



ESWATINI

IPC ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY ANALYSIS JULY 2021 - MARCH 2022 Issued in September 2021

CURRENT JULY - SEPTEMBER 2021		
262,000 22% of the population analysed People facing high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above) IN NEED OF URGENT ACTION	Phase 5	0 People in Catastrophe
	Phase 4	22,000 People in Emergency
	Phase 3	240,000 People in Crisis
	Phase 2	342,000 People Stressed
	Phase 1	570,000 People in food security

PROJECTED OCTOBER 2021 - MARCH 2022		
317,000 27% of the population analysed People facing high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above) IN NEED OF URGENT ACTION	Phase 5	0 People in Catastrophe
	Phase 4	50,000 People in Emergency
	Phase 3	267,000 People in Crisis
	Phase 2	360,000 People Stressed
	Phase 1	495,000 People in food security

Overview

Nearly 262,000 people (22% of the analysed population) in Eswatini are experiencing high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above) between June and September 2021 and require urgent humanitarian assistance. Of these, 240,000 people are experiencing Crisis food acute insecurity (IPC Phase 3) and 22,000 Emergency acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 4). An additional 342,000 people (29%) are Stressed (IPC Phase 2). The situation has slightly deteriorated when compared to 2019/20 when the food insecure population in IPC Phase 3 or above was 205,000. During the projected period, which corresponds with the lean season, the number of people expected to experience Crisis or worse acute food insecurity is expected to increase by an estimated 5% from the current levels of 262,000 to around 317,000. The likely impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, high commodity prices and poor performance of the agricultural season will greatly influence this increase.

Urban livelihood zones have also shown increased levels of acute food insecurity. The Peri-urban and Lubombo Plateau had the highest proportion (45%) of households classified in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above). The Livestock Cattle and Maize (the largest livelihood zone in terms of area covered and population) has over 90,000 people (40%) in IPC Phase 3 or above requiring urgent assistance. The deterioration is attributed to the impact of COVID-19 pandemic households in the urban and peri-urban areas. Most urban areas were classified in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse, averaging above 20% in these conditions, with Lubombo reaching 35% and Shiselweni Urban 25%. Limited livelihood opportunities, high food prices and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic are the key drivers of acute food insecurity in the urban areas

Key Drivers



Drought/dry spells

Dry spells in November and December 2020 negatively impacted early cropping activities and reduced harvests.



Floods

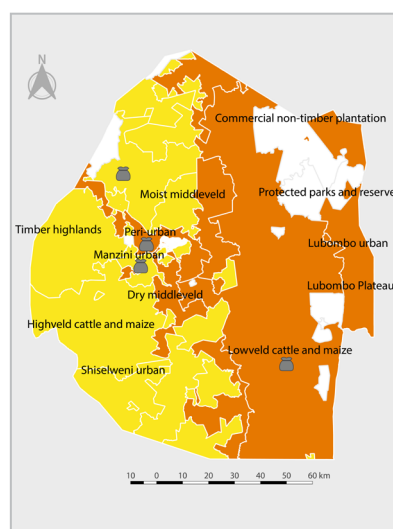
Above-normal rains in February 2021 caused by Cyclone Elois resulted in flooding in some areas, causing crop damage and poor yield, as it affected crops when they were at the tassell stage. Excessive rains affected crop maturity.



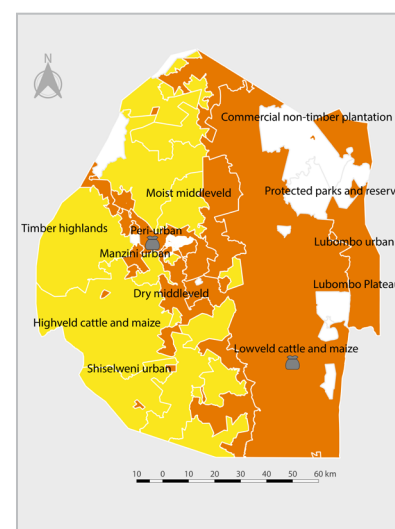
Impact of COVID-19

The outbreak of Covid-19 negatively impacted the livelihoods of households through the mitigation actions, such as lockdowns, taken to prevent the spread of the virus.

Current Situation July-Sept 2021



Projection Oct 2021 - Mar 2022



Key for the Map

IPC Acute Food Insecurity Phase Classification

1 - Minimal	5 - Famine
2 - Stressed	Areas not analysed
3 - Crisis	Evidence Level
4 - Emergency	* Acceptable
	** Medium
	*** High

Area receives significant humanitarian food assistance (accounted for in Phase classification)

- > 25% of households meet 25-50% of caloric needs through assistance
- > 25% of households meet > 50% of caloric needs through assistance

CURRENT SITUATION OVERVIEW (JULY - SEPTEMBER 2021)

Current Rural Situation Overview

The current period, July to September 2021, is generally the post-harvest period in Eswatini, when most rural households consume food from their own production, except in areas where purchasing from the markets is the primary source of food. In this period, the overall acute food insecurity situation generally improved in terms of food stocks available at the household level compared to the same period last year. However, there are a few areas that had a below-average performance. The improvement in the household food situation can be attributed to the improved rainfall season in the southern Africa region. During the early stages of the cropping season, floods were experienced in Manzini and Hhohho regions, resulting in the washing away of crop fields. However, the crops later regrew. Though the 2020/21 rainfall season was above average in most areas, a few areas, especially Lubombo and Shiselweni, experienced dry spells. It is estimated that 50% of the households in these two areas have food stocks that will last for only two months. In the Hhohho region, around 32% of households have food stocks that will last at least six months. It is also estimated that 18% will have their stocks depleted in less than a month. This is particularly true for the Peri-Urban (PUR) and Lowveld Cattle and Maize (LCM) livelihood zones. The Moist Middleveld (MMV) livelihood zone is an exception where more than half (59%) of the households have stocks that will last more than five months. Generally, in Hhohho region, around 33% of households have food stocks that will last for six months or more, 29% that will last for 4-5 months, 22% that will last for 2-3 months and only 13% that will last for less than two months. Around 3% of household members in the region did not harvest at all.

In the Peri-Urban livelihood zone, given the nature of its livelihood activities and current shocks experienced in the country, it has the highest proportion of households experiencing high levels of acute food insecurity. The livelihood zone has performed poorly in all the food security indicators being monitored. About 46% of the households engaged in livelihood coping strategies, while another 46% in food-based (rCSI) strategies. This livelihood zone is highly vulnerable to shocks as most of the households depend on food purchases. The outcome indicators for this region were the worst for the country, with 28% of households found to have Poor food consumption and 55% of households indicating that they consumed less than two food groups. Access to WASH activities and improved sanitation services is a challenge in this zone, and this will likely lead to poor food utilisation outcomes. The Lowveld Cattle and Maize zone and the Dry Middleveld zones also show signs of being under immense pressure, where households are failing to meet their daily food needs, having poor food security outcomes, thus engaging in high coping mechanisms.

In urban areas, the proportion of highly food insecure households (IPC Phase 3 or above) is 18%, compared with 21% in rural areas. This is a result of the effects of COVID-19 in urban areas, which curtailed the movement of goods and services to rural areas. Despite above-average national production in staple food, prices have remained significantly above average throughout the country. Farmgate prices for maize and other food commodities are higher than both last year and average levels, mainly due to the combined effect of job losses and reduced purchasing power.

Current Overview by Livelihood Zone

The Moist Middleveld Zone is classified in IPC Phase 2 with 20,274 of the population (15%) in IPC Phase 3 or above. The zone experienced normal to above-average rainfall, with erratic weather patterns – prolonged dry spells experienced by 12% of the households— affecting overall agricultural production. Shocks encountered include the loss of employment (27.2%) and reduced income (5.5%), thus affecting household purchasing power. Vulnerability remains high, as 40% of the households in the zone reported hosting a member with HIV, and 28% are hosting orphans and vulnerable children.

The MMV livelihood zone represents a lower degree of vulnerability in terms of food availability and stability. This relatively better situation is a result of several factors. Firstly, an average of 68% of the households have access to arable land, 30.6% reported having harvested twice the yield compared to the previous year, whilst 31.9% have reported having at least half the yield compared to last year. A large proportion (45%) of households reported having enough food stocks to last them 4-6 months, representing a greater degree of household food stocks availability.

A notable concern can be registered regarding access to improved water sources, which shows that 76.3% of the households do not have access to improved water sources. Around 88% of the households travel less than a kilometre to water sources, and less than 0.8% travel for more than 2 kilometres to water sources. More than 90% of the households travel less than 30 minutes to water sources during the rainy season and dry season.

The MMV livelihood zone has overall fair conditions in terms of access to electricity. At least 52.9% of the households reported using either electricity or gas for cooking, with 47.5% of the households relying on firewood as a primary source for cooking. Household lighting shows a more improved outlook as 87.7% of the households use electricity, with only 12.3% of the households using either candles or paraffin for lighting.

A majority of the households have favourable or acceptable levels of food consumption. At least 92% of the households have either acceptable food consumption scores or borderline food consumption scores, with a low percentage of 3% with poor consumption scores. Most households (70%) do not employ any coping strategies.

Lubombo Plateau is classified in Crisis (IPC Phase 3), with 35% of the population (15,741) in IPC Phase 3 or above requiring interventions to improve access to /availability of food and to support livelihoods. This livelihood zone typically receives the least rainfall and is a drought-prone area, yet most households still rely on rain-fed agricultural activities. These conditions discouraged many households from cultivating their land. This had a negative impact on food availability at the household level. Access to arable land is low, as 60% of the households reported having no access to arable land. 14.3% of households did not harvest and 29% have food stock that will last less than two months. A maize harvest of 3,140.75 tons was registered, leaving a reported gap of 2,131.48 tons of maize.

Food prices remained above average, resulting in poor access to food at the household level, with the recent 3.6% increase in transport likely to worsen the situation. Regarding food preservation, preparation and utilisation, the Lubombo Plateau has 9% of households using electricity for refrigerators for food storage, while 86.9% of households use electricity for lighting. For food preparation, 43% use unimproved water, meaning half of the assessed households use unclean water to prepare food. In terms of distance and time of travel to the water source in the dry season, 4.9% of households travel more than 2 km and 9.8% take 90 minutes to fetch water, while in the wet season, 3.3% of households travel more than 2 km and 4.9% take more than 90 minutes to fetch water.

On food security outcome indicators, this zone has performed poorly, given that 51% of households have an HDDS pointing to Phase 3 or above. 24% of households have a poor FCS (indicative of IPC Phase 4+). In this livelihood zone, the percentage of households with an HHS score of 0 (indicative of Phase 1) is 48%. The Household Hunger Score points to Phase 3, with 32% of households under this category in IPC Phase 3 or above. About 19% of the households in the region employ stress coping strategies, while 13% reported using crisis coping strategies. There were no reported emergency coping strategies such as selling the last female cow or sale of land.

The Lowveld Cattle and Maize livelihood zone is classified in IPC Phase 3, where 35% (79,060 people) of the population are in Phase 3 or above, including 5% of the population classified in IPC Phase 4 (Emergency). This population will require urgent humanitarian assistance to improve food access/availability and support livelihoods. This livelihood zone receives the least rainfall and is most drought-prone, with conditions failing to support effective crop production. Good rains received during the later season had a positive impact on pasture availability and quality, a pillar for livestock production in this zone. This also impacted water availability in earth dams and other water sources, which meant extended water availability for livestock and agricultural purposes. Major shocks reported in this zone include loss of employment for households at 61.7%, with 19.2% of households that reported having lost income. This, coupled with high food prices, has limited the purchasing power of households. Access to arable land is 60%, and 20.5% of households reported not having harvested. 36.4% of households from LCM have food stocks that will last them for less than two months, indicating increased stress levels with regards to food availability.

Food prices further increased by 4.8% and remained above average, limiting access to basic food items, and the 3.6% increase in transport costs and the SZL 0.90 increase in fuel price has further worsened the current situation. Access to food from markets is limited. To access food, 23.6% of households employ stress coping strategies, including selling assets, borrowing money and withdrawing children from school. About 23% of households employ crisis coping, which includes spending of savings and selling productive and non-productive items.

Timber Highlands (THL) is classified in IPC Phase 2, where a total of 13,526 people (15% of the population) are in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) and may require urgent humanitarian action between June and September 2021. However, the region experienced normal to above normal seasonal rainfall accumulation. The late start coupled with episodes of dry spells affected agricultural production as 28% of households experienced drought/dry spells. Around 10% of households have lost employment, 55.6% of household members have no employment, 23.5% are currently employed, 11.8% are engaged in casual labour, and only 9.1% are self-employed. An estimated 85% of household members have access to arable land for farming in the Livelihood Zone, with only 15% not having access to arable land. Although the region has access to arable land, 42% of households in the THL harvested half of last season's yield, only 33% of the harvest doubled the previous season's yield, and only 9% reported crop failure. Around 47% of households with food stocks that will last for more than six months, 16% of households with food stocks lasting for 4-5 months, 19% of the households have food stocks lasting for 2-3 months, and only 6% of household members in THL did not harvest at all. However, food will be available through markets.

National Statistics indicate that 51.47% of the population in the country live below the poverty line, and the household depleted stock level will worsen the situation, further aggravated by the loss of employment and reduced income. Access to food will be constrained by increased food prices (maize meal, rice and beans). In the THL, 26% of household members have access to improved water sources, while 74% of households have water from unimproved water sources during the rainy season. In terms of access to water sources, 68.2% of households in THL travel less than 30 minutes to a nearby water source during the rainy season, 15.9% travel a distance of more than 30 - 60 minutes to a nearby water source, and 11% of households have a water source within the premises. Moreover, 61% of households in THL have access to electricity as a source of energy, 36% of households have access to candles as a source of lighting and only 2% use paraffin as a source of energy.

The current analysis indicates that Highveld Cattle and Maize livelihood zone is classified in IPC Phase 2 (Stressed), with 15,272 people (10%) in Phase 3 or above. The zone experienced normal to above-average rainfall, even though 44% of households experienced dry spells, thus affecting agricultural production. Approximately 8.9% of households in the zone experienced the loss of employment, 21% had reduced income, thus affecting household purchasing power. Around 59% of the Highveld Cattle and Maize households host a member with HIV, and 23% of the households host orphans and vulnerable children. The COVID-19 pandemic has continued to be a key driver of food insecurity in this zone due to loss of livelihood, income and employment by the population.

Food access is not a major limiting factor for household food security; its impact depends on the trend of food prices, but during the post-harvest period, there would not be any important price increases. Access to water is not a challenge in the zone, as the majority (85%) of the households source their water within a radius of 0.5km and take less than 30 minutes to the nearest water source, both in the wet and dry seasons. Wood fuel (82%) is the primary source of energy for cooking, despite electricity being used by a more significant proportion (76%) of households in the zone.

The current analysis indicates that the Dry Middleveld livelihood zone is in IPC Phase 3, with 20% (27,365) of the population having large food consumption gaps and depleting their livelihood assets. This zone received below-normal rains in the start of the planting season and good rains were received towards the end of the season, which affected crop yields. An estimated 23 % of households in this zone reported crop failure. The majority of the households have food stocks lasting less than six months; this will affect the availability of food by many households. Even though food will be available in the markets, reduced income at the household level (experienced by 47% of households) and high unemployment (52%) will affect the purchasing power of households. An increase in food prices will constrain access to food due to the current COVID-19 induced restrictions, thus worsening the situation. The utilisation of food is compromised since a majority of households are using unimproved water sources. Poor and very poor households will be faced with vulnerability to food insecurity in this livelihood zone.

The Peri-Urban (PUR) livelihood zone is the largest zone concerning land size and population size. The PUR is classified in IPC Phase 3, with an estimated 40% (42,818) of the population facing Crisis or worse food insecurity outcomes. Agriculture production is not a significant livelihood source in this zone, as only 45% of households have access to arable land. Around 14% of households are not involved in any farming activity, and those able to farm (57%) reported having received half of what was received in the previous season. Food availability from own production is a limiting factor in the zone, with the majority of households depending on purchases to access food.

Erratic rainfall (27%), loss of employment (25%) and reduced income (16%) are some of the key shocks reported in the zone, which has overall affected livelihoods in the zone. Given the nature of livelihood sources in this zone, food insecurity is relatively high in the zone. The COVID-19 pandemic impact, such as loss of employment, income and livelihood sources, has increased households' vulnerability to food insecurity. Increases in food prices and high unemployment will limit household purchasing power, reducing their ability to meet their food needs.

Current Urban Situation Overview

The urban areas have generally remained in IPC Phase 2 in the current period, despite the effects of COVID-19. This could be attributed to the fact that though the majority of the urban areas rely on purchases, the prices hadn't escalated during the post-harvest period.

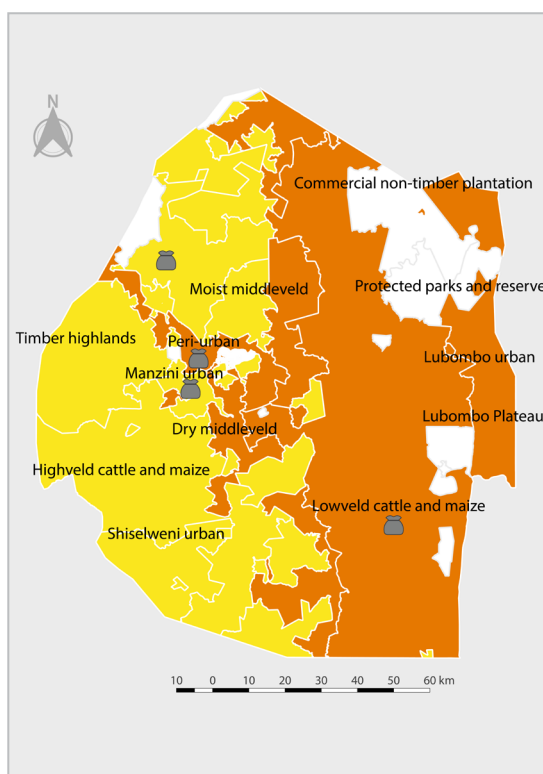
Manzini Urban is classified in IPC Phase 2 in the current period, with no population in IPC Phase 3. Although the region is classified in IPC Phase 2, households in the region cannot afford some of the non-food essential expenditure without engaging in negative coping strategies. The region also has 15% of the surveyed population engaging in crisis coping strategies, including spending savings and selling productive assets. The situation has been worsened by the persistent COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in many disruptions in productive activities. About 25% of the urban households in the region lost their source of income due to the pandemic and reduced income and loss of employment, which reduced the purchasing power of most households, hence compromising their access to food. Although food is available in the market, access is constrained by the increase in the region's food prices (maize meal, rice, cooking oil).

Hhohho Urban is classified in Stressed (IPC Phase 2) in the current period, with around 15% (12,450) of households classified in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) and 25% (29,750) classified in IPC Phase 2. Although the COVID-19 pandemic had strained the urban population, the relaxation of the COVID-19 control measures in the assessment period has positively impacted the urban population as some businesses opened and people returned to their respective jobs. However, the permanent loss of employment for some urban populations had a significant impact on the urban population; hence, they fall into IPC Phase 2. In urban zone 16,665 beneficiaries received humanitarian assistance.

Shiselweni Urban is classified in IPC Phase 2 (Stressed) in the current period, with 5,100 people (10%) in Phase 3 (Crisis) and 2,550 (5%) in IPC Phase 4 (Emergency). Although the region has maintained its IPC Phase 2 classification, households in the region cannot afford some of the non-food essential expenditure without engaging in negative coping strategies. About 25% of the urban households in the region lost incomes through job losses by the main breadwinners due to the COVID-19 pandemic and reduced income and loss of employment, which reduced the purchasing power of most households and compromised their access to food. Although food is available in the market, access is further constrained by the increased food prices (maize meal, rice, cooking oil) in the region.

Lubombo Urban is classified in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis), with 25% of households classified in IPC Phase 3 or above, including 10% of households classified in IPC Phase 4 (Emergency). This region has the highest proportion of households classified in IPC Phase 4. In the region, 25% (13,805) of the population are engaging in crisis coping. A total 31% of the households have Borderline or Poor food consumption based on the FCS, and 29% of the households are eating between 2-4 food groups (IPC Phase 3 or 4). The majority of the workforce in Lubombo is in the sugar industry. Around 23% of the households rely on small businesses as a source of income, with 12% getting their incomes from remittances. Cross border trade with Mozambique is another livelihood activity for the urban population. This urban area remains one of the areas in Eswatini where rainfall remains a major limiting factor. Earlier in the season, it experienced severe dry spells.

CURRENT SITUATION MAP AND POPULATION TABLE (JULY - SEPTEMBER 2021)



Key for the Map

IPC Acute Food Insecurity Phase Classification

(mapped Phase represents highest severity affecting at least 20% of the population)

- 1 - Minimal
- 2 - Stressed
- 3 - Crisis
- 4 - Emergency
- 5 - Famine
- Areas not analysed

Area receives significant humanitarian food assistance (accounted for in Phase classification)

- > 25% of households meet 25-50% of caloric needs through assistance
- > 25% of households meet > 50% of caloric needs through assistance

Evidence Level

- * Acceptable
- ** Medium
- *** High

Region	Total population analysed	Phase 1		Phase 2		Phase 3		Phase 4		Phase 5		Area Phase	Phase 3+	
		#people	%	#people	%	#people	%	#people	%	#people	%		#people	%
Dry middleveld	136,826	68,413	50	41,048	30	27,365	20	0	0	0	0	3	27,365	20
Hhohho urban	82,999	49,799	60	20,750	25	12,450	15	0	0	0	0	2	12,450	15
Highveld cattle and maize	152,715	83,993	55	53,450	35	15,272	10	0	0	0	0	2	15,272	10
Lowveld cattle and maize	225,888	101,650	45	45,178	20	67,766	30	11,294	5	0	0	3	79,060	35
Lubombo plateau	44,974	17,990	40	11,244	25	13,492	30	2,249	5	0	0	3	15,741	35
Lubombo urban	55,220	19,327	35	22,088	40	8,283	15	5,522	10	0	0	3	13,805	25
Manzini urban	92,522	46,261	50	32,383	35	13,878	15	0	0	0	0	2	13,878	15
Moist middleveld	135,163	67,582	50	47,307	35	20,274	15	0	0	0	0	2	20,274	15
Peri-urban	107,045	42,818	40	21,409	20	42,818	40	0	0	0	0	3	42,818	40
Shiselweni urban	50,994	22,947	45	20,398	40	5,099	10	2,550	5	0	0	2	7,649	15
Timber highlands	90,171	49,594	55	27,051	30	13,526	15	0	0	0	0	2	13,526	15
Grand Total	1,174,517	570,374	49	342,305	29	240,224	20	21,615	2	0	0		261,839	22

Note: A population in Phase 3+ does not necessarily reflect the full population in need of urgent action. This is because some households may be in Phase 2 or even 1 but only because of receipt of assistance, and thus, they may be in need of continued action.

PROJECTED SITUATION OVERVIEW (OCTOBER 2021 - MARCH 2022)

Projected Rural Situation Overview

This projected situation is based on the following assumptions:

According to the Eswatini Meteorology forecast, rainfall will be average, dry areas will remain dry, hence affecting food production. However, the threat of climate change brings extreme weather events such as tropical cyclones that may negatively or positively affect outputs. The COVID-19 pandemic will persist and may worsen with the looming threat of the third wave and other variants; this may influence stricter COVID-19 restrictions. Eswatini is a net importer of goods, and as the third wave in South Africa escalates, resulting in a slowdown in business operations, which will reduce the supply of goods and ultimately increase the price levels. A ban of beef imports from South Africa is already in effect and may persist. These restrictions may impact small and medium enterprises, leading to lost or reduced employment opportunities, which will affect the purchasing power of affected households. High commodity prices affect the urban and peri-urban households who depend on food purchases. The prevalence of food insecurity in urban areas, given current developments and the evolving impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, is projected to worsen. The increased insecurity levels will further compound this in Peri-Urban areas, where the population depends on the urban areas for their livelihoods. The ongoing political instability in the country might disrupt the provision of services if not managed properly. Disruptions in food supply chain and access to farming inputs could be experienced.

Based on the assumptions, the population estimated to be facing a high level of food insecurity is expected to increase to 317,000 people (27% of the population). This population includes around 50,000 in IPC Phase 4 (Emergency). Of the total population likely to be facing high acute food insecurity, approximately 250,000 people are from rural livelihood zones, including peri-urban areas, and 67,000 in urban areas. This population includes those households facing prolonged low levels of crop production, high poverty and HIV rates, above-average food prices, and the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic is expected to be a key driver of food insecurity in the country, where the impact will be magnified in peri-urban and urban populations.

Households faced with Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes in the projected period are expected to increase. Most household food stocks are expected to be depleted during this period, and 47% of households are expected to have no food stocks. Food prices are expected to remain high and slight increases in most commodities are expected, given the increases in fuel prices, which will likely lead to increases in inflation. The projected 3rd and 4th wave of the COVID-19 pandemic will continue to put a strain on economic activities, resulting in limited livelihood activities for the population.

The Moist Middleveld Livelihood Zone is expected to remain in IPC Phase 2 for the projected period. The population faced with Crisis or worse acute food insecurity is projected to remain at 15% of the population (20,274). However, it is expected that due to increased pressures, the population in Phase 1 will decrease from 45% to 40%, with those faced with Stressed outcomes increasing.

The 53.2% of households whose crops were affected by pests will affect food production, with a compounded effect on the unemployment rate (49.6%) and an overall effect on food availability. Regarding food availability, 35.6% of households will have food stocks lasting six months and 30.1% lasting 4-5 months, which means food availability is a minor limiting factor, with only 15.1% having food stocks lasting two months. Prices are expected to remain high and possibly increase, given the reported increases in commodity prices such as fuel and electricity.

A 27.2% shock on job losses will leave households more vulnerable, thus affecting their purchasing power. Also, 40.3% of households hosting people living with HIV will remain vulnerable, along with the 27.9% hosting orphans; both factors will contribute to the strain on food insecurity. Considering that the livelihood zone received below-average rainfall, their production will be affected.

Access to improved water is still a challenge, as MMV has 76.3% still using unimproved water sources. The distance and time taken to the water source for most households on both seasons are 0-30 minutes and 0.5 km, respectively. Almost half the households (47.5%) still use firewood for cooking, while 87.7% opt for electricity for lighting.

The expected COVID-19 fourth wave threats coming with a range of effects such as job losses and death in the households or reduced income and increased food prices will further affect food consumption. The population in Phase 3 or above will slightly increase. The lean season projects an unfavourable situation, as that is the beginning of the projected season where increased food prices will further affect food consumption. The level of coping is expected to increase with more households engaging in crisis and emergency coping strategies.

Key Assumptions for the projected period

1. Seasonal Rainfall Performance is projected to be normal
2. There is a possibility of cyclones in the areas of Lubombo bordering Mozambique and the Indian Ocean on the East.
3. COVID-19 impact is likely to interrupt the supply chain with movement restriction and food import ban.
4. Food prices – are generally high and will increase due to social unrest and COVID-19 related factors.
5. Cross Border Movement restrictions will impact imports of food. (please be specific on the impacts)
6. The Combined effected of increased inflation, and limited commodity movement will affect commodity provisioning.
7. Declining Stocks: Diminishing Food stocks at household level as the lean season progresses
8. Economic shocks: Low purchasing power due to Covid-19 impacts of third wave.
9. Social unrest: This affects food prices, causing a major challenge on food access and loss of livelihoods and employment.

The Lubombo Plateau will remain in IPC Phase 3 for the projected period. The population faced with Crisis or worse acute food insecurity is expected to increase from 35% to 45% (20,238 people). The anticipated fourth wave of COVID-19 coupled, with an increase in fuel prices and commodity prices, are factors expected to worsen the food insecurity situation in the zone.

The likely fourth wave of the COVID-19 pandemic expected to coincide with the planting season (October to December) will likely limit the production capacity of the households in the zone due to restrictions to control the spread of the coronavirus. In the projected period, food availability in the region is envisaged to deteriorate due to inadequate access to arable land and a lack of resources and farm inputs to plough. The insufficient supply of goods due to restrictions will result in increases in food prices and farming inputs. The overall rise in the price levels will reduce the ability of most households to access farming inputs. This means households in the zone will not afford to buy farming inputs and as a result, will be unable to produce enough food for themselves. The distance and time travelled for a water source during the dry and wet seasons are expected to remain the same in the zone, and the usage of electricity for cooking, refrigeration and lighting is not expected to change in the projected period.

The Lowveld Cattle and Maize zone is expected to retain its classification in IPC Phase 3, with 40% of the population (90,355 people) experiencing high levels of acute food insecurity. The number of people in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) that will need urgent humanitarian support to save lives and livelihoods is expected to increase to 11,294 people in the projected period. With the 3rd wave of the COVID-19 pandemic predicted to continue and the accompanying COVID-19 control measures, the level of unemployment is expected to rise, as more people lose jobs due to expected business closures. The predicted changes in climate are also likely to expose more households to food insecurity due to drought conditions evident in the LCM zone. It is anticipated that the food security situation in the LCM livelihood zone will worsen because of poor crop yield due to the below normal average rainfall received, which discouraged farmers from crop production. The 36.4% of households who will have food stocks that will last for less than two months will resort to food purchases. However, they will be affected by increased food prices and reduced income due to COVID-19 control measures.

Erratic rainfall has detrimental effects on rangelands, a pillar for livestock production in this zone, contributing to dwindling water levels in earth dams. This will also have an impact on water availability for livestock production and backyard gardening. High unemployment of households' heads (61.7%) and the threats from the COVID-19 pandemic will disrupt the economic activity and affect purchasing power under this zone. In the projected period, basic food commodity prices are expected to increase. Increases in prices of fuel and the evolving impact of the COVID-19 pandemic will likely worsen the situation. Access to water in the Lowveld Cattle and Maize livelihood zone will not be a challenge as the majority (over 70%) of the households source their water within a radius of 0.5km and take less than 30min to the nearest water source, both in the wet and dry seasons. However, due to loss and/or reduced income, food preparation and preservation will be affected.

The Timber Highlands (THL) will remain in IPC Phase 2 (Stressed) in the projection period. The population shift from IPC Phase 1 to Phase 2 was caused by worsening the situation, but the people in Phase 3 will remain the same. Although the Livelihood zone is in Phase 2, a total population of 45,086 people are in Phase 1. 13,526 people (15%) in THL are in Phase 3 and will require urgent humanitarian action between September 2021 and March 2022.

Although a normal season is projected for the livelihood zone, erratic weather patterns are expected, resulting in a poor distribution of rainfall and prolonged dry spells, negatively impacting food production. Reported shocks such as drought/dry spells, losses of employment and unemployment will negatively affect the population's livelihoods during the projected period, contributing to the estimated increase in food insecurity.

The livelihood zone has a high proportion of the population, of 85% having access to arable land; however, about 15% of the households did not harvest. Even though 47% of the population will have their food stocks lasting for six months or more, 19% will have their food stocks lasting for 2 to 3 months. Thus, food availability will be compromised.

Even though most direct evidence points the zone to Phase 2 due to COVID-19 and other contributing factors, a shift of population to a worse phase is anticipated in the projected period. Due to increased inflation and the price of fuel, food access and stability will further be compromised. The distance and time travelled to a water source is expected to remain the same in the zone and the usage of electricity for both cooking and lightning is not expected to change in the projected period.

The Highveld Cattle and Maize livelihood zone will remain in Phase 2 in the projected period, between October 2021 and March 2022, with only a shift from IPC Phase 1 to Phase 2 and a small proportion of the population falling into IPC Phase 4 (Emergency). The number of people in Crisis or worse is likely to increase from 15,272 (10%) in the current to 22,415 (15 %) in the projected period. The looming COVID-19 fourth wave threats compounded with other underlying factors, including reduced income, high poverty levels and increased food prices, will further affect food consumption patterns in the livelihood zone.

Given that the projected period begins at the start of the lean season, food consumption patterns are expected to deteriorate. Only 9% did not harvest, so food availability is the minor limiting factor, and over 64% of the households will have their food stocks last them for more than three months, while 26% will have their food stocks lasting more than five months. Due to increased inflation and the price of fuel, food access and stability will be compromised. The availability of water and energy resources is likely to remain the same due to the projected normal to above rains for the coming season.

The Peri-Urban livelihood zone is expected to remain in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis), with the population classified in Crisis or worse food insecurity increasing from 40% to 45% (48,171 people). A proportion of these households will likely fall into Emergency (IPC Phase 4), with an estimated population of 5,352. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on livelihood and income will result in more people falling into Crisis (IPC Phase 3) compared to the current period. Shock related to reduced revenue and job losses, and increased food prices will likely be the key drivers for food insecurity during the projected period. The current 3rd wave of the COVID-19 pandemic and the accompanying COVID-19 control measures will accelerate the depletion of household resources, such that the level of coping is expected to remain high. Unemployment is expected to rise as more people lose jobs due to expected business closures to curb the spread of the deadly virus. This will reduce the purchasing power of the majority of the people in the peri-urban zone as a majority of the population depend on purchases for livelihood purposes.

In the projected period, the Dry Middleveld livelihood zone is expected to remain in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) with 34,206 people (25%) expected to face Crisis or worse food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above) and require urgent humanitarian action between October 2021 - March 2022. It is envisaged that the food security situation will worsen in this zone, as it received below normal rains at the start of the planting season, and good rains were received towards the end of the season, which affected crop yields. High unemployment (52.6%) in this zone and the current COVID-19 3rd and looming 4th waves, and the ongoing political unrest, will disrupt economic activity and affect purchasing power. Food stocks are expected to deplete further and an increase in food, farming inputs, fuel and transport prices is expected in the projected period, because of the inadequate or limited supply of goods as a result of the COVID-19 situation and political unrest. The distance and time travelled for a water source during the wet and dry seasons is expected to remain the same in this zone. Unimproved water sources will affect household food utilisation.

Projected Urban Situation Overview

The projected food security situation in urban areas will deteriorate from IPC Phase 2 to Phase 3. The most notable factor is COVID-19 in the urban areas, where households rely on purchases, compared to the rural areas. It will also be negatively impacted following the social unrest that occurred mainly in the urban areas and is still a significant threat to the urban economy. This projected situation in urban areas is based on the following assumptions: food prices will rise, as is typical for this period, and most households will be dependent on markets for food purchases. Food supply chains will remain functional, and borders with South Africa will remain open for importing staple foods and other key food commodities. Although movement restrictions may cause a delay in cross border movement of food, minimal disruptions to the food supply flow is expected. As such, food will be available within markets for purchasing.

Regarding access issues, it is assumed that income sources from non-agricultural, formal and informal sectors, self-employment, entrepreneurship and property investments (property rents, house rents, space and office rents), SMEs, and commercial businesses will improve. Income shocks will likely not prevail in the projected period as there will be minimal loss of employment in the various sectors. In the projected period, it is expected that purchasing power will improve due to increased chances of employment, thus supporting food access and purchasing power for the urban dwellers.

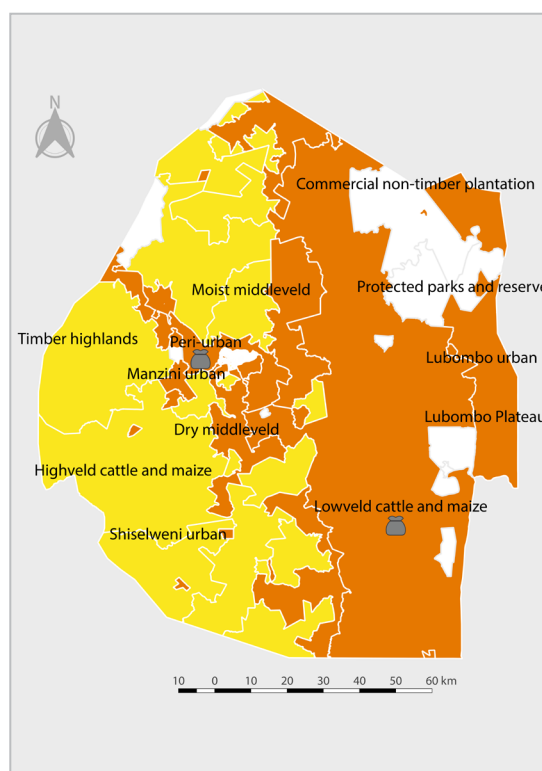
Manzini Urban is expected to shift from IPC Phase 2 to Phase 3 in the projected period, with 4,626 people (5%) moving to Phase 4 and requiring humanitarian and livelihood support. The predicted 3rd wave of the COVID-19 pandemic and the accompanying COVID-19 control measures coupled with the high level of unemployment (49%) in the region is expected to rise as more people experience reduced income (34%) and loss of jobs due to expected business closures as means to curb the spread of the deadly virus. The death of breadwinners (25%) will affect the purchasing power of households, thus increasing food insecurity of the people in urban Manzini. The closure of businesses and the death of breadwinners is expected to reduce purchasing power, ultimately compromising access to food, as the majority of the people in urban Manzini depend on purchases for livelihood purposes. About 27.4% of urban households in the region are expected to employ stressed coping strategies (resorting to borrowing, selling household assets) indicative of IPC Phase 2.

Hhohho Urban in the projected period is expected to experience high acute food insecurity with an estimated shift from IPC Phase 2 (12,450 people [15%] in IPC Phase 3 or above) to Phase 3 with 16,600 (20%) people in IPC Phase 3 or above who will need humanitarian assistance. An additional 4,150 are likely to be in IPC Phase 4 (Emergency) in the projected period. Given the predicted 3rd wave of the COVID-19 pandemic and the accompanying control measures, the level of unemployment is expected to rise as more people lose jobs due to expected business closures as means to curb the spread of the deadly virus. The predicted changes in climate are also likely to expose more households to food insecurity in the urban environment due to drought-induced crop failure in rural Hhohho. This will limit rural-urban food transfers, which has become one of the significant urban food sources in recent years in the Kingdom of Eswatini.

Shiselweni urban is projected to be in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) with a population of 12,749 (25%) found to have high levels of acute food insecurity, a 10% rise from 7,649 (15%). The outbreak of COVID-19 has reduced income for about 82% of households, as most businesses temporarily closed and reduced their activity. As it is reported that 82% of the households have lost or had reduced income in the current year, it is projected that several households will have limited purchasing power as the impact of COVID-19 continue to worsen the situation and deteriorate food availability. Food will be available in the market as the food supply chain will remain functional, and borders with South Africa remain open for importing. However, food access may remain constrained due to an increase in food prices. Access to water will remain adequate in the urban areas for most households; thus, food utilisation will not be compromised.

Lubombo Urban is expected to remain in IPC Phase 3 with 16,879 people in IPC Phase 3 and 2,761 people in IPC Phase 4. In total, 35% (19,327) of the population is experiencing high levels of food insecurity. Given the projected 3rd wave of the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated COVID-19 control measures, the level of unemployment is anticipated to rise as additional people lose jobs due to expected business closures as means to curb the spread of the deadly virus. The closure of businesses is expected to reduce the purchasing power of households, ultimately compromising access to food as most of the people in urban Lubombo will depend on purchases for livelihood purposes in the lean season.

PROJECTED SITUATION MAP AND POPULATION TABLE (OCTOBER 2021 - MARCH 2022)



Key for the Map

IPC Acute Food Insecurity Phase Classification

(mapped Phase represents highest severity affecting at least 20% of the population)

- 1 - Minimal
- 2 - Stressed
- 3 - Crisis
- 4 - Emergency
- 5 - Famine
- Areas not analysed

Area receives significant humanitarian food assistance (accounted for in Phase classification)

- > 25% of households meet 25-50% of caloric needs through assistance
- > 25% of households meet > 50% of caloric needs through assistance

Evidence Level

- * Acceptable
- ** Medium
- *** High

Region	Total population analysed	Phase 1		Phase 2		Phase 3		Phase 4		Phase 5		Area Phase	Phase 3+	
		#people	%	#people	%	#people	%	#people	%	#people	%		#people	%
Dry middleveld	136,826	61,572	45	41,048	30	27,365	20	6,841	5	0	0	3	34,206	25
Hhohho urban	82,999	45,649	55	20,750	25	12,450	15	4,150	5	0	0	3	16,600	20
Highveld cattle and maize	149,431	74,716	50	52,301	35	14,943	10	7,472	5	0	0	2	22,415	15
Lowveld cattle and maize	225,888	90,355	40	45,178	20	79,061	35	11,294	5	0	0	3	90,355	40
Lubombo plateau	44,974	13,492	30	11,244	25	15,741	35	4,497	10	0	0	3	20,238	45
Lubombo urban	55,220	16,566	30	19,327	35	16,566	30	2,761	5	0	0	3	19,327	35
Manzini urban	92,522	37,009	40	37,009	40	13,878	15	4,626	5	0	0	3	18,504	20
Moist middleveld	135,163	60,823	45	54,065	40	20,274	15	0	0	0	0	2	20,274	15
Peri-urban	107,045	32,114	30	26,761	25	42,818	40	5,352	5	0	0	3	48,170	45
Shiselweni urban	50,994	17,848	35	20,398	40	10,199	20	2,550	5	0	0	3	12,749	25
Timber highlands	90,171	45,086	50	31,560	35	13,526	15	0	0	0	0	2	13,526	15
Grand Total	1,171,233	495,229	42	359,639	31	266,821	23	49,544	4	0	0		316,365	27

Note: A population in Phase 3+ does not necessarily reflect the full population in need of urgent action. This is because some households may be in Phase 2 or even 1 but only because of receipt of assistance, and thus, they may be in need of continued action.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

Response Priorities

1. Take all necessary steps to ensure immediate and continuous access to humanitarian support by all populations needing assistance.
2. Government and development partners should consider providing the urgently-needed resources to enable sourcing and delivery of critical life-saving food assistance to populations facing significant food consumption gaps. To achieve this, there is an urgent need to integrate and coordinate actions to contain high rates of asset depletion and food consumption gaps through food and livelihood assistance for the populations classified in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) and Crisis (IPC Phase 3).
3. Strengthen COVID-19 prevention methods and increase people's awareness, particularly in the rural, urban and semi-urban areas, with particular attention to the population living in crowded areas.
4. Considering people's diminished resilience, particularly the Lowveld Cattle and Maize livelihood zone (Lubombo); close collaboration between humanitarian and development programmes is needed to tackle the root causes of food insecurity and enhance population resilience and livelihood. This will ensure that livelihoods are protected and people safeguarded from sliding into worse-off conditions.
5. Strengthen regular and elaborate food security monitoring given the fragile food security situation. The main risk factors/ key drivers should be closely monitored to ascertain if they have reached the relevant threshold/ trigger levels.

Situation Monitoring

- i. The effects of the social unrest experienced in the earlier months and its impact on livelihoods.
- ii. The price changes for key commodities and market provisioning.
- iii. Formal and informal cross border commodity movements from South Africa and impact on prices.
- iv. The impact of COVID-19 on food security and escalation of new cases.
- v. Inflation and impact on the economy.
- vi. Climatic Forecast of the next rain season from SARCOF.

Plan for an Update

Given the envisaged developments in the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and civil action, it will be necessary to update the current analysis. This will be done in November 2021 to update the situation until the end of March 2021. There will also be an opportunity to review the impact of COVID-19 on food security at the household level, market functionality, transport and trade across districts/regions, the effect on household-level food requirements, price of staples, availability of labour opportunities, etc.

PROCESS AND METHODOLOGY

A range of multi-sectoral consultative technical meetings were held through the overall management and coordination provided by the Deputy Prime Minister's Office - Disaster Management Department. The IPC process started early 2021 by preparing a detailed implementation plan and establishing timelines for activities, including inventory of available information, identification of data gaps and needs for new data required for the analysis. Training of enumerators preceded the actual collection of data (both primary and secondary data). The IPC analysis covered all the country's four regions: Hhohho, Manzini, Lubombo and Shiselweni. The regional experts managed to provide virtual remote technical support based on IPC Version 3.0 protocols.

Sources

The Eswatini VAC assessments were designed according to the global standards, using WFP's/FAO's corporate-level technical protocols, taking special considerations of data requirements for the IPC analysis. The Eswatini VAC data included direct evidence for food consumption (Food Consumption Score, Household Dietary Diversity Score, Household Hunger Score, FIES and food-related Coping Strategies) as well as the Livelihood Coping Strategies. WFP also provided market-related data. Other reports from various sectors such as WASH and existing knowledge/expertise from the analysis team contributed to the IPC analysis and classification of the multiple regions using the IPC Acute Food Insecurity Version 3.0 protocols.

What is the IPC and IPC Acute Food Insecurity?

The IPC is a set of tools and procedures to classify the severity and characteristics of acute food and nutrition crises as well as chronic food insecurity based on international standards. The IPC consists of four mutually reinforcing functions, each with a set of specific protocols (tools and procedures). The core IPC parameters include consensus building, convergence of evidence, accountability, transparency and comparability. The IPC analysis aims at informing emergency response as well as medium and long-term food security policy and programming.

For the IPC, Acute Food Insecurity is defined as any manifestation of food insecurity found in a specified area at a specific point in time of a severity that threatens lives or livelihoods, or both, regardless of the causes, context or duration. It is highly susceptible to change and can occur and manifest in a population within a short amount of time, as a result of sudden changes or shocks that negatively impact on the determinants of food insecurity.

Acute Food Insecurity Phase name and description

Phase 1 None/Minimal	Phase 2 Stressed	Phase 3 Crisis	Phase 4 Emergency	Phase 5 Catastrophe/ Famine
Households are able to meet essential food and non-food needs without engaging in atypical and unsustainable strategies to access food and income.	Households have minimally adequate food consumption but are unable to afford some essential non-food expenditures without engaging in stress-coping strategies.	Households either: • have food consumption gaps that are reflected by high or above-usual acute malnutrition; or • are marginally able to meet minimum food needs but only by depleting essential livelihood assets or through crisis-coping strategies.	Households either: • have large food consumption gaps that are reflected in very high acute malnutrition and excess mortality; or • are able to mitigate large food consumption gaps but only by employing emergency livelihood strategies and asset liquidation	Households have an extreme lack of food and/or other basic needs even after full employment of coping strategies. Starvation, death, destitution and extremely critical acute malnutrition levels are evident. For famine classification, area needs to have extreme critical levels of acute malnutrition and mortality.)

Contact for further Information

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This analysis has been conducted under the patronage of the Disaster Management Unit in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

Classification of food insecurity and malnutrition was conducted using the IPC protocols, which are developed and implemented worldwide by the IPC Global Partnership - Action Against Hunger, CARE, CILSS, EC-JRC, FAO, FEWSNET, Global Food Security Cluster, Global Nutrition Cluster, IGAD, Oxfam, PROGRESAN-SICA, SADC, Save the Children, UNICEF and WFP.

IPC Analysis Partners:

