

Rapid Market Assessment

This Rapid Market Assessment (RMA) is a supplement to the MAU Market Price Report in Southeast Myanmar. It provides township-level data on market functionality, activity, supply, and logistics. Data were collected through observation and KIIs with retailers during Feb. 14-20, 2024. Reports available at www.themimu.info/market-analysis-unit.

KEY FINDINGS

- **Village markets remained active**, although some like Loikaw faced serious supply limitations;
- **Fuel, rice, and medicines were scarce**, and in some markets vegetables were largely unavailable;
- **Formal trade between townships was permitted**, and retailers often sourced goods from Shan State;
- **Resupply lead times were sometimes reasonable**, but security risks still increased shipping costs;
- **Retailers struggled with security conditions**, but they also faced a wide range of other challenges;
- **Improved security may be needed to boost supply**, as active retailers remain wary of safety risks.



Regional Overview

Market Functionality - Village markets remained operational despite security risks. Markets were generally open throughout the day. There were no reports of recent damage to the markets, but those in Demoso, Hsihseng, and Loikaw were described as relatively unsafe.

Market Activity - Activity in village markets increased as they absorbed activity from urban areas. Markets in villages and secondary-towns grew as households continued to avoid urban areas. Although retailer numbers increased, the range of available goods did not always improve significantly.

Availability of Goods - Fuel and medicines were scarce regionwide, and rice was sometimes unavailable. The availability of goods was very poor in village markets in Hsihseng and Loikaw, but it was better elsewhere. Vegetable availability was worse than might be expected, and rice, medicines, and fuel were scarce in multiple markets across the region.

Transport & Logistics - Formal inter-township shipping was often possible, and retailers sourced goods from Shan State. Hopong, Aungpan, and Pinlong were common sources of supply, and lead times were decent. However, the Loikaw village market was very isolated.

Retailer Challenges - Retailers faced a variety of challenges, especially poor security and supply of goods.

Retailers in the Demoso village market reported relatively few challenges, but those elsewhere struggled with a variety of difficulties. Safety and security was a recurring refrain, and it appeared to impact both supply of goods and the activity of customers in village markets.

Possible Interventions - Retailers felt interventions could help them increase supply if they addressed the immediate impacts of conflict.

Retailers expressed a willingness and ability to increase supply under more favorable circumstances. In particular, they said safe/secure passage for traders and repair to damaged roads, markets, and infrastructure would most likely enable them to boost supply. Fuel subsidies and other support for transportation costs were also favored.

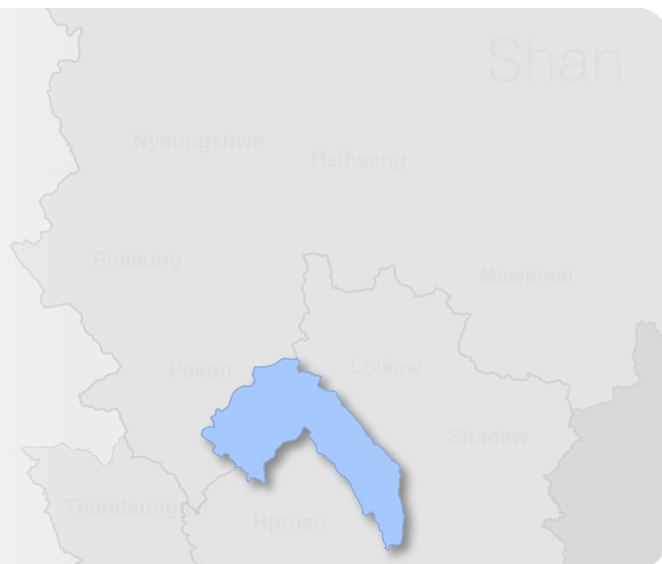
What to Watch

- Lack of **fuel** may further reduce availability of goods, particularly **medicines, rice, and vegetables**;
- Local security conditions will likely remain the major factor driving the availability of goods.
- Helping retailers boost supply may prove difficult absent concrete improvements in local security.

Demoso Township

Village Market

The Demoso village market was operational and relatively well supplied, but local security was poor. The market remained operational, but retailers regarded the surrounding environment as unsafe. Market activity had increased since late-2023, and many goods were available in the market; Demoso was the only market monitored with reports of decent access to fuel. Formal shipping was possible, and retailers supplied from Pinlaung with reasonably short lead times. Retailers reported facing relatively few challenges, but among them were security risks and challenges procuring new supply.

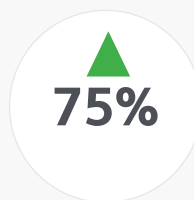


Market Functionality - Market hours were stable, and there was no recent damage or closures, yet retailers said local security was relatively poor.

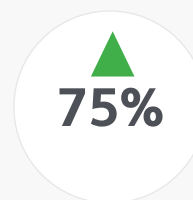
- **Opening Hours:** 6am-6pm, daily.
- **Market Security:** Unsafe.
- **Market Damage:** No recent damage.
- **Closures:** No closures in previous week.

Market Activity - Village market activity was up since late-2023, and customers arrived from area villages as well as other townships.

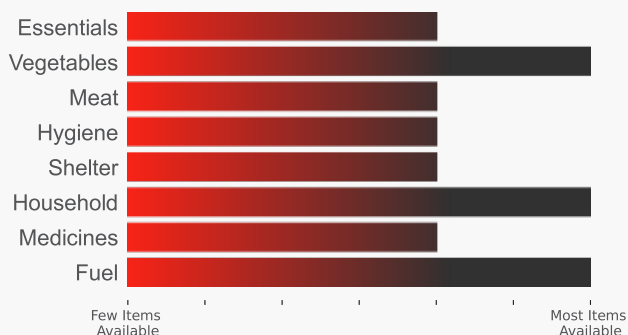
Customers



Retailers



Availability of Goods - Availability of goods was relatively good in this village, whose market is important regionally. Among the markets monitored, this market alone reported reasonable availability of fuel.



Scarce Items

- *Shrimp*

Transport & Logistics

Pinlaung supplied the village market via formal routes.

- **Inter-Township:** Formal shipping allowed.
- **Suppliers:** Pinlaung.
- **Lead Time:** 1-3 days.
- **Shipping Rates:**



50kg Rice Bag
10,000 MMK
(from Pinlaung)



Small Car

-



Small Truck

-



Small Boat

-

Retailer Challenges - Demoso village retailers reported few major business-related difficulties. Personal safety and access to new supply were the most notable challenges, but retailers did not appear as concerned with these challenges as retailers in other markets monitored.



Transport Limits



Supply Limits



Weak Demand



Market Damage



Cash Access

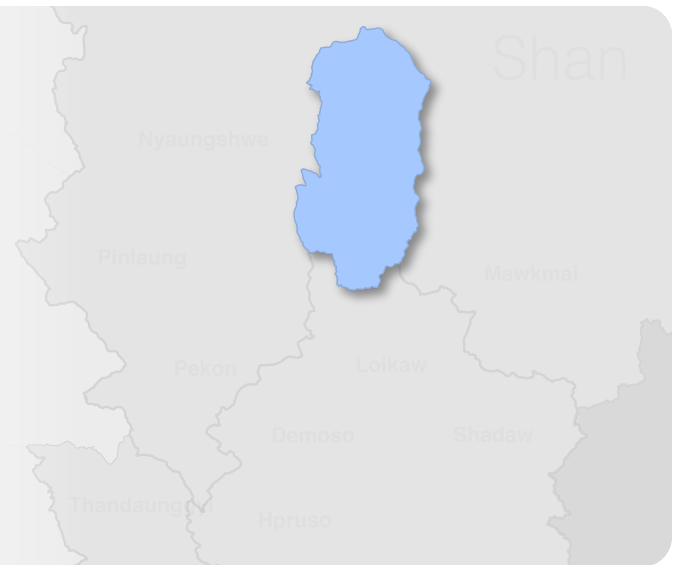


Personal Safety

Hsihseng Township

Village Market

The Hsihseng village market was operational, but security was poor and many goods were unavailable. Activity in the village market had increased in recent months, but periodic security concerns continued to mute customer and retailer activity. Many goods were not available, and supply of NFIs was particularly poor. Rice, medicines and fuel were scarce. Formal shipping was possible, and some retailers reported supplying from from Hopong. Lead times were relatively short, but shipping was costly. Security was a major concern for retailers, both because of safety concerns and the impact it had on customer activity.

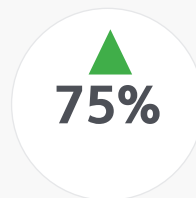


Market Functionality - Market hours were stable, and there was no recent damage or closures, yet retailers said local security was relatively poor.

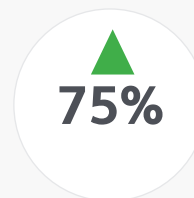
- **Opening Hours:** 6am-6pm, daily.
- **Market Security:** Unsafe.
- **Market Damage:** No recent damage.
- **Closures:** No closures in previous week.

Market Activity - Village market activity was up since late-2023, and customers arrived from area villages as well as other townships.

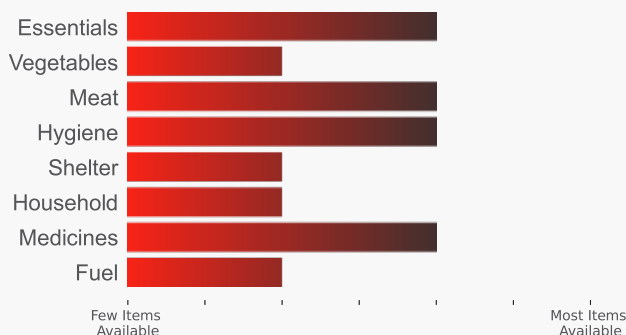
Customers



Retailers



Availability of Goods - Availability of many goods was poor in the market. NFIs were particularly scarce, but so too were some critical foods including rice and a variety of vegetables.



Scarce Items

- Rice
- Medicines
- Fuel

Transport & Logistics

Hopong supplied the village market via formal routes.

- **Inter-Township:** Formal shipping allowed.
- **Suppliers:** Hopong.
- **Lead Time:** 1 day.
- **Shipping Rates:**



50kg Rice Bag
1,500 MMK
(from Hopong)



Small Car
50,000 MMK
(from Hopong)



Small Truck
100,000 MMK
(from Hopong)



Small Boat
-

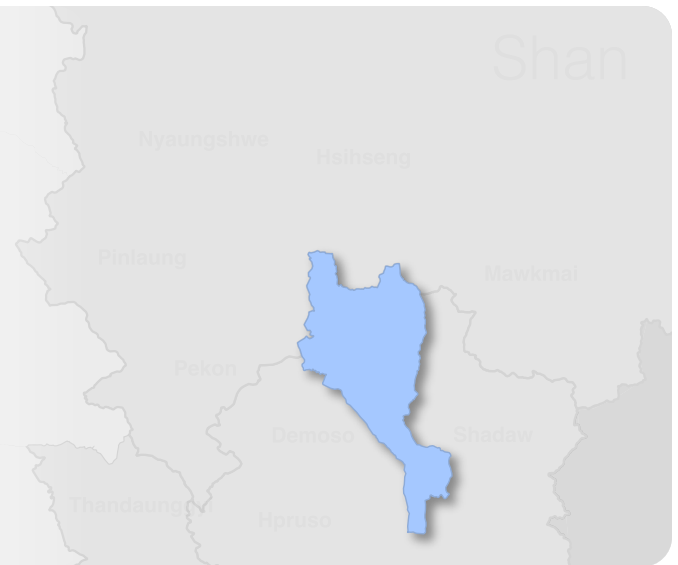
Retailer Challenges - Personal safety and weak demand were the most significant challenges for Hsihseng village retailers. Retailers struggled with cash access and ability to order new supply, yet the risks presented by local conflict and reduced demand troubled them even more.



Loikaw Township

Village Market

The Loikaw village market offered very few foods or NFIs, and retailers faced many challenges. Like many village markets, activity here had increased recently, but poor security was still a limiting factor. Many foods and NFIs were scarce, including rice, vegetables, medicines, and fuel. Retailers in the market ordered supply from Nyaungshwe, but lead times were slow and costs were high. Retailers reported facing many significant challenges, most notably security risks continuing to keep customers away from the market. Transportation limits, poor supply, and poor cash access were also challenges.

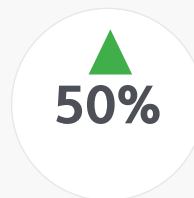


Market Functionality - Market hours were stable, and there was no recent damage or closures, yet retailers said local security was relatively poor.

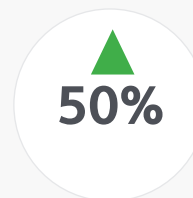
- **Opening Hours:** 6am-6pm, daily.
- **Market Security:** Unsafe.
- **Market Damage:** No recent damage.
- **Closures:** No closures in previous week.

Market Activity - Market activity was up 50% from late-2023 levels, and the market served customers from area villages as well as other townships.

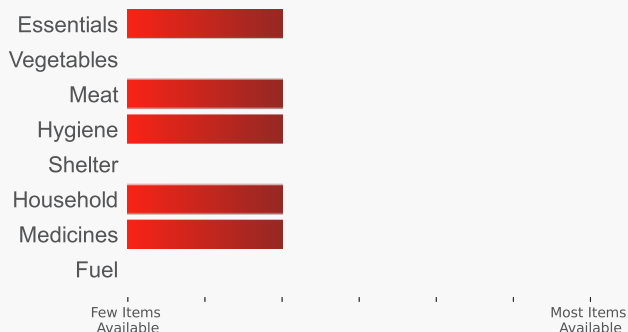
Customers



Retailers



Availability of Goods - Availability of most goods was very poor, and only very few critical foods and NFIs were on offer. Rice, medicines, and fuels were all hard to come by, and vegetables and shelter goods were scarce.



Scarce Items

- Rice
- Vegetables
- Medicines
- Fuel

Retailer Challenges - Loikaw village retailers reported a wide range of business-related challenges. Although the market had grown somewhat more active in recent months local safety and security risks still muted retailer and customer activity in this village market.



Transport & Logistics

Shipping permissions were unclear, lead times were long.

- **Inter-Township:** Formal permission was unclear.
- **Suppliers:** Nyaungshwe.
- **Lead Time:** 3-7 days.
- **Shipping Rates:**



50kg Rice Bag
15,000 MMK
(from Nyaungshwe)



Small Car
1-3 lakh
(from Nyaungshwe)



Small Truck
3-5 lakh
(from Nyaungshwe)



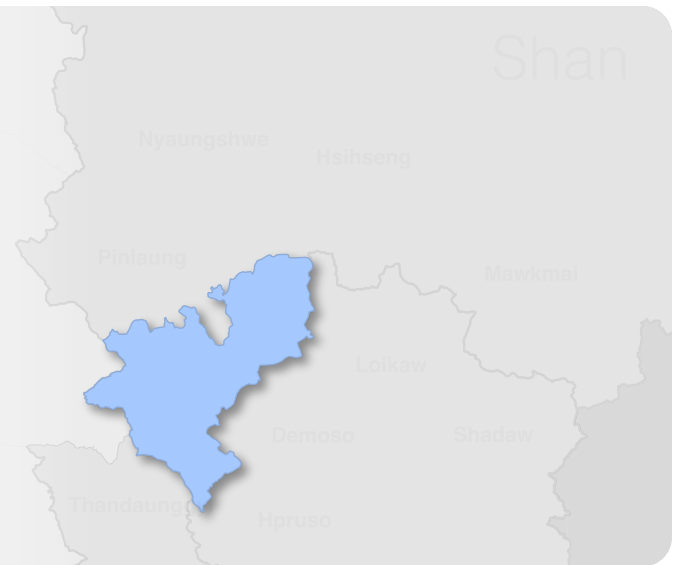
Small Boat
-

Pekon Township

Village Market

The Pekon village market was operational, relatively secure, and there was decent availability of goods.

Customer activity had doubled in recent months, and retailers increased too. Food availability was somewhat poorer than NFIs, but fuel and medicines were most scarce. Retailers ordered supply from Aungpan, and lead times were relatively short. Retailers faced many challenges, and there was some longstanding damage to the market. A poor security and its impact on customer activity remained prominent challenges for retailers, but poor access to cash was a challenge as well.



Market Functionality - Market hours were stable, and there was no recent damage or closures. Retailers described the market environment as safe.

- **Opening Hours:** 6am-6pm, daily.
- **Market Security:** Safe.
- **Market Damage:** No recent damage.
- **Closures:** No closures in previous week.

Market Activity - Customer activity doubled since late-2023, and retailers increased too. The market served customers from villages and other townships.

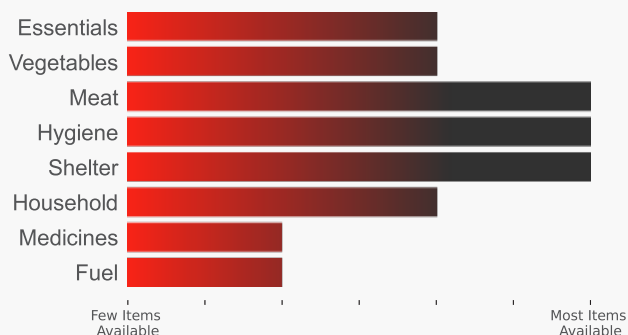
Customers

▲
100%

Retailers

▲
50%

Availability of Goods - Availability of food and NFIs was relatively good in the village market. NFI availability was in general somewhat better than for foods, although fuel and medicines remained scarce.



Scarce Items

- *Fuel*

Retailer Challenges - Pekon village retailers faced a wide range of significant challenges, but personal safety and supply limits were most notable. Safety was a major concern, and market damage from earlier incidents was reported; these security issues hindered transportation and limited supply.



Transport & Logistics

Aungpan supplied the village market via formal routes.

- **Inter-Township:** Formal shipping was allowed.
- **Suppliers:** Aungpan.
- **Lead Time:** 2-3 days.
- **Shipping Rates:**



50kg Rice Bag
5,000 MMK
(from Aungpan)



Small Car
2 lakh
(from Aungpan)



Small Truck
13 lakh
(from Aungpan)

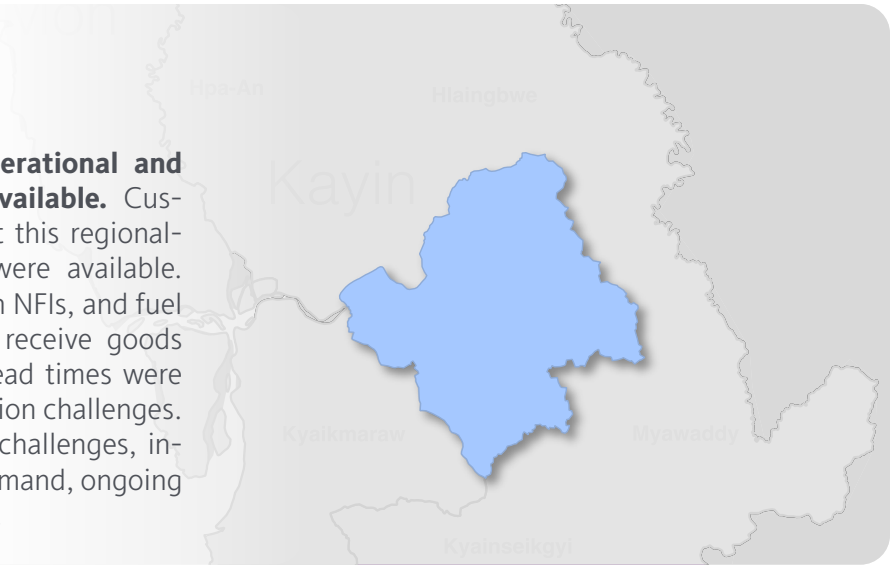


Small Boat
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Kawkareik Township

Village Market

The Kawkareik village market was operational and growing in size, and many goods were available. Customer and retailer activity had doubled at this regionally-important market, and many goods were available. Food availability was somewhat better than NFIs, and fuel was most scarce. Retailers continued to receive goods from both Myawaddy and Hpa-An, and lead times were relatively short considering the transportation challenges. Retailers reported faced many significant challenges, including transportation and supply, weak demand, ongoing security concerns, and poor access to cash.

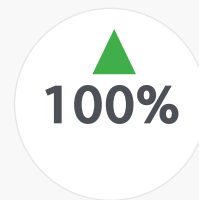


Market Functionality - Market hours were stable, and there was no recent damage or closures. Retailers described the market environment as safe.

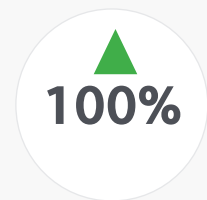
- **Opening Hours:** 6am-6pm, daily.
- **Market Security:** Safe.
- **Market Damage:** No recent damage.
- **Closures:** No closures in previous week.

Market Activity - Village market activity doubled since late-2023, and the market served customers from area villages as well as other townships.

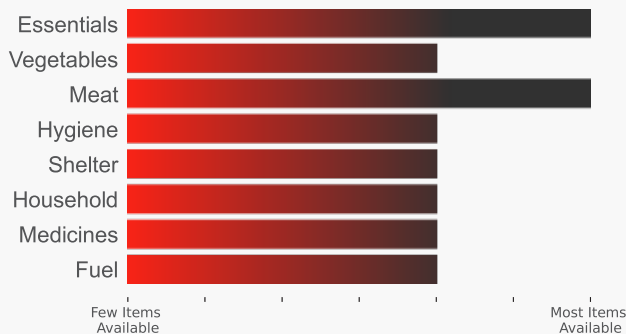
Customers



Retailers



Availability of Goods - Availability of goods was relatively robust in this village market. Availability was poorer for NFIs than for foods, and fuel was most scarce.



Scarce Items

- Fuel

Transport & Logistics

Shipping was mostly informal, but lead times were short.

- **Inter-Township:** Formal shipping not allowed.
- **Suppliers:** Myawaddy, Hpa-an.
- **Lead Time:** 1-3 days.
- **Shipping Rates:**



50kg Rice Bag
1,000 MMK
(from Hpa-An)



Small Car
1 lakh (Hpa-An)
3.5 lakh (Myawaddy)



Small Truck
2 lakh (Hpa-An)
6 lakh (Myawaddy)



Small Boat
-

Retailer Challenges - Kawkareik village retailers reported a wide range major business-related challenges. Despite increased activity and relatively broad availability of goods, retailers still worried about transportation, safety, and basic supply and demand.



Indicator Descriptions

Market Functionality

Opening Hours: Typical market hours during the week of data collection.

Market Security: Observer's assessment of security environment in/around market, relative to preceding months.

Market Damage: Whether significant recent damage to market infrastructure and/or inventory has occurred.

Closures: Whether market-wide closures affected the location during the week of data collection.

Market Activity

Retailer Activity: Estimated portion of normal (e.g., early-November 2023) retailers active in the market.

Customer Traffic: Estimated portion of normal (e.g., early-November 2023) customers visiting the market.

Customers Served: Provenance of customers served by the market.

Availability of Goods, by Category

Availability: Estimated portion of goods in each category with reliable availability.

Category	Examples
Essentials	Rice, cooking oil, pulses, etc.
Vegetables	Eggplant, long bean, watercress, green chili, etc.
Meat/Fish	Chicken, dried fish, fresh fish, fish paste, etc.
Hygiene	Soap, detergent, sanitary pads, toothpaste, etc.
Shelter	Plastic tarp, wood, nails, wire, construction tools, etc.
Household	Blanket, clothing, towels, jerry can, cooking pots, etc.
Medicines	Paracetamol, amoxicillin, etc.
Fuel	95 octane, 92 octane, etc.

Transportation & Logistics, by Modality

Inter-Township: Whether or not inter-township shipping is formally allowed, according to retailers.

Suppliers: Primary source of goods supplied to the market, according to retailers.

Lead Time: Time needed to receive goods after order is placed, according to retailers.

Shipping Rates: Example one-way shipping costs, according to retailers.

Retailer Challenges

Measure: Qualitative estimate of the frequency / severity of challenge: low (white), medium (yellow), or high (red).

Challenge	Description
Transport Limits	Price and availability of shipping / transportation services.
Supply Limits	Ability to maintain and replenish inventory with new supply.
Weak Demand	Customer purchases and active demand for goods.
Market Damage	Damage to market infrastructure and/or inventory.
Cash Access	Availability of desired cash and/or credit (for business operations).
Personal Safety	Personal safety of retailers and/or customers in/around market.

Market Analysis Unit (MAU)

The Market Analysis Unit is an independent project that provides donors, humanitarian responders, development practitioners and private sector actors in Myanmar with data and analysis to better understand the impacts of market developments, conflict and other crises on:

- Household purchasing power, including coping mechanisms, safety nets and access to basic needs;
- Supply chains, including trade, cross-border dynamics and market functionality (particularly as it relates to food systems);
- Financial services, including financial services providers, household and business access to finance and remittances; and
- Labor markets (formal and informal), with a focus on agricultural labor and low-wage sectors (e.g., construction, food services).

CONTACT

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