



FAO requires
USD 29.4 million



to assist
990 000 people



1.3 million people
facing acute food insecurity at
crisis and worse levels*



1.1 million internally
displaced persons



80% of the population relies
on agriculture for their food
and income



34 700 ha of land not
cultivated during the 2019/20
agricultural season in the Mopti
region alone



52% of pastoralists lost their
source of livelihood

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

Impact of COVID-19 on food security and agriculture

- On 25 March 2020, the first cases of COVID-19 were reported in Mali, in a context already marked by a security crisis and where the Government had just declared a state of emergency due to the deteriorating food security and nutrition situation. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, agricultural production in the country was affected by increased conflict caused by armed groups and inter-community clashes, in the northern and central regions. During the 2017/18 and 2018/19 agricultural seasons, adverse weather conditions also led to large fodder deficits in the Sahelian strip, thus increasing the pressure on fodder resources.
- Following the first cases of COVID-19 reported in Mali, the Government put in place a series of urgent and essential health-related containment measures, including border closures, a curfew for two weeks, no gatherings of more than 50 people and closed all schools. While market activity and movement of goods have not been restricted, logistical constraints and delays have accumulated. For many rural households, the pandemic and related necessary restrictions took place during a key period (April–June) with the harvesting of irrigated rice, the preparation of fields and the return of transhumant herders.
- More specifically, the government measures while essential to curtail the spread of the virus, have impacted the following: (i) seasonal migration; (ii) the availability of agricultural labour; (iii) access to pastoral resources; (iv) access to agricultural inputs; and (v) disrupted households' livelihoods. In addition, the country's GDP growth is expected to decrease from 5 to 0.9 percent, and the slowdown in the domestic economy is affecting trading activities and leading to a reduction in imports and exports. The loss of temporary jobs by the Malian diaspora has resulted in an abrupt halt in remittances, thereby decreasing incomes and households' purchasing power.



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

The spread of COVID-19 to almost all regions of Mali and the difficulties in contact tracing put a strain on the already limited capacity of health structures. In view of the continuous increase in numbers of positive cases and limited compliance with containment measures, the main expected impacts may include the following:

Farming households may not have the means to start the upcoming cropping season on time, while government and non-government actors may not be able to support them, in a context of anticipated early monsoon rains in the sub-region. Vulnerable populations are thus reportedly engaging in negative coping mechanisms, threatening their capacity to conduct agricultural activities during the main cropping season to start in July. Moreover, from July to October, access to inputs will remain a challenge for vulnerable agropastoral households particularly in Liptako-Gourma areas and western Sahel, who in addition to early depletion of their stocks, are experiencing decreased incomes as a result of livelihood disruptions due to insecurity or declining remittances.

The livestock sector to be particularly affected by the decline in exports of live animals due to border closures, the deterioration of the terms of trade and restrictions on movement on traditional transhumance routes (with general upward movement towards the north at the end of the dry season), affecting pastoralists' income and access to food. A total of 42 percent of pastoralists report having reduced their

movements since 15 May 2020 and 56 percent of them observed a stagnation or even a drop in their sales of animals. In the current context, projections point to a decrease of 15 to 20 percent in income from the livestock sector.

The vulnerabilities and food insecurity of agropastoral communities to increase due to the effects of COVID-19 on economic conditions in the country. If imports continue to decrease, especially for rice, oil, milk and sugar, commodity prices will in turn increase, making them less available to vulnerable households. Rises in prices are likely to continue in the coming months, which will be detrimental to western Sahel and the regions of Timbuktu, Gao, Kidal and Menaka, where populations are entirely dependent on market and informal trade with neighbouring countries, like Algeria and Mauritania. Vulnerable groups, are expected to suffer the most from the socio-economic impacts of the pandemic, including women and displaced people whose livelihoods have already been weakened by the existing situation in the country, due to difficult living conditions, limited access to water, food, sanitation and healthcare.

Anticipatory actions and response

Immediate measures are required to avert a full-blown economic and food crisis for populations already affected by insecurity, natural hazards and conflict.

Within the framework of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Corporate COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme, the proposed actions have been identified to meet the urgent short-term needs of the most vulnerable food-insecure populations and protect their assets. It also represents FAO's contribution to the United Nations Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19. FAO aims to: (i) sensitize 60 000 people to barrier gestures; (ii) protect the livelihoods of 65 000 rural households recently classified in severe acute food insecurity and particularly affected by COVID-19; and (iii) support 250 small and medium businesses (SMBs) and rural micro-enterprises, with a grant of USD 3 660 each, based on the cost of the payroll of ten employees over a six-month period. More specifically, FAO will focus on achieving the three main results through a series of activities as indicated below.

1) The livelihoods of vulnerable households affected by COVID-19 are protected

For many agricultural and pastoral households, income-generating activities have been suspended or severely affected by the pandemic. Essential health-related measures resulted in the disruption of input supplies, the delay in field preparation and reduced movement of livestock. The drop in national and international demand will force producers to keep their livestock and their productions until markets recover. FAO will implement the following activities in order to support vulnerable households:

- Implement cash+ activities by providing agricultural kits (including crop or vegetable seeds, tools and/or mineral fertilizers) or livestock-based livelihood support (animal feed, veterinary supply and

vaccination) along with unconditional cash transfers in order to cover vulnerable households' livelihood losses, maintain production capacity and allow them to meet their immediate needs.

- Support affected 250 agrifood SMBs/rural micro-enterprises (suppliers of agricultural and aquaculture inputs, and feed) that are essential to the local food supply chain through subsidy provisions.

2) Barrier gestures are quickly disseminated and adopted in rural areas to limit the spread of the virus

In close collaboration with the main health actors, FAO will contribute to social mobilization and communication efforts, in order to raise households' awareness on COVID-19 and rapidly increase the adoption of barrier gestures and physical distancing during the implementation of field activities. Specific activities are as follows:

- Disseminate messages in local languages through 2 000 Dimitra clubs, 1 000 farmers field schools, 500 Village Savings and Loan Associations, 500 farmers' associations, 50 rural radio stations and 100 producers' organizations.
- Distribute community radios, smartphones and solar radios to the most affected people.
- Produce local handwashing devices with the involvement of youth and women (at least 60 percent).

3) The impact of COVID-19 on the agriculture sector and food security is analysed to better coordinate interventions

FAO plans to assess the effects and impacts of the pandemic on food security and nutrition, analyse the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on households in the agriculture sector, and establish a targeting and monitoring mechanism to identify producers. This will allow prioritization of rapid recovery actions, ensure an adequate response and identify any potential new economic opportunities in the agriculture sector.



Funding



FAO requires
USD 29.4 million

- **USD 10 million** under the Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19
- **USD 19.4 million** under the Humanitarian Response Plan for 2020

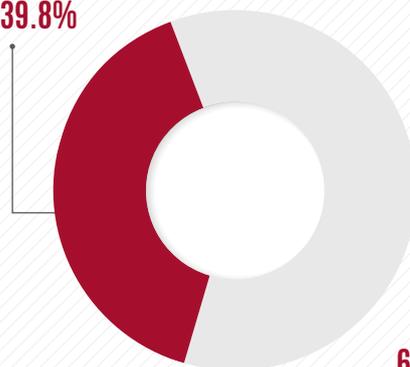


to assist
990 000 people

FUNDING GAP

USD 11.7 million

39.8%



60.2%

RECEIVED

USD 17.7 million

Resource partners

the Government of Canada, the Central Emergency Response Fund, the Special Fund for Emergency and Rehabilitation Activities and the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund

Coordination and partnerships

Implemented in close collaboration with the Government and in line with the UN Joint Programmatic Approach to COVID-19 Response in Mali, FAO's Response Plan will also seek a strong commitment from its partners. The strategic partnerships between FAO, the World Food Programme, the United Nations Children's Fund, the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Development Programme and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees will be strengthened to provide integrated assistance to vulnerable populations. Information and awareness messages will be adapted to WHO's model to reach as many people as possible, especially in rural areas.

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Contact

FAO Representation in Mali
Bamako, Mali
FAO-ML@fao.org

FAO Office of Emergencies and Resilience
Rome, Italy
OER-Director@fao.org

Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations
www.fao.org/emergencies