

# Quarterly Progress Report

Q1 2024



**WORLD BANK** | **MONITORING**  
**AFGHANISTAN** | **AGENT**

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## **Acknowledgments**

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**Front cover:** Children playing in the snow.

**Page 12:** Two young women selling food at the market.

**Page 18:** A farmer watering his trees.

**Page 33:** Laborers pouring concrete.

**Page 46:** Boys sowing seeds.

**Page 50:** A market where handmade goods are sold.

# Abbreviations

<b>AFN</b>	Afghan Afghanis
<b>AKF</b>	Aga Khan Foundation
<b>ARTF</b>	Afghanistan Resilience Trust Fund
<b>BV</b>	Beneficiary Verification
<b>BBV</b>	Baseline and Beneficiary Verification
<b>CASA 1000</b>	Central Asia-South Asia Electricity Transmission and Trade Project
<b>CCAP</b>	Citizens' Charter Afghanistan Project
<b>CDC(s)</b>	Community Development Council(s)
<b>CESI-WAPCOS</b>	CESI S.p.A-WAPCOS JV
<b>CFW</b>	Cash For Work
<b>CMU</b>	Country Management Unit
<b>CRLP</b>	Community Resilience and Livelihoods Project
<b>CSO(s)</b>	Civil Society Organization(s)
<b>DAB</b>	Da Afghanistan Bank
<b>DAP</b>	Di-ammonium Phosphate
<b>EATS</b>	Emergency Agriculture and Food Supply Project
<b>ECA(s)</b>	Entry Criterion / Criteria for Access
<b>EERA</b>	Education Emergency Response in Afghanistan
<b>EFSP</b>	Emergency Food Security Project
<b>ESS</b>	Environmental and Social Standards
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agricultural Organization
<b>FEWS NET</b>	Famine Early Warning Systems Network
<b>FY</b>	Financial Year
<b>GA/CG</b>	Gozar Assembly / Community Group
<b>GRC</b>	Grievance Redress Committee
<b>GRM</b>	Grievance Redress Mechanism
<b>HACT</b>	Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfer
<b>HER</b>	Health Emergency Response
<b>HG</b>	Home Gardening
<b>IDA</b>	International Development Association
<b>IP(s)</b>	Implementing Partner(s)
<b>IPC</b>	Integrated Food Security Phase Classification
<b>ITA</b>	Interim Taliban Administration
<b>ITS</b>	Information and Technology Solutions
<b>LIW</b>	Labor Intensive Work
<b>LVG(s)</b>	Low Value Grant(s)
<b>MA</b>	Monitoring Agent
<b>MCBP</b>	Maternal and Child Benefit Program
<b>MIS</b>	Management Information System

<b>MoPH</b>	Ministry of Public Health
<b>NCCSP</b>	NGO / CSO Capacity Support Project
<b>NGO(s)</b>	Non-governmental organization(s)
<b>NHLP</b>	National Horticulture and Livestock Project
<b>O&amp;M</b>	Operations and Maintenance
<b>OAT</b>	Operational Acceptance Testing
<b>OIS</b>	Office of Information Security
<b>QE</b>	Questionable Expenditure
<b>SCRPS(s)</b>	Statement(s) of Cash Receipts and Payments
<b>SG(s)</b>	Social Grant(s)
<b>SoE(s)</b>	Statement(s) of Expenditure
<b>SP(s)</b>	Service Provider(s)
<b>TPMA</b>	Third Party Monitoring Agent
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>UNOPS</b>	United Nations Office for Project Services
<b>USD</b>	United States Dollars
<b>WERP</b>	Water Emergency Relief Project
<b>WFP</b>	World Food Programme
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization

# Executive Summary

## Third party monitoring

As the World Bank Monitoring Agent (World Bank MA) for the Afghanistan Resilience Trust Fund (ARTF), we provide the World Bank and other stakeholders with visibility of and assurance over project implementation through a mix of financial and physical monitoring. This report provides the cumulative results of our monitoring during Q1 2024 to provide a comprehensive view of project performance, with results presented by project. Our purpose is to determine eligibility of expenditure incurred under the various projects for financing and to verify that anticipated project outputs are being achieved and intended beneficiaries reached. In doing so, we provide evidence of the implementation of cross-project Environmental and Social Standards (ESS) and Entry Criteria for Access (ECAs), in support of the World Bank's monitoring framework.



## Financial Monitoring

In Q1 2024, our financial monitoring focused on Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT) audits for the UNICEF-implemented Health Emergency Response (HER) and Education Emergency Response in Afghanistan (EERA) projects, and expenditure reviews for the Community Resilience and Livelihoods Project (CRLP) and the Emergency Food Security Project (EFSP). We also provided alternative assurance arrangements through reviews of Statements of Cash Receipts and Payments (SCRPs).

We continued to monitor ARTF and International Development Association (IDA) project bank balances and proceeded with the validation of outstanding liabilities under the Central Asia-South Asia Electricity Transmission and Trade Project (CASA 1000).

### Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT) audits: HER (1 January to 30 June 2023)

Audited expenditure	Questionable Expenditure (QE)	QE as %age of total payments
<b>USD 50,264,763</b>	<b>USD 30,550</b>	<b>0.06%</b>

### Statements of Cash Receipt and Payments

Total reported payments	Payments reviewed	QE	QE as %age of total payments
<b>USD 119,901,206</b>	<b>USD 119,311,415 (99%)</b>	<b>USD 75,374</b>	<b>&lt;0.1%</b>

### Bank balance verification

Project bank balances verified	Amount verified as of 31 March 2024
<b>81</b>	<b>USD 303 million</b>

### Review of project commitments: CASA 1000

Total invoices submitted for payment	Total recommended for payment
<b>USD 61,080,687</b> <b>Euro 870,357</b>	<b>USD 39,720,763 (65%)</b> <b>Euro 828,329 (95%)</b>





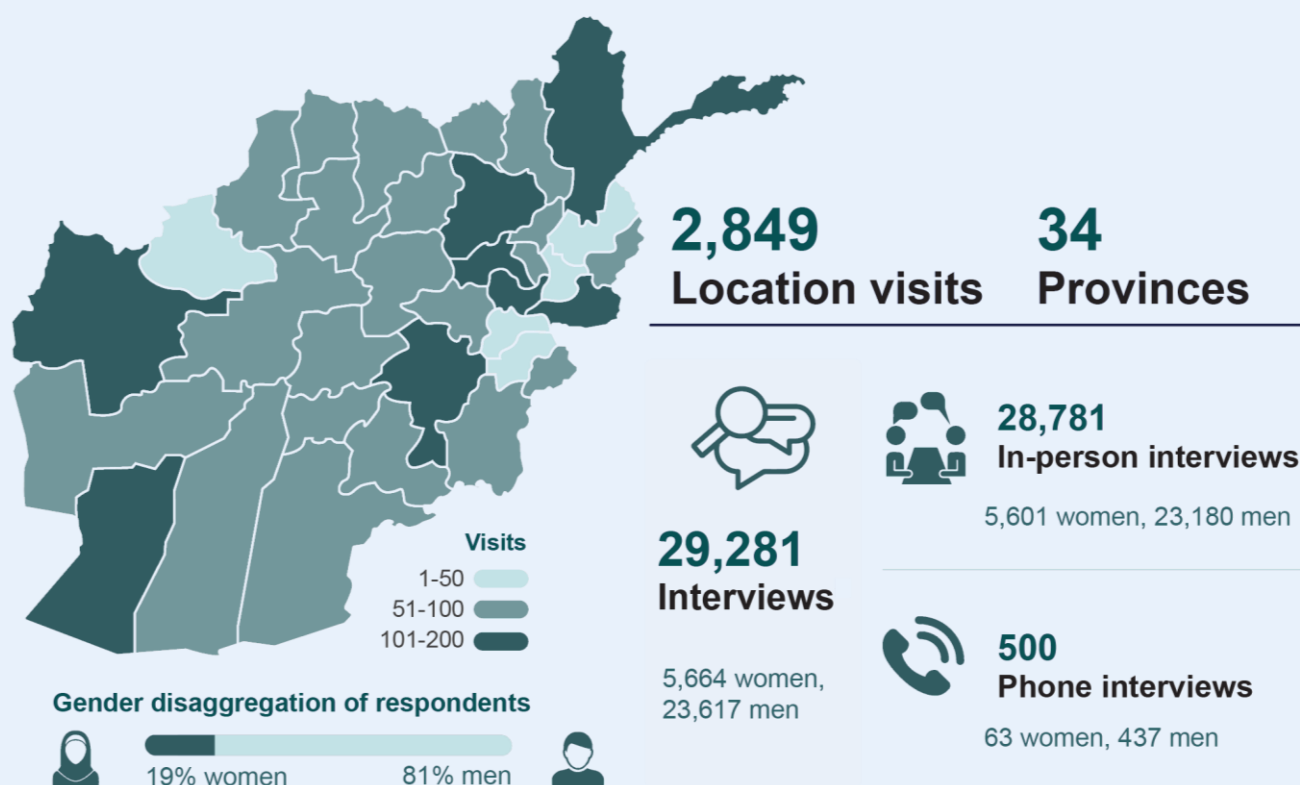
## Physical Monitoring

In Q1 2024, our physical monitoring teams completed 2,849 location visits and 29,281 in-person and telephone interviews.<sup>1</sup>

Our physical monitoring for CRLP, implemented by the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) comprised 239 location visits, monitoring construction and Community Development Councils (CDCs). We conducted 6,543 in-person interviews to monitor Entry Criteria for Access (ECA) compliance, Labor-Intensive Work (LIW), Cash For Work (CFW), and Social Grant (SG) provision.

Under EFSP, we completed 646 location visits and 3,750 interviews to verify the findings of five surveys by the Food and Agriculture Organization's Monitoring Agents (FAO TPMA) relating to wheat package distributions in 2022 and 2023, and CFW and Home Gardening (HG) interventions.

We completed 124 location visits and 283 in-person and telephone interviews for the NGO/CSO Capacity Support Project (NCCSP), implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), to verify the selection of Low-Value Grant (LVG) recipients.



<sup>1</sup> This report details findings from physical monitoring activities completed between 21 December 2023 and 20 March 2024. As such, there may be activities that began but had not been completed by the time of this report. Findings from these latter activities will be included in our Q2 2024 report. This report does not include details and findings from every activity undertaken, as some were conducted for internal monitoring purposes, not intended for publication. As a result, disaggregated figures may not fully reflect aggregate totals.

## Community Resilience & Livelihoods Project

In Q1, we visited 239 sub-projects and monitored the CDCs linked to them. We monitored and reported on construction at 193 sub-projects in 21 provinces, assessing physical progress, the quality of work done, and Environmental and Social Standards (ESS) compliance. Additionally, we completed 6,543 in-person interviews to monitor ECA compliance, and LIW, CFW, and SG activities, in both urban and rural areas across 24 provinces.

Two-thirds of the **193 sub-projects whose construction monitored in 2023 were completed and rated as 'Good' or higher** with no security incidents recorded. The CDC members we interviewed were **highly mobilized and actively engaged in updating beneficiary lists**.

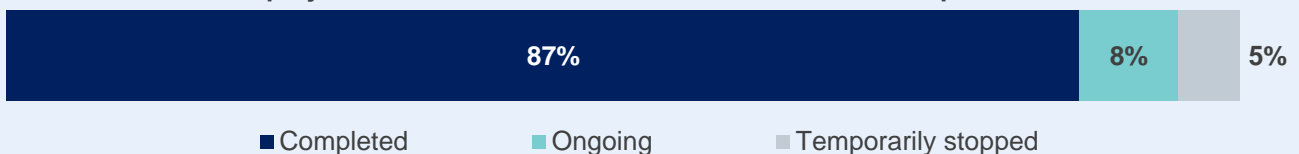


Compliance for ECA 1 involves checking the membership of CDCs to assess whether at least 70% of members listed in the UNOPS Management Information System (MIS) are part of, and engaged with, a named CDC. ECA 2 checks that women comprise at least 40% of a CDC's membership. In all, **89% (n=213) of CDCs met both ECAs<sup>2</sup>**.

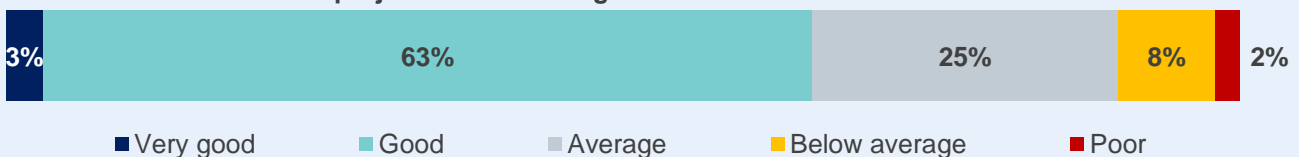
On average, nationwide, **women constituted almost half of CDC members (47%)**.

For financial monitoring, we reviewed payments totaling USD 1,374,884 made to unskilled and skilled laborers under the CFW scheme. We sampled and reviewed **33% (USD 457,150) of labor costs** reported under Component 2 of the project. We found **QE amounting to 0.2% (USD 921)** of the labor costs sampled, where excess days had been invoiced for. Detailed results from financial monitoring are in the Financial Monitoring section of this report.

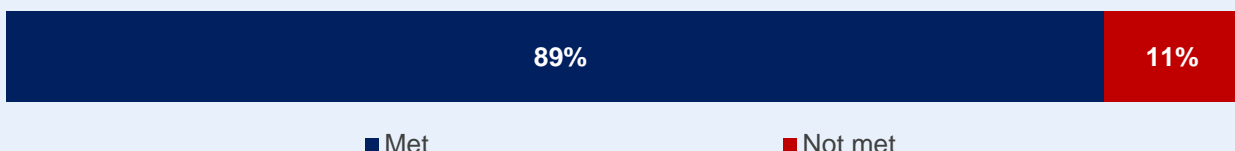
**Most of the 193 sub-projects whose construction we monitored were completed.**



**We rated most of the sub-projects 'Good' or higher.**



**A large majority of CDCs met both ECA requirements.**



<sup>2</sup> We were unable to deploy female enumerators to directly interact with female CDC members.



## Emergency Food Security Project

In Q1 2024, our monitoring of EFSP validating findings from five surveys conducted by the FAO TPMA:

- Post-harvest outcome monitoring for wheat production package distribution by FAO at the end of 2022.
- Baseline and beneficiary verification (BBV) for CFW.
- BBV for the HG intervention.
- Beneficiary verification (BV) for the 2023 wheat package distribution.
- ESS and mid-term construction monitoring for CFW.<sup>3</sup>



For financial monitoring, we received responses and supporting documents from FAO on draft findings from the review for the period ending 31 March 2023, for 15 Implementing Partners (IPs) covering 22 contracts. Our review of responses was ongoing at the end of this reporting period.

### Key findings from the validation of the post-harvest outcome monitoring for the 2022 wheat package distribution

In the second half of 2022, FAO distributed a wheat production package. The FAO TPMA's post-harvest monitoring outcome survey interviewed 7,380 households across 20 provinces. We validated their findings by interviewing 760 households in 20 provinces between 29 November and 25 December 2023. Comparing our findings with those of the FAO TPMA, we:

- Confirmed there were high levels of satisfaction among almost all beneficiary households with the wheat seed distributed**, with 91% of households reporting themselves either satisfied or highly satisfied, consistent with FAO TPMA findings (98%). We also found high levels of satisfaction among beneficiaries with the overall quality and yield performance of the wheat production package, again aligning with FAO TPMA findings.
- Confirmed there was near-universal satisfaction among those receiving wheat cultivation training**, with all but one household reporting to be satisfied or highly satisfied (For the FAO TPMA, this was all but two households). However, we also confirmed relatively low levels of households who reported receiving wheat cultivation training: both the FAO TPMA and ourselves found this to be 53%.
- Confirmed that the most frequently cited challenges when cultivating the 2022 wheat package were drought (64) and a lack of water (50%)**, reported by the FAO TPMA at 56% and 44% respectively.
- Confirmed 1.8 jeribs as the average amount of land used to cultivate the seed received and 28 kg for the amount of seed used per jerib** (the FAO TPMA found the latter to be 26.5 kg/jerib) with slightly lower usage rates for urea (31 versus 36 kg/jerib) and di-ammonium phosphate (29 versus 35 kg/jerib).
- Found a lower average yield than the FAO TPMA: 529 kg/jerib compared to 657 kg/jerib.** To some extent, this difference might result from the fact that we allowed households to respond "I don't know" to this question (52% of households selected this response), while the FAO TPMA did not, decreasing our denominator significantly.

<sup>3</sup> We did not receive the FAO TPMA data in time to complete this comparison before submission of this report. We will include findings from this analysis in the next quarterly report, if we receive the data.

## Key findings from the validation of the baseline and beneficiary verification survey for Cash For Work

In the second half of 2023, FAO began to implement a CFW program as part of EFSP. The FAO TPMA conducted a BBV survey, interviewing 10,003 households across all 34 provinces. To validate the FAO TPMA's findings, we interviewed 1,026 households in 33 provinces.



**Community involvement in beneficiary selection process was high.** We confirm the high satisfaction rates with beneficiary selection found by the FAO TPMA (97% for us, 99.7% for the FAO TPMA).



**We found that almost one-third of households (29%) reported having received other assistance in the previous 12 months.** For the FAO TPMA, this was 36%. Nearly one-fifth of households targeted for CFW had also been beneficiaries of WFP food distributions in the previous 12 months.



**Both our findings (99%) and those of the FAO TPMA (92%) showed that 'getting enough food to eat' was the top priority for households.** Other frequently cited priority needs were 'health support' (73% for us, 47% for the FAO TPMA) and 'education for children' (52% for us, 58% for the FAO TPMA). When asked if FAO or an FAO IP had consulted households about developing, implementing, or monitoring activities to help address their priority needs, nearly one-fifth of households (19%) agreed, but over three-quarters (77%) said this had not been the case. This reverses the FAO TPMA finding of 85% reporting they were consulted and 15% that they were not.



**In terms of land holdings, 47% of households reported owning irrigated land, and 24% rainfed land, with 14% households reporting owning both types.** The FAO TPMA's findings were 61% for ownership of irrigated land and 28% for rainfed land. The percentage of households targeted for CFW with access to some type of agriculture land was 57%, compared to the FAO TPMA's finding of 66%. On average, we found reported irrigated landholdings to be marginally smaller than did the FAO TPMA (2.2 versus 2.3 jeribs), but rainfed landholdings to be a third larger (4.7 versus 3.5 jeribs).

## Key findings from the validation of the baseline and beneficiary verification survey for Home Gardening

In the second half of 2023, FAO began to implement an HG program as part of EFSP. The FAO TPMA conducted a BBV survey, interviewing 8,381 households across 31 provinces. To validate the FAO TPMA's findings, we interviewed 847 households in 29 provinces.



**Community involvement in the beneficiary selection process was high.** We confirmed the high satisfaction rates with beneficiary selection found by the FAO TPMA (97% versus 99%).



**We found that 41% of households reported receiving other assistance in the previous 12 months,** compared to 25% for the FAO TPMA, with nearly a quarter of households (23%) targeted for HG also beneficiaries of WFP food distribution in that period.



**Both our findings (99%) and those of the FAO TPMA (86%) showed that 'getting enough food to eat' was the top priority of households targeted for HG.** When asked if FAO or an FAO IP had consulted households about developing, implementing, or monitoring activities to help address their priority needs, over one-quarter of households (26%) agreed, but 70% said this had not been the case, and 4% said they did not know. This is the reverse of the FAO TPMA finding of 83% reporting they were consulted and 17% that they were not.



**We found households had better access to vegetable seed than did the FAO TPMA (66% versus 47%).** Of all households that indicated they had recently cultivated vegetables, the cumulative average yield was 362 kg, against 276 kg for the FAO TPMA.



The average reported **amount of land used by households that had recently cultivated vegetables was 0.76 jeribs** (1.14 jeribs for the FAO TPMA). Female respondents tended to report using less land than did male respondents (0.63 versus 0.83 jeribs). Regarding the type of vegetables recently planted,

73% of households named tomatoes (74% for the FAO TPMA). Other crops mentioned by more than half of households were eggplant (51% for us, 54% for the FAO TPMA) and okra (51% for both).



**Most households reported that both men and women participate in cultivating vegetables** (63% for us, 55% for the FAO TPMA). While 11% of female respondents reported that only men cultivated vegetables, 29% of all male respondents did so. In contrast, 18% of female respondents reported that only women cultivated vegetables compared to 5% of male respondents. We also found that 6% of respondents reported their household did not cultivate vegetables at all, which could suggest a targeting error: the FAO TPMA reported that all the households interviewed cultivated vegetables.

### Key findings from the validation of the beneficiary verification survey for the 2023 wheat package distribution

In the second half of 2023, FAO distributed a wheat production package as part of EFSP, for which the FAO TPMA conducted a beneficiary verification survey, interviewing 7,834 households across 20 provinces between. We validated their findings by interviewing 788 households in 20 provinces between 22 February and 10 March 2024. Comparing our findings with those of the FAO TPMA:



**We noted some demographic differences.** We found that the average reported age of heads of households was 47 years, compared to 39 years for the FAO TPMA. As with past surveys, this difference may be due to FAO TPMA enumerators assuming that everyone who collected the assistance was also the head of household. However, we found that almost one-fifth of those who collected the 2023 wheat production package did so on behalf of their head of household.



**We found substantially lower proportions of farmers (70% versus 89%) and households reporting agriculture as their main source of livelihood (77% versus 98%).** This difference likely reflects the fact that we collected data in winter (February-March 2024) when employment in agriculture is significantly reduced, whereas the FAO TPMA collected data between August and November 2023.



**We found a substantially larger number of households having received a wheat production package (97% versus 12%) and having access to certified wheat seed for the 2023 winter wheat season as a result (88% versus 11%).** These differences are due to the different data collection periods, as we collected data after FAO had finished its 2023 distribution of the wheat production package, while the FAO TPMA collected data before the distribution. As a result, we found that almost all households referred to UN assistance as the source of the certified wheat seed. In the absence of this assistance, the FAO TPMA found that the market was the main source of certified wheat seed for the beneficiary households (reported by 57% of all households).



**We confirmed FAO TPMA findings that almost all households had access to irrigated land.** However, we found that households reported larger landholdings than did the FAO TPMA (4.5 versus 3.2 jeribs on average), and a lower proportion of households reported sharing their land with other households (23% versus 41%). We confirmed the finding that where households reported sharing their land, they did so with an average of two other households.



**We confirmed that most households (61% for us, 77% for the FAO TPMA) had lost crops in 2023 as a result of natural events.** However, we did find major differences in responses at provincial level. We found a smaller proportion of households reporting crop losses in 2023, with almost two-thirds of households reported losing at least half of their crops, compared to less than half reporting doing so to the FAO TPMA.

## NGO/CSO Capacity Support Project

In Q1 2024, in collaboration with UNDP, we conducted observation visits to 124 sampled organizations, 85% (n=105) of which were selected for LVGs. The majority (87%, n=108) were non-governmental organizations (NGOs), with the remainder (n=16) civil society organizations (CSOs).

Our monitoring comprised in-person visits to the organizations' headquarters in the capital or in regional provinces, as well as in the province where project activity was to occur and conducted phone interviews with the heads of organizations. The aim was to identify possible inclusion and exclusion errors from the sample of organizations based on the eligibility criteria.



### Verification of eligibility requirements, including proposal eligibility

Our organizational assessments indicated that all NGOs selected for LVG met the eligibility criteria.

Of the 105 organizations selected for an LVG, **all confirmed participating in Component One training and reported a notable improvement in performance as a result**. All organizations also reported having staff members receiving training related to gender in the previous twelve months.

Project proposals were scored overall against UNDP proposal criteria to provide a parallel grading to that produced by UNDP. The objective was to grade project proposals and to outline any variance (>15%) between UNDP assessments and ours.

The assessment of proposal eligibility criteria found **five cases with a variance greater than 15%** between UNDP scoring and our scoring.



### Entry Criteria for Access

NCCSP has two Entry Criteria for Access:

1. Women are not prohibited from participating as workers and/or recipients of aid/services.
2. Women continue to staff the beneficiary organizations and benefit from their activities.

When asked whether women were being prohibited from participating as workers and/or recipients of aid and service, interviews with the 124 heads of organizations reported **the main challenge as the ban on women working in offices (85%, n=105)**. Other challenges raised included **the ban on women leading organizations and operating bank accounts (15%, n=19)**, and **traveling to the project site (13%, n=16)** but that there weren't any challenges so long as a *mahram* was able to accompany a woman in the field.



### Grievance Redress Mechanisms

**Almost all organizations (96%, n=117) reported the existence of official Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) channels** in the form of phone calls, emails, on-site complaints boxes, and/or face-to-face discussions with Grievance Redress Committee (GRC) members.

Additionally, **93% (n=109) of organizations had a GRC for receiving and responding to grievances**. Of these, 18 had no female members on their GRC; of those who did, 84% (n=76) had two or fewer female members.



## Looking ahead

During the next quarter, we will continue our financial monitoring reviews for both legacy and current projects, while conducting both in-person and remote physical monitoring activities for each active project in the ARTF portfolio and sectoral tasks.

Financial monitoring activities and physical monitoring data collection will continue across all projects, with the re-commencing of data collection for HER and the launching of data collection and reporting for the Maternal and Child Benefit Programme (component of HER 2) and the Water Emergency Relief Project (WERP).

Our workplan includes continued support for users of our Digital Platform, as well as expanding its functionality.



# Table of contents

<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Financial monitoring .....</b>	<b>19</b>
Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers audits funded by ARTF .....	19
Statements of Cash Receipts and Payments .....	20
Review of project bank accounts.....	21
Review of project liabilities .....	21
Community Resilience and Livelihoods Project review of expenditure .....	22
Emergency Food Security Project.....	23
<b>Physical monitoring .....</b>	<b>24</b>
Community Resilience and Livelihoods Project (CRLP) .....	25
Emergency Food Security Project (EFSP) .....	34
Health Emergency Response (HER).....	47
NGO / CSO Capacity Support Project (NCCSP) .....	48
Water Emergency Relief Project (WERP) .....	52
<b>MA Digital Platform.....</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>Looking ahead .....</b>	<b>54</b>
Financial monitoring.....	54
Physical monitoring.....	55
Digital Platform .....	55



## List of tables

Table 1: Status of ARTF project monitoring during Q1 2024 .....	15
Table 2: Status of HACT audits under HER and EERA .....	19
Table 3: Summary of HER HACT audit results from 1 January to 30 June 2023 under HER .....	19
Table 4: Summary of SCRP reviews for FY 1400, in USD .....	20
Table 5: Summary of results of bank account reviews as of 31 March 2024 .....	21
Table 6: Summary of review and certification of invoices submitted by CASA 1000 contractors .....	22
Table 7: Summary of expenditure review under CRLP .....	22
Table 8: Sub-projects with deviations .....	27
Table 9: Summary of financial monitoring verification of proposal eligibility results .....	51
Table 10: Digital Platform development updates .....	53

## List of figures

Figure 1: Summary of physical monitoring activities completed in Q1 2024 .....	24
Figure 2: Summary of CRLP monitoring completed in Q1 2024 .....	25
Figure 3: Average aspect ratings .....	26
Figure 4: CRLP sub-project observations and deviations .....	27
Figure 5: Probable causes of deviations .....	28
Figure 6: Laborer sectors of work .....	29
Figure 7: Use of payments by laborers .....	30
Figure 8: CDCs meeting ECA requirements .....	31
Figure 9: CDC members verified .....	31
Figure 10: Updates to eligible beneficiary household list .....	32
Figure 11: Summary of EFSP monitoring completed in Q1 2024 .....	34
Figure 12: Wheat yield from production package .....	35
Figure 13: Wheat yield increase in 2023 compared to 2022 .....	36
Figure 14: Challenges and constraints faced when cultivating wheat seed .....	37
Figure 15: Household priority needs .....	39
Figure 16: Household priority needs .....	42
Figure 17: Market challenges for buying inputs for vegetable cultivation .....	43
Figure 18: Type of agricultural land that households can access .....	46
Figure 19: Extent of crop losses .....	46
Figure 20: Summary of NCCSP monitoring completed during Q1 2024 .....	48
Figure 21: Organizations providing documents relevant to the service delivery area .....	49

# Introduction

## Scope of our monitoring and using this report






As the World Bank Monitoring Agent (World Bank MA) for the Afghanistan Resilience Trust Fund (ARTF), we provide the World Bank and other stakeholders with visibility of and assurance over project implementation through a mix of financial and physical monitoring activities. This report provides the cumulative results of financial and physical monitoring during Q1 2024 to provide a comprehensive view of project performance. We present our results by project to enable readers to understand individual project performance.

Our purpose is to determine eligibility of expenditure incurred under the various projects for financing, to verify that anticipated project outputs are being achieved and intended beneficiaries are being reached. In doing this, we provide evidence of the implementation of cross-project Environmental and Social Standards (ESS) and Entry Criteria for Access (ECAs), in support of the World Bank's monitoring framework.

Our findings draw on an evidence base that includes thousands of financial and project documents and hundreds of thousands of data points from in-person monitoring visits, as well as in-person and phone interviews. This report also captures how we have worked with various UN agencies to support them with filling information gaps and to inform their decision-making for current and future programming, including through the collaborative development of monitoring frameworks for ARTF-funded projects.

This report highlights our monitoring planning, activities, and results for the projects detailed below.

**Table 1: Status of ARTF project monitoring during Q1 2024**

Project	Implementing agency	Status of monitoring
 Community Resilience and Livelihoods Project (CRLP)	United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)	Ongoing
 Emergency Food Security Project (EFSP)	Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)	Ongoing
 Health Emergency Response Project (HER)	United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)	Paused during January and February; Re-launched in March
Maternal and Child Benefit Program (MCBP) component of HER 2	World Food Programme (WFP)	Preparing to launch alongside project implementation
 NGO / CSO Capacity Support Project (NCCSP)	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	Ongoing
 Water Emergency Relief Project (WERP)	UNOPS and Aga Khan Foundation (AKF)	Preparing to launch alongside project implementation

## In Focus

### The impact of climate change on agriculture and food insecurity in Afghanistan



Increasing evidence shows how climate change is influencing rainfall patterns and seasonal temperatures in Afghanistan<sup>4</sup>, which ranks fourth on the list of countries most at risk of a crisis,<sup>5</sup> and eighth on the 2024 Notre Dame Global Adaptation Index of countries most vulnerable and least prepared to adapt to climate change. In Afghanistan, the climate crisis manifests itself most acutely as a water crisis.<sup>67</sup>

The ARTF supports food security and agriculture in Afghanistan through EFSP, implemented by FAO. This project provides vulnerable families in Afghanistan with food security and livelihood support, such as agricultural training and inputs and Cash For Work (CFW) opportunities.

## Drought

Extreme weather, natural disasters and other climate-related challenges experienced by Afghans mainly relate to water, its absence or in excess, and connected to rising levels of food insecurity since 2021. In recent years, Afghanistan has experienced the fallout of consecutive droughts and flash floods. Drought is the most frequently reported shock experienced by households in Afghanistan (39% of households in 2021, 64% in 2022.<sup>8</sup> Today, 25 out of 34 provinces experience either severe or catastrophic drought conditions, affecting more than half the population.<sup>9</sup>

Afghanistan has experienced two consecutive harsh droughts in recent years, with devastating effects on agricultural production. Lack of water to irrigate land has resulted in decreased crop yields and insufficient agricultural outputs to sustain communities. Decades of conflict and instability have hampered water storage systems in Afghanistan, leaving few reserves able to be drawn on to reduce the impact of drought.

In the second half of 2023 and early 2024, communities across Afghanistan were once again concerned that another drought may be impending. The La Niña weather phenomenon brought below average and irregular rain and snowfall resulting in drought-like conditions in much of the country. Kabul did not experience snowfall until the beginning of February but would typically expect to see snow from mid-November.<sup>10</sup>

Other mountainous areas of Afghanistan - which should see heavy winter snowfall – experienced a drop in precipitation levels during the peak 2023-2024 winter period to just 45-60% of previous years' figures.<sup>11</sup> Snow water volumes were either at, or very close to, record minimum levels across the country at the end of 2023.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>4</sup> UNOCHA, August 2023. Afghanistan: The alarming effects of climate change.

<sup>5</sup> INFORM Risk Index, August 2023

<sup>6</sup> UNOCHA, August 2023. Afghanistan: The alarming effects of climate change.

<sup>7</sup> Afghanaid, March 2024. Is Afghanistan on the cusp of another year of drought?

<sup>8</sup> UNOCHA, August 2023. Afghanistan: The alarming effects of climate change.

<sup>9</sup> Save the Children, February 2024. Afghanistan: Lack of Snow Raises Fears of Further Drought as Children and Communities Suffer Impacts of Climate Crisis.

<sup>10</sup> Afghanaid, March 2024. Is Afghanistan on the cusp of another year of drought?

<sup>11</sup> Persistent below-average precipitation and above-average temperatures from October 1, 2023, to January 15, 2024, have been seen throughout the country. These conditions continued until at least the end of January. The wet season precipitation performance was in the range of 45-60% of average and spread over the northeastern, eastern, and southern parts of the country. Slightly better precipitation performance in the range of 60-90% of average along with isolated patches of average cumulative precipitation was seen in the rest of the country as of the reporting date.

<sup>12</sup> FEWS NET, January 2024. Seasonal impacts of below-average precipitation thus far in the winter wet season are concerning if deficits aren't reduced in February and March.

This has contributed to 67% of households in Afghanistan reporting difficulties in accessing water in 2023, and risking disruption to crop planting and harvest systems.<sup>13</sup>

Our validation of the FAO TPMA's post-harvest monitoring outcome survey for the 2022 wheat distribution for EFSP highlighted climate-related challenges. Of households reporting challenges cultivating the seed they had received, the most frequently cited were drought (64%) and lack of water (50%). This broadly aligns with FAO TPMA's findings (drought 56%, and lack of water 44%). Similarly, of households that reported facing challenges when cultivating other crops, just over half (52%) reported drought and 45% a lack of water as major constraints or challenges.

## **Flooding**

Land degradation caused by drought and deforestation has increased the frequency of floods in Afghanistan. Dry, depleted ground cannot absorb the runoff water from melting snow-caps and rainfall, especially during heavy rains, resulting in floods risking lives and livestock and destroying agricultural land. In August 2022 (the same month that saw devastating floods in neighboring Pakistan), central, eastern, western, and south-easter regions of Afghanistan experienced atypical intense rains resulting in floods. Over the last four decades, desertification has affected more than 75 per cent of the total land area in the country's northern, western, and southern regions, reducing vegetation cover for pasture, accelerating land degradation, and affecting crop farming.<sup>14</sup>

Deforestation has also contributed to flooding, such as in Fayzabad district, Jawzjan province, which was historically less frequent as trees absorbed large amounts of Spring snowmelt and reduced the rapid flow of rainwater. However, it is now one of the districts most vulnerable to flooding due to large-scale deforestation.<sup>15</sup>

## **Food insecurity and malnutrition**

With at least 60% of the population dependent on rain-fed agriculture, changes in rain and snow patterns have severely eroded livelihood practices and worsened food insecurity, malnutrition, and disease.<sup>16</sup> In 2023, four million pregnant or breast-feeding women and children under five years of age were suffering from acute malnutrition.<sup>17</sup> This includes 3.2 million children, of whom about 875,000 were suffering from severe acute malnutrition and 2.3 million from moderate acute malnutrition, according to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification report.<sup>18</sup> The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification's (IPC) projection for the period between November 2023 and March 2024 (corresponding to the winter lean season) was for a further deterioration in food security, with the number of people in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) or above likely to rise to 15.8 million (36% of the total population), including about 3.6 million people in IPC Phase 4 (Emergency), and about 12.3 million people in IPC Phase 3.

## **Forecasts for 2024**

The European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF) weekly precipitation forecasts indicated average to above-average precipitation in most parts of the country in early-to-mid February 2024.<sup>19</sup> The forecast average precipitation conditions were thought to potentially increase the current snow water volumes from record lows. This aligns with a March 2024 update from Afghanaid indicating that many areas across

<sup>13</sup> Afghanaid, March 2024. Is Afghanistan on the cusp of another year of drought?

<sup>14</sup> UNOCHA, August 2023. Afghanistan: The alarming effects of climate change.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Save the Children, February 2024. Afghanistan: Lack of Snow Raises Fears of Further Drought as Children and Communities Suffer Impacts of Climate Crisis.

<sup>18</sup> IPC, March 2024. Afghanistan: Acute Food Insecurity Situation for October 2023 and Projection for November 2023 - March 2024

<sup>19</sup> FEWS NET, January 2024. Seasonal impacts of below-average precipitation thus far in the winter wet season are concerning if deficits aren't reduced in February and March.



Afghanistan began to see an increase in rain and snowfall, ensuring that some hillsides and water sources could replenish, and new crops had the necessary amount of water to grow.

Snow water volume deficits may not have been completely erased, as above-average temperatures may have caused early snowmelt. In response, it is expected that farmers may opt for planting spring wheat from late February through end of April, taking advantage of the forecast average precipitation. These forecasts will be confirmed or updated in the next Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) report, which draws on data from ECMWF and International Research Institute for Climate and Society forecasts, amongst others.

Above-average mean temperatures are highly likely between February and April 2024 and air temperatures in the hottest 20% of the historical record are forecast to be 2-3 times more likely than average during late spring and summer months. Above-average temperatures may not only adversely affect healthy germination of irrigated spring wheat, but also lead to moisture stresses in rainfed crops and rangelands during this period. Early blooming of stone fruits, mainly almonds, due to early above-average temperatures in the northern, northeastern, and central parts of the country may be badly affected by late spring frosts and freezing temperatures culminating in reduced yields at the end of the season.<sup>20</sup>

There is also an increased likelihood of earlier-than-normal flash floods due to the forecast above-average temperatures melting fresh snow occurring during late February and March. If realized, these events may distract the farmers in their regular agricultural activities during early spring especially in the eastern and southern parts of the country.<sup>21</sup>



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<sup>20</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*

# Financial monitoring

## Our financial monitoring toolkit

In Q1 2024, our financial monitoring focused on Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT) audits for HER and EERA, and expenditure reviews for CRLP and EFSP. We also provided alternative assurance arrangements through reviews of SCRPs.

We continued to monitor ARTF and International Development Association (IDA) project bank balances and proceeded with the validation of outstanding liabilities under Central Asia-South Asia Electricity Transmission and Trade Project (CASA 1000).



## Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers audits funded by ARTF

HACT audit reports are addressed directly to UNCEF under separate contractual terms. During the quarter, we continued HACT audits for 16 Service Providers (SPs) for HER and 19 SPs for EERA, for expenditure incurred between January and June 2023. The status of these HACT audits is summarized below.

**Table 2: Status of HACT audits under HER and EERA**

Status	HER	EERA
Planning ongoing	0	3
Testing/Site visits at IP premises	2	8
Testing complete and finalization in progress	4	8
Final Audit report released to UNICEF	10	0
<b>Total number of HACT audits</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>19</b>

During this period, we submitted ten completed HACT audit reports for expenditure incurred between 1 January and 30 June 2023 under HER. We summarize these audit reports below. We audited USD 50,264,763 of expenditure, finding USD 30,550 (0.06%) of Questionable Expenditure (QE).

**Table 3: Summary of HER HACT audit results from 1 January to 30 June 2023 under HER**

Service Provider	Audited expenditure (USD)	QE (USD)	QE as %age of audited expenditure	Audit opinion
Aga Khan Foundation (AKF)	9,038,452	4,843	0.05%	Unmodified
Agency for Assistance and Development of Afghanistan (AADA)	6,343,093	19,812	0.31%	Unmodified
Bakhtar Development Network (BDN)	3,491,723	0	0.00%	Unmodified
BU ALI Rehabilitation and Aid Network (BARAN)	6,202,654	1,295	0.02%	Unmodified
Coordination Humanitarian Assistance (CHA)	859,677	0	0.00%	Unmodified
Health Net International Transcultural Psychological Organization (HNTPO)	6,800,623	99	0.00%	Unmodified



Service Provider	Audited expenditure (USD)	QE (USD)	QE as %age of audited expenditure	Audit opinion
Just for Afghan Capacity and Knowledge (JACK)	9,832,088	191	0.00%	Unmodified
Medical Management and Research Courses for Afghanistan (MMRCA)	4,470,124	4,175	0.09%	Unmodified
MOVE Welfare Organization (MOVE)	1,853,390	0	0.00%	Unmodified
Solidarity for Afghan Families (SAF)	1,372,939	135	0.01%	Unmodified
<b>Total</b>	<b>50,264,763</b>	<b>30,550</b>	<b>0.06%</b>	

## Statements of Cash Receipts and Payments

We issued ten SCRP Cover Letters for Afghan Financial Year (FY) 1400 (equivalent to 21 December 2020 to 21 December 2021).

**Table 4: Summary of SCRP reviews for FY 1400, in USD**

Project	Total payments reported	Total payments reviewed	%age of Total payments reviewed	QE	QE as %age of Total
Afghanistan Rural Access Project (ARAP)	5,776,085	5,774,602	100%	-	0.00%
Covid-19 Relief Effort for Afghan Communities and Households (REACH)	37,628,862	37,505,320	100%	-	0.00%
Education Quality Reform Program (EQRA)	3,157,194	3,067,264	97.15%	75,374	2.00%
Emergency Agriculture and Food Supply Project (EATS)	11,232,141	10,903,970	97%	-	0.00%
Financial Sector Rapid Response Project (FSRRP)	-	-	0%	-	0.00%
Kabul Municipal Development Program (KMDP)	7,704,963	7,704,963	100%	-	0.00%
Mazar-e-Sharif Gas to Power Project (Mazar Gas)	-	-	-	-	0.00%
Sehatmandi	51,262,148	51,235,994	100%	-	0.00%
Women's Economic Empowerment National Priority Program (WEE-NPP)	-	-	0%	-	0.00%
Women's Economic Empowerment Rural Development Project (WEE-RDP)	3,139,813	3,119,302	99%	-	0.00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>119,901,206</b>	<b>119,311,415</b>	<b>99%</b>	<b>75,374</b>	<b>&lt;0.1%</b>

## Review of project bank accounts

Following a World Bank request that we conduct quarterly reviews of project bank accounts, we reported on the status of bank accounts up to 31 December 2023 in our 2023 Annual Report. The bank accounts comprise the projects' Designated Accounts (denominated in USD), Clearing Accounts (denominated in AFN), and the National Horticulture and Livestock Project (NHLP) and EATS Farmers' Contribution Account (denominated in AFN). In Q1 2024, we reviewed and reported on the status of 81 bank accounts as of 31 March 2024.

**Table 5: Summary of results of bank account reviews as of 31 March 2024**

	Designated Accounts (USD)	Clearing Accounts (USD)	Farmers' Contribution Account (USD)	Total (USD)
Bank balances as of 31 December 2023	163,474,294	133,984,268	3,358,896	<b>300,817,458</b>
Banking credits (deposits) in Q1 2024	-	-	-	-
Unrealized Forex gains	-	1,892,451	47,442	<b>1,939,893</b>
<b>Bank balances as of 31 March 2024</b>	<b>163,474,294</b>	<b>135,876,719</b>	<b>3,406,338</b>	<b>302,757,351</b>

There was no movement in the balances of the Designated, Clearing, and Farmers' Contribution Accounts<sup>22</sup> during the quarter.

We converted AFN-denominated balances in the Clearing and Farmers' Contribution Accounts, amounting to over AFN 10 billion as of 31 December 2023 and 31 March 2024, using the rates quoted by Da Afghanistan Bank (DAB) at the beginning and end of the quarter. We estimate that the bank balances as of 31 March amounted to approximately USD 302 million for 40 projects, compared to USD 418 million as per the Bank's Client Connection system. The difference is primarily due to outstanding advances, undocumented expenditure and other reconciling differences. We also estimate that there were unrealized Forex gains in the quarter, amounting to USD 1,939,893, as the AFN strengthened from AFN 72.9625/USD on 31 December 2023 to AFN 71.9463/USD on 31 March 2024.<sup>23</sup> We are undertaking a detailed reconciliation and expect to report on the results by the end of Q2 2024.

## Review of project liabilities

In March 2023, the World Bank asked us to review expenditure ('liabilities') outstanding as of 15 August 2021 payable to private sector contractors for ARTF- and IDA-funded projects. The objective of the review was to determine whether the liabilities were for the intended purposes and eligible for financing in accordance with the Grant and Financing Agreements. The review initially focused on the validation of invoices from contractors for CASA 1000 and the Trans-Hindukush Road Connectivity Project (THRCP) under the Direct Payment modality to private sector contractors. It was subsequently expanded to include unpaid expenditure as of August 2021 under all categories of ARTF- and IDA-funded projects (e.g., salaries, project implementation and management costs).

<sup>22</sup> Farmer Contributions were the portion of the total project expenditure contributed by the farmers and deposited to a separate bank account. These do not form part of the DAs.

<sup>23</sup> A significant amount of funds was advances from clearing accounts to CDC accounts, which were unspent as of 15 August 2021. We do not review CDC bank accounts.

## Central Asia-South Asia Electricity Transmission and Trade Project

Since May 2023 we have been reviewing and certifying invoices submitted by CASA 1000 contractors Kalpataru Power Transmission Limited (Lot 1), KEC International Limited (Lots 2 and 3), and CESI S.p.A-WAPCOS JV (CESI-WAPCOS). In Q1, we reviewed the invoices submitted by these three contractors under CASA 1000, as summarized below.

**Table 6: Summary of review and certification of invoices submitted by CASA 1000 contractors**

	Euro	USD
Total invoices submitted for payment	870,357	61,080,687
Total recommended for payment	828,329	39,720,763

Of the total of USD 61.08 million and Euro 0.87 million claimed for all these contracts, we recommended payment USD 39.72 million and Euro 0.83 million respectively. This review is an ongoing process, in which we expect to issue additional Cover Letters recommending payment in phases, as and when additional documents received.

### Other project liabilities

In addition to the CASA 1000 project liabilities mentioned above, the World Bank asked us to review and assess the eligibility of project liabilities under all other ARTF and IDA projects. During the quarter, we continued our work towards agreeing the final list of liabilities with the Ministry of Finance and line ministries. This work was ongoing at the end of the reporting period.

## Community Resilience and Livelihoods Project review of expenditure

In all, 31 private sector contractors under CRLP reported expenditure to UNOPS, amounting to USD 2,408,909 for Q1 2023. The scope of our review was limited to payments totaling USD 1,374,884 made to unskilled and skilled laborers under the CFW scheme.

**Table 7: Summary of expenditure review under CRLP**

	Total (USD)	Labor Costs (USD)	Earthworks, Clearing, Concrete Structure, etc. (USD)
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>2,408,909</b>	<b>1,374,884</b>	<b>1,034,025</b>
Total sample		457,150	
Total financial findings	921	921	
QE as a % of total payments		0.1%	
QE as a % of total sample		0.2%	

We sampled and reviewed 33% (USD 457,150) of labor costs reported under Component 2 of the project. We found QE amounting to 0.2% (USD 921) of the labor costs sampled. This was a result of excess days invoiced.

## Emergency Food Security Project

In January, we shared draft findings with FAO from the review for the period ending 31 March 2023 for 15 IPs covering 22 contracts. We received responses and supporting documents on our draft findings from FAO, and our review of responses was ongoing at the end of this reporting period.

# Physical monitoring

## Our physical monitoring toolkit

In Q1 2024, we completed 2,849 location visits and 29,281 interviews across all 34 provinces.

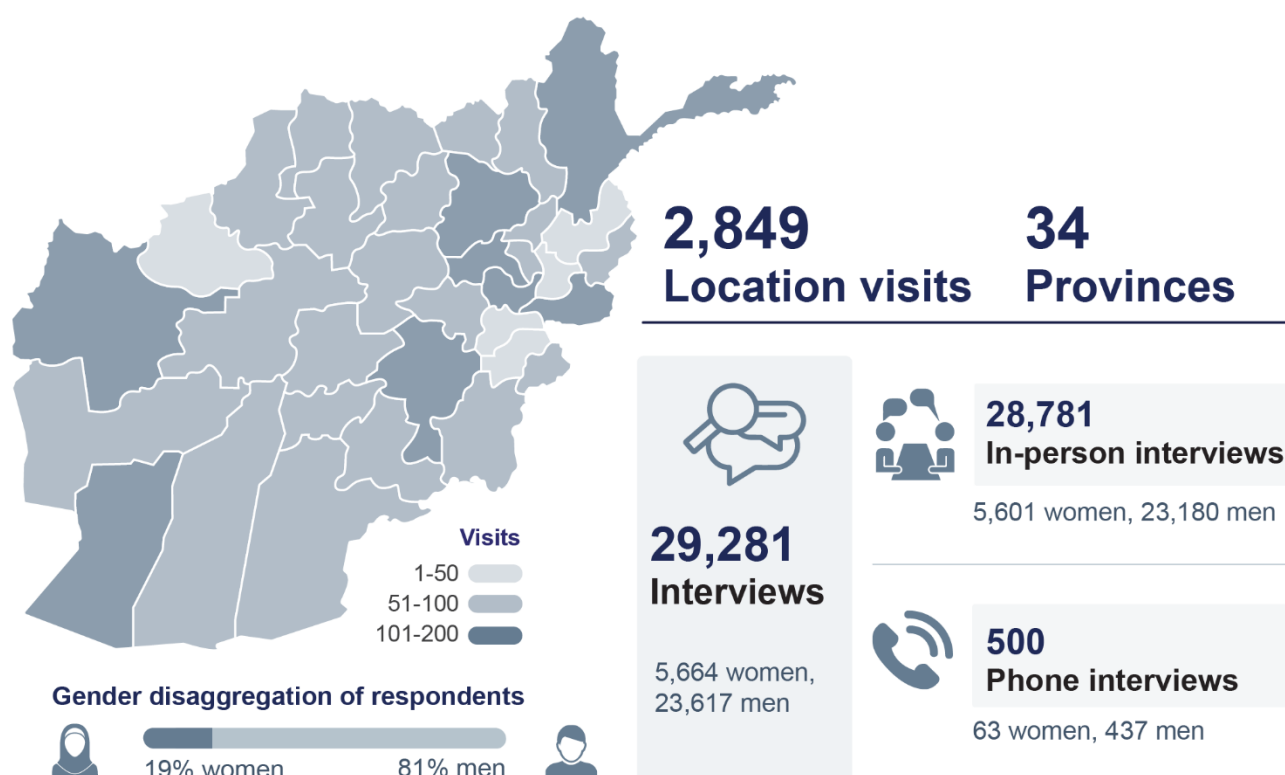
Our physical monitoring under CRLP included 239 location visits. We monitored the construction of sub-projects and the ECA compliance by Community Development Councils (CDCs). We conducted 6,543 in-person interviews to monitor ECA compliance, Labor Intensive Work (LIW), Cash For Work (CFW), and Social Grant (SG) provision.

Under EFSP, we completed 646 location visits and 3,750 interviews to verify the findings of five FAO TPMA surveys relating to the 2022 and 2023 wheat package distributions, and the CFW and Home Gardening (HG) interventions.

We completed 124 location visits and 283 in-person and telephone interviews for NCCSP to verify the selection of Low Value Grant (LVG) recipients.



Figure 1: Summary of physical monitoring activities<sup>24</sup> completed in Q1 2024



<sup>24</sup> This report does not include details and findings from all activities, as some were conducted for internal monitoring purposes, not intended for publication. As a result, disaggregated figures may not fully reflect aggregate totals.

## Community Resilience and Livelihoods Project (CRLP)



### Physical and financial monitoring overview

For the UNOPS-implemented CRLP, we monitored sub-projects to assess the following:

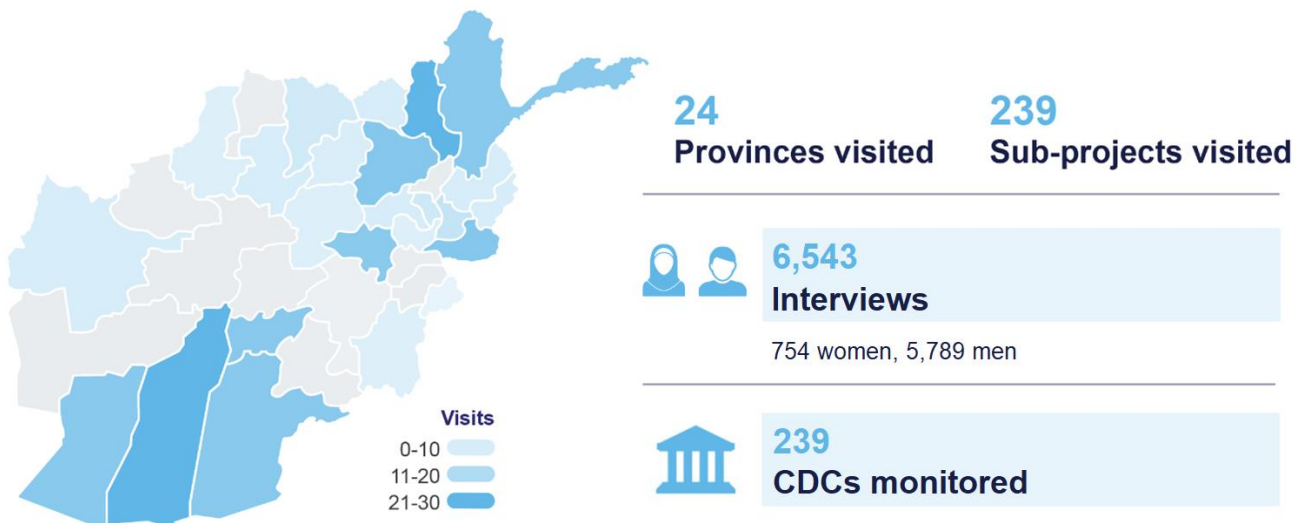
- **Construction and implementation quality** of sub-projects.
- Compliance by CDCs with **ECA requirements**.
- **Community remobilization** activities, including assessing **CFW, LIW, and SG** payments, verifying the eligibility of laborers and beneficiaries, and **post-distribution monitoring**.

Over the lifetime of the project, we expect to monitor 678 out of 6,22375 project-supported communities (5,968 rural and 555 urban).



In Q1, we visited 239 sub-projects and monitored the CDCs linked to them. We monitored and reported on construction at 193 sub-projects in 21 provinces, assessing physical progress, the quality of work done, and ESS compliance. Additionally, we completed 6,543 in-person interviews to monitor ECA compliance, and LIW, CFW, and SG activities, in both urban and rural areas across 24 provinces.

**Figure 2: Summary of CRLP monitoring completed in Q1 2024**



In all, 31 private sector contractors under CRLP reported expenditure to UNOPS, amounting to USD 2,408,909 for Q1 2023. The scope of our review focused on payments totaling USD 1,374,884 made to unskilled and skilled laborers under CFW. We sampled and reviewed 33% (USD 457,150) of labor costs reported under Component 2 of the project and found QE amounting to 0.2% (USD 921) of the labor costs sampled, the result of excess days being invoiced.



## Construction monitoring

### Sub-project status

In Q1 2024, we completed monitoring of construction for 193 sub-projects across 21 provinces. All 193 projects were in rural areas, with 87% (n=167) completed, 8% (n=16) ongoing, and 5% (n=10) temporarily stopped.

### Rating of sub-projects

#### How we rate sub-projects:

Our engineers assign scores for three aspects for each sub-project: Materials, Workmanship, and Operations & Maintenance (O&M) where applicable. For consistency, we apply the same scoring approach to all construction or infrastructure elements of ARTF- and IDA-funded projects. Although not a requirement for CRLP, we provided O&M scoring to support UNOPS' and World Bank teams' reflections on the sustainability of sub-projects. To assign sub-project ratings, we applied a scale where 0.00-0.99 is Very Poor and 5.0 Very Good.

We applied scores to Materials and Workmanship for both ongoing and completed sub-projects, and to O&M for completed sub-projects only. We adjusted the scores to account both for the number and severity of identified issues (listed as Critical, Major or Minor 'deviations') and for evidence of Good Practice, where work was done over and above technical specifications, or of Extra Work, where additional elements had been constructed at no cost to the sub-project, to provide a rating for each sub-project, aggregated to provide an overall project rating for the reporting period.

i

Our engineers rated the overall quality of construction outputs as **Good**, as follows:

- Five sub-projects were rated **Very Good**.
- 121 sub-projects were rated **Good**.
- 49 sub-projects were rated **Average**.
- 15 sub-projects were rated **Below Average**.
- Three sub-projects were rated **Poor**.

The figure below presents average aspect ratings across the 193 sub-projects monitored and rated in Q1 2024.

**Figure 3: Average aspect ratings**



### Good Practice and Extra Work

We sought to identify evidence of Good Practice, where work was done over and above technical specifications, or of Extra Work, where additional elements had been constructed at no cost to the sub-project. These examples were principally through achieving more than was specified, such as a construction of a 15-

meter protection wall along a canal, based on the needs of the site, and cleaning an additional canal with 4,524 m length, but at no additional cost. We observed 50 examples of Extra Work.

## Deviations

### How we classify deviations:

We define deviations as instances where technical drawings, specifications, or common engineering standards have not been followed, affecting any outputs created. We classify deviations as:

**Critical:** A deviation which, if not rectified, could lead to the injury or death of a worker or future user, or could lead to the failure of the sub-project as a whole.

**Major:** A deviation that is not life-threatening but that affects the structural integrity or overall sustainability of the sub-project.

**Minor:** Often cosmetic, a deviation that does not affect a sub-project's structural integrity, usability, or sustainability. These can often be corrected with little effort and at limited cost.

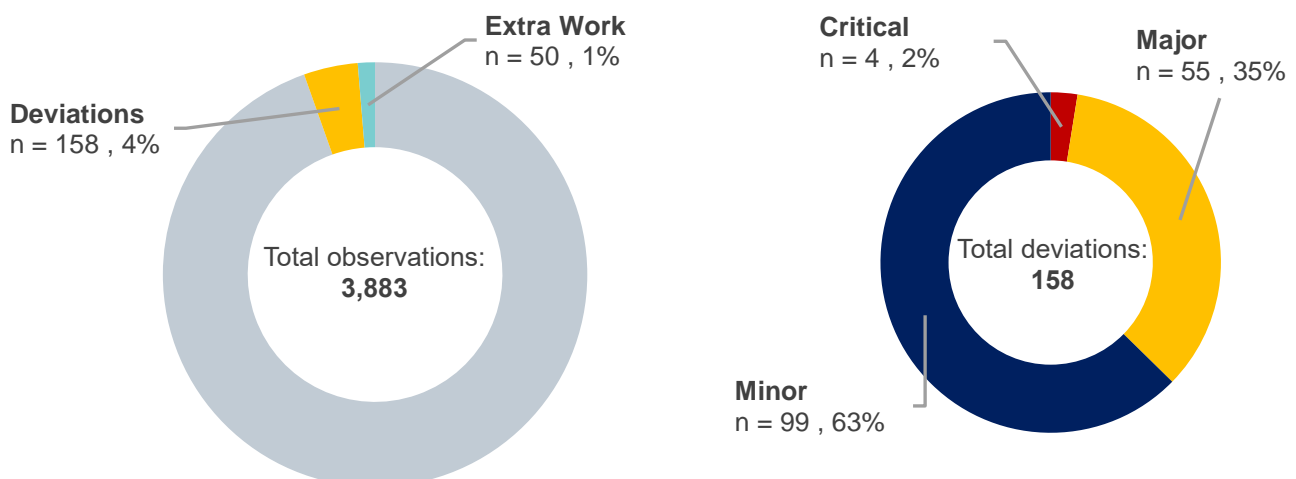
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Our engineers made 3,883 observations of sub-project elements, identifying 158 deviations (four Critical, 55 Major, 99 Minor) across 102 sub-projects. There were 91 sub-projects with no deviations identified. All four critical deviations were associated with projects rated as 'Below Average'.

Table 8: Sub-projects with deviations<sup>25</sup>

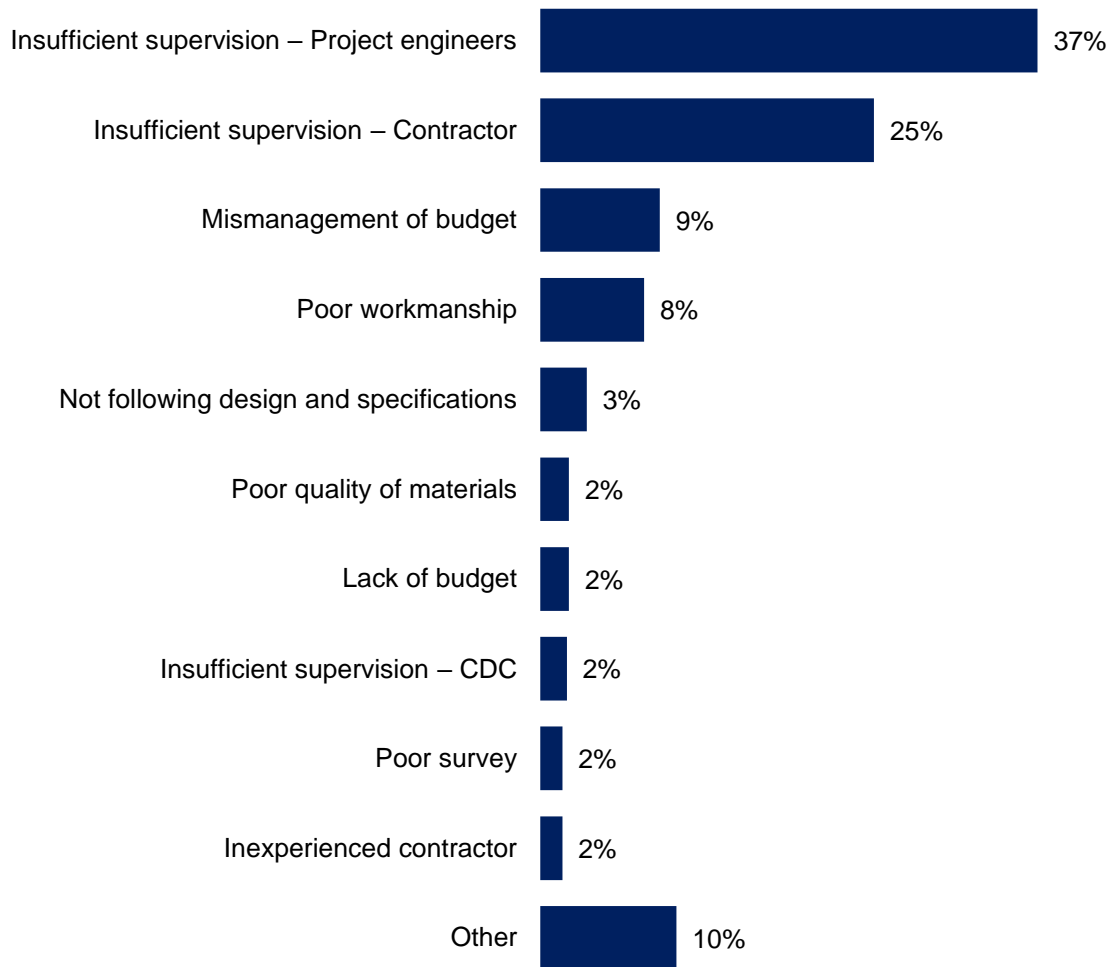
	Sub-projects
Sub-projects with Critical and/or Major deviations	54
Sub-projects with only Minor deviations	48

Figure 4: CRLP sub-project observations and deviations



<sup>25</sup> Rectification of Critical deviations during this period primarily consisted of confirming the installation of barriers around wells or culverts that posed safety risks to community members. UNOPS rectified all Critical deviations during this period.

**Figure 5: Probable causes of deviations<sup>26</sup>**



## Sub-project documentation

Sub-project design drawings were available at sub-project sites for almost all sub-projects (99%, n=192), as were Environmental and Social Screening Forms (98%, n=189) and Form 3, the Eligible Beneficiary Household List (97%, n=187).

## Social and Environmental Standards

There were no reported security incidents affecting any sub-projects.

One sub-project included the need for a Labor Management Plan (LMP) in procurement and bid documents, but none provided the LMP. At no sub-projects had CDCs held meetings about labor recruitment procedures. Drinking water was provided to workers at only one ongoing sub-project site.

At 166 project sites where work had begun or had been completed, we found that 86% had properly managed and disposed of excavated materials on site, although workers had received training in waste management at only 6% (n=11) of sites.

<sup>26</sup> A deviation may have more than one probable cause.

## Safety Management

Of 193 sub-projects, 61% (n=118) had trained staff and workers in environmental health and safety, and 7% (n=13) had assigned a Safety, Health, and Environmental Officer.

Staff and workers were trained in first aid at slightly more than a quarter of projects (27%, n=52). At sites where training had occurred, only 11% (n=22) kept training records. Of the 16 sub-projects where work was ongoing, only three had a first aid kit on-site. No workers at ongoing sub-projects were wearing appropriate personal protection equipment (PPE).

Only 11% (n=22) of ongoing or completed sub-projects had a system in place for reporting incidents or physical injuries.

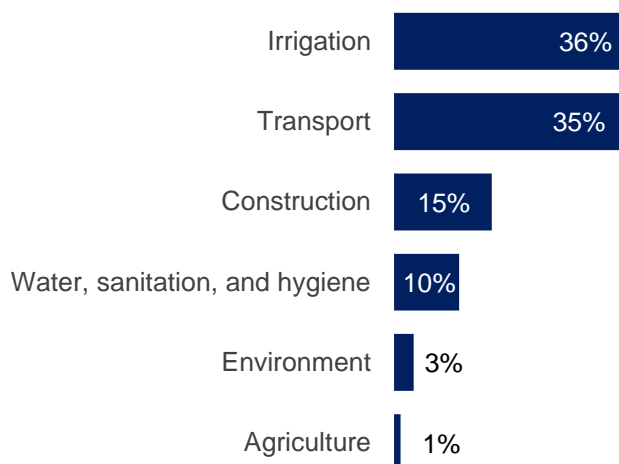
## Post-distribution monitoring

We attempted a total of 2,739 interviews, of which we were able to conduct 2,592 interviews (95%) in 23 provinces. Of these, 59% (n=1,524) were with CFW/LIW laborers and 41% (n=1,068) with their household members. For the remaining 5%, the listed laborer was not available and when we attempted to interview a household member the listed laborer was not known to them.

All laborers interviewed (100%) confirmed they had worked on the sub-projects. The figure was slightly lower when we interviewed a household member, with 97% confirming the listed laborer had worked on the project. The remaining 3% said the laborer was listed but never worked on the sub-projects. Almost all (98%) laborers were unskilled.

The laborers interviewed mainly reported working in the irrigation (36%, n=551) and transport (35%, n=531) sectors.

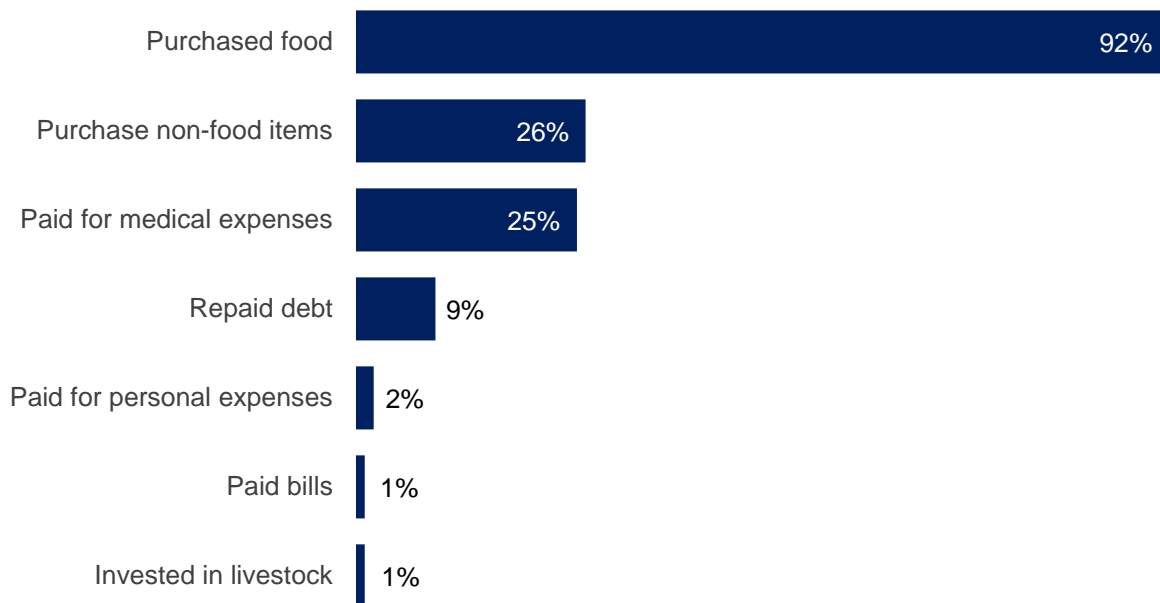
**Figure 6: Laborer sectors of work**



Where laborers confirmed working on sub-projects, 12% (n=321) of them said that someone else from their household was also working as a laborer. The average days each labor worked was 28 days, paid at an average of AFN 450 per day.

Of those interviewed, 86% (n=1,310) of laborers confirmed they had been paid for all days worked, 10% (n=153) had been paid for some days worked, and 3% (n=53) that they had not been paid for any days worked. A large majority of laborers (92%, n=1,413) reported using some of the money received to buy food for the household, while just over a quarter (26%, n=400) purchased non-food items as well or instead.

**Figure 7: Use of payments by laborers**



A large majority of laborers reported that their overall household income had increased (96%, n=1,450), that participation in projects had improved their overall wellbeing (96%, n=1,448) and were satisfied with their participation (98%, n=1,491).

Almost three-quarters of laborers (73%, n=1,100) reported that they were aware of the Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM), but only 1% of laborers (n=22), from 11 sub-projects in six provinces (Balkh, Bamyan, Hilmand, Kabul, Paktika, and Uruzgan) reported having a complaint. About half of those who had complaints also registered them, all of which were reported as unresolved.

### **Social Grant beneficiary household profiles**

We sampled and traced 1,438 Social Grant (SG) beneficiaries listed on the MIS, covering 24 provinces.

We found and interviewed 61% (n=880) of beneficiaries listed (59% men, 41% women). Where another 23% (n=329) of beneficiaries were unavailable for interview, we interviewed another household member. As a result, we confirmed a total of 1,209 beneficiaries (84%). More than four-fifths of respondents (86%, n=1,045) confirmed they had received either a cash grant or food package; the remainder (14%, n=164) reported receiving neither cash nor a food package at the time of monitoring. Of those who had received a cash grant, the average amount was AFN 11,125.

Of those interviewed, 47% (n=572) of beneficiary households were female-headed; in 89% (n=510) of these, the head of household was a widow. In all, 30% (n=361) of household heads were a person with a disability, and 2% (n=20) were internally-displaced-person-headed households. Overall, 52% (n=623) of these household heads were also elderly.

Almost all the cash and food package grant beneficiaries (99%, n=1,032) said that they were satisfied with the grant received. Only 1% (n=13) said they had complaints related to the sub-project, but none had reported their complaints.

## ECA compliance by CDCs

We monitored compliance by CDCs with ECA requirements as follows:

- **ECA 1** involved checking the membership of CDCs to assess whether at least 70% of members listed in the UNOPS Management Information System (MIS) were part of, and engaged with, a named CDC.
- **ECA 2** checked that women comprised at least 40% of a CDC's membership.

Only CDCs meeting both ECA 1 and 2 were considered to have met ECA requirements, while CDCs meeting only one ECA did not meet the threshold.



We sampled and monitored 239 CDCs (217 rural, 22 urban) across 24 provinces. We found that 92% (n=220) of CDCs met ECA 1 and 95% (n=227) met ECA 2. A large majority of CDCs (89%, n=213) met both ECAs.

**Figure 8: CDCs meeting ECA requirements**



The 26 CDCs that did not meet one or both of ECAs came from urban (n=2) and rural (n=24) locations, and from seven provinces: 16 in Hilmand, three each in Nimroz and Takhar, and one in each of Parwan, Kandahar, Paktika, and Khost.

Of these, 19 did not meet ECA 1, 12 did not meet ECA 2, and five met neither. We found that there were three CDCs that had more female members than listed on the database but still did not meet overall ECA conditions.

## CDC member verification

The 239 CDCs sampled had a total of 4,402 CDC members listed on the MIS, of whom 47% were women. We verified 4,104 (93%) members, 2,197 men and 1,907 women. Of the 298 members not verified (7%), 151 were men and 147 women.

**Figure 9: CDC members verified**





## Community mobilization

We interviewed 728 CDC members (94% men, 6% women) across 237 locations (216 rural, 21 urban) in 23 provinces as part of community mobilization monitoring.

### Resource mapping

Almost all CDC members interviewed (97%, n=704) reported that their CDC's community resource mapping had been updated, of whom 98% also said that all male members of the CDC had been involved in the revisions, compared to just over three-quarters (76%, n=538) saying all female CDC members had been involved. Where the resource mapping had been updated, 83% (n=587) said that suggestions from women CDC members had been considered.

### Eligible beneficiary household lists and sub-project selection

A large majority of lists of eligible beneficiary households (94%, n=685) had been updated for both CFW/LIW and SGs, while 4% (n=28) said it had been updated for SGs only, and 2% (n=11) for CFW/LIW only. Where the eligible beneficiary households list had been updated, 96% of respondents reported that all male CDC members had been involved, and 76% (n=553) said that all women members had been involved.

**Figure 10: Updates to eligible beneficiary household list**



In all, 97 respondents associated with 47 CDCs reported that women CDC members had not been involved in updating the eligible beneficiary lists. The reasons provided were that women were prohibited by authorities (71%, n=69); owing to family commitments (47%, n=46); they were not invited to participate (40%, n=39); they were not aware of being allowed or eligible to participate (37%, n=36); the CDC had no female CDC members (29%, n=28); they did not want to participate (19%, n=18).

Almost all respondents (99%, n=710) reported that male CDC members were involved in the selection of CFW sub-projects, while 82% (n=587) said that female members were. Of those interviewed, 83% (n=596) said suggestions from women CDC members had been used in the selection of CFW projects.

Of those interviewed, only 1% (n=6) said they faced challenges updating or completing the eligible household beneficiary list, the selection of sub-projects, and the updating of community resource mapping.

### Grievance redress committees and mechanisms

Of the 728 CDC members interviewed, 81% (n=591) said a Grievance Redress Committee (GRC) had been established for community members to lodge complaints or concerns regarding project activities, and 80% (n=582) said a Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) had also been set up. Where a GRM had been established, 97% (n=563) said that it was operational, 96% (n=556) that it was accessible, and 2% (n=11) that it was inaccessible.

In urban areas, we interviewed 35 Gozar Assembly/Community Group (GA/CG) members for community mobilization monitoring for LIW and SGs, covering seven provinces (Balkh, Bamyan, Hirat, Kabul, Kandahar, Kunduz, Nangarhar) and 15 GAs/CGs. All those interviewed were men. All respondents (100%) said that the

LIW beneficiary list had been completed for their GA/CG sub-project; and 86% said that suggestions from community representatives had been included in sub-project selection.

Of 35 GA/CG members interviewed, 30 said a GRM had been established in their GA/CG for sub-projects, of whom all said that it was operational and accessible.

We interviewed 342 members of CDC, GA, or CG GRCs for community mobilization monitoring in 24 provinces. Half of these (50%, n=171) were members of the GRCs and GRM focal points; where they were not available, we interviewed CDC members or office-bearers. Of these, 80% (n=273) from 203 CDCs reported a GRC had been established. Where it had been established, 71% (n=196) of respondents said that the GRC included both men and women.

Of those interviewed, 76% (n=261) reported that a GRM had been established, and 22% (n=58) from 47 CDCs/GAs/CGs reported that members had used the GRM to report grievances. Of those reporting grievances had been reported, 86% (n=50) reported all grievances had been resolved. There were two CDCs and three GAs where respondents reported that grievances were currently unresolved.



## Emergency Food Security Project (EFSP)



### Physical monitoring overview

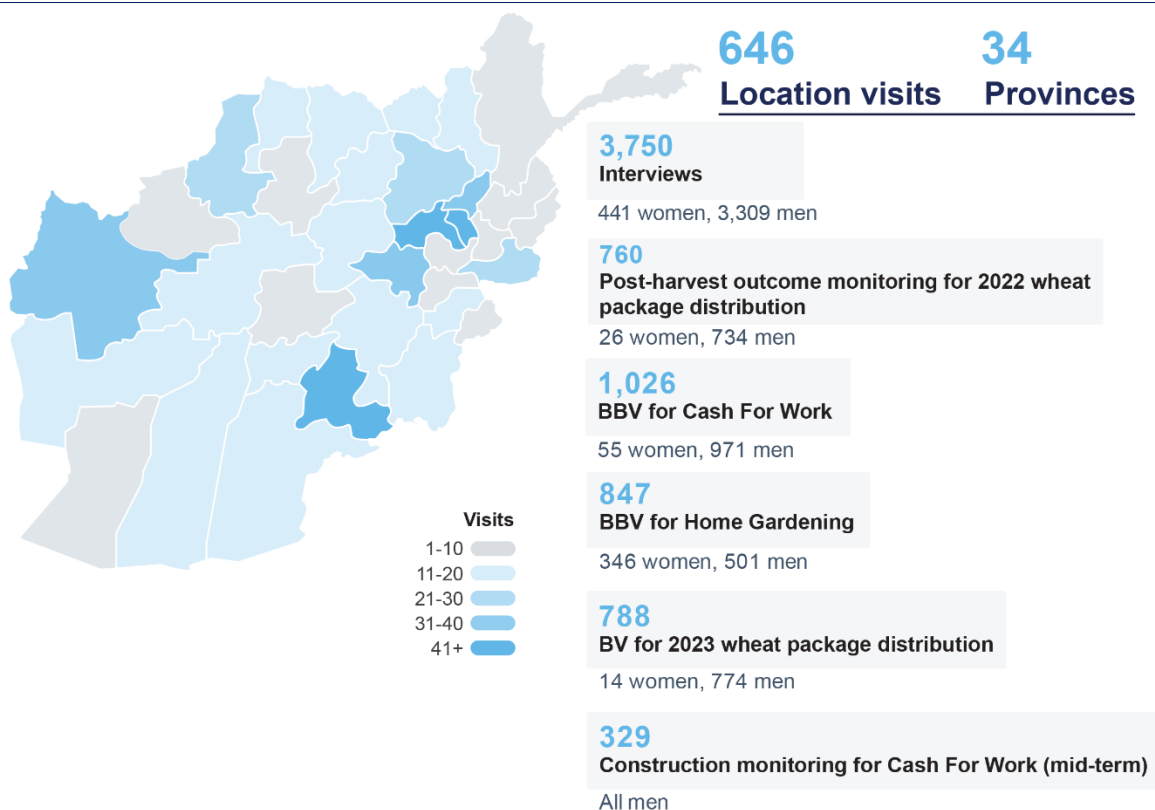
For the FAO-implemented EFSP our remit is to **validate the findings of monitoring conducted by the FAO's contracted TPMA**. As such, our work commences once the FAO TPMA has completed its monitoring surveys, from which we sample a subset, using data collection tools and analysis techniques to allow for comparative analysis.



In Q1 2024, our monitoring of EFSP comprised of validation of the findings for the following 3,750 in-person interviews in 34 provinces for the following five surveys:

- Post-harvest outcome monitoring survey for wheat packages distributed by FAO at the end of 2022, along with complementary training on wheat cultivation techniques.
- Baseline and beneficiary verification (BBV) survey for the CFW intervention.
- BBV survey for the HG intervention.
- Beneficiary verification (BV) survey for the 2023 wheat package distribution.
- Mid-term construction monitoring survey for the CFW intervention.<sup>27</sup>

**Figure 11: Summary of EFSP monitoring completed in Q1 2024**



<sup>27</sup> We did not receive the FAO TPMA data in time to complete this comparison before submission of this report. Once received, we will include findings from this analysis in the next quarterly report.

## Post-harvest outcome monitoring: 2022 wheat package distribution

### Overview

In the second half of 2022, FAO distributed a wheat production package, for which the FAO TPMA conducted a post-harvest monitoring outcome survey, interviewing 7,380 households across 20 provinces between 1 and 24 August 2023. We validated the FAO TPMA's findings by interviewing 760 households in 20 provinces between 29 November and 25 December 2023.

Of the 760 households we interviewed, 748 (98%) reported receiving the wheat production package. Thus, apart from household demographics, all the findings and analyses in this report are based on 748 households. For households interviewed by the FAO TPMA, all 772 reported receiving the wheat production package.

### Findings

#### Cultivation of production package

Of the 748 households receiving the package, 701 (94%) reported that they or someone in their household had cultivated the wheat seed received (96%, n=742, for FAO TPMA). Of these, 86% reported they had cultivated the seed during the winter wheat season (76%, n= 594, for FAO TPMA).

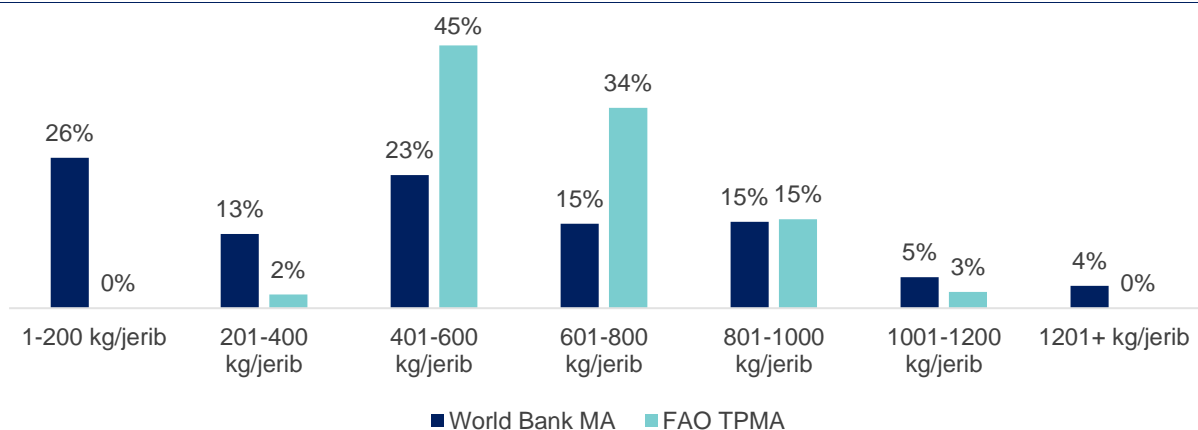
#### Use of land and inputs

Almost two-thirds of households using the seed (62%, n=435) cultivated between 1.6 and 2 jeribs of land; the proportion found by the FAO TPMA was (46%, n=343), but the overall average of 1.8 jeribs was the same for ourselves and the FAO TPMA. Households we surveyed reported using 28 kg of seed per jerib of land cultivated (26.5 kg for FAO TPMA).

#### Yield of wheat production package

Just over half of the 701 households (52%, n=364) did not know how much wheat had been produced. Those that said they did know (48%, n=337) reported an average yield of 529 kg/jerib, compared to the yield reported by the FAO TPMA of 657 kg/jerib.

**Figure 12: Wheat yield from production package**



#### Performance of wheat seed received compared to local wheat seed

Similarly, just over half (53%, n=375) did not know if using FAO-provided seed had resulted in a change in yield compared to using local wheat seed. Of those that did (n=323), almost half (46%, n=147) reported a lower yield,



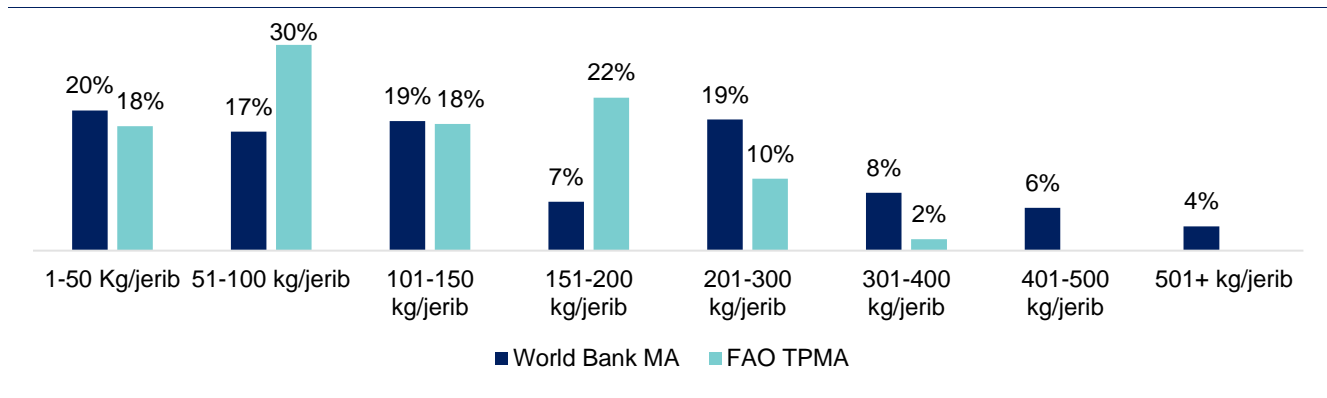
38% (n=123) a higher yield, and 16% (n=53) reported no change. The FAO TPMA simply asked if the wheat yield was higher compared to local wheat seed varieties; 81% (n=601) reported that this was the case.

Where households reported that using the certified wheat seed had resulted in a higher wheat yield compared to local seed varieties (n=123 for us, n=601 for the FAO TPMA) the stated average increase was 104 kg/jerib. The FAO TPMA reported a figure of 138 kg/jerib.

### Performance of 2023 wheat harvest compared to 2022 wheat harvest

Although 147 out of 323 households reported that the FAO-provided seed had resulted in a lower yield compared to local varieties, four-fifths of households (82%, n=570) cultivating the seed reported that the overall package (including urea and di-ammonium phosphate (DAP)) had helped increase their wheat production capacity. The FAO TPMA found the same (82%, n=607).

**Figure 13: Wheat yield increase in 2023 compared to 2022**



Compared to the previous harvesting season in 2022, households reported an average increase of 184 kg/jerib in their household wheat production capacity in 2023. The FAO TPMA reported figure was 132 kg/jerib.

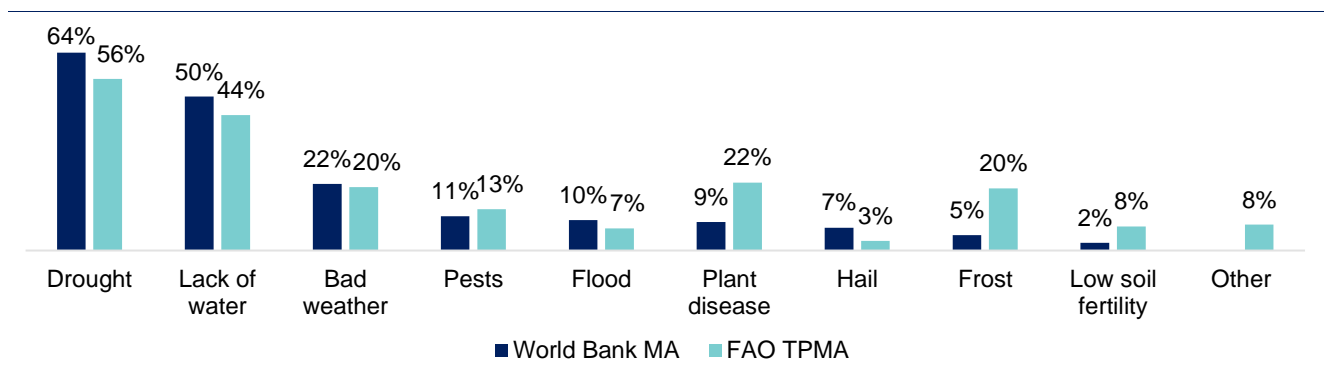
### Sufficiency of 2023 wheat harvest

The 570 households reporting an increase in production capacity from the package said that the wheat harvested in 2023 was expected to last them 5.6 months on average (4.7 months for FAO TPMA). This difference can likely be explained by the fact that the FAO TPMA asked this question to all households that cultivated the wheat seed, regardless of whether or not they had reported that the package had increased their production capacity.

### Constraints and challenges

Almost one-third (31%, n=215) of households cultivating the seed received reported they had not faced any constraints or challenges when doing so. Of those reporting challenges (n=486), those most frequently cited were drought (64%, n=311) and a lack of water (50%, n=242), slightly higher than findings from the FAO TPMA (56%, n=412, and 44%, n=325, respectively). The FAO TPMA did find higher incidences of households reporting challenges in the form of plant diseases, hail, frost, and low soil fertility.

**Figure 14: Challenges and constraints faced when cultivating wheat seed**



### Wheat cultivation training

The wheat package distribution was intended to be complemented by training on wheat cultivation techniques from FAO Implementing Partners (IPs). Of the 748 households that received a package, just over half reported receiving training (53%, n=395), the same proportion as found by the FAO TPMA (n=409).

Almost all households that received training (97%, n=383) reported applying the skills learned; 2% (n=8) reported that they had not done so, and 1% (n=4) did not know. The FAO TPMA reported that 99.5% (n=407) of households receiving training had applied the skills learned, while 0.5% (n=2) did not.

All but one of the households that had received training reported themselves very satisfied (64%, n=253) or satisfied 36% (n=141). The FAO TPMA findings were similar, with 59% (n=242) very satisfied and 40% (n=163) satisfied.

### Overall satisfaction with the project

A large majority of beneficiary households (91%, n=678) reported themselves highly satisfied or satisfied with the wheat seed distributed, similar to the FAO TPMA (98%, n=727). We also found high levels of satisfaction among beneficiaries with the overall quality 93% (n=693) and yield performance 94% (n=687) of the package. The FAO TPMA did not ask this question but did ask households if they were satisfied with the assistance or service provided, with 90% (n=670) reporting themselves highly satisfied or satisfied.

### Safety and respect during distribution

When asked about perceived safety when traveling to receive the assistance, receiving it, and returning home, four-fifths of households (80%, n=598) reported feeling completely safe, and 14% (n=102) feeling mostly safe. At 69% (n=514) and 27% (n=200) respectively, the FAO TPMA figures were similar overall.

Three-quarters of households (75%, n=562) reported feeling that organization staff had treated them with complete respect during the distribution process, and 19% (n=142) that this was mostly the case. The FAO TPMA figures were similar overall, at 62% (n=468) and 31% (n=236) respectively.

### Complaint mechanisms

Less than a quarter of respondents (23%, n=170) were aware of any means for making complaints or suggestions about the project; the FAO TPMA found two-thirds of households (67%, n=475) reported knowing how to do so.

Of the 170 respondents who were aware of how to make a complaint or suggestion, 16% (n=27) stated they had raised a complaint or suggestion in the past. Of these, 67% (n=18) reported that it had been followed up. The FAO TPMA asked all households if they knew whether complaints or suggestions had been followed up; 65% (n=459) reported that this had been the case.

## Community consultation

Three-fifths of households (60%, n=451) reported being consulted on their opinions of the assistance, of whom 80% (n=362) reported their views had been completely or mostly taken into account, but 16% (n=73) said this had not really been the case and 3% (n=12) said their views had not been considered at all. The FAO TPMA asked households whether they felt their views had been taken into account: 73% (n=508) agreed, 6% (n=44) reported that this had not really been the case, and 3% (n=22) said their views had not been considered at all.

Almost two-thirds of beneficiary households (62%, n=464) felt that they had been completely or mostly well informed about the assistance, while 23% (n=169) reported feeling partially informed and 15% (n=109) reporting this had not happened at all. The comparative FAO TPMA figures were 87% (n=643), 4% (n=33), and 3% (n=20) respectively.

## Exclusion errors

When asked if there were households in their community that needed support and met the FAO vulnerability criteria but had not received it, almost one-third of respondents (31%, n=229) agreed, compared to 48% (n=343) found by the FAO TPMA.

# Baseline and beneficiary verification: Cash For Work

## Overview

In the second half of 2023, FAO began to implement a CFW program as part of EFSP. The FAO TPMA conducted a BBV survey for this program between 5 April and 7 October 2023, interviewing 10,003 households across all 34 provinces.

To validate the FAO TPMA's findings, we interviewed 1,026 households in 33 provinces between 29 November and 25 December 2023.

## Findings

### Household demographics

Of all the respondents we interviewed, 67% were the head of their household (n=692), compared to 95% (n=977) for the FAO TPMA. The average size of the households we interviewed was 10.5 (8.9 for FAO TPMA). Almost all heads of households (96%) were married, with 3% single persons, compared to 89% and 9% respectively for the FAO TPMA.

Of the heads of households we interviewed, 14% (n=141) lived with a disability. Of these, half were able to work (n=68). The FAO TPMA found only 30 heads of households (3%) that reported to be living with a disability, of whom 14 were able to work.

The average reported age of heads of households was 46 (36 for the FAO TPMA).

### Other assistance

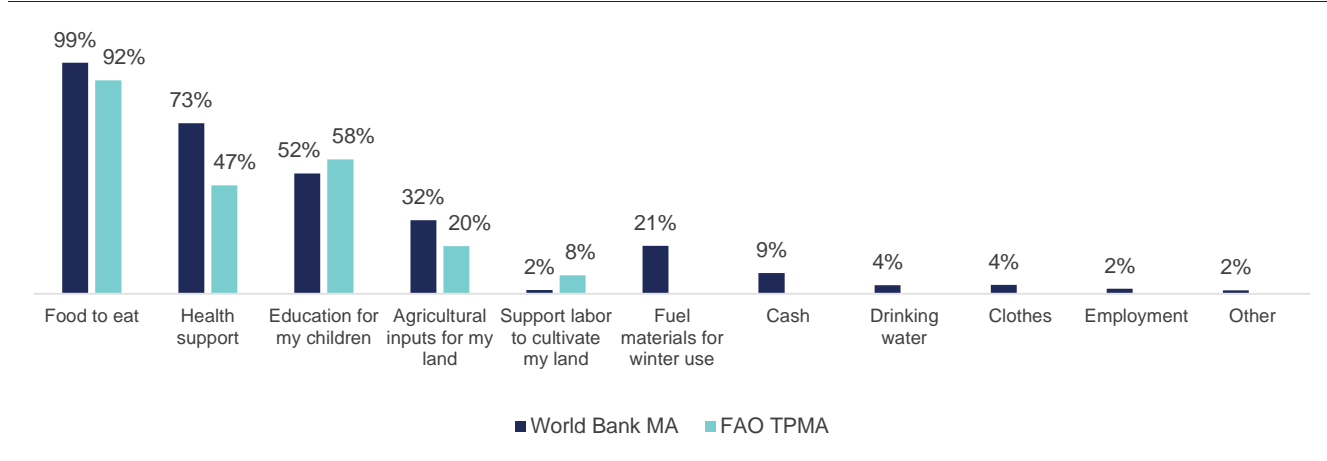
Almost one-third of households (29%, n=296) reported receiving other assistance in the previous 12 months. For the FAO TPMA, this was 36% (n=369). Three-quarters of households that reported receiving other assistance (75%, n=203) said the provider of that 'other' assistance was a 'UN agency', 97% (n=197) of whom identified it as WFP. Thus, of all households targeted for CFW, one-fifth (19%) had received food from WFP in the previous 12 months. The FAO TPMA found a lower proportion of respondents (43%, n=160) citing a 'UN agency' as the most common provider of 'other' assistance and did not go on to identify the agency.



## Household priority needs

When asked about their top three needs, almost all households (99%, n=1,019) stated that their top priority was getting enough food to eat, followed by health support (73%, n=753) and education for children (52%, n=531). The FAO TPMA also found these the three most-cited needs, but in different proportions: 92% (n=942) mentioned food, 58% (n=593) education for children, and 47% (n=478) health support.

**Figure 15: Household priority needs**



When asked if FAO or an FAO IP had consulted households about developing, implementing, or monitoring activities to help address their priority needs, while nearly one-fifth of households (19%, n=200) agreed, but over three-quarters (77%, n=790) said this had not been the case, while 4% (n=36) said they did not know. This is the reverse of the FAO TPMA finding, with 85% (n=876) reporting they were consulted and 15% (n=150) that they were not.

Of the 200 households interviewed that reported having been consulted on priority needs, half said they were adequately consulted, compared to 39% (n=338) for the FAO TPMA.

## Access to agricultural land

In terms of land holdings, 47% of households (n=480) reported owning irrigated land, and 24% (n=242) rainfed land, with 138 households reporting owning both types. The FAO TPMA's findings were 61% for ownership of irrigated land and 28% for rainfed land. The percentage of households targeted for CFW with access to some type of agriculture land was 57% (n=584), compared to the FAO TPMA's finding of 66% (n=677).

On average, we found reported irrigated landholdings to be almost the same as found by the FAO TPMA (2.2 against 2.3 jeribs), but rainfed landholdings to be one-third larger (4.7 versus 3.5 jeribs).

## Livestock ownership

Of households targeted for CFW, 61% (n=626) reported owning livestock. The FAO TPMA finding was 67% (n=691). Of households owning livestock, the animals most frequently mentioned were dairy cows and cattle (64%, n=402), followed by sheep or goats (54%, n=340), and donkeys or horses (30%, n=186). For the FAO TPMA, these proportions were 66% (n=453), 67% (n=468), and 27% (n=190) respectively.

The average number of animals owned was highest for sheep or goats (5.1), followed by cows or cattle (1.9), and donkeys or horses (1.4). The FAO TPMA's figures were slightly higher for sheep or goats, at 6.2, and almost the same for other animals, at 1.9, and 1.3 respectively.

## Beneficiary selection satisfaction

Almost all households (97%, n=1,002) indicated that they were satisfied with the beneficiary selection process, but slightly lower than the finding by the FAO TPMA (99.7%, n=1,023). In all, 88% (n=906) of households reported that the community had been involved in beneficiary selection, of whom 93% (n=841) reported that male community members had been involved and 24% (n=221) that female community members had been involved. The FAO TPMA did not ask these questions.

## Exclusion errors

While 28% (n=283) of households reported that they knew deserving households that had been excluded, 60% (n=620) reported they did not know of any, and 11% (n=116) that they did not know either way. The FAO TPMA reported 46% (n=457) of households citing exclusion errors, the remainder reporting that they did not know of any excluded households.

Of those households that reported knowing of exclusion errors, when asked what type of households they believed tended to be excluded, two-fifths identified female-headed households (40%, n=110), followed by child-headed households (36%, n=97), people living with a disability (33%, n=91), and elderly people (28%, n=76). The FAO TPMA did not ask this question.

## Inclusion errors

While almost three-quarters (73%, n=752) of households reported that they did not know any undeserving households that had been included, 15% (n=147) reported they did, and 11% (n=115) that they did not know either way. For the FAO TPMA 77% (n=755) reported they were not aware of any inclusion errors while 23% (n=229) reported that they did.

Of those households that reported knowing of inclusion errors, when asked what types of households they believed tended to be wrongly included, more than half mentioned male community elders (58%, n=78), just under half mentioned family members of community elders (48%, n=65), followed by male CDC members (27%, n=36), and female community elders (10%, n=14). The FAO TPMA did not ask this question.

## Grievance mechanisms

Only 19% (n=192) of households targeted for CFW reported that they were aware of a grievance mechanism, with 81% (n=830) unaware, similar to FAO TPMA findings of 18% (n=180) and 82% (n=846) respectively.

The most cited grievance mechanism was that of the government (41%, n=78), followed by the Awaaz Afghanistan complaint mechanism (36%, n=70), FAO's complaint mechanism (29%, n=55) and the IP complaint mechanism (23%, n=44). In contrast, the FAO TPMA reported that households cited the FAO complaint mechanism most often (56%, n=100), followed by the IP complaint mechanism (37%, n=66), Awaaz (18%, n=33), and then the government complaint mechanism (15%, n=27).

# Baseline and beneficiary verification: Home Gardening

## Overview

In the second half of 2023, FAO began to implement a HG program as part of EFSP. The FAO TPMA conducted a BBV survey for this program between 6 April and 20 September 2023, interviewing 8,381 households across 31 provinces. To validate the FAO TPMA's findings, we interviewed 847 households in 29 provinces between 29 November and 25 December 2023.

## Findings

### Household demographics

Of all the respondents we interviewed, 55% (n=463) were the head of household, compared to 84% (n=710) for the FAO TPMA.

Two-fifths (41%, n=346) of our respondents were women and 16% (n=139) of households interviewed were female-headed. The FAO TPMA reported interviewing significantly more women (93%, n=788) and female-headed households (78%, n=662).

Of the heads of households we interviewed, 14% (n=116) lived with a disability. Of these, one-third were still able to work (n=40). The FAO TPMA found only 52 heads of households (6%) that reported living with a disability, of whom just under half (n=21) were still able to work.

### Other assistance

Two-fifths of households (41%, n=345) reported receiving other assistance in the previous 12 months. For the FAO TPMA, this was 25% (n=208). Almost two-thirds (63%, n=219) of households that reported receiving other assistance said the provider of that 'other' assistance was a 'UN agency', with 90% (n=197) of these respondents identifying WFP. This indicates that of all households targeted for HG, almost one-quarter (23%, n=197) had received food from WFP in the previous 12 months. The FAO TPMA found a lower proportion of respondents (55%, n=114) citing a 'UN agency' as the most common provider of 'other' assistance and did not subsequently identify the agency.

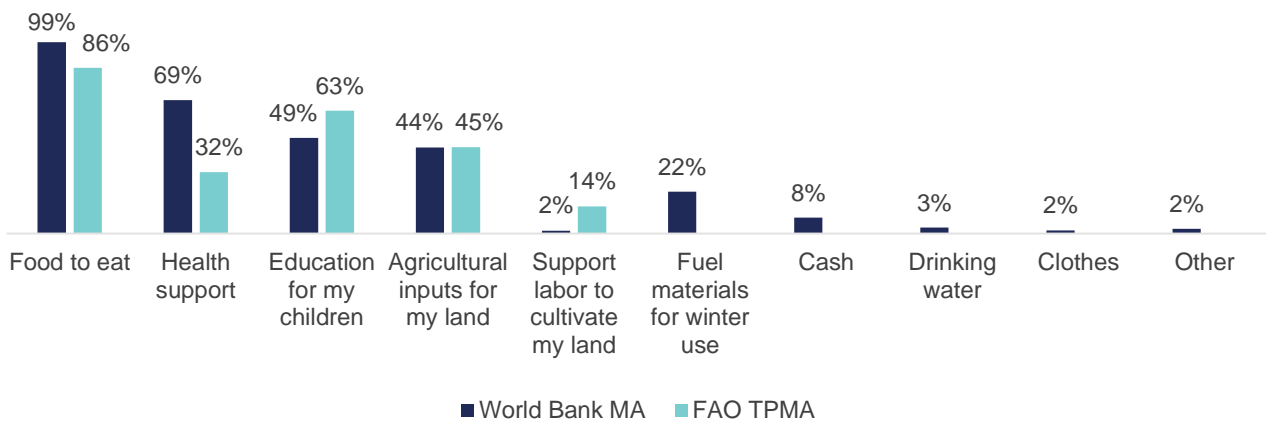
### Household priority needs

When we asked households about their top three needs, almost all (99%, n=835) stated their top priority was 'getting enough food to eat', followed by 'health support' (69%, n=582) and 'education for children' (49%, n=417). The FAO TPMA also found food (86%, n=725) and education (63%, n=538) were among the three most cited needs, but only 32% (n=269) cited health support. Instead, the FAO TPMA found agricultural inputs to be the third-most cited need (45%, n=377). We found a similar proportion of households (44%, n=376) reporting this as a priority need.

When asked if FAO or an IP had consulted households about developing, implementing, or monitoring activities to help address their priority needs, a quarter of households (26%, n=216) agreed, but 70% (n=597) said this had not been the case, and 4% (n=34) said they did not know. This is the reverse of the FAO TPMA finding of 83% (n=701) reporting they were consulted and 17% (n=142) that they were not.

Of the 216 households interviewed that reported being consulted on priority needs, only one-third (33%, n=72) said they were adequately consulted, compared to less than one-quarter (24%, n=167) for the FAO TPMA.

**Figure 16: Household priority needs**



### Access to vegetable seed

Two-thirds of households (66%, n=556) interviewed reported having access to vegetable seed. The FAO TPMA found this to be less than half (47%, n=397). A slightly larger proportion of men (68%, n=339) than women (63%, n=217) reported having access. The FAO TPMA reported that only 46% (n=365) of female respondents had access to vegetable seed.

Almost all respondents who reported that their household did have access to vegetable seed stated they obtained seed from the market (92%, n=511). The proportion reported by the FAO TPMA was much lower (52%, n=208). This may be due to a difference in the way in which households could answer this question.

### Distance to local market

Of the 511 households that reported buying vegetable seed from the market, one-third (33%, n=169) could not say how far the market was from their house. The others reported an average distance of 8.7 km (11.8 km for the FAO TPMA).

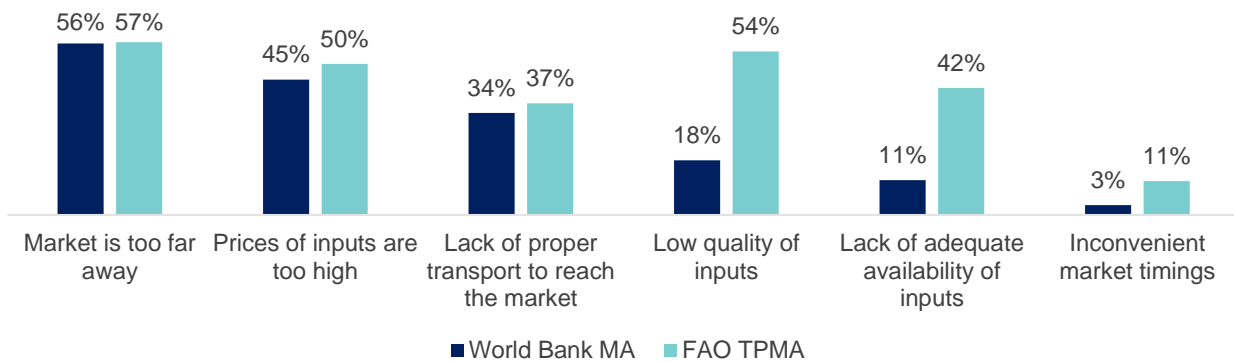
Of answers from male respondents, the average distance to market was 12.0 km; female respondents' answers averaged less than half this, at 5.4 km, while the FAO TPMA average distance from female respondents was 11.6 km.

### Challenges accessing markets

Just over half of all households (51%, n=429) reported challenges in buying inputs at the market for vegetable cultivation, with a higher percentage of women doing so (58%, n=199) compared to men (46%, n=230). Over one-third of all respondents (37%, n=317) reported experiencing challenges when selling vegetable produce at the local market, with no significant difference between male and female respondents. The FAO TPMA did not ask this question.

The most commonly cited challenge when buying inputs at the local market for vegetable cultivation was the distance to market, with more than half of all households (56%, n=242) highlighting this as a challenge, almost the same proportion as found by the FAO TPMA (57%, n=481).

**Figure 17: Market challenges for buying inputs for vegetable cultivation**



### Household division of labor when cultivating vegetables

Most households reported that both men and women participate in cultivating vegetables (63%, n=529 for us, 55%, n=465 for the FAO TPMA). However, the proportion of households reporting that only male household members cultivated vegetables was twice as high as those reporting that only women did so (22%, n=184 versus 10%, n=86). The FAO TPMA figures were 23% (n=191) for both.

While 11% (n=40) of female respondents reported that only men cultivated vegetables, 29% (n=144) of all male respondents did so. In contrast, 18% (n=61) of female respondents reported that only women cultivated vegetables compared to 5% (n=25) of male respondents.

We also found that 6% of respondents reported that their household did not cultivate vegetables at all, which might imply a targeting error. The FAO TPMA, however, reported that all households interviewed cultivated vegetables.

### Recent vegetable cultivation

Almost three-quarters of households interviewed (72%, n=607) reported they had cultivated vegetables within the previous six months (73%, n=616 for the FAO TPMA). This proportion was higher for male respondents (77%, n=384) compared to female respondents (64%, n=223). The FAO TPMA's findings were 69% (n=41) and 73% (n=575) respectively.

The average reported amount of land used by households that had recently cultivated vegetables was 0.76 jeribs (1.14 jeribs for the FAO TPMA). Female respondents tended to report using less land than did male respondents (0.63 versus 0.83 jeribs), while the reported average was 1.16 jeribs for FAO TPMA female respondents.

Regarding the type of vegetables recently planted, 73% (n=444) of household named tomatoes (74%, n=454 for the FAO TPMA). Other crops mentioned by more than half of households were eggplant (51%, n=312) and okra (51%, n=311). These proportions were similar or the same for the FAO TPMA, at 54% (n=333) and 51% (n=313) respectively.

The average cumulative yield of all vegetables harvested by these households was 362 kg (276 kg for the FAO TPMA), with female respondents citing less than half the average quoted by male respondents (210 kg against 450 kg). The FAO TPMA reported an average of 285 kg for female respondents.

### Vegetable cultivation training

Almost half of all respondents (44%, n=375) said they had received training on vegetable cultivation techniques in the last year (32% for the FAO TPMA, n=270). However, while just over one-third of female respondents (36%, n=123) reported they or household members had received training, half of male respondents did so

(50%, n=252). The FAO TPMA found a similar proportion of female respondents reporting to have received training (32%, n=249).

### **Beneficiary selection**

Almost all households (97%, n=818) indicated that they were satisfied with the beneficiary selection process, similar to the FAO TPMA findings (99%, n=839). In all, 83% (n=703) of households reported that someone in their community had been involved in beneficiary selection. Of these, 90% (n=634) reported that male community members had been involved and 51% (n=362) that female community members had been involved. However, while 57% (n=240) of male respondents said female community members had participated, only 44% (n=161) of female respondents did so. The FAO TPMA did not ask these questions.

### **Exclusion errors**

In all, 31% (n=261) of households reported they knew deserving households that had been excluded, with almost half (49%, n=416) reporting they did not know of any, and 20% (n=169) saying they did not know either way. The FAO TPMA reported 47% (n=370) of households citing exclusion errors, with the remainder reporting that they did not know of any excluded households.

We asked households that reported knowing of exclusion errors what type of households they believed tended to be excluded. More than half identified female-headed households (57%, n=150), followed by child-headed households (39%, n=103), elderly people (36%, n=95), people living with a disability (32%, n=84), and women (22%, n=58). Significantly more female respondents than male respondents cited female-headed households (64%, n=55 versus 54%, n=95) and women (31%, n=27 versus 18%, n=31). On the other hand, fewer female respondents than male respondents cited child-headed households (35%, n=30 versus 42%, n=73), minority groups (1%, n=1 versus 7%, n=13), and poor people (2%, n=2 versus 7%, n=12). The FAO TPMA did not ask this question.

### **Inclusion errors**

More than two-thirds (69%, n=586) of households reported they did not know any non-qualifying households that had been included, but 12% (n=99) reported that they did, with 19% (n=160) saying they did not know either way. For the FAO TPMA, 79% (n=598) reported they did not know of any inclusion errors while 21% (n=163) reported that they did.

We asked all households reporting inclusion errors what types of households had been incorrectly included. More than half mentioned male community elders (66%, n=63), followed by family members of community elders (43%, n=41), male Community Development Council members (23%, n=22), and female community elders (21%, n=20). Significantly fewer female respondents than male respondents cited male community elders: 53% (n=16) compared to 71% (n=47), while significantly more female respondents than male respondents cited female community leaders: 33% (n=10) versus 15% (n=10). The FAO TPMA did not ask this question.

### **Complaint mechanisms**

Only 19% (n=164) of households targeted for HG reported that they were aware of a complaint mechanism. The FAO TPMA found this to be 10% (n=85).

Of those households that were aware, the most cited complaint mechanism was that of FAO (41%, n=67), while the same proportion of households (26%) reported awareness of Awaaz Afghanistan (n=43), the IP complaint mechanism (n=43), and the government complaint mechanism (n=42). In contrast, the FAO TPMA found that Awaaz Afghanistan was most cited (41%, n=35), followed by the FAO's complaint mechanism at 39% (n=33), the IP complaint mechanism (29%, n=25), and the government complaint mechanism (18%, n=15).

## Beneficiary verification: 2023 wheat package distribution

### Overview

In the second half of 2023, FAO distributed a wheat production package as part of EFSP, for which the FAO TPMA conducted a beneficiary verification survey, interviewing 7,834 households across 20 provinces between 2 August and 11 November 2023. To validate the FAO TPMA's findings, we interviewed 788 households in 20 provinces between 22 February and 10 March 2024.

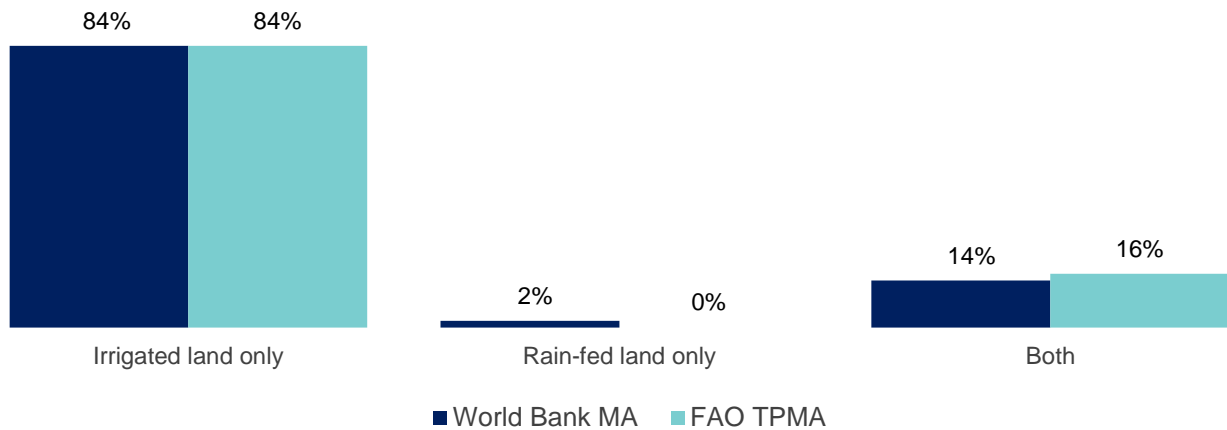
### Findings

Comparing our findings with those of the FAO TPMA for the beneficiary verification survey of the 2023 wheat production package distribution:

- 1. We noted some demographic differences.** We found that the average reported age of heads of households was 47 years, compared to 39 years for the FAO TPMA. As with past surveys, this difference may be due to FAO TPMA enumerators assuming that everyone who collected the assistance was also the head of household. However, we found that almost one-fifth of the people who collected the 2023 wheat production package did so on behalf of their head of household.
- 2. We found substantially lower proportions of farmers (70% versus 89%) and households reporting agriculture as their main source of livelihood (77% versus 98%).** This difference likely reflects the fact that we collected data in winter (February-March 2024) when employment in agriculture is significantly reduced, whereas the FAO TPMA collected data between August and November 2023.
- 3. We found a substantially larger number of households having received a wheat production package (97% versus 12%) and having access to certified wheat seed for the 2023 winter wheat season as a result (88% versus 11%).** These differences are due to the different data collection periods, as we collected data after FAO had finished its 2023 distribution of the wheat production package, while the FAO TPMA collected data before the distribution. As a result, we found that almost all households referred to UN assistance as the source of the certified wheat seed. In the absence of this assistance, the FAO TPMA found that the market was the main source (as reported by 57% of all households) of certified wheat seed for the beneficiary households.
- 4. We confirmed FAO TPMA findings that almost all households had access to irrigated land.** However, we found that households reported larger landholdings than the FAO TPMA found (4.5 compared to 3.2 jeribs on average), and a lower proportion of households reported sharing their land with other households (23% versus 41%). We confirmed the finding that households that reported sharing their land said they shared it with an average of two other households.

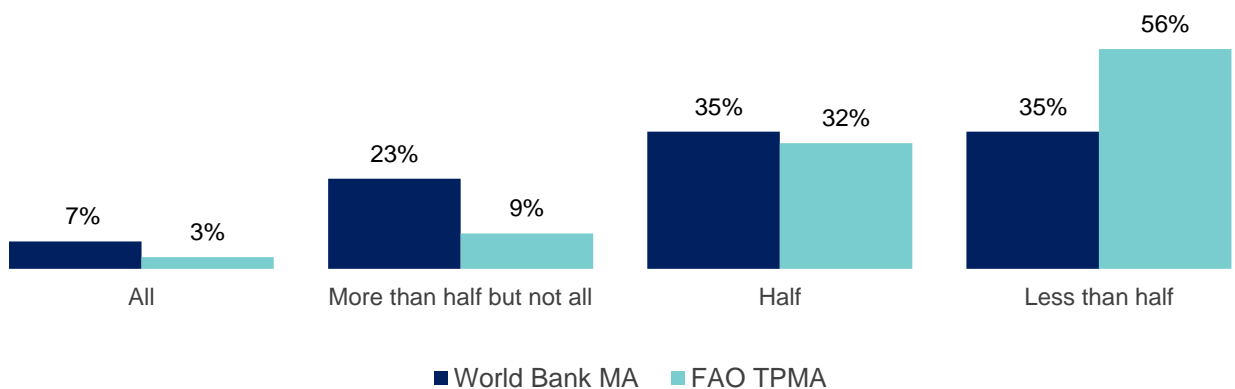


Figure 18: Type of agricultural land that households can access



5. We confirmed that a majority of households (61% for us, 77% for the FAO TPMA) lost crops in 2023 as a result of natural events. However, we did find major differences in responses at provincial level provinces. We found a smaller proportion of households reporting crop losses in 2023 than did the FAO TPMA; our finding was that almost two-thirds of households reported losing at least half of all their crops, compared to less than half reporting doing so to the FAO TPMA.

Figure 19: Extent of crop losses



## Health Emergency Response (HER)



### Physical and financial monitoring overview

We were tasked by the World Bank to monitor the following integral components of the UNICEF-implemented HER on a quarterly basis:

- **ESS monitoring** at health facility and community levels.
- **Construction assessment** of health facilities.

We were also asked to conduct **counter-verification of findings** from UNICEF's contracted TPMA on service volume and quality.

We visited different types of health facilities providing the Basic Package of Health Services and Essential Package of Hospital Services in all 34 provinces: Provincial Hospitals, District Hospitals, Comprehensive Health Centers, Basic Health Centers, and Sub-health Centers.



We temporarily paused our data collection activities during January and February during negotiations with the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) over access permission. We recommenced data collection at the end of February and will report our results in Q2.

During this period, we submitted ten completed HACT audit reports for expenditure incurred between 1 January and 30 June 2023 under HER. We audited USD 50,264,763 of expenditure, finding USD 30,550 (0.06%) of QE. Detailed results from financial monitoring are in the Financial Monitoring section of this report.

During January and February, we engaged with the World Bank's Health Task Team to revise our sampling methodology, selecting a sample of 234 health facilities for two forthcoming rounds of counter-verification data collection, including ESS monitoring data for 218 health facilities across 34 provinces.

During this period, we continued discussions to finalize our Terms of Reference and Monitoring Framework for MCBP, a component of HER2 implemented by WFP, with updated versions shared in February with the World Bank and WFP and signed off in January. We then drafted a data collection tool related to beneficiary verification. This work remains on hold pending receipt of receipt from the World Bank of additional indicators to be monitored.

## NGO / CSO Capacity Support Project (NCCSP)



### Physical monitoring overview

For the UNDP-implemented NCCSP, we:

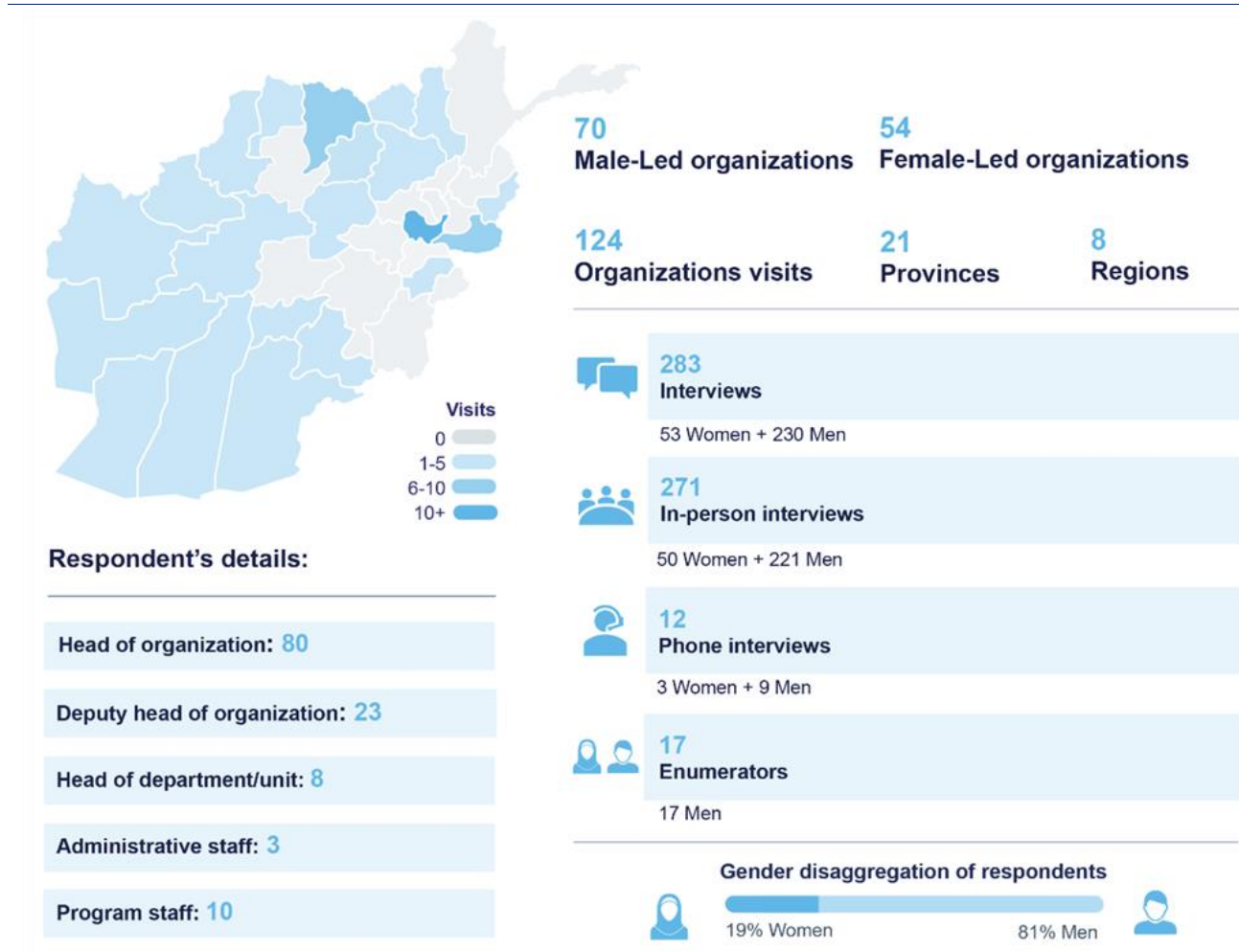
- Monitored the **quality of training and capacity building** provided to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society organizations (CSOs), completed in 2023; and
- Began to verify that NGOs selected to receive LVGs **met the eligibility criteria** for the project and assessed exclusions.



In Q1 2024, in collaboration with UNDP, we conducted observation visits to 124 sampled organizations, 85% (n=105) of which were selected for LVGs. Most (87%, n=108) were NGOs, the remainder CSOs (13%, n=16).

Our monitoring comprised in-person visits to the organizations' headquarters in the capital or in the provinces, as well as in the province of project activity, and phone interviews with the heads of organizations. The objective of the visits was to identify possible inclusion and exclusion errors from the sample of organizations based on the eligibility criteria.

**Figure 20: Summary of NCCSP monitoring completed during Q1 2024**



## Key findings

### Eligibility requirement verification

Our organizational assessments indicate that all NGOs selected for LVG met the eligibility criteria.

Of the 105 organizations selected for an LVG, all confirmed participating in Component One training, including on gender, and reported a notable improvement in performance as a result.

### Geographical presence in targeted areas

All 105 organizations selected for an LVG indicated that they operated in at least one or more of the project service delivery areas. However, just over half (51%, n=54) were unable to provide project documentation as evidence of this.

### Registration and operational status

Of the 105 organizations selected for the LVG, 45% (n=48) were women-led. Six were unable to provide a valid registration license (five of them women-led) although all possessed registration licenses valid to April 2021.

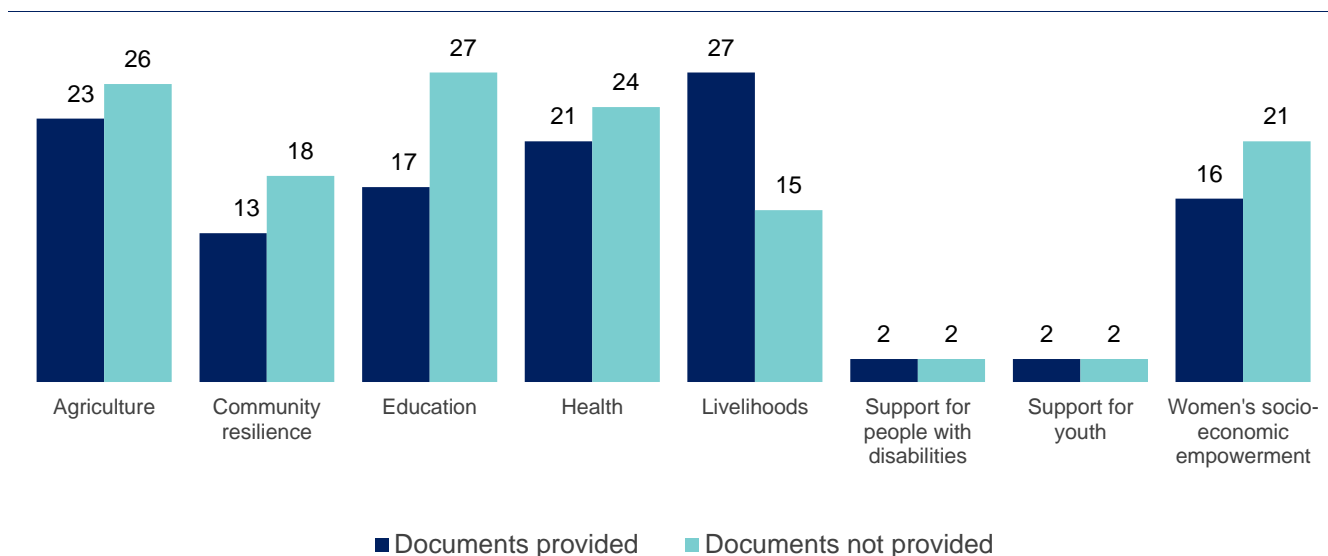
Just under half of the organizations (45%, n=48) had licenses dating back more than ten years, and all but eleven of the remainder (n=46) had been registered for between five and nine years. Of the remaining 11, nine had licenses issued between one and four years ago and two had renewed licenses in the last twelve months.

### Organizational governance and service delivery

All 105 organizations selected for an LVG indicated that they operated in at least one or more of NCCSP's service delivery areas. However, just over half (51%, n=54) were unable to provide project documentation to evidence this.

As with the non-LVG organizations, many were unable to provide documentation as evidence of their work in different service delivery areas (see below). This was especially true for organizations claiming to work in education, agriculture, health, and women's socio-economic empowerment. Only in relation to livelihoods were most organizations able to provide documentary evidence of their work.

**Figure 21: Organizations providing documents relevant to the service delivery area**







## Grievance Redress Mechanisms

Almost all organizations (96%, n=117) of organizations reported official GRM channels in the form of phone calls, emails, on-site complaints boxes, and/or face-to-face discussions with GRC members.

Additionally, 93% (n=109) of organizations had a GRC for receiving and responding to grievances. Of these organizations, 18 had no female members on their GRC, and of those who did, 84% (n=76) had 2 or fewer female members on their GRC.

## Entry Criteria for Access

NCCSP has two Entry Criteria for Access: 1) Women are not prohibited from participating as workers and/or recipients of aid/services; and 2) Women continue to staff the beneficiary organizations and benefit from their activities.

When asked whether women were being prohibited from participating as workers and/or recipients of aid and service, interviews with 124 heads of organizations reported the main challenge as the ban on women working in offices (85%, n=105). Other challenges raised included the ban on women leading organizations and operating bank accounts (15%, n=19), and traveling to project sites (13%, n=16) but that there weren't any challenges so long as a *mahram* was able to accompany a woman in the field.

When 12 other staff (monitoring staff, heads, and deputy heads of field offices) were asked about challenges, five stated either that there were no challenges because women were needed and/or authorized to work or that there were no challenges so long as they were accompanied by a *mahram*. Three reported the ban on women in offices.

## Verification of proposal eligibility criteria

Project proposals were scored overall against the existing UNDP proposal criteria to provide a parallel grading to that from UNDP. The objective was to identify significant variances (>15%) between UNDP assessments and ours.

Our assessment was based on the following criteria:

- Evidence of tangible activities with the potential to generate positive change among identified beneficiaries.
- An evidence base for the proposed activity.
- Clear description of what the activity comprises.
- Clear description of how the activity will be implemented.
- Clear description of what beneficiary capacity building measures will be implemented and how.
- Evidence of realistic monitoring, including what will be monitored and how.

In reviewing 21 project proposals, we were unable to establish proven track records of sound financial management practice due to lack of one or more documents required to make the assessment. Although data was only shared as totals, rather than annually, all 21 proposals met the cumulative amount of Low-Value Grant by UNDP, being under the USD 300,000 ceiling. Based on budget proposals submitted, only 6 of the 21 organizations proposed operational costs below the 40% threshold.

**Table 9: Summary of financial monitoring verification of proposal eligibility results**

Proposal eligibility criteria (For proposals submitted by eligible organization)	Organizations meeting the criteria	Organizations not meeting the criteria	Conclusion/Remarks
Proven track record of sound financial management practice (Financial reports, preferably with audit reports and/or evidence by banks or cash service agent)	0	21	The track record of sound financial management practice could not be concluded for any of the selected organization due to lack of one or more documents required for drawing the conclusion.
Cumulative amount of low-value grant by UNDP including this time since 2021 does not reach USD 300,000	21	0	This is based on the information shared in excel sheet by UNDP. UNDP did not share annual detail as mentioned, only the total amount. We were not able to verify this data as no documents (e.g. bank statements, remittance/receipt confirmation, etc.) were shared.
Operation Cost including human cost, equipment and miscellaneous is up to 40% of the total amount proposed	6	15	This is based on the budget submitted in proposal.

All 21 organizations sampled were able to provide a completed copy of their proposal as a PDF file with a signature on the first page. Where they did not provide specified documentation, all 21 organizations provided alternative materials, principally comprising copies of money exchange licenses (n=17), agreements with money exchange offices (n=16) and selected e-Tazkeras or passports of staff listed in the proposal (n=15).

Our assessment of proposal eligibility criteria found five cases with a variance greater than 15% from UNDP scoring.



## Water Emergency Relief Project (WERP)



We continued to discuss our monitoring approach for WERP with the World Bank Task Team, UNOPS, and AKF to identify suitable monitoring activities. Due to delays in project implementation, our monitoring had not yet begun in Q1.

# MA Digital Platform

The table below details major development updates related to the MA Digital Platform for Q1 2024.









**Table 10: Digital Platform development updates**

Activity	Updates
ARTF partner space	<p><b>Financial monitoring dashboard:</b> We shared a dashboard, updated with Q3 2023 reported data, with the World Bank Country Management Unit (CMU) and finance team on 21 January.</p> <p><b>Physical monitoring dashboards:</b> We began to design and prepare project-specific physical monitoring dashboards in line with our Quarterly Progress Reports. In the first round, we produced two project-specific dashboards (HER and CRLP) as samples, using data shared in the Q3 2023 report. We shared the dashboards with the CMU for feedback in February.</p>
Platform accreditation	<p>Following confirmation that the World Bank will move ahead solely with accreditation, and with maintenance and development of the Platform after July 2024, we continued to respond to World Bank inquiries. In January, we submitted accreditation documentation requirements to the World Bank's Information and Technology Solutions (ITS) team and a White Paper to the Bank CMU.</p> <p>In addition, we met with the World Bank's Office of Information Security (OIS) team in February to discuss accreditation requirements, including hosting the platform applications on the Bank servers.</p> <p><b>Platform testing:</b> In coordination with the CMU and ITS teams, we provided the OIS team with access to the Digital Platform's Operational Acceptance Testing (OAT) environment from 13 February. The Bank's OIS team started testing the Digital Platform and shared their report on 21 February, and we shared our response on 28 February. We commenced the amendments per the OIS recommendation and confirmed completion on 20 March with our team continued testing.</p>
Penetration testing	<p>In January, we conducted a penetration test of ARTF-TPM.com and its associated application programming interface to identify and mitigate vulnerabilities in the current infrastructure and to reduce attack pathways.</p> <p>The test involved accredited cyber forensics experts attacking the Platform throughout a week-long period in to test its security and resilience, and to identify potential areas of exploitation. The test reported no 'Critical', 'High', or 'Medium' vulnerabilities, and found the application to be secure. The experts emphasized the 'maturity of the application's security' in the final report.</p> <p>Four items were identified as low-priority potential vulnerability, and two informational recommendations were reported. Our team resolved these issues within a week of receipt of findings.</p>
Red Flag reporting	<p>Following the delivery of this feature, and based on user feedback, we rolled out a redesign of the Red Flag email digest format. The weekly digest now breaks down the Red Flags by project, displayed in separate tables for ease of follow up.</p>
Training sessions	<p>We completed Digital Platform training sessions for new users from UNOPS and UNICEF.</p>





# Looking ahead

In Q2 2024, we plan to continue financial monitoring reviews for both legacy and current projects, while conducting both in-person and remote physical monitoring activities. Our workplan includes continued support for Digital Platform users while continuing to expand its functionality.




## Financial monitoring

 <b>Liabilities review</b> We will continue invoice validation with contractors for CASA 1000. Additionally, we will coordinate with the World Bank and MoF for certification of payments against salaries, non-consulting services, and operating expenses for other project liabilities.	 <b>SCRP reviews</b> We will continue with SCRPs reviews and plan to issue remaining Cover Letters in Q2.	 <b>CRLP</b> We will submit a financial monitoring report of project expenditure for Q2 2023 and commence review for Q3 2023 expenditure.
 <b>EERA</b> We plan to complete HACT audits of expenditure, covering 1 January to 30 June 2023.	 <b>EFSP</b> We plan to submit a financial report of expenditure for the period ended 31 March 2023. We will commence and complete review of project expenditure for Q2 and Q3 2023.	 <b>HER</b> We plan to complete the ongoing HACT audits and commence audits in respect of expenditure incurred in the period 1 July to 31 December 2023. Under MCBP (HER 2), we will additionally commence monitoring transactions reported by CPs under sub-component 3.2 (Social and Behavioral Change Communication)
 <b>WERP</b> We plan to complete our review of SoE for the component managed by AKF for the period up to December 2023.	 <b>Review of pre-August 2021 Questionable Expenditure</b> We plan to revisit the QE pre-August 2021 and recommend for documentation any resolved expenditure.	

## Physical monitoring

	<p><b>CRLP</b></p> <p>We will continue to conduct final rounds of ECA, Construction, LIW, CFW, and SG monitoring and laborer verification, in both urban and rural locations.</p>		<p><b>EFSP</b></p> <p>As data collected by the FAO TPMA is provided, we plan to collect data in-person for validation of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) the PDM survey for the 2023 wheat production package distribution;</li> <li>ii) the PDM survey for Home Gardening;</li> <li>iii) the PDM survey for Cash For Work; and</li> <li>iv) the final round of construction/ESS monitoring for Cash For Work.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>HER</b></p> <p>We will continue ESS monitoring in health facilities and surrounding communities across all 34 provinces. We will also continue to conduct data collection to verify UNICEF TPMA findings.</p> <p>We plan to finalise the design of monitoring tools for the WFP-implemented MCBP component of HER2 and roll out monitoring alongside the implementation of project activities.</p>		<p><b>WERP</b></p> <p>We will finalize the Monitoring Framework and data collection tools in collaboration with UNOPS, AKF and the World Bank to ensure timely roll-out of monitoring activities alongside project implementation.</p> <p>As project activities commence, we expect to collect data on ECA compliance and training provided.</p>

## Digital Platform

	<p><b>Hosting and accreditation</b></p> <p>We will continue to respond to the World Bank's inquiries related to the Digital Platform's accreditation, including responding to the Bank's OIS team's re-testing results.</p>
	<p><b>Partner space</b></p> <p>We will update the financial and physical monitoring dashboards and publish updates to the ARTF partner space.</p>
	<p><b>User experience enhancements and user engagement</b></p> <p>We will continue to design and develop user experience enhancements, such as improving the engagement with visual dashboards and further customizations of the email notifications. We will also continue to support Platform users across the World Bank, UN agencies, and facilitating partners/service providers, managing user access, and providing walk-throughs and training sessions, alongside technical support. This includes introducing 15 service providers under HER to their dedicated dashboards.</p>

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