Afghanistan Emergency Food Security Assessment

August – September 2018

Afghanistan Food Security Cluster
Strengthening Humanitarian Response

MAIL
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Emergency Food Security Assessment (EFSA-2018) findings are the most important source of information for the Government of Afghanistan as well as the humanitarian community in order to respond to the severe drought this year.

The present report is the end result of the concerted efforts of a large number of people and entities who have contributed at various stages of the survey and are highly appreciated.

Specifically, the Food Security and Agriculture Cluster (FSAC) who provided overall leadership of the assessment, United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) for their concerted support in designing the survey, survey tools preparation, training, as well as technical and financial support to the assessment from start of the survey up to data analysis. The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) was instrumental in managing the financial transactions for the survey process.

The National Statistics and Information Authority (NSIA) served as the technical lead of the assessment by preparing the household and community samples, enumeration area maps and leading the supervisory assessment of the enumerators. The Ministry of Agriculture Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) generously availed experienced field staff to conduct the assessment and also carried out monitoring and supervision of the assessment covering almost 70 percent of the enumerated communities across rural areas of the country.

The 32 National and International NGOs (ACF, ACTED, Afghanaid, APA, ARAA, AREA, CAHPO, CoAR, CRDSA, CRS, ECW, FGA, HRDA, IRA, Mission East, NAC, NCRO, NRC, OHW, OXFAM, PAC.o, RAADA, RI, SCI, SFL, SHPOUL, SI, SOFAR, WHH, WV and ZOA), conducted the interviews, mostly at their own cost, covering their areas of operation and accounting for 30 percent of the total enumeration areas across the country despite of all security and access challenges are highly appreciated.

The IPC team of MAIL and Lindell-Mills managed data entry including staff recruitment, training, management and data cleaning.

A special thanks to those of more than 16,000 household respondents for their patience in responding to survey questions, especially under drought conditions.
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Afghanistan is currently facing a severe drought that has affected up to 20 provinces, mostly in the northern and western parts of the country. During the winter of 2017-2018, extremely poor rain and snow-fall, combined with unseasonably high temperatures, resulted in a shortage of water for rain-fed and irrigated agriculture during the critical growing periods for the main wheat crop. Consequently, the harvest was less than 50 percent of the normal level and, in some locations, was the fifth consecutive year with below-average production. Affecting rural areas with high levels of chronic food insecurity and undernutrition, the drought has led to some displacement to urban centres and set back efforts to achieve Zero Hunger by causing acute needs for millions of rural people.

In March 2018, the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock (MAIL), WFP, and FAO used data from the 2016/17 Afghanistan Living Conditions Survey (ALCS) to initially estimate the levels of acute food insecurity caused by the drought. The analysis focused on populations engaged in agricultural activities, as well as the pre-existing levels of food insecurity and estimated that 1.4 million people across 20 provinces would need food-based assistance. After the harvest, this Emergency Food Security Assessment (EFSA) was undertaken to gather actual on-the-ground, field-level data.

The 2018 Emergency Food Security Assessment (EFSA) collected information from more than 16,000 rural households in all 34 provinces across the country. The main objective was to better understand the impact of the drought on household food security and livelihoods and to estimate the number of people who will require humanitarian assistance. Drawing on a range of food security indicators the following was concluded from the analysis:

- Out of the 17 million rural population residing in the 20 drought affected provinces around 10.5 million people (3.9 million highly and 6.6 million moderately) were affected by drought.
- Of the 10.5 million drought-affected, 3.5 million were also found to be highly food insecure after the harvesting time and require emergency food and nutrition assistance through the next harvest in 2019.

According to the multi-sectoral analysis, food insecure households are:

- More likely to be headed by a woman.
- Less likely to use drinking water from an improved source
- More likely to have borrowed food or cash in last 3 months
- More likely to have increased tensions inside the house.
- More likely to rely on non-agricultural wage labour
- Less likely to own or access agricultural land and more likely to rely on rainfed agriculture
- More likely to be asset poor
- More likely to live on < $1/person/day
- More likely to cope by selling house, land or household assets; decreased health expenditure, beg, early marriage for daughters, and to migrate.
Rather than repeating the findings from the body of the report, a series of tables below present key findings by province and indicator, using a red (alert), yellow (caution) and green (acceptable) colour scheme. The indicators are explained below:

1. **Food security**: level of food insecurity of the households in the province, where red is extremely high.
2. **Water**: percentage of households accessing drinking water from improved sources.
3. **Coping**: level of household coping as per the reduced coping strategies index.
4. **Protection**: percentage of households responding that tensions inside the home have increased due to the drought.
5. **Disabled member**: percentage of households with at least one mentally or physically disabled member.
6. **Debt**: percentage of households who borrowed money in the 3 months prior to the survey.
7. **Shock – reduced income**: percentage of households reporting that reduced income as a shock.
8. **Seeds for next year**: percentage of households not having any seed for planting in the next season.

In general the situation is not good across the country but some regions such as central (excluding Kabul) and the southeast regions are doing better than the rest of the country. The most affected regions are the western provinces plus the eastern region.

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Recommendations

A holistic and strategic response is recommended to improve the food and nutrition security of the most affected households and communities, focusing on the short-, medium-, and longer-term.

**Short-term**

1. The emergency response should focus on provision of food or cash transfers as well as nutrition treatment and prevention programmes to up to 3.5 million people until the next harvest in mid-2019.
2. Efforts should be made to improve access to safe and plentiful supplies of water in drought-affected communities.

**Medium-term**

3. The consolidated response should be framed around a triple nexus approach. The humanitarian response should be linked to development gains such as access to water, agriculture and resilience building which will also have longer-term development and peace benefits.
4. Early warning systems should be strengthened, and early funding mechanisms established to facilitate early response.

**Longer-term**

5. The Government and international community should work together to establish shock responsive safety nets programmes for the most vulnerable communities in the most vulnerable parts of the country.
1. BACKGROUND AND SITUATION ANALYSIS

Over the past 15 years, Afghanistan has demonstrated an ability to deliver improvements in key areas such as school enrolment and life expectancy. However, complex and protracted conflict combined with other challenges, such as climate change and natural disasters, demographic shifts, limited job opportunities, pervasive gender inequalities and transparency concerns, has dramatically constrained the country’s wider development efforts. As a result, Afghanistan currently ranks 169th of 188 countries in the Human Development Index. It has low levels of economic growth, unemployment rates exceed 19 percent – 13.9 percent for men and 36.4 percent for women – and over 54 percent of the population lives below the poverty line. The Afghanistan Living Conditions Survey (ALCS) 2016-17 reported a 16 percent increase in poverty from 2011-12 to 2016-17.

Food insecurity is widespread and increasing among the population. The 2017 Afghanistan Living Conditions Survey found that overall food insecurity, including both moderate and severe forms, rose from 33 to more than 44 percent in the last three years. Although food insecurity affects much of the country’s population, women, children, displaced persons, returnees, woman-headed households, persons with disabilities and poor people are the groups most at risk.

While significant progress has been made in the past 15 years, the national prevalence of stunting in Afghan children under 5 years is almost 41 percent, which is classified as very high according to World Health Organization (WHO) thresholds. The prevalence of wasting among children under 5 years is 9.5 percent – 10.3 percent for boys and 8.7 percent for girls.

Agriculture is the largest sector of the economy, accounting for approximately half of economic growth in 2016 and providing a source of income for about 44 percent of the population – 61 percent of women and 40 percent of men – especially among rural households, which are largely subsistence farmers with small, rainfed holdings. Agricultural productivity is closely tied to irrigation, but currently only 40 percent of farming households have access to irrigated land.

With mountainous terrain and limited water resources, only 12 percent of the country’s land can support agricultural cultivation, making it critical to maximize the proportion of land under productive and sustainable use. The country is exposed to a wide range of natural hazards, including floods, droughts, avalanches, landslides and earthquakes, which together affect 400,000 people annually. Given the fragility of its ecosystems, Afghanistan is also highly susceptible to the impacts of climate change. Most agricultural production relies on water from snowmelt or rain, but as temperatures rise, droughts will become more frequent and flash flooding will increase because of earlier snowmelt.

Drought and dry spells are common natural disasters in Afghanistan in 2011 the country was affected by a drought that resulted in more than 2 million people becoming food insecure. In 2018 the country experienced another dry spell which is considered worst of its kind. The October 2017 to February 2018 wet season experienced below-average rainfall and above-average temperatures. This resulted in low snowpack formation in the mountainous regions, which is key for irrigation systems to function and provide water for the summer months. Overall lack of precipitation prevented the recharging of key aquifers which support crop production. Early reports estimated that 60–70 percent of rainfed wheat production areas suffered damages due to dryness. With the previous year’s wheat production already 57 per cent below the five-year average, the 2018 harvest was forecast to be even lower: down from 4.2 million metric tons to 3.5 million metric tons.

In April 2018, the Government of Afghanistan officially declared a drought in 20 priority provinces following months of dryness. A precipitation deficit of up to 70 percent in most parts of the country affected the winter harvest and resulted in dire prospects for crop production in the spring and summer of 2018.
Given the prolonged dry spell that began in 2016 and poor precipitation in the winter of 2017/18, the Food Security and Agriculture Cluster (FSAC) members agreed to carry out an Emergency Food Security Assessment across all 34 provinces in the country to better understand the effects of the current drought on livelihoods and food security of the rural populations.

**Objectives and methodology**

The key objective of EFSA 2018 is to estimate the drought affected population in need of humanitarian support in order to inform emergency response by various clusters.

The other objectives are

- Assess the food security and livelihood situation of rural populations, especially those affected by drought.
- Determine the profile of the food insecure and drought affected population to inform programme design.
- Provide provincial level information to guide response planning by the various clusters.

The assessment used three tools to collect information from the households, community leaders and traders. This report presents the findings from the household survey only while community and trader findings will be presented in an Annex to this report in early 2019.

**The Household questionnaire** collected information on household demographics, including disability, as well as on shelter, water and sanitation. There were also modules on asset ownership, livelihoods, debt, agriculture and livestock, household expenditure, household food consumption and sources, shocks and coping and household priorities.

The EFSA 2018 sampling was done by the National Statistics and Information Agency (NSIA), using an updated sampling frame and focusing only on rural communities.

**Sampling for household survey:** EFSA 2018 covered all 34 provinces (excluding urban areas) with a two-stage stratification. The samples were drawn from the CSO update sampling frame with following steps.

- **Equal allocation of 32 enumeration areas** (communities/villages) in all provinces.
- Probability Proportion to Size (PPS) method is applied for selection of 32 communities in each province. A geographic coordinate through Global Positioning System (GPS) are tagged to the communities.
- From each enumeration area 15 households are selected that gives 480 Household (HH) per province. Household selection is based on systematic random sampling by field staff after preparation of household list within selected communities.
- A province remains as a stratum, all **34 provinces** are included in the survey adding up to 34 strata. From each stratum selection of 480 households provides a total sample size of **16,320 households**.
- Finally, **16,013 households** could be interviewed in 34 provinces.

The Ministry of Agriculture Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) and the National Statistics and Information Authority (NSIA) of Afghanistan are two important partners of FSAC in the EFSA 2018. Like other years MAIL supported the assessment with providing their field staff as enumerators of the survey. The role of NSIA was technical and supervisory. The UN World Food Programme's Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping Unit (VAM) took the lead in designing the questionnaires,
training the enumerators, doing the analysis in this report as well as the final preparation of this report.

The survey was conducted in August 2018. It is representative of a post-harvest period. Since the major objective of the assessment is to capture the impacts of drought agricultural seasonality was not the prime focus.
2. DEMOGRAPHICS

Of the more than 16,000 households that were included in the survey, not all were permanent residents of those communities as around 4 percent of households identified as IDPs while another 4 percent identified as returnee households. The chart below shows the residence status by province, where the highest percentage of returnee households were found in Paktika and Paktya provinces. The highest percentage of IDP households in the survey were found in Helmand, Urozgan and Ghazni province samples.

Chart 1 – Residence status by province

Households were also asked if they were hosting returnees. As expected households in the east were the most likely to be hosting returnees, with the exception of Nuristan. Hosting returnees was also frequently reported by households in Faryab, Urozgan, Helmand, Kandahar and Ghazni. However there were many households who did not respond to this question, perhaps for sensitive reasons. They were mostly found in border provinces or in the southern region.

Chart 2 – Households hosting returnees

Collection of information on household size continues to be challenging in these large scale surveys as it seems that the definition of ‘household’ is not uniform across the country and thus many multi-generational families’ information was collected and included in the data. Hence it makes more sense to analyse and report on the median household size rather than mean or average size in order to
control for the outliers (extremely large households). For the purpose of the survey, a household should include a single set of parents and their children, and perhaps grandparents. Not the entire number of people living together in one place.

The largest households were found in the southeast and the southern provinces, along with some of the eastern provinces, which, not surprisingly, are those also most likely to be hosting returnees. Indeed, when comparing mean and median household size of households hosting returnees and those not, most are significantly \( p < 0.05 \) larger. Male headed households are also significantly larger \( p < 0.001 \) than female headed households.

Chart 3 – Median household size by province

Although most households are headed by men in Afghanistan (or a male member of the household), there were some provinces where female headship was more common than expected, such as in Daykundi where 21 percent were headed by women. However, when looking at the findings of the livelihood coping for Daykundi, 34 percent of the households reported that a member had migrated to look for work. Nearly 10 percent of households in Nimroz and Herat also reported being headed by a woman.

Chart 4 – Percentage of female headed households, by province

The chart below shows the percentage of households with a disabled head of household, by province. The bottom section of the bar indicates the percentage of households where the head is disabled and cannot work, while the upper part of each bar shows the percentage of households where the head is disabled but can work. The actual type of disability was not specified in this question. The province
with the highest percentage of households with a disabled head who is unable to work is Kandahar (15 percent), followed by Ghor (11 percent) and Nimroz (10 percent). Urozgan is the province with the highest percentage of households with a disabled head who can work (16 percent), followed by Ghor (14 percent), Zabul (11 percent), Sar-e-Pul (10 percent), Samangan (10 percent) and Nuristan (10 percent). Overall, households in Ghor are the most likely to have a disabled head (25 percent), followed by Kandahar (22 percent), Daykundi (18 percent), Sar-e-Pul (18 percent) and Samangan (18 percent).

When looking at disability and sex of household head, for female headed households, 28 percent are disabled, compared to only 13 percent of male heads of household.

Chart 5 – Disability of household head

When considering the rest of the household members, 12 percent reported having a mentally or physically disabled male member while 8 percent reporting having at least one female member who was disabled. For most provinces, the likelihood of having a disabled male member was greater.

When considering the disability of the head and the disability of the other members, half of the households in Urozgan have a mentally or physically disabled member. More than 40 percent of households in Zabul and Ghor have at least one disabled member while around one-third of households in Bamyan, Daykundi, Paktya, Paktika, Khost, Takhar and Nangarhar had at least one disabled member.

Chart 6 – Households with at least one disabled member
3. HOUSING, WATER AND SANITATION

Nearly 90 percent of the respondents reporting living in a private house, with very few living in temporary shelters, which makes sense as the assessment is focused on rural communities. However there are some regional and provincial variations. More than half of the households in Nimroz were living with other people or in temporary conditions, likely representing the situation of the many returnee and IDP households in that province. In terms of renting (alone or communally), households in Kandahar, Urozgan and Kunar were more likely not to own than the other provinces, except for Nimroz. Households living in temporary conditions were found most often in Paktika, Helmand, Kandahar and Badghis provinces.

Chart 7 – Type of housing by province

Since the assessment was focused on the effects of the current drought, there was a focus on understanding more about household access to drinking water. Using the UNICEF definition of an ‘improved source’ of drinking water, about half of the households have this access. The best access was found in the southeast where around 90 percent of the surveyed household access water from an improved source. This region was also not affected by the drought. Households in Nangarhar (78 percent), Logar (76 percent), Kandahar (72 percent) and Badakhshan (71 percent) were also more likely to access water from improved sources. Only 10 percent of rural households in Nimroz were accessing drinking water from improved sources, followed by Ghor (18 percent) and Daykundi (21 percent).

Chart 8 – Household access to drinking water from an improved source, by province
Not only do households in Nimroz have the worst access to drinking water from improved sources, they also have to spend more time, only average, to collect water compared to rural households in other provinces. Households in Jawzjan and Faryab also have limited access to drinking water. Access is best in the southeast as well as in Helmand, Kabul and Kunduz.

**Chart 9 – Time to collect drinking water by province**

In order to look at the impact of the drought on time to collect drinking water, households were asked if the time had increased compared to last year. Households in the southern region were most affected with 65 percent in Urozgan indicating that it takes longer now to collect drinking water compared to the previous year. Other provinces that were most affected include Badghis (57 percent), Daykundi (56 percent), and Nimroz (52 percent). Not surprisingly, households in the southeast were least likely to spend more time collecting water compared to last year.

**Chart 10 – Increases in time to collect drinking water compared to last year, by province**

In an attempt to get further insight on the impact of the drought on household water access, respondents were asked if the drought has resulted in a reduction in water quantity and quality for their families. As shown in the chart below, most households reported this problem, with fewer from Kapisa (45 percent), Kunduz (61 percent) and Khost (63 percent). Reduced quantity and quality was most problematic for rural households in the Central highlands, the South, the West and North – basically all of the provinces most affected by the drought. Households in Nuristan were also suffering from reduced quantity and quality of drinking water.
Only 3 percent of these rural households have access to the most improved form of sanitation facility which is the flush latrine, while 13 percent have access to traditional improved latrines. The commonly used system is the ‘traditional latrine’ which as per the Afghanistan Living Conditions Survey definition is a lower quality improved latrine (basic or limited). Lack of latrine/use of bush was reported by 12 percent of the households and this practice is more common in the drought affected provinces.

As shown in the chart below, the type of sanitation used varies greatly by province. When considering flush and improved traditional latrines as ‘safe’ sanitation, households in Balkh, Faryab, Kabul and Helmand were the most likely to use safe sanitation. However, a fair percentage of households in Helmand are also without a toilet. The worst access to safe sanitation is found amongst households in Daykundi where half of the households don’t have any type of toilet. More than 40 percent of households in Nuristan are also without a toilet.

**Chart 12 – Type of sanitation by province**
4. HOUSEHOLD ASSETS, LIVELIHOODS, EXPENDITURE AND DEBT

The EFSA 2018 assessment inquired about the household assets or items, valued from high to low which are sellable to withstand the negative impacts of shock thus reflecting the wealth and resilience of the households. The assets were grouped into three categories based on their market value. **High value assets**, comprising of seven items refrigerator, TV, VCR/DVD, motorcycle, car, satellite dish and expensive carpets. **Medium value assets** also comprising of seven items, stove/gas balloon, sewing machine, iron, radio/tape recorder, electric fan, bicycle, cell phone. **Low value assets** with two items blankets and low-cost carpets like kilim, sataranji, or farash.

To have a better understanding of the economic resilience of the households at provincial level a household asset composite score was estimated and asset groups were formed by weighting the high, medium and low value assets (weights 0.5, 0.35, 0.15 respectively) and dividing the composite scores into four groups. The group cut offs were decided based on the histogram with normal distribution curve. Two groups were formed below the median value one with the median value and one group above the median value, altogether four asset ownership groups\(^1\). The asset groups aligned well with the income expenditure quintiles and livelihood groups.

The chart below shows the asset wealth of the sample of households for each province. The wealthiest households appear to be in the southeast, followed by Faryab in the northern region. Households in the central region also appear to be relatively OK in terms of asset wealth. However, households in the eastern region, particularly in Nuristan and Kunar, are the poorest in terms of asset wealth. Other provinces with few wealthy and many poor households include Ghor, Helmand and Nimroz.

**Chart 13 – Household asset wealth by province**

By and large there have not been major decreases in the household asset ownership from 2018 compared to last year. Reported decreases in asset ownership happened mostly with the high (17 percent) and medium (18 percent) value asset holders.

The selling of household assets in the livelihood coping strategy also confirms the findings that on average 20 percent of the households sold household assets during the survey or over the last 12 months which has caused the change in the household asset ownership. At provincial level household asset sales were higher in drought affected provinces (19 percent) compared to non-drought provinces (15 percent). For the drought affected provinces of Farah, Faryab, Helmand, Kandahar,

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\(^1\) The highest asset composite score was “High value asset 7*0.5 + Medium value assets 7*0.25+ Low value assets 2*0.15 = 6.5”. The median value was 2, the cut off points were Poor: 0-1.075, Marginal: 1.075 – 2, Moderate: 2-3, High: >3.
Uruzgan and Zabul over 20 percent households reported a decrease in both high and medium value assets since last year.

It is good to understand mobile phone ownership amongst the rural households for a number of reasons. Firstly, data collection can be done using mobile phone calls, if physical access is not possible or if information is needed quickly. Also, phone interviews are a convenient way to reach women in these households in order to get their views and ideas on a number of issues. Secondly, several agencies use mobile service providers to distribute cash assistance for food or non-food items and it’s good to know where this would be a more useful approach. Lastly, for people receiving drought and other assistance, it is important to know if they have access to a mobile phone so they can use the inter-agency/inter-cluster Awaaz hotline in order to report any problems or issues related to the assistance or to report any abuse or harassment cases.

The chart below shows the percentage of these sampled rural households that own a mobile phone. For most provinces, ownership is quite high with some notable exceptions. Households in Zabul and Urozgan are the least likely to own a mobile phone, followed by those in Nuristan and Ghor.

Chart 14 – Mobile phone ownership by province

Lastly, to better understand if households are able to withstand the sometimes harsh winters in the rural areas of the country, the chart below presents blanket ownership by province. This is also useful for the ministries and humanitarian agencies and NGOs who provide winterization to households across the country. The assessment did not investigate the condition or quantity of blankets, however.

Chart 15 – Blanket ownership by province
Nearly all rural households in the samples owned at least one blanket. In general blanket ownership was lower in the warmer provinces in the south and east of the country and higher in the other regions. However for households in the west, ownership appears a bit low, especially because they do experience harsh conditions during the winter season.

**Livelihoods**

In the assessment, households were asked to name up to three main sources of income for their families. The most common livelihood activity was the production and sales of field crops (48 percent), followed by non-agricultural wage labour (33 percent), and the production and sales of livestock and livestock products (25 percent). Other common livelihood activities for these rural households include: skilled labour (20 percent), salaried work (14 percent), small business/petty trade (14 percent), orchard cultivation and sales (13 percent), shepherding (10 percent) and agricultural wage labour (8 percent). Remittances were reported as a main source of income by 8 percent of the households.

**Central region**

For households in Ghazni, the main livelihood activities are livestock rearing and agricultural crop production, followed by non-agricultural wage labour and orchard production. For Kabul, rural households mostly rely on non-agricultural wage labour, followed by crop production, skilled labour and orchards. Households in Kapisa have a more diverse set of livelihood activities, including crop production, followed by skilled labour, livestock rearing, salaried work and orchards. In Logar, rural households rely more on non-agricultural wage labour plus crop production, skilled labour and salaried work. Households in Maidan Wardak rely on production and sales of livestock and livestock products, followed by crop production, orchards, skilled labour and non-agricultural wage labour. In Panjsher the most common source of income is salaried work, followed by crop production and small business/petty trade. Lastly households in Parwan rely mostly on crop production, followed by orchards, salaried work, small business and non-agricultural wage labour.

**Chart 16 – Main livelihood activities in the Central region, by province**

**Central highlands**

Households in Bamyan rely mostly on agricultural crop production and sales, along with non-agricultural wage labour, small business/petty trade and livestock production and sales. In Daykundi, rural households have similar livelihoods, but with more reliance on non-agricultural wage labour and then crop production and sales. They also engage in livestock production, followed by small business/petty trade. They rely a bit more on remittances than households in Bamyan.
Southeast

Rural households in Khost province rely mostly on crop production for their livelihoods and income, followed by non-agricultural wage labour, small business/petty trade, remittances and salaried work. Those in Paktika rely mostly on skilled labour for their income, followed by small business/petty trade and a variety of other livelihood activities. Lastly in Paktya province, households rely mostly on non-agricultural wage labour, followed by crop production and sales, salaried work, skilled labour and small business/petty trade.

Southwest

In Helmand province, the most common livelihood activity for rural households is the production and sales of field crops, followed by skilled labour, livestock production and sales and non-agricultural wage labour. For households in rural Kandahar, the most common livelihood activity is field crop production, followed by skilled labour, non-agricultural wage labour and orchards. In Nimroz, the most common livelihood activity is non-agricultural wage labour, followed by crop production and sales and livestock production and sales. Households in rural Urozgan rely mostly on field crop production (including cash crops), livestock production and sales and skilled labour for their livelihoods. Lastly households in rural Zabul are most likely to be engaged in production and sales of field and cash crops, followed by orchards, livestock production, skilled labour and agricultural wage labour.
Western

More the three-quarters of the households in Badghis rely on crop production and sales as a main livelihood activity. This is followed by livestock production and sales, non-agricultural wage labour and shepherding. In Farah, households also mostly rely on crop production and sales and livestock production and sales and, to a lesser extent, on non-agricultural wage labour and small business/petty trade. Rural households in Ghor are similar to those in Badghis, in that they rely on field crop production and sales, livestock production and sales, shepherding and non-agricultural wage labour for their main livelihood activities. Lastly, in rural Herat the most commonly reported livelihood activity is non-agricultural wage labour, followed by crop production and sales and livestock production and sales.

Northern

As expected, in this region, crop production and sales is a major livelihood activity in most provinces. For households in rural Balkh province, crop production is the most common activity, followed by non-agricultural wage labour and, to a lesser extent, livestock production and skills labour. Households in Faryab are mostly engaged in crop production and sales, livestock production and sales, shepherding, skilled labour, non-agricultural wage labour and orchards. In Jawzjan and Samangan, rural households are reliant on crop production and sales, and non-agricultural wage labour, followed by livestock
production and sales and skilled labour. Lastly in Sar-e-Pul, households mostly rely on non-agricultural wage labour, followed by crop production and sales and remittances.

Chart 21 – Main livelihood activities in the Northern region, by province

Northeast

Rural households in Badakhshan mostly rely on non-agricultural wage labour and crop production and sales as their main livelihood activities, followed by livestock rearing and, to some extent, remittances. Households in Baghlan also rely on crop production and sales but one-quarter rely on salaries for their livelihoods. In both Kunduz and Takhar provinces, rural households tend to rely on a combination of crop production and sales along with non-agricultural wage labour and livestock production and sales as their main livelihoods.

Chart 22 – Main livelihood activities in the Northeastern region, by province

East

According to the survey findings more households in Kunar rely on crop production and sales for their livelihoods than in any other province. These households also tend to rely on non-agricultural wage labour and livestock production and sales to earn a living. In rural Laghman, non-agricultural wage labour is the most common livelihood activity, followed by crop production and sales and livestock rearing. Skilled labour is also a fairly common livelihood activity in that province. Households in Nangarhar rely on a combination of crop production and sales, non-agricultural wage labour and skilled labour. Lastly, households in Nuristan are mostly reliant on crop production and sales, and, to a lesser extent, livestock production and sales, shepherding and non-agricultural wage labour.
Households were asked to estimate the cash income earned by the household members during the previous month. This estimate was then transformed into ‘per capita monthly income’ to be able to compare across households. However this estimate is for comparison purposes only and should not be seen as an absolute or precise estimate of income.

The chart below allows for comparison between provinces and regions in terms of cash income. Clearly the households in the Central highlands and the Western regions have the lowest per capita monthly incomes, followed by those in the East. Incomes are better in the Southeast and Central regions.

When looking at median per capita income by livelihood activity, the chart below shows that, as expected, households relying on salaried work for their income have the highest median per capita income. Interestingly, those relying on remittances have the second highest, followed by households engaged in small business/petty trade activities.

On the lower end of the spectrum are households engaged in livestock production and sales, shepherding and non-agricultural wage labour, which was the second most common livelihood activity amongst the sample of rural households.
Households were asked if their income in 2018 had changed, compared to 2017. Many households felt that their income had decreased during that period of time and the results are presented in the chart below. Not surprisingly, nearly all of the households in Badghis reported a significant decrease in income compared to last year. Large percentages of households in Ghazni, Jawzjan, Sar-e-Pul and Kunar reported decreases in income. However, in a few provinces, increases were reported, such as in Paktya where more households reported increases or no change in income than those reporting decreases. In Faryab a large percentage of rural households reported an increase in income. However, there were also a large percentage who reported decreases.

When asked why their incomes decreased, the most common reasons included the drought, reduced employment opportunities and conflict. A few mentioned migration or competition with IDP or returnee households for employment but not in large numbers. The findings are presented below.

Reduced employment opportunities was mentioned most often by households in Khost (76 percent), followed by those in Laghman (60 percent) and Panjsher (58 percent). Conflict was a major reason for rural households in Helmand (48 percent) and Logar (26 percent). Reduction in income due to drought was mentioned by 98 percent of the households in Badghis, followed by 93 percent in Sar-e-Pul, 89 percent in Ghor and 88 percent in Daykundi.
The share of monthly household expenditure for food was calculated for each household as a measure of poverty and food insecurity. The higher the share of monthly expenditure for food, the more likely the household has fewer resources and is prioritizing food purchases over non-food. Rural households in Ghor and Badakhshan provinces had at least 60 percent of total monthly expenditure for food, which are the highest of all provinces. Households in Kunar, Kabul and Herat also had relatively high share of monthly expenditure for food. The lowest was found in Faryab, followed by Zabul and Farah provinces.

Since the purpose of the assessment was to look at the impact of the drought on households, it was of interest to also investigate more on household access to water. Therefore the share of monthly expenditure for water was calculated and is presented in the chart below.

Households in Nimroz have the highest share of monthly expenditure for water at nearly 5 percent of total. They are followed by households in Faryab, Kandahar and Farah. Rural households with the lowest share of monthly expenditure for water include those in Kapisa, Logar, Paktya, Nuristan and Badghis.
Households were asked how their food expenditure has changed compared to the previous year. The findings are outlined in the chart below, showing that food expenditures for rural households in Badghis have decreased for nearly all of the respondents. It is unclear if this is due to the lack of cash or because many households in Badghis were already receiving some form of food assistance at the time of the survey. Khost province had the highest percentage of households reporting an increase in food expenditure compared to last year, followed by Nangarhar and Paktya. Households in Panjsher province were the most likely to report no change in food expenditures.

When asked about changes in non-food expenditure compared to the previous year, the findings were similar, where nearly all of the households in Badghis reporting a decreased in non-food expenditures compared to the previous year. In addition, households in Khost province were the most likely to have increased their non-food expenditures compared to last year.

The assessment also included some questions on borrowing and debt. Nearly three-quarters of these rural households reported that they had borrowed money or in-kind items in the 3 months prior to the survey. By province, households in Kunar were the most likely to borrow (97 percent), followed by those in Badghis (91 percent), Laghman (89 percent), and Farah (88 percent). Borrowing was much less common amongst households in Paktika province (43 percent) and Nimroz province (51 percent).
The main reasons to borrow were to buy food or pay for health care. To a lesser extent, households borrowed to pay for ceremonies such as weddings, or to purchase agricultural inputs. The regional results are presented in the chart below.

Chart 32 – Main reasons to borrow, by region
5. AGRICULTURE AND LIVESTOCK

Total arable and permanent cropland in Afghanistan is 8.5 million hectares, of which, around one million are irrigated (CSO, 2010). The irrigated cultivation provides higher yields and thus a reduction in actual irrigated areas affects crop yields and prevents a stable growth of the agricultural industry.

The EFSA findings show that on average, rural households in Afghanistan own or have access to around 7 jeribs of irrigated and rainfed land. However, about half of these households own or have access to only 3 Jeribs of irrigated land and 1 Jerib of rainfed land or less. Access to land does not confirm cultivation of land. Due to prolonged conflicts and unstable precipitation, there has often been a shortfall in irrigated land cultivation.

The main capital of farmers is arable land and in Afghanistan particularly irrigated land, so far is more productive than rain-fed land. The Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) estimated that typical yield of wheat from irrigated fields is 2.7 times higher than that from rain-fed fields (MAIL 2012). Due to the high yield in households tend to shift to irrigated cultivation and rainfed cultivation is on the decline.

Apart from the variation in yield by irrigated and rainfed land the crop yield in Afghanistan is also dependent on the land size. From last year to this year there is a minor shift in the average agricultural land size cultivation both for irrigated and rainfed lands. Irrigated land reduced by 11.8 percent and rainfed land reduced by 17.6 percent.

Change in the agriculture land cultivation is better captured through land holding size which is a key determinant of wealth status as well. In Afghanistan land ownership is under high pressure by population growth, resulting in land fragmentation. ALCS 2016-2017 reported that the average owned irrigated land size decreased from 6.7 jeribs in 2007-08 to 4.9 jeribs in 2016-17, thereby jeopardizing the livelihoods of many farm-households. The survey also reported that the median land size was 2.5 jeribs meaning half of the households owned this land size or less.

The assessment findings show that rural households in the Central region are more likely to have access to irrigated agricultural land, compared to other regions. Access to irrigated agricultural land was lowest in the Northeastern region, as expected. Households in Panjsher, Wardak, Daykundi and Bamyan were the most likely to have access to irrigated agricultural land. Only 34 percent of the
surveyed households in rural Takhar had access to irrigated land, followed by 37 percent in Nimroz province.

Chart 34 – Households having access to irrigated agricultural land, by province

The size of irrigated land that rural households can access varies a lot by province and, to an extent, region. The households in the southern region reported having access to larger plots of land compared to the other regions, especially Nimroz and Urozgan. This is likely because they don’t have access to rainfed land so all land they farm is irrigated. Larger plots of land for rural farmers were also found in Faryab and Jawzjan provinces in the northern region. Households in Panjsher were most likely to have only 1-2 jeribs of land for farming (70 percent), followed by those in Kunar (64 percent), Kapisa (63 percent) and Daykundi (63 percent).

Chart 35 – Irrigated land size by province

When comparing the area of irrigated land under cultivation this year compared to the previous year, most of the farmers in the central highlands, northeast and east regions cultivated about the same amount of land. Households in many provinces in the central region also reported cultivating the same as the previous year.

However, households in Farah, Nimroz and Helmand were the most likely to have cultivated less irrigated farmland. Households in Ghazni, Logar and Zabul were the most likely to have cultivated more irrigated land this year than the previous year.
The following chart shows that rural households in Ghor and Badghis provinces were the most likely to have access to rainfed agricultural land, followed by those in Kunar and Samangan. By region, access to rainfed agricultural land was lowest in the central region.

Size of rainfed plots also vary by region and province. In some areas they are larger than the irrigated land, such as in the southern, northern and northeast regions while in other they are smaller. Size of rainfed plots were uniformly small across most of the central provinces as well as the east.
Cultivation of rainfed land decrease mostly in the southern region which is mostly dry anyway. In fact there were only a few households in the Nimroz sample who reported cultivating rainfed land and thus there were no findings reported. In general, compared to irrigated land cultivation, farmers cultivating rainfed land mostly reduced their plot size because of the drought. However, rural farmers in Ghazni, Logar and Samangan were the most likely to have increased the area under rainfed cultivation.

Chart 39 – Change in rainfed land cultivated compared to last year, by province

Land cultivation challenges

Farmers were asked to name their top three main difficulties they faced during cultivation this season. The findings are summarized by region and province in the following charts. The main challenged faced by most rural farming households were crop pests and diseases as well as lack of water.

Central region

The main challenges in this region are with crop pests and diseases along with lack of water, especially in Kabul province. Farming households in Kabul, Kapisa and Panjsher provinces also were affected by lack of fertilizer during the past season. Also, for most rural farming households in this region, access to adequate seeds was also a challenge for them. Of note is the issue with insecurity/conflict for farming households in Ghazni, many of whom were affected by the fighting that took place there during the time of the data collection.

Chart 40 – Challenges with land cultivation by province – Central region
Central highlands region

Rural farming households in the central highlands also faced problems with crop pests and diseases and water shortages when cultivating in the last season. Households in Bamyan also had difficulties accessing enough seeds while households in both provinces were also not able to access enough fertilizer.

Chart 41 – Challenges with land cultivation by province – Central highlands region

Southeast region

Farming households in the southeast region were challenged most by water shortages, followed by crop pests and diseases, and lack of seeds and fertilizers. Households in Paktya also faced cultivation challenges with damaged irrigation systems while farming households in both Paktika and Paktya also faced shortages of tools for cultivation.

Chart 42 – Challenges with land cultivation by province – Southeast region

Southwest region

Farming challenges in the Southwest region varied by province with farmers in Helmand and Urozgan reporting problems mostly with crop pests and diseases while those in Nimroz really being affected by water shortages. Rural households in Kandahar and Zabul reported problems with damaged irrigation systems more than any other issue. Farming households in Helmand and Urozgan also faced challenges with insecurity, more than the other provinces.
Western region

Nearly 80 percent of rural farming households in Herat faced challenges with cultivation due to water shortages. They were also plagued with crop pests and diseases and a lack of fertilizer and seeds. Farming households in Ghor and Farah faced similar challenges while those in Badghis were mostly challenged by lack of seeds, followed by crop pests and diseases as well as lack of water. Both Ghor and Badghis have been dealing with locust problems over the past years which caused extensive crop damages.

Northern region

Cultivation challenges for farmers in the northern region were similar as the chart below illustrates. In all provinces, farmers were dealing with crop pests and diseases, along with water shortages as well as a lack of seeds. More than one-third of the farmers in Balkh province also were facing fertilizer shortages.
Northeastern region

Farming households in Badakhshan and Baghlan were mostly challenged by crop pests and diseases, followed by a lack of fertilizer, water shortages and lack of seeds. Damaged irrigation was also a problem for nearly one-third of the farmers in Baghlan. Farmers in Kunduz and Takhar were greatly challenged by crop pests and diseases and water shortages and more than 40 percent of the farmers in Kunduz also lacked access to adequate fertilizer. Natural disaster was cited by around 20 percent of farmers each in Baghlan, Kunduz and Takhar.

Chart 46 – Challenges with land cultivation by province – Northeastern region

Eastern region

The chart below shows that the farming challenges faced in the eastern region are a bit different from other regions of the country as damaged irrigation systems appears to be a bigger problem for the rural farmers, especially in Kunar, Laghman and Nuristan. Crop pests and diseases are also problematic in all provinces as well. However, farmers in Laghman and Nangarhar also face challenges with accessing enough seeds while those in Nuristan could not access enough tools. Water shortages were also faced more often by farmers in Nangarhar and Nuristan. Lastly 40 percent of farming households in Kunar mentioned natural disasters as a main challenge to cultivation.
In analysing this year’s harvest prospects and how households may manage to feed their families if they could not produce enough food, the assessment asked farming households about their top three strategies for filling the harvest gap. For the most part, it seems that these households plan to borrow money to feed their families. The findings by province are presented by region below.

Central region

Borrowing was a main strategy in all provinces in the central region for filling their harvest gaps, but especially for rural farming households in Ghazni, Panjsher, Parwan and Kabul. Use of savings was also a popular strategy for households in most provinces while many also planned to work for food, especially in Kabul and Parwan provinces. For farming households in Wardak and Panjsher, economic migration was also mentioned by more than half of the interviewed households.

Central highlands region

More than three-quarters of rural farming households in both Bamyan and Daykundi plan to rely on borrowing to fill the gap from their harvest this season. In Bamyan, more than half the households will work for food and around one third will sell livestock or send members out for work. In Daykundi the households also play to work for food to meet their harvest gaps, along with sending members out to look for work. This could explain why there is such a high percentage of female headed households in Daykundi. Rural households in both provinces also plan to relay on food assistance to meet their needs.
Households in Khost province plan to borrow and use their savings to fill their harvest gaps this season. Around one-third will also work for food or send members out to earn money. For rural farming households in Paktika, nearly 90 percent will use their savings to meet their harvest gaps, while more than half will borrow money or food. In Paktya, households plan to use a combination of savings and borrowing to meet their needs, supplemented by working for food, sending members out and relying on food assistance.

**Southwest region**

Rural households in Helmand will mostly rely on borrowing to fill their harvest gap, supplemented by reliance on food assistance and use of savings. About one-third plan to send members out to look for work of food. In Kandahar, there are a variety of strategies reported, but mostly focused on use of savings and borrowing. In Nimroz, more than 80 percent of rural farming households will use their saving to meet their harvest gaps, while more than half will borrow or sell livestock to meet their needs. Rural farming households in Urozgan will use a combination of borrowing, savings and working for food to meet their harvest gaps, with around 40 percent of households also relying on livestock sales. Lastly, rural households in Zabul will primarily rely on savings, followed by borrowing, working for food, selling livestock, sending household members out or food assistance.
Western region

For rural farming households in the western region, borrowing is the main strategy to fill their harvest gaps. In Badghis, households will also rely on working for food, food assistance, sending members out to work, or selling household assets. One in five households will migrate completely in order to meet their household needs. Very few households planned to use savings, likely because they have exhausted their savings. In Farah, there is supplemental reliance on savings and sending members out to work. In Ghor, rural farming households will also plan to work for food to meet their harvest gaps. Lastly households in Herat will use a variety of strategies to meet their food gaps, and are the least likely to rely on food assistance.

Northern region

Households in Balkh province plan to rely mostly on borrowing to fill their harvest gaps, followed by using their savings and working for food. About one third plan to send a member out to earn money. In Faryab, rural farming households will mostly rely on their savings to meet their harvest gaps, followed by working for food and sending a family member out to earn money. However, one-quarter of the households also indicated that they would migrate completely. Eight in ten rural households in Jawzjan will borrow food or money to meet their harvest gaps, while around half will use savings or work for food and one-third will send members out to look for work. In Samangan the rural households will rely on a variety of strategies including working for food, use savings, borrow, or send
members out to look for work. Lastly the rural households in Sar-e-Pul will mostly rely on borrowing, followed by working for food and use of savings.

Chart 53 – Household strategies to meet harvest gap, by province – Northern region

Northeast region
For all provinces in the Northeast region, the most popular strategy for filling the harvest gap is borrowing money or food. In Badakhshan, around 40 percent of households also planned to work for food or send members out to work, with one-third of households planning to sell livestock. In Baghlan, rural farming households will also work for food or use their savings to meet their harvest gaps. In Kunduz, more than half the households plan to send members out to work, while around 40 percent also planned to work for food or to sell livestock in order to meet their needs. Lastly, in Takhar, nearly 40 percent will sell household assets, and one-third will work for food, sell livestock or send members out to work. In Badakhshan and Takhar around one-quarter of the households plan to rely on food assistance to meet their harvest gaps.

Chart 54 – Household strategies to meet harvest gap, by province – Northeast region

Eastern region
Borrowing is the main strategy used by rural households in the eastern region in order to fill their harvest gaps. Households in Kunar planned to sell assets (42 percent) and rely on food assistance (32 percent) while more than half the rural farming households in Laghman will use their savings, sell livestock or send members out to work to fill their harvest gaps. In Nangarhar, households will work
for food or use their savings to meet their needs. Lastly in Nuristan, nearly half will rely on food assistance to meet their needs, while more than 40 percent will also sell livestock or work for food.

Chart 55 – Household strategies to meet harvest gap, by province – Eastern region

Access to sufficient seed for the next agricultural season is a problem in all provinces, with households in the southeast and southwest having the best access, in relative terms. However, access to sufficient seeds is a huge problem for households in the drought-stricken western region. In particular, seeds are a problem for households in Balkh, Jawzjan and Baghlan provinces.

Chart 56 – Households access to seeds for the next season, by province

Animal ownership is quite common amongst the rural households in the assessment. Provinces with the highest levels of ownership include Kunar (88 percent), Ghor (86 percent), Zabul (84 percent), Khost (83 percent), Paktika (82 percent) and Wardak (82 percent). Lower levels of ownership were found amongst rural households in Kabul province (41 percent), Nimroz (47 percent) and Logar (50 percent). Findings by province are presented in the chart below.
Cattle and yak ownership was highest amongst rural households in Kunar province, followed by those in Paktika, Zabul, Panjsher and Badakhshan. Only 12 percent of households in Nimroz reported owning cattle or yaks. Ownership was also quite low in Ghazni.

Chart 58 – Households owning cattle or yaks, by province

Chart 59 – Households owning buffalo, by province
Buffalo ownership was very low in most provinces, as indicated in Chart 59 above. However, 45 percent of rural households in Urozgan own buffalo, followed by 23 percent in Faryab and 22 percent in Zabul. Ownership was not uncommon amongst households in Kandahar, Farah, Ghor and Daykundi.

The chart below shows that ownership of sheep or goats is quite high in most regions and is most common amongst rural households in Zabul, Ghor, Faryab, Kunar and Paktika. Very few households in Kabul province own sheep or goats.

**Chart 60 – Ownership of sheep or goats, by province**

Ownership of these animals varies across the country, ranging from 72 percent of households in Ghor province to only 1 percent in Kabul.

**Chart 61 – Ownership of horses, donkeys and mules, by province**

Ownership of camels was also assessed in the survey. The highest level of ownership was found amongst rural households in Zabul province (16 percent), followed by 10 percent in Ghor, 9 percent in Faryab and 7 percent each in Farah and Jawzjan. Most other provinces were without camel owners.

Poultry ownership was also quite high across most provinces, again with Zabul having the highest levels of ownership, followed by Kunar, Daykundi and Paktika. Ownership was lowest amongst rural households in Kabul province, followed by Balkh and Herat provinces.
Households owning animals were asked about several problems they’ve faced raising animals over the past 6 months. Lack of money was a main challenge for many rural households who are raising animals. This was reported most often by households in Kunar (95 percent), Zabul (93 percent) and Farah (92 percent) which are also the provinces with the highest ownership levels. Money was less of a problem for households in Parwan (15 percent) Baghlan (37 percent) and Paktika (40 percent).

Lack of water was a major issue with raising animals, in both the drought and non-drought affected regions. As expected, lack of water was problem for more than 90 percent of households in the southwest provinces, except for Helmand. In the western region, nearly all households in all four provinces were affected by lack of water. However lack of water was not as big an issue for households in the northeast provinces although they were mostly included in the drought zone.
Lack of adequate pasture and fodder was also a big problem for livestock raising households in most provinces, including nearly all in Ghazni, Kandahar, Badghis, Jawzjan, Kunar and Nuristan.

Chart 66 – Problems raising animals in past 6 months due to disease & lack of veterinary services, by province
High levels of livestock disease and lack of adequate veterinary services were a major problem for livestock rearing households in Faryab (95 percent), Jawzjan (94 percent), Zabul (91 percent), and Helmand (91 percent), as indicated in the above chart.

Lack of markets for livestock and livestock products was a general problem in the western and southern regions but in particular, in Jawzjan province (84 percent), Ghazni (84 percent) and Ghor (82 percent).

**Chart 67 – Problems raising animals in past 6 months due lack of market for animals and their products, by province**

Livestock deaths were reported most often by rural livestock rearing households in Badghis (93 percent), Farah (92 percent), Faryab (92 percent), Nimroz (87 percent) and Jawzjan (85 percent). Livestock deaths were also common in Ghazni, Herat, Ghor and Helmand provinces.

**Chart 68 – Households experiencing livestock deaths in the past 6 months, by province**

Not only did many households experience deaths of livestock due to the drought, they also experienced reduced productivity due to lack of water, pasture, fodder or adequate veterinary services. The southern and western regions were the hardest hit with reduced productivity, along with Ghazni province, Faryab, Jawzjan and Nuristan provinces.
Chart 69 – Experienced reduced livestock productivity due to drought, by province
6. DIETARY DIVERSITY AND HOUSEHOLD FOOD SECURITY

This section is presenting information on household dietary diversity and food frequency based on a 7-day recall period for 9 foods/food groups.

- Households in Ghazni typically consume cereals and oils/fats on a daily basis, supplemented with sugar and dairy 3-4 days per week and pulses, proteins and vegetables 1-2 days per week.
- In Kabul, households consume cereals, vegetables, and oils/fats 3-4 days per week and other foods 1-2 days per week, with no consumption of proteins.
- In Kapisa, households are consuming cereals, oils/fats and sugar daily, along with pulses, dairy, proteins, vegetables and fruits 1-2 days per week.
- Households in Logar are consuming oils/fats and sugar nearly every day, vegetables 3 times per week and other foods 1-2 days per week on average.
- Households in Wardak are consuming cereals and oils/fats daily with regular consumption of pulses and sugar and are eating dairy, fruits and vegetables only 1-2 days per week.
- Households in Panjsher and Parwan have similar consumption as those in Kapisa.

Chart 70 – Weekly household food consumption by province – Central region

**Central highlands**

Households in Bamyan consume cereals, oils/fats and sugar daily but not much more while those in Daykundi are eating cereals daily and oils/fats sometimes and other foods rarely.

Chart 71 – Weekly household food consumption by province – Central highlands region
Southeast region

- In Khost, households are consuming cereals daily, followed by regular consumption of dairy, oils/fats and sugar. Consumption of pulses, protein, vegetables and fruits is only 1-2 days per week.
- Households in Paktika are consuming cereals and sugar daily, oils/fats 6 days per week and the other foods/food groups twice per week.
- Consumption by rural households in Paktya is similar to the consumption patterns of households in Paktika.

Chart 72 – Weekly household food consumption by province – Southeast region

Southwest region

- Households in Helmand are consuming cereals and oils/fats daily, vegetables and sugars 5-6 days per week and other foods on occasionally (1-2 days per week).
- Rural households in Kandahar have similar consumption patterns to those in Helmand.
- In Nimroz, households are consuming cereals daily but other foods 1-3 days per week with no consumption of fruits.
- Households in Urozgan have similar consumption to those in Kandahar
- In Zabul households are consuming cereals and sugar almost every day, with oils/fats and dairy sometimes, but other foods occasionally.

Chart 73 – Weekly household food consumption by province – Southwest region
Western region

- Consumption in Badghis is rather poor with households consuming only cereals on a daily basis, oils/fats 4 days a week and pulses and sugar only one day per week.
- Households in Ghor have better consumption, with daily consumption of cereals, consumption of oils/fats and sugar about 4 days per week but consumption of pulses, dairy and vegetables only occasionally.
- Household consumption in Farah is quite poor as well, with daily consumption of cereals, but consumption of oils/fats 3 days per week and pulses and dairy only one day per week.
- In Herat, household consumption was slightly better with cereals, oils/fats and sugar being consumed nearly every day but with only occasional consumption of pulses, dairy, proteins and vegetables.

Chart 74 – Weekly household food consumption by province – Western region

Northern region

Consumption in the Northern provinces was similar and fairly diverse with most households having daily consumption of cereals and oils/fats and consumption of sugar 2-3 days per week. Other foods/food groups were consumed only occasionally.

Chart 75 – Weekly household food consumption by province – Northern region
Northeast region

- Households in Badakhshan had quite poor consumption which consists only of daily consumption of cereals, oil/fats 6 days per week, sugar 3 days and pulses and vegetables only 1 day per week.
- In Baghlan the households enjoy daily consumption of cereals, oils/fats and sugars while only occasional consumption of other foods.
- Households in Kunduz have similar consumption as those in Baghlan.
- Households in Takhar also have quite poor consumption which is similar to the people in Badakhshan province.

Chart 76 – Weekly household food consumption by province – Northeast region

Eastern region

- In Kunar, households are consuming cereals and sugar 6-7 days a week, followed by oils/fats about 3 days per week with occasional consumption of pulses, dairy and vegetables.
- Households in Laghman are consuming cereals, oils/fats and sugar daily with occasional consumption of pulses, dairy and vegetables.
- In Nangarhar the consumption is similar to that in Laghman, except the households are consuming proteins one day per week.
- Lastly, in Nuristan, the household consumption is very poor, where on average, households are having cereals every day, vegetables, oils/fats and sugar 3-4 days per week and pulses only 1 day per week.

Chart 77 – Weekly household food consumption by province – Eastern region
The Household Dietary Diversity Score (HDDS) focuses on the desired outcome of improved food access - improved household food consumption. Household dietary diversity - the number of different food groups consumed over a given reference period - is a good proxy indicator for the following reasons.

- A more diversified diet is an important outcome in and of itself.
- A more diversified diet is associated with a number of improved outcomes in areas such as birth weight, child anthropometric status, and improved haemoglobin concentrations.
- A more diversified diet is highly correlated with such factors as caloric and protein adequacy, percentage of protein from animal sources (high quality protein), and household income. Even in very poor households, increased food expenditure resulting from additional income is associated with increased quantity and quality of the diet.

For this assessment, questions on dietary diversity were asked at the household, making it possible to examine food security at the intra-household levels. To better reflect a quality diet, the number of different food groups consumed is calculated, rather than the number of different foods consumed. Knowing that households consume, for example, an average of four different food groups implies that their diets offer some diversity in both macro- and micronutrients. This is a more meaningful indicator than knowing that households consume four different foods, which might all be cereals.

While the individual dietary diversity score (IDDS) is used as a proxy measure of the nutritional quality of an individual’s diet, the HDDS is used as a proxy measure of the socio-economic level of the household. For the EFSA, the desired number of different food groups consumed is ‘7’ which is the median HDDS for the asset rich households in this sample of households.

The chart below shows that households in Maidan Wardak have the highest median dietary diversity, followed by those in Takhar province. In all, 14 provinces had a median HDDS of 7 or higher while 20 were below the desired level. Not surprisingly, the provinces with the lowest HDDS were some that are most affected by the drought including Badghis, Kunar and Nuristan. Rural households in Daykundi, Nimroz, Sar-e-Pul and Badakhshan all had a median HDDS of only 5 food groups.

![Chart 78 – Median household dietary diversity score by province](image)

The Food Consumption Score is a composite score of diversity and frequency of 9 food groups consumed over the past 7 days by the household members, weighted by the relative nutritional importance of the 9 food groups. Based on the scores and the standard threshold for Asian countries the households are grouped into three categories Poor, Borderline and Acceptable. The categories are often referred to as Food Consumption Groups (FCG). In a way it is a proxy of quality and quantity of food consumption.
When looking at household dietary diversity and food frequency using the WFP food consumption score (FCS) classifications, the findings are similar, with more than 70 percent of rural households in Nuristan having ‘poor’ food consumption, followed by more than 60 percent in Badghis and around half in Daykundi, Ghor and Badakhshan. However when comparing those with better HDDS with FCS, the findings are different for Maidan Wardak and Takhar. Rural households in Khost and Faryab have the best outcomes using the FCS classifications.

Chart 79 – Household food consumption classifications by province

Households were asked if their consumption this year had changed compared to last year. As shown in the chart below, in most provinces, the majority of rural households had experienced decreases in their consumption in terms of quantity and quality. Household in Badghis were the most likely to report a decrease in consumption, followed by those in Helmand, Ghazni, Kandahar, Farah, Jawzjan and Kunar. Around one-quarter of households in Paktika reported improvements in consumption, followed by 10 percent in Parwan, Samangan and Baghlan.

Chart 80 – Changes in household food consumption compared to last year, by province

Households were also asked if they were consuming iodized salt, although this was not verified by testing a sample of household salt. Regardless, the reported use of iodized salt was pretty high in the Central region as well as most provinces in the North. The highest reported consumption of iodized salt is in Khost province, followed by Parwan, Samangan, Logar and Baghlan. The lowest reported use was in Paktika (3 percent), Kunar (4 percent), Nimroz (6 percent) and Badghis (10 percent). The graph below presents all results by province.
Households were asked how they access the different foods/food groups consumed in the previous week. The most common ways that rural Afghan households access food include: own production, purchase (with own cash) and credit. A few households also rely on strategies like gifts/charity, food assistance or collecting wild foods.

The chart below presents the main source of cereals for these rural households. More than 60 percent of the households in Ghazni, Kapisa and Faryab rely on their own production to access cereals for home consumption, followed by more than half the households in Urozgan, Zabul, Ghor and Takhar. This doesn’t mean that they are enjoying better consumption however. As expected, nearly all households in Kabul province rely on purchase to access their cereals. Reliance on credit is problematic as many rural households are already in debt due to chronic poverty and food insecurity, compounded by the drought. Reliance on credit to access cereals was highest amongst rural households in Nuristan (45 percent, followed by Bamyan (43 percent), Kunar (34 percent) and Daykundi (33 percent).

Overall, most households rely on purchase to access pulses for their household consumption with the exception being Nuristan where more than 40 percent of household rely on own production. Reliance on credit is highest for households in Daykundi (35 percent), Bamyan (34 percent) and Kunar (34 percent). Just over 10 percent of households in Helmand rely on gifts or charity to access pulses for household consumption.
The majority of rural households access their milk, yoghurt and other dairy products for home consumption through their own production. Livestock ownership is fairly common throughout most of the provinces and some animals are good sources of dairy products which provide necessary sources of protein and calcium. This is clear in the high livestock owning provinces of Wardak, Bamyan, Zabul, Badakhshan and Nuristan where more than 75 percent of households access their dairy products through home production. Households in Helmand (15 percent), Baghlan (11 percent) and Urozgan (8 percent) were the most likely to rely on gifts or charity to access dairy products. Credit was most commonly used by households in Herat (18 percent), Farah (15 percent) and Badghis (14 percent).

Home vegetable production is fairly common in some provinces across the country as indicated in the chart below where around 60 percent of households in Bamyan, Zabul and Badakhshan rely on home production to access vegetables they eat. Reliance on credit for vegetables was not very common. However, 23 percent of households in Helmand, 21 percent in Farah, 18 percent in Ghor and 18 percent in Kunar used credit to purchase vegetables. In the eastern provinces, there were many households relying on ‘other’ for their vegetables which likely indicates that they were collecting them in the wild.
Rural households are consuming edible oils from plants or seeds as well as animal fats. The most common source of oils and fats for rural households is purchase but also a high percentage of households are accessing this food/food group through credit. More than 20 percent of households in Khost and Zabul access their oils/fats through own production. Households in Badghis (58 percent), Daykundi (57 percent), Nuristan (47 percent) and Ghazni (44 percent) are the most likely to rely on credit to access fats and oils for home consumption. Around 10 percent of households in Panjsher, Urozgan, Faryab and Nuristan are accessing fats and oils from ‘other’ sources which could include collection from wild seeds and nuts.

Sugars and sweeteners such as honey are important in the rural Afghan diet with most households relying on purchase for access. Around 10-15 percent of households in Khost, Zabul and Ghor access sugar and sweeteners from local production, likely sugar cane or even honey production. However, an alarming percentage of households are relying on credit to access sugar and sweeteners. Households in Daykundi (58 percent), Bamyan (41 percent), Nuristan (41 percent), Paktya (39 percent), Farah (34 percent) and Badghis (32 percent) are the most likely to use credit to access sugar or sweeteners for home consumption.
Household food security

The Consolidated Approach to Reporting Indicators of food security (CARI) was established in order to increase the compatibility between the three main food security domains of: current status of food consumption, economic vulnerability and asset depletion.

In the CARI matrix, current food consumption is captured with the food consumption score, economic vulnerability through monthly share of food expenditure, and asset depletion which is measured by the livelihood coping strategy. The final output of CARI console is the Food Security Index (FSI) that groups households into four different food security classifications:

1. **Food Secure**: Households are able to meet essential food and non-food needs without engaging in atypical coping strategies.
2. **Marginally Food Secure**: Households have minimally adequate food consumption without engaging in irreversible coping strategies; unable to afford some essential non-food expenditures.
3. **Moderately Food Insecure**: Households have significant food consumption gaps, or marginally able to meet minimum food needs only with irreversible coping strategies.
4. **Severely Food Insecure**: Households have extreme food consumption gaps or have extreme loss of livelihood assets, that will lead to food consumption gaps, or worse.

The Food Security Index uses a more stringent definition to define severe food insecurity: A household must be severely insecure on both food consumption and livelihood coping capacity, meaning they don’t have any coping capacity or are using the worst coping strategies, to be defined as severely insecure. These households rely at least partially on desperate measures such as migration of the entire household or the sale of their land/house for their survival.

According to the Food Security Index, **59 percent of the rural households in the sample are food insecure**, of which **13.4 percent are severely food insecure**. The severely food insecure population need immediate support related to food and livelihoods.

Using the CARI analysis approach, the following was concluded:

- Out of the 17 million rural population residing in the 20 drought affected provinces around 10.5 million people (3.9 million highly and 6.6 million moderately) were affected by drought.
• Of the 10.5 million drought-affected, 3.5 million were also found to be highly food insecure after the harvesting time and require emergency food and nutrition assistance through the next harvest in 2019.

The chart below shows the percentage of households by province, in each food security classification. The worst off provinces are Badghis, Nuristan and Daykundi. Food security in Faryab looks to be amongst the best, followed by Parwan.

**Chart 88 – Household food insecurity by province**

According to the multi-sectoral analysis, food insecure households are:

• More likely to be headed by a woman.
• Less likely to use drinking water from an improved source
• More likely to have borrowed food or cash in last 3 months
• More likely to have increased tensions inside the house.
• More likely to rely on non-agricultural wage labour
• Less likely to own or access agricultural land and more likely to rely on rainfed agriculture
• More likely to be asset poor
• More likely to live on < $1/person/day
• More likely to cope by selling house, land or household assets; decreased health expenditure, beg, early marriage for daughters, and to migrate.
7. SHOCKS IN THE PAST 6 MONTHS

During the interview, the households were asked if they had experienced any shocks in the past 6 months. The chart below shows the percentage of households reporting at least one shock, by province. Overall, reported shocks were quite common across the country but regionally, the lowest in the southwest region. By province, rural households in Ghor (98 percent) were the most likely to have experienced a recent shock, followed by those in Kunar (97 percent), Faryab (89 percent) and Nuristan (89 percent). Households in Nimroz (42 percent) were the least likely to have reported a recent shock, followed by those in Paktya (46 percent) and Khost (47 percent).

Chart 89 – Households experiencing at least one shock in the past 6 months by province

By livelihood, the groups that were most likely to report a shock were those engaged in livestock production and sales as well as those engaged in shepherding, followed by field crop production, agricultural wage labour and orchard production and sales. This makes sense as they would be the most likely to be affected by the drought. Least likely to be affected are those households with a more regular source of income such as salaried work and remittances.

Chart 90 – Households experiencing at least one shock in the past 6 months by livelihood activity

All livelihood groups were most affected by reduced income and drought shocks, especially those households engaged in field crop production and production and sales of livestock and their products. The group least likely to report drought as a main shock are those households engaged in skilled labour
activities. Of course, reduced income was less of an issue for salary earners but affected daily wage earners the most.

Households relying on skilled labour were the most likely to report illness or natural death of a breadwinner as a main shock, along with households relying on salaried work. As expected, households relying on shepherding as a main livelihood activity were the most likely to report being affected by unusually high levels of livestock disease.

High food prices affected all livelihood groups but was most often reported by households relying on shepherding, salary or small business/petty trader for income. Conflict as a main shock was most often reported by households relying on skilled labour, followed by salaried workers and those with small businesses or engaged in petty trade.

Chart 91 – Main types of shock experienced by livelihood

Households that reported experiencing a shock in the previous 6 months were then asked to name the main three shocks. The map below shows the percentage of households listing drought as a main shock, by province. Interestingly, some of the more food insecure provinces such as Badakhshan, Kandahar and Helmand were in the lowest percentage group. Ghazni and Maidan Wardak provinces were not among the 20 provinces where drought was declared but, in the assessment, they have a high percentage of households reporting that they experienced drought shock. This is the same for Nuristan and Kunar, but these provinces also have poor food security outcomes, so it makes sense.

Chart 92 – Household food security and shocks
Map 1 – Percentage of households reporting drought as a main shock
LIVELIHOOD COPING STRATEGIES

The survey assessed the extent to which rural households were relying on specific livelihood coping strategies in order to feed their families. A total of 16 strategies were assessed and the results will be presented for each later in this section. It must be noted that some of the results from Ghazni and Paktya provinces appear to be exaggerated, likely due to data collection or entry challenges.

Overall it seems that households in the eastern region relied more on livelihood coping strategies than in other regions, partly because of direct and indirect effects of the drought. For example, if a household has only a few assets or no savings, then they cannot sell assets or spend their savings to buy food. Therefore, these results should be interpreted with care. Another example is that in Nimroz, is seems as though they are not stressed because most households are using sustainable strategies. But Nimroz is also one of the poorest provinces in the country and many of the respondents were IDPs and returnees. When comparing livelihoods coping index classifications by resident status, around one-third of resident, IDP and returnee households are using sustainable livelihood coping strategies. However, 37 percent of IDP and 30 percent of returnee households are using emergency levels of coping compared to 19 percent of resident households.

Chart 93 - Livelihood coping index by province

The chart below shows that households in Farah, Nangarhar and in southeast and southern provinces were the most likely to have sold their houses or land to meet their families’ food needs. This strategy was not used much in the Central provinces.
This strategy also must be interpreted carefully because the respondents only represent households who have owned animals, not those who never have owned them. Regardless, it seems that destocking is a more common strategy in the eastern region as well as parts of the south and western regions.

Migration is a commonly used strategy all across the country when households or even communities cannot find enough food or money to meet their needs. Economic migration was most often reported by households in Faryab, Nangarhar and Laghman but not a common strategy in the central or Northeastern regions of the country.
Although many of the people in rural communities are engaged directly in agricultural activities or in raising livestock, many others rely on agricultural wage labour as a main livelihood activity. In this survey alone, one-third of the households reported agricultural wage labour as a main livelihood activity. In addition, one-third also named non-agricultural wage labour as a main activity (they could like up to three activities in the survey). Therefore it makes sense that many household will try to increase their daily wage activities in order to earn more money for food. Households in the southern and eastern regions along with some in Khost are most likely to use this strategy.

From this survey, households allocate around 48 percent of total monthly expenditure for food. Households in the eastern region are most likely to decrease expenditure on non-food items when faced with food shortages. Households in Kunar already allocated 60 percent of monthly expenditure for food, followed by 57 for Laghman. The other two are in line with the average.
The average household in this survey owns around 7 different types of household assets so asset sales as a coping strategy is quite commonly used in rural Afghanistan. However, 22 percent of the total households in the sample own 0-4 different types of assets and thus are not likely to sell them when in need. In terms of asset wealth, households in Nuristan are the poorest with half of the sample owning 0-4 different types of assets. The other households in the eastern region also are asset poor, followed by those in Ghor, Nimroz and Daykundi.

Sales of household assets was most likely amongst rural households in Kandahar province, followed by Kunar, Nangarhar, Samangan and Khost, as indicated in the chart on the next page. With households in Nimroz and Nuristan being amongst the poorest in the country, it is clear that they cannot use this strategy often as most do not have assets to sell.
9. PROTECTION AND DROUGHT

The survey included a few questions regarding the changing role of women in the household as a result of the drought, as well as learning more about any increased tensions within the household because of the drought and the changing dynamics. WFP Afghanistan had conducted a qualitative assessment on gender and drought and indeed learned that as men lose their earning capacity due to crop failure or lack of agricultural wage labour, they feel disenfranchised and thus this could lead to an increase in gender-based violence within a drought affected household (WFP, 2018). In addition, women and girls are having to travel farther from home to collect water and cooking fuel, this exposing themselves to possible harm.

Overall 61 percent of the households indicated that the workload of the women had increased as a result of the drought. Nearly all households in Faryab province reported this phenomenon, followed by 91 percent in Nuristan, and more than 80 percent in several other provinces. However, a few provinces like Paktika (6 percent), Parwan (24 percent) and Panjsher (25 percent) were much less impacted by the drought in terms of women’s workloads.

Chart 100 – Percentage of households reporting increase in women’s work due to drought

Households were also asked if women were working outside the home to support the family because of the drought. Indeed it appears that one-third of all sampled households reported that this was the case.
Households in Daykundi were the most likely to report that women were working outside the home because of the drought (67 percent), followed by 58 percent of households in Ghazni, Faryab and Nuristan provinces. More than half of the households in Maidan Wardak, Bamiyan, Ghor, Farah and Badakhshan reported that the women were working outside the home as a result of the drought. This was much less of an issue for sampled households in Parwan, Logar, Paktika and Khost provinces.

Nearly half of all households (46 percent) reported that the drought had caused increased tensions within their family. As illustrated in the chart below, tensions were highest in households from Urozgan province (92 percent), followed by Nuristan (74 percent), Faryab (71 percent) and Farah (67 percent). These increased tensions could result in increases in gender-based violence in these households. Provinces where tensions were less likely to increase due to drought are Paktika (7 percent) and Logar (21 percent).

Chart 101 – Percentage of households with women working outside the home due to drought

Chart 102 – Percentage of households with women working outside the home due to drought
10. HOUSEHOLD PRIORITIES

At the end of the survey, respondents were asked to name up to three of their household’s main priorities in order to improve their quality of life. There were many different choices but the main priorities are described below, by sector, and also found in the charts by province at the end of this section.

**Improved access to drinking water**

For about half of the household surveyed, improved drinking water (quantity and quality) was a priority. In the Central region, 65 percent of households in Logar and 61 percent in Panjsher felt this was a priority. Improved access to water was less of a priority for households in the Central Highlands and the Southeast region. However, in the Southwest region, 87 percent of households in Nimroz and 75 percent in Kandahar had named improved access to water as a priority. Household in Farah in the Western region also prioritised improved water access (80 percent), along with 60 percent of households in Faryab in the Northern region. Lastly 68 percent of sampled households in Baghlan (Northeast) and 60 percent of households in Nangarhar (Eastern) provinces prioritized improved access to drinking water.

**Rehabilitation of irrigation systems**

Overall, around 28 percent of the surveyed households name rehabilitation of irrigation systems as a priority, especially for households in the Central and Eastern regions. Sixty percent of sampled households in Kabul province prioritised irrigation systems, followed by 52 percent in Parwan, 46 percent in Panjsher and 42 percent in Maidan Wardak. This compares to 52 percent in Kunar, 41 percent in Laghman and 38 percent in Nuristan. Also in the Southwest region, 43 percent of respondents in Kandahar province and 39 percent in Zabul prioritised rehabilitation of irrigation systems.

**Rural road repair and construction of new roads to improve rural access**

Overall 19 percent of households prioritised repairing of rural roads while 8 percent would like new roads to be constructed. Rural road repair is a priority mostly in the Central and East regions where 44 percent of sampled households in Panjsher and 33 percent in Parwan along with 37 percent in Nangarhar and 32 percent in Laghman prioritised rural road repairs. This was also a priority for 32 percent of households in Takhar and 27 percent of households in Bamyan province.

Construction of new roads to improve rural access was not one of the top priorities overall but for some provinces it was important, especially in the east and northern parts of the country. For example, 17 percent of households in Nangarhar, 15 percent in Laghman and 11 percent in Kunar named this as a priority. However, 19 percent of households in Kabul province prioritised new rural roads for improved access, along with 16 percent in Urozgan and 12 percent each in Sar-e-Pul and Faryab.

**Employment opportunities, training and micro-credit**

Nearly 40 percent of households prioritised new employment opportunities, while 9 percent named micro-credit and 8 percent named vocational skills training as priorities. In Central region, 63 percent of households in Kapisa and 43 percent in Panjsher prioritized employment while in the Southeast region, 45 percent in Khost, 48 percent in Paktika and 46 percent in Paktya prioritized the need for more employment opportunities. In the Northeast region, 56 percent of sampled households in Badakhshan, 53 percent in Takhar and 51 percent in Baghlan prioritized employment opportunities. Other provinces that prioritized employment include Laghman (55 percent), Jawzjan (44 percent), Urozgan (44 percent), and Samangan (42 percent).
Vocational skills training was a greater priority amongst surveyed households in Ghazni (39 percent), Paktya (18 percent), Jawzjan (17 percent), Laghman (14 percent), Samangan (13 percent), Paktika (13 percent), Balkh (12 percent), and Logar (12 percent) provinces.

Access to micro-credit schemes were a greater priority amongst households in Kunduz (25 percent), Balkh (21 percent), Jawzjan (21 percent), Farah (20 percent), Ghazni (17 percent), Helmand (16 percent), and Kabul (15 percent) provinces.

**Improvement to rural health facilities**

Nearly 20 percent of households prioritised improvements to rural health facilities. It was a priority for all provinces in the Northeast: Takhar (26 percent), Baghlan (25 percent), Baghlan (24 percent) and Badakhshan (23 percent). Other provinces that prioritised improvements to rural health facilities include Paktika (33 percent), Faryab (32 percent), Samangan (31 percent), Parwan (30 percent), Zabul (24 percent) and Herat (24 percent).

**Housing**

Although improved housing was not a priority for most provinces, notably it was for households in Nuristan (24 percent), Paktika (21 percent), Nimroz (14 percent) and Faryab (13 percent) provinces.

**Education facilities and literacy**

Overall improvements to education facilities and literacy programmes were not high priorities for most provinces. However improvements to education facilities were prioritized for households in Paktika (29 percent), Zabul (27 percent), Helmand (20 percent), Nangarhar (19 percent), Logar (17 percent) and Khost (16 percent) provinces.

Literacy programmes were a greater priority for households in Bamyan (13 percent), Jawzjan (13 percent), Zabul (13 percent), Nimroz (12 percent) and Paktika (10 percent).

**Agricultural inputs, livestock feed and improved veterinary services**

Agricultural inputs were a priority for 17 percent of the households overall while livestock feed and improved veterinary services were priorities for 6-7 percent of households overall. By province, households in Balkh (37 percent) were the most likely to prioritise agricultural inputs, followed by Kapisa (32 percent), Kunduz (27 percent), Baghlan (26 percent), Ghazni (25 percent), Jawzjan (25 percent) and Bamyan (24 percent).

Livestock feed was a priority for 25 percent of households in Badghis, followed by 19 percent in Maidan Wardak, Farah and Faryab, 16 percent in Kunduz and 12 percent in Ghor. In a few provinces, the need for improved veterinary services was prioritized, including Nuristan (28 percent), Kunar (15 percent) and Faryab (15 percent).
Conclusions

The EFSA provided a rich look into the lives of rural Afghans in order to help the humanitarian community better understand the food security situation and effects of the drought. However, drought was not the only shock affecting these households as many reported challenges related to increased prices, lack of employment opportunities or reduced income, livestock illness and conflict-induced displacement.

The assessment also noted that the usual coping strategies of borrowing and migration were increased as a result of the drought and overall difficult situation for rural households in 2018 while also highlighting an increase in some extreme coping strategies such as withdrawing children from school and alarming increases in early marriage of daughters.

The multi-dimensional aspect of the assessment allows many sectors to better understand the needs of the rural populations and the key findings were presented by province in the Executive Summary. This allows for prioritisation of resources by sector, for the humanitarian community.

Recommendations

Given these challenges, a holistic and strategic response is required to improve the food and nutrition security of the most affected households and communities. The recommendations from this Emergency Food Security Assessment therefore relate to the short-, medium-, and longer-term.

Short-term

6. In response to the urgent drought situation, the emergency response should focus on provision of food or cash transfers as well as nutrition treatment and prevention programmes to up to 3.5 million people until the next harvest in mid-2019.

7. At the same time, a concerted effort should be made to improve access to safe and plentiful supplies of water in drought-affected communities. Water scarcity was identified as a central challenge for rural communities during the drought, affecting agriculture, livelihoods, nutrition, health and hygiene.

Medium-term

8. The consolidated response should be framed around a triple nexus approach. The humanitarian response should be linked to development gains in areas like access to water, agriculture and resilience building which not only will improve household food and nutrition security in the short term but also will have longer-term development and peace benefits, with households becoming less likely to migrate, go into debt or engage in risky anti-social behaviours.

9. In addition, concerted effort should be put into strengthening early warning systems and establishing early funding mechanisms for early response, in order to prevent crises from materializing in the future.

Longer-term

10. The Government and international community should work together to establish shock responsive safety nets programmes for the most vulnerable communities in the most vulnerable parts of the country.
12. ANNEX 1 – ADDITIONAL MAPS

Map 2 – Household priority of improved rural irrigation

Map 3 – Household priority of improved health infrastructure
Map 4 – Household priority of improved drinking water

Map 5 – Household priority of access to microcredit
Map 6 – Household priority of increased employment opportunities

Map 7 – Household priority of agricultural inputs