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# PILOT STREET FOOD SAFETY PROGRAMME

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SDGs:



Countries:

Pakistan

Project Codes:

TCP/PAK/3602

FAO Contribution:

USD 161 000

Duration:

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Contact Info:

FAO Representation in Pakistan

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### Implementing Partners

Ministry of National Food Security and Research (MNFSR); Ministry of Planning, Development and Reform (MoPDR); Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad (MCI)/Capital Development Authority (CDA); Food Sciences and Product Development Institute; National Agricultural Research Centre (NARC); Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC).

### Beneficiaries

Technical officials from the MNFSR, the Nutrition Section of the MoPDR, the MCI and the Directorate of Health Services of the CDA; food safety inspectors; street and market food vendors; food and nutrition professionals; university students; consumers and the general public.

### Country Programming Framework (CPF) Outputs

Output 1.1: Effective functioning of food and nutrition security networks for synergetic outcomes; Outcome 4.2: Capacities of Pakistani stakeholders of the agricultural sector are effectively involved, and appropriate international standards and best practices enhanced.



## BACKGROUND

Rising population growth and increasing urbanization among developing countries is shedding light on the challenges and potential linkages that exist between rural and urban food systems. Pakistan is no exception, especially with its Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) reaching a population of close to seven million and experiencing an urbanization rate of over 70 percent from 2005 to 2015 alone. These population trends and shifts translate into an increased need to access affordable, nutritious and safe food in urban centers, which helps explain why middle and lower-income segments of the Pakistani population have come to rely on street food, given its accessibility, variety and lower prices in comparison to formal establishments. Beyond its economic importance, street and market food in Pakistan has also acquired a cultural importance.

To this end, the Pakistani authorities have been working to establish food streets, that is, streets in several federal and provincial capitals dedicated to street food vending at affordable prices, thereby incentivizing small-scale entrepreneurial activity from this urbanized part of the national food system, which also supplies a significant proportion of the fresh raw and cooked food for urban populations.

While street and market food vending is growing, it is also shedding light on a number of public health issues, as lack of food safety guidelines and general hygiene practices (GHPs) drive many food and water-borne diseases.

In the absence of more robust monitoring, surveillance and infection control systems, the World Health Organization (WHO) warns that one-third of the population in developed countries suffer from food and water-borne illnesses each year, while in developing countries the magnitude of the problem is far greater. In Pakistan, the population's risk factors are accentuated by the fact that 40 percent of Pakistan's children under five years are stunted and a considerable number of all child deaths in Pakistan are caused by diarrhoea and bacterial infections; this points to the likelihood of being exposed to food-borne pathogens and suffering from malnutrition. Against this backdrop, this project engaged a plurality of sectors and public and private actors around street and market food vending and the essential food safety and GHPs throughout the entire food system. An integrated participatory approach to these challenges allowed for a more holistic understanding of the spatial and socio-economic dimensions of food systems in urban areas, hence positioning the project's activities to better respond to the needs of vendors, consumers, regulators and other stakeholders concerned.

With FAO having played a key role in the strengthening of the MNFSR in Pakistan, the MNFSR is actively providing support to developing a National Agricultural and Food Security Policy and the establishment of a Zero Hunger Programme, both of which require a strong focus on food safety, as the project aimed to do.



## IMPACT

The project bolstered the technical and practical capacities of street and market food vendors in the ICT, enabling them to better observe food safety and general hygiene practices. In parallel, the project provided technical, regulatory and policy formulation support to ICT authorities on food safety management and handling, quality assurance, public health implications and the implementation of standards and regulations. In doing so, Pakistan now has a model through which to address food safety as a driver to sustainable urban livelihoods, improved nutrition and public health, stronger linkages between rural and urban food systems and improved access to safe, nutritious and affordable street and market food.

## ACHIEVEMENT OF RESULTS

In light of the project's evidence-based prescriptions, training materials and advocacy campaigns, national and provincial authorities will be better equipped to design, inform and embed food safety guidelines, monitoring tools, regulatory frameworks and consumer awareness campaigns into their food and nutrition security efforts towards achieving Zero Hunger.

The project tested and documented a food safety policy and training model at the level of the ICT, which is both replicable and scalable at the national level with the support of provincial and district governments. This model, supported by the Islamabad Food Safety Policy, has the potential to guide and enforce consumer protection regulations and work towards the reduction of food and water-borne diseases and the public health costs and productive losses associated with these illnesses. A higher quality production and supply of safe foods and beverages through capacity building of stakeholders and implementation of regulatory measures aims to strengthen the street and market food sector and incentivize exports of food products based on sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures and Codex Alimentarius standards.

Using a cluster sampling technique to document the recurrent challenges and untapped opportunities relating to food safety for different street and market food vendor types, 346 street and market food vendors (24 percent of all vendors sampled) were identified to focus on five food types: (i) cooked food; (ii) grilled food; (iii) snack food; (iv) beverages; and (v) water.

The project's major results stem from the following strategic activities.

- Identifying street and market vendor types in the ICT using participatory survey tools developed by FAO in close consultation with the CDA and the MNFSR.
- Conducting field surveys to (i) assess the food safety status of street food vendors in the ICT; (ii) collect and transport food samples for chemical and microbial analyses; and (iii) identify potential vendors for capacity building who may act as master trainers.
- Developing a Food Safety Manual for Vendors, Business Operators and Food Safety Authorities, which serves as an essential guidance document for future information, education and communication (ICE) campaigns.
- Carrying out systematic reviews of food safety documents for situational analysis and data collection exercises, leading to the draft Islamabad Food Safety Policy.
- Developing food safety, nutrition and GHP-specific IEC materials.

## IMPLEMENTATION OF WORK PLAN

The project design was based on multi-stakeholder consultations and a situational analysis of food safety and implementation challenges and opportunities at the institutional level to reflect the realities and bottlenecks on the ground.

There were time and capacity constraints from some governmental technical departments, in light of their response to public health-related epidemics in the capital city, including polio and malaria. Nonetheless, all project activities were implemented within the planned budget, and the project performed well despite delays in the transfer of funds and despite competing time commitments among implementing partners.

## FOLLOW-UP FOR GOVERNMENT ATTENTION

The MNFSR and MoPDR, in close collaboration with ICT authorities, are invited to identify opportunities to replicate and scale up this pilot model, such that between 50 and 100 new street and market food vendors can be trained every year after the project's closure. These efforts would feed into having the food safety model extended to an additional provincial capital within one year of project closure. A supplementary awareness campaign would prove timely to this end.



All materials developed by the project and its partners have been handed over to the Directorate of Health Services of the CDA, which is encouraged to use them to up-scale their trainings and awareness raising campaigns, as well as to inform the enforcement of food safety regulations. The CDA and other relevant authorities are also reminded of the importance of working towards developing a comprehensive and updated traceability system; a paper-based system can be incorporated into a computer-based and bar code system at a future date.

Moreover, the draft document of the Islamabad Food Safety Policy is ready to proceed to a participatory technical review. As part of these efforts, updating food safety regulations in line with best international practices (Codex Alimentarius), including on food safety protocols, traceability and control measures, is key. Once technically reviewed, the Islamabad Food Safety Policy document shall be submitted to the pertinent higher authorities for approval.

Government authorities and implementing partners are strongly encouraged to continue working together to design and implement a food safety enforcement mechanism. Related to this, a revision process of animal, plant and food safety laws and regulations should also be carried out, building on the evidence generated throughout the project. The federal government is also encouraged to use the momentum from this project to initiate proceedings to establish a Food Safety Regulatory Authority that governs domestic and international commerce through a food safety perspective.

The evidence generated and policy frameworks supported by the project specific to food safety handling and traceability regulations have already proven timely among national health authorities and food safety experts as part of Pakistan's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, hence pointing to new opportunities for the project's scalability.

## SUSTAINABILITY

### 1. Capacity development

The project provided technical support to build the capacity of vendors in selling safe and hygienic food and provided guidance to the ICT authorities on food safety management laws and regulations. As such, a pilot model on evidence-based solutions for food safety interventions was made available at the federal government level. This model envisages a continued series of efforts of capacity building for government officials, district administrations, public health professionals and other stakeholders involved in food safety, health promotion and disease prevention.

Furthermore, the commitment to ensuring that this information is mainstreamed to the general public was evident. All IEC materials produced for print and electronic media have added to a growing literature base on the risks of infectious and chronic diseases accentuated by lack of food safety legal frameworks, and their linkages to long-term food and nutrition security and sustainable development policies. Of great relevance to these efforts are Pakistan's food based dietary guidelines that were revised under the framework of this project.

In addition, the project supported the key drivers to achieving a sustainable food system with strong rural-urban linkages. In doing so, it reflected on the FAO Framework for the Urban Food Agenda on three priority areas of work.

- Effective urban and territorial policies and transformative institutions to enhance sustainable food systems, including those specific to food vending.
- Short supply chains and inclusive public food procurement, including food vendors, to tap the potential of production in urban and peri-urban centres.
- Improved access to safe, nutritious and affordable food based on responsible production and consumption practices, since lower-income urban communities may depend on street and market vendors for fresh food.

### 2. Gender equality

Since women and children are more vulnerable to food and water-borne illness due to their lower levels of food and nutrition security, the project ensured that access to safe food and water played a key role in strengthening the vulnerable immune systems and micronutrient deficiencies among them. The project also trained female government technical officials and street and market food vendors (80 men and 20 women), while consumer advocacy activities directly reached 300 women and 200 men. In addition, gender-disaggregated data was collected to better inform future activities.



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### 3. Environmental sustainability

The project positioned food safety from the point of view of preventing food waste and loss in order to reduce strains on limited natural resources, like water and energy sources. The project also integrated responsible and sustainable production and consumption behaviours as part of a food safety policy mindful of decreasing the use of unnecessary additives or fertilizers in food supply chains, as well as curbing the threat of anti-microbial resistance (AMR) given their ecological footprint and potential health hazards.

### 4. Human Rights-based Approach (HRBA) – in particular Right to Food and Decent Work

The project generated interest and political buy-in from national and provincial authorities, largely because of its rights-based narrative on how food safety policies and regulations work to improve labour conditions and contribute to the progressive realization of the Right to Food.

The urban focus of this project helped reinforce FAO's approach to working with those most in need, irrespective of geographical location. As such, the project supported a successful food systems-based narrative, highlighting the need for strengthened food safety policy and regulatory frameworks, which can lead to gainful and dignified employment.

### 5. Technological sustainability

All capacity development products and training-of-trainers modalities contributed to enriching and complementing local knowledge, most notably through the Food Safety Manual for Vendors, Business Operators and Food Safety Authorities and the Pakistan Dietary Guidelines for Better Nutrition (PDGN).

Similarly, the project thrived in brokering a host of partnerships and strategic alliances. Beyond the ministerial partners, the project worked closely with the Directorate of Health Services of the CDA, the Network for Consumer Protection, the Scaling-Up-Nutrition (SUN) Movement in Pakistan, the Pir Merh Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University and the Women Farmers Network, including the Potohar Organization for Development Advocacy (PODA) that partnered with villages and rural women across Pakistan.

### 6. Economic sustainability

The Pakistani government has approved additional resources in terms of technical capacity and human resources for the MCI on food safety management in the ICT.

Moreover, the project's support in developing the Islamabad Food Safety Policy complemented and informed the existing Islamabad Food Safety Bill that was in need of technical inputs, in addition to providing the Islamabad Food Safety Authority with operational and programmatic guidelines. This represents an essential policy-level driver of sustainability through the institutionalization of the project's results.



### DOCUMENTS AND OUTREACH PRODUCTS

- ❑ FAO Launches Pakistan Dietary Guidelines for Better Nutrition. Press release. Islamabad. 2018. <https://bit.ly/2LdM0AA>.
- ❑ Mapping of Food Outlets in Urban Islamabad. H Orooj, I Afridi, P Paracha and N Anis. Islamabad. 2018. 1 pp.
- ❑ Assessment of Food Safety Situation in Islamabad. A Mumtaz, N Rashid, P Paracaha, A Qazalbash, N Anis and H Orroj. Islamabad. 2019. 82 pp.
- ❑ Food Safety Brochure. A Ahmad and N Anis. Islamabad. 2019. 10 pp.
- ❑ Food Safety Manual for Food Handlers, Street Food Vendors, Business Operators and Stakeholders. P Paracha, N Anis, H Orroj and A Qazalbash. Islamabad. 2019. 35 pp. (available in English and Urdu)
- ❑ Islamabad Food Safety Policy. H Orroj, I Afridi, P Paracha, N Anis and A Qazalbash. Islamabad. 2019. 13 pp.
- ❑ Pakistan Dietary Guidelines for Better Nutrition (PDGN) Brochure. P Paracha and N Anis. Islamabad. 2019. 6 pp. (available in English and Urdu)
- ❑ Pakistan Dietary Guidelines for Better Nutrition (revised version). N Anis, P Paracha and A Shaheen. Islamabad. 2019. 106 pp. <https://bit.ly/2YIn9wU>.

### ACHIEVEMENT OF RESULTS - LOGICAL FRAMEWORK

<p><b>Expected Impact</b></p>	<p>The food safety project will contribute towards improving the overall food safety situation in the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT), leading to a better health and nutritional status of the residents of the area</p> <p>Trained street food vendors will observe proper hygiene, safety and sanitation measures in food preparation, leading to a substantial reduction of food-borne diseases and increased business in this sector</p>	
<p><b>Outcome</b></p>	<p>A model, replicable at the national level, for sound policy development and capacity building of food vendors through local administrations is implemented in Islamabad</p>	
	<p>Indicator</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Number of street and market food vendors, service providers, business operators and food safety professionals trained in food safety and hygiene practices (Output 1).</li> <li>2. Draft document of the Islamabad Food Safety Policy developed (Output 2).</li> <li>3. Food Safety Manual for Vendors, Business Operators and Food Safety Authorities developed (Output 3).</li> <li>4. Number of food safety advocacy and information dissemination campaigns developed (Output 3).</li> </ol>
	<p>Baseline</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. No baseline data available (indicator will first be produced in first quarter of 2017).</li> <li>2. No baseline data available (indicator concerns a new product to be developed).</li> <li>3. No baseline data available (indicator concerns a new product to be developed).</li> <li>4. No baseline data available (indicator concerns a new product to be developed).</li> </ol>
	<p>End Target</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 100</li> <li>2. Draft document of the Islamabad Food Safety Policy developed, technically reviewed, sent to Parliament and, one year after project completion, used for policy guidance.</li> <li>3. Food Safety Manual for Vendors, Business Operators and Food Safety Authorities developed and completed and, one year after project completion, used to train an additional 50 street and market food vendors, extend the training model to one additional provincial capital and develop a food safety e-learning course.</li> <li>4. 2</li> </ol>
	<p>Comments and follow-up action to be taken</p>	<p>The food safety model developed and piloted among ICT street and market food vendors shall be extended to one additional provincial capital beyond the ICT within one year of the project's closure. In doing so, an additional 50 to 100 street and market vendors shall be trained every year after the project concludes.</p> <p>In terms of follow-up actions, the following five points seek to operationalize the Food Safety Manual for Vendors, Business Operators and Food Safety Authorities and the Islamabad Food Safety Policy document.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A supplementary awareness campaign for a more widespread culture of food safety among the general public.</li> <li>- A review of food safety regulations, in line with best international practices (Codex Alimentarius).</li> <li>- The establishment of a Food Safety Regulatory Authority that governs domestic and international commerce through a food safety perspective.</li> <li>- The revision and updating of animal and plant health laws.</li> <li>- The development of a comprehensive and updated traceability system.</li> <li>- The technical revision of the Islamabad Food Safety Policy.</li> </ul>

<b>Output 1</b>	Improved capacity of street and market food vendors and capital administration in ensuring food safety and hygiene		
	Indicators	Target	Achieved
	Number of street and market food vendors, service providers, business operators and food safety professionals trained in food safety and GHPs.	100	Yes
<b>Baseline</b>	No baseline data available (indicator will first be produced in first quarter of 2017).		
<b>Comments</b>	Street and market food vendors received pedagogical and in-situ trainings that made use of training guides, manuals and graphic demonstrations on the five essential practices to guarantee safer and cleaner food: (i) GHPs; (ii) segregation of raw and cooked foods; (iii) thorough cooking; (iv) temperature control; and (v) use of safe water and raw materials. Street and market food vendors were also introduced to food traceability.		
<b>Activity 1.1</b>	Assessment of capital street and market food safety status		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	A detailed literature review of technical reports and other relevant documents was conducted which, alongside a comprehensive survey, helped determine the status of food safety and of GHPs among street food and market vendors. Randomly selected samples of food and beverages were collected using a risk-based food inspection approach, based on the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) principles, to assess the presence of environmental, physicochemical and microbial contaminants.	
<b>Activity 1.2</b>	Number of street and market food vendors trained in food safety and hygiene		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	A group of master trainers were identified from within the target groups of street food and market vendors and trained on food safety and GHPs and, as part of training-of-trainers modalities, shared their knowledge through practical demonstrations.	
<b>Output 2</b>	Food safety policy draft document for Islamabad capital formulated		
	Indicators	Target	Achieved
	Draft document of the Islamabad Food Safety Policy developed.	Draft document of the Islamabad Food Safety Policy developed and completed.	Yes
<b>Baseline</b>	No baseline data available (indicator concerns a new product to be developed).		
<b>Comments</b>	The draft document of the Islamabad Food Safety Policy needs to be technically revised in order to ensure that it is in line with best international food safety and hygiene practices, in addition to addressing food safety protocols, traceability and control measures. Once reviewed, this document shall be discussed and assessed before receiving Parliamentary approval to be enacted into law, after which a comprehensive implementation mechanism shall be developed to enforce the technical regulations concerned. As a complementary action to this draft policy document, a revision process of animal, plant and food safety laws and regulations shall be carried out.		
<b>Activity 2.1</b>	Review the street food safety standards and legislations, along with gap identification and policy implications		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	A detailed literature review of technical reports and other relevant documents was conducted, followed by consultation workshops, focus group discussions and interviews with stakeholders, from which policy and implementation gaps were identified.	
<b>Activity 2.2</b>	Development of food safety policy draft document		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	The framework and content for the Islamabad Food Safety Policy Document resulted from a series of consultation meetings and workshops with national food safety actors. These discussions took place with the Health Directorate Administration of the CDA and the MNFSR, both of which helped coordinate efforts with district-level stakeholders, public and private enterprises and organizations, producer associations, law enforcement agencies, civil society organizations and the media.	

<b>Output 3</b>	Development of food safety manual and awareness raising of consumers on street food safety		
	Indicators	Target	Achieved
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Food Safety Manual for Vendors, Business Operators and Food Safety Authorities developed.</li> <li>- Number of food safety advocacy and information dissemination campaigns developed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Food Safety Manual for Vendors, Business Operators and Food Safety Authorities developed and completed.</li> <li>- 2</li> </ul>	Yes
<b>Baseline</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No baseline data available (indicator concerns a new product to be developed).</li> <li>- No baseline data available (indicator concerns a new product to be developed).</li> </ul>		
<b>Comments</b>	<p>Given the perceived limited knowledge on food safety standards among street and market food vendors in the ICT and a weak cause-and-effect understanding of the risks related to food safety, particularly in terms of handling, storage, temperature control and traceability, the Food Safety Manual for Vendors, Business Operators and Food Safety Authorities outlined: (i) fundamental concepts and pillars of food safety and general hygiene practices; (ii) potential sources of contamination; (iii) HACCP principles; (iv) regulatory and enforcement mechanisms; (v) consumer-driven demand for food safety knowledge; and (vi) guidelines and checklists for food service providers.</p> <p>In addition, the target number for food safety advocacy and information dissemination campaigns developed during the course of the project was surpassed, from two to a total of ten.</p>		
<b>Activity 3.1</b>	Development of food safety manual		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	<p>Based on the results from the food safety assessment (from Activity 1.1) and, building on food safety training materials developed by the Health Directorate of the CDA and international best practices advocated by FAO, the Food Safety Manual for Vendors, Business Operators and Food Safety Authorities was developed and discussed with implementing partners to ensure its content and approach was in line with the required food safety and GHPs.</p> <p>As such, this food safety manual served as the template for conducting the trainings of street and market food vendors and food safety inspectors, as well as for information dissemination and educational and outreach campaigns.</p>	
<b>Activity 3.2</b>	Advocacy and dissemination		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	<p>The project drew the attention of local and national government actors towards the challenges and implications around food safety legislation in order to promote the development of appropriate food safety rules and regulations that could work to mitigate the risks of food and water-borne illnesses. To this end, advocacy and information dissemination workshops, geared to policymakers and parliamentarians, were carried out.</p> <p>As part of these nutrition and food safety education activities, the project supported the revision of the Pakistan Dietary Guidelines for Better Nutrition (PDGN), which were first developed as part of support activities to the SUN movement. As such, the project ensured the inclusion of food safety into these national dietary guidelines.</p>	



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