In addition to the health costs of the COVID-19 pandemic the corresponding socio-economic impacts will have devastating impacts on people’s livelihoods and employment. In Afghanistan vulnerable people will be subject to higher prices of food commodities due to border closure, experience less access to food due to supply chain disruption, income losses, and limited access to markets following lockdown measures. Additionally, due to the high number of returnees from Iran and Pakistan, the purchasing power of low-income families have significantly dropped along with their access to remittances. The lock down of major cities of Afghanistan will result in the loss of earning opportunities for many in a vulnerable employment status who are dependent on their daily work or sale of goods or services to obtain their next meal. The populations most at risk include those living in formal or informal displacement settlements, those who have experienced multiple resilience eroding shock in the past 6 months, and those subject to recent COVID-19 pressures, including lack of employment and recent returnees. There will be a focus where possible on female headed households and those where the primary breadwinner has lost their employment due to COVID-19 impacts.

Overview: Food needs are at a record high level in Afghanistan. High levels of poverty (55 percent) and food insecurity (45 percent) are eroding the coping capacity of vulnerable community members exposed to frequent shocks, against a backdrop of conflict and other challenges.