



Global Food Security Strategy (GFSS)

Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) Country Plan

August 2024

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Acronyms

AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Agreement
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EAC	East African Community
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FtF	Feed the Future
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
GDP	Gross domestic product
GFSS	Global Food Security Strategy
GoDRC	Government of DRC
GVB	Gender-based violence
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IPC	Integrated Food Security Phase Classification
MSME	Micro-, small-, and medium-sized enterprises
MCC	Millennium Challenge Corporation
PNIA	National Agricultural Investment Plan
PNSD	National Development Plan
PRONANUT	National Nutrition Program
RFSA	Resilience Food Security Activity
RFZ	Resilience Focus Zone

A. Country Context

Overview

In spite of tremendous agronomic potential, DRC remains one of the poorest and most food insecure countries in the world. Estimates suggest that DRC's agriculture sector, if fully developed, could provide enough food to feed the whole of Africa. In reality, DRC does not even produce enough food to feed its own population. In 2022, DRC had the largest number of people experiencing high food insecurity in the world with about 26.4 million people—over 26% of the population—experiencing high levels of acute food insecurity.¹² Experts estimate that from January to June 2023, 24.5 million people will likely be in IPC Phase 3 or above. Persistently high levels of hunger have had devastating consequences for nutrition in DRC. As of 2020, 40% of the population is undernourished.³ Measures of poverty in DRC are equally grim: nearly 70% of the population lives on less than \$2.15 a day. GDP per capita stands at just \$577,⁴ and 37% of the population is in severe multidimensional poverty.⁵ Multiple factors have aggravated the situation in DRC including conflict, stagnated economic development, dependence on food imports (DRC is a net food importer), Ebola and the lingering impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Acute food insecurity remains highest in North Kivu and Ituri, two areas in which persistent conflict have resulted in a large population in emergency condition (IPC Phase 4). Across DRC, food insecurity has recently been exacerbated by sharp fuel and food price increases resulting from the war in Ukraine, as well as poor infrastructure, and structural factors.

Consequently, more than 37 million Congolese are suffering from malnutrition.⁶ Nearly 43% of children under the age of five are stunted and 7% are wasted.⁷ Micronutrient deficiencies are common: 60% of young children and 38% of women of childbearing age (15-49 years) are anemic.⁸ Furthermore, only 54% of children are exclusively breastfed up to 6 months of age and dietary diversity is very low.⁹ Recent nutritional surveys show that the prevalence of this type of malnutrition and under-five mortality rates are reaching emergency thresholds in the Kasai, Kasai Central, Kasai Oriental, Sankuru, Tanganyika, South Kivu, North Kivu, and Ituri provinces. Significant disparities persist between rural and urban settings and between the richest and poorest households. A 2017 study released by the Government of the DRC (GoDRC) estimated the social and economic costs of undernutrition to cost the country more than \$1 billion annually.¹⁰ Contributing factors include increased healthcare costs, additional burdens on the education system, and reduced workforce productivity. The National Nutrition Program (PRONANUT) recognizes that malnutrition has multifaceted causes and therefore requires the

¹ Integrated Food Security Classification, "Democratic Republic of Congo: Acute Food Insecurity and Acute Malnutrition Situation September 2021 - August 2022."

² Reliable sex-disaggregated data in the DRC is sparse. Many indicators are derived from outdated surveys, and figures are often only available every few years. In addition, national-level data is largely modeled after assumptions built on the country's last census, which was carried out in 1984. Where possible, the data presented are disaggregated by sex.

³ World Bank, "Data: Prevalence of undernourishment (% of population) - Congo, Dem. Rep."

⁴ World Bank, "Data: Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing, Value Added (% of GDP)."

⁵ World Bank, "Data: Prevalence of undernourishment (% of population) - Congo, Dem. Rep."

⁶ Concern Worldwide USA, "What We Know About Hunger in the DRC in 2021."

⁷ INS, USAID, UNICEF "République Démocratique du Congo, MICS-Palu 2018 (French)."

⁸ Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo (GoDRC), *Democratic Republic of Congo: Demographic and Health Survey, 2013-2014*.

⁹ INS, USAID, UNICEF "République Démocratique du Congo, MICS-Palu 2018 (French)."

¹⁰ The 2016 Cost of Hunger in Africa (COHA) study found that 1.7 billion was lost every year due to child malnutrition in DRC.

engagement of health, education, agriculture, gender, governance, private, and public sector actors to address the determinants.

In 2021, agriculture, forestry, and fishing contributed \$10.5 billion to the economy, a 2.4% increase from the previous year. This pales in comparison to DRC's overall growth rate of 6.2%, now among the highest in Africa.¹¹ Reflecting a potential opportunity for Feed the Future engagement, recent growth is due to increased political stability and an improving security situation (in some areas); a fledgling civil society and incipient democratic institutions; and a business-friendly political administration working to control corruption, increase competition, and a rolling back of burdensome regulations and taxes. Recent integration into the East African Community (EAC) and African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) has been another boon for the economy. The main source of broader economic growth, however, has been the expansion of extractive industries driven by rising commodity prices. In contrast, steady but modest growth in the agrifood system has barely kept pace with population growth,¹² producing few economic benefits for the 70% of the labor force that works in agriculture.¹³

The agriculture sector's anemic growth is largely the result of underinvestment in agricultural market systems and supporting infrastructure, as well as broad lack of confidence due to policy and regulatory gaps. Both the public and private sector have neglected to invest in agriculture, preferring to score quick wins in extractive industries and the commodities sector. Consequently, the agrifood system hasn't industrialized or developed modern agricultural market systems. The DRC's agriculture sector is small, fragmented, and consists almost entirely of micro-, small-, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs). Production is mostly for subsistence purposes,¹⁴ and many commercial farmers and agribusinesses operate informally. The World Bank provides evidence that growth in the agriculture sector is up to four times more effective at reducing extreme poverty than growth in other sectors of the economy providing an opportunity for FTF investments to successfully reduce poverty through agriculture programming.¹⁵

Women represent 60% of agricultural laborers, 73% of farmers, and produce 80% of food crops for household consumption; up to 95% of rural women work in agriculture. Despite women's high labor force participation rate in agriculture, they earn considerably less than men and own fewer assets. Just 8% of women aged 15-49 own land in DRC, compared to 22% for men of the same age.¹⁶ Women and girls experience higher rates of poverty, less political representation and power, lack of access to healthcare, reduced education and employment rates, and widespread gender-based violence (GBV). - the population at large. Traditional agriculture offers a viable source of employment for some youth, but most young people seek to relocate to urban areas and work in the services or manufacturing sectors. Unfortunately, DRC's education system does not equip young Congolese with the skills they need to obtain formal work: less than 1% of youth find employment corresponding to their abilities and skills.¹⁷ is under the age of 20.¹⁸ Failure to adequately train youth to participate in the economy would represent a squandered opportunity to reap a demographic dividend. Worse, it would contribute to political instability and conflict by increasing the number of unemployed and disaffected youth.

¹¹ World Bank, "Data: GDP growth (annual %) - Congo, Dem. Rep."

¹² International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), *Democratic Republic of the Congo's Agrifood System: Structure and Drivers of Transformation*, Jan 2023.

¹³ International Labour Organization, *State of Skills: The Democratic Republic of the Congo*.

¹⁴ 50-75% families rely on subsistence farming according to DRC situation Report - April 2020 by FAO.

¹⁵ World Bank, "Event: Harvesting Prosperity: Technology and Productivity Growth in Agriculture."

¹⁶ Our World in Data, "Land ownership, men vs. women, 2022."

¹⁷ World Bank, *Democratic Republic of Congo Systematic Country Diagnostic*, Mar 2018.

¹⁸ USAID, Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) – Democratic Republic of Congo, 2020-2025.

Undernourishment among children leads to lifelong losses in workforce productivity that - in combination with increased healthcare costs and additional burdens on the education system - cost the DRC \$1 billion annually.

Violence has a significant impact on security and economic activity, as well as the agrifood system in non-conflict areas. As of November 2022, some 5.5 million people were internally displaced in DRC, largely as a result of armed conflict and intercommunal violence.¹⁹ The large influx of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees can put tremendous pressure on local agricultural market systems. Some communities have seen food price spikes, increased competition over natural resources and land, and overstretched infrastructure and public services because of population pressures from IDPs and refugees.²⁰ Displaced persons will have a distortionary effect on market systems as long as they lack the resources and stable housing and employment they need to participate in the market.

Unfortunately, climate change will aggravate DRC's IDP and refugee problem and many of the other agricultural development challenges discussed thus far. Smallholder farmers are one of the groups expected to be most impacted by climate change.²¹ A warming Congo Basin will lead to an increase in disease and pests; a rise in the frequency of flash floods and extreme precipitation characterized by longer, more frequent, and less predictable droughts; rising sea levels; and greater exposure to erosion and landslides. Field visits by Mission staff in 2023 revealed that farmers are already seeing their yields impacted by erratic rainfall and drought linked to climate change, but are constrained in their ability to adapt because drought-resistant seeds and primary planting materials are not locally available.

Climate change will also threaten DRC's agrifood system by weakening an oft-forgotten pillar of food production - the forests. Forests supply an estimated \$8.7 billion in food and non-timber products to the Congolese economy²² and this critical national asset is increasingly threatened by deforestation. Between 2015 and 2019, annual deforestation rates in DRC exceeded 1 million hectares.²³ Primary drivers of deforestation include agricultural extensification, exploitation of wood fuels, urban expansion, and mining.²⁴ In Kongo Central, for example, the total area of humid primary forest has decreased by 20%, primarily for charcoal making, subsistence and commercial agriculture, and firewood production.²⁵ The combined effects of climate change and environmental degradation could eventually lead to an ecological collapse of the Congo Rainforest, the consequences of which would be disastrous for agriculture and food production. Important to note is that agriculture is a priority area within the Government's National Adaptation Plan to Climate Change 2022 - 2026²⁶ and Nationally Determined Contributions 2021²⁷.

Market Constraints and Opportunities within the Agrifood System

In the DRC, domestic demand for nutritious and affordable food exceeds the agrifood system's capacity to supply it, causing the country to rely heavily on imports. Only a third of food consumed in DRC is produced locally, with the rest being sourced regionally or even globally (e.g., most chicken sold in DRC

¹⁹ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, *The Democratic Republic of the Congo: Regional Refugee Response Plan – 2023*.

²⁰ World Bank, *DRC Systematic Country Diagnostic*.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Mongabay, "Poor governance fuels 'horrible dynamic' of deforestation in DRC," Dec 2020.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Global Forest Watch, "Dashboard of Kongo-Central, DRC."

²⁶ GoDRC, *National Adaptation Plan to Climate Change (2022-2026)*.

²⁷ GoDRC, Contribution Déterminée à l'échelle Nationale révisée.

is from Brazil). The country has an annual food trade deficit of \$1.5 billion, which weighs heavily on its balance of payments.²⁸ As of 2021, net imports were equal to 23% of the national budget.²⁹ Import dependence undermines the agrifood system's resilience to shocks and stresses, making the DRC more vulnerable to global events and crises. Many parts of the country suffer from low or no food reserves.³⁰ As a result, slight disruptions to the supply chain can affect retail prices of food in markets, sometimes triggering food crises. These vulnerabilities exposed DRC to some of the worst impacts of Putin's War in Ukraine—in the weeks following the invasion, food, fuel, and fertilizer prices spiked. Impact analyses suggest DRC's agrifood system was the most affected sector of the economy, largely because of reliance on imports of affected products.³¹

DRC's import dependence is surprising given the country's strong domestic demand for food and enormous agricultural potential. The DRC has 80 million hectares (ha) of arable land, only 10 million of which are being cultivated.³² Irrigation coverage is relatively low at 4 million ha, but much of the country receives consistent rainfall or is naturally irrigated by the Congo River network.³³ DRC's vast savannahs and grasslands have the potential to support a livestock population of 40 million head of cattle, and its rivers, lakes, and seas have the potential to produce 707,000 tons of fish per year. The world's eleventh largest country possesses 135 million hectares of tropical forests, which can be sustainably leveraged to produce food as well.³⁴

Despite this potential, the DRC has not made sustainable investments in agriculture and supporting sectors that would enable it to capitalize on its natural endowments. In fact, DRC's agriculture sector is so underdeveloped that domestic production is more expensive than imports for both processed and unprocessed agrifood products.³⁵ Growing domestic demand - which has been the primary driver of growth in recent years - has not translated to a commensurate expansion in the agrifood system.³⁶

Increasing investment in agriculture, both by the public and private sectors, is key to better linking farmers to markets. In 2017, the GoDRC's public expenditures on agriculture accounted for just 2.4% of total spending,³⁷ well below the average of 6% for Sub-Saharan Africa.³⁸ Investment in agricultural research and development (R&D) is among the lowest in Africa and stood at just 0.34% of AgGDP.³⁹ The pace of innovation has suffered as a result. Dissemination of research and best practices is similarly challenged by low government investment. DRC is characterized by a dearth of agricultural support and extension services, as evidenced by the fact that there is only one extension worker for every 6,000 farming households in the DRC.⁴⁰

²⁸ World Bank, *DRC Systematic Country Diagnostic*.

²⁹ The Africa Report, "DRC: Will the government ever reduce its spending to invest more?"

³⁰ World Bank, *DRC Systematic Country Diagnostic*.

³¹ IFPRI, "Democratic Republic of the Congo: Impacts of the Ukraine and Global Crisis on Poverty and Food Security."

³² U.S. Agency for Internal Development (USAID), "DRC – Agriculture and Food Security."

³³ International Trade Administration, "Congo, the Democratic Republic of the – Country Commercial Guide."

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ World Bank, *DRC Systematic Country Diagnostic*.

³⁶ IFPRI, *Democratic Republic of the Congo's Agrifood System: Structure and Drivers of Transformation*.

³⁷ African Union Development Agency-NEPAD (AUDA-NEPAD), "DRC."

³⁸ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), *Public expenditure on food and agriculture in sub-Saharan Africa*, 2021.

³⁹ Agricultural Science and Technology Indicators, "Agricultural R&D Indicators Factsheet: DRC, April 2017."

⁴⁰ Elan RDC, "Grains and Horticulture."

Quality seeds, fertilizer, and other inputs are inaccessible to smallholder farmers, even though they are available in-country. The lack of a clear legal framework for the seed sector and sustained budgetary support for seed institutions has caused unpredictability and inconsistency in the application of seed standards, resulting in poor quality seed for farmers. Producers in rural regions face similar challenges accessing affordable fertilizer. In fact, DRC was the country that used the least chemical fertilizer per hectare in the world as of 2012.⁴¹ Fertilizer consumption had quadrupled to 2.1 kg/ha by 2020 but remained just a fraction of SSA's regional average of 22.5 kg/ha.⁴² DRC's progress in increasing fertilizer consumption is now threatened by elevated and volatile fertilizer prices stemming from Putin's War in Ukraine.

Smallholder efforts to increase production and yields and become more profitable are often constrained by poorly functioning seed, fertilizer, and other input systems. Consequently, low productivity of DRC farmers results in crop yields well behind regional benchmarks. For example, average maize yields in the DRC are estimated at 0.77t per hectare compared to 2.00t/ha in Kenya.⁴³ In 2013, agricultural value added per DRC worker and in the cereal yield per hectare stood respectively at \$224 and 767 kilograms a year, compared with SSA averages of \$706 and 1,433 kilograms.⁴⁴ Smallholder productivity is limited by farmers' low capacity to address technical agricultural constraints, such as pests and disease, decreased soil fertility, inadequate transportation, packaging, and other pre-market services (particularly for staple crops).⁴⁵ The World Bank estimates the "DRC could double its agricultural GDP and increase its overall GDP by 23 percent simply by increasing crop yields to the level of neighboring countries in Central Africa."⁴⁶

However, increases in yields must coincide with complementary investments in post-production and delivery systems for smallholder farmers to profit. Farmers and agribusinesses often suffer from overwhelming post-harvest loss due to deficiencies in post-harvest infrastructure, technologies, and capacities. For women producers and entrepreneurs, these disparities are often greater. To avoid these losses, producers are sometimes compelled to offload their product in local markets at reduced prices, cutting into already razor-thin margins.⁴⁷ Greater access to insecticides, fit-for-purpose energy, and cold chain technology would do much to reduce the high levels of aflatoxins, disease, and pests that cause post-harvest loss, as would increased adoption of pre- and post-harvest biological control practices. By reducing post-harvest loss and increasing the supply of safe food that reaches end markets, farmers could drive down prices for consumers while also earning greater profits.

Equally important to increasing the profitability of agriculture, are efforts to increase agribusiness profitability by improving connections to regional and international markets and taking advantage of economies of scale are critical to the DRC's agricultural transformation.

In 2011, GoDRC committed to a target of 10% public expenditure on agriculture when it joined the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP).⁴⁸ The GoDRC made similarly ambitious commitments to increasing investments in agriculture under the 2014-2020 National

⁴¹ VOA News, "Project in DRC Aims to Increase Fertilizer Use," Jul 2012.

⁴² World Bank, "Data: Fertilizer consumption (kilograms per hectare of arable land) – Congo, Dem. Rep."

⁴³ Elan RDC, "Grains and Horticulture."

⁴⁴ World Bank, *DRC Systematic Country Diagnostic*.

⁴⁵ USAID, *Feed the Future Enabling Environment for Food Security Project*, "SeedCLIR: Democratic Republic of the Congo," Sep 2019.

⁴⁶ World Bank, *DRC Systematic Country Diagnostic*.

⁴⁷ USAID and Feed the Future, *Mid-Term Performance Evaluation of the Strengthening Value Chains (SVC) Activity in the Democratic Republic of the Congo*, Jan 2021.

⁴⁸ FAO, *Public expenditure on food and agriculture in sub-Saharan Africa*, 2021.

Agricultural Investment Plan (PNIA). PNIA was the national planning framework for public and external funds for agriculture and rural sector development.⁴⁹ The overall objective of the plan was to stimulate sustained annual growth of 6% in the agriculture sector. The Plan identified five priority areas - (1) promoting sustainable agriculture sectors; (2) improving management of food security, nutrition, and strategic reserves; (3) developing and disseminating agriculture research; (4) improving agricultural governance and integrating gender policy into plan implementation; and (5) reducing the vulnerability of the agriculture sector to climate change.⁵⁰

Implementation of PNIA's budget reforms was spotty, and GoDRC's investment levels never reached the ambitious targets set by the Plan. The agriculture sector nonetheless responded to the additional investment and grew 52% over the life of the Plan.⁵¹ GoDRC's current administration seeks to build on the successes of PNIA with the 2019-2024 National Development Plan (PNSD). The PNSD focuses on the role of agriculture as a catalyst for economic growth. Its medium-term objectives consist of five priority pillars, three of which are closely aligned with USAID/DRC's strategic priorities: Human and Social Capital Development, Good Governance and Peacebuilding, and Diversification and Transformation of the Economy.⁵²

The country's transport system is in a deplorable state: more than 2 million square kilometers of territory are connected by just 58,000 kilometers of road, of which only 5% is paved.⁵³ Remoteness due to poor road, rail, port, and transport infrastructure has demonstrable negative effects on agricultural diversification, farm-gate prices, and poverty reduction.⁵⁴

Access to power is another perennial brake on agricultural growth, as 90% of Congolese citizens are without electricity.⁵⁵ The poor and inconsistent supply of energy is a constraint on economic activity and disincentivizes investment in electrically powered machinery and equipment. Provision of reliable energy is also a prerequisite for post-harvest processing and cold chain development. DRC's lack of cold chain infrastructure contributes to substantial food loss and waste—as does lack of access to improved water sources. While the government's ambitious 2019-2024 National Development Plan (PNSD) aims to address infrastructure needs, the estimated cost of the plan is high at \$25 billion. GoDRC's costing of the Plan anticipates a financing gap of 56%, even with revenue projections that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has termed “unrealistic.”⁵⁶

Even with successful budget implementation of the PNSD, DRC will need to mobilize significant private capital to address the infrastructure deficit and other investment gaps in the agrifood system. Financial conditions have improved with DRC's strong recent economic performance, but financial markets are still thin. There are 16 commercial banks; five large microfinance institutions (102 total); 20 impact investors; and seven crowdfunding platforms operating in DRC. International investors are showing renewed interest in DRC because of its increased political stability, rising commodity prices, and

⁴⁹ GoDRC, *National Adaptation Plan to Climate Change (2022-2026)*.

⁵⁰ Global Hunger Index, “A Closer Look at Hunger and Undernutrition in Democratic Republic of the Congo - Country Case Studies,” Oct 2020.

⁵¹ World Bank, “Data: Agriculture, forestry, and fishing, value added (current US\$) - Congo, Dem. Rep.”

⁵² GoDRC, *Plan National Stratégique de Développement 2019-2023 (French)*, Oct 2021.

⁵³ World Bank, *DRC Systematic Country Diagnostic*.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ USAID, Tulane University, and Save the Children, *Interim Evaluation of the South Kivu Food Security Project (FSP)-Enyanya Resilience Food Security Activity in the Democratic Republic of the Congo*, May 2022.

⁵⁶ USAID, “DRC Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS), December 10, 2020 – December 9, 2025.”

economic integration into the East Africa Community (EAC) and African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA).^{57,58}

Foreign direct investment (FDI) has climbed since 2016, reaching \$1.68 billion in 2021.⁵⁹ But while FDI provides DRC with valuable foreign exchange, it has not contributed to broad-based economic growth because most foreign investment is drawn to the profitable commodities sector.

Agribusinesses have struggled to compete with extractive industries for financing, especially as metal and mineral prices have surged in recent years. Most private sector entities in agriculture are MSMEs, which are not attractive to large financial institutions, and microfinance models are too small and their duration too short - not covering a full cropping season - to be impactful in this market niche. There is an estimated funding gap for SMEs in the DRC of \$9.3 billion. Local financial institutions perceive lending to SMEs as risky and require collateral as high as 200% of the loan amount. Interest rates are high, with commercial loans averaging 27% for loans in local currency and 16% for loans in foreign currency in 2019.⁶⁰ The rates for microfinance loans run 30-60% per year. While agriculture accounts for 19% of GDP,⁶¹ only 2% of bank loans are dedicated to the agricultural sector in 2018.⁶²

Policy challenges abound in DRC. According to the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), DRC ranks in the 17th percentile for regulatory quality.⁶³ Minimal policy coordination at the central and provincial levels has created a patchwork of regulations that increase the cost of doing business. Arable land in DRC is abundant and relatively accessible, but land ownership is disorganized and use rights are unclear. Additionally, the DRC's land registry systems have not been updated with the technology, tools, and data needed to clarify land ownership claims and issue official title documents.⁶⁴ A 2008 study found that an estimated 77% of residents from and around Kinshasa reportedly owned their own plots, but only 30% had rights recognized under formal law.⁶⁵

DRC's complex and opaque regulatory framework has enabled pervasive corruption. Indeed, DRC scored just 19 out of 100 on Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), making it one of the most corrupt countries in the world. Eighty percent of DRC citizens reported having to pay a bribe for public services in the previous 12 months.⁶⁶ Unsurprisingly, reforms that address corruption and other aspects of elite capture face strong resistance from public officials and various public and private interest groups benefiting from market distortions and/or other special privileges.⁶⁷ Significant progress has nonetheless been made under recent GoDRC administrations through legislating reform of the private sector, although implementation has not kept pace with legislation.⁶⁸ There is growing political will for change and increased alignment among actors on market-friendly policy that attracts foreign investment and allows the private sector to prosper. President Felix Tshisekedi and his pro-U.S.

⁵⁷ KCB Group, "KCB Group Shareholders, Approve Proposed Trust Merchant Bank SA (TMB) Acquisition," Sep 2022.

⁵⁸ Equity, "Equity Group Holdings Completes Acquisition of Majority Stake in Banque Commerciale Du Congo (BCDC)."

⁵⁹ World Bank, "Data: Foreign direct investment, net inflows (BoP, current US\$) – Congo, Dem. Rep."

⁶⁰ USAID, "USAID's DRC Investment Facilitation Activity: Capital Map Report."

⁶¹ World Bank, "Data: Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing, Value Added (% of GDP)."

⁶² Making Finance Work for Africa, "Financial Sector Overview - Democratic Republic of the Congo."

⁶³ Millennium Challenge Corporation, "Scorecard - Congo, Dem. Rep. FY23".

⁶⁴ Cities Alliance, "DRC: Using Drones to Improve Land Tenure and Empower Women," Sep 2020.

⁶⁵ USAID LandLinks, "Country Profiles – Democratic Republic of Congo."

⁶⁶ Transparency International, "Corruption Perceptions Index."

⁶⁷ World Bank, *DRC Systematic Country Diagnostic*.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

administration have expressed a strong commitment to pursuing progressive, socially responsible reforms, including economic reform of the agriculture sector.

Programming Landscape

In 2021, DRC received \$3.34 billion in net official development assistance (ODA).⁶⁹ The UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported \$1.11 billion in humanitarian aid for the same period, of which the United States Government contributed \$465.8 million.⁷⁰ By comparison, DRC received \$1.7 billion in FDI in 2021⁷¹. According to OECD data, humanitarian and development assistance now accounts for 40% of all DRC's resource inflows, and net ODA for 2021 was equal to 6.8% of GNI.^{72,73}

USAID/DRC Mission oversees a large, multisectoral portfolio with over \$1.020 billion in total mission budget in fiscal year 2022. Outside of humanitarian assistance funds, the Health (\$233 million) and Environment (\$49.5 million) sectors have the most in programmed funds, followed by Education (\$27.5 million), Peace and Security (\$21.8 million), Economic Growth (\$22 million), and Democracy, Rights and Governance (\$20.2 million).

The Bureau for Humanitarian Affairs also provides \$400-500 million each year to respond to emergency needs. The next phase of multi-year Resilience and Food Security Activities (RFSAs) are estimated to total \$317 million. In addition to FY 2022 programmed funds, USAID/DRC received \$37 million in Ukraine emergency supplemental funding (approximately \$13 million for Health and \$24 million for agriculture-related programming).

Although humanitarian and development aid has played a critical role in DRC by filling gaps in consumption and investment, the aid industry has in some places “become a key player in the Congolese economy and an attractive market segment for businesses.”⁷⁴ For example, the African Seed Access Index (TASAI) reports that in 2016 ‘seed sales to the [humanitarian] relief market accounted for 22% of total maize sales, 40% of total rice sales, 72% of total bean sales and 41% of total soya bean sales.’⁷⁵ While progress has been made by the humanitarian community to consider market dynamics in their activities and to limit market distortion, more effort is needed to escape the state of protracted crisis and rebuild independent and functioning markets—an important aspect of Feed the Future programming.⁷⁶

Feed the Future aims to be catalytic in its approach to investments in the agriculture sector, not only producing change that is sustainable and climate-smart,⁷⁷ but pursuing interventions that have the

⁶⁹ World Bank, “Data: Net official development assistance received (constant 2020 US\$) - Congo, Dem. Rep.”

⁷⁰ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Financial Tracking Services, “République Démocratique du Congo Plan de Réponse Humanitaire 2021.”

⁷¹ World Bank, “Data: Foreign direct investment, net inflows (BoP, current US\$) – Congo, Dem. Rep.”

⁷² World Bank, “Data: Net ODA received (% of GNI) - Congo, Dem. Rep.”

⁷³ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Statistics.

⁷⁴ Diane Bommart and Kim Beevers, *Changing Aid Industry Norms: Applying the Market Systems Development Approach to the DRC's Aid Industry*, Jul 2019.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Our Mission FtF ZOI scoping visits found that many smallholder farmers in DRC are already dealing with difficulties regarding an increased frequency of drought, flooding, disease/pests, and shifting agricultural seasons, due to climate change. Addressing these concerns is of a high priority and inherent in our efforts to achieve FtF objectives. Climate-smart solutions, such as off-grid clean energy, soil building practices, IPM and the use of resilient/resistant planting materials, will be actively promoted.

potential to scale rapidly. Current activities that align with Feed the Future's focus on inclusive agriculture-led growth, resilience building, and nutritious diets, will become a part of Feed the Future programming, which provides additional opportunities to sequence, layer, and integrate activities with BHA investments. The rich variety of USAID programming in the DRC offers diverse opportunities for cross-sectoral collaboration and potential tie-ins for Feed the Future programming with ongoing agriculture activities, including market systems and private sector development within the coffee sector, agriculture pest and disease prevention and control, and livelihood and resilience strengthening.

- The \$24.7 million Strengthening Value Chains⁷⁸ activity in South Kivu province applied a nutrition sensitive market systems development approach to accelerate nutritional crop (dry beans and soybeans) and specialty coffee value chain development.
- The \$14 million Gorilla Coffee Alliance, co-financed by USAID, Nespresso and Olam food ingredients (Ofi) to, works to revitalize the high-end Arabica coffee value chain in South Kivu Province.⁷⁹
- The \$6.6 million Cassava Brown Streak Disease (CBSD) activity develops and promotes the dissemination of appropriate cassava varieties and disease control technologies across multiple provinces⁸⁰.
- The \$17 million Fall Armyworm (FAW) activity is increasing maize yields for farmers across multiple provinces⁸¹ by promoting improved pest and disease management and agricultural practices.
- The \$10 million Market Systems and Partnerships (MSP) buy-in activity - Market Systems and Partnerships: Smallholder & Women Producer Organization's Access to Markets (ACCESS) utilizes co-financing with agribusinesses in multiple provinces to establish sustained markets for a diversity of staple and commodity value chains.
- The \$18 million Feed the Future Strengthening Livelihoods and Resilience activity in Ituri province is promoting cultivation of staple and cash crops while promoting land security.
- The \$12.6 million Investment Facilitation (INVEST) has built a pipeline of more than 300 companies for targeted investment-facilitation and private sector engagement in agriculture.
- The \$10 million East Africa Economic Recovery and Reform Activity is strengthening DRC's regional and international market integration through improved trade policy implementation.
- The \$20 million USAID, U.S DFC and SIDA (Swedish International Development Agency) Loan portfolio Guarantee supports lending to Congolese MSMEs including in Agriculture and Energy.
- The ongoing designing USAID, U.S DFC Microfinance project will support Congolese Microfinance institutions with loan and /Loan Portfolio Guarantee to increase their capacities and resources to expand lending to Congolese MSMEs including farmers groups, agribusinesses and energy actors in rural area.

Within the agriculture sector writ large, the Mission's strategic partners include the National Agency for the Promotion of Investments (ANAPI), the National Institute of Agricultural Study and Research

⁷⁸ The SVC Activity ended in September 2022.

⁷⁹ USAID linked coffee cooperatives with international buyers resulting in an increase in small holder farmers' cooperatives from 500 in 2020 to 20,000 at the end of 2022.

⁸⁰ CBSD covered the provinces of Kongo-Central, Kasai-Oriental, Lomami, Tshopo, Haut-Katanga, and Sud-Kivu.

⁸¹ FAW operates in Katanga, Tanganyika, South Kivu, and the Kasai provinces, with anticipation to expand geographic scope in 2023.

(INERA), the Agriculture and Rural Management Council (CARG) within the Provincial Ministries of Agriculture and Rural Development, as well as various importers, cooperatives, unions, credit organizations, producer organizations, agricultural processors, farm colleges, youth groups, technical service providers, and community savings groups. Given large cuts to the UK's official development assistance, the European Union and Belgium are now the only other large bilateral donors in the agriculture sector outside of the United States. The World Bank and African Development Bank comprise DRC's main multilateral donors.⁸²

Regarding nutrition, USAID/DRC enjoys close relationships with more than 40 donors and implementing partners—primarily under the national Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) effort. Stakeholders specialize in nutrition focus areas such as infant and young child feeding, micronutrient supplementation, management of acute malnutrition, food and agriculture, WASH, and social protection. The Mission coordinates with Canada, Japan, UNICEF, the World Bank, the Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office (FCDO), and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation to achieve SUN objectives.⁸³

USAID/DRC leverages private sector partnerships with domestic and foreign actors to maximize the reach, impact, and longevity of interventions. Coordinated engagement with DRC's burgeoning middle and entrepreneurial class is critical for supporting market systems that improve the quality of and access to food, nutrition, WASH, health, education, natural resource management, and crisis response.⁸⁴

Alignment with interested foreign companies allows USAID/DRC to make complementary investments that enhance the inclusivity and durability of development gains. The Mission has signed memorandums of understanding (MOUs) with Nespresso, Olam Food Group, a regional bank, as well as the Public Private Alliance for Responsible Minerals Trade with major U.S. firms, including Google, Intel, Microsoft, and Apple.⁸⁵

DRC's large international donor community and burgeoning private sector offer many opportunities for USAID/DRC to co-create, sequence, and integrate activities with partners. USAID/DRC aims to use its convening power, technical capabilities, and large programming footprint to provide leadership on the issue of food security and nutrition to coordinate action across a diverse partnership landscape. Within this context, USAID is best positioned vis-a-vis other donors to make catalytic investments that deliver meaningful and enduring result

⁸² USAID, CDCS – Democratic Republic of Congo, 2020-2025.

⁸³ USAID, DRC Multisectoral Nutrition Action Plan.

⁸⁴ USAID, DRC CDCS 2020-2025.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

B. Geographic Targeting

The Mission utilized multiple sources to identify the Zone of Influence (ZOI), including the RFS-provided tool to identify potential implementation areas; comprehensive desk review; field visits to identified regions; stakeholder consultations; and internal USG and external GoDRC and partner consultations. Insights from these lines of inquiry were considered in conjunction with anticipated levels of Feed the Future funding and BHA RFSA areas to finalize selection of the ZOI.

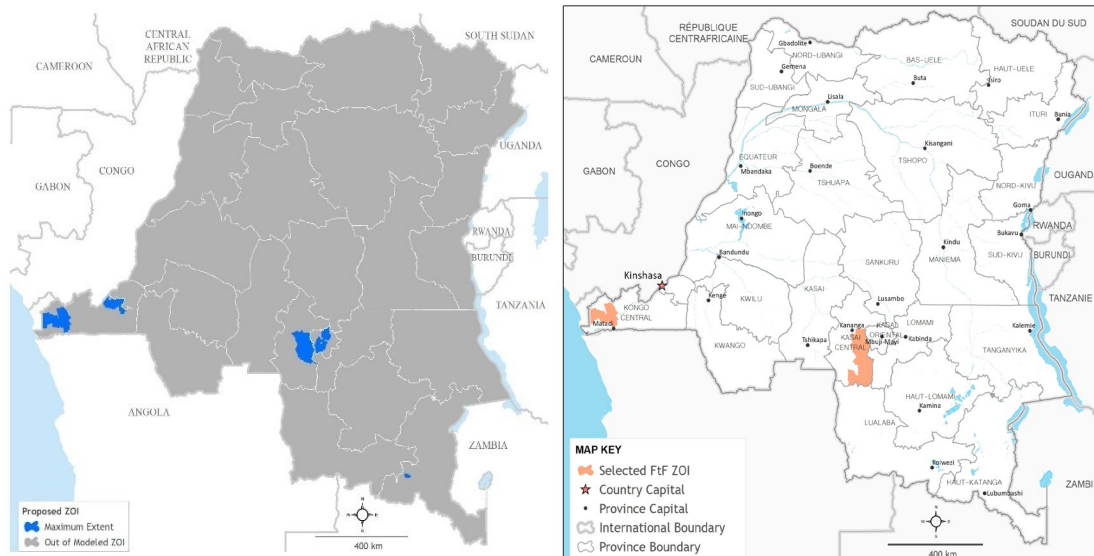


Figure 1: Feed the Future Zone of Influence (ZOI) Map for DRC

Image of the potential Zone of Influence map identified by the Resilience Food Security-provided tool on the left, while the map on the right shows the image of final Zone of Influence identified by Mission review and resource allocation.

The above map (left) suggests a maximum area that would be suitable for a Zone of Influence in DRC. This area was selected by mission analysis and criteria using the RFS-provided tool to support ZOI selection, prioritizing the four primary criteria outlined in the GFSS Country Plan Guidance: potential for sustainable impact, opportunities for agriculture-led growth, level of need, and right-sizing for budget and approach. Areas with the highest level of need were identified by combining subnational data on poverty, malnutrition, and hunger.^{86, 87, 88} Opportunities for agriculture-led growth were calculated by combining subnational data on RFS priority farming systems, the ratio of yield achievement to yield potential, and mission-provided agriculture opportunity and market access data.^{89, 90} Finally, in order to right-size for budget and approach, the tool calculated the maximum population where Feed the Future will contribute to reducing extreme poverty and stunting with an anticipated \$100 million over the next 5 years. This calculation relies on a cost per beneficiary approach based on findings from *The Global Cost*

⁸⁶ Guanghua Chi, Han Fang, Sourav Chatterjee, and Joshua E. Blumenstock, "Microestimates of wealth for all low- and middle-income countries," *National Library of Medicine (NIH)*, Jan 2022.

⁸⁷ Local Burden of Disease Child Growth Failure Collaborators, "Mapping child growth failure across low- and middle-income countries. 2019 Stunting Estimates," *Nature*, Jan 2020.

⁸⁸ World Food Programme, "Hunger Map Live."

⁸⁹ John Dixon et al., *Farming Systems and Food Security in Africa: Priorities for Science and Policy Under Global Change*, Dec 2019.

⁹⁰ FAO and International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA), "Global-Agro Ecological Zones version 4."

of *Reaching a World Without Hunger: Investment Costs and Policy Action Opportunities* and estimates the least cost to reduce poverty, hunger, and malnutrition.⁹¹

The USAID/DRC mission prioritized contiguous territories within established market corridors, or stand-alone territories in close proximity to large regional markets within existing Resilience Focus Zones (RFZs). The rationality for this prioritization was based on the assumption that such territories will have a higher probability of success in achieving poverty and malnutrition reduction goals due to a combination of the economic benefits derived from market pull with complementary investments and interventions by BHA and by potential private sector investment. The areas identified by the RFS-provided ZOI-selection tool were various territories in the provinces of Kongo Central, Kasai Oriental, Kasai Central, Haut-Katanga, and Lualaba. While these areas individually represent significant opportunities for agriculture-led economic growth that can drive reductions in food insecurity and poverty, additional analyses were undertaken to determine feasibility and to right-size the ZOI.

Mission-Selected and Validated Zone of Influence

In March 2023, the USAID/DRC mission deployed economic growth office technical staff to suggested regions to engage in scoping studies and issue mapping, as a means to validate the final Feed the Future ZOI selection.⁹² The team completed in-person key informant interviews with responses and available data scored according to alignment with potential Feed the Future program goals across 6 main criteria: operational context; constraints and identified needs; available resources; partnership interest; growth potential; and operational risk.⁹³ Scoring and subsequent internal validation discussions have led to final mission selection as identified in the map above on the right, to include one set of contiguous territories in the province of Kongo Central (Seke-Banza and Lukula); and a second continuous set made up of a territory in the province of Kasai Central (Dibaya), and two health zones from the adjoining territory of Luiza (Masuika and Yangala) where BHA resilience programing will take place.

Across this ZOI, the estimated population in 2026 will be about 2,330,000 million. If the cost of implementation was the same in the DRC compared to the global average, the ZOI could be as large as 3.7 million people, according to the RFS-provided tool to support ZOI selection. However, when considering a variety of implementation cost factors (elevated fixed-cost prices in DRC contracts; high travel costs; significantly higher expat and key personnel costs), combined with basic market research (significantly higher commodity costs and price of USAID Local Compensation Packages compared to the region), the mission assumes the cost of operations in the DRC to be two to three times higher than the global average. In recognition of this, the mission opted to select a ZOI with a population size approximately 37% lower than the maximum number of beneficiaries recommended by the tool, which bases its modeling on the global average.

Within the selected ZOI of Seke-Banza, Lukula, Dibaya, Masuika, and Yangala, the stunting rate averages 40%, and the poverty rate is approximately 79%, with these metrics most severe in Masuika, with

⁹¹ Bezawit Chichaibelu et al., “The Global Cost of Reaching a World Without Hunger: Investment Costs and Policy Action Opportunities,” *NIH*, Jan 2023.

⁹² USAID/DRC Feed the Future ZOI Scoping visits 2023.

⁹³ 1) **Operational Context**; major value chains (VCs), stakeholders, supportive institutions, Livelihoods, access to finance, inputs, seed system, extension, logistics, post-harvest, processing/transformation, marketing and commercialization, etc.; 2) **Identified needs**; gaps or constraints to growth, investment, or formalization of the agriculture sector that facilitates improved production, access, and affordability of locally produced food; 3) **Resources available for Feed the Future aligned programming**; in the form of partnership potential, enabling environment, human or social capital, or agriculture opportunity; 4) **Partnership interest**; willingness to collaborate/coordinate on Feed the Future aligned programming; 5) **Growth potential**; potential or capacity to expand production, job creation, or reach out to smallholders with services or resources that improve production or standards of living; 6) **Operational risks**; showstoppers or concerns that might inhibit coordinative efforts or programmatic success.

stunting rates of 47% and poverty rates of 83.1%. To accomplish a 20% reduction in stunting and poverty rates, and in consideration of the elevated uncertainty and cost of doing business in the DRC, Feed the Future resources must be combined with complimentary investments if the sought after changes in the ZOI are to be realized.

Dibaya, Masuika, and Yangala, where the level of change needed is substantial in comparison to any province in the DRC, fall within the Mission's RFZ and planned BHA resilience and food security investments in this area will be essential to achieving success. Complimentary USAID health investments in WASH and clinics, governance activities addressing market constraints and potential PowerAfrica investments in microgrids will also support program outcomes. In addition, planned investments by the United Kingdom's development agency (FCDO) in agriculture finance offers excellent opportunities for cooperation, and current European Union paving of a critical trunk road transecting the ZOI will be a force-multiplier in driving agriculture market growth once completed.

To achieve the sought after level of change in Kongo Central where development partner investments are significantly less, greater emphasis will be placed on developing strong private sector partnerships and co-investment in areas of aligned values as the driver for change. With its close proximity to the large urban center and market of Kinshasa, and given the presence of strong formal enterprise investment in food systems within the region, the mission is confident that the desired level of change is achievable.

Based on current budget projections and the leveraging opportunities referenced above, Feed the Future programming in the DRC can expect to reduce poverty for approximately 367,612 individuals within the selected ZOI over a 5-year period.⁹⁴

Description of the Selected ZOI

The proposed ZOI represents three territories and two health zones in two geographically distinct regions, covering two major market corridors in the DRC. Specifically, the selected ZOI captures market flows of agricultural goods and services 1) between the Kasais and mining communities or market towns in Haut-Katanga; and 2) along the western corridor connecting Kongo Central, Kwilu, Kwango, and Kinshasa, inclusive of other large cities near the coast, Congo River, and Angolan border.

In both selected economic regions, high production costs and fragmented market relationships between producers, aggregators, transporters, and retailers prevent farmers from sustainably intensifying production. Inefficiencies in the value chain, low agricultural yields and high crop-loss result in a significant gap between production and local demand. Lack of high-quality certified seeds, inputs, and capital stifle production levels and result in yields that are low by both regional and global standards. Feed the Future is well positioned to address these challenges, and there is tremendous potential to increase incomes, employment and entrepreneurship throughout the agri-food system and increase the availability and consumption of safe and nutritious food in selected territories.

The major market corridors in DRC connect the country's major population centers (most notably Kinshasa, Lubumbashi, Mbuji-Mayi, Bukavu, and Kisangani). Working in the selected ZOI allows for program activities to align strongly with these southern and western market corridors connecting Kinshasa, Mbuji-Mayi, and Lubumbashi. Providing catalytic programming into existing market flows opens the possibility of significant multiplier effects. Market system improvements made in the southern corridor will have a complementary impact on USAID's programming in the RFSA Zone in Kasai Central by improving the market access for both agriculture inputs and produce.

⁹⁴ To reduce poverty by 20% in the proposed ZOI.

Description of the Selected ZOI In Relation to Other Priority Geographies

The selected ZOI aligns and provides complementary support in the Mission's priority geographies. With a ZOI close to the capital, each part of the non-contiguous ZOI will complement one another through national level policy change and reform, as well as FTF national level investments in trade and finance facilitation. As the appetite of government and the private sector to engage with donors is stronger in Kongo Central, work in this part of the ZOI will provide proof of concept that is transferable to an emerging market environment, including Dibaya, Masuika, and Yangala.

Alignment with the RFZs

The central market corridor in the selected ZOI aligns with the RFZs and new RFSA geographies (Kasai, Kasai-Central, Kasai-Oriental). Coordinating development resources with humanitarian assistance (HA) and peace partners will be a critical aspect of our approach to strengthening resilience and reducing conflict in the FTF ZOIs and RFZs more broadly. Directly sequencing, layering, and integrating with RFSA programming in Dibaya, Masuika, and Yangala, Feed the Future will follow market systems principles to position activities and interventions to most effectively facilitate market functioning within these regions in close coordination with RFSA and humanitarian programming.

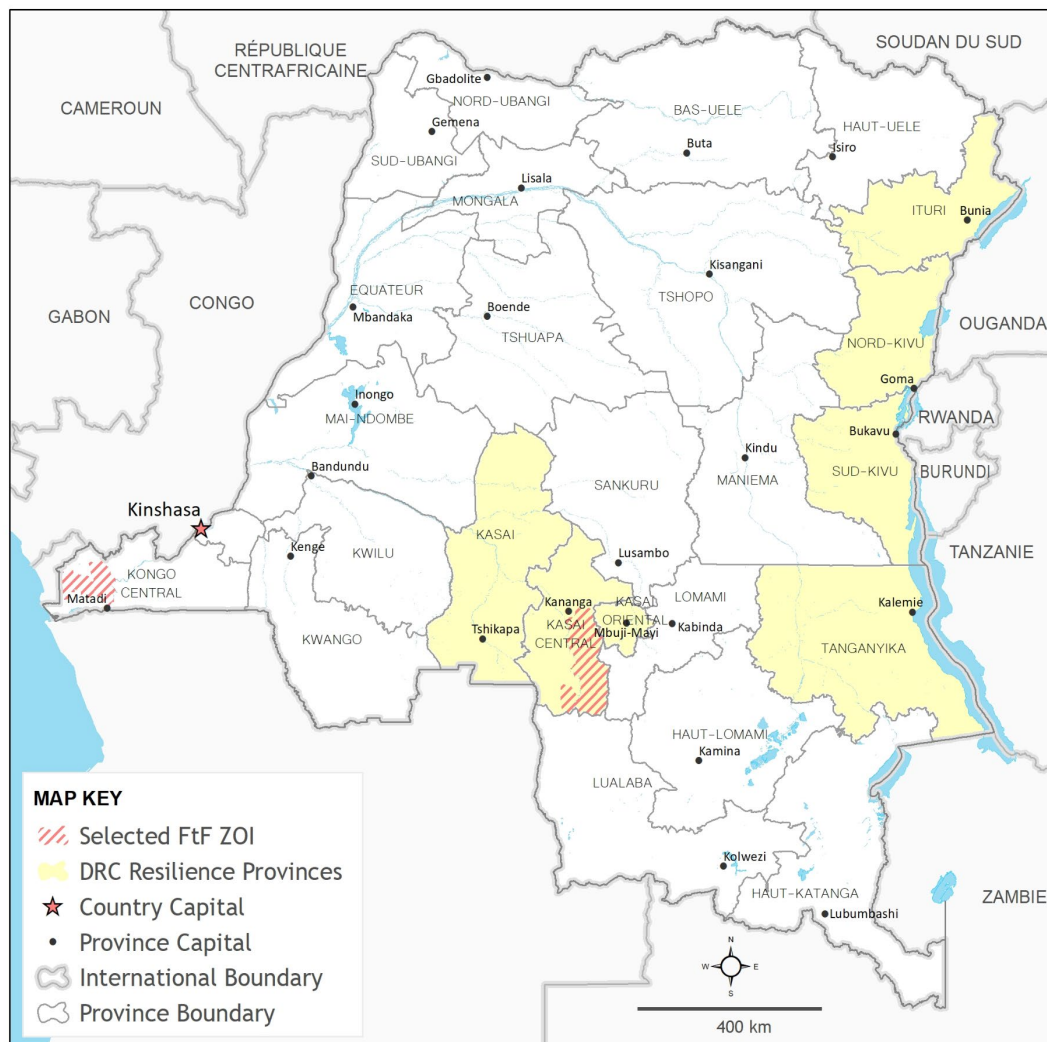


Figure 2: Image of overlap map between Feed the Future selected zone of influence and resilience provinces in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Alignment with Nutrition Programming

The USAID Health Office will make an intentional effort to program its current and any new nutrition activities in collaboration with the GFSS country plan. Efforts to align geographic targeting will be made and currently nutrition programming is in the process of designing the next phase of their household nutrition program (Integrated Health Program (IHP)) which are intended to have complimentary priorities and geographies with both the RFZs, RSFAs, and this proposed FtF ZOI. Nutrition efforts focus on the delivery of quality, integrated services to sustainably improve the health status and nutrition outcomes of the Congolese population. While there have been successes in nutrition programming through IHP and Momentum Integrated Health Resilience (MIHR), these activities also are impacted by the lack of safe and nutritious food in the markets, poor infrastructure, a fragmented supply chain for both nutritional inputs and agricultural goods, a lack of technical and managerial capacity at the provincial level contributing to poor governance of the food system, and inability to get information out to those in need.

Aligned to CDCS

The CDCS recognizes the ability and endurance of some local institutions that have potential to catalyze development in specific sectors and regions and recommends engaging them in program design and implementation. The selected ZOI allows the Feed the Future program to engage directly with several of such anchor institutions. It will allow for close connection not only with health sector anchor institutions, but also strong alignment and collaboration with complementary nutrition programming. Similarly, the selected ZOIs align well with planned and active BHA (RFZs), DRG, Health and Education programming and local or domestic anchor institutions.

Alignment with Other USG-Investments

Current and ongoing agriculture sector interventions in eastern DRC will continue through the end of their respective periods of performance. This will allow continued mission investment in agriculture development while new programming is designed and awarded in the ZOI proposed under this Country Plan. Additionally, activities with the flexibility to pivot to at least partial implementation within the new ZOI—access to finance interventions, for example—will begin doing so under their respective FY 2024 work plans.

In addition to alignment with BHA's resilience programming, the Mission seeks to leverage a suite of multi-sectoral programs integrating WASH, conservation, energy, governance, health, education, extractive industries and humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding to achieve FTF objectives. Current USG investments in Kongo Central include Democracy and Governance (DRG) in addition to current active efforts in Ag-focused programming, access to finance, and agriculture pest/disease management. In the Kasais, humanitarian aid, health, WASH, and education programming additionally complement these investments.

As the Integrated Health Program (IHP) phases out, the Feed the Future team will be intimately involved in Health Office new program designs ensuring a more concerted effort at tackling poor nutrition and disease burden from repeated but preventable illnesses within the ZOI. Democracy and Governance Programming in the ZOI will also be critical for fostering community governance platforms engaging in policy-reform and agriculture sector enabling reforms. As the FTF objectives are ambitious and as the operating environment of the DRC is complex and challenging, the mission intends to “crowd-in” this diversity investments.

Feed the Future Zone of Influence: Kongo Central (Lukula and Seke-Banza Territories)

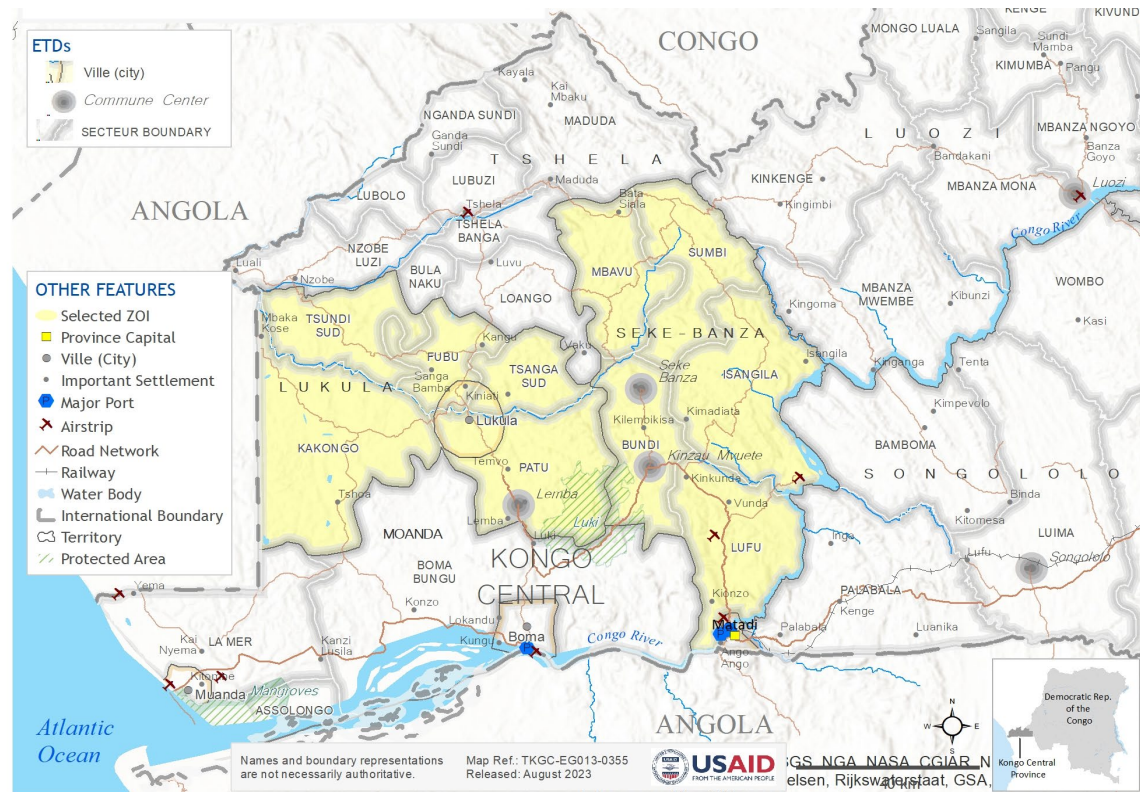


Figure 3: Image of Feed the Future selected zone of influence map in Kongo Central

Poverty: 64.5% | Stunting: 28.4% (Seke-Banza) 29.2% (Lukula) | Combined Population: 538,816

Predominant Value Chains: horticulture, cassava, maize, peanuts, rice, yams, cowpea, banana, palm oil, cacao, and coffee.

Agriculture Context

The territories of Lukula and Seke-Banza were once known for the Mayumbe forest, but decades of charcoal production and shifting agriculture have left a fraction of the original forest cover intact. These mountainous territories are now characterized by pockets of forest surrounded by rain-fed agriculture. Kongo Central is known nationally for its agricultural production, but it has been affected by various factors that contribute to widespread food insecurity and poverty. The agro-pastoral area of the province is 2,050,000 ha, of which only 10% is used for agricultural production. The province is home to an estimated 740,000 agricultural households and 400 agricultural producer associations. Eighty percent of materials for propagation (seeds, plantlings, cuttings, etc.) used by rural farmers are sourced from other farmers and not from formal seed systems resulting in low yields and poor-quality produce.⁹⁵

Agriculture in this region is primarily rain-fed. A prolonged rainy season largely hinders the transportation of products to market; most feeder roads are in a state of disrepair, forcing producers and aggregators to wait for the dry season when roads are passable to move product. Post-harvest storage is limited, and few households use or have access to modern crop storage technology, resulting in significant crop loss and food safety concerns. Along the main road (RNI) from Kinshasa to Tshela

⁹⁵ IPAPL, Province du Kongo Central Inspection Provinciale de L'agriculteur Développement de La Chaîne de Valeurs Agricole, 2021.

there are about 30 consolidation points for agricultural products, with warehouses along RNI serving as safeguarding points for 50 or so marketing centers, ten of which were built with the help of technical and development partners.⁹⁶

Large and medium-sized operations in Kongo Central process sugarcane, palm oil, rice, cassava, maize, and sesame. Associative and individual feed mills and other small processors generally specialize in fish feed production, rice and coffee husking, and palm oil extraction. Individual cassava and maize mills, bakeries, and semi-industrial and domestic pastry shops are scattered throughout the province's main urban centers. There is no capacity for canning agriculture products, but cold storage facilities are available in Kikonka, Madimba; Minkelo, Songololo; and Mbanza Ngungu despite the unreliable and low quality electricity supply.⁹⁷

Goats, sheep, and pigs make up the majority of livestock kept by households. There is substantial demand for fresh fish in urban areas, but difficulties with cold chain often prevent local production from reaching this market.

There is a strong private sector presence in Seke-Banza and Lukula, with entrepreneurs, processors, and small agribusinesses engaging both individually and cooperatively in small-scale agricultural production and artisanal processing. Capacity, quality, and resources vary greatly across the private sector landscape. Common constraints include lack of access to capital, high quality seeds and other inputs; lack of market-readiness (e.g., business planning and acumen, product commercialization, and ability to meet quality standards), infrastructure-related limitations (roads, water, energy, etc.), and land titling concerns that disincentivize investment in sustainable intensification.

The strong private sector presence is complemented by a responsive government with a stated interest in reforming the agricultural sector. This is particularly significant in Kongo Central, where provincial government authorities enjoy a close relationship with the national government and are seen as a role model by other provincial governments. Kongo Central thus presents a unique opportunity to influence national policy and to make improvements to the business enabling environment with the potential for far-reaching effects for food and agricultural market systems.

Malnutrition and Stunting

There are various factors contributing to malnutrition and stunting in Kongo Central, including skipped meals; low dietary diversity; limited access to healthcare; poor sanitation and hygiene; and low levels of household income. Poor health and sanitation infrastructure contributes to malnutrition and stunting and, in households without running water, children are more likely to be anemic and stunted. According to the 2021 Global Report on Food Crises, an estimated 1.8 million people in the DRC were facing severe food insecurity—this includes Kongo Central province.⁹⁸ Seke-Banza and Lukula are regularly classified within the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) between Phase 2 (Stressed) and Phase 3 (Crisis) with portions of the population experiencing high levels of acute food insecurity. The report highlighted the impact of conflict and displacement on food security in the broader region, as well as the limited access to basic services and weak market linkages. The prevalence of stunting in children under five years of age in Seke-Banza and Lukula was reported to be 28 and 29%, respectively, and in children aged 6–23 months, just eight percent receive a minimum acceptable diet. The disease burden of malaria, respiratory infections, and preventable diseases additionally exacerbates poor health outcomes in children and an increased prevalence of stunting and malnutrition.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Food Security Information and Network and Global Network Against Food Crises, *2021 Global Report on Food Crises*.

the falling interest and investment in mining and other extractive industries, which had driven the economy in the 1980s. Secondary livelihoods include livestock, fishing, and exploitation of forest resources or non-timber forest products (NTFP).⁹⁹

The basis of food security is cassava, since cassava can be conserved in the ground past maturity, depending on the humidity of the soil. Despite this, maize has become the most important crop in the province due to shifts in eating habits resulting from cassava-related disease and pests. Most crops are rainfed and mechanization is low, though some producers may rent tractor services, although the rising costs of fuel has made this expense a luxury in recent years. Most land is untitled, with land tenure often governed by customary law. Contradictions between customary and formal law result in land disputes which are quite common and legal proceedings can be burdensome for provincial authorities.

Constraints to agriculture production and marketing include a non-functioning seed system, lack of access to high-quality inputs (fertilizer, pesticide, tools), underutilization of finance, and untapped water for irrigation. The seed system in the province is fragmented and poor, with INERA reporting that only 5% of farmers had access to improved seeds in 2015. Though precipitation in the region is sufficient to support crop production, erratic rainfall patterns in recent years have altered the traditional planting calendar. Access to technical assistance is weak or non-existent, as extension services are underfunded. Farmers lack access to capital for inputs, seeds, and labor ahead of the planting season due to the dearth of financial institutions, which commonly see agriculture as a high-risk sector with poor profitability.

Most households have some kind of livestock, with the more common being goats, sheep, poultry, and pigs as opposed to cattle. Despite the potential for cattle production, few households manage a herd due to bovine-related diseases and a lack of animal health services. The region had been well known for their production of high-quality goat meat, though their numbers have been severely reduced in recent years due to disease. River fishing supplements other food production efforts, and freshwater eels that are smoked or dried are sent as far as Kinshasa.

Despite ongoing EU efforts to pave a primary trunk road through the region, trade connections are weak with few export commodities, and the region is often referred to as regionally isolated from major trade. This is due to weak and fragmented infrastructure (both rail and road infrastructure), as well as the high cost of transport, which makes the region heavily dependent on air delivery of goods. Lack of transportation access remains a constraint for local and regional markets, broadly stifling economic dynamism. Recent price increases for fuel due to Russia's war in Ukraine have provided additional concerns for trade logistics, and the lack of post-harvest technologies available has resulted in enormous crop loss.

The regional main markets include the provincial capitals of Mbuji-Mayi and Kananga, which are connected by roads and used to transport goods by modified-bicycle, motorcycle, and vehicle (when fuel can be acquired). When transport is possible by water and railway, some goods and commodity crops can reach the southern corridor, such as Kolwezi and Lubumbashi through Likasi. The Southern market in return sends maize and limestone back to the Kasais.

Malnutrition and Stunting

The territory of Dibaya and the two health zones of Masuika and Yangala are classified by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) Phase 3 (Crisis) based on 45% of the total population experiencing high levels of acute food insecurity.¹⁰⁰ A total of 42.6% of children under the age of five are stunted in Dibaya with food demand generally exceeding supply and production in this region. The

⁹⁹ USAID, "USAID Office of Food for Peace Food Security Desk Review for Kasai Occidental and Kasai Oriental, Democratic Republic of Congo," 2015.

¹⁰⁰ IPC, Democratic Republic of the Congo: Acute Food Insecurity Situation Project Update for January-June 2023.

stunting rate for Masuika and Yangala are 47% and 44%, respectively. Local food prices fluctuate throughout the year and are influenced by several factors, including the high cost of production and transportation, which are passed on to the consumer. Nationally, the mortality rate in DRC for children under five is the eighth worst globally, with Kasai Central having the sixth highest among provinces nationally.¹⁰¹ This is in part due to the poor nutritional status of children in this region which raises the risk of mortality and stunting, illness, and infections, and delayed cognitive and physical development. Unfortunately, fragmented nutrition and health services make it difficult to prevent adverse lifelong health, education, and productivity outcomes resultant of chronic malnutrition.

The risk of stunting in Kasai Central is a result of poor nutrition and the high disease burden from repeated preventable illnesses such as diarrhea, fever, and acute respiratory infections. Malaria is prevalent among 30% of children under five and is among the highest of DRC's provinces. Furthermore, the lack of reliable electricity and cold chains has made it difficult to preserve vaccines and essential medicines. In addition to fragmented healthcare services, low water and adequate sanitation facility access and hygiene practices (only half of the population have access to improved water sources) exacerbate poor community health outcomes.

¹⁰¹ Global Hunger Index, "DRC: A Closer Look at Hunger and Undernutrition," Oct 2020.

C. Results Framework

C.I Results Framework Figure

In DRC, FtF programming will strengthen food systems within the ZOI to more efficiently produce, market and deliver safe and nutritious food. Working through the private sector and in partnership with the public sector, FtF programming will advocate for agriculture sector policy reform, and leverage market-based approaches to create an enabling environment that facilitates MSME formalization and incentivises new market entrants, boosting circular agribusiness investment across the food system. It is important to note that approximately 77% of the population within the ZOI reside within a resilience focus zone, 39% in close proximity to a newly awarded BHA resilience and food security activity, and that the majority of FtF resources will be allocated to the RFZ located in Kasai Central.

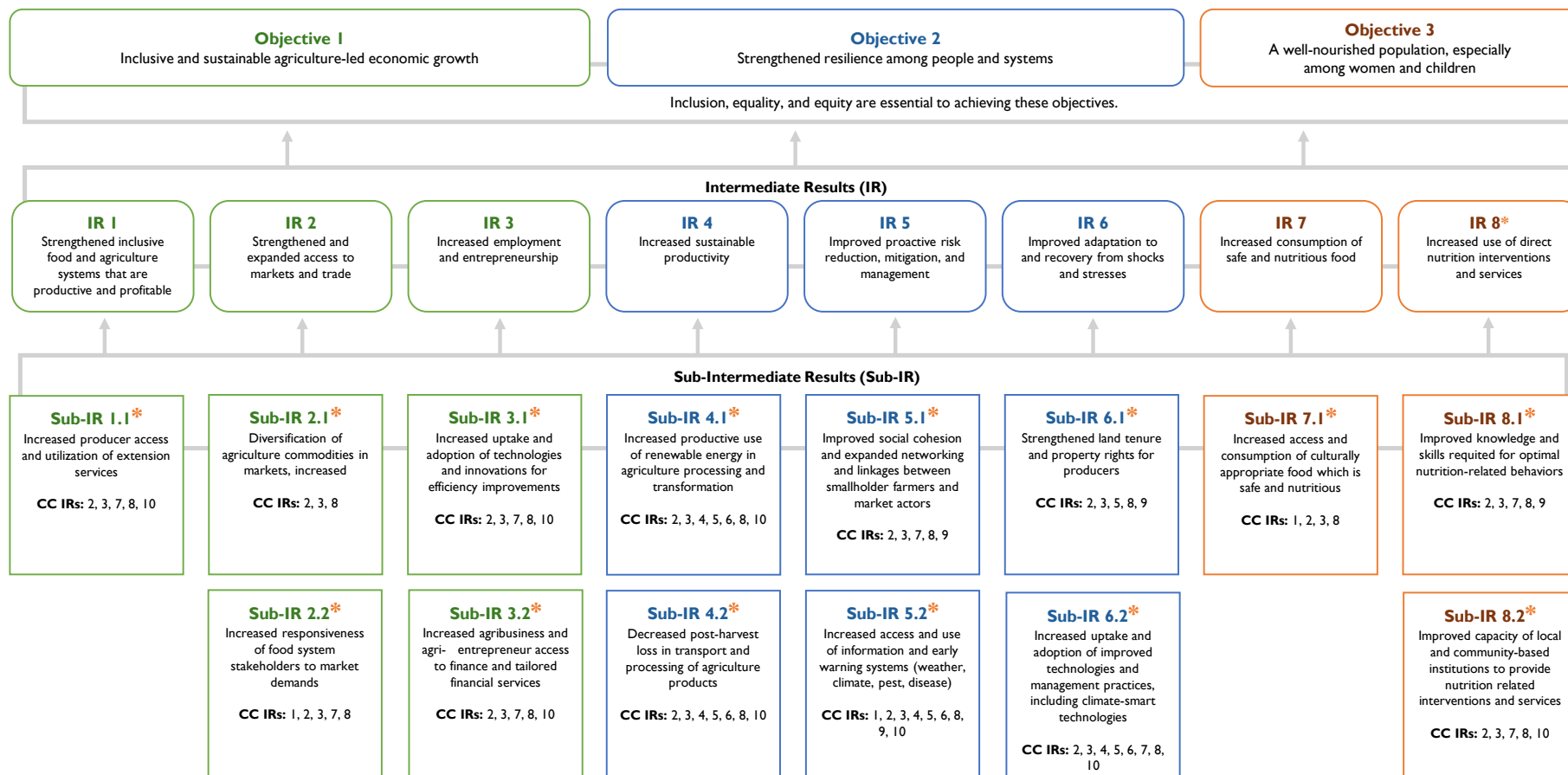
FtF programs will concurrently strengthen seed and input supply systems, sustainably increase agricultural output, increase farmer access and adoption of climate-smart innovations, reduce post-harvest product losses, improve agriculture product safety and quality, reduce inefficiencies in key value chains, and strengthen both supplier-processor and producer-buyer linkages between and within local and regional market systems. This will result in an improved capacity of the agriculture sector to meet the needs of local markets and compete with foreign imports. Targeted interventions and a systems approach will increase employment, household income, livelihood opportunities, private sector growth, enhance market systems and support enabling policies to improve resilience of vulnerable populations and systems. Partnering with other FtF resources including BHA RFSA and nutrition programs will complete the strategy and will drive the adoption of healthy behaviors and lead to a reduction in poverty, hunger, and malnutrition in targeted areas.

This strategic approach is strongly aligned with DRC's CDCS with all IRs and sub-IRs under GFSS Objective 2 ("Strengthening resilience among people and systems") mirroring CDCS Development Objective 2 ("Community Resilience Increased"); and with all IRs and sub-IRs under GFSS Objective 1 ("Inclusive and sustainable agriculture-led economic growth") mirroring CDCS Development Objective 3 ("Inclusive, Broad-based and Sustainable Economic Growth Increased"). IRs and sub-IRs under GFSS Objective 3 ("A well-nourished population, especially among women and children") also compliments the Mission's Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Action Plan (MSNAP)¹⁰², particularly DRC's National Nutrition Strategic Plan strategic axes 3 ("increase in the availability of and access to diversified foods, including high energy density, biofortified and fortified foods"); 5 ("strengthening the nutrition information and knowledge management system"); and 6 ("strengthening governance and multi-sectoral coordination of nutrition") and which lists Kasai Central and Kongo Central as provinces for prioritized interventions. The mission's Climate Change strategy objectives will be applicable to, and advanced by, interventions under Objective 2 of this results framework, particularly sub-IRs 4.1 and 6.2, and the Mission's PSE Strategy, while applicable across the entire results framework, will be most noticeable in interventions advancing IRs and sub-IRs under GFSS Objective 1 ("Inclusive and sustainable agriculture-led economic growth").

¹⁰² USAID/DRC, "Mission Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Action Plan," 2022.

U.S Government Global Food Security Strategy Results Framework, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Goal: Sustainably reduce global poverty, hunger, and malnutrition



* At present, the only interagency partner is the Department of State (DOS), who will be a key player across all IRs and Sub IRs

Figure 4: DRC Results Framework

C.2 Results Framework Summary

USAID, USG, GoDRC and the broader donor community have extensive programming in the agriculture and food security sector, and annual humanitarian assistance alone is \$400-500 million. The vast majority of these investments, however, are focused on direct transfers of food, cash or in-kind resources which, at times, bypass or distort local markets, both in resource flows and in livelihood models for target communities.^{103, 104} Given this context, USAID/DRC has identified IRs 1 – 4 as the most impactful pathways for FtF programming to contribute to the GFSS development objectives, and are manageable given an anticipated annual funding level of \$21 million in EG.3 agriculture funds. While addressing all eight of these IRs are necessary to meet food security, poverty reduction and improve health outcome goals, per the strategy's theory of change, it is important to note that the majority of EG.3 resources will be allocated to address IRs 1-4, with interventions advancing IRs 5-8 coming primarily from blended BHA, Health, and other mission funding sources and limited EG.3 funds allocated through intentional and collaborative programming.

Inclusive and sustainable agriculture-led economic growth

IRs 1 through 3 respond directly to GFSS Objective 1 and are aligned with the DRC's CDCS DO 3 (broad based, sustained economic growth) identified by the mission as the most effective approach for applying FtF programming to achieve broader CDCS and GFSS goals. With productivity in the DRC significantly lagging behind regional neighbors, increasing producer access and utilization of extension services will be essential for adoption of new technologies (sub-IR 1.1) necessary for strengthening an inclusive food system that is productive and profitable (IR 1). Additionally, for markets and trade to expand (IR 2), producers must be more responsive to market demands (sub-IR 2.2) and be able to diversify production of commodities available in markets to meet changing consumer demands (sub-IR 2.1). The third result necessary for achieving the objective of establishing inclusive and sustainable agriculture-led economic growth (Objective 1) in the DRC is to increase employment and entrepreneurship across the food system within the ZOI (IR 3). For this to happen, efficiencies in doing business must increase. This will require investments in new technologies and innovations (sub-IR 3.1) which, in turn, will require increasing numbers of agribusinesses and food system entrepreneurs to utilize finance and targeted financial services (IR 3.2). The DRC Office of Economic Growth (OEG) is well-positioned to deploy interventions which address agricultural production, market connections, and agri-food systems development challenges to ensure the achievement of sub-IRs which are necessary and sufficient to reach IRs 1 through 3, and particularly in the majority of the ZOI which is located within the Kasai Central RFZ. While resources funding these interventions will be almost entirely EG.3 agriculture funds, OEG will seek additional investment from relevant donors and stakeholders, specifically the British development agency (FCDO) when it comes to matters of agriculture sector finance, and the African Development Bank on skills development and the adoption of new technologies.

Strengthened resilience among people and systems

IRs 4 through 6 responding to the GFSS Objective 2 and DO 2 of the DRC's CDCS have been identified by the mission as critical for building long term resilience capacities while ensuring sustainability of development and humanitarian interventions. The Mission recognizes that USAID/DRC's market-based approach to agriculture and food security programming will complement humanitarian assistance activities addressing IRs 4 through 6 by co-locating with RFSAs in the targeted ZOI and by providing targeted support to shared beneficiaries and objectives. EG.3 agriculture funds will be used to sequence,

¹⁰³ USAID and Feed the Future, *Mid-Term Performance Evaluation of the Strengthening Value Chains (SVC) Activity in the Democratic Republic of the Congo*, Jan 2021.

¹⁰⁴ USAID and Feed the Future, *Feed the Future DRC SVC Activity Fiscal Year 2018 Annual Report*, Pg. 35-36.

layer, and integrate (SLI) interventions complementary to BHA development activities which are community-driven and most appropriate to support vulnerable and underrepresented populations.

In recognition of what are the most binding constraints to any economic pursuit in the DRC (poor transportation systems and lack of access to electricity), decreasing post-harvest loss in transport (sub-IR 4.2) and increasing processing and transformation of agricultural products through the productive use of energy in agriculture (sub-IR 4.1) is essential for realizing the desired result of increased sustainable productivity (IR 4). Strengthening systems for networking between producers and buyers or service providers across all aspects of the food system (IR 5.1) and for sharing information on markets or potential risks (IR 5.2) will be fundamental for improving proactive risk reduction, mitigation and management (IR 5). Ensuring that beneficiaries will adapt to and bounce back from shocks and stresses more quickly or be better prepared to endure them (IR 6), property rights for producers and producer organizations must be strengthened (sub-IR 6.1) so that producers are less likely to be displaced and productive systems can resume operations more quickly in response to shocks. This includes the willingness and ability to invest in new technologies and management practices, especially climate-smart technologies (sub-IR 6.2), which often requires land tenure security for long-term investments in new technologies, such as climate-smart inputs.

A well-nourished population especially among women and youth

IRs 7 and 8 respond to GFSS Objective 3 and DO 1 of DRC's CDCS which focuses on responsiveness of public institutions. Both IRs are vital to attaining the nutritional goals of the GFSS and for reducing child stunting. The Mission's Health Office and BHA contribute to increased direct nutrition services and interventions, as well as a more hygienic household and community environment. The Mission recognizes FtF's strategic focus to engage with market actors and leveraged private sector investments in the agri-food system will complement on-going investments by the Mission's Health Office and BHA to strengthen market actors' capacity to increase food safety and quality, while improving food accessibility, adequacy, affordability, and sustainability. The Office of Economic Growth will be active in coordination and SLI with complementary and co-located programming within established RFZs and RFSA, seeking to leverage efforts which support the achievement of sub-IRs essential to achieve IRs 7 and 8. IR 9 was not prioritized due to more pressing priorities with resources needed to advance the aforementioned pursuits. Increasing access to safe and nutritious foods (IR 7.1) and to institutions providing nutrition-related interventions and services (IR 8.2) while simultaneously increasing knowledge and skills across beneficiaries that result in improved nutrition-related behavior (IR 8.1) will all be necessary to achieve the results of increasing the consumption of safe and nutritious foods (IR 7) and increased use of nutrition-related services (IR 8).

Cross-cutting Intermediate Results: Underpinning each of the above GFSS Objectives and Intermediate Results, and weaving through each of the sub-IRs in the proposed results framework, are four cross-cutting intermediate results (CC IR) which the Mission feels are essential for driving the type of changes sought under the GFSS and the CDCS for the DRC Mission. Each CC IR was chosen in order to highlight important elements that will need to be emphasized throughout all interventions, and supported by strong and ambitious disaggregated targets, in order to achieve desired outcomes, results and impacts. The Mission will focus on increasing gender equality and female empowerment (CC IR 2) at every opportunity and particularly in advancing beneficiaries' positions across the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index and equitable access to finance. Increasing youth empowerment and livelihoods (CC IR 3) through assistance that accelerate this demography to establish and expand job creating enterprises will be strongly embedded in all interventions and approaches. A focus on more effective governance, policy and institutions (CC IR 7) is seen as necessary and fundamental to achieving long-term sustainability and fostering an operational context where private-sector-led agricultural and economic growth can thrive. Finally, improving human, organizational and institutional performance (CC IR 8) gets at the heart of localization and establishment of pathways that make households, communities

and systems more sustainable and resilient in the face of shocks and disruptions frequently experienced in the DRC.

Assumptions and Risks of the Results Framework

The proposed approach relies on a few key assumptions, which are well-grounded in the literature cited in the Country Context section and in recent programming experience:

- There are a sufficient and growing number of stakeholders interested in and willing to enter the agricultural and food market system, formalize their agricultural businesses, or expand their businesses to catalyze change within the system.
- Improvements in the agribusiness operating environment, input supply systems and market-facilitating infrastructure will produce net benefits for the agriculture sector.
- As access to energy increases, so too will the productive use of energy, the viability of local processing, and the capacity to reduce post-harvest losses.
- Improvements in the agribusiness operating environment, input supply systems and market-facilitating infrastructure for SMEs will benefit subsistence producers to use market principles.
- Markets will reward improved quality and consistency with increased demand, premium pay and expanded market share for local products.

Whereas the presence of the above assumptions within the ZOI are key to achieving the desired results, several factors pose a high level of risk in attaining the desired outcomes:

- Complementary programming within the ZOI (BHA, FDOC, or others) may not materialize as planned or may terminate earlier than expected;
- Active conflict or political unrest becomes established and entrenched in the ZOI;
- Corruption impacting micro, small and medium enterprises increases to levels intolerable for enterprises to succeed;
- Slow onset or acute disasters (natural or otherwise) significantly impact the ZOI due to reliance on rain-fed agriculture; and
- Global-level or macroeconomic conditions rapidly deteriorate causing spiraling inflation, commodity price shocks, or other negative consequences.

Country planning and programming should seek to mitigate these risk factors through stakeholder engagement, building complementarities and redundancies into the program components, and other methods which ensure programmatic adaptability and flexibility to build resilience.

Two other key challenges requiring more focused consideration throughout planning and implementation are countering Chinese or malign influence and addressing the weak governance and corruption challenges pervasive in the DRC.

USAID/DRC's interventions to counter Chinese influence have historically focused on improving mining governance and, more recently, increasing efforts to draw non-Chinese investors to the minerals sector. Due to the outsized influence of the mining and minerals sector in the DRC, there is little Chinese influence within the agriculture sector. Regardless, one of the central components of the DRC's FTF strategy is the creation of a better business enabling environment capable of driving systemic improvements for agribusinesses. This "leveling of the playing field" will improve the prospect of wider investments in DRC beyond Chinese exploitation of existing systems in any sector of the economy. Expanding this reasoning to countering malign influence, and with the DRC as one of the top importers of Ukrainian grain, interventions will focus on developing more resilient agriculture systems, particularly

across the maize and cassava value chains, in a manner that displaces and reduces reliance on grain imports which have been significantly impacted by Russia's war in Ukraine.

Weak governance and pervasive corruption have significantly and negatively impacted development efforts in the DRC, with USAID investments notwithstanding. In the DRC, when products and services are scarce or hard to get, and given weak governance systems writ large, agriculture producers and others involved across the food system are forced to participate in Congo's entrenched patronage system to get what they need to support their livelihoods. As such, reducing the scarcity of products and services demanded in the agriculture space, in part, by partnering with the private sector to strengthen business to business and customer relationships will improve direct personal relationships thereby increasing the likelihood of skirting the patronage system. Additionally, increasing policy reform efforts by leveraging "Champions" in national and local-level governments will involve increasing digitalization and transparency in transactions, licensing, etc. which is a critical next step in effectively countering corruption.

Incorporating adaptive management and learning

To mitigate the risks associated with development programming in the complex operating environment of DRC, the Mission aims to integrate adaptive management and learning across new FtF interventions. Drawing insights from both current and past programs will inform the design efforts that support new activities. Several studies and assessments have been commissioned in pursuit of this process, and their findings will be used to formulate the new design and procurement processes to ensure strong alignment with the primary ambitions of the FtF portfolio.

Specifically, the Mission plans to undertake the following:

- 1) Analyze the P-DEC activity, examining its challenges and successes in operating within the challenging context of Ituri. Given that two-thirds of the proposed ZOI for intended FtF programming is located in a part of the country wracked by violence from 2016-2018, future activities will emphasize building resilience at various levels (individual, household, community, and systems). This includes association building, reinforcing good institutional governance, and strengthening inter-community social and market linkages between communities;
- 2) Conduct a resilience and risk assessment which will be carried out across the entire ZOI in 2024. This assessment will delve into the P-DEC activity, the SLR activity, and other interventions relevant to the Humanitarian-Development Peace Nexus that inform new FtF interventions and efforts to integrate SLI best practices into new activities;
- 3) Apply lessons learned from the integration of a markets-based contract (as seen in the ex-project assessment by the MSP activity of the Strengthening Value Chains (SVC) activity) with a co-located humanitarian assistance mechanism in the difficult operating environment of South Kivu. Implementer sometimes struggled to achieve results where there were common beneficiaries and sometimes competing priorities, especially concerning market-systems development and direct food assistance approaches;
- 4) Initiate a renewed effort to advocate for the promulgation of the nation's agriculture law and seed law. This initiative to date has largely been driven by the engagement of IITA, funded by USAID; and
- 5) Explore relevant experiences and approaches for engaging women, youth, and other marginalized populations in contexts characterized by land insecurity and conflict under the SLR activity and the upcoming mid-term evaluation of the P-DEC activity.

Relationship of the Results Framework to the Five GFSS Priorities

The impact pathways identified in the Results Framework will contribute to progress on the GFSS five priority areas: 1) Equity and Inclusion; 2) Proactively addressing climate change; 3) Countering the lingering impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic; 4) Working at a Food Systems level; and 5) integrating conflict mitigation approaches.

Equity and inclusion

FtF will focus and report on outcomes for small-holder farmers, MSMEs, women, youth and ethnically marginalized populations, including Indigenous Peoples, within the target zones. Outcomes for these stakeholders are the main consideration in each of the sub-IRs.

Ambitious approach to climate change, proactively

FtF will strengthen the agrifood system's capacity to withstand climate-related shocks and stresses via multiple pathways. Increased access to climate-smart inputs and drought- and flood-resistant seeds, in combination with training in climate-smart farming and agroforestry practices, and increased use of climate and meteorological information will help smallholders adapt to increased temperatures and variable rainfall. Stronger linkages between market actors in the agricultural value chain will facilitate the availability of financial and insurance services that will support farmers and agribusinesses to mitigate and manage risk. Opportunities also exist within the ZOI to counter conditions driving deforestation, loss of biodiversity in protected areas, and unsustainable water use.

Counter the COVID-19 pandemic's long-term effects

FtF will continue investing in revitalizing agricultural markets and supply chains that have been disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. FTF will also address the long-term negative impacts on nutrition brought on by the pandemic. For markets, resilience to future shocks and stresses, specifically by reducing dependence on imports, will be built. And for nutrition outcomes, dietary diversity will be increased and the number of skipped meals will be reduced. Within the DRC, FtF will require an adaptive stance given other health threats in the system, whether Ebola, mpox, or other emergent diseases.

Work across relevant areas of food systems

The Results Framework will work to strengthen existing systems and policies and reduce the corruption that undermines these systems. By embedding the strategy in the existing landscape of agricultural and food systems programming, FtF will be able to capitalize and build on additional investments across the food system.

Integration of conflict mitigation, peacebuilding and social cohesion

It is not possible to operate effectively within the DRC without being conflict sensitive and integrating conflict mitigation and Do No Harm (DNH) approaches into programming. In striving to reach sustainable results and support impact pathways, FTF will incorporate DNH and conflict sensitive approaches by understanding the local context through ongoing conflict analysis, monitoring the interaction of interventions with the context and adapting when necessary to ensure interventions DNH, have positive outcomes and contribute to increased community cohesion and resilience. Several sub-IRs within the Results Framework address effective communication, collective action and collaboration among actors within the agricultural market system. The existing landscape of agricultural and food systems programming includes conflict mitigation activities, which FtF will be able to capitalize and build on through its integration with this broader programming landscape.

D. Program Components

D.1 Programmatic Approach

Considerable efforts and investment in both humanitarian and development assistance has been made to improve smallholder's livelihood and food security, including agricultural production in DRC. Although this has achieved notable successes, it has done little to revitalize DRC's atrophied agricultural market system, one of the root causes of food insecurity in the country. Feed the Future will fill this programming gap by taking a market systems approach that prioritizes market facilitation and interventions that demonstrate market-viability.

Each of the program components identified below - Policy, Governance and the Business Enabling Environment; Market Linkages; Food and Agricultural Productivity; and Resilience - provide an integral pathway through which FtF programming can improve the performance of DRC's agricultural markets. Components are intrinsically linked, and will be integrated through information sharing, and joint programming, planning, and activity design. Since the FtF Strategy is embedded in a robust network of agricultural and food systems programming, many elements of the program components outlined below will be addressed to some extent by other USG, GoDRC and donor community investments in humanitarian assistance, conflict mitigation, environmental conservation, energy, and health and nutrition interventions. The DRC FtF Strategy will prioritize the creation of transferable models with the goal of enabling other USAID, USG, donor and GoDRC programs and activities to leverage adaptive FtF investments. This is elaborated on in the partnership section of each Component.

D.2 Program Component 1: Policy, Governance and the Business Enabling Environment

Feed the Future in DRC will broaden the role of public, private and civil society by advocating for policy and regulatory reforms that promote an efficient and resilient agricultural market system. This Component will work primarily on governance of institutions, input systems, and supportive infrastructure that enable the effective and inclusive operation of agricultural, food, and market systems.

Improvements to the policy, governance and business enabling environment will address a wide variety of constraints affecting the performance of the agrifood system. As outlined in the DRC CDCS 2020-2025, improvements include removing barriers to agribusiness formalization and registration, accelerating incentives for reinvestment and external investment (thereby reversing capital flight to increase in-country value added production), rationalizing business regulations, streamlining a cumbersome and redundant tax regime, and building structures and incentives which facilitate access to enabling resources (such as finance and technical assistance, and information), encourage new players to enter the market and existing players to access new markets, both for agricultural products and inputs and equipment. Program Component 1 will strengthen the capacity of public institutions to establish a path to accelerate and enable agriculture-led growth and enable local agricultural markets to flourish and strengthen the ability of national food systems to provide market goods. Expanded public-private access, interaction, advocacy and collective planning will facilitate policies that are incrementally conducive to agribusiness and responsive to the needs of the agriculture sector. Streamlining processes for business formalization, minimizing the parafiscal and fiscal burden placed on market actors, and ensuring transparent and equitable application of laws and regulations will increase the predictability of doing business and enhance the private sector's ability to plan and invest (IRs 1, 2; CCIRs 1, 7).

Improvements in land tenure security, agricultural research, extension and education institutions will improve capacity of stakeholders in the agrifood system and expand the resource base to increase resilience and improve social cohesion (IRs 3, 4, 5; CCIR 8). FtF will prioritize policy issues that improve efficiencies and incomes of smallholder farmers, MSMEs, Indigenous Peoples, women and youth. For

example, land tenure, access to finance, and targeted market-based skills development opportunities (IRs 1, 2, 3, 5, 6; CCIRs 2, 3, 8). These improvements will pave the way for inclusive and sustainable agriculture-led growth, improved access to safe and nutritious food, and strengthened resilience among people and systems.

- **Who and Where:** Policy programming will focus at the national level while governance programming will occur throughout the ZOI with a strategic concentration of efforts in Kongo Central, given FtF engagement with a motivated and forward-looking regional government, active business associations with the potential to become a national leader in agriculture, and business enabling environment reform efforts. Immediate participants will include local government officials, agricultural research and extension personnel, and agriculture stakeholders, such as cooperatives, advocacy groups, major agribusinesses and input suppliers. Benefits will also accrue to smallholder farmers and SMEs in the medium- and long-term, as investments in state and institutional capacity building pay dividends in the form of a better business operating environment.
- **Key Partners:** IITA; UNDP; local government officials; World Bank Group (particularly the IFC); the IMF; DRC's agricultural research, extension and education agencies and networks; Akademiya 2063; RFS Policy Team and its IPs; existing USG programming, including Mission- and Washington-funded activities and their implementing partners; an array of private sector actors, including aggregators, processors, warehouses, carriers, banks, input suppliers, producers organizations and business associations such as FEC and Chamber of Commerce.

D.3 Program Component 2: Market Linkages

Feed the Future will deepen economic connectivity between agricultural market corridors within DRC, making it cheaper and easier for actors in the agriculture sector to access markets. Expanded and sustained linkages between producers, aggregators, buyers and end markets will lead to more reliable inputs, increased transactions and deeper markets. Component 2 will focus on markets and market linkages that provide significant benefit to small-holder farmers, women, landless and other marginalized groups. DRC's natural wealth is extensive—experts estimate the country's agriculture sector could produce enough food to feed 2 billion people.¹⁰⁵ However, conflict, corruption and the lack of coordination in the domestic market system often results in end markets choosing imported products as cheaper, easier to obtain and transport, and of higher quality than their domestic equivalent. Facilitating value-added relationships among buyers, input/service providers, and smallholder farmers will increase access to information and build capacity to meet consumer preferences, enabling producers and SMEs to tap better market opportunities. Improving these connections has the potential to add tremendous value to the agriculture and food market system, by expanding access to markets and increasing sales for producers, thus incentivizing greater production volumes and quality.

This approach strengthens incentives for producers to participate in organizations that negotiate with buyers and sellers for advantageous collective sales and purchases. Buyers also benefit through greater access to products, allowing for quality differentiation and economies of scale. With more market information and sales options, markets operate more efficiently, rewarding quality and responsiveness with greater demand and higher prices (IRs 1, 2, 3, 4; CCIRs 3, 8). The diversification of productive connections and market options will support increased income, asset building and, in turn, resilience to shocks and stresses. Greater connections and access to market information universally strengthen market actors' capacity to anticipate risks and adopt risk-mitigation tools, such as insurance (IR 5). This component will take active effort to consider how women access information and what barriers to

¹⁰⁵ The Guardian, "DRC is rich with farmland, so why do 22 million people there face starvation?"

market information they experience which prevents greater participation in the market and in access to finance. Similarly, greater market connections and access to information strengthen incentives to develop and rapidly increase access to diverse, safe, nutritious foods that are demanded by consumers (including pregnant and lactating women). More robust markets also increase diversified access to channels for social and behavior change communication (IR 7). The approach seeks to sustainably develop the capacity of local actors and institutions to take advantage of opportunities and respond effectively to change. This will be a value chain neutral approach, integrating climate-smart agriculture, sustainable production, asset creation and nutrition throughout.

- Who and Where: market linkages programming will occur throughout the ZOI and, in some cases, may extend to areas outside of the ZOI where there is a high level of agricultural opportunity for market systems development. Immediate program participants will include a diverse range of small- and medium-sized agribusinesses, producer organizations, and private sector partners that will directly benefit from efforts to increase economic connectivity within DRC. Smallholder farmers will be linked with larger organizations and the market and they will benefit as they receive targeted advisory services, inputs, new economic opportunities, and consumers. Special attention will be paid to ensure women are strategically targeted for interventions and that opportunities to leverage youth innovation and risk-taking actions (while reinforcing youth inclusion) are strategically integrated in the activities and benefits arising from FtF market linkages interventions.
- Key Partners: MinAgri, ONAPAC, ANAPEX (GoDRC's export promotion agency), FEC (Private Enterprise Association), Confédération Nationale des Producteurs Agricoles du Congo (CONAPAC); IITA, the CGIAR and other international, regional and local research institutions; World Bank Group; RFS Market Systems and Finance Division and its implementing partners; BHA and their implementing partners, as well as other humanitarian assistance donors and organizations; existing USG programming, including Mission- and Washington-funded activities and their implementing partners; an array of private sector actors, including aggregators, processors, warehouses, carriers, banks, input suppliers and producers organizations.

D.4 Program Component 3: Food and Agriculture Productivity

The FtF Strategy seeks to increase the capacity of producers to use market-based approaches to meet demand for safe and nutritious food, while increasing quantity, variety, quality and timing of food and agricultural products in demand by markets. Much of this work is already embedded in USAID programming and FtF will advance past investments. This focus will be oriented toward small-holder farmers and producers organizations with the capacity to respond to market indicators; enabled through a sequencing and layering of interventions to facilitate strengthened resilience capacities and beneficiary graduation from receiving humanitarian assistance to participating in agriculture markets.

In DRC, much of the agricultural programming undertaken by the USG, GoDRC and donor community is already firmly operating in this Program Component, focusing on resource availability and expanding production among small-holder farmers. Component 3 supports all three FtF objectives, and expanding the productive capacity of small-holder farmers and producers organizations will contribute directly to increasing household income and purchasing power, strengthening resilience and providing the conditions for increased consumption of safe and nutritious food. Increasing capacity for women and men through skills building, technical training and expanded access to information will improve the ability to diversify livelihoods, including with off-farm employment for rural households, and open up new pathways out of poverty (IRs 1, 3, 4, 6, 7; CCIRs 3, 8).

Greater adoption by smallholder farmers of agricultural research, technological innovations including off-grid energy provision, and best practices through extension services and capacity-strengthening activities

will increase production of demanded agricultural products and food (IR 1). Among these is the explicit focus on the dissemination of good practice including climate-smart production practices and adaptation measures, improved post-harvest handling methods and technologies, increased access to affordable high-quality inputs and seed, and sustainable natural resource management practices, particularly in corridors adjacent to or potentially drawing from protected areas (IRs 1, 4, 6, 7; CCIR 4). Throughout, the Program Component will aim to layer market information into production-focused activities, sequencing activities to facilitate referrals from these interventions into the Market Linkages and Resilience Components, and in coordination with the Policy Component to ensure that policymakers understand the needs and opportunities at this level, for both producers writ large as well as for vulnerable groups and women farmers and entrepreneurs who often experience even higher levels of inaccessibility to enabling resources needed for production. Although there may be some direct intervention with primary producers, the approach seeks to leverage incentives within the market system to drive systemic change, technological innovations, instead of directly intervening to deliver services. Direct interventions to boost productivity under FtF will serve as a pilot to demonstrate proof of concept, which can then be adopted and scaled by local actors and other donors and projects.

- Who and Where: productivity-focused programming will take place throughout the ZOI. Immediate program participants will include agribusinesses, input suppliers, local government, research and extension institutions that will be empowered to access and adopt new technologies and best practices. Private and public sector partners directly benefiting from Component 4 will pass these innovations and practices to smallholder producers, both men and women, who will consequently see increased yields. In the medium- and long-term, Congolese consumers will be the ultimate program participants of increases in production, as they enjoy increased access to affordable and nutritious foods.
- Key Partners: MinAgri, ONAPAC, ANAPEX (GODRC's export promotion agency), FEC, CONAPAC ; IITA (International Institute of Tropical Agriculture), the CGIAR and other international, regional and local research institutions; RFS Market Systems and Finance Division and its implementing partners; BHA and their implementing partners, as well as other humanitarian assistance donors and organizations; existing USG programming, including Mission- and Washington-funded activities and their implementing partners; private sector partners, including input suppliers, producers organizations, aggregators, processors, warehouses and carriers.

D.5 Program Component 4: Resilience

Feed the Future will include equity and inclusion principles as it works to improve information flows, intensify economic interconnectivity, strengthen producers and business associations and expand the diversity of livelihoods, thus increasing the resilience of people, households, communities, institutions and the overall market systems to shocks and stresses. USAID DRC will focus efforts for greater sequencing, layering and integrating of activities within multiple sectors and with significant investments applied within established resilience focus zones and resilience and food security activity implementation areas. Efforts will be made for joint program planning and design, and bringing together implementing partners working in the ZOI. The focus will use an inclusive approach when supporting smallholder farmers, producers organizations and MSMEs, in collaboration with existing programming in food systems, humanitarian assistance, conflict mitigation and environment. Component 4 aims to reinforce resilience capacities and sources of resilience for market actors against stresses and shocks and to layer in market information and sequence support through referrals, allowing FtF to determine what type and level of support will have the optimal development outcome for a given institution or target population. Component 4 will intentionally integrate cross-sectoral approaches and resources into resilience and adaptation programming.

Resilience, adaptation to climate change, and sustainable management of natural resources are all important considerations that will be integrated in programming through this Component (IR 4, 5, 6, CCIR 8). Similarly, conflict mitigation and effective democracy and governance to plan for shocks, stresses and evolving climate risk will be included in this component, particularly as relates to resource-driven conflict (CCIRs 7, 8). Increasing connectivity, as well as diversity of connections and livelihood strategies among actors within the food and agriculture market system will strengthen social cohesion, build inclusive social networks and enhance social capital, which is a particularly scarce resource in a conflict-plagued country like DRC.

Including local and national government and institutions will improve accountability for effective policies and implementation. Strengthening information flows throughout the market system and diversifying the channels for those flows will improve equitable access to timely, accurate and relevant information about likely shocks, stresses and climate risk; early warnings and effective risk assessment will enhance household, institutional and government capacity to plan and minimize loss. Support for financial inclusion and access to a variety of banking and lending tools, as well as support for asset-building, accumulation and protection through products like crop insurance will enhance capacity to reduce and mitigate risk. Support for public and private institutions to provide social protection and risk reduction programs will lead to the development of additional risk and adaptation market services by private sector actors, leading to sustainable advances in overall system resilience (IRs 1, 4, 5, CCIRs 7, 8).

Improved connectivity and competition within the market actors and strengthened economic relationship with various actors in production and market will enhance communities' capacity to recover quickly from shocks and stresses. This component will link market development activities with adaptive social protection and risk management programs that focus on boosting the means of the poorest populations.

- **Who and where:** A resilience approach to programming will take place across the ZOI, however an additional risk analysis will focus on communities that are particularly vulnerable to recurring shocks and stresses. The FtF program participants will include a diverse range of small- and medium-sized agribusinesses, producer organizations, and private sector partners that will directly benefit from expanded market linkages, improved risk management practices, and economic diversification. Increased resilience of larger private sector actors will contribute to the economic stability of communities that depend on those actors to provide key services and employment opportunities. Thus women, youth, the landless and other marginalized groups that are particularly sensitive to economic shocks will benefit most from the resilience focus of Program Component 4. The provision of additional funding may allow FtF to further expand and co-locate programming with existing BHA resilience and other USG investments in RFZ in future fiscal years.
- **Key Partners:** USAID programming; MinAgri at national and local levels; RFS Market Systems and Finance Division and its implementing partners; BHA and their implementing partners, as well as other humanitarian assistance donors and organizations; local financial institutions; existing USG programming, including Mission-and Washington-funded activities and their implementing partners; private sector partners, including input suppliers, producers organizations, aggregators, processors, warehouses and carriers.

E. Stakeholder Engagement

USAID /DRC has engaged a wide range of stakeholders through meetings, consultations, thematic workgroups, and key informant interviews. Stakeholders include USG representatives, GoDRC, Donor agencies, NGOs, and private sector actors. In March 2023, the USAID/DRC deployed Mission staff to proposed ZOI regions to engage in scoping studies, local stakeholder consultation and issue mapping to help in ZOI selection.¹⁰⁶ This process consisted of a rapid assessment of available qualitative data through desk research, as well as key informant interviews conducted in-person, general observation of physical condition of the infrastructures and institutions. Informant responses and available data was considered and analyzed in terms of alignment with potential FtF programming across 6 main criteria: 1) operational context; 2) constraints and identified needs; 3) available resources; 4) partnership interest; 5) growth potential; and 6) operational risk.

E.1 Vision for Engagement and Coordination with Relevant Stakeholders

USAID/DRC envisions a facilitation approach to coordination with relevant stakeholders in accordance with the Feed the Future strategy's Market Systems approach. USAID and USG engagement with stakeholders in the agriculture sector will facilitate connections among relevant actors at various levels and in different localities to support a functioning agricultural market system, both within the ZOI and beyond. Engagement will also aim to co-create, co-invest and co-implement interventions through local system actors and institutions, embedding multi-stakeholder engagement and action planning programming cycle approaches such as the Systems-wide Collaborative Action for Livelihoods and the Environment (SCALE+).¹⁰⁷ USAID/DRC will continue to leverage partnerships with influential individuals, change agents and champions to maximize the impact of interventions, but will prioritize engagement with institutions over engagement with individuals. An institutionalist approach to stakeholder engagement will ensure that new knowledge, processes, and capabilities become embedded in institutional structures with the potential to spark systems-level change. This will make the strategy more sustainable and resilient in the face of organizational and personnel changes and will increase the long-term return on investment from stakeholder engagements.

The focus throughout will be on facilitating better coordination within the market system. Feed the Future will work within existing platforms and frameworks (where possible), while recognizing that programming may need to build new connections and structures in areas with particularly thin agricultural markets. Any new platforms that emerge from FtF programming will be co-created with local actors to develop self-reinforcing, sustainable connections.

Stakeholder engagement, particularly within the USG and donor communities, will be multi-sectoral, acknowledging that different market systems are interrelated and that performance of a market system depends on factors beyond a single sector and its enabling environment. This will enable identification of "areas of opportunity" to co-locate, sequence and layer FtF programming with other sectors, as appropriate. Programming will consider including a provision for 10-15 percent flexibility in location of activities to pursue areas of opportunity connected to other USG, donor, and GoDRC identified in our Results Framework.

¹⁰⁶ Mission staff visited various stakeholders in the proposed ZOI in Kongo central, Kasai province and other relevant market centers in southern DRC. Semi-Structured consultation was held with stakeholders such as the Governor's office (his chief of staff), Minister of Agriculture, Provincial and Territorial Agricultural Inspectors, Territorial administrative heads, producers group, processors, agricultural service providers and farmers. These conversations and observations were factored in both selection of ZOI and conceptualizing program components.

¹⁰⁷ For more information on these approaches visit the Future Search Network website (<https://futuresearch.net/>) and the SCALE+ website (<http://scaleplus.fhi360.org/>).

Both at the design stage and throughout implementation, the following questions will be considered:

- What institutions, groups, individuals are poised to facilitate catalytic change, investment and connections? How might existing gender norms limit or support catalytic change, investment and connection?
- How can local leaders be engaged with and effectively communicate our process and progress, creating champions and cementing incentives for meaningful change, including around inclusive and equitable investments?
- How can USAID support existing or emerging coalitions of actors to accelerate change, whether strategically “crowding-in” investment or enabling effective public-private dialogue?
- What regional and international stakeholders should be engaged that may have relevant perspectives and/or resources, including women and youth organizations?
- Internally, what centrally-managed/funded resources can the Mission leverage to support local initiatives?
- What institutions and/or market actors are interested, incentivized and resourced to adapt and take over any essential interventions?
- What institutions and/or individuals are respected, entrepreneurial and willing to innovate, integrate inclusion, replicate and scale successful approaches across their business/organizational models?
- What is FtF’s role in multi-sector stakeholder action planning? How can USAID ensure that the process is driven by local systems of actors?
- How can FtF most effectively support the development of a national public-private plan and coordinated actions to accelerate agriculture-led growth? And how can FtF leverage “nodes”/clusters of ? What implications does this have for national multi-sector stakeholder action planning?
- What existing platforms exist and how can they be engaged?

E.2 Regular, Ongoing Coordination Bodies

The Feed the Future Program will leverage several existing platforms for stakeholder engagement. An outline of the different platforms, including key institutional partners and areas of engagement, is presented in Annex I.

E.3 Role of the FtF Coordinator

The FtF Coordinator will lead quarterly interagency FtF meetings with Mission leadership, building on existing Office of Economic Growth meetings. The FtF Coordinator will participate in or receive reports on all stakeholder engagement platforms as envisioned above, using this quarterly interagency leadership meeting to share a snapshot or pulse check of stakeholder feedback on FtF, and on challenges and opportunities currently present in the market system. FtF can make adjustments in response and pivot any relevant aspects of design, implementation or evaluation as needed. These meetings also will allow for a crowding in of USG resources to respond to challenges and take advantage of opportunities within the market system, regardless of sector. It is envisioned that this will be a useful source of information for activity and program design throughout the Mission and interagency, as well as helping to inform communications planning, site visits and special initiatives.

F. Annexes

Annex I: Coordination Bodies in DRC

International Donors Group for the Agricultural Sector (GIBADER)

- Monthly meeting, organized by GIBADER Chair (currently World Bank but likely shifting to Belgium in 2023).
- Members include: AFD, AfDB, Belgium, Carter Center, ENABLE, EU, FAO, FCDO, IFAD, IFC, JICA, MFA, Sweden, UN, UNDP, WFP, World Bank, etc.
- Meetings include regular presentations and opportunities for collaboration and engagement on FtF design, implementation and evaluation.
- Current engagement on design; areas of overlap; coordination on geographic targeting; identification of key constraints and opportunities; and layering, sequencing, collaboration and complementary support.

Implementing Partners

- Annual meeting with FtF presentation, opportunities for collaboration, coordination and engagement. Meetings are organized at the Mission level, with key input from the Economic Growth Office, including the FtF Coordinator;
- Bi-monthly meeting of agriculture activity implementers, with presentations on programming and discussion of collaboration opportunities in the FtF and market systems space;
- Many of the other stakeholder engagement platforms outlined in this section will be best attended by implementing partners, rather than by USAID. Regular implementing partners meetings will be a good platform to share report outs from these engagements by IPs;
- Current engagement focused on resilience and how to incorporate related principles into multi-sectoral programming.

USAID/DRC

- Regular discussion and presentations on FtF at leadership level, Mission-wide meetings, and individual office meetings;
- Key offices/sectors engaged include DG, BHA, CARPE, Health, Economic Growth, while actively seeking areas for collaboration with other relevant sectors;
- Focus on opportunities to crowd in investment and pivot existing investments for better coordination, collaboration, layering, sequencing, integration, and ZOI targeting.

USG Interagency in DRC

- Regular discussion and presentations on FtF at leadership level and individual office meetings with State/Econ (U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs);
- Key offices/sectors engaged at DRC and regional levels include State/Econ, USAID, USAID/Power Africa, while actively seeking areas for collaboration with the regional USDA (U.S. Department of Agriculture) platform;
- Discussion of alignment with broader ICS (Integrated Country Strategy) and diplomatic relations with DRC (messaging).

Washington/RFS CST (Country Support Team)

- Monthly meeting, organized by RFS Country Support Officer in coordination with DRC FtF

Coordinator, with regular updates on design, implementation, evaluation, and opportunities for collaboration, engagement and crowding in new and existing programming;

- Key offices/sectors engaged include the Agriculture-Led Growth, Resilience, Nutrition, WASH, MEL, Policy, and Inclusive Development.

Expanded Washington CST (Country Support Team)

- Quarterly (combined with RFS CST meeting), organized by RFS Country Support Officer in coordination with DRC FtF Coordinator, with regular updates on design, implementation, evaluation, and opportunities for collaboration, engagement and crowding in new and existing programming;
- Key offices/sectors engaged (in addition to those in the core RFS CST) include GH, BHA, Africa Bureau and Interagency.

Engaging other categories of stakeholders is also critical to FtF's responsiveness to local need and opportunity, and thus, to the success of the program. More engagement is needed to identify what platforms may exist for the following stakeholder groups, both in the ZOI and nationally, and whether USAID and/or implementing partner involvement in any existing groups would be appropriate. FtF will engage with existing groups where appropriate and will work with local actors to develop regular engagement opportunities where current ones do not exist. The focus throughout will be on closing gaps and strengthening connections among local actors to encourage the development of robust, efficient and resilient market systems.

Government of DRC

- Planned annual coordination meetings with the national government, bi-annual with provincial and local governments. To be organized by FtF Coordinator at the national level and by implementing partners at the provincial and local levels. Current discussion includes opportunities for collaboration and engagement on FtF design, implementation, and evaluation.
- National and provincial governments, as well as local government, i.e., ETDs (Decentralized Territorial Entities).
- Ministries/departments to be included: DRC Presidency, DAI, DDEA, Direction de Production et Protection des Végétaux, DMPACC, Politique Agricole, PROSANA, Secrétariat Général, SENASEM, SNV, Ministry of Rural Development, Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, Ministry of Plan, Ministry of Agriculture, etc.
 - Identify key focal points within GoDRC which both have access and influence (i.e., can bring national actors into alignment).
- Current engagement on design, areas for overlap, collaboration and complementary support, as well as identification of key constraints and opportunities;
- Identify messages and pathways for government actors to build on and claim FtF successes to enhance sustainability of outcomes.

Agricultural Research, Education, Extension

- National and regional research, education and extension institutions have existing platforms for regular coordination, but it may not be appropriate for USAID to participate directly. This is a targeted area of exploration for IPs, particularly local partners.
- Current engagement with IITA, other CGIAR, FtF Innovation Labs on design, areas for crowding-in investment and pivoting existing investments, opportunities for collaboration and engagement.

Agri-Business, Agricultural Producers, Other Private Sector

- The FEC (Fédération des Entreprises du Congo) for private enterprises, and CONAPAC (Confédération Nationale des Producteurs Agricoles du Congo) are already meeting regularly at the national level, but may not be appropriate for USAID to participate in directly. This is a targeted area of exploration for implementing partners, particularly local partners.
- Focus will be on aggregate groups, business associations, business incubators, accelerators and other “disruptors” and enabling businesses. Given DRC’s demographic trends, there also will be a focus on working with youth groups and organizations that generate opportunities for youth.
- The vision is to build the capacity of private sector entities to continue to advocate for sound market facilitation policies and implementation and for improvements in the business enabling environment, as well as to facilitate strong networks of private sector actors nationally, regionally and locally.
- Areas for engagement include advocacy; business linkages; layering and sequencing of activities; and identifying and capitalizing on challenges and opportunities related to the business operating environment.

Finance (Domestic, International, Donor)

- There are two categories of domestic associations for bank and microfinance institutions. ACB (Association of Congolese Banks), ANAMIF (National Association of Microfinance institutions), and APROCEC (Professional association of credit and saving cooperatives). Regional and local opportunities have yet to be identified in the ZOI. This is a targeted area of exploration for implementing partners, particularly local partners.
- Focus will be on developing appropriate financial products for agriculture and food systems market actors, and sequencing and layering programming to attract catalytic investments within the market system.

International, Regional, and Local NGOs, PVOs (Private Voluntary Organizations), Civil Society

- There is a forum for international NGOs that implement projects in DRC known as ONGI (Forum des Organisations Non-Gouvernementales Internationales). This is a targeted area of exploration for implementing partners, particularly local partners which may be further explored in the FtF ZOI program design process.
- FtF will seek to engage select local actors with long-term commitment and investment in DRC. Focus will be on supporting women, youth, marginalized populations, small-holder farmers and MSMEs.
- Targets for collaboration include policy advocacy, support for improvements in the business operating environment, expansion of social- and market-based linkages and information exchange.

Other Relevant Stakeholders

- FtF will seek to identify other relevant stakeholders with the opportunity to add value to the program. Based on stakeholder engagements to date, notable targets include:
 - IT resources, especially for business development;
 - Access to power and/or rural electrification.

Annex 2: Stakeholders Consulted

1. GIBADER Mapping of Donor Investments
2. FtF DRC Country Plan Alignment Matrix (Old Activities, Adapted Activities, New Activities)

List of stakeholder meetings to date:

1. USAID Mission Director engagement with Minister of Agriculture (Date: ~September 18), Chief of Staff
2. Engagement with Chief of Staff, MinAgri (Apollinaire Bilosso), INERA Director (Jacques Lutaladio), IITA Central Africa Regional Director Zoumana Bamba, Provincial Agriculture Inspector for Kongo Central Kiatoko Soli (Augustin Ngeleka, Amy Stenoien) - 5-6 October 2022
3. Stakeholder Discussions, Ministry of Agriculture directorates (Deborah Amani; Erin Baize)
4. Stakeholder Discussion, GIBADER/Donors (Deborah Amani; Erin Baize)
5. Presidential Advisory on Agriculture, Julie Tshilombo, State/USAID engagement (Mike Fox, Amy Stenoien) 28 October 2022
6. ANAPEX, Export Planning (Marc Nyunzi & FtF Team) October 2022
7. Mike Libuko, State/USAID engagement (Mike Fox) September 2022
8. Various Meetings with the Rural regulatory authority ANSER (Benjamin Skolnik, Amy Stenoien, Marc Nynzi) - multiple dates
9. Ministry of Plan, Deputy Chief of Staff (Mike Fox) 7 November 2022
10. Alda Kule Dale, Special Advisor on Investment Risk and Agriculture to Ministry Finance (Amy Stenoien) - 9 November 2022
11. Ministry of Agriculture, Programme de sécurité Alimentaire et Nutritionnelle (PROSANA) September 2022 (Erin Baize)
 - Mike Limbuko
 - Paul Mfinda
 - David DOMBELE
 - Alain Boyoa
 - Grace Mbangama
 - Kevin Eloma
12. Ministry of Agriculture, Direction d'Agro-Industrie(DAI)
 - Placide Mukendi
 - Kausu Bhun Kien
 - Bagaza Mawiya
13. Ministry of Agriculture, Politique Agricole
 - Bellarmin Nkwakwimbi
 - Mairon ISSA Saidi
 - Zenon Falanga

14. Ministry of Agriculture, Direction de protection des vegetaux
 - John Mutombo Kabwe
 - Jacob Ngolo bopinga
 - Stephane Mwamba Mubilay
15. Ministry of Agriculture, Direction de Marché des produits agricoles et crédit de campagne (DMPACC)
 - Celestin Bonzeke Ngekwa
 - Michel Mbumba Bandi
 - Fidele Ngamuloko Mfuta
16. Ministry of Agriculture, Direction de production des végétaux
 - Joseph Imani Katembera
 - Simon Musana Musumbu
 - Caroline Nkasa Mbimba
17. Ministry of Agriculture, Service National de Semences (SENASA)
 - Andre Wutezi
 - Archal Ngandole
 - Joseph Kamoha
18. Ministry of Agriculture, Service National de Vulgarisation (SNV)
 - Arssel Lesa Luseku
 - Richard Beya
 - Victor Lobela Lofetola
19. Ministry of Agriculture, Direction de développement et entrepreneuriat agricole (DDEA)
 - Samuel Shako Kasongo
 - Florimond kitamba
20. Ministry of Agriculture, Secretary general
 - Nday-buyeye Polydore
 - Kyulu-ntambo Jean
21. WORLD FOOD PROGRAM, (Lorena Braz, program officer)
22. FAO (Michel Ngongo, Resilience officer)
23. WORLD BANK, (Cheitch DIA, TTL)
24. AMBASSADE DE BELGIQUE(Guillaume Gillard, DRO)
25. ENABEL,(Mathilde Fassollette, Experte Agriculture)
26. AMBASSADE DE NORVÈGE (Prince Baraka, Program officer)
27. ATA, Field visit to Mongata on November 30th, 2022.
28. IITA, Field visit to Mongata on November 30th, 2022.

- Bamba Zoumana (Country representative)
- Sikirou Mouritala

29. CERAGRU, Field visit to Mongata on November 30th, 2022 to the seeds multiplication.

30. Implementing partners meeting with USAID, on December 6, 2022.

31. Donor meeting with FCDO, January 2023.

32. Field trip for Stakeholders consultation in proposed ZOIs - March 1-17 (Haut-Katanga and Kasai-Oriental); March 26-31 (Kongo central)

Annex 3: Overall Sex-Disaggregated Statistics on Poverty, Hunger and Nutrition

Reliable sex-disaggregated data in the DRC is sparse. Many indicators are derived from outdated surveys, and figures are often only available every few years. In addition, national-level data is largely modeled after assumptions built on the country's last census, which was carried out in 1984.¹⁰⁸ Where possible, the data presented are disaggregated by sex.

Poverty

Indicator	Male	Female	Overall
GDP per Capita (current US\$)	--	--	\$577.2 (2021) ¹⁰⁹
Population living on less than \$2.15 a day (%)	--	--	64 (2021) ¹¹⁰
Multidimensional poverty (%)	--	--	50.8 (2016) ¹¹¹
Severe multidimensional poverty (%)	--	--	36.7 (2016) ¹¹²
Employment to population ratio, 15+ (%) (national estimate) - Congo, Dem. Rep.	65.5 (2020) ¹¹³	59.6 (2020) ¹¹⁴	62.5 (2020) ¹¹⁵
Employment in Agriculture Sector (%)	57 (2019) ¹¹⁶	72 (2019) ¹¹⁷	64 (2019) ¹¹⁸

¹⁰⁸ Cyril Owen Brandt and Tom De Herdt, "On the political economy of data collection: Lessons from the unaccomplished population census (Democratic Republic of the Congo, 2006-2018)," *Overseas Development Institute (ODI)*, Mar 2019.

¹⁰⁹ World Bank, "Data: GDP per capita (current US\$) – Congo, Dem. Rep."

¹¹⁰ World Bank, "The World Bank In DRC."

¹¹¹ ILO, *State of Skills: The Democratic Republic of the Congo*.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ World Bank, "Data: Employment to population ratio, 15+, male (%) (national estimate) - Congo, Dem. Rep."

¹¹⁴ World Bank, "Data: Employment to population ratio, 15+, female (%) (national estimate) - Congo, Dem. Rep."

¹¹⁵ World Bank, "Data: Employment to population ratio, 15+, total (%) (national estimate) - Congo, Dem. Rep."

¹¹⁶ World Bank, "Data: Employment in agriculture, male (% of male employment) (modeled ILO estimate) - Congo, Dem. Rep."

¹¹⁷ World Bank, "Data: Employment in agriculture, male (% of female employment) (modeled ILO estimate) - Congo, Dem. Rep."

¹¹⁸ World Bank, "Data: Employment in agriculture (% of total employment) (modeled ILO estimate) - Congo, Dem. Rep."

Indicator	Male	Female	Overall
Unemployment	52 ¹¹⁹	48 ¹²⁰	--
Unemployment, youth total (percent of total labor force ages 15-24) (modeled ILO estimate)	12 (2021) ¹²¹	8.5 (2021) ¹²²	10.1 (2021) ¹²³
Share of youth not in education, employment or training, total (percent of youth population)	28.7 (2020) ¹²⁴	33.9 (2020) ¹²⁵	31.4 (2020) ¹²⁶
Mortality rate, under-5 (per 1,000 live births)	87 (2020) ¹²⁷	75 (2020) ¹²⁸	81 (2020) ¹²⁹

Hunger and Malnutrition

Indicator	Male	Female	Overall
Prevalence of stunting, height for age (percent of children under 5)	45.6 (2017) ¹³⁰	38.2 (2017) ¹³¹	--
Prevalence of wasting, weight for height (percent of children under 5)	7.1 (2017) ¹³²	5.8 (2017) ¹³³	6.4 (2017) ¹³⁴
Prevalence of undernourishment (percent of population)	--	--	40 (2020) ¹³⁵

¹¹⁹ ILO, *State of Skills: The Democratic Republic of the Congo*.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ World Bank, "Data: Unemployment, youth male (% of male labor force ages 15-24) (modeled ILO estimate) - Congo, Dem. Rep."

¹²² World Bank, "Data: Unemployment, youth female (% of female labor force ages 15-24) (modeled ILO estimate) - Congo, Dem. Rep."

¹²³ World Bank, "Data: Unemployment, youth total (% of total labor force ages 15-24) (modeled ILO estimate) - Congo, Dem. Rep."

¹²⁴ World Bank, "Data: Share of youth not in education, employment or training, male (% of male youth population) - Congo, Dem. Rep."

¹²⁵ World Bank, "Data: Share of youth not in education, employment or training, female (% of male youth population) - Congo, Dem. Rep."

¹²⁶ World Bank, "Data: Share of youth not in education, employment or training, total (% of male youth population) - Congo, Dem. Rep."

¹²⁷ World Bank, "Data: Mortality rate, under-5, male (per 1,000 live births) - Congo, Dem. Rep."

¹²⁸ World Bank, "Data: Mortality rate, under-5, female (per 1,000 live births) - Congo, Dem. Rep."

¹²⁹ World Bank, "Data: Mortality rate, under-5 (per 1,000 live births) - Congo, Dem. Rep."

¹³⁰ Global Nutrition Report, "Country Nutrition Profiles: DRC."

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ World Bank, "Data: Prevalence of wasting, weight for height (% of children under 5) - Congo, Dem. Rep."

¹³⁵ World Bank, "Data: Prevalence of undernourishment (% of population) - Congo, Dem. Rep."

	Male	Female	Overall
Prevalence of severe food insecurity in the population (%)	--	--	39.2 (2020) ¹³⁶
Prevalence of anemia among women of reproductive age (percent of women ages 15-49) - Congo, Dem. Rep.	--	42 (2019) ¹³⁷	--
Exclusive breastfeeding (percent of children under 6 months)	--	54 (2019)	--

Regional Hunger and Nutrition Data

Province	Child stunting (%) ¹³⁸	Child wasting (%) ¹³⁹	Child mortality (%) ¹⁴⁰	Population Experiencing Acute Food Insecurity (IPC 3 and above) (%) ¹⁴¹
Kinshasa	15.6	5.5	6	14
Kongo Central	35.2	9.7	7.7	18
Kwango	54.6	9.3	3	44
Mai-Ndombe	38.8	9.3	6.6	18
Équateur	35	7.6	4.3	23
Sud-Ubangi	44.9	4.6	10.1	31
Nord-Ubangi	42.4	13.5	5.3	17
Mongala	47.5	8.5	3.6	25
Tshuapa	45.3	10.6	10.1	31
Tshopo	43.9	4.3	6	23
Bas-Uélé	47.5	4.1	4.2	34
Haut-Uélé	35.2	10	5.4	29
Ituri	47.1	11.2	4.4	51
Nord-Kivu	49.6	4.6	2.6	19
Sud-Kivu	48	2.6	3.8	16
Maniema	44.2	4	9.1	25

¹³⁶ World Bank, "Data: Prevalence of severe food insecurity in the population (%) - Congo, Dem. Rep."

¹³⁷ World Bank, "Data: Prevalence of anemia among women of reproductive age (% of women ages 15-49) - Congo, Dem. Rep."

¹³⁸ Global Hunger Index, "DRC: A Closer Look at Hunger and Undernutrition," Oct 2020.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ IPC, "Democratic Republic of Congo: Acute Food Insecurity and Acute Malnutrition Situation September 2021-August 2022."

Province	Child stunting (%) ¹³⁸	Child wasting (%) ¹³⁹	Child mortality (%) ¹⁴⁰	Population Experiencing Acute Food Insecurity (IPC 3 and above) (%) ¹⁴¹
Haut-Katanga	40	5	9.8	14
Lualaba	42.9	5.9	4.8	25
Haut-Lomami	48.6	6.2	13.1	20
Tanganyika	40.8	4	6.6	31
Lomami	45.3	6	7.8	19
Kasai-Oriental	42.8	5.6	8.2	29
Sankuru	50.4	8.2	12.7	27
Kasai-Central	53.7	6	10	36
Kasai	47.4	6.9	16.9	39

Annex 4: Historical Data

Historical Values of Agricultural Production of Select Goods (US International \$) ¹⁴²

Historical Food Security Indicators¹⁴³

Year	Prevalence of undernourishment (%) (3-year average)	Number of people undernourished (million) (3-year average)	Prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity in the total population (%) (3-year average)	Number of moderately or severely food insecure people (million) (3-year average)	Percentage of children under 5 years affected by wasting (%)	Number of children under 5 years affected by wasting (million)	Percentage of children under 5 years of age who are stunted (modeled estimates) (%)	Number of children under 5 years of age who are stunted (modeled estimates) (million)	Prevalence of anemia among women of reproductive age (15-49 years)	Prevalence of exclusive breastfeeding among infants 0-5 months of age (%)
2000	--	--	--	--	--	--	47.8	4.1	52.7	--
2001	32.2	15.6	--	--	15.9	1.4	47.5	4.2	52.5	23.8
2002	33.7	16.8	--	--	--	--	47.3	4.4	52.4	--
2003	34.5	17.8	--	--	--	--	46.9	4.5	52.2	--
2004	34.7	18.4	--	--	--	--	46.3	4.6	51.9	--
2005	34.6	19	--	--	--	--	45.8	4.7	51.5	--
2006	34.6	19.6	--	--	--	--	45.2	4.8	51	--
2007	34.5	20.2	--	--	10.4	1.1	44.6	4.9	50.5	35.8
2008	34.5	20.8	--	--	--	--	44.2	5	49.8	--
2009	34.5	21.5	--	--	--	--	43.9	5.2	48.9	--
2010	34.2	22.1	--	--	8.5	1	43.6	5.3	48.1	36.4
2011	34.5	23	--	--	--	--	43.1	5.4	47.2	--
2012	35.1	24.2	--	--	--	--	42.8	5.5	46.4	--
2013	35.1	25.1	--	--	8.1	1.1	42.4	5.7	45.5	47.3
2014	35.1	25.9	--	--	--	--	42	5.8	44.8	--
2015	35.5	27.1	--	--	--	--	41.7	5.9	44.1	--
2016	36	28.4	--	--	--	--	41.7	6	43.5	--

¹⁴² FAO, "FAOSTAT: Value of Agricultural Production."

¹⁴³ FAO, "FAOSTAT: Suite of Food Security Indicators."

Year	Prevalence of undernourishment (%) (3-year average)	Number of people undernourished (million) (3-year average)	Prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity in the total population (%) (3-year average)	Number of moderately or severely food insecure people (million) (3-year average)	Percentage of children under 5 years affected by wasting (%)	Number of children under 5 years affected by wasting (million)	Percentage of children under 5 years of age who are stunted (modeled estimates) (%)	Number of children under 5 years of age who are stunted (modeled estimates) (million)	Prevalence of anemia among women of reproductive age (15-49 years)	Prevalence of exclusive breastfeeding among infants 0-5 months of age (%)
2017	36.4	29.6	--	--	6.4	1	41.6	6.2	43	53.6
2018	36.3	30.5	--	--	--	--	41.5	6.3	42.6	--
2019	37.7	32.7	69.2	60.1	--	--	41.2	6.4	42.4	--
2020	39.8	35.6	72.3	64.7	--	--	40.8	6.5	--	--

G. Notes and References

Notes

² Reliable sex-disaggregated data in the DRC is sparse. Many indicators are derived from outdated surveys, and figures are often only available every few years. In addition, national-level data is largely modeled after assumptions built on the country's last census, which was carried out in 1984. Where possible, the data presented are disaggregated by sex.

¹⁰ The 2016 Cost of Hunger in Africa (COHA) study found that 1.7 billion was lost every year due to child malnutrition in DRC.

¹⁴ 50-75% families rely on subsistence farming according to DRC situation Report - April 2020 by FAO.

⁷⁷ Our Mission FtF ZOI scoping visits found that many smallholder farmers in DRC are already dealing with difficulties regarding an increased frequency of drought, flooding, disease/pests, and shifting agricultural seasons, due to climate change. Addressing these concerns is of a high priority and inherent in our efforts to achieve FtF objectives. Climate-smart solutions, such as off-grid clean energy, soil building practices, IPM and the use of resilient/resistant planting materials, will be actively promoted.

⁷⁸ The SVC Activity ended in September 2022.

⁷⁹ USAID linked coffee cooperatives with international buyers resulting in an increase in small holder farmers' cooperatives from 500 in 2020 to 20,000 at the end of 2022.

⁸⁰ CBSD covered the provinces of Kongo-Central, Kasai-Oriental, Lomami, Tshopo, Haut-Katanga, and Sud-Kivu.

⁸¹ FAW operates in Katanga, Tanganyika, South Kivu, and the Kasai provinces, with anticipation to expand geographic scope in 2023.

⁹³ 1) **Operational Context**; major value chains (VCs), stakeholders, supportive institutions, Livelihoods, access to finance, inputs, seed system, extension, logistics, post-harvest, processing/transformation, marketing and commercialization, etc.; 2) **Identified needs**; gaps or constraints to growth, investment, or formalization of the agriculture sector that facilitates improved production, access, and affordability of locally produced food; 3) **Resources available for Feed the Future aligned programming**; in the form of partnership potential, enabling environment, human or social capital, or agriculture opportunity; 4) **Partnership interest**; willingness to collaborate/coordinate on Feed the Future aligned programming; 5) **Growth potential**; potential or capacity to expand production, job creation, or reach out to smallholders with services or resources that improve production or standards of living; 6) **Operational risks**; showstoppers or concerns that might inhibit coordinative efforts or programmatic success.

⁹⁴ To reduce poverty by 20% in the proposed ZOI

¹⁰⁶ Mission staff visited various stakeholders in the proposed ZOI in Kongo central, Kasai province and other relevant market centers in southern DRC. Semi-Structured consultation was held with stakeholders such as the Governor's office (his chief of staff), Minister of Agriculture, Provincial and Territorial Agricultural Inspectors, Territorial administrative heads, producers group, processors, agricultural service providers and farmers. These conversations and observations were factored in both selection of ZOI and conceptualizing program components.

¹⁰⁷ For more information on these approaches visit the Future Search Network website (<https://futuresearch.net/>) and the SCALE+ website (<http://scaleplus.fhi360.org/>).

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