



NIGERIA

RAPID ASSESSTMENT

Development and Expansion
of Digital Agricultural Advisory
Services for Smallholder Farmers
in the Context of COVID

IFAD'S COVID-19 RESPONSE

RURAL POOR STIMULUS FACILITY (RPSF)

FACILITY'S PILLARS



Inputs
& basic assets



Targeted
funds



Access
to markets



Digital
services

RPSF project: Development and Expansion of Digital Agricultural Advisory Services for Smallholder Farmers in the Context of COVID (Nigeria)¹

Launched in April 2020, the Rural Poor Stimulus Facility is IFAD's multi-donor response to COVID-19. With the overall objective of providing agile support to poor rural producers affected by key immediate challenges posed due to COVID-19, it seeks to improve the resilience of rural livelihoods in the context of the crisis by ensuring timely access to inputs, information, markets and liquidity. The Development and Expansion of Digital Agricultural Advisory Services for Smallholder Farmers in the Context of COVID-19 in Nigeria is part of the 20% of the projects of the Facility chosen to undergo a rapid assessment to report against Tier 1 "Development Results" indicators in the RPSF Results Measurement Framework.

Project activities

This is a multi-country project covering Kenya, Nigeria and Pakistan, implemented through Precision Development, a US-based NGO. Through RPSF financing for US\$3.2 million, the project supported the delivery of personalized agricultural advice to farmers through their mobile phones, establishing a two-way information channel by which farmers can receive low-cost, customized advice to improve on-farm practices, input utilization, pest and disease management, environmental sustainability, and access to markets.

PxD developed and delivered new digital agricultural advisory content for 12 crops of two IFAD funded projects, the Climate Change Adaptation and Agribusiness Support Programme (CASP) and Value Chain Development Programme (VCDP). Beneficiaries included are spread across 11 states in Nigeria, (Borno, Jigawa, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto, Yobe, Zamfara, Ebonyi, Ogun, Niger, and Nasarawa). The content developed included all the target crops for the 2021 wet season (rice, maize, soybeans, cowpea, sorghum, millet, cabbage, and groundnut) of the CASP; as well as rice and cassava, which are priority value chains for the VCDP project, and the CASP dry season crops (tomato, onion, rice, maize and pepper). More than 100,000 people were supported.

Rapid assessment methodology

Self-reported information on Tier I "Development Results" indicators was collected from a representative sample of 330 beneficiary households, of which 39 percent are headed by women and 14 percent are headed by youth (aged less than 35 years). Details of each indicator were asked with the aim of capturing the potential contribution effect from i) COVID-19 and ii) the RPSF project. Interviews were conducted between October and November 2021 using a Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) survey.

¹ This note is prepared by Vibhuti Mendiratta, Gonzalo Nunez-Chaim and Piero Massotti from the Research and Impact Assessment (RIA) division of IFAD.

Key results ²

Contribution effect of COVID-19

- Prior to the start of project activities, COVID-19 led to a sharp reduction in various Tier I indicators of welfare, mainly on production, market sales, total income, food security (number of meals) and resilience.
- Compared to households headed by men, women headed beneficiary households were more adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in terms of total income and food security. Similarly, households headed by youth, compared to adults, were more often affected in terms of production, sales, total income and resilience.

Contribution effect of RPSF

- More than 8 out of 10 households were able to maintain or improve on all the indicators of interest, after the project was implemented.
- Women and youth headed households benefited at least the same as households headed by men and adults respectively after the program was introduced.

Lessons learned

- Future advisory service support should explore the targeting approach and conditions behind the success of this project at improving welfare across all the dimensions for all the subgroups considered.

² The rapid assessment does not consider a control group; thus, results are only indicative of potential contribution effects.

Figure 1: Percentage of households that experienced a loss in each Tier I indicator due to COVID

Figure 2: Percentage of households that were able to maintain or improve each Tier I indicator after RPSF

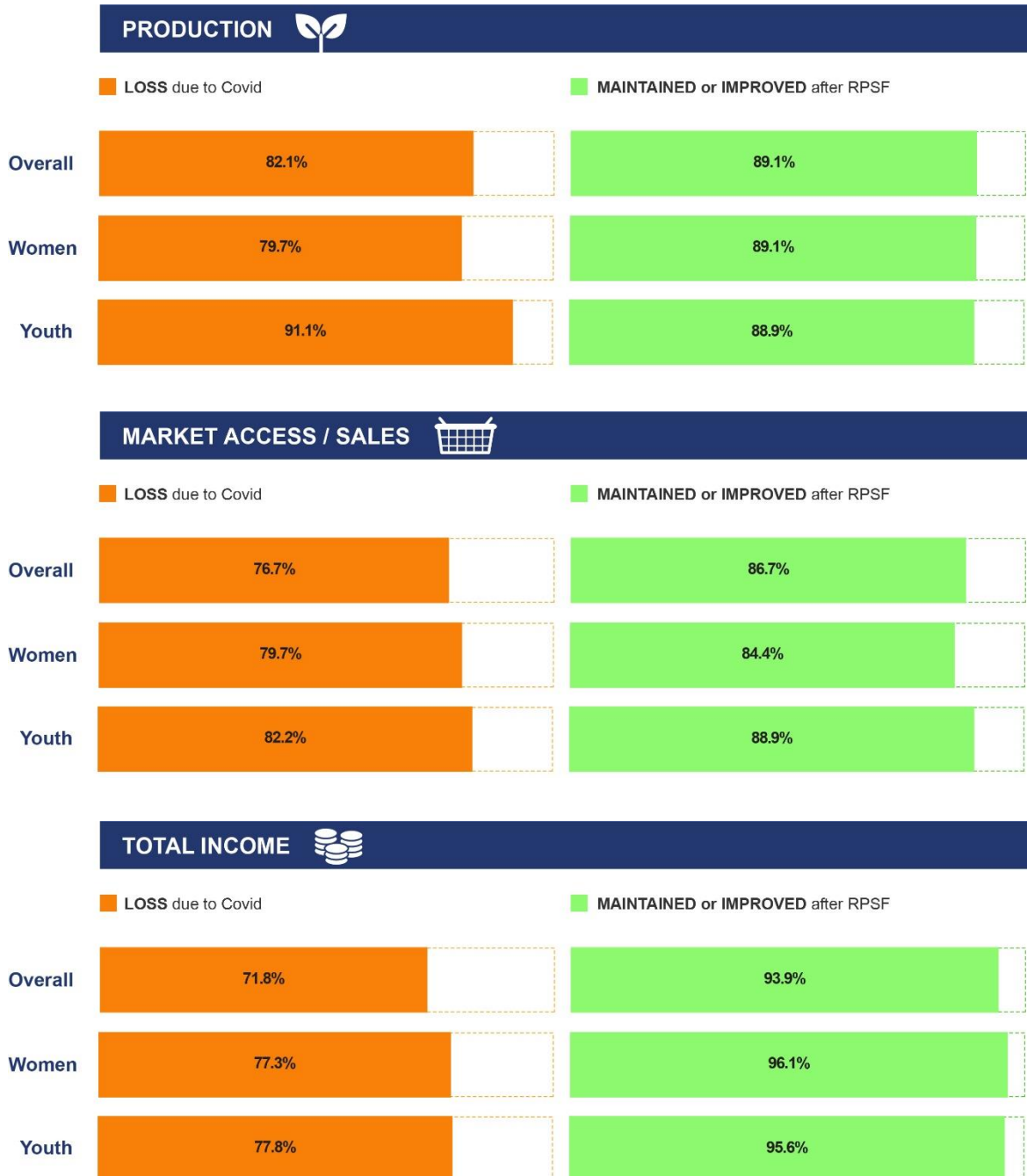


Figure 1: Percentage of households that experienced a loss in each Tier I indicator due to COVID

Figure 2: Percentage of households that were able to maintain or improve each Tier I indicator after RPSF



NOTE: RPSF activities were rolled out starting in March 2021.

Two separate questions were asked for each indicator. The first question asked what happened to each Tier 1 indicator between March 2020 - September 2020 relative to March 2019 – September 2019: i) a total loss; ii) reduced; iii) stayed the same; or iv) increased. The **orange bar** shows the percentage of households that responded i) or ii) to this question, that is, those which experienced a total loss or reduction in the indicator. The second question asked what happened to each Tier 1 indicator between March 2021 - September 2021 relative to March 2020 - September 2020, except for assets which considers the period between September 2020 and September 2021: i) reduced further; ii) stayed the same; iii) returned to level before COVID-19; or iv) increased above the level before COVID-19. The **green bar** shows the percentage of households that responded ii), iii) or iv) to this question, that is, those which maintained or improved each indicator relative to pre-RPSF levels.

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Investing in rural people

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