



FAO requires
USD 2 million



to assist
156 000 people



281 500 people facing
acute food insecurity at crisis
and worse levels*



Agriculture accounts for
23.4% of the country's GDP



+80% of the rural population
relies on agriculture for their
livelihoods



661 recorded COVID-19 cases
and 14 deaths (1 July 2020)



12 336 refugees, of whom
1 182 are in Avépozo camp

*Source: Permanent Interstate
Committee for drought control in the
Sahel (CILSS) *Cadre Harmonisé*,
Togo – Acute Food Insecurity Analysis
(June–August 2020 projection), April 2020

Impact of COVID-19 on food security and agriculture

- Following the first confirmed COVID-19 cases in Togo in March 2020, the Government put in place a series of urgent and essential containment measures, to slow the spread of the virus, such as the closure of all land borders. In mid-June, the Government started easing these measures, including the lifting of the curfew, and reopening cities and schools. In June 2020, the impact of containment measures on market functionality and food availability was limited, and most agropastoral markets remained accessible.
- While the COVID-19 pandemic has had relatively limited effects on crop production, market prices and food availability, the livestock sector, labour market and incomes have been more significantly affected by the essential health-related containment measures and subsequent economic slowdown.
- The restriction of movements between cities until June 2020 adversely affected the availability of agricultural labour as young people from the north who usually move south between April and June could not travel, which in turn affected planting. While cereal prices in local markets have not increased significantly for the moment compared with the past five years, there is a risk that they will in the coming months. In addition, agrifood companies have been severely affected by the lack of supply of raw materials and limited sales. Some companies have had to stop production and lay off their employees, with a significant drop in households' purchasing power.
- The restrictions have disrupted pastoralists' movements, leading to tensions around water points. Although animal prices have



remained stable for the moment since the onset of the pandemic, the scarcity of animals was observed in various markets.

- Due to the closure of schools, more than 91 000 students in 315 public primary schools have not had access to daily meals for several months – an important source of nutritious food – which may lead to increased levels of malnutrition.
- Togo currently hosts refugees including in camps, preventing adequate physical distancing. In addition to the lack of proper shelters and water, sanitation and hygiene infrastructure, this increases the risk of disease spread. Furthermore, a significant number of refugees, both in rural and urban areas, already suffer from chronic diseases and conditions recognized as risk factors in the context

of the COVID-19 pandemic. Also at risk are people living with chronic conditions, as well as other vulnerable population groups, including migrants, pregnant women, the elderly and people living with disabilities.

- The latest *Cadre Harmonisé* analysis (March 2020), which covered 37 prefectures in the country, indicates that for the period of June–August 2020 over 485 500 people are estimated to be under pressure (Phase 2) and 4 673 in crisis (Phase 3). Most of these areas are also affected by floods and the upcoming rainy season might worsen the situation. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the food security situation is likely to worsen with increased numbers of people in acute food insecurity at crisis or worse levels (Phase 3+).

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

Although the easing of restrictions on movement is expected to improve access to markets and facilitate agricultural activities, the observed negative effects on households' incomes and purchasing power are likely to continue to affect the livelihoods and food security of the most vulnerable households during the ongoing lean season. Furthermore, if new peaks of infections are reported leading to the adoption of stricter containment measures, this may affect the harvest of the main season (maize and yams), the planting of the second maize season (starting in August), as well as the marketing of perishable commodities such as vegetables and meat, with negative effects of the food security situation. More specifically, the anticipated effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are the following:

- **Increase in food prices to limit access to food.** While average cereal prices in markets (May 2020) remained stable in the country's five regions, despite the preventive measures put in place by the Government, households slowly depleting their stocks and reduced food availability during the lean season may lead to further increases in prices, with negative impacts on food security. There is fear of an increase in the prices of imported foodstuffs, such as rice, oil, sugar, milk, meat, fish, etc. on which the country is highly dependent on.
- **Farmers to lack the means to conduct harvest and post-harvest activities, as well as to kickstart the second season.** Despite the efforts of the Government to support the most vulnerable people (e.g. through the Novissi digital cash transfer scheme), the overall effects of COVID-19 and related measures on the Togolese economy are likely to continue to affect households' incomes and purchasing power. For farmers, the reduction

in income may jeopardize agricultural activities, including the harvest of the main maize season and the planting of second maize season as well as post-harvest activities. These activities could be hindered should new but essential restrictive measures be put in place to contain the spread of the virus, potentially affecting 2020 agricultural production. This risk adds to below-average rainfall forecasts, despite a good start in the rainy season.

- **Reduced livestock movements and increased livestock sales to result in a deterioration of pastoral livelihoods.** Critical health-related restrictions on movement have severely hampered livestock migration in Togo, and contributed to an increase in the sale of animals. Such distress sales are likely to cause a deterioration in pastoral livelihoods, with potential negative effects on food security, especially if new restrictions are introduced in the coming months.

Anticipatory actions and response

FAO is focusing on strengthening the resilience of households affected by floods and climate change, supporting the Government on forestry and water management, and plant pest control (fall armyworm). The implementation of interventions has slowed down since the first COVID-19 cases were reported, suspending field missions and limiting contacts with partners. Certain projects have been partially reoriented taking into account the evolving situation linked to the pandemic which has increased immediate needs.

Within the framework of FAO's 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.

FAO's main priorities are to: (i) analyse the impact of COVID-19 in food crises; (ii) conduct multiple rapid assessments to monitor the food security situation; (iii) safeguard the livelihoods of young rural workers; (iv) support smallholder farmers; (v) carry out social protection interventions in rural areas; (vi) conduct digital agricultural surveys; and (vii) support the empowerment of rural women.

More specifically, in order to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on agricultural and livestock-based livelihoods, FAO will implement a series of activities within the framework of three main components, as follows:

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

- Support 5 000 small-scale producers through the provision of:
 - cereal (maize, rice and sorghum) and pulse (cowpea and groundnut) seeds;
 - fertilizers (NPK and Urea);
 - agricultural equipment and phytosanitary products;
 - training on crop management;
 - canoes to fishers.

- Support urban agriculture initiatives, such as home gardening and family poultry farming through the provision of market gardening inputs, watering tools and technical advice to support the establishment of 2 000 micro-gardens in the main cities where FAO is already carrying out activities with partners, in regional capital cities that are most affected by COVID-19, benefiting at least 2 000 households as well as an additional 2 000 in the same locations through the provision of poultry kits.
- Provide cash transfers to 5 000 vulnerable households valued at XOF 25 000 (USD 43) over a period of three months to allow them to cover immediate needs and prevent malnutrition.

2) Ensuring continuity of the food supply chain

- Strengthen existing food distribution channels by engaging young people and processors in the use of digital agricultural market platforms (e.g. Nzara) to facilitate households' access to agricultural products targeting 25 women processors, 20 young people for the deliveries and nearly 72 000 consumers.
- Reduce post-harvest losses and facilitate access to markets by setting up a cooling system to facilitate the distribution, sale and marketing of vegetables, and fishery and aquaculture products.
- Enhance agricultural production processing capacities at local level through training of women processors on hygiene procedures recently adapted to COVID-19.
- Support women producer groups (fishmongers and fish processors) in the Maritime region through the construction of 100 improved charcoal kilns to strengthen their resilience.

3) Ensuring food supply chain actors are not at risk of transmission

- Raise awareness at the local level to reduce the risk of virus spread and provide personal protection equipment (masks, sanitizer and hand washing stations).
- Develop guidelines and protocols for compliance with hygiene /safety measures during planting, harvesting, selling, etc.



Funding



FAO requires
USD 2 million

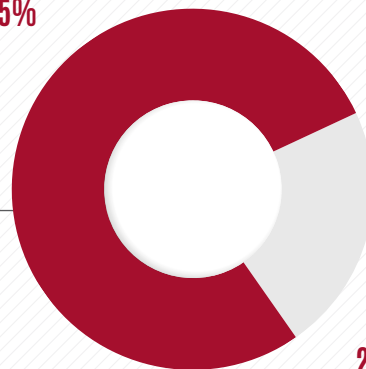


to assist
156 000 people

FUNDING GAP

USD 1.55 million

77.5%



22.5%

RECEIVED

USD 450 000

Resource partners

the African Development Bank and FAO's own resources

Coordination and partnerships

- FAO works in close collaboration with the Ministry of Social Protection, the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal and Fish Production as well as Non-governmental Organizations to disseminate messages related to COVID-19 among food chain actors to mitigate the spread of the virus.
- FAO, in line with other United Nations agencies, is committed to maintaining a coordinated approach among other sector interventions such as those related to health, social protection and nutrition in order to monitor closely the impact of COVID-19 on food security.

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