



**The Area-Based Approach for Development
Emergency Initiatives (ABADEI) Strategy for
Community Resilience in Afghanistan**

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Introduction

General context

1. The post 15 August 2021 power shift in Afghanistan has resulted in severe political and social-economic instability in a climate of heightened uncertainty. The country faces challenges on multiple fronts, including COVID-19, poverty, food insecurity, draughts, and micro- and macroeconomic impacts. UNDP's analysis shows that with the shift in power, these factors could drive the country to near-universal poverty, with numbers falling below the poverty line projected to be over 95-97 percent by 2022.
2. Core government functions and essential service provision have completely collapsed. The discontinuation of development funds and programmes has led to significant gaps in service provision, salaries of service staff and replenishment of essential equipment and supplies. Approximately 18.5 million Afghans need humanitarian assistance¹. It is estimated that over half a million people have already been displaced by conflict² and thousands more affected by natural disasters. Nearly 19 million Afghans, or 45 percent of the population, are food insecure³ with a larger number and proportion amongst rural populations. That number is expected to rapidly rise to 22.8 million during the winter season (November-March)⁴.
3. The political instability, economic volatility, and the collapse of basic services, compounded by the uncertainty over continued international aid, and the severe disruption in financial and banking services, mean the risks faced by the Afghan population are acute and urgent. Without rapid and sustained support to re-establish these systems, Afghanistan can face a humanitarian catastrophe and the total collapse of its economy, which could have lasting consequences for the country and for the region.

Impact of the crisis on GDP

4. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew by 3.9 percent in 2019, declined by 1.9 percent in 2020, and before the August 15 power shift, the previous Government had forecast a four percent growth for 2021, assuming the security situation remained unchanged. UNDP's analysis estimates that for the next fiscal year (June 2021-2022), GDP growth will be lower by 3.6 - 13.2 percentage points than the four percent growth predicted.⁵

¹ <https://hum-insight.info/plan/1031>

² OCHA Afghanistan weekly humanitarian update (16-21 August 2021)

³ According to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) report, co-led by the Food and Agriculture Organization and the UN World Food Programme

⁴ www.afghan-analysts.org

⁵ [UNDP \(2021\). Rapid Appraisal of Economic Instability & Uncertainty in Afghanistan](#)

Impact of the crisis on the SDGs

5. The current crisis will have a negative impact on Afghanistan's path toward achieving the Agenda 2030.⁶ Overall poverty impact estimates range between an increase of 7-25 percentage points from a baseline poverty rate of 72 percent in 2020 (SDG-1). This, in turn, implies a deterioration in food security (SDG-2) by between 4 and 19 percentage points; and in health and well-being (SDG-3) by between 6 and 21 points compared to their levels in 2020 (considering the COVID-19 impact). These estimates vary in terms of the intensity of the instability and disruption in international trade. In turn, these affect the supply of basic goods such as food items and public services such as health care. All scenarios show a markedly negative impact on all SDGs, with the exception of SDG-12 (sustainable consumption and production), given lower activity bringing less environmental pollution. The magnitude of the impact on SDG-10 (inequality) is also projected to be high.

Lessons Learnt

6. Over the last 20 years, the UN has learnt valuable lessons on what works and what doesn't in its assistance to Afghanistan. Neither a *one-size-fits-all* approach or a fragmented sector-based approach to development interventions has been effective. Instead, a more integrated approach is needed, one that accounts for the significant differences in basic service delivery and needs across provinces and regions and recognizes that humanitarian and basic human needs gains in one area are linked to and dependent on humanitarian and basic human needs gains in other areas.
7. Against this backdrop, development partners and the wider international community have determined that humanitarian assistance alone will not be enough to avert famine and a major humanitarian crisis. A calibrated approach is needed to safeguard progress and prevent an increase in the humanitarian caseload by directing assistance at the local level to support basic human needs by mitigating, and hopefully averting, the immediate impact of the crisis on lives and livelihoods.

Programmatic Response

8. The **Area-Based Approach to Development Emergency Initiatives (ABADEI) Strategy** has been designed as a response to the ongoing crisis in Afghanistan upon a call of the UN Executive Committee Working Group for Afghanistan. It offers an integrated and decentralized approach to programming for community resilience. It proposes an innovative, inclusive and highly flexible approach, that puts people first, targets the most vulnerable and meets specific local needs of the population.
9. The ABADEI Strategy is a tailored area-based integrated programming approach to support basic human needs, complementing short-term humanitarian life-saving assistance with the safeguarding of livelihoods and the strengthening of community resilience. It is centered on

⁶ Linking the GDP changes estimated using the Afghanistan General Trade TAP (Turkmenistan Afghanistan Pakistan) Computable General Equilibrium (CGE) model to near-term SDG indicators points to a deterioration in progress towards the Agenda 2030

addressing worsening poverty and vulnerability, supporting community resilience and social cohesion, and enabling the rehabilitation of small-scale infrastructure vital for basic human needs. It supports the creation of immediate sources of income through cash-for-work, cash for market, small businesses and livelihood opportunities with particular focus on agri-business and regenerative agriculture infrastructure and services (critical for food security) that are under threat.

10. The Strategy is grounded in partnerships without which implementation at the local level would not be possible. It capitalizes on the One-UN concept by using the combined resources, experience and collective knowledge of other UN agencies and development partners. ABADEI interventions will complement the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) and takes into account key humanitarian indicators such as food insecurity, emergency needs and the presence of internally displaced persons (IDPs).

Value Proposition

11. The value proposition of Area Based Programming (ABP) which forms the core of geographical needs-based targeting of the ABADEI Strategy lies in its contribution to preserving human, social, and institutional capital in a context of multi-dimensional crisis. It recognizes that while humanitarian life-saving assistance is essential to address urgent needs, it must be simultaneously accompanied by measures to reduce displacement and the rapid rise of the humanitarian case load. The distinguishing feature of the area-based approach is that it is an integrated response that addresses multiple vulnerabilities simultaneously to avoid the socio-economic collapse of the country, in a context of severe instability.

A Phased Approach

12. The ABADEI Strategy will be implemented in two phases with a timeline of 6-12 months for the implementation of the immediate first phase of preservation and safeguarding of essential services and livelihoods and an additional 12 months for the second phase focusing on community resilience.
13. The priority of Phase 1 is to support the delivery of essential services such as health, water and electricity in an equitable manner, while providing targeted basic income and safeguarding livelihoods. The focus of Phase 2 is to expand on the range of interventions to build a more integrated approach and strengthen community resilience.

Guiding Concepts

ABADEI is an integrated approach based on three guiding concepts:

Resilience

14. Communities are considered '*resilient*' when they can withstand and bounce back from shocks. As we saw with the COVID-19 pandemic, the impacts of shocks and disasters can cascade

rapidly across whole systems and sectors. Given the multiple shocks the people of Afghanistan are facing at the same time (on the economy, food security, health services, agriculture), dealing with the complex multi-dimensional interactions between these different shocks will require comprehensive, joined-up responses. In an emergency context, improving short-term coping capacities at the community level across a range of risks through quick impact interventions such as improved irrigation, access to finance and cash transfers, can have a significant impact on community-level resilience.

15. The focus over the next 12/24 months will be to work towards ensuring that no one is left behind when it comes to access to food, income-generating activities and basic services such as electricity, water and healthcare. These are the basic set of issues that will support rapid socio-economic recovery and are most likely to contribute to improved resilience at the community level. The ABADEI Strategy aims to achieve this by promoting increased cross-sectoral collaboration, and analysis of the socio-economic context at the local level to develop context-specific and tailor-made responses involving all relevant stakeholders. This will help ensure that a broad range of perspectives on risk informs the process and ensures that the needs of the most vulnerable are addressed.

Integration

16. Since many of the challenges facing the people of Afghanistan are multi-dimensional, they should not be addressed in isolation. Instead, an integrated approach is needed. As humanitarian and development gains in one area are linked to and dependent on humanitarian and development gains in other areas, these challenges need to be addressed at multiple scales, and often at the same time. Considering this, the choice of which specific interventions to implement in each area will rely not only on the immediate basic human needs for each area, but also on an understanding of how these priority issues are connected.
17. The SDGs provide a basis for understanding how the most important issues connect and influence each other both at the regional level and across regions. In this sense, the SDGs can serve as a broad integration framework that is just as useful for short-term planning in an emergency context as it is for longer-term planning in the future. For example, the SDG calculator that UNDP's economic modelling team has developed, can be used to understand how the impact of investments in energy might impact the outcome of investments in health or food security. By understanding the interdependencies and synergies across different interventions and their broader SDG impact, it will be possible to assess any trade-offs that may have to be made between desirable goals. These can then be managed to achieve an optimum overall impact in responding to citizens' needs in the most cost-effective and efficient manner possible.
18. The aim is to bring different sectors together towards collective outcomes by considering:
 - The interventions as a connected whole so that their joint contribution to the desired outcomes can be assessed and improved.
 - The positive and negative interactions with the interventions of UN agencies (humanitarian and non-humanitarian) and actors working in the same area.

Community Engagement

19. To start the implementation of the ABADEI Strategy, the issues likely to be of most concern have initially been identified based on top-down assessments and information from existing projects that were already available. During the first six months of implementation, one of the main objectives is to engage local communities to ensure they play a key role in bottom-up assessments of more specific local priorities and needs, and in setting collective outcomes.
20. In a crisis context like Afghanistan, this approach will allow ABADEI partners to work with sub-national level stakeholders reaching the most vulnerable first and leaving no one behind, whilst at the same time providing opportunities for socio-economic recovery to reduce the likelihood of further conflict and migration, and resulting in greater community-level resilience to both current and future shocks.

Support for the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) Nexus

21. The response to crisis situations typically starts with humanitarian interventions to address urgent needs with no geographical restrictions. Development interventions, on the other hand, have been carried out with a longer-term focus in mind and have been restricted to those areas under government control. However, for a rapid and effective crisis response, the provision of resources in support of basic human needs will play a vital role in reducing displacement and enhancing resilience and coping mechanisms to prevent the deterioration of the humanitarian situation as well as the collapse of core socio-economic service mechanisms.
22. In terms of the HDP nexus, interventions under the ABADEI Strategy can serve as an indirect contribution to peace-building efforts by reducing the potential for further conflict and laying the ground for conflict prevention initiatives, particularly for vulnerable groups such as women and youth. Many partners agree that to be effective, safeguarding livelihoods and building community resilience are vital at the beginning of a crisis and should take place alongside humanitarian interventions, as they are mutually supportive.

ABADEI as a response

23. The ABADEI approach represents a large-scale attempt to operationalize community-led solutions that augment the efficacy of humanitarian efforts by helping communities cope better with the adverse effects of the crisis. This includes supporting households and the local private sector, while preserving the capacities and core service delivery mechanisms at the community level. This will be done with the support to basic human needs in parallel to the humanitarian response, offering more durable solutions at the early stages of the emergency, and enabling the lead up to shorter-term community resilience building (Fig 1.0).
24. Saving lives, safeguarding livelihoods and building community resilience will not only help address the basic human needs of local people with essential services, and income-generating activities but in the process also generate important social and economic benefits. Aiming to

build resilience of communities can help prevent a protracted humanitarian crisis, reduce the likelihood of further local-level conflict and support reconciliation and peace-building efforts.

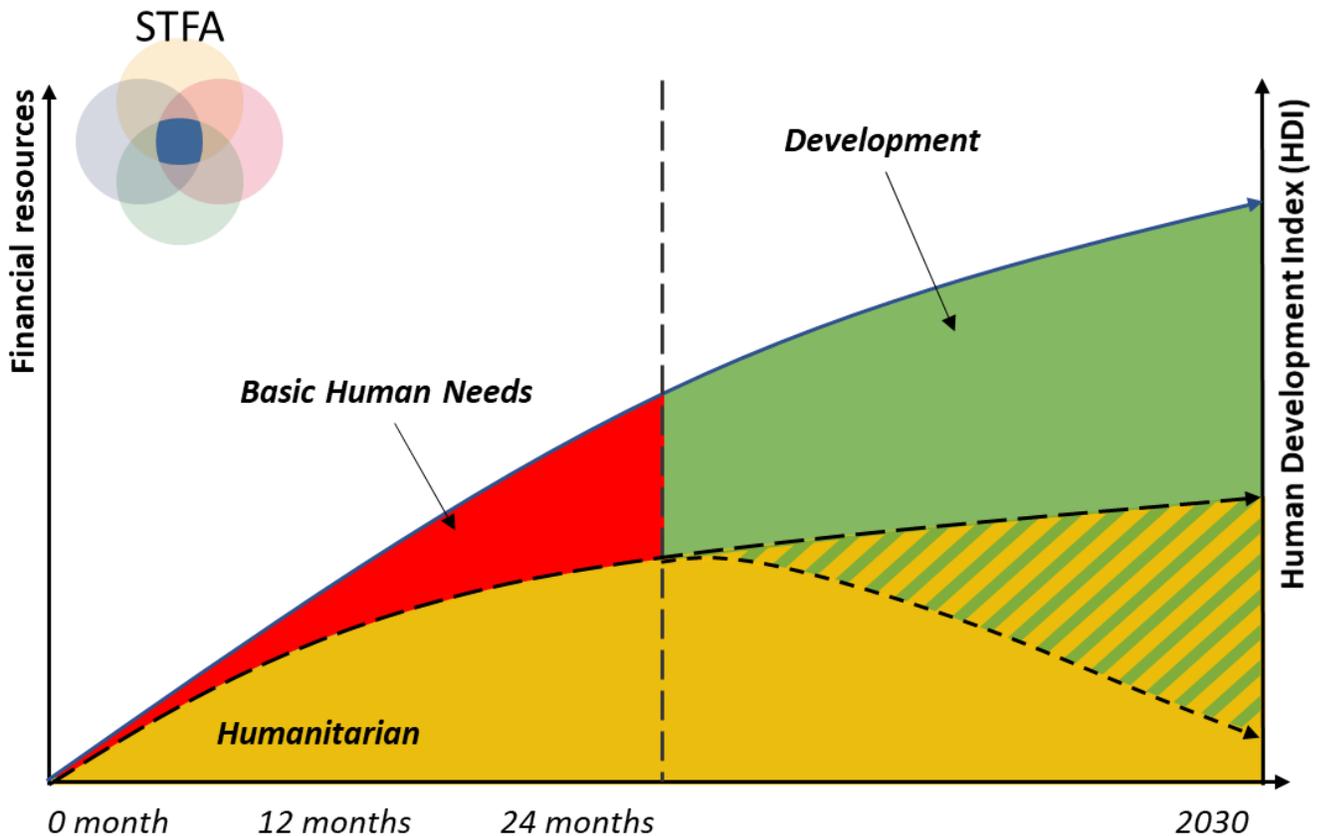


Fig. 1.0: Relationship between basic human needs, development and humanitarian action.

Links

25. In this context, the goal is to maintain a strong linkage with the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) in terms of priority setting and targeting based on compiled key humanitarian indicators and data, including the severity of food insecurity, emergency needs, and the presence of internally displaced persons. At the level of strategic outcomes, the ABADEI Strategy is broadly coherent with the HRP, contributing to efforts to reduce vulnerability and enhance short-term resilience by preserving the capacities of individuals and communities to cope with the deteriorating socio-economic conditions at community-level.
26. Ultimately, the aim of the HDP nexus is to ensure that humanitarian needs are reduced over time by focusing on shared responsibility for emergency interventions and implementing a range of initiatives designed to gradually reduce the current dependence on international engagement. In the current context, the priority is to bring community engagement across the HDP nexus by focusing on food security and malnutrition, access to essential services and

income-generating activities, as well as working with internally displaced persons and returnees. This will require strong coordination across the HDP with humanitarian agencies (national and regional) and with local level implementing partners.

27. The eight administrative regions of the country (see fig.2.0) have been chosen as the focus of interventions of the ABADEI Strategy. Separate area-based programme strategies under the ABADEI framework have been developed for each of the eight regions that are responsive to the needs and vulnerabilities determined by natural resources, population distribution and other corresponding diversities existing within the regions. However, for the first phase, more local area based integrated solutions will be nested within each region particularly targeting districts and communities with high levels of poverty and deprivations.



Figure 2.0: The Eight Regions of Afghanistan

Geographical Targeting Criteria

28. The geographical targeting within the eight regions focuses at the district level and is initially based on three main criteria: UN presence, the Humanitarian Access Group’s assessment of district-level security and access restrictions, and poverty⁷ based on the multi-dimensional poverty incidence (Head Count Ratio) determined by the National Statistics and Information

⁷ Methodological Note on UNDP Afghanistan Geographical Targeting for Area Based Approach, July 2021

Authority (NSIA) through its 2020 Income, Expenditure and Labour Force Survey⁸. Head Count Ratio represents the percentage of population who are multidimensionally poor and are deprived in an area of sample. Although this data is available only at provincial level, the values have been normalized for use at district level calculation with the assumption that the values reflect the realities of deprivation in the country. The Afghanistan MPI reflects deprivations in 18 indicators within five (5) dimensions of health, education, living standards, work and shocks (to production, income and security).

Leaving No One Behind (LNOB) and Gender Equality

29. Female community members are particularly affected by the crisis, being exposed to significant restrictions and human rights abuses. The restrictions newly imposed after the 15 August power shift are disrupting existing socio-economic coping mechanisms. Dedicated support to women and girls, however, cannot easily be delivered in view of these restrictions, and new ways to provide assistance will therefore need to be devised.
30. The aim of ABADEI is to promote women empowerment and participation in a prudent and realistic way that will create no unintended negative consequences to the women involved, their families or communities. As such, ABADEI interventions will ensure that the provision and safeguarding of essential services and livelihoods are delivered equitably.
31. In the delivery of the ABADEI Strategy, special focus will be given to reduce the vulnerability of marginalized and vulnerable groups, including disabled people, youth, gender-based violence victims, climate refugees, the unemployed, the homeless and nomads (Kuchi).
32. ABADEI participating organizations will engage local stakeholders in a manner that aims to reduce inequalities, mainstream gender equality principles and promote the dignity and rights of girls and women, by facilitating greater access for women to health care, social protection, vocational training and agricultural livelihoods. They will also aim to provide psychosocial support and counselling, particularly to survivors (women and girls) of gender-based violence.
33. In addition, the interventions will strengthen women's organizations and self-help groups that provide safe spaces to protect women and children from instability, fragility, and insecurity. They will also help women and survivors to participate actively in social dialogues, peace committees, local level resilience planning committees and provide alternative livelihoods to the families and women who have lost their source of income due to the current social, economic and political context.
34. The Multi-Dimensional Poverty Index (MPI) Headcount Ratio provides a useful measure for identifying those segments of the population that have been left furthest behind. The 2020 Income, Expenditure and Labour Force Survey, based on data from 2019-2020, reveals that

⁸ NSIA Income, Expenditure and Labour Force Survey Report 2020. Published April 2021.

the national Headcount Ratio is 49.4 percent, almost half of the total population is identified as multidimensionally poor.

35. To assess multidimensional poverty, assessing the uncensored headcount ratios which represent the proportion of the population who are deprived in the corresponding sector indicators that comprise the MPI, the highest deprivation headcounts at the national level are found for female schooling (with 62.7% of the population deprived), dependency (60.8%), school attendance (58.1%), cooking fuel (55.6%), and income shocks (53.6%).
36. Geographically, the incidence of poverty is above 70 percent in eight out of the 34 provinces, namely Urozgan (93%), Helmand (86%), Kandahar (80%), Badghis (79%), Nooristan (73%), Faryab (73%), Maydan Wardak (73%), and Zabul (72%). Although these regions are relatively small in that each of them is home to less than 4 percent of the population, they deserve particular attention as a very large proportion of their population live in multidimensional poverty.
37. By contrast, the incidence of poverty is only below 20% in the capital, Kabul (17%), which is home to 16 percent of the population and thus represents the most densely populated province in the country, and in Panjsher (10%). Multi-dimensional poverty incidence is between 60 – 67 percent in Farah (61.4%), Khost (65.6%), Kunar (61.6%), Laghman (60.7%), Logar (64.7%), Nangarhar (66.8%), and Samangan (60.2%). In the rest of the regions, the intensity of poverty is around 50 percent, but it ranges from 47.9 percent in Paktika to 59.7 percent in Urozgan.

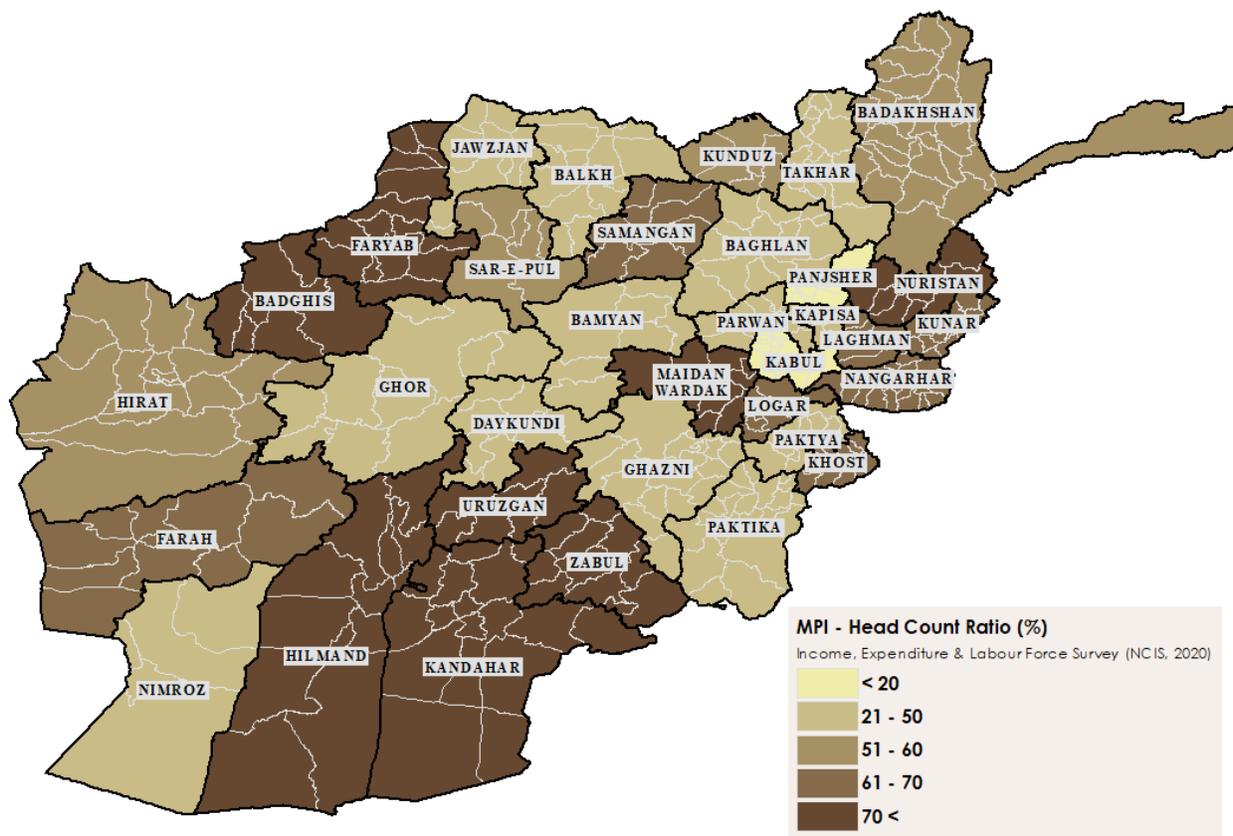


Figure 3.0: Multi-dimensional Poverty Incidence (Head Count Ratio) in Afghanistan, NSIA 2020

Priority Issues in the humanitarian and basic human needs phase

38. UNDP’s socio-economic analysis shows that each of the 34 provinces in Afghanistan has its own distinctive characteristics. For example, Badakhshan has the largest percentage of its population living in the emergency phase of food security (30%).⁹ Badghis has the largest percentage of its population experiencing multi-dimensional poverty (85.5%).¹⁰ Kabul which has the largest population and highest population density, has the most serious urban water supply problems. Bamyan is facing a significant problem with rangeland degradation due to over-stocking, and Zabul has the lowest percentage of women contributing to household incomes (4%).¹¹ Ghor reported the highest percentages in gender-based violence at 93 percent followed by Herat at 91 percent. There is also significant variation between the districts that make up each province and the issues of most concern in each province are not always distributed evenly and may affect different population groups, differently.

39. On the other hand, the similarities between provinces tend to be driven by factors such as their dependence on trade, their proximity to international borders, common cultural factors such as

⁹ IPC Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, “Afghanistan.”

¹⁰ Afghanistan Multi-Dimensional Poverty Index (2016-2017). National Statistics and Information Agency (NSIA)

¹¹ <https://asiafoundation.org/publication/afghanistan-in-2019-a-survey-of-the-afghan-people/>

attitudes towards women, environmental factors such as desertification and the availability of water, and physical factors such as the extent of the infrastructure needed for access to markets. Further, humanitarian and development gains in one province are linked to and dependent on humanitarian and development gains in other provinces. It is also important to point out that the socio-economic impacts of the relationship between those provinces and the countries that they border cannot be underestimated.

40. Based on the socio-economic analysis that has been carried out for each region, Table 5.0 below shows the issues of most concern for each region and the associated set of SDGs.

Table 5.0: Afghan SDG (A-SDG) Priorities

Region	A-SDG Priorities	Key Issue
Central Highlands Region	A-SDGs 2, 3, 6, 7 & 15 (<i>food, water, health, energy and the sustainable use of natural resources</i>)	Food Security
Central Region	A-SDGs 3, 6, 8, 15, 16 (<i>water, employment, health the sustainable use of natural resources and access to justice</i>)	Environmentally Sustainable Economic Growth
Eastern Region	A-SDGs 2, 3, 4, 6, 7 (<i>food, education, water, health, energy</i>).	Energy Access
North-Eastern Region	A-SDGs 2, 3, 7, 8, 13 (<i>food, energy, employment (youth), health and climate</i>)	Food Security
Northern Region	A-SDGs 3, 6, 7, 15, 17 (<i>water, health, energy, the sustainable use of natural resources and partnerships</i>)	Environmentally Sustainable Economic Growth
South-Eastern Region	A-SDGs 3, 6, 7, 15 (<i>water, energy, health, the sustainable use of natural resources</i>)	Water
Southern-Region	A-SDGs 3, 4, 6, 7, 16 (<i>energy, water, health, education and corruption</i>)	Water
Western Region	A-SDGs 1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 16 (<i>water, food, employment, health and peace</i>)	Water

41. While there is some variation between the regions, it is clear that *as a minimum*, interventions for each region will need to address five key issues that support basic human needs at the community level:

- Issue (1): Food Security
- Issue (2): Water
- Issue (3): Energy
- Issue (4): Health
- Issue (5): Livelihoods and Employment

These five issues will be jointly monitored with other UN agencies and include an assessment of whether human rights are being protected, considering the differences across regions.

Issue (1): Food Security

42. Food insecurity is a major constraint for any socio-economic recovery effort as it is a conflict driver and therefore an important consideration for programming. The food security phase classification for each province is shown in fig. 4.0 below. This map is based on the IPC Integrated Food Insecurity Phase Classification for March–May 2021,¹² and shows that only four provinces (shown in yellow) are currently classified as being in IPC Phase 2 (Stressed) and are therefore not critical. These are Farah, Paktya, Khost and Kunduz. The report also projects that the food security situation will continue to worsen, affecting up to 30 percent of the population of the country by the end of the year.

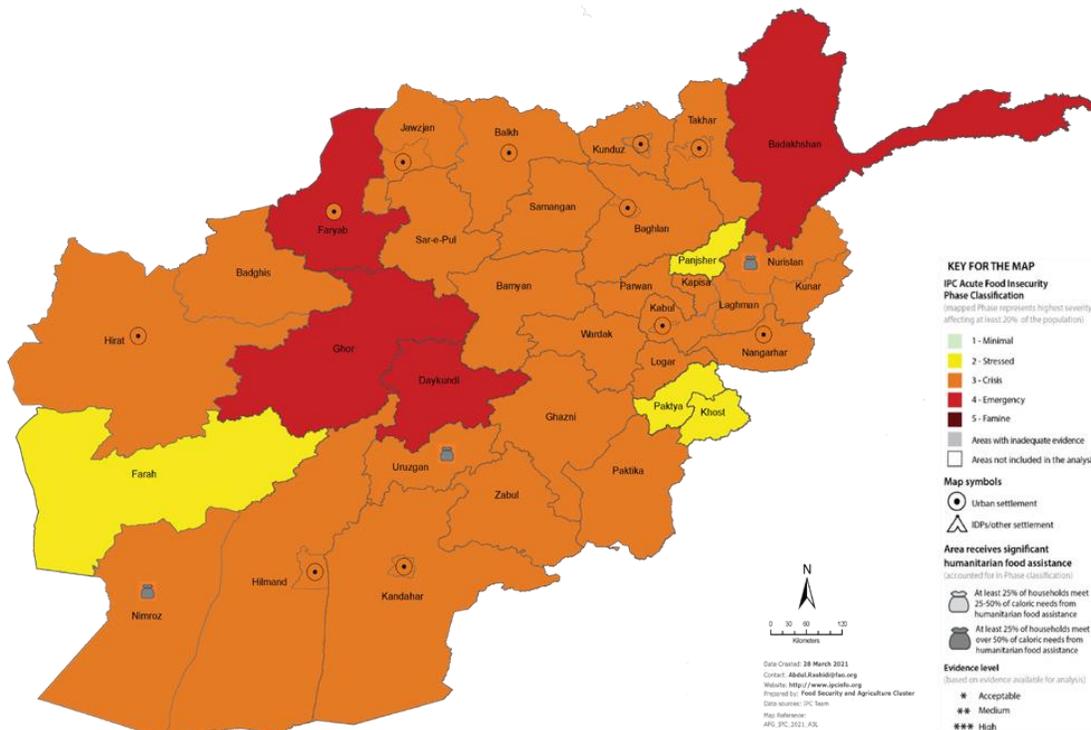


Fig. 4.0: IPC Integrated Food Security Phase Classification for Afghanistan

43. The total population in Afghanistan at Phase 4 (Emergency) is 2,372,030 people, or 6 percent of the population of Afghanistan. As shown in Table 4.0 below, there is a wide range of variation between the different regions of Afghanistan in the number of people classified as being in IPC Integrated Phase 4 (Emergency). The two worst regions are the Central Highlands, North-Eastern and Northern Regions. The four provinces that have the largest number of people in IPC Integrated Phase 4 (Emergency) in these two regions are: Farah (25%), Ghor (20%), Daikundi (18.3%) and Badakhshan (30%). These four provinces are therefore critical as far as any programming on food security is concerned. However, it should be noted that all 34 Provinces have a segment of the population that are classified as being in IPC Phase 4 (Emergency) with the percentage of the population in Phase 4 in each province ranging from 5 percent (12 provinces) to 30 percent in Badakhshan.

¹² IPC Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, “Afghanistan.”

Issue (2): Water

44. Given water's role in agriculture, food security, disease prevention, and overall health, access to water is critical for people's well-being, socio-economic recovery and resilience. Afghanistan has experienced continued shocks to its water systems over the past several decades, ranging from an increased frequency, intensity and duration of droughts to severe contamination from poor development and improper sewage channels.
45. The total annual amount of renewable water per capita has dropped by nearly 40 percent between 2002 and 2017.¹ The availability of groundwater for drinking in many urban areas and for agricultural irrigation and livestock in many rural areas has become critical in most provinces, causing internal migration. According to the Survey of the Afghan People (SAP),¹³ access to clean drinking water varies significantly across regions, but all provinces reported that access is getting worse.

Issue (3): Energy

46. Afghanistan's per capita electricity consumption of 100 kWh is less than a tenth of the levels in neighboring countries. While solar panels have provided an opportunity for off-grid access to electricity for close to 60 percent of households, the country has installed capacity of around 600 Megawatt (MW) locally. Over 80 percent of the country's energy needs are imported from neighboring countries.¹⁴
47. After the August 15 crisis, although imported electricity from Uzbekistan has not yet been cut off, there is insufficient funding to pay for the country's electricity needs. Even before August 15, regular power cuts had affected industry and the 33.5 percent of households that are connected to the national grid. Access to electricity for hospitals or other essential services is at risk.
48. At the household level, according to the 2019 SAP, there are significant differences between provinces in perceptions on whether the electricity supply is improving or getting worse. By province, respondents living in Kunduz are most likely to report improved access to electricity (45.3%), while those in Kunar (62.2%), Nangarhar (49.9%), and Zabul (47.6%) are most likely to report that access has worsened.

Issue (4): Health

49. Before 15 August, 59 percent of the population had access to primary healthcare within half an hour's walk and the eight regions differed significantly in terms of life expectancy at birth. The North-Eastern region had the lowest life expectancy (66.5), and the South-Eastern region had the highest life expectancy (72.9). Since the crisis, the World Bank, which was the largest donor supporting the health sector in Afghanistan, announced the suspension of their support for the largest health project in the country, the Sehatmandi project. However, the Global Fund,

¹³ <https://asiafoundation.org/publication/afghanistan-in-2019-a-survey-of-the-afghan-people/>

¹⁴ https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/280392021_VNR_Report_Afghanistan.pdf

another major actor in the health sector, is continuing its work on HIV and AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis. Due to the loss of funding from the international community, the health system in Afghanistan has now all but collapsed.

Issue (5): Livelihoods and Employment

50. There are significant differences in the level of unemployment, female labour force participation, labour underutilization and youth unemployment between the provinces. For example, as per the NSIA 2020 Income, Expenditure and Labour Force Survey, the unemployment rate ranges from 50 percent (Ghor) to 3.1 percent (Uruzgan); the female labour force participation rate ranges from 57 percent (Nuristan) to 0.2 percent (Kandahar). More worryingly, the youth unemployment rate ranges from 74.2 percent (Kabul) to 1.1 percent (Uruzgan) and labour underutilization ranging from 14.8 percent (Urozgan) to 69.4 percent (Ghor).
51. In addition, the humanitarian multi sector needs assessment for Whole of Afghanistan in 2020 by REACH reveals the major reason behind lower income of displaced households and vulnerable population to be either absence or reduced employment and labor-intensive work opportunities as responded by over 85 percent of sampled HHs across the regions and their provinces. Clearly, these differences are extreme already, and the situation further aggravated by the current multi-dimensional crisis on the economy, natural disaster and drought, hence particular attention has been paid when planning the interventions under ABADEI, and, when planning the type of cash-based interventions that are appropriate for each region. Provinces with a high rate of youth unemployment are of great concern as without jobs, the youth are either likely to migrate or become involved in the illicit economy and may pose a significant conflict risk.

The type of interventions that will be carried out

52. Taking these five common issues into account as well as the differences across provinces described above, the focus of ABADEI's interventions will be on prioritized support in each of the four key areas of work or *pillars* shown below:



Fig. 5.0: Four Pillars of the ABADI Strategy and its associated Outputs

53. Interventions to be carried out under each of the four pillars of the ABADI Strategy have been organized under a total of 15 Outputs.

Pillar (1): Provision of essential services:

54. The rehabilitation of essential infrastructure and services is key to establishing and maintaining livable conditions in vulnerable areas. Interventions will provide targeted support to:

- i) Public infrastructure for the delivery of essential health services; electricity, solid waste management (SWM) and water supply, such as the rehabilitation of basic community services in health and COVID-19 support (supporting primary health care facilities for COVID-19 response and short-term management assistance to prevent disruptions to the Basic Package of Health Services (BPHS) and the Essential Package of Hospital Services (EPHS) in rural and urban areas);
- ii) Food security based economic infrastructure such as local roads, bridges, marketplaces as well as boreholes and irrigation channels for agricultural communities (including community members benefitting from cash for work for rehabilitation and reconstruction of food storage and water security infrastructure), productive infrastructures such as greenhouses and the rehabilitation of degraded lands; and
- iii) Energy provision required to support these essential services.

55. This pillar includes activities under three outputs as follows:

- IR 1.1 Essential basic services and infrastructure including COVID 19 support enabled and supported.
- IR 1.2 Essential food security and regenerative agriculture infrastructure, inputs and services supported.
- IR 1.3 Basic renewable energy services supported and sustained (to enable essential and food security service delivery).

56. These outputs will ensure that people’s both urgent and basic needs are met to maintain positive coping capacities and pursue dignified livelihoods and prevent the aggravation of humanitarian needs beyond what can be addressed through the humanitarian response. Therefore, the activities under these three results areas focus on preserving core service delivery mechanisms (including infrastructure) for **health** services and COVID-19 response, WASH and SWM services; reducing **food insecurity** by providing short-term emergency support in the forms of agricultural inputs, services and infrastructure; and the **energy** required to support essential service and household level needs.

Pillar (2): Community livelihoods and local economic activities

57. The revitalization of local economies is an important dimension of the ability of communities to cope in the current environment while also addressing the drivers of vulnerabilities they face. UNDP is already working directly with communities to address extreme poverty by providing immediate financial assistance to households, leveraging digital and innovative delivery mechanisms, creating opportunities for immediate income generation, targeting unemployed youth.

58. UNDP and UN agencies are already supporting local economies by developing green, inclusive value-chains based on local market assessments, strengthening the private sector by providing access to innovative financial services, new markets and products and supporting producers and micro-enterprises, including women-owned small and medium sized businesses.

59. This pillar includes four output areas as follows:

- IR 2.1 Households in high poverty and high insecurity areas provided with basic income (TBI).
- IR 2.2 Local level livelihoods and economies sustained through Cash for Work (CfW) and Cash for Market (CfM).
- IR 2.3 Local private sector development through technical and financial support to informal and formal businesses, including assisting SMEs to access and/or expand to new market areas, support to local traders, to women-led and community-led enterprises.
- IR 2.4 Cross border trade and access to market supported.

60. These outputs will contribute to livelihoods being safeguarded so that communities can continue to function “independently” in the face of the crisis. Therefore, the activities under these four result areas focus on a range of social protection measures and the creation of livelihoods opportunities. Temporary basic income will target households in high-poverty,

high-insecure areas, with a specific focus on children (0-3), elders (above 65) and the disabled. Interventions will include CfW for agriculture, disaster resilient infrastructure, maintenance and construction work. CfM will support SMEs and prioritize women-led informal businesses and community-owned social enterprises.

61. Moreover, the interventions will support vulnerable groups especially youth and women through training for income generating activities. Different options will be explored including aggregation, basic processing, packaging and marketing of local agricultural products in support of rapid socio-economic recovery at the community level.

Pillar (3): Protection of farm-based livelihoods from natural disasters

62. Due to geographical location and years of environmental degradation and dependence on agriculture and natural resources for sustenance, Afghan communities are highly prone to intense and recurring natural hazards such as flooding, earthquakes, snow avalanches, landslides and droughts.

63. Beyond humanitarian assistance, farmers and vulnerable households need to be supported to produce locally in the face of natural disasters. As these factors intensify crisis, adopting a climate-resilient approach is important to protect and sustain development gains from the start. Priority will be given to improving the ability of communities to avoid and recover quickly from disasters, increase their access to renewable energy, water, and promoting sustainable food production through regenerative agriculture and agroforestry. Poor and marginalized communities, particularly displaced women and youth will be provided with environmentally sustainable livelihood opportunities.

64. This pillar includes activities under four results areas as follows:

- IR 3.1 Community preparedness for disasters improved.
- IR 3.2 Disaster resilient critical infrastructure in place.
- IR 3.3 Water security and access enhanced through climate-smart systems.
- IR 3.4 Natural ecosystem restoration and management supported.

65. The objective of this pillar is to ensure that the natural resources upon which livelihoods and rapid socio-economic recovery critically depends, are **managed as sustainably as possible** in a crisis context. Therefore, the activities under these results areas focus on providing short-term emergency support that ensures continued access to critical resources whilst at the same time generating **rapid income generating opportunities** and engaging communities in designing and implementing projects that lead to collective outcomes.

Pillar (4): Community resilience and social cohesion

66. To protect development gains, ABADEI interventions will support the development of community-led needs-based socio-economic assessments and recovery plans that promote reconciliation and prevent conflict, improve access to justice, support alternative dispute

resolution mechanisms, and protect the rights of women and girls. ABADEI interventions will be designed and implemented in a participatory manner to ensure that activities are responsive to local needs and priorities and contribute to community resilience building.

67. This pillar includes four results areas as follows:

- IR 4.1 Communities for peace and social cohesion reinforced.
- IR 4.2 Improved gender equality and women's empowerment.
- IR 4.3 Rights-based access to justice, human rights and human security fostered.
- IR 4.4 Community-led needs-based local recovery and resilience plans identified.

68. Activities of these outputs will prioritize local civil society organizations (CSOs) and women's self-help groups. It is critical to ensure the voice of vulnerable groups are not excluded. Communities will be supported through the establishment of District Management Teams (DMTs) which will play a critical role in the designing of community gender sensitive resilience plans, identifying priorities, community and resources mobilization, and the implementation of the prioritized community initiatives through small-scale rehabilitation projects.

69. These interventions will contribute to improvement of service delivery, social cohesion and community resilience. At the same time, they provide an indirect contribution to peacebuilding through activities that are designed to reduce the potential for further conflict and lay the ground for more direct peacebuilding and conflict prevention initiatives, particularly for vulnerable groups such as women and youth.

70. As can be seen in fig. 6.0 below, the impact of the interventions under each pillar interacts in complex ways. The ABADEI Strategy design has used modelling simulations to understand these interactions and will use this information to improve implementation and planning.

ABADEI, a community resilience strategy

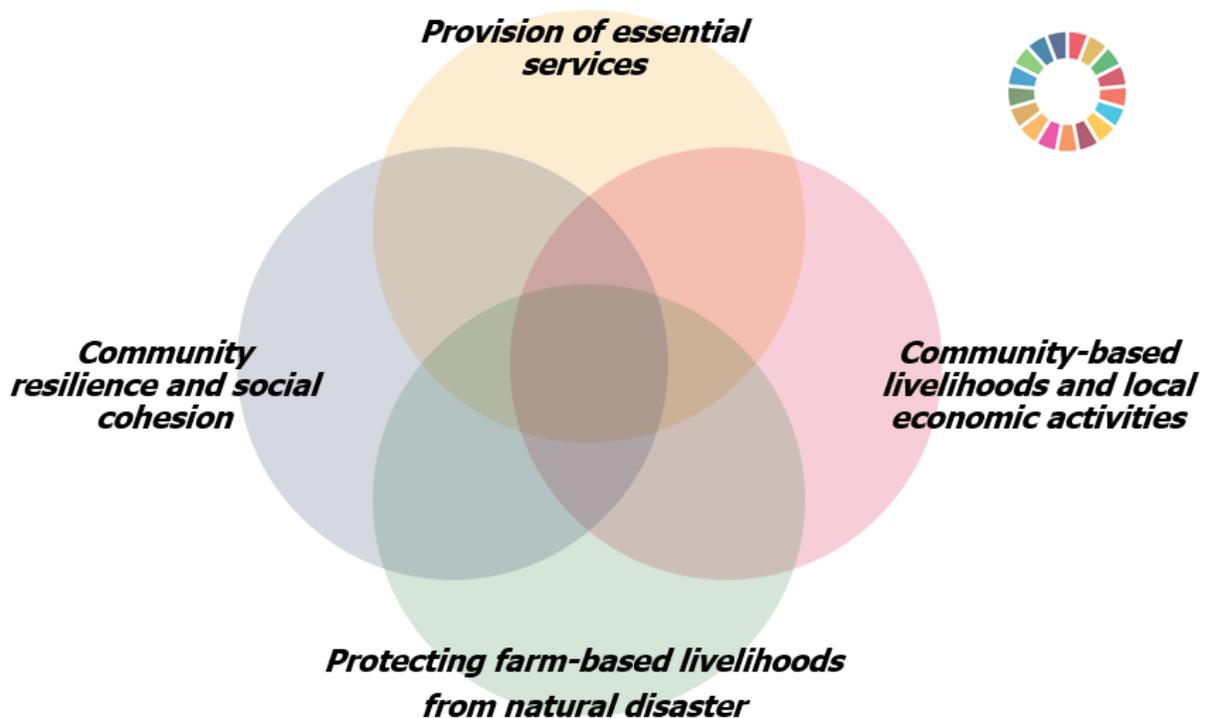


Fig. 6.0: Interaction of the four pillars

Theory of Change

71. The ABADEI Strategy theory of change indicates that:

IF essential basic services are functioning (Output 1.1, 1.3), and essential food security service delivery supported and enabled equitably (Output 1.2 and 1.3), THEN people can meet their basic needs without relying on humanitarian assistance.

IF the most vulnerable receive basic income (Output 2.1), livelihoods support and local economies are revitalized (Output 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4) THEN livelihoods are saved with people able to earn a living to sustain themselves and their families, and communities can continue to function.

IF communities are prepared for disaster management (Output 3.1, 3.2) and water and natural ecosystems are restored (Output 3.3 and 3.4), THEN livelihoods will be protected, population displacement is reduced, and communities will be able to prevent further deterioration and recover more rapidly and sustainably.

IF reconciliation, conflict sensitive and inclusive participatory processes are fostered to identify Afghan led solutions (Output 4.1), gender equality is improved (Output 4.2), access to

justice strengthened (Output 4.3) and communities are involved in planning (Output 4.4), THEN social cohesion and resilience is strengthened at community level.

This can result in the number of people requiring humanitarian assistance to decrease and positive coping capacities and community resilience to strengthen.

72. Assumptions underpinning the ABADEI Theory of Change are:

- Strong linkage and coordination with the HRP exist in terms of priority setting and targeting based on key humanitarian indicators, and data, including severity of food insecurity, emergency needs and presence of internally displaced persons.
- Dedicated support to women and girls can be delivered in view of the new restrictions, applying new ways to provide assistance in a sensible and realistic way that will create no unintended negative consequences to the women involved, their families or communities.
- Sufficient engagement with local level stakeholders can be established to foster ownership of activities, and identification of demand-based interventions, and in turn, strong support for what is being achieved together.
- Operational and access arrangements for target areas are strong enough to allow access for contractors, partners and freedom of movement.

ABADEI funding and likely SDG impacts

73. The total budget required for the implementation of ABADEI Strategy from 2021-2023 is \$1.467 billion over 24 months with the first 12 months needs amounting to \$667.4 million. This amount is distributed annually for Phases (1) and (2) as follows:

Phase 1 (0 -12 months)

- \$300 million *targeted basic income* in the form of cash transfers to households
- \$100 million for *Cash-for-Work* as public investment in infrastructure to create livelihoods and jobs for women and men
- \$100 million for *Cash for Markets* particularly targeting SMEs owned by women¹⁵
- \$167.4 million for support interventions across pillars 1, 3 and 4

Phase 2 (12/18 - 24 months)

- \$300 million *targeted basic income* in the form of cash transfers to households
- \$100 million for *Cash-for-Work* as public investment in infrastructure to create livelihoods and jobs for women and men

¹⁵ In terms of mobilizing funds to support the private sector, UNDP's SDG financing initiative is looking at local development funds to mobilize zakat and sadaqa for social services, impact bonds targeting climate change adaptation, health and education and delivery of essential infrastructure, structuring of Islamic financial vehicles for local governments and the private sector including murabahah, mudharabah and musharakah, digital crowd-funding solutions for specific SDG-related projects and blended finance solutions

- \$100 million for *Cash for Markets* particularly targeting SMEs owned by women¹⁶
- \$300 million for technical support interventions

74. UN joint programmes in support of the ABADEI Strategy will be operationalized under the Special Trust Fund for Afghanistan (STFA). UN agencies will be able to access funds for activities under the ABADEI Strategy as per the mechanisms outlined in the STFA Terms of Reference (TOR).
75. UNDP's modelling work suggests that the overall effects of these ABADEI inputs on real GDP will be positive generating with an annual increase which amounts to 1 percent in 2025. Following the improvement in the economic activity, unemployment will decrease for both males and females by an average of 0.5 and 0.3 percent respectively. The exchange rate will appreciate during the years of cash injection and depreciate in the following years based on the assumption that since the \$667.4 million for initial 12 months (2021-2022) and \$800 million (2023) will be financed through a grant each year, the demand for Afghani's currency will increase leading to an appreciation of 4.3 and 3.2 percent respectively in 2021 and 2022 followed by a depreciation during the rest of the period. This will have a double effect: firstly, a general decline of total exports in 2021 and 2022 and an increase of total imports for almost all the period, and secondly a reduction of the inflation rate in 2021 and a decrease in the following period. This can be explained by the fact that consumption is made mainly up by imports. Consequently, an appreciation of the exchange rate would decrease the inflation rate and vice-versa. The annual cash transfers to the most-needy population are likely to increase their welfare significantly.
76. UNDP's modelling work also shows that the overall impact of ABADEI funding on the SDGs will be an improvement of 1.28 percent on the baseline scenario. The largest impacts of the ABP approach of ABADEI will be a 7.55 percent increase on the baseline for SDG-6 which covers the sustainable management of water and sanitation for all, and a 3.84 percent increase on the baseline scenario for SDG-10 (inequality). The impact is positive across all seventeen SDGs with the exception of a 0.24 percent decrease on the baseline scenario for SDG-12 which covers sustainable consumption and production patterns¹⁷.

Cash-based Interventions (CBI)

77. As most development projects have been frozen and as the economy deteriorates, it is likely that this will lead to further frustration in communities impacting the prospects for peace. While the technical interventions will be implemented through partner organizations such as NGOs, INGOs, CSOs, etc. in each region, given the problems of access in some areas, the core

¹⁶ In terms of mobilizing funds to support the private sector, UNDP's SDG financing initiative is looking at local development funds to mobilize zakat and sadaqa for social services, impact bonds targeting climate change adaptation, health and education and delivery of essential infrastructure, structuring of Islamic financial vehicles for local governments and the private sector including murabahah, mudharabah and musharakah, digital crowd-funding solutions for specific SDG-related projects and blended finance solutions

¹⁷ In the context of the wider funding picture, the \$1.1 billion pledge until the end of 2021 made in Geneva on 13 September, will have a significant impact on food security (SDG-2), supporting a key focus of the ABADEI Strategy, and is likely to positively affect the other SDGs.

approach to delivery that underpins the interventions under each of the four areas is a reliance on cash-based interventions (CBI). The options available include *Cash-for-Work* to cover activities such the rebuilding and management of basic, productive, transport and energy infrastructure, *Cash-for-Markets* such as support to SMEs, women-led informal businesses, and community-owned social enterprises and *Targeted Basic Income* to support households in high-poverty, high-insecurity areas, with a specific focus on children (0-3), elders (above 65) and the disabled.

78. These Cash-Based Interventions will be delivered in a way that reflects realities on the ground at regional and provincial levels taking into account the different economic infrastructure available and using e-payments (mobile-based) and cash vouchers. The UN has considerable experience with digital and analogue cash transfer methodologies in Afghanistan with previous projects and currently uses reliable systems that enable the identification of beneficiaries, transparent transaction records and updated data. The UN and its partners work with roving agents for physical cash disbursement and updating records in last-mile locations where no other options may be present. Specifically, the cash-based interventions include:

- **Targeted Basic Income (TBI):** TBI is applied in districts with high poverty and high insecurity and households with vulnerable population segments, including children (0-3years), disabled people, and elders (above 65).
- **Cash for Work (CFW):** CFW helps generate income generation opportunities by intervening in two essential areas for Afghanistan: physical infrastructure management and aid provision. These interventions will focus on infrastructure building and management and social protection or energy provision, as well as community-led aid provision and will be supported through real-time analysis and policy insights through the core analytical functions that the Policy and SDG Integration teams will play both at the local and the community-levels.
- **Cash for Markets (CFM):** Cash for Markets aims to address gaps in existing markets in selected areas of intervention, focusing primarily on improving access to goods, income and employment generation and support to existing micro and small businesses. The focus will be on low-value direct grants (LVGs) to community-owned businesses (micro-franchises and social enterprises), and support for women-led businesses in the informal sector to build area-specific local level capacities.

Partnerships & Implementation Modality

79. UN participating organizations will draw on their nationwide network of capable personnel. In the case of UNDP, it has already established four regional offices (Jalalabad, Mazar, Herat and Kandahar) at the provincial level, and is in the process of establishing four more sub offices in rest of the eight regions and a full roster of over 40 implementing partners throughout Afghanistan. Existing UN networks and stakeholders will be mobilized to provide support,

including an extensive network used to deliver the current portfolios of programmes and projects that remain active at the local level.

80. Partnerships under the ABADEI Strategy will be further expanded and facilitated following an initial start-up phase to test the end-to-end implementation and scalability with UN agencies able to bring their thematic and sector expertise, experience and resources to joint initiatives. The value-added of such a collaborative approach to implementation include sharing data and knowledge; sharing and managing risks, co-location of physical presence, shared resources and pooled funding, extended reach through existing projects and networks of implementing partners; shared long-term agreements with vendors for services; and cooperation around joint monitoring and reporting arrangements. UNDP has been coordinating with the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) and UN Country Team (UNCT) to inform and adjust the ABADEI Strategy's design, risk mitigation, implementation modalities and identification of partners.
81. In this uncertain environment, the UN participating organizations will maximize the use of the Direct Implementation Modality (DIM). The implementation of ABADEI will be undertaken through the direct contracting of third-party implementers. Third-party implementers include non-governmental organizations, local community groups, private vendors, and vetted money service providers. UN agencies will use the flexibilities of the UN procurement to make use of the benefits of existing contracts. For example, Long Term Agreements (LTAs) used by UNDP and other UN agencies will be used under the agreed 'mutual recognition' principle of the UN development system.

Monitoring & Reporting Framework

82. As shown in fig. 7.0 below, UNDP has developed an Area-Based Monitoring and Reporting Framework that relies on a mix of tested tools and methods. It provides an ongoing tracking and reporting capability, based on three main components.
83. The first component provides essential contextual information, including information on local security, conflict, politics and the economy. The second component describes how data is gathered at the local level. Three mechanisms will be used to monitor field activities. Combinations of these mechanisms will be adopted depending on the local context and the nature of activities in each area:
 - **Community-based Monitoring:** Afghan youth and local community volunteers will be selected and recruited based on agreed transparent criteria. They will then receive simplified training on the project cycle and monitoring techniques followed by on-the-job training opportunities to actively provide real-time reporting on projects' progress, quality of implementation, and transparency. UNDP has already established a network of trained 1,500 field monitoring agents who use mobile phones to gather micro-level data that can be used to track interventions and can be activated at any moment on needs basis and visualized on an online system.

- Third-Party Monitoring and Evaluation: Carried out by an independent firm to ensure that the implemented projects in each area are monitored and objectively assessed. This also ensures that findings will be reported quickly and thoroughly with a clear focus on relevance, efficiency, sustainability, and effectiveness in relation to ABADEI's pre-set targets and work plans. As activities increase, this modality of monitoring will be scaled up further on needs basis.
- Site visits: Regular and *ad-hoc* missions will be undertaken by the country and field teams to monitor the progress and performance of activities and to identify key results and challenges.
- Digital surveys and tele-surveys will be used as needed.
- Regional Offices across the eight regions will have a dedicated responsibility of monitoring the ABADEI implementation progress and emerging needs and risks at the local level at the same time coordinating with the humanitarian area clusters.

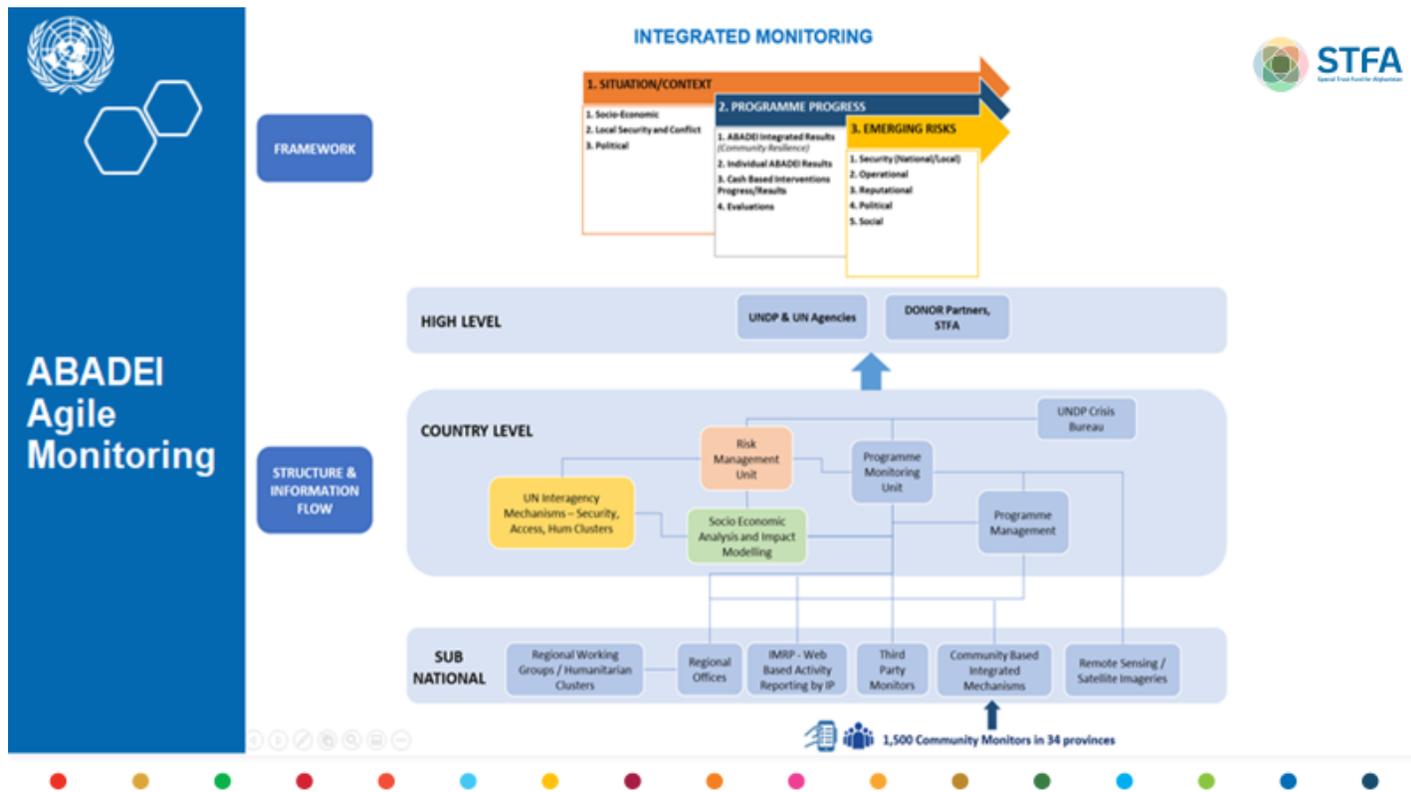


Fig. 7.0: Integrated approach to monitoring of the ABADEI Strategy

84. To ensure data integrity and the security of often sensitive data, this information is uploaded by authorized personnel in the regional sub-offices. All of this data is stored centrally so that all interventions can be tracked together in one monitoring system. A key feature of UNDP's monitoring system is the use of digital technologies to move from an evidence-based approach

to almost ‘real-time’ monitoring. Through the creation of analytics, collective analysis, actionable intelligence, this aggregated data will be used to support sub-national and national decision-making processes in terms of policy dialogue and the allocation of budgets to reduce inequality among regions. This will allow UNDP and its partners to see and monitor the progress of activities and so adopt a more flexible and adaptive approach to programming that suits the highly volatile context. To support data management and analysis, the UNDP Afghanistan country office has created a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) pooled capacity workforce comprising over 18 national and international M&E and data management experts to support this work. Lastly, UNDP has developed an SDG dashboard that will be used at the national and sub-national level to help decision-makers to visually assess the broader impact of the Strategy.

Adaptive Management and Risk Management Framework

85. The third component supports the analysis of risk and monitoring of conflict sensitivity. UNDP has established an Integrated Risk Management Unit (I-RMU) in Afghanistan (fig 8.0) to continuously review, analyze and mitigate risks involved in implementing the tailored area-based programmes in the eight regions of Afghanistan. During the design of the ABADEI Strategy, UNDP has conducted a comprehensive risk analysis guided by on-the-ground knowledge of its staff in the different regions, the review of socio-economic and conflict trends and the development of likely scenarios for the coming 6-12 months. It constitutes a starting point for risk-informed programme planning and implementation and will ensure a consistent ‘*Do No Harm*’ approach to ABADEI interventions, and also proactively apply the UN’s organizational standards and principles. The I-RMU will monitor risks at three levels:

- **Organizational level** (high-level reputational and political risks as well as regional geopolitical and programmatic risks),
- **Country-level** (political, reputational, security, programmatic and operational risks), and
- **Local level** (political, security, programmatic and operational risks). As an important feature, it will connect risk levels and risk escalation, using adaptive management principles and through the continuous analysis of developments and their implications on the efforts on the ground.

86. To identify plausible trends so as to delineate the boundaries for a realistic risk mitigation framework, four risk management scenarios have been identified. These are not meant to predict future developments but rather to identify plausible future trends so as to delineate the boundaries for a realistic risk mitigation framework. Each of these scenarios would produce a different risk landscape and have a distinct impact on programme implementation. Taking the current situation as a starting point, the first two scenarios, which assume either a peace settlement or the return of an ultra-conservative Sharia-based governance system, are likely to lead to less conflict and poverty while offering more access, security, and international funding. In these scenarios, the level of risk exposure of the programme decreases and facilitates implementation. By contrast, in the remaining two scenarios, an increasingly isolated

Afghanistan or the fragmentation of power based on the coexistence of autonomous groups can be assumed to lead to higher conflict and poverty levels and offer less access, security and international funding. Risk exposure increases in these scenarios and complicates programme implementation.

87. Thirteen general risks relating to programme implementation in Afghanistan were identified and subsequently assessed against the above scenarios in view of their likelihood and impact on the programme. Among these risks, those risks with the highest risk score will require continuous senior-management attention and mitigation. Ten of the planned 48 interventions are exposed to the highest level of risk. Among these, the activities targeting women have a particularly high socio-political risk exposure. In practical terms, these activities will need to be implemented through a gradual, experimental approach.