



FAO requires
USD 42.3 million



to assist
1.2 million people



2.36 million people

facing acute food insecurity at
crisis or worse levels (51% of the
population)*



75% of the population relies
on agricultural and livestock
production for their livelihoods,
contributing to 55% of the
country's GDP



+600 000 internally displaced
persons (IDPs) and 590 000 Central
African refugees in neighbouring
countries



+3 100 COVID-19 reported cases
(June 2020)



The price of imported rice has
increased by **76%** in one year

Impact of COVID-19 on food security and agriculture

- While the majority of the population in the Central African Republic relies on agricultural and livestock production for their livelihoods, productivity has been decreasing over the years due to insecurity, land disputes, recurrent low rainfall and lack of infrastructure, as well as the adoption of subsistence farming with low investment and subsequent limited harvests.
- During the lean season (May–August), vulnerable households' food insecurity may further worsen given that average harvests of the 2019/20 agricultural season were lower than previous years due to below-average rainfall throughout the country – lower production was registered in particular for cassava, groundnut and sesame. Households have also depleted their food stocks.
- Since the first COVID-19 cases were reported in the country, the Government has taken several urgent and essential health-related measures to mitigate the spread, including border closures, movement restrictions between Bangui and the largest towns in the East, the closure of the national airport and increased controls at the border with Cameroon. The effects of the essential restrictions have exacerbated the slowdown in food commodity imports and there have been major supply chain disruptions. The majority of imports are now coming from Cameroon due to the closure of borders with other countries, but a two-week delay in supply has been observed due to increased border controls which created shortage in supply (mainly for oil, rice, soap and wheat) in Bangui as well as in other provinces.
- Staple food prices are increasing in most of the markets due to limited supply, especially in Bangui where the cost of the daily food basket has doubled since the onset of the pandemic. Indeed, COVID-19 has directly affected the price of imported products such as of cassava and rice.

*Source: Central African Republic Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) Technical Working Group, Acute Food Insecurity Analysis (updated May–August 2020 projection), May 2020



- The livestock sector is likely to be affected by COVID-19-related movement restrictions and border closures, disrupting the movement patterns of transhumant herders.
- Physical distancing and reduced income-generating opportunities have severely affected the purchasing power of vulnerable households who are increasingly adopting negative coping mechanisms to meet

their immediate food needs. The population most affected by the situation, with a significant increase in the levels of food insecurity, is located in Abba, Bangui and Sibut, in addition to areas classified in IPC Phases 3 and 4. The most vulnerable population groups such as IDPs are expected to suffer the most from the effects of the pandemic.

Likely evolution of the impacts of COVID-19 on food security

The number of COVID-19 reported cases in the Central African Republic are expected to continue to increase in the coming months due in part to increased testing capacity, as well as widespread insecurity that is preventing the Government from enforcing stricter measures. As a result, COVID-19 necessary prevention measures could be further extended exacerbating the already weakened coping capacities of poor households to withstand stresses and shocks. The main anticipated effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are the following:

- **Cross-border trade continues to experience delays.** Staple food prices are expected to remain above those of last year until the harvest in August–September, based on low market supply during the lean season and disruptions to trade flows. While prices could decrease during harvests, the delays in delivery and trade flows are expected to continue between Cameroon and the Central African Republic, as well as within the country, triggering further price increases.
- **Vulnerable households' agricultural production and purchasing power to further decrease due to the effects of COVID-19 restrictions.** Households' purchasing power, particularly of poor households in Bangui and the surrounding peri-urban areas, is likely to decrease due to low market supply of staple foods, high staple food prices and high cost of transportation to reach markets. Harvesting of the 2020 early-planted maize started by mid-June in the southern and central bi-modal rainfall areas, while planting of sorghum and millet crops is ongoing under favourable weather conditions in the unimodal rainfall northern areas with harvesting activities expected to begin in August. In these areas, although seasonal forecasts indicate average to above-average rainfall from June to September, agricultural production is likely to remain below pre-conflict levels due to insecurity and difficulties in supplying markets in relation to COVID-19 prevention measures. Households' production is also likely to be limited due to reduced income to purchase agricultural inputs, which have become more expensive. The ongoing cassava mosaic disease is also expected to affect perennial cassava yields.
- **Insecurity to continue affecting delivery of assistance.** Insecurity continues to affect many parts of the country triggering population movements. Clashes among armed groups are expected to persist in the northeastern, southeastern and western parts of the country. This could in turn limit the Government's capacity to enforce stricter COVID-19 measures should it be required.

Within the framework of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Corporate COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme, the proposed actions have been identified to meet the urgent short-term needs of the most vulnerable food-insecure populations and protect their assets. It also represents FAO's contribution to the United Nations Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19.

1) Coordination and the national system for assessing the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on the agro-sylvo-pastoral and fishery sector and on the functioning of markets are strengthened

FAO is working with partners in the Food Security Cluster to strengthen the capacities of vulnerable populations to withstand shocks that affect their food security and nutrition by providing them with livelihood recovery support through improved access to productive assets and markets, and by strengthening their resilience to food crises. Furthermore, FAO is working to improve monitoring of the humanitarian situation by (i) strengthening coordination and governance mechanisms for food security, early warning systems and capacity building of communities and stakeholders; and (ii) ensuring continued access to information on the evolution of the food security situation.

2) Ensuring availability of and stabilizing access to food for the most acute food-insecure populations

FAO will continue to support production through direct distribution of agricultural inputs to farmers or setting up local seed fairs while ensuring that technical extension services are maintained during the agricultural campaign to minimize post-harvest losses. FAO will support social safety nets through the provision of cash transfers, including for herders to enable the restocking of small ruminants and access to animal

health treatment and feed. FAO will also facilitate access to drinking water by building and rehabilitating agropastoral infrastructure, including wells and boreholes in livestock areas, thus also responding to the needs of sedentary livestock, due to movement restrictions linked to COVID-19.

For the 2020 agricultural campaign, as part of its emergency and resilience programme benefiting vulnerable, crisis-affected populations, FAO plans to reach about 790 000 people through the provision of crop and vegetable seeds, input trade fairs, cash transfers, cash for work, income-generating activities, small-scale livestock support and vaccinations. Interventions are mainly targeting conflict-affected populations, IDPs, returnees, host families, farmers, small-scale producers and female-headed households.

3) Ensuring continuity of the critical food supply chain for the most vulnerable populations

As the humanitarian crisis deepens due to the effects of COVID-19, sustained agricultural support is crucial to enable vulnerable households to produce their own food and increase their income, especially given the disruptions to the food supply chain and markets, and reduced purchase power. FAO has therefore increased the number of targeted beneficiaries to support an additional 413 000 farmers and pastoralists, who have been impacted by the effects of the pandemic. As vulnerable households' food stocks are depleted and their sources of income weakened, to limit the adoption of negative coping mechanisms, such as reducing the number of meals per day and selling their assets, FAO is supporting the establishment of social safety nets through cash transfers, cash for work and support income-generating activities for female-headed households and youth to promote value chains and *caisses de résilience* activities.

Funding



FAO requires
USD 42.3 million

- **USD 12.6 million** under the Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19
- **USD 29.7 million** under the Humanitarian Response Plan for 2020

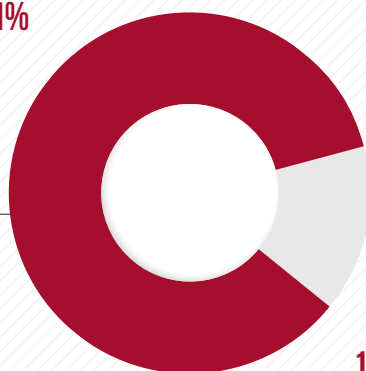


to assist
1.2 million people

FUNDING GAP

USD 36 million

85.1%



14.9%

RECEIVED

USD 6.3 million

Resource partners

the Department for International Development, the European Union, the Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection and the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund

Coordination and partnerships

FAO will continue to engage with the relevant line ministries to ensure that food supply chains and social safety nets are in place to protect livelihoods in the context of COVID-19. At the national level, a coordination system has been set up through the *Comité de coordination du secteur rural*, which aims to coordinate the development, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of sectoral policies and strategy as well as the formulation of rural sector programmes and projects together with the *Relèvement et la consolidation de la paix en centrafricaine*. In addition, there's the *Comité de crise* which focuses on the management of the effects linked to the pandemic at the national level. FAO's actions in response to the effects of COVID-19 on food security and the agriculture sector are carried out in coordination with these committees, as well as with the Food Security Cluster, co-led by FAO and the World Food Programme, which is supporting the assessment of emerging vulnerabilities and needs, as well as any gaps in humanitarian assistance.

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