



DRC Context Desk Review and Market Study Work Assignment

Purpose

The USAID Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA) proposes two resilience, food and nutrition security (FNS) desk reviews and market studies (DRMS) that will focus on the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The first DRMS will focus on the provinces of Tanganyika and South Kivu and the second will focus on Kasai, Kasai Central, and Kasai Oriental. This DRMS and the associated deliverables will inform the BHA RFSA design process and serve as a publicly available resource for implementing partners developing applications to BHA RFSA solicitations.

Budget

This work assignment will be funded with Title II non-emergency funding. The anticipated budget ceiling for this assignment is \$404,551.

Background

The DRC ranks as one of the world's most fragile states. Outside of urban areas, the state is barely present – a situation that leaves at least two thirds of the Congolese population without access to public services and beyond the purview of the central Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (GDRC). Despite abundant natural and human resources, DRC has failed to realize its potential due to weak institutions, instability, and a government that is not sufficiently accountable nor responsive to its citizens. The state is unable to deliver basic services, such as health; education; and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH), nor guarantee the security of its people or prevent the degradation of natural resources. The climate projections of increased temperatures and variability in precipitation along with increased natural hazards, including droughts, epidemics like Ebola, floods, landslides, wildfires, volcanic activity, and earthquakes means increased risk of food insecurity.^{1,2}

Violence against women, girls, and other vulnerable populations persists. Sixty percent of the country's population is under the age of 20, and this percentage will only expand.³ Decades of conflict have left the country extremely fragile,⁴ destabilized, vulnerable to epidemics, suffering from high rates of gender-based violence (GBV), and in persistent need of humanitarian assistance.

Shocks are pervasive—whether in the health, economic, climate/environmental, or conflict arena. The DRC ranks at the bottom on measures of health, political violence, and civil conflict; its people suffer from high rates of food insecurity, extreme poverty, and displacement. Chronic conflict and neglect have stripped many communities of their security, livelihoods, and social safety nets, leaving them ill-equipped to cope with shock. Eastern DRC is home to more than 100 armed groups that contribute to general insecurity, population displacements, and tragic levels of GBV. Self-reliance will be impossible to achieve unless the DRC's citizens are better able to mitigate, adapt to, and recover from shocks and stresses.

Objectives

¹ Climate Risk Profile, Democratic Republic of Congo, Fact Sheet.

https://www.climatelinks.org/sites/default/files/asset/document/20180716_USAID-ATLAS_Climate-Risk-Profile_DRC.pdf

² Climate Risk Country Profile, Democratic Republic of Congo, World Bank, 2021.

https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/15883-WB_Congo%2C%20Democratic%20Republic%20Country%20Profile-WEB.pdf

³ USAID defines youth as “a full spectrum of the population aged 10-29, regardless of socioeconomic status, ethnic identity, religion, race, sex, sexual orientation and gender identity, disability, political affiliation, or physical location.”

⁴ Center for Systemic Peace, State Fragility Index, 2018: <http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscr/SFImatrix2018c.pdf>

BHA Resilience Food Security Activities (RFSA) activities focus on rural populations that are chronically vulnerable to nutrition and food insecurity. The goal of these activities is to improve and sustain the food and nutrition security of vulnerable populations. Any potential RFSA solicitation in the DRC will be aligned with the USAID/DRC 2020-2025 Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS), which focuses on “strengthening resilience to recurrent crises”. With this broad purpose in mind, the DRMS has two specific objectives:

- **Objective 1:** Conduct a market analysis to inform the [Bellmon determination](#) and the selection of food assistance modalities for each of the targeted geographic areas.
- **Objective 2:** Conduct a desk review to provide BHA and potential implementing partners with a deep contextual understanding regarding the resilience and FNS context, stakeholders, and key activity design issues for consideration.

The DRMS will document the general country and targeted sub-national context, the food security situation, and the food and nutrition security related strategies, initiatives, and programs, as well as the lessons learned from such efforts. The following list of contextual questions are of concern to BHA and potential partners working to address food insecurity for the most vulnerable to nutrition and food insecurity in the targeted departments. To the extent possible, awardees should use these guiding questions to inform the analysis. BHA understands that information sources and time may be limiting factors in seeking to comprehensively research all of the factors highlighted below.

Each of the questions should be considered at two different levels of analysis, the local (defined household and community levels) and non-local (which includes the provincial, national, and regional contexts) levels. Further, the target beneficiaries of BHA RFSA programming will focus on the most vulnerable. All core questions should include a focus on those populations. Additionally, information on cassava, plantains, groundnuts, maize, beans, rice, potatoes, soybeans, and edible oil will be used for the Bellmon determination, while information on livestock will provide contextual information for activity design.

Objective 1: Conduct a market analysis to inform the [Bellmon determination](#) and the selection of food assistance modalities for each of the targeted geographic areas.

This objective seeks to provide USAID/BHA and potential BHA awardees with sufficient evidence to inform response analysis for the provinces of Tanganyika, South Kivu, Kasai, Kasai Central, and Kasai Oriental and make a Bellmon determination. At its highest level, Objective 1 must answer:

1. Will there be adequate storage for the in-kind commodities at the proposed scale to prevent spoiling or wastage?
2. Would the provision of any one of the proposed modalities at the proposed scale result in a substantial disincentive to or interference with domestic production or marketing in that country?

More specifically, this objective aims to provide information about the appropriateness of various food assistance transfer modalities (cash, vouchers, local, regional, international procurement as well as U.S. In-kind) based on local market conditions, as well as feasibility to deliver those modalities. The study will provide an analysis of the operating environment in specific sub-national and local areas of a BHA country of interest and is designed to integrate directly into the [BHA Modality Decision Tool](#) to inform the Tool’s first two tiers of questions around appropriateness and feasibility. The study’s intent is not, however, to provide specific modality recommendations.

Knowledge Goal 1: Food availability

The DRMS should provide an understanding of the extent to which food is available in sufficient quantities for purchase in markets. It is also important to understand 1) market quality and ability to meet local demand and 2) to what extent markets for staple food function in the target provinces.

Potential lines of inquiry

1. What is the market structure, conduct, and performance for key food staples (cassava, plantains, groundnuts, maize, beans, rice, potatoes, soybeans, and edible oil) in the proposed geographic area, and the marketing basins that serve those areas?
2. What is the geographic area's production capacity of these staple foods? Is it typically self-sufficient, deficit or surplus-producing?
3. How does rainfall and access to water affect food availability?
4. What are the current and longer-term commodity price trends, for multiple years if available, for staple food markets in the targeted area?
5. What is the basic profile of key reference markets in and serving the selected geographic areas, including an inventory of key commodities sold, the number of markets/vendors broken down by category along with a typology of market size/type, quantities traded (broken down by post-harvest and lean season), market days/schedule, contacts?
6. To what extent are key reference markets accessible to populations vulnerable to nutrition and food insecurity and does accessibility vary (by gender, age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, language, religious, disability, and the socially excluded)?
7. To what extent are the local markets in the given geographic area well integrated with national, regional, and/or international markets?
 - a. Do key commodity markets operate in a competitive manner across the marketing basins relevant for programming? Describe the roles of various market actors (wholesalers, middlemen, retailers, and transporters) and price setting behavior.
 - b. What are the primary barriers/constraints faced in conducting and/or scaling up business?
 - c. When supply of locally produced food is insufficient to meet local demand, does the market meet demand (price responsive)? What are the barriers to market functionality?
 - d. What are the factors that introduce variability (or instability) in availability and price levels? These may be localized, national, regional, or international.
 - To what extent do these factors influence availability and price levels?
 - e. To what extent are there any localized gender dynamics related to purchasing and selling?
8. How do shocks (especially conflict), migration, environmental, and other contextual factors influence and impact:
 - a. The functionality of the market and staple commodity price trends?
 - b. The capacity of the private sector, government, and non-government actors to provide agricultural production related services (inputs, extension, marketing, etc.) for staple food and livestock?
 - c. FNS, food availability, and decision-making?

Knowledge Goal 2: Food access

The DRMS should provide an understanding of the extent to which extremely poor and vulnerable HHs are able to access food in the selected geographic areas. This line of inquiry should explore differences among key demographics and geographic areas that affect HHs ability to access food. This line of inquiry also explores livelihoods and the main sources of income and how they are differentiated by key demographics and geographic areas.

Potential lines of inquiry

1. What are the main staples accessed through own production (including cassava, plantains, groundnuts, maize, beans, rice, potatoes, soybeans, and edible oil and livestock such as goats, pigs, rabbits, guinea pigs and chickens?
 - a. How does this vary by key demographics?
 - b. What proportion is this of their total food needs?
2. What percentage of average household expenditure is on market food purchases?

- a. How do purchase patterns vary seasonally?
3. What is the typical food basket consumed by households in the selected areas? To what extent are there differences in how people access food based on level of wealth, vulnerability, and other social characteristics (sex, age, ethnicity, political affiliation, etc.)?
4. What are the main sources of income for the BHA target population (including on farm crop production, on farm livestock rearing, and off farm economic activities)? To what extent do livelihoods and income sources meet basic food requirements?
5. To what extent do HHs in the target geographic area diversify their livelihoods across risk portfolios and how does this vary based on key demographics (sex, age, ethnicity, political affiliation, poverty level, etc.)?
6. How do populations access markets?
 - a. Who typically purchases commodities for the household?
 - b. How do people travel to the market (modes of transport)?
 - c. How far do they typically travel and what average costs do they typically incur?
 - d. How do people of different socioeconomic groups generally use cash, credit, or barter to purchase goods and any relevant services (e.g., milling) at food markets?
 - e. What are the physical, social, economic, and other barriers to accessing markets?
 - f. How do shocks (especially conflict), migration, environmental, and other contextual factors affect access to markets and other food sources?
7. Do small-scale farmers have access to high quality, affordable cassava and plantains cuttings and groundnuts, maize, beans, rice, potatoes, soybeans seeds?
8. What are the property rights norms in the target provinces? How do property rights and land tenure vary by key demographics (sex, age, ethnicity, political affiliation, immigration status, poverty level)?
9. How do people cope if they have inadequate access to food? To what extent are there differences in how people access food based on level of sex, age, socio-economic status, and other social characteristics?

Knowledge Goal 3: US in-kind, local procurement (LP), regional procurement (RP) and/or International procurement.

The DRMS should provide an understanding of the factors involved with delivering in-kind food assistance. Please refer to the [BHA Functional Policy 20-03](#) for definitions of LP/RP.

Potential lines of inquiry

1. Are there adequate ports, transport, and storage available to ensure the in-kind commodities can be stored and distributed without substantial waste?
2. To what extent would the distribution of the commodities in the recipient country (at the proposed scale) result in a substantial disincentive or interference with domestic agricultural production or marketing?
3. To what extent are there any restrictions on modalities and/or delivery mechanisms by relevant authorities (e.g., formal or informal government policies)?
 - a. What are the risks to delivering assistance across modalities (security, fraud, liquidity, government interference, etc.)?
 - b. What, if any, restrictions does the GDRC impose on the importation of commodities, e.g., Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO) considerations?
 - c. What is the recent history of export restrictions from neighboring countries and how might they affect the reliability of regional procurement options?
4. What food assistance activities are currently or have recently been implemented in the area and what modalities/delivery mechanism did they utilize? What were the key lessons learned and challenges faced?

Knowledge Goal 4: Cash transfers, food vouchers, or small-scale local procurement

The DRMS should provide an understanding of the range of feasible modality delivery mechanisms within the geographic area of concern as related to cash transfers, food vouchers, or small-scale improvement.

Potential lines of inquiry

1. How does the current macroeconomic context, particularly as it relates to uncertainty around Congolese Francs and US dollar exchange fluctuations, affect the feasibility of cash and voucher-based transfers?
2. To what extent are markets able to provide the necessary commodities in the quantity and [BHA commodity quality](#) needed and meet increases in effective demand without inducing price increases at a rate above an appropriate benchmark for average inflation?
3. Assuming current market conditions hold in the next one-two years, which transfer modalities could be implemented and at what scale without significantly distorting markets?
4. Who are the available financial service providers (FSPs), including mobile money providers, banks, Micro-Finance Institutions (MFIs), SACCOs, etc?^{5,6,7,8}
 - a. What are their capacities, coverage, reliability, and ability to meet program needs (liquidity)?
 - b. Is the target population able to meet applicable “Know Your Customer” (KYC) requirements?
 - c. What are current adoption rates and or size of the customer base in relevant geographic areas (bank accounts, mobile phones, etc.)?
 - d. Do local literacy and numeracy levels provide a distinct barrier to delivery mechanism success?
 - e. Are market actors able to access credit?
5. Are there any restrictions on modalities and/or delivery mechanisms by relevant authorities?
6. What are the particular risks to delivering assistance across modalities (security, fraud, liquidity, etc.)?
7. Do GDRC or local organizations have the capacity to test commodities to ensure quality as per the [Codex Alimentarius Recommended International Code of Practice: General Principles of Food Hygiene CAC/RCP 1-1969 Rev 4 – 2003](#)?

Objective 2: Conduct a desk review to provide BHA and potential implementing partners with a deep contextual understanding regarding the resilience and FNS context, stakeholders, and key activity design issues for consideration.

This objective seeks to provide an overview and synthesis of the current, projected, and recent historical trends of the resilience and FNS context and stakeholders in the targeted geographic area providing BHA and implementing partners with a deep understanding of the context and stakeholders to make informed activity design decisions.

Knowledge Goal 1: Key Stakeholder Mapping

⁵ <http://www.unhcr.org/5899ebec4.pdf>

⁶ <http://www.cashlearning.org/downloads/mobile-money-assessment-and-contracting-guide-final.pdf>

⁷ <https://www.mercycorps.org/sites/default/files/E-TransferGuideAllAnnexes.pdf>

⁸

<http://www.cashlearning.org/section-3-ctp-activities-within-the-project-cycle-preparedness/section-311-analysis-of-potential-financial-service-providers-and-delivery-mechanisms-offered-includ>

The DRMS should provide an understanding of the key actors involved in resilience and FNS in Tanganyika, South Kivu, Kasai, Kasai Central, and Kasai Oriental. A stakeholder mapping exercise, to be carried out as part of the DRMS, will identify and describe key actors and institutions in the target geography. The specific objective of the stakeholder analysis is to gain a comprehensive understanding of the relationships among citizens and key resilience and FNS actors such as local, regional, and national government, USAID funded activities, other donors, local NGOs, emergency actors, private sector, and other key actors working in the geographic area. The stakeholder mapping will identify existing relationships and drivers of FNS and resilience.

Potential lines of inquiry

1. Who are the various actors involved in resilience and FNS in the focus geographic area?
2. What is the structure and characteristics of informal and formal mechanisms of social protection? To what extent are there differences in how people access social protection based on level of wealth, vulnerability, and other social characteristics (sex, age, ethnicity, etc.)? This includes GBV services, such as government and NGOs providing legal, psychosocial, protection, or medical services?
3. What are the mandates, missions, and objectives of each stakeholder?
4. What alliances and relationships exist between stakeholders?
5. What are the strengths, challenges, risks and opportunities for collaboration or coordination associated with working with each stakeholder?
6. What are the key resilience and FNS policies, strategies, and plans that exist or are planned?
7. What programs and projects exist or are currently planned in the existing focus geographies?
 - a. Where are programs geographically and programmatically?
 - b. What are the objectives of the program and who are the intended participants?
 - c. What type and level of resources do the programs and projects provide?
 - d. What is the timing and duration of the programs and projects?
8. What activities have been most successful and least successful in improving the resilience of those most vulnerable to nutrition and food insecurity? What factors contributed most significantly to high and poor performance?

Knowledge Goal 2: Demographic and Social Characteristics

The DRMS should identify the key demographics in the target area related to gender, age, and social inclusion and how social dynamics influence FNS strategies and access to resources.

Potential Lines of Inquiry

1. What are the key demographic characteristics, size, and distribution of the population in the targeted geographic area? Specific characteristics should include but are not limited to gender, age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, language, religion, disability, socially excluded, displacement status, and livelihood.
2. What are the characteristics and distribution of populations that have the highest levels of need for humanitarian assistance, food insecurity, poverty, and chronic and acute malnutrition?
3. How do social dynamics influence FNS strategies, resources, and decision-making? Specific characteristics should include but are not limited to marriage, fertility, family size and distribution, migration status, age (youth (13-35) and adult (35+)), and group affiliation (ethnic, political, religious, etc.).
 - a. To what extent are certain groups excluded from FNS related strategies, resources, and decision-making?
 - b. To what extent do these social dynamics affect participation in economic activities and types of livelihoods?
 - c. To what extent do these social dynamics affect asset ownership?

4. How does women's access to resources (agricultural inputs, money, fuel, and water) and women's time affect food choices, food access, and food preparation, meal frequency, dietary diversity, and nutrition?
5. What does a typical day look like for adults (35+ years of age) and youth (13 – 35 years of age) men and women?
 - a. What roles do household members play in household activities including, but not limited to decision-making, family farming, food production, water fetching, and livelihoods? How does this vary by youth vs adult, men vs women?
 - b. How does time allocation vary for different household members in regards to productive and domestic workload?
 - c. What roles do household members play in community activities such as savings groups and community leadership structures?
 - d. What are the important differences between adolescent girls and boys, given early marriage and childbearing among adolescent girls – how does this differentially affect youth roles in farming, access to livelihoods and income, and ability to meet food security needs – either their own or their families?
 - e. What is the role of youth in childcare and household chores, particularly between males and females? How is gender reflected in the youth's role in childcare and household chores?
6. How are youth engaged in village life? How does engagement vary by age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, gender, and other social or demographic characteristics?
7. What options do youth view as their future opportunities? What opportunities do they aspire to/wish they had?
8. To what extent do male and female youth have access to education? What factors drive school attendance?
9. What livelihood opportunities do male and female youth have access to? How does education impact livelihood opportunities?

Knowledge Goal 3: Food Utilization and Nutrition

The DRMS should provide an understanding of food utilization and nutrition trends and how they vary by geographic area and across demographics. Additionally, the potential lines of inquiry under knowledge goal 3 seek to provide greater understanding of available government and non-governmental nutrition and WASH service providers.

Potential lines of inquiry

1. What are the current, recent, and projected trends related to malnutrition, dietary diversity of women and children, child feeding, family planning, infectious disease (i.e., upper respiratory disease, COVID-19, malaria), acute diarrheal illnesses, water and sanitation access, and hygiene behavior changed status?
 - a. To what extent are there differences in these trends based on socio-economic status, vulnerability, level of education, immigration status, and other social characteristics (sex, age, ethnicity, political affiliation, etc.)?
 - b. How do these trends change because of a shock?
 - c. What other characteristics, risks, and factors that are associated or contribute to poor nutrition related outcomes?
2. What is the structure and characteristics of systems that provide nutrition, family planning, water, sanitation, and hygiene related resources and services, especially related to the surveillance, prevention, and treatment of malnutrition?
 - a. How does access to nutrition related resources and services differ between communities, ethnic groups, youth and adult men and women? How does this affect nutrition related outcomes?

- b. What is the current level of capacity of private sector, government, and non-government stakeholders to provide nutrition related services, especially during shocks or emergencies?

Methods

This objective will involve reviewing the academic literature, project documents, evaluations, meta-analysis and conducting consultations by phone, Skype or other ‘remote’ technology platforms with key international, regional, national, and local stakeholders.

Preliminary Required Background Documents for Consultation

Most of the literature will be available publicly or through access to online journal articles. Literature to review includes, but is not limited to:

- a. [USAID/BHA Strategic Framework](#);
- b. USAID Mission and Country Strategies and frameworks (e.g., [CDCS](#));
- c. DRC Staple Food Market Fundamentals, [FEWSNet](#)
- d. Program documents from other related projects and initiatives, including [USAID/DRC Feed the Future](#) programming, [DRC Global Food Security Strategy \(GFSS\)](#)
- e. [The Democratic Republic of Congo Systematic Country Diagnostic: Policy Priorities for Poverty Reduction and Shared Prosperity in a Post-Conflict Country and Fragile State](#)
- f. [UNICEF Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys](#);
- g. [Global Network against food crisis \(GNAFC\) and Food Security Information Network \(FSIN\)](#)
- h. [FY2015 DRC Request for Applications and Country Specific Information](#)
- i. [Food Security, Annual crops assessment, Food Balance Sheet report 2018-2019](#)
- j. [DRC Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis](#)
- k. [USAID Multi-Sector Nutrition Strategy 2014 - 2025](#)
- l. Lessons learned on the ability of layered programming to deliver on resilience and food and nutrition security goals and achievement of the anticipated multiplier effect through coordinated program implementation-- identifying successes and failures of coordination;
- m. Previous resilience and food and nutrition security assessments;
- n. Other USAID Resilience programming in the region, including RFSA project documents, results, and evaluation reports

To Be Provided by USAID/BHA:

- Conflict Analysis for DRC
- DRC Nutrition Profile
- DRC Complex Emergency Factsheet
- DRC Food Assistance Factsheet

Deliverables and Schedule:

Deliverable	Due	Description
Kick Off Meeting		The first meeting with the DRMS team and BHA representatives to confirm deliverables, timelines, and scope of work.
Deliverable 1: Work Plan	2 weeks after Kick Off Meeting	The work plan will describe the planned strategies, methodologies, activities, timelines, and resources associated with completing the developing the deliverables, including but not limited to sub-contracting or staffing (if applicable), data collection, analysis, and report writing. USAID/BHA will provide any feedback within two weeks of submission.

Deliverable	Due	Description
Deliverable 2: Report Outline, Briefing Outline, Mapping Plan	2 weeks after Work Plan submitted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● DRMS Report Outline - The DRMS report outline will be drafted by the awardee team and reviewed by the USAID/BHA design and markets team, and finalized based on mutual agreement/feedback received, or later upon mutual agreement of the awardee team and USAID. The exact report outline will reflect the USAID design team’s core research questions for a given work assignment. It is anticipated that the DRMS report outlines will include an Executive Summary (maximum of 3 pages, including a table that summarizes key findings in 1 page), a brief report that summarizes the report findings (no more than 60 pages), and a series of annexes that provide detailed information related to the points covered in the brief report. ● USAID Briefing Outline - The USAID Briefing Outline will be drafted by the awardee team and reviewed by the USAID/BHA design and markets team, and finalized based on mutual agreement/feedback received, or later upon mutual agreement of the awardee team and USAID. The exact report outline will reflect the USAID design team’s core research questions for a given work assignment. It is anticipated that the USAID Briefing will be no greater than 2 hours in duration. ● Mapping Deliverable Plan – A description of the mapping products that provide critical information regarding resilience, food security, and nutrition statistics and/or stakeholders. It is anticipated that products will be Tableau dashboards or ArcGIS produced maps, or accessible and compatible with Tableau or ArcGIS. This will also include an actor map highlighting relationships among stakeholders in the region. The plan should also outline the proposed timing, structure, content, and requirements associated with the Mapping Product Presentation.
Deliverable 3: Annotated Bibliography	1 week after Report Outline (deliverable 2) is submitted	The annotated bibliography will provide the secondary sources that the awardee reviewed and considered for the development of the DRMS. Each entry should follow the APA style, include specific web-based links, and provide a summary that is relevant to the context of the DRMS.
Deliverable 4: Draft DRMS Report	4 weeks after Annotated Bibliography is submitted	The narrative report must be provided in a Microsoft Word format and based on the approved Report Outline in Deliverable 2 and should be no longer than 60 pages. Annexes may be provided in Microsoft Word or Excel, as appropriate. USAID will provide feedback within two weeks of receipt of the first draft of the DRMS Report.
Deliverable 5: Results Briefing for USAID	1 week after Draft report submission	The briefing will occur at a mutually agreeable time and location, however, if feasible, it is preferred to occur at the USAID/Mission in person and with a teleconference option for USAID personnel in DC, prior to the departure of staff from the country (if applicable). The briefing must include a slide deck presentation that includes the areas agreed upon in the USAID Briefing Outline.

Deliverable	Due	Description
Deliverable 6: Final DRMS Report	2 weeks after USAID provides feedback on draft report	Upon approval of the final reports and products for public consumption, the awardee team will process them for accessibility (508 compliance) and submit them to USAID and other platforms as suggested by USAID (LASER website, DEC).