

KEY FINDINGS

- *The food market of Maimana in Faryab province is large and is meeting the current demand of the population which it serves. It also has the capacity to meet increased demands. The main supplier of food commodities to Maimana market is the Mazar main city market with limited supply also coming from Turkmenistan through Aaqena border.*
- *Food prices in Maimana market have remained stable over the last month but prices for staple foods such as wheat flour, rice and cooking oil are slightly higher than in Mazar main city market while the price of pulses is reported to be substantially higher.*
- *The traders reported that supply from Mazar market to Maimana market is challenging for them, mainly due to insecurity on the road between the cities. Thus the traders must pay more to the transporters who supply these commodities to Maimana. However, the traders confirmed that there were no security threats to local people accessing the main market.*
- *Based on the findings from the rapid market assessment, it is recommended to that cash-based transfers are an appropriate modality to respond to the needs of vulnerable households in that area.*

Assessment Background and Methodology

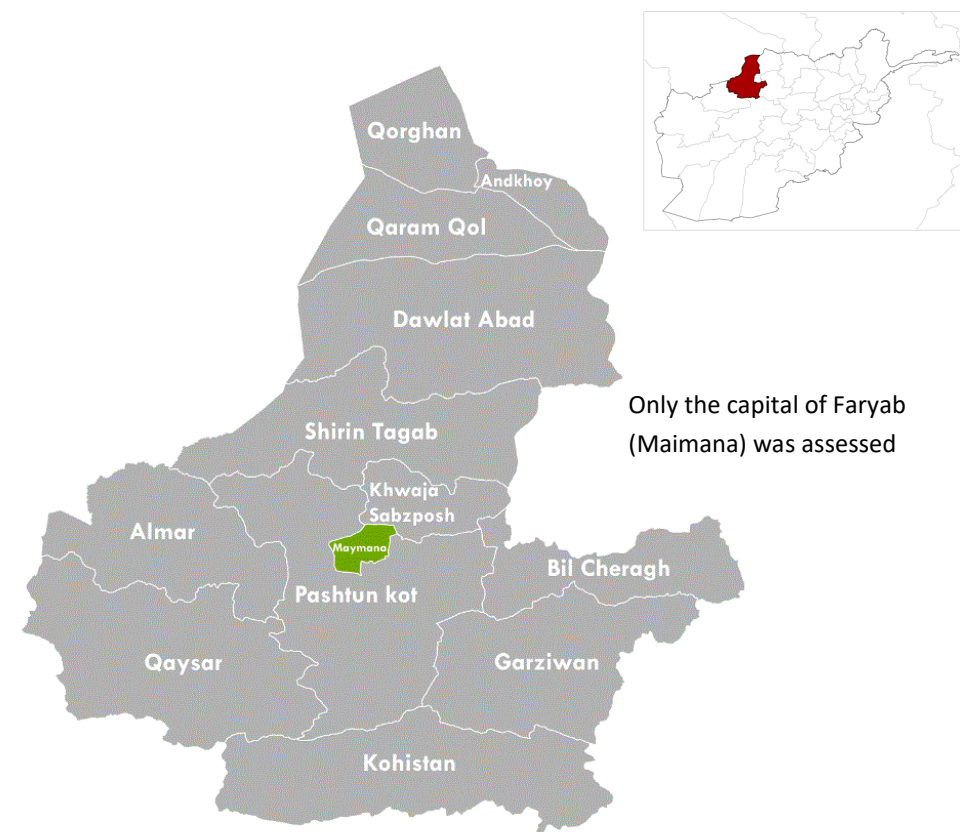
WFP has been using mVAM to conduct market assessments in Afghanistan since December 2016. In November 2017, WFP conducted its first mobile market monitoring assessment in northern region and obtained data from 6 districts of Badakhshan province, where many are hard-to-reach due to remoteness, conflict and insurgent activities. In January 2018, WFP Mazar office requested the mVAM team to conduct a rapid market assessment in Maimana, the capital of Faryab province.

The primary aim for this assessment is to gain information on market functionality, supply and prices to guide decision making on the appropriate use of cash based transfers (CBT) in Maimana as it is difficult for WFP to transport food commodities to that city.

A total of 10 interviews were conducted on the 18th January 2018 in Maimana central market by one mVAM call operator. All the interviews were carried out with the traders.

Access and Security

Most of the respondents in Maimana reported that the security situation in Maimana district has been deteriorating over the past month. However, the local people are able to access the market for the livelihood activities and buying food. The impact of the insecurity is mainly on the traders when supplying food commodities from Mazar central market to Maimana. Over the past month, the presence of AGEs in some of the surrounding villages of Maimana complicates delivering food to some district markets Faryab province. All the traders indicated the presence of AGEs on the supplying roads has resulted in increased transportation costs and therefore increasing the prices of staple foods on the market.



Food Supply and Prices

The prices for the staple foods (wheat flour, rice, beans and cooking oil) in Maimana market has remained stable over the past month but are reported to be slightly higher than prices in Mazar main city market. The main reason for price stability in Maimana is mainly due to a steady supply from regional markets. It was reported by most of the traders that food prices may increase in the future in case the current security situation deteriorates.

Supply of food commodities to Maimana is mainly from Mazar main city and there is also limited supply of staple food from Turkmenistan through Aaqina border. Supply of food commodities to the villages of Maimana and to all the districts of Faryab province is mainly from Maimana main market. Thus when supply is limited to Maimana, it impacts the supply to the districts of the province.

All the traders reported that due to insecurity, they face difficulties in supplying food commodities from Mazar to Maimana and then from Maimana to the districts of Faryab province. The traders also indicated that the prices of food commodities in all districts of Faryab province are higher compared to the prices in Maimana due to the higher costs of transporting the food through these insecure areas.

Supply of food commodities is sufficient to all the districts of Faryab province including Maimana except some shortages of pulses from Mazar main city market to Maimana and from Maimana to the districts of Faryab province.

Figure 1: Average prices of food commodities in Maiman main city market

District Name	Wheat flour*	Rice**	Beans***	Cooking oil
Maimana	24	90	90	70

Note: The retailer prices are collected for all the commodities mentioned in Figure 1. All the prices are in AFN/Kg-Lit

- * Wheat flour price is collected for high quality
- ** Rice price is collected for high quality
- *** Bean prices are collected for the red beans

Livelihood Opportunities

So far, there are no security issues for the local people in accessing the market for livelihoods activities and buying food. However, the livelihood opportunities during this time of the year are very limited in Maimana as well as all districts of Faryab province.

According to the traders, the majority of the people in Maimana are relying on casual labour work which is very limited (1-2 days in a week) during winter months, and thus they are rarely able to earn enough to meet their needs.

The limited availability of casual labour is mainly due to remote geographic location, prolonged and harsh winter season. As a result there are few local industries and low levels of agricultural production which normally provide casual labour opportunities. The average wage for the unskilled labour in Maimana district is AFN 300 per day.

Terms of Trade (ToT)

The **terms of trade (ToT)** between wheat flour and casual labour is a proxy indicator for **household purchasing power**, which shows the quantity of wheat flour that can be purchased with the wage earned from one day of casual (unskilled) labour.

The terms of trade in Maimana district is reported to be 12 kgs of wheat flour per daily wage which is slightly lower than the terms of trade in Mazar main city which is 13 kgs of wheat flour per daily wage. The main reason for lower ToT in Maimana compared to Mazar is the higher wheat flour price and lower daily wage rate for the casual labour work.

Based on the information from the traders, it was reported that the ToT in all the districts of Faryab province is lower than the ToT in Maimana which is mainly due to the same reasons: higher wheat flour prices and lower average daily wage rate.