MMU

FINAL REPORT

Market Monitoring Unit

3i Solution
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Contents

Introduction

The Market Monitoring Unit (MMU) was originally established by the Livelihoods Interventions Fund (LIF) in southern Syria (Dara'a and Quneitra Governorates), off the back of their expanding programming in these areas. Their portfolio in the South aimed to generate impacts at the level of local value chains, which brought about a need to establish the MMU in order to:

a. Understand the market dynamics and political economy surrounding the local value chains that LIF supports; and

b. Understand as far as possible the impact of LIF interventions in order to inform future programming.

The original value chains (VCs) selected by LIF were olive, poultry, and livestock.

However, following the major Government of Syria (GoS) operation to retake southern Syria from Opposition forces, commencing on 18th June 2018, the project was then suspended in the South, on account of the fragile and increasingly dangerous security situation. This subsequently led to a geographical shift to northwest Syria, formalised in a first amendment to the contract, following discussions and planning by both GIZ and 3iS.

The change in geographical location also brought about a review of the relevant VCs for this area. The value chains selected by LIF were the olive VC and the livestock (including dairy) VC. It was intended that the geographic focus of the initiative targeted the areas of Al-Atareb, Maaret an-Numan, Kafr Nobol, Saraqeb and Binnish, but were not solely limited to this.

3iS, in collaboration with the MMU, developed and implemented surveys to map up the two key market systems of olives and livestock (dairy production) in Idlib Governorate in northwest Syria. 3iS used an experienced team of enumerators from a third-party data collection organisation to collect qualitative and quantitative data relevant to the respective VCs. Additionally, 3iS utilised the third party to carry out continuous monitoring of the local security context and political and economic developments of the region.

It is hoped that this report, alongside the associated project factsheets and dashboards for each of the VCs, will help inform future humanitarian and development programming, directly benefitting the public both inside Syria and surrounding countries. Many agencies implementing livelihoods interventions would no doubt benefit from the findings to ensure a more coordinated approach to programming. The findings in this report and the other products could also be disseminated to GIZ beneficiaries and partners inside Syria to improve beneficiaries' access to market information and therefore leverage their potential to create stronger market linkages long-term. Previous market research studies have found that small market actors are lacking access to market information, which makes them dependent on information shared by the larger traders buying from them, therefore diminishing their negotiation power.

Methodology

The project was initially designed to be conducted in Southern Syria over a period of 8 months with 4 rounds of data collection, to allow for trends analysis. However, this initial plan was modified due to several challenges in line with the conflict fluidity.

In light of the contextual changes and with the halting of LIF activities in Southern Syria, the project focus was shifted to north western Syria. Due to delays determined by the contextual changes and donor's suspension of activities in the southern area, only one round of data collection could be completed within the timeframe. This report therefore captures a snapshot of the situation of selected market systems at the time of this unique round and cannot expand to trends analysis over time (which was the initial plan, with 4 rounds of data collection over 8 months). Unfortunately, an early assessment of the impact of the LIF interventions on the selected value chains could not be completed, as activities were under suspension at the time the interventions phased out.

Key informant (KI) interviews with relevant experts (agronomists and other agriculture specialists) were conducted in the last quarter of 2018, before field data collection, in order to contextualise agriculture and trade dynamics in the target areas, and tailor field data collection tools.

A set of specific questionnaires[1] was developed to conduct semi-structured interviews with market actors in the selected value chains in the field. Data was collected using a Kobo-based platform.

Field data collection was conducted in the second half of November 2018 through third-party enumerators (trained by 3iS beforehand). For each value chain, 65 face to face individual interviews have been conducted with producers, processors, traders, service and input providers, consumers and key informant from local communities in the sub districts of Al-Atareb in Aleppo governorate and Maaret an-Numan, Kafr Nobol, Saraqeb and Binnish, in Idleb governorate in Northwest Syria.

Table 1 - Number of market actors interviewed per type and per market system

Type of market actors	Olive market system	Dairy market system
Producers	20 (6 large, 5 medium, 9 small)	20 (5 large, 4 medium, 11 small)
Processors	(4 large, 4 medium)	10 (3 large, 4 medium, 4 small)
Traders	20 (13 wholesalers, 7 retailers)	18 (9 wholesalers, 9 retailers)

Thresholds to evaluate the size of actors were defined in consultation with key informants as follows:

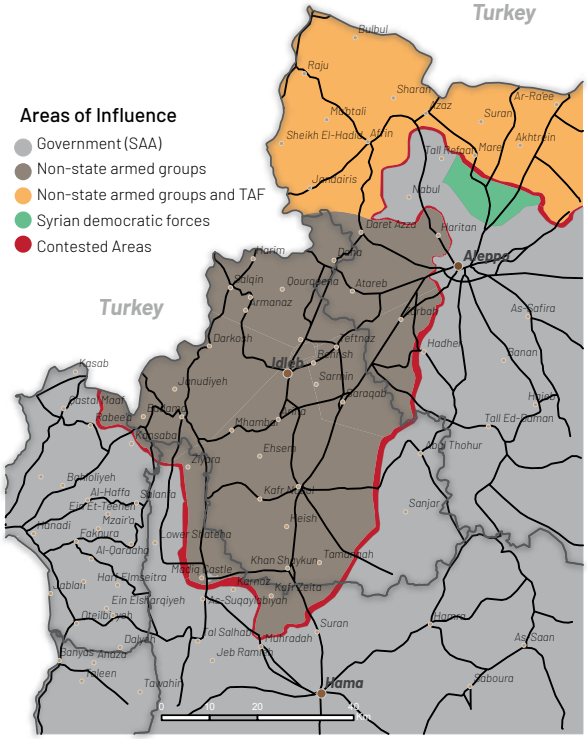
		Olive market system	Dairy market system
Producers	Small	Up to 35 olive trees	Less than 75 livestock heads
	Medium	From 35 to 250 olive trees	Between 75 and 150 livestock heads
	Large	ore than 250 olive trees	More than 150 livestock heads
Processors	Small	One production line	Defined by each community
	Medium	Two production lines	
	Large	Three production lines and above	

Data validation was implemented in December 2018 through follow-up key informant interviews to validate initial findings.

1 Find used questionnaires at this link

Current Context: Northwest Syria

On 28th December 2018, the Armed Opposition Group (AOG) and Salafist jihadist militant group, Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), launched an offensive against affiliated groups of the National Liberation Front (NLF) – also an AOG fighting against the Government of Syria (GoS). HTS exploited NLF troop movements to southern Idleb governorate to support HTS hostility in western rural Aleppo, by attacking the reduced numbers of the latter organisation in other parts of Idleb. This allowed HTS to rapidly take ground from NLF affiliated groups and increase its hold on the strategically significant M4 and M5 highways. On 30th December, this also led to increased GoS shelling of HTS targets in northern Hama and southern Idleb, with reports of Russian airstrikes in the city of Jisr-Ash-Shugur



As established by the Demilitarised Zone (DMZ) agreement between Russia and Turkey on 19th September, the deadline to resume cross-line transportation in northwest Syria (NWS) passed without being implemented on 31st December 2018. Whilst this caused complexities in the region, the focus of Turkey and Russia at the time turned to US policy towards Syria, with the announcement, on December 19th, 2018, of an operational withdrawal of US forces from northeast Syria. Thus, at the time, there was no significant backlash from either Turkey or Russia towards the failure to implement the agreement as earlier proposed. This was largely on the basis that Geopolitical actors are shifting their interests towards northeast Syria (NES) following the US announcement.

NLF member organisation, Nourredine al-Zinki (NZ), was expelled by force from its stronghold in western rural Aleppo by HTS, culminating on 6th January 2019, and exploiting full control of the area subsequently. NZ personnel are reported to have fled, where possible, but many combatants instead chose to fall under HTS command and bolster the organisation's ranks. This, along with other territorial advances in NWS, led to HTS control of the majority of crossing points and transitory routes in the region. HTS takeover of large swathes of land in NWS degraded the implementation of the DMZ, largely leaving the agreement breached. This left space for GoS and their Russian backers to justify that the DMZ is now under the control of "terrorist" organisations, increasing the likelihood of further strikes and the possibility of a military offensive in the region. HTS further announced that they will take control of all security governance in the areas it took control of, with all other governance falling under the HTS-affiliated Salvation Government; the non-military hand of HTS.

By 10th January, HTS took the remaining parts of northern Hama and Idleb governorates from the NLF. On this date, an agreement of ceasefire was negotiated between the NLF and HTS, comprising of three main objectives: 1) immediate end to hostilities between the factions; 2) mutual release of prisoners; 3) surrender of administration bodies to the Salvation Government. Around this period, reports came in that Turkish military forces had moved into the Province of Hatay, on the Turkish side of the Turkey-Syria border, above Latakia, Idleb and Aleppo governorates. Furthermore, it was reported that GoS's Syrian Arab Army (SAA) also deployed their 5th Legion and 9th Armored Division to northern Hama, thus posturing for offensive operations was seen on both sides of Idleb governorate.

Significantly, it was announced by HTS on 14th January that they were declaring support to Turkey against the YPG and PKK, stating that the groups in NES are the enemy of the revolution against GoS.

Since its ceasefire with NLF, HTS has been focusing its operations on countering ISIS in NWS. This is following a number of attacks on HTs infrastructure and against strategically key site, allegedly conducted by ISIS, which included suicide attacks. HTS have been conducting arrests and executions of reported sleeper cells in the region and possible ISIS members connected with the attacks. In other parts of Idleb, HTS has been consolidating its control of areas which it took from NLF, whilst also making efforts to disrupt and prevent the influence of remaining NLF elements.

With the successful HTS operation to control the majority of NWS, many aid and development organisations suspended their operations in the region. This caused some level of difficulty for the civilian population in the area, as they are largely reliant on external support to maintain their services and provision of resources

required by the local population. Therefore, following similar announcements by Aleppo, Hama and Idleb Health Directorates, the Idleb Provincial Council issued a statement on the 26th January, saying that they were in need of humanitarian organisations to restart their health and education programmes in Idleb, stating that humanitarian issues in the governorate would reach severe levels, should services not be resumed.

By 3rd February, multiple political leaders, as well as those from civil society from around NWS stated that they were intending to establish the General Conference of the Syrian Revolution, with the hopes that they would then be able to consolidate NWS governance under a unified umbrella of a single entity in opposition to GoS. Further to this, the military council is reportedly going to oversee compliance with the DMZ, with specific focus towards agreements to reopen transit on the M4 and M5 highways, though this has seen some opposition from other AOGs, including Hurras Al-Deen, furthering tensions among armed groups in NWS.

The General Conference of the Syrian Revolution published their intended governance mandate for NWS on 10th Feb, which included 12 points of administrative importance. Significantly, the plans would seek to replace the Salvation Government as the administrative lead in NWS, which would likely appear more favorable to external actors who view the HTS and their affiliated governance body as an extremist organisation, so the new initiative would potentially give more credibility to the governance of NWS. However, the General Conference of the Syrian Revolution is governed by 10 personnel, majority of whom are reported to maintain close personal ties with HTS. This is perhaps why the General Conference of the Syrian Revolution has not been accepted by all significant Opposition entities in NWS, with the Syrian Interim Government stating that they do not recognise the General Conference as being a legitimate governing body. Therefore, it seems likely that the initiative is just an effort by HTS and their associated Salvation Government to rebrand their activities in an effort to increase their acceptance and legitimacy in NWS.

On 14th February, the most recent round of talks between Turkey, Russia and Iran were held in Sochi. These talks have been anticipated for some time and saw discussions focusing on multiple aspects of the Syrian conflict, including the feasibility of sustaining the DMZ in NWS. No substantive agreement was announced following the talks, but it is now significantly more likely that there will be some form of offensive to take NWS away from Opposition control. All parties at the summit emphasised their dissatisfaction with HTS control of Idleb governorate, though with Turkish interests now focusing more towards the US withdrawal from NES, Russia is becoming increasingly impatient with the situation in the NWS and their rhetoric at the highest of levels shows a lack of appetite to continue with the situation as it remains. With HTS lack of legitimacy in the eyes of every external stakeholder, there is now significant room for GoS, Russian and Iranian military action to take place in NWS in the coming months. This is especially true, given Turkey and Russia's inability to reach an outcome regarding the situation until now, though there we have seen the two countries conducting joint patrols in February between the areas of the Euphrates Shield and Tall Refaat, which does imply some level of coordination.

Throughout January and February, GoS have intensified their shelling of areas under opposition control in NWS, particularly in northern Hama and southern Idleb, as well as western rural Aleppo. This has been a tactic of GoS prior to any major international summit throughout the conflict, as it aids their negotiation power. However, it has also been a prelude to major offensives to seize control of a particular area and could therefore be considered as a possible indicator for military activities increasing in the near future.

Turkey has been actively making efforts to ensure the integrity of the DMS and has been pushing for a peaceful resolution in the region, in order to preserve security on its border with Syria. However, it was unable to prevent HTS from taking significant control of Idleb, as well as the M4 and M5 highways, which has served to increase the likelihood of GoS action, backed by Russia and Iran, to retake control of NWS. In the case of an offensive, Turkey will be keen to reduce the number of refugees crossing its borders, which is likely the reason for Turkish troop build-up on its border with Idleb and not, as many may speculate, a prelude to Turkish operations cross-border to topple HTS control in the area. Furthermore, given the HTS control in the areas of contention, the subsequent reduction in humanitarian and development programming in NWS has served to provide a space with limited NGO activities, which will only increase GoS desire to move its forces beyond the DMZ control lines and to bring an end to the Opposition in NWS

Market systems – findings

Both market systems functioning are shown in market system maps. Those maps are comprised of three layers: the top layer captures market and business environment factors that have a direct influence on the way market actors trade and interact; the middle layer shows the relationship between market actors (the market chain) from production to consumption through processing and trade, highlighting quantitative information such as market prices and volumes; the bottom layers represents the necessary inputs, key infrastructures and services that support the market chain. An interactive version of each market system map is available online and includes highlights; it is complemented by an online dashboard for more information on quantitative data. Dashboards capture quantitative information on market prices, production and trade volumes, consumption volumes, wages and labour demographics.

Olive Market System in Northwest Syria

NOV 2018

The market environment
Institutions, rules, norms & trends

- Cultural Values
- Farmers Social Network
- Checkpoints Taxes
- Women Role
- Family Business
- Quality Control
- Support Vulnerable Groups "widow"
- Challenges in Cross Border Trading
- Challenges in Cross Line Trading

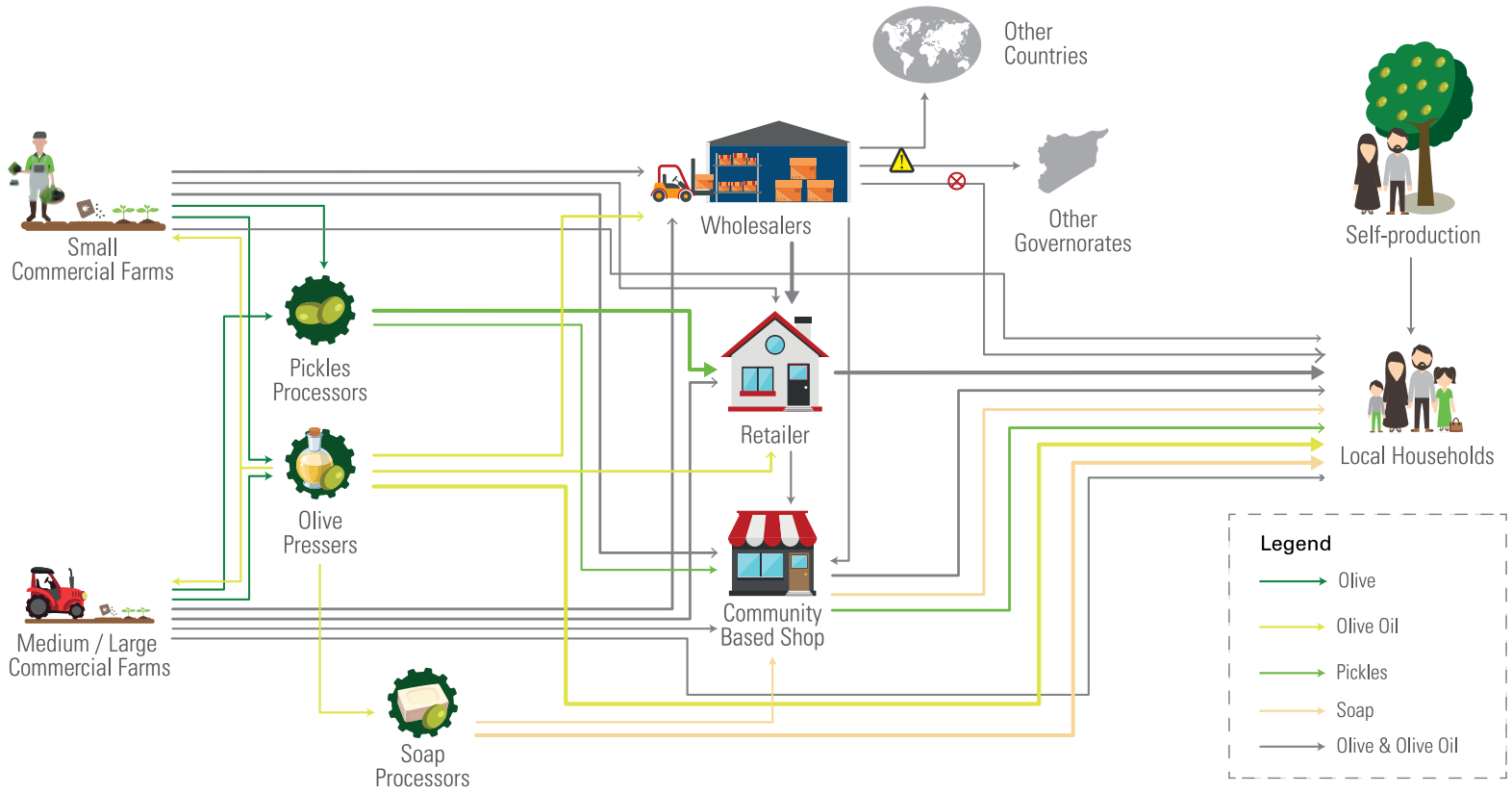
⊗ Consumer puchasing power ⚠ SYP Depreciation ⚠ Laws and Regulations ⊗ Agriculture Olan and Loans Aid Agency ⚠ Security Enviroment ⚠ Business Network (Unreliable Supplier)

The market chain
Market actors & their linkages

Price of olive and Olive Oil (SYP/kg)
Olive: 200 - 350
Olive Oil: 940 - 1,150

Olive Farmers Production Volume (MT/season of 2018)
Small 0.4 - 2
Medium 1.3 - 6
Large 3 - 15

Olive Oil Farmers Production Volume (kg)
Small 100 - 320
Medium 500 - 960
Large 700 - 2500



Price of Olive and Olive Oil (SYP/kg)
Olive: 275 - 500
Olive Oil: 1,000 - 3,000

Weekly Consumption per person (G)
Olive: 150 - 1,000
Olive Oil: 200 - 1,250
Pickles: 150 - 500
Soap: 50 - 250

⊗ Major disruption ⊘ Partial disruption ⚠ Critical issue ✚ Supportive role

Olive Dashboard

Key infrastructure
Inputs, market-support services

- Marketing Services/capacities
- Expensive Fertilizers and pesticides
- Credit based trade
- Soil Lab Test
- Available skilled labor
- Knowledge of the Harmful insects

⊗ Assets ⊘ Poor Roads ⚠ Financial Services ⚠ Fuel ⊘ Transportation Expensive Alternative Energy ⚠ Processing Inputs ⊘ Warehouses Capacity

Key findings from the olive market system

The production amount of olive products has increased in 2018 comparing the production in 2017[2] . This has had a direct impact on prices, as due to increased availability of olive products on the markets, prices were kept relatively stable as compared to 2017 (when production volumes were lower), despite challenging transactional costs.

Prices have followed an increasing trend since the beginning of the conflict. Indeed, in 2010, market prices generally observed in Idleb were around 40-50 SYP per kg for table olives and 100-125 SYP per litre for olive oil. In 2016, table olives were found around 400 SYP per kg and olive oil around 1,500 SYP per litre in Salqin area of Idleb[3]. In the MMU target locations, at time of data collection, olives were reported between 275 and 500 SYP per kg (depending on the location), against 1,000 to 3,000 SYP per litre for olive oil.

The demand for olive products decreased, as the clients' purchasing capacity has been negatively impacted by the crisis, which furthermore prevented an increase in prices that would have reflected those of production costs.

Half of respondents reported that they had to pause their business in the past twelve months for a period expanding between 3 to 10 months due to the lack of supply in inputs and raw materials, decrease in demand, supply routes closures, damage or destruction of land or facility, displacement, lost access to land or facilities, ongoing fighting and change of controlling authorities. Some olive farmers reported that their lands were damaged by bombing and ongoing fighting.

The quality of olive products has deteriorated due to various reasons, including a lack of needed skills, lack of capital, lost access to lands and facilities, instable security situation, decrease in the profit margin and lack of governmental support to the farmers.

Closures of trade routes have limited the exporting capacity of olive market actors and prevent them from being able to sell the products in areas outside the production sub district and/or within the same governorate.

Small olive businesses seem to have been less affected by the challenges and taxation linked to exporting as they were previously not used to export their production outside the sub district.

Working hours have been generally reduced due to the security situation which has a direct impact on productivity: before the crisis, all olive market actors used to have night shifts during the peak production season to increase production, however now the night shift system is not feasible anymore. Some actors still take the risk of having more than one shift which have the labour being exposed to dangerous and unsecured work environment.

Credit practices were negatively affected by the instable context and the lack of trust, lack of financial and banking services, and the disrupted controlling support.

Profit margin of olive market actors have decreased and been impacted by increasing input costs, mainly fuel, fertilisers, skilled labour and water in addition to expensive transportation and taxation.

The main reported challenges in restocking olive products for trade actors were reported as follows: limited financial capacity, expensive transportation, checkpoint taxations, unreliable suppliers, disruption of the credit system, limited warehousing capacity, and fluctuation in supply prices.

Consumers reported that they substitute olive oil with sunflower oil or/and ghee, while table olives are substituted with yogurt and cheese and soap is substituted with shampoo and other types of soap.

Olive market actors [4] reported that they face a challenge in finding skilled workers who have experience in using the modern equipment, trimming trees, testing soil, using pesticides, maintaining and fixing the machines and tools (specifically the olive oil processing machines), olive oil filtering and extracting, marketing (mainly social media marketing), and packaging skills. It was reported that this is due not only to displacement, but also to costliness of labour and lack of vocational training.

2 The small sample size for this exercise did not allow for a statistical analysis. However, this trend was consistently reported across respondents.

3 2010 and 2016 prices are extracted from a study conducted by 3iS and the SIM Consortium in 2017 "Understanding market drivers in Syria », January 2018.

4 Olive market actors in this report refers to olive farmers, processors of olive oil, pickles and soap, and traders of olive products.

The role of women in the market chain

Interviewed key informants reported that men play a dominant role in the olive value chain while the role of women comes as off support to men throughout the market chain. Women play a signi icant role in the production phase. In contrast they have a limited role in the trading phase, which might be caused by local norms, as women are hesitant to deal with strangers or foreigners. The crisis has led an increasing number of women (especially those who became head of household) to take the lead and substitute the role of men in the market chain.

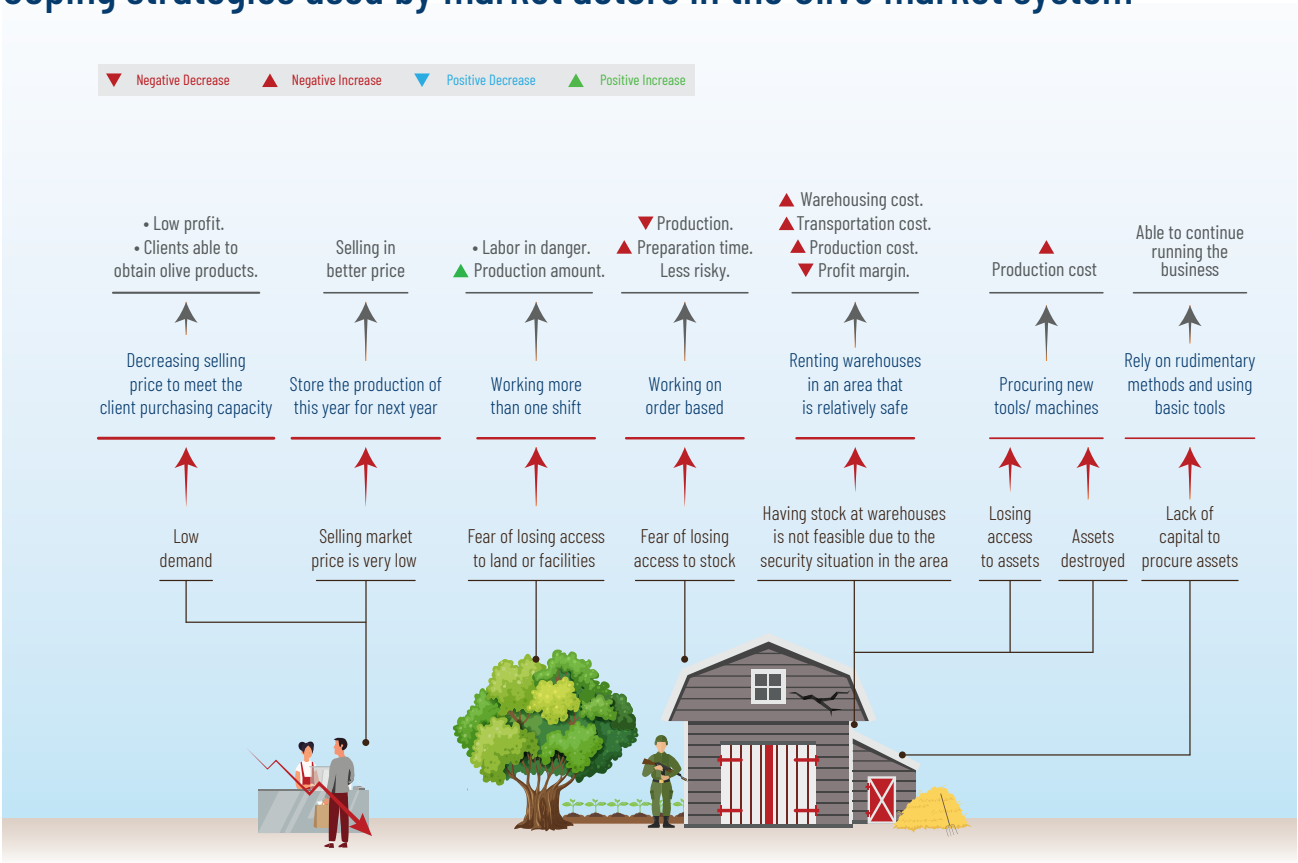
The collected data indicated that women have an active role in harvesting, weeding, olive categorisation and packaging. At processing stage, their role depends on the type of processing: women have a limited role in olive oil processing, but they lead the soap and pickles processing. As mentioned above this might also be affected by the community and culture barriers as both reported soap and pickles processing activities were home based.

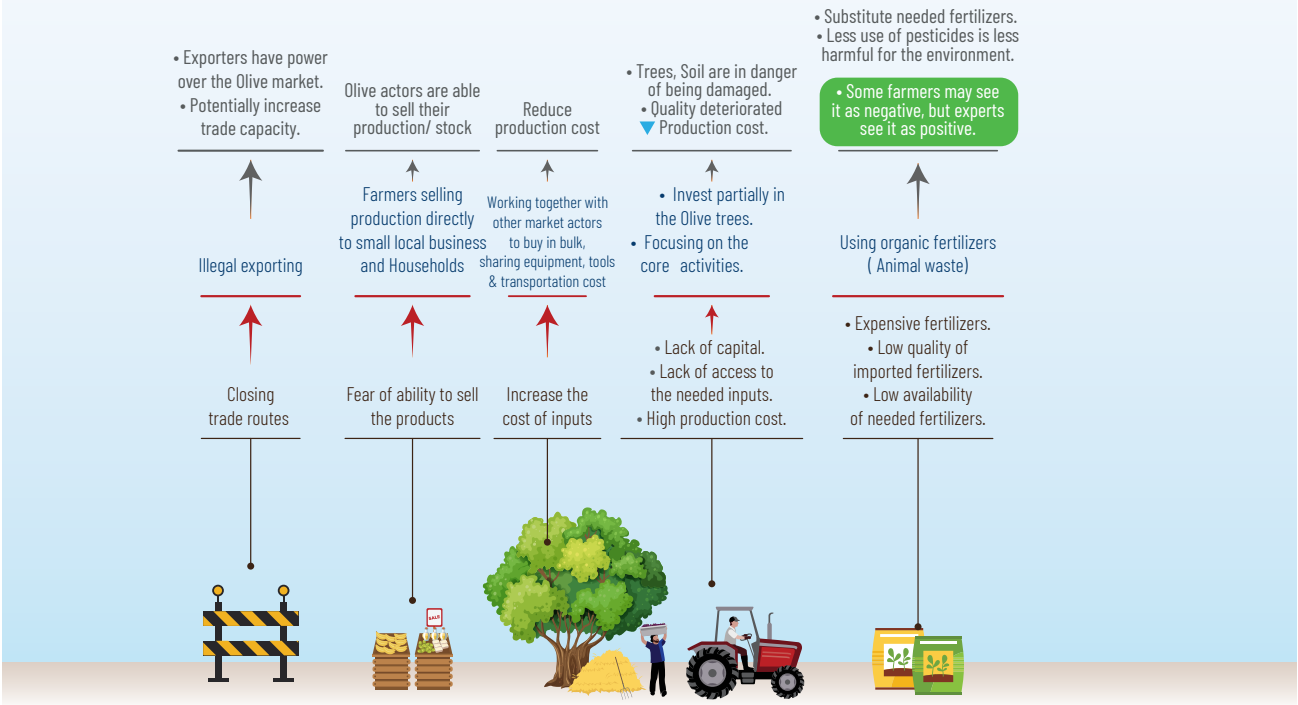
It is worth mentioning that many olive market actors mentioned that they are providing support to vulnerable groups like widows and orphans through either providing special discounts for them or giving them olive products as in-kind gift.

Coping strategies used by market actors in the Olive market system

Olive market actors have reported using the below main coping strategies to mitigate the associated risks and continue running their business in the fragile environment in Northwest Syria;

Coping strategies used by market actors in the Olive market system





Dairy Market System in Northwest Syria

NOV 2018

The market environment

Institutions, rules, norms & trends

Olive Season

Family Business (Child labor)

Women Role

Neighborhood Based Shops

Displacement

(Increase the demand in the hosted areas

Challenges in Cross Line Trading

- Productivity
- Syp Depreciation
- Aid Agency
- Purchasing Power
- Laws and Regulations
- Checkpoint Taxes
- Business Network
- Agriculture and Loans Plan
- Improvement in The Security Situation
- Profit Margin
- Quality Control

The market chain

Market actors & their linkages

Monthly Price of Dairy products (SYP/kg):

Milk 125 - 325
Yogurt 150 - 475
Cheese 780 - 1250

Monthly Milk Farmers' Production Volume(MT)

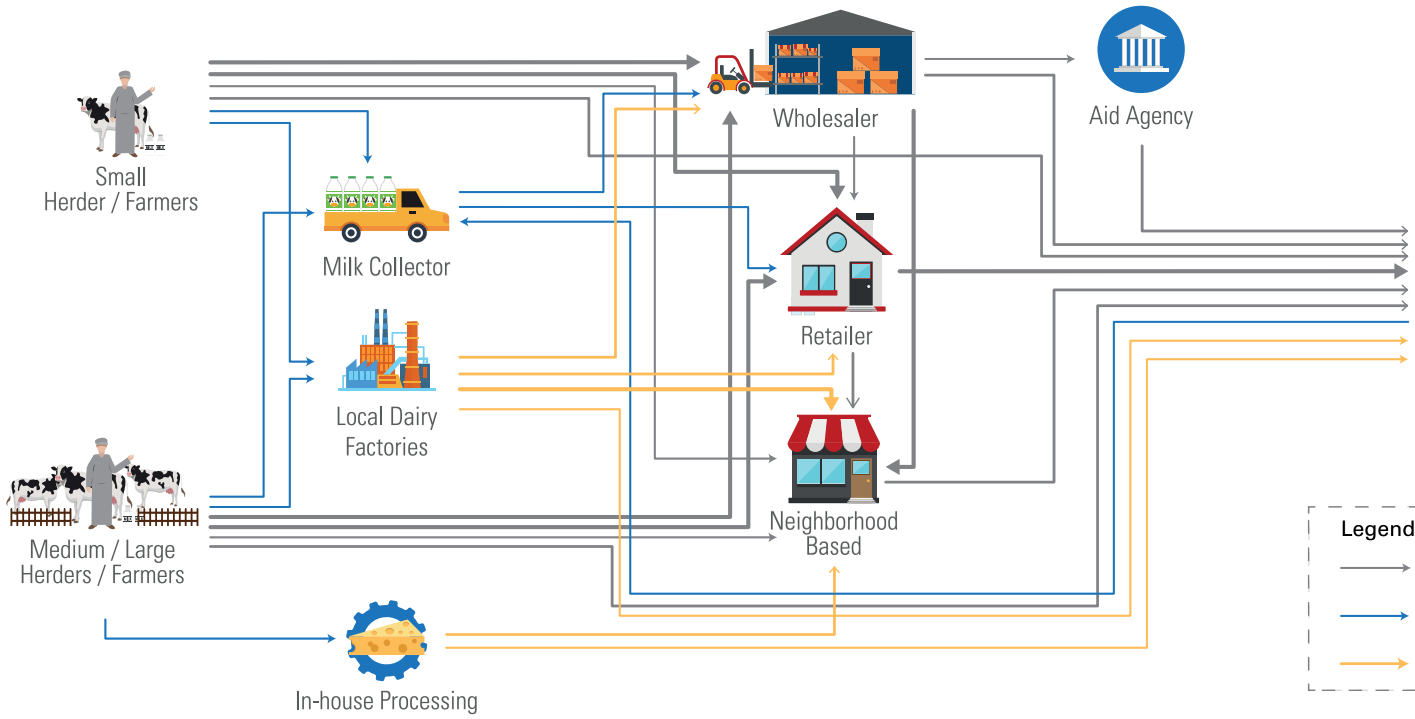
Small 0.2 -1.8
Medium 2 - 3
Large 1.2 - 11

Monthly Yogurt Farmers' Production Volume(MT)

Small 0.1 - 0.4
Medium 1 MT
Large 0.2 - 3.6

Monthly Cheese Farmers' Production Volume (MT)

Small 0.1 - 0.45
Medium 0.24
Large 0.15 - 6



Price of Dairy products (SYP/kg):

Milk 200 - 500
Yogurt 220 - 350
Cheese 1000 - 1800

Weekly Consumption per person (G):

Milk 50 - 2000
Yogurt 200 - 2000
Cheese 150 - 1300

Dairy Dashboard

Key infrastructure

Inputs, market-support services

Restocking
- Machines
- Assets

Marketing Capacity
- Capital

Expensive Fodder and Vet. Medicine
- Maintenance Services
- Transport

Low Quality Fodder and Vet. Medicine
- Fuel
- Credit System

Livestock population
- warehousing

Vaccine
- Electricity

Increase of Livestock Cost/price
- Increase use of solar power

Skilled Labor
- Refrigerated Trucks/ Warehouses
- Expensive Input processing

Cold Chain Equipment

Key findings from the dairy market system

Herders reported that production costs have significantly increased (compared to the situation pre-2011) due to increased prices of inputs such as animal feed, fodder, and veterinary services and drugs.

A notable percentage of the respondents reported a decrease in their sales, as consumers' purchasing power has been negatively impacted by the crisis. The combination of increased production costs alongside with decreased purchasing power has negatively affected the profit margin of actors in the dairy products value chain.

Dairy market actors reported challenges in affording the needed cold chain equipment and its operational costs, especially in summer, which has a major effect on the quality and therefore potential waste of dairy products. This increases the burden on dairy market actors, especially herders, who have to sell their products in a short period of time and sometimes at lower price than the market price, to avoid the expiry of their products.

Enforced displacement resulted in losing access to the production, processing and trading facilities, workshops and warehouses, in addition to sapping the business networks in the areas that dairy market actors were displaced from.

Dairy market actors in host areas reported that their business has been slightly improved due to increased population numbers after IDP influxes.

The number of livestock heads per herder has decreased due to the lack of capital and high cost of looking after/taking care of the animals.

The main reported challenges to restocking were reported as follows: diminished financial capacity that limits the ability to order the needed quantities, unreliable suppliers (affecting both trust relationships and credit system), and the high cost of transportation.

The temporary closure of trade routes impacts the ability of dairy market actors to export their production to areas that are located outside their sub district.

Although there was an improvement in the security situation comparing with third quarter of 2018, the dairy market actors are still hesitant to expand their work or invest in improving it as they are worried of the fragility of security situation.

The amount of livestock production has notably decreased: herders reported that this is mainly caused by the low quality of fodder and the difficulty in affording and obtaining the needed veterinary services and medicines.

7 out of 48 respondents among the dairy market actors had to pause their business for a while (between one and three months) due to the damage and/or destruction of assets and facilities, lack of capital, frequent displacement, and decrease in demand in the area.

Considering that the data collection has been carried out at the time of olive harvesting, interviewed customers reported that they prioritise procuring the olive products over the dairy ones as it is more a yearly based procuring which resulted in a relatively decreased demand in comparison to previous months.

The quality control system has been deteriorated. It counts on the customers' experience and the trust between sellers and buyers.

Consumers substitute the dairy products with olive, olive oil, thyme, milk powder, tomatoes and jam to overcome the challenges of affordability that are caused by either the high price or the availability of the dairy products.

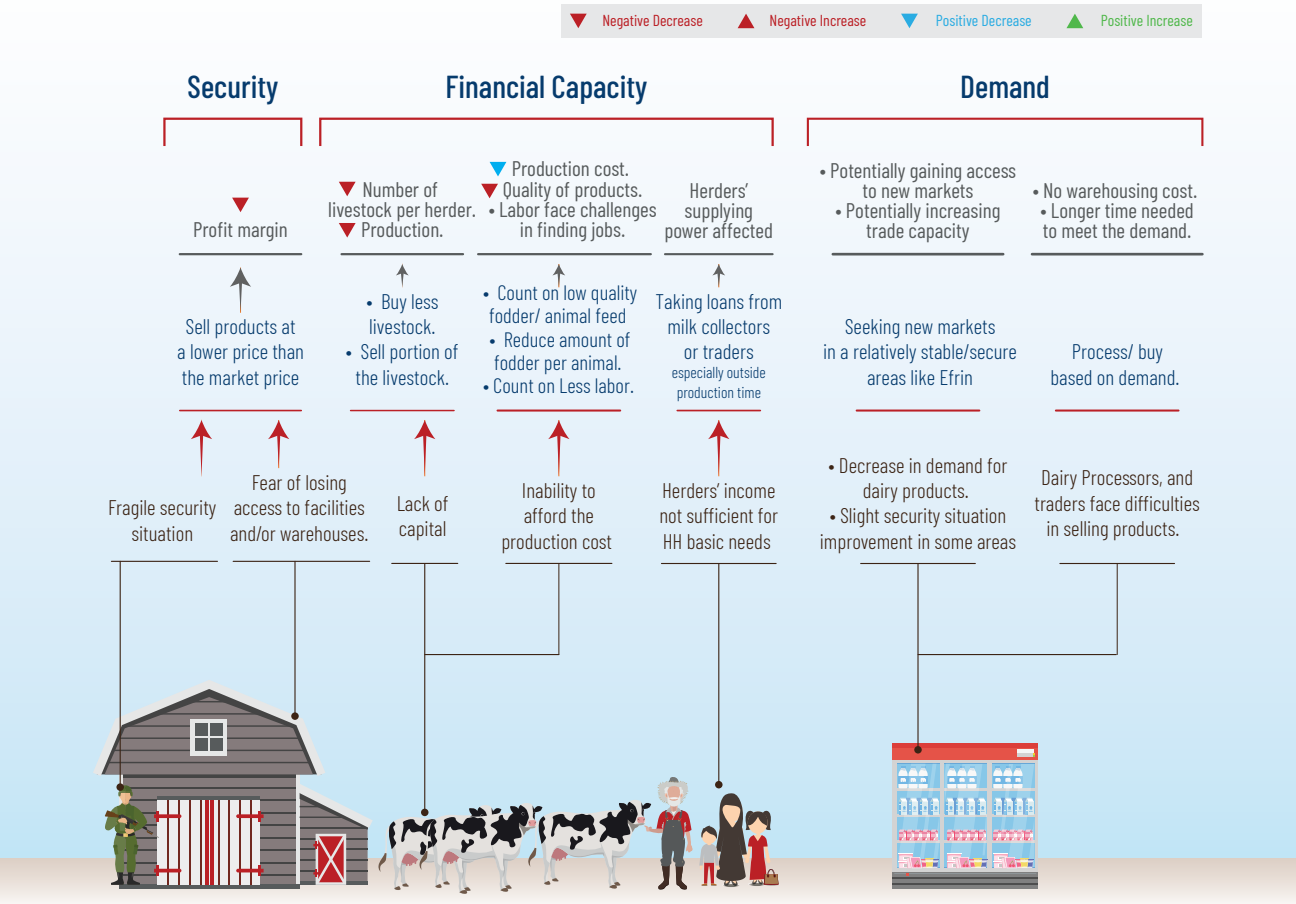
This study looked at the needed skills in the dairy value chain. Interviewed actors reported that the generic skills are available, but there is a lack in specific skills like fodder mixing, ability to substitute the missing component of the fodder mixtures, processing skills of heavy creamer, yogurt and ghee, and marketing skills. Under the service input category, actors reported a huge need for veterinary and vaccine experts and maintenance technicians. In addition, the market actors asked for more vocational training to tackle the existing lack of expertise.

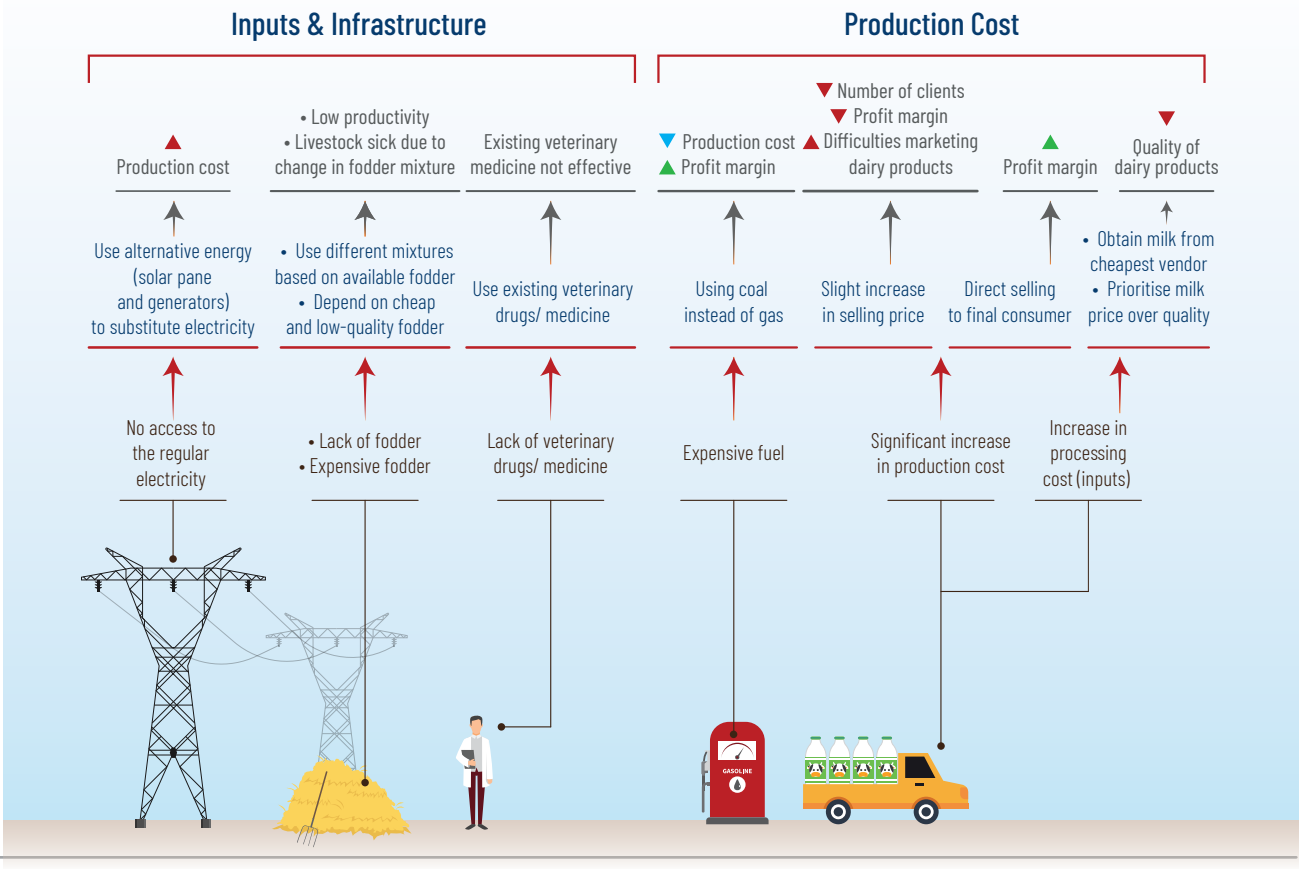
Role of women in the dairy market system

Women play a predominant role in the dairy value chain at small and medium-scale facilities, while they tend to hold a rather supportive role in the large dairy business across the different phases of production, processing and trading. Collected data indicate a limited role of women in marketing activities compared to other activities along the chain; at production phase, women hold a leading role in milking and feeding the livestock and cleaning; while at processing phase (especially at home-based processing), women lead the processing activities of cheese and yogurt, and the packaging.

To contextualise the role of women it is important to know that women have a leading role in the small and medium size as the majority of these sizes are family-based business that help in overcome many of cultural barriers that limits the women role like dealing with strangers as most of the labour are family members.

Coping strategies used by market actors in the Dairy market system





Recommendation for implementing partners at the LIF programme

1. **Toward market aware response;** implementing partners are encouraged to consider the main concepts of the market system like supply and demand at the program design phase. For example; Olive farmers reported challenges in marketing their products and exporting their production outside the sub district, this is a crucial indicator to be taken for any production support related, as increasing the supply in an area that has low demand would potentially have impact on the prices, thus cause a harm for the other farmers who have not been supported.
2. **For better calculation of the daily wages under Cash for Work (CfW) interventions,** it is important to take into consideration the benefits -like daily meals and free transportation- that labors receive and costing these benefits then add them as a top up to the local wages.
3. **Timely response;** adding to the seasonal calendar of the targeted value chain, it is recommended to think of a preventive response. For example, herders reported that they get loans from milk collectors and traders to meet their basic needs -especially outside the production time- this has direct impact on the herders' supplying and negotiation power. Thus, it would be recommended to provide help to herders at the time to ensure the stability and healthy of the market system.
4. **Encourage the best practices;** the collected data indicate that producers and processors count on the local business cultures and norms in doing their business. That might show inappropriate or immature practice that need to be eliminated for improving the quality of the products and reduce the negative impact on the assets. For example; olive oil processors use high temperature in extracting the olive oil which affect the quality of produced olive oil while the experts advised that the temperature should not exceed 30°C/ 86°F.
5. **Enhance the local knowledge;** vocational training programs are recommended to tackle the lack of available skills due to the displacement of experts outside the governorate and/or country. It is important to take the movement ability into consideration at site selection phase to enhance the accessibility of market actors to the needed labor skills and service inputs. In addition, a labor assessment is needed to have an informed vocational training programs with the aim to avoid increasing the supply over local demand.
6. **Promote environmentally friendly solutions/practices;** some of local practices are not environmentally friendly; local actors believe that using high amount of chemical items - especially fertilisers and pesticide- is better for the production amount and quality. Experts advised that this practice has no rationale scientific to support. On contrast, experts advise and promote the usage of organic items that are less harmful for the environment and soil preservation. Thus, implementing partners are encouraged to promote the environmental based intervention that aims to raise the environmental awareness of local actors through practices.
7. **Promote the production efficiency;** key informants reported that there is a lack of business management skills among herders and farmers. For example, farmers and herders are not used to calculate their profit neither the production cost. Therefore, implementing partners are heartened to include the business management sessions in their livelihood intervention, and focusing on the practices that could last and have sustainable impact in terms of raising the awareness of target groups on the best practices and encourage them to avoid the inherited costly practice that bound the production efficiency.
8. **Having the protection lens in mind;** At the same time encouraging the efforts toward having a greater participation of women in leading the local economy, it is essential to keep the program team aware of the local norms and condition and ensure that women are not imposed to participate in the livelihood programs just because they are in need. The risk of women being imposed to social violence just because they actively participate in the humanitarian/ livelihood programs should be considered by the implementing partners, and therefore implementing partners are advised to have this on their risk plan and try to come up with effective mitigation measures based on their context understanding.
9. **For better local governance structure;** throughout the data collection phase, it was clearly observed that the local governance structure -if existed- is in need for capacity building and admin support to perform its role in supporting the market and humanitarian actors. Hence, it is recommended to put an effort toward having community-based cooperatives and/or associations that have the mandate of providing the needed support for market and humanitarian actors, in terms of statistical data on the current production, average prices, log for farmers, encourage best practices, and utilising resources, ... etc. For example, having a standardised classification for both herders and farmers among NWS.

Lessons learnt from the MMU project within the LIF programme

The following lessons were learnt from the project:

Utilising the available resources and strengths of the LIF consortium:

LIF partners already deal with the different types of market actors throughout the project cycle and in the same areas, therefore utilising these resources could contribute to

a. Better chose of respondent profile (Utilising the existed trust and improve the women representative and participation in the data collection)

b. Speed up the process of Kicking off the data collection phase by counting on the community engagement and partners' networks that already existed on grounds.

Having evaluated the potential of such collaboration, 3iS did collaborate with LIF implementing partners at the data validation stage which resulted in improving the final products.

Strengthening the communication with implementing partners:

3iS faced challenges in reaching out to LIF implementing partners. Over the course of four months (Nov. 2018 _Feb. 2019), 3iS had a limited chance to meet with all LIF implementing partners; two meetings have been held with partners mainly Ihas and ACU. This limited the ability to provide more feedback and recommendation to improve programs. For future projects, it is recommended to hold a monthly lesson learnt session with LIF partners for capturing lesson learnt and capitalising on the experience of implementing partners, with the objective to develop a best practice around the value chains.

Update the data collection method:

trying to have a second step in the data collection in which FGD is being utilised after the Key informant's interview with the aim to digging more on the preliminary results, especially those that are environment and context related.