

NORTHEAST SYRIA MARKET MONITORING EXERCISE

Snapshot: 9-16 March 2020

INTRODUCTION

To inform humanitarian cash programming, REACH in partnership with the northeast (NES) and northwest (NWS) Syria Cash Working Group (CWG) conducts monthly Market Monitoring Exercises in northern Syria to assess the availability and prices of 36 basic commodities that are typically sold in markets and consumed by average Syrian households, including food and non-food items, water, fuel, and cellphone data.

Of these, 18 items comprise the Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB; see below), which represents the minimum, culturally adjusted items required to support a 6-person household for a month.

Data was collected this month (between 9-16 March 2020) by REACH, CHF, Concern, Hasakah for Relief and Development, IRC, Mercy Corps, PIN, Rojava, and Samaritan's Purse.

The accompanying [data from the month of March](#) is disseminated monthly and is distributed through partners across the humanitarian community.

SURVIVAL MINIMUM EXPENDITURE BASKET (SMEB) CONTENTS

	Item	Quantity
Food Items	Bread	37 kg
	Bulgur	15 kg
	Chicken	6 kg
	Eggs	6 kg
	Fresh vegetables	12 kg
	Ghee/vegetable oil	7 kg/L
	Red lentils	15 kg
	Rice	19 kg
	Salt	1 kg
	Sugar	5 kg
	Tomato paste	6 kg
	Water trucking	4500 L
Hygiene items	Bathing soap	12 bars
	Laundry/dish soap	3 kg
	Sanitary pads	4 packs of 10
	Toothpaste	200 g
Fuel	Cooking fuel*	25 L
Water	Water trucking	4500 L
Telecom	Smartphone data	1 GB
Other	Float (other costs)**	7.5% total value

* Kerosene in northern Syria

** Float only applied to observations where prices of all SMEB contents could be collected

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Coverage and data collection dates

This month, REACH and partners covered 25 sub-districts in NES, including approximately 1,297 individual shops. Dotted lines in the graphs indicate lack of data for the months of October and November 2019. Six months trends are not available for this reason. Please also note that given the unpredictable situation across NES due to the novel COVID-19 situation, prices in the Market Monitoring dataset and output should be seen as representative only of the markets and dates where and when information was collected (9-16 of March). REACH will be adding COVID-related items to the April Market Monitoring Exercise.

Highest SMEB cost recorded under northeast Market Monitoring Exercise

The cost of the SMEB increased by 4% from 107,401 Syrian Pounds (SYP) in February to 111,876 SYP in March 2020

across comparable communities (with consistent coverage since February), setting the highest price recorded by the Market Monitoring Exercise in NES. In United States Dollars (USD), the SMEB cost was recorded at 104 USD across comparable communities with consistent coverage (see Methodology). When including all assessed communities in NES during March, the total median regional SMEB was recorded at 112,558 SYP / 105 USD.

Continued depreciation of the SYP against the USD

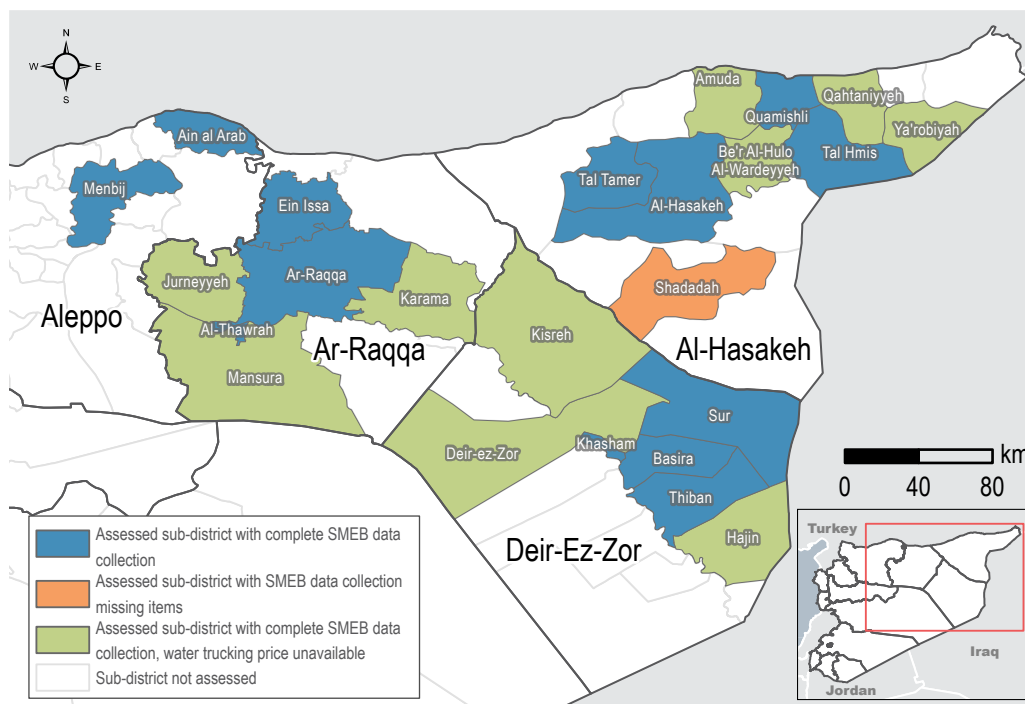
During March, the informal SYP/USD exchange rate continued to increase across the region, with the highest exchange rate recorded at 1,100 SYP for 1 USD in Ein Issa sub-district in Ar-Raqqa governorate. The total median regional informal exchange rate was recorded at 1,075 SYP/USD, a 3% increase since last month. The continued financial crisis in neighbouring Lebanon ([as banks in Lebanon restrict the release of USD - including for Syrians with Lebanese bank](#)

[accounts](#)), and [international economic sanctions on Syria and Iran](#) are reported as the main causes for the reduced supply of USD and the continued depreciation of the SYP informal exchange rate.

Most winter items prices decreased as winter comes to an end

The prices of most winter items decreased since last month as the season comes to an end, lowering the demand for such items. This includes the price of manually refined kerosene (used for heating in addition to cooking), which decreased by 6% since last month. However, prices of some winter items remained very high, in particular items such as jerry cans which reached 5,000 SYP in Basira and Khasham sub-districts in the governorate of Deir-Ez-Zor, and plastic sheets which reached 15,000 SYP in Tal Tamer sub-district in Al-Hasakeh governorate. KIs reported that jerry cans prices remained high as procurement of such item is consistently challenging in NES.

ASSESSED AREAS AND COVERAGE



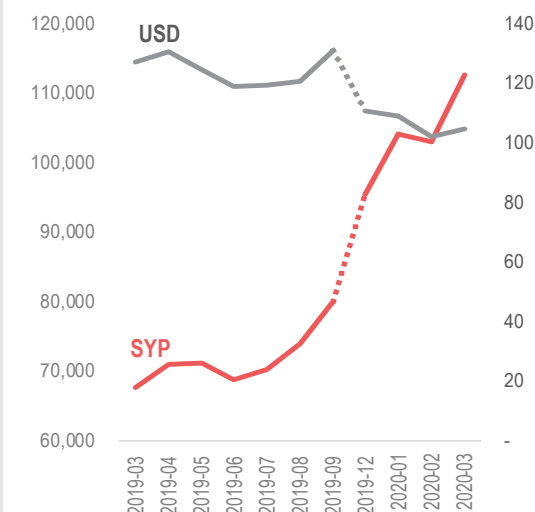
MEDIAN SMEB COST IN SYP (USD), BY REGION

112,558 SYP
(105 USD)

NORTHEAST SYRIA - AL-HASAKEH,
AL-RAQQA, DEIR-EZ-ZOR,
EASTERN ALEPPO GOVERNORATES

MEDIAN SMEB COSTS, BY MONTH

Thousand Syrian Pounds and US Dollars



KEY DEVELOPMENTS

**112,558 SYP
(105 USD)**

NORTHEAST SYRIA - AL-HASAKEH,
AL-RAQQA, DEIR-EZ-ZOR,
EASTERN ALEPPO GOVERNORATES

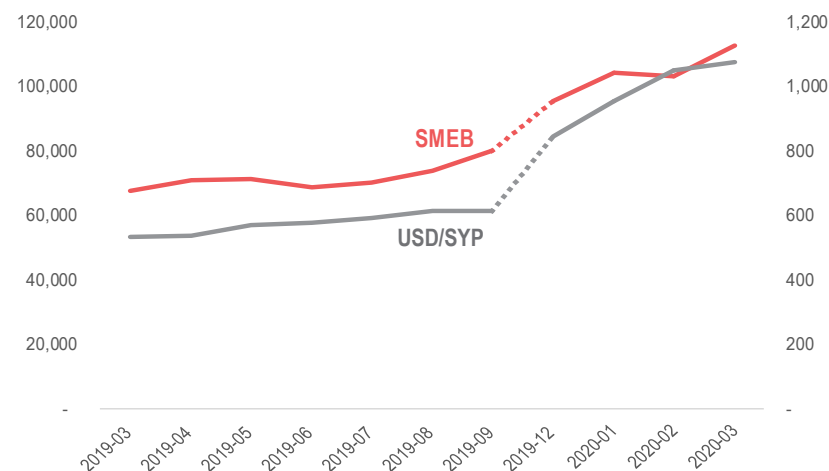
High quality transport fuels widely unavailable and manually refined transport fuels at decreasing prices

During this month's Market Monitoring Exercise, KIs reported a scarcity of high quality transport fuels originating in Government-controlled areas of Syria. High quality diesel and petrol were reportedly unavailable in 87% and 81% of the assessed shops selling fuel, respectively. However, when available, the regional median price for high quality diesel decreased by 13% compared to last month. On the other hand, manually refined fuel types, often refined by local authorities in NES, were available in most assessed shops selling fuel and witnessed a significant decrease in prices. Since February, the regional median price for manually refined diesel and petrol decreased by 31% and 13%, respectively. Field teams reported that authorities in NES often sell transport fuels at subsidised prices to the local population, which could explain the current decrease in prices of manually refined products. Furthermore, the growing unavailability of high quality transport fuel could be another explanation for the rise in prices in the region, as quality transport fuel is needed to transport commodities over long distances to reach the markets.

Essential SMEB food items' prices sharply increased – especially onions

Despite the SMEB food component not having increased in value since last month, the vegetable component increased by 10%, reaching 5,839 SYP. This was largely due to the increase in prices of cucumbers and onions. The median price of cucumbers increased by 9% since February and the prices of onions witnessed a sharper increase of 32%, reaching 595 SYP in March. KIs reported that cucumbers and onions were imported and difficult to find in markets in NES, which resulted in high prices. The biggest increase in onion prices was recorded in the sub-district of Menbij, where prices increased by 233% between February and March. Other food items also increased such as green peas, which increased by 17%, and bulgur by 12% since February. On the other hand, as winter comes to an end, the regional median price of tomatoes decreased by 13% since February. According to the [World Food Programme](#), food prices in Syria increased due to the depreciation of the SYP.

SMEB COST (SYP) AND EXCHANGE RATE (USD/SYP), BY MONTH



MEDIAN SMEB COSTS & CHANGES*

Syrian Pounds

Sub-district	SMEB	One month change	Six month change
Northeast Syria	111,876	4%	NA
Ain al Arab	102,015	0%	NA
Al-Hasakeh	109,541	NA	NA
Al-Thawrah	110,993	NA	NA
Amuda**	105,477	NA	NA
Ar-Raqqa	112,210	-1%	NA
Basira	112,558	NA	NA
Be'r Al-Hulo	100,427	-1%	NA
Al-Wardeyyeh**	109,040	0%	NA
Deir-ez-Zor**	109,040	0%	NA
Ein Issa	116,875	NA	NA
Hajin**	100,741	-11%	NA
Jurneyeh**	102,412	-1%	NA
Karama**	101,221	7%	NA
Khasham	111,876	NA	NA
Kisreh**	109,423	6%	NA
Mansura**	94,204	-11%	NA
Menbij	96,111	0%	NA
Qahtaniyyeh**	118,393	NA	NA
Quamishli	116,676	NA	NA
Shadadah	NA	NA	NA
Sur	117,085	-1%	NA
Tal Hmis	96,876	NA	NA
Tal Tamer	100,532	NA	NA
Thiban	116,117	NA	NA
Ya'robiyah**	112,123	4%	NA

* For price and change calculations, only the communities within a sub-district with consistent coverage across months are included. This applies to all following tables.

** Denotes sub-districts where water trucking is not common, and therefore does not have water trucking prices in the SMEB cost

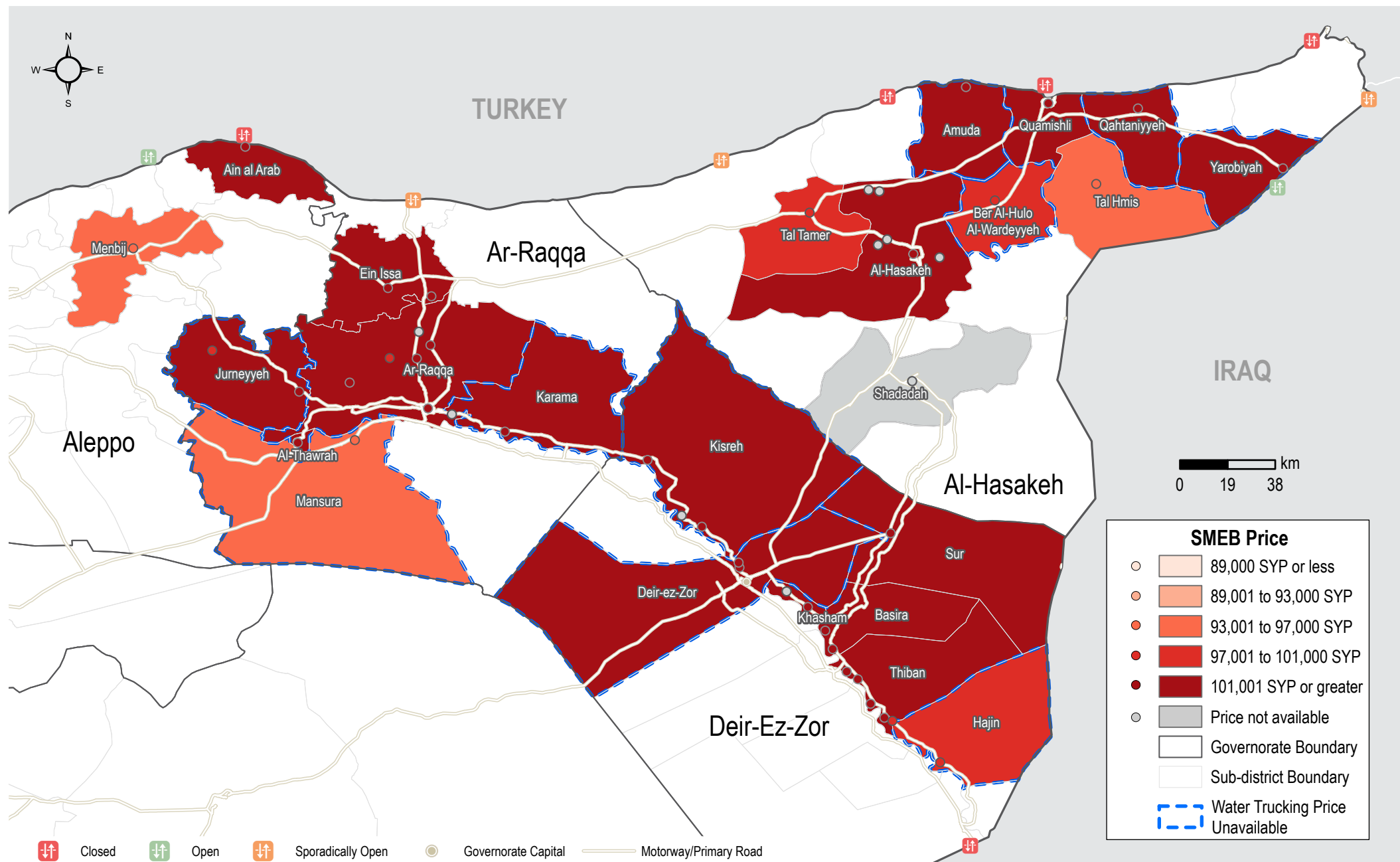
SUB-DISTRICTS WITH INCOMPLETE SMEB IN MARCH

SUB-DISTRICT MISSING ITEMS

Shadadah Cooking fuel, water trucking, kerosene, LP gas

Note: Lack of data for a SMEB item does not necessarily imply a shortage.

SMEB COST RANGES (SYP), BY SUB-DISTRICTS



NORTHEAST SYRIA - SMEB COST RANGES

Al-Hasakeh, Ar-Raqqa, Deir-ez-Zor, Eastern Aleppo governorates

SMEB COST: ONE MONTH & SIX MONTHS TREND

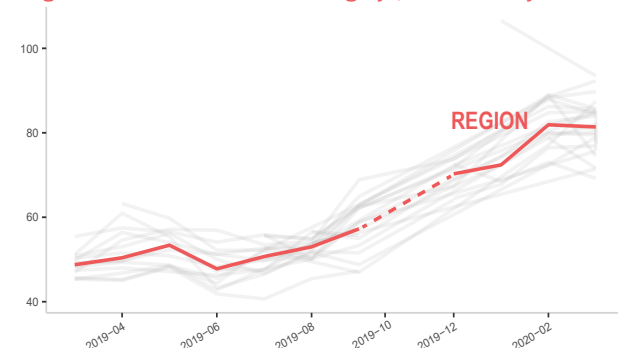


MEDIAN SMEB COST: FOOD ITEMS See Page 1, Syrian Pounds

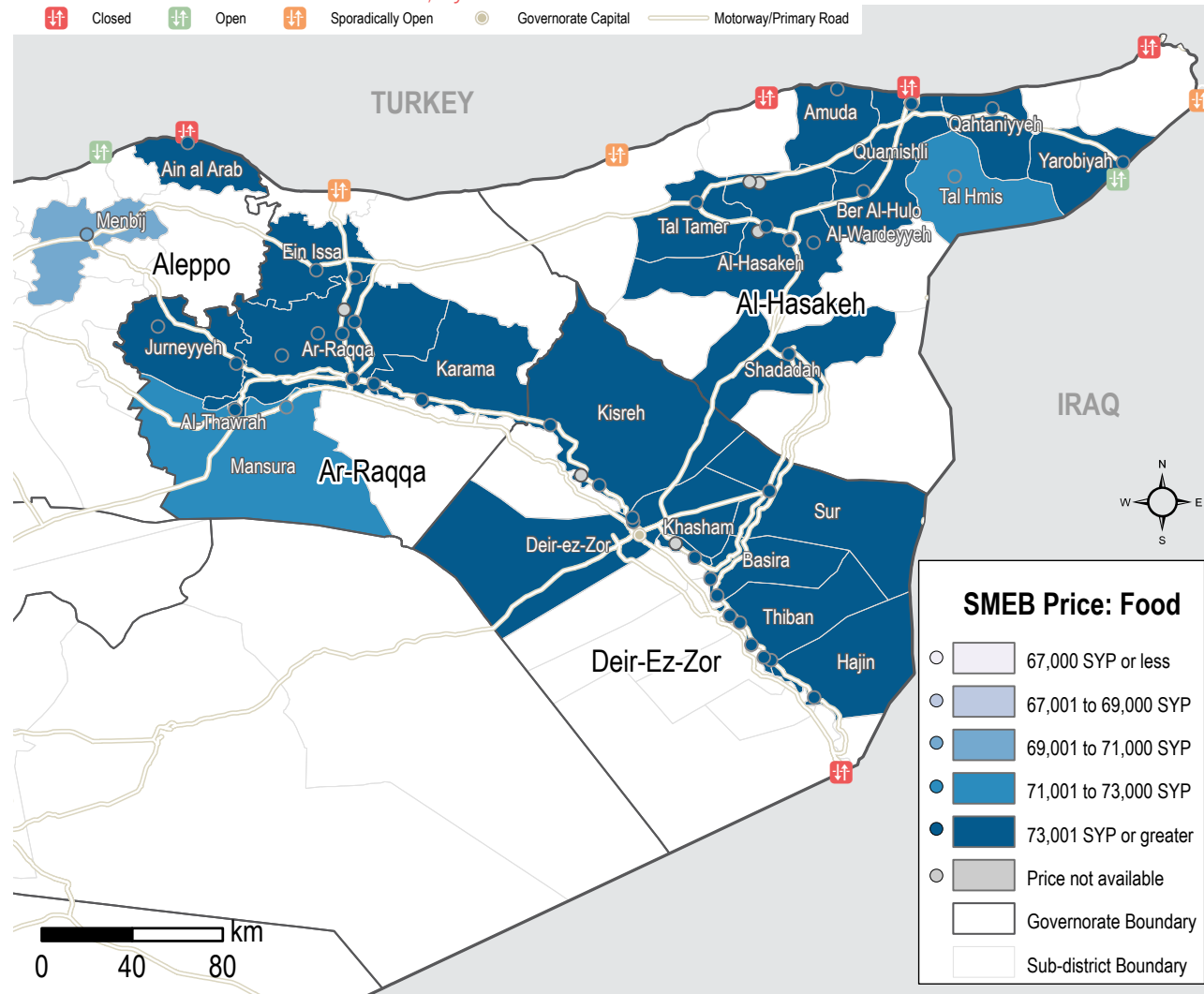
Sub-district	SMEB Food	One month change	Six month change
Northeast Syria	80,968	0%	NA
Ain al Arab	76,888	1%	NA
Al-Hasakeh	78,915	-4%	NA
Al-Thawrah	79,524	0%	NA
Amuda	85,668	-4%	NA
Ar-Raqqqa	81,915	-3%	NA
Basira	84,927	NA	NA
Be'r Al-Hulo	80,020	0%	NA
Al-Wardeyyeh	80,020	0%	NA
Deir-ez-Zor	85,100	0%	NA
Ein Issa	86,063	12%	NA
Hajin	74,988	-15%	NA
Jurneyyeh	78,999	0%	NA
Karama	78,529	8%	NA
Khasham	84,153	NA	NA
Kisreh	83,353	5%	NA
Mansura	71,650	-9%	NA
Menbij	69,200	-5%	NA
Qahtaniyyeh	93,475	NA	NA
Quamishli	84,413	-4%	NA
Shadadah	75,663	NA	NA
Sur	85,525	-1%	NA
Tal Hmis	71,480	NA	NA
Tal Tamer	74,261	NA	NA
Thiban	89,791	1%	NA
Ya'robiyah	92,300	4%	NA

MEDIAN SMEB COST: FOOD ITEMS, BY MONTH

Region (red) and Sub-districts (grey), Thousand Syrian Pounds



SMEB FOOD ITEMS' COST Sub-districts, Syrian Pounds



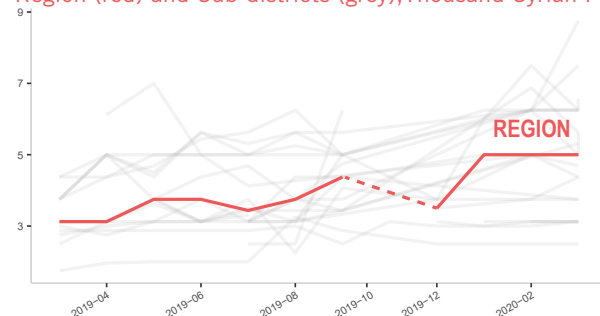
MEDIAN SMEB COOKING FUEL PRICE

Kerosene 25L, Syrian Pounds

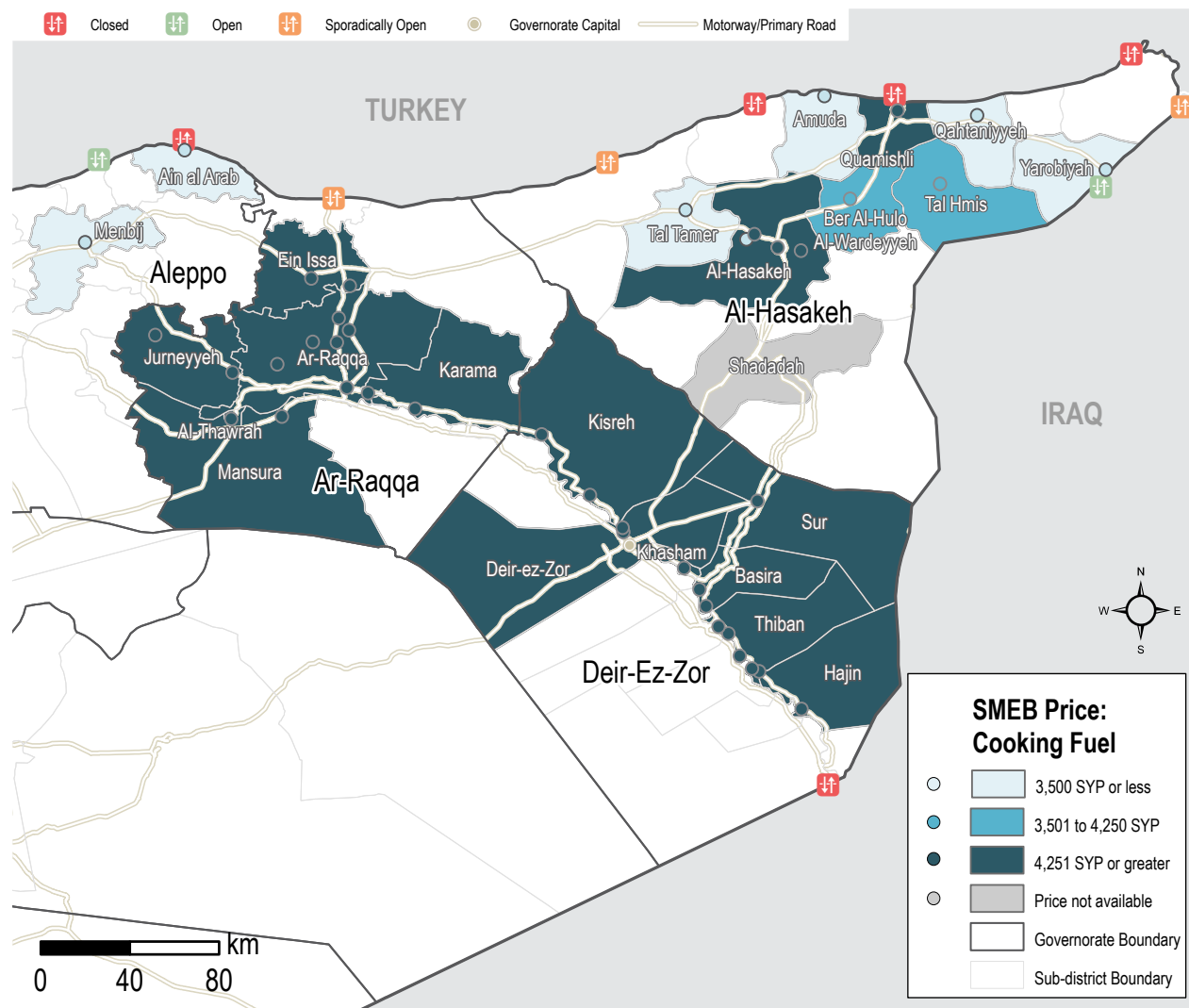
Sub-district	SMEB Cooking Fuel	One month change	Six month change
Northeast Syria	5,000	0%	NA
Ain al Arab	3,125	4%	NA
Al-Hasakeh	5,313	6%	NA
Al-Thawrah	6,250	0%	NA
Amuda	3,125	0%	NA
Ar-Raqqa	6,250	-17%	NA
Basira	5,313	NA	NA
Be'r Al-Hulo Al-Wardeyyeh	3,750	0%	NA
Deir-ez-Zor	4,375	-13%	NA
Ein Issa	6,875	0%	NA
Hajin	5,625	-17%	NA
Jurneyyeh	6,250	0%	NA
Karama	6,250	0%	NA
Khasham	5,625	NA	NA
Kisreh	5,000	0%	NA
Mansura	8,750	40%	NA
Menbij	3,125	0%	NA
Qahtaniyyeh	3,125	NA	NA
Quamishli	4,375	17%	NA
Shadadah	NA	NA	NA
Sur	5,000	0%	NA
Tal Hmis	3,750	NA	NA
Tal Tamer	3,000	NA	NA
Thiban	5,000	-22%	NA
Ya'robiyah	2,500	0%	NA

MEDIAN SMEB COOKING FUEL COSTS, BY MONTH

Region (red) and Sub-districts (grey), Thousand Syrian Pounds



SMEB COOKING FUEL COST Sub-districts, Syrian Pounds



NORTHEAST SYRIA - SMEB COST: HYGIENE ITEMS

Al-Hasakeh, Ar-Raqqa, Deir-ez-Zor, Eastern Aleppo governorates

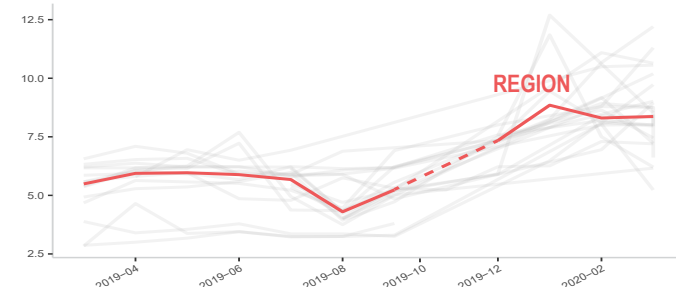
MEDIAN SMEB HYGIENE ITEMS' PRICE

12 bars of soap, 4 packs of 10 sanitary pads, 3kg of laundry/dish soap, 200g of toothpaste, Syrian Pounds

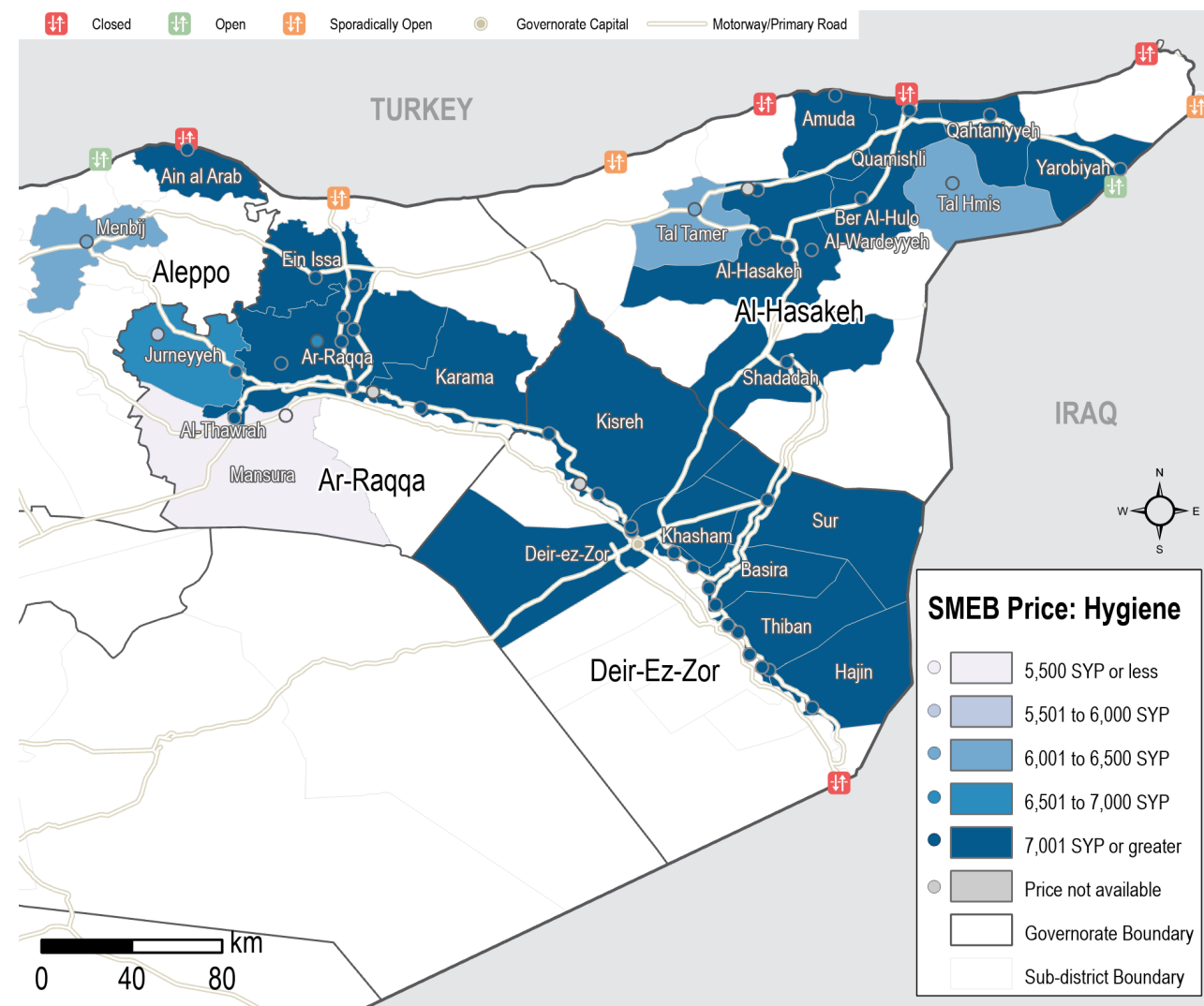
Sub-district	SMEB Hygiene	One month change	Six month change
Northeast Syria	8,429	0%	NA
Ain al Arab	7,200	-1%	NA
Al-Hasakeh	8,541	-6%	NA
Al-Thawrah	7,960	-2%	NA
Amuda	8,325	-1%	NA
Ar-Raqqa	9,902	17%	NA
Basira	10,189	NA	NA
Be'r Al-Hulo Al-Wardeyyeh	7,450	-14%	NA
Deir-ez-Zor	10,558	1%	NA
Ein Issa	9,159	27%	NA
Hajin	11,600	32%	NA
Jurneyyeh	6,869	-15%	NA
Karama	8,030	0%	NA
Khasham	10,307	NA	NA
Kisreh	12,187	16%	NA
Mansura	5,232	-35%	NA
Menbij	6,206	-17%	NA
Qahtaniyyeh	8,533	NA	NA
Quamishli	8,749	0%	NA
Shadadah	9,018	NA	NA
Sur	10,641	-4%	NA
Tal Hmis	6,163	NA	NA
Tal Tamer	6,300	NA	NA
Thiban	7,225	-23%	NA
Ya'robiyah	8,000	-2%	NA

MEDIAN SMEB HYGIENE ITEMS' COSTS, BY MONTH

Region (red) and Sub-districts (grey), Thousand Syrian Pounds



SMEB HYGIENE ITEMS' COST Sub-districts, Syrian Pounds



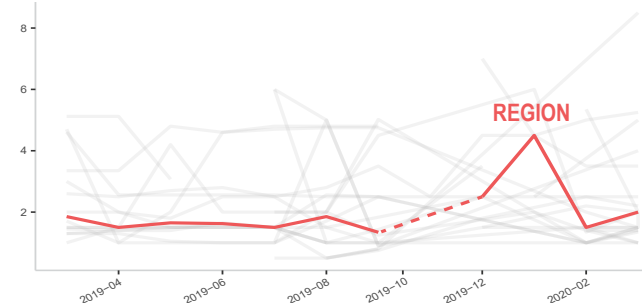
MEDIAN SMEB CELLPHONE DATA PRICE

1GB data, Syrian Pounds

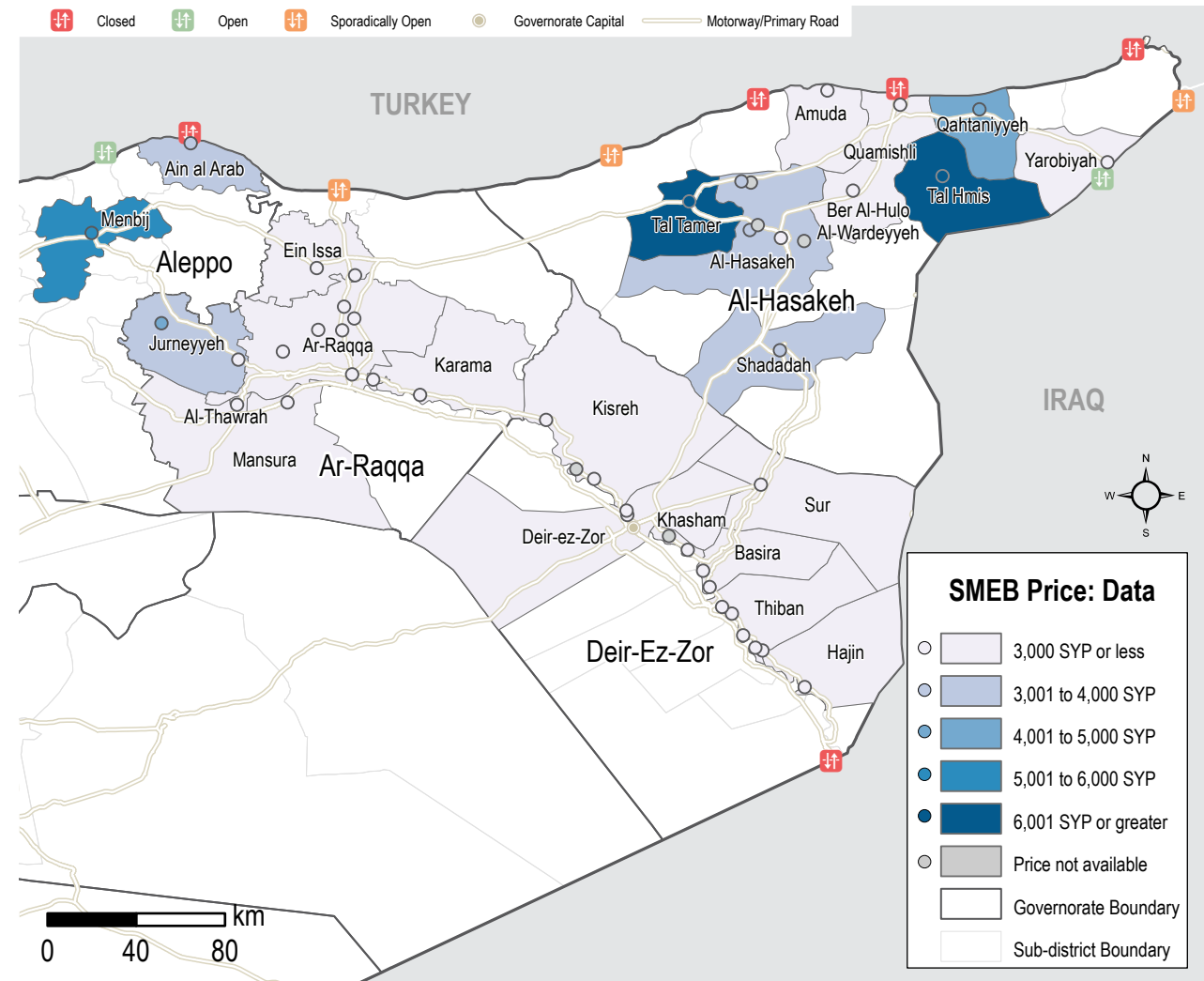
Sub-district	SMEB Data	One month change	Six month change
Northeast Syria	2,000	33%	NA
Ain al Arab	3,500	0%	NA
Al-Hasakeh	4,000	300%	NA
Al-Thawrah	2,000	48%	NA
Amuda	1,000	NA	NA
Ar-Raqqa	1,500	0%	NA
Basira	2,500	NA	NA
Be'r Al-Hulo Al-Wardeyyeh	2,200	-12%	NA
Deir-ez-Zor	1,400	0%	NA
Ein Issa	1,000	-33%	NA
Hajin	1,500	50%	NA
Jurneyyeh	3,150	15%	NA
Karama	1,350	35%	NA
Khasham	2,500	NA	NA
Kisreh	1,250	0%	NA
Mansura	2,000	-63%	NA
Menbij	5,250	5%	NA
Qahtaniyyeh	5,000	NA	NA
Quamishli	2,000	-9%	NA
Shadadah	4,000	NA	NA
Sur	1,000	0%	NA
Tal Hmis	8,500	NA	NA
Tal Tamer	8,000	NA	NA
Thiban	1,500	50%	NA
Ya'robiyah	1,500	0%	NA

MEDIAN SMEB CELLPHONE DATA COST, BY MONTH

Region (red) and Sub-districts (grey), Thousand Syrian Pounds



SMEB CELLPHONE DATA COST Sub-districts & Communities, Syrian Pounds



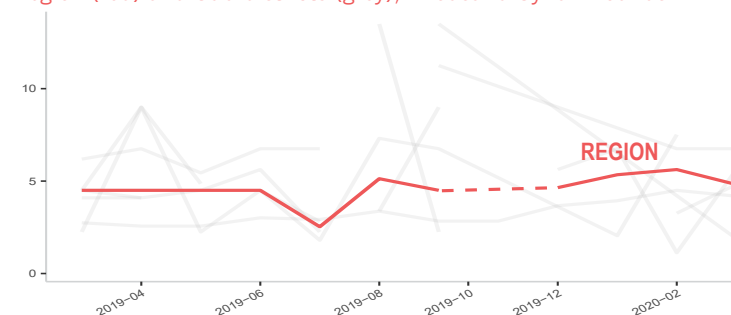
MEDIAN SMEB WATER TRUCKING PRICE

4,500L, Syrian Pounds

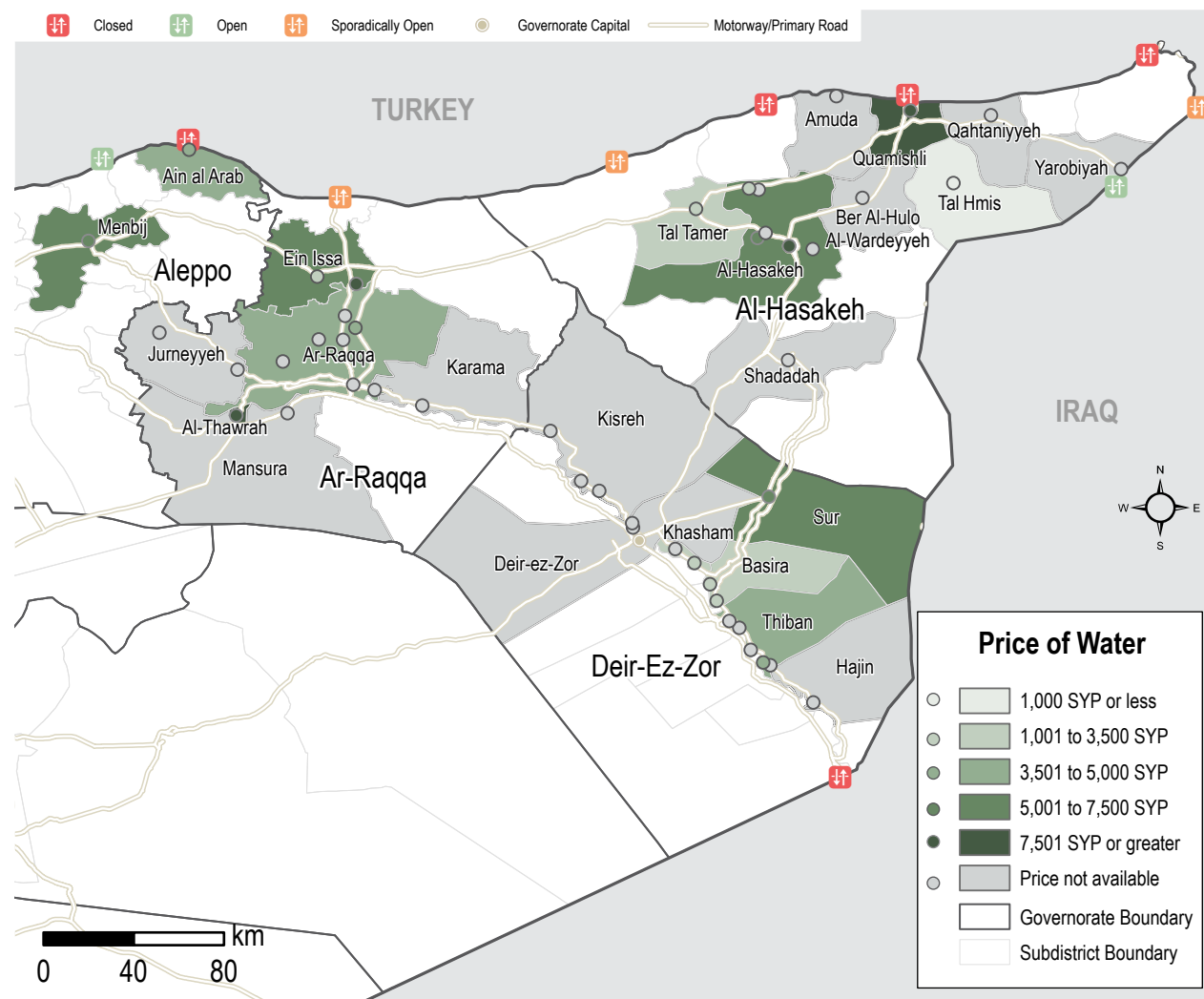
Sub-district	SMEB Water	One month change	Six month change
Northeast Syria	4,815	-14%	NA
Ain al Arab	4,185	-7%	NA
Al-Hasakeh	5,130	NA	NA
Al-Thawrah	7,515	NA	NA
Amuda	NA	NA	NA
Ar-Raqqa	4,815	48%	NA
Basira	1,778	NA	NA
Be'r Al-Hulo	NA	NA	NA
Al-Wardeyyeh	NA	NA	NA
Deir-ez-Zor	NA	NA	NA
Ein Issa	5,625	NA	NA
Hajin	NA	NA	NA
Jurneyyeh	NA	NA	NA
Karama	NA	NA	NA
Khasham	1,485	NA	NA
Kisreh	NA	NA	NA
Mansura	NA	NA	NA
Menbij	5,625	400%	NA
Qahtaniyyeh	NA	NA	NA
Quamishli	9,000	NA	NA
Shadadah	NA	NA	NA
Sur	6,750	0%	NA
Tal Hmis	225	NA	NA
Tal Tamer	1,958	NA	NA
Thiban	4,500	NA	NA
Ya'robiyah	NA	NA	NA

MEDIAN SMEB WATER TRUCKING COSTS, BY MONTH

Region (red) and Sub-districts (grey), Thousand Syrian Pounds



SMEB WATER TRUCKING COST Sub-districts & Communities, Syrian Pounds



NORTHEAST SYRIA - TRANSPORT FUEL

Al-Hasakeh, Ar-Raqqa, Deir-ez-Zor, Eastern Aleppo governorates

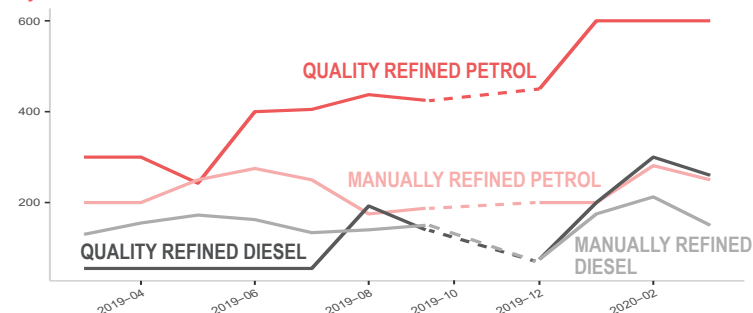
MEDIAN TRANSPORT FUEL PRICE

Diesel and Petrol, 1L (High Quality and Manually Refined), Syrian Pounds

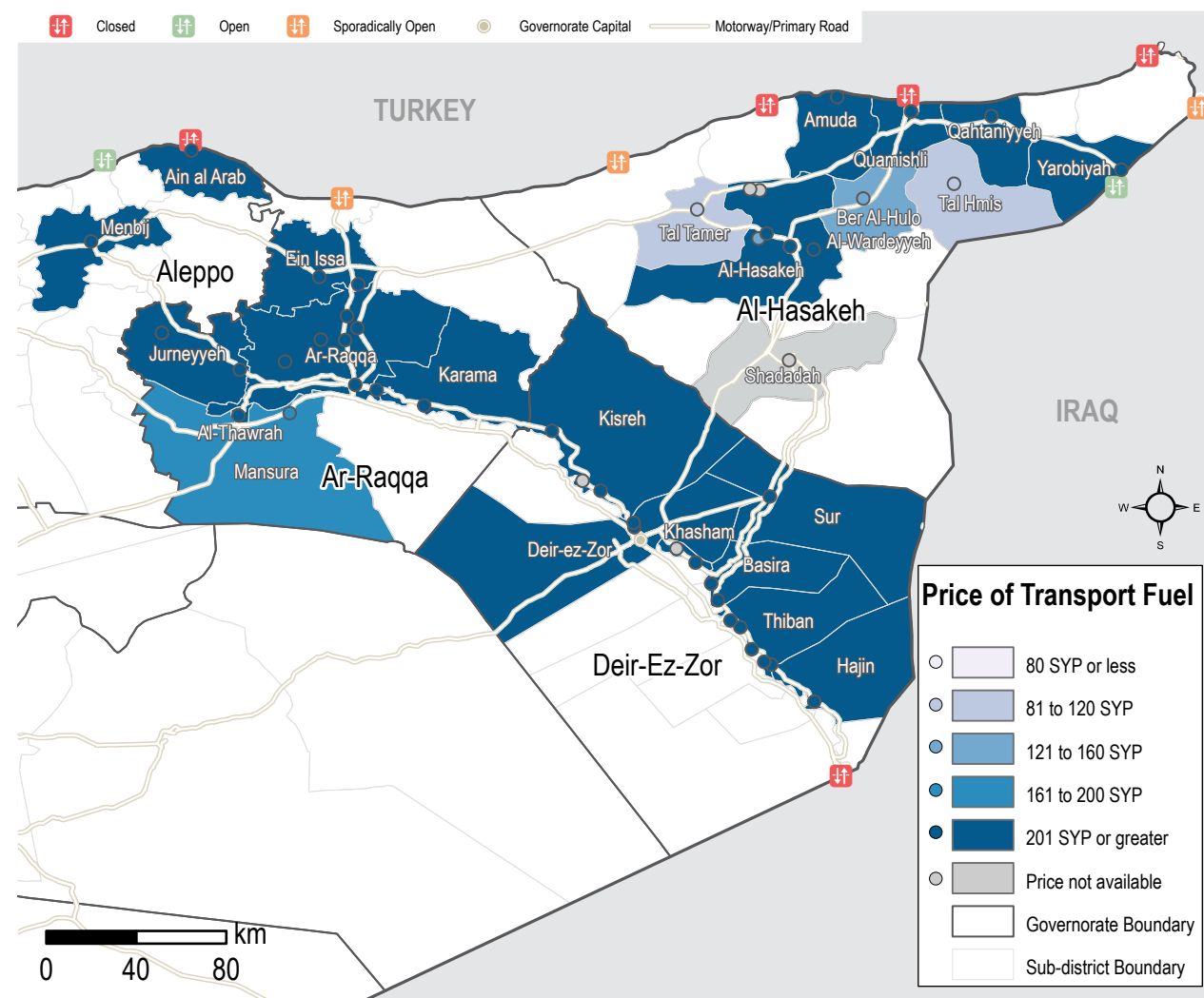
Sub-district	SMEB fuel	One month change	Six month change
Northeast Syria	NA	NA	NA
Ain al Arab	313	5%	NA
Al-Hasakeh	392	21%	NA
Al-Thawrah	295	-26%	NA
Amuda	318	-13%	NA
Ar-Raqqa	304	-30%	NA
Basira	250	NA	NA
Be'r Al-Hulo Al-Wardeyyeh	142	-19%	NA
Deir-ez-Zor	305	28%	NA
Ein Issa	294	3%	NA
Hajin	225	-18%	NA
Jurneyyeh	292	-1%	NA
Karama	367	-10%	NA
Khasham	228	NA	NA
Kisreh	334	-4%	NA
Mansura	163	-58%	NA
Menbij	213	49%	NA
Qahtaniyyeh	317	NA	NA
Quamishli	396	40%	NA
Shadadah	NA	NA	NA
Sur	314	48%	NA
Tal Hmis	88	NA	NA
Tal Tamer	88	NA	NA
Thiban	295	7%	NA
Ya'robiyah	250	43%	NA

MEDIAN TRANSPORT FUEL COSTS, BY MONTH & TYPE

Syrian Pounds

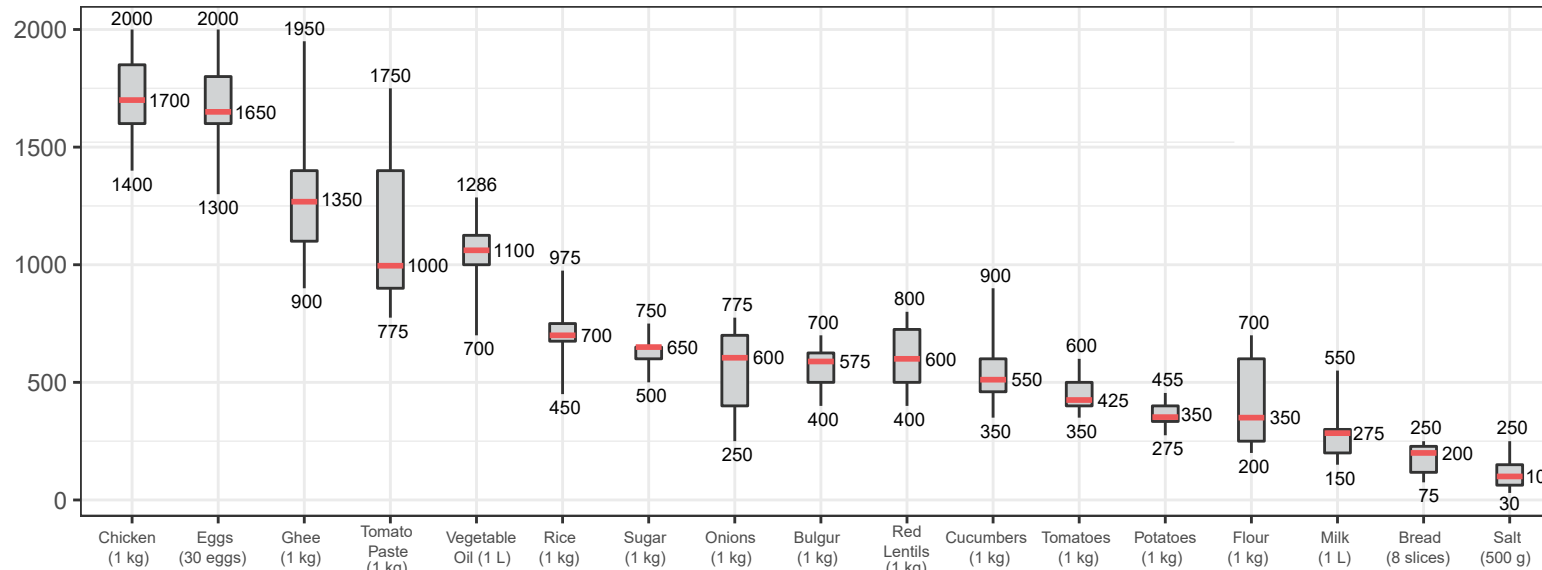


TRANSPORT FUEL COST Sub-districts & Communities, Syrian Pounds



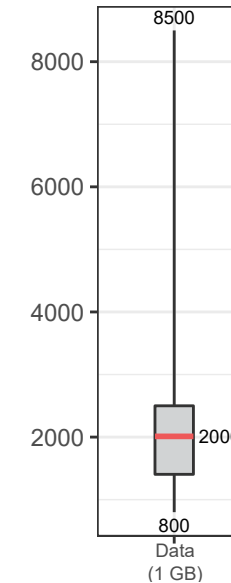
ASSESSED FOOD ITEMS

Syrian Pounds



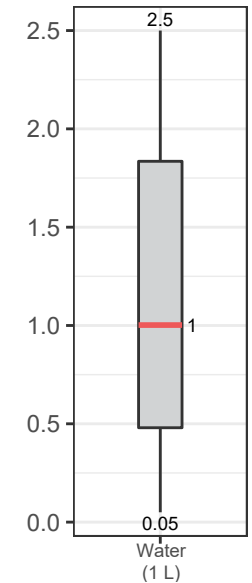
CELLPHONE DATA

Syrian Pounds



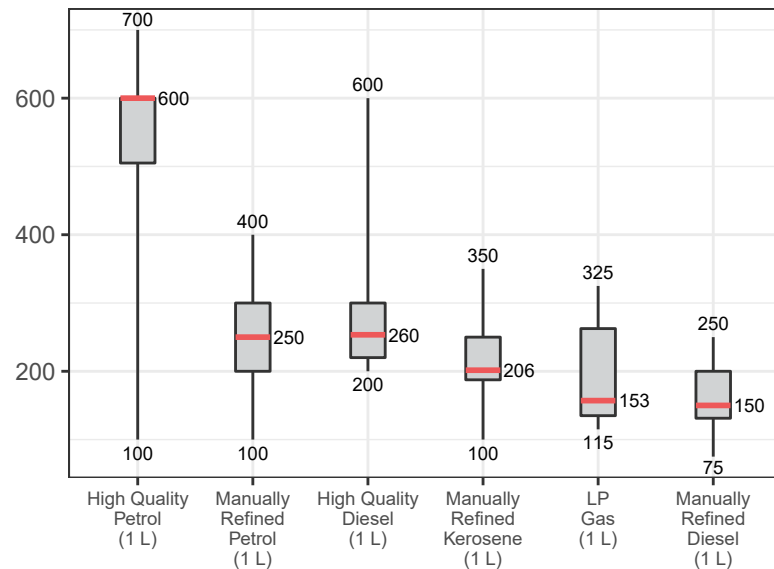
WATER TRUCKING

Syrian Pounds



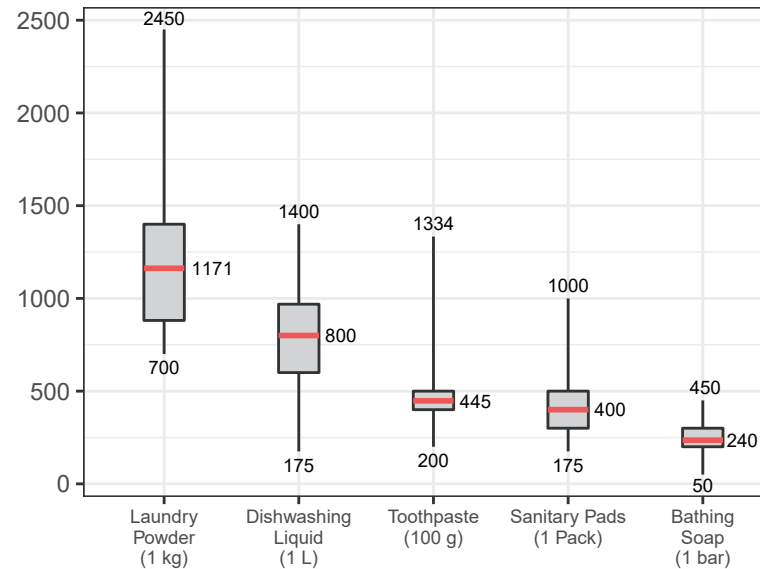
ASSESSED FUEL ITEMS

Syrian Pounds

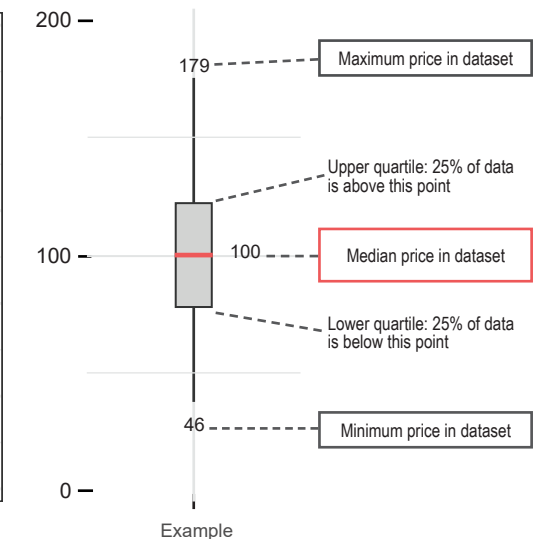


ASSESSED HYGIENE ITEMS

Syrian Pounds



READING BOXPLOTS



METHODOLOGY

In order to be included in the Syria Market Monitoring Exercise, markets must be permanent in nature, large enough to support at least two wholesalers, and diverse enough to provide a sufficient variety of goods and commodities. Additionally, the shops surveyed within each market must be housed in permanent structures and must sell certain items to be eligible for inclusion. Participating organisations train their enumerators on the Market Monitoring methodology and data collection tools using standard training materials developed by REACH. Each enumerator aims to assess three to five shops of each type in the main market in their assigned sub-district, using surveys to collect information about the cheapest prices of each item and whether there are any barriers in the supply chain. In sub-districts where direct surveying by enumerators is not possible, data collection is conducted remotely through key informants such as shop owners, suppliers and consumers. A survey form is deployed on KoBo each month to capture price and stock information from different types of establishments, including grocery stores, fuel traders, currency exchange shops, water trucking services and mobile phone shops, among others. Nearly all participating partners submit their data to these KoBo forms, using the KoBoCollect Android app to upload data. A small number of partners, by prior permission, collect data using fully harmonised data collection tools deployed on other platforms, then submit their raw data to REACH for standardisation, compilation and cleaning.

Following data collection, REACH compiles and cleans all partners' data, normalising prices and cross-checking outliers. The cleaned data is then analysed by SMEB costs, components of the SMEB, and by commodities. These trends are observed at the sub-district-level and, when possible, at the community-level. Prices are divided into quartiles and boxplots are created to assist CWG members in understanding the distribution of prices across the northeast and northwest of Syria. To illustrate local variations in prices and availability, REACH uses the collected data to map the price of the SMEB in each sub-district and adds illustrations of surrounding border crossings, with data sourced from the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). In addition, each SMEB

component costs and transport fuel prices are graphed to visualise trends over time.

The cleaned datasets are available on the [Humanitarian Data Exchange](#) website and are distributed to all participating partners, as well as to interested clusters and the broader humanitarian community.

Calculating 'median cheapest price'

This figure is calculated by taking the median of the minimum-reported prices of a region's sub-districts. In turn, the minimum-reported prices for each sub-district were taken from the median of the minimum-reported prices of the constituent towns assessed.

Calculating Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB) costs

The cost of a SMEB is calculated for each assessed sub-district by calculating the median cheapest price of each SMEB commodity in that sub-district, then multiplying these medians by the number of units that an average Syrian household requires to purchase in a month. The composition of the SMEB can be found on [page 1](#). SMEB vegetables includes potatoes, tomatoes, onions and cucumbers.

Calculating price trends over time

One month and six-month price changes and trends in this factsheet are calculated only with the comparable assessed communities of a sub-district with consistent coverage across months. On the other hand, in the dataset medians are calculated taking all assessed communities for the current month in consideration. Therefore, prices and percentage changes within the tables of this factsheet may slightly differ from the current month's dataset medians. In the narrative, both regional median SMEB values are shared; the SMEB value including all assessed communities that specific month, and the SMEB value only taking in consideration communities with consistent coverage since the previous month.

Calculating regional SMEB costs with limited coverage

For the months of January and February 2020, the regional full SMEB cost as well as the regional full SMEB cost without water were calculated by summing the

medians of each regional SMEB component. This was done due to the lower coverage at a sub-district level in January and February 2020, which affected the regional median SMEB calculations.

Seasonal items

Winterisation items have been added to the market monitoring exercise and data collection will continue for these items over winter, until mid-March 2020. Whilst other commodities are bought regularly by families, winterisation items are not expected to be bought regularly and may be one-off purchases for each family member.

Changes to coverage

Given security and access constraints in the south of Syria, data collection has been unable to take place since July 2018. Escalation of conflict in October 2019 has resulted in limited coverage in northeast Syria since then. However, coverage between January and March 2020 significantly increased (from 9 assessed sub-districts to 25 assessed sub-districts).

Challenges and limitations

As the Syria Market Monitoring Exercise currently includes 13 partners based in 2 hubs, achieving a consistent approach is inherently challenging. Participating organisations are therefore requested to adopt harmonised data collection methodologies and tools to ensure that the data uploaded is as accurate as possible. Because this exercise collects data directly from vendors and relies on partner organizations for its wide coverage, Market Monitoring may sporadically lose coverage temporarily or for longer periods of time owing to challenges in accessing locations or due to loss in the shared data collection capacity of the project. This impacts the ability to report on trends, as can be seen in the line graphs and 'NA' values in the tables.

ABOUT REACH

REACH Initiative facilitates the development of information tools and products that enhance the capacity of aid actors to make evidence-based decisions in emergency, recovery and development contexts. The methodologies used by REACH include primary data collection and in-depth analysis, and all activities are conducted through inter-agency aid coordination mechanisms. REACH is a joint initiative of IMPACT Initiatives, ACTED and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research - Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNITAR-UNOSAT). For more information please visit our website:

www.reach-initiative.org. You can contact us directly at: geneva@reach-initiative.org and follow us on Twitter [@REACH_info](https://twitter.com/REACH_info).

ABOUT THE CASH WORKING GROUP

The Cash Working Group (CWG) was established in May 2014 to analyse the impact of the ongoing conflict on markets in Syria and guide the implementation of humanitarian cash and voucher programmes within those markets. REACH and the CWG have been partners on the Syria Market Monitoring Exercise since early 2015.