

**SYNTHESIS OF RAPID
FOOD SECURITY
ASSESSMENT**

GUINEA-BISSAU



Ministry of Agriculture, National
Cashew nut Agency, National Institute
of Statistics FAO and World Food
Programme



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Republic of Guinea Bissau

Rapid Food Security Assessment

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Assessment undertaken by: Damieta Gregório Mendes, José Batista da Luz in collaboration with Suanda Infonda, Afonso Sami, Raul António Mandim, Andrea Nunes S. Costa, Matilde Lopes Ferreira and Lello Te.

Data collection team:

Damieta Gregório Mendes

Jose Batista da Luz

Suanda Infonda

(Bissau)

Afonso Sami

(Bissau)

Matilde Lopes Ferreira

Lello Te

Raul Antonio Mandim

Andrea Nunes S. Costa

World Food Programme, Bissau Guinea Bissau

World Food Programme, Bafata Guinea Bissau

Department of agricultural statistics, Ministry of Agriculture

Department of agricultural statistics, Ministry of Agriculture

National Cashew nut Agency

National Cashew nut Agency

National Institute of Statistics

National Institute of Statistics

For more information, please contact:

World Food Programme Office in Guinea Bissau

Pedro Figueiredo, Country Director, Representative

Fatimata Sow Sidibé, Head of programme,

Damieta Mendes, Monitoring and Evaluation Assistant

Pedro.Figueiredo@wfp.org,

Fatimata.sow-sidibe@wfp.org

Damieta.Mendes@wfp.org,

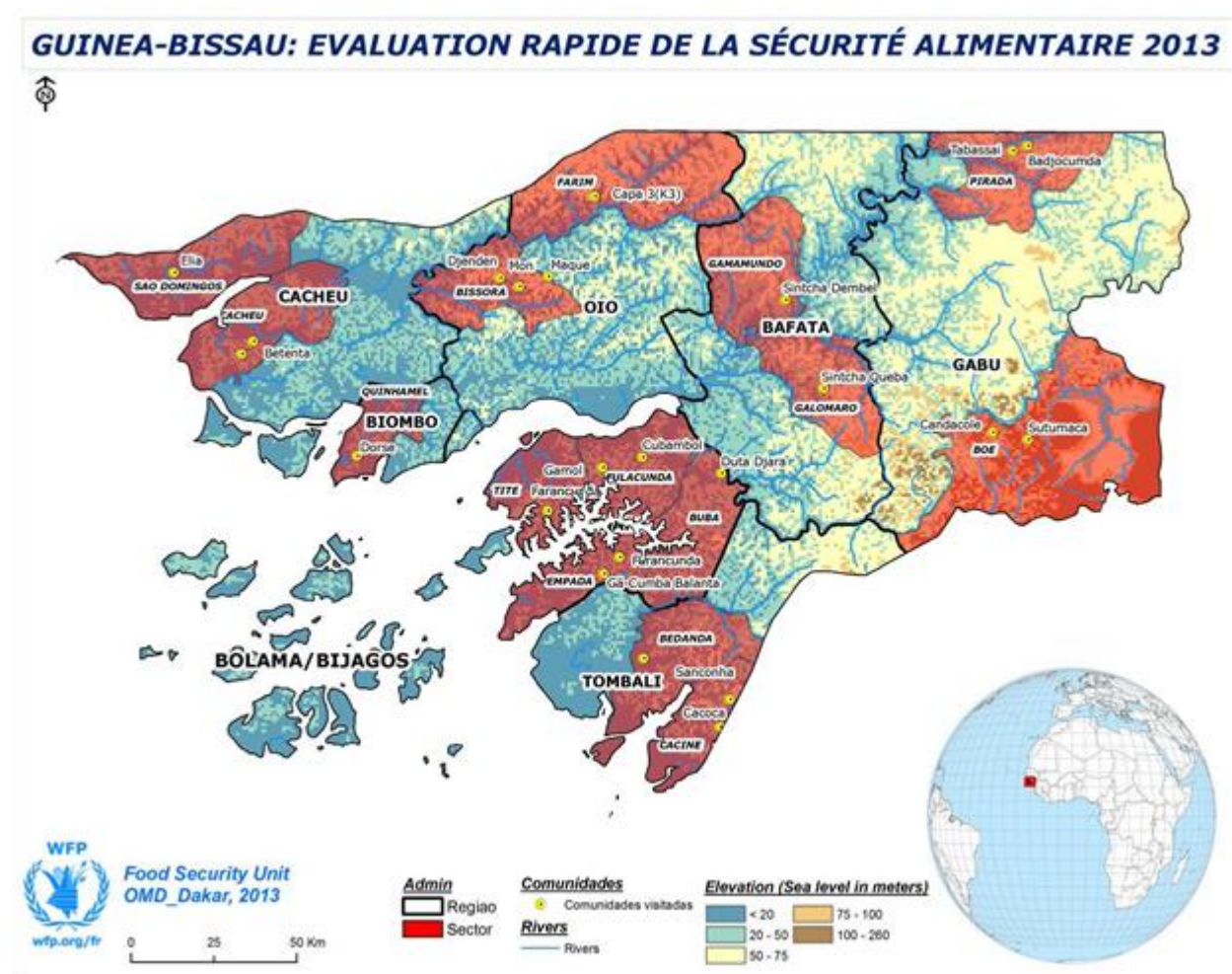
SYNTHESIS OF RAPID FOOD SECURITY ASSESSMENT¹

June 2013

Guinea-Bissau is one of the largest exporters of unprocessed cashew in the world. Cashew is the main exported commodity (representing approximately 90% of exports). It represents 30% of the primary sector, which accounts for over 45% of GDP. Cashew revenue is the main source of income for rural households.

Given the importance of cashews on household food security, WFP has initiated a rapid food security assessment mission in 7 regions of the country (only Bolama Bijagos and SAB were not visited). The assessment was conducted by WFP with the Ministry of Agriculture, the National Institute of Statistics, the National Cashew Agency (ANCA), and FAO from June 14 to 17. The strategy was based on focus group discussions with communities, interviews with key informants and interview of households via questionnaires.

A total of 25 villages were visited, 25 focus groups were held with communities and 125 households interviewed.



The main findings of the mission:

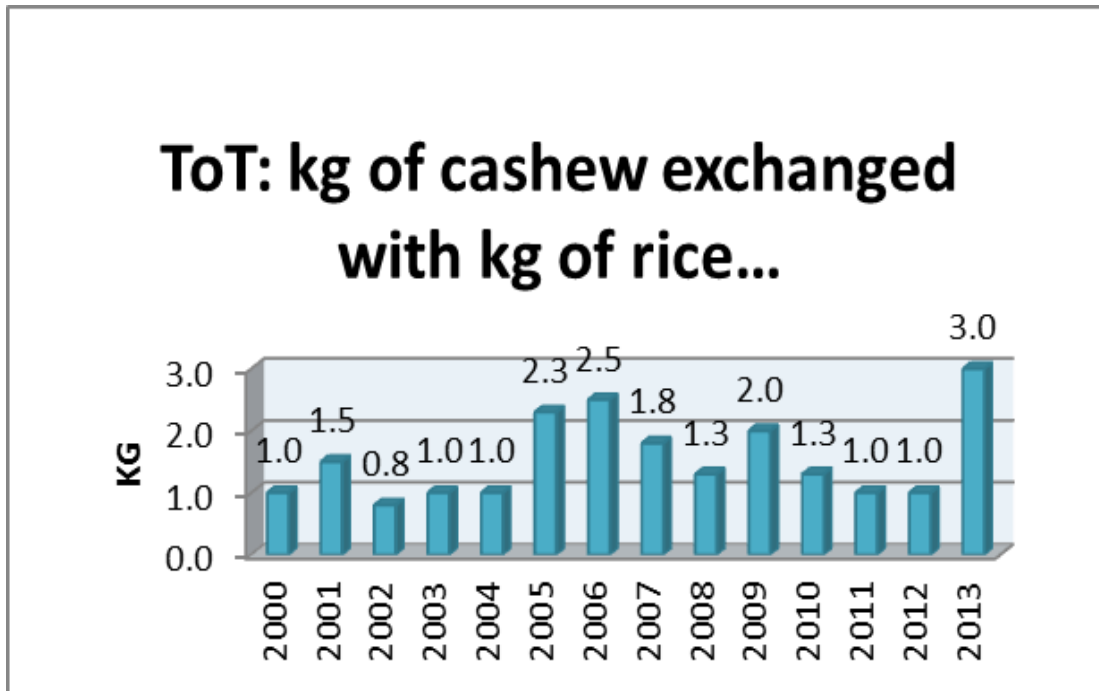
All visited communities cultivate rice and are involved in cashew harvest. Rice is not only the most cultivated cereal but also the staple food in Guinea-Bissau. Over 80% of households benefit from cashew as producers or collectors in the cashew producer's field. They reported that the 2012/2013 cashew crop was lower compared to previous years and it is the worst of all years.

¹ The full report is available in Portuguese.

Accessibility:

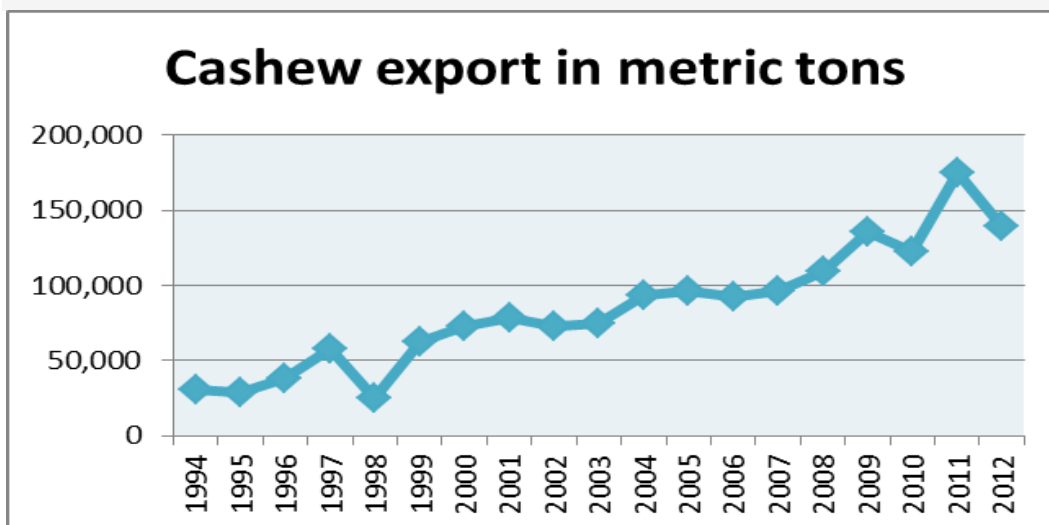
In 2013, the purchase price of one kilo of cashew was between 100-150 CFA francs against 300-350CFA francs in 2011 and 2012. According to data collected during the mission, the average price of cashew was 112 CFA francs against 300 CFA francs in 2012, hence a decrease of 62.6%.

The terms of trade deteriorated: 1 kg of cashew nuts was exchanged against 1 kg of rice in 2011 and 2012, but in 2013, 1 kg of rice is exchanged against 3 kg of cashew nuts. See the chart below.



Communities informed the mission in all visited regions that the traders have interrupted the purchase of cashew since end of May. Approximately 38% of the cashew is still unsold.

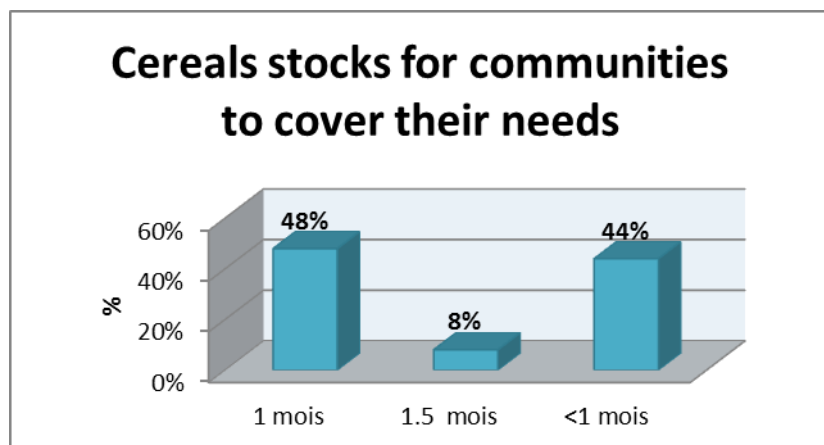
The comparison of 2011 and 2012 exports data shows a 20% reduction due to i) *internal problems*: the April 2012 coup d'état and the non-reimbursement of loans with bank institutions and ii) *external factors*: decrease in demand on international markets as shown in the graph below.



Availability:

The failure of 2012-2013 cashew crop production had an impact on the availability of local cereal production. According to collected data, only 8% of the communities have cereals stocks to cover their needs for one month and half; 48% of communities have cereal stocks to cover one month of food consumption and 44% of communities have stocks to cover just one month.

Communities who will not cover more than one month of their needs will be in severe food insecurity, starting July 2013; as per chart below

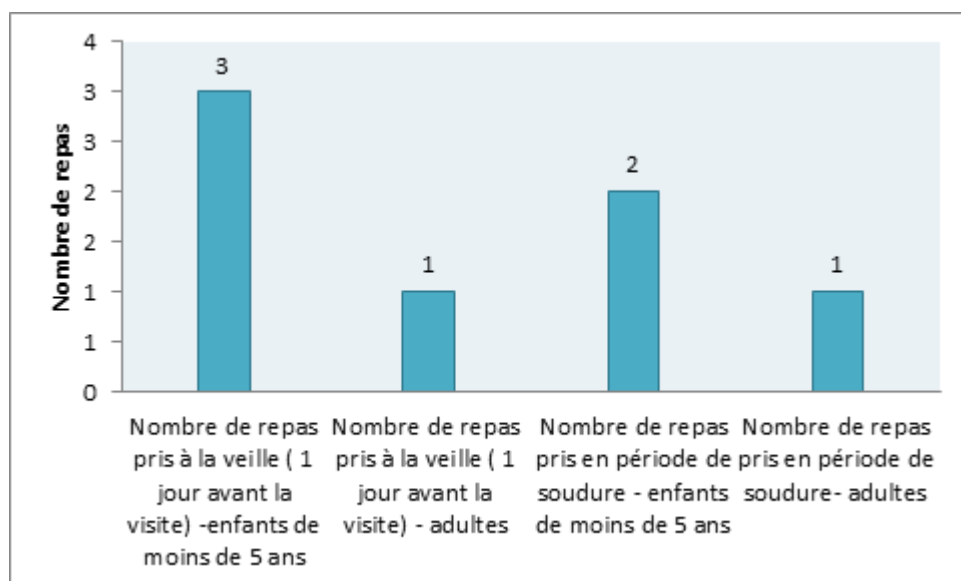


Utilization: Food consumption

The information collected during the mission show that households cook once a day (at mid-day). The food is prepared and divided into three parts: a main portion ($\approx 70\%$) for lunch, another part ($\approx 20\%$) for dinner and the rest ($\approx 10\%$) is reserved for breakfast of children under 5 years for the next day.

Meals consumed by households are undiversified. Indeed, they are almost always composed of rice (daily) with sometimes a small portion of fish, okra and/or crushed leaves of sorrel, with palm oil. Households rarely eat meat, eggs or milk.

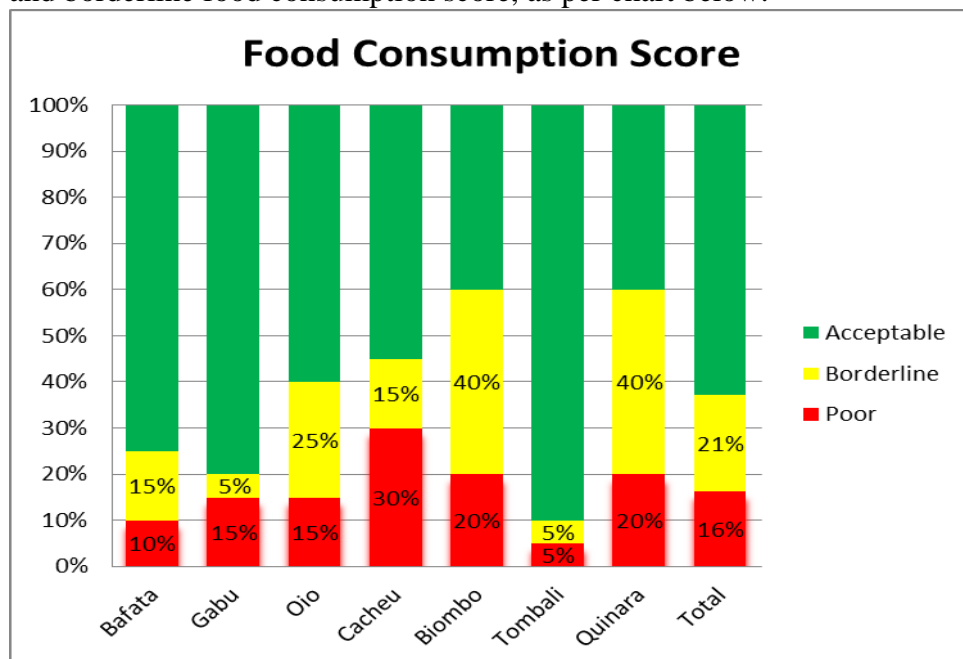
The analysis shows that there was an early onset of the lean season due to poor harvest this year and the problem of cashew selling. Adults eat only once a day during the lean season (July-September), as per chart below.



NUMBER OF MEALS PER DAY

The Food Consumption Score (FSC) is a composite score based on the dietary diversity, food frequency and relative nutritional importance of the different food groups consume. The food consumption indicators are designed to reflect the quantity and quality of household's diets. The higher FSC the more likely dietary diversity will be and the more likely that a household will be food secure.

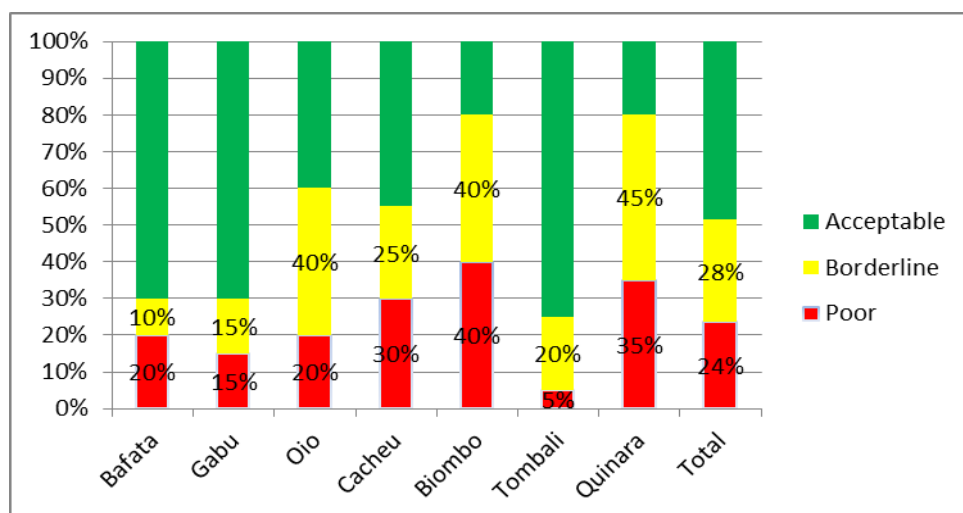
Analyzing the data collected for this indicator, the results show that 37% of household do not have an acceptable food consumption score which means that they do not have a balanced diet. The geographical analysis shows that the regions of Quinara, Biombo, Cacheu and Oio have the highest percentage of poor and borderline food consumption score, as per chart below.



Thanks to the mango season, the households get to eat fruit almost every day, which contributes to improve their food consumption score. At the end of July, once the mango season ends, this indicator will be much more critical.

In this case, the percentage of the household with poor and borderline food consumption score will increase from 37% to 54% as per chart.

FOOD CONSUMPTION SCORE AFTER MANGO SEASON



90% of household and visited communities indicated that they procured most of the consumed food in the market.

The main expenditure is food (85%), the residual money is mostly reserved for health expenses in severe cases (in benign cases, households resort to traditional medicine -roots, leaves, etc.).

Coping strategies

The main coping strategies adopted by households and communities are:

- Reduction of daily meals number
- Reduction in the diversity of consumed food
- Increase of loans
- Increased of wild fruits harvest in the forests
- Sale of livestock (poultry, small ruminants, pigs or cattle)
- Mortgage of next peanut crop (2,500 CFA francs credit from the merchant and pay back with 50kg bags of peanuts that costs 5,000 CFA francs during the harvest, hence a loss of 50%)
- Increase of artisanal activities (weaving hedges)

The combination of these factors (poor harvest, low purchase price and interruption of cashew purchase), high percentage of households with poor and borderline food consumption score and the households coping strategies will certainly deteriorate the food security situation of rural households during the next 3 months.

Recommendations:

Urgent:

1. Undertake a Comprehensive Food Security Assessment during the lean season (July-September 2013) at national level to have a broad picture of food insecurity, to identify the number and the location of vulnerable populations and define the appropriate type of assistance;
2. Carry out a targeted food distribution to the most vulnerable identified population in the Northern, Southern and Eastern part of the country (Quinara, Gabu, Bafata, Biombo and Oio);
3. Provide seeds for mangrove rice production in the regions of Biombo and Tombali and provide seed protection rations;²
4. Scale up nutritional activities in health centers (CRENI and CREMAM) and at community level for children, and pregnant and lactating women in assessed regions;

Medium term:

1. Initiate FFW (Food For Work) activities in assessed region to assist vulnerable populations to rehabilitate rice production infrastructures, feeder roads to link area of production to markets; and gardening to diversify food diet;
2. Reactivate the FSMS (Food Security Monitoring System) to have a sustainable early warning system to collect food security information, prevent crisis and help on decision making;
3. Advocate for behavior changes to diversify agricultural production in order to improve food diet and increase income through cash crops.

Long Term:

1. Elaborate a sustainable cashew nut chain and policy starting from the production stage to the final stage of trade including local transformation;

² At this stage, it is late to provide other seeds; mangrove seed protection activities can be undertaken.

Field mission pictures:



Interview with households- Gamol village



Focus group discussions with communities- Gamol village



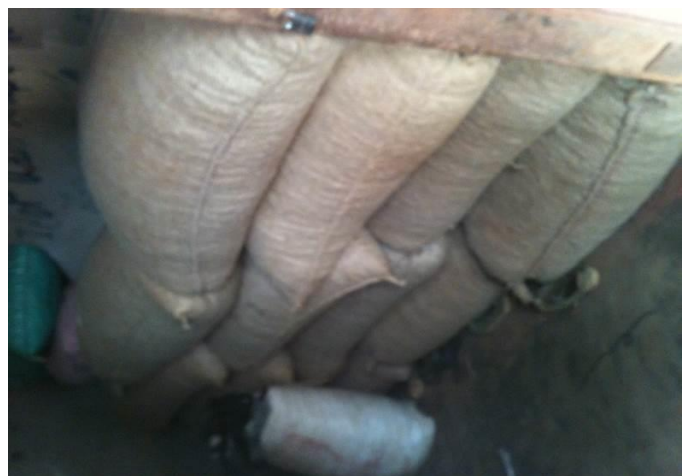
Focus group discussions with communities- Farancunda Village



Focus group discussions with communities- Farancunda Village



Cashew nut stock at household's level- Farancunda Village



Cashew nut stock at household's level Farancunda Village



Cashew nut stock at household's level-
Cabuxanque village



Cashew nut stock dried in the sun at
household's level, to not losing the quality,
due to the raining season- Buba sector



Cashew nut stock at household's level-
Cabuxanque village



Cashew nut stock dried in the sun at
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