

16 July 2020

Update on IFAD's response to the COVID-19 pandemic

The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the response on IFAD-supported operations have been extremely varied.

Based on a recent survey of 102 IFAD-supported countries, the current impact on IFAD-supported projects is as follows:

No disruption: 46 countries (45%)

Partial stop of project operations: 51 countries (50%)

Complete stop: 5 countries (5%)

Several measures have been taken to mitigate impacts on operations, including conducting remote supervision missions and use of digital technologies.

Some regions have been more affected than others: in APR, ESA and LAC, there has been major disruption or complete stop of operations (for short periods) in a majority of countries, while in **NEN and WCA there has been far less disruption**, and the majority of projects have suffered minimal or no disruption.

The **situation is changing daily, and so the situation may look very different in a month or two.**

To respond to the COVID-19 pandemic we've taken **three sets of measures** to support our member countries:

- We've established the Rural Poor Stimulus Facility, a dedicated fund to respond to the immediate and short-term constraints of rural producers.
- We've been repurposing resources under our ongoing projects, to enable them to respond to the immediate problems that COVID-19 has created for their target groups.
- We've been supporting COVID-19-related policy analysis in many countries, in most cases in collaboration with the other RBAs and the UNCTs.

Mitigating impacts on livelihoods on IFAD's target group

i. Rural Poor Stimulus Facility (RPSF)

On Wednesday 10th June, Canada became the first donor to the RPSF, with a contribution of \$4.4m, taking the total RPSF pot to \$44.4m. IFAD is very grateful to Canada for this contribution, and is in advanced discussions with several other potential donors that we hope will join Canada in committing to the Facility in the coming weeks.

As of Monday 29th June we'd received the **first six country proposals**, with a combined value of \$4.4m. These proposals also contain a total of \$700,000 in co-financing from governments and implementing partners. We are expecting many additional country proposals to be submitted in the coming two weeks.

We have fast tracked the regional/global proposals that were ready earliest, and so far three have been submitted – two for farmers' organizations and one to a not-for-profit working on digital services for smallholder farmers – with a combined value of \$5.5m.

ii. Repurposing of ongoing projects under implementation.

Status of repurposing as of 26 June:

Approved:	Pipeline:
Total Value: \$66m	Total Value: \$99m
Nr. Countries: 28	Nr. Countries: 50
Nr. Projects: 40	Nr. Projects: 87

Of the approved financing, \$33m will be used to improve input access; \$20m to support financial services; \$7m for digital information and extension support; \$3m for cash transfers; and \$3m to support market access.

In addition, we have so far extended 49 projects across 35 countries to enable them to meet their objectives in spite of COVID-19 related delays.

Some examples of approved repurposing include:

Cambodia. A combined \$24m will be repurposed across two projects. The entire annual budget of the ASPIRE project will be dedicated to responding to COVID-19 in a wide variety of ways, representing a repurposing of \$14m. An additional \$10m will be repurposed through the AIMS project, to be used for emergency provision of irrigation to ease pressures on production caused by the outbreak. As part of this, up to 8,000 households receiving production support under these activities have been mapped through GIS-tracking, allowing for rigorous results reporting (see this [blog post](#) for more information)

Ethiopia. We have recently approved for implementation a repurposing of \$15m for a rural finance project – RUFIP III. This will be used to ensure that the financial institutions supported by the project can properly support the liquidity of their clients during the COVID-19 outbreak, including allowing the financial institutions to provide more loans and to defer the loan repayments of their clients, as well as allowing for the financial institutions themselves to defer repayments to the Development Bank of Ethiopia.

Tunisia. \$1.5m of funds from the PROFITS, and \$1.2 million from PRODESUD II has been re-allocated to support a government cash transfer programme to secure liquidity and basic needs in response to COVID-19.

Bosnia and Herzegovina (RCDP): \$1.1 million of funds have been reallocated as an emergency response to procure and distribute seeds for targeted subsistence farmers.

Burkina Faso. \$390,000 of funds for the PAFA-4R project has been repurposed to procure seeds and fertiliser and assisting with land preparation in the absence of labour.

Zambia. \$200,000 of funds from the Enhanced Smallholder Livestock Investment Programme (ESLIP) has been used to address the short-term gaps in information access caused by movement and social distancing restrictions, which involves identifying and implementing alternative training and extension approaches, including collaboration with Life-Long Learning for Farmer (L3F) and Mobile Fisheries and Livestock Advisory Information System (M-FLAIS) to bypass human-to-human contacts.

iii. Policy and analytical support

There are now 20 studies in progress, or planned, across 23 countries (see table below). These have been financed either through project or regional funds, or through IFAD's administrative budget. The total value of these studies is \$420,000.

The majority of these initiatives involve conducting rapid assessments of the situation in the agricultural / rural sector. For instance, in the space of six weeks, the assessment in **Nigeria** will produce a report for the government on the effects on the agricultural sector and agri-food systems, impacts on gender and youth vulnerabilities, and implications for peace and conflict. Some of the studies are focusing on informing support through IFAD projects, such

as the vulnerability assessment of beneficiaries of the TRIP II project in **Tonga**, while others also aim to support government policies, such as the initiative to support the Strategic Action Plan of the Government of **Mali**. In terms of focus, most of the initiatives have a relatively broad scope, although some target specific areas, such as the analysis in **Cote d'Ivoire** to assess how COVID-19 will influence the ongoing meat price crisis in the country, or the study in **India** of the specific threats to livelihoods in a post-lockdown setting.

Country	Activities
Cote d'Ivoire	Analysis to help ensure COVID-19 does not exacerbate the meat price crisis in the country.
Bangladesh	In collaboration with UNCT, rapid assessment of the economic impact of COVID-19
Bangladesh	Engage with FAO on immediate response to ensure food production and distribution for smallholders.
Egypt	Economic study on the impact of COVID-19 on the agricultural sector in Egypt—implemented through the PRIME project.
Eritrea	Assisted the UNCT in conducting a rapid assessment of the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19.
India	In collaboration with FAO, assessment of the impact of COVID-19 in a post-lockdown setting.
Laos	In collaboration with FAO and WFP, rapid assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on food security and livelihoods
Mali	Support the Mali COVID-19 Strategic Actions Plan through planning and conducting information campaigns, staff training, and social mobilization activities.
Mozambique	Multiple studies to inform the response effort in the areas of market access and production of fish, small stock and poultry in rural and peri-urban areas.
Myanmar	In collaboration with UNCT, rapid assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on food security and livelihoods
Namibia	In collaboration with WFP, Filling the Nutrition Gap analysis to inform the country analyses of UNCT, and government efforts to support the agricultural sector and national development goals.
Nigeria	In collaboration with FAO and WFP, rapid assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on Nigeria's agriculture-based livelihoods, food security and nutrition levels.
Palestine	Detailed study of emergency supply chains in agriculture and food production sectors, to assess long-term preparedness for external shocks – linked to the RELAP project.
The Philippines	In collaboration with FAO, WFP and UNICEF, rapid assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on rural livelihoods, agricultural market chains and food security.
S. Africa	Assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on rural households and smallholder farmers, for the purpose of informing the work of the Government and UNCT.
S. Sudan	Rapid assessment of the impacts of COVID-19 on food security and agriculture
Tonga	Study to assess the vulnerability of food and seed supply for target group of the TRIP II project.
Venezuela	Develop policy and programme briefs, using FAO's Monitoring, Anticipation and Assessment Guidelines, to inform COVID-19 response activities of the government and development partners.
Vietnam	In collaboration with the ADB, assist the MARD's Institute of ARD Policy and Strategy in conducting a country-wide survey on COVID-19 impacts to smallholder farmers.
Pacific Region	In collaboration with FAO and WFP, rapid assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on livelihoods in the Pacific region.