



## GIEWS Country Brief

### The Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste

Reference Date: 04-March-2024

#### FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT

- Dry weather conditions affecting planting and establishment of 2024 main cereal crops
- Above-average cereal production obtained in 2023
- Above-average cereal import requirements forecast in 2023/24
- Prices of rice at high levels in December 2023
- High food prices and reduced purchasing power limit access to food for vulnerable households

#### Dry weather conditions affecting planting and establishment of 2024 main cereal crops

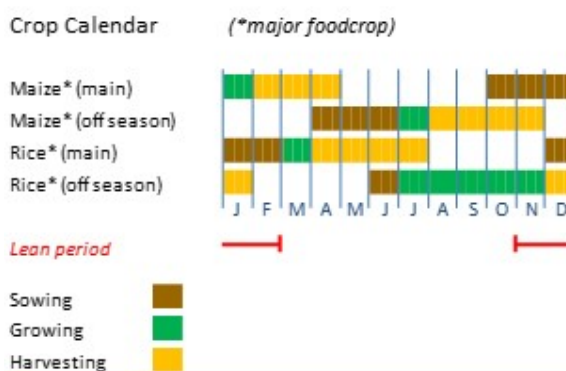
Precipitation amounts between October 2023 and January 2024 were more than 30 percent below average, associated with the El Niño phenomenon, hindering planting operations of the 2024 main maize crop and sowings are estimated at below-average levels, especially in southern parts of the country. Planting of 2024 main paddy crops started with some delay last January and improved precipitation amounts from February allowed plantings to pick up. Remote sensing data, as of mid-February 2024, indicates below-average vegetation conditions in northern and southern areas (red, orange and yellow colours in VHI map), especially in municipalities of Baucau, western Aileu, western Bobonaro and parts of Liquiçá. In these areas, which combined account for about 40 percent of the main cereal crop production, yields of early planted crops are likely to be at a below-average level.

According to the International Research Institute/Climate Prediction Centre (IRI/CPC) weather forecasts, there is a high likelihood that below-average precipitation amounts and elevated temperatures will persist between February and April 2024 across most of the country, exacerbating the negative effects of the ongoing dryness on the main crop production.

#### Above-average cereal production obtained in 2023

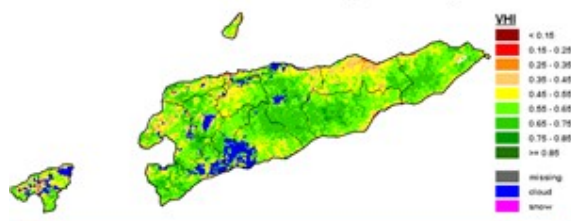
The 2023 cropping season finalized last January and cereal production is estimated at an above-average level due to large sowings, driven by high prices of cereals at planting time. Adequate precipitation amounts throughout 2023, resulted in average yields in most parts of the country.

#### Timor-Leste



#### Timor Leste - Vegetation Health Index (VHI)

from start of season 1 to dekad 2, February 2024



#### Timor-Leste

##### Cereal Production

	2018-2022 average	2022	2023 forecast	change 2023/2022
				percent
	000 tonnes			
Maize	81	87	85	-2.3
Rice (paddy)	73	76	82	6.9
Total	155	163	167	2.0

Note: Percentage change calculated from unrounded data.

## Above-average cereal import requirements forecast in 2023/24

About 60 percent of the country's total cereal consumption needs are covered by imports, mostly sourced from India, China (mainland) and Viet Nam. Cereal import requirements in the 2023/24 marketing year (April/March) are forecast at an above-average level of 200 000 tonnes. Imports of rice, which account for about 80 percent of annual imports, are anticipated to be above the average, in line with population growth and increasing domestic consumption. Import requirements for maize are estimated at average levels.

## Prices of rice at high levels in December 2023

Prices of rice, the country's main staple, increased throughout 2023, with a steep rise recorded between August and November 2023, in line with international price trends following the export ban of non-basmati white rice by India. Despite a seasonal decline in December 2023, prices remained 30 percent higher than the elevated levels of a year earlier.

According to the National Institute of Statistics, food inflation was estimated at 12.4 percent in December 2023, well above the rate of 12 months before, mostly reflecting increased domestic prices of rice products.

## High food prices and reduced income limit access to food for vulnerable households

According to the latest Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) analysis, an estimated 262 000 people, 20 percent of the total population, were projected to face high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 [Crisis] and above) from May to September 2023. The main drivers of food insecurity were high food prices and reduced income following the slowdown of the national economy in 2022 and 2023, which diminished the purchasing power of vulnerable households, limiting their access to food. Food insecurity conditions may worsen in 2024 due to the adverse effects of ongoing dry weather conditions on 2024 crop production, likely affecting farmers' livelihoods and exerting additional upward pressure on already high prices.

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*This brief was prepared using the following data/tools:*

FAO/GIEWS Country Cereal Balance Sheet (CCBS) <https://www.fao.org/giews/data-tools/en/>.

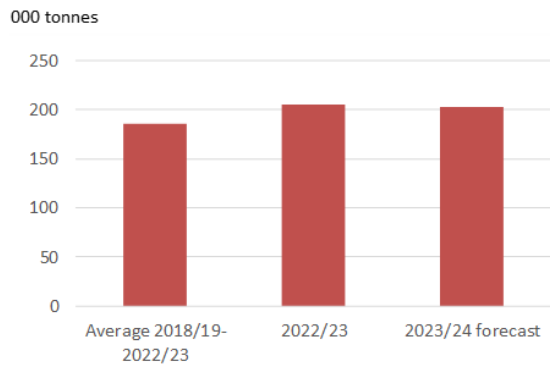
FAO/GIEWS Food Price Monitoring and Analysis (FPMA) Tool <https://fpma.fao.org/>.

FAO/GIEWS Earth Observation for Crop Monitoring <https://www.fao.org/giews/earthobservation/>.

Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) <https://www.ipcinfo.org/>.

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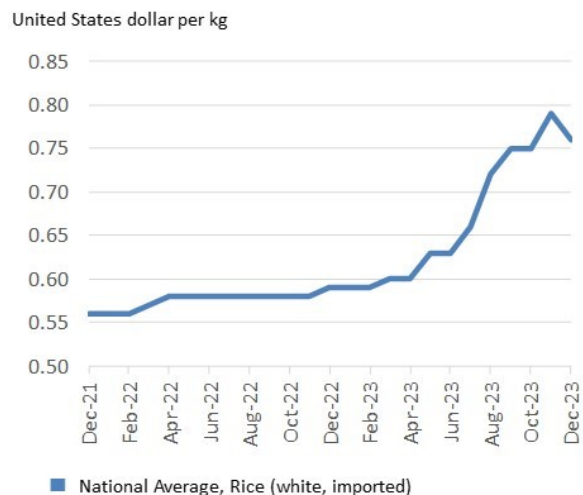
#### Cereals Imports



Notes: Includes rice in milled terms. Split years refer to individual crop marketing years (for rice, calendar year of second year shown).

### Timor-Leste

#### Retail prices of rice



■ National Average, Rice (white, imported)