



In Myanmar, the COVID-19 pandemic and political upheaval have both had significant economic and social repercussions. CGIAR has been working with partners in the country to assess the economic impacts of the pandemic and their consequences for agrifood system (AFS) supply chains.

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF COVID-19

The double blow of the COVID-19 pandemic and the coup d'état on February 1, 2021, is likely to have more impact than either alone. The [International Monetary Fund \(IMF\) projects that Myanmar's economy will shrink by 8.9 percent](#) in 2021, and Myanmar is not expected to achieve the 2030 United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. These impacts will have long-term negative effects on food and nutrition security and the welfare of vulnerable populations in particular.

Results from interviews conducted from February to July 2020 suggest that [demand for production inputs and consumer goods was substantially affected](#) even after initial lockdown and movement restrictions were eased. Employment followed a somewhat similar pattern, with research showing that the pandemic may have had [differential impacts on men's and women's abilities](#) to access paid work.

[A study on rice](#), the country's most important staple crop and source of calories as well as a source of income through exports, shows that Myanmar's rice mills were not exempt from the COVID-19 disruptions experienced in the country: mills registered lower overall production, employee layoffs, and less credit availability.

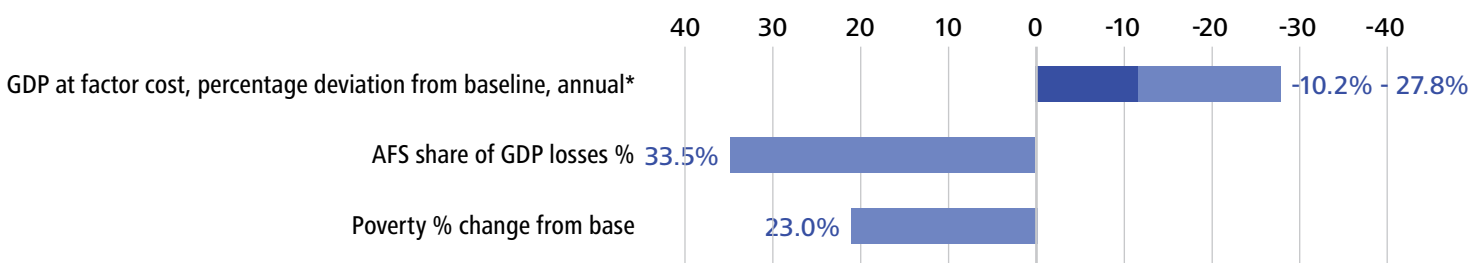
Although food supplies were exempt from lockdown restrictions, AFS gross domestic product (GDP) declined by about 33.5 percent due to income losses and supply chain disruptions in 2020/2021, as shown in Figure 1.

Not all the news is negative, though. Findings suggest that [economic recovery](#) in 2021 has been driven primarily by an upturn in nonagriculture sectors, which experienced sharp declines during the lockdown period. This may explain why many households with nonagricultural income recovered quickly post-lockdown. However, many factors adversely affecting agricultural incomes¹ and remittances are external and are expected to be more persistent. As such, the harmful economic impacts of COVID-19 on agricultural households are projected to be prolonged for at least a year, with many newly poor households likely to remain impoverished due to long-term losses of income. This would impact 650,000 households under a slow recovery scenario and 350,000 under a fast recovery scenario. Most of these households are rural, divided approximately equally between farm and non-farm households.

CGIAR COVID-19 HUB RESEARCH RESPONSE

The CGIAR response in Myanmar focuses on three main workstreams: assessing the impacts of COVID-19 on agrifood supply chains; determining the impacts of COVID-19 on women's agribusiness and value chains in the Gulf of Mottama; and outlining policy options to build recovery and resilience in Myanmar's food, land, and water value chain systems.

Figure 1: Economic and poverty impacts of COVID-19 in Myanmar 2020/2021



Source: [Pauw et al. 2021](#).

*range under slower and faster recovery scenarios

¹ Agricultural income includes farm and nonfarm incomes.

The work of the COVID-19 Hub in Myanmar focuses on generating research findings that can be adopted by local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and development partners. Outputs completed to date include:

- An article on [COVID-19 impacts on small-scale fisheries](#)
- An article on [COVID-19 impacts on aquatic food value chains](#)
- A blog on [empowering women in a changing world](#)
- A review of studies on COVID-19 impacts on agrifood supply chains in Myanmar

The country team will also prepare a short synthesis report on Hub activities in Myanmar, including policy options to build recovery and resilience for food, land, and water value chains and systems. Findings will be available in the last quarter of 2021.

IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES AND INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS

Key partners in delivering COVID-19 research include the Department of Fisheries, Myanmar Green Way Apps, the Myanmar Fisheries Federation, and local NGOs. These collaborations provide valuable channels for the dissemination of research findings through the Myanmar Fisheries Federation Network, the Farmers Association Network, local and international NGOs, and the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation (MOALI).

The reimposition of military rule has created operational challenges for the delivery of COVID-19 response work in Myanmar. For CGIAR research, the biggest constraint is the lack of interaction with key ministries under the current political conditions. The country team is now

restricted to working with local government entities. Therefore, the team is placing more emphasis on the practical aspects of research that relate directly to communities, working with them on specific tools and methods such as converting rice fields to rice and fish systems.

CGIAR COVID-19-RELEVANT WORK IN MYANMAR

Impact of the pandemic on chicken and egg production

A study on the impact of [COVID-19 on chicken and egg production in Myanmar](#) found that these activities were severely affected. Chicken farms experienced a partial recovery between June and August 2020. Broiler farms had more rapid supply responses to the shock than layer farms.

Social and economic impact of the pandemic

A [community survey](#) was conducted in June and July 2020 across all of Myanmar's states/regions to assess the economic and social impacts of COVID-19. Respondents from nearly all communities perceived that COVID-19 had caused widespread income loss.

Welfare interventions during the pandemic

Scientists combined findings from telephone surveys on incomes, coping strategies, and food security with surveys designed to assess the impacts of differing [targeted cash transfers](#) to poor households. Findings show that small cash transfers had only moderate impacts on severe poverty during lockdowns.



The CGIAR COVID-19 Hub is led by the CGIAR Research Program on Agriculture for Nutrition and Health. To learn more, visit www.a4nh.cgiar.org/covidhub/

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