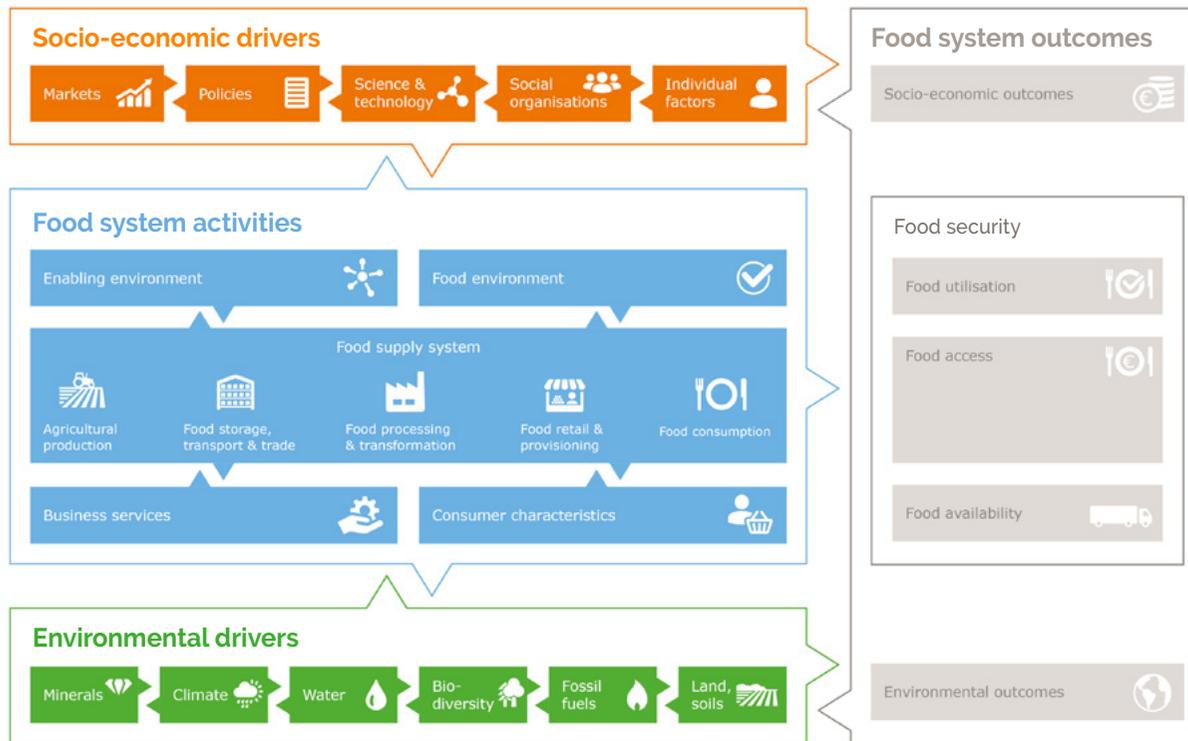


Rapid country assessment

July 2020

Mali

A fruit and vegetable seller wearing a protective mask at the market of Badalabougou. (Photo: Michele Cattani)



The impact of COVID-19 on the food system

Over the past months, governments and their health agencies are trying to combat the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic with mobility restrictions and social-distancing measures. We value their efforts to protect people's lives, health and livelihoods, as these measures contribute to a reduction in the likelihood of human mortality, severe health consequences and the spread of the disease, especially among vulnerable people and communities.

However, these efforts have also resulted in challenges in the functioning of the food system, also in low and middle income countries. This rapid country assessment was set out to synthesise available secondary data in relation to the impact of the COVID-19 crisis and prioritise short-term challenges and actions required in Mali. In this report we present the key impacts of the COVID-19 crisis on the food system, the effects of the lockdown measures on the most vulnerable groups, gaps identified in the data analysed and in government responses to the crisis, and actions required to address short-term priorities and challenges. The initial findings were further refined and approved by a panel of experts. More information on the methodology can be found on [page 11](#).

The analysis is based on the food systems approach outlined by Van Berkum et al. (2018)¹. An overview of relevant food system drivers, activities and outcomes can be [found here](#).

Key impacts on the food system

The COVID-19 crisis in Mali has hit the country at a time when its people are already facing multiple other crises. Many of the reports analysed for this country assessment do not, and cannot, clearly distinguish between what is purely the result of COVID-19 measures and what are underlying structural difficulties. From the overall picture of insights gathered, we take the position that the source of the impact cannot be isolated to one crisis only, and that the COVID-19 crisis has the potential to aggravate the already precarious situation. The impacts of COVID-19 can be divided into **immediate health effects and effects resulting from the measures taken**. We concentrate on the latter, as the vast majority of impacts are linked to the measures taken to stop the spread of COVID-19 in Mali.

Relative stability in availability and price of basic food

- The main markets are well supplied. Major cereal crops and most animal products are available in sufficient quantities.
- National average consumer prices remained relatively stable until May 2020. Studies recorded a slight increase in the price of millet (3%), sorghum and maize (1%); a decrease in the price of cowpea (4%); and stable prices for local and imported rice, in May 2020². Some reports recorded price increases, particularly in the northern part of the country and mostly for animal proteins (meat and dairy products²). The northern regions face higher prices because they import food from other parts of Mali and neighbouring countries.

Nutritious foods unaffordable for many households

- According to a survey of 1,766 households, conducted in June 2020 by the Institut national de la statistique (INSTAT), 25-28% of households surveyed indicated that they cannot afford basic food items. 70% of respondents reported having experienced hunger in the past month, with the COVID-19 restriction measures (and subsequent lack of income) cited as the main reason⁴.
- Currently, 760,000 people are in need of food aid in Mali, mainly in the regions of Kayes, Mopti and Gao (this is not directly linked to the COVID-19 crisis but to security issues in those

regions). An increase in the number of people in need of food is anticipated in the coming months. According to the United Nations, an estimated 1.3 million people in Mali are expected to suffer from some kind of famine in the coming months, while 2.2-2.7 million people will be severely food insecure in the weeks ahead².

- 53% of the households surveyed by INSTAT reported to be worried about not having enough food in future months; one third of these households are selling assets to be able to feed the members of their household¹.

Export sectors hit hard and lack funds to invest in the next agricultural season

- According to a panel of experts, the agricultural sectors most affected by the measures taken to reduce the spread of COVID-19 are cotton and fresh horticultural products such as the mango sub-sector. The cotton sector has been hit by several challenges, which include a low price in the world markets because of declining global demand from the garments industry³, disruptions in international trade, and delays in input distribution.
- Cotton is not only the major cash crop of Mali but is also the pillar of rainfed grain- and legume-based production systems in southern Mali, which is the 'breadbasket' of the country. The challenges in the cotton sector will likely affect the entire upcoming

agricultural season (2020/2021) as there may not be sufficient funds to pay for inputs, machinery and labour required for cotton and cereal production.

- The southern and south-western parts of Mali are regions where smallholder horticultural production thrives and provides employment and income to women and youth, who are active in processing, transportation and sales. Produce is mainly destined for urban markets and neighbouring countries such as Senegal. Travel and transport restrictions have a negative impact on these supply chains and hence on the income of women and youth.
- Although agro-inputs are available, smallholder farmers have difficulties accessing loans to purchase these inputs at the beginning of the planting season. There seems to be a general fear that agricultural production may be lower than expected in 2020/2021 and, consequently, that smallholders might not be capable of repaying input loans. This is a serious risk for the production of staple foods for the upcoming season.

Loss of income in the informal agro-food industry and services

- The vast majority of Mali's economy is informal³. Millions of people whose incomes are generated from petty trade, food processing, food transport, etc. have been particularly affected by the temporal lockdown in March-April, followed by the closing of restaurants and bars. This sector is mainly comprised of (poor) women and youth without much savings.

Loss of income from remittances

- The majority of Malian households are part of larger extended families and social networks through which in-kind and financial support is organised. For many households, remittances from migrant workers - in either Mali or other countries in the West African region and Europe - are an essential part of their livelihoods.
- In Europe and the United States, migrant workers have also been hit by the COVID-19 crisis, which has affected the amount of remittances sent back to families in their home countries. In 2019, the inflow from remittances represented a little more than 5% of Mali's gross domestic product (GDP). An estimated 85% of people who depend on remittances are unemployed (or have no formal employment). The World Bank forecasts that global remittance flows could fall by 19.9% in 2020, while flows to Africa could drop by as much as 23.1%⁴.

Agro-pastoralist sector affected by border closures

- The COVID-19 crisis has had a limited impact on the agro-pastoral sector, but this sector has been strongly affected by the worsening security situation in northern Mali. The closure of international borders reduces the availability of animal feed (imported concentrates) and hampers transhumance, which is the coping strategy of agro-pastoralists during the dry season when water and forage resources are rare and geographically scattered.
- This situation may have several impacts, which include the clustering of animals and subsequent health risks, an increase in conflicts between farmers and pastoralists over access to grazing lands and waterholes, and an increased exodus to urban centres. As a result, some areas of land are being overgrazed, while others are being undergrazed. This is suboptimal resource use and induces a risk of land degradation.



Cattle market in Mali (Photo: Blackland research)

Key impacts on vulnerable groups

The following groups were identified in panel discussions and several reports as being particularly affected by COVID-19 measures and health risks.

Groups identified and their vulnerabilities in relation to the COVID-19 crisis

Families engaged in agro-pastoralism	Women providing informal agri-food services	Youth providing informal agri-food services	Pregnant and lactating mothers and children under five years old	Refugees
<p>81% of agro-pastoral households in Mali earn less than 1.9 United States dollars (US\$) per day ⁵. Transhumance is one of the strategies for dealing with shocks. Closure of international borders hampers transhumance, but also hinders international trade of live animals, and the import of animal feed and veterinary medicines.</p> <p>Most agro-pastoralists live in the northern part of Mali. If they are not able to survive on their normal livelihoods, there is an increased risk that they will be recruited by violent groups or migrate to urban centres. Both options will have disruptive effects on society.</p> <p>A survey of 1,500 agro-pastoral households, conducted in seven countries (including Mali) in May 2020 by the Association pour la Promotion de l'Élevage en Savane et au Sahel (APESS), showed that agro-pastoralists are turning towards complementary occupations such as trade, and religious activities (e.g. maraboutage), and artisanal activities. According to the survey, 61% of the male respondents and 44% of the female respondents indicated that they were engaged in income-generating activities unrelated to agro-pastoralism ⁶.</p>	<p>Women represent 92% of all employees in the informal sector in West Africa (this also includes non-agricultural jobs such as transport, trade, nail and hair studios, etc) ⁷. They often work in the most precarious jobs, such as small restaurant services and retail. Informal also means there are no laws that can protect these workers from getting infected, for example, or in terms of financial support.</p> <p>According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), women represent 51% of the workforce in agriculture in West Africa. If the food economy slows down, women risk losing their income-generating activities, while they are at the same time responsible for feeding their families ⁸. Women often provide unpaid community healthcare services and manage illnesses within families; they are therefore particularly exposed to the risk of contracting COVID-19.</p>	<p>Besides women, the panel of experts reported that many young people have lost their income because small businesses have either closed, reduced activity or had to lay-off workers, even though agri-food services or many young people have found (informal) work.</p> <p>It is important that the markets have remained open; informal trade is a vital vein of the Malian food economy, both in terms of livelihoods as well as the supply of food.</p>	<p>The increasingly precarious situation among women (see above) affects the food and nutrition security of the children for whom they care ⁹. In 2018, 28% of Malian children were reported to be suffering from chronic malnutrition (stunting) ¹⁰.</p> <p>According to the United Nations International Children's Fund (UNICEF), 377,000 children were suffering from chronic malnutrition before the outbreak of COVID-19 ¹¹.</p>	<p>With their livelihoods already disrupted by the conflicts in the north, the vulnerability of refugees and internally displaced people has further deteriorated over the past few months, in terms of food security and access to water, hygiene, and healthcare. Access to humanitarian aid is also being hampered, due to the presence of armed groups and barriers impeding national and international transport ³.</p> <p>The expert panel confirmed that the security threat will lead to massive displacements of populations who are particularly vulnerable to COVID 19 because of their precarious situation.</p>

Gaps identified ...

... in reports analysed

- The COVID-19 crisis hit Mali when the country was already facing multiple crises, with some territories badly affected by ongoing violence. This makes it difficult to disentangle the specific impacts of the COVID-19 crisis and related government responses. COVID-19 crisis or not, the socio-economic, health and nutritional status of the majority of the population is precarious; particularly in central and northern Mali.
- There are limited secondary data available on the impact of COVID-19 measures on crop production for domestic consumption (vegetables, fruits, cereals). Most reports stress the importance of the livestock sector, particularly transhumance. While the livestock sector is important, it is difficult to value its significance when compared to cash crops as the necessary data are largely absent in the reports that are available.

... in government responses

- Due to the weak economy and widespread poverty, the Malian government has only very limited options to support its citizens financially. Furthermore, donors are reluctant to transfer funds to the government because of corruption scandals in past months. The government struggles to find appropriate ways to identify and target the hardest hit groups because these groups entirely depend on the informal economy for their income and survival.

Short-term actions required

This report includes a wide range of drivers and impacts. It is important that actions taken therefore address short-term priorities while also considering underlying causes of the multiple crises that Mali faces.

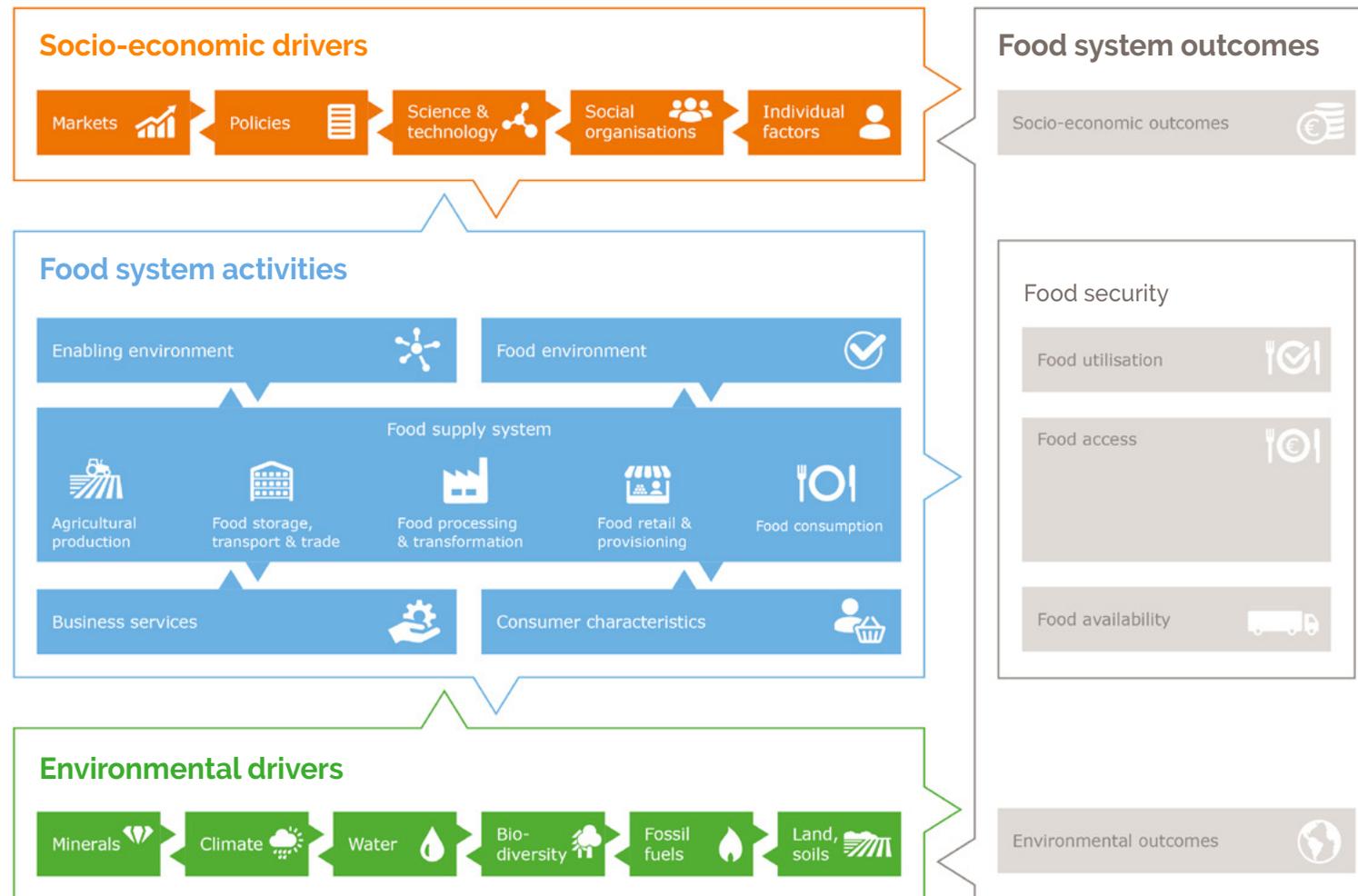
- Use the extensive network of agricultural and agro-pastoral production and processing associations to inform smallholders and agricultural workers on COVID-19, protective measures and safe labour services.
- Facilitate the continuation of local and international trade (both for crops and livestock) to avoid a slowing down of the informal economy. This is of crucial importance.
- Facilitate cross-border transhumance (and livestock inputs), with a view to promoting local livelihoods on the eve of the Tabaski festivities. This should be done in collaboration with the governments of Senegal and Mauritania.
- Build on the experiences by piloting the creation of social safety networks in Mali to target the most vulnerable groups with (in-kind) support measures. For instance, young people and women in the informal agro-food sector should be prioritised for economic support; pregnant and lactating women as well as refugees should be prioritised for healthcare and food aid.

- Conduct an in-depth investigation to understand to what extent the current social protection measures actually reach the most affected socio-professional strata.
- Ensure the continuation of the upcoming crop season by providing financial guarantees for microfinance institutions (MFIs) in order to facilitate smallholders' access to loans for agro-inputs.
- Invest in more research to better understand the specific impact of COVID-19 on the major sectors (e.g. cotton, fruit).



Malian workers unload a truck transporting fish from Mauritania. Due to the closing of borders, transport of goods by road has drastically decreased. (Photo: Michele Cattani)

Food systems approach



Many of the reports analysed for this country assessment do not, and cannot, clearly distinguish between what is purely the impact of the COVID-19 measures and what are underlying structural difficulties facing Mali. From the overall picture of insights gathered, we take the position that the source of the drivers cannot be isolated to one crisis only, and that the COVID-19 crisis has the potential to aggravate an already precarious situation. Below, we outline the most important drivers – both general and those linked to the COVID-19 crisis – gleaned from the reports analysed.

Socio-economic and political drivers

Socio-economic drivers



The COVID-19 crisis is occurring in a context of multidimensional crises, and in territories across the Sahel region that have already been affected by political insecurity (among other issues) for several years.

- The **security crisis** in Mali, which has been ongoing for years, is getting worse. Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM), a branch of Al-Qaeda operating in the Sahel, announced on 14 April 2020 that COVID-19 is a 'soldier sent by God' capable of weakening the Malian army and foreign soldiers. The JNIM has continued to launch a number of attacks in several villages in the regions of Ségou, Mopti, Gao and Timbuktu targeting the Malian army and civilians⁷. (not COVID-19 related)
- Both internal and international **migration** impacts the economy and society. Internal migration is largely linked to the security crisis. Refugee camps are increasingly being attacked. Refugees who left their homes for political reasons, either want to return home or to migrate to another safe place in the region or even to Europe. The number of economic migrants from other Sahelian countries is increasing; they pass through Mali,

traveling through Algeria and on to Europe. Mali already had 218,531 internally displaced people in February 2020¹². Labour migration is prominent in the Sahel, for transport work, regional trade and transhumance, among other reasons. The different types of internal and international migration have currently been affected by the closing of the borders - part of the measures to combat the COVID-19 pandemic.

- The country's **economic malaise** is worsening because of COVID-19; an additional 800,000 Malians are expected to fall below the poverty line in the coming months (i.e. having to live on less than 1.9 United States dollars a day)³. Even though most mobility restrictions have been lifted, the economy has slowed down. The government has limited options to support its citizens financially. Donors are reluctant to transfer money to the government because of recent corruption scandals. A very small minority of the population has bank savings, credit cards or access to online transactions that allow them to stay at home for an extended period.
- Mali is among the top ten recipients of migrant remittances in sub-Saharan Africa⁷.

Environmental drivers



Due to the economic crisis in the European Union and the United States, **remittances are beginning to decrease.**

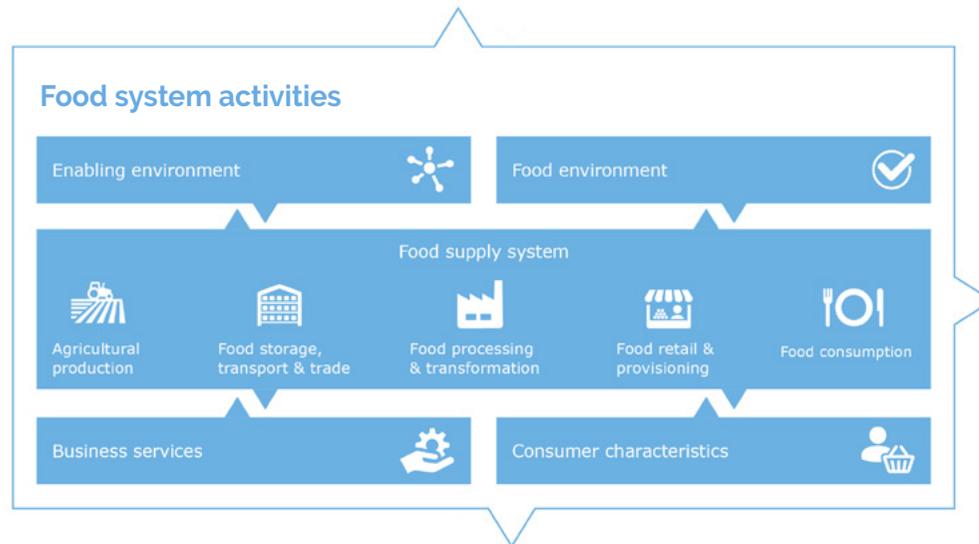
- The **lean period** is starting now; smallholders' stocks of food from last year's harvest are gone and the next harvest is still a few months ahead. Above all, this puts the poorest and most vulnerable households to the test of feeding their families.
- The price of cotton, one of Mali's main export products, is already relatively low in the world markets, and has declined because of decreasing demand from the garment industry since January 2020. One of the persistent problems in the cotton sector is the increasing cost of production; for example, fertilisers that need to be imported. This situation affects not only state revenue but also the income of those active in the cotton sector (smallholders, agro-dealers, transport workers, processors, middlemen, wholesalers), which risks jeopardising the 2020-2021 cotton season and subsequently also the cereal sector, as this sector is rotated with cotton.
- Finally, there are **socio-religious factors** that seriously affected - and may further aggravate

- the pandemic and thereby the crisis. Gatherings in mosques for Friday prayer, as well as marriages and funerals, are continuing to take place, undeterred by the limit of fifty people or the social-distancing measures imposed by the government⁷. During the festivities, the movement of people returning to their families continues to be significant (for example, during the feast of Tabaski, which will take place on 31 July).

Environmental drivers

- The effects of climate change can be seen in the form of regular shocks - intermittent drought, water shortages, flooding, etc - which in turn lead to conflicts relating to access to natural resources.

Effects of COVID-19 on food system activities



Production, trade, processing and transport

- The reports assessed in the study do not mention challenges in relation to availability of inputs. The panel of experts noted that the supply of inputs for cotton has been hampered by delays in implementing government measures to subsidise these inputs. Consequently, the same delays were observed for food crops (cereals), which are grown in rotation with cotton.
- The experts emphasised that the problem is mainly at the level of input prices and is the result of a lack of liquidity at the level of retailers (agro-dealers) and buyers (farmers). Contrary to the practices of previous years, dealers are reluctant to sell inputs to farmers on credit. This is due to the closing of the borders.
- Smallholder farmers, including women's groups, are not being able to sell their primary staple food products along the chain (which is regional). Since they have been obtaining inputs on credit from agro-dealers, both the agro-dealers and smallholders consequently have less funds to invest in the next season. Women's groups, among others, are likely to cover less acreage due to lack of funds and inputs.
- The restrictions linked to the COVID-19 crisis affect the marketing of perishable products (vegetables and fruit, dairy, fish, etc.). This is particularly significant for export crops (e.g. mango).
- According to the expert panel, the agricultural sub-sectors most affected by the restrictions are cotton (a strategic sector at national level) and the horticulture sector, mango in particular (a strategic sub-sector at national level).

- Casual labourers cannot work on the land due to restrictions in movement. The majority of casual labourers in the agriculture sector are young people. The limited availability of labour is expected to disrupt the agricultural productivity of the upcoming season, particularly during periods of heavy work (weeding, harvesting and post-harvest operations). The effects of this will be noticeable next year: limited output will result in food and income shortages.
- The government does not have a robust social safety net for informal labourers. Street vendors and retailers are affected by reduced economic activity. Daily income-generating activities (catering, petty trade, casual work) have been disrupted, especially in urban centres. Women and young people, who depend on such activities for their daily livelihoods, are those most affected by this situation.

Consumption, prices and markets

- International trade, both the export and import of food and other commodities from Algeria and Mauritania, is being disrupted at the northern borders of Mali.
- An increase in transport costs within the country and with neighbouring countries is resulting in reduced transport flows, slowing down the economy.
- Physical access to certain markets has been hampered due to issues concerning security. Insecurity in such specific localities continues to affect the movements of populations and their goods¹³.

- A sustained fall in the price of cotton in the world markets has had, and will continue to have, repercussions on the entire agricultural sector in areas where this crop forms the basis of agricultural production systems (loans, inputs).
- Livestock markets are well supplied and mostly stable. Animal prices are generally stable or dropping, depending on the region. In any case, the current situation does not seem to be related to the COVID-19 crisis but rather to the security situation in the north of the country and to religious festivities. (not COVID-19 related)
- The agro-pastoralist sector has been strongly affected by the worsening security situation in northern Mali. On top of this, the closure of international borders reduces the availability of agro-pastoral inputs, such as animal feed and veterinary drugs. Moreover, the limited mobility of herds increases pressure on water sources and pastures. The risk of clustering livestock (and people) in central places is that it increases the herders' susceptibility to a COVID-19 infection, and also the potential emergence and spread of other zoonotic diseases¹². Additionally, the decrease in commercial transactions has a negative impact on the price of live animals and leads to unemployment for people whose incomes depend exclusively on related activities carried out in livestock markets⁵.

Effects of COVID-19 on the food system outcomes

Socio-economic effects

- Almost 90% of workers in sub-Saharan Africa are employed in the informal sector³. The restrictions on markets, curfews (some street vendors sell at night), and the closure of restaurants and bars have had a significant impact on casual labourers and their families. Income-generating activities have been disrupted in all regions across Mali. According to a survey conducted in April 2020 in several Sahelian countries, 50-65% of respondents indicated that informal income generation was limited or had ceased. The sample size was not mentioned in the report⁷.
- In the formal sector, 13% of jobs that were previously available before the COVID-19 crisis were lost due to the pandemic, while 5% of households that have a family business declared a loss of income (due to COVID-19) compared to the previous month.
- Temporary job losses have taken a heavy toll on the incomes of Malians living abroad. This has repercussions for the remittances that form a substantial basis for the cash available among many households in Mali.
- The security situation in the agro-pastoral zones (central and northern Mali) may cause families to split apart and trigger a massive exodus towards urban centres. It is also likely to be the cause of an increase in rural conflicts. Pastoral resources are declining due to a diversity of reasons. The border closures will aggravate this protracted crisis, particularly since areas that are normally used for crop production are now also hosting a large number of animals.

- Most households, whether rural or urban, have to leave the home for basic needs such as food, water, sanitation, or work. People are being encouraged to stay at home because of the containment measures, social distancing, and restrictions on transport and trade, as well as factory and market closures; as a result, jobs and livelihoods are now at risk.

Food security effects

Availability of basic food

- The main markets are sufficiently well supplied. Physical availability of cereals is not under threat and continues to meet the demand. The quantities offered in the markets are relatively stable overall.
- The supply of animal protein (meat, dairy) has decreased.

Affordability

- According to a survey of 1,766 households, conducted by the Institut National de la Statistique (INSTAT) in May 2020, the national average consumer prices for staple foods are more or less stable compared to April 2020. The survey reported a slight increase in the price of millet (3%), sorghum and maize (1%); a decrease in the price of cowpea (4%); and stable prices for local and imported rice in May 2020 [2].
- The prices of imported food (dairy, sugar and cooking oil) are increasing because of transport delays and border closures, especially in the northern part of the country, which depends on imports from Algeria.
- The same survey by INSTAT mentions that due

- to loss of income and price increases, 28% of the respondents reported that they had experienced lack of food in their households between April and May 2020. An increase in prices was indicated as the main reason for the lack of food in these households, while just 0.3% of respondents reported the lack of availability of food items as being the main reason (figure 10 from²).
- Food prices are expected to increase due to the reduction of trade flows, which is in line with the usual trends during this period.

Nutrition security

- According to the INSTAT survey, from those households that had experienced hunger over the months of April and May 2020, 70% of respondents indicated that the COVID-19 crisis was the main cause. 69% of households surveyed reported they had experienced a day with nothing to eat at home during that period².
- 53% of the households surveyed by INSTAT stated that they had experienced situations where the household was worried about not having enough to eat because of the lack of resources or money².
- There is a high probability that widespread famine will return to Mali. Currently 760,000 people, concentrated in the regions of Kayes, Mopti and Gao, are in need of food aid. This is mainly related to the security crisis. The number of people expected to be food insecure is alarming: an estimated 1.3 million people in Mali are expected to suffer from some kind of famine in the coming months. The United Nations estimate that 2.2-2.7 million people will be severely food insecure in the weeks ahead³.

Food system outcomes

Socio-economic outcomes



Food security

Food utilisation



Food access



Food availability



Environmental outcomes



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Colophon

Rapid country assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on food systems

To avoid a food, nutritional and socio-economic crisis in the aftermath of the current COVID-19 pandemic, urgent action is needed to address key challenges in food systems. Low- and middle-income countries are particularly vulnerable to the COVID-19 crisis, as these countries are already struggling with multiple and interrelated problems such as the effects of climate change, food insecurity, political unrest, underfunded health services, and/or persistent poverty among a significant part of the population. Following initial macro-level modelling and scenarios of the actual and potential impacts of the COVID-19 crisis, there is now an urgent need for more specific assessments of its impact on food systems, using 'real', ground-based country data.

Purpose

The first aim of the rapid country assessments is to synthesise available secondary data and point out gaps in data concerning the current impact of the COVID-19 crisis on the food system in general and vulnerable groups in particular. The second aim is to identify priorities for immediate action and possible trade-offs and synergies of proposed actions that would contribute to achieving resilient and more inclusive food systems. The rapid country assessments are conducted in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Kenya and Mali.

Institutional reference

This rapid country assessment is the result of a collaborative effort between the Community of Practice on Knowledge in relation to the COVID-19 crisis in low- and middle-income countries - an initiative of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Netherlands Food Partnership and the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) - and several other communities of practice (CoPs), to support joint Dutch responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. More information on this can be found [here](#).

Contributing organisations

Contributing organisations include Adouna Trading Hub (represented by Fatoumata Toure); Institut d'Economie Rurale (represented by Alpha Oumar Kergna and Yara Koreissi Dembele); non-governmental organisation MALIMARK (represented by Aminata Tangara Coulibaly); Live Your Dream Mali (represented by Alfousseni Sidibe); Almamy Traore (consultant); Fédération Nationale des Producteurs de Lait (FENALAIT; represented by Adama Dembele); Agri-ProFocus Mali (represented by Oudou Bengaly and Doualat Maïga); ICCO / Woord en Daad (represented by Peter Commandeur and Sebastien Dohou); SNV Netherlands Development Organization (represented by Thomas Sommerhalter); and 2Scale (represented by Baba Togola, Oumou Camara and Henk van Duijn).

Method

In-country networks of members of the CoP on Knowledge collect relevant secondary data in relation to the impacts of COVID-19 on the respective food systems. The analysis of available data is based on the food systems approach outlined by Van Berkum et al. (2018) and on the notion of vulnerability analysis¹⁴. Data are aggregated and summarised, commonalities and differences (or conflicting messages) are assessed, data gaps are identified, and priority actions mentioned in the reports are recorded. The initial findings are reviewed by a panel of experts representing different fields of expertise, sectors and stakeholder groups in the food system (see above for the list of organisations that contributed in Mali).

These rapid assessments synthesise available information for use by practitioners and policymakers, and are conducted under extreme time pressures. The entire process takes three weeks. One of the implications is that due to the speed of the assessment, we have to compromise on the depth of the analysis. The current assessment is a pilot. If successful, we will repeat this process in other countries.

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