

ARTF
Quarterly Progress Report

Q3 2024

Abbreviations

AFN	Afghanis (currency)
AKF	Aga Khan Foundation
ARTF	Afghanistan Resilience Trust Fund
BPHS	Basic Package of Health Services
CASA 1000	Central Asia-South Asia Electricity Transmission and Trade Project
CBE	Community-Based Education
CDC(s)	Community Development Council(s)
CFW	Cash For Work
CMU	Contract Management Unit
CRG	Community representative groups
CRLP	Community Resilience and Livelihoods Project
CSO(s)	Civil society organization(s)
DA(s)	Designated Account(s)
DAB	Da Afghanistan Bank
ECA(s)	Entry Criterion / Criteria for Access
EERA	Education Emergency Response in Afghanistan
EFSP	Emergency Food Security Project
ERHSPP	Afghanistan Covid-19 Emergency Response and Health Systems Preparedness Project
ESS	Environmental and Social Standards
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization
FY	Financial Year
GRM	Grievance Redress Mechanism
HACT	Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfer
HER	Health Emergency Response
IDA	International Development Association
IP(s)	Implementing Partner(s)
ITA	Interim Taliban Authority
MA	Monitoring Agent
MCBP	Maternal and Child Benefit Program
MoF	Ministry of Finance
NCCSP	NGO and CSO Capacity Support Project
NGO(s)	Non-governmental Organization(s)
PDM	Post Distribution Monitoring
QE	Questionable Expenditure
QQM	Quantified Quality Metrics

RMU	Rational Medicine Use
SBCC	Social and Behavioural Change Communication
SCRP(s)	Statement(s) of Cash Receipts and Payments
SOE(s)	Statement(s) of Expenditure
SP(s)	Service Provider(s)
TPMA	Third Party Monitoring Agent
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
USD	United States Dollars
WASH	Water Sanitation and Hygiene
WB	The World Bank
WERP	Water Emergency Relief Project
WFP	World Food Programme



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1. Executive Summary

The World Bank (WB) Monitoring Agent (MA) for the Afghanistan Resilience Trust Fund (ARTF) provides the World Bank and other stakeholders with visibility of and assurance over project implementation through both financial and physical monitoring. This report offers a concise overview of progress, highlighting key insights from financial and physical monitoring activities conducted during Q3 (1 July to 30 September) 2024.

The MA's purpose is to verify expenditure eligibility and ensure project implementation aligns with funding objectives. This includes comprehensive monitoring of outputs, achievement of objectives, and beneficiary verification; as well as adherence to Environmental and Social Standards (ESS) and Entry Criteria for Access (ECAs) per the World Bank framework.



Financial Monitoring

In Q3 2024, financial monitoring included Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT) audits for the Afghanistan Health Emergency Response (HER) and Education Emergency Response in Afghanistan (EERA) projects, expenditure reviews for the Afghanistan Community Resilience and Livelihoods Project (CRLP), Emergency Food Security Project (EFSP), and Water Emergency Relief Project (WERP), as well as ongoing monitoring of ARTF and International Development Association (IDA) project bank balances. Additionally, validation of outstanding liabilities for the Central Asia-South Asia Electricity Transmission and Trade Project (CASA 1000) and contingency claims for Sehatmandi and Afghanistan Covid-19 Emergency Response and Health Systems Preparedness Project (ERHSPP) were conducted. The results are summarized below:

HACT Audits: HER (1 January to 30 June 2023)

Audited expenditure	Financial findings ¹	Findings as % of total payments
USD 2,041,674	USD 46,441	2.27%

HACT Audits: EERA (1 January to 30 June 2023)

Audited expenditure	Financial findings	Findings as % of total payments
USD 3,636,258	USD 188,489	5.18%

Community Resilience and Livelihood Project (CRLP)

Monitored expenditure	Questionable Expenditure ²	Questionable Expenditure as % of total
USD 12,183,480	USD 5,055	0.18%

¹ Financial findings are defined in UNICEF's Terms of Reference for HACT Audits as "findings and observations with financial impact."

² Questionable Expenditure is reported where we find evidence of inadequate or a lack of supporting documents, material non-compliance with financial policies, applicable procurement regulations or control frameworks, incomplete contracted tasks and deliverables, or the non-existence of assets procured or constructed.

Water Emergency Relief Project (WERP)

Amount claimed for replenishment	Questionable Expenditure	Amount recommended for replenishment
USD 188,881	USD 3,148	185,733

Financial Monitoring of the Pre-August 2021 IDA and ARTF Portfolio**Statements of Cash Receipt and Payments**

Total reported payments ³	Payments reviewed	Questionable Expenditure	Questionable Expenditure as % of total payments
USD 16,146,960	USD 16,146,960	0	0.00%

Bank Balance Verification

Projects' bank balances verified	Amount verified as of 31 September 2024
81	USD 392 million

Review of Project Liabilities: CASA 1000

Total invoices submitted for payment	Total recommended for payment
USD 61,080,687	USD 46,206,548 (76%)
Euro 870,357	Euro 828,329 (95%)

Review of Other Project Liabilities

Total invoices submitted for payment	Total recommended for payment
USD 22,552,508	USD 16,832,195 (75%)

Contingency Claims under Sehatmandi and ERHSPP

Total invoices submitted for payment	Total recommended for payment
Sehatmandi - AFN 80,166,989	AFN 40,858,967 (51%)
ERHSPP - AFN 6,320,499	AFN 1,447,113 (51%)

³ The reported payment excludes an amount of USD 3,513,057 that was reported as a payment in the Statement of Cash Receipt and Payment, but subsequently refunded to the World Bank on 4 July 2023.



Physical Monitoring

Physical Monitoring Activities

In Q3, the MA observed Maternal and Child Benefit Program (MCBP) cash distributions in Nimroz, confirming strong adherence to guidelines and verifying that a majority of beneficiaries received the intended amount of AFN 4,300. Additionally, the MA monitored 30 Social and Behavioural Change Communication (SBCC) sessions, which focused on nutrition and health topics. Compliance with the intended topics was found to be most common in sessions for women. Most beneficiaries planned to use the funds for household food needs, with many also intending to access health services. Overall, the monitoring findings reflect strong program implementation and effective beneficiary engagement.

Under the EERA Water Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) infrastructure component, the MA assessed midline progress at 46 schools across 13 provinces. For WERP, training sessions were monitored in Kabul and Hirat, with participant feedback gathered through exit interviews. Findings for these projects are due to be reported in Q4.

Monitoring Frameworks and Future Planning

The MA updated Monitoring Frameworks in preparation for 2025, refining sampling strategies, tools, and monitoring frequencies across projects. These updates aim to enhance data collection and alignment with project objectives in the coming year.

Risk Assessment and Mitigation Planning

In Q3, increased restrictions and delays in authorizations placed substantial pressure on MA monitoring activities. As part of this report, the MA presents a risk assessment and mitigation measures. The insights present a focus on the Interim Taliban Authority's (ITA's) imposed bans on essential quality assurance (QA) practices, including GPS data collection and, in some areas, restricted use of audio recordings and photos. Data collection by female surveyors was also limited, even in health and education sectors where limitations would not normally be as restrictive. Access to household interviews faced resistance from local authorities. These challenges raise concerns for both data quality and staff safety. In response, the MA focused on enhancing transparency and engagement with ITA institutions, seeking support from WB ARTF partners, and securing access letters to facilitate monitoring activities.

Looking Ahead

In Q4 (1 October to 31 December) 2024, the MA will continue with financial monitoring, and physical monitoring will increase across multiple projects. Financial monitoring will include HACT audits, Designated Account (DA) reconciliations, liabilities reviews, certification of expenditures for legacy and current projects, and the continued Statement of Cash Receipt and Payment (SCRIP) review of CCAP.

Subject to the continuation of current access arrangements, physical monitoring activities will take place for all active ARTF projects in Q4. This will comprise of a beneficiary verification census for MCBP, a sub-grant use verification for the NGO/CSO Capacity Support Project (NCCSP), and health facility performance assessments under the HER project. Additional ad hoc studies in the health sector will explore Quantified Quality Metrics (QQM) and Rational Medicine Use (RMU) at Basic Package of Health Services (BPHS) primary health care facilities. Infrastructure assessments and training verifications are planned for WERP and CASA 1000, contingent upon receiving access permissions.

In addition, the MA is coordinating outcome monitoring for EFSP activities and endline data collection for EERA Round 4 phase to evaluate school infrastructure and WASH interventions.

2. Introduction

The World Bank Monitoring Agent (MA) promotes transparency and accountability in project implementation by providing the World Bank and partner implementing agencies with insights into project progress through both financial and physical monitoring activities. This report summarizes current progress and latest insights from the cumulative efforts of financial and physical monitoring during Q3 2024.

The Purpose of the World Bank Monitoring Agent

The purpose of the WB MA is to determine the eligibility of expenditure incurred under different projects and to verify that project implementation aligns with the funding provided. Under this arrangement, the MA conducts detailed monitoring of outputs, measures the extent to which projects have met project objectives, and verifies targeted beneficiaries. In addition, the MA monitors compliance with ESS and ECAs in accordance with the WB's monitoring guidelines.








Approach

The MA's approach ensures transparency and comprehensive oversight, with rigorous standards achieved through in-depth sampling, detailed review of thousands of financial and project documents, extensive data collection and QA processes. This also includes direct observations and in-person interviews with both men and women. In Q3, monitoring efforts covered both financial and physical aspects.

Physical monitoring activities included data collection for the EERA WASH infrastructure midline assessment, WERP and MCBP. The reporting outputs for the EERA WASH midline assessment and WERP are currently in development. Additional activities involve increased coordination efforts with the ITA as well as more regular contextual risk assessments to mitigate risks related to access, particularly following recent developments and restrictions. Furthermore, the MA adjusted monitoring approaches in consultation with WB Task Team Leads (TTLs), which involved updating and adjusting monitoring frameworks and data collection tools, notably to cover ARTF and IDA Additional Financing and to integrate lessons learned, along with preparation for the many data collection activities planned for Q4.

This report presents Q3 findings from physical and financial monitoring, along with the risk assessment, notable developments regarding access, and the enhanced monitoring approach.

Table 1: Status of ARTF project monitoring during Q3 2024

Project	Implementing agency	Status of monitoring in Q3
 Community Resilience and Livelihoods Project (CRLP)	United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)	Preparation underway, with next mobilization for data collection planned for Q4
 Education Emergency Response in Afghanistan (EERA)	United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)	Monitoring ongoing
 Emergency Food Security Project (EFSP)	Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)	Preparation underway, with next round of data collection planned for Q4
 Health Emergency Response (HER)	United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)	Preparation underway, with next round of data collection planned for Q4
 Maternal and Child Benefit Program (MCBP) component of HER 2	World Food Programme (WFP)	Monitoring ongoing
 NGO / CSO Capacity Support Project (NCCSP)	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	Preparation underway, with final round of data collection planned for Q4
 Water Emergency Relief Project (WERP)	UNOPS and Aga Khan Foundation (AKF)	Monitoring ongoing

3. Risk Assessment and Mitigation Strategies

Risks Likelihood and Impact Assessment

Q3 2024 was marked by increased pressure on monitoring activities across Afghanistan, with delays in receiving authorizations and additional restrictions imposed. The MA has identified four areas in which the ITA have increased limitations:

Restrictions on the Use of Essential Quality Assurance Measures:

Collecting GPS points is a critical component of QA in monitoring projects, as it ensures accuracy and transparency regarding enumerators' activities and verifies the precise locations of project sites. By July 2024, the ITA had banned the collection of GPS points. While the MA's interlocutor with the ITA points to possible exceptions, the ways and circumstances in which exceptions could be granted remain uncertain.

Another essential element of the MA's QA process is the collection of audio recordings and photos to verify reports and confirm project outputs and locations. However, ITA officials have at local level, on different occasions, imposed restrictions on this practice, further impacting the MA's ability to conduct thorough QA.

Data Collection Restrictions

01	The collection of data by female surveyors has been challenged in some provinces, specifically in the health and education sectors, two sectors that are considered by the ITA as exceptions to the ban on women in the workforce.
02	The ability to conduct household interviews has frequently faced challenges at local level in certain provinces, with local authorities asserting that data collection should be limited to facility-level sites (such as schools, clinics, or other public institutions).
03	While interference with data collection tools and questionnaires has remained limited so far, authorities at both national and local levels have requested to review data collection tools and questionnaires.

This pressure intensified during Q3, following the arrest and detention (for over a week) of four MA field staff, reportedly due to their monitoring activities. Consequently, both staff safety and data quality are impacted by these regulations and the decisions made by individual ITA officials.

Mitigation Measures

The MA's primary goal for mitigation is to strengthen engagement with various ITA institutions involved in decision-making processes with the ability to affect monitoring activities. The engagement strategy is based on the following principles:

01	Transparency: The MA does not engage in any data collection activities without first obtaining ITA authorization. This includes fully disclosing planned activities, such as mobilizing female staff or using GPS technology, and seeking approval beforehand rather than operating covertly.
02	Awareness and Engagement: Engaging with the ITA officials unfamiliar with monitoring activities to explain how monitoring supports accountability. This helps to foster understanding of our mandate and approach, emphasizing its value in improving the development sector.

The MA has also raised awareness among WB ARTF partners, including UN partners and WB TTLs, and sought their support in obtaining access letters. It is crucial for the ITA to understand the connection between a specific TPM assignment and its associated project, recognizing how the former supports the latter. The MA would like to recognize the substantial efforts from WB staff and UN partners in supporting or leading on navigating access in this complex environment.

4. Monitoring Activities



Financial Monitoring

Financial Monitoring Activities

In Q3 2024, the MA's financial monitoring efforts focused on HACT audits for HER and EERA. Additionally, expenditure reviews were conducted for CRLP, EFSP, and WERP. The MA also continued monitoring ARTF- and IDA-funded project bank balances and proceeded with validating outstanding liabilities under CASA 1000, as well as addressing legacy project claims and contingency claims under Sehatmandi and ERHSPP (Covid-19).



Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT) audits funded by ARTF

The MA addresses HACT audit reports directly to UNICEF under separate contractual terms. During this quarter, the MA continued HACT audits for 16 Service Providers (SPs) for HER and 19 Implementing Partners (IPs) for EERA, for expenditure incurred between 1 January and 30 June 2023.

Table 2: Status at the end of Q3 2024 of HACT audits under HER and EERA (Expenditure period: 1 January - 30 June 2023)

Status	HER	EERA
Planning ongoing	0	0
Testing/Site visits at IP/SP premises	0	0
Testing complete and finalization in progress	1	1
Final Audit report released to UNICEF	15	18
Total number of HACT audits	16	19

For HER, the MA completed one HACT audit report in Q3 for expenditure incurred between 1 January and 30 June 2023. A total of USD 2,041,674 of expenditure was audited, with financial findings amounting to USD 46,441, representing 2.27% of the audited amount.

Table 3: Summary of financial findings under HER HACT audits from 1 January to 30 June 2023 during Q3

Category (USD)	USD
Commitments treated as expenditure	44,800
Cut-off errors	1,540
Ineligible salary costs - Others	101
Total	46,441

For EERA, the MA submitted eight completed HACT audit reports for expenditure incurred between 1 January and 30 June 2023⁴. A total of USD 3,636,258 of expenditure was audited, with financial findings amounting to USD 188,489, representing 5.18% of the audited amount.

Table 4: Summary of financial findings under EERA HACT audits from 1 January to 30 June 2023 during Q3

Category	USD
Ineligible salary costs (Expenditure not charged as per budget and agreed allocation percentage)	35,542
Ineligible costs other (Non-salary expenditure not charged as per budget and agreed allocation percentage)	8,052
Cut-off errors	102,138
Ineligible salary costs (Overpayment of salaries)	2,849
Ineligible salary costs (Salary charged not as per budget)	15,165
Ineligible salary costs (Salary charged for positions that did not exist, and that had not been recruited or not in the approved work plan/ budget)	15,134
Ineligible costs (Unapproved expenditure)	1,444
No proof of payment	8,165
	188,489

During the quarter, planning and expenditure testing commenced for the period covering 1 July 2023 to 31 December 2023, for 15 HER and 19 EERA HACT audits.

Statements of Cash Receipts and Payments

The MA issued two SCRP Cover Letters for the Afghan Financial Year (FY) 1400 (equivalent to 21 December 2020 to 21 December 2021). A total of USD 16,146,960 of expenditure was reviewed, and no Questionable Expenditure was noted⁵.

Review of Project Bank Accounts

Following the WB's request for quarterly reviews of project bank accounts, the status of accounts up to 31 December 2023 was reported in the 2023 Annual Report. In Q1, only the movement in project DA balances was reported. During Q2, after a workshop with WB teams in Islamabad in May 2024, guidance was provided to reconcile actual outstanding balances in the DAs with WB Client Connection.

The reconciliation of project bank accounts and alignment with Client Connection was discussed in detail during a Financial Management Workshop held in Dubai on 1-3 October, as presented below.

⁴ The HACT reports are for programs implemented by Afghan Amputee Bicyclists for Rehabilitation and Recreation (AABRAR), Aga Khan Foundation (AKF), International Rescue Committee (IRC), Move Against Poverty of Women Organization (MAPWO), Norwegian Afghanistan Committee (NAC), Organization for Community Coordination and Development (OCCD), Social Association for Development of Afghanistan (SADA) and Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA).

⁵ The SCRPs were for the Afghanistan Water, Sanitation, Hygiene and Institutional Support Project (AWASH) and Strengthening Afghanistan's Financial Intermediation Project (SAFI).

Table 5: Status of DA reconciliation

Description	USD
A. Funds held in bank accounts (DA: \$176,220,227; CA: \$143,686,890; CDC: \$72,737,982)	392,645,099
B. Fund held in cash (Advance: \$4,876,049; Cash with CDCs: \$15,813,777)	20,689,826
C. QE reported	7,669,924
D. Adjusted DA balance (A+B+C)	421,004,849
E. Identified differences	5,132,226
F. Total per Client Connection	418,135,710
G. Unreconciled difference (D+E-F)	8,001,365

Each item of reconciliation was discussed in detail. The MA, together with the World Bank's Financial Management, and Finance and Accounting teams, and with further assistance from the ITA Ministry of Finance will endeavour to resolve unreconciled differences by March 2025.

Review of Project Liabilities

In March 2023, WB requested the MA to review outstanding expenditure ('liabilities') 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 these liabilities were for the intended purposes and eligible for financing in accordance with the Grant and Financing Agreements. The review initially focused on validating invoices from contractors for CASA 1000 and the Trans-Hindukush Road Connectivity Project under the Direct Payment modality to private sector contractors. It was subsequently expanded to include unpaid expenditures as of August 2021 across all categories of ARTF- and IDA-funded projects (for example, salaries, project implementation, and management costs).

Central Asia-South Asia Electricity Transmission and Trade Project

Since May 2023, the MA has been reviewing and certifying invoices submitted by CASA 1000 contractors. The MA completed the review of invoices submitted by three contractors, as summarized below.

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

	Euro	USD
Total liabilities submitted for payment	870,357	61,080,687
Total recommended for payment	828,329	46,206,548

Of the total USD 61.08 million and € 0.87 million claimed for all these contracts, the MA recommended payment of USD 46.20 million and € 0.83 million, respectively. This review is an ongoing process, with further Cover Letters recommending payment expected to be issued as issues are resolved.

Other Project Liabilities

In addition to the CASA 1000 project liabilities mentioned above, WB requested the MA to review and assess the eligibility of project liabilities under all other ARTF- and IDA-funded projects. During Q3, the MA continued efforts to finalize the list of liabilities with the Ministry of Finance and relevant line ministries, a process that remained ongoing at the end of the reporting period.

By the end of the period, the MA had completed the review of liabilities amounting to USD 22.55 million submitted by sixteen projects, with 47 Cover Letters issued in respect of these liabilities, recommending USD 16.83 million for payment, as summarised below. This review is an ongoing process, with additional Cover Letters recommending payment expected to be issued as issues are resolved.

Table 7: Summary of review of invoices for other legacy projects

	AFN	USD	Total USD ⁴ equivalent
Total invoice submitted for payment	14,774,005	7,778,503	22,552,508
Total recommended for payment	12,560,830	4,271,365	16,832,195

Contingency Claims under Sehatmandi and ERHSPP (Covid-19)

During Q3, the MA completed a review and issued six Cover Letters regarding contingency claims submitted for expenditure incurred under the Contingency Fund for Sehatmandi and ERHSPP (COVID-19) implemented in Kunar, Laghman, and Nangarhar provinces.

The results of the review, regarding claims from the SP, are summarized below.

Table 8: Summary of contingency claims

In USD millions	Sehatmandi	ERHSPP	Total
Invoices submitted for payment	80,166,989	6,320,499	86,487,488
Questionable Expenditure	(39,308,022)	(4,873,386)	(44,181,408)
Invoices certified for payment	40,858,967	1,447,113	42,306,080

Our review is ongoing in respect of claims from the service provider MOVE.

Community Resilience and Livelihoods Project (CRLP)

The MA reviewed the project's financial summary information under Components 1, 2, and 3, totalling USD 12,183,480, provided by UNOPS for Q2 2023 and extracted from the project's financial records for the same period. The financial findings resulting from the MA's review, in line with the procedures outlined above, amount to USD 5,055, as summarized below.

Table 9: Summary of expenditure review under CRLP (in USD)

Component	Total expenditure	Samples selected	QE	QE as a %age of total	QE as a %age of samples
C1	7,963,526	1,183,867	16	0.00%	0.00%
C2	3,770,917	1,193,428	4,921	0.13%	0.41%
C3	449,037	376,342	118	0.03%	0.03%
Total	12,183,480	2,753,637	5,055	0.04%	0.18%

Table 10: Summary of CRLP Questionable Expenditure (in USD)

Finding Category	Description	C1	C2	C3	Total
Excess days invoiced	Days recorded on Form 8 were in excess of those recorded on the Attendance Records, resulting in overpayment to the NGO	16	3,654	-	3,670
Excess days invoiced	Days recorded on the Wages Receipt Form were in excess of those on the Record/Form 8, resulting in overpayment to the laborer	-	671	-	671
Eligibility of laborer questionable	Tazkira/ID of laborer not provided	-	596	-	596
Other	The beneficiary was contacted and the denied receiving the food package	-	-	118	118
Total		16	4,921	118	5,055

Emergency Food Security Project (EFSP)

Under the assurance reporting arrangement between FAO and the World Bank, FAO holds sole responsibility for all financial monitoring activities, including the fiduciary monitoring of its IPs, which is conducted by FAO's Third Party Monitoring Agent (FAO TPMA). The MA's role is to validate, on a sample basis, up to 25% of transactions reviewed by the FAO TPMA.

The MA submitted a project findings log to FAO on 23 August 2024 for the period Q2 and Q3 2023 and responses are expected (and the report issued) in Q4 2024.

We have initiated communications regarding the Q4 2023 and Q1 2024 expenditure review and we expect to commence the reviews in Q4 2024.

Water Emergency Relief Project (WERP)

The MA completed the review of the first Statement of Expenditure (SoE) for Water Emergency Relief Project components managed by the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF), covering the expenditure period up to 31 December 2023, under ARTF Grant Agreement No. TFOC1927.

The procedures were performed solely to assist the World Bank in evaluating whether the expenditures reported by the project in the SoE, for replenishment in the Withdrawal Application, comply with the Grant Agreement.

The project claimed USD 188,881, and the MA recommended USD 185,733 for replenishment. The result of the review is summarized below.

Table 11: Summary of expenditure review under WERP

Detail	Total (USD)
Amount claimed for replenishment	188,881
Questionable Expenditure	(3,148)
Amount recommended for replenishment	185,733

Table 12: Summary of WERP Questionable Expenditure findings

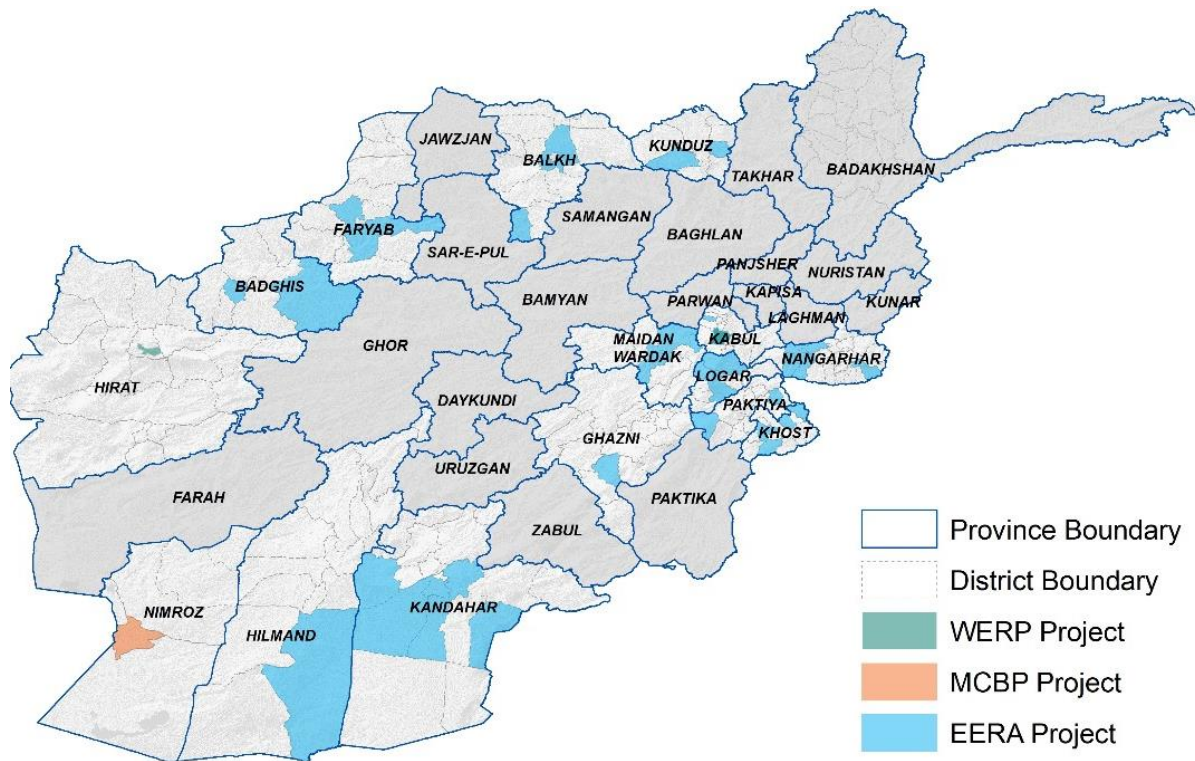
Category	Total (USD)
Ineligible salary costs	2,942
Support costs incorrectly calculated (7% support cost on USD 2,942)	206
Total	3,148

NGO/CSO Capacity Support Project (NCCSP)

The MA commenced field visits to 21 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or civil society organizations (CSOs) to verify that grant expenditure aligned with the approved sub-grant proposals. The outcomes of this monitoring will be reported in Q4.



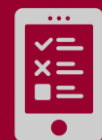
Physical Monitoring



Physical Monitoring Activities

In Q3, the MA conducted direct observations and assessments across multiple projects. For MCBP, the MA observed five cash distributions in Nimroz and monitored 30 SBCC sessions to verify adherence to program processes.

For the EERA WASH infrastructure components, the team assessed midline progress at 46 schools across 13 provinces. The MA monitored WERP by observing training sessions in Kabul and Hirat, ensuring alignment with training materials. The MA also updated Monitoring Frameworks for 2025 to enhance data collection and program alignment across projects.



Maternal and Child Benefit Program (MCBP)

Monitoring for MCBP comprised direct observations of cash distributions in all seven MCBP districts to identify any red flags and to ensure adherence to site management and process guidelines, verify beneficiary identities and cash disbursements, and monitor the delivery of SBCC sessions.

Q3 included direct observations of cash distribution in two communities in Zaranj district in Nimroz. Due to a misunderstanding, the MCBP sample for direct observations in the first observed district was smaller than intended. It has been agreed with the WB task team that future rounds will cover 50% of distribution sites per district. The MA observed cash distributions during five days through in-person site visits to cash distribution centres in the villages of Mahjer Abad and Shahrak Sistan between 15 and 28 August. The MA also conducted exit interviews with 55 beneficiaries; 26 female respondents and 29 male respondents in line with WFP's work progress. No red flags were identified during distributions in this monitoring period.

Site Management and Adherence to Guidelines

The MA observed broad adherence to site and process guidelines, with no major deviations recorded.



All distributions occurred as scheduled



Minor issues were noted with the **Community Feedback Mechanism (CFM) Helpdesk**, including missing contact channels on banners and one instance of CFM staff absence.



Separate lines for men and women



WASH facilities





No security incidents were reported ✓



All FPs had at least one female staff member on-site ✓

Verification of beneficiaries and Cash Disbursements

The MA observed that beneficiary verification and cash disbursement processes adhered closely to guidelines.



✓
All beneficiaries provided thumbprints and ID (tazkira or other), with SCOPE Cards verified through biometric scans.



✓
Each beneficiary interviewed received the full cash amount (4,300 AFN) after waiting 10-30 minutes. No security incidents or dissatisfaction were reported.

Interviews with Site Supervisors indicated that overall, 880 beneficiaries (or their alternates) were registered to receive cash assistance across five days of observation. Of these, 531 women (60%) and 241 men (28%) collected their benefits, while 108 beneficiaries (12%) were absent, amounting to approximately AFN 465,000 (USD 6,500) in uncollected funds. Almost all facilitating partners (FPs) reported that they contacted absent beneficiaries to return the following day, with one exception where the FP reported funds were held by the exchanger until beneficiaries could collect them.

Social and Behavioural Change Communication (SBCC) Sessions monitoring

The MA monitored 30 SBCC sessions over five days, with 21 sessions for women and nine for men. The monitoring objective was to assess the type of content being taught. Each site visited ensured separate waiting areas and rooms for men and women, and sessions were facilitated by gender-applicable staff. A total of 468 women and 153 men attended, with class sizes ranging from five to 31 participants.

As shown in the table below, based on the reports from enumerators, it seemed that the women's sessions adhered more closely to WFP's guidance.

Table 13: Number of sessions in which content was covered

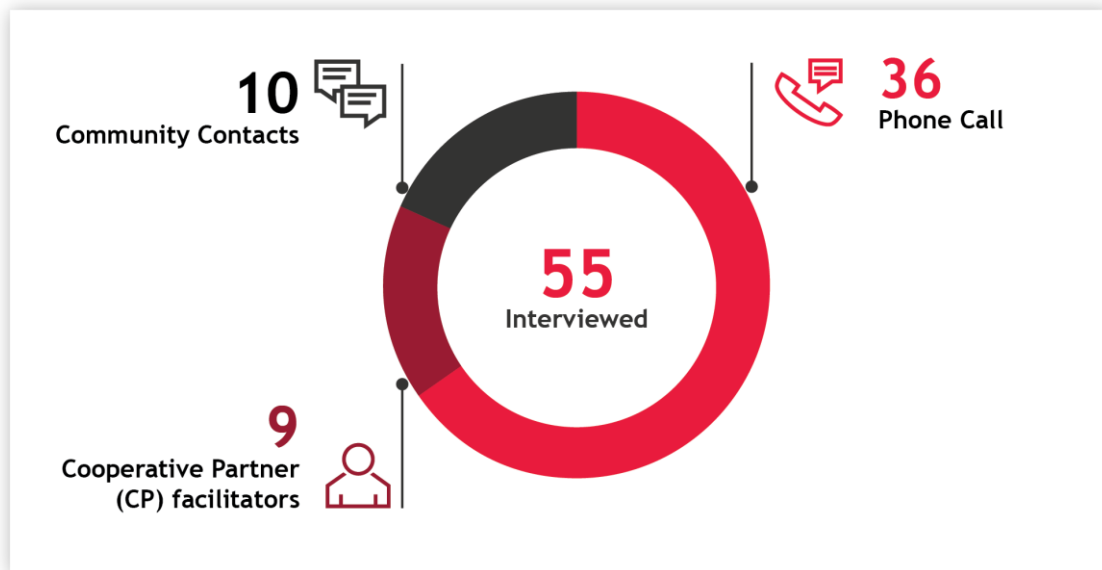
Content	Women's Sessions	Men's Sessions
Nutrition basics (what is good nutrition, importance of good nutrition, naming some nutritious foods eaten in different seasons)	21/21	1/9
Malnutrition basics	21/21	9/9
Video on undernutrition/ malnutrition	21/21	6/9
Signs and symptoms of malnutrition	20/21	2/9
Causes of poor nutrition	19/21	1/9
Prevention of malnutrition	19/21	8/9
Treatment of malnutrition (How to seek Health and Nutrition Services)	18/21	0/9
Consequences of poor nutrition	16/21	1/9
Information on nearby health facilities and services provided (How to seek Health and Nutrition Services)	7/21	0/9

In all cases, participants were engaged, and facilitators concluded with the three key messages. Minor non-compliance was noted in two female sessions where SCOPE card verification⁶ was not conducted by the project team.

⁶ The SCOPE Cards are identified/verified through a biometric scan as well as, in some cases, physical observation by the project staff. A beneficiary's ID is required to match the SCOPE card.

Beneficiary engagement and cash utilisation

How beneficiaries were informed:



All 55 respondents were aware of the nutrition information session, with 35 having already attended and 20 men planning to attend later; those who attended found the session informative. Among these attendees, most recalled the key nutrition messages, though some male respondents struggled to recall specifics about malnutrition and its prevention (8 in total).

All 55 respondents possessed SCOPE Cards, although 15 lacked a Tazkira, and each received the correct cash benefit of AFN 4,300, expressing satisfaction with the distribution process.

Cash utilisation



Health Facility Visits and Services Sought Post-Disbursement

Of 55 respondents, 53 indicated they intended to visit a health facility following the cash disbursement (one male and one female did not plan to do so). Their reasons for visiting covered a range of health services, with many respondents selecting multiple options. The primary reasons included lactation consultations, antenatal and postnatal care, and pregnancy-related nutrition counselling. A smaller number of respondents intended to seek immunization (n=10), birthing services (n=6), Infant and Young Child Feeding counselling (n=6), illness (n=6) and malnutrition (n=5) treatments.

Education Emergency Response in Afghanistan (EERA) WASH Infrastructure Midline

As part of EERA Sub-Component 2.1, the ARTF is funding gender-focused rehabilitation and construction of school infrastructure to support girls following the increased gender segregation, to promote attendance and reduce the exclusion of girls. UNICEF has been providing support to schools, specifically by enhancing WASH facilities and building boundary walls, to create inclusive spaces where all children can learn.

Between 10 and 30 August 2024, the MA conducted monitoring visits to 46 primary schools (50% of the 93 schools receiving ARTF-funded infrastructure support) across 13 provinces and 36 districts to assess midline progress, as well as ESS compliance. The monitoring approach included on-site observations, interviews with contractors and UNICEF personnel, and document reviews. The findings from this monitoring will be reported in Q4.

WERP Direct Observations of Trainings with Facilitating Partner Staff

The MA directly observed WERP training sessions with Facilitating Partners and conducted exit interviews with participants.⁷ Enumerators took photos of sessions and relevant materials. Direct observations were conducted to confirm that the training sessions took place as scheduled, with content aligned to prepared materials. Observations also recorded the gender of participants and facilitators, the availability of separate rooms or facilities, and the presence of required physical materials (including photographs).

In exit interviews, enumerators gathered participant feedback on the quality and relevance of the training. In Q3, the MA observed three training sessions and conducted exit interviews with 25% of participants in each session in Kabul and Hirat, in line with AKF's work progress. Preliminary findings have been shared with the WB TTL. Further discussions are ongoing, and a quarterly report is being prepared to present findings. The outcomes will be reported in Q4.

Physical Monitoring Design and Development Updates

The MA develops Monitoring Frameworks⁸ as a standard for all new projects or for new components supported by ARTF and IDA Additional Financing. The Monitoring Framework is a technical approach document that outlines the agreed scope of monitoring, information needs, sample sizes, broad activity timing, and access agreements. They are living documents to be updated as and when needed.

The MA updated all Monitoring Frameworks as part of planning for 2025 and in consultation with individual Task Teams/UN agencies and the World Bank Contract Management Unit. During this process, the MA conducted a broad stocktaking exercise across the projects and agreed on several adjustments (see below).












⁷ Direct observations of trainings have continued into Q4. See below for more information.

⁸ Monitoring Frameworks were formerly called Monitoring Protocols. Monitoring Frameworks are a streamlined version of the protocols.

5. Looking Ahead to the Next Quarter

In Q4 2024, financial monitoring reviews will continue for both legacy and current projects, while conducting both in-person and remote physical monitoring activities. The MA workplan includes continued support for Digital Platform users.

Financial Monitoring

<p>DA reconciliation</p> <p>The MA plans to continue with DA reconciliation of projects with WB Client Connection as discussed in the Dubai workshop.</p> 	<p>Liabilities review</p> <p>The MA will coordinate with the WB and Ministry of Finance and continue certification of payments against salaries, non-consulting services, and operating expenses for project liabilities.</p> 	<p>SCRP reviews</p> <p>The MA will continue with the SCR review of CCAP in Q4 2024 and the CCAP cover letter is planned for issuance in Q4 2024.</p> 
<p>CRLP</p> <p>The MA plans to complete testing for expenditure of Q4 2023. The MA also plans to commence testing of expenditure of Q1-Q2 2024.</p> 	<p>EERA</p> <p>HACT audits of expenditure are planned to continue, covering 1 July to 31 December 2023.</p> 	<p>EFSP</p> <p>A financial report of expenditure for the period Q2-Q3 2023 is planned to be submitted and commence review of expenditure for Q4 2023 and Q1 2024.</p> 
<p>HER</p> <p>Audits of expenditure incurred in the period 1 July to 31 December 2023 will continue.</p> 	<p>NCCSP</p> <p>The MA will complete a review of grant expenditure of selected CSOs together with physical monitoring and issue joint report.</p> 	<p>WERP</p> <p>A Cover Letter for review of SoEs will be issued under the component managed by AKF for the period up to Q1 2024. We will commence a review of SoEs covering expenditure for the period Q2 2024.</p> 
<p>MCBP</p> <p>The MA will commence the review of expenditure of seven CPs.</p> 	<p>Review of pre-August 2021 Questionable Expenditure</p> <p>The MA will review additional documents and recommend for documentation resolved expenditure as agreed in the Islamabad workshop, and issue Cover Letters for resolved QE.</p> 	

Physical Monitoring

Maternal and Child Benefit Program (MCBP)

In Q4, the MA will conduct a beneficiary verification census in Kamdesh district in Nuristan province. The census will comprise a door-to-door survey of all households in Kamdesh and is designed to identify both inclusion and exclusion errors⁹. The MA will assess household-level awareness and operationality of available Grievance Response Mechanisms (GRMs) and community outreach/stakeholder engagement mechanisms, as well household wellbeing (assessing livelihood activities, food consumption patterns, internet connectivity) and maternal health practices (assessing food consumption patterns and breastfeeding habits). In addition, the MA will continue to monitor a representative sample of WFP cash disbursements and conduct phone-based Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) following disbursement (PDM surveys the verification of the receipt of assistance, including use and impact of the assistance provided). In November and December 2024, the MA plans to conduct phone interviews with 1,200 beneficiaries across three districts: Zaranj in Nimroz province; Warduj in Badakhshan province; and Kamdesh).

NGO/CSO Capacity Support Project (NCCSP)

In Q4 the MA will conduct a joint physical-financial monitoring activity on the use and impact of sub-grants provided to NGOs. The MA financial monitoring team will verify the receipt and use of sub-grants through SoE reviews, and the MA physical monitoring team will conduct in-person visits to selected NGOs to conduct key informant interviews (KIIs) with the heads of NGOs, review and verify documentation, and collect site photographs. Through in-person visits, the MA will also assess aspects of activity implementation, such as general challenges and potential issues related to female beneficiary engagement, and better understand the impact of the sub-grants on NGO operations.

As part of this activity, the MA plans to conduct phone surveys with 350 indirect beneficiaries, that is, beneficiaries of the projects implemented through the sub-grants, to confirm their participation in project activities and assess their level of satisfaction.

Health Emergency Response (HER)

In Q4, the MA will finalize the design and complete the data collection related to three ad hoc studies:

01

Health Facility Performance study - This ad hoc study will use mixed methods to investigate differences between high- and low-performing health facilities. It will triangulate several data sources including KIIs with health facility staff, interviews with respondents in the catchment areas of HER-funded health facilities on beliefs and attitudes towards health services, and observations of structural factors such as medicines, personnel, and equipment availability, and the physical condition of facilities.

02

Quantified Quality Metric (QQM) study - This ad hoc study will explore the effectiveness and impact of new quality tools and the QQM introduced in the health sector in Afghanistan over the past year. The objective is to probe the perceptions of respondents regarding the usefulness and effectiveness of the new tools and QQM, and how they have impacted health facilities and service providers and their ability to achieve increased quality in service provision in the Afghan health sector.

03

Rational Medicine Use study - This ad hoc study will investigate the rational medicine use among Basic Package of Health Service (BPHS) health facilities. The objective is to assess the extent to which health workers prescribe antibiotics at primary health care facilities, to understand the level of polypharmacy at primary health care level, and to understand if health care workers are following WHO recommendations regarding injection prescriptions at primary health care facilities.

Water Emergency Relief Project (WERP)

In Q4, subject to the receipt of an access letter from the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) and coordination on field access with AKF and UNOPS, the MA plans to conduct ECA verification of

⁹ Inclusion error: someone who has been registered as a beneficiary but does not meet the beneficiary criteria. Exclusion error: someone has not been registered as a beneficiary but meets the criteria.

Community representative groups (CRGs) using the same methodologies as CRLP (described above). The MA plans to assess infrastructure works under UNOPS and AKF to verify work progress, construction quality, and flag any shortcomings.

The MA plans to continue direct observations of training and to conduct exit interviews with participants in line with AKF's and UNOPS' work progress. In addition, the MA plans to observe other AKF and UNOPS training following receipt of project training plans to the end of Q4.

Central Asia-South Asia Electricity Transmission and Trade Project (CASA 1000)

In Q4, subject to the receipt of an access letter from Da Afghanistan Brishna Sherkat (DABS) and confirmation of physical work progress, the MA plans to commence regular infrastructure assessments from December 2024. The infrastructure assessments will comprise an average of 25 location visits each month, subject to progress made by project contractors, and the submission of contractors' invoices to DABS.

Emergency Food Security Project (EFSP)

In Q4, subject to agreement from FAO, the MA plans to conduct outcome monitoring for the following FAO activities that were implemented in 2023: a) wheat seed distribution, b) provision of kitchen gardening kits, and c) Cash For Work.

Education Emergency Response in Afghanistan (EERA)

EERA Round 3 lessons learned were compiled and presented to WB/UNICEF in August 2024 for consideration in EERA Round 4 planning.

EERA Round 4 monitoring data collection is planned to take place from November to December 2024 in line with the completion of the climate-based education academic year in Afghanistan. The monitoring will include physical visits to public schools, Community-Based Education points, schools that have received High-Performance Tents, and endline data collection on infrastructure and WASH interventions.

Unified Monitoring Approach: Financial and Physical Monitoring

The MA has a standard process for joint physical and financial monitoring of infrastructure sub-projects. Field engineers assess physical (construction) progress and record a list of supplies/items used as part of the physical monitoring team's scope. The financial monitoring team quantifies physical progress of these works in financial terms and verifies invoiced items and amounts.

Further, at the request of WB and/or UN agency, the MA may conduct ad hoc reviews, deep-dives, and investigations combining financial monitoring and physical monitoring efforts. These activities may be in response to red flags identified and/or whistleblower allegations or based on questionable documentation reviewed as part of financial monitoring activities. Any joint monitoring will be based on clear terms of reference and procedures agreed in advance with the WB and relevant UN agency.

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