

FINAL NARRATIVE REPORT

Contribution to UNHCR's Afghanistan Situation Response 2022



Afghan returnees receive UNHCR cash assistance as part of a permanent shelter programme in Afghanistan.

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Donor	Austrian Development Agency (ADA)
Funding	EUR 4,000,000
Title	Contribution to UNHCR's Afghanistan Situation Response 2022
Implementation Period	1 January 2022 – 31 December 2022 (12 months)
Reference	UNHCR: CD F0254 ADA: 2645-00/2022

UNHCR Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific

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Overview

This is the final narrative report for Austria's generous contribution of EUR 4 million intended to support UNHCR's response to the Afghanistan situation in 2022. The contribution was received at a critical time when UNHCR was scaling up its humanitarian assistance to the displaced populations in Afghanistan and its neighboring countries, in response to the political shift that occurred in August 2021.

In 2022, Afghanistan faced a multitude of severe challenges that had far-reaching consequences. The country grappled with the enduring effects of the global pandemic, extensive repercussions of the Ukraine crisis, a devastating earthquake, crippling food insecurity, and escalating economic instability. The situation was further compounded by the destabilizing effects of the systematic erosion of women's and girls' rights and their gradual exclusion from public and political life by the de facto authorities, culminating in a ban on women working for NGOs, announced in December 2022. These circumstances had a disproportionately adverse impact on Afghan returnees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), refugees, asylum-seekers, and the communities that generously host them.

In Central Asia and the Islamic Republics of Iran and Pakistan, which collectively host 8.2 million Afghans, including 2.6 million individuals head-counted by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran in 2022, UNHCR and around 40 partners actively supported preparedness initiatives through the inter-agency [Afghanistan Situation Regional Response Plan \(RRP\)](#), overseen and coordinated by UNHCR. However, given the challenging and intricate funding landscape, only 52% of the RRP received funding by the end of the year. Therefore, the generous contribution made by Austria was greatly appreciated, as it enabled UNHCR to deliver essential aid to the displaced populations in Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, and Central Asia.

Results achieved

Following the end of the war in 2021, there was an improvement in overall access to provide humanitarian aid within Afghanistan. In 2022, UNHCR successfully reached all 34 provinces and provided assistance to 6.2 million individuals. In line with UNHCR's "[Policy on cash-based interventions \(2022–2026\)](#)," the organization expanded and integrated the utilization of cash assistance across various programmes to enhance support for protection and solution outcomes. Cash assistance was provided to 1.5 million vulnerable people, while 4.1 million people benefitted from diverse community-based assistance initiatives. Over 550,000 individuals received in-kind assistance and nearly 360,000 core relief items (such as tents, undergarments, soaps, blankets, sanitary kits, gas cylinders, kitchen sets) were distributed. In addition, 60,000 persons with specific needs received psychosocial support. UNHCR also maintained its commitment to an area-based approach in the 80 Priority Areas of Return and Reintegration, aiming to foster resilient communities with a particular focus on health, education, and livelihoods.

In Iran, collaborative efforts by UNHCR and other RRP partners resulted in the construction and rehabilitation of 54 schools, with 17 of them being newly built, along with 15 health facilities. Furthermore, 185 health facilities received support through in-kind and financial assistance. By the conclusion of 2022, RRP partners in Pakistan provided assistance to approximately 2.2 million individuals, which accounted for 80% of the targeted population, and over half of those assisted were

women and girls. In Tajikistan, partnerships in the textile and IT sectors were expanded to create opportunities for livelihoods and skills development. This encompassed job placements for approximately 330 refugees, vocational skills training for over 550 individuals, and start-up grants for nearly 200 individuals. To address the aftermath of devastating floods in Pakistan, the [Pakistan Flood Response Plan](#) was launched to bolster the humanitarian response. These floods impacted around 33 million people, including an estimated 800,000 Afghan refugees residing in “calamity hit” districts.

Aligned with the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR) and the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR), UNHCR continued its commitment to inclusive policies by directing investments into national public service delivery systems through the SSAR Support Platform. In 2022, there was a notable increase in the voluntary return of over 6,000 registered Afghan refugees from Iran, Pakistan, and other countries to Afghanistan. Although these numbers fell short of previous years, they marked a significant rise compared to 2020 and 2021. To enhance partnership diversification, UNHCR intensified its efforts and established a strategic collaboration with the World Bank at the regional level, which was integrated into the SSAR. This partnership allowed UNHCR and the World Bank to combine their distinct expertise and establish a Joint Strategic Analysis Hub specifically focused on the Afghanistan situation. The objective of the hub is to provide informed support for durable solutions to forced displacement in the Islamic Republics of Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan, as well as Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

Significant efforts were undertaken in 2022 for the Afghanistan situation to strengthen existing coping mechanisms and cultivate resilient communities capable of withstanding multiple shocks. The primary objective was to mitigate further displacement, as well as onward movement, while establishing a solid foundation for eventual return and sustainable solutions. Resettlement programmes and other complementary pathways, such as education scholarships and labour mobility initiatives, experienced an increase. However, the availability of opportunities remained insufficient in comparison to the needs at hand.

Summary Sheet of Results Achieved

As outlined in the proposal, the expected results could have been reached if UNHCR’s activities were fully funded. However, as of the end of 2022, UNHCR’s Afghanistan Situation programmes were only 82% funded, resulting in a shortfall of more than USD 113 million. Consequently, certain objectives, especially in the health and shelter sectors, were not entirely achieved, while others exceeded their intended outcomes. This summary table also indicates how UNHCR’s programmes reached a large population inside and outside of Afghanistan, including 43,470 people who were estimated to benefit from Austria’s contribution:

Key expected results mentioned in the proposal	Actual results achieved in 2022
R1: Displaced persons' basic needs are addressed	
In 2022, UNHCR is targeting to reach over 180,000 persons with core relief items in Afghanistan.	Over 550,000 people received in-kind assistance and almost 360,000 core relief items were distributed in Afghanistan.

<p>In addition, around 154,000 vulnerable persons will receive cash-based assistance to help meet their basic needs.</p>	<p>In total, 1.5 million people received cash assistance in Afghanistan.</p>
<p>R2: Displaced persons can access education and vocational opportunities</p>	
<p>In total, in 2022, UNHCR is planning to construct or repair 20 schools in Iran.</p> <p>In Pakistan, UNHCR plans to improve 14 public schools for the inclusion of persons of concern in the government education system.</p>	<p>In Iran, UNHCR constructed 32 schools in 16 provinces, providing additional safe learning spaces for around 23,040 refugee and host community children.</p> <p>In Pakistan, UNHCR supported 40 public schools with school improvements, construction of new classrooms and provision of school furniture across KP and Balochistan, reaching 14,914 students.</p>
<p>R3: Displaced persons have access to health services and facilities</p>	
<p>In 2022, UNHCR aims to support 200 health facilities in Iran, and plans to provide health referrals for secondary and tertiary health care to 300,000 refugees.</p> <p>In Pakistan, UNHCR plans to construct or provide support to 46 health facilities in total.</p>	<p>In Iran, UNHCR contributed to the construction and rehabilitation of six health posts, as well as supporting 134 health posts in refugee-populated areas in urban settings and refugee settlements, including by procuring essential medicines and medical equipment. In order to enable the refugees to access secondary and tertiary health at reduced rates, UNHCR covered the premium fee of Universal Public Health Insurance for 120,000 of the most vulnerable refugees.</p> <p>In Pakistan, UNHCR supported 41 health facilities: 10 basic health units, 16 maternal and child health services, and 15 community labour and maternal and child health services.</p>
<p>R4: Displaced persons receive shelter support</p>	
<p>In 2022, UNHCR is targeting to distribute emergency shelter kits to benefit over 30,000 persons as well as cash for shelter for over 40,000 persons in Afghanistan.</p>	<p>In Afghanistan in 2022, UNHCR distributed emergency shelter kits to 11,218 people, while 28,734 people benefitted from cash for shelter.</p>

Coordination and partnerships

The Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR) continues to serve as the guiding framework for UNHCR's coordination of the refugee response in countries impacted by the Afghanistan situation. The SSAR, along with its Support Platform and Core Group, serves as the primary platform for UNHCR's engagement with donors.

In Iran, UNHCR works with the Bureau for Aliens and Foreign Immigrants Affairs (BAFIA) under the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and other relevant government entities, as well as UN agencies, national organizations, and international NGOs. With the activation of the Refugee Coordination Model (RCM) in 2021, UNHCR strengthened partnerships with various international aid partners, primarily through the framework of the 2022 Refugee Response Plan (RRP) for the Afghanistan Situation. The 2022 RRP saw the participation of 16 international aid organizations, an increase from the 10 involved in the 2021 Refugee Preparedness and Emergency Response Plan. Under the RCM, UNHCR took on the role of leading coordination efforts, convening the Refugee Response Group (RRG) comprising of major UN agencies and INGOs engaged in the response. The operational coordination among RRP partners was supported through seven sector working groups. UNHCR led three sectors, namely Protection, Shelter/NFI, and Health, and actively participated in all sector working groups as part of an inclusive coordination approach under the RCM. Additionally, UNHCR maintained partnerships with 15 organizations for project implementation, including six government partners and eight NGO partners.

In Pakistan, UNHCR expanded its network of partnerships in 2022. The number of partners contributing to the Regional Refugee Plan (RRP) nearly doubled from 32 in 2022 to 56 partners in 2023, including 9 UN agencies, 17 international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), and 30 national non-governmental organizations (NNGOs). An adapted refugee coordination model (RCM) was established, leveraging the existing humanitarian sector coordination structure. This involved the convening of the Refugee Protection Working Group, other sector working groups, and Pakistan Refugee Consultative Forums at the federal and provincial levels. UNHCR, along with UNICEF and UNFPA, took on a joint leadership role in the Protection Sector during the inter-agency flood response, with a particular focus on child protection and gender-based violence (GBV). The emergency efforts involved the participation of approximately 80 stakeholders. The advancement of the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR) Support Platform continued, while initiatives are ongoing to encourage member states to match the Government's pledges for the 2023 Global Refugee Forum.

In Uzbekistan, UNHCR coordinated activities with four partners, including UNHCR itself, across various sectors such as Protection (including Child Protection and GBV), Shelter/NFIs, Health and Nutrition, Livelihoods and Resilience, WASH, Education, and Logistics and Telecommunications.

In Turkmenistan, UNHCR coordinated activities with three partners, including UNHCR itself, focusing on the implementation of initiatives in sectors such as Protection (including Child Protection and GBV), Shelter and NFIs, Health and Nutrition, Livelihoods and Resilience, WASH, and Education.

As an active member of the UN Country Team, UNHCR engages with the government, UN agencies, development organizations, international financial institutions, diplomatic entities, and other partners to ensure that forcibly displaced people are not left behind in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by the respective states.

Monitoring and Evaluation

In the context of UN system reforms and the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR), UNHCR has undergone a series of organizational reforms to shift capacities, authorities and resources closer to the point of delivery, to enable greater flexibility in how these are used, and to leverage relationships with others. These include the decentralization and regionalization of decision-making; the introduction of multi-year planning; the launch of a new results-based management system; and reforms in human resource management and enterprise resource management, among others.

Monitoring and evaluation of UNHCR programmes are conducted using the revised results-based management system, which enables the organization to keep track of the progress of the results achieved, which is made visible internally as well as externally. The performance and progress of activities implemented by UNHCR's partners are also closely monitored through quarterly reports and regular on-site monitoring activities.

In particular, the operations affected by the Afghanistan situation underwent rigorous monitoring to ensure accountability. Regular updates such as dashboards, operational updates, data sheets, and fact sheets are produced by each operation. These updates can be found on [UNHCR's data portal for the Afghanistan Situation](#).

Visibility

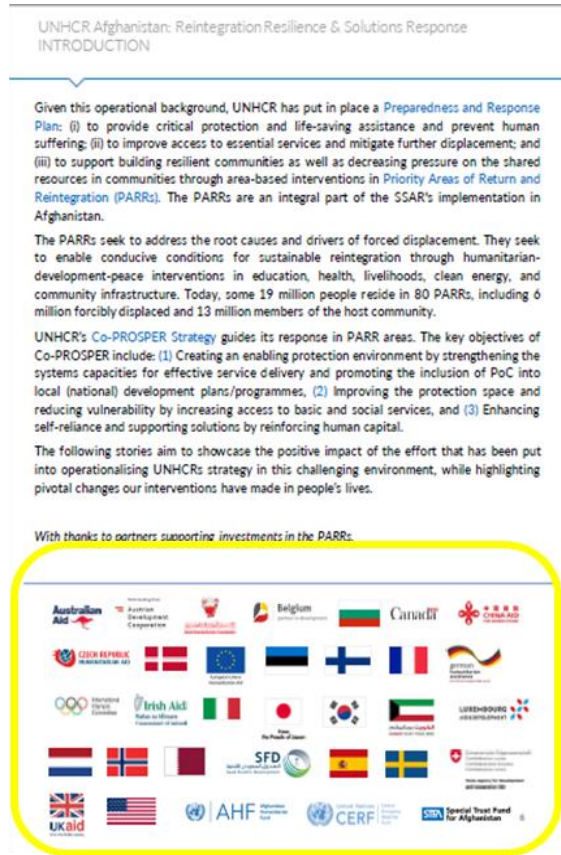
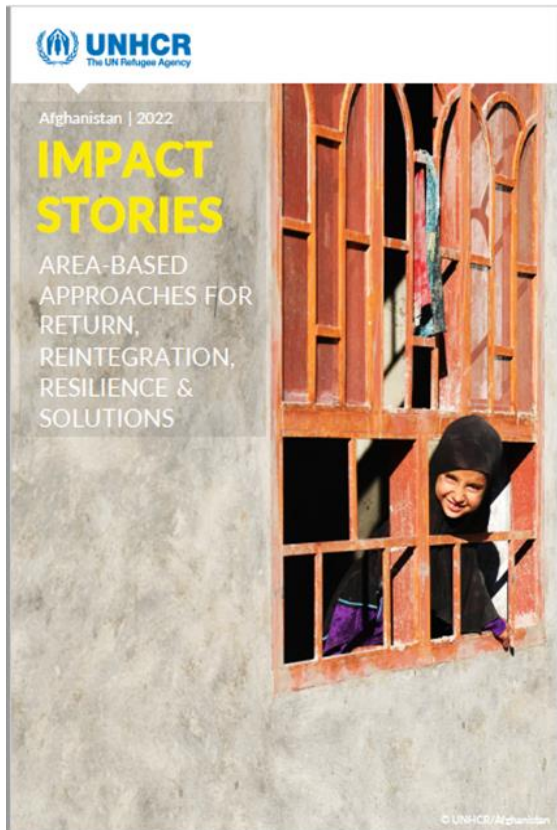
Austria was highlighted as one of the top donors in key external publications and social media platforms related to UNHCR's programmes on the Afghanistan situation. Information materials with donor visibility were disseminated in the field and multi-donor banners were placed on project sites:

Example 1: Name of the country and the flag on [Regional Refugee Response Plan 2022 - Final Report](#):

RRP 2022 donors: Australia | Austria | Belgium | Bulgaria | Canada | Czechia | Denmark | European Union | France | Germany | Iceland | Ireland | Italy | Japan | Kuwait | Luxembourg | Netherlands | New Zealand | Norway | Poland | Private Donors | Qatar | Republic of Korea | Slovakia | Slovenia | Spain | Sweden | Switzerland | United Kingdom | United States of America



Example 2: ADA logo in Afghanistan's *Impact Stories* publication:



Example 3: Leaflet with Austria's flag was distributed through Proof of Registration Card Modification (PCM) Centres across Pakistan:



Example 4: Multi-donor banners including the ADA logo were placed on project sites:



Example 5: Thank you messages to donors including to Austria were posted on UNHCR Afghanistan Twitter:



Example 6: Thank you message was posted on UNHCR Iran's Instagram:



Other key publications which have donor visibility for Austria include:

- [UNHCR Pakistan: DRIVE report](#)
- [UNHCR Afghanistan Voluntary Repatriation update 2022](#)
- [UNHCR Afghanistan Border Monitoring Report 2022](#)
- [UNHCR Afghanistan Delivery Summary 2022](#)
- [UNHCR Iran: Factsheet - December 2022](#)

Conclusion

The generous contribution of EUR 4 million from Austria has presented a valuable opportunity for UNHCR to effectively provide essential humanitarian aid to both the displaced people in Afghanistan and Afghan refugees in neighbouring countries. The funding has been greatly appreciated, especially considering the unexpected emergencies faced by countries affected by the Afghanistan situation in 2022, such as the earthquake in Afghanistan and flooding in Pakistan. UNHCR expresses profound gratitude for Austria's support towards those affected by the evolving situation in Afghanistan and hopes for ongoing assistance in the future.