

# WEATHERING THE PANDEMIC TO BUILD BACK BETTER

## Options for supporting agri-food SMEs in low and middle-income countries

OPTIONS PAPER | 16 December 2020





## **ABOUT GAIN**

The Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) is a Swiss-based foundation launched at the UN in 2002 to tackle the human suffering caused by malnutrition. Working with governments, businesses, and civil society, we aim to transform food systems so that they deliver more nutritious food for all people, especially the most vulnerable.

## **ABOUT FOOD SYSTEMS FORESIGHT**

Food Systems Foresight is a purpose-built strategy consulting firm dedicated to increasing food systems resilience. We collaborate with food systems actors to address urgent and emergent challenges. We equip our clients to think systemically, envision multiple futures, and take strategic action.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Food Systems Foresight would like to thank Lewis Bett and Stella Nordhagen for their partnership, as well as the GAIN Kenya team, Charles Opiyo and Harold Mate, and the GAIN Nigeria team, Uduak Igbeka, David Atamewalen and Augustine Okoruwa, for providing information on the Keeping Food Markets Working Programme in their respective locales.

This paper has been produced by the Keeping Food Markets Working (KFMW) programme of the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition with funding from the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development of Canada, and the Rockefeller Foundation. The views expressed herein are the responsibility of GAIN and do not necessarily reflect the views of the supporting organisations. Any errors are our own.

## **CITATION**

Hansen, Angela R., Chase Keenan, and Eilif Ronning. 2020. Weathering the Pandemic to Build Back Better: Options for Supporting SMEs in Low- and Middle-Income Countries. Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN). Options Paper #1. Geneva, Switzerland, 2020.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On March 11, 2020 the World Health Organization declared the coronavirus outbreak a global pandemic. In response, governments around the world enacted public health measures to contain the outbreak. While these measures were necessary, the economic toll of the response has caused a global economic contraction.

The crisis has adversely impacted many businesses, but the agri-food SMEs that constitute food markets in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) have struggled to adapt and sustain essential food access for vulnerable consumers. As part of its own pandemic response, the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) partnered with Food Systems Foresight to identify a set of response options that can support agri-food SMEs as they continue to weather the effects of the COVID-19 crisis.

This paper summarises research conducted on the impacts of COVID-19 on LMICs' food systems. It reviews interventions implemented to support agri-food SMEs, including rapid responses to keep markets working, strategic recovery interventions to build back better, and systemic shifts to facilitate continuous learning and adaptation. Our assessment of these interventions highlighted a subset that warrant further consideration, presented here as Options for Priority Actors. For example, Priority Actors like Accelerators may consider strategic recovery options such as agri-food mentorship, or broadened access to training via social media. Similarly, Development Partners can stimulate strategic recovery by helping SMEs meet demand for shelf-stable products and enable systemic shifts by providing adaptive business development services. Donors can respond with rapid advocacy for nutritious food from SMEs and demonstrate responsiveness by pivoting other private-sector development efforts to focus on food markets. Finally, Governments can redouble responses to improve safety in food markets and support strategic recovery by incentivising low-interest loans to SMEs.

Our research revealed a bias toward rapid response and strategic recovery interventions, with fewer responses aiming to enable systemic shift. To fill this gap, future interventions can be better designed to probe, listen, and respond to food systems systemically as they continue to adapt, and invite actors to work alongside one another to support agri-food SMEs in weathering the pandemic and building back better.

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

The World Health Organisation declared the novel coronavirus outbreak (COVID-19) a global pandemic on March, 11 2020.<sup>1</sup> In the wake of this announcement, as the virus continued its spread around the world, governments and businesses responded with a range of public health measures intended to contain and minimise the outbreak: transport restrictions, school closures, limitations on in-person business transactions, restrictions on the size of gatherings, medical mask mandates, quarantines for infected or potentially infected individuals, and stay-at-home orders. While interventions were largely successful in reducing the short-term public health impacts of COVID-19, significant heterogeneity was observed across countries.<sup>2</sup>

As the pandemic curve flattened in many countries, the world's attention quickly shifted to the economic impacts of the virus and public health response, and the need for recovery. In its June edition of Global Economic Prospects, the World Bank estimated a 5.2% contraction in global GDP for 2020, which would make the recession in the wake of the pandemic the most severe in decades.<sup>3</sup> For emerging economies, many of which rely heavily on informal sectors, the recession has also brought into focus the need for innovative measures to deliver support to a broader range of citizens and companies, especially Small- and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs).

## 1.1 KEEPING FOOD MARKETS WORKING

The COVID-19 lockdowns and their economic toll directed attention to the weaknesses of food systems around the world, as food markets and food security have been threatened, further underscoring the need for food system transformation.<sup>4</sup> GAIN developed the Keeping Food Markets Working (KFMW) programme as an emergency response to the COVID-19 crisis, providing rapid support to food system workers, to SMEs supplying nutritious foods, and to keeping fresh food markets open.



◀ **Figure 1.** KFMW Workstreams<sup>5</sup>

A core aspect of the KFMW approach is to ensure agri-food SMEs can weather the pandemic, and to look for ways these businesses can build their resilience over the long term. The owners and employees of these businesses have been working tirelessly to adapt their businesses to the disruptions caused by the pandemic and continue to deliver nutritious foods to consumers.

This paper guides stakeholders around the world to support agri-food SMEs in continuing to adapt to the challenging dynamics presented by the pandemic and economic crisis. It examines the challenges these SMEs face, the interventions that have been implemented around the world to support them, and analyses both challenges and interventions to

identify the best options available to GAIN and its network of stakeholders to act in support of agri-food SMEs and better functioning food systems.

## 1.2 SMES AND FOOD MARKETS

SMEs play a critical role in emerging economies. In most countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia, these businesses employ 50%-60% of the workforce.<sup>6</sup> In normal times these businesses are highly vulnerable and volatile. For instance, in the US the failure rate of small business within five years consistently hovers around 50%,<sup>7</sup> while in Nigeria this figure is estimated at 80%.<sup>8</sup> In the context of the COVID-19 crisis the IMF has predicted a 9% increase in the failure rate of SMEs absent any intervention.<sup>9</sup>

As SMEs are the lifeblood in any well-functioning economy, agri-food SMEs are critical for well-functioning nutritious food systems. They act as important nodes in a network of small- to medium-scale producers, processors, aggregators, distributors, and retailers that collectively manage the flow of nutritious foods

from farm to plate. In April 2020, the Global Alliance for Improve Nutrition (GAIN) with the SUN Business Network conducted a survey of 363 agri-food SMEs in 17 low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), 94% reported that the pandemic had impacted them.<sup>10</sup> The failure of these SMEs would jeopardise food and nutrition security for millions of people—worldwide nearly 50% of all calories are produced by small farms<sup>11</sup>, and in LMICs as much 80% of all food consumed is handled by SMEs.<sup>12</sup>

## 2. UNDERSTANDING THE FOOD MARKET LANDSCAPE

To understand how COVID-19 is impacting contemporary food systems, food markets and the agri-food SMEs that keep them both working, two determinants of the overall food market landscape merit consideration: the stage of food production, and the degree of modernisation.

The movement of food from farm to plate has three general stages, which can be conceptualised as upstream, midstream, and downstream.<sup>13</sup> Upstream includes all aspects of production—the physical act of farming as well as the procurement of inputs and equipment. When produce crosses the farm-gate it enters the midstream, which involves a variety of business-to-business (B2B) transactions of food trading, sometimes as a raw product (e.g., processors, packagers), others as an intermediary (e.g., wholesalers, distributors). Downstream is the point at which a person purchases the food for consumption in a business-to-consumer (B2C) transaction, such as those that happen at shops and restaurants.

The second determinant of contemporary food systems relates to modernisation, which began several decades ago as food markets in LMICs began to displace traditional subsistence cultivation and local trade networks, though these traditional modalities still account for roughly 10% of food access in LMICs.<sup>14</sup> This transition led to the creation of an SME sector that sells food as its product, which is characterised by labour-intensive production and fragmented networks of small suppliers and distributors.<sup>15</sup> These transitional SMEs account for roughly 70% of food access in LMICs.

As the SME sector in LMICs grew, high-income countries (HICs) saw the introduction of digital technology. Digital technology enabled food businesses to modernise, integrate their supply and sales operations, and facilitated the creation of just-in-time inventory management. The resulting modern food systems are characterised by supermarkets, highly scaled fast-food chains and other retail outlets, and international logistics systems. Since their emergence, modern food systems have expanded to LMICs as well, and now account for 20% of food access in those markets.<sup>16</sup> Figure 2 below summarises the full food market landscape we have discussed in this section, from traditional to modern, and upstream to down.

**Figure 2.** Full Food Market Landscape

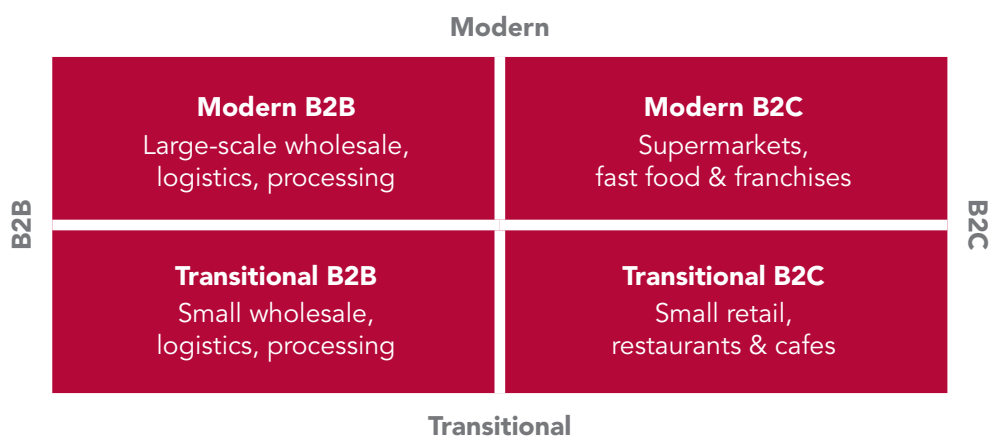
	Upstream	Midstream	Downstream
Modern	Industrial Agriculture	Modern B2B	Modern B2C
Transitional	Market-connected Farms	Transitional B2B	Transitional B2C
Traditional	Subsistence Cultivation	Farm-to-farm Trading	Self-reliant Consumption

The remainder of this Options Paper is oriented toward understanding the challenges affecting, and the mechanisms to support, agri-food SMEs operating midstream and downstream that exhibit transitional or modern business formulations, which accounts for 90% of food access in LMICs.

Historically, development interventions have focused on the upstream production, neglecting the middle, which only recently captured the attention of academics and governments.<sup>17</sup> Research shows this phase, which forms 30 to 40% of value addition in LMICs, is of equal importance to food security as upstream production.<sup>18</sup> Downstream is also important, especially now, as it represents the frontlines of the pandemic’s impact on food systems. Social distancing measures have drastically altered the way individuals interact downstream to access food for household consumption. This paper’s focus is thus on food once it leaves the farm, though some businesses use models of vertical integration to create stronger links between the upstream and midstream, and sometimes even downstream. Vertically integrated businesses are excluded from the analysis, though our analysis is relevant for their post-farm activities.

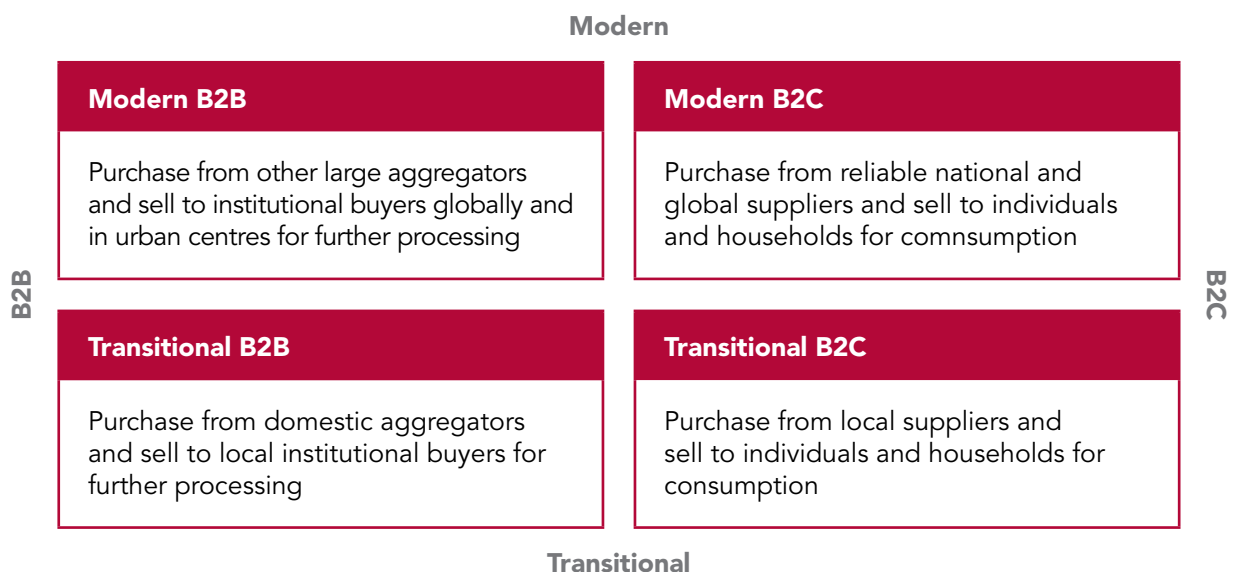
Figure 3 illustrates the focus of this paper, which will serve as a conceptual framework to organise our analysis going forward.

**Figure 3.** Agri-Food Market Framework



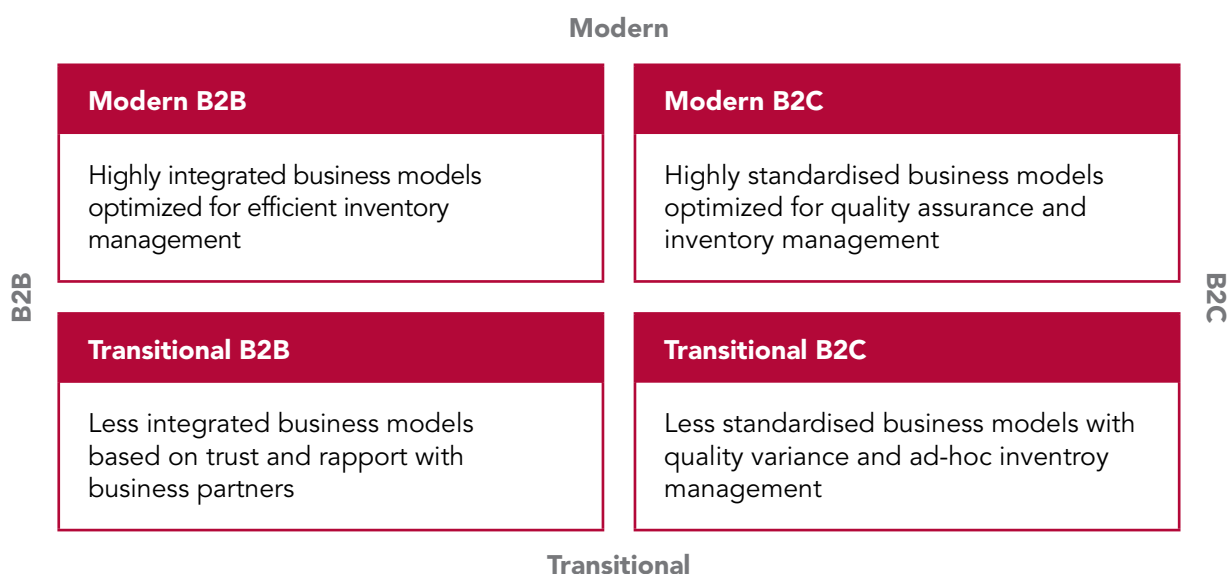
While there is variation in the types of businesses classified in each quadrant of the framework, there are commonalities that make it a useful tool for understanding agri-food markets. One of these commonalities is the way that food is moved by businesses in each of these quadrants. From the large volumes traded by the institutional buyers and sellers of the Modern B2B quadrant, to the diffuse networks of local sellers in the Transitional B2C quadrant that serve as food access points in LMICs, each plays a critical role in moving food to market. Figure 4 summarises how food businesses and associated markets move food.

**Figure 4.** How Agri-Food Markets Move Food



Another important aspect to consider in this framework are the characteristics of the business models that define each quadrant. While each business will naturally tailor their business model to their own needs, similarities emerge in each quadrant, be that the highly standardised business models of Modern B2C enterprises or the trust-based operating procedures of Transitional B2B enterprises.

**Figure 5.** Agri-Food Business Models



## 2.1 IDENTIFYING CHALLENGES, INTERVENTIONS, AND PRIORITY ACTORS

Food Systems Foresight conducted a rapid global scan of secondary data sources to establish a functional understanding of an uncertain and rapidly shifting pandemic context. We scanned for challenges facing agri-food SMEs to supplement the findings of the *Impact of COVID-19 on Food Systems Situation Report* issued by GAIN and organised the challenges according to the framework above. Following this, we reviewed over 70 resources to identify challenges impacting agri-food SMEs around the world and more than 150 discrete interventions being implemented by governments, international donors, development partners, large enterprises, financial institutions, multi-laterals, and accelerators and other business support organisations to support SMEs.

While the interventions reviewed were executed by a wide range of actors, we highlight interventions most relevant to four key actors, as these actors were considered most likely to engage based on a use-case analysis undertaken at the start of the research. The priority actors identified through use-case analysis were accelerators and business support organisations, development partners, international donors, and national governments; additional detail is provided below for each of these actors.

**Accelerators and Business Support Organisations (BSOs)** are fixed-term programs that typically use competitive assessment processes to select businesses, typically start-up enterprises, for participation. Once accepted, businesses can expect to receive mentorship and access to networks of other businesses and possible investors. Accelerators are well placed to connect with their existing business networks and alumni to provide support to adapt to COVID. Additionally, because they are selective in their intake, they are also well-positioned to target specific sectors (e.g., agri-food) and/or specific entrepreneurial segments, such as women and youth.

**Development Partners** are international organisations, most often NGOs, working on development in LMICs. These include organisations focused on medium- and longer-term projects, rather than those who provide acute crisis support (i.e., humanitarian organisations). These actors are well placed to enact options that target strategic recovery and involve leveraging existing partnerships and channels.



The **International Donor Community** includes bilateral and multilateral donors of development assistance funds. This may also include the activities of private foundations that provide similar services. These actors are well positioned to leverage their recognisable brands and partnerships to support SMEs, in addition to continued funding of emergency relief operations, including those targeting the food system and SME access to finance.

**Governments** include national and sub-national governments of LMICs. This also includes a special focus on relevant ministries for example, ministries of health, agriculture, or commerce, and regional governments (e.g. counties or states). Governments are well positioned to enact coordinated country or region-wide measures, particularly as they have existing organisational infrastructure to coordinate decision implementation.

## **2.2 SUMMARY OF CHALLENGES**

COVID-19 and the associated public health response introduced an acute shock to food systems and businesses around the world, as they were forced to adapt their operations to adhere to new public health standards. As the pandemic continued through 2020 this acute shock transformed into a chronic one, introducing a new normal for business operations. Our review of the situation revealed a number of challenges pertinent to agri-food SMEs in LMICs. This review begins with a summary of universal challenges faced by all SMEs, and then provides a categorisation of challenges for operations in different parts of the food market landscape according to the framework introduced in Figure 3.

### **2.2.1 Universal Challenges for SMEs**

#### **2.2.1.1 Reduced revenue**

The major challenges facing SMEs have one unifying impact: reduced revenue. Many SMEs entered the pandemic with low levels of liquidity and a reliance on operational cash flow.<sup>19</sup> As the pandemic impacted operations of SMEs, it compounded existing financial precarity, reducing their resilience and their ability to weather the crisis.<sup>20</sup>

#### **2.2.1.2 Reduced consumer purchasing power**

Since the onset of the pandemic, widespread closures across sectors led to a contraction in global GDP and increased unemployment and underemployment.<sup>21</sup> The ILO reports that in the second and third quarters of 2020, 17.4% and 12.1% of working hours were lost.<sup>22</sup> According to World Food Programme estimates, an additional 130 million people in LMICs will suffer from acute hunger in large part due to loss of livelihoods.<sup>23</sup> For modern and transitional SMEs, reduced income and livelihoods among their clients translates into reduced sales.<sup>24</sup> SMEs are a key link in providing food to people in LMICs, and this financial difficulty threatens their ability to continue operating, and thus the ability of consumers to access nutritious foods.

#### **2.2.1.3 High levels of uncertainty**

SMEs across the world are experiencing high levels of uncertainty.<sup>25</sup> It is difficult to anticipate the trajectory of the virus, how the government will respond, and what support measures will be put in place. This uncertainty and the rapidly changing national and global contexts make it difficult for businesses to plan for and adapt to the future.<sup>26</sup>

#### **2.2.1.4 Increased burden of unpaid care work**

The ILO reports that approximately one-third of companies report a shortage of workers resulting from containment measures, increased family care responsibilities or fear of infection.<sup>27</sup> This burden results in less time available to run their businesses. These responsibilities include both caring for sick family members and increased childcare due to school closures.<sup>28</sup> This increased burden disproportionately affects women, who prior to the pandemic spent an average of 4.1 hours providing unpaid care work compared with men who spent 1.7 hours.<sup>29</sup> Since the onset of the pandemic these figures have increased, with women spending more than six hours a day providing care.<sup>30</sup>

## **2.2.2 Challenges for Modern B2B SMEs**

### **2.2.2.1 Difficulty accessing inputs and bringing products to market**

Transportation connectivity is a key challenge for SMEs, as it hinders their ability to access key inputs and bring products to market; this results in both increased costs and potentially decreased units produced.<sup>31</sup> According to recent GAIN and SBN surveys published in the *Impact of COVID-19 on Food Systems Situation Report*, all of the businesses surveyed reported difficulty accessing inputs and ingredients for their operations, such as machinery, packaging, and raw agricultural materials.<sup>32</sup> Difficulties reported resulted from a host of factors including: border closures, intra-national movement restrictions, transportation and checkpoint delays, and increased transportation costs.<sup>33</sup> Difficulties accessing inputs can lead to inability to bring products to market, a particular risk for perishable goods like dairy and produce.<sup>34</sup> Even when SMEs are able to access inputs, transportation connectivity issues challenge their ability to bring products to clients.<sup>35</sup> Overall, this challenge is observed in global and local supply chains, though local supply chains have proven more resilient.<sup>36</sup>

### **2.2.2.2 Decreased demand from institutions and anchor purchasers**

Independent of decreased consumer purchasing power, discussed above, is decreased demand from institutions and anchor purchasers resulting in decreased sales and revenue.<sup>37</sup> This is the result of widespread and continued closure of institutions like schools and universities as well as businesses in the tourism and hospitality sector.<sup>38</sup>

### **2.2.2.3 Difficulty adopting safe business practices**

As social distancing is a primary measure enacted globally to combat COVID-19, adapting business practices to ensure worker safety and economically viable operations is a challenge for SMEs. In addition, there are increased financial burdens for businesses, such as new safety measures and the need to purchase personal protective equipment (PPE) for employees.<sup>39</sup> This increases variable and fixed costs for SMEs.

### **2.2.2.4 Difficulty meeting shifting consumer preferences and pivoting production**

The pandemic has catalysed changes in consumer preferences. These changes are context specific and varied; for instance, some countries have observed an increased preference for fresh produce while others have seen a decrease, others have reported a decreased preference for animal-source foods and imported staples and commodities such as coffee, cocoa, and oil.<sup>40</sup> Pivoting to meet this changing demand is a challenge for SMEs. Changing products and services is not only important to meet consumer demand but a challenge SMEs face as they tackle disruptions in the supply chain.<sup>41</sup> This affects both the volume of units SMEs sell as well as increased fixed costs if they shift the kinds of units they produce.

## **2.2.3 Challenges for Transitional B2B SMEs**

### **2.2.3.1 Difficulty accessing inputs and bringing products to market**

As with modern B2B SMEs, transportation connectivity is a central challenge. Where transitional SMEs differ is lower levels of integration up and downstream, which increases the difficulty of maintaining smooth supply chains.<sup>42</sup> Transitional SMEs are also less likely to suffer from border closures, as they are less connected to global supply chains. This, again, results in increased costs and decreased units produced.

### **2.2.3.2 Difficulty adopting safe business practices**

Transitional B2B SMEs face similar challenges to adopting safe business practices as modern B2B SMEs. An additional burden transitional B2B SMEs face is that they are generally less vertically coordinated than modern ones, which adds additional barriers to adhering to new food safety and hygienic practices.<sup>43</sup> This increases variable and fixed costs for SMEs.

### **2.2.3.3 Difficulty transitioning to e-commerce**

Unlike modern SMEs that generally have high levels of digitisation, transitional SMEs vary greatly with their levels of digitisation. This difference also varies across geographies and is tied to both local infrastructure and digital literacy of SMEs and their consumers.<sup>44</sup> While e-commerce emerged as a key intervention for modern SMEs, particularly those located in HICs, transitional SMEs in LMICs face additional barriers to adopting e-commerce business models.<sup>45</sup> This will often result in increased fixed costs for SMEs.

#### **2.2.3.4 Difficulty meeting shifting consumer preferences and pivoting production**

Transitional B2B SMEs are also challenged by the observed shift in consumer preferences and the need to adapt products and services. Again, lower levels of digitalisation are purported to reduce agility of shifting production.<sup>46</sup> As with modern B2B SMEs, this affects the volume of units SMEs sell and increased fixed costs.

### **2.2.4 Challenges for Modern B2C SMEs**

#### **2.2.4.1 Reduced in-person retail**

Modern B2C businesses face significant challenges with the reduction of in-person retail. Situations vary regionally, but globally these businesses are strained by complete or partial closure (reduction in opening hours).<sup>47</sup> For businesses that are able to remain open, reductions on maximum capacity of retail locations reduces not only the number of consumers but also requires fixed costs to be spread across fewer products, resulting in increased costs.<sup>48</sup>

#### **2.2.4.2 Difficulty adopting safe business practices**

As with B2B businesses, adopting COVID-19 safety measures is an additional burden on B2C businesses. This includes adapting business practices to ensure worker safety, and additional variable and fixed costs associated with new safety measures and PPE for employees.<sup>49</sup> B2C SMEs face the added difficulty of ensuring customer behaviour complies with safety measures.<sup>50</sup>

#### **2.2.4.3 Difficulty meeting shifting consumer preferences**

The previously discussed shift in consumer preferences also affects B2C businesses as they may need to pivot their businesses' stock.<sup>51</sup> This was a more acute challenge at the onset of the pandemic due to panic buying of non-perishable goods and resulted in reduced sales of certain units.<sup>52</sup>

### **2.2.5 Challenges for Transitional B2C SMEs**

#### **2.2.5.1 Reduced in-person retail**

Transitional B2C SMEs face similar challenges as modern B2C businesses SMEs.

#### **2.2.5.2 Difficulty adopting safe business practices**

Modern and transitional B2C SMEs face similar challenges. B2C transitional SMEs face the added difficulty of ensuring customer compliance with safety measures which is more challenging in informal retail spaces where these businesses operate.<sup>53</sup> These businesses also faced increased barriers to adopting practices such as cashless payment.<sup>54</sup> These adaptations increase fixed and variable costs for SMEs.

#### **2.2.5.3 Difficulty meeting shifting consumer preferences**

Similar challenges are experienced by these businesses as with the modern B2C SMEs.

#### **2.2.5.4 Difficulty transitioning to e-commerce**

Transitional B2C SMEs face similar challenges adopting e-commerce as B2B transitional SMEs, with added challenges due to the more diffuse sales models B2C businesses exhibit. This results in increased fixed costs and, until the transition is made, likely reduced unit sales.

### **2.2.6 A Note on Size and Age**

This framework does not account for firm age and size; however, it is worth noting these factors affect how SMEs experience COVID-19 related challenges. Findings show that older, large firms may be less agile at adapting than smaller, younger firms, thus, these firms may be less resilient.<sup>55</sup> Findings also suggest that nascent start-ups are vulnerable to failure, which may have long-term economic impacts if a generation of firms is lost.<sup>56</sup>

## **2.3 SUMMARY OF INTERVENTIONS**

Since the start of the pandemic and lockdown measures, many SMEs have shifted from immediate survival mode to restructuring and recovery.<sup>57</sup> This shift does not necessarily reflect a change in the challenges faced by SMEs, but rather a progression as firms, governments, and other stakeholders have already taken immediate measures to respond to the crisis. Many have now entered a stage of recovery characterised by continuous learning and innovation to adapt to new challenges as they emerge.

Similar to the experience of firms, key actors seeking to intervene are also taking a variety of actions to support functioning food markets. Their actions can be characterised as **rapid responses**, **strategic recovery interventions**, and **systemic shifts**. Rapid responses are direct actions that respond to immediate needs and are generally informed by best practices. Strategic recovery interventions use experts and data-driven analytics to inform complicated plans with many components as a means of building back better over the medium- to long-term. Systemic shifts focus on continuous learning and adaptation using feedback loops to improve the actor's ability to operate in the uncertain context presented by the pandemic and economic crisis.

The following sub-sections summarise the results of the intervention scan, which looked for promising interventions aimed at agri-food SMEs in both LMICs and HICs. Interventions were identified in each quadrant of the food market framework and organised according to the actor driving the intervention. A combination of rapid responses, strategic recovery interventions, and systemic shifts were identified.

### 2.3.1 Modern B2B Interventions

The businesses that make up the Modern B2B market are often important national and international players, with vast, formal, highly integrated, and technologically optimised operations. These businesses can be large or small, and while they exist in all markets, they are generally more characteristic of HICs, moving products over oceans, borders, and to critical centres in domestic markets, to meet demand where it is greatest. Modern B2B enterprises benefit greatly from interventions intended to maintain global and domestic trade deployed through highly formal channels (e.g., tax codes, import / export regulations).

The table below summarises interventions that targeted Modern B2B food markets, driven by accelerators, development partners, donors, and governments.

ACCELERATORS/BSOs	DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS
<p><b>Rapid Response</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provided <u>information on available support</u> and recommended practices on websites and helplines</li> <li>• <u>Shifted to online</u> programming and activities</li> </ul> <p><b>Strategic Recovery</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provided <u>targeted mentorship</u> of youth and women-led agri-food SMEs</li> <li>• Facilitated <u>investor matching</u></li> </ul> <p><b>Systemic Shift</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Monitored and identified new opportunities</u> for entrepreneurs to build resilient enterprises</li> </ul>	<p><b>Strategic Recovery</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assisted women-owned food processors to <u>adapt products and services</u></li> <li>• Helped exporters consolidate shipments to <u>facilitate and ensure movement of goods</u> in global supply chains</li> </ul> <p><b>Systemic Shift</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developed and supported business accelerators</li> </ul>
DONORS	GOVERNMENTS
<p><b>Rapid Response</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Targeted hygiene training</u> for vital economic sectors</li> </ul> <p><b>Strategic Recovery</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Used their convening power to <u>connect companies</u> with trade partners, development assistance, etc.</li> <li>• <u>Redirected emergency relief funds</u> to support women-led SMEs.</li> <li>• <u>Increased lending capacity</u> of national banks supporting SME-clients</li> </ul> <p><b>Systemic Shift</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Refocused private sector development</u> towards resolving cross-border food supply chain issues</li> </ul>	<p><b>Rapid Response</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instated an <u>exemption on import tax</u>, customs, and/or duties of essential food goods</li> <li>• <u>Regulated prices</u> of essential goods</li> <li>• <u>Purchased unsold food</u> stock</li> </ul> <p><b>Strategic Recovery</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provided financial relief to agri-food SMEs (<u>low interest loans; matching fund loans; increase banks' lending capacity; waiver of bank fees and charges; grants and subsidies; credit guarantees</u>)</li> </ul> <p><b>Systemic Shift</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitated transition to e-commerce</li> </ul>



### 2.3.2 Transitional B2B Interventions

The Transitional B2B market is characterised by fragmented and localised operations. Larger agri-food business and SMEs in this segment exhibit lower degrees of formality, often relying on ‘handshake’ agreements for supply and sales. Important players in their domestic food markets, they move produce between farms and markets and serve vital institutions. The Transitional B2B market benefits most from interventions intended to ensure operational continuity; these interventions are often deployed through intermediary channels like accelerators and banks.

The table below summarises interventions that targeted Transitional B2B food markets, driven by accelerators, development partners, donors, and governments.

ACCELERATORS/BSOs	DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS
<p><b>Rapid Response</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provided <a href="#">resilience toolkits</a> for SMEs</li> </ul> <p><b>Strategic Recovery</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provided <a href="#">online, publicly accessible training</a></li> </ul>	<p><b>Strategic Recovery</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assisted women-owned food processors to <a href="#">adapt products and services</a></li> </ul>
DONORS	GOVERNMENTS
<p><b>Rapid Response</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Provided agri-food SMEs with PPEs</a></li> </ul> <p><b>Strategic Recovery</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Provided targeted financing</a> to agri-food SMEs</li> </ul> <p><b>Systemic Shift</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supported <a href="#">financial access of women</a> and youth</li> </ul>	<p><b>Strategic Recovery</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provided <a href="#">financial training</a> and business support (via banks)</li> <li>• Provided financial relief to agri-food SMEs (<a href="#">low interest loans; increase banks’ lending capacity; credit guarantees; waiver of bank fees and charges; grants and subsidies</a>)</li> </ul> <p><b>Systemic Shift</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitated <a href="#">transition to e-commerce</a></li> </ul>

### 2.3.3 Modern B2C Interventions

This part of the market exhibits high degrees of quality control, using formalised processes and mechanisms and to assure operational consistency for consumers and employees alike. Important players in all types of markets, they offer familiar and reliable points for household consumers to access food. Modern B2C enterprises benefit most from interventions intended to stimulate household consumption.

The table below summarises interventions that targeted Modern B2C food markets, driven by accelerators, development partners, donors and governments.

ACCELERATORS/BSOs	DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS
<p><b>Rapid Response</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Provided information on available support</a> and recommended practices on websites, portals, helplines, etc.</li> </ul> <p><b>Strategic Recovery</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Promoted mass entrepreneurs</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Facilitated investor matching</a></li> </ul> <p><b>Systemic Shift</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Monitored and identified new opportunities</a> for entrepreneurs to build resilient enterprises</li> </ul>	<p><b>Rapid Response</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Shifted sourcing of emergency food</a> assistance to local and regional markets</li> </ul>

DONORS	GOVERNMENTS
<p><b>Rapid Response</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Directed emergency relief <u>funds towards women-led SMEs</u></li> </ul> <p><b>Strategic Recovery</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Catalysed public-private investment</u> by supporting local orgs/NGOs</li> <li>Used convening power to <u>connect companies</u> with trade partners, development assistance, etc.</li> <li><u>Redirected relief</u> to women-led SMEs</li> <li><u>Increased lending capacity</u> of national banks supporting SME-clients</li> </ul>	<p><b>Strategic Recovery</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provided financial relief to agri-food SMEs (<u>deferment of loan and financing payments; increase banks' lending capacity; credit guarantees; tax deferral; low interest loans; waiver of bank fees and charges</u>)</li> </ul>

### 2.3.4 Transitional B2C Interventions

The independent service and retail business which comprise this category exhibit lower degrees of formality in their operations than those in the modern category, relying on judgment and experience to make business decisions. Important players in food markets in their neighbourhoods, they serve as a critical point of food access for millions around the world. Transitional B2C enterprises benefit most from interventions for general business support (e.g., low-interest loans, financial management training) and improving consumer access to retailers through broad safety measures.

The table below summarises interventions that targeted Transitional B2C food markets, driven by accelerators, development partners, donors, and governments.

ACCELERATORS/BSOs	DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS
<p><b>Rapid Response</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provided <u>resilience toolkits</u> for SMEs</li> </ul> <p><b>Strategic Recovery</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provided low-interest <u>bridge loans</u></li> <li>Provided online, publicly accessible training <u>classes and workshops</u></li> </ul>	<p><b>Rapid Response</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Shifted sourcing of emergency food</u> assistance to local and regional markets</li> </ul> <p><b>Strategic Recovery</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developed and supported business <u>accelerators for women-led businesses</u></li> </ul>
DONORS	GOVERNMENTS
<p><b>Rapid Response</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provided direct emergency relief <u>funds towards women-led SMEs</u></li> </ul> <p><b>Strategic Recovery</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Promoted SMEs producing nutritional food</u> to consumers through existing communications channels</li> </ul> <p><b>Systemic Shift</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supported <u>financial access of women</u> and youth</li> </ul>	<p><b>Rapid Response</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Implemented safety measure</u> in public commercial spaces (markets, transport hubs)</li> </ul> <p><b>Strategic Recovery</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provided financial relief to agri-food SMEs (<u>low interest loans; increase banks' lending capacity; credit guarantees; waiver of bank fees and charges</u>)</li> </ul>

### 2.3.5 Emergent Intervention Themes

The intervention scan revealed a bias toward Modern B2B interventions. A possible explanation is that this part of the market is most consolidated in terms of its reach and is readily accessible through well-established channels of intervention, particularly those aimed at maintaining and facilitating trade. Transitional B2C portions of the market were the targets of the least relief, which may be for a similar reason, as a diffuse network of smaller food vendors is difficult to reach with targeted support, particularly when they exhibit high degrees of informality as they do in many LMICs.





Across all quadrants of the market there was a bias toward rapid response and strategic recovery interventions. This is most readily explained by the nature of the pandemic and economic response, as actors of all types have been forced to adapt to a rapidly changing reality and more recently turned their attention toward strategising for medium- to long-term recovery. However, the lack of interventions targeted toward systemic shifts suggest that actors across food systems in HICs and LMICs are operating in a manner that is less apt for the uncertain context of the pandemic, as systemic interventions would likely be more effective at managing uncertainty while simultaneously improving post-pandemic business prospects.

### 3. OPTIONS FOR PRIORITY ACTORS

The core constituency of the KFMW programme is SMEs in LMICs and the organisations best positioned to support their resilience. In collaboration with GAIN, we identified the following stakeholders as priority actors: national governments, international donors, development partners, and accelerators and business support organisations.

To identify a set of Options for consideration by these priority actors, we developed a suite of evaluation criteria based on the objectives of KFMW (Figure 6). Team members individually assessed each intervention against these metrics to approximate their feasibility in an LMIC context and the potential for positive impacts aligned to KFMW goals. We tabulated the scores to reveal the strongest Options for each actor, which we present in the next sections.

Figure 6. Assessment Criteria

Metric	Icon	Unfavourable	Fair	Favourable
<b>Cost</b> How expensive is the intervention for the implementing stakeholder?		Prohibitively costly	Manageable costs	Relatively inexpensive
<b>Complexity</b> How many stakeholders would be involved for successful implementation?		Many diverse stakeholders	Some coordinated action	Few Core stakeholders
<b>Gender</b> To what degree are women-led SMEs considered in intervention design? <sup>58</sup>		Gender unequal or blind	Gender sensitive	Gender specific or transformative
<b>Nutritious Food Impact</b> Does the intervention improve food security and nutrition through: (1) availability; (2) access; (3) utilisation; (4) stability? <sup>59</sup>		Targets no food security pillars	Targets one or two of the four pillars	Targets three or four pillars

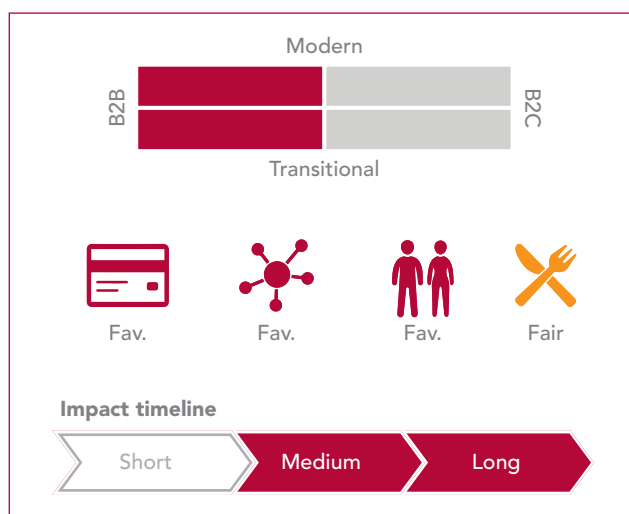
The following sub-sections provide an overview of promising Options available to priority actors in support of agri-food SMEs in LMICs based on this summary assessment of interventions undertaken around the world in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

### 3.1 ACCELERATORS AND BUSINESS SUPPORT ORGANISATIONS

#### 3.1.1 Strategic Recovery: Provide targeted mentorship to agri-food SMEs

Local entrepreneurial support operations in LMICs, which include accelerators and other business support organisations, have the potential to specifically target SME populations with high growth potential and high nutritional impact.

These programmes can be re-designed as open competitions or to target agri-food SMEs led by women. Targeting mentorship towards women may counterbalance difficulties women-led SMEs face during the pandemic (due to increased care burdens, particularly during the onset of the pandemic) and ensure proportions of women-led business do not decrease. In addition to mentorship and training, accelerators can provide investor matching for SMEs, which is particularly vital for women-led enterprises, as women’s access to finance is an on-going challenge in many LMICs. This option is low cost and low complexity, as it does not require additional inputs to accelerator programmes, but rather a pivot in their target audience and/or sector.



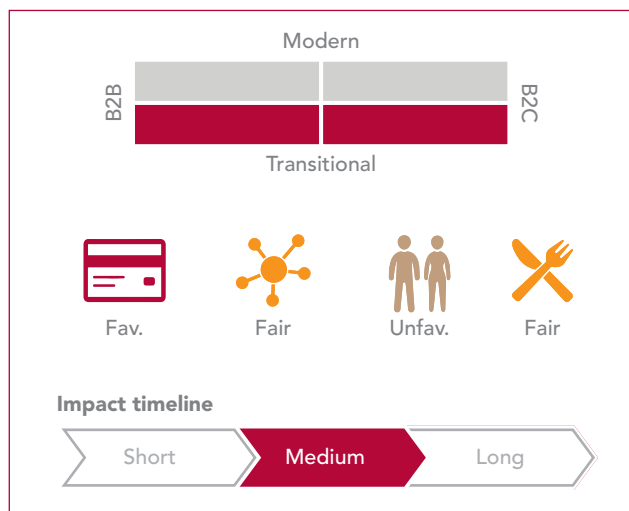
<p><b>Pros</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fosters innovation and competition</li> <li>• Strengthens local food systems</li> <li>• Uplifts women business owners (if targeted in design)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Cons</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excludes informal SMEs and smaller enterprises</li> <li>• Reaches few SMEs</li> </ul>
<p><b>Key enablers and considerations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large base of agri-food entrepreneurs in need of mentorship and funding</li> <li>• Vibrant ecosystem of food-tech and agri-food firms with high growth potential</li> <li>• Active donors funding agri-food programmes</li> </ul>	



### 3.1.2 Strategic Recovery: Provide online, publicly accessible training

Accelerators and BSOs can make training classes and workshops publicly available online for on-demand access. Publicly available materials reach a wider audience, particularly when published on highly trafficked social media platforms, which allow people to share and re-share them to wider audiences. Potential topics for classes include digitising business in terms of inventory management, food delivery, and web- and app-based purchasing. Classes could also broadly target SMEs with financial and business management training.

Creating on-demand materials reduces the opportunity cost of participating in training by allowing SME owners to decide when to engage with the materials. Additionally, it allows for SME owners with unstable access to the internet to engage with the materials when optimal internet conditions arise. Finally, these materials may raise awareness of existing support measures available to SMEs and provide troubleshooting advice for common, avoidable problems. This option is low-cost as it leverages existing platforms to disseminate existing training material.

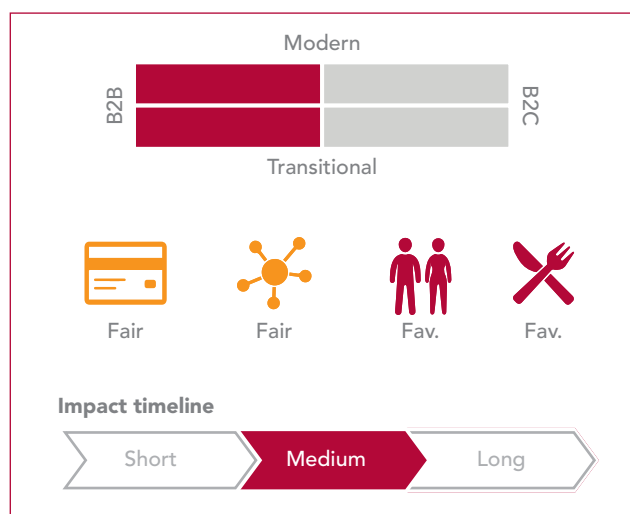


<p><b>Pros</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunity for wide reach and broad inclusivity</li> <li>• Decreased opportunity cost of participation</li> </ul>	<p><b>Cons</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excludes SMEs with poor internet access</li> <li>• Offers generalised rather than customised business support</li> </ul>
<p><b>Key enablers and considerations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High-internet usage rates and digital literacy</li> <li>• Online platforms with high engagement</li> </ul>	

## 3.2 DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS

### 3.2.1 Strategic Recovery: Assist shifting production to shelf-stable products

Development partners can assist food processors to shift their products towards shelf-stable food products. For example, shifting from fresh dairy products to UHT versions, or from fresh fruits and vegetables to dried fruit and vegetable products or preserves. Fragmented supply chains challenge processors' ability to access inputs and bring products to market. These difficulties compound with changing consumer preferences, including a preference for shelf-stable food products. Adapting products and services allows SMEs to continue their operations, maintain employment, and continue to bring food products to market.



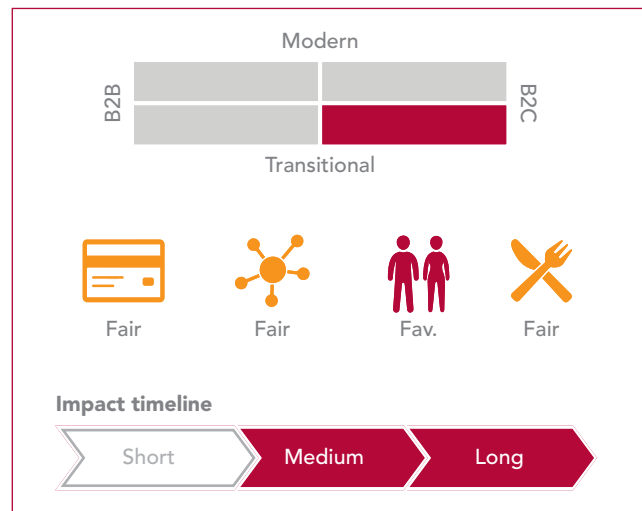
Development partners can offer technical expertise or leverage partnerships to connect processors to other actors in the food system, which can be particularly useful as processors shift from international to local markets. They can also support SMEs by connecting them to finance for the large capital requirements for pivoting, such as procuring new equipment. This option is moderate-cost and moderate-complexity as it requires tailored engagement with SMEs. It is also flexible so other considerations, such as gender and nutritional impact, can be layered into program design.

<p><b>Pros</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintains operations, employment, and food supply</li> <li>• Strengthens local food systems</li> <li>• Reduces post-harvest loss</li> <li>• Can uplift women</li> </ul>	<p><b>Cons</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Processor-specific assistance resulting in more smaller beneficiary pool</li> <li>• Excludes informal businesses</li> </ul>
<p><b>Key enablers and considerations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confirmed and sustained demand for local shelf-stable food products</li> <li>• Processing and/or packaging infrastructure and equipment availability</li> </ul>	

### 3.2.2 Systemic Shift: Provide one-on-one business development services

Provide business development services through one-on-one business counsellors targeting agri-food SMEs. In times of crisis this approach can build rapport and trust to improve the efficacy of these services, and these services can be designed to target transitional B2C SMEs selling nutritious foods, such as neighbourhood produce vendors or small restaurants. These SMEs serve a critical food access point for many consumers, especially those in low-income settings.

As these transitional businesses have lower levels of digitisation, these support services are most aptly provided through common communication channels like mobile phone calls, text messaging, and audio and video messages. As development partners improve their capacity to deliver these tailored services, business development services and programs can be scaled to reach more businesses more efficiently, effectively, and inexpensively. A gender component can be layered into programme design to achieve an impact on women-led SMEs who are disproportionately affected by the pandemic.

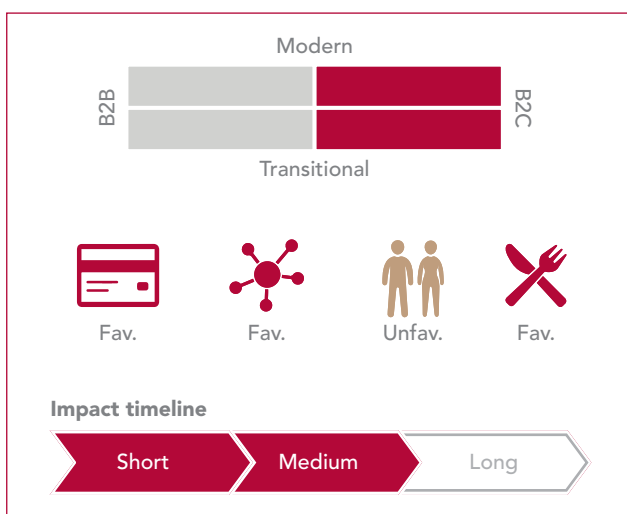


<p><b>Pros</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Includes SME owners with low digital literacy</li> <li>• Provides assistance with avoidable problems</li> <li>• Provides tailored support</li> <li>• Supports women-led businesses (if targeted)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Cons</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reaches few SMEs</li> <li>• Risk of 'choosing winners' through programme selection processes</li> </ul>
<p><b>Key enablers and considerations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to mobile telephone and network coverage</li> <li>• Widespread digital literacy</li> </ul>	

### 3.3 DONOR COMMUNITY

#### 3.3.1 Rapid Response: Launch campaigns for good food from SMEs

Awareness campaigns can encourage consumers at the individual and household levels to continue to purchase nutritious foods from the SMEs that make up the fabric of their community. Disseminating the campaign through existing communications channels can make this a cost-effective, rapid response option, particularly when done in partnership with trusted and recognisable brands. To maximise effectiveness, donors could partner with NGOs to disseminate messaging, leveraging their existing networks and brand recognition. This would be particularly effective in contexts where fiscal stimulus targeted toward the household level has been successful in stimulating consumer demand, as this directs spending toward more nutritious products from local SMEs.



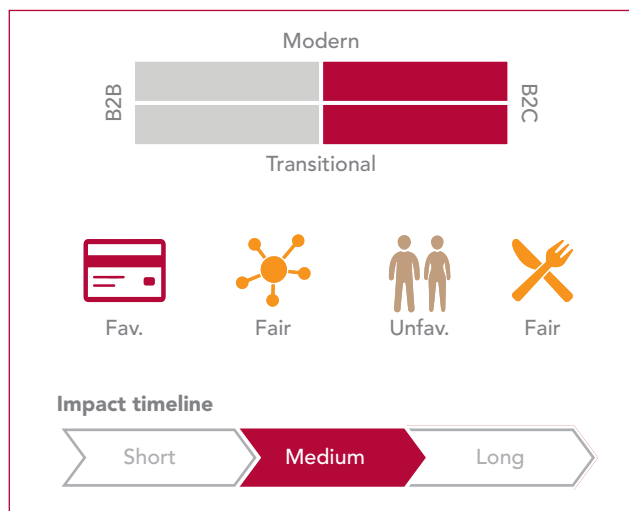
<p><b>Pros</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Directs consumer demand to nutritious foods</li> <li>• Leverages existing donor networks, partnerships, and communication channels</li> </ul>	<p><b>Cons</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Challenging to control consumer behaviour through messaging</li> <li>• Potential for messaging to conflict with government-imposed lockdown measures</li> </ul>
<p><b>Key enablers and considerations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supply of nutritious foods available from SMEs</li> <li>• Brand recognition and community trust</li> <li>• Strong communication channels and/or a broad network of partners to disseminate the campaign</li> <li>• Campaigns should consider how to best communicate to women, who often hold responsibility for food purchasing</li> </ul>	



### 3.3.2 Systemic Shift: Make private sector programming flexible to pivot

Donors’ private-sector programmes often target a healthy diversity of sectors, with the goal of improving economic self-reliance. But, as COVID revealed, in times of crisis it may be necessary to focus energy and resources on essential facets of the domestic economy (e.g., food markets) to maintain stable and functioning societies.

Flexible, context-sensitive programming approaches can make it easier for donors to pivot existing programmes targeting non-essential sectors or those rendered non-competitive by a crisis (such as tourism during the pandemic) towards essential sectors like agri-food. For instance, initiatives centred on connecting businesses to global expertise and markets can pivot by tailoring this offering to agri-food, connecting SMEs with a broader set of food systems partners, suppliers or offtakers to stimulate innovation and diversify relationships to smooth gluts and shortages. In the face of COVID-19 and other crises, this can improve the resilience of local markets and supply chains, while on-going engagement in this space may produce lessons for future initiatives and interventions. While some donors may already have mechanisms in place that allow them to pivot in times of crisis, others may need to adapt their programming to be more flexible or scale-up the use of those mechanisms available.



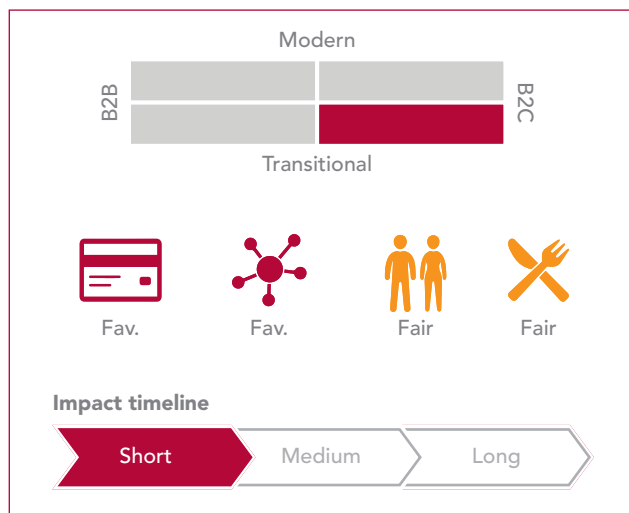
<p><b>Pros</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leverages existing partnerships and channels of engagement</li> <li>• Maintains employment</li> </ul>	<p><b>Cons</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Redirects support from other sectors, which are also impacted by the crisis</li> </ul>
<p><b>Key enablers and considerations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mechanisms in-place that allow for programme flexibility (e.g., results-based programmes, decentralized decision-making apparatus)</li> <li>• Strong partnerships with private sector</li> <li>• Existing programs to pivot from (i.e., tourism to food systems)</li> </ul>	

### 3.4 GOVERNMENTS

#### 3.4.1 Rapid Response: Scale safety measures in public commercial spaces

Scale-up implementation of safety measures in public commercial spaces such as markets and transportation hubs. These measures may include hand-washing facilities at entrances, informational signage on prevention measures, and PPE. Measures may also include increased cleaning and disinfecting of the space.

Making these spaces safe to reopen and allowing SMEs to reach consumers to sell their products is crucial to keeping markets working. It is important to make these measures visible to the public to ensure both that the public is safe and that they perceive these spaces as safe, so they continue to frequent them.

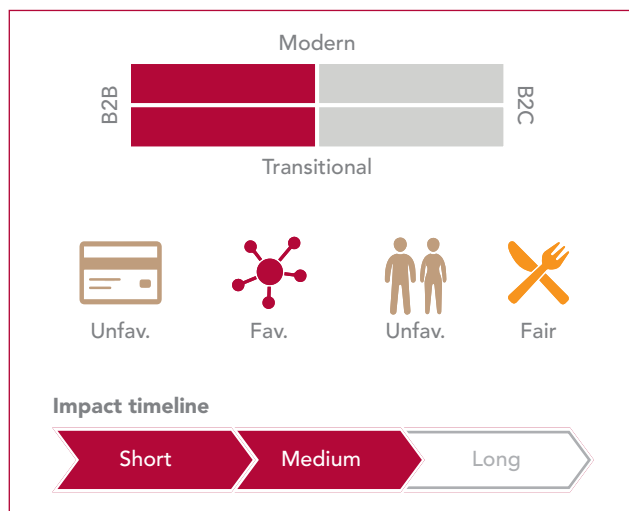


<p><b>Pros</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Targets lower income and more food insecure populations</li> <li>• Maintains employment</li> </ul>	<p><b>Cons</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Challenging to control consumer behaviour</li> </ul>
<p><b>Key enablers and considerations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infrastructure allowing for clean running water</li> <li>• Population has access to masks</li> <li>• Existence of formal, centralised public commercial spaces</li> </ul>	

### 3.4.2 Strategic Recovery: Incentivise low-interest loans to agri-food SMEs

Provide targeted loans and financial management training to agri-food SMEs. Financial actors with focused engagement with this segment of the SME population, such as state agricultural banks, would be best positioned to deliver the support.

This option can be designed for the government to bear the cost of lending, allowing banks or other quasi-financial institutions to issue agribusiness loans at low-interest rates, which vital agri-food businesses can use to maintain operations and employment through the economic contraction. Coupling financial assistance with training on financial management strengthens SMEs' resilience over the long term.



#### Pros

- Combines financial and technical assistance
- Ensures food moves down the supply chain
- Maintains operations and employment

#### Cons

- Excludes informal and unbanked SMEs

#### Key enablers and considerations

- Highly banked SME population
- Strong banking system able to actively engage with clients

## 4. CONCLUSION

### 4.1 CONCEPTS IN SUMMARY

This paper presented a summary of a rapid review of challenges facing, and interventions being implemented to support, agri-food SMEs in LMICs, and an analysis of options available to key actors to address these challenges. It offered options for accelerators, development partners, international donors, and governments to consider, analyse, adapt, and deploy to support nutritious food SMEs in LMIC contexts.

The challenges identified through this research reveal many commonalities for agri-food SMEs of all types, as well as those specific to a particular phase of the supply chain. For instance, the new hygiene requirements for operating during the pandemic have imposed new fixed costs on B2B and B2C businesses alike, while at the same time shifts in consumer preferences for different products have contributed to reduced sales. Transitional SMEs in both B2B and B2C operations face additional challenges, especially in adapting their business models to the new circumstances through e-commerce solutions.

Another key finding is that the near- and medium-term demands of the pandemic response have challenged actors' ability to respond in ways well-suited to the complexity of the situation. The review of interventions targeting agri-food SMEs revealed a bias toward rapid response and strategic recovery interventions. However, in the rapidly changing and uncertain context of the pandemic, systemic interventions designed to probe, listen, and respond to food systems as they evolve will likely be most effective at increasing these systems' resilience.

Finally, the Options presented reveal that there are opportunities for actors of all kinds to scale up their support for agri-food SMEs and ensure that food markets continue to function in the face of this crisis, and future ones. There are no silver bullets, as each Option comes with its own pros, cons, and enabling factors to consider. However, if considered in the broader context of the food system challenges and response, and if implemented alongside other trusted partners, the Options identified can support agri-food SMEs in weathering the pandemic and building back better.

## 4.2 LIMITATIONS AND GAPS

While the review and analysis attempted to be as comprehensive as possible, the rapidly changing nature of the pandemic creates natural limitations on the veracity of the information in this document. Key limitations and gaps include:

1. *The study was rapid and global in scope.* While the study attempted to be as comprehensive as possible, this was a rapid global scan of challenges and interventions. It should be viewed as a snapshot of the coronavirus pandemic's impact on nutritious food systems and potential responses.
2. *The focus of the study was narrower than many pandemic responses.* While the focus on nutritious foods is an important one, it is a more specific focus than most of the pandemic responses, which often address broader market functioning through generalised SME support.
3. *There is a bias toward formalised response mechanisms and against informal markets.* In the global scan for interventions relevant to agri-food SMEs, the team noted a bias toward more formalised channels of delivering support, such as tax relief, navigating trade barriers, and expanding credit access. This anti-informality bias is important to consider as actors across food systems continue to mobilise support.
4. *The selection of Options was based on expert assessment and approximations.* As we are still in the midst of pandemic response, evaluations of the impact of interventions and the Options they informed are not yet available; likewise, assessments of their feasibility are based on approximations. This creates a natural gap in the study's ability to rigorously analyse these Options and offer more specific recommendations.

## 4.5 PRINCIPLES FOR APPLICATION

Understanding the limitations and gaps of this study, the following principles are recommended for consideration by those who want to understand if the options presented in this paper are relevant to the challenges observed in their food systems of interest.

1. *Contextualisation:* Due to the global nature of this study, more contextually grounded analysis is required for a deeper understanding of the potential feasibility and impact of each Option. In the presentation of Options, we attempt to outline some of the underlying systemic factors stakeholders should consider if exploring implementation.
2. *Learning and Adaptation:* As the pandemic and associated economic crisis are still in motion, there is a need for continuous learning and adaptation for the global community to improve its own capacity to respond to emerging challenges. Where possible, actors applying any of these options should seek to create feedback loops and mechanisms for adjusting their approaches.
3. *Optimisation to Address Gaps:* Given these Options are presented as components of pandemic and economic crisis response; it is important that they are considered in terms of how they can best address the gaps in the crisis response. Depending on how the response is being undertaken in a given country, actors may need to shift roles, offer different resources, and align themselves in new ways to maximise partnerships.

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