National agrifood systems and COVID-19 in Zimbabwe

Effects, policy responses and long-term implications
National agrifood systems and COVID-19 in Zimbabwe

Effects, policy responses and long-term implications

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Rome, 2021
INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has put significant pressure on health systems all around the world. The drastic measures established to contain its spread are creating serious impediments to economic activity (including agrifood systems) and, consequently, to livelihoods and food security and nutrition.

The COVID-19 outbreak demonstrates both how health and food systems are linked to one another, and how local food systems are linked to global systems. High rates of urbanization and the globalization of trade and travel have contributed to the spread of the virus across countries. Lockdowns and movement restrictions within countries and across borders have disrupted national and local food and agricultural output and input markets and have caused sharp reductions in overall economic activity globally. In poorer countries, disruptions have further exacerbated the fragility of systems (including agrifood systems) and livelihoods.

The Global Report on Food Crises 2021 found that 155 million people in 55 countries and territories are facing acute food insecurity at “crisis” level or higher – a situation that requires urgent action. The report further concluded that over 208 million people were experiencing a “stressed” level of acute food insecurity and bore a high risk of sliding into a “crisis” level if confronted by with additional shocks (FSIN, 2021). The situation is particularly worrisome in light of the evolving nature of the COVID-19 pandemic.

As the situation evolves, the question arises as to how, or whether, food, health and financial and economic systems could become better prepared to prevent similar outbreaks from escalating into a full-blown economic and social crisis.

This report is part of a series of country profiles that describe: (i) policy measures enacted by governments to contain the spread of the virus; (ii) policies and measures to stabilize the functioning of agri-food systems; (iii) potential effects of policies on agri-food systems and vulnerable groups. Finally, the profiles also assess longer-term options for agri-food system policies and investments so as to make them more resilient.
POLICY MEASURES TO CONTAIN COVID-19

What major measures have been taken to contain the spread of the virus? How are they evolving?

Following the World Health Organization (WHO)’s declaration of COVID-19 as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) in January 2020, the Zimbabwe Ministry of Health and Child Care (MoHCC) immediately instituted response measures to enhance the country’s state of preparedness and capacity to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak. These primarily consisted of public health actions aimed at prevention, containment and treatment.

When COVID-19 was characterized as a pandemic by the WHO on 11 March 2020, the Government of Zimbabwe (GoZ), like many other governments the world over, was quick to act, officially declaring a state of emergency on 20 March 2020. It did so in anticipation of the potential devastating effects of the disease, even before a single case of infection had been reported in the country. From the first reported case (21 March 2020) until 31 December 2020, Zimbabwe recorded a total of 13,625 confirmed COVID-19 cases, and 360 deaths as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Zimbabwe COVID-19 cases and deaths

Source: Data from MoHCC daily COVID-19 updates.

The declaration of COVID-19 as a national disaster and state of emergency necessitated the enactment and enforcement of a series of regulations and policy measures as and the deployment of human and financial resources to support the implementation of the response. More than 20 COVID-19 related regulations have been enacted and reviewed or amended more than two dozen times since the arrival of COVID-19 in Zimbabwe.

---

1 Screening of travellers arriving in Zimbabwe at major points of entry commenced on 24 January 2020. In early February, an assessment of preparedness, led by the Minister of Health and Child Care, targeted the country’s health facilities and major entry points into the country. The country’s major hospitals were designated as the main isolation facilities for suspected COVID-19 cases.

The following summarises the major policy and regulatory measures instituted in response to the pandemic.

**COVID-19 preparedness and response plan**

- The development of a COVID-19 National Preparedness and Response Plan (NPRP) commenced in mid-January 2020 and the plan was officially launched on 13 March 2020.
- The NPRP aimed to minimise morbidity and mortality from COVID-19 and associated adverse socio-economic impacts.

**National lockdown**

- A 21-day national lockdown and prohibition of public gatherings was legislated on 20 March and took effect on 30 March 2020.
- The entire country was encouraged to be on high alert in terms of taking preventative measures as well as responding to and handling of suspected cases.
- All movements of people were restricted, except when necessary to access essentials like food, fuel and health services. Exemptions were also made for staff certified to provide essential services, such as medical personnel, agricultural and food sector workers, fuel attendants, and security forces.
- Due to the increasing number of COVID-19 cases, the national lockdown was extended to 3 May, then to 17 May, and, on 31 May 2020, it was further extended indefinitely subject to fortnightly reviews.

**Curfews and restricted business operating hours**

- From 30 March 2020, a curfew was imposed between 15.00 and 06.00 hours, with business hours designated between 09.00 and 13.00 hours.
- From 17 May 2020, only registered small and medium enterprises (SMEs) with workspaces allocated to them by local authorities (including SMEs in the agrifood sector but excluding street vendors) were allowed to operate; these were required to comply with all COVID-19 screening protocols.
- From 22 July 2020, curfew hours were revised to 19.00 to 06.00 hours. Business operating hours were revised to 08.00 to 15.00 hours.
- Starting on 18 August 2020, the overnight curfew began at 20.00 rather than 18.00 hours. Business hours were extended to 16.30 hours.
- From 15 September 2020, business hours were revised to run from 06.30 to 18.30 hours.
- From 1 November 2020, overnight curfew hours were reduced to 22.00 to 06.00 hours to allow greater movement of people and goods.

**Relaxation of national lockdown**

- Although the lockdown was extended on 17 May 2020, some slight relaxations were allowed to enable more private entities to provide essential services, including humanitarian food distribution.
- Some businesses in the formal commercial and industrial sector were also allowed to operate, despite not being classified as essential services, subject to strict adherence to public health containment measures.
• Lockdown measures were also relaxed from 29 April to 28 August 2020 to allow tobacco marketing activities to take place at designated auction floors, which were decentralized to minimize the spread of COVID-19.

• Although the national lockdown is still in force, measures are gradually being relaxed over time to allow increased economic activity in the country.

• The relaxations have increased access to goods and services as well as income earning opportunities for some workers and businesses.³

Restrictions on gatherings of individuals

• Starting from 30 March 2020, gatherings of more than two persons were banned, with the exception of funerals, where up to 50 people could gather.

• From June, places of worship were allowed to operate with no more than 50 individuals gathering at a time while adhering to COVID-19 prevention and containment measures.

• Special provisions were made in June 2020 for restaurants, hotels and the tourism sector to serve sit-in meals (but no alcoholic beverages) during licensed hours. Recreational facilities were opened to local tourists and visitors only.

• As of September, public gatherings can include up to 100 people.

Closure of both land borders and airports to non-essential travel

• Both land borders and airports were closed to all human traffic, with the exception of returning nationals and permit holders, as from 30 March 2020.

• Starting on 23 September 2020, local and regional flights were allowed to resume with strict enforcement of COVID-19 screening protocols.

• Air, rail and road transportation of cargo, food, agricultural inputs, and other essential products have remained open throughout the lockdown.

• Imports and exports of basic food commodities, such as maize, wheat, wheat flour and soya bean as well as key medical and industrial supplies were permitted throughout the lockdown period.

• From 1 October 2020, international air travel was permitted for passengers and cargo, subject to strict enforcement of COVID-19 screening protocols.

• Starting on 1 December 2020, GoZ began the phased reopening of Zimbabwe’s borders⁴ to private passenger vehicles and pedestrians while the best way to handle cross-border public passenger transport is being assessed.

Lifting ban on use of foreign currency as legal tender

• A ban⁵ on the use of foreign currency, imposed in September 2019, was lifted at the end of March 2020, to allow citizens to use their personal foreign currency earnings and savings for local transactions in the country.

• This measure has partially dollarized Zimbabwe’s economy, with most transactions now using the preferred USD currency.

³ This includes businesses in the agrifood sector, particularly SMEs in the horticulture and fresh produce value chains.

⁴ The country’s six largest borders ( Beitbridge, Chirundu, Forbes, Nyamapanda, Plumtree and Victoria Falls) will be the first to open.

⁵ In September 2019, the GoZ amended the Exchange Control Regulations through SI 212 of 2019 to allow the exclusive use of the Zimbabwean dollar for local transactions.
Closure of schools, colleges and universities

- Schools and tertiary institutions were closed at the end of March 2020.
- University students were permitted to sit for exams in June under strict COVID-19 screening protocols.
- Schools and institutions of higher learning remained closed until the end of September 2020, when higher learning institutions (universities and colleges) and exam-writing classes (Grade 7, Form 4 and Form 6) were allowed to return to school.
- From 26 October 2020, the second phase of school opening allowed Grade 3, Forms 3 and 5 to return to school.
- The third phase entered into force on 9 November 2020, when the remaining classes (Grades 1 to 4 and Forms 1 and 2) returned to school.

Internal barriers to movement of non-essential goods

- Starting on 30 March 2020, the movement of non-essential goods across towns and cities were restricted.
- Transport services for the intercity and urban-rural movement of goods and people were restricted until mid-September 2020, when long-distance travel and transportation of goods were permitted, conditional on adherence to strict COVID-19 screening procedures. An increasing number of transporters have resumed operations and there has been increased movement of people and goods to urban and rural destinations.

Implementation of policy and regulatory measures

- The most well-enforced measures were the national lockdown and associated restrictions on movement, such as the curfew and limitations on the gathering of individuals.
- These measures were strictly enforced by security forces and aimed to slow down the spread of the virus by restricting public activities and closing informal markets, with exceptions for certain essential agricultural activities, formal food markets, fuel service stations and health facilities.
- The lockdown measures have gradually been relaxed and the level of enforcement has been reduced over time.
- The initial stringent and rigorous enforcement of restrictive measures has gradually been replaced by a more tolerant approach to dealing with ‘offenders.’

What major measures have been taken to relax or strengthen the lockdown, especially in relation to the functions of agrifood system?

- Agriculture, mining and health were prioritized as essential sectors, which should remain operational during the lockdown, save for curfew hours. However, they were required to adhere strictly to public health regulations, such ensuring the use of adequate personal protective equipment (PPE), regular temperature checking, hand sanitizing and physical distancing.

---

6 Bus crews are required to have temperature testing kits and sanitizers for passengers, and to possess certification showing that they have tested negative to COVID-19
The operation of food markets was initially restricted to formal outlets, such as retail shops and wholesalers, until it was realized that some key actors in agricultural value chains, e.g., horticultural producers, were being harmed by the restrictive measures (ZELA, 2020) since they could not access transport to move their perishable produce to distant markets in urban areas.

The lockdown measures did not initially consider the transport and logistical support that would be needed for farmers and agroprocessors to acquire productive inputs and move produce to the markets (see further below for details). Thus, the trucks transporting produce to the markets were often stopped at roadblocks across the country. Even when the trucks were allowed passage, farmers could be denied access to the market stalls or they would find the markets closed since most were regarded as informal markets.

These oversights in the policy measures resulted in many farmers incurring huge losses, especially for highly perishable horticultural products.

A week into the lockdown, popular horticultural markets (which are dominated by informal traders), such as Mbare Musika in Harare, were allowed to open, subject to strict enforcement and adherence to public health prevention and containment measures.

Some contractors of crop and livestock products were unable to be quickly certified as providers of essential services, resulting in huge stock holdbacks as farmers such as poultry producers failed to deliver, or the contractors failed to offtake, either due to travel restrictions measures or the lack of adequate storage facilities since some of the markets where farmers normally sell were not in operation to absorb accumulating stocks.

Continuous review of the situation prompted the GoZ to clear more agricultural players and humanitarian and development aid providers to operate as essential service providers. However, such clearances were made on a case by case basis.

By September, the GoZ had eased most of the COVID-19 restrictions, particularly those limiting the movement of people. Considering the inadequate testing capacity in the country, some experts warned that the relaxed measures would raise the risk of a second wave of increased infections, which indeed began in December (see Figure 1) (Worldometers, 2020).

**AGRIFOOD POLICY MEASURES TO RESPOND TO THE EFFECTS OF THE CRISIS**

**What major policy measures are in place or anticipated that target the food system directly?**

**Stimulus package for the agriculture sector**

- The agriculture sector was prioritized under the GoZ’s COVID-19 stimulus package and was allocated ZWL 6.1 billion (34 percent of the total package, approximately USD 102 million).

- The bulk of the funds allocated to the agriculture sector (ZWL 1.5 billion or approximately USD 60 million7) went towards funding the Winter Wheat Production Programme, which traditionally has been funded through the Crop and Livestock Inputs Scheme or, more recently, the Command Agriculture Programme (Tatsvarei et al., 2020).

---

7 Figures are based on an estimated cost per hectare of USD 1 394 TVC prior to harvesting
• About 190,000 tonnes of wheat were expected to be produced in 2020, compared to 94,700 tonnes in 2019 (MoFED, 2020c).

• Zimbabwe is a net importer of wheat. Therefore, there was some contention as to the rationale for subsidizing wheat production when the state would eventually import wheat (Tatsvarei et al., 2020), rather than directing the subsidies to other sectors with greater potential.

Import facilitation measures

• To mitigate the critical cereal supply situation, which existed previously but was compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic, the GoZ lifted import duties on maize, wheat, maize meal, and wheat flour for 12 months starting in May. The objective was to allow more cereal grains to be imported by private players, mainly from South Africa.

• The major constraint to importing adequate cereals to build national stocks has been access to foreign currency, both by the GoZ and private grain milling companies.

In addition to exemptions from cross border restrictions, the following import facilitation measures were instituted:

• In July, the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority (ZIMRA) expanded the list of agricultural inputs and equipment that individuals and commercial entities can import duty free and without value-added tax (VAT).

• These include a wide variety of equipment for both crop and livestock production as well as farming inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, and livestock breeding stock.

• The tax exemption on agricultural inputs and equipment came as a relief to farmers, whose production and marketing activities had been directly or indirectly affected by the pandemic, particularly as preparations for the 2020/21 farming season gained momentum.

• Local poultry breeders continued to incur customs excise duty on the import of fertilized eggs until the second week of October 2020. The GoZ responded by amending customs and exercise regulations (S.I. 245 of 2020) to suspend duty on imported fertilized eggs for the top nine poultry breeders in Zimbabwe between October and the end of March. The price of day-old chicks, which had grown from around USD 0.50 before the lockdown to USD 1.50 per chick, has gradually been decreasing to USD 1.00 per chick.

Food price controls

• On 22 April, the GoZ called for a price freeze, directing all food producers and retailers to revert to commodity prices that prevailed on or before 25 March (Zimbabwe Independent, 2020).

• This step was taken after the prices of food and other in-demand consumer products, which were already high due to hyperinflation, skyrocketed as consumers embarked on panic buying in anticipation of limited supplies during the lockdown.

• However, the price freeze was not legally binding and the call was generally ignored and compliance with the directive was very low because of shortages of basic commodities in retail outlets.

---

8 This was the result of two consecutive poor harvests as a result of droughts, pest and diseases, and unfavourable macroeconomic environment.
Food distribution

- Under the Food Deficit Mitigation Programme, which pre-existed COVID-19, the Department of Social Development in the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare (MoPSLSW) targeted 760 000 vulnerable food-insecure households per month (up from approximately 600 000 in 2019) (MoFED, 2020b; FEWSNET, 2019). The programme distributed maize to the additional 160 000 households across the country’s eight rural provinces, starting in March 2020.

- In October 2020, the Department reported that it had reached a total of 735 455 (including the additional 160 000 households mentioned above) food-insecure households with 36 772.75 tonnes of maize per month since July (MPSLSW, 2020b). This is more than double the 18 000 tonnes distributed to 600 000 households each month prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic (MPLSW, 2020a). According to statistics obtained from the MoPSLSW, the grain portion per household increased from 30 kg to 50 kg per month after the lockdown.

- The programme was extended to urban areas in September, when grain distribution was phased out and replaced with a cash-for-cereal scheme targeting vulnerable and food-insecure households.9 Beneficiaries received an equivalent of USD 12 per person per month up to a maximum of four people per household in emergency cash transfers from September until December, when the situation was reviewed.

- The 2020 Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee (ZimVAC) Report found that about 72 percent of rural households eligible for food aid had been provided with some form of food assistance from various sources (including the GoZ’s Department of Social Development mentioned above) (ZimVAC, 2020b).

Grain producer price incentives and adjustments

- In May, GoZ’s cabinet approved and announced a 30 percent price increase incentive for early maize delivery to the state-owned enterprise Grain Marketing Board (GMB) on top of the 80 percent upward-review of the producer price effected in April for grain delivered to the GMB.

- The GoZ, therefore, successively increased the producer price for cereal grains four times between February and July to attract more farmers to contribute to the strategic grain reserve (SGR). It promised to make the payments within two to three days of the day of delivery, a feat that was largely achieved, with farmers receiving payments within 24 hours (NewZWire, 2020; Business Weekly, 2020)).

- Grain millers were allowed to access grain from the GMB at a subsidized price for milling and to sell as subsidized maize meal to consumers; the retail price was controlled by the Government.

Agricultural inputs support/conditional inputs support

- Following indications that most smallholder farmers would require assistance to recover from the impact of two consecutive drought seasons10 compounded by prevailing adverse macroeconomic conditions and COVID-19, the GoZ restructured the existing Presidential

---

9 The identification of beneficiaries is done by the Department of Social Development in collaboration with local authorities and humanitarian and religious organizations. Selection is then conducted through a vetting process that takes into account the food poverty datum line as defined by poverty, incomes, consumption and expenditure survey criteria.

10 2018/19 season and 2019/20 agricultural season
Input Support Programme (PISP) to make access to agricultural inputs conditional on the adoption of a climate-smart (conservation agriculture) practices, which are locally code-named "Pfumvudza" (which means regeneration/revitalization)

- The PISP’s target was to support about 1.8 million vulnerable households with a standard free input package (comprising 5 kg seed, 12 kg lime, 50 kg basal and 50 kg top dressing fertilizers) for the production of maize and traditional small grains, like sorghum and millets, during the 2020/21 farming season.
- As of October, 48 percent of the 11,971 surveyed rural households had received input support from the GoZ (ZimVAC, 2020b).

What measures are in place or anticipated that aim to mitigate the effects of the crisis on vulnerable groups?

Economic recovery and stimulus package

- In May 2020, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MoFED), announced an economic and recovery stimulus package of ZW$18 billion (USD 720 million at the official rate of 1:25) (MoFED, 2020a). The package was equivalent to about nine percent (9 percent) of the country’s GDP and 34 percent was allocated to the agricultural sector (as highlighted above).\(^{11}\)
- The economic recovery and stimulus package came on top of an already underperforming economy and was intended to revitalize the economy and provide relief to individuals, families, small businesses and industries impacted by the economic slowdown caused by the pandemic (MoFED, 2020a).
- Additional objectives included expanding existing social protection programmes (see details below), for example by establishing a health sector support fund (Tatsvarei et al., 2020) as well as providing liquidity support to productive sectors of the economy and protecting employment.

A note on exchange rate

Different exchange rates between the USD and the Zimbabwean Dollar (ZWL) have been applied to better reflect people’s purchasing power and the “real value” of goods and services at the time of transaction or when the data was collected. The official exchange rate actually fluctuated significantly in 2020. Trends are presented in Annex 5.

---

\(^{11}\) The remaining portion went to fund the Working Capital Fund for Industry (17 percent), the Mining Sector Facility (5 percent), the SME Support Fund (3 percent), the Tourism Support Fund (3 percent), liquidity from statutory reserves (11 percent), the Health Sector Support Fund (5 percent), broad relief measures (8 percent), COVID-19 cash transfers (13 percent), and the Arts and Sports Grant (1 percent).
Support to financial institutions and private sector

- In August, the Minister of Finance and Economic Development announced that, due to the prevailing challenges “exacerbated by the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic,” the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) was going to extend the deadline for meeting the minimum capital levels for financial institutions by 12 months from 31 December 2020 to 31 December 2021 (MoFED, 2020d).

- By November, the GoZ had provided ZWL 3 billion (USD 120 million) to industries in the private sector (agrifood, tourism, manufacturing, construction, etc.) for working capital through the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe’s Medium-Term Bank Accommodation Facility. About ZWL 2.6 billion (USD 31.04 million) had already been accessed by beneficiary companies (MoFED, 2020c).

Tax-related measures

- The GoZ adopted a soft stance towards tax payments and sought to reduce the period for processing tax refunds for companies that would have declared inadequate profits to 30 days rather than the usual 60 days.

- Online tax filing options were expanded to reduce the need for taxpayers to visit the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority (ZIMRA) offices in person.

- A blanket order at the beginning of April suspended penalties and interest on late tax payments for entities experiencing cash flow challenges due to COVID-19, including in the agrifood sector.

- The employment (pay as you earn or PAYE) tax free threshold was increased from ZWL 2 000 (USD 80.00) to ZWL 5 000 (USD 200) per month and the highest tax band to 40 percent on income over ZWL 100 000 (USD 4 000.00) per month effective 1 August 2020. Additionally, the deadline to submit 2019 income tax returns was extended to 31 August 2020.

Employment support measures for the public sector

- Although not specifically targeting vulnerable groups, a notable positive development for employment was the government decision to ‘unfreeze’ about 4 000 posts for healthcare workers as well as creating an additional 200 positions for medical doctors in public hospitals to pressure on the already overburdened national healthcare system.

- The GoZ has set a target to recover, in 2021, an estimated 150 000 formal jobs lost in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. (MoFED, 2020c).

Social protection measures

- In Zimbabwe, informal employment is estimated to contribute about 76 percent to total employment (Tatsvarei et al., 2020). Given the absence of well-structured social safety nets and protection mechanisms, Zimbabwe faced significant risks from the spread of COVID-19 since workers and entrepreneurs in informal employment cannot not afford to stay away from work since their livelihoods depend on their day-to-day activities (ZCTU, 2020).

- In March, the GoZ announced that a ZWL 600 million (approximately USD 24 million) facility would be set aside to provide unconditional cash transfers of ZWL 200 per person per
month (equivalent to about USD 8.00 per person per month at the official exchange rate of 1:25) for three months (April to June) to one million vulnerable households (KPMG, 2020). However, this measure was only partly implemented, with just 200 000 households receiving cash transfers from the Department of Social Welfare by August (Mashingaidze, 2020; Gagare, 2020). The ever-increasing poverty datum line (minimum cost of living), which stood at ZWL 14 000 per month in June 2020 (equivalent to USD 560 at the prevailing official rate of 1:25), was far higher than the amount of the cash transfer. The assistance was completely insufficient for meeting the day-to-day needs of a family of five.

- Zimbabwe’s existing social cash transfer programme (ZWL 158.1 million or USD 6.32 million) was expanded to include an additional ZWL 85.5 million (USD 3.42 million) COVID-19 response facility to cover, among other things, increased allocations for cash transfers, subsidized public transport to mitigate the impact on urban poor and subsidized agricultural inputs for vulnerable households between January and June 2020.

- As indicated above, food assistance for an estimated 760 000 vulnerable households continued during the lockdown period, from March to July 2020.

- The country’s National Social Security Authority (NSSA) offered a one-off discretionary bonus to pensioners, doubling their monthly pay-out in April to cushion them against the effects of the pandemic and other adverse macroeconomic conditions.

**How is the government funding COVID-19 related measures?**

The GoZ launched a national preparedness and response plan for COVID-19 on 13 March (MoHCC, 2020) with a total budget of USD 26 388 380. However, due to the on-going country’s economic problems, such as limited flexibility in spending choices, the GoZ was unable to secure meaningful loans or grants to meet immediate budgetary needs for dealing with the pandemic (KPMG, 2020).

Expenditures were cut from lower priority capital expenditure areas in the national budget, such as tourism, sports, arts and recreation, in order to provide stimulus packages to the productive sectors and fund social protection programmes. The Treasury also redirected some funds to essential services such as sanitation and water supply programmes. Only very critical capital expenditures, such as irrigation, road and dam construction, were spared.

The two percent Intermediated Money Transfer Tax (IMTT), which is ordinarily been ring-fenced for capital development projects, was redirected to activities around COVID-19 related challenges. For example, out of the total ZWL 902.2 million (USD 2.8 million) generated by the IMTT between January and June 2020, a COVID-19 response facility amounting to ZWL 85.5 million (USD 3.42) was availed. This was in addition to the ZWL 158.1 million (USD 6.32 million) earmarked for the ongoing social cash transfer programme.

Some disparities have been reported between the allocated amounts and actual disbursements from the Treasury. The country has faced borrowing constraints from the international community over the years and this has created the need for more humanitarian support. Concerns have been raised about the adequacy of resources for COVID-19 mitigation measures.

---

12 This is a new programme that was introduced to respond to the COVID-19 lockdown as a supplement to the existing cash transfer programme.

13 Initially, the Minister of Finance indicated that the Department of Social Welfare would use its structures to identify the vulnerable households but after four months, in July 2020, he announced that a “sophisticated algorithm” would be used to evaluate individuals’ mobile money and bank balances to identify beneficiaries.

14 The Consumer Council of Zimbabwe uses a standard food basket equivalent to a family of five people.
and the heavy reliance on development partners and humanitarian organizations to supply personal protective equipment (PPE), improving the capacity of state hospitals, and providing incentives to frontline health personnel.

What initiatives have been taken by the humanitarian and development community to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 on food security, nutrition, agriculture, water and sanitation and health?

The Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) for 2020, developed before the COVID-19 pandemic, was reworked twice, first in April to respond to early warning issues that were raised in the February Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) food insecurity analysis and the March 2020 ZimVAC Rural Livelihoods Assessment (RLA) reports, and again in July to include an addendum concerning the impacts of COVID-19. The revision of the HRP in July by the United Nations and its humanitarian partners in Zimbabwe sought to update the response to the COVID-19 pandemic by including a multisectoral migrant response and a reprioritization of humanitarian cluster responses.

The latest version of the HRP aims to reach 4.6 million people with humanitarian assistance in both urban and rural areas (OCHA, 2020b), compared with about two million reached in 2019 (OCHA, 2020a). The priorities for the COVID-19 response are: education; food security and livelihoods; health, nutrition; child protection; refugees; water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) (see Annex 1 and 2 for key response measures).

How are the humanitarian and development communities funding the COVID-19 response?

- The HRP had initially called for a total of USD 715.8 million in funding from the international community before revising it upwards to USD 800.8 million (with the increase coming from the USD 85 million earmarked for the COVID-19 response).
- As of 5 October 2020, 29 percent of the funding had been received, with only four (education, food security and livelihoods, health and WASH) out of nine priorities having received some contributions as shown in Annex 3.
- Agencies agreed to use carryover funds from 2019 for the COVID-19 response and these would be reflected in the UN OCHA Financial Tracking System (FTS). The World Bank office in Zimbabwe announced in May that it was redirecting financial resources from the Cyclone IDAI Recovery Project to COVID-19 response in affected communities (World Bank, 2020a).
- The United States Government (34 percent) was the leading source of humanitarian funding as of 5 November 2020, as shown in Annex 4.

---

15 The 2020 HRP was launched in August 2020 following an appeal for humanitarian support by the GoZ.
16 The COVID-19 HRP is aligned with the GoZ’s COVID-19 response plan in terms of attaining the overall goal of minimizing morbidity and mortality as well as the adverse socio-economic impacts associated with the pandemic.
Following an appeal by the GoZ, the African Development Bank (AfDB) approved and disbursed a USD 13.7 million COVID-19 Rapid Response Facility grant (separate from the USD 85 million mentioned above) to support the country response to the pandemic. The funds were earmarked for training of the MoHCC’s lab technicians and medical staff on COVID-19 management and prevention practices (AfDB, 2020).

It is important to note that humanitarian organizations have included COVID-19 response measures in their programming as a way of minimizing the effects of the pandemic on the communities in which they work. The integration of COVID-19 response measures, such as awareness campaigns done through printing of appropriate messages on food hand out packages and PPE, has budget implications for the operations of these organizations. It can, therefore, be concluded that there have been shifts of funding, both by government and by donors, from development to immediate emergency responses, thereby compromising future development efforts (unless the funds are replenished).

IMMEDIATE EFFECTS OF THE CRISIS ON VULNERABLE PEOPLE AND THE AGRIFOOD SYSTEM

Food security and nutrition: latest data and projections

Figure 2. People facing high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 and above)

Source: (IPC, 2020a, b & c; WFP, 2020)

Figure 2 above indicates the prevalence of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 and above).

Before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic (June to December 2019)

- Over two million people were in need of urgent humanitarian action in Zimbabwe.
- 25 percent of the rural population was estimated to be in crisis or emergency status (IPC Phase 3 and 4).

17 IPC Phase 3: People facing severe acute food insecurity (crisis, emergency and catastrophic situations)
From October to December 2019, the number of people in IPC Phase 3+ increased from 2.29 million to 3.58 million (38 percent of the rural population) (IPC, 2020a).

Key drivers of food insecurity prior to the pandemic were: the delayed start of the 2018/19 farming season and prolonged dry spells during the second half of the season; Cyclone IDAI which affected livelihoods in 12 districts of two provinces; crop pests (e.g., fall armyworm, which resulted in significantly reduced crop harvest); limited carry-over of household food stocks from the previous year; reduced purchasing power as a result of hyperinflation; and exponential increase in food prices beyond the reach of most rural households.

### Between February and June 2020

- More than 4.34 million people in Zimbabwe were estimated to be in crisis status (IPC Phase 3) or worse. About 45 percent of the country’s rural population was in IPC Phase 3+ (crisis) (IPC, 2020b).
- This represented a deterioration in the food security situation for most rural households: at the time of the last analysis, 38 percent of the rural population fell into IPC Phase 3 and higher.
- The Global Acute and Severe Acute Malnutrition (GAM and SAM) prevalence increased to 3.8 percent and 2.0 percent from 3.7 percent and 1.4 percent respectively (ZimVAC, 2020a; ZimVAC, 2020b).

Key drivers were poor rains (a second consecutive drought during the 2019/20 agricultural season), low agricultural production as a result of the drought conditions, and high food prices in the context of declining consumer purchasing power. In urban areas, the crisis status (IPC Phase 3) was mainly due to stringent lockdown restrictions on informal sector activities, which resulted in the shortage of household basic commodities and the generally above-average prices.

### From July to December 2020

- 5.3 million people in rural areas and 3.3 million in urban areas were expected to be food insecure (IPC 3+) between October and December 2020, up from previous estimates of 3.7 million and 2.2 million people respectively (OCHA, 2020c; WFP, 2020).
- However, the November IPC analysis found a significant reduction in the number of acutely food insecure people in IPC Phase 3 or above, with only 2.61 million and 3.38 million people expected to fall into this category during October to December 2020 and January to March 2021 respectively (IPC, 2020c). This is attributed to early action and increased humanitarian response around food assistance and other social protection interventions. The GoZ and humanitarian organizations have reached a large number of food insecure households (4.1 million beneficiaries between July and December 2020) and aim to reach 6.7 million beneficiaries between January and March 2021 (OCHA, 2020e; IPC, 2020c).
- FEWSNET reported in June that there was likely going to be an increase in the prevalence of GAM between July and December beyond the national average of 3.4 percent and the May 2019 GAM prevalence of 3.6 percent (FEWSNET, 2020).
- The nutritional status of children in Zimbabwe has deteriorated over the past one year, with the GAM prevalence having increased from 3.6 to 3.8 percent between May 2019 and May 2020.

---

18 It is difficult to disentangle the effects of COVID-19 from other factors and although it appears that the drought and high food prices seem to have taken precedence over the pandemic.
• The GAM prevalence between October and January 2021 period is anticipated to remain within the ‘acceptable’ (below 5 percent) range save for a few areas where it may deteriorate to the ‘alert’ (5.9 - 9.9 percent) range (FEWSNET, 2020).

Key drivers of the food security situation between July and December were the effects of the COVID-19 lockdown, an adverse macroeconomic environment and limited food availability (see details below).

How have the pandemic and associated measures affected agrifood systems?

Food production/supply chain

• Backyard agricultural production (i.e., home gardens) became widespread in urban areas as people sought other ways to access food beside relying on commercial value chains, which had become too formalized since only large supermarkets and retail outlets were allowed to operate with strict enforcement of COVID-19 regulations (Scoones, 2020).

• There has been an increasing demand for traditional and indigenous foods due the realization that many have both nutritional and medicinal properties (KTA, 2020).

• Prior to COVID-19, the production and marketing of indigenous foods was associated with informal food vendors, but the trend is gradually changing with big supermarkets now stocking herbal teas, edible insects, leafy vegetables, and many other non-timber forest products as urban people have become increasingly health conscious.

Markets (access to markets, logistics/transportation, information, prices)

• A situational analysis conducted by the Centre for Conflict Management and Transformation (CCMT) to estimate the impact of the pandemic on irrigation schemes in the Midlands Province found that farmers were unable to access traditional markets for their produce due to movement restrictions and thus lost about 40 percent of their brassicas to spoilage. Although the situation improved with the determination – after 18 days – that agricultural activities were essential services, farmers lost approximately ZWL 105 500.00 (USD 4 220.00) during those few weeks (Centre for Conflict Management and Transformation, 2020).

• Maize meal shortages continued as government-subsidized maize meal (sold at ZWL 70 or USD 2.80 per 10 kg bag between January and July) was not readily available due to the limited availability of grain (due to poor harvest) to millers. Some millers resorted to producing premium refined brands, which were exempt from the subsidy policy, but they were too expensive for most poor households.19

• The tobacco marketing season started a month late (at the end of May) due to COVID-19 restrictions. Farmers lost significant potential earnings as payments were structured in such a way that they could only receive half in USD and the other half as ZWL. The ZWL portion was pegged at a fixed exchange rate of USD 1:25 ZWL. The situation only started to improve around end of June, when the GoZ introduced an auction-based foreign exchange trading system.

• COVID-19 restrictions had a negative impact on the beef value chain, resulting in logistical supply bottlenecks that hampered the sourcing and marketing of cattle. Prices for meat

---

19 These refined brands are out of the price range of poor households although there is a market segment in urban areas that can afford them and is willing to pay a higher price. Sometimes poor customers end up buying what is available due to shortages, even if it is expensive.
products have remained low due to declining disposable incomes. Thus, the livestock sector witnessed a significant decline in business activity between the first and the second quarters of 2020. The implementation of lockdown protocols saw cumulative beef cattle slaughters for the first quarter of 2020 declining by 16 percent to 103,451 compared to the same period in 2019, while second quarter slaughters amounted to only 49,530 heads, 24 percent below the same period in 2019 (LMAC, 2020).

**Food waste and losses**

- A study conducted between April and May 2020 on the impact of the lockdown on the marketing of horticulture produce in Zimbabwe reported significantly increased instances (by more than 35 percent) of fresh produce sale leftovers and spoilage of unsold food at popular markets compared to the period prior to the lockdown (Parwada, 2020).
- COVID-19-related losses by farmers have had ripple effects along the agrifood supply chain, with subsequent losses of income by the informal intermediaries and SMEs that dominate the horticulture supply chain (Dhewa, 2016). The reduced availability of agricultural products in some retail shops meant reduced income generation for the employers resulting in termination of contracts for some jobs in the retail sector (Chaora, 2020).

**Reduced food availability (general availability or availability of specific items)**

- The availability of maize grain, maize meal and other cereals in agricultural produce markets remained limited across the country during the April-October 2020 period, mainly due to a drought-induced poor harvest during the 2019/20 production season (FEWSNET, 2020). The World Food Programme (WFP) reported that only 3.3 percent of the markets surveyed in October 2020 (4.7 percent of urban and 2 percent of rural markets) indicated the availability of maize (WFP, 2020).
- Grain movements from surplus-producing to deficit-producing areas was very limited due to restrictions imposed by the GoZ in 2019 regarding the amount of grain that can be transported freely, except for deliveries to the Grain Marketing Board (GMB), which had no limitations. This was further compounded by the COVID-19 lockdown and related public transport movement restrictions and higher transportation costs. In May 2020, the retail price of a 10 kg pocket of maize meal was ZWL 76.20 (USD 3.05) in Mashonaland West Province (a surplus-producing area) and more than double in Bulawayo Province (a deficit area) at ZWL 258.29 (USD 10.33) (FAO, 2020a).
- By mid-June 2020, most consumer products, particularly basic food commodities such as sugar, maize meal and cooking oil, had become scarce and expensive, forcing households to adopt survival and coping strategies like reducing the quantity and frequency of meals.
- Some essential goods began trickling in as illegal imports from neighbouring countries, especially South Africa, facilitated by cross-border haulage truckers, who had continued to operate during the lockdown.
- Knowledge Transfer Africa (eMKambo) – a Zimbabwe knowledge brokering organization concerned with agriculture and rural development – noted that, due to the COVID-19 lockdown, urban consumers who had previously relied heavily on imported manufactured foods – to the point of associating local food with poverty – began to look for traditionally-

---

20 Informal markets are estimated to absorb more than 70 percent of agricultural fresh produce and commodities.

21 These are agricultural produce markets located in urban centres, which exclude formal supermarkets and retail shops.
grown and prepared nutritional foods to fill the gap created by the absence of imported and industrially manufactured foods (KTA, 2020).

What have been the short-term effects of the COVID-19-related health and economic crises and associated measures on livelihoods, food insecurity and malnutrition, and future prospects?

The continued deterioration of Zimbabwe’s economy remains the major driver of acute food insecurity and poverty. Numerous, unpredictable policy changes have destabilized most macroeconomic indicators. The COVID-19 containment measures, coupled with drought and poor harvests during the 2019/20 season, have also had a significant impact on the food security situation of most households. However, it is difficult to disentangle the impacts of COVID-19 from other factors in an inflationary and unstable economic environment, where the exchange rate and prices are characterized by high volatility. In addition, the fact that most transactions take place in the informal economy, where statistics are not properly recorded, presents huge challenges for attribution. Despite these challenges, some studies have been undertaken on the various impacts of the pandemic and the findings are highlighted in this and the following section.

A rapid assessment by the Agricultural Policy Research in Africa (APRA) in June 2020 that 84 percent of rural households surveyed had experienced a rise in the cost of living and a deterioration in their food security situation due to the lockdown measures (Mutyasira, 2020).

The country’s economy contracted by an estimated 6.5 percent in 2019, weighed down by exogenous shocks such as the El-Nino induced drought and the destruction caused by Cyclone Idai (ZimVAC, 2020b). On 24 February 2020, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) announced that, following a sharp contraction in 2019 and another poor crop harvest expected in 2020, economic growth in 2020, which had initially been projected to increase to 3 percent (MoFED, 2020b), was now forecast at near zero, with food shortages continuing (IMF, 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic came at a time when the country was in the midst of other crises. For example, the agriculture sector was emerging from two consecutive droughts. The country’s GDP, which had been projected by the UNDP to contract by over 8 percent due to COVID-19 (UNDP, 2020), is now expected to contract by 4.1 percent by the end of 2020 (MoFED, 2020c).

Migration

Between April and November 2020, a total of 32 047 Zimbabwean migrants were officially recorded as having returned from neighbouring countries (OCHA, 2020e). As the challenges of living in town under COVID-19 lockdown became unbearable for most urbanites, many decided to migrate back to their rural areas, where at least they had the option to pursue agriculture-based livelihoods (Scoones, 2020). This urban-to-rural migration is expected to continue as the farming season approaches (October to March). The food production and supply situation is therefore expected to significantly improve.

Changes in remittances

The MoFED predicted that remittances would decline by 4.9 percent in 2020 to USD 877 million, from USD 922 million in 2019, as major economies, such as South Africa, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, plunged into recession (MoFED, 2020b). Remittances from relatives living abroad or in urban areas fell below the average for most households in Zimbabwe due to COVID-19-related challenges (FEWSNET, 2020).
Price volatility and key drivers

Zimbabwe’s already high food prices continued to rise in 2020, mainly driven by: tight domestic supplies (due to a poor 2020 harvest and limited imports); severe macroeconomic instability, particularly related to the weak value of the country’s currency; and, to some extent, disruptions to trade flows and market functions due to COVID-19 (Blanke, 2020; FAO, 2020c). Prices spiked further in April amid concerns over the impact of the lockdown measures (FAO, 2020c). In June, the GoZ abandoned the fixed exchange rate and introduced an auction system, which reviews the exchange rate on a weekly basis. Within a month, the price of fuel had increased by 150 percent with further increases in food prices during the second and third quarters of 2020, particularly for payments made in the local currency (FEWSNET, 2020).

Food price inflation rose to 836 percent in June, with commodities such as sugar, bread and cooking oil almost doubling in price from May to June; this partly contributed to the critical shortages of these commodities pre-COVID, which were amplified by the pandemic (FAO, 2020c). In July 2020, Zimbabwe recorded an annual inflation rate of 838 percent, the second highest annual inflation rate globally. From early May to mid-June 2020, the local currency depreciated by 80 percent against the United States dollar. The country experienced an average national price increase of 424 percent between April and September 2020. Food inflation, which had been on an upward trend since March 2020, continues to be the major driver of inflation in the country, however, it started to recede from 977 percent — recorded in July 2020 — to 865 percent in August and 724 percent in September, due to exchange rate stabilization measures adopted by the GoZ in June 2020.

Prices of maize grain, maize meal and some basic food items such as sugar and cooking oil remained significantly above average between April and July as shortages continue to be experienced in most markets. In April, retail prices for maize and small grains rose by 77 percent and 85 percent respectively from February (FEWSNET, 2020). In June, the average maize grain price was 383 percent higher than in February. The high level of prices was further supported by a weaker local currency and resulting imported inflation.

Although price volatility on the markets has largely been curbed due to some degree of stability in the official and parallel market exchange rates has returned; reduced economic activity and associated reductions in employment, remittances, incomes and purchasing power, coupled with localized food price increases have exacerbated most pre-existing COVID-19 food insecurity-related vulnerabilities (Global Network, 2020). Prices of basic goods and services have remained significantly high and unaffordable for most poor households, a situation that is expected to continue until the first quarter.

Production situation and implications for household consumption

• At the onset of the lockdown, the country barely had any carryover stocks from the previous season’s harvest due to climate-change related shocks.

• The national cereal deficit was estimated at 1.16 million metric tonnes for the 2020/21 marketing and consumption year, including small grains (ZimVAC, 2020a), compared to 761 332 metric tonnes for 2019/20 (MoLAWCRR, 2020).

---

22 It is difficult to disentangle the effects of COVID-19 and the impacts of the macroeconomic shocks on prices.

23 At the end of June 2020, the GoZ introduced an auction-based exchange rate determination system that has gradually stabilized the parallel market exchange rate and, subsequently, market prices.

24 Food inflation for May stood at 954 percent, down from 980 percent in April and 807 percent in March.
• The second round of the crop and livestock assessment conducted by the Ministry of Agriculture in May 2020 estimated total maize production at 908,000 metric tonnes, an increase of 20 percent compared to 2019, but still 1.1 million tonnes short of requirements.\(^{25}\)

• Many poor households in surplus crop-producing areas of the country were expected to exhaust their own food production by late August/September 2020 having to depend on markets despite reduced incomes.

• IPC Phase 3 (crisis) outcomes are expected to continue in many deficit crop-producing areas of the country. Poor households are expected to engage in consumption or livelihood-based coping strategies that may result in the accelerated depletion of household and productive assets (FEWSNET, 2020) and livestock and a reduction in the quantity and frequency of meals.

• In the areas of the country where households totally failed to achieve any meaningful harvest, IPC Phase 4 (emergency) outcomes are expected to prevail, driving 768,595 people or 153,719 households to engage in the extreme coping strategies mentioned above (IPC, 2020c).

• FEWSNET noted that the anticipated improved income earning opportunities from the reopened informal sector in urban areas, although still below normal, would likely result in most households remaining in IPC Phase 2 (stressed outcomes) between July 2020 and January 2021.

Reduced income/income shocks/lost wages/unemployment

• Incomes from crop and livestock sales have generally been low during the post-harvest period (April – August 2020) due to liquidity challenges.

• FEWSNET reported an increase in informal self-employment activities for some rural households during the lockdown; these included gold panning, vegetable production and marketing and selling of non-timber forest products, such as wild fruits, grass and firewood (FEWSNET, 2020).

• According to the 2020 ZimVAC report, rural households experienced an average 51.5 percent reduction in income compared to 2019 (OCHA, 2020e).

• The lockdown period led to a sharp reduction of the non-agricultural informal sector in rural and urban areas. This led to a decline in incomes of over 50 percent among people engaged in the informal sector, most of whom are women.

• Coupled with food and fuel price increases, the drop in poor peoples’ incomes is expected to reduce the consumption of food, especially higher cost nutritious food, with implications for the nutritional status of poor households. The 2020 ZimVAC RLA reported that 57 percent of rural households rely on less expensive or less preferred foods (ZimVAC, 2020b).

• The situation was projected to worsen during the peak hunger period (October to March) because a massive number of people (over six million) (IPC, 2020c) in urban areas (employed in both the formal and informal sectors) were expected to continue earning below-normal incomes, despite some improvements expected from the easing of COVID-19 restrictions.

\(^{25}\) Cereal requirements for livestock are estimated at 450,000 MT.
Which groups are most likely to be severely impacted by COVID-19 and associated measures?

Rural smallholder farming households

The top three impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on rural households – as noted during the 2020 ZimVAC rural livelihoods assessment – are disrupted income-generating opportunities (53 percent), reduced accessibility of food (50 percent) and limited accessibility of basic commodities (21 percent). An estimated 1.5 million smallholder farming households will require emergency crop and livestock inputs assistance for the 2020/21 farming season following consecutive droughts in the 2018/19 and 2019/20 seasons and the disruptions caused by the pandemic (OCHA, 2020e).

People with disabilities

A rapid assessment the impact of COVID-19 on people with disabilities in Zimbabwe revealed that most depend on informal activities, such as petty trading (vending and selling airtime), cross-border trading, and begging in city centres and on intercity buses for survival. Restrictions on movement and ban on informal activities during the lockdown constrained them from undertaking these livelihood activities. According to the study, the monthly income of people with disabilities shrunk by more than 50 percent in real terms from ZWL 2 160 (USD 43) before COVID-19 to ZWL 1 080 (USD 13) per month during the lockdown (UNESCO, 2020).

Orphans and vulnerable children

Due to the economic crisis, which has been compounded by COVID-19, the capacity of families to take care of their children has been significantly compromised. It is estimated that over 20 000 children were forced into street vending during the lockdown to help support their urban families (The Conversation, 2020). The school feeding programmes that normally take care of most orphaned and vulnerable children were disrupted significantly due to the closure of schools and movement restrictions on caregivers. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Human Affairs (UN OCHA) estimated in October 2020 that over 850 000 children were in acute need of various forms of assistance, including school feeding (OCHA, 2020d).

Students in schools, colleges and universities

With the closure of schools and universities, students from some urban schools were able to use e-learning platforms, while those in low income rural and high-density urban areas found it difficult to continue their schooling because they lacked access to ICT and support structures. Thus, there has been unequal access by students to education, a situation that exacerbates already existing inequalities in educational outcomes, human development and poverty reduction.

Internally-displaced people

The UN OCHA reported in October that 128 270 internally-displaced people in refugee camps were living under threatening conditions and needed humanitarian assistance more than a year after Cyclone Idai hit Zimbabwe in March 2019. Living conditions in the camps expose people to COVID-19 and present serious health and protection risks (OCHA, 2020e).

---

26 COVID19 has worsened the plight of disabled agricultural value chain actors (KTA, 2020).
Low-income households

Low-income households in both rural and urban areas have become more vulnerable due to the loss of livelihoods and incomes. This has been particularly the case for women- and child-headed households at a time when rural poverty continues to increase (ZIMSTAT, 2019). This is because they depend heavily on livelihood activities in the informal sector (such as petty trading, street food vending, etc.), which were brought to a halt by the COVID-19 measures.

The proportion of bank loans issued to women as a percentage of total loans declined from 15.59 percent in December 2019 to 3.12 percent in June 2020 (RBZ, 2020). Loans issued to young people also declined from 6.06 percent to 2.55 percent during the same period, indicating a significant vulnerability to financial exclusion during the pandemic. Most poor households live ‘from hand to mouth’, implying that any disruption in their daily income-earning opportunities pushes them further into poverty and deprivation.

Women, girls and youths

Women adopted negative coping mechanisms, such as transactional sex, as economic stress took its toll on families; this also increased the incidence of child or early marriages. About 13 percent of women reported having experienced spousal violence during the lockdown, 71 percent of whom reported verbal abuse and being deprived of physical needs (ZimVAC, 2020b). The Musasa Project, a lobby and advocacy initiative for women and gender issues, reported a 70 percent increase in gender-based violence (GBV) during the lockdown (SAFE, 2020). In 94 percent of these cases, women were being exploited sexually, physically and emotionally, 90 percent of the time by their partners.

According to a socio-economic assessment of the impact of COVID-19 by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), women and girls were more likely to be adversely affected by the lockdown than men and boys due to bearing the burden of household chores and care work in the event of morbidity (UNDP, 2020). In addition, due to the reprioritization of expenditures by the GoZ and humanitarian partners to fighting the pandemic, the reproductive rights of women and adolescent girls received less attention.

The UNDP assessment also found that the pandemic has deepened pre-existing inequalities, including gender inequalities. The exposure and exacerbation of social, political and economic structural inequalities has further marginalized women and girls, particularly those living with various forms of vulnerabilities (UNDP, 2020).

Micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and the informal sector

A survey conducted by the Sivio Institute in April and May 2020 (Chaora, 2020) found that 32 percent of MSMEs closed down operations altogether; 63 percent lost between USD 1 000 and USD 3 000 in revenue during the first two months of lockdown; 69 percent could not restock without external assistance; 57 percent could not afford to pay salaries for the month of June; 40 percent could not afford to pay rent; 56 percent lost customers to competitors; and 50 percent would require external assistance to recover.

Business operators in the informal sector faced numerous constraints: business disruptions (especially if the sector was deemed non-essential); challenges in meeting loan repayment obligations; additional operating costs for compliance with COVID-19 safety measures; limited

---

27 According to the 2020 ZimVAC Report (ZimVAC, 2020a), 32.2 percent of rural households are female-headed and 0.2 percent are child-headed.
sales and income after relaxation of some lockdown measures as walk-in customers were affected by movement restrictions; limited market accessibility and loss of perishable produce.

Employees of formal (large-scale) businesses

Almost 90 percent of formal businesses suspended operations for close to two months according to a World Bank survey conducted between June and July 2020 (World Bank, 2020b). A significant proportion (86 percent) suffered from a drop in demand, while 76 percent experienced disruptions in the supply of raw materials and/or merchandise for resale. About 94 percent of the firms reduced the size of their workforce as a coping strategy, while 37 percent reduced workers’ wages, thereby rendering their employees more vulnerable (Sharukayi, 2020). The pandemic significantly impacted the financial wellbeing of many firms, with sales falling by 51 percent compared to the previous year. About 90 percent reported experiencing liquidity challenges and cash flow deficits, while 64 percent reportedly faced difficulties in paying service providers and meeting tax obligations with the revenue authority.

FOOD FOR REFLECTION: LONG-TERM POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Zimbabwe’s economy experienced consecutive recessions in 2019 and 2020, with GDP contracting by 6 percent and 4.1 percent respectively (GoZ, 2020; MoFED, 2020c). The economic contraction resulted from declining performances in agriculture, energy (electricity generation), manufacturing, mining, and tourism, which were aggravated by climate change and COVID-19. The impact of the pandemic has combined with crippling hyperinflation, crop failure and food insecurity, health system deficiencies, limited utilization of available capacity in industry, high unemployment, and failures in delivery of basic goods and services, such as water, sanitation and hygiene. Climate-related disasters, such as El Niño and droughts, Cyclone IDAI in March 2019, scattered incidences of flooding, and outbreaks of pests and diseases have wreaked serious damage. It is difficult to isolate the impact of COVID-19 in a precise manner, especially in a context in which restrictions have not been very rigorously enforced. However, there is no doubt that the impact has been serious, deepening existing inequalities and creating new poor and vulnerable people in an already impoverished economy.

Zimbabwe’s over-reliance on external economic drivers, such as remittances, foreign direct investments (FDI) and official development assistance (ODA), has made it more vulnerable to the pandemic-related shocks and predictions show that the overall economy will shrink further by 4.1 percent in 2020 (MoFED, 2020c).

For a successful transition to recovery and inclusive growth, the country needs to accelerate policy and legal reforms, attract investments in value-added activities, foster social cohesion and peace, and uphold principles of good governance. Promotion of constitutionalism, consolidation of the rule of law and respect for human rights and gender equality have been identified as key catalysts for re-engagement with the international community. In a 2018 needs assessment for Zimbabwe, the AfDB and World Bank identified three actions required to support Zimbabwe’s quest for recovery: the move from a centralized system of governance and decision-making toward devolution and decentralization; the move from a public sector–driven, semi-closed, constrained economy to a stable, open, market-based, private sector-driven inclusive economy; and the move from international isolation to inclusion and integration in the global economy. A stronger economy and social cohesion will be essential for strengthening Zimbabwe’s resilience to COVID-like pandemics and other shocks.
How has the food system evolved or changed due to the crisis?

- The pandemic prompted the GoZ to promote formerly neglected foods, such as traditional grains and other indigenous foods. For example, a price premium of up to 5 percent is now being paid for traditional grains (sorghum and millets) delivered to the Grain Marketing Board (GMB) compared to the traditional staple maize crop. This move is intended to promote the production and consumption of nutritionally superior small grains.

- The relaxation of lockdown measures brought about the revival of informal economic activity. New and innovative ways of getting products to customers, devised during the lockdown, continue to be employed, including mobile food delivery services and car boot sales and online social media advertising and marketing strategies continue taking root. Some areas have seen an expanded role for small-scale producers. For example, in the country’s second largest city, Bulawayo, the pre-pandemic shortage of horticultural produce was aggravated by lockdown regulations, which constrained production and logistics on larger farms. Local small-scale farmers moved in, increasing their production and using emerging marketing channels to meet Bulawayo’s demand for fresh produce (Banda, 2020). For these farmers, the lockdown presented a rare opportunity to claim a share in the local market, although due to their low levels of inputs and technology they might fail to keep up with the demand of the growing population of Bulawayo.

- Other enterprises embarked on food and product preservation activities to counter perishability issues and the decline in customers. This could be a means to strengthen the food commodity value chain by establishing alternative means to preserve and add value to food products. It could also raise the value of the commodities by extending their shelf life.

- Traditional methods of preserving food have reportedly become so important that most farmers have realized the importance of value addition to their produce for sale at higher prices (KTA, 2020).

What changes are needed in governance systems (e.g. decentralization) to support future crisis responses?

The COVID-19 pandemic hit Zimbabwe at a time when it was undertaking an ambitious three-year (2018 – 2020) Transitional Stabilization Programme (TSP) intended to revive the country’s fortunes by, inter alia, getting the economic fundamentals right. After failing to achieve the stabilization and growth targets in the TSP, the GoZ has embarked on a new economic growth and stabilization programme, the National Development Strategy (2021-2025), which focuses on economic and political reforms and good governance in the context of devolution and decentralization (MoFED, 2020b).

Although devolved structures, such as local authorities, were already in existence before the establishment of the devolution agenda, economic management functions still need to be devolved to the lower tiers of government. The economic governance structures overseen by local authorities are weak and require capacity strengthening with professional skills such as fiscal budgeting, monetary policing and auditing of books of accounts. A well-managed devolution process will improve efficiencies and capacities to effectively respond to emergencies and crises by subnational entities.
Are national self-sufficiency policies likely to prevail? Is there a revived debate around national or regional self-sufficiency, and possible implications? How will this affect import/export controls?

The Agriculture and Food Systems Transformation Strategy (2020 – 2025), launched in August 2020, emphasizes the restoration of productivity to guarantee national food self-sufficiency and promote import substitution and industrial growth and development. The priority of the new strategy is food security, increased exports and import substitution. The current over-reliance on imports and food aid exposes Zimbabwe to potential disaster during future pandemics when source countries may not be able to supply the country’s need for food. Increased local utilization of primary products and resources in industrial value addition processes has multiplier effects in national employment and economic well-being, which are vital for national self-sufficiency.

Are technologies employed during the epidemic, such as deliveries of food and electronic transactions, likely to remain? What are the implications for farmers and markets?

Zimbabwe had already made significant progress in using electronic transaction systems prior to COVID-19, mainly due to cash shortages, which have plagued the country since 2016. It is estimated that electronic payments accounted for about 96 percent of all transactions before the pandemic (RBZ, 2020) and they are likely to continue to be used in future.

However, due to runaway inflation and astronomical parallel market exchange rates during the lockdown period, the GoZ (through the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) of the RBZ) suspended the dominant mobile money payment systems in June 2020. This limited transfers by mobile transactions to ZWL 5 000 (approximately USD 50 on the dominant parallel market), thereby affecting the sales of agricultural commodities. In some cases, consumers resorted to barter trade, offering farmers groceries, household utensils, farm inputs, implements and building materials instead of money. This presents huge challenges for the farmers who prefer actual cash payments.

The lockdown witnessed an increase in food delivery services. New enterprises, such ‘Fresh-in-a-Box’ emerged, where the enterprise would deliver fresh fruits and vegetables directly to consumers. This could be a gateway to the growth of innovative food delivery systems in the country.

How will the crisis shape agrifood policies, given challenges such as climate change, biodiversity and environment degradation?

COVID-19 has prompted stakeholders to consider changes to in agrifood system, including structural changes in markets, local value addition, innovation and policy approaches. For example, biofortification and industrial food fortification strategies are increasingly seen as essential components of the national food and nutrition security. These nutrition-boosting strategies are critical for improving access to healthy diets, particularly when the availability of fresh farm produce and livestock-based products is limited. The pandemic has also exposed the need to prioritize in policy discussions, post-harvest technologies such as food preservation for enhanced food and nutrition security.
With the advent of COVID-19, the GoZ has taken a deliberate move to replace the government-led command agriculture financing model\textsuperscript{28} for large-scale commercially-oriented producers with a private sector-driven smart agriculture financing model. In addition, the Presidential Inputs Support Programme (PISP) for smallholder farmers and other vulnerable groups has been restructured to promote sustainable intensification under a conservation farming technique locally known as ‘Pfundzva’ (a climate-proof conservation agriculture concept). In response to the shortages of fresh produce caused by COVID-19, the GoZ approved a USD 2 billion Horticulture Recovery Plan in October 2020, which is meant to target 1.8 million rural households with input support under the Presidential Horticulture Scheme.\textsuperscript{29} The GoZ has also started to conduct regular vulnerability assessments of local food supply chains and will take action to strengthen supply capabilities to ensure adequacy of available food supplies.

The lack of preparedness of the Zimbabwe health sector risks that future pandemics will spread rapidly and infect large numbers of people, threatening economic activity, including the agrifood sector, which is already highly compromised. Against this background, periodic risk assessments become essential. Both the national and international communities expect the UN organizations (including FAO and WFP) to play a leading role in assessing the impact of COVID-19 and proposing response measures aimed to sustain the national agrifood system.

The pandemic also presents an opportunity to test the efficacy of anticipatory action (or Early Warning Early Action – EWEA) as an approach for mitigating the negative effects of future pandemics on food production and accessibility, thus preventing further deterioration of the food security situation in the country.

**What are the challenges for the humanitarian and development community in the medium-term?**

The 2020 UN OCHA country reports highlighted some emerging humanitarian situations that will require some shifts in the priorities of humanitarian organizations in the immediate to the medium term (OCHA, 2021; OCHA, 2020e; OCHA, 2020d). Some of these priorities, such as increased funding for health, education, food and nutrition security and livelihoods, WASH, social protection, refugees and shelter are linked to COVID-19, others are not. At least four million Zimbabweans cannot access primary healthcare while they face recurring drought conditions and climatic shocks and hazards, which trigger health risks. At least 3.7 million vulnerable people do not have safe water, sanitation and hygiene, increasing the risk of communicable disease outbreaks. And 1.2 million school age children do not have access to basic education. Drought and a turbulent economy have heightened social protection needs, particularly for women and children.

Some 128 270 people across 12 districts in Manicaland and Masvingo provinces continue to need humanitarian assistance more than a year after Cyclone IDAI in March 2019. More than 35 000 refugees and asylum seekers require assistance to enable them to lead safe and dignified lives. This implies that the humanitarian and development community will be called on to provide more resources in the medium term to ensure that the emerging priority areas are fully implemented. Humanitarian and development initiatives around education, food security and livelihoods,

\textsuperscript{28} Command Agriculture scheme refers to a GoZ financed Special Maize Production Programme, which provided inputs to farmers on credit for production of maize and marketing through the Grain Marketing Board (GMB), where loan recovery would be done on a stop-order basis.

\textsuperscript{29} The target for the plan is to attain a USD 1.217 billion annual rural horticulture economy by 2025, which is expected to grow to USD 3.5 billion by 2030. This translates to household income earnings from horticulture amounting to USD 675 per annum by 2025. The initiative is part of the GoZ’s Agriculture and Food Systems Transformation Strategy (2020-2025) meant to transform agriculture from a USD 5.2 billion to a USD 8.2 billion sector by 2025.
health, nutrition, child protection, refugee response and WASH, including funding requirements for the pandemic, are described further above.

INFORMATION AND GOVERNANCE

Coordination of the COVID-19 response

Zimbabwe had a multistakeholder COVID-19 response committee comprised of a wide range of stakeholders, including representatives from the private sector, academia and professional associations, civil society organizations, and development (technical and donor) partners. In August, the government merged the various COVID-19 response initiatives by various stakeholders into a single response plan and established a 13-member technical steering committee under the MoHCC.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Zimbabwe had begun to devolve key functions of the state to the subnational (provincial and district) levels. The process failed to gain momentum for a number of reasons, however, the COVID-19 pandemic exposed the need to revisit and expedite the devolution agenda in many sectors, particularly the health sector. On 29 September 2020, the GoZ launched its first Devolution and Decentralization Policy following its approval by the Cabinet on 21 July 2020.

Implications of the crisis and related policies for conflict and ongoing social tensions

The GoZ has been accused by some civil society organizations (CSOs) of using the COVID-19 lockdown as a justification for implementing overly restrictive measures and limiting the rights of its citizens to protest against the perceived lack of good governance (Gukurume, 2020; Kulkarni, 2020). In July 2020, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) appealed to authorities not to use the pandemic as an excuse to restrict fundamental rights and freedoms. The appeal followed the arrests of political activists in connection with mass street protests against the rising cost of living and deteriorating living standards in the country.

The UN OHCHR encouraged the government to seek to “engage with civil society and other stakeholders to find sustainable solutions to grievances while ensuring that people’s rights and freedoms are protected in accordance with Zimbabwe’s human rights obligations (UN News, 2020).”

The holding of by-elections to fill vacant positions in Parliament or in local government was suspended at the beginning of October and will remain suspended as long as the COVID-19 remains an emergency. In May 2020, provision was made for prosecuting any person who publishes or communicates false news about agents involved in enforcing or implementing the national lockdown. According to SI 200 of 2020, any person who publishes or communicates false news about any public officer, official or enforcement officer involved in enforcing or implementing the national lockdown in his or her capacity as such, or about any private individual that has the effect of prejudicing the state’s enforcement of the national lockdown, shall be liable for prosecution under Section 31 of the Criminal Law Code (Publishing or communicating false statements prejudicial to the state).

Are there any studies on the cost of the agrifood system disruptions (including hidden costs e.g., the loss of nutrition)?

- The Agricultural Policy Research in Africa (APRA) project under the Future Agricultures Consortium of the Institute of Development Studies (United Kingdom) conducted a rapid assessment in Mvurwi and the Concession Areas of Mazowe district of Zimbabwe to gain

---

30 According to SI 200 of 2020, any person who publishes or communicates false news about any public officer, official or enforcement officer involved in enforcing or implementing the national lockdown in his or her capacity as such, or about any private individual that has the effect of prejudicing the state’s enforcement of the national lockdown, shall be liable for prosecution under Section 31 of the Criminal Law Code (Publishing or communicating false statements prejudicial to the state).
an understanding of the impacts of COVID-19 on food production systems, supply chains and livelihoods in rural communities. The assessment, conducted in mid-2020, found that the pandemic had worsened the livelihoods of the predominantly agriculture-dependent rural communities by disrupting their production, marketing and other income-generating activities. Since the onset of the lockdown, 86 percent of the surveyed households have been unable to access off-farm work; 84 percent have faced increases in the cost of living and experienced worsening food insecurity, while 64 percent have failed to access any form of assistance (Mutyasira, 2020a).

- The socioeconomic studies mentioned above document how farming communities lost their produce to spoilage and huge sums of unrealized revenues as a result of the pandemic.

Are there any ongoing or planned studies to assess the impact of COVID-19 on the food chain, vulnerable livelihoods, poverty or nutritional status?

- The UNESCO Regional Office for Southern Africa (ROSA) conducted a rapid assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on people with disabilities in Zimbabwe. ROSA hosted a virtual meeting for key stakeholders to review and validate the report on 20 November 2020. The report has since been published (UNESCO, 2020).

- A technical advisory committee comprised of representatives from government, development partners, NGOs and academia (ZimVAC) recently concluded a rural livelihoods assessment, with a focus on the impact of COVID-19 on the food security situation and livelihoods of rural people in Zimbabwe. Key findings have been included in report. The next task of the ZimVAC is an assessment of the impact of the pandemic on urban livelihoods.

- FAO is conducting a risk assessment study, through a GeoPoll survey, to understand the impacts of COVID-19 on food security, agricultural production and livelihoods.

- FAO also conducted an agricultural livelihoods and food security monitoring survey in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic to generate lessons learned from the first round and to set the roadmap of the survey for 2021.

- FEWSNET has integrated the effects of COVID-19 in its routine food security, trade and market assessments to prompt early action.

- UNDP has recently concluded an assessment on the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in Zimbabwe. Key findings have been included in this report (UNDP, 2020).

- WFP conducts regular food markets vulnerability assessments and mapping (VAM) surveys in order to monitor the food security situation in the country.

- The Agricultural Policy Research in Africa (APRA) project will conduct two more rounds of assessments in Zimbabwe (one at the end of 2020 and another in early 2021) to gain a further understanding of the impacts of COVID-19 on food production systems, supply chains and livelihoods in rural communities (Mutyasira, 2020b).
## ANNEX 1. HUMANITARIAN CLUSTER-BASED RESPONSE MEASURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cluster</th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Needs</th>
<th>Key response measures/initiatives</th>
<th>Gaps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Camp coordination and camp management&lt;sup&gt;31&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>35 166 displaced people in camps and host communities</td>
<td>Food, livelihoods support; shelter; WASH; PPE</td>
<td>- New shelter and decongestion of displacement sites - Food and NFI&lt;sup&gt;32&lt;/sup&gt; distribution</td>
<td>- Access to medical services and health facilities - GBV and PSEA&lt;sup&gt;33&lt;/sup&gt; awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education&lt;sup&gt;34&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1.2 million children of school going age</td>
<td>853 000 children in acute need</td>
<td>- 359,764 reached with COVID-response - 520 radio lessons broadcasted</td>
<td>- Shortages of teaching and learning materials at home during lockdown - Unmet needs for marginalized learners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food security and livelihoods&lt;sup&gt;35&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>6 million people in both rural and urban areas</td>
<td>4.6 million people in urgent need of food assistance</td>
<td>- In-kind food assistance: vouchers or cash (USD) - Agricultural and livelihood support</td>
<td>- 61 percent gap in funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health&lt;sup&gt;36&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3 million people</td>
<td>- Prioritization of health worker occupational health and safety - Increased access and utilization of essential health services</td>
<td>- Continued delivery of essential health services, including preventive, curative and rehabilitation services - Enhanced preparedness to deal with current and future pandemics</td>
<td>- Declining access and utilization of essential services - Limited preparedness for other health emergencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutrition&lt;sup&gt;37&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1.7 million children</td>
<td>968 770 children targeted with Vitamin A supplementation</td>
<td>- 736 266 children received vitamin A supplementation - Continued treatment of child wasting - 6 679 village health workers trained</td>
<td>Inadequate supplies of PPE for community volunteers implementing nutrition and life-saving activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child protection&lt;sup&gt;38&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>422 000 people</td>
<td>Improved service delivery for protection of vulnerable children</td>
<td>78 208 children reached with psychological support</td>
<td>Unavailability of COVID-19 related information for persons with disabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protection against gender-based violence (GBV)&lt;sup&gt;39&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>845 000 people</td>
<td>Improved service delivery for protection of victims and vulnerable people</td>
<td>150 180 people reached with GBV risk mitigation and response</td>
<td>Limited operation of GBV facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)&lt;sup&gt;40&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.7 million people</td>
<td>Access to WASH products such as safe water</td>
<td>2.3 million people reached with WASH assistance</td>
<td>Access to safe water in rural areas a challenge (only 30 sources are protected)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migrants/returnees&lt;sup&gt;41&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>24 046 returning migrants</td>
<td>Reinforced surveillance, contact tracing and hygiene practices</td>
<td>- Real-time screening and separation of COVID-19 symptomatic returnees</td>
<td>Provision of livelihood support to returnees after discharge from quarantine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General coordination&lt;sup&gt;42&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Biweekly high-level coordination meetings</td>
<td>Continuous tracking and increased coordination of response progress</td>
<td>- A standing cabinet committee overseeing efforts and coordination with humanitarian partners</td>
<td>Critical funding gap hindering operational response coordination</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** Measures under the 2020 HRP (COVID-19 addendum)  
**Source:** OCHA, 2020d.

---

<sup>31</sup> Implementing partners include the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Terre des Hommes.  
<sup>32</sup> Non-food items  
<sup>33</sup> Protection against sexual exploitation and abuse  
<sup>36</sup> ACT Alliance, Christian Aid, Organization of Public Health Interventions and Development (OPHID), Save the Children, UNICEF; United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), World Health Organization (WHO), World Vision Zimbabwe.  
<sup>38</sup> Justice for Children, Child Protection Society, Childline Zimbabwe, Plan International, The J.F. Kapnek Trust, Trocaire, UN Women, UNICEF.  
<sup>39</sup> ACT Alliance, Christian Aid, ActionAid International Zimbabwe, CRS, Child Protection Society, Childline Zimbabwe, IRC, Regional Psychosocial Support Initiative, UN Women, UNFPA.  
<sup>41</sup> IOM.  
<sup>42</sup> United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
## ANNEX 2: HRP CLUSTER-BASED FUNDING REQUIREMENTS AND PROGRESS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cluster/sector</th>
<th>Funding requirements (USD)</th>
<th>Funding received (USD)</th>
<th>Progress coverage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Camp coordination and camp management</td>
<td>950 000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordination and common services</td>
<td>5 000 000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>41 651 396</td>
<td>979 912</td>
<td>2.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education COVID-19</td>
<td>10 260 000</td>
<td>2 620</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food security and livelihoods</td>
<td>483 261 341</td>
<td>108 889 026</td>
<td>22.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food security and livelihoods COVID-19</td>
<td>15 857 507</td>
<td>16 083 277</td>
<td>101.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>64 731 300</td>
<td>1 949 432</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health COVID-19</td>
<td>24 846 000</td>
<td>7 473 519</td>
<td>30.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutrition</td>
<td>18 790 283</td>
<td>3 558 937</td>
<td>18.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutrition COVID-19</td>
<td>4 548 530</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protection</td>
<td>21 249 005</td>
<td>1 603 034</td>
<td>7.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protection – Child COVID-19</td>
<td>2 747 260</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protection – GBV COVID-19</td>
<td>3 761 103</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refugee response</td>
<td>4 100 000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refugee response COVID-19</td>
<td>424 000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shelter</td>
<td>10 639 006</td>
<td>1 495 961</td>
<td>14.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shelter COVID-19</td>
<td>13 417 520</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water, sanitation and hygiene</td>
<td>65 404 273</td>
<td>1 799 699</td>
<td>2.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water, sanitation and hygiene COVID-19</td>
<td>9 132 409</td>
<td>997 181</td>
<td>10.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not specified</td>
<td>31 912 384</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple clusters/sectors (shared)</td>
<td>3 835 645</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>800 770 933</strong></td>
<td><strong>180 580 627</strong></td>
<td><strong>25.55</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** Data as of 18 November 2020.  
**Source:** OCHA, 2020f.

## ANNEX 3. COVID-19 HRP FUNDING REQUIREMENTS AND PROGRESS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cluster/sector</th>
<th>Required (USD)</th>
<th>Funded (USD)</th>
<th>Progress (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education COVID-19</td>
<td>10 260,000</td>
<td>2 620</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food security and livelihoods COVID-19</td>
<td>15 857 507</td>
<td>16 083 277</td>
<td>101.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health COVID-19</td>
<td>24 846 000</td>
<td>7 473 519</td>
<td>30.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutrition COVID-19</td>
<td>4 548 530</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protection - Child COVID-19</td>
<td>2 747 260</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protection – GBV COVID-19</td>
<td>3,761,103</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refugee response COVID-19</td>
<td>424 000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shelter COVID-19</td>
<td>13 417 520</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water, sanitation and hygiene COVID-19</td>
<td>9 132 409</td>
<td>997 181</td>
<td>10.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>84 994 329</strong></td>
<td><strong>24 556 597</strong></td>
<td><strong>28.89</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** Data as of 18 November 2020.  
**Source:** OCHA, 2020f.
ANNEX 4. SOURCES OF FUNDING FOR THE ZIMBABWE HRP 2020

![Funding for Zimbabwe HRP/appeal (USD) chart]

**Note:** Data as of 18 November 2020.  
**Source:** OCHA, 2020g.

ANNEX 5: TRENDS IN USD TO ZWL EXCHANGE RATE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Official Exchange Rate</th>
<th>Open Market Exchange Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 2020</td>
<td>25.00</td>
<td>62.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2020</td>
<td>25.00</td>
<td>60.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2020</td>
<td>25.00</td>
<td>71.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2020</td>
<td>57.36</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2020</td>
<td>76.76</td>
<td>97.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 2020</td>
<td>83.40</td>
<td>99.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2020</td>
<td>81.44</td>
<td>97.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2020</td>
<td>81.35</td>
<td>101.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2020</td>
<td>81.82</td>
<td>103.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2020</td>
<td>81.79</td>
<td>111.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2021</td>
<td>82.68</td>
<td>113.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2021</td>
<td>83.89</td>
<td>113.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2021</td>
<td>84.12</td>
<td>115.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (official rate) and Zimbabwe Market Watch (open market rate)

---

43 Taken for the last day of the month  
44 Source is Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe  
45 Source is Zimbabwe Market Watch (https://www.marketwatch.co.zw/)
REFERENCES


National agrifood systems and COVID-19 in Zimbabwe
Effects, policy responses, and long-term implications


ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Food and Nutrition Security Impact, Resilience, Sustainability and Transformation programme (FIRST) is a strategic partnership between the European Union and FAO. Through a network of policy officers embedded in government bodies, it works hand in hand with over 22 countries on setting the right conditions to promote both public and private investments in sustainable agriculture and creating an enabling environment for these investments to contribute to achieving food security and nutrition.

Launched by the European Union, FAO and the World Food Programme at the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit, the Global Network against Food Crises is an alliance of humanitarian and development actors united by the commitment to tackle the root causes of food crises and promote sustainable solutions to eradicate hunger and malnutrition through leveraging analysis and knowledge sharing, strengthened coordination in supporting evidence-based policy responses and collective efforts across the Humanitarian, Development and Peace (HDP) nexus.

A joint effort between FIRST with the Global Network has produced assessments on policy responses related to COVID-19 and their impact on agrifood systems in 13 countries. In particular, FIRST brought policy analysis capacities to support the programming priorities of FAO’s Office of Emergencies and Resilience (OER) and the Global Network in these countries; FAO’s OER and the Global Network provided quantitative assessments of the impacts of the pandemic on food security and nutrition.

This document was produced by the FAO representation in Zimbabwe. The process was led by Kingston Mujeyi, FIRST policy officer in Zimbabwe, with contributions from Alex Carr, Sophie Tadria, Solal Lehec, the FIRST management team and the Technical Support Unit of the Global Network against Food Crisis.