

USING THE COSMAT IN MALI

SEPT 2022 - AUGUST 2023



*A brief report on using the Conflict Sensitive Market Analysis Toolkit
(CoSMAT) in Mali*

COSMAT IN MALI

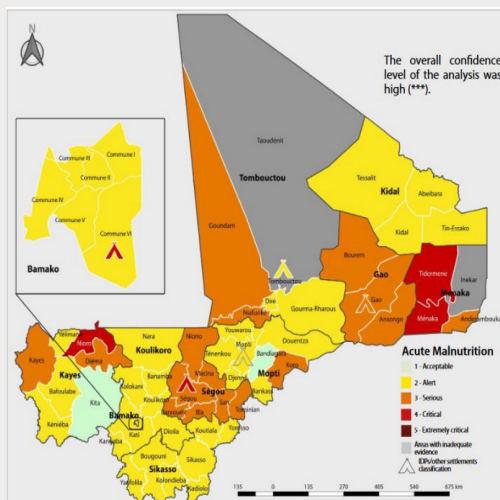
The WV Mali team opted to use the Conflict Sensitive Market Analysis Toolkit to understand the context and potential risks that may be impacted by or impact a cash/voucher based programme. The CoSMAT was used in two project locations where the team is implementing an ADH-funded cash project, and the findings are being used to ensure risks are monitored and mitigated, and relevant project adjustments are made when needed.



CONTEXT

The insecurity and socio-political crisis affecting northern Mali since the coup in 2012 is worsening and has spread across the center of the country, affecting the regions of Mopti, Segou, Bandiagara and Douentza among others. The resumption of direct confrontations between the Malian army and peace agreement signatory armed groups, as well as the increased criminality pose serious protection risks for civilians and especially vulnerable children, limiting their access to basic livelihoods and social services.

As a result the humanitarian situation in Mali continues to deteriorate. Insecurity, which has spread from the northern region to the central region of Mopti and Ségou, is restricting population movement and disrupting livelihoods and access to services such as drinking water, medical support and education. Clashes between armed groups and intercommunal violence continue to cause displacements of people who require humanitarian assistance and protection services.



BY THE NUMBERS

WHO WAS INVOLVED?

7 staff

HOW LONG DID IT TAKE?

4 months

HOW MUCH DID IT COST?

7 staff @LoE 10% over 3 months (other needs integrated with existing monitoring/assessments)

HOW MANY INDICATORS WERE SELECTED?

6 indicators

WHY USE THE COSMAT?

In this setting of instability and volatility, the WV Mali team has been implementing a variety of programmes to address the critical needs of the most vulnerable. In 2022, with ADH-funding, WVM started a cash/voucher programme in two locations within Mopti region: Bandiagara and Djenne. The situation in Mopti region has become more and more fragile due to intercommunity conflicts, and due to the presence of armed groups targeting the defense and security forces, allies and communal self-defense groups. In fact, REACH data from March 2023 revealed that 32% of market locations visited in Mopti were closed due to security concerns. In particular, the situation between the two ethnic communities (Peulh and Dogon) is getting increasingly tense. The rising tensions may have unforeseen and significant impacts on how cash/voucher programmes function in the area because they can affect relationships between market actors and community members, impact access to/from markets, and create an environment where people don't feel safe to access and use financial assistance.

COSMAT: WHAT IS IT?

The CoSMAT is a WV-developed toolkit that aims to fill a critical gap in existing context analysis and market assessment processes: the particular role that markets and market actors may have in contributing to or mitigating potential risks. Risks may be related to market accessibility, relationships between community members and market actors, the use of cash/vouchers to address identified needs, the targeting and selection process, or any other part of the cash project cycle. The CoSMAT was therefore developed to help better understand the way these components intersect, monitor them, and identify relevant ways to adjust programming to ensure our approach remains conflict sensitive throughout implementation. CoSMAT has four key steps:

- *Step 1: Understand the context*
- *Step 2: Risk matrix and indicators*
- *Step 3: Staff behaviour and attitude*
- *Step 4: Action planning*



As WV Mali geared up to respond to the growing needs, the team considered the best ways to identify and mitigate risks that may arise, and how they could remain agile to respond in a safe, effective and accountable way. The CoSMAT offered a pathway to assessing the key risks in the areas of intervention, how these risks may interact with markets and/or market actors, and a way to identify priority issues and indicators to ensure these factors and risk issues are regularly monitored and understood.

WHAT WAS THE PROCESS?

The CoSMAT was designed to be field-ready and ensure that field teams of varying sizes can quickly understand, adapt/contextualize and implement the toolkit. In this vein, the toolkit has four key steps with a variety of options on how to carry out each component. Here's how it worked in Mali:

Step 1: Understanding the Context

Step 1 of the toolkit calls for the team to gather key context information about how community members interact with one another across social, ethnic, cultural, economic, religious, and other lines. This can be collected via focus group discussions with community members, market actors and other project stakeholders (e.g. community leaders, local officials). In Mali's case, the team was able to leverage the findings of an ongoing 'Good Enough Context Analysis Review'(GECARR) with the Fragile Context Programming Approach (FCPA) team, which also called for conducting focus group discussions with a wide range of community members. These were completed in November - December 2022. The findings of those FGDs helped WV Mali understand the relationships within the communities and to identify any potential risk areas due to the way people interact and engage with others in their community. Based on this analysis, WV Mali identified key risk themes related to:

1. Negative perceptions about the fairness of the eligibility criteria and targeting approach for aid distributions;
 2. Access issues (particularly in Djenne); and
 3. Biases in service delivery and assistance from government officials.
- These areas were explored further through Step 2.

Step 2: Identifying indicators

Step 2 of the CoSMAT requires some additional data collection about the risk themes identified through Step 1, namely through an assessment (survey), by adding relevant questions into existing monitoring tools, and/or through a team workshop (ideally with local community representation) to leverage the team's knowledge about the local dynamics. WV Mali opted for including relevant questions in their existing PDM (conducted in December 2022) and a few additional focus groups as part of a planned needs and market assessment process.

Through this process, some risks related to market access were discussed (related to poor security), but there were more concerns related to safety and security while registering for and collecting assistance. Although 19% of respondents highlighted mistrust between people of different religions and ethnic groups, this did not come up as a factor that would affect market use.

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On all levels the team workshop was effective: contextual analysis of the market, analysis of the security situation and accessibility, analysis of the means of implementation.”

WV Mali team member - anonymous feedback survey

In fact, in terms of interactions within the market space, 47% of respondents highlighted markets as a connector within the community. Instead, the PDM and FGD data confirmed key risks around the perception of unfair selection criteria and treatment by aid providers, potential taxation upon receipt of assistance, and wider issues related to insecurity.

Risk Indicators	Data Collection	Frequency	Responsible	Trigger threshold
% or proportion of beneficiaries who report increasing exposure to violence, fraud, extortion or other protection threats as a result of the program	Security weekly reports Security assessments	Monthly	Security Officer	+ 20%
% of people who report feeling unsafe when registering for or collecting cash/voucher assistance	PDM	After each distribution	M&E Officer	+ 20%
% of people who believe that WV staff treated them fairly and equitably	PDM/OSDM	After each distribution	M&E Officer	- 20%
% of beneficiaries who say they have been taxed after receiving their assistance	PDM/OSDM	After each distribution	M&E Officer	+1%
% of beneficiaries who know a) selection criteria, b) transfer values, and c) project duration	PDM/OSDM	After each distribution	M&E Officer	- 20%
% of people who say the project met their expectations for the help provided	PDM/OSDM	After each distribution	M&E Officer	- 20%

Following the Step 2 data collection, the team held a team workshop during which they discussed the key risk areas, agreed on indicators to prioritize, and identified relevant trigger thresholds. The discussion was guided by key questions for each risk area as per the CoSMAT step 2 guidance, and based on what factors could impact the programme and its participants. The outcome of the workshops was a list of final indicators (shown above) along with 'trigger thresholds'. Once a trigger threshold is reached, it is a significant risk to the community and the project and should be reviewed by management as quickly as possible. In this way, the indicators are used to continually track the impact of programming on local communities and market dynamics and to raise a red flag when issues or risks are deemed too great for activities to continue as usual.

Step 3: Staff behaviour and attitudes

It is also important to assess how World Vision's own staff interact with community members, and the relationships they hold with project participants (aid recipients, market actors, local leaders, etc.). The power dynamic between staff and project participants can significantly impact the effectiveness of a programme, and, when staff are not upholding WV's standards or values, cause injustice or even harm to community members. As such, Step 3 involves a staff survey aimed at identifying how staff believe they themselves and other team members engage with community members, and helps identify areas of concern and risks. This is typically done through an anonymous online survey to ensure staff feel confident to answer questions honestly and openly.

Step 4: Action planning

Step 4 of the toolkit helps ensure the data collected and analysis conducted is used to inform programming - both current and future. The Mali team developed an action plan with key steps to ensure there are clear plans to monitor the indicators listed above, including how frequently they should be monitored and how the information should flow to decision makers. If an indicator meets the predefined trigger threshold, then project/programme management will be informed in order to take the appropriate action - whether pausing, halting or modifying activities to ensure the safety of project participants, the wider community and WV staff.

Identifying trigger thresholds ensures that if/when risks materialize, we can be agile in our response.





AND THEN WHAT?

The CoSMAT was completed in April 2023. Since then the team has added the prioritized indicators to the project ITT and updated their routine monitoring tools to include the questions necessary to monitor those indicators. The first two rounds of data collection were completed by August 2023 and the findings are presented below. To date, none of the trigger thresholds have been met. We can see that the shift from first to second round of PDM reveals small changes around the perception of WV staff treatment of project beneficiaries (-1%), and the proportion of participants who know basic information about WV's programming (-3%). These should be monitored closely. The data also shows positive changes in the proportion of participants who experience increased violence, fraud or other threats (-11%) and the proportion who report that the project met their expectations.

	Trigger threshold	Monitoring Round 1	Monitoring Round 2	Change
% of beneficiaries who report increasing exposure to violence, fraud, extortion or other protection threats as a result of the program	+ 20%	43%	32%	-11%
% of people who report feeling unsafe when registering for or collecting cash or voucher assistance	+ 20%	0%	0%	NA
% of people who believe that WV staff treated them fairly and equitably	- 20%	100%	99%	-1%
% of beneficiaries who say they have been taxed after receiving their assistance	+1%	0%	0%	NA
% of beneficiaries who know a) selection criteria, b) transfer values, and c) project duration	- 20%	92%	89%	-3%
% of people who say the project met their expectations for assistance	- 20%	79%	80%	+1%

The team will continue to monitor the selected indicators regularly and report on the findings to all relevant stakeholders. As the project and/or other market-based programmes in the same locations continue, it will be important to periodically reassess the contextual and market-related factors- which are continuously shifting - to ensure the selected context and market-related indicators remain relevant and appropriate. Additional indicators may be added as needed based on ongoing consultations with affected communities.

FEEDBACK FROM MALI

The Mali team has provided valuable feedback about the CoSMAT and offered some practical suggestions for improvements. Overall, the team found the toolkit useful in identifying ways their project activities, attitudes and behaviours may affect existing and arising tensions, inter-communal relationships, and other risks. Below is a snapshot of the feedback received:

On a scale of 1-4 (1 = not at all, 4 = very), how useful was the CoSMAT

3.8

On a scale of 1-4 (1= very hard, 4 = very easy) how difficult was it to apply the CoSMAT

2.7

Strongly agree CoSMAT added value to the market and needs assessment

71%

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to the WV Mali team for their commitment to using the CoSMAT, and for their input to this brief report. Special thanks to Dieudonne Kouakou for leading the process and ensuring that the information gathered is used to inform and adjust programming.



For more information regarding the Conflict Sensitive Market Analysis Toolkit:

wvi.org/casestudy

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World Vision



It takes a world
to end violence against children

**Aktion
Deutschland Hilft**
Bündnis deutscher Hilfsorganisationen

World Vision is a Christian relief, development and advocacy organisation dedicated to working with children, families and communities to overcome poverty and injustice. Inspired by our Christian values, we are dedicated to working with the world's most vulnerable people. We serve all people regardless of religion, race, ethnicity or gender.

We believe a world without violence against children is possible, and World Vision's global campaign It takes a world to end violence against children is igniting movements of people committed to making this happen. No one person, group or organisation can solve this problem alone, it will take the world to end violence against children.