



Food systems transformation Supporting change in the institutional and policy environment in the Asia and Pacific region

The issue

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the weaknesses and vulnerabilities in food systems. Production-oriented agricultural policies have achieved considerable success in improving the food security situation in the Asia-Pacific region over the last few decades. However, the pandemic has led to widespread supply chain disruptions that has affected availability, access, affordability as well as trade. Actors from farm-to-fork in chains of perishable and nutritious produce including vegetables, fish and milk have been seriously impacted due to lack of on-time market access leading to food waste and livelihood losses. Consumers have been denied availability despite food stocks being ample. Job losses in the agrarian economies of the region are substantial with the potential to trigger a food security crisis due to a drop in incomes. The region is already home to the largest number of malnourished people and the pandemic is impeding progress to the Sustainable Development Goals. At the same time land-use change and degradation are among the largest sources of greenhouse gas emissions at the regional level while water stress and scarcity is prevalent in many key agricultural production areas in the region. The threat from trans-boundary pests and diseases and climatic events renders the situation more complex. Policies for sustainable and resilient food systems need to be put in place now ensure to food security and nutrition without compromising the economic, social and environmental bases.

The action

The programme aims to put in mechanisms to prevent future disruptions in food supply chain and ensuring production capacity in the present and future seasons in rural as well as in urban areas. It will also facilitate the needs of the producers/farmers and Micro-Small-Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) to get their agriculture and food products to market.

- 1 Strengthen the data management setting and the flow of information that focuses on food availability, demand and accessibility for enhanced decision making capacities of policy makers in the context of crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 2 Support modernization of the marketing and buying arrangements of food in the rural and urban areas through digital innovations.
- 3 Incorporate the use of technology in production and distribution of food including in urban areas through vertical farming and other approaches.
- 4 Develop employment opportunities in the food processing industry and other MSMEs to increase food diversification and value addition to local foods.

Budget

USD 40 million

Time frame

2021–2024

SDGs



Related FAO policy briefs

- ▶ [Adjusting business models to sustain agri-food enterprises during COVID-19](#)
- ▶ [The opportunity for digital transformation](#)
- ▶ [Agri-food markets and trade policy in the times of COVID-19](#)
- ▶ [Farmers and agribusinesses at risk under COVID-19. What role for blended finance funds?](#)

- 5 Foster an enabling environment to identify and correct existing imbalances that hinder food production and distribution.
- 6 Integrate natural resource use and environmental considerations into food policy and planning.

Expected results

The programme will strengthen the governance and co-ordination capacity of stakeholders and ensure that actions are effective and complementary and based on evidence and reliable predictive models.

- 1 **Food-related data and information** flow for informed decision making during crisis situations enhanced.
- 2 **Dissemination of information to stakeholders** and food market and supply chain functionality facilitated.
- 3 **Multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral food governance** mechanisms at national and sub-national levels established.
- 4 **Technologies, both digital as well as others,** to increase efficiencies from production to retail incorporated.
- 5 **Policy measures and instruments including financing** to support MSMEs in food processing for diversification and value addition put in place.
- 6 **Availability and access** to locally produced and nutritious foods for low wage consumers enhanced.

Partnerships

Governments, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, World Bank, International Fund for Agricultural Development.

Programme links

The programme will tie in with Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations's extensive normative work in food and agriculture policies, ongoing Global Environment Facility (GEF) and Green Climate Fund (GCF) projects and ongoing programme work in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia and Philippines.

Country focus

Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Nepal, Philippines, Pakistan and Solomon Islands

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