The number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in Pakistan has risen to 213,470 as of 30 June.

The most affected province due to the COVID-19 pandemic is Sindh (84,640 cases) followed by Punjab (76,262 cases).

The recovery rate is 47.2%.

The government is following a partial lockdown strategy across Pakistan to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

It is estimated that the GDP of Pakistan will shrink by 0.38% in 2020 due to the impact of COVID-19 on the economy.

The Government of Pakistan has allowed air services from major international airports across the country.

*Situation as on 30th June 2020
**Data extracted from covid.gov.pk & OCHA website
The SUN Business Network Global Team rolled out an SME survey in early May 2020 to better understand the opportunities and challenges faced by SMEs in low- and middle-income countries, including Pakistan. The survey revealed the devastating impact of the pandemic on the SME sector, especially for businesses involved in fruit, vegetable, grain, and fish value chains. Decreased sales, difficulty accessing inputs, and reduced production put businesses, jobs, and access to healthy diets at risk – in communities already facing the challenge of malnutrition.

The Survey Results have highlighted the need for collective efforts in providing access to finance and technical assistance to keep nutritious foods producing SMEs afloat – and help them build stronger, more resilient businesses with an even greater impact on nutrition, so that they can bounce back from this crisis.

Key Results

- Almost 94% of respondents reported being impacted by the pandemic
- 84% of firms reported changing their production volume as a result of the pandemic, generally decreasing it; 57% had changed their product’s sales price.
- 85% of respondents anticipated future impacts on their supply chains, including shortages of supplies (61%) and transportation and distribution disruptions (49%).
- 80% and 84% of firms reported taking actions to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on their business and to protect their employees, respectively
- 81% and 64% of firms reported urgently needing financial and technical support, respectively, to cope with the effects of the pandemic.

For further details, visit: www.sunbusinessnetwork.org/impacts-of-covid-19-on-smes-in-the-food-system-survey-results/
WEBINAR ON THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON FOOD BUSINESSES

A webinar entitled “Impact of COVID-19 on Food Businesses: Challenges, Mitigation Strategies & Way Forward” was organised by SBN Pakistan. A high-level panel of speakers from Government and Private Sector discussed various effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on food businesses. The different sessions of the webinar focused on 1) Steps taken by Government to support Businesses, 2) Challenges faced by Food Businesses due to COVID-19, 3) Ensuring Food Safety during COVID-19 and 4) Business Continuity during COVID-19. The speakers also highlighted future strategies to make businesses more resilient to such shocks. The webinar provided attendees with a holistic view of the situation and enabled them to understand how different stakeholders were responding to the rising challenges during COVID-19.

The Panelists included:
- Dr Muhammad Azeem Khan - Chairperson, Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC)
- Dr Abubakar Shafiq - Manager Agribusiness & Entrepreneurship Development, Farm Dynamics Pakistan
- Mr Suleman Anwar - Chief Strategy Officer, Shazday Fruits
- Dr Muhammad Nasir - Senior Manager Scientific & Regulatory Affairs, Engro Foods Pakistan
- Mr Sayyed Ahmad Masud - Chief Executive Officer, Change Mechanics

Key recommendations of the webinar included making agriculture more farmer-centred, supporting businesses with technical and financial assistance, strengthening food safety protocols by introducing e-audits, ensuring contingency planning for businesses and capitalising the vast potential of university students during the pandemic as researchers and interns.

RAPID MARKET ASSESSMENT OF KEY VALUE CHAINS

To deep-dive into the impacts of COVID-19 on specific value-chains, SBN Pakistan conducted a study to get a quick but comprehensive scan of the market. The activity entailed carrying out detailed interviews with players at different stages of the value-chains and support markets in order to determine how they had been impacted and what adaptive measures they had taken in this regard.

The selected value chains included dairy, fruits and vegetables, fish, meat, poultry, edible oil and related products, and wheat flour. The results of the study are being compiled and will be made publicly available once finalised.
ABOUT SBN

In 2010, the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement was launched to support national leadership and collective action to scale up nutrition. The SUN Business Network (SBN) is one of the four global networks that supports SUN countries (along with the UN, Civil Society and Donor Networks). It is convened by the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) and the UN World Food Programme (WFP) and further supported by an Advisory Group comprised of senior business leaders.

The SBN aims to reduce malnutrition in all its forms through engaging and mobilising business to act, invest and innovate in responsible and sustainable actions and operations to improve nutrition. The SBN provides a neutral platform to broker partnerships and collaboration between business and all actors on nutrition at a national, regional and global level.

SBN Pakistan seeks to increase the availability and affordability of safe, nutritious foods for low income consumers through capacitating businesses and other relevant stakeholders and incentivising positive business actions. SBN Pakistan focuses on specific areas in the food system including creating an enabling environment for businesses to act on nutrition, accelerating nutrition sensitive innovations and promoting cutting-edge and inclusive business models across the food system that address the constraints of different sectors that are important for food diversity and improved nutrition.