



Food systems transformation Transforming fresh markets in the Asia and Pacific region

The issue

Fresh markets in the Asia and Pacific region are important for daily fresh foods, like vegetables, fruit, and dairy products, as well as fresh meat, fish and seafood. They are a source of livelihoods and of food security and nutrition to millions in the Asia-Pacific region. Despite the rapid expansion of various franchised supermarket chains in the region, such markets' popularity rests in the perceived freshness and competitive pricing of the products that provide a ready source of varied foods that are rich in protein as well as essential micronutrients like iron, iodine, calcium, zinc, Vitamin A and Vitamin B12, thus promoting healthy diets for women and children. However, fresh markets, when not managed properly, can pose serious health risks to the population they serve. This is because the congregation of people, the presence of live animals, the proximity of animal origin and plant origin food, the lack of adequate facilities and poor sanitation conditions can create favourable conditions for spread of diseases and entry of contaminants in food rendering it unsafe. Often, authorities close down these markets as a result of a food safety incident or the spread of disease as has happened in case of COVID-19. This could temporarily halt the health threat but such measures only address the symptom but not the cause. It also restricts the access of millions of people to fresh nutritious foods and incomes, increasing the risk of malnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies.

The action

The programme aims to bring in large-scale changes and introduce innovations and technologies to improve health and safety conditions in fresh markets through pragmatic and participatory ways.

- 1 Use geospatial information to map the location of urban, peri-urban and rural fresh markets in countries in the region and the dynamics of the supply chains that access them.
- 2 Assess the state of fresh markets and develop criteria for their classification based on parameters linked to socio-economic conditions, planning, zoning, transport, biosecurity, food safety and others.
- 3 Develop participatory approaches to involve all stakeholders – Government, supply chain and market actors and civil society – in the regulation, management and maintenance of fresh markets.
- 4 Develop strategies for waste management, food safety and hygiene, food loss and waste reduction, other basic services and emergency preparedness.

Budget

USD 30 million

Time frame

2020–2024

SDGs



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- ▶ [Urban food systems and COVID-19: The role of cities and local governments in responding to the emergency](#)
- ▶ [Agri-food markets and trade policy in the times of COVID-19](#)
- ▶ [Mitigating risks to food systems during COVID-19: Reducing food loss and waste](#)
- ▶ [Food Safety in the time of COVID-19](#)

- 5 Strengthen governance and build national and regional models for fresh markets as safe public spaces.
- 6 Stimulate demand for fresh food at affordable prices and create opportunities for farmers to sell produce directly to consumer.

Expected results

The programme will transform fresh markets from a site of food safety and zoonotic risks to one that offers a safe food shopping experience to millions. It will strengthen the governance capacity of stakeholders, provide access to local food producers as well as for certified food chains.

- 1 **Maps of fresh market locations** in rural and urban areas and the supply chains feeding them will be created.
- 2 **Forward looking improvement and upgradation strategies** based on market assessments and the One Health approach in a country or region will be developed.
- 3 **Local fresh markets** will become hubs for sale of fresh produce and lead to supply chains being shortened and incomes for sellers increased.
- 4 **Innovations and technologies** to effectively manage traffic of people and produce in fresh markets and inventory to reduce food loss and waste will be introduced.
- 5 **Availability and access** to locally produced and nutritious foods for low wage consumers will be enhanced.
- 6 **Knock on environmental effects** including cleaner surroundings, better waste management, safe water and sanitation will be delivered and the risks to food safety and pandemic spread will be significantly reduced.
- 7 **Fit-for-purpose models** of upgraded fresh markets suited to the national and regional context will be established.

Partnerships

Local and city administrations, market committees, supply and value chain actors, producer organizations, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, World Bank, International Fund for Agricultural Development, World Health Organization (WHO) and World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE).

Programme links

The programme will tie in with FAO's extensive normative work in food safety and animal health, the One Health agenda and ongoing programme work in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Laos and Nepal.

Country focus

Bangladesh, Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Pakistan, Samoa, Sri Lanka, Tonga

Contacts

Aziz El Behri – Senior Economist
FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
FAO-RAP@fao.org

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
Bangkok, Thailand

