

Photo: WFP/Merel van Egdom

Special mVAM bulletin #8: December 2014

Guinea

December 2014: Negative coping levels high in Forest Guinea and Upper Guinea

Tracking food security during the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) outbreak in Guinea

Highlights

- Despite the ongoing harvest, households continue to rely on negative coping mechanisms, especially in Forest Guinea and Upper Guinea. Nonetheless, households in Forest Guinea are employing fewer negative coping strategies than in November.
- Local rice prices are dropping thanks to the harvest, while imported rice prices have remained stable. As a result, terms of trade have improved or remained constant in most areas of Guinea.

Methodology

mVAM round 3 data was collected in Guinea in French via interactive voice response (IVR). Round one data was collected in October 2014; round two data was collected in November 2014; and round three data was collected in December 2014. Overall 465 respondents were surveyed. The sample size of respondents from Middle Guinea was insufficient, so the results for this region have a wider margin of error than those for other regions. Consequently, the results for Middle Guinea have been removed from the analysis.

Map 1: Guinea—Reduced Coping Strategies Index (rCSI) -

December 2014

GUINEA - Reduced Coping Strategies Index (rCSI)
DECEMBER 2014

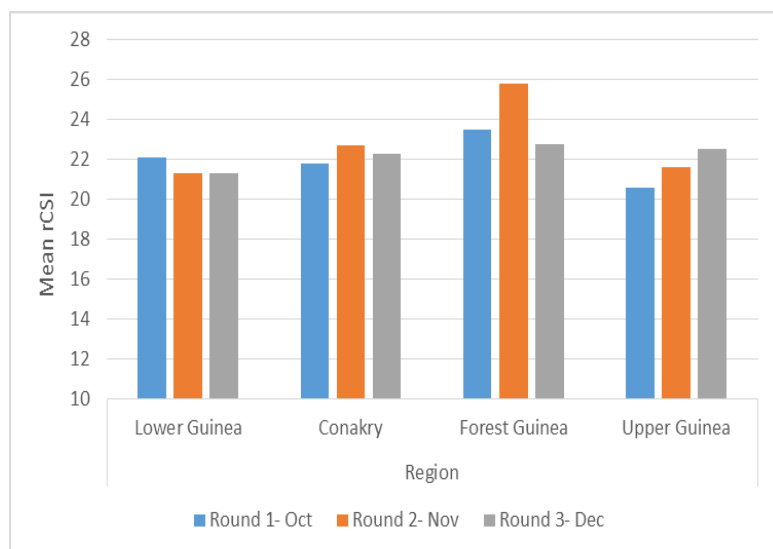


The reduced coping strategies index (rCSI) expresses the frequency and severity of the mechanisms that households use to access food. The more negative coping strategies households implement, the higher the rCSI.

A comparison of November and December 2014 rCSI values for Guinea shows that the rCSI has remained constant at high levels, perhaps indicative of an unreasonably high level of food insecurity in light of the ongoing main harvest that began in late September 2014 and is expected to continue through January 2015. As in November, December data shows that the rCSI is the highest in Forest Guinea (rCSI=22.8). While the rCSI is still high in Forest Guinea, evidence shows that on average, households implemented fewer negative coping strategies in December compared to the previous two months.

Source: WFP mVAM

Figure 1: Reduced Coping Strategies Index for October, November and December 2014



Source: WFP mVAM

This correlates with a dip in the region's rCSI from 23.5 in October to 22.8 in December ($p=0.04$). In Upper Guinea the rCSI increased in November and December. However, this increase was not statistically significant. The rCSI trend has coincided with the increase in EVD caseload in the area. In December, the rCSI remained high in Upper Guinea ($rCSI=22.5$), a sign of ongoing food insecurity. In Conakry the rCSI remained unchanged but high.

Across Guinea, the percentage of households employing the five surveyed negative coping strategies remains high, at above 80 percent for each strategy. In December, the most frequently employed strategy used to deal with food insecurity was consuming less preferred and less expensive food (88.8%). Other commonly used strategies included borrowing food and/or relying on help from friends and family to meet household consumption needs (86.5%), as well as limiting portion size at meal times (86.4%).

EVD incidence rates for 24–30 November 2014

In Guinea, incidences of EVD have been increasing slightly since early October, with between 75 and 148 new confirmed cases reported each week over the last six weeks. In November, a large number of new cases were reported in Nzérékoré and Macenta in Forest Guinea, with persistent transmission reported in Kankan and areas of Kerouane, Kouroussa and Kissidougou in Upper Guinea.

Source: [WHO Situation Report on 3 December](#)

Photo: WFP/Merel van Egdom



Local rice prices decline, while travel restrictions remain in some areas

Informal travel restrictions remain in place in some areas of the country, with reports indicating community-imposed quarantines and movement restrictions in select areas of Upper Guinea and throughout Forest Guinea.



Photo: WFP/Merel van Egdom

These restrictions, in tandem with border closures between Guinea and neighboring Senegal, Guinea-Bissau and Liberia, may have impacted price levels and income earning opportunities for producers of goods for export, as documented in previous reports (including [WFP, FAO, Ministry of Agriculture, December 2014](#)).

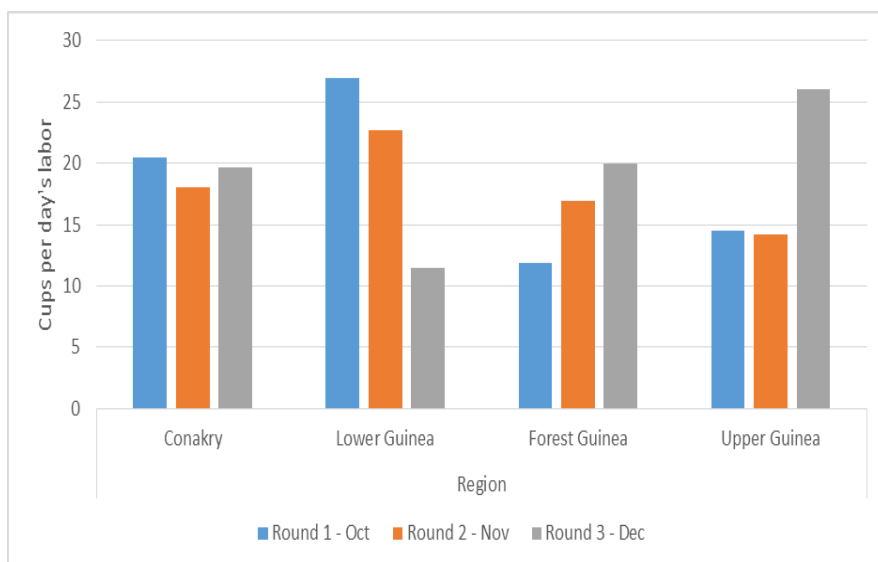
From November to December, there were seasonal decreases of between 3 and 10 percent in local rice prices – a consequence of the ongoing domestic rice harvest. During this period, imported rice prices remained stable. The price of cassava flour has stayed constant between round two and round three data collection in much of the country, although it fell in Conakry and Lower Guinea.

Wage levels and terms of trade improve

Wage levels across Guinea remained stable between November and December. This stability, combined with nominal decreases in local rice prices, led to better wage-to-local-rice terms of trade in December. Since October, terms of trade have been improving in the Forest Guinea, one of the areas worst hit by the EVD outbreak. This could explain the decline in negative coping observed between round one and round three data collection in this region.

When terms of trade are calculated against imported rice, the trend indicates that purchasing power has remained stable.

Figure 2: Wage-to-local-rice terms of trade for October, November and December 2014



Source : WFP mVAM

Conclusion and Outlook

As is observed in the other EVD-affected countries, as of December 2014, food security patterns across Guinea have not returned to baseline levels nor much improved since November. Reported EVD incidence has continued to increase since October, resulting in informal movement restrictions and border closures that are impacting trade. As such, households continue to implement negative coping mechanisms to deal with food insecurity, despite the ongoing harvest. This could be indicative of food insecurity that will outlast the epidemic and should be investigated further.



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To download mVAM data on the ebola-affected countries, please visit: http://vam.wfp.org/sites/mvam_monitoring/index.html