Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Estimating water loss in Amu Darya River Basin during summer season 2022

Source: Global Administrative Unit Layers from Natural Earth with disputed areas.

Efficient irrigation practices are based on a comprehensive understanding of water loss and water consumption for which the remote–sensed actual evapotranspiration is a proper proxy. By utilizing MODIS remote sensing imagery, actual evapotranspiration data was retrieved, which is a meaningful proxy to estimate water loss from soil. Cropland extent information was collected from ESA WorldCover, a land cover dataset based on Sentinel-1 and Sentinel-2 data [1,2]. Through the integration of these datasets, a bivariate map with a hexagon grid (cells of 90 square kilometers) showcasing water loss patterns and cropland distribution. This approach contributes valuably to the Afghanistan Emergency Food Security Project's (OSRO/AFG/213/WBK) objectives, aiding in informed irrigation and water management strategies.

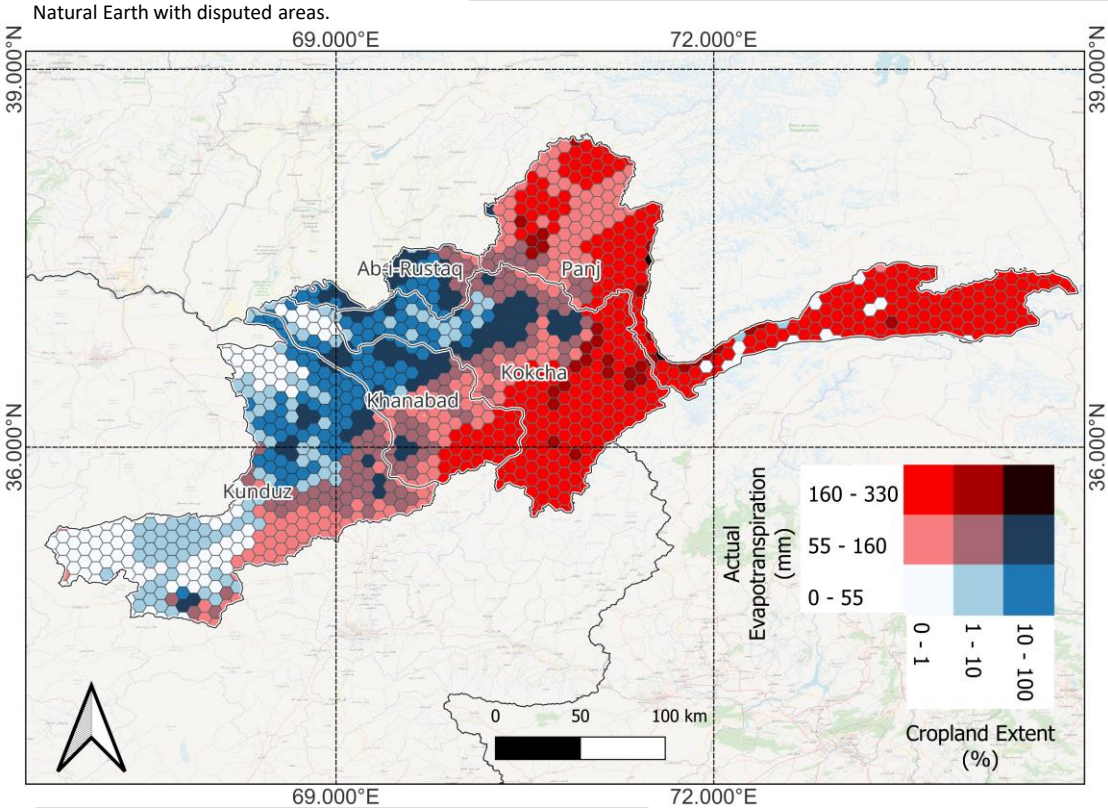

Figure 1: Bivariate map of seasonal cumulative actual evapotranspiration (mm) and cropland land area extent (%) during summer season (05 to 09, 2022) in Amu Darya River Basin.

Key Findings

- Cropland extent was highest in Ab-i-Rustaq, covering 44 percent of the basin area, followed by Khanabad with 16 percent, and Kunduz with 11 percent.
- Panj shows the highest actual evapotranspiration with 179 mm, followed by Kokcha with 154 mm, and Khanabad with 103 mm.
- Emphasizing the importance of water infrastructure in high-demand areas like Khanabad and the need for further research to understand the factors contributing the differences in Ab-i-Rustaq and Kunduz, where a substantial cropland extent coexists with a comparatively lower rate of actual evapotranspiration.

Table 1: Mean values of seasonal cumulative actual evapo-transpiration (mm) and cropland area extent (percentage of the sub-basin area and extent in km^2) during summer season (05 to 09, 2022) by sub-basins.

Sub-basin	Actual Evapo-transpiration (mm)	Cropland extent (%)	Cropland extent (km^2)
Ab-i-Rustaq	62	44	1 622
Khanabad	103	16	1 933
Kokcha	154	8	1 765
Kunduz	53	11	3 155
Panj	179	1	158

Prepared by Dario Spiller, Qiyamud Din Ikram, Kaustubh Devale, Sayed Sharif, Hashmatullah Omid, Maziar Karimi, and Matieu Henry for the Afghanistan Emergency Food Security Project. Food and Agriculture Organization of United Nations, Rome, Italy.

[1] Xiang, K., Li, Y., Horton, R., & Feng, H. (2020). Similarity and difference of potential evapotranspiration and reference crop evapotranspiration–a review. Agricultural Water Management, 232, 106043. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.agwat.2020.106043
[2] Running, S., Mu, Q., Zhao, M. (2017). MOD16A2 MODIS/Terra Net Evapotranspiration 8-Day L4 Global 500m SIN Grid V006. NASA EOSDIS Land Processes DAAC. Accessed 2023-05-26 from https://doi.org/10.5067/MODIS/MOD16A2.006
[3] Zanaga, D., Van De Kerchove, R., Daems, D., De Keersmaecker, W., Brockmann, C., Kirches, G., Wevers, J., Cartus, O., Santoro, M., Fritz, S., Lesiv, M., Herold, M., Tsendbazar, N.E., Xu, P., Ramoino, F., Arino, O., 2022. ESA WorldCover 10 m 2021 v200.