



Progress update on DACCAAR Climate and Environment Charter Commitments and Targets



Report by: Environment, Climate and Sustainability Commi

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Executive summary

DACAAR remains committed to translating the Climate and Environment Charter commitments into tangible actions that strengthen climate resilience, environmental sustainability, and community-led adaptation across Afghanistan. As climate change continues to deepen humanitarian needs through prolonged droughts, groundwater depletion, environmental degradation, and increasing disaster risks in Afghanistan, DACAAR continues to integrate climate and environmental considerations into its strategic frameworks, programs, operations, and partnerships. This report presents progress made up to June 2026 against the six Charter commitments made by DACAAR and their associated targets.

The organization made important advances in institutionalizing environmental sustainability. DACAAR adopted and operationalized its Environment, Climate and Sustainability Policy and established the Environment, Climate and Sustainability Committee to oversee implementation and accountability. Significant progress has been achieved in strengthening climate adaptation and resilience within DACAAR's programming. Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) principles have been integrated into strategic and thematic frameworks, while climate awareness and environmental sustainability have been promoted among staff across all regions of operation. DACAAR continues to expand climate-smart agriculture, sustainable land and water management, green energy technologies and ecosystem restoration initiatives, contributing to improved food security, increased vegetation cover, enhanced water conservation, and strengthened community resilience to climate shocks. DACAAR further strengthened groundwater protection by integrating hydrogeological assessments, yield testing, recharge analysis, and safe abstraction limits into water supply projects, ensuring evidence-based groundwater management and reducing the risk of over-extraction. Environmental risk assessments and climate screening tools are now integrated into project design and proposal development, enabling early identification and mitigation of environmental risks. Building organizational capacity and promoting evidence-based decision-making has been another major achievement where staff members received specialized training on climate adaptation technologies, environmental and social impact assessment, climate risks, and environmental management. Water Management Committees, water user groups, and local operators have been trained to manage and maintain water systems, promote responsible water use, and support long-term sustainability of infrastructure investments. DACAAR has also expanded collaboration and advocacy efforts at different levels. Groundwater monitoring data are regularly shared to support evidence-based decision-making. The organization is also an active member of regional climate networks, including the Climate Action Network South Asia (CANSAs) and the All-India Disaster Mitigation Institute (AIDMI). These engagements have enhanced knowledge exchange, policy dialogue, and advocacy on climate resilience, groundwater management, and environmental sustainability.



Overall, DACAAR has achieved substantial progress across most of its Climate and Environment Charter commitments, with several targets already completed and others progressing according to schedule, summarized on the targets versus progress dashboard (page 13). Key priorities moving forward include finalizing the organizational carbon footprint baseline, establish and implement GHG reduction strategies, further mainstreaming climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction across all programs, and continuing to scale up sustainable and community-led solutions.

Acronyms

AIDMI	All-India Disaster Mitigation Institute
ANDMA	Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority
CANSA	Climate Action Network South Asia
CCA	Climate Change Adaptation
COP 30	Conference of Parties 30
DACAAR	Danish Committee for Aid to Afghan Refugees
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
ECHO	European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
ECSC	Environment, Climate and Sustainability Committee
EPTDO	Environmental Protection, Training and Development Organization
ESIA	Environmental and Social Impact Assessment
FRLD	Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage
GHG	Greenhouse gas
HCC	Humanitarian Carbon Calculator
NEAT+	Nexus Environmental Assessment Tool
NGO	Non- Governmental Organization
NRM	Natural Resources Management
SSED	Small- scale Enterprise Development
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Education
WEO	Women Economic Opportunities
WMC	Water Management Committee

Progress against commitments and targets

Commitment 1: Step up our response to growing humanitarian needs and help people adapt to the impacts of climate and environmental crises.	
Target	Status and progress report
<p>Target 1: By 2026, all our staff and programs will be climate aware.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DACAAR Strategic framework (2026-28) places climate resilience and environmental sustainability a priority (Strategic Objective 2). This is also reflected in the updated thematic strategies (WASH, NRM, WEO, SSED), where climate and environmental considerations are explicitly integrated. DACAAR strategic framework and the Environment, Climate and Sustainability Policy were shared with all staff, rolling out is ongoing. • The organization conducted climate awareness sessions and presentations to the field staff in all the regions of operation. Staff climate awareness included guidance on promoting environmentally responsible and climate smart practices, for example, groundwater protection, waste management, and tree planting. • Climate and environment training sessions were conducted for key and relevant staff in 2025 covering the following sessions: Climate change adaptation technologies, Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA), Impacts of climate change on environment and water systems, Solid waste management technologies. • A training targeting female staff was also conducted in 2026 on environment and climate to increase their knowledge and awareness, and they can now share this information with beneficiaries in the target areas to raise awareness about environmental sustainability and climate change resilience.
	
<p>Figure 1: 2025 staff training sessions on climate and environment</p>	
<p>Target 2: By 2026, introduce</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drip and sprinkler irrigation systems have been established in targeted communities to avoid over-extraction of groundwater. By the end of 2025, 49 hectares supporting 250

<p>effective irrigation techniques and capacity building for farmers (drip and sprinkler irrigation systems, awareness to avoid over-extraction of groundwater).</p>	<p>orchards were established, and 8 greenhouses were supported, equipped with drip irrigation systems.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DACAAR organized awareness programs and training for farmers on sustainable water use and drip and sprinkler irrigation techniques. In 2025, 4000 farmers and beneficiaries received training on these water conservation and sustainable practices. Training emphasized sustainable land and water management, mulching, IPM, and drip irrigation techniques, equipping farmers with the knowledge and tools needed to adapt to environmental challenges while improving productivity. • All DACAAR interventions are coordinated at all levels, starting with the local structures for necessary follow-up at the subnational and community level to manage the natural resources sustainably. The coordination included the introduction of the effective irrigation systems. • DACAAR’s WASH programme integrates groundwater monitoring, water quality assurance, and sustainable infrastructure management to ensure safe, reliable, and environmentally responsible water supply systems. A key advancement was the systematic implementation of hydrogeological assessments for all our projects prior to drilling, ensuring that groundwater development is guided by evidence-based decision-making. These assessments routinely included yield testing, analysis of groundwater level trends, and estimation of natural recharge rates, generating reliable data to assess site viability and determine safe abstraction limits. Based on these findings, well-specific pumping rates were defined in accordance with aquifer capacity, reducing the risk of over-extraction and extending the operational lifespan of water sources.
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Figure 2: Effective irrigation systems promoted by DACAAR

<p>Target 3: By 2027, CCA and DRR will be mainstreamed into all</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) is integrated across DACAAR’s Natural Resource Management (NRM) programming through the promotion of climate-smart agriculture, sustainable land and water management, and ecosystem restoration. Interventions included the establishment of orchards, agroforestry systems, drought-adapted nurseries, drought-tolerant crops, greenhouse and vegetable production, livestock improvement, and backyard poultry farming, alongside environmentally responsible practices such as drip
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<p>programs, adapting our programs to support resilience to climate and environmental risks.</p>	<p>irrigation, mulching, integrated pest management, and regenerative farming. Under the EU-funded project, 300 orchards were established and 675 jeribs of land were cultivated for vegetable production, contributing to improved livelihoods, food security, increased vegetation cover, and enhanced climate resilience. In addition, 70 environmental awareness sessions reached 1,750 community members, while 19 water-saving structures were constructed to improve water conservation, reduce losses, and strengthen agricultural productivity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DACAAR is committed to DRR integration, an updated DRM strategy highlights this integration. New project concept notes and proposals consider DRR measures in project designing. Disaster Risk Management (DRM) structures are being established to strengthen community preparedness and resilience against natural hazards and climate-related risks. • Program staff under the ECHO funded DRR project were trained on integrating DRR measures into programming. Periodic reviews are being done to assess how well programs align with CCA and DRR strategies.
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Commitment 2: Maximize the environmental sustainability of our work and rapidly reduce our greenhouse gas emissions in line with the principle of "do no harm."



<p>Target 1: By 2025, adopt a new environmental policy and establish an Environmental Sustainability Committee.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DACAAR successfully collaborated with internal environment and climate experts through the Environment, Climate and Sustainability Committee (ECSC) to develop an Environmental Sustainability Policy, which was updated in 2026 to the Environment, Climate and Sustainability Policy. The policy incorporates sustainable practices, waste reduction, energy efficiency, climate resilience, responsible resource management, and green operations, while aligning with national environmental regulations and international frameworks. The policy also establishes implementation, monitoring, and accountability mechanisms to ensure the integration of environmental sustainability across DACAAR's programmes and operations. • DACAAR established the Environment, Climate and Sustainability Committee (ECSC), comprising representatives from key departments including Technical Coordination, Natural Resource Management, Women's Economic Opportunities, Regional Management, Climate and Environment, and Donor Compliance. The committee has been formally mandated through the Environment, Climate and Sustainability Policy to oversee policy implementation, monitor environmental performance, ensure compliance with environmental standards, review progress, and provide strategic guidance, thereby strengthening organizational accountability and decision-making on sustainability and climate-related matters. • A workplan was developed by the ECS Committee with clear indicators and targets to track progress on implementation of the ECS Policy. The first ECS policy report was produced for the year 2025.
<p>Target 2: By 2026, calculate your</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DACAAR developed a Carbon Footprint Calculation Methodology based on the Humanitarian Carbon Calculator (HCC), establishing a structured framework for collecting organizational greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions data. The methodology defines



<p>organization's carbon footprint.</p>	<p>organizational boundaries, identifies key emission sources, and outlines data collection requirements for electricity consumption, vehicle and generator fuel use, air travel, waste generation, and staff numbers. Roles and responsibilities have been assigned to relevant departments to support the systematic collection, validation, and consolidation of carbon-related data for baseline calculations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The methodology will be used to establish 2026 baseline carbon footprint for DACCAAR Headquarters, calculating total emissions, identifying major emission sources, tracking future emission trends, and develop reduction strategies. • Efforts to reduce our carbon footprint are underway, embracing solar energy and reducing generator use. A green operations guideline and procedure developed to support these efforts.
<p>Target 3: By 2026, assess environmental risks and implement mitigation measures.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DACCAAR strengthened its environmental risk assessment processes by integrating environmental and climate screening into project design and proposal development. Environmental assessments are conducted using tools such as NEAT+ and a newly developed Climate and Environmental Assessment Checklist for Water Supply Projects, which evaluates potential impacts related to water resources, biodiversity, waste generation, resource use, energy consumption, pollution, climate risks, and community health. These assessments help identify environmental and climate-related risks early in the project cycle and inform environmentally responsible project planning and implementation. • Through the application of the Water Supply Climate and Environmental Assessment Checklist, potential risks such as groundwater contamination, resource overuse, waste generation, pollution, soil erosion, flooding, and climate-related impacts are systematically assessed. The assessment process includes the development of mitigation measures and recommendations that are incorporated into project designs to minimize environmental impacts and promote sustainable resource management. • DACCAAR has incorporated environmental monitoring and review mechanisms into its Environment, Climate and Sustainability framework to track the implementation and effectiveness of mitigation measures throughout project implementation. Environmental and climate risks identified during assessments are regularly reviewed through project monitoring, field supervision, and environmental compliance processes, enabling adaptive management and continuous improvement of mitigation actions. Lessons learned from implementation are used to strengthen future project design and environmental safeguards.
<p>Commitment 3: Guided by the leadership and experience of local actors and communities.</p>	
<p>Target 1: By 2025, promote water metering in the water supply system and train Water Management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DACCAAR piloted the installation of household-level water meters in selected high-priority water supply schemes to improve monitoring, accountability, and sustainable management of water resources. The initiative was complemented by hydrogeological assessments to determine safe pumping rates based on aquifer capacity and the introduction of transparent fee collection mechanisms to support operation and maintenance costs. Combined with the promotion of solar-powered and gravity-fed water systems, the use of water meters has helped reduce the risk of over-extraction, encourage

<p>Committees (WMC).</p>	<p>responsible water use, strengthen financial sustainability, and improve the long-term functionality of community water supply services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community engagement remains a key component of WASH interventions. Water Management Committees (WMC) have been established in target communities and trained in governance, operation, and maintenance of water systems. Local valve men and mechanics have also received technical training and were equipped with maintenance toolkits. Continuous capacity-building and hygiene promotion activities are ongoing to strengthen local ownership and ensure the long-term functionality and environmentally responsible operation of WASH infrastructure. Water user groups were established to collectively manage irrigation systems, fostering cooperation, sustainable water use, and conflict resolution among stakeholders.
<p>Target 2: By 2026, set up disaster risk committees, provide DRR training, and register them with provincial authorities (ANDMA).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Under the DP project, DACAAR established 99 community disaster preparedness committees to spearhead disaster preparedness and response activities at local and community level. Capacity strengthening of these committees was conducted on the following themes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community-Based Disaster Risk Reduction (CBDRR) Training First Aid Training Search and Rescue Training Participatory Capacity and Vulnerability Assessment (PCVA) Training Community Contingency Plan Development related training sessions Currently, the CDPCs have been established as community-based institutional structures to support disaster preparedness and risk reduction activities at the local level. Currently, there is no formal procedure or mechanism in place for their registration with ANDMA.
<p>Commitment 4: Increase our capacity to understand climate and environmental risks and develop evidence-based solutions.</p>	
<p>Target 1: By 2025, train relevant staff in integrating climate and environmental risks into programs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specialized training curricula were developed and delivered covering key climate change and environmental sustainability topics, including Climate Change Adaptation Technologies, Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA), Climate Change Impacts on Environment and Water Systems, Solid Waste Management Technologies. The training content focused on strengthening staff capacity to understand climate and environmental risks and apply sustainable approaches in program design and implementation. Training materials were aligned with operational priorities and the environmental and climate context of Afghanistan. A total of 75 staff members from Operations and Program departments participated in the climate and environment training program. Participants included managers, specialists, officers, and technical staff, ensuring broad institutional coverage. The trainings enhanced staff capacity to integrate climate and environmental considerations into project planning and implementation, apply ESIA processes in WASH, agriculture, and infrastructure projects, assess environmental risks and climate impacts during site selection and project design, promote climate-resilient and environmentally

	<p>sustainable practices within communities, and develop and implement climate-resilient WASH and natural resource management interventions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation of level of climate awareness done before and after the training. Based on the survey findings for the four training sessions conducted, it can be concluded that the training was well received, relevant to staff roles, and valued for their contribution to organizational effectiveness. The sessions have proven effective in enhancing staff knowledge, and the staff are using the knowledge in their day-to-day work.
<p>Target 2: By 2025, collect local knowledge on ‘good practices and experiences for climate-smart activities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field visits, community consultations, and stakeholder interviews were conducted across project implementation areas to identify and document local climate adaptation and mitigation practices. Information was collected from communities, project beneficiaries, technical staff, and local institutions, focusing on practical approaches that enhance climate resilience, environmental sustainability, and natural resource management. As a result, a range of lessons learned, best practices, and success stories were documented, highlighting effective community-led and project-supported climate smart practices. • The documented lessons learned, best practices, and case studies were shared with staff and relevant stakeholders through internal communication channels, technical meetings, workshops, and knowledge-sharing platforms. This facilitated cross-program learning, promoted replication of successful approaches, and strengthened organizational capacity to integrate climate and environmental considerations into future programming. <p>The lessons learn and best practices collected, and the case studies are shared with the staff and relevant stakeholders. (see Annexes for the case stories)</p>
<p>Target 3: By 2026, develop and recommend innovative technologies in groundwater monitoring.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DACAAR acquired a geo-scanner, an advanced tool for geo-physical investigations and groundwater assessments. The geo-scanner helps identify underground features without excavation. It works by measuring the physical properties of subsurface materials, such as electrical resistivity, electromagnetic conductivity, or seismic wave behavior, to create an image of what lies beneath the ground. • A trainer from the company enhanced the technical skills of the relevant DACAAR staff, and the equipment is highly suitable.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The equipment has improved the groundwater monitoring work of DACAAR. <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: flex-start;"> <div style="background-color: #333; color: white; padding: 20px; text-align: center;"> <p>STEM ELECTROMAGNETIC DEVICES (GEO SCANNER)</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>Difficult Transportation More Staff More Time More Spaces</p>  <p>SYSCAL Pro</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>Easy Transportation Less Staff Less Time Less Spaces</p>  <p>sTEM (Electromagnetic)</p> </div> </div> <p>Figure 3: Geo- scanner</p>
<p>Target 4: By 2026, use weather forecasts and climate science to inform operations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly FEWS NET reports (October–May), including Afghanistan-specific monitoring plots generated through SMPG at regional, provincial, district, livelihood zone, and basin levels, are being used and incorporated into program design and planning processes, especially for NRM activities. These forecasts provide early insights into rainfall patterns, temperature trends, drought risks, vegetation conditions, and water availability, enabling timely adjustments to project activities and mitigation of potential climate-related disruptions. The same reports are also useful in climate risk and vulnerability assessment to guide the selection and implementation of climate adaptation measures.
<p>Commitment 5: Collaborate across the humanitarian sector and beyond to strengthen climate and environmental action.</p>	
<p>Target 1: By 2025, share DACAAR groundwater monitoring data with WASH clusters, NGOs, universities, and other relevant organizations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A proper mechanism has been established for data sharing with relevant organizations and academic institutions for research purposes. Data confidentiality is ensured, and all participating organizations will cite DACAAR as the source of the information. The groundwater monitoring data is shared with the WASH Cluster and all partners to inform policy makers, programs and decisions on the groundwater situation in the country.
<p>Target 2: By 2025, establish partnerships with the private</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A partnership agreement was signed with the sTEM company to train the DACAAR staff in using the innovative technologies and groundwater monitoring and modelling

sector in geophysical modeling for groundwater.	techniques. New equipment was purchased, and the training was delivered to the DACAAR staff early in 2025.
Target 3: By 2025, participate in meetings where climate and environmental information are shared.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attended the World Water Week in Sweden and also participated in many climate conferences and events in-house. • Actively participating and contributing to the Afghanistan CANSA.
Commitment 6: Mobilize urgent and more ambitious climate action and environmental protection.	
Target 1: By 2025, join the South Asian Climate Action Network and EPTDO.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DACAAR has become an active member of the Climate Action Network South Asia (CANSA) and the All-India Disaster Mitigation Institute (AIDMI) network. Membership in these regional platforms has strengthened DACAAR’s engagement in climate change adaptation, environmental sustainability, disaster risk reduction, and resilience-building initiatives through participation in knowledge-sharing, advocacy, capacity-building, and networking activities. As part of its commitment to expanding its engagement in global climate processes. Through participation in CANSA and AIDMI activities, DACAAR has increased access to regional expertise, best practices, policy dialogues, and collaborative opportunities, further supporting the integration of climate resilience and disaster risk reduction into its programs and operations. • DACAAR also completed and submitted its application for registration as an Observer Organization to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Once registered, this milestone positions the organization to enhance its contribution to international climate discussions and strengthen the representation of Afghanistan’s climate and environmental priorities within global forums.

- As an active member of the Climate Action Network South Asia (CANSA) Afghanistan Chapter, DACAAR contributed to collective climate advocacy efforts calling for the inclusion of Afghan voices in global climate processes, particularly COP30. Through CANSA, DACAAR joined national and international civil society organizations in advocating for equitable access to climate finance, participation of Afghan experts and civil society in climate dialogues, and the depoliticization of climate action in Afghanistan. The organization also supported policy engagement and knowledge-sharing initiatives, contributing to climate resilience planning, stakeholder capacity development, and



community-based adaptation efforts aimed at strengthening Afghanistan's response to climate change.

Figure 4: CANSA Afghanistan members

- DACAAR also supported and signed the open letter on the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage (FRLD) Strategy, which had meaningful demands in the call for climate justice across the global space. Being part of this collective and coordinated effort in amplifying voices of the affected and vulnerable communities suffering the consequences of global warming and climate change is critical. The funding gap for loss and damage is very big, compared to the needs requiring more civil society organizations to speak with one voice.

Target 2: By 2026, present on the state of groundwater in Afghanistan at 2 international conferences.

- DACAAR's hydrogeology team prepares comprehensive reports on the state of groundwater, incorporating findings from DACAAR's monitoring efforts on an annual basis.
- DACAAR produced an abstract report on the groundwater monitoring status and submitted for the 2026 World Groundwater Conference in Budapest Hungary. The abstract has been accepted and DACAAR was also invited to present its groundwater monitoring findings at the South Asia Conference in Sri Lanka. Unfortunately, we have not received a visa for either of the events to participate.

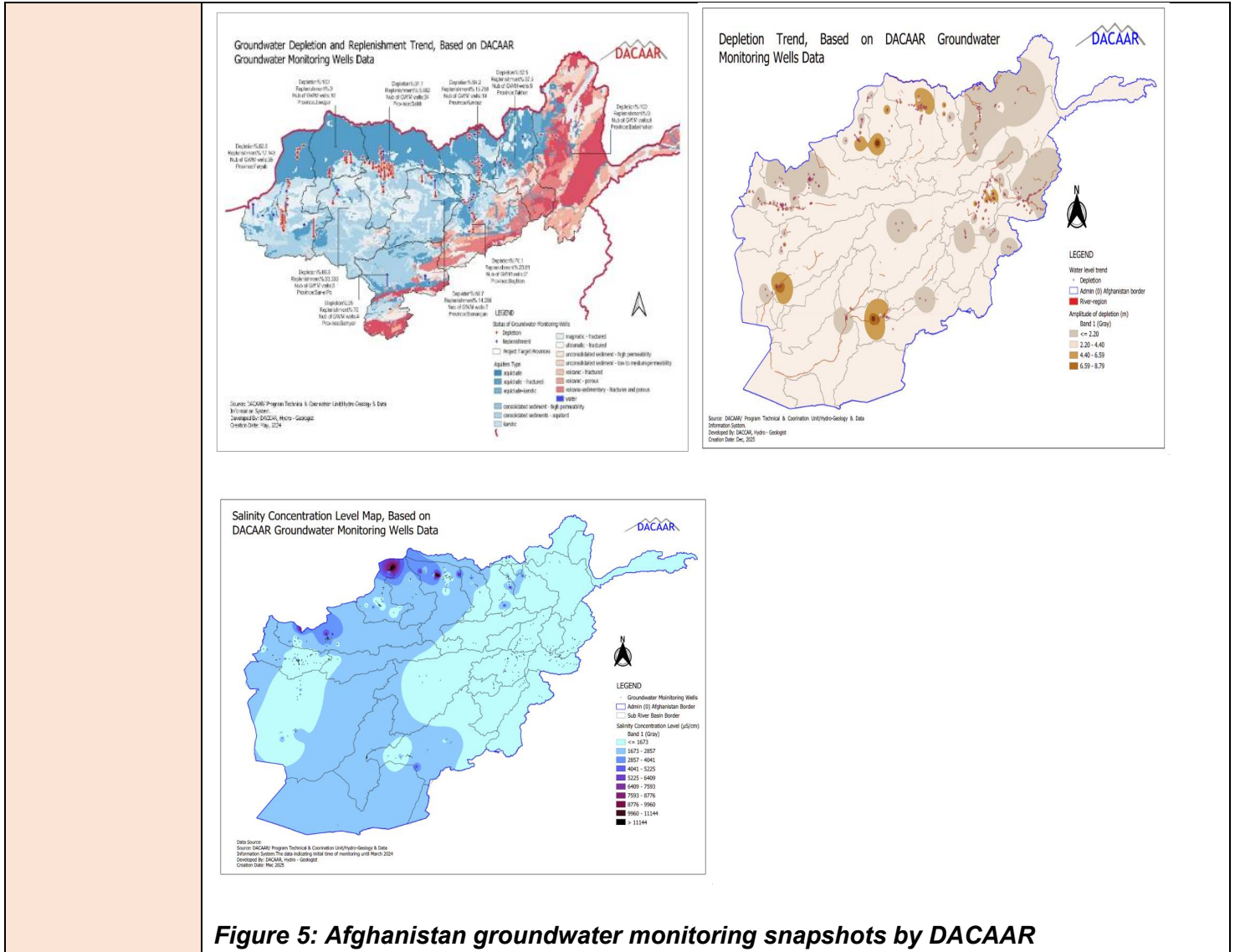


Figure 5: Afghanistan groundwater monitoring snapshots by DACAAR

Targets versus progress dashboard

***Traffic-light scoring key:** ● **Green**- Completed and targets achieved; ● **Amber**- ongoing and on track; ● **Red**- Off track, immediate management action required

Commitments	Targets	Status
Commitment 1: Step up our response to growing humanitarian needs and help people adapt to the impact of the climate crises	Target 1: By 2026, all our staff and programs will be climate aware.	●
	Target 2: By 2026, introduce effective irrigation techniques and capacity building for farmers (drip and sprinkler irrigation systems, awareness to avoid over-extraction of groundwater).	●
	Target 3: By 2027, CCA and DRR will be mainstreamed into all programs, adapting our programs to support resilience to climate and environmental risks.	●

Commitments	Targets	Status
Commitment 2: Maximize environmental sustainability and reduce GHG emissions	Target 1: By 2025, adopt a new environmental policy and establish an Environmental Sustainability Committee.	●
	Target 2: By 2026, calculate your organization's carbon footprint.	●
	Target 3: By 2026, assess environmental risks and implement mitigation measures.	●
Commitment 3: Be guided by leadership and experience of local actors and communities	Target 1: By 2025, promote water metering in the water supply system and train Water Management Committees (WMC).	●
	Target 2: By 2026, set up disaster risk committees, provide DRR training, and register them with provincial authorities (ANDMA).	●
Commitment 4: Increase capacity and evidence-based solutions	Target 1: By 2025, train relevant staff in integrating climate and environmental risks into programs.	●
	Target 2: By 2025, collect local knowledge on 'good practices and experiences for climate-smart activities.	●
	Target 3: By 2026, develop and recommend innovative technologies in groundwater monitoring.	●
	Target 4: By 2026, use weather forecasts and climate science to inform operations.	●
Commitment 5: Work collaboratively across the sector	Target 1: By 2025, share DACAAR groundwater monitoring data with WASH clusters, NGOs, universities, and other relevant organizations.	●
	Target 2: By 2025, establish partnerships with the private sector in geophysical modelling for groundwater.	●
	Target 3: By 2025, participate in meetings where climate and environmental information are shared.	●
Commitment 6: Mobilize ambitious climate action and environmental protection	Target 1: By 2025, join the South Asian Climate Action Network and EPTDO.	●
	Target 2: By 2026, present on the state of groundwater in Afghanistan at 2 international conferences.	●

Case Stories

Case Story 1 : From economic hardship to sustainable livelihoods – Ms. Aziza, Faryab Province, Afghanistan



Background: Ms. Aziza, a resident of Sarbulaq village in Maimana District, Faryab Province, is the mother of nine children. For many years, her family faced severe economic hardship. To support her household, she worked in rug weaving, an exhausting and time-consuming activity that generated very limited income despite her continuous efforts. Her husband worked as a daily laborer, an unstable occupation that provided no fixed or reliable earnings. As a result, the family struggled to meet basic needs, including food, clothing, healthcare, and educational expenses such as notebooks, pens, and school uniforms. At times, they relied on assistance from others to survive. The persistent financial pressure created stress within the household, leading to tension and uncertainty about the future.

DACAAR interventions: Ms. Aziza's circumstances began to change when she learned about DACAAR's livelihood support program aimed at empowering vulnerable women through sustainable agricultural opportunities. She applied for assistance and, following a household assessment conducted by DACAAR staff and recommendations from the village representative and mosque imam, she was selected as an eligible beneficiary. Through the project, DACAAR supported Ms. Aziza with the installation of a 210-square-meter greenhouse equipped with a drip irrigation system. She also received improved tomato and cucumber seeds, as well as practical on-the-job training covering greenhouse vegetable production and harvesting, line and row planting techniques, pest and disease management, efficient irrigation practices, proper use of animal and organic fertilizers, hygiene standards, processing, packaging, marketing, and the sale of agricultural products.

Although Ms. Aziza had long been interested in vegetable cultivation, she lacked the technical knowledge and skills required for productive farming. Through continuous mentoring and technical support from DACAAR staff, she gradually developed the competencies needed to manage greenhouse production successfully. She learned how to prepare planting beds, maintain appropriate spacing between plants and rows, manage irrigation according to crop requirements and climatic conditions, and improve water-use efficiency. According to Ms. Aziza, prior to the training she had limited understanding of proper irrigation practices. She now appreciates how



drip irrigation delivers water directly to plant roots, reducing water losses while improving crop growth and productivity.

Results and impact: The adoption of improved greenhouse production techniques enabled Ms. Aziza to achieve high yields from a relatively small area of land within a short period. As a result, her income increased significantly. She now earns approximately AFN 60,000 from each cucumber production cycle and around AFN 19,000 from each vegetable cycle. The increased income has transformed the living conditions of her family. She is now able to cover household expenses, including food, clothing, healthcare, and her children's educational needs. Family nutrition has improved through increased access to fresh vegetables, and her children attend school with greater confidence and peace of mind. Ms. Aziza explains that she no longer worries about the future because she has a stable and reliable source of income. Through year-round cultivation of off-season vegetables in her greenhouse, she continues to generate regular earnings and strengthen her household's economic resilience.

Environmental and community benefits: In addition to improving household income, the intervention has generated environmental benefits. The drip irrigation system reduces water consumption by delivering water directly to the root zone, minimizing wastage and increasing irrigation efficiency. The use of animal manure and organic fertilizers improves soil fertility, reduces dependence on chemical inputs, and contributes to the protection of soil, water resources, and human health. The greenhouse also enables year-round production and efficient use of limited land resources, demonstrating a practical model of climate-smart and sustainable agriculture.

The project has positively influenced not only Ms. Aziza's family but also the wider community. Reduced financial stress has contributed to greater harmony within her household, while local access to fresh vegetables has reduced the need for community members to travel long distances to markets. Inspired by her success, other women in the village have expressed strong interest in adopting greenhouse cultivation. As she plans to expand her activities by renting additional land, Ms. Aziza voluntarily shares her knowledge and experience with other women, encouraging them to engage in greenhouse farming as a pathway to self-reliance and economic empowerment.

Conclusion: Ms. Aziza's journey demonstrates how targeted livelihood support, combined with practical skills development and climate-smart agricultural technologies, can transform the lives of vulnerable households. Once dependent on low-paying and labor-intensive work, she has become a successful greenhouse producer and the primary breadwinner for her family. For Ms. Aziza, greenhouse cultivation represents far more than an agricultural activity, it marks the beginning of a new chapter characterized by economic stability, dignity, self-reliance, and hope for the future.

Case story 2: Supporting a female-headed household through kitchen gardening, Nangarhar Province, Afghanistan.



Background: Mrs. Jamila, a resident of Papin village in Haska Mina District of Nangarhar Province, is the head of a household caring for five young children. Her family’s survival depends largely on a small 400-square-meter plot of land that she owns.

“My entire family depends on the harvest from this land. Because I could not afford to buy vegetables from the market, I had no choice but to rely on what I could grow myself to feed my children.” Mrs. Jamilla.

Despite her determination, Jamila faced serious challenges. Limited financial resources prevented her from purchasing quality vegetable seeds, and she lacked knowledge of standard cultivation and irrigation practices. As a result, her production was low and insufficient to meet her family’s nutritional needs. To compensate, Jamila and her young children were forced to work on other people’s farms to earn additional food, an exhausting and difficult burden for her family.

DACAAR interventions: In 2025, DACAAR, building on lessons learned from previous programs and community needs assessments, launched a kitchen-garden initiative targeting 420 rural women across several districts of Nangarhar Province. The program was designed to strengthen women’s livelihoods while respecting local cultural practices and promoting environmental sustainability. Kitchen gardens encourage diversified crop cultivation, which creates habitats for beneficial insects, birds, and soil organisms that support natural ecological cycles. The use of animal manure and homemade compost improves soil fertility while reducing environmental pollution. Producing fresh vegetables at home also reduces reliance on markets and transportation, thereby lowering household expenses and greenhouse-gas emissions. In addition, the program enhances the knowledge and skills of women and children in sustainable agriculture, natural resource management, plant life cycles, and healthy nutrition.

Transformation in Jamila’s life: Mrs. Jamila actively participated in the kitchen-garden program and received improved vegetable seeds, including tomatoes, okra, peppers, eggplant, onions,



pumpkin, coriander, garlic, and radishes, along with essential gardening tools and a vegetable-processing kit. She also took part in on-the-job training on:

- Standard vegetable cultivation techniques
- Proper irrigation practices
- Composting and soil conservation
- Pest management
- Vegetable processing and preservation

“Participating in DACCAAR’s kitchen-garden program transformed my life. My harvest has increased significantly. Not only can I meet my family’s needs, but I also sell surplus vegetables in the local market,” Mrs. Jamilla.

Mrs. Jamilla now processes part of her produce into pickles, sauces, and chutneys, which she sells to neighbors and nearby villages at good prices. The income generated enables her to purchase essential household items and cover her children’s education-related expenses, including notebooks, pens, and school uniforms. Today, Jamila proudly describes herself as an independent woman, supporting her family through her own land while also contributing to environmental protection.

Conclusion: The kitchen-garden program in Nangarhar Province demonstrates how sustainable, community-based interventions can empower rural women economically while promoting environmental conservation. Jamila’s experience highlights that investing in women’s skills, knowledge, and access to resources not only improves household food security and income but also contributes significantly to local development and long-term environmental sustainability.