



INVESTING IN SELF-RELIANCE IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE AFGHAN PEOPLE

NAC Strategy 2026 – 2030



Afghanistan – Compounding Crises and Persistent Development Challenges

Afghanistan remains affected by a protracted humanitarian crisis and continues to face persistent challenges, driven by regional conflicts and instability, poverty, environmental degradation, increasing climate-related hazards, and shifting national policies and priorities. These challenges have been further intensified by the return of millions of Afghans from neighbouring countries, placing additional strain on already fragile livelihoods and the well-being of communities. Economic decline and limited opportunities for income generation, along with high unemployment continue to undermine livelihoods. Rural communities are amongst the most vulnerable, facing persistent food insecurity, limited access to healthcare and other basic services, natural hazards, and recurrent emergencies. Women and girls are disproportionately impacted by these constraints which further increase their economic and social vulnerabilities.

Recent cuts in development and humanitarian aid by most donor countries have severely impacted UN agencies, national and international NGOs, and other civil society organisations and their ability to support the Afghan people. International sanctions continue to restrict financial systems, international engagement, and development programming.



Our role and contribution

For more than forty-five years, the Norwegian Afghanistan Committee (NAC) has worked with rural communities across Afghanistan, maintaining a continuous presence through periods of crisis and instability. This long-term solidarity-based engagement has enabled NAC to deliver contextually adapted, community-based responses that address immediate humanitarian and health needs whilst supporting sustainable livelihoods. NAC's experience demonstrates that sustained engagement is essential for building self-reliance, resilience, and stability in fragile contexts, where short-term interventions alone cannot address the structural drivers of vulnerability. By remaining present and accountable to the communities we are working with, we aim to support these communities – not only to survive ongoing crises, but to build a healthier, more secure, and sustainable future.

Vision and goals

Vision

A peaceful Afghanistan where communities overcome poverty and aid dependency and where people live in an inclusive and equitable society.

Goal

People and communities in Afghanistan are self-reliant, live free from poverty, and have access to quality services.

Objectives

Food security, natural resource management and sustainable livelihoods: Improved food and livelihood security, self-reliance, and resilience to the impacts of climate change, natural hazards, and other shocks for income-poor rural households.

Lifelong learning: Improved lifelong learning opportunities enabling people in rural, hard-to-reach, and income-poor communities to strengthen their self-reliance and enhance social and economic opportunities.

Quality health and rehabilitation services: Improved access for income-poor women, children, adolescent girls, and persons with disabilities and disabling health conditions to quality health and rehabilitation services.

Humanitarian response: Lives saved, hunger and suffering alleviated, and human dignity and rights in humanitarian crises safeguarded.

Strategic advocacy for systemic change and effective resource mobilisation: Increased national and international support for rural Afghan communities and for those most vulnerable to exclusion and marginalisation.

Values and principles

NAC is a membership-based solidarity organisation. For NAC, solidarity embodies the values of equality, inclusivity, friendship, and respect, which form the foundation of our identity and guide our behaviour. These values are reflected in our actions and create impact through trust, transparency, responsibility, and positive change. Adaptability enables us to evolve, ensuring we remain effective and relevant in a changing world.

In practice, our values are embedded in a set of core principles that ensure relevance, inclusivity, and accountability in all interventions. We are committed to promoting equity, diversity, and inclusivity across geographic areas, among diverse ethnic groups, genders, and persons with and without disabilities and disabling health conditions, and among other population groups vulnerable to exclusion and marginalisation.

We are committed to the humanitarian principles, uphold strict anti-corruption standards, and promote transparency and integrity in all operations. NAC remains in solidarity with the Afghan people, regardless of which government is in place.

Alignment with international and national frameworks and strategies

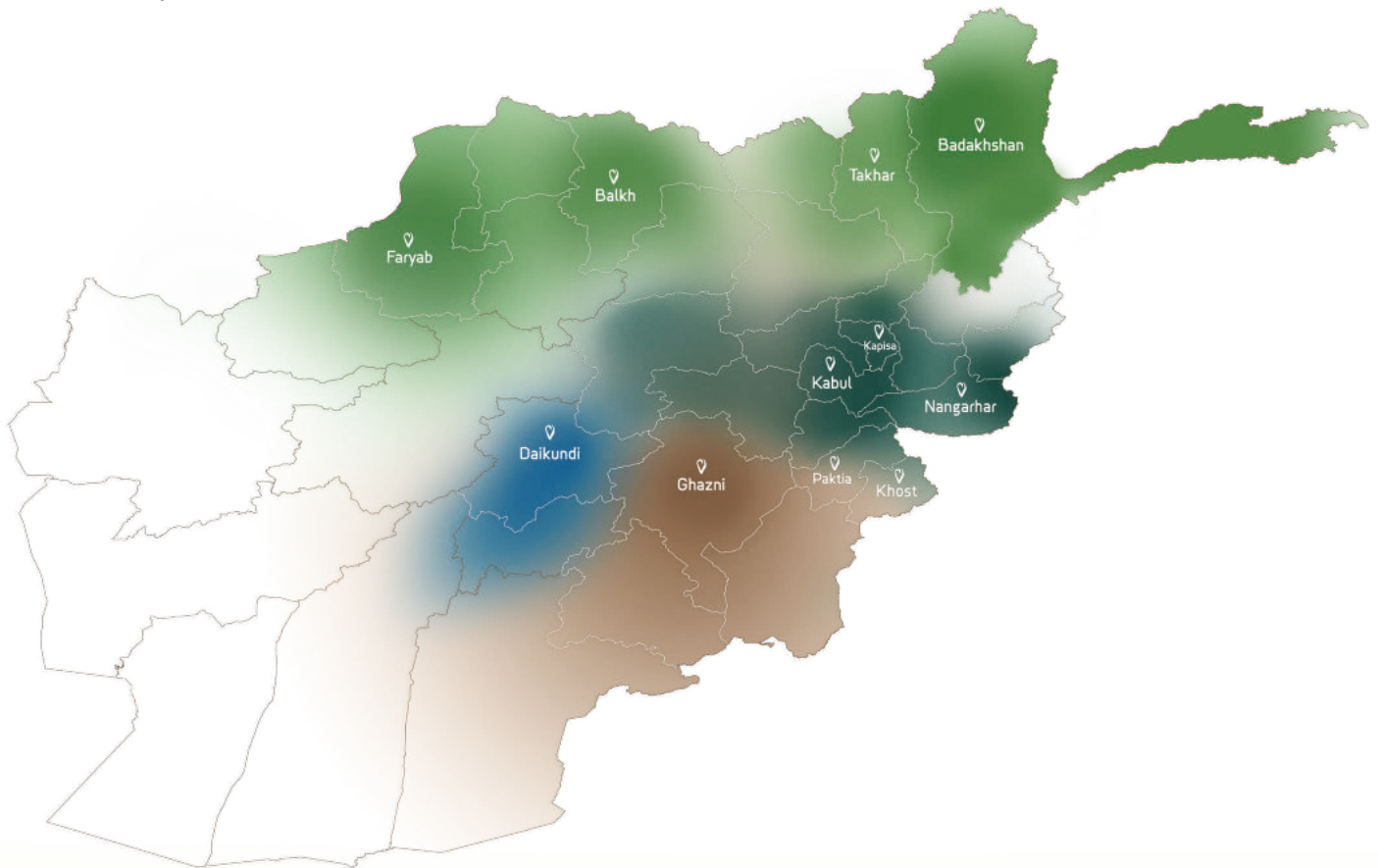
NAC's strategy is anchored in the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the UN Conventions on Human Rights, the Rights of the Child, the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The strategic impact areas are aligned with the recommendations outlined in the UN Security Council Resolutions no. 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security, and no. 2250 on Youth, Peace, and Security. The strategy builds on relevant sector goals defined by the Afghan National Development Strategy 2025-2030 and is well aligned with the UN Strategic Framework for Afghanistan 2023-2027, UN humanitarian needs and response plans, and relevant ministerial strategic priorities. The strategy is also aligned with the Norwegian Humanitarian Strategy 2024-2029 and the principles of localisation and improved aid effectiveness.

NAC applies a contextualised, dialogue-based approach to promoting our values, aiming to find common ground with room for action and local solutions.

Geographical coverage

NAC's geographical coverage is based on national priorities and needs, established trust, network and community commitments, available human resources, and our ability to implement quality programmes, ensuring that both majority and minority populations are reached.

NAC operates through a **flexible and decentralised operational structure**, enabling timely and context-specific responses across various regions. The country office in **Kabul** provides strategic oversight and coordination. The regional offices in **Badakhshan**, **Daikundi**, and **Ghazni** ensure a strong field presence and community engagement, while district-hub and project offices in **Balkh**, **Faryab**, **Kapisa**, **Khost**, **Nangarhar**, **Paktia**, and **Takhar** enable us to provide localised support related to thematic initiatives. This structure allows NAC to **scale activities to surrounding provinces and districts** and to rapidly establish and manage project offices based on evolving programme needs, humanitarian priorities, and access considerations.



The way we work to deliver impact

People at the centre

NAC programmes target households living in poverty and facing heightened vulnerabilities in rural areas, particularly those affected by natural disasters, recurring shocks, and structural barriers, with limited access to basic services, and with fragile livelihoods. NAC recognises the extreme vulnerability of female-headed households and therefore aims to ensure their inclusion in all programmes and interventions.

Priority will be given to:

- Women, children, and adolescent girls
- Small-scale farmers (female and male)
- Youth, including young professionals
- Persons with disabilities and disabling health conditions
- Refugees and returnees



Localisation: working with local communities and institutions

We place local communities at the centre of development and humanitarian actions, recognising them as primary partners rather than beneficiaries. This approach to localisation is anchored in the Community-Led Development (CLD) model. Through CLD, we work towards removing external structural barriers, supporting communities in defining priorities, co-designing interventions, and managing development initiatives in ways that reflect their social, cultural, and economic realities.

The aim of CLD is to build sustainable and **community-owned institutions, structures and systems** to ensure long-term development impact.

NAC operationalises this strategy through stakeholder- and community-driven partnership modalities, including community contracting, community-led initiatives, participatory action research, and structured engagement with community-level committees and governance mechanisms. These include shuras, disaster risk reduction (DRR) committees, natural resource management (NRM) committees, social enterprises, and organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs), which serve as accountable local counterparts for planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning. These include shuras, disaster risk reduction (DRR) committees, natural resource management (NRM) committees, social enterprises, farmer associations, organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs), and professional associations, which serve as accountable local counterparts for planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning.

NAC aims to avoid developing parallel structures and to work closely with and support the human capital within relevant existing institutions – to promote institutional ownership, skills development, and sustainability. Future partnerships aim to include private sector actors, cooperatives, civil society, and women-led organisations and businesses.



Triple Nexus approach, dialogue, and conflict transformation

NAC applies a triple nexus approach that intentionally links humanitarian assistance, development programmes, and dialogue to address both immediate needs and the underlying drivers of vulnerability and conflict. In fragile and conflict-affected contexts, dialogue is a critical entry point for building trust, strengthening social cohesion, and enabling inclusive participation in development processes. NAC integrates community-level dialogue and conflict transformation mechanisms within its partnerships to promote peaceful dispute resolution, reduce tensions over resources, and support locally led solutions. By embedding conflict sensitivity and dialogue within humanitarian and development interventions, NAC ensures that assistance contributes not only to recovery, but also to longer-term stability and peaceful coexistence.

Strategic impact areas

We aim to strengthen sustainable livelihoods, lifelong learning, ensure access to quality health and rehabilitation services, and provide humanitarian assistance in priority geographic areas. All efforts are grounded in existing community structures and consistently promote and advocate for the participation, rights, and protection of women, youth, and persons with disabilities, in line with the realities of the Afghan context.

Strategic impact area I

Food security, natural resource management and sustainable livelihoods



Objective

Improved food security, sustainable livelihoods, self-reliance, and resilience to climate change, natural hazards, and socioeconomic shocks among low-income rural households.

This strategic impact area aims to strengthen community self-reliance and resilience by addressing the underlying causes of vulnerability, including poverty, climate change, and persistent unemployment.

Sustainable livelihoods in Afghanistan continue to be severely constrained by prolonged conflict, climate change, and weakened governance systems, with significant consequences for food and livelihood security. A large proportion of the population depends on agriculture and natural resources for survival. Rural communities face increasing environmental and climate-related challenges, including drought, water scarcity, land degradation, soil erosion, deforestation, and extreme weather events, all of which reduce agricultural productivity and weaken resilience.

Reduced agricultural production, high food prices, and declining incomes have limited access to sufficient and nutritious food for millions of households. Poor nutrition prevents children from reaching their full developmental potential and undermines the country's **long-term** social and economic progress. Malnutrition rates among children under five remain high, with alarming levels of stunting and wasting.

Food Security, Natural Resource Management (NRM), and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) will continue to constitute essential components of NAC's long-term investments in rural development.

DRIVERS OF CHANGE



Sustainable Natural Resource Management and Climate Resilience

NAC promotes sustainable natural resource management and climate-smart agriculture through reforestation, improved land and water management, and adaptive crop and livestock practices. These interventions aim to strengthen resilience, diversify incomes, and improve sustainable agricultural production.

Productive and Protective Infrastructure

Limited water infrastructure, including inadequate storage and distribution systems, weakens communities' ability to adapt to climate change.

NAC is committed to supporting the rehabilitation and strengthening of critical productive and protective infrastructure. This includes physical, social, and economic infrastructure that contributes to improved food security, sustainable livelihoods, and environmental protection.

Micro, Small, and Medium-Sized Enterprises (MSMEs)

NAC will prioritise the development of farm-based MSMEs as a key driver of rural economic growth and resilience. These initiatives will be closely aligned with NAC's vocational education and training programmes.

By integrating enterprise development with practical skills training, NAC seeks to create sustainable employment pathways and promote inclusive rural development.

Women's Economic Empowerment and Inclusion

Dedicated programmes and initiatives will be implemented to promote women's economic empowerment and inclusion. These initiatives will focus on strengthening women's capacities in business development, production, income generation, literacy, and vocational skills, based on market and needs assessments.

A comprehensive strategy for social enterprises and women-led MSMEs (formerly referred to as self-help groups [SHGs]) will be developed to strengthen their organisation, sustainability, and market engagement.

Access to Safe and Nutritious Food

NAC will contribute to improved nutrition outcomes by promoting sustainable agricultural practices, increasing access to diverse, safe and nutritious foods, and implementing nutrition education and behaviour change activities that support healthier diets and improved well-being.

Access to Decent Work

In response to the current context, in which youth—particularly women and girls—face significant exclusion from the labour market, NAC will offer Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) courses that are student-centred and aligned with market needs and employment opportunities.

Programme design will be informed by continuous feedback, labour market assessments, studies, and research to ensure relevance, quality, and employability outcomes.



Strategic impact area II

Lifelong learning for social and economic development



Objective

Lifelong learning opportunities that enable people in rural, hard-to-reach, and income-poor communities to strengthen their self-reliance and improve their social and economic opportunities.

The Afghan education system is facing a deepening crisis for both girls and boys. Since mid-2021 girls have only had limited access to formal education beyond grade six, while boys are increasingly leaving school to work and support their families. There are a shortage of qualified teachers and a lack of relevant curricula, and vocational education and training often fail to meet labor market needs. Most children with disabilities are excluded from education, and the needs of children with trauma and other disabling health conditions are rarely met within formal schools.

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Early childhood development (ECD)

NAC will support playgroups for children in hospitals, clinics, rehabilitation centres, and other health facilities, as well as for the children of women working in MSMEs. By establishing women-led ECD initiatives, NAC supports women's economic participation and allows them to remain in the workforce, boosting economic productivity.

Formal and non-formal literacy and numeracy

NAC will support both literacy, numeracy, and science skills both in schools and alternative learning spaces to counter the widespread problem with schooling without learning. Functional needs-based literacy and numeracy will also be integrated into TVET programmes connected with implementation of community-based protective and infrastructure projects.

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)

NAC will support ESD initiatives to equip learners with knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes to make informed decisions for environmental integrity, economic viability, and social justice. ESD encourages transformative action, fostering responsible citizenship to solve global challenges like climate change, biodiversity loss, and inequality.

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

NAC will establish and support technical and vocational education and training courses for female and male youth, persons with disabilities, and young adults with limited literacy, numeracy, and job skills.

Support system for teachers in schools

NAC will educate, train, and mentor teachers to improve the quality and relevance of education and promote greater inclusion and diversity in education.

Knowledge exchange with education planners

NAC will provide platforms where Afghan and international education planners meet and learn. NAC will support ministries in revising and improving curricula to meet emerging needs and expectations.

Strategic impact area III

Health and rehabilitation services



Objective

Expand access for income-poor women, children, adolescent girls, and persons with disabilities and disabling health conditions to quality health and rehabilitation services.

Access to health services and qualified female health personnel is a critical concern in Afghanistan, where maternal and child morbidity and mortality rates are amongst the highest in the world. Restrictions on rights, mobility, education, and work — combined with economic hardship, fear, and social isolation — have created an environment that severely harms women's emotional and psychological health.

One out of every seven persons living with a severe disability, and women and girls are particularly affected by additional barriers to inclusion and participation.

Decades of conflict and war led to a severe public health crisis in Afghanistan, with estimated Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) prevalence rates among the general population of between 42 and 66%. Women, children, and those who have lost family members are highly vulnerable, with studies finding 90% of some traumatised groups show high PTSD probability (Institute of Health Policy and Leadership, 2020). Social and economic rehabilitation is essential for the process towards greater inclusion and reintegration into community life.

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Access to reproductive health and rights

NAC will support women-led health facilities that provide holistic, respectful, gender-sensitive, and quality healthcare, as well as safe working environments for health professionals.

Quality services for persons with disabilities and disabling health conditions

NAC aims to improve social integration and ensure that persons with disabilities and disabling health conditions have access to the services and opportunities they need and deserve to live independent and dignified lives.

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

NAC will provide TVET for young people who are vulnerable to exclusion and marginalisation to ensure greater economic and social rehabilitation and inclusion.

Safeguarding critical expertise within the health and rehabilitation sector

NAC will provide apprenticeship programmes to enhance and strengthen the practical skills of female health graduates.

Access to psychosocial support

NAC will continue to invest in psychosocial support as an integrated component of all programmes and as a support service to our own staff.

Strategic impact area IV

Humanitarian response



Objective

Save lives, alleviate hunger and suffering, and safeguard human dignity and rights in humanitarian crises.

NAC aims to provide a needs-driven approach, where crisis-affected people and their representative organisations are included in the decision-making processes, planning, and implementation of humanitarian response.

In the complex crises and political context of Afghanistan, the definition of activities carried out as humanitarian response, basic needs, or long-term development may overlap. NAC sees humanitarian response as a supplement to long-term development – with the purpose of saving lives in crisis situations – while development activities address the underlying causes of poverty and fragility through strengthening communities' self-reliance in coping with shocks.

DRIVERS OF CHANGE



Humanitarian Hubs

The NAC Humanitarian Hubs have regional capacities to respond to natural hazards and crises, based on our expertise within health and rehabilitation, DRR, and food security. The Humanitarian Hubs offer localised humanitarian responses by connecting established community-based disaster risk management structures to required resources when crises occur. Humanitarian Hubs also offer safe spaces for strengthening the capacity to deliver gender sensitive services.

Life-saving assistance for the most vulnerable households and people affected by natural hazards.

Decentralised services and infrastructure

NAC is committed to restoring and strengthening critical productive and protective infrastructure, shelter, and basic services, both during and after natural hazards and during crises related to social and political tensions (national and regional).

Humanitarian innovations

NAC is committed to develop, implement, document, and assess innovative measures, especially related to protection, combatting hunger, and addressing the humanitarian consequences of natural hazards and climate change.

Protective interventions to safeguard rural livelihoods to sustain essential services and improve local capacity.

Preventive humanitarian response is viewed as an integrated part of sustainable livelihoods and disaster risk reduction activities.

Technical and vocational education and training

NAC will provide TVET for survivors of natural hazards, returnees, and internally displaced persons to support the process of economic independence and social inclusion and reintegration into home or host communities.

Strategic impact area V

Strategic Advocacy for Systemic Change and Effective Resource Mobilisation



Objective

Increased national and international support for rural Afghan communities and for those most vulnerable to exclusion and marginalisation.

NAC's work and communications aim to support structural and systemic change at national and sub-national levels to ensure inclusive development and community-led processes towards greater self-reliance and accountability and to strengthen inclusive power structures and reduce unequitable power dynamics.

NAC links its development programmes, knowledge management, and advocacy initiatives to create lasting change in attitudes, systems, and structures to strengthen community-led development and self-reliance. We ground our work in community realities and by systematically capturing learning, including through participatory action research. We generate strong evidence that informs and strengthens our advocacy, information, and communications efforts. In turn, our advocacy elevates community voices and advances policies that support our vision and goals. This positions us to contribute effectively to national and international development and humanitarian agendas and priorities in a world with increased polarisation and limited financial resources.

DRIVERS OF CHANGE



Strategic communication

NAC's identity and programmatic approach define its positioning, branding, imagery, and storytelling. NAC will ensure ethical, clear, consistent, and targeted messaging adapted to channels and audiences – including both current and future decision-makers – ensuring that the language used is inclusive, protective, and respectful of all.

NAC will engage proactively and strategically with media to raise awareness about the realities facing Afghan communities, with a focus on development and humanitarian needs. By sharing evidence and learning from our programmes, amplifying community perspectives, and offering clear, contextual analysis, NAC will contribute to informed and balanced public discourse.

Platforms for mutual learning, dialogue, and debate

NAC is committed to engage in dialogue with all relevant stakeholders, including community members, academics, practitioners and decision makers. NAC will contribute to mutual learning and awareness through hosting symposia, seminars, dialogues, and debates.

NAC will write knowledge-based policy briefs and op-eds that contribute to learning, dialogue, and debate in Afghanistan, Norway, and internationally.

Alliances and Coalitions

NAC aims to build, join, and strengthen networks and seeks to strategically cooperate with organisations, professional associations, civil society actors, and public and private institutions in Afghanistan, Norway, and internationally to ensure effective use of human and financial resources towards more inclusive and community-led development processes.

Organisational capacity and development

NAC's overall organisational development objective

NAC will strengthen our ability to deliver needs based, integrated, localised, and gender-responsive development and humanitarian assistance.

NAC will continue to focus on being an **efficient, flexible, and results-focused organisation** whose programmatic approaches, structures, systems, leadership, and culture consistently enable the delivery of high-quality, accountable, and integrated programmes that are continuously adapted to Afghanistan's changing context and needs.



Strategic enabler No. 1: Invest in people, leadership, and organisational culture

NAC will systematically develop its staff, leaders, and organisational culture to ensure motivated, capable, and well-supported teams who can improve and deliver impactful and tailored development programmes and humanitarian response under pressure based on NAC's values.

Key focus:

- **Inclusive workforce and HR management:** NAC will invest in affirmative action and efficient, inclusive HR management, including recruitment, onboarding and offboarding, to attract, retain and support a diverse workforce that reflects and responds to diverse needs across Afghanistan.
- **Leadership, capacity development, and collaboration:** NAC will strengthen inclusive leadership and management, promote organisational values and principles, and provide structured capacity building and career development so staff and teams can collaborate effectively across departments, regions, and functions.

- **Staff wellbeing, communication, and inclusive organisational culture:** NAC will promote psychological wellbeing and safety in the workplace, strengthen inclusive internal communication and digital meeting spaces, and use accessible, respectful language and terminology to build common understanding and reduce stigma and discrimination.

Strategic enabler No. 2: Strengthen NAC's approach and systems for accountability and risk management

NAC will consolidate risk management, anti-corruption, safeguarding, and compliance systems into a coherent, organisation-wide framework. Alongside this, NAC will accelerate digitalisation of key operational and administrative processes to strengthen data protection, improve efficiency, and reduce risk. Together, these efforts will support adaptive management, reinforce NAC's accountability to communities, staff, members, and donors, and position NAC as a digitally capable and resilient organisation fit for the demands of operating in complex and rapidly changing environments.

Key focus:

- **Integrated risk, compliance, and accountability systems:** NAC will strengthen and align risk management, anti-corruption, internal audit, compliance, safeguarding, PSEAH, and data protection systems to provide independent assurance, pre-empt risks, and support continuous improvement across operations.
- **Digital governance, capability, and resilience:** NAC will invest in digital literacy, clear digital policies and standards, AI governance, strengthened in-house IT capacity, and continued competency building to ensure safe, confident, and resilient use of technology across the organisation.
- **Efficient operational systems and administrative processes:** NAC will streamline and digitalise key administrative, procurement, stock management, and operational processes to reduce duplication, improve real-time visibility and accountability, and free staff to focus on work requiring human judgment, contextual knowledge, and relationships.



Strategic enabler No. 3: Knowledge Management and Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning

NAC works as a knowledge-based organisation. At NAC, knowledge is produced to learn and better understand the results of our work, and used to inform our communication, advocacy, and evidence-based decision making and reporting. Our priority is to maintain and continuously improve our systems, approaches, and methods. This includes strengthening our data collection, management, monitoring, and evaluation to ensure reliable, timely, and meaningful information flows across our programmes. The participation of our partner communities in monitoring and evaluation is a core element of our work. We are dedicated to further strengthening this engagement, ensuring that communities and partners are not just subjects of our learning, but active contributors to it.

Key focus:

- **Learning, reflection, and adaptive programme development:** NAC will invest in systematic learning, reflection, and programme development processes that go beyond evaluations, enabling staff, partners, and communities to generate new thinking, adapt to a rapidly changing context, and continuously improve the relevance and quality of our work.
- **Knowledge systems, evidence, and strategic use of learning:** NAC will strengthen knowledge management systems and the systematic use of evidence to monitor strategic progress, inform decision-making, and ensure that learning from programmes is translated into communications, advocacy, donor reporting, and organisational development.
- **Community-led accountability and participatory evidence generation:** NAC will ensure that partner communities, community-based institutions, and committees actively contribute to monitoring, assessments, feedback, reviews, and participatory action research, so that local knowledge and community voices shape how NAC learns, adapts, and remains accountable.

Strategic enabler No. 4: Secure sustainable resourcing and strategic partnerships

NAC will secure diversified resources and build strategic partnerships with authorities, civil society, academia and private sector actors to sustain its core platforms and long-term presence.

Key focus:

- **Diversified and sustainable resource mobilisation:** NAC will develop and implement a targeted resource mobilisation strategy to increase multi-year and flexible funding from traditional and new donors in Norway, Afghanistan, and internationally.
- **Strategic programme and research partnerships:** NAC will build, nurture, and expand strategic partnerships with authorities, civil society, academia, research institutions, universities, and private sector actors to strengthen programme quality, innovation, and access to relevant expertise and funding.
- **Positioning, communications, and trusted partner relations:** NAC will improve its communications and advocacy efforts to sustain support for the Afghan people, strengthen NAC's positioning, and establish the organisation as a preferred and trusted partner.

Strategic enabler No. 5: Strengthen NAC as a solidarity-based membership organisation

NAC commits to strengthening its role as a solidarity-based membership organisation by ensuring regular, meaningful communications and fostering inclusive spaces for learning, engagement, and connection. By providing relevant and creative content and purposeful opportunities for member participation, NAC will reinforce a strong, cohesive sense of community and shared purpose.

Key focus:

- **Membership growth and inclusive outreach:** NAC will broaden and diversify its membership base by reaching professionals within the sectors where NAC works, while also engaging younger audiences and future supporters of solidarity with the Afghan people.
- **Regular member communication and relevant content:** NAC will maintain regular, meaningful, and creative communication with members through members' letters, updates, and diversified content that strengthens knowledge, connection, and continued engagement.
- **Learning, participation, and solidarity in practice:** NAC will provide inclusive spaces and opportunities for members to learn, connect, and participate through monthly meetings, events, stands, outreach activities, and engagement that also reflects Afghan culture, history, and traditions.

