

# IOM COMPREHENSIVE ACTION PLAN FOR AFGHANISTAN AND NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES

*August 2021 - December 2024  
2023 Revision*





INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION

17 Route des Morillons P.O. Box 17  
1211 Geneva 19  
Switzerland  
T. +41 22 717 91111  
[hq@iom.int](mailto:hq@iom.int)  
[www.iom.int](http://www.iom.int)

PUBLICATION DATE: MAY 2023.

The designations employed and the presentation of material throughout the report do not imply expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of IOM concerning legal status of any country, territory, city or area, or of its authorities, or concerning its frontiers or boundaries.

IOM is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. As an intergovernmental organization, IOM acts with its partners in the international community to: assist in the meeting of operational challenges of migration; advance understanding of migration issues; encourage social and economic development through migration; and uphold the human dignity and well-being of migrants.

All maps included in this document are for illustration purposes only. Names and boundaries on the maps do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM. All information is the best available at the time when the map was produced.

This publication has been issued without formal editing by Publications Unit.

COVER:

Krushnal, an earthquake survivor from Barmal, Afghanistan, surveys the ruins of his former home alongside one of his four young children. Photo: IOM 2022/Léo Torréton

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise without the prior written permission of the publisher.

# INTRODUCTION

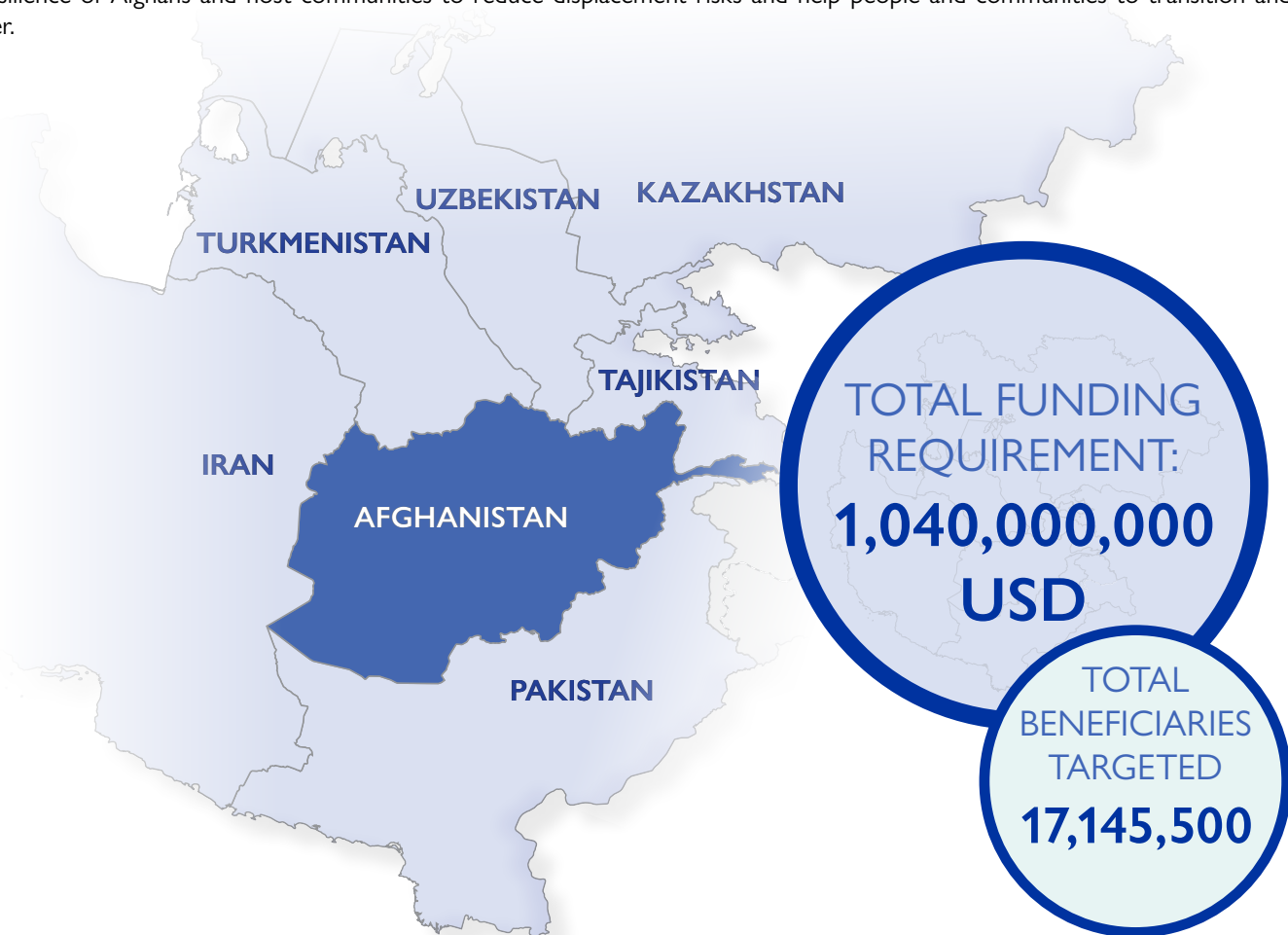
© IOM 2022/Léo Torrétón

Following decades of conflict, the COVID-19 pandemic, recurrent disasters linked to climate change (including floods, and drought-like conditions), and earthquakes, Afghanistan is facing chronic poverty and economic instability and dangerously approaching systemic collapse.

With over 2.6 million Afghans driven into displacement since mid-August 2021, Afghans, and in particular women and girls, face increasing needs, risks and vulnerabilities in Afghanistan as well as in neighbouring countries.

Without a comprehensive response that combines rapid humanitarian action with mid- to long-term development planning, economic and social conditions are expected to continue to spiral downwards and risk further wiping out development gains made over the past 20 years.

IOM's Comprehensive Action Plan (CAP) for Afghanistan and Neighbouring Countries seeks to mobilize USD 1.040 billion to further expand its operations addressing the humanitarian and protection needs of affected populations in the region, whilst strengthening the resilience of Afghans and host communities to reduce displacement risks and help people and communities to transition and recover.



Afghanistan	Neighbouring Countries	Iran	Kazakhstan	Pakistan
Funding requirement <b>\$900,000,000</b>	Funding requirement <b>\$140,000,000</b>	\$41,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$65,500,000
		200,000	20,000	2,180,000
Beneficiaries targeted <b>14,608,000</b>	Beneficiaries targeted <b>2,537,500</b>	Turkmenistan \$1,000,000	Uzbekistan \$5,000,000	Tajikistan \$16,500,000
		10,500	27,000	100,000

### Target population

Through this revised plan, IOM aims to reach over 17M persons affected by the crisis (internally displaced persons, migrants, returnees, host communities, and other persons in vulnerable situations) and government counterparts. Additional support will be given to affected communities and host governments in the targeted neighbouring countries. When targeting these groups, IOM places a specific focus on vulnerable groups, including single parents, persons with disabilities, children, including unaccompanied and separated children (UASC), older persons, survivors of GBV and human trafficking, and other human rights violations, and those that have been disproportionately affected by lack of services and loss of livelihoods among others.

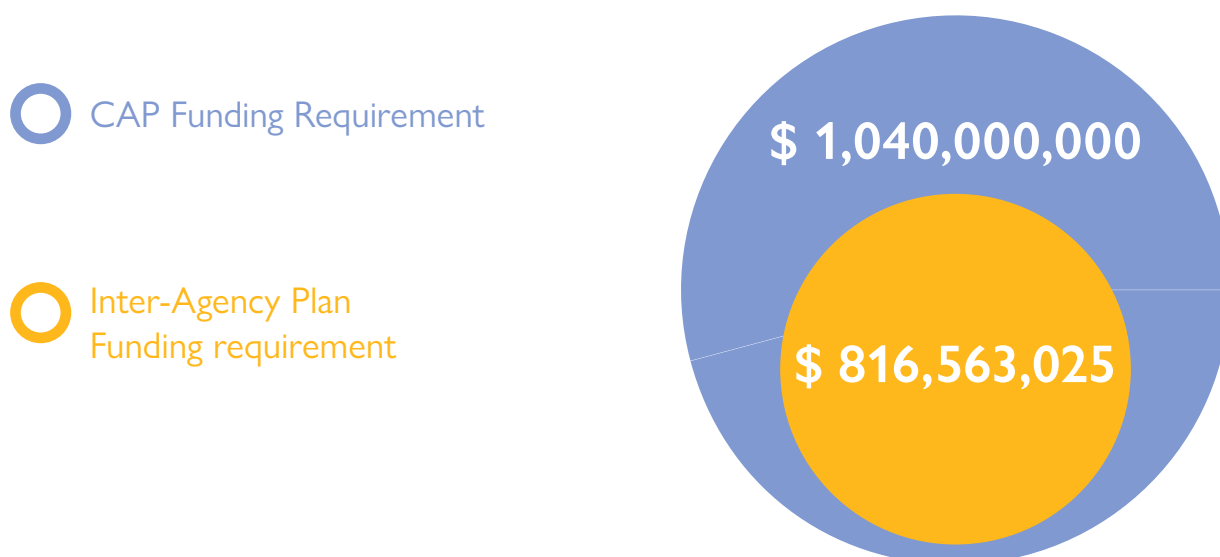
The planning targets are based on available data on displacement and migration, and projections are being made through scenario and response planning exercises conducted by the humanitarian community in Afghanistan and the region in coordination with the Refugee Coordination Model and the UN Country Teams in targeted countries. Due to the complexity of the crisis at different levels and across a variety of countries, IOM's approach will continue to be guided by regular updates on mobility dynamics and will be adjusted according to identified needs. As such, figures on targeted populations may change as the situation evolves and additional information on people's movements is available.

The Appeal outlines IOM's funding requirements for Afghanistan, as well as its neighbouring countries, including the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan. Funding will also support regional and global activities, in particular the coordination of activities regarding data collection, analysis and response to cross-border mobility flows.

The Appeal is aligned with existing inter-agency funding appeals, such as the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) for Afghanistan, and the Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRRP) for neighbouring countries.

*The unpredictable nature of the current humanitarian and political situation in Afghanistan is limiting the analysis of foreseeable funding needs for the Afghanistan response beyond 2023. The CAP will be revised at the beginning of 2024 to reflect the evolving humanitarian needs on the ground.*

### CAP FUNDING REQUIREMENTS VS INTER-AGENCY PLANS



**FUNDING RECEIVED SO FAR VS FUNDING REQUESTED:**

<b>Afghanistan</b>	<b>Neighbouring Countries</b>	<b>Iran</b>	<b>Kazakhstan</b>	<b>Pakistan</b>
CAP Funding received*	CAP Funding received*	\$7,982,521	\$455,374	\$22,638,152
<b>\$222,708,437</b>	<b>\$ 38,923,383</b>	\$41,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$65,500,000
CAP Funding requested	CAP Funding requested	Turkmenistan	Uzbekistan	Tajikistan
<b>\$900,000,000</b>	<b>\$ 140,000,000</b>	\$137,536	\$1,058,959	\$2,849,761
		\$1,000,000	\$5,000,000	\$16,500,000

\* As of March 2023.



© IOM 2022/Léo Torréton

# SITUATION OVERVIEW

© IOM 2022/Léo Torrétou



## Afghanistan

In 2023, over 28.3 million people (two third of the country's population) are in urgent need of humanitarian assistance, making Afghanistan the world's largest and most severe humanitarian crisis.<sup>1</sup>

While the overall security environment has improved with the end of major hostilities and the consolidation of control by Afghanistan's de facto authorities (DfA), the Afghan population continues experiencing worrying levels of harm as the country has one of the highest levels of explosive hazard contamination in the world, including Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and Explosive Remnants of War (ERW).<sup>2</sup> Active armed conflict between DFA and non-state armed groups continues to pose a threat to civilians, triggering displacements and retaliatory behavior.

As the deteriorating economy has caused sharp declines in income, rising debt and high unemployment, in 2022 around 80 per cent of households across Afghanistan have experienced income reduction.<sup>3</sup> The functioning of essential public services, such as health infrastructure, has become widely dependent on

the support of humanitarian agencies operating in country, and access to it continues decreasing.

Combined with the economic decline, widespread severe water scarcity due to the persistent drought has left 17 million people facing acute hunger in the beginning of 2023, including 6 million people on the brink of famine-like conditions - one of the highest figures worldwide.<sup>4</sup> The country is also prone to earthquakes, many of which happen in the mountainous Hindu Kush region that borders Pakistan; the resulting devastation exacerbates already dire humanitarian needs.

High levels of disability exist among the population and exposure to violence, hardship and displacement have also resulted in half of the Afghan population suffering from psychological distress, and one in five people being functionally impaired due to mental illness.<sup>5</sup> Although efforts towards building individual and community resilience and moving towards recovery and solutions appear extremely challenging, they must remain paramount to maintain the psychosocial wellbeing and mental health of the population and shape a comprehensive transition to a brighter future for Afghanistan.

### Women and girls

Since August 2021 there has been a steady increase of restrictions imposed upon women and girls and a systematic removal of women from active participation in society, limiting their freedom of movement, access to protection services, employment, and basic rights such as education and participation in public spaces. On 24 December 2022, the DfA issued a degree banning Afghan women from working with I(NGO)s, and nearly four months later this same ban was enforced upon the UN. This is a blatant act against women's rights and human rights but also a violation of International Human Rights Law, and in direct contradiction to the UN Charter. The UN agencies stated that this is a watershed moment for the United Nations in Afghanistan and the UN has been put into an impossible position. IOM is committed to principled programming and remains focused on staff safety and security. IOM's stance (in line with the IASC Guidance) is that we do not replace female staff with male staff, and do not implement discriminatory programming.

Female undocumented returnees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) are especially experiencing the impacts of these restrictive measures, as they are exposed to increased protection risks and are more likely to be denied access to life-saving services (including shelter, health, education and livelihoods support), and face severe restrictions on their freedom of movement and access to justice.

As these restrictions fail to uphold the fundamental human rights of half of the country's population, causing direct social, physical and psychological consequences, they also negatively impact the country's political, social and economic infrastructure.

<sup>1</sup>Afghanistan Humanitarian Response Plan 2023 (March 2023), OCHA.

<sup>2</sup>Afghanistan Humanitarian Needs Overview 2023 (January 2023) - Afghanistan | ReliefWeb

<sup>3</sup>Afghanistan: Humanitarian Update, February 2023 - Afghanistan | ReliefWeb

<sup>4</sup>Afghanistan Humanitarian Needs Overview 2023 (January 2023) - Afghanistan | ReliefWeb

<sup>5</sup>Afghanistan Humanitarian Needs Overview 2023 (January 2023) - Afghanistan | ReliefWeb

Women play a critical role in the delivery of humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan. They must have access and support to continue their extraordinary work throughout the country.  
Photo: © IOM 2023/Léo Torrétou



## Mobility dynamics within Afghanistan and in the region

As widespread conflict in Afghanistan ended following the events of 15 August 2021, the country's economic decline, combined with the catastrophic effects of recurrent disasters on Afghans' livelihoods, constitute the primary driver of displacement in and out of the country.

Since 2021, internal displacements in Afghanistan have drastically increased, mostly due to socio-economic factors, with 2.6 million individuals displaced between 2021 and 2022 only (bringing the total number of displaced individuals in the country since 2012 to 6.6 million), and expected to further increase in 2023,

according to IOM DTM. Meanwhile between 2021 to 2022, 5.7 million individuals returned to Afghanistan from displacement in neighbouring countries, following the overall improvements of the security situation in places of origin (bringing the total number of returnees since 2012 to 11.1 million). Due to the dire political and economic situation in the country, both population groups have been in serious need of humanitarian assistance. Since the start of 2021, according to government estimates, at least 1.6 million Afghans have arrived in neighbouring host countries, despite border restrictions and limited access.<sup>6</sup>

## ESTIMATED PRESENCE OF AFGHAN POPULATION IN NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES



<sup>6</sup>Afghanistan Situation: Regional refugee response plan summary | Global Focus (unhcr.org)

<sup>7</sup>UNHCR data from Afghanistan Situation: Regional refugee response plan summary | Global Focus (unhcr.org) (2023)

<sup>8</sup>Without official data, this is an estimate based on IOM's programming in Kazakhstan.

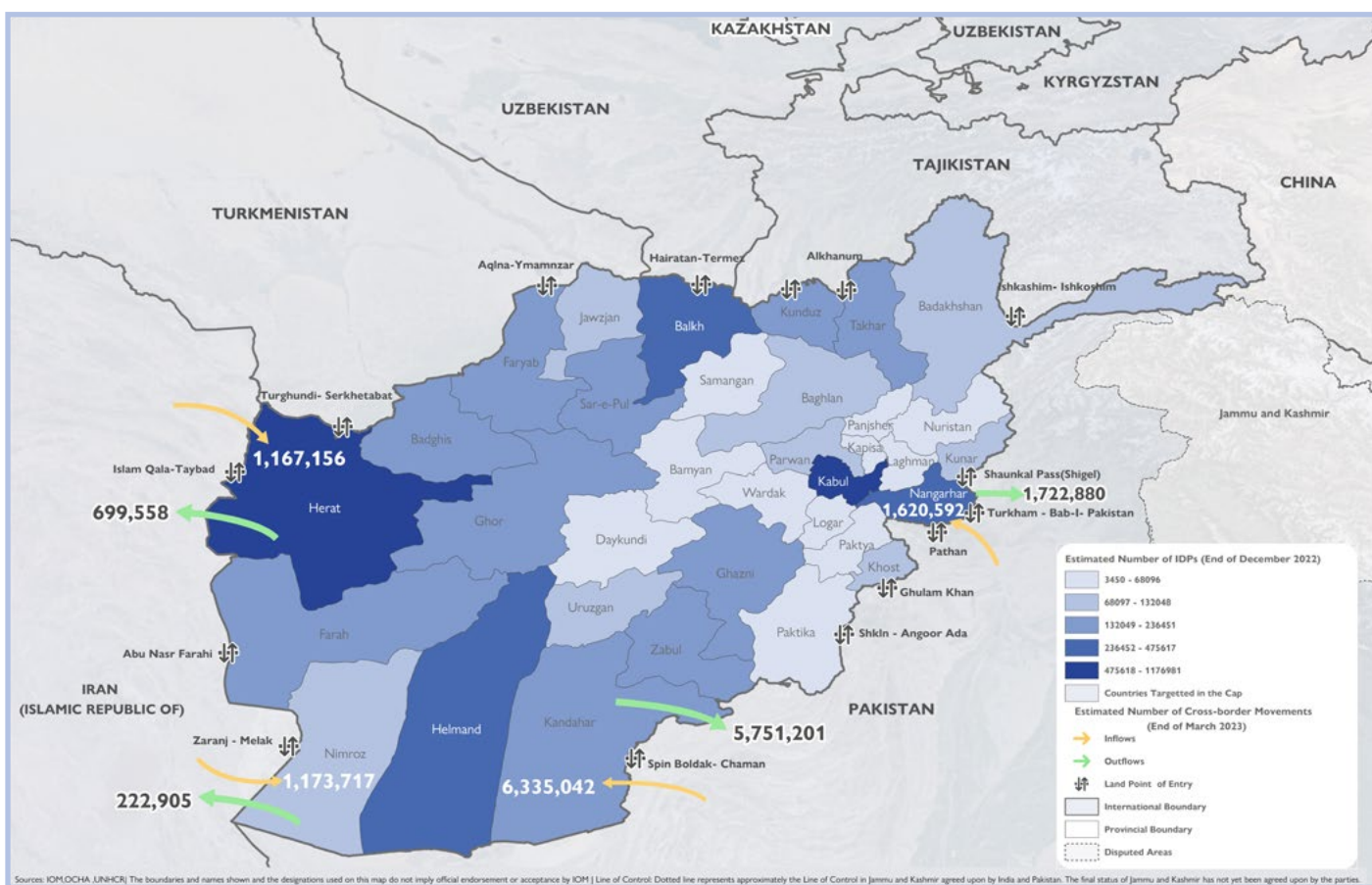


Whilst precise arrival numbers and potential circularity of the cross-border flows are unknown, Afghan nationals continue to arrive in neighbouring countries such as Iran and Pakistan on a daily basis through predominantly irregular channels. Pakistan remains the first country of destination for Afghans, with a positive trend of outflows towards the country compared to inflows back to Afghanistan. From April 2022 to the end of March 2023, 3.5 million Afghans have been monitored crossing the border to Pakistan against 3.2 million crossing back. In Iran, the number of people returning to Afghanistan has been much higher, with around 898,000 Afghans crossing back compared to 765,000 going to Iran. This is mainly due to the systematic

pushbacks from the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran<sup>9</sup>.

In and outflows between Afghanistan and Central Asia neighbouring countries are more limited in size. Most of the Afghan population currently living in Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan) relocated either in the summer of 2021, or in the 1990s and early 2000s. In addition to hosting Afghans displaced by conflict and regime change, Central Asian countries also host Afghan students and migrant workers who have also been affected by the 2021 fall of the Afghan Government. Currently the Tajik, Uzbek, and Turkmen borders with Afghanistan are closed and very strictly controlled.

## MOBILITY DYNAMICS WITHIN AFGHANISTAN AND ACROSS THE REGION IN 2023



### Regional impacts and protracted needs

As many Afghans move in and out of the country through irregular channels, they become increasingly exposed to protection risks, including exploitation and abuse. Their irregular status and lack of documentation, linked to the risk – higher for those undocumented – of being arrested or deported at any point, as well as the often-unpredictable asylum procedures and migration governance frameworks are significant factors impacting their level of vulnerability. In addition, existing socioeconomic difficulties in neighbouring countries – including high inflation and decreased real value of remittances, political instability,

cross-border clashes, as well as the catastrophic effects of disasters (such as the floods in Pakistan that affected over 33 million people, the earthquake that hit the north-western region of Iran on 28 January 2023, affecting over 261,387 individuals) – further exacerbates structural barriers to access stable employment opportunities and essential services. This has consequences on Afghans’ livelihoods, vulnerability to diseases, and mental health, and can lead to development of coping mechanisms resulting in additional protection risks.

<sup>9</sup>IOM DTM - Movements in and out of Afghanistan Snapshot (1-31 March 2023)

In **Iran**, Afghans holders of the Amayesh registration card (estimated 750,000 individuals) can enjoy temporary residency and certain level of access to services (health insurance and temporary work permit). Primary healthcare and education up to secondary school is accessible to all, independently from documentation status. Most Afghans in Iran, though, are undocumented. Of those, the ones who took part in a government-led headcount exercise in June 2022 have been provided with temporary legal status (through the provision of a headcount slip) and some access to essential services.

In **Pakistan** over 840,000 Afghan Citizenship Card (ACC) holders and some 775,000 undocumented Afghan migrants have limited or no access to services and fall outside the scope of most existing assistance schemes, remaining in a legal limbo and increasingly exposed to protection risks. ACC holders are currently not entitled to access public services such as health and education, and they may not access formal employment, open a bank account, rent property, or register a SIM card, among other privileges.

Without clear pathways to durable solutions in the **Central Asian** context, prolonged displacement has exacerbated vulnerabilities and needs. **Uzbekistan** has not ratified the 1951 Refugee Convention and has no domestic law or policy on asylum. In this context, Afghans must renew visitor visas every month (incurring fees of 100 to 1,000 USD each time). Complications linked to legal status make it impossible for many Afghans to work, build skills or access basic services. The same challenges prevent many Afghan children from accessing education. About ten per cent of Afghan households in Uzbekistan have applied for resettlement to a third country. Stress, anxiety, and feelings of hopelessness have increased in the Afghan population in Uzbekistan. While legal regimes in **Turkmenistan** and **Kazakhstan** provide greater stability and protection to Afghans, the most vulnerable households still face barriers to basic services and livelihoods linked to their visa status. In **Tajikistan**, most of the Afghan community holds refugee status. The remainder of the community is either long present in the country or in the process of seeking asylum. They have access to basic services such as education and health, but livelihood opportunities are limited, and have to negotiate many hurdles when it comes to accessing the job market or opening a business.



IOM health staff meet with women and children in Afghanistan.  
Photo: © IOM/Muse Mohammed

# IOM'S COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO THE CRISIS

© IOM 2023/Léo Torrétou

IOM recognizes the urgency of addressing humanitarian needs and reducing protection risks for people on the move in parallel to anticipatory action to mitigate the crisis impact, save lives and livelihoods, and enable societies to transition and recover towards sustainable development in line with IOM's commitment to the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus (HDPN). IOM's Comprehensive Action Plan for Afghanistan and Neighbouring Countries supports the most vulnerable populations affected by the crisis, providing life-saving humanitarian assistance

and protection services both in Afghanistan and the region, by ensuring the neighbouring countries are capacitated and equipped to respond to large population flows from Afghanistan. Simultaneously, IOM will continue to work with government institutions in the region and communities to address drivers of migration and displacement, mitigate the mid-term impact of the crisis on societies in the region, and support recovery and resilience for longer-term sustainable development.

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1

Strengthen preparedness capacity and respond to humanitarian and protection needs to save lives

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2

Address migration and displacement drivers and mitigate mid-term impacts of the crisis in Afghanistan across the region

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3

Strengthen institutional and community capacities for socio-economic recovery and inclusive sustainable development

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4

Inform preparedness, response, recovery and development efforts through evidence-based data collection and analysis

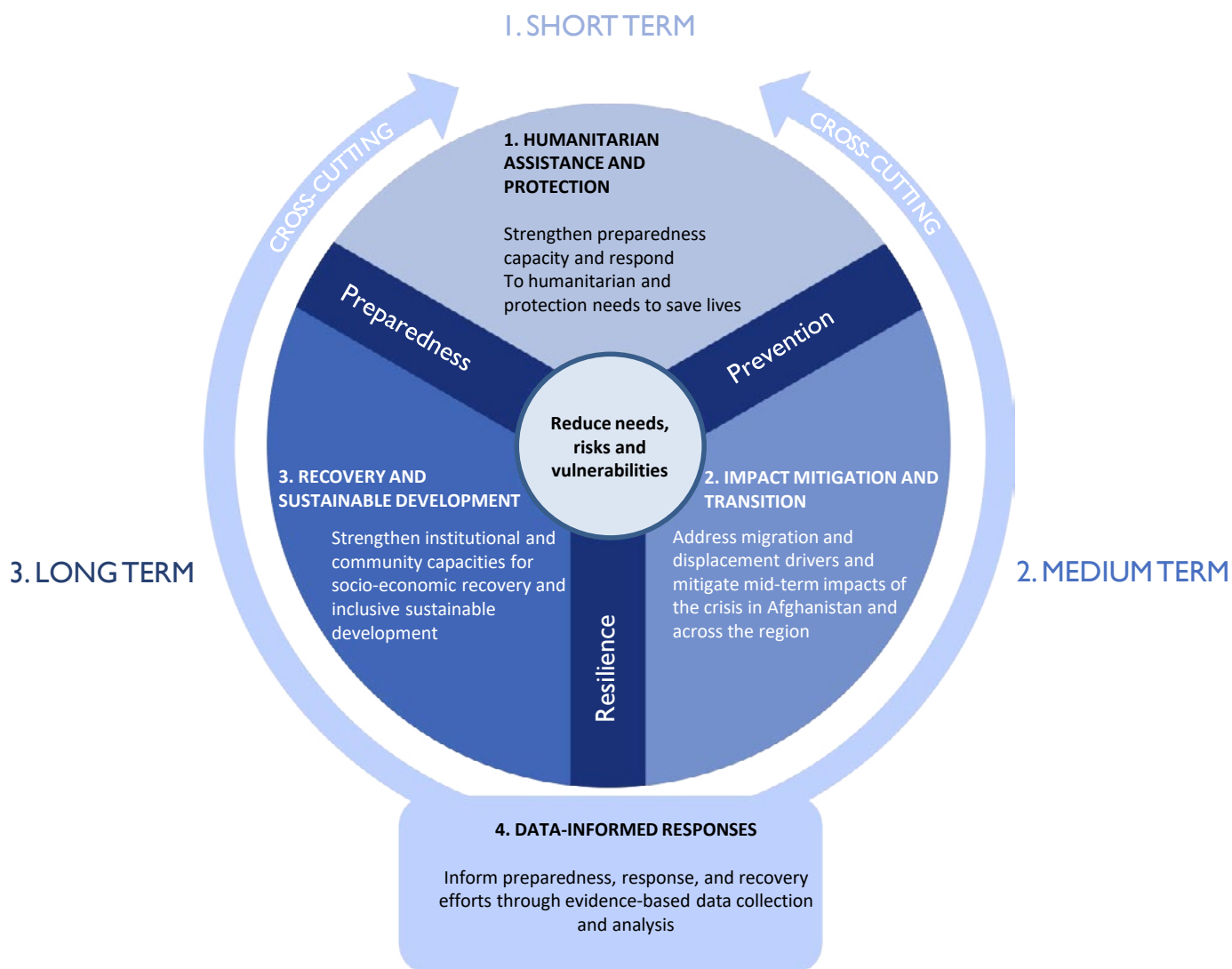
The four Strategic Objectives of the Plan are complementary building blocks which are interlinked and run simultaneously to contribute to reducing people's needs, risks and vulnerabilities. They allow for a comprehensive response to the crisis through a migration lens, taking into account regional mobility dynamics as well as risk-informed and gender-sensitive analysis of national and local contexts. In combining humanitarian, development and peace interventions, IOM aims to prevent new humanitarian

needs and displacement, support greater regional preparedness, and increase the resilience of communities both in Afghanistan and across the region. IOM will continue working closely with all key stakeholders in the region to enhance the sustainable development goals. The Plan's Strategic Objectives thereby serve as entry points and support joint analysis and collective outcomes across the HDPN.

Zarlakht, who survived Afghanistan's most deadly earthquake in over two decades, sits in the street next to her destroyed house in Giyan. Photo: © IOM 2022/Léo Torrèton



## IOM'S COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO THE AFGHANISTAN CRISIS:



IOM's interventions build on the Organization's expertise in responding to migration and displacement crises and strengthening integrated approaches to migration management, governance and sustainable development as well as its operational presence in Afghanistan and in all neighbouring countries. IOM's Migration Crisis Operational Framework (MCOF) guide the programmatic action with an analytical approach, recognising cross-border and mobility dynamics to draw attention to aspects of a crisis that have sometimes remained invisible. IOM's approach to health is integrated into this plan and similarly follows the triple nexus – aiming to address the acute health needs of displaced populations and migrants in humanitarian contexts, while maintaining a long-term view that considers the importance of supporting global health security and health system recovery.

The complexity of this multidimensional crisis requires to build on both humanitarian and development funding and coordination mechanisms and provide flexible multi-year funding to respond to urgent humanitarian needs, invest in preparedness and prevention, whilst working on medium to longer term interventions. In light of the deterioration of the humanitarian and protection situation in Afghanistan and across the region, IOM has updated humanitarian funding needs under Strategic Objective 1 for the year 2023, whilst extended the remaining objectives to ensure funding for transition and recovery longer-term programming until the end of 2024.

# COORDINATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

© IOM 2022/Léo Torrétton

All interventions carried out through this plan are in line and complementary to current inter-agency humanitarian and development efforts to respond to this crisis. As a member of the Inter-Agency Steering Committee (IASC) and the UN Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG), IOM will continue to work closely with partner agencies to ensure coordination during the implementation of the proposed activities, including with UN agencies, government counterparts in neighbouring countries, international and local organizations, civil-society and other relevant stakeholders with the goal of creating greater self-reliance at the country and regional levels. In Afghanistan, the Organization is working closely with other crisis response stakeholders in line with the Joint Operating Principles and access engagement strategy to which IOM is a party through the Humanitarian Access Group. As a member of the UN Country Team (UNCT), IOM coordinates cross-border return assistance activities with relevant UN and NGO partners and is the lead agency providing assistance to undocumented returnees. While the precise nature of the relationship with Afghanistan's de facto

authorities remains to be defined, IOM will continue to work with relevant counterparts at the technical level to ensure access and provision of humanitarian, protection and early recovery and reintegration assistance. Further, IOM's assessments inform the work of the UN to sustain essential services and preserve community systems. As co-lead of the M&E working group of the UNDP-led Special Trust Fund for Afghanistan, IOM is providing data and spatial assessments for the identification of community-based interventions. For this, its DTM assessments are combined with district-level profiling, in order to identify structural drivers of migration and opportunities to facilitate local integration and sustainable development. In addition, all activities proposed in Afghanistan under this plan will be closely coordinated at the inter-agency level and are in line with the Humanitarian Response Plan (2022) in the country as well as the Regional Refugee Response Plan (2022) and the UN's Transitional Engagement Framework (TEF). At the regional level, IOM will ensure close coordination with UNHCR, with UNCTs, relevant governments as well as other humanitarian and development key stakeholders.



© IOM 2022/Léo Torrétton

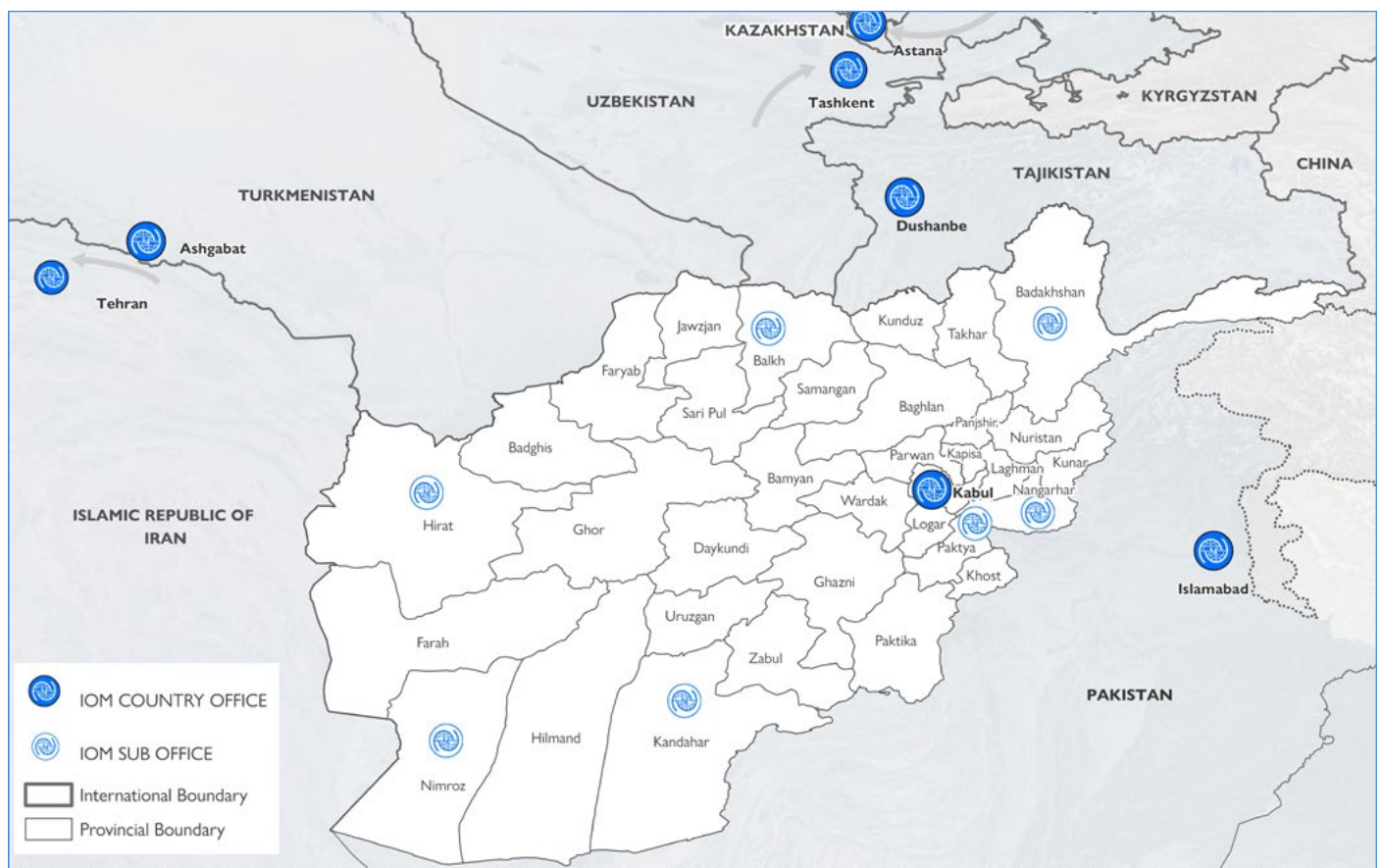
# IOM MANDATE, CAPACITY AND COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE

© IOM 2022/Léo Torrétou

As the UN Migration Agency, IOM is committed to the core values and principles that are at the heart of its work, including the principles enshrined in the UN Charter, and upholding human rights for all. Respect for the rights, dignity and well-being of migrants remains paramount, with principled humanitarian action as an organization-wide commitment. As an organization adhering to the OECD DAC recommendations on the HDPN, IOM promotes joint analysis and programming across the nexus in order to reduce needs, risks and vulnerabilities with a long-term perspective. In recognition of the fact that well-managed migration can be both a development strategy and a development outcome, IOM is also seeking to foster sustainable development for migrants and their communities. IOM has an operational presence in all target countries, supported by multi-thematic expertise including at regional and headquarters level, as well as pre-identified experts through rosters across the HDPN, with a capacity to quickly respond and scale-up operations. In

Afghanistan, IOM is the leading agency providing humanitarian assistance to undocumented Afghan returnees and to internally displaced populations affected by disasters. In response to the current situation, IOM is also a major responder to people displaced internally by conflict. IOM Afghanistan's programming portfolio over the past years has included a diverse range of interventions, including displacement tracking in more than 12,000 communities, emergency response and humanitarian assistance including a robust Shelter and non-food item (NFI) response to disasters, as well as the provision of comprehensive protection services. Further, IOM is implementing life-saving migration health interventions (including mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services), a WASH programme including the provision of hygiene kits, large scale community stabilization, disaster risk reduction, and life-saving assistance to spontaneous returnees including support communities in places of high returns with basic human needs.

## OVERVIEW OF IOM PRESENCE IN THE REGION



Along with IOM Headquarters, the two Regional Offices in Bangkok and Vienna will continue to provide technical support for implementation, and liaison with host governments and regional partners to ensure coordinated implementation of the plan at all levels. Building on its global capacity in migration and displacement data collection and analysis, IOM will also continue to provide regular updates on regional mobility dynamics to governments and partners, in order to inform planning and implementation processes.

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES OVERVIEW AND SECTORS OF RESPONSE

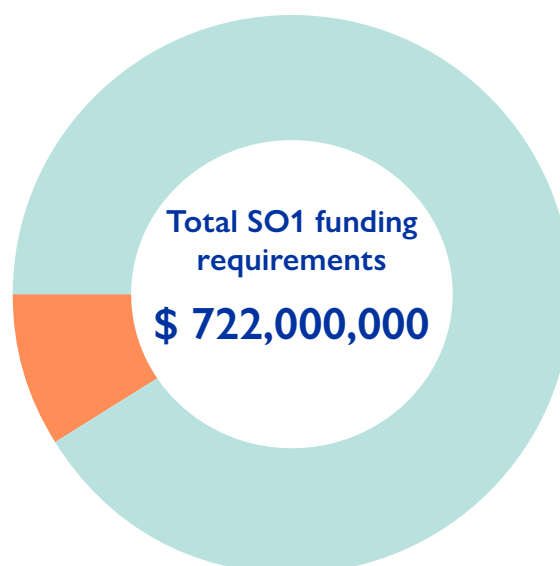
SO 1	Strengthen preparedness capacity and respond to humanitarian and protection needs to save lives	\$ 722,000,000
SO 2	Address migration and displacement drivers and mitigate mid-term impacts of the crisis in Afghanistan across the region	\$ 178,000,000
SO 3	Strengthen institutional and community capacities for socio-economic recovery and inclusive sustainable development	\$ 110,000,000
SO 4	Inform preparedness, response, recovery and development efforts through evidence-based data collection and analysis	\$ 30,000,000

### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1: STRENGTHEN PREPAREDNESS CAPACITY

#### AND RESPOND TO HUMANITARIAN AND PROTECTION NEEDS TO SAVE LIVES

In light of the increasing humanitarian needs, protection risks and vulnerabilities of affected populations in Afghanistan and the neighbouring countries across the region, IOM aims to sustain and reinforce its rapid life-saving interventions and specialized protection services, as well as ensure protection mainstreaming across all sectors of response. The response will focus on life-saving and basic needs support whilst also engaging pertinent stakeholders in ensuring access to protection services and strengthening referral mechanisms.

#### SO1 Funding requirements







Many Afghan families travel to Pakistan through the "Zero Point" of Spin Boldak.  
Photo: © IOM 2023/Léo Torrétón



© IOM 2022/Léo Torrèton



## Shelter and Non-Food Items (NFIs)

In light of the increasing humanitarian needs, protection risks and vulnerabilities of affected populations in Afghanistan and the neighbouring countries across the region, IOM aims to sustain and reinforce its rapid life-saving interventions and specialized protection services, as well as ensure protection mainstreaming across all sectors of response. The response will focus on life-saving and basic needs support whilst also engaging pertinent stakeholders in ensuring access to protection services and strengthening referral mechanisms.

Emergency shelter and NFI assistance, including for winterization, will be provided to people directly impacted by new shocks. This will include the procurement, pre-positioning and distribution of essential items for IDPs that have been affected by conflict and disasters, for cross-border returnees and refugees, for people facing multiple shocks, as well as for those who are extremely vulnerable.

Transitional shelter support (through shelter construction, repairs/upgrade, rental subsidies) will be provided in areas of protracted displacement, in areas of return and in newly accessible areas in order to enable safer and more dignified living standards and prevent recovering communities from slipping back into humanitarian need.

Active participation and engagement in country-level coordination mechanisms (including the co-leadership of the ES-NFI cluster in Afghanistan, that currently also covers the CCCM working group) will be reinforced in order to ensure a timely, effective, context-specific and needs-based sectoral response.



## Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

The lagging effects of recent years' droughts, conflict and the COVID-19 pandemic, combined with large-scale cross-border population movements and recurring natural disasters have diminished people's access to essential services, including WASH infrastructure and services. Emphasis will be put on ensuring that people in areas of high mobility, return, protracted displacement, in displacement sites and at key border crossing points have safe access to potable water in sufficient quantity as well as sanitation and hygiene sustainable infrastructure and services. Hygiene promotion and the distribution of hygiene kits will be integrated into the sectoral response whilst efforts will be made to ensure that gender and protection concerns are taken into consideration. Across all targeted locations, delivering a WASH minimum package of services will be the response priority and will include the following activities: construction and rehabilitation of WASH facilities, through the incorporation of gender mainstreaming considerations (i.e., set-up of gender-balanced community-led committees), culturally appropriate safe hygiene messaging, set-up of core pipeline for WASH supplies.



## Health and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergencies

Health has been identified as a key priority area by all humanitarian actors, including access to lifesaving primary and secondary health care services, and mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services. Weak health systems and disrupted access to health care have left millions of Afghans, both in Afghanistan and in neighbouring countries, with mounting health needs, compounded further by the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, due to past conflicts and the recent political turmoil and economic hardships, many Afghans experienced different forms of violence, displacement and other potentially traumatic events and have to cope with these experiences as well as the psychosocial impact on their lives.

Ensuring the availability and accessibility to the basic package of health services as well as emergency health care, including sexual and reproductive health services, remains essential for meeting the needs of IDPs, returnees, migrants, refugees and other mobile populations, including for women and girls, and host communities. To respond to these needs, IOM activities will include deployment of mobile medical teams and overall expansion of health activities, including in border areas; provision of MHPSS services for vulnerable migrants, including through mobile teams and community-based support; health and hygiene promotion as well as Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) activities.



## Protection of vulnerable populations

Four decades of conflict, recent measures curtailing population's freedom and human rights, increasing hunger, limited access to basic services, rising poverty and resulting population movements have severely impacted the humanitarian and protection situation across the region. The most vulnerable include, among others, those exposed to forced, multiple and often extended periods of displacement, undocumented Afghan returnees, children, the older people, households headed by women and people with disabilities. Raising protection concerns (including population safety and security, freedom of movement, denial of and inability to access services, lack of civil documentation, human rights violations and systematic discrimination against civilians, including against women and girls) have increased vulnerabilities and exposure to risks, including the risk of trafficking and gender-based violence (GBV), and pushed many to adopt harmful coping mechanisms. IOM's response will focus on strengthening

protection monitoring and analysis in areas of high mobility and cross-border locations; on identifying and providing targeted protection services and assistance for persons with specific needs, including through case management and individual protection assistance and/or referral to partners' services; strengthening referrals mechanisms and partners' protection knowledge and skills including on protection mainstreaming, psychological first aid, GBV, child protection, legal assistance and counselling on civil documentation, counter-trafficking principles and best practices; enhancing community-based protection mechanisms and increasing protection actors' capacities to provide timely and quality protection services, including access to information on services, asylum, and other relevant topics. Overall, IOM will also ensure protection mainstreaming across all sectors and activities is strengthened.



## Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM)

As protracted internal displacements and cross-border movements continue, significant numbers of informal settlements across Afghanistan are in constant expansion. As these informal settlements are often last-resort options for those who have lost property, lived through traumatic events and are suddenly stranded outside the safeguards of their own homes and communities, displaced populations living in these sites are usually in dire need of humanitarian assistance and face heightened protection risks.

It is estimated that there are currently more than 12,000 informal settlements hosting IDPs and returnees across the 34 provinces of Afghanistan with the latest data indicating no more than 60% having access to humanitarian assistance. The CCCM Working Group aims to reach 430,000 IDPs living in precarious condition in informal settlements scattered all over the country. Given the deterioration of the economic and humanitarian situation, there is an urgent need to continue working with these communities. As such, the CCCM working group has been established in Afghanistan to ensure that the provision of humanitarian assistance within these sites is coordinated, that sectoral gaps in terms of assistance and protection are identified and that information on the number and profile of displaced populations in the sites is updated and shared with the humanitarian community on a regular basis. As the global co-lead of the CCCM cluster, IOM aims to reinforce its support towards the coordination of the working group as well as its operational presence at site-level. IOM Afghanistan through its CCCM programming seeks to provide support to IDPs, returnees and underserved host communities to access multisectoral assistance through community resource centers (CrCs) and mobile outreach teams by setting up a system of interconnected CRCs and mobile outreach teams to ensure the provision of humanitarian aid and essential services, especially in the most underserved and hard-to-reach areas. IOM CCCM interventions will look at:

- Building community participation mechanisms (i.e., camp committees composed of displaced populations and host community representative, women's, elderly and youth groups, etc.), linking displaced populations to the relevant local governmental counterparts, and strengthening access to basic services through site development and mitigation activities.
- Conducting systematic information management, and advocacy to inform and mobilize local actors and humanitarian partners adequately.
- Focusing IOM site planning on rationalizing will primarily focus on rationalizing shelter alignments and spacing within the sites, improving drainage, lighting, creating WASH corridors, improving accessibility with a view of reducing exposure to public health and GBV risks as well as fire hazards as well as the construction or rehabilitation of essential infrastructure.
- Supporting the identification of durable solutions and facilitate, local integration, relocation/resettlement or return and reintegration as relevant.



## Cross-Border Return assistance in border areas

As in and out flows to/from Afghanistan are expected to continue, especially those from Iran and Pakistan, returnees will remain in dire need of humanitarian assistance. As a response, IOM Afghanistan manages eight reception and transit centres at four major land border crossing points in Nangahar, Kandahar, Herat, Nimroz provinces with Pakistan and Iran where direct life-saving assistance is provided for vulnerable undocumented returnees. Multi-sectorial assistance provided in these centres include meals, temporary overnight, essential items, multi-purpose cash grants, as well as a range of critical protection, health, disease surveillance at the border and humanitarian border managements interventions. The facilities also provide strategic response points for people in need in communities and settlements that form around border areas.



IOM teams are screening travelers on both sides of the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Photo: © IOM 2023/Léo Torrétton



## Disaster prevention

Aligning with the Sendai Framework, IOM Afghanistan will work towards preventing the worst impacts on vulnerable populations living in disaster-prone areas through: small-scale disaster risk management (DRM) infrastructures (such as gabion walls or irrigation systems); implementing Community-Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM) through the development of Community Disaster Management Action Plans, community hazard maps and early warning systems.

IOM Iran will specifically work with government officials and humanitarian partners on capacity building initiatives on risk reduction and disaster prevention, including training on CCCM, training on evacuation planning and management .

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2: ADDRESS MIGRATION AND DISPLACEMENT DRIVERS AND MITIGATE MID-TERM IMPACTS OF THE CRISIS IN AFGHANISTAN AND ACROSS THE REGION

IOM support governments across the region in full alignment with active sanctions regimes and communities to develop and strengthen community-based efforts aimed at fostering resilience, addressing evolving stabilization needs and supporting enhanced access to services and livelihoods. IOM's interventions will continue focusing on promoting social cohesion through the use of conflict-sensitive approaches and empowering communities to recover better. Further, IOM supports safe and regular mobility and counter migrant smuggling through cross-border coordination, humanitarian border management and providing access to information. Transition and recovery initiatives in Afghanistan will be implemented in line with the UN Transitional Engagement Framework (TEF) for Afghanistan through flexible and localized area-based approaches and in close partnership with UN agencies under the Strategic Trust Fund for Afghanistan.

### SO2 Funding requirements



### Early recovery and livelihoods

Displaced communities in Afghanistan, as well as Afghan nationals and their host communities in neighbouring countries, will be supported through a range of income generating interventions aiming at strengthening their capacity to respond to future shocks with adverse impacts and contribute towards sustainable recovery. The interventions will be designed and delivered through a participatory community development and action planning approach to increase civic engagement, strengthen local ownership and identify context-specific solutions for addressing the vulnerabilities of different social groups. Labor market and value chain assessments will be informing the areas of focus for interventions, which include rehabilitation of local infrastructure and services through Quick Impact Projects (QIPs); emergency livelihood assistance through cash-for-work on construction sites, asset replacement and emergency business grants; vocational training, on-the-job training opportunities and apprenticeships; support to new and existing small businesses through business support packages.



Photo: © IOM 2022/Léo Torrétou



## Social cohesion, community stabilization and peacebuilding

Community engagement is core to enabling affected people to be directly involved in their recovery process and support local decision making and advocacy. IOM will work with the local authorities, local host communities, displaced populations and local civil society organizations in areas of return and areas of protracted displacement to promote stability at the local level as a step out of crisis or fragility, thus paving the way for more sustainable development approaches. IOM's community stabilization approach combines addressing multi-sectoral early recovery needs with a specific focus on addressing the factors that destabilized communities, whilst restoring horizontal cohesion across communities as well as vertical social contracts with local leadership to build resilient communities, and support durable solutions for displaced populations. As part of this approach, communities will be provided with capacity building support on basic conflict interpersonal and community-based mediation skills, especially in areas where this type of intervention may be required to mitigate potential inter-community tensions triggered by the arrival of additional displaced populations (or Afghan nationals in neighbouring countries). Community-based planning for infrastructures rehabilitation projects will contribute to communities' recovery processes. Activities such as integrated MHPSS interventions (including social, ritual and recreational activities) and community volunteers training in psychological first aid (PFA), will promote relationship-building, trust and problem solving, and overall strengthen social cohesion and resilience.



## Bolster national health capacity and resilience

In Afghanistan and across the region IOM has observed a significant need to improve and strengthen the coordination and delivery of existing health services, including MHPSS, in vulnerable communities, particularly at border areas and areas of high mobility, to help address the complex health needs of returnees, alongside IDPs, and host communities. IOM will respond to these needs by supporting the financing, running and implementation of critical health facilities, to bridge gaps in public health infrastructures; advocating for the access of migrants and displaced communities to health and mental health services, as well as for their integration in national policies and strategies; enhancing disease surveillance and RCCE mechanisms; supporting capacity building efforts for medical personnel in targeted subject areas; procuring essential medicines, medical supplies and equipment.



## Access to safe and regular mobility

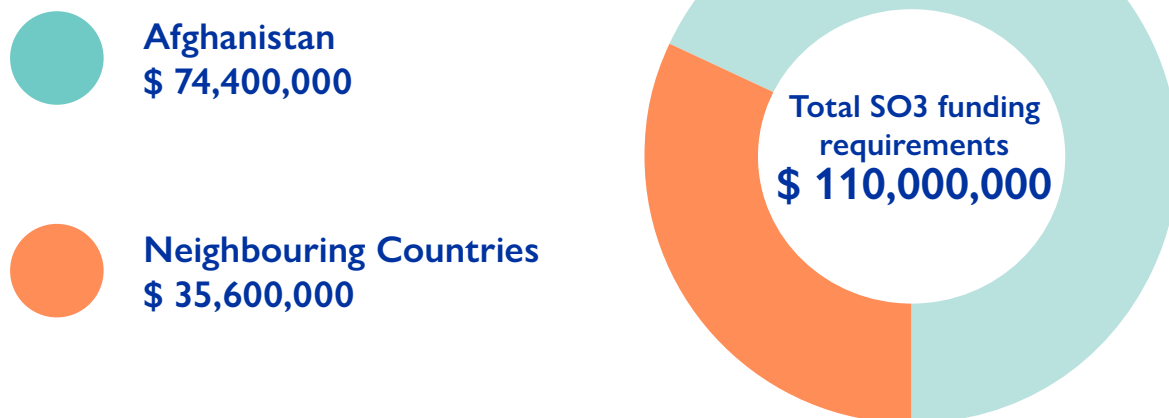
In addition to addressing the adverse drivers of migration and displacement in Afghanistan, IOM recognizes the need to establish adequate response mechanisms and strengthen integrated border management systems to protect Afghans crossing borders and ensure they can move through safe and regular pathways. National border management agencies including immigration, police, customs and armed forces will need to be equipped with operational mechanisms that are designed to respond to changing movement patterns. This support will include capacity building on coordinated and human rights-based border management approaches, including health and protection considerations for safe and inclusive cross-border mobility; donation of equipment and rehabilitation of infrastructures at key border posts.

Simultaneously, IOM will increase its capacity to assist migrants with a variety of vulnerabilities and protection needs when they are moving in large numbers across these regional borders.

### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3: STRENGTHEN INSTITUTIONAL AND COMMUNITY CAPACITIES FOR SOCIO-ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND INCLUSIVE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

IOM will use an adaptive process, responsive to people on the move, that is relevant in both displacement affected communities in Afghanistan (through a durable solutions approach) and hosting communities in neighbouring countries, to support host governments and societies for inclusive integration and sustainable localized development planning across the region. Supporting skills-based labor mobility schemes and cooperation at national and decentralized levels as well as strengthening inclusive health systems will also contribute to more inclusive sustainable development.

## SO3 Funding requirements



## Durable solutions, including safe return and sustainable reintegration

In line with the IASC Framework on Durable Solutions for IDPs and returning Afghan refugees and IOM's Progressive Resolution of Displacement Situations (PRDS Strategy), IOM will work in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, including diaspora communities around the world, as well as the displaced population, to establish conditions and to provide the means that would allow IDPs to return voluntarily, in safety and dignity, to their homes, to integrate in the local community or to resettle voluntarily in another part of the country. At the same time, IOM will be looking at strengthening social, economic and psychosocial resilience of displacement affected communities, by revitalizing local economic conditions and social service infrastructure.

## Inclusive national and local integration and development strategies

Recognizing the challenges of host countries to receive Afghan populations, in addition to addressing existing development priorities, IOM will support national and local governments in neighbouring countries to advance inclusive and integrated policy approaches that address the needs of Afghans and host communities. IOM will strengthen institutional and community capacities for socioeconomic recovery and inclusive sustainable development, seeking to advance durable solutions for displaced populations in line with governments' development priorities. Further, IOM will support dialogues with governments to advance regional approaches to the mobility crisis, providing capacity building support on the development and operationalization of humanitarian border management procedures, including counter-trafficking strategies, as well as equipment and infrastructural support for key border crossing points.

## Access to decent work and skills development

To further mitigate the socio-economic impact of the Afghan crisis in the country and across the region, IOM will provide policy support and capacity development to national/ local governments as well as host communities to ensure migrants are part of recovery planning and implementation, including policy solutions for upskilling and reskilling of migrants and promotion of multistakeholder engagement on inclusive recovery policies. IOM's interventions will respond to both protracted and emerging needs in communities hosting high volumes of Afghan migrants, including new arrivals, by seeking to enhance and foster sustainable economic opportunities for all through entrepreneurship and employment programmes, as well as small business grants. Working with national and local government institutions responsible for employment, training, and labor market development, IOM will facilitate the recognition of skills and access to the labor market and promote decent work for Afghans and host communities as part of national and local employment strategies. Lastly, IOM will work on diaspora engagement and mobilization for recovery, in cooperation with governments and other partners.

## Strengthen health systems capacity to promote access and inclusion

IOM will contribute to mitigating the impact of the crisis by strengthening national health systems and advocating for the development and implementation of migrant-sensitive national health policies and strategies, including through enhancing the integration of health and border management systems to prevent, detect and respond to COVID-19 and other public health threats at points of entry and other areas of high mobility. This includes supporting equitable access to vaccines, the improvement and rehabilitation of key health facility infrastructure, increase of health system capacity through capacity building and development of policy and pilot schemes that ensure an inclusive health system recovery, diaspora engagement to strengthen human resources for health, including via health worker training/retraining, virtual consultations and transfer of knowledge.





Basmina, a 45-year-old Afghan mother of four, sits in the IOM Transit Center reflecting on her return to Afghanistan from Pakistan.  
Photo: © IOM/Léo Torrétton

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4: INFORM PREPAREDNESS, RESPONSE AND RECOVERY EFFORTS THROUGH EVIDENCE-BASED DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The systematic collection, analysis and dissemination of baseline data on internal displacement, returns and cross-border movements as well as data on the evolving needs of the population groups on the move enables IOM, governments and partners to have a better understanding of the complex mobility dynamics across the region and contribute to more effective, evidence-based responses. IOM will continue to work in collaboration with UN agencies and other key stakeholders on assessments and other data collection activities to inform strategic planning processes and ensure complementarity and coordinated work across humanitarian, development and peace sectors.

### SO4 Funding requirements



Border guards are organizing the coming and going of vehicles through the "Zero Point" of Spin Boldak, at the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan  
Photo: © IOM 2023/Léo Torrérton



## Immediate emergency data collection on internal displacement, return and cross-border movements

Several components of IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) will be implemented in targeted locations in Afghanistan and neighbouring countries depending on the context and the information needs of partners. The data will be collected through significant and well-established network of community focal points and data enumerators in coordination with relevant actors in the field in order to provide multi layered analysis on the mobility and needs of the people on the move as well as of host communities.

- **Emergency data collection:** In case of sudden and significant internal population movements, emergency data collection mechanisms (such as the Event Tracking Tool (ETT)) shall be deployed to collect and share close to real-time information on the location, the number of affected populations and their immediate priority needs.
- **Mobility tracking:** Complementary to the alert mechanism cited above, mobility tracking (baseline mobility and community-based needs) assessments will provide a comprehensive overview of the displacement situation country-wide, allowing to prioritize resources and humanitarian response activities within defined locations. These assessments will be implemented with the objective of providing estimates on the presence, numbers of affected population groups, reasons for displacement, length of displacement and specific needs of the displaced population and host communities.
- **Cross-border tracking:** Data on cross-border movement flows at key transit and border crossing points will be collected, regularly shared with partners such as UN agencies, national authorities, and clusters/sectors and inter-cluster/ inter-sector coordination mechanisms, facilitating better data exchange and having evidence-based response and assistance, and will include information on the profiles, journey, intentions and observed/reported vulnerabilities of populations on the move.

## Rebuilding baseline data and information on displacement and population mobility to support addressing mid-term and broader region impact

Data on displacement triggers, migration drivers, needs and vulnerabilities of people on the move will be systematically collected and analyzed in order to provide partners with a periodic analysis of the regional migration trends, patterns and projections over time. This will be done through inflow and outflow monitoring, using the DTM existing flow monitoring operations to provide a better understanding of the impact of the crisis on mobility dynamics within the region. Moreover, context-specific surveys, assessments and studies (particularly on the situation of migrants, displaced populations and other vulnerable groups) will help leverage human mobility for transition and inclusive and sustainable recovery, including through disaggregated data (for example through the implementation of DTM's return index designed to measure the severity of conditions in locations of return).

## Building comprehensive knowledge base to support self-reliance, socio-economic recovery as well as inclusive development planning

IOM will continue to conduct and support data production and research which will contribute to strengthening joint UN mid- and longer-term planning in Afghanistan and neighbouring countries and inform governments' approaches to migration management and sustainable development policies for longer-term recovery through:

- Conducting research and assessments on host government capacities for migration management, as well as the impact of the crisis on migrant protection and assistance, including return and reintegration, migration patterns, criminal networks, cost for services, incidents of violence, exploitation and abuse, to inform preparedness and response programming.
- Increasing the understanding of the impact of the Afghan crisis on host communities and societies, as well as opportunities and challenges for sustainable development priorities through data- and research-related initiatives to support national and local planning mechanisms and policies in response to evolving mobility dynamics, for example, through migration profiles, research on diaspora and remittances, labor market needs and skills mapping of existing migrant workforce in the country as well as assessments on social cohesion/tensions within different communities and across different demographics within communities.
- Strengthening migration data gathering systems to ensure continuity of data collection, enhancement of analysis and forecasting capacities of governments and other partners for preparedness and inclusive development planning.
- Identifying structural drivers that increase displacement risks and unsafe, irregular migration and inform opportunities to prevent future displacement.
- Contextualizing mobility trends and its different dimensions to promote broader policy considerations and public understanding of migration and mobility (displacement, migration, returns, remittances, food security, climate change).



IOM health staff meet with women and children in Afghanistan.  
Photo: © IOM/Muse Mohammed

