



A 2025 Webinar Series on Climate Action in Afghanistan

Session 5: Climate Finance - December 2, 2025

Five Key Takeaways

1. Access to climate finance in Afghanistan is urgently required to avoid the worst impacts of climate change which are already unfolding in the country and act as a threat multiplier. Despite political challenges, Afghanistan's current stability offers a narrow window to turn fragility into resilience.
2. Afghanistan has historically received extremely limited financing from vertically integrated climate funds, totalling only 56.7M USD in a ten year period from 2014-2024, placing the country among the lowest recipients among an already low-receiving cohort of conflict-affected states.
3. Most vertically funded climate finance to Afghanistan (including pipeline projects) were suspended after the August 2021 political changes, and their resumption challenged by governance gaps, donor mistrust, and political non-recognition.
4. National climate change strategic plans and policies do exist that could help guide and prioritize adaptation and mitigation programming, such as the country's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan.
5. While there has been considerable focus on the suspension of vertical climate funds - there are existing opportunities to do more with existing funding streams by improving coherence and coordination across stakeholders and through private sector engagement which can foster innovative solutions, mobilize investments, and drive sustainable development.

Opening Remarks

Stephen Rodriques, Resident Representative, UNDP opened noting that climate change is not simply an environmental concern, but a threat multiplier that forces displacement, deepens inequalities, and increases the risk of conflict. Mr. Rodriques stressed that the relative stability in Afghanistan is a window of opportunity where smart investments can turn fragility into resilience, and where climate finance is not charity, but an investment in peace and economic recovery. He called on global vertical climate funds including GEF, GCF and Adaptation Fund to unlock resources for Afghanistan, on the de facto authorities to prioritize public investments guided by Afghanistan's NDCs, and the private sector to invest in resilience and green growth.



"Our message is simple: addressing climate fragility in Afghanistan requires urgent financing and action.." - Stephen Rodriques

Lightning Presentations: Key Insights

1. Dima Reda, Founder, Nataji Group and Berghof Foundation Consultant overviewed a study commissioned by the Berghof Foundation on climate finance in Afghanistan, including current opportunities and entry points. From 2014-2024, Afghanistan received only 56.7M USD from vertically integrated climate funds (VIFs), ranking Afghanistan among the lowest recipients of VIF financing among conflict-affected states. Afghanistan received notably more financing for resilience from multilateral development banks (1.8 billion USD from 2015-2023). Ms. Reda recommended engaging VIFs politically to resolve financing to Afghanistan, expanding Afghan participation in global climate





forums, and continuing to utilise off-budget community-centered implementation approaches.

“The inability to engage with Afghan institutions raises questions about long term stability, as the UN and NGOs operate on shorter term project cycles that limit their ability to establish lasting governance structures.” - Dima Reda

2. **Najib Rahman Said, Climate Change Financial Mechanisms Expert, *de facto* National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA)** overviewed the status of completed, ongoing, and pipeline climate finance projects pre- and post-August 2021, showcasing significant challenges and suspensions following August 2021 except minimal progress under GEF. Mr. Said outlined programmatic priority areas for Afghanistan according to its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and climate change strategy under both mitigation and adaptation targets. While mitigation actions center around sustainable agriculture, renewable energy, waste and wastewater management, sustainable transport, and land use, adaptation priorities center around disaster risk management, water and agriculture, biodiversity, national resource management, and public awareness. Capacity, coordination and governance remain critical to both workstreams.

“After 2021, nearly all of these projects were suspended.” - Najibullah Rahman Said



Panel Discussion: Key Messages

1. **Dr. Assem Mayar, Afghan Climate Expert** reflected on his outreach and advocacy efforts with donors and stakeholders to resume climate financing for Afghanistan. He highlighted that Afghanistan faces deep barriers to accessing climate finance due to weak governance, donor mistrust, and non-recognition. Reliance on grants, hesitancy around concessional loans, limited actors, and dependence on UN channels all restrict investment. Meanwhile, climate change impacts intensify, with dramatic economic consequences - for example in drought years losses of around 18% of GDP. While there are opportunities for initiatives, without fairer support and stronger national entities, resilience will remain out of reach for fragile states like Afghanistan.

“If you want to create diversity and create more options for implementation, we need to think about capacity building and legitimising more national implementing entities to implement these funds.” - Dr. Assem Mayer

2. **Najibullah Yusufi, Deputy Portfolio Manager (Climate Resilience Portfolio), UNDP** discussed the challenges of getting approval for the resumption of the GEF-funded Community-Based Climate-Responsive Livelihoods and Forestry (CCLF) project. Mr. Yusufi outlined key considerations around implementation arrangements, robust financial fiduciary mechanisms, risk management, inclusion - particularly of women, and co-financing mechanisms to ensure the project's alignment with GEF policies and procedures. He noted the project is now underway with preliminary assessments in Badakhshan and Kunar provinces, with full-fledged implementation expected in 2026.

“We responded to all the queries of the GEF council to ensure the CCLF project could continue, and it has been very well accepted by the communities.” - Najibullah Yusufi



3. **Hans Christian Johansen, Country Director Afghanistan, ACTED** discussed the process of ACTED accreditation as an NGO under GCF - which took nearly three years and over 1,000 documents. Yet, despite the accreditation, ACTED faces the same overall constraints in accessing GCF funding as outlined by the previous speakers. Besides the vertical funds, Mr. Johansen stressed the critical role NGOs can play in project implementation considering their proximity and ties at the community level, opportunities for INGOs to build local capacity - including of national NGOs, as well as





the criticality of monitoring progress. He stressed, however, that the governance component is critical and cannot be ignored.

“We are in a situation in Afghanistan now where we cannot keep waiting. We need to start these [climate change] projects. It’s already too late, we need to start now.” - Hans C. Johansen.

4. **Bronwen Moore, Country Representative, CRS** reflected on the key consideration of coherence and coordination, noting that while a lot of focus is put on the suspended vertical financing, this may cause stakeholders to overlook and miss opportunities to improve existing efforts and do more with the financing that already exists. Ms. Moore noted the need to ensure the right people are part of the right conversations and coordination forums, with the opportunity to look at systems approaches and reorient existing activities to take improving climate change outcomes into account. She echoed the emphasis on urgency, stating the time to act is now and stakeholders cannot wait on new funding streams to look at improving coordination and coherence both within and between organizations now.



“How can we look at multipliers in existing efforts - what kind of changes can we make now which would have a broader impact in the long term.” - Bronwen Moore

This summary overviews the shared insights from a [webinar convened by Samuel Hall and UNAMA as part of the 2025 Climate Action in Afghanistan Series](#). It brings together humanitarian, development, and technical perspectives to clarify what earlier, more coordinated, and more community-driven climate action must look like in practice. The session brought together:

The [United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan](#) (UNAMA) is a UN Special Political Mission supporting the Afghan people. Its vision is a peaceful, stable, and prosperous Afghanistan where everyone’s rights are respected without discrimination.

[Samuel Hall](#) is a social enterprise that conducts research, evaluates programmes, and analyses data in and on contexts of migration and displacement. Our research connects the voices of communities to changemakers for more inclusive societies.