening the humanitarian-development nexus, to create additional capacity and contribute towards improving services. RRP Partners will continue to adopt **community-based approaches** which will benefit displaced and host communities in areas with a high concentration of Afghans. Such interventions support displaced and host communities and promote **peaceful coexistence and social cohesion**.

Elements of **emergency preparedness** and response continue to form part of RRP 2023. New arrivals continue and they have a variety of specific needs while emergencies brought on by climate-related and other natural hazards witnessed in the region in 2022 underline the need for adequate preparedness measures to be put in place, in collaboration with host governments.

Opportunities for durable solutions will be promoted wherever possible. Resettlement has been expanded in 2022 and partners will continue to advocate for increased allocations of places in third countries, but the needs continue to far outweigh the number of places available. Innovative programmes for complementary pathways like third level scholarships and work placement programmes will be pursued wherever available.

Building on the experience and achievements of the SSAR Support Platform and **looking ahead to the next Global Refugee Forum (GRF) in 2023**, partners will leverage the RRP process to ensure that gaps and needs identified are linked into the coordination of pledging for the GRF 2023, to avoid duplication, maximize synergies and ensure linkages between humanitarian response and longer-term efforts.

Regional Strategic Objectives

Acknowledging the huge contribution of host countries, the RRP reaffirms the regional multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral approach which aims at strengthening the humanitarian and development response in support of host governments. As well as building community resilience, the RRP will deliver concrete actions, with a focus on community-based interventions incorporating an age, gender and diversity approach, cross-border collaboration, and durable solutions within the framework of the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR). RRP 2023 will aim to:

SO1: Ensure coordinated efforts towards durable solutions in line with the objectives of the SSAR.¹⁴

SO2: Anchored in government systems wherever possible, the response aims to take an area-based and needs-based approach to build resilient communities, including through investments in key areas of national infrastructure like education and health and by supporting livelihoods for Afghans and host communities in urban areas and settlements.

SO3: Support host governments to ensure access to territory and asylum, and protection in accordance with international standards, including respect for the principle of non-refoulement, admission, reception, registration, and documentation.¹⁵

SO4: Ensure that immediate and longer-term needs are addressed through nexus programming by reinforcing local and national systems of host countries which have supported Afghans for decades, in the spirit of international responsibility- and burden-sharing in line with the Global Compact on Refugees. In doing so, the plan will pay particular attention to the needs of children, youth, women, older persons, persons with disabilities and other people with specific needs.

SO5: Respond to the basic needs of the most vulnerable, including by sustained support to government-led emergency preparedness efforts and through multi-sectoral support to swiftly respond to those newly displaced by conflict, climate-related and other natural hazards, and other crises, as well as to existing populations who have seen their situation deteriorate due to the rising cost of living.

Regional Cross-Cutting Response Priorities

Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP)

To ensure AAP, refugees and affected communities will be actively engaged in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of all response activities through participation and consultations via focus group discussions, surveys, household interviews, community-level interaction and through online and telephone channels, as appropriate to each context, and depending on their preferences. All people have the right to participate and play an active role in decisions that will impact their lives, well-being, dignity, and protection, and thus partners will make an active commitment to reach out to hard to reach and left behind population groups and ensure their voices are heard. Partners will be responsive to input from communities and adapt approaches according to the feedback and self-identified preferences of those the aim to serve. It is important for participating organizations to share feedback and information they receive from affected communities in an anonymized and safe manner to inform a response-wide understanding of the views, perspectives, and preferences of affected people across demographic groups and ensure that individual agencies, and the response as a whole, are accountable to the communities they serve.

¹⁴ The Objectives of the SSAR are I). Creating conditions conducive to voluntary repatriation through community-based investments in areas of high return; II). Building Afghan refugee capital based on livelihood opportunities in Afghanistan in order to facilitate return; and III). Preserving protection space in host countries, including enhanced support for refugee-hosting communities, alternative temporary stay arrangements for the residual caseload, and resettlement in third countries.

¹⁵ In line with national policies.

Refugees and other populations being assisted through the plan will receive clear and tailored information about available assistance. Communities will also be informed about their rights, including the right to participate in decision-making, ethical behaviour of staff, and how to report concerns. The preferences and ease of access to communication channels for groups with different age, gender, and diverse characteristics will be used to inform the selection of communication channels and strategies for communication with communities. Where possible, community-based, or community-led approaches will be used to improve the reach and effectiveness of communication initiatives. Partners will continue to pursue accessible, confidential, and culturally as well as age, gender, and diversity appropriate communication mechanisms for all refugees to provide feedback on services, the response in general, and report complaints, including sensitive ones such as on sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) or fraud.



Age, gender, and diversity (AGD)

RRP 2023 will ensure that refugees' needs are identified and addressed in support of government efforts, with consideration of **age, gender, and diversity (AGD)** in programming across sectors. Aligned with the commitment to AAP, elaborated above, partners will actively engage communities in planning, implementation, and evaluation of the response by consulting, listening to, and acting upon the voices and priorities of diverse women, girls, boys, and men, including the most marginalized and at-risk people among affected communities. RRP partners will aim to strengthen monitoring of assistance using age, gender, and diversity disaggregated approaches to identify gaps in the response.



Localization

UN Agencies and NGOs among others, made a commitment at the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) in May 2016 to “empower national and local humanitarian action” and thus, to work towards **greater localization**. The [New York Declaration](#) and the [Global Compact on Refugees](#) (GCR) both refer to the importance of engaging directly with forcibly displaced persons themselves. These commitments were again reiterated at the Global Refugee Forum (GRF) 2019, with pledges for engagement and partnerships with affected populations to ensure that they are meaningfully engaged throughout the process. RRP 2023 has 26 national NGO partners, three local women-led organizations and one local faith-based organization for 30 national partners in total, almost double the number for 2022 and demonstrating a large increase in engagement of national NGOs in the response. These are only the directly appealing partners. Many other national NGOs, refugee-led organisations, faith-based organization, and women-led organizations do not have their own response requirements but instead are funded directly by appealing partners in the response. The increase in national partnership in 2023 is mainly down to increased engagement in Pakistan, both due to an increased focus on localization and the scale up during the flood response which saw many organizations expand their activities. In Iran, due to government policy, national NGOs do not participate as directly appealing partners so are not listed in the budget table, but a limited number do partner with RRP appealing UN Agencies and INGOs to implement activities.



Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)

Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) will be prioritized across the region in 2023. Inter-Agency networks and PSEA mechanisms in affected countries have been strengthened in the past year through the establishment of safe reporting channels, provision of victim assistance and accountability, and investigation procedures, and this will continue in 2023. Capacity-building of humanitarian actors, local authorities, host communities, and affected populations will also continue to ensure that PSEA is mainstreamed across the response. Measures to prevent and mitigate risks of GBV, including sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), will be integrated in all sector programmes. The provision of life-saving prevention and multi-sectoral response programming will be prioritized

alongside ensuring **proactive GBV risk mitigation**, including in relation to sexual exploitation and abuse, across all sector programmes and assistance. Risk mitigation measures will be informed by consultations with communities, in particular diverse women and girls and other groups at heightened risk. Strengthening of functioning referral pathways and access to specialized services appropriate to the specific needs of survivors is a continuous priority and will be in accordance with a survivor-centred approach and the GBV Minimum Standards.

A key issue across the Afghan refugee population is child marriage. In 2021, World Vision released a report entitled [“Breaking the Chain: Empowering girls and communities to end child marriages during COVID-19 and beyond.”](#) Looking at four contexts including Afghanistan, the report highlighted that **“Child marriage is a fundamental violation of human rights, which severely impacts the global economy, peace, and security, as well as hampering the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.”** While it focused on inside Afghanistan, many of the considerations and cultural norms at play are relevant to Afghan populations in neighbouring countries. The report found that between 60-80 per cent of marriages in Afghanistan are forced or underage and more than a third of Afghan girls are married before the age of 18. It also highlights that Afghanistan has one of the highest maternal mortality rates in the world – 400 out of 100,000 live births – as a consequence of child marriage and child pregnancy. RRP partners aim to identify factors contributing to high rates of child marriage and maternal mortality and address them.



Gender in Humanitarian Action

Women and girls make up almost half of Afghan refugees, and they face many gender-specific barriers in accessing protection and assistance services. **Gender equality measures will be incorporated into all areas of protection and assistance** throughout the response, and there will be a specific and dedicated focus on promoting gender equality and equitable outcomes for women and girls in all sectors. A key barrier for women in accessing humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan is the lack of women humanitarian workers on response teams as cultural restrictions make it difficult for men humanitarian workers to assist women and girls due to restrictive norms around women family members being in contact with men outside the household. In neighbouring countries, to ensure that women can access assistance, and provide inputs to needs assessments, response teams should include 50 per cent women. Women’s participation is crucial to ensuring effective assistance to the most vulnerable groups, including widows and children, women-headed households, women with disabilities, and older people. Engaging with women-led civil society organizations is also critical as they provide an invaluable understanding of local challenges and potential solutions, are able to mobilize local networks, and offer greater access and AAP. Additionally, resources must be allocated towards promoting gender equality. Gender analysis and gender-responsive budgeting should be a requirement for all priority plans and budgets, specifying stakeholders, indicators, and benchmarks for achieving gender equality aims. These considerations need to be applied in Afghanistan and neighbouring countries with humanitarian emergencies and large refugee populations.

Gender in Humanitarian Action Working Group

To map challenges and find practical solutions to ensure women’s participation in humanitarian response in Afghanistan, the Gender in Humanitarian Action Working Group, led by UN Women and IRC, conducted a study on [‘Promoting the Recruitment and Retention of Women Humanitarian Workers in Afghanistan.’](#) The study complements previous GiHA work such as [‘Guidance on ensuring women’s safe participation in surveys’](#), and [‘Research on Challenges, Barriers and Opportunities for Women-led CSOs in the Afghanistan Humanitarian Crisis’](#). A good practice example of an inclusion mechanism for women leaders in the humanitarian architecture was the establishment of the Afghan Women Advisory Group, supported by GiHA, to advise on how to better respond to the needs of women and girls. In addition, UN Women and UNHCR launched a joint study series, [‘Afghanistan Crisis Update: Women and Girls in Displacement’](#) examining the needs, fears, and barriers encountered by Afghan women

and girls who are displaced, internally or abroad. While some of the above are focused inside Afghanistan, the considerations raised apply to a large extent to the wide Afghan response, including in neighbouring host countries.



Climate Action

According to the [World Bank's latest Groundswell report](#), climate change could force 216 million people across six regions globally to move within their countries by 2050, mostly to cities. This will have social, political, economic, spatial, and environmental consequences in urban contexts. Some 60 per cent of refugees globally already reside in cities. They often live in poorer areas of cities, including in informal settlements, which are disproportionately affected by disasters and climate change. The [Global Compact on Refugees](#), affirmed by an overwhelming majority in the UN General Assembly in December 2018 recognizes that "climate, environmental degradation and disasters increasingly interact with the drivers of refugee movements." As evidenced by the devastating floods in Pakistan and earthquakes in Afghanistan in 2022, the Southwest Asia region is extremely prone to hazardous climate and other environmental events and conditions. The [2021 Global Natural Disaster Assessment Report](#) highlighted that frequency and severity of these events in Asia compared to other continents, and it is worsening. Key figures from that report include:

- Total losses in Asia from 2011 to 2021 were twice those from 2000 to 2010.
- Asia covers 30 per cent of the world's land mass but accounted for 65 per cent of global extreme weather disasters in the period from 2000 to 2021 (mostly extreme floods, tropical cyclones, extreme high temperatures, and droughts. This is magnified by Asia's population density (accounting for 60 per cent of the world's population).
- From 2000 to 2021, **1.864 billion people were affected by extreme weather events in Asia** (85.3 per cent of the global affected population).
- The total number of deaths was 246,000 (54.7 per cent of the global total).
- Since the year 2000, **Pakistan is the third most frequently hit country in the world by extreme weather events** (Afghanistan is 8th) while Pakistan suffered the fifth highest direct economic losses globally during this period.

As highlighted in the Pakistan chapter of this plan, integrating climate response into response interventions is crucial in areas of hosting significant numbers of displaced people and areas that are vulnerable to natural hazards, to ensure that they can better withstand shocks caused by these events. This includes investing in sustainable, durable housing and community infrastructure, which enhances preparedness and resilience.

UNHCR's engagement in the climate change policy sphere seeks to strengthen and enable the protection environment for displaced and stateless persons from the global, regional, and national levels, particularly in conflict-affected or fragile displacement settings. Prior to **27th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 27)** in November 2022, [UNHCR issued a call to action](#) on parties and stakeholders to:

- Involve displaced people and their hosts on the climate frontlines in the decisions that impact their lives.
- Urgently scale up additional finance and support for adaptation and loss and damage to avoid the worst outcomes and reduce the suffering of millions of displaced people and their hosts.
- Ensure displacement and the protection of people displaced are included in COP27 decisions and in national legal and policy frameworks supporting climate action where it is most needed.

In tandem with these policy efforts, [UNHCR's Operational Strategy for Climate Resilience and Environmental Sustainability 2022-2025](#) aims to strengthen environmental considerations in operational responses from preparedness to protection and solutions.



Use of Cash-based interventions (CBI)

One of the commitments of [the Grand Bargain](#) at the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016 was to increase the use and coordination of cash-based programming. Cash is a modality rather than a sector of intervention. When choosing the most suitable modality for a particular situation, a variety of factors should be considered including risk mitigation, efficiency, effectiveness, and appropriateness of the modality in meeting the needs.

In terms of appropriateness, the preference of the community (in support of the principle of AAP) and the empowerment of the beneficiaries (choice, dignity, and independence of choice) are essential to consider, to understand the most appropriate response. In many cases these considerations are aligned with the use of cash transfers. CBI can offer significant gains in terms of efficiency. Operating costs of cash transfers are significantly lower compared to in-kind distributions (when factoring in costs of transportation, storage, and distributions). This results in notable savings, meaning that humanitarian funding can reach more people in need. In [one study conducted by the Overseas Development Institute](#) across four diverse humanitarian response settings (Ecuador, Niger, Uganda, and Yemen), it was found that 18 per cent more people could have been helped at no extra cost if everyone received cash instead of in-kind food assistance. In terms of effectiveness, compared to in-kind distribution, cash transfers have a far better impact in addressing basic needs as it allows families to prioritize their own needs, generates income opportunities for local businesses, and avoids loss of value in assistance provision (for example, due to the re-sale of in-kind goods for a lower cost than they are worth, which can occur when in-kind goods don't address the most urgent needs of beneficiaries).

In 2023, **21.4 per cent** of the entire RRP response across the region is planned through cash-based interventions.

HIGHLIGHTS

30th anniversary of the [DAFI programme](#)

- Since its launch in 1992, the Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative (DAFI) has supported over 22,500 refugee students to pursue tertiary education in over 700 universities across 55 countries. **Some 10,000 of these have been Afghans.** The programme offers qualified refugee and returnee students the possibility to earn an undergraduate degree in their country of asylum or home country, with the support of the Governments of Germany, Denmark, the Czech Republic, UNHCR and private donors.
- As of 2021, **only 6 per cent of young refugee women and men have access to higher education** around the world. As UNHCR continues to work towards a target of 15 per cent enrolment in higher education by 2030, DAFI remains the cornerstone of investments in tertiary refugee students.
- In 2021, 8,307 young refugee women and men from 53 countries of origin were enrolled in DAFI scholarships in 55 countries around the world (41 per cent female; 17 per cent from Afghanistan). However, the needs far outweigh the number of places available. In 2021, the programme also received the highest number of applications to date, 15,860 in total, reflecting increased demand and greater need for investment in higher education scholarships and opportunities for refugees.
- This year's report, [Higher Education: Now is the Time](#), highlights the urgent and pressing need to invest in higher education opportunities for refugees around the world.

Partnership and Coordination

In support of the national humanitarian response mechanisms and in line with the Refugee Coordination Model in the host countries and the Global Compact on Refugees, Refugee Response Plan (RRP) partners will continue to support the concerned governments to respond to the situation of Afghans and their host communities in neighbouring countries. Initially launched in 2021 with 11 partners, the RRP expanded to 40 partners for 2022 and has increased to 65 partners across the region in 2023 across the five countries (14 UN agencies; 18 INGOs; 26 local NGOs; four faith-based organizations – one local and three international; and three women-led organizations). This demonstrates the continued importance of RRP platforms to coordinate the response, facilitate a joined-up approach, promote synergies, avoid duplication of efforts, and provide opportunities for unified strategic advocacy with host governments and the international community. Building on the capacities and expertise of affected populations to act as first responders (including refugee-led organizations and women-led organizations), the plan will respond to the needs of Afghans and host communities in line with the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees.

RRP 2023 has been developed through an inclusive and participatory planning process. Under UNHCR's leadership, in each country, UN Agencies and international and local NGOs, have worked together as part of the ongoing development of the plan, in consultation with governments. The coordination structures at country level will provide for a coordinated multisectoral response, including through UN Agencies and national and international NGOs in their respective areas of expertise. Sector working groups at country level will provide sector specific coordination and expertise in the areas of protection, including child protection and GBV, education, health and nutrition, food security, WASH, shelter, core relief items, livelihoods, and logistics. Close collaboration and consultation will be maintained with relevant government counterparts and line ministries in host countries to support and ensure complementarity with the national response and development plans. At the regional level, partners will work together, through interagency regional meetings on the Afghan situation led by UNHCR, to monitor and update on developments and to undertake planning and resource mobilization efforts. In addition, a regional IM technical working sub-group dedicated to cross-border refugee flows at the regional level has been established. Other regional coordination mechanisms such as Gender in Humanitarian Action (GiHA – led by UN Women and Plan International), AAP/PSEA Working Group (led by World Vision and UNFPA with OCHA as secretariat), and GBV in Emergency Working Group (GBViE, led by UNFPA) also monitor the situation and challenges relevant to their respective areas of responsibilities and provide affected countries with necessary support in close coordination with their counterparts in country level. Meanwhile, outside of the RRP planning process, the World Bank (WB) and other development actors are engaged as members of the SSAR Support Platform Core Group. The RRP reaffirms a regional multi-stakeholder “whole-of-society” and multi-sectoral approach, by enhancing community-based investments in line with the GCR and working towards the solutions outlined in the SSAR. The SSAR Support Platform has strengthened partnerships with humanitarian and development actors, including in the 80 Priority Areas of Return and Reintegration inside Afghanistan as well as in the host countries of Pakistan and Iran, and brings a range of support to enable lasting solutions for Afghan refugees.

Coordination related to the modality of assistance, and to cash-based interventions (CBI) in particular, is necessary not only to respond but also to get prepared. This will be ensured both at country and regional level, through existing cash working groups or ad-hoc mechanisms. It will look at both coordination and collaboration, including common cash transfer mechanisms, the calculation of transfer values, and joint studies and analysis.

HIGHLIGHTS

10 Years of Refugee Response Plans (RRPs)

- To mark the 10th anniversary of RRP globally, the report “[The Regional Refugee Response Plans: Ten years of coordinated action in support of refugees](#)” was released in December 2022.
- Regional Refugee Response Plans (RRP) aim to foster joint humanitarian and development programming in countries of asylum and to provide an overarching regional protection and solutions strategy.
- Since the first RRP in response to the Syria crisis in 2012, UNHCR has exercised its leadership and coordination responsibilities in refugee situations, in line with its mandate. These are reflected in the Refugee Coordination Model (RCM) introduced in 2013, designed to ensure accountable, inclusive, predictable, and transparent coordination in responding to refugee situations.
- RRP are an interagency planning and coordination tool as well as resource mobilization platform, which provide a vehicle through which a broad range of actors can be brought together ~~around the table~~: members of the UN & Humanitarian Country Team, international organizations and INGOs, civil society, including women-led organizations and organizations led by refugees, faith-based organisations, development and financial institutions, and private sector, to collectively agree on strategic objectives and multi-sector activities to address a regional refugee situation in support of host governments.
- RRP contribute to the implementation of the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) by articulating prioritized multi-actor responses for the benefit of refugees and host communities, as identified in conjunction with governments and partners. In line with the GCR, RRP provide partners with a platform and tools to coordinate an Inter-Agency response, which helps them to engage with new partners and enhance the inclusion of refugees in national and local development plans and policies.

10 Years of RRP in numbers

- RRP have targeted more than 78 million refugees and migrants and 65 million host community members for assistance in over 50 countries.
- RRP have helped raise \$36 billion for RRP partners in the last 10 years.
- RRP have brought together more than 900 different partners in the last 10 years through 51 RRP plans covering 12 refugee situations.

RRP 2023 Partnership



Notes: This list only includes appealing organizations under the RRP, many of which collaborate with implementing partners to carry out RRP activities. See 'Budget Summary by Partner' for partner breakdown per type.

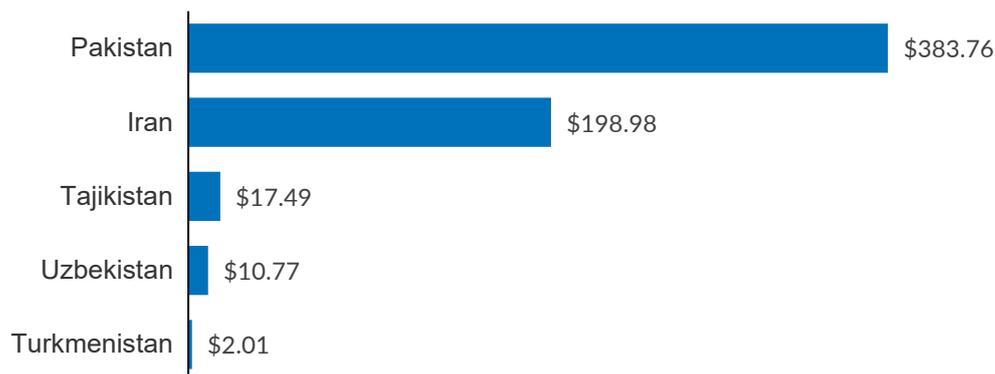
Regional Inter-Agency Financial Requirements



Total Financial Requirements In USD **\$ 613.01 M**

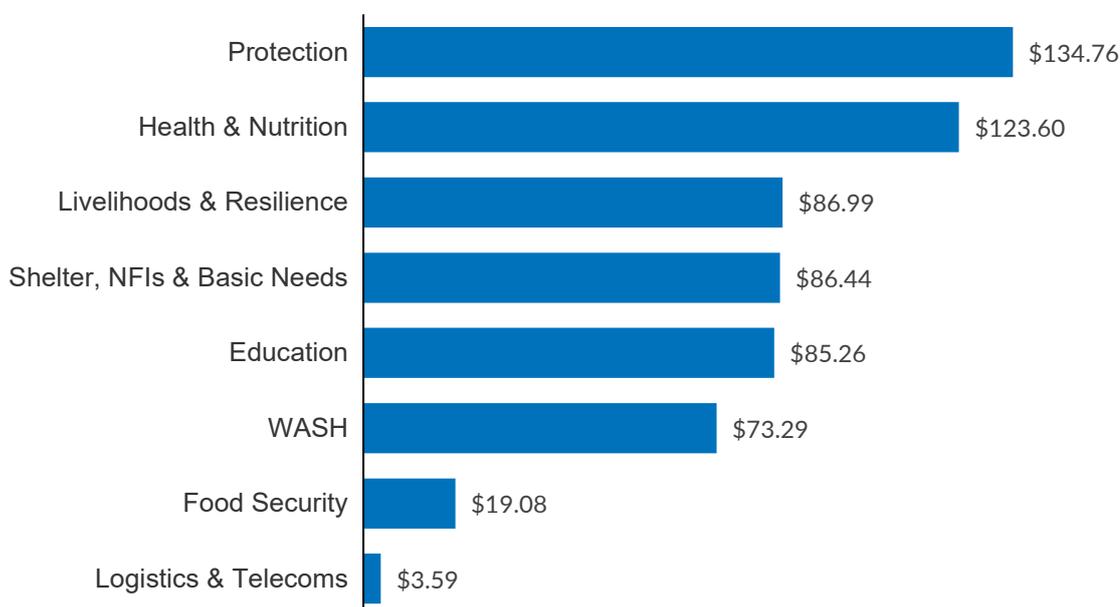
Budget summary by country

In millions USD



Budget summary by sector at regional level

In millions USD



Total Protection requirements		
\$ 134,755,367		
Other protection activities	GBV	Child Protection
\$ 94,412,590	\$ 18,740,112	\$ 21,602,665
15.4% of total	3.1% of total	3.5% of total

 Total Cash Assistance requirements* \$ 131,330,459						
Education	Food Security	Health & Nutrition	Livelihoods & Resilience	Protection	Shelter, NFIs & Basic Needs	WASH
\$ 856,277	\$ 9,422,608	\$ 3,053,068	\$ 15,349,695	\$ 59,132,977	\$ 42,220,380	\$ 1,295,455

* This is a breakdown by sector of the requirements for cash assistance which are included in the above total sectoral budgets. Cash assistance is pursued and reflected as a key modality of assistance and protection in line with UNHCR's CBI Policy 2022-2026. Cash assistance is used as a cross-cutting modality across the various sectors, including protection, and is budgeted for accordingly and in line with a basic needs approach. As the modality of choice of the persons we work with, cash assistance will be used as the primary means to meet immediate basic needs and provide important protection outcomes.

Budget summary by partner type

 65 Partners involved	 UN Agencies \$489,961,899	 International NGOs \$79,410,929	 National NGOs \$32,750,036	 Faith-based Organizations \$7,909,797	 Women-led Organizations \$2,980,325
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Budget Summary by Partner

UN: United Nations, INGO: International NGO, NNGO: National NGO, FBO: Faith-based Organization, WLO: Women-led Organization

Partner	Acronym / Short Title	Type	Requirements in US\$
Action Against Hunger Pakistan	ACF	INGO	\$ 2,889,400
Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development	ACTED	INGO	\$ 4,566,715
Alight	Alight	INGO	\$ 1,938,403
Azat Foundation	AF	NNGO	\$ 811,680
Balochistan Rural Support Program	BRSP	NNGO	\$ 2,557,466
CARE International	CIP	INGO	\$ 1,299,000
Catholic Relief Services	CRS	FBO	\$ 1,946,761
Comprehensive Health and Education Forum	CHEFI	NNGO	\$ 625,600
Concern Worldwide	CW	INGO	\$ 239,639
Cooperazione e Sviluppo	CESVI	INGO	\$ 250,000
Direct Focus Community Aid	DFCA	NNGO	\$ 208,000
Dopasi Foundation	Dopasi	NNGO	\$ 250,000
Foundation for Rural Development	FRD	NNGO	\$ 1,127,000
Hashoo Foundation	HF	NNGO	\$ 300,000
Health And Nutrition Development Society	HANDS	NNGO	\$ 2,235,241
Human Appeal Pakistan	HA Pak	INGO	\$ 784,500
Hundreds of Original Projects for Employment	HOPE'87	INGO	\$ 1,035,600
Indus Hospital and Health Network	IHHN	NNGO	\$ 5,275,000
Initiative for Development & Empowerment Axis	IDEA	NNGO	\$ 1,886,100
Integrated Social Services Program	ISSP	NNGO	\$ 372,558
International Medical Corps-UK	IMC	INGO	\$ 3,486,000
International Rescue Committee	IRC	INGO	\$ 13,049,729

REGIONAL REFUGEE RESPONSE PLAN FOR AFGHANISTAN SITUATION

Intersos	INTERSOS	INGO	\$ 2,967,848
Islamic Relief Worldwide	IRW	FBO	\$ 1,500,000
Khwendo Kor	KK	WLO	\$ 825,000
Kokkyo naki Kodomotachi	KnK Japan	INGO	\$ 1,056,526
Mercy Corps	Mercy Corps	INGO	\$ 4,369,488
Mission East	Mission East	INGO	\$ 20,932
Muslim Hands	MH	FBO	\$ 2,538,036
Norwegian Refugee Council	NRC	INGO	\$ 21,239,059
Pak Mission Society	PMS	NNGO	\$ 460,000
Pakistan Alliance for Girls Education	PAGE	WLO	\$ 1,155,325
Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund	PPAF	NNGO	\$ 3,591,364
Participatory Rural Development Society (PRDS)	PRDS	NNGO	\$ 963,037
Poverty Eradication Initiative	PEI	NNGO	\$ 537,000
Rabt Development Organization	RDO	NNGO	\$ 1,235,000
Relief International	RI	INGO	\$ 13,592,819
Rural Development Organization RDO Buner	RDO Buner	NNGO	\$ 330,000
Rural Support Programmes Network	RSPN	NNGO	\$ 3,639,809
Salik Development Foundation	SDF	NNGO	\$ 450,000
Save the Children	SCI	INGO	\$ 4,953,848
Secours Islamique France	SIF	FBO	\$ 1,925,000
Society for Human and Environmental Development	SHED	NNGO	\$ 520,000
Takal Welfare Organization	TWO	NNGO	\$ 500,000
Tameer-e-Khalaq Foundation	TKF	NNGO	\$ 626,726
Taraqee Foundation	TF	NNGO	\$ 1,851,987
The Awakening	The Awakening	NNGO	\$ 193,368
UN - Food and Agriculture Organization	FAO	UN	\$ 8,359,849
UN - International Organization for Migration	IOM	UN	\$ 75,048,508
UN - Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS	UNAIDS	UN	\$ 15,000
UN - United Nations Development Programme	UNDP	UN	\$ 1,230,000
UN - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	UNESCO	UN	\$ 600,000
UN - United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women	UNWOMEN	UN	\$ 310,400
UN - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	UNHCR	UN	\$ 269,204,430
UN - United Nations Industrial Development Organization	UNIDO	UN	\$ 1,270,000
UN - United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund	UNICEF	UN	\$ 63,507,315
UN - United Nations Office for Project Services	UNOPS	UN	\$ 4,000,000
UN - United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime	UNODC	UN	\$ 2,840,000
UN - United Nations Population Fund	UNFPA	UN	\$ 11,671,811
UN - World Food Programme	WFP	UN	\$ 31,619,080
UN - World Health Organization	WHO	UN	\$ 20,285,507
Voluntary Service Overseas	VSO	INGO	\$ 1,671,423
Water, Environment & Sanitation Society	WESS	NNGO	\$ 1,650,000
Women Empowerment Organization	WEO	WLO	\$ 1,000,000
Youth Organization	YO	NNGO	\$ 553,100

Total: \$ 613,012,986

Regional Monitoring Results*

*The below is a summary of key selected indicators from each sector and does not reflect the entire work of the sectors, the full results framework for each sector will be reported upon in dashboards and reports during 2023.

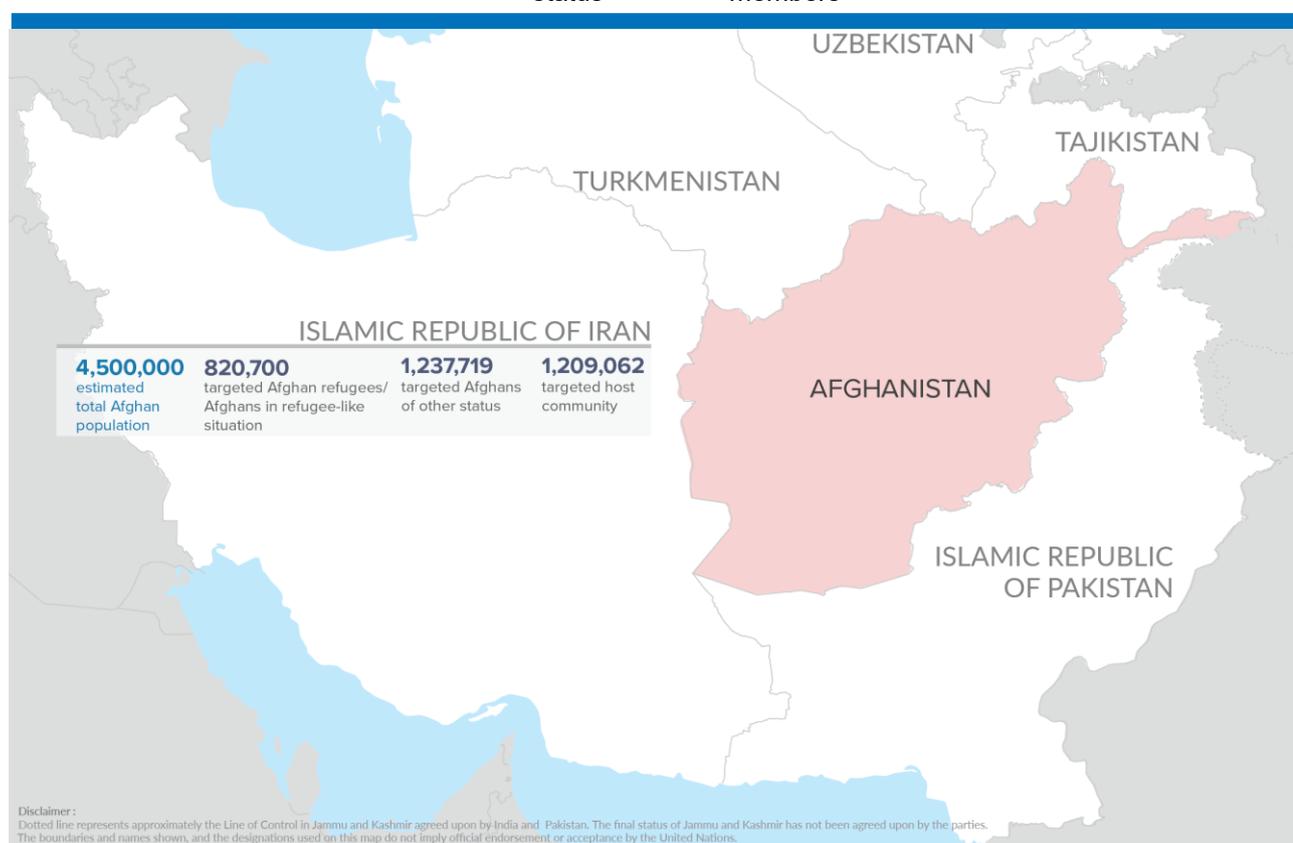
Sector	Indicator	Target
	Protection	# of individuals who received CBI for protection related purposes 45,455
	Child Protection	# of identified children at heightened risk supported by Best Interests Procedure (BIP) 6,750
	GBV	% of sectors that included GBV risk mitigation actions in their response plans 80%
	Education	# of primary and secondary school-aged children supported to access primary and secondary education 993,860
	Food security	# of individuals who received CBI for food security purposes 150,550
	Health & Nutrition	# of Afghans supported to access secondary and tertiary healthcare services 353,132
	Livelihoods & Resilience (and Socio-Economic Inclusion)	# of individuals included in livelihoods/ income generation projects/programmes 110,073
	Shelter, NFIs & Basic Needs	# of individuals who received CBI for shelter/NFI purposes 120,134
	WASH	# of persons who have received hygienic supplies 738,400

Islamic Republic of Iran

Country chapter

> At a Glance

Islamic Republic of Iran Planned Response January-December 2023



Sectors Involved	Financial requirements in USD		Partners involved
Education	USD	32,809,842	7
Food Security	USD	14,114,686	3
Health & Nutrition	USD	52,147,942	9
Livelihoods & Resilience	USD	11,087,066	7
Logistics & Telecoms	USD	2,737,520	4
Protection	USD	34,631,848	8
Shelter, NFIs & Basic Needs	USD	34,959,766	5
WASH	USD	16,493,328	6

Part 1: Current Situation

The situation of Afghans in the Islamic Republic of Iran has continued to evolve since the August 2021 events in Afghanistan. In addition to the new Afghan arrivals in 2021 and 2022 who entered Iran using both regular and irregular means, Iran has continued to host millions of Afghans over the course of four decades. In recent years, the combined impact of the pandemic, unilateral economic sanctions and the emerging global cost of living crisis have contributed to a self-perpetuating cycle of poverty which leaves many Afghans, as well as Iranians within the communities who host them, unable to meet their basic needs. Systemic barriers to accessing safe, stable, and sustainable livelihoods further aggravate this situation, depriving Afghan families of the means to establish self-sufficiency, cover fees to access services and renew documentation, and pathways to more durable solutions. These persistent challenges, combined with a prevailing situation in Afghanistan that continues to constrain Afghans ability and willingness to return (as noted in UNHCR's [Guidance Note on the International Protection Needs of People Fleeing Afghanistan](#) of February 2022),¹⁶ underline the importance of sustained and demonstrable support towards tangible burden-sharing from the international community in collaboration with the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran (GIRI). Without such support, underlying needs are likely to become more extensive and entrenched, not only pushing more Afghans to rely on humanitarian assistance but also deepening existing vulnerabilities. In turn this will jeopardize the safety and dignity of Afghans in Iran, leaving them more reliant on costly external aid while also leading many to resort to harmful coping mechanisms including premature return to Afghanistan or onward movement.

The humanitarian outlook for Afghans in Iran and their Iranian host communities are largely shaped by socio-economic dynamics, the situation in Afghanistan and displacement trends, as well as political conditions which may influence the issuance of documentation and inclusion in national services.

In 2021/2022, Iran marked its third consecutive year where annual inflation exceeded 35 per cent, with the headline inflation rate reaching its highest level for a decade.¹⁷ Iran is also extremely exposed to global inflationary pressures with food prices having risen by over 50 per cent in Iran between May 2021 and May 2022, exceeding the headline inflation rate of 39 per cent recorded over this period.¹⁸ In the short to medium term these inflationary pressures are likely to increase as the full impact of the Government's removal of import subsidies on basic food items (including wheat flour) and decreased domestic crop yields take effect, and in turn increase reliance on costly food imports. Inflationary and cost of living pressures will also be exacerbated by the impact of unilateral sanctions which has limited GIRI revenue and constrained trade, in turn contributing to the continued devaluation of the Iranian Rial (IRR) and high levels of inflation. Not being able to re-establish the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) could negatively impact prospects for sanctions relief in the short-to-medium term. This could further devalue the IRR, increase inflationary expectations, constrain GIRI revenue as well as impact household purchasing power and potentially undermine access to quality public services, including inclusive health and education services.

Despite the rebound in Iran's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2021/2022 (up 4.7 per cent following a 3.1 per cent increase in 2020/2021), levels of employment remain below pre-pandemic levels¹⁹ with structural inequalities in levels of workforce participation between men and women persisting.²⁰ The pandemic has also depleted household savings

¹⁶ The [Guidance Note](#) requests states to ensure equitable sharing of responsibility for international refugee protection of the Afghan population as well as *inter alia* the offering of international protection (in a predictable and regularized manner) and to suspend forcible returns until such time as the security, rule of law, and human rights situation in Afghanistan has significantly improved to permit a safe and dignified return of those determined not to be in need of international protection.

¹⁷ Iran Economic Monitor- Managing Economic Uncertainties, Spring 2022, World Bank

¹⁸ Statistical Centre of Iran, May 2022

¹⁹ Iran Economic Monitor- Managing Economic Uncertainties, Spring 2022, World Bank

²⁰ Ibid

which were used to cover income shortfalls during the pandemic, leaving vulnerable populations less able to withstand shocks, including additional inflationary pressures.

These inflationary pressures will severely impact households, outstripping wage growth and potentially contributing to increased recourse to harmful coping mechanisms to be able to meet basic needs. These harmful coping mechanisms include reducing meal sizes, resorting to hazardous jobs, non-enrolment or drop-out of children in/from education and recourse to child labour or forfeiting healthcare coverage (e.g., under the Universal Public Health Insurance scheme). They are likely to disproportionately impact women and children.

Given the widespread reliance on informal and daily labour arrangements and considering the significant numbers of households living below or at the edge of subsistence levels, Afghans are likely to be particularly exposed to these dynamics. Within the RRP target population groups, individuals' risk factors relating to gender, age, ethnicity, religion, and disability will shape the scale and scope of vulnerabilities with, for instance, children at particular risk due to possible disruption of education and exposure to labour exploitation.

While the security and political situation in Afghanistan has somewhat stabilized over the course of 2022, risks and reports of human rights abuses and continued concerns about high levels of food insecurity persist. It is likely that conditions for return will remain largely un conducive, while the number of cross-border movements/ arrivals to Iran will remain considerable into 2023. Between July 2022- December 2023, it is estimated that the level of cross-border movements will continue at 2022 levels of approximately 2,000 crossings per day, or 1,095,000 over the planning period.

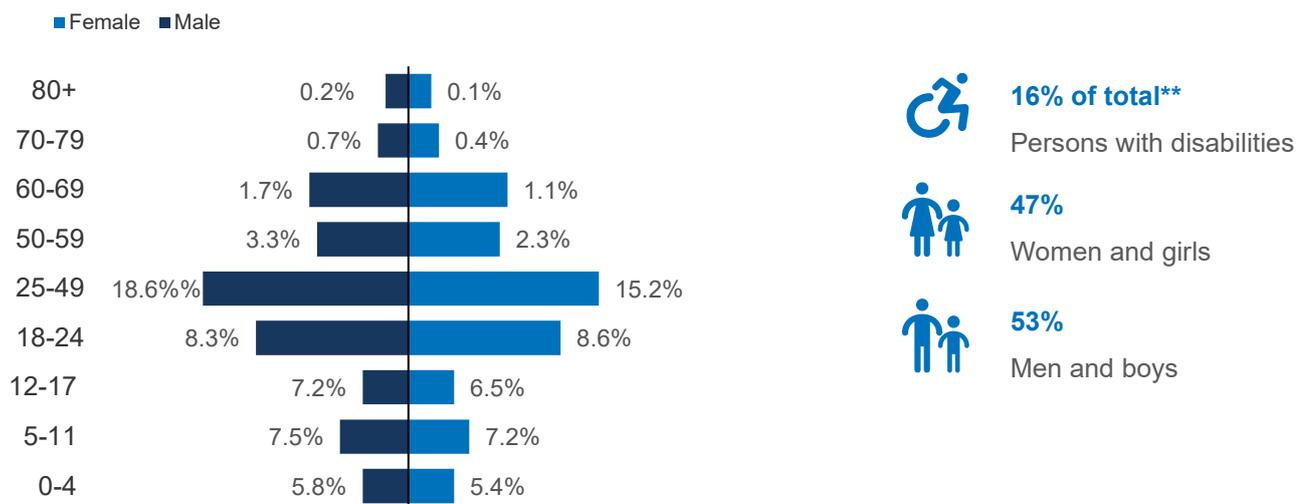
Although international partners will continue to prioritize interventions which lay the foundations for the eventual voluntary repatriation of the population, the same factors likely to continue to drive cross-border displacement will continue to preclude opportunities for voluntary repatriations over the planning period, with many returns from Iran likely to remain involuntary.

Sustained and targeted financial assistance from the international community will also be critical in supporting the GIRI to maintain the inclusive policies it has extended to Afghans in Iran, most notably free access to education and primary healthcare. The headcount exercise, conducted between April-June 2022 is a positive indication that the GIRI is committed to not only maintaining these inclusive policies, but also identifying opportunities to provide documentation (and therefore facilitate predictable access to social services) to at least some of the reported 2.6 million Afghans who enrolled in this exercise, many of whom arrived since June 2021. However, worsening economic conditions and increased pressure on already constrained GIRI budgets, underline the importance of concerted support from the international community as part of collective efforts to realize more tangible burden-sharing, as per commitments made under the Global Compact on Refugees. Such support should also be geared to scaling-up targeted assistance to the most vulnerable who face challenges in covering their basic household needs.

Population Planning Figures

Islamic Republic of Iran	Afghan Refugee/ refugee-like	Afghans of other Status*	Host Community	Total
Total population	820,700	3,700,000	85,000,000	
Target population	820,700	1,237,719	1,209,062	3,267,481

Age and gender breakdown



*AGD disaggregation is of the Amayesh card population.

** WHO Global estimate

Country Protection Needs, Vulnerabilities and Risks

Access to territory in Iran is likely to remain constrained for those without valid passports and visas. Arrest, detention, and deportation of Afghans without documentation, especially of new arrivals, is expected to continue. There remains a need for an accessible, transparent, and fair asylum procedures to individually identify and protect those in need of international protection. Against this backdrop, high levels of irregular crossings, including through smuggling, especially but not exclusively of young men including those under the age of 18, are likely to continue.

Access to documentation remains a key concern as it not only provides protection against detention and deportation, but also enables predictable access to national services and other assistance. Although the headcount exercise is likely to result in protection benefits for those who participated and were issued with temporary documentation (headcount slip), the duration of these protection safeguards and the subsequent legal status including rights and obligations, remains vague over the longer-term if they were to expire. Specific concerns exist for the situation of Afghans who, for a variety of reasons did not participate in this exercise and remain without any form of documentation. It is also likely that Afghans with expired visa’s will face difficulties in extending their regularized stay and thereby face the risk of becoming undocumented. Afghans without (valid) documentation may be reluctant to approach State institutions or humanitarian partners to seek support due to a fear of deportation. They will also face more extensive constraints on their movement, and access to social assistance, national protection systems, and financial services.

The deteriorating economic situation continues to impact livelihood opportunities, with reduced household income leaving many unable to afford the renewal of their Amayesh cards, which has reportedly doubled in cost, or to cover the Universal Public Health Insurance (UPHI) premium fee. Faced with increased barriers to accessing livelihoods, Afghan populations are likely to become increasingly reliant on unstable sources of income generation and resort to harmful coping strategies that may generate protection risks. Female-headed households are likely to experience particularly acute job insecurity while children will be disproportionately impacted by reduced household incomes. Overall, the worsening economic situation is likely to increase risks of exploitation and abuse affecting Afghans in Iran.

Women and children as well as groups in situations of vulnerability are at elevated risk of being negatively affected by the situation of displacement and the economic downturn; risks are compounded by prevailing knowledge, attitudes, and practices. These risks include dropping out of school and engaging in child labour –already widely reported among

girls and boys. Unaccompanied and separated children, generally boys, who often live and work on the streets remain of specific concern, while instances of child marriage continue to be reported, affecting particularly girls. Domestic violence requires specific assistance and interventions including psychosocial and reproductive health support, some of which remain inaccessible to documented and undocumented Afghans. The lack of education, skills development and income generation impacts youth, many of whom have spent many years in Iran, leading to a profound sense of despair for the future. Individuals in situations of elevated vulnerability also include older persons, persons with disabilities, and female-headed households – all of whom may experience distinct barriers in access to services, face elevated cost of living, and be exposed to exclusion, discrimination, and other type of violations. Barriers to employment also impact educated Afghans, leaving them unable to meaningfully contribute while similarly unable to return to Afghanistan. Activities aimed at identifying, preventing, and mitigating risks, including through empowerment-focused and community-based approaches, remain constrained. Therefore, the operational environment leads to a continued and increased need for coordination and collaboration with public institutions.

Many Afghans in Iran continue to experience a situation that affects their psychological wellbeing and mental health. Along with the impacts of displacement, the worsening socio-economic outlook, rising food insecurity, and continuing protection risks exert a significant emotional and social toll, resulting in anxiety, depression, suicidal thoughts, and substance abuse. While many continue to demonstrate coping capacities and resilience, particular groups, including children, require psychosocial support and in cases of particular risk, need comprehensive mental health services.

Options for durable solutions for Afghans in Iran remain constrained, with integration and naturalization largely inaccessible due to the legal framework and resettlement as a viable option for just a fraction of those in situations of elevated vulnerability and risk. Voluntary repatriation is limited given the situation in Afghanistan though support continues to be offered to those who opt to return voluntarily while forward looking support remains required to enable Afghans in Iran to capitalize on future opportunities for voluntary repatriation when circumstances are conducive.



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Part 2: Country Protection and Solutions Strategy

Humanitarian action in Iran is underpinned by the principles and objectives of the [Global Compact on Refugees \(GCR\)](#) and the [Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees \(SSAR\)](#). It is also shaped by the national legal framework, and the [Guidance Note on International Protection Needs of People Fleeing Afghanistan](#). Interventions are supported by ongoing analysis of community needs and priorities identified through direct engagement with diverse groups of Afghans in Iran, and host communities.

Under the framework of the RRP, partners will contribute to the government-led response through continued burden-sharing. Supporting national systems will enable the continuation of inclusive and progressive national policies that seek to ensure protection and improve the humanitarian conditions of Afghans in Iran who can access essential services. RRP partners remain ready to support the GIRI to further expand regularized and predictable access to territory, the asylum system, and documentation. This is of specific concern for newly arrived undocumented persons in need of international protection, and/or those at risk of statelessness, as well as those Afghans in Iran residing without, or with expired, documentation. Clear, transparent, and fair access to asylum will mitigate risks related to irregular border-crossings, including family separation and human trafficking. Further, without adequate registration of Afghans in Iran, information on population movements, locations of residence, and profiles remain inadequate. Supporting the GIRI in enabling access to documentation remains a priority, with legal status a key determinant in the ability of Afghans to access assistance and national services. Access to documentation is also a key step in building resilience, including through education, skills development, access to financial institutions and telecommunication, gaining decent and secure employment, and participation in society. It reduces the risk of exploitation, discrimination and harassment and provides the option of legal recourse. A functioning asylum system is a critical contributing factor in preparation for the achievement of sustainable solutions.

RRP partners will support capacity development of national social protection systems and institutions, where feasible, to increase inclusiveness and effectiveness of services provided. Key priorities are continued equitable access to national health and education systems for Afghans regardless of legal status as well as ensuring sanitation and hygiene needs at the community and household level are addressed, utilizing an area-based approach. Further, the inclusion of individuals and households with heightened protection risks in national social protection systems remains an area of focus, with the aim of ensuring timely responses to address violence, neglect, and abuse and provide safety nets. GIRI managed settlements will be supported with critical infrastructure, increasing, and improving dignified living conditions for Afghans, notably new arrivals. There will also be a focus on ensuring community structures are diverse and representative of all ages expanding targeted mental health and psychosocial support services (MHPSS), developing livelihood skills, and ultimately building resilience. In turn this will contribute towards self-sufficiency, increase possibilities for residence outside of settlements and provide opportunities to deliver solutions, including return and reintegration as/ when conditions are conducive. Similarly, to enhance effectiveness of service delivery through public institutions in urban areas, in collaboration with GIRI institutions, RRP partners aim to engage in community-based activities which promote inclusion, participation and may facilitate access to services and better understanding of needs and priorities. This will help strengthen existing community structures and capacities, while reducing risks and dependency on assistance. These activities will also facilitate access to protection mechanisms through identification and referral to specialized services where required, including for children and persons with disabilities, and older persons. Support to national institutions and service providers, building on an area-based approach, will provide longer-term benefits for GIRI service delivery capacity, and help support peaceful co-existence and social cohesion between Iranian and Afghan communities.

RRP partners will continue to deliver multi-sectoral assistance to vulnerable populations. Targeted and prioritized cash-based interventions, in particular multi-purpose cash to support access to housing, food, and other basic needs, will be a primary modality to address needs aggravated by the deteriorating economic situation. This will seek to prevent the

adoption of harmful coping mechanisms, such as child labour, school drop-out, depletion of assets, indebtedness. Humanitarian partners will also continue to support individuals and households to cover their documentation renewal fees, while also working with government counterparts to reduce barriers to renewal. Through these interventions, efforts will also be made to promote greater community engagement and mobilization. Where feasible in collaboration with the GIRI, RRP partners will maintain and enhance engagement with diverse groups within the Afghan population to provide counselling and information, strengthen feedback and response mechanisms, as well as complaints mechanisms with the purpose of identifying solutions in partnership with affected communities.

In line with the GCR, the efforts of RRP partners and the wider donor community are aimed at creating conditions and taking actions that further progress towards solutions. Despite continued advocacy and efforts by RRP partners to advance towards viable returns and reintegration in Afghanistan, prospects for large-scale voluntary returns are limited. This is both due to the challenging situation in Afghanistan and the reality that large numbers of Afghans in Iran have resided there for extended periods, in many cases for multiple generations. While conditions remain inconducive for return, RRP partners will continue to work to provide services to Afghans and Iranian host populations, with the purpose of reducing pressure on national systems and with an outlook towards future returns and reintegration. Concurrently, RRP partners will continue to offer support to those opting to return to ensure that such returns are informed, voluntary, safe, and dignified. Further, RRP partners will continue to advocate strongly for an increased commitment by states towards solidarity and more predictable responsibility-sharing including through consistent allocation of resettlement quotas for Afghans in Iran. Towards this aim, considerable resources are invested in ensuring those at the highest risk are identified, considered, and submitted for resettlement. Complementary pathways to third countries, such as family reunification and labour mobility and visa schemes, though currently limited, are also facilitated and will be further explored. Local solutions also remain limited to individuals with specific protection needs. Given the outlook for immediate solutions at scale, RRP partners will continue to support the GIRI in addressing basic needs, including health and education, as well as regularizing legal statuses and supporting livelihoods of Afghans in Iran, thereby building resilience, reducing pressure on national services, and increasing future opportunities for achievement of solutions.

Country Strategic Objectives

SO1: Promote access to territory as well as to asylum and social protection systems, supporting the GIRI in ensuring implementation of accessible, transparent, and fair asylum procedures in accordance with international standards. Partners will work with the GIRI to reduce barriers to documentation/ legal status, ensuring that procedures take into consideration age, gender, disability, and diversity, including through technical and targeted financial support as relevant, enabling access to social services.

SO2: Support inclusive national services led by the GIRI to address these challenges by supporting access to national systems and the provision of basic services to strengthen self-reliance, including through livelihoods, inclusive national health, education, and other specialized protection services. This will build on the *hybrid approach* which looks to support new arrivals and Afghans *in situ* through multiple modalities, including expanding urban responses which build on existing support to inclusive national services. RRP partners will seek to refine and tailor support to promote the sustainability and cost-effectiveness of interventions.

SO3: Provide targeted assistance through in-kind and cash-based modalities, as well as service delivery, to the those in situations of vulnerability which addresses emergency and protection needs of those impacted by displacement and provides a lifeline at-risk girls, boys, women, and men living in Iran who have seen their situation deteriorate due to rising costs of living. Under this SO, partners will continue to maintain an emergency response capacity as part of government-led preparedness efforts.

SO4: Maintain and expand the protection space to promote durable solutions by:

- Supporting refugee self-reliance through skill-development and education, aimed at facilitating voluntary repatriation and sustainable reintegration when conditions for return are conducive;
- Identifying the most vulnerable who can benefit from resettlement opportunities, while working with member states to increase existing quota levels;
- Strengthening collaborative partnerships, through capacity development for national institutions and humanitarian organizations and community-based approaches promoting meaningful participation of refugee and host communities.

Sectoral Responses**PROTECTION**

Protection needs remain widespread amongst Afghans residing in Iran as well as those in Afghanistan. The absence of predictable and unrestricted channels to access territory and asylum increase risks, while a lack of documentation and the economic downturn further aggravate existing vulnerabilities. Girls, boys, women, and men are affected in different ways and face specific risks which are compounded by prevailing barriers to accessing national protection systems.

Protection Sector partners will aim to address rights violations and mitigate risks through support to national systems, community-based activities, as well as specialized individual interventions. Building on engagement with communities, partners will engage in continued advocacy and support to national systems aiming to increase access to territory and asylum, improve reception and registration, and strengthen settlement management and access to specialized support for individual cases (documentation, psychosocial support, child protection, GBV). In addition, partners aim to offer complementary specialized services and interventions such as legal dispute resolution, psychosocial support, and targeted material assistance. Activities aim to contribute towards solutions either through transitionally supporting stabilization of longer-term situations of specific risk and/or through supporting durable solutions, notably resettlement as well as voluntary repatriation.

Sub-Sector: Child Protection

Fleeing from conflict and political instability, Afghan children are at risk of family separation, violence, abuse and neglect, with individual factors such as gender and disability further exacerbating the risks. Children bear the brunt of economic woes as families resorted to harmful coping practices such as withdrawing children from education and child labour. Also, children have limited access to national child protection systems and services and documentation as well as affecting their psychosocial wellbeing and increased the level of stress within the household. Unaccompanied and separated children are among the most at risk because some have turned to the streets for shelter and livelihood, with all the protection risks that come with being outside of a protective family environment. To address the protection risks facing Afghan children and support their families, the Child Protection Sub-Sector

efforts will be directed towards two objectives: a) strengthening national Child Protection systems in terms of resources and technical knowledge to be able to provide services for Afghan children; and b) identifying the most at-risk Afghan children who are at greatest risk of being left behind and facilitating their access to Child Protection services in a sustainable manner. The aim will be to promote access to inclusive national systems, with direct service provision used to facilitate access to national services.

To facilitate children's access to services, the CP Sub-Sector will work with other sectors and relevant actors to prevent child protection risks, keep children safe and timely identification and referral of children at risk to appropriate services,

including Best Interests Procedure/ case management, alternative care arrangement and family tracing and reunification for unaccompanied and separated children and mental health and psychosocial support programme.

Sub-sector: Women and Girls Safety

Afghan women and girls face considerable risks related to their physical and mental wellbeing, including violence, coercion, and abuse. Of particular concern is the physical, mental, and social well-being of women and girls among Afghan populations due to prevailing societal attitudes and practices as well as high levels of intimate partner violence and its long-term negative impacts. Further, in addition to limitations on accessing national services due to a lack of documentation, Afghan women are observed to face serious challenges and barriers within their communities that prevent them from accessing specialized support services, including reproductive health. Female-headed households face comparatively greater difficulties in addressing basic needs, aggravating protection risks.

To facilitate access to protection and reproductive health needs, Partners aim to support individual and group-based activities. Institutional support including capacity development and predictable referrals will aim to increase access to specialized national services. Where national systems are not accessible, safe and comprehensive services will be provided on an individual basis to those in need. These services include case management, health and MHPSS, legal assistance, safety and security, cash-based interventions, livelihoods, education, and support to achievement of durable solutions.

Given the multi-sectoral nature of the protection sector objectives, they align with several SDG goals, including SDG 3, 4, 5, 8, 10 and 16.²¹ The objectives also align with the GCR objectives i) easing pressures on host countries; ii) enhancing refugee self-reliance; and iii) expanding access to third country solutions.



EDUCATION

While significant progress has been made on access to education due to inclusive national policies, Afghans still face barriers, including the inability to obtain required documentation due to the limited registration time to obtain Educational Support Cards (ESC), affordability of education related costs including the voluntary financial contribution to schools, prevalence of child labour, and lack of awareness among parents regarding the importance of education, specifically for girls and children with disabilities. To address needs, the education sector will support educational infrastructure (establishment, rehabilitation, and equipping) and the distribution of school supplies/student kits as a continuation of support to the GIRI to maintain inclusive access to education for Afghan children. Support to non-formal education, closely coordinated with the GIRI, will look to provide alternative education opportunities for out-of-school children, with the goal of transitioning into formal schools through, for instance, remedial education and pre-school interventions that prepare children to transition to primary education. Targeted cash assistance will be provided to the most vulnerable families to cover their educational expenses and/or support the system to provide free of charge provisions such as health screening and schoolbooks, helping to ensure that rising cost of living challenges do not have an adverse impact on educational access or attainment. At the same time, partners will provide further support tailored to the most vulnerable households through, for instance, supporting children with disabilities to integrate into mainstream schools. Capacity development will be undertaken to ensure high quality teaching in both formal and non-formal settings, and educational and recreational items will be provided, including inclusive teaching, and learning materials for children with

²¹ SDG 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages. SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. SDG 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all. SDG 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries. SDG 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

disabilities. Institutional capacity for emergency preparedness as per the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies Minimum Standards (INEE MS) for education will also be strengthened. The sectors objectives align with the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 on inclusive education²² and with outcome 2.2 of the Global Refugee Compact (GCR).²³



Children attending an interactive awareness-raising session about their basic and human rights through fun activities such as playing games, drawing, and flash cards. UNHCR is committed to ensuring that refugee children are protected from harm and their rights are upheld through the provision of psychosocial support and targeted programmes to meet their specific protection and developmental needs.

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FOOD SECURITY

To control rising food import prices, the GIRI removed subsidies for imports of certain essential foods, contributing to increased food prices, with food price inflation surpassing 80 percent by mid-2022. To mitigate the impact of inflation, GIRI introduced additional cash transfers for Iranians, but refugees were excluded from this support. This situation, coupled with the impact of the pandemic which has constrained income-earning opportunities for Afghans, contributed to lower purchasing power, leading to harmful coping strategies and higher protection risks. To address this situation, the food security sector will address immediate and longer-term food needs for newly arrived Afghans through distributions of in-kind food rations, and cash-for-food/ vouchers for Afghans in settlements. Newly arrived Afghan students attending primary and junior high schools in settlements will receive daily school meals. Bakeries and communal ovens will be established in the newly established settlements. The sector will also continue supporting protracted food insecure registered refugees both in settlements and urban areas through monthly distributions of in-kind food rations. Daily meals will be provided to Afghan students in primary and junior schools to mitigate negative food

²² SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”, specifically targets 4.1: ‘By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes’; 4a: ‘Build and upgrade education facilities that are disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive, and effective learning environments for all.

²³ Refugee and host community self-reliance is strengthened

coping strategies and to increase school attendance and promote better learning outcomes. Food security needs and vulnerability assessments will be conducted covering settlements and urban areas, and Post-Distribution Monitoring exercises will continue, alongside the establishment and strengthening of Community Feedback Mechanisms (CFMs). This sector contributes to SDG 2²⁴ on zero hunger and are aligned with GCR objectives²⁵ and the requirement to provide food security and nutrition to meet needs and support communities under the programme of action.



HEALTH & NUTRITION

Afghan refugees are at particular risk of contracting communicable diseases and food and waterborne diseases due to sub-optimal access to food, water and sanitation and other basic services, including health. The high prevalence of communicable diseases such as diarrhoea, and respiratory tract infections including tuberculosis among Afghans contributes to poor nutrition and further exacerbate the unequal access to health and sanitation. Among Afghans the lack of health insurance and, consequently, high medical expenses, continues to be a persistent and widely reported challenge and results in limited access to secondary and tertiary health care services. Many Afghans are not covered by insurance due to lack of documentation, while for documented Afghans, the price of enrolment in the Universal Public Health Insurance (UPHI) scheme is often restrictive. For undocumented refugees the fear of deportation deters them from approaching health care centers. Afghan refugees also experience mental health issues, exacerbated by the trauma of displacement.

To address these challenges, the health sector will continue to support efforts to expand access to healthcare through the construction and rehabilitation of health facilities that benefit both the host community and refugee populations alike. Primary and secondary health facilities, including permanent and mobile facilities will be supported, including with equipment, medicines and medical supplies, nutritional supplies, and salary/ incentive coverage. Highly vulnerable Afghans and host community members will be supported to enrol in the UPHI to access secondary and tertiary health services, with ongoing efforts to promote the cost-effectiveness and sustainability of the scheme. Routine and essential nutrition and childcare services focusing on children under five will be prioritized (including through the provision of maternal and child nutritional supplements for children under five and pregnant and lactating women), as well as targeted cash assistance to facilitate access to health and nutrition services, including for emergency/ life-threatening cases. Malnutrition amongst infants and children will be addressed through identification, referral and treatment, and immunization campaigns will be carried out targeting young children. The sector will continue outreach and awareness raising on COVID 19 prevention and vaccines. Empowering families for childcare and selfcare will be integrated in all activities

This sector contributes to SDG 3²⁶ on good health and well-being as well as SDG 2.2 on management of malnutrition. The objectives are aligned with the GCR objectives 1 and 2²⁷ and meeting needs and supporting communities through health under the programme of action.

²⁴ SDG 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote agriculture

²⁵ GCR Objective 1- Ease pressure on host countries. Objective 2 - Enhance refugee self-reliance

²⁶ SDG 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.

²⁷ GCR Objective 1- Ease pressure on host countries. Objective 2 - Enhance refugee self-reliance



LIVELIHOODS & RESILIENCE

Afghans in Iran face substantial barriers in accessing livelihood opportunities and employment including restrictions on their ability to access certain job categories and lack of insurance. Unstable/ hazardous employment and low incomes make them vulnerable, irrespective of their status and location. This, coupled with increasing economic challenges, along with the residual and disruptive impact of the pandemic, have resulted in a loss of livelihood opportunities for Afghan refugees and host communities as well as entrenched barriers to employment for educated youth. In turn, household incomes have decreased, negatively impacting the ability of households to cover their basic needs, and increasing protection risks due to harmful coping strategies. To address this, the livelihoods and resilience sector will focus on developing skill sets and knowledge amongst refugee and host communities to enhance prospects of employment and income generation. This will be done through the provision of technical and vocational trainings through the Technical and Vocational Training Organization (TVTO) as well as providing business skills related training. The sector will also promote sustainable livelihood opportunities through the provision of grants, seed funds, in-kind support, and regular assessments and analysis of market conditions both in settlements and urban areas which will inform livelihoods programming. As part of efforts to promote sustainable livelihood opportunities, partners will continue to link livelihoods to voluntary repatriation, ensuring that support provided builds the skills, resilience and security that will enable Afghans to capitalize on opportunities for return as the situation becomes more conducive. The objectives of the sector align with SDG 828 on decent work and economic growth, as well as the objective 1 and 2, and outcome 2.1 of the GCR.²⁹



Isfahan:

Afghan refugee and Iranian nationals work side-by-side at a garment factory run by an Afghan businessman in Isfahan.

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²⁸ SDG 8: Promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

²⁹ GCR Objective 1- Ease pressure on host countries. Objective 2 - Enhance refugee self-reliance. Outcome 2.1: Refugees are able to actively participate in the social and economic life of host countries.



LOGISTICS & SUPPLY CHAIN

Through 2023 it is expected that newly arrived food insecure Afghans, and protracted Afghan communities in Iran will need humanitarian assistance. The main objective of the logistics and supply chain sector will be to ensure provision of logistics and supply chain related common services to humanitarian partners and GIRI counterparts. The sector will continue to provide support required, especially to address the needs of newly arrived Afghans and protracted populations who may be residing in settlements, including newly established ones. The sector will continue to provide transportation for humanitarian items, including core relief items (CRI's), and non-food items (NFI's) such as tents, blankets, kitchen set, rub halls, food items, etc. The sector will also expand and/or establish warehouse capacities with the purpose of ensuring harmonisation across agencies covering provinces based on needs of population. Additionally, capacity building and information sharing will be undertaken with all sector partners. This sector objectives are in line with SDG 17 on Building Partnership for the Goals³⁰, and GCR objectives 1 and 2.³¹



SHELTER, NFIs & BASIC NEEDS

The influx of Afghan refugees in August 2021 led to an increase in the number of refugees residing in existing settlements and in urban areas. Due to the lack of space, newly arrived refugees have also been residing in transit/reception centers for extended periods of time. Living in these sub-standard conditions has had a negative impact on the physical and mental health of refugees who have had to survive the double burden of fleeing conflict, coupled with current sub-optimal shelter conditions in Iran. The economic situation in Iran has severely impacted income opportunities and is consequently leading to poorer living conditions for refugee households. In urban areas, there has been an increase in the number of Afghans who are not able to afford housing rent, and are at risk of harassment, exploitation, discrimination, and forced evictions. The lack of privacy, overcrowding, limited access to services including water, have contributed to increased protection concerns, including for women and girls. The GIRI, with the support of humanitarian agencies, continues to host vulnerable and newly arrived refugees in 20 existing settlements across the country. Most of these settlements have been in existence for decades and are often in dire need of expansion, reconstruction, or rehabilitation. The primary objective of shelter response is to ensure the health, security, privacy, and dignity of affected populations. The shelter sector will target refugees living in settlements and urban areas through the establishment, improvement and maintenance of shelters and infrastructure, distribution of CRI, cash for shelter and non-food items and provision of winterization assistance, as well as support to energy provision and energy efficient solutions (including alternative/renewable energy). The sector will also continue to work on the development of new settlements in collaboration with the GIRI.

Shelter and settlement interventions contribute to SDG 11 to make cities inclusive, safe, resilient,³² and sustainable, as well as GCR objectives 1 and 2³³.

³⁰ SDG 17 on Building Partnership for the Goals³⁰: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

³¹ GCR Objective 1- Ease pressure on host countries. Objective 2 - Enhance refugee self-reliance

³² SDG 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.

³³ GCR Objective 1- Ease pressure on host countries. Objective 2 - Enhance refugee self-reliance



While most of the population enjoys adequate access to drinking water and sanitation, drought and unsustainable use of water have driven water shortages in Iran in recent years. Municipal services supporting water supply and sanitation facilities, solid waste collection systems, and grey water drainage are rarely provided outside urban areas. Hygiene knowledge and practices are inadequate in settlements, due to a combination of the fragile economic situation of households, limited access to safe water and sanitation facilities, and cultural norms relating to topics perceived as sensitive, such as menstrual health and hygiene. Old water sanitation systems in the settlements coupled with limited maintenance has led to reduced functionality of the existing infrastructure. In urban settings, Afghan refugees have been forced to relocate to cheaper, less habitable, and often overcrowded housing due to rental increases. To address these issues, the WASH sector will work towards providing access to and ensuring availability of safe water, sanitation, and solid waste management services, as well as the promotion of safe hygiene behaviour, and Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) measures. The sector will also support the establishment, operation, and maintenance of WASH facilities, and will maintain an emergency response capacity in case of a sudden refugee influx, earthquake, flood, or other emergency.

The sector objectives contribute to SDG 6 on clean water and sanitation, SDG 5 on gender equality and SDG 13 on climate action³⁴. It also aligns with the GCR objective 1 and 2³⁵.

Country Cross-Cutting Response Priorities



Accountability to Affected Population (AAP) approaches will be considered throughout the programme cycle and include participatory assessments whenever feasible, public information boards, feedback mechanisms through complaint boxes, community meetings, interviews, counselling sessions, and home visits to ensure that communities are meaningfully and continuously involved in decision making. The UNHCR-run protection hotline will provide two-way communication with individuals. Age, gender, and diversity considerations, including on disability inclusion, will be woven into methodologies employed to communicate with communities, including through sex and age specific focus group discussions (FGDs). A key priority will be to better understand barriers to accessing services by diverse groups of people, including older persons and people with disabilities.



Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse training and capacity development will be undertaken for all staff by partner agencies, and through close collaboration with the PSEA Task Force under the leadership of UNFPA in the UNCT. Staff and implementing partners sign Code of Conducts, and standard operating procedures will be in place to address SEA incidents. PSEA focal points networks will be strengthened, including on strengthening feedback mechanisms, increasing general awareness on PSEA among communities and staff, and ensuring standard operating procedures are known and used appropriately to address cases.

³⁴ SDG 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all. SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. SDG 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

³⁵ GCR Objective 1- Ease pressure on host countries. Objective 2 - Enhance refugee self-reliance



Assessments and monitoring risks of GBV affecting women and girls will be undertaken regularly such as GBV safety audits, including through FGDs and Key Informant Interviews with the purpose of understanding barriers to safety and protection, and strengthening, developing, and integrating solutions across relevant sectors to address GBV risks. Tools will be contextualized based on the context in Iran considering, for instance, the ability to provide direct outreach to refugee communities. Through joint coordination, GBV actors will facilitate trainings with effective follow-up coaching and action plans for all sector actors on GBV guiding principles, safe disclosures, and referrals. All services and assistance will be gender-sensitive and accessible to all individuals that may require them.

Partnership and Coordination

Overall leadership on the refugee response, for registered refugees, new arrivals, and Afghans of other status, ultimately lies with the GIRI, through BAFIA, in collaboration with RRP partners. The GIRI has expressed support for UNHCR to facilitate coordination among UN Agencies and international NGOs, in alignment with the Refugee Coordination Model (RCM) which was activated in Iran in July 2021. Consistent with the commitment of RRP partners to the localization agenda, efforts are ongoing to explore ways in which coordination platforms activated under the RCM can be more inclusive and representative of the main stakeholders in the refugee response, including refugee-led and women-led organizations.



Under the RCM, the Refugee Response Group (RRG) is the main platform for strategic-level Inter-Agency coordination. This forum is chaired by UNHCR and includes the main UN Agencies and international NGOs supporting this plan. The RRG is responsible for overall strategic planning, government liaison, policy (including collective positioning in relation to minimum operating standards and principles of engagement) and resource mobilization. As of September 2021, an Inter-Sector Coordination Group

(ISCG) was established in Iran under the RCM and operates under the delegated authority of the RRG. The ISCG facilitates operational coordination among agencies/ between sectors and enhances inter-sectoral linkages between the eight sectors: Protection including Child Protection and Gender-based Violence (GBV) sub-sectors, Food Security, Shelter, Non-Food Items (NFI) and Basic Needs, water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH), Health and Nutrition, Livelihoods and Resilience, Education, and Logistics and Supply. The ISCG works closely with the RRG, ensuring that relevant topics/ issues are elevated for decisions, guidance, advice, and advocacy. The PSEA task force that functions under the UNCT coordination mechanism, led by UNFPA, can be consulted by the ISCG as required, with ongoing efforts to strengthen linkages. The six sectors are supported by a Coordinator and Co-Coordinator(s) from different agencies with relevant expertise, under the overall leadership of UNHCR. In collaboration with the ISCG, sector response outlooks will be developed to support the operationalization of the 2023 RRP. Sector Coordinators will also support ongoing response coordination/planning, and monitoring progress including through tools such as the 5Ws. Quarterly reporting will be provided by all agencies against the results framework developed by all sectors.

The strategic and sectoral coordination under the RCM, is complemented by provincial-level coordination in those areas where UNHCR and RRP partners have a significant presence. Efforts are ongoing to strengthen these provincial arrangements, with the aim to facilitate more effective operational engagement and implementation.

The partnership approach fostered by the coordination mechanism in Iran is in line with the GCR and seeks to strengthen the humanitarian development nexus through collaboration between humanitarian and development actors under the RRP, and through information sharing and collaboration with the UNCT. Efforts to develop and strengthen synergies between different planning frameworks, most notably the RRP and UN Sustainable Development and Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) for Iran, will continue, with a specific emphasis on promoting joint action in areas where the needs of Iranian host communities and Afghans in Iran intersect.

In addition to the above, UNHCR will continue to leverage the SSAR Support Platform (SP) to facilitate more strategic engagement with key stakeholders, including Member States, on issues of common concern. The SSAR SP will remain critical in advancing solutions-based approaches, bringing together a wide range of stakeholders to realize more tangible burden-sharing at the global level and devise plans for concerted action around specific themes/ priorities



Notes: This list only includes appealing organizations under the RRP, many of which collaborate with implementing partners to carry out RRP activities. See 'Budget Summary by Partner' for partner breakdown per type.

HIGHLIGHTS

Cash working group: In 2022, the cash working group (established in 2016 to support humanitarian actors coordinate on and implement cash and vouchers – CVA – assistance) was brought under the ISCG framework, in line with global guidance. Led by UNHCR and NRC, the CWG will work towards strengthening coordination on multi-purpose and other forms of cash assistance, and leveraging the work conducted by the CWG in previous years to benefit the sectors within the ISCG. The cash working group will include both technical functions that focus on process (such as sharing lessons learnt, harmonizing approaches, delivering cash, developing guidelines), as well as strategic functions that focus on results and impact (such as avoiding gaps and duplications, advocacy to promote appropriate cash and voucher assistance and influence policy).

Education upscaling initiative: Inclusive national policies by GIRI have made it possible for all children in Iran, including refugee children, to access primary and secondary education regardless of documentation status. However, with an increased number of Afghan arrivals since 2021, the overstretched education system has been further burdened leading to challenges in delivering quality education to all children. A recent statement of GIRI indicated that more than 700,000 foreign students were registered in public schools, of whom 380,000 are undocumented Afghans and 58,000 are university students. The Ministry of Education has indicated that 7,000 extra classrooms are needed to provide education for Afghans in Iran. Currently schools operate in two shifts to allow as many children as possible to attend. Despite this, they remain overcrowded, with teachers struggling to allocate quality time for students, and the teacher-student ratio being high. To address this and support GIRI in advancing its inclusive policies on education, support under RRP 2023 will help mitigate challenges through construction of required schools and classrooms as determined in close collaboration with GIRI. Given the estimated scale of needs and immense pressure on the education system, further joint planning, and additional resources (beyond those in RRP 2023) may be required to support collective efforts to enhance system capacity and education outcomes for Afghans in Iran.

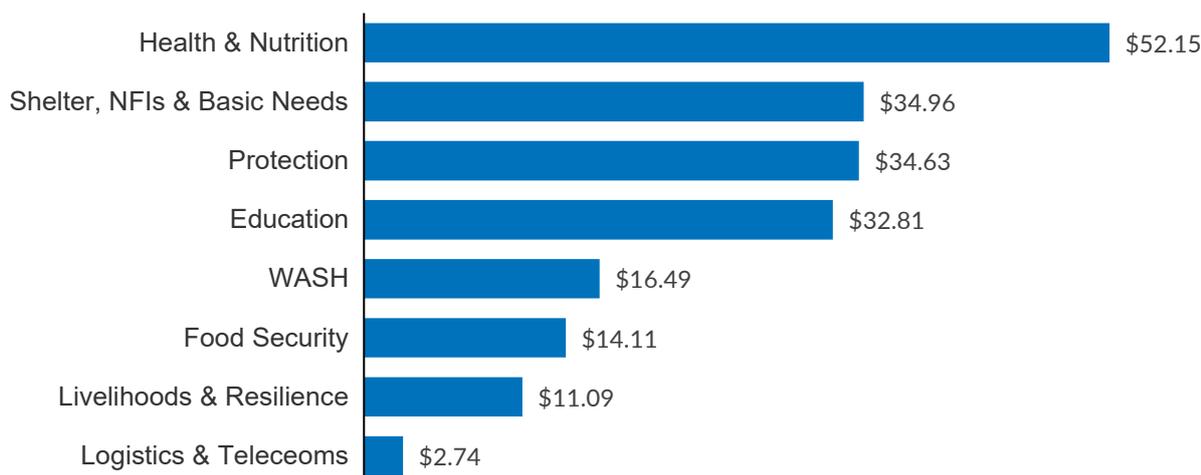
Inter-Agency Financial Requirements

Total
Financial Requirements
In USD

\$ 198.98 M

Budget summary by sector at country level

In millions USD



Total Protection requirements \$ 34,631,848		
Other protection activities	GBV	Child Protection
\$ 26,863,404	\$ 4,484,860	\$ 3,283,584
13.5% of total	2.3% of total	1.7% of total

Total Cash Assistance requirements* \$ 28,822,089						
Education	Food security	Health & Nutrition	Livelihoods & Resilience	Protection	WASH	Shelter, NFIs & Basic Needs
\$ 388,277	\$ 6,873,541	\$ 2,363,938	\$2,626,935	\$1,309,338	\$1,295,455	\$13,964,606

* This is a breakdown by sector of the requirements for cash assistance which are included in the above total sectoral budgets. Cash assistance is pursued and reflected as a key modality of assistance and protection in line with UNHCR's CBI Policy 2022-2026. Cash assistance is used as a cross-cutting modality across the various sectors, including protection, and is budgeted for accordingly and in line with a basic needs approach. As the modality of choice of the persons we work with, cash assistance will be used as the primary means to meet immediate basic needs and provide important protection outcomes.

Budget summary by partner type



Budget Summary by Partner

UN: United Nations, INGO: International NGO

Partner	Acronym / Short Title	Type	Requirements in US\$
Cooperazione e Sviluppo	CESVI	INGO	\$ 250,000
Intersos	INTERSOS	INGO	\$ 2,967,848
Norwegian Refugee Council	NRC	INGO	\$ 21,239,059
Relief International	RI	INGO	\$ 10,122,819
UN - International Organization for Migration	IOM	UN	\$ 7,967,841
UN - Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS	UNAIDS	UN	\$ 15,000
UN - United Nations Development Programme	UNDP	UN	\$ 160,000
UN - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	UNESCO	UN	\$ 600,000
UN - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	UNHCR	UN	\$ 114,080,751
UN - United Nations Industrial Development Organization	UNIDO	UN	\$ 1,270,000
UN - United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund	UNICEF	UN	\$ 10,945,901
UN - United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime	UNODC	UN	\$ 250,000
UN - United Nations Population Fund	UNFPA	UN	\$ 6,757,250
UN - World Food Programme	WFP	UN	\$ 14,176,529
UN - World Health Organization	WHO	UN	\$ 8,179,000
Total:			\$ 198,981,998

Country Monitoring Results

*The below is a summary of key selected indicators from each sector and does not reflect the entire work of the sectors, the full results framework for each sector will be reported upon in dashboards and reports during 2023.

Sector	Indicator	Target	
	Protection	# of people supported with counselling on assistance and services, registration, documentation and international protection	90,330
	Child Protection	# of children, parents, and primary care givers in humanitarian situations provided with child-focused community-based MHPSS, including access to child friendly spaces, PFA, and counselling services.	16,770
	GBV	# of GBV survivors receiving specialized case management services (psychosocial support, case management and referral)	9,430
	Education	# of classrooms constructed, rehabilitated, or renovated, including in-kind support	124
	Food security	# of households reached through awareness-raising sessions on food security issues	15,296 HH (approx. 91,776 individuals)
	Health & Nutrition	# of Afghans reached through supported immunization campaigns	530,000
	Livelihoods & Resilience (& Socio-Economic Inclusion)	# of individuals supported through networking opportunities	1,114
	Logistics, Telecoms & Operational Support	# of warehouses maintained in Tehran, Mashad, Dougharoun and Kerman and warehouses established/expanded in close proximity of response locations	13
	Shelter, NFIs & Basic Needs	# of individuals receiving assistance to cover energy supply (including for cooking purposes)	17,500
	WASH	# of individuals benefiting from WASH-related training or capacity-building	3,554

Islamic Republic of Pakistan

Country chapter



At a Glance

Islamic Republic of Pakistan Planned Response January-December 2023



3.7 M

Total Afghan population



1.5 M

Targeted refugee population*



1.6 M

Targeted Afghans of other status*



1.44 M

Targeted host community members



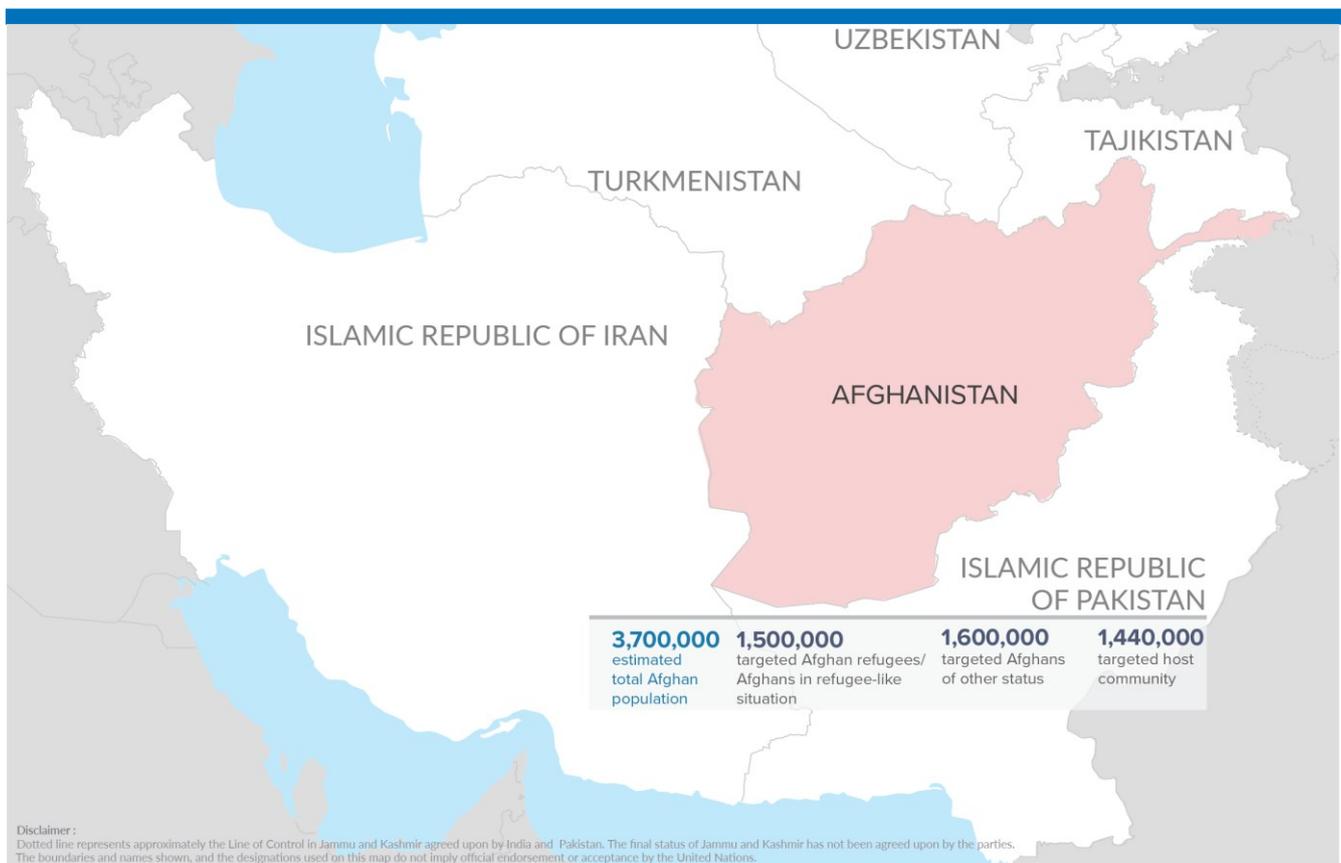
383.76 M

Total financial requirements



56

Partners involved



Sectors Involved	Financial requirements in USD	Partners involved
Education	USD 50,212,873	20
Food Security	USD 4,011,405	7
Health & Nutrition	USD 68,898,223	18
Livelihoods & Resilience	USD 72,144,323	16
Protection	USD 90,692,583	13
Shelter, NFIs & Basic Needs	USD 47,345,824	6
WASH	USD 50,459,185	28

* this comprises documented (Afghan Citizen Cardholders) and yet to be documented Afghans.

Part 1: Current Situation

Situation Overview

Pakistan has been generously hosting millions of Afghans for over 40 years with significant movements of Afghans over time in both directions. Currently, Pakistan hosts over 3 million Afghans and provides open access to both public health and education services. In February 2022, the government, along with UNHCR support, concluded the [Document Renewal and Information Verification Exercise \(DRIVE\)](#) to deliver new smartcards and to verify and update refugee data. The exercise identified almost 1.3 million refugees with Proof of Registration (PoR) cards, in addition to 129,703 unregistered members of registered families (UMRFs). Pakistan also hosts some 840,000 with Afghan Citizen Cards and some 775,000 undocumented Afghans. The majority of refugees have exercised their freedom of movement and 68.4 percent of refugees live in urban areas while 31.5 per cent live in refugee villages. Given that most Afghan refugees and other Afghan nationals in Pakistan live in urban or semi-urban areas and their daily lives intersect with members of the host community, many of whom are also from the most vulnerable segments of society, this response plan targets 3.1 million Afghan refugees and Afghans of other status and 1.44 million host community members through multi-sectoral interventions.

Pakistan is traditionally highly vulnerable to climate-related and other natural hazards. In July 2022, torrential rains and flash-flooding affected several areas of the country and Pakistan received more than three times its average rainfall during August. By the end of August, this had severely damaged housing, schools and other communal buildings in refugee villages and host communities. According to the Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) carried out by the Government with support from the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, European Union, and UN organizations, an estimated 4.4 million acres of cropland were damaged by the floods and around 800,000 livestock perished, which had a significant effect on livelihoods and jeopardized the country's food security.³⁶

A total of 94 districts in Balochistan, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), and Punjab provinces were declared "calamity hit". Some 33 million people were affected by the monsoon floods and half a million displaced. 46 of the "calamity hit" districts host an estimated 800,000 Afghan refugees. Most are in just four districts: Peshawar (210,000), Quetta (170,000), Nowshera in KP (77,700) and Karachi (71,500).

The floods have underscored the need for increased and forward-looking attention on disaster risk reduction and building resilience among the communities. Given the vulnerability of the country to further climate-related and other natural hazards, investments in sustainable, durable housing and community infrastructure will be key to enhancing preparedness and resilience. Shelter activities foreseen by this plan will, to the extent possible, adapt building materials to ensure that homes can better withstand shocks. This also include an expansion of support to community resilience through livelihoods programmes linking climate-smart reconstruction and rehabilitation to the creation of green jobs with an emphasis on the environment.

This plan is complementary to the [UN Flash Appeal](#) and seeks to support affected refugee and host communities coping with the long-term impacts of the flooding on infrastructure and the impact on livelihoods.

Pakistan is not a signatory to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. Nevertheless, Pakistan has had a decades-long history of providing refuge and protection to Afghan refugees. In absence of a national asylum law, its policy and institutional response are predominantly based on administrative measures. UNHCR's supervisory role vis-à-vis refugee protection is envisaged by a Cooperation Agreement from 1993 which recognizes the role of UNHCR within the parameters of its Statute. There is no national legislation,

³⁶ The PDNA results are as of the end October 2022.

which specifically refers to the right to seek asylum or to the principle of non-refoulement. However, Afghan refugees have been exempted from the application of provisions of the Foreigners Act (1946) and the principle of non-refoulement has been upheld by the Government of Pakistan (GOP) vis-à-vis registered refugees. In particular, the commitment of the GOP to ensure data confidentiality of Afghan refugees and to ensure that returns to Afghanistan are conducted in conditions of voluntariness, safety and dignity has been consistently reflected in the government policies and approaches. The GOP has also permitted Afghan refugees' freedom of movement and granted them access to public facilities. Afghans, including those travelling from Afghanistan, have been able to also receive care at public health facilities.

Pakistan ranks as a lower middle-income country, though this obscures some challenges that the country faces. The World Bank's World Development Indicators place Pakistan as the 42nd largest GDP economy globally, which is largely based on agriculture, industry, and services. In August 2022 inflation in Pakistan reached its highest level since 1975 at 27 percent. Pressure on food prices is anticipated to increase further, propelled by the Ukraine situation, with Pakistan sourcing roughly half its wheat purchases from Ukraine and the Russian Federation.

Most of the population work in the agricultural sector and prior to the floods and economic crisis were already suffering from high unemployment and vulnerability. Pakistan ranks 154 out of 189 countries on the 2020 Human Development Index. Multi-dimensional poverty is highest in the main refugee hosting Provinces of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa at 73 percent and in Balochistan at 71 percent, with the national average at 38.8 percent. According to the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund, more than half of the refugees are in the category of extremely poor/ultra-poor.

This response plan is the outcome of multiple interagency and sectoral consultations, including with the Government of Pakistan and seeks to increase international and local support to the people of Pakistan and the Government's continuous efforts to safeguard the protection of and build the self-reliance and human capital of Afghan populations while at the same time supporting members of the host communities.

Central to the Government and partners' approach in this plan is the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR) and its Support Platform. The SSAR pursues a whole-of-society approach engaging a broad variety of actors with complementary expertise to forge a nexus between humanitarian assistance and long-term development. The 2023 Refugee Response Plan will further reinforce this nexus through the activities of all partners which are in line with the SSAR and the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR). Partners and Sectors will continue to work closely with the Ministry of States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON), the Chief Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees (CCAR), the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA), provincial Commissionerates and provincial governments to maximize opportunities and impact. A whole-of-government approach in tandem with SAFRON and CCAR will underpin this strategy. Furthermore, close collaboration with the Ministry of Interior (MoI) and Ministry of Foreign Affairs is envisaged moving forward on the asylum-related matters, including registration and documentation of unregistered Afghan nationals in need of international protection.

While the 2023 RRP is seeking funding for one year the strategy and objectives that underpin it are multi-year, seeking longer-term solutions. Building on the 2022 engagement of more than 30 appealing partners in Pakistan, the 2023 RRP has broadened its partnership to 56 partners, for whom it will serve as an effective coordination and resource mobilization tool. While the plan is area-based and of a humanitarian nature, in view of the protracted stay of the refugee population in Pakistan and the recent impact of both floods and inflation, sustained humanitarian and development support is needed from the international community to implement planned activities with a focus on the sustainability of outcomes and grants.

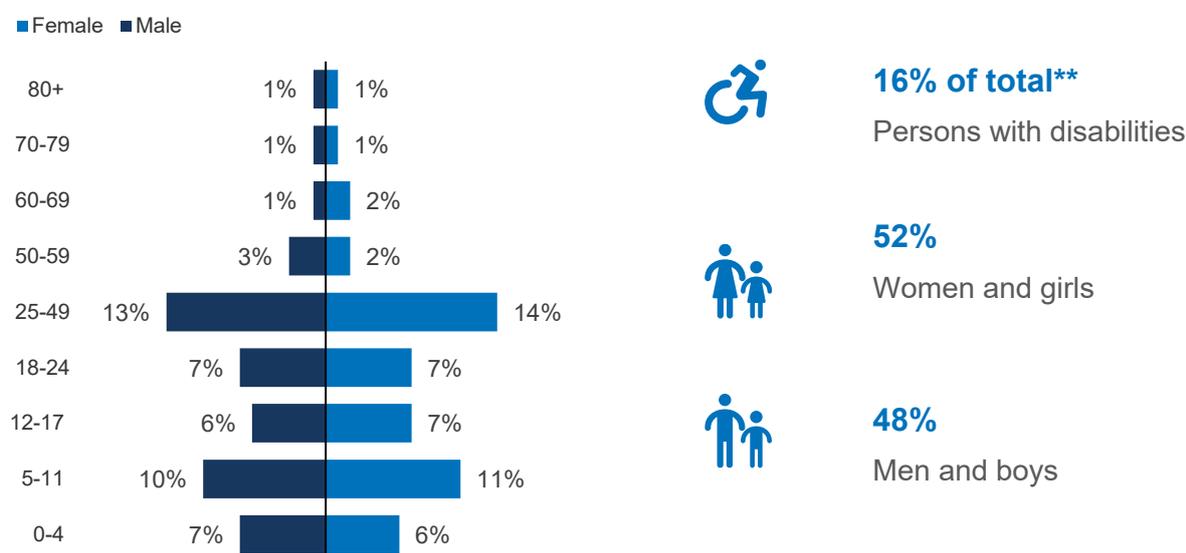
Given the uncertainty of the situation in Afghanistan, this plan is part of ongoing efforts to advocate on behalf of Pakistan with the international community in the spirit of global burden sharing to ensure that the country

continues to receive the required support for both its Afghan and local communities until a more durable solution is available. The plan will promote humanitarian-development linkages, notably through strategic activities and engagements under SSAR Support Platform and the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) for Pakistan. Close cooperation with development partners will ensure complementarity between longer-term development initiatives in refugee-hosting areas and activities under this plan to promote economic development and leverage opportunities that benefit both Afghan populations and their Pakistani hosts.

Population Planning Figures

Islamic Republic of Pakistan	Afghan Refugee/ refugee-like	Afghans of other Status	Host Community	Total
Total population	1,500,000	2,200,000	225,200,000	
Target population	1,500,000	1,600,000	1,440,000	4,540,000

Age and gender breakdown*



** WHO Global estimate

* UNHCR data

Country Protection Needs, Vulnerabilities and Risks

Documentation is a key protection tool for refugees and Afghans of other status residing in Pakistan.³⁷ Registered Afghan refugees hold Proof of Registration (PoR) Cards, and this serves as an identity and residency document for a given period that can be extended through Cabinet notifications. As part of a 2021 verification exercise of registered Afghan refugees, PoR Cards were extended until June 2023. Afghan Citizenship Cards (ACC) issued likewise remain valid for those who have received them, in line with the Government of Pakistan’s policy directives.

³⁷ In Pakistan, Afghans of other status relates to both Afghans with documentation and Afghans to be documented as per Government policy.

Generally, refugees enjoy freedom of movement within Pakistan and can choose their place of residence, except in areas where there are security constraints applicable to all foreigners and, at times, to nationals. Over the years a majority (68 percent) of Afghan refugees have moved from Refugee Villages to urban areas. Afghan nationals of other statuses also tend to live in urban areas.

In terms of access to gainful employment no specific permits are issued for refugees and they cannot own businesses. Under the 2017 *Repatriation and Management Policy for Afghan Refugees*, a flexible visa regime provides terms for PoR card holders to apply for a visa inside Pakistan, including for work purposes. However, implementation modalities for this regime are still in the process of being formalized. Most refugees are engaged in un-skilled labour in the informal sector, mainly as daily wage labourers in the transport, construction, or agriculture sectors. Notably, these sectors are particularly vulnerable to external shocks such as those caused by COVID-19 and more recently by the floods. While engaged in the informal sector, refugees often face challenges maintaining stable employment and are at risk of exploitation. A notification issued in 2019 allows Afghan refugees with PoR Cards to open bank accounts. This administrative measure has mitigated some of the risk factors, but challenges remain in accessing mobile money transfers and in obtaining driver's licenses – the Government is considering granting access to these through a special dispensation.

PoR holders, ACC holders and unregistered Afghans experience different levels of access to services, with unregistered populations having the least. ACCs were designed to have time-limited validity and do not confer guaranteed access to public services such as education and health care. Further, ACC holders do not have the right to access formal employment, open a bank account, or purchase a SIM card, factors making life for ACC holders more challenging for the provision of assistance and the updating of their status more difficult. Currently, ACC holders have informal access to education and health services based on the willingness of service providers, whereas PoR holders have access to documentation, legal services, travel documentation, education, housing, protection services, etc. Rental and deed agreements for refugees in Pakistan are often concluded through informal arrangements exposing them to possible forms of exploitation, including sexual exploitation and forcible eviction, which particularly impacts refugee women and children.

This plan is sensitive to the gender disparities present across Pakistan, which are exacerbated by social and cultural norms in many of the most economically vulnerable districts. Attention to disabilities will also be factored into programming. A heightened focus will be given to increasing women and girls' access to health and education facilities and community decision-making processes. Gender inequality has contributed to lower education access and skill levels among women and girl refugees. GBV is largely under-reported due to social norms, cultural stigma, and a lack of effective redress mechanisms. Outreach to women and girls through protection helplines or other community-based mechanisms remains very low. Women remain under-represented in community structures and during participatory assessments refugee women and girls noted that their participation in community structures depends on male relatives or community members' permission. During the 2022 Participatory Assessment, mental health issues like depression, chronic stress and insomnia were widely reported. Women and girls identified discrimination, violence, and restriction on freedom as the main factors triggering mental health issues. Men identified the lack of livelihoods as a key driver of stress. As with GBV, Child protection risks and incidents of violence, abuse, exploitation, and neglect within affected communities are also largely under-reported due to social norms and ineffective reporting, response, and redress mechanisms. Major protection risks facing children include distress, child labour, and family separation (unaccompanied and separated children continue to be identified and referred for support services).

Part 2: Country Protection and Solutions Strategy

Given the current situation in Afghanistan, solutions remain elusive. However, in line with one of the primary objectives of the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees and the National Policy on Management and Repatriation of Afghan refugees, the GoP will lead the efforts to support Afghans who wish to return to Afghanistan on a voluntary basis. An increase of the voluntary repatriation grant was introduced as of 1 August 2022 from USD250 up to USD375 in view of the exponential increase in transportation and living costs in Pakistan and inside Afghanistan, increasing inflation, and the deteriorating economic and humanitarian situation in Afghanistan overall. The adjustment covers transportation and reintegration costs. This will continue to be reviewed to ensure that this amount can continue to meet the needs of those returning voluntarily. In the context of voluntary repatriation, specific focus will be given to ensure that pre-departure protection counselling is conducted, the identification of children-at-risk is systematic, and that adequate provision of information on return areas is provided. Community consultations will gather relevant information on intention to return to ensure community attitudes and perceptions are systematically recorded and inform decision-making and programming.

In terms of other durable solutions, resettlement to third countries for refugees at heightened protection risk will continue. Complementary pathways, particularly in the sectors of education and labour mobility, as well as family reunification will also be explored to ensure lasting solutions to the protracted situation of displacement. This approach is aligned with the goals of the Global Compact for Refugees to promote burden and responsibility sharing, in recognition of the significant contribution that Pakistan has made in hosting refugees for 40 years.

Against this backdrop, the Government's support for refugee access to national programmes will be critical. It will ensure that Afghan refugees and Afghans of other statuses can be self-reliant, live-in dignity and contribute to their communities whilst in Pakistan. It will also allow refugees to be able to acquire skills and avail themselves of education opportunities which will have a long-lasting impact upon their return to Afghanistan. A strategic approach will be pursued to ensure that social, economic, and cultural barriers that hinder refugees and asylum-seekers from exercising their rights and freedoms and accessing public services are addressed. Advocacy will be continued for refugees to access national services such as specialized protection services, social protection, education, health, and livelihood opportunities, to



A beneficiary woman from newly merged tribal districts has set up her own poultry business through skills provided by FAO under "Restoring Subsistence and Commercial Agriculture in Tribal Districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa"

© UNFAO Pakistan

ensure their rights are upheld whilst residing in the country of asylum. Such access and the availability of national services requires sustained international support to match the generous contributions of the Pakistani Government and people. It is critical in this respect that the international community supports Pakistan's reception of refugees in the spirit of responsibility sharing.

Advocacy will also continue to support access of Afghan nationals with other statuses to similar services. Currently, ACC holders are not entitled to access public services such as health and education, and they may not access formal employment, open a bank account, rent property, or register a SIM card, among other services. While some ACC holders can access certain services based on the willingness of local officials and service providers, and many participate in the informal economy, formalization of these rights as part of their status as ACC holders during their stay in Pakistan is critical to ensure dignified lives.³⁸

Registration and documentation will also be prioritized, as well as improved access to civil registration to ensure that the births of all Afghan children are registered. Avenues will be explored for strengthening the national refugee legal and administrative framework while continuing to advocate for adherence to international protection standards will also be pursued. Documentation for Afghans of other status' will also be beneficial to ensure that the needs of this population are identified, including for solutions, as per government policy.

The Ministry of SAFRON, CCAR, CAR, and the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) in collaboration with IOM and the Afghan authorities conducted a documentation exercise for undocumented Afghans from July 2017 to March 2018. During this exercise, 878,929 undocumented Afghans came forward to document themselves and approximately 840,000 were documented and received an identify document known as an "Afghan Citizen Card" (ACC). In collaboration with the government, IOM is preparing a second round of documentation exercise to re-verify the status of current ACC holders and to record the data of undocumented Afghan nationals (in line with a government approved policy the provisions of which are still under-consideration).

Programming inclusive of age, gender and diversity will be strengthened through effective use of the data gained through the verification exercise of 2021/22. The existing database of 1.3 million Proof of Registration (PoR) Card holders, including key information related to specific needs, family composition, ethnicity, intentions to return, as well as education and livelihoods. This will serve as a foundation to further ensure refugee programmes are evidenced-based and reflect the changing demographic profile and living patterns of this population.

A focus will be placed on strategies to ensure GBV survivors have access to quality GBV services, including psycho-social, medical, and legal support, and that strong referral systems are in place, including information on existing services, and GBV prevention programming to effectively addresses root causes of GBV. A multi-stakeholder and area-based approach will be taken to engage refugee community members including male leaders, protection partners, civil society as well as government partners in the lead role. Innovative programmes such as *Engaging Men in Accountable Practices* (EMAP). Working with adolescent girls on life skills development and initiatives to improve their participation in community structures will also be the key focus.

In the realm of child protection, focus will be placed on programming that ensures children are protected from violence, neglect, abuse, exploitation, and discrimination. Systematic identification of child protection cases through community outreach, protection monitoring, and referral of children at heightened risk to Best Interests Procedure/case management and other relevant services and ensuring that children have access to child friendly procedures and services. This will be achieved through capacity building of community service workers, supporting community-based

³⁸ In line with government policy.

child-led initiatives, and supporting specialized service provision for case management where needed. Across the response, the RRP seeks to build the capacity of public services to benefit both Afghan and host communities.

Amidst the social and culturally embedded barriers, addressing key protection risks and making changes requires a multifaceted and participatory approach involving awareness raising, feedback mechanisms, and effective case management procedures and practices. As such, community engagement and women's empowerment will underpin GBV and Child Protection interventions to ensure enhanced participation in programme design, implementation, and evaluation, aiming for full engagement of women, children, and vulnerable groups in decision-making bodies and processes. UNHCR will work closely with an array of partners towards this end, most notably with CCAR and its provincial counterparts alongside operational partners active in the GBV and Child Protection sub-sectors.

Country Strategic Objectives

SO1: Strengthen the protection environment. In close coordination with CCAR/CAR and other relevant government actors at provincial and federal levels, the plan will seek to support the Government of Pakistan in ensuring refugees, Afghans of other status, and host communities can realize their rights in line with international protection standards. This will include access to documentation and humanitarian protection; prevention, mitigation of and response to GBV; and child protection interventions. The plan will incorporate AAP and gender-sensitive programming across all sectors and a focus on marginalized groups, including children, women, older persons, persons with disabilities, and persons with other specific protection needs.

SO2. Continue to advance the humanitarian-development nexus to ensure the basic needs and rights of the most vulnerable Afghans and host communities are met through access to social protection, healthcare, education, nutrition, WASH facilities, green solutions, and livelihoods. The focus on livelihoods is underpinned by fostering growth of human capital. The plan recognizes the on-going deterioration in living conditions for both Afghans and the communities that host them across all sectors, caused by economic hardships, inflation, and the impact of floods and other climate related hazards. By focusing on wide ranging cross-sectoral responses, this plan seeks to support the Government of Pakistan and make a substantive contribution to improving the basic needs and wellbeing of families and communities.

SO3. Improve the potential for longer-term solutions in line with the SSAR framework. In 2023, the search for solutions for some Afghan refugees and persons in a refugee-like situation, and Afghans of other status will continue to be a focus. Cognizant that a decline in returns has been observed since 2016, the search for durable solutions including resettlement efforts will be reinvigorated for vulnerable families, with support for dignified voluntary repatriation to Afghanistan provided where appropriate, alongside the pursuit of complementary pathways for refugees.

SO4. Support social cohesion and promote peaceful cohesion. Recognizing that this is a protracted situation of more than four decades, it will be key to further include Pakistani host communities in RRP interventions. Activities will involve host and Afghan communities and will be coordinated to ensure complementarity between focused humanitarian planning, flood response, recovery and resilience. The plan incorporates a focus on 'building back better' and will support government efforts to maintain emergency preparedness and response measures by ensuring climate adaptation and other emergency preparedness actions are taken at both local and national levels.

Sectoral Responses



PROTECTION

The Protection sector will prioritize interventions to address the most critical protection risks outlined above. This will include working in a multi-sectoral manner with a broad range of stakeholders to ensure the rights of refugees and

Afghans of other status are upheld whilst they continue to reside in Pakistan, under the Government of Pakistan's policies. Key interventions include: awareness-raising and advocacy with service providers to facilitate access to education, health and protection services; supporting access to registration and identity documentation; provision of legal assistance; supporting refugee with specific protection needs, including persons with disabilities; establishing community-based complaint/feedback mechanisms to ensure that commitments to AAP and PSEA are upheld; and identifying and facilitating durable solutions, including voluntary repatriation, resettlement and complementary pathways.

Sub-Sector: Child Protection

To address the identified protection risks facing children, the Child Protection sub-sector response will focus on identification of children at risk, including unaccompanied and separated children, and referral to case management/Best Interests Procedure and the national child protection system. It will include supporting national child protection systems, facilitation of family tracing and alternative care arrangements and the provision of information on child protection risks and referral pathways to access available child protection services, as well as strengthening community-based child protection mechanisms.

Sub-sector: GBV

Under the GBV sub-sector, the priority response will include the provision of timely access to quality services for GBV survivors (psychosocial support, safety support, medical and legal assistance) through case management and in-line with a survivor-centered approach. It will also include establishing women and girl safe spaces, supporting specialized shelters and safe homes for women and children, and providing dignity kits. Awareness-raising sessions will be conducted on GBV referral pathways and existing services. Technical support will be offered across all sectors to improve each sector's capacity to mainstream GBV risk mitigation measures. UNHCR and GBV partners will also invest in capacity building on GBV response, prevention, and case management.

GCR linkages: The activities prioritized under the Protection Sector aim to reinforce the objectives of the Global Compact on Refugees through both the delivery of services and an inter-sectoral mainstreaming approach that seeks to ease the pressure on host communities, enhance refugee self-reliance as well as expand access to third-country solutions. Protection activities address the key areas of support identified in the GCR including specific interventions to meet the needs of women and girls, as well as children and other persons with specific needs. This is reflected particularly in the prioritized activities of the GBV and CP Sub-sectors which highlight the ongoing support to systems strengthening and working with national counterparts to reinforce key protection services required to meet the needs of the most vulnerable. Further, the expansion of third country solutions seeks to ensure international solidarity in the spirit of responsibility-sharing and support Pakistan, as one of the longest and largest refugee-hosting nations.

SDG linkages: Linkages between the Protection Sector and the Sustainable Developments Goals are evident through the Sector's prioritized activities. In particular, Goal 5 related to achieving gender equality is linked to the work of the GBV sub-sector that seeks to address the root causes of GBV. Goal 16 promotes peaceful and inclusive societies and focusses on interventions related to reducing violence against children and ensuring legal identity including birth registration, which is highlighted as a key priority for refugee children through the interventions prioritized by the Child Protection sub-sector. Legal assistance provided to refugees also advances efforts to ensure strengthened access to justice and contributes to achieving the targets under SDG 16. Through a protection mainstreaming approach, as well as consideration for age, gender, disability and other diversity, protection activities also support the advancement towards achieving all SDGs relevant to the response from an inter-sectoral approach, to ensure that no-one is left behind.



EDUCATION

Addressing the educational needs of refugees in Pakistan, Education Sector Working Group (ESWG) partners will support improved access to both formal and non-formal education at primary, middle, secondary, tertiary, and higher education levels, with a specific focus on refugee girls' education. This includes the recent expanded allocation of places for Afghans in higher education institutes. To ensure a safe learning environment and address the low absorption capacity and low retention rates in overcrowded public schools, school infrastructure will be improved, including WASH facilities. To facilitate quality learning, educational and recreational supplies will be provided to refugee children and youth. Refugee and host teachers will have access to continued professional development opportunities, including training that leads to inclusive and student-centred teaching approaches. Post-secondary education will be increased through the provision of higher educational scholarships, advocacy for a higher quota for university admittance, access to careers counselling and private sector internships, and support for certified technical courses for youth.

In line with the area-based approach to programming, the national education system will be strengthened to respond to education needs of all children in an area through capacity building initiatives for partners and education authorities, where appropriate, including through establishing additional educational facilities as required. Communities will be directly mobilized through parent-teacher associations, education committees and teachers' councils to encourage enrolment and retention. Innovative approaches, such as accelerated learning and digital learning, will expand access to education for the most vulnerable students.

Education response modalities will include close coordination with national, provincial and district level education stakeholders through the ESWG. In line with a needs-based approach, education partners will seek to increase the capacity of and improve education facilities, provide capacity building support to teachers and community members, and support vulnerable refugee girls through cash-based assistance.

GCR linkages: In line with the GCR, education interventions will contribute to peaceful co-existence in refugee-hosting communities, maximize investment in public resources and infrastructure, as per national policy. Continued donor support and investments will assist in strengthening the national education system that will benefit both refugee and host communities.

SDG linkages: Pakistan is committed to support inclusive and quality education for all and promoting lifelong learning, as per Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" by 2030.



FOOD SECURITY

Both Afghan refugees and Pakistani host communities have been facing multiple stresses and shocks since 2020 such as extreme weather events due to climate change (including flash floods) COVID-19, crop and livestock pests and diseases, an economic downturn, and high food inflation. The 2022 floods have created additional vulnerabilities for host and refugee communities with regard to food security and livelihoods. The Food Security Agriculture and Livelihoods (FSAL³⁹) sector partners will undertake humanitarian food security and livelihoods related activities and complement response by other sectors, for Afghan refugees and Afghans of other statuses, and host communities, particularly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan provinces. The focus is on highly food insecure vulnerable people

³⁹ In Pakistan the Livelihoods Sector has been incorporated into the Food and Agriculture Sector and it is the FSAL sector working group that provides coordination and oversight to this programming.

affected by multiple shocks. Programming of livelihoods restoration/rehabilitation and resilience building; multiple interventions including capacity building trainings will support the targeted communities with medium to long-term food security and livelihoods improvement and build resilience against multiple shocks. This inclusive targeted approach has been a long-standing component of the Afghan refugee response in Pakistan, mitigating the impacts of hosting a protracted refugee presence. Collaborative approaches on food security with other sectors will support the self-reliance of Afghan refugees and host communities, moderating harmful coping strategies and improving inclusion.

GCR linkages: FSA sector's interventions for host communities and Afghan refugees are designed to meet needs and support communities as per the guidelines (GCR, para 61) on complementary durable solutions. This is especially relevant given the impacts of climate-related shocks affecting the ability of host communities to absorb refugee presence.

SDG linkages: Utilizing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, FSA sector's interventions for Afghan refugees and host communities in Pakistan are linked to SDG Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere, Goal 2 (End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture) and Goal 5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls).



HEALTH & NUTRITION

Health sector interventions are designed to support government health facilities to maintain healthcare systems and ensure access for all population groups. Refugees, ACC card holders, and undocumented and other Afghans living in Pakistan can access government healthcare facilities. The public health system in Pakistan is, however, woefully under-resourced, therefore the extension of essential health services to refugees and other groups has placed additional pressure on the already stretched public health system. This plan will provide critical resource support to health facilities, both within and outside Refugee Villages, thus scaling up the capacity to respond to healthcare needs of refugee and host population. While the majority of health services are free of charge, some specialized services require costly diagnostics procedures, consumables, and medicines, which are not free. A preference for doctors who speak the same language also leads some Afghan patients to seek healthcare in private clinics when they are unable to find doctors in the public healthcare system who speak their language. Refugees and other persons in need of assistance are not yet included in the government social protection schemes and often risk falling into debt and succumbing to harmful coping mechanisms to afford private medical treatment. As such, cash-based interventions to offset healthcare expenses can be a crucial protection tool.

Support envisaged will not only ensure that health facilities are better equipped to deliver preventive and promotive healthcare but will also bring the healthcare system to a level where it can respond effectively to outbreaks and epidemics. In addition to improving the quality of healthcare and expanding the catchment areas to include refugee hosting districts and villages, resources will also support efforts to provide gender-sensitive and all-inclusive assistance across all population groups.

In line with the aim of the Global Compact on Refugees to reduce the burden on the host Government, partners will continue to help the Departments of Health by providing training & technical support to healthcare staff; by procuring and donating essential equipment & machines; as well as by making resources available for the procurement of drugs and consumables required at health facilities.

⁴⁰ In Pakistan the Health and Nutrition Sector is represented by two discreet working groups one focusing on Health led by WFP and one focusing on Nutrition led by UNICEF. The sectoral working groups work in close coordination.

Nutrition sector interventions will enhance the prevention, early detection and treatment of child wasting in 17 districts of Balochistan, eight districts in KP and one district in Sindh province. All children under five years of age and pregnant and lactating mothers will be screened for their nutritional status. Children with severe acute malnutrition (SAM) will be enrolled to Outpatient Therapeutic Program (OTP), while those with moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) will be linked/referred to Targeted Supplementary Feeding Programmes (TSFP). Pregnant and lactating mothers with acute malnutrition will also be referred to TSFP and other community-based malnutrition prevention activities. Children with SAM with medical complications will be referred to the nearby stabilization centres. Moreover, children and pregnant and lactating mothers will be provided with multi-micronutrients.

Children, adolescents, caregivers, and communities will be engaged through participatory behaviour change interventions to improve their nutritional status by adopting key family care practices. Community-based nutrition promotion activities, including the promotion, and support of optimal maternal, infant, and young child feeding (MIYF) practices will be scaled up across the refugee response districts.

Capacity of frontline workers will be raised and reinforced on the delivery of essential and life-saving nutrition interventions through training, on job coaching and technical assistance. Community outreach teams will be engaged in door-to-door screening of children and referral of malnourished cases to nearby nutrition sites and the delivery key messages on MIYCF practices/behaviours. Technical assistance and support will also be provided to the Department of Health on coordination of nutrition sector and nutrition information management to better monitor the humanitarian response.

Standard monitoring check lists endorsed by the Nutrition Working Group will be used in coordination with UNICEF, WHO, WFP, and government counterparts, as well as using third party field monitors.



Wafa Naqvi, a Lady Health Visitor and vaccinator, prepares to vaccinate a child at one of the outreach health camps established during the Immunization Week in Lahore, Punjab province of Pakistan.

© UNICEF/Sami Malik



SHELTER, NFIs & BASIC NEEDS

Shelter & NFI sector activities cover the short to mid-terms solutions through in-kind support and conditional cash assistance for basic needs, shelter, and housing in compliance with government policy towards refugee housing.⁴¹ Other key interventions including provision of multi-purpose cash assistance (MPC), provision of alternate/renewable energy for cooking, and installation of household and street lighting for both refugee and host communities. Partners implementing MPC shall, to the extent possible, align with the social protection schemes of the Government of Pakistan and with the minimum expenditure basket developed by the national Cash Working Group, also in coordination with other agencies providing sectoral cash assistance to ensure complementarity. Substantial efforts will be made to ensure effective communication with communities around assistance (including eligibility, terms, and conditions, safeguards, complaint, feedback, and redress mechanisms).

Partners will be responsive to input from communities and adapt approaches as needed. Refugees and other target populations will receive clear and tailored information about the content of provided and available assistance. Where possible, community-based, or community-led approaches will be used to improve the reach, effectiveness, and sustainability of initiatives. Partners will establish and support the implementation of accessible, confidential, and culturally- and age, gender, and diversity-appropriate communication channels for refugees to provide feedback on services, on the response in general, and to report complaints, including on sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) or fraud. Gender responsive programming will be prioritized to ensure proactive GBV risk mitigation, including in relation to sexual exploitation and abuse.



WASH

Activities proposed under the WASH sector are intended to improve access to safe and sufficient water, basic sanitation, and improved hygiene behaviour for the existing Afghan refugees, residing within refugee villages (RVs) or in hosting communities. Providing adequate WASH services for populations already settled in areas where these services are not present or inadequate is often a challenge. Currently WASH gaps in Refugee Villages center around functionality of water systems and lack of operation and maintenance capacities. In addition, aging infrastructure and irregular electricity supply means potable water is still not available to all refugees. Likewise, sanitation is poor due to impermanent housing structures, existing social norms, and weak sanitation and solid waste management systems. The WASH sector will make substantial effort to ensure that there are no gaps in provision of WASH services for the refugees and surrounding hosting communities, mainstreaming gender responsive programming to address sexual exploitation and abuse.

Service provision/ enhancement will aim to lessen the burden on the resources of the government and in this way the WASH sector proactively contributes to the GCR. Projects work to meet the WASH needs of Refugees and Host communities and support broader solutions to WASH challenges in areas with a high concentration of refugees, including supporting capacities of service providers. By improving access to sustainable WASH infrastructure and improving access for refugees, interventions ease pressure on host communities. Prior to WASH interventions, a full mapping of potential impact/feasibility studies will be conducted, in both refugee and host communities.

⁴¹ This defines that refugees housing should be secure, temporary, dismantlable, and transportable. This is more required in wake of torrential rains, floods, and climatic changes.

Country Cross-Cutting Response Priorities



The Inter-Agency AAP working group has recently been reinvigorated in Pakistan and is working to ensure additional accountability mechanisms are in place at provincial and federal levels.



The Pakistan Refugee Consultative Forum (PRCF) will work with other sectors and thematic working groups, particularly the Inter-Agency PSEA network, to ensure that SEA prevention, risk mitigation, and response measures are fully incorporated in humanitarian programmes. To reflect this essential requirement, a dedicated indicator has been included in the monitoring framework at country-level on SEA risk mitigation and agency focal points are being identified.

Partnership and Coordination

In 2023, partnership and coordination will be enhanced building on the Inter-Agency collaboration that has been strengthened in 2022. The Pakistan Refugee Consultative Forum (PRCF) at both federal and provincial levels oversees overall coordination of the refugee response. The PRCF is co-chaired by the Ministry of SAFRON/ CCAR and UNHCR and includes all the partners in this RRP and other stakeholders supporting refugee programming; an estimated 60-70 partners (both appealing and implementing agencies) attend coordination structures across Pakistan. The Refugee Inter-Sector working group continues as the working-level coordination forum that brings together the Sectoral Working Groups to draw on operational partners’ sectoral expertise from both humanitarian and development communities. The UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2023-2027 is nascent and close coordination will be maintained between the PRCF and Outcome Group work for the UNSDCF to better support the Government’s efforts to achieve the SDG goals and ensure that “no one is left behind”. The Refugee Protection Working Group (RPWG) will continue to ensure focused attention on refugee protection, working in tandem with the existing Protection Sector Working Group that addresses the needs of other vulnerable groups. Meanwhile, an Age/ Disability and Diversity Task Force is being developed, looking specifically at integrating persons with specific protection needs in the wider response.



Notes: This list only includes appealing organizations under the RRP, many of which collaborate with implementing partners to carry out RRP activities. See ‘Budget Summary by Partner’ for partner breakdown per type.

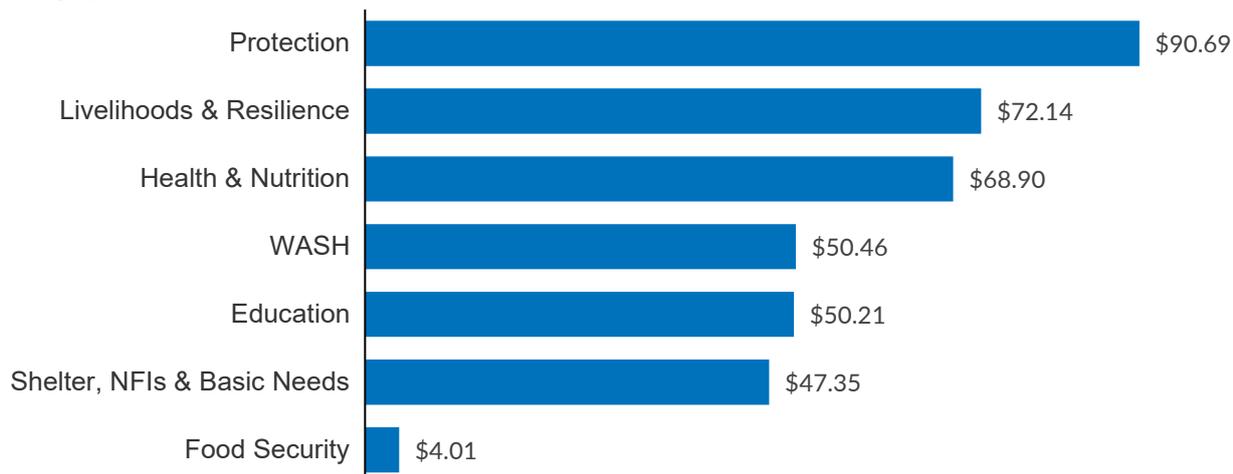
Inter-Agency Financial Requirements




Total Financial Requirements In USD **\$ 383.76 M**

Budget summary by sector at country level

In millions USD



Total Protection requirements		
\$ 90,692,583		
Other protection activities	GBV	Child Protection
\$ 61,544,261	\$ 13,949,241	\$ 15,199,081
16% of total	3.6% of total	4% of total

Total Cash Assistance requirements*					
\$ 28,822,089					
Education	Food security	Health & Nutrition	Livelihoods & Resilience	Protection	Shelter, NFIs & Basic Needs
\$ 468,000	\$ 1,835,902	\$ 489,130	\$12,722,760	\$55,384,261	\$24,894,902

* This is a breakdown by sector of the requirements for cash assistance which are included in the above total sectoral budgets. Cash assistance is pursued and reflected as a key modality of assistance and protection in line with UNHCR's CBI Policy 2022-2026. Cash assistance is used as a cross-cutting modality across the various sectors, including protection, and is budgeted for accordingly and in line with a basic needs approach. As the modality of choice of the people we work with, cash assistance will be used as the primary means to meet immediate basic needs and provide important protection outcomes.

Budget summary by partner type



Budget Summary by Partner

UN: United Nations, INGO: International NGO, NNGO: National NGO, FBO: Faith-based Organization, WLO: Women-led Organization

Partner	Acronym / Short Title	Type	Requirements in US\$
Action Against Hunger Pakistan	ACF	INGO	\$ 2,889,400
Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development	ACTED	INGO	\$ 4,181,715
Alight	Alight	INGO	\$ 1,938,403
Azat Foundation	AF	NNGO	\$ 811,680
Balochistan Rural Support Program	BRSP	NNGO	\$ 2,557,466
CARE International	CIP	INGO	\$ 1,299,000
Catholic Relief Services	CRS	FBO	\$ 1,946,761
Comprehensive Health and Education Forum	CHEFI	NNGO	\$ 625,600
Concern Worldwide	CW	INGO	\$ 239,639
Direct Focus Community Aid	DFCA	NNGO	\$ 208,000
Dopasi Foundation	Dopasi	NNGO	\$ 250,000
Foundation for Rural Development	FRD	NNGO	\$ 1,127,000
Hashoo Foundation	HF	NNGO	\$ 300,000
Health And Nutrition Development Society	HANDS	NNGO	\$ 2,235,241
Human Appeal Pakistan	HA Pak	INGO	\$ 784,500
Hundreds of Original Projects for Employment	HOPE'87	INGO	\$ 1,035,600
Indus Hospital and Health Network	IHHN	NNGO	\$ 5,275,000
Initiative for Development & Empowerment Axis	IDEA	NNGO	\$ 1,886,100
Integrated Social Services Program	ISSP	NNGO	\$ 372,558
International Medical Corps-UK	IMC	INGO	\$ 3,486,000
International Rescue Committee	IRC	INGO	\$ 13,049,729
Islamic Relief Worldwide	IRW	FBO	\$ 1,500,000
Khwendo Kor	KK	WLO	\$ 825,000
Kokkyo naki Kodomotachi	KnK Japan	INGO	\$ 1,056,526
Mercy Corps	Mercy Corps	INGO	\$ 4,369,488
Muslim Hands	MH	FBO	\$ 2,538,036
Pak Mission Society	PMS	NNGO	\$ 460,000
Pakistan Alliance for Girls Education	PAGE	WLO	\$ 1,155,325

REGIONAL REFUGEE RESPONSE PLAN FOR AFGHANISTAN SITUATION

Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund	PPAF	NNGO	\$ 3,591,364
Participatory Rural Development Society (PRDS)	PRDS	NNGO	\$ 963,037
Poverty Eradication Initiative	PEI	NNGO	\$ 537,000
Rabt Development Organization	RDO	NNGO	\$ 1,235,000
Relief International	RI	INGO	\$ 3,470,000
Rural Development Organization RDO Buner	RDO Buner	NNGO	\$ 330,000
Rural Support Programmes Network	RSPN	NNGO	\$ 3,639,809
Salik Development Foundation	SDF	NNGO	\$ 450,000
Save the Children	SCI	INGO	\$ 4,953,848
Secours Islamique France	SIF	FBO	\$ 1,925,000
Society for Human and Environmental Development	SHED	NNGO	\$ 520,000
Takal Welfare Organization	TWO	NNGO	\$ 500,000
Tameer-e-Khalaq Foundation	TKF	NNGO	\$ 626,726
Taraqee Foundation	TF	NNGO	\$ 1,851,987
The Awakening	The Awakening	NNGO	\$ 193,368
UN - Food and Agriculture Organization	FAO	UN	\$ 8,359,849
UN - International Organization for Migration	IOM	UN	\$ 60,637,667
UN - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	UNHCR	UN	\$ 148,330,719
UN - United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund	UNICEF	UN	\$ 39,081,414
UN - United Nations Office for Project Services	UNOPS	UN	\$ 4,000,000
UN - United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime	UNODC	UN	\$ 2,400,000
UN - United Nations Population Fund	UNFPA	UN	\$ 4,585,001
UN - World Food Programme	WFP	UN	\$ 16,487,830
UN - World Health Organization	WHO	UN	\$ 11,816,507
Voluntary Service Overseas	VSO	INGO	\$ 1,671,423
Water, Environment & Sanitation Society	WESS	NNGO	\$ 1,650,000
Women Empowerment Organization	WEO	WLO	\$ 1,000,000
Youth Organization	YO	NNGO	\$ 553,100

Total: \$ 383,764,416

Country Monitoring Results

*The below is a summary of key selected indicators from each sector and does not reflect the entire work of the sectors, the full results framework for each sector will be reported upon in dashboards and reports during 2023.

Sector	Indicator	Target	
	Protection	# of individuals accessing legal assistance	100,000
	Child Protection	# children and caregivers accessing mental health and psychosocial support	178,035
	GBV	# of individuals reached during awareness raising activities	235,000
	Education	# of students and teachers provided with education supplies	350,000
	Food security	# of individuals receiving in-kind food assistance	78,300
	Health & Nutrition	# of severely acutely malnourished girls and boys (6-59 months) successfully treated at nutrition management sites	52,927
	Livelihoods & Resilience (and Socio-Economic Inclusion)	# of individuals trained on entrepreneurial skills, income generation activities	10,500
	Shelter, NFIs & Basic Needs	# of individuals provided with clean energy access	75,000
	WASH	# of persons who have received hygienic supplies	408,300

Tajikistan

Country chapter

> At a Glance

Tajikistan Planned Response January-December 2023



Sectors Involved	Financial requirements in USD	Partners involved
Education	USD 1,808,122	2
Food Security	USD 954,721	1
Health & Nutrition	USD 1,914,168	4
Livelihoods & Resilience	USD 1,440,050	6
Logistics & Telecoms	USD 153,750	1
Protection	USD 4,890,482	7
Shelter, NFIs & Basic Needs	USD 1,108,335	3
WASH	USD 5,218,000	2

Part 1: Current Situation

Situation Overview

Despite positive indications in early 2021, the Tajik Government closed its border with Afghanistan in August 2021 and ceased the issuance of Tajik visas for Afghan nationals in Afghanistan. As such, only those individuals with an existing valid Tajik visa were able to cross the border into Tajikistan. This significantly reduced the number of new arrivals in 2022, since only those who managed to get Tajik visas in transit countries were able to enter. There were 5,705 new arrivals in 2021 but only 21 in 2022.

Access to territory has been restricted, especially for asylum-seekers attempting to enter the country illegally due to existing inconsistencies between the Refugee Law and the country's Criminal Code. Despite the introduction of a non-penalization clause in the 2014 Refugee Law for asylum-seekers entering the country irregularly, the authorities still apply a restrictive approach to accessing Tajik territory. This approach is guided by the Criminal Code, which envisages detention and subsequent deportation for illegal border crossings. Such cases of refoulement often come to the attention of UNHCR post factum due to lack of access to the border by humanitarian partners. Since 2021, [UNHCR has recorded multiple incidents of refugee detentions, forced returns and non-admission to territory](#) for individuals in need of international protection. A UNHCR global non-return advisory for Afghanistan issued in August 2021 and renewed in February 2022,⁴² calls for a ban on forced returns of all Afghan nationals.

Against this backdrop, the Government is expected to continue viewing all population movements, including refugee movements, through national security lenses, with limited regard for protection-sensitive border management. Despite the potential for Afghan refugee flows into Tajikistan, it is expected that Tajikistan's closed border policy will continue in 2023, limiting protection space for asylum-seekers and refugees, limiting the possibility for new arrivals, and creating a high risk of refoulement.

Such tight control measures and desperate situations across the border in Afghanistan may also give rise to smuggling activities, thus putting the lives of refugees at high risk. The Government is ready to allocate areas for refugee accommodation and set up temporary reception facilities at the border crossing points, whose minimum standards of reception are yet to be assessed. Each agency will engage in sectors according to its respective mandate. UNHCR will continue to advocate with the Government for a non-camp arrangement, with settlements placed close to existing communities. Meanwhile, the situation of mandate refugees (who do not enjoy the socio-economic rights provided to Convention Refugees) remains in limbo and UNHCR will continue advocating for avenues to regularize their stay in the country.

The socio-economic situation in Tajikistan will continue to be affected by the war in Ukraine with a significant impact on business and livelihood opportunities not only for refugees but also for the local population. The Government faces a shortfall in revenue to fulfil its 2022 budget commitments, especially in the social sector. Thus, it is likely that state-based programmes to mitigate the effects of the economic downturn on the population will be insufficient. Drug smuggling and violent extremist movements also remain a challenge. International Financial Institutions expect some limited growth in the next year, which may ease the socio-economic situation, but conditions will remain difficult. Against this background, vulnerable populations will remain heavily affected and dependent on humanitarian assistance.

Unrest along Tajikistan's 964-kilometer-long frontier with Kyrgyzstan is an additional concern. Frequent incidents of intercommunal violence as well as skirmishes between border guards along this frontier in 2022 has reportedly internally displaced around 60,000 people, although no official figures or request for support has been received from the Tajik

⁴² <https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/61d851cd4.pdf>

Government. Although the likelihood of cross-border movements is low in this case, displacement from Tajikistan's enclaves inside of the Batken Region of Kyrgyzstan is of concern.

Tajikistan hosts the largest number of registered refugees and asylum-seekers in Central Asia and has ratified several international conventions, including the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol. However, Tajikistan is not yet a state party to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. Nonetheless, the country has progressed well in harmonizing its nationality-related legislation with international standards. The adoption of the Amnesty Law in December 2019 was one of the key acts to fill in the gap in legislation and resolve the most complex situations of statelessness. During the High-Level Segment on Statelessness at UNHCR's Executive Committee meeting in October 2019, Tajikistan committed to: explore the scale of statelessness through the national Census; complete the Civil Registration System reform in the country; secure safeguards for universal childbirth registration regardless of the legal status and possession of identity documents by parents; legalize persons illegally residing on the territory of the Republic of Tajikistan through the adoption of the Amnesty Law; and, consider the issue of ratification of the 1954 and 1961 Conventions.

Most refugees and asylum-seekers are from Afghanistan and are of Tajik ethnicity, followed by Hazaras, Pashtuns and others. The profile of refugees in Tajikistan is of urban nature and refugees and asylum-seekers do not face challenges living in the same communities with the Tajik nationals due to language, cultural and religious similarities. As to stateless persons and those with undetermined nationality, the majority are ethnic Tajiks who were born and have grown up in Tajikistan but lack valid identity documents for several reasons, followed by other nationalities from former Soviet republics, mostly Uzbeks.

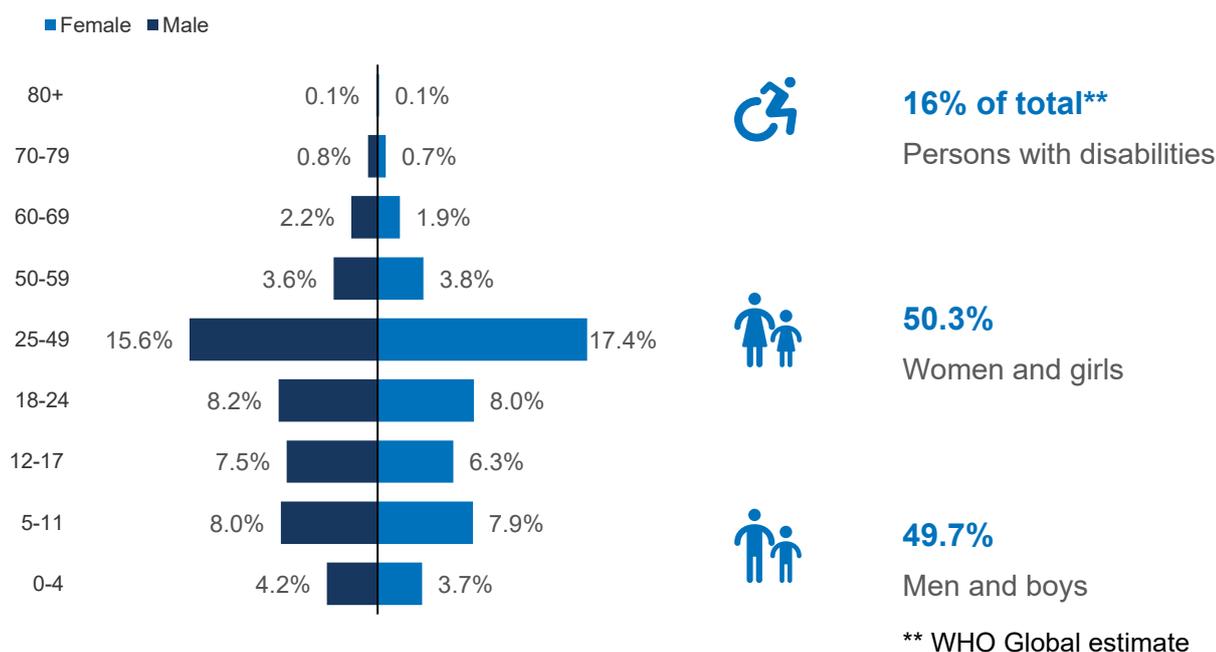


A self-employed Afghan refugee in a local sewing shop in Vahdat, recipient of small business grant from UNHCR, Tajikistan, November 2022

Population Planning Figures

Tajikistan	Afghan Refugee/ refugee-like	Afghans of other Status*	Host Community	Total
Total population	9,700	1,300	9,750,000	
Target population	9,700	1,300	46,000	57,000

Age and gender breakdown*



* UNHCR data.

Country Protection Needs, Vulnerabilities and Risks

It is expected that access to territory and protection space for asylum-seekers and refugees in Tajikistan will continue to be limited in 2023. Asylum-seekers attempting to enter the country informally would be vulnerable to the above-mentioned inconsistencies between Refugee Law and Criminal Code and would be subjected to detention and subsequent deportation/ refoulement for illegal border crossing under the Criminal Code, despite the non-penalisation clause for asylum seekers for illegal border crossing under the 2014 Refugee Law. This may put them at great risk upon their deportation or by forcing those moving illegally into the hands of smugglers, raising many other protection risks.

According to government data, there were 6,081 refugees and 404 asylum-seekers as of November 2022, mostly from Afghanistan and mostly of Tajik ethnicity, followed by Hazaras and Pashtuns. Gender disaggregation suggests nearly one third (30 percent) of the refugee population are adult women, 32 percent adult men, and the rest (38 percent) are children. However, the recent UNHCR biometric verification/CBI distribution in December 2022 captured 9,979 refugees and asylum seekers (8,240 refugees and 1,307 asylum seekers). Most refugees and asylum-seekers live in peri-urban areas near the capital city, Dushanbe, including the towns of Hissor, Rudaki, and Vahdat as well as Jabbor Rasulov in Sughd province. Currently, Afghan refugees do not face challenges living in host communities due to language, cultural and religious similarities. In 2022, UNHCR registered 87 new arrivals and does not envisage a significant increase in the number of asylum-seekers next year, provided the status quo prevails. However, a drastic change in the

humanitarian (food insecurity), human rights, security, and political situation in Afghanistan may lead to an increase in the number of new arrivals. With the job opportunities in Tajikistan being low, the refugee population would be particularly vulnerable to poverty.

In the event of a large refugee influx, the immediate protection needs of the population would be access to territory, protection from refoulement, and access to other life-saving assistance, such as emergency medical care, safe shelter, food, and water/sanitation. Priority protection needs would include full and comprehensive registration and documentation; identification and referral of refugees with heightened protection needs, including unaccompanied and separated children and other children at risk provision of emergency education; prevention and response to GBV; specialized care for persons with specific protection needs and family tracing. A rapid needs assessment and a protection analysis would be carried out at the onset. Special attention would be given to people with specific needs and those at heightened risk, including pregnant women; people with disabilities; single-parent families; single women and girls; people with physical or mental health needs; and victims of violence and torture.

The impacts on host communities would depend on the scale and duration of the displacement. However, support and provision of services to members of host communities as well as refugees with specific needs, would be essential to promote social cohesion. Accordingly, support to local public infrastructure (including health and education facilities) would be important.

National systems on prevention, mitigation, and response to GBV need to be strengthened to ensure access to reproductive health services for GBV survivors, including clinical management of rape, distribution of dignity kits, creation of women safe-spaces, mobile health clinics, etc. as appropriate. Also, it is key to ensure that referral systems are in place to facilitate GBV survivors' access to psychosocial support, safety and security, justice, and socio-economic support.

Part 2: Country Protection and Solutions Strategy

The dire situation in Afghanistan means that the risk of mass influx persists. However, the assumption is that Tajikistan's closed-door policy will continue, and that protection space will continue to be limited with access to territory subject to the possession of a Tajik visa. Nonetheless, advocacy for access to territory and respect for the principle of non-refoulement will continue. Opportunities for durable solutions will also be pursued wherever possible including resettlement as well as complementary pathways like labour mobility schemes. In 2022, 4,213 Afghan refugees departed from Tajikistan to Canada through a Canadian sponsorship programme.

During 2023-2024, to ensure a favourable protection environment in the country and support the realization of basic socio-economic rights, partners will continue to advocate for the proper application of the 2014 Refugee Law and the Amnesty Law 2019, as well as for a suspension of deportations. Partners will also support the Government to ensure that necessary policy, laws, and procedures are in place to provide solutions for refugees and asylum-seekers as well as for persons with undetermined nationality.

Country Strategic Objectives

SO1: Attaining a favourable protection environment and securing solutions: Partners will seek to ensure a favourable protection environment for refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless individuals through improved legislative frameworks, unhindered access to territory, status determination, as well as access to justice and documentation. Durable solutions will be pursued where possible through resettlement and complementary pathway (particularly labour mobility). Limited voluntary repatriation may also occur, despite the dire situation in Afghanistan.

SO2: Realizing basic rights and access to basic social services: Partners will seek to support rehabilitation and construction of basic social services as part of burden-sharing to support government efforts in communities where refugees are residing.

SO3: Enhance refugee self-reliance, economic inclusion, and livelihoods: The plan will seek to promote access to sustainable employment and livelihoods, by engaging with line ministries and private sector for refugee employment, in line with the national planning and the UNSDCF.

SO4: Ensure emergency preparedness: Ensure emergency preparedness and response, in support of government efforts, through continued risk analysis, scenario building, contingency plan revision and prepositioning of emergency humanitarian assistance to prepare for potential influx.

HIGHLIGHTS

Ending Statelessness

In addition to the Afghan refugee situation, statelessness is a major issue being tackled by the humanitarian community in Tajikistan and across Central Asia, led by UNHCR owing to its mandate. Since 2014, the Government of Tajikistan, UNHCR and civil society partners have been carrying out a project to address statelessness. Since then, **the project has supported confirmation of nationality for more than 54,092 stateless persons**. However, there are strong indications that the issue of statelessness is still widespread throughout the country. Certain groups of persons with undetermined nationality such as girls and women, the poor, older persons, and persons with disabilities, children, and Jugi (Roma) ethnic minority, remain in the category of extremely vulnerable in terms of accessing state services and obtaining identity documents. COVID-19 and negative socio-economic consequences of the war in Ukraine have adversely impacted their situation, putting them in a more vulnerable situation as many de-prioritized spending their limited resources on costs associated with documentation to meet their daily needs, especially food and healthcare.

Advocacy will continue to ensure that the Government fulfils its commitment to prevention and reduction of statelessness and fulfils its pledges, including accession to two Statelessness Conventions by the end of 2024 thus accomplishing its commitments under of Global Action Plan to end Statelessness. These commitments include:

- Action 1 (to resolve existing major situations of statelessness)
- Action 2 (ensure that no child is born stateless, by providing universal birth registration and certification)
- Action 7 (ensure birth registration for the prevention of statelessness)
- Action 9 (accede to UN Statelessness Conventions)

Sectoral Responses



PROTECTION

The Protection Sector chaired by UNHCR will focus on continuous border monitoring through field missions; improving the capacities of border guards through training on human rights and refugee law and the implementation of referral mechanisms/safeguards; meeting the basic needs of the most vulnerable through cash assistance for protection purposes along with dignity kits; and, scaling up the existing community-based feedback mechanisms. Capacity building will continue for members of the National Refugee Status Determination (RSD) Commission as well as advocacy for UNHCR's observer status in the State RSD Commission. The sector will work with the Government to ensure the functionality of the Temporary Accommodation Centre for asylum-seekers.

Advocacy will focus on several key issues, including: access to territory, non-refoulement; complementary forms of protection and non-penalization for irregular border crossing to seek asylum, the abrogation of Government Resolution 325, which limits freedom to choose place of residence for refugees and asylum-seekers; regularization of the legal stay of mandate refugees so that they can access basic socio-economic rights, and, ensuring that refugees and stateless people are mainstreamed into national social assistance schemes and enjoy unhindered access to education, health, and other public services.

Sub-Sector: Child Protection

Chaired by UNICEF, the sub-sector will focus on identification of children at risk and provision of child protection services. With UNHCR support and technical guidance, the Sub-Sector will implement the Best Interests Procedure (BIP) and train the relevant authorities and humanitarian actors, while supporting the inclusion of children into national child protection systems. In addition, to conduct life and social skills training for teachers, social workers host and refugee families.

Sub-sector: GBV

Chaired by UNFPA, the sub-sector will focus on developing the capacities on GBV prevention, risk mitigation and response on three levels: government officials, humanitarian actors, and refugees and host communities. To support strengthening the national systems on GBV, the Sub-Sector will train government officials on survivor centred GBV case management and response services. Close collaboration with other sectors on GBV risk mitigation will be carried out and prevention activities will be implemented with the refugee and host community, including through awareness raising



EDUCATION

A Rapid Teaching and Learning Needs Assessment (RTLNA) of Afghan children based on their grades/subjects will be conducted, including any disability/special education needs of children. In addition, following the holistic RTLNA, the Sector will develop a child friendly and gender-sensitive Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP) to address immediate learning needs of pre-primary, primary and secondary age Afghan children, including adolescents, that may include the following courses: computer science, English language, early childhood education, courses for learning Cyrillic script for Afghans, Subject and grade specific support, Skill building and Afghan-Tajik integration for children, Social and Emotional Learning.

Additionally, the 2023 RRP considers working with Ministry of Education and Sciences (MoES) and its affiliated agencies to develop a “training of trainers” pack for Tajik and Afghan teachers and caregivers to work with children in schools and in out-of-school settings. Jointly with the Academy of Education of Tajikistan and Education Development Institute, the Sector will ensure the ALP package includes: Capacity-building training for teachers; children’s learning pre- and post-evaluation; formative and summative assessment sets; subject-specific and supplementary teaching and learning resources, including “School in a Box,” and Recreational and Adolescent Kits; and ICT supplies, like laptops and tablets with internet connection for blended and distance learning modalities.



FOOD SECURITY

In case of an influx the Food Security and Agriculture (FSA) Sector will support sites in proximity to border crossing and refugee settlements with food and logistic assistance following a modular plan which will cover the initial 72 hour needs of newly arrived refugees. This will be followed by support to kitchens at refugee settlements or dry-rations and fresh

food complementary rations depending upon the final design of the future settlements including Balkhi refugee settlement. Where possible support to Host Communities in border areas will be included in preparedness and response activities.

Food support modalities will consist of in-kind food assistance followed by a cash-based interventions (CBI). In-kind food support – which consists of fortified wheat flour, vegetable oil, pulses, iodized salt, and fresh items – will be provided during the first three months. To strengthen life-saving preventive nutrition services for vulnerable population groups (women and children) a formulated supplementary food for infants and young children (Super Cereal+) will be included in the in-kind support. CBI will apply for the next six months covering needs of the refugees at settlements.

For the in-situ population in Tajikistan, following needs assessments, partners will target vulnerable Afghans and members of the host community with cash assistance for food security purposes, as well as in-kind food assistance where appropriate and needed. Post Distribution Monitoring will also be conducted after distributions to ensure that the assistance meets the needs of the affected population.

Implementation of the activities by FSA Sector will contribute to Sustainable Development Goal 2, ‘*End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.*’



HEALTH & NUTRITION

Health response to the possible refugee influx will focus on the health needs during and after fleeing – to ensure the availability, accessibility, acceptability, affordability, and quality of essential services in transit and host environments, as well as addressing vulnerability to health risks, exposure to potential hazards, stress, and increased susceptibility to abuse, violence, stigmatization, and discrimination. Coordination by the Ministry of Health, WHO, and the existing DCC Health/ emergency sub-group will be used as a platform to discuss health and nutrition needs and to coordinate the response.

Hospital preparedness planning will be prioritized – each hospital/department will develop its emergency plans with defined roles and responsibilities, surge and deployment capacities, emergency stocks, logistics. In addition, training would be provided for health care providers (at regional and district levels) in providing First Aid, mass casualty management, Infection Prevention and Control (IPC), Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE), Infectious Diseases Control and Epidemiologic Surveillance. Emergency health kits will be stockpiled regionally to respond to immediate health needs. Lastly, in respect of RCCE, both refugee and host communities will be provided with the Information Education and Communication (IEC) materials listing locations where they can access health services and receive risk communication messages.



LIVELIHOODS & RESILIENCE (AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC INCLUSION)

The key priorities for the Sector are: (i) strengthening capacity of local vocational institutions and education facilities; and (ii) promoting economic inclusion through contribution of resources and expertise to stimulate job creation, income generation initiatives and entrepreneurship programmes for host community members and refugees.

RRP partners will promote access to sustainable employment and livelihoods and engage with line ministries and private sector to promote refugees’ employment. They will focus on improving access of refugees, especially women and young people and persons with disabilities to vocational training and skills development programmes. Drawing on the needs of the local labour market, partners will cooperate with host communities and the private sector to expand economic

inclusion of refugees into the local economy, thus **contributing to the national strategic priority for productive employment development and achievement of SDGs 1, 4, 5, and 8**. In addition to grant schemes, seed funding, cash and in-kind support for livelihood projects provided to refugees, RRP partners will strengthen the target group's awareness on legal frameworks on employment, entrepreneurship and livelihoods in Tajikistan. Refugee support actions will be aligned with local development planning, disaster preparedness and early warning initiatives, and will be accompanied by capacity building and institutional strengthening of local government, local community leaders and key stakeholders to ensure peaceful coexistence and social cohesion.



SHELTER, NFIs & BASIC NEEDS

The primary objective of Shelter/NFI Sector will be to respond to a refugee influx by ensuring an interagency coordination and arrangements for timely provision of basic emergency shelter and non-food items and cash assistance as appropriate to arriving refugees. Key activities include the prepositioning of core relief items (CRI) for up to 5,000 new arrivals and setting up of refugee reception infrastructures at border-crossing points (BCP) bordering Afghanistan.

This includes site identification and development, installation of tents, medical and security screening areas, first aid health point, NFI distribution area. The prioritized BCPs for establishing such structures would be Panji Poyon and Ishkashim. The reception arrangements would also include establishing temporary refugee accommodation facilities in areas away from the border where refugees would be placed after having completed the national medical and security screening procedures at the border. Support for host community areas will also be included. Planned activities will be implemented in coordination with the WASH, Health, Food Security, and Protection Sectors.

For the in-situ population in Tajikistan, following needs assessments, vulnerable Afghans and members of the host community will be targeted with cash-based interventions for shelter/NFI and purposes as well as to cover their most basic Needs. Post Distribution Monitoring will also be conducted after distributions to ensure that the assistance meets the needs of the affected population.



WASH

To consolidate gains made in previous years and to address the identified needs, the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) sector will continue to target social institutions, including schools and healthcare facilities, where Afghan children in the country are enrolled. Additionally, the response provided in the form of establishing WASH infrastructure in the temporary accommodation centre for refugees will continue to be supported in case of a sudden influx and availability of WASH services and infrastructure at reception centres in districts bordering Afghanistan will be ensured.

The response will target the most urgent needs of up to 8,500 Afghan refugees and 11,500 host community members including providing access to a sufficient quantity of water, safe and equitable sanitation and hygiene and waste management services both in urban and rural areas and providing hygiene kits to the affected population (safe water storage containers, chlorine/tablets for water disinfection, soap, personal hygiene items). To improve access and the quality of services, assistance will mainly include infrastructure development and in-kind provisions.

As well as addressing the specific needs of refugees and asylum-seekers, the response will support host communities in the spirit of burden sharing, due to a difficult socio-economic environment, high poverty levels, and limited access to resources. Public infrastructure will be handed over to national/ local authorities to ensure sustainability of the response.

The WASH sector will also have an emphasis on building resilience of refugees and strengthening durable, long-term WASH interventions in urban, peri-urban, and rural areas, including empowering host communities to be more shock-responsive and strengthening the capacities of the Government. At the institutional and community levels, the plan will support the achievement of SDG 6.1 and 6.2 to achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water, and adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all.

Country Cross-Cutting Response Priorities



RRP partners in Tajikistan are fully committed to the principle of AAP considering age, gender, and diversity (AGD), and community-based approaches. Participatory assessments will be conducted at least once a year and the outcomes of assessments and suggestions made will be incorporated into planning. Regular gatherings in the form of town hall meetings as well as focus group discussions will be held in the main refugee-hosting locations to review current progress of implementation, collect feedback from communities and adjust activities, if needed. Existing community feedback and mechanisms (outreach, meetings, consultations, hotline, etc.) will be strengthened. Efforts will be taken to ensure meaningful participation of affected populations in all stages of programme cycle management. The Protection Working Group (WG) members will provide guidance and technical expertise to humanitarian actors, including sector leads on community-based protection (CBP) approaches and ensure that protection standards, risks, and mitigation measures are factored into planning and implementation.



Drawing on its commitment to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse, humanitarian actors (mainly UN Agencies) have developed a PSEA Inter-Agency Plan. The implementation of the plan will start at the beginning of 2023 and will be extended to other humanitarian partners. All agencies and partners' staff will undergo mandatory training on PSEA. This will be a pre-requisite for any organization to start any activities related to RRP.

Capacity building on PSEA will be conducted for local authorities, host communities, and affected population. Existing community feedback mechanisms will be strengthened and will include safe channels of communication. Relevant SOPs will be updated to ensure due observance of PSEA across the board. Protection Working Group members will ensure that PSEA is meaningfully mainstreamed across the humanitarian response. It is envisaged that initially PSEA activities will fall under the coordination of the Protection Working Group. However, depending on the needs, it could be further transformed to a standalone Inter-Agency PSEA Working Group.

Partnership and Coordination

In support of the Government of Tajikistan, UNHCR leads and coordinates the response. Through the Inter-sector Coordination Group interagency preparedness and response efforts are being put in place, in collaboration with UN Agencies, international organizations, civil society and other humanitarian actors. The Refugee Coordination Model includes a clear coordination structure covering different thematic areas and sectors of response. Depending on the context and capacity, other agencies, are assuming lead and co-lead role under relevant sector in coordination with UNHCR. UNICEF, WFP, WHO and others have taken the lead in the sectors according to their mandate and capacity and are mobilizing resources in collaboration with partners. A Joint Preparedness and Response Action Plan, cascading down from current Response Plan, contemplates detailed description/checklist of activities to be carried out by each agency starting from reception, further relocation, and accommodation.

In addition to the current partners under the plan in Tajikistan, additional partners will be encouraged to join coordination structures. UNHCR will pursue the formalization of a cooperation with the Border Guards Service through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding. Strategic partnerships will be forged between UN Agencies, national and international NGOs, donors, intergovernmental organization like the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, and international financial institutions.



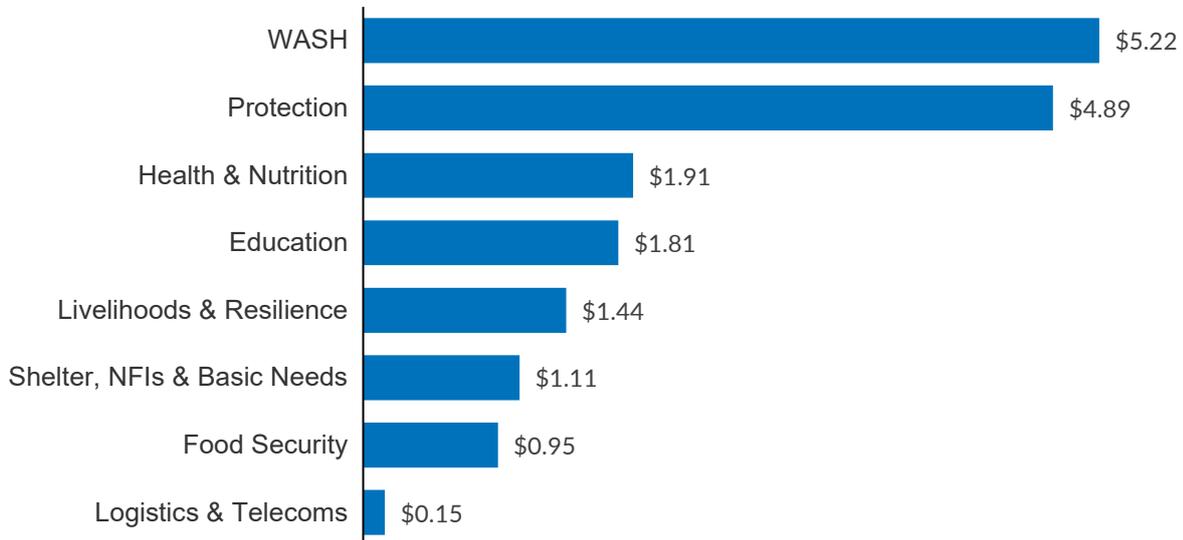
Notes: This list only includes appealing organizations under the RRP, many of which collaborate with implementing partners to carry out RRP activities. See 'Budget Summary by Partner' for partner breakdown per type.

Inter-Agency Financial Requirements



Budget summary by sector at country level

In millions USD



Other protection activities \$ 4,125,471 23.6% of total	GBV \$ 245,011 1.4% of total	Child Protection \$ 520,000 3% of total	Protection \$ 2,139,378	Shelter, NFIs & Basic Needs \$ 853,335	Food security \$ 713,165	Health & Nutrition \$ 200,000
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* This is a breakdown by sector of the requirements for cash assistance which are included in the above total sectoral budgets. Cash assistance is pursued and reflected as a key modality of assistance and protection in line with UNHCR's CBI Policy 2022-2026. Cash assistance is used as a cross-cutting modality across the various sectors, including protection, and is budgeted for accordingly and in line with a basic needs approach. As the modality of choice of the people we work with, cash assistance will be used as the primary means to meet immediate basic needs and provide important protection outcomes.

Budget summary by partner type

 11 Partners involved	 UN Agencies \$17,081,696	 International NGOs \$405,932
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Budget Summary by Partner

UN: United Nations, INGO: International NGO

Partner	Acronym / Short Title	Type	Requirements in US\$
Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development	ACTED	INGO	\$ 385,000
Mission East	Mission East	INGO	\$ 20,932
UN- International Organization for Migration	IOM	UN	\$ 4,243,000
UN - United Nations Development Programme	UNDP	UN	\$ 70,000
UN - United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women	UNWOMEN	UN	\$ 310,400
UN - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	UNHCR	UN	\$ 2,745,015
UN - United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund	UNICEF	UN	\$ 8,020,000
UN - United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime	UNODC	UN	\$ 190,000
UN - United Nations Population Fund	UNFPA	UN	\$ 258,560
UN - World Food Programme	WFP	UN	\$ 954,721
UN - World Health Organization	WHO	UN	\$ 290,000
Total:			\$ 17,487,628

Country Monitoring Results

*The below is a summary of key selected indicators from each sector and does not reflect the entire work of the sectors, the full results framework for each sector will be reported upon in dashboards and reports during 2023.

Sector	Indicator	Target	
	Protection	# of trainings provided to border guards on access to territory and implementation of referral mechanisms	4
	Child Protection	# of children at heightened risk support by Best Interests Procedure	5,080
	GBV	# of trainings on GBV prevention provided	3
	Education	# of primary and secondary school-aged students supported to access formal and non-formal education, including early learning (ALP, accelerated education, literacy programs)	10,370
	Food security	# of individuals receiving CBI for food security purposes	1,400
	Health & Nutrition	# of health facilities supported with equipment, medicines and medical supplies, salaries	13
	Livelihoods & Resilience (and Socio-Economic Inclusion)	# of individuals benefiting from vocational training	1,935
	Logistics, Telecoms & Operational Support	# of warehouses maintained for safe storage of relief items	1
	Shelter, NFIs & Basic Needs	# of individual who received CBI for shelter/NFI purposes.	10,150
	WASH	# of persons who have received hygienic supplies	20,000

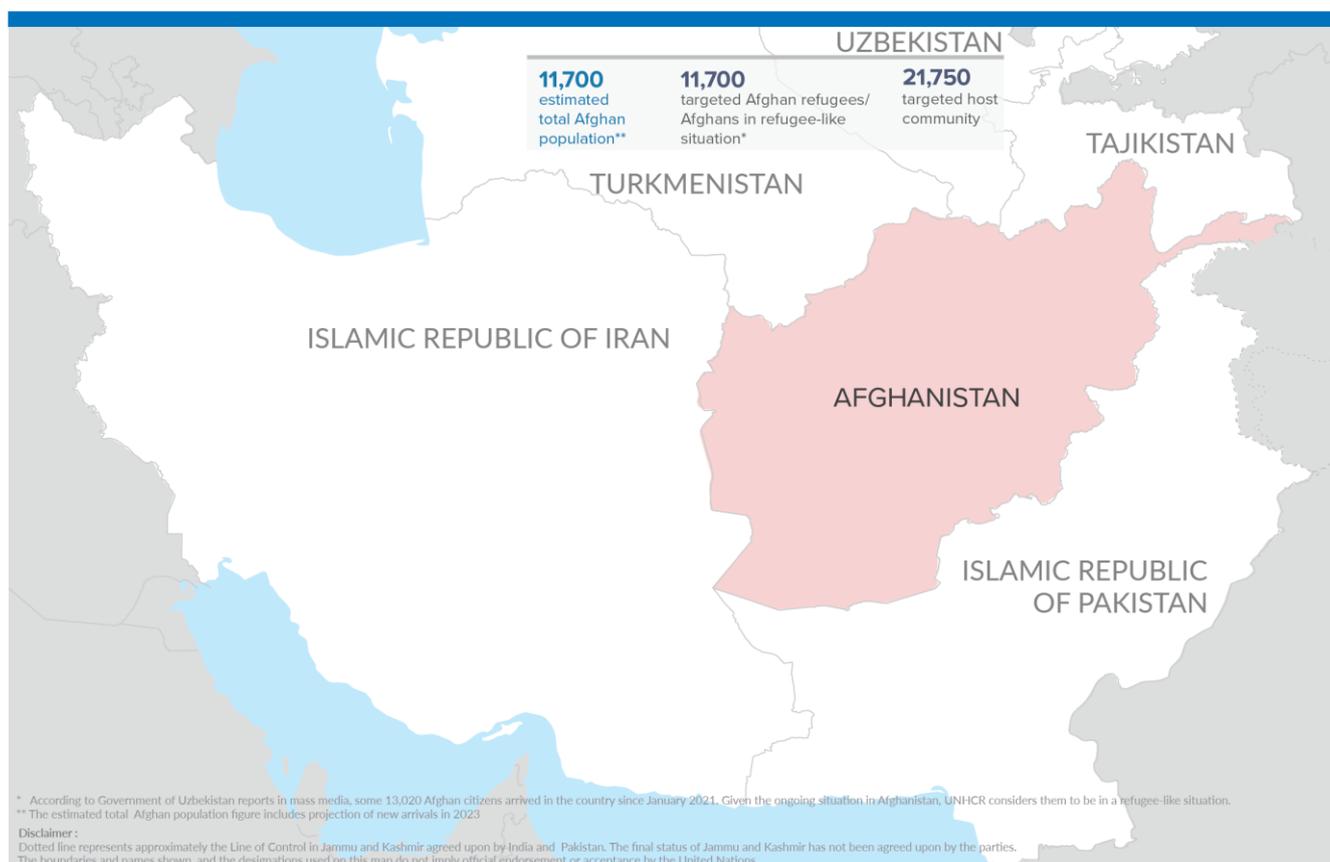
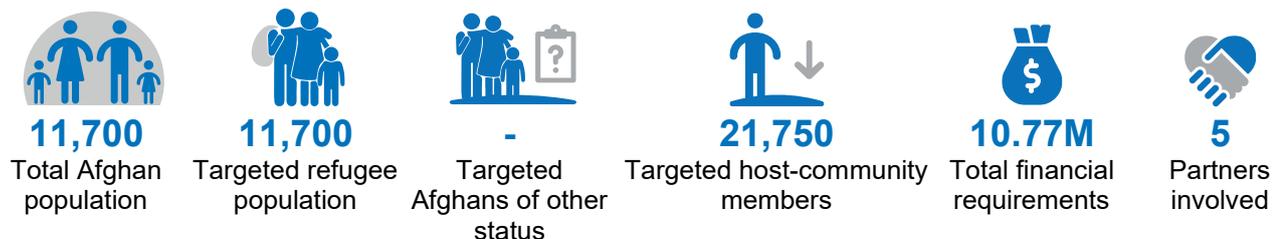
Uzbekistan

Country chapter



At a Glance

Uzbekistan Planned Response January-December 2023



Sectors Involved	Financial requirements in USD	Partners involved
Education	USD 300,000	1
Health & Nutrition	USD 471,000	3
Livelihoods & Resilience	USD 2,322,404	4
Logistics & Telecoms	USD 700,000	1
Protection	USD 3,579,425	4
Shelter, NFIs & Basic Needs	USD 2,502,917	2
WASH	USD 896,000	1

Part 1: Current Situation

Situation Overview

In late 2016, Uzbekistan started reforms with its new leadership aiming to drive growth by re-engaging internationally and reorienting the public sector to provide quality services to its citizens. Achieving long-term and sustained economic growth is feasible if structural reforms are backed up by considerable investments in public administration, rule of law, human rights, labour rights, gender equality, natural resource use, and environmental management dimensions. To achieve this ambition, Uzbekistan has confirmed its commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). While significant gains on labour rights, gender equality, and human rights have been made in recent years, more needs to be done if the Government wants to ensure inclusive rights-based development for all, especially people forced to flee.

Uzbekistan shares a 144 km border with the north of Afghanistan, with likely entry points for refugees being through the town of Hairatan in the northern Balkh province of Afghanistan to Termez in the Surkhandarya region of Uzbekistan, along the riverine border. Prior to mid-August 2021, Afghan passport holders could enter Uzbekistan on tourist visas, however access has since been restricted to only those with education, business, or diplomatic visas. In November 2021, the Government of Uzbekistan reported via mass media that 13,020 Afghan citizens had arrived in the country on short-term visas, of whom around 2,000 still had valid visas as of July 2022 (latest data available). In 2022, RRP partners did not receive official information on the number of Afghan citizens in Uzbekistan and did not have official access to this group to carry out systematic needs assessments or protection monitoring. Given the continuing volatile situation in Afghanistan, and the absence of a national asylum framework in Uzbekistan, RRP partners consider these people to be in a refugee-like situation. RRP partners continue to advocate with the Government for access to the group, and to enable safe and unhindered access to territory.

Visa issuance remains a significant problem for Afghan citizens in Uzbekistan, with individuals facing expensive and repeated visa renewal processes. Afghans on short-term visas face additional challenges linked to legal status including difficulties accessing medical services, education, and livelihoods. There are reports of babies born to Afghan families in Uzbekistan being denied birth registration. Afghans who cannot afford visa renewals, run out of pages in their visas, or turn 16 and need a new visa, must leave the country – at risk to their lives and safety.

Uzbekistan is not a party to the 1951 Refugee Convention nor its 1967 Protocol and does not have a national asylum system. The only avenue to seek asylum is the 2017 Presidential Decree on Political Asylum. While the definition of a political asylee is similar to the refugee definition, the procedure is not in line with international standards and its implementation is unknown. However, refugees who have attempted to apply through this process in 2022 informed UNHCR of not being able to lodge applications. At the 30th session of the Universal Periodic Review of the Human Rights Council of 2018, Uzbekistan supported the recommendation to ratify the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol. The next report of Uzbekistan to the Universal Periodic Review is due on 1 July 2023.

In partnership with the National Human Rights Centre of the Republic of Uzbekistan, and with support by the UN Resident Coordinator's Office, in June 2022 UNHCR facilitated discussions between representatives of Ministries, the General Prosecutor's Office, and the National Security Service, as well as other State agencies and international organizations on the establishment of provisional solutions to allow forcibly displaced persons in need of international protection in Uzbekistan access to due rights guaranteed by international and national law.

The economic outlook in Uzbekistan was bleak even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, with inflation reaching over 20 percent in 2018. The pandemic brought additional economic and social challenges. However, in early 2022 the economy of Uzbekistan started showing strong signs of recovery, with inflation falling to single digits for the first time in years and unemployment rates almost reduced to pre-pandemic levels. The war in Ukraine, and the resulting sanctions on Russia have threatened the country's development priorities, including its national Sustainable Development Goals, by sharply

increasing food and energy prices (inflation rising again to over 12 per cent), and eroding the incomes of already vulnerable households.

Population Planning Figures

Uzbekistan	Afghan Refugee/ refugee-like	Afghans of other Status	Host Community	Total
Total population	11,700	-	34,920,000	
Target population	11,700	-	21,750	33,450

Country Protection Needs, Vulnerabilities and Risks

Given the volatile situation inside Afghanistan, key protection priorities remain ensuring the safe and unhindered access to territory for civilians fleeing persecution and violence, and that people seeking international protection are not forcibly returned, have access to proper registration, documentation, and asylum procedures, and are treated in accordance with the principles of national and international law.

In partnership with the Government, and with input from the UN Country Team, in early 2022 UNICEF drafted the tools to conduct a rapid assessment of Afghan citizens in Surkhandarya region and offered to deliver training on the methodology for government representatives to undertake the effort. It was reported back to the UN Country Team that an assessment was conducted by authorities, however the results were never shared with the UNCT. As such, RRP partners rely primarily on information from Afghan citizens contacting the UN or involved in other ongoing humanitarian and development initiatives.

From the information that is available, the situation of many Afghan citizens in Uzbekistan has become increasingly difficult. Of the more than 700 Afghan citizens in Uzbekistan who contacted RRP partners, most reported their greatest challenges as being economic hardship, and lack of access to legal stay, employment, medical services, and the national social protection systems.

Visa issuance remains a significant challenge, including the technicalities of how to access visa renewal, and official and unofficial costs involved – the visa renewal fee is USD 120 per person, for one month, which is particularly difficult for families. Those without valid visas cannot access education or medical services. Some Afghan nationals report running out of empty pages in their passports for visas, and that the Embassy of Afghanistan is unable to issue new passports. Minors who have since turned 16 are expected to have their own passport and visa, which requires them to return to Afghanistan. Without the required documentation, they fear that they are at imminent risk of deportation. Additionally, there have been reports that some Afghan citizens without a valid visa in Uzbekistan are facing difficulties registering the birth of their children.

Though the Government has stated that it will not forcibly return Afghan nationals to Afghanistan, towards the end of 2022 there have been reports of Afghan nationals receiving exit visas when they requested extension of their visa to stay in Uzbekistan. Consequently, some have felt forced to return to Afghanistan due to this. Those who are unable to extend their visa are expected to pay fines. There is an urgent need to find a solution in line with international standards to provide access to asylum and legal stay to Afghan citizens in Uzbekistan who remain in legal limbo, and to ensure access to rights and services.

Due to their challenging situation many Afghans experience the collapse of family and community safety nets and other protection mechanisms, and long-standing gender inequalities, can magnify the risks of GBV – especially for women and girls. Protection is a concern of all humanitarian actors, especially specialized GBV response actors which have a critical role to play in providing quality GBV services by strengthening their service provision capacities.

The child protection system in Uzbekistan is very nascent and community-based child protection mechanisms are very weak. There is an urgent need to enhance systems and capacities in child protection, including case management, legal aid, MHPSS, preventative and response services for child victims of violence, abuse, and exploitation, and to ensure appropriate alternative care for unaccompanied and/or separated children.

A further deterioration of the situation in Afghanistan could lead to the arrival of an additional 5,400 Afghan arrivals in 2023, many of whom may have specific protection needs. This may include high numbers of older persons; children, including unaccompanied and separated children and other children at risk; women-headed households; survivors of GBV; persons with serious health conditions; persons with legal or physical protection needs, persons with a LGBTIQ+ profile, and persons with disabilities.

Children whose parents have valid visas can attend public primary and secondary schools. However, those who did not have the opportunity to bring their school certificates and relevant documentation when fleeing Afghanistan report being rejected by schools. Some parents report not being able to enrol their children in pre-school education because of their challenging financial situations. Language of instruction is an additional challenge, as well as differences between the educational levels of the two countries – some children are being enrolled in classes lower than their age. Afghan children in Uzbekistan need support with catch-up language courses and academic subjects to ensure they can continue their education.

Similarly, Afghan adults have reported difficulties accessing the formal and informal labour market in Uzbekistan due to language barriers. Social inclusion and economic self-reliance are essential to ensure the well-being of Afghan citizens in Uzbekistan. Afghan nationals with tourist visas do not have access to legal employment and local integration. Without legal status as refugees, they cannot exercise their social rights and, as a result, continue to face serious socio-economic hardship.

With access to social structures and health systems disrupted, existing sexual and reproductive health needs and inequalities are heightened. Women and girls face increased risks of unintended pregnancy, maternal complications leading to disability or death, sexual and GBV, unsafe abortions, and sexually transmitted infections.

In areas of Uzbekistan bordering Afghanistan, land degradation, water scarcity, and natural hazards exacerbated by climate change continue to negatively impact livelihoods, drive migration, and generate vulnerabilities in local communities. Host communities in these and other areas where Afghans may be hosted are already economically marginalized and facing poverty and are therefore equally in need of humanitarian assistance and support to access quality services.

Options for durable solutions are limited, in the absence of an asylum system that may include legal provisions on which Afghan refugees can apply for naturalization. Voluntary repatriation is limited given the situation in Afghanistan.

Part 2: Country Protection and Solutions Strategy

The RRP reflects Inter-Agency efforts to ensure humanitarian partners in Uzbekistan have the response capacities to support the Government and other local authorities to meet the critical needs of Afghan citizens already in the country, as well as any potential new arrivals. Partners will coordinate actions with respective authorities to ensure protection through assistance and resilience-building activities in host communities, strengthening the capacity of government counterparts to ensure sustainability and responsibility-sharing.

Partners will continue to advocate for safe and unhindered access to territory and for the establishment of national asylum procedures, including referral mechanisms, and the establishment of interim arrangements enabling Afghans already in the country to legalize their stay and access essential services, as well as data on Afghan populations from the government to better understand the situation of those who may be in need of international protection. Expert

technical assistance and capacity building will be provided on asylum for the judiciary, and for migration authorities and border officials.

Should Uzbekistan establish interim arrangements and referral mechanisms for persons in need of international protection in the country and commence registration of Afghan citizens (or anyone in the country seeking asylum), RRP partners will support the host Government, including with human resources and engagement of local partners to provide community-based protection and address basic needs.

In 2023, RRP partners will aim to support the resilience of Afghans and their host communities, including through investments in key areas of national infrastructure, such as education, health, social welfare/protection and by supporting livelihoods for Afghans and host communities. The joint RRP partner response will include community-based interventions, cross-border collaboration with the Humanitarian Country Team in Afghanistan, and durable solutions as feasible.

Among the most vulnerable of the host and refugee populations, women and girls will continue to be prioritized for assistance. Interventions will aim to prevent the risk of GBV and of sexual exploitation and abuse. Children at risk and their families and caregivers will also be prioritized, and child protection risks identified and addressed in all areas of the humanitarian response.

Areas of Uzbekistan bordering Afghanistan are economically marginalized, with high poverty levels, and environmental and demographic stressors, which drives labour migration. To ensure self-reliance, social cohesion, peace, and stability in communities neighbouring Afghanistan and/or accommodating Afghan citizens, the basic needs for assistance and services of the most vulnerable and at-risk groups will also be addressed. Support provided to refugees will be extended also to local communities – addressing critical needs through a holistic programme also benefiting the local population. Host communities will benefit from targeted livelihoods projects, including income generation or employment programmes. Enhanced linkages will be made with the local labour market and support provided to businesses, entrepreneurs, and small to medium enterprises. Improved access to finance for youth and women will be prioritized in addition to cash-for-work and other cash-related programmes as appropriate. Programmes will also include basic infrastructure support and support to ensure inclusive social services, education, and access to justice.

Country Strategic Objectives

SO1: Promote safe access to territory and asylum, prevent refoulement and provide support to national systems to implement inclusive policies. Access to territory will be promoted including through continued advocacy and provision of technical expertise for implementation of interim measures; access to registration, documentation, and referrals; establishment of national asylum legislation as well as capacity building for government authorities on access to territory, non-refoulement, asylum and refugee status determination. Support will also be provided to the Government to fulfil the recommendations addressed to the authorities in the Universal Periodic Review, including implementing the standards of the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol.

SO2: Meet immediate and longer-term needs by reinforcing local and national systems. This will be done by ensuring enhanced access to quality child protection support, expanded access to education, improved resilience and livelihoods of Afghan communities.

SO3: Respond to basic needs and ensure emergency preparedness. The basic needs of the most vulnerable displaced and host populations will be met through in-kind and cash-based assistance, cross-cutting human rights-based protection interventions, and improved access to quality basic and social services. This will be achieved through individual assistance and community-based support.

Termez Regional Humanitarian Logistics Hub

■ In August 2021, the Government of Uzbekistan offered the use of the Termez Cargo Centre – a logistics facility on its border with Afghanistan – to help international humanitarian aid efforts.⁴³ With support from the Government, UNHCR established its Regional Humanitarian Logistics Hub within the Termez Cargo Centre, serving Afghanistan, neighbouring countries, and beyond. In June 2022, by a decree of President Mirziyoyev, the Termez Cargo Center was given the status of an ‘International Multifunctional Transport and Logistics Hub’ for the provision of humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan and other States.⁴⁴ In the first year of operations, UNHCR sent 217 trucks/ 2,485 tons of essential relief items from its hub to support emergency responses in Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, and Ukraine.

Sectoral Responses



PROTECTION

The Protection sector will advocate for safe and unhindered access to territory, establishment of national asylum procedures including referral mechanisms, and prevention of refoulement. It will provide expert technical assistance for capacity building on asylum for the judiciary, migration authorities and border officials. Trainings and simulation exercises will be delivered to strengthen the capacity of the Government to respond to an influx of new arrivals in accordance with international standards. If possible, support will be provided for the registration of arrivals, documentation and early identification and referrals of persons with specific needs. Advocacy will be conducted for the provision of access to national social protection programmes for Afghan individuals and families in Uzbekistan. Meanwhile, access to social services will be streamlined through a network of community-based social workers (with a strong representation of women). Service provision will be enhanced by strengthening local capacity and utilizing the “Social Services in a makhalla” digital platform of the Single Registry, the national management information system of social protection.

Sub-Sector: Child Protection

The sub-sector will advocate for and engage in policy dialogue on the key principles for care and protection of affected children, including unaccompanied and separated children. It will aim to ensure access to quality child protection support (including Best Interests Procedure/case management, MHPSS, and legal aid) and protection standards. Partners will provide relevant authorities and professionals with capacity building support on the implementation of the child protection Standard Operating Procedures, including in emergencies. Community-based child protection programming will enhance the roles of families, caregivers, and communities in protecting children. Meanwhile, awareness raising will be conducted among affected children on where and how to seek child protection support.

Sub-sector: Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

The sub-sector will strengthen GBV prevention, risk mitigation and response through enhanced coordination with sectors, sensitization, and capacity building. Quality and survivor-centred GBV services will be provided, while referral systems and pathways for further support via multisectoral services will be enhanced. The capacity of services providers

⁴³ <https://eurasianet.org/uzbekistan-offers-to-act-as-hub-for-afghanistan-aid>

⁴⁴ <https://www.gazeta.uz/ru/2022/06/23/termez-hub/>

(including law enforcement, healthcare, psychological support, and social sectors) will be strengthened, ensuring survivors receive adequate care and support.

EDUCATION

The sector will undertake joint assessments and monitoring as well as the development of an education road map. It will support the Government to procure appropriate education/learning-related materials, and supply education materials to children and adolescents in need. Partners will recruit and train learning facilitators on appropriate teaching practices, including on GBV risk mitigation and child protection, as well as providing safe temporary learning spaces for children. The sector will build capacity for school management committees and for teachers on Multi-Lingual Education, bridge programmes, and adaptive teaching and learning. Awareness raising will be conducted on the rights of displaced children to education and safe access to education for girls, as well as back to school campaigns.

HEALTH & NUTRITION

The health sector will ensure safe access to and utilization of comprehensive tri-level health services by supporting curative health, reproductive health, mental health, and psychosocial support, and address risks, barriers and needs for women and girls. This will preferably be done through national health systems and services in support of localization. Access to immunization services will be ensured as per the national guidelines including against measles, polio, and COVID-19. Support will be provided for comprehensive nutrition programming including sectoral coordination, treatment of severe acute malnutrition (SAM) and moderate acute malnutrition (MAM), infant and young child feeding, nutrition screenings, and assessments for children. The sector will promote safe motherhood, emergency obstetric care, and prevention of sexually transmitted infections and HIV among target population through capacity building of medical professionals working in maternity care and by enhancing implementation of “Near Missed Cases Review” in selected districts.



Modern life-saving and diagnostic medical equipment was donated to the regional children's hospital to help strengthen the local healthcare system's capacity to respond to health emergencies.



LIVELIHOODS & RESILIENCE (AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC INCLUSION)

The Livelihoods sector will expand local economic development approaches to enhance livelihoods, build skills in line with labour market demands, facilitate employment, support entrepreneurship and SME development, and improve access to finance, including for youth and women. It will conduct livelihoods activities and employment programmes for Afghan citizens in Uzbekistan and in-need members of host communities, including through support to business, cash-for-work, and other cash-related programmes. Computer literacy and digital skills training will be conducted for Afghan women, while leadership and empowerment programmes will be provided for girls and boys, including those with disabilities. Meanwhile, the capacity of service providers, local authorities, communities will be built, including on cross-cutting issues like GBV risk mitigation.



LOGISTICS, TELECOMS & OPERATIONAL SUPPORT

The sector will facilitate storage and distribution of emergency supplies in partnership with national organization and other key partners/suppliers. Support will be provided for the humanitarian logistics hub in Termez for pre-positioning and rapid delivery of in-kind assistance to Afghanistan and operations involved in the response to the Afghanistan situation.



SHELTER, NFIs & BASIC NEEDS

Sector partners will provide multi-purpose cash-based assistance (including to vulnerable host population), including electronic emergency cash transfers. In addition, it will distribute core-relief items to refugees, ensuring distribution modalities assess and mitigate GBV and other protection risks.



WASH

The sector will install/ renovate safe water points in consultation with communities, including women and girls, while decent and safe toilet facilities will be ensured for women, men, and children. The sector will prioritize the provision of safe water, sanitation and handwashing facilities at healthcare facilities, education institutions and child friendly spaces, and ensure functioning waste management systems. Life-saving hygiene messages will be disseminated, including on menstrual hygiene management, while hygiene and dignity kits will be provided to the affected population.

Country Cross-Cutting Response Priorities



AAP

RRP partners remain committed to advancing AAP by supporting the achievement of quality and effective protection and assistance for Afghan citizens in Uzbekistan, with consideration of age, gender, and diverse characteristics. Efforts to increase accountability to affected populations are essential for the accurate identification of protection risks and they contribute to effective assistance through the timely adjustment of programmes. UNHCR maintains an emergency hotline across all South-West and Central Asian countries providing information and counselling to refugees and asylum-seekers.



Mechanisms and procedures for refugees and host communities, including children, to report SEA allegations will be strengthened, and the capacities of relevant professionals including service providers will be enhanced to better identify and refer cases of SEA, and provide victim assistance and support.

Partnership and Coordination

In Uzbekistan, UNHCR is leading inter-agency preparedness and response efforts for the refugee response, in collaboration with the UN Country Team and the host Government. RRP partners contribute directly to the relief efforts, focusing their targeted humanitarian and technical assistance on areas where they have the greatest operational impact based on their respective expertise and experience. In 2023, RRP partners will focus on monitoring and coordination with respective authorities to improve the protection space and provision of humanitarian assistance directly to people forced to flee.

In the event of new arrivals from Afghanistan, RRP Partners will support the Government with registration and human resources and will engage local partners to provide protection services and respond to basic needs. Continuous engagement will be conducted to ensure that the host government facilitates unhindered access to the territory of Uzbekistan and access for humanitarian agencies (UN and INGOs) to people and communities in need of humanitarian assistance.



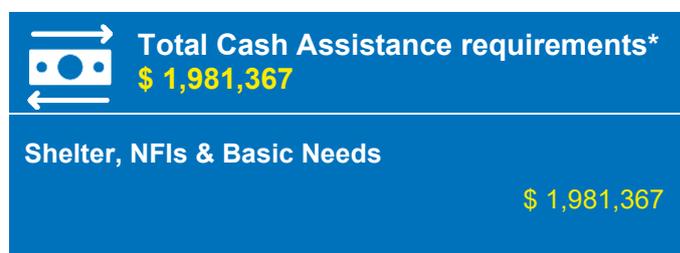
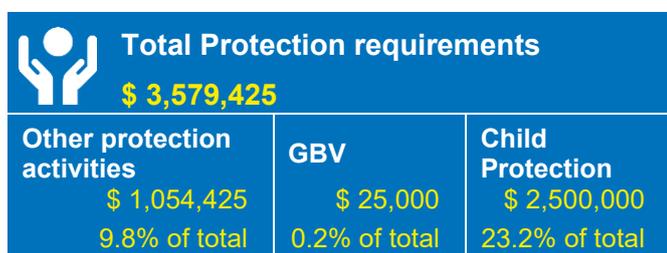
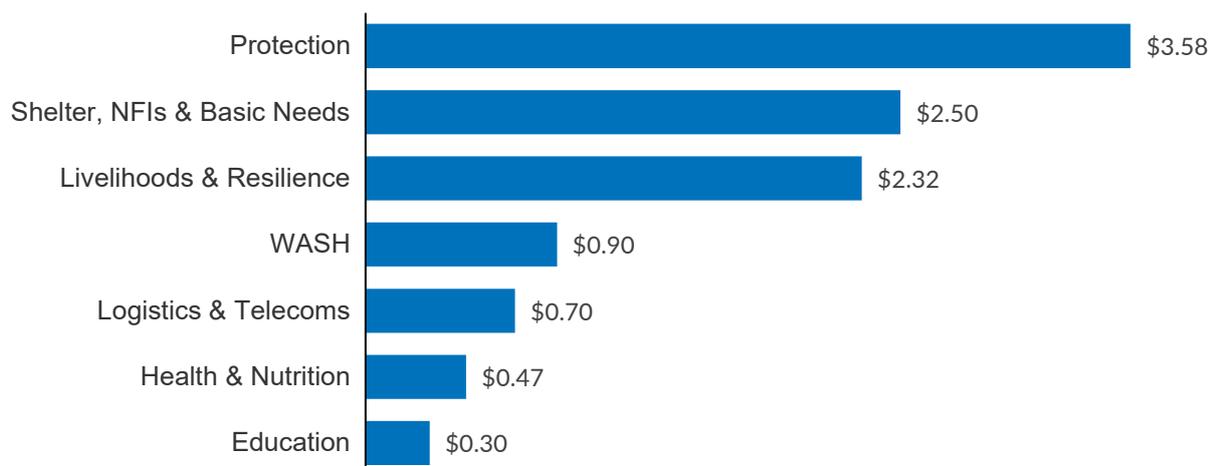
Notes: This list only includes appealing organizations under the RRP, many of which collaborate with implementing partners to carry out RRP activities. See 'Budget Summary by Partner' for partner breakdown per type.

Inter-Agency Financial Requirements



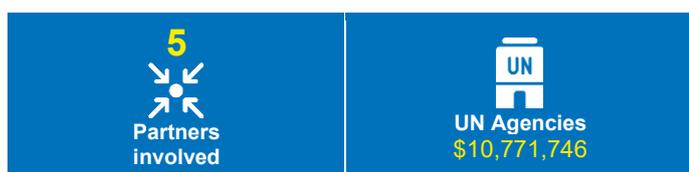
Budget summary by sector at country level

In millions USD



* This is a breakdown by sector of the requirements for cash assistance which are included in the above total sectoral budgets. Cash assistance is pursued and reflected as a key modality of assistance and protection in line with UNHCR’s CBI Policy 2022-2026. Cash assistance is used as a cross-cutting modality across the various sectors, including protection, and is budgeted for accordingly and in line with a basic needs approach. As the modality of choice of the people we work with, cash assistance will be used as the primary means to meet immediate basic needs and provide important protection outcomes.

Budget summary by partner type



Budget Summary by Partner

UN: United Nations

Partner	Acronym / Short Title	Type	Requirements in US\$
UN - International Organization for Migration	IOM	UN	\$ 1,800,000
UN - United Nations Development Programme	UNDP	UN	\$ 1,000,000
UN - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	UNHCR	UN	\$ 3,096,746
UN - United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund	UNICEF	UN	\$ 4,840,000
UN - United Nations Population Fund	UNFPA	UN	\$ 35,000
Total:			\$ 10,771,746

Country Monitoring Results

*The below is a summary of key selected indicators from each sector and does not reflect the entire work of the sectors, the full results framework for each sector will be reported upon in dashboards and reports during 2023.

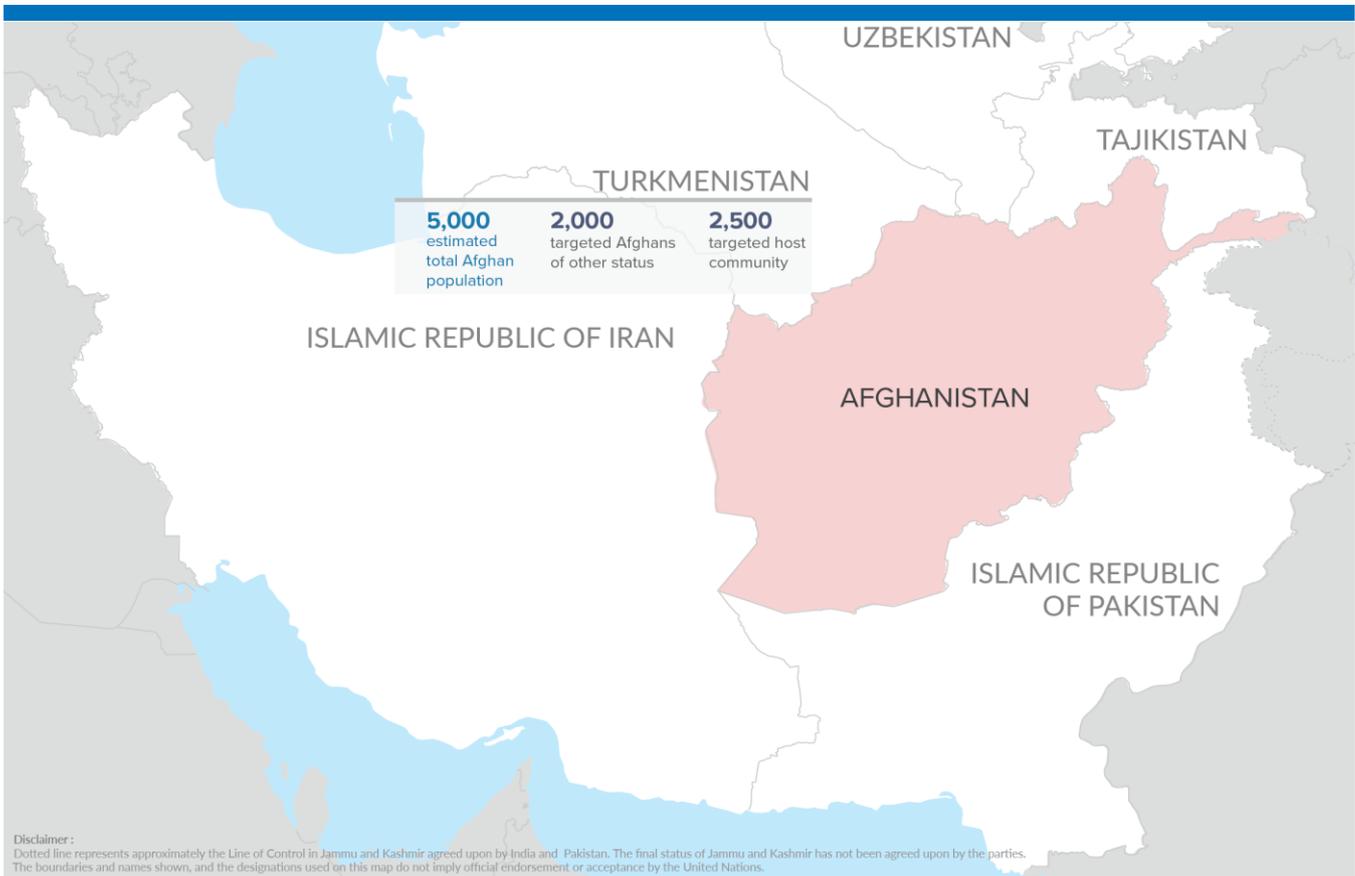
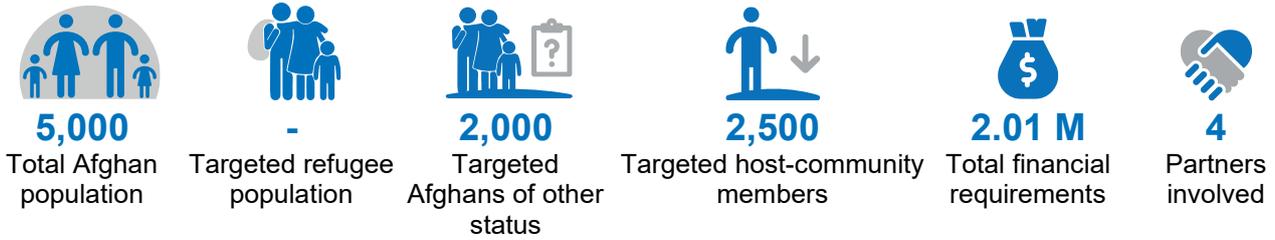
Sector	Indicator	Target	
	Protection	# of beneficiaries covered by protection activities	20,400
	Child Protection	# of children at risk provided with child protection services	3,500
	GBV	# of trainings on GBV prevention provided	4
	Education	# of primary school-aged children supported to access primary education	10,000
	Health & Nutrition	# of maternities implementing near-miss cases review (NMCR) methodology	3
	Livelihoods & Resilience (and Socio-Economic Inclusion)	# of adolescents, with the focus on disadvantaged, have enhanced socio-emotional skills.	1,700
	Shelter, NFIs & Basic Needs	# of households provided with core relief items, including winterization assistance	1,639
	WASH	# of renovated handwashing facilities	16

Turkmenistan

Country chapter

> At a Glance

Turkmenistan Planned Response January-December 2023



Sectors Involved	Financial requirements in USD		Partners involved
Education	USD	130,000	1
Health & Nutrition	USD	170,000	1
Protection	USD	961,029	4
Shelter, NFIs & Basic Needs	USD	526,170	2
WASH	USD	220,000	1

Part 1: Current Situation

Situation Overview

In 2022, Turkmenistan held early presidential elections which saw the incumbent Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow succeeded by his son Serdar Berdimuhamedow. In the wake of this change, the basic principles of its foreign policy (including with regard to Afghanistan) which, according to Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan press reports are: neutrality, equality, and good neighbourliness, remained the same. The Government of Turkmenistan is in a position of cooperation and dialogue with the de facto authorities of Afghanistan, underlining that Turkmenistan, as a neighbouring state, is deeply interested in the political stability and security of the Afghan people.

In 2022, Turkmenistan's Resolution "Zone of peace, trust and cooperation of Central Asian countries" was unanimously adopted at the 76th session of the UN General Assembly – acknowledgment of the country's interest in ensuring sustainable development in the world and among Central Asian countries. Turkmenistan is an upper-middle-income country with significant revenues from exports of hydro-carbon resources. However, despite government subsidies, inflation is having a serious impact and the prices of basic items including food are rising, requiring constant monitoring of vulnerable Afghan and host community households' conditions. Like other Central Asian countries, Turkmenistan faces a range of climate-related hazards including floods, landslides, droughts, and earthquakes.

Turkmenistan lies along the northwest frontier of Afghanistan, adjacent to the Afghan provinces of Herat, Badghis, Faryab, and Jowzjan. The 744km border sits in a plain that extends from northern Afghanistan into the Karakum Desert of Turkmenistan. Likely entry points for refugees would be through Torghundi-Serhetabat (road and rail) and Aqina-Ymamnazar (rail) border checkpoints, as well as through informal crossing points. Turkmen account for two to three per cent of the total population in Afghanistan, equating to approximately 800,000 to 1.1 million people of Turkmen ethnicity.

As of June 2022, Turkmenistan hosts 10 mandate refugees from Afghanistan (15 mandate refugees in total). UNHCR and partners advocate with the Government of Turkmenistan to find durable solutions for mandate refugees – several of whom have close family ties with the host country – through naturalization or granting of legal residence. In addition, Turkmenistan hosts 4,000 to 5,000 Afghan nationals who have lived in scattered communities since the 1990s, as well as around 500 Afghan students. As a COVID-19 preventative measure, movement through Turkmenistan's borders was suspended in August 2020, with international flights gradually resuming in 2022. Border checkpoints are operational, but only those with valid passports and diplomatic, business or education visas can enter the country.

In September 2021, the Office of the UN Resident Coordinator in Turkmenistan presented to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs a matrix of support actions that the UN system would be able to offer in case of an influx of refugees from Afghanistan. The actions included technical support, in-kind contributions, and cash for activities to be implemented with national authorities and the National Red Crescent Society across the Protection, Education, Health and Nutrition, WASH, Livelihoods and Resilience, Logistics and Telecommunications sectors. The Government of Turkmenistan expressed willingness to work with the UN in case of a refugee emergency. There have been no official reports of refugee arrivals from Afghanistan since then. However, as the risk remains high, strengthened emergency preparedness is essential.

Turkmenistan adopted its Law on Refugees in 1997 (last amended in 2017), which determines procedures for granting refugee status, protection-related legal provisions, reference to the legal status of persons granted refugee status, legal and economic standards, and social guarantees for the protection of their rights. In 1998, Turkmenistan acceded to the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol, and in 2009 it established its refugee status determination procedures. However, there has been no asylum-seeker registered with the Government since then. Nonetheless, according to the country's legislation on refugees, potential asylum-seekers will be granted access to registration and national asylum procedures and allowed unhindered access to the territory and quality asylum procedures, including adequate referral

mechanisms. The *Law of Turkmenistan on International Humanitarian Aid in an Emergency Situation* was approved in 2020. The law on State Guarantees of the Rights of the Child (last amended in 2016) guarantees children who permanently reside in its territory the same rights and freedoms as natural-born citizens, including access to education, unless otherwise provided by legislation or international treaties.

Through a Memorandum of Understanding signed between the United Nations Country Office and the Government of Turkmenistan in 2019, the Government cooperates with the UN in coordinating emergency preparedness and response, through the implementation of an Annual Action Plan. Meanwhile, the national SDG priority areas include strengthening human capital by advancing integrated social protection, health, and education investments, as well as improving food security, water management and climate action.

Population Planning Figures

Turkmenistan	Targeted Afghan Refugee/refugee-like	Targeted Afghans of other Status*	Host Community	Total
Total population	-	2,000	6,120,000	
Target population	-	2,000	2,500	4,500

Country Protection Needs, Vulnerabilities and Risks

Although there has been no official refugee influx from Afghanistan to Turkmenistan, the deteriorating economic, humanitarian, and human rights situation in Afghanistan continues to force people to flee to neighbouring countries. Any potential new refugees could face several risks upon arrival in Turkmenistan including lack of legal status, insufficient assistance programmes, and interrupted education, worsened by the lack of community and family support networks.

In the event of an outflow from Afghanistan, vulnerable people with specific needs, such as people with disabilities, and children – especially unaccompanied and separated children – face additional risks including the risk of trafficking for purpose of sexual exploitation, child marriage and other forms of GBV. Refugees would need immediate protection and humanitarian support through safeguarding access to the territory, protection from refoulement, access to life saving assistance, medical care, food, safe shelter, and safe access to appropriate WASH services.

While there has not been a large movement of Afghans since August 2021, according to unofficial sources from the Embassy of Afghanistan in Ashgabat and Afghan community leaders in Turkmenistan, Turkmenistan currently hosts between 4,000 and 5,000 Afghans, most of whom migrated to Turkmenistan in the early 1990s. In 2005, Turkmenistan granted citizenship to 709 Afghans of Turkmen ethnicity. The remaining community members still have humanitarian needs, mostly linked to their legal status as non-citizens. In July 2022, IOM conducted a vulnerability study of Afghans; this exercise was followed by a more in-depth assessment of their legal status and related challenges in November 2022, speaking to Afghans in seven villages in southern and north-eastern Turkmenistan. The study identified 420 extremely vulnerable households including 60 households with older people, 87 with a person with disabilities, and 173 households with extreme economic challenges, as well as 34 female-headed households.

Afghan nationals in Turkmenistan experience problems accessing employment, health services, education, and other social services. Members of the Afghan community who have residence permits in Turkmenistan do not have the same rights as citizens, for example they cannot buy houses or work in government organizations. Children born to non-Turkmen citizens cannot obtain a passport and face restrictions in accessing higher education. Afghans who have a visa issued by the Migration Service of Turkmenistan and Embassy of Afghanistan in Turkmenistan must pay all taxes

and official expenditures in US dollars, which creates huge difficulties for vulnerable Afghans, and is a particular challenge in Turkmenistan where the unofficial market exchange rate can be more than six times the official rate.

Host communities in border areas lack the knowledge and skills to support refugees and are equally in need of humanitarian assistance, and support to access quality services. In the event of a refugee influx, host communities would be highly impacted depending on the scale and duration of the displacement.

Part 2: Country Protection and Solutions Strategy

While it is unlikely that a considerable number of refugees will flee to Turkmenistan, the increased complexity and scale of the situation in Afghanistan may result in Afghans seeking to move legally or informally to the country. Based on UNHCR data on new arrivals since 2021, over 50 percent of them would likely be children, including unaccompanied and separated children. The displaced population would have an urgent need for humanitarian assistance – including lifesaving food, non-food items and shelter – and services such as WASH, health, education, psychosocial and legal support, including access to registration and identification.

Afghan communities throughout Turkmenistan and vulnerable host community members as well as households along the Afghan border humanitarian assistance. Across all sectors, the RRP seeks to address the immediate needs of Afghan communities already in Turkmenistan and any new arrivals, as well as strengthening existing critical infrastructure (including health facilities, and schools) and services in areas which may host refugees should there be an influx. The impact on host communities will depend on the scale and duration of the displacement.

RRP partners will continue working in collaboration with the Government and local authorities, the National Red Crescent Society of Turkmenistan (NRCST), civil society organizations, communities, and the private sector, using their capacity and leveraging access to affected populations and critical knowledge of the local context and people. Preparedness measures will include pre-positioning of emergency supplies and strengthening national capacities in emergency preparedness and response to be able to address emergency needs. A multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral approach will be adopted to ensure strengthened resilience of host communities and capacity building of the local population.

It is assumed that in case of refugee influxes, only the government authorities and the National Red Crescent Society of Turkmenistan would have access to the displaced people in the early stages of emergency. RRP partners are therefore focusing on consolidating partnerships with the National Red Crescent Society for emergency preparedness and targeted, multi-sectoral humanitarian response. Partners will continue to provide support to the Government and authorities to prepare to address any immediate protection and assistance needs of newly arriving Afghan refugees and strengthen the resilience of the existing refugees and host communities.

In the event of an influx, with support and permission from authorities, RRP partners would conduct a rapid needs assessment and protection analysis, paying special attention to people with specific needs and cases with specific protection needs such as women and girls, unaccompanied and separated children and other children at risk, people with disabilities, single-parent households, and survivors of violence and torture, including GBV survivors. Sexual and reproductive health needs, including access to obstetric care, family planning, prevention and response to HIV would also be prioritized.

Coordination of assistance modalities, for cash-based interventions (CBI) in particular, is necessary for both preparedness and response within the framework of the recently adopted Law on Humanitarian Assistance. For CBI, synergies would be sought looking at common cash transfer mechanisms, joint agreement on transfer values, joint studies, and analysis.

Country Strategic Objectives

SO1: Promote safe access to territory and asylum and prevention of refoulement and support national systems to implement inclusive policies. Ensuring safe and unhindered access to territory, respect for the principle of non-refoulement, efficient registration, provision of proper documentation, including advocacy and support to the Government in their efforts to ensure proper admission and asylum procedures, that are child friendly and gender sensitive.

SO2: Meet immediate and longer-term needs by reinforcing local and national systems. Application of a community-based approach and the inclusion of host population in humanitarian assistance programmes to promote social cohesion. Ensuring synergy between the international partners in provision of multi-sectoral assistance to refugees and host communities with a view to anchor the response in government systems, with particular attention to the needs of children, youth, and women. Facilitating safe and dignified access of children and women, including the most vulnerable groups, to emergency services such as comprehensive health, including sexual and reproductive health and HIV treatment, MHPSS, vaccines, nutrition, and risk communication, through national health systems. Supporting the Government in ensuring that Afghan refugees and undocumented populations have equitable access and inclusion in national education, child protection and health systems.

SO3: Ensuring adequate emergency preparedness measures are in place. Pre-positioning of emergency supplies and strengthening national emergency preparedness and response capacities will be prioritized to address the needs of affected host communities, and vulnerable people, including those with disabilities. Applying a needs and area-based approach to scale-up life-saving assistance, through in-kind and cash-based assistance, as well as basic services, and addressing pressing protection and humanitarian needs including of host communities. Ensuring that requirements for persons with specific needs are considered in ongoing preparedness efforts; increase engagement with communities across all phases of the response; ensure safe and ethical participation of women, children, and persons with disabilities throughout the response; and ensure that referral and case management systems are activated to support identification and assistance to particularly vulnerable persons, including new arrivals.

Child-centred Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy

- In collaboration with UN and national partners, in 2022 UNICEF in Turkmenistan drafted the **Child-centred Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy** focusing on emergency preparedness and response to ensure synergy of approaches and actions towards implementation of child rights in emergencies.
- Following a vulnerability study and legal assessment of Afghan nationals, IOM recently provided direct cash assistance to **400 vulnerable Afghan households** and identified priority needs and communities for future interventions.

Sectoral Responses



PROTECTION

Guided by the results of the July 2022 IOM vulnerability assessment and legal status analysis, the most vulnerable Afghan and host community households in Turkmenistan require legal assistance, including basic information on their status and associated rights, as well as potentially direct assistance (financial, transportation, help with legal and administrative procedures) to renew or modify their visas. Protection activities will include cash assistance, supporting vulnerable households with specific needs.

In the event of new arrivals, to protect children from violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect, a rapid protection assessment and analysis would need to be conducted. The assessment will have a particular focus on people with specific protection needs, notably women, unaccompanied and separated children, other children at risk and children with disabilities, single headed families, people with mental health needs, and survivors of violence and torture, including GBV survivors. Capacity building would also need to be conducted to ensure that the required protection tools and mechanisms to address vulnerabilities are built within national partner organizations.

Priority activities include: conducting strategic advocacy on safe and effective access to territory and prevention of refoulement; strengthening the capacity of relevant authorities on refugee protection; supporting the government to register any new arrivals and ensure early identification and referral of persons with specific needs, including to emergency and other services; and, providing the most vulnerable Afghan and host community households with legal assistance, including basic information on their status and associated rights and support (financial, transportation, help with legal and administrative procedures) to renew or modify their visas.

Sub-Sector: Child Protection

Within the Child Protection sub-sector, priority activities include: conducting a rapid child protection needs assessment to identify risks and capacities to address gaps and provide the required support through national partners; identify children at risk, including unaccompanied and separated children and refer to Best Interest Procedures/ case management and other appropriate services, conducting family tracing and re-unification, when in the child's best interests, at the first point of contact; providing psychosocial support for children and caretakers through setting child friendly spaces to help children cope with the aftermath of conflict as well as strengthen their resilience; identifying safe temporary shelters to protect unaccompanied children and women headed households who are at risk of GBV in in border areas; advocating for child-friendly reception, accommodation and care arrangements and provision of adequate standard of living for all children.

Sub-Sector: Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

Within the GBV sub-sector, priority activities include: promoting social norms changes as well as behavioural changes at community level; building the capacity of key local authority and partner services providers and strengthening GBV response coordination with the same actors to promote access to survivor-centred, rights-based, and inclusive GBV services.



EDUCATION

The education sector response will aim to ensure uninterrupted education so that children and adolescents have access to inclusive, quality education and learning in a safe and protective environment with specific attention to girls and children with disabilities. Partners will identify risks and barriers faced by children with disabilities and incorporate related responses in humanitarian programme planning and monitoring. Temporary learning spaces, and learning materials and equipment, life-skills, and survival training, MHPSS for students, teachers and other education personnel will be organized in safe learning environments. Support to practice nurturing care will be available. It will be inclusive and gender-sensitive and aimed at parents and caregivers with specific attention to adolescents and young parents. Identification, recruitment, and training of volunteer teachers/ learning facilitators will be provided in refugee or potential host communities.



HEALTH & NUTRITION

With Afghanistan being one of two countries globally which are still endemic for polio, neighbouring countries remain at risk of importation of polio. The humanitarian response in Turkmenistan will therefore consider programme support and capacities in this area, as well as the continuing COVID-19 pandemic situation, providing access to health services, Communications for Development, and risk communication.

The displaced population would need access to essential and quality healthcare and medicine for pregnant women and new-borns, immunization services and the minimal initial service package (MISP) to mitigate the consequences of conflict and prevent poor sexual and reproductive health (SRH) outcomes, especially among women and girls. Community-based interventions will therefore ensure that pregnant women receive regular antenatal care, and mothers and new-borns receive timely postnatal care. Children and women will be supported to receive routine vaccinations, including during vaccination campaigns conducted to reduce risk of epidemic-prone outbreaks. Support will be provided to caregivers of children aged 0-23 months ensuring adoption of recommended infant and young child feeding practices, including breastfeeding and complementary feeding. Children age under five years will be referred to adequate services for treatment of severe wasting and other forms of life-threatening acute malnutrition in early childhood. New arrivals would have timely access to culturally appropriate, gender- and age-sensitive information and interventions that promote the uptake of healthy diets, services and practices and contribute to improve their nutritional status.



LIVELIHOODS & RESILIENCE (AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC INCLUSION)

Cash-based interventions will be provided to female-headed households, child-headed-households, and older people to purchase essential items, as well as part of livelihoods and durable solutions programming in the form of small business development grants.



SHELTER, NFIs & BASIC NEEDS

The most vulnerable Afghan and host community households will be targeted with in-kind and cash support to ensure access to safe and dignified housing, including new arrivals in the event of an influx.



WASH

WASH interventions will ensure that refugees have access to sex disaggregated toilets and handwashing facilities that are culturally appropriate, secure, sanitary, user-friendly and gender appropriate. In collaboration with the potential host communities, new arrivals in the event of an influx would have safe and equitable access to a sufficient quantity and quality of water to meet their drinking and domestic needs. Affected populations would have timely access to culturally appropriate, gender- and age-sensitive information related to risk prevention, hygiene promotion, and adoption of safe hygiene practices, focusing on WASH service in schools and health facilities serving refugees.

Contingency planning collaboration with the Government of Turkmenistan

In September 2022, UNICEF signed a **Humanitarian Contingency Programme Document** with the National Red Crescent Society to facilitate coordinated actions between the two in the immediate aftermath of a sudden major disaster and to speed up emergency planning, mobilization, and response. UNICEF expanded its partnership with the National Red Crescent Society and, for the first time, signed a **Memorandum of Understanding** establishing the warehousing capacity for emergency response supplies in Turkmenistan.

Partnership and Coordination

In the event of an influx, sector working groups could be activated as required, with RRP partners in coordination with the Government, will assume leadership and coordination responsibilities in areas where they have the greatest operational impact based on their respective expertise, experience, and capacity.

The Government of Turkmenistan has established a State Commission for Emergency Situations to coordinate emergency responses and oversee the activities of Ministries, departments, enterprises, and local authorities in case of emergencies. The National Red Crescent Society of Turkmenistan (NRCST) constitutes the principal non-governmental institution active in disaster preparedness and response in Turkmenistan. In the event of an influx emergency, close collaboration and consultation would be maintained with relevant government counterparts, including the State Commission for Emergency Situations and the NRCST, to support and ensure complementarity in the response.



Notes: This list only includes appealing organizations under the RRP, many of which collaborate with implementing partners to carry out RRP activities. See 'Budget Summary by Partner' for partner breakdown per type.

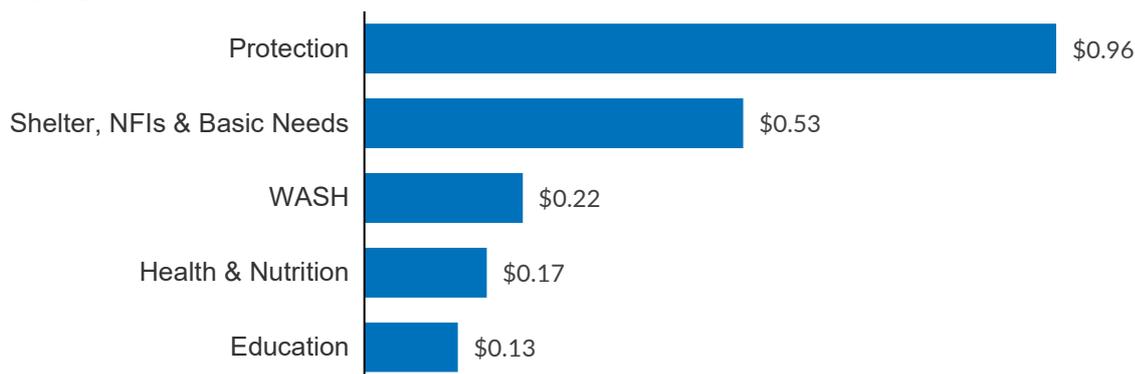
Inter-Agency Financial Requirements

Total
Financial Requirements
In USD

\$ 2.01 M

Budget summary by sector at country level

In millions USD



Total Protection requirements

\$ 916,026

Other protection activities	GBV	Child Protection
\$ 825,029 41.1% of total	\$ 36,000 1.8% of total	\$ 100,000 5.0% of total

Total Cash Assistance requirements*

\$ 826,170

Protection	Shelter, NFIs & Basic Needs
\$ 300,000	\$ 526,170

* This is a breakdown by sector of the requirements for cash assistance which are included in the above total sectoral budgets. Cash assistance is pursued and reflected as a key modality of assistance and protection in line with UNHCR's CBI Policy 2022-2026. Cash assistance is used as a cross-cutting modality across the various sectors, including protection, and is budgeted for accordingly and in line with a basic needs approach. As the modality of choice of the people we work with, cash assistance will be used as the primary means to meet immediate basic needs and provide important protection outcomes.

Budget summary by partner type

4

Partners involved

UN Agencies
\$2,007,199

Budget Summary by Partner

UN: United Nations

Partner	Acronym / Short Title	Type	Requirements in US\$
UN - International Organization for Migration	IOM	UN	\$ 400,000
UN - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	UNHCR	UN	\$ 951,199
UN - United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund	UNICEF	UN	\$ 620,000
UN - United Nations Population Fund	UNFPA	UN	\$ 36,000
Total:			\$ 2,007,199

Country Monitoring Results

*The below is a summary of key selected indicators from each sector and does not reflect the entire work of the sectors, the full results framework for each sector will be reported upon in dashboards and reports during 2023.

Sector	Indicator	Target	
	Protection	# of individuals who received CBI for protection related purposes	2,500
	GBV	# of trainings on GBV prevention provided	20
	Education	# of secondary school-aged supported to access secondary education	2,500
	Health & Nutrition	# of people reached through messaging on prevention and access to nutrition services	2,000
	Shelter, NFIs & Basic Needs	# of individual who received CBI for shelter/NFI purposes	2,300
	WASH	# of people reached through messaging on prevention and access to WASH services	5,000

Funding

The work of RRP partners would not have been possible without the extremely generous support of Donors. As of end 2022, the RRP 2022 response was 52 per cent funded across the region with USD 324 million received of USD 623 million requirements. However, this represents a drop in the funding percentage compared to 2021 when the Afghan Situation RRP response was 58 per cent funded. With a variety of other emergencies developing globally, there is a risk of fatigue in the donor community, and this is a real risk looking towards 2023. As is clear from this plan, the needs across the region are huge and are the situation of vulnerable Afghan populations has worsened due to external regional and global factors. Their host communities, who have welcomed Afghans for four decades, also require significant support, particularly to bolster the public infrastructure which serves Afghans and host communities alike.

RRP partners reiterate the message on the **importance of flexible**, which allows partners to prioritize the most pressing needs across the region, as well as **multi-year funding**, which facilitates a more predictable response. Both of these were important commitments by donors as part of the Grand Bargain and remain integral to the humanitarian response across the Afghanistan Situation.

Further information on the funding levels of the response is available on the [Refugee Funding Tracker](#)⁴⁵ which tracks interagency funding for the response. This was rolled out in 2021 and its usage has increased since then. It was the first time it had been used in these countries. Given that the response has increased its partnership significantly from 40 partners in 2022 to 65 partners in 2023, further guidance will be provided at country level on the use of the RFT to ensure that funding tracking is as up to date as possible.

The following government donors are gratefully acknowledged for their valuable contributions to the RRP for the Afghanistan Situation in 2021 and 2022. RRP Partners thank private donors, charities, and other organizations for their contributions, as well as other government donors whose flexible funding at a global, regional, or sub regional level has contributed to the response. RRP partners acknowledge the huge generosity of host countries for their continued hosting of Afghans over several decades. These countries must be supported through even greater responsibility sharing by the international community, in the spirit of the Global Compact on Refugees.

RRP donors: Australia | Austria | Belgium | Bulgaria | Canada | Czechia | Denmark | European Union | France | Germany | Iceland | Ireland | Italy | Japan | Kuwait | Luxembourg | Netherlands | New Zealand | Norway | Poland | Private Donors | Qatar | Republic of Korea | Slovakia | Slovenia | Spain | Sweden | Switzerland | United Kingdom | United States of America

⁴⁵ <http://refugee-funding-tracker.org/>

