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## Two in three Afghan households show resilience gains in last year

Amid Afghanistan's overlapping crisis of economic contraction, climate extremes and widespread food insecurity, Afghan households have a hard time putting good, nutritious food on their plates. In early 2025, 12.6 million people – about 27 percent of the population – were in phase 3 (Crisis) or worse on the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) for acute food insecurity.

The United Nations Strategic Framework for Afghanistan (UNSWFA) 2023–2025 aimed to boost rural household resilience capacity by 10 percent by the end of 2025. Under Priority 2 – Economic Opportunities and Resilient Livelihoods – the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) rolled out a number of community-based interventions to help rural households protect their livelihoods and recover from shocks. Farmers received climate-resilient seeds and livestock assistance, households adopted nutrition-sensitive farming, and cash-for-work projects restored vital irrigation systems while providing more income for households. From August 2021 and to the end of 2024, FAO supported more than 30 million rural Afghans and helped reverse the acute food-security crisis, with the number of people facing food insecurity nearly halving over four years. Together, these actions aimed to strengthen household assets (such as a household's wealth and owning livestock and farming tools) and "adaptive capacity" (such as diversified income sources, crop diversification, education) – two of the four pillars to measure overall resilience capacity.

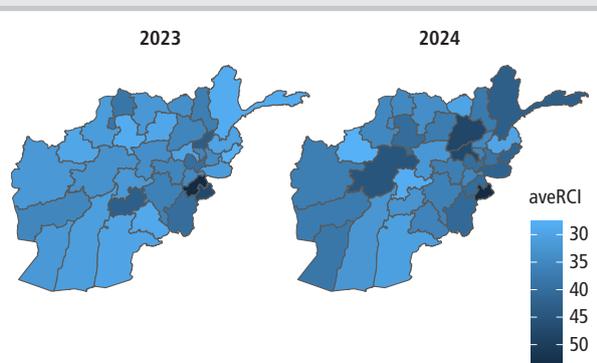
### Where is resilience rising?

Between 2023 and 2024, panel data from 10 225 FAO-supported Afghan households showed promising progress: two-thirds of households recorded at least a 10 percent increase in resilience capacity. During this period, the Resilience Capacity Index (RCI) for FAO beneficiary households increased by an average of 15 percent, exceeding the 2025 year-end target of 10 percent (see Figure 1 that presents average province-level resilience capacity in 2023 and 2024, where darker-blue indicates higher resilience while lighter blue indicates lower resilience).

### KEY MESSAGES

- ▶ Two in three households in Afghanistan saw their resilience to food insecurity improve between 2023 and 2024 – marking strong momentum toward a 10 percent resilience goal gain by 2025 set by the United Nations.
- ▶ Resilience is improving nationwide, notably in southeastern areas, but uneven progress leaves some provinces falling behind.
- ▶ FAO's Resilience Index Measurement and Analysis (E-RIMA) tool tracked resilience over time and showed that household assets and adaptive capacity are the two main buffers against food insecurity and vulnerability.

FIGURE 1. Evolution of resilience capacity in Afghanistan



*Note:* The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on these maps do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of FAO concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers and boundaries.

*Source:* FAO. 2025. E-RIMA database. [Accessed on 27 June 2025]. [https://foodandagricultureorganization.shinyapps.io/ShinyRIMA\\_HHresilience](https://foodandagricultureorganization.shinyapps.io/ShinyRIMA_HHresilience). Licence: CC-BY-4.0.

Access to food is rising alongside resilience. The Food Consumption Score rose from an average of 28 in 2023 to 38 in 2024. This positive change indicates that not only are households strengthening their ability to absorb and recover from shocks, but they are also experiencing notable improvements in their actual food security situation.

Yet, notable differences between provinces remain. Provinces such as Kabul, Khost, Paktika, Paktya consistently show strong resilience, with encouraging progress also seen in Badakhshan, Kunar and Nangarhar. In contrast, Badghis, Hilmand and Kandahar remain highly vulnerable areas once dependent on poppy cultivation until a ban in 2022 abruptly cut off this primary income source, leaving households without a viable alternative livelihood and thus affecting their resilience capacity.

Regionally, RCI shifted upward in 2024 (darker blue shades in Figure 1), with marked improvements in the west (Farah, Herat and Ghor) and the northeast (Badakhshan) showing a clear year-over-year increase. The southwestern region continues to lag behind. These variations underscore the need for context-specific interventions and regular resilience monitoring.

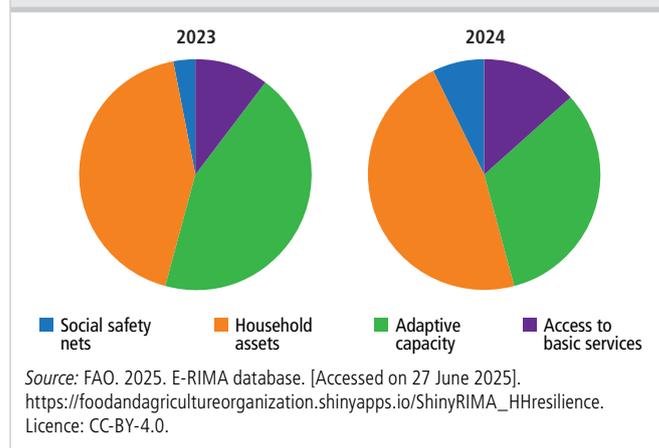
## How was resilience tracked over time?

FAO, the United Nations lead agency for tracking household resilience, was tasked with monitoring progress toward the goal of boosting rural household resilience by 10 percent by 2025. To do this, it applied its Resilience Index Measurement and Analysis (E-RIMA) tool, which generates a Resilience Capacity Index based on four pillars: access to basic services, household assets, social safety nets, and adaptive capacity. These are combined with food security indicators – such as the food consumption score, coping strategy index and household dietary diversity score – to produce an overall resilience ranking.

## What's driving greater resilience capacity?

Our analysis reveals that, across 2023 and 2024, Afghan families depend heavily on both tangible assets and adaptive capacity to withstand shocks to their food security, with smaller shares for access to basic services and social safety nets (see Figure 2). Household wealth, farming tools and livestock play a crucial role in building resilience, as do adaptive factors such as having multiple sources of income, crop diversification and education attainment. Over this period, the composition of resilience drivers shifts slightly towards assets, with modest improvements to basic services and social safety nets, as well as a small decline in adaptive capacity. These patterns indicate gradual rebuilding and improvement in services and social protection.

FIGURE 2. Drivers of resilience capacity for Afghan households over time



The analysis highlights a clear takeaway: strengthening household assets and adaptive capacities are the primary drivers of greater resilience. However, achieving long-term resilience across the board also depends on greater investment in social protection and access to basic services, and even more so in times of multiple, simultaneous shocks such as drought, flooding and rising food prices.

## Recommendations

Boosting household resilience in Afghanistan requires an integrated, community-centred strategy. First, programmes should prioritize targeted investment that allows households to build up their assets and diversify their livelihood. This is especially so in provinces with low resilience rankings through livestock restocking, small-equipment grants and support for off-farm enterprises. These gains need to be paired with stronger adaptive capacity by expanding early-warning systems, delivering local climate information, trainings and supporting climate-smart agriculture.

To protect families during crises, scaling up flexible, shock-responsive safety nets – such as emergency cash transfers and public works – would better support chronically vulnerable communities. Finally, resilience cannot be sustained without broader access to basic services. Investing in rural clinics, water, schools and integrated nutrition platforms is especially critical in remote and shock-prone areas.

Strengthening resilience in Afghanistan requires coordinated, multi-sectoral action. Aligning United Nations efforts and using digital tools like e-RIMA has proven effective, enabling policymakers to track progress, anticipate risks, and tailor interventions in provinces most at risk – helping households cope with droughts, floods and rising food prices.

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