

Strategizing Bangladesh Food Futures

Stakeholder consultation workshops



WAGENINGEN
UNIVERSITY & RESEARCH

1 and 8 Oct. 2020



New ways to ensure sustainable food systems in the future are part of the strategic knowledge base (KB) programme 'Food Security and Valuing Water', commissioned and financed by the Dutch Ministry of Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality. Two programmes within this larger programme - the motifs 'Deltas under Pressure' and 'Feeding the Cities and Migration' - are both working on cases in Bangladesh. They bring their work together in online workshops on rural urban linkages in the food future of Bangladesh.

Introduction

Increasingly, people are moving into cities and in deltas worldwide, and mega cities are developing. This is also the case in the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna delta in Bangladesh with its capital city Dhaka as a mega-city. The large number of people concentrated in the city puts pressure on the natural resources, including water, and the availability of fresh and nutritious food. These urban developments affect the way in which the food system is organized, for example where food is produced, transported, processed and what food is being consumed. In addition, these developments emphasize the importance of rural-urban flows of goods, services and capital and the role they play in a food system. It is key to understand these developments and how we can transition to a food system in which food is produced in a sustainable manner, feeding many people in a healthy way. In these transitions, it is important to look how rural and urban areas link, for example: how well are production areas linked with urban markets, or what impact does salinity in the delta have on food for livestock producing dairy for urban population?

So far, not much research has been done regarding those rural-urban linkages. It is not clear how the city's food security is ensured, how rural food production operates in relation to that, or how the wider context of food systems links food production and consumption with food security. At Wageningen University and Research, food systems are investigated as part of the KB programme 'Food Security and Valuing Water'. The two programmes 'Deltas under Pressure' and 'Feeding Cities and Migration Settlements', are both focusing part of their work on food system transitions in Bangladesh. This is done in close collaboration with partner organizations, like FAO and Solidaridad; leading stakeholders working on SDG 2 – Zero Hunger, in Bangladesh. In our KB work, we want to ensure to focus on issues and knowledge questions that are relevant to stakeholders in the field and support already ongoing work on transforming food systems. **What are key knowledge questions and needs that we should focus our work on? Who are critical players to engage with?**

Objective of the consultation sessions

Against this background, it is crucial to connect our research with actual developments in the field, link with various partners and initiatives, and explore questions together. Only then we can meaningfully contribute to complex transformation processes and support and strengthen work that is already being done by those stakeholders. Therefore, we organize two online consultations sessions with the objective to connect with current partners who are leading stakeholders working on SDG 2 in Bangladesh. **Together we want to identify learning questions around rural-urban linkages in food systems in Bangladesh that are relevant to those stakeholders.**

Agenda

Session 1 SETTING THE SCENE

This session will focus on exchanging focus areas of work, identify similarities and differences between various knowledge agendas and identify knowledge gaps.

When: 1 October, 3 p.m. (Bangladesh time), 11 a.m. (NL time)

Where: online

Session 2 FOOD FUTURES

Based on the first session, we will jointly prioritise key issues and identify agenda points for knowledge development and action on urban-rural linkages in Bangladesh

When: 8 October, 3 p.m. (Bangladesh time), 11 a.m. (NL time)

Where: online

Participants & Contributors

We have invited Solidaridad, FAO, DAE, EKN, ADB, SAU, East-West Seed, and Wageningen University and Research (Economic Research, Environmental Research, Livestock Research, Food and Biobased Research, Centre for Development Innovation)

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About the sessions

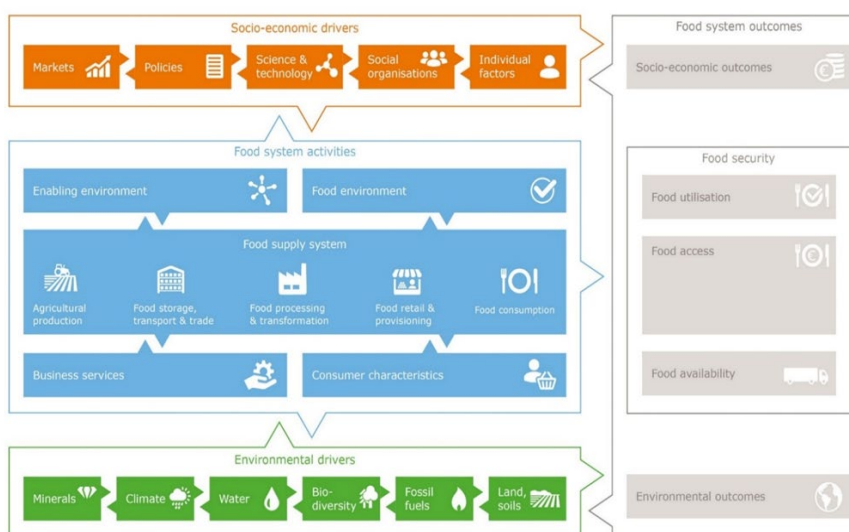
The sessions, max 2 hours each, will focus on sharing and exchanging existing issues in relation to rural-urban linkages addressed by leading partners and stakeholders working on SDG 2 in Bangladesh. We want to discuss what knowledge is already being generated, explore overlap and differences, and identify knowledge gaps that need to be addressed.

Together, we will formulate a set of knowledge questions related to rural-urban linkages that can help us to better understand these linkages and how they can be strengthened. Strengthened rural-urban linkages means better connectivity of food flows, technology, resources and people between rural and urban areas, thereby ultimately improving food and nutrition security across the rural-urban spectrum.

To enrich discussions, we invite a mixed group of stakeholders around the virtual table, with representatives from policy, private sector, implementation and knowledge partners, each working on different parts of the food system.

Food Systems Approach (FSA)

This 2019-2022 KB programme 'Food Security and Valuing Water', aims to deliver an analytical framework, recommendations and tools for food system transition pathways. The framework used in this programme is presented below and will be further elaborated during the sessions. This Food system approach (FSA) consists of three building blocks: 1. Drivers, environmental and socio-economic, 2. Food system activities, including the value chain, and 3. Food system outcomes, including socio-economic and environmental food system outcomes and food security, including its three aspects of food utilization, food access and food availability. During the workshops we will explore how the different activities currently ongoing to address Zero Hunger can be placed within the food system, with a particular focus on the role of rural-urban linkages. This will on the one hand lead to new ideas about future activities as well as new knowledge questions regarding the pathways for transformation in the food systems.



The Food System Approach (FSA): a way of mapping the relationships of the food system to its drivers (van Berkum et al, 2018)

Deltas Under Pressure

Delta regions are strong contributors to food production and other environmental services. However, they are also particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Typical stresses for Deltas are: Sea level rise, floods, drought, salinity, acidity, humidity, waterlogging, subsidence, pest and other diseases (exacerbated by above abiotic stresses).

Availability of fresh water of sufficient quality and maximisation of the use of salinizing regions (and flood protection) are the essential components of food systems in Deltas. Changes are happening rapidly and in a complex setting – it is difficult to foresee what a sustainable transition pathway could look like. The research program explores what is needed for viable and feasible transition pathways for the food system in deltas under pressure. It works in 2 case studies: one in Bangladesh and one in Vietnam.

Feeding the Cities and Migration

Cities all over the world are ever-expanding and becoming more complex in terms of logistics and administration. They need a robust and sustainable food system to provide everyone with enough healthy food. But how do you feed growing cities? How do you strengthen their connections with the surrounding farmland and how can sufficient nutritious food be produced? More knowledge is needed about the dynamics of urban food systems and their interaction with the surrounding areas.

This research programme aims to gain a better understanding of, and therefore get a better grip on, urban food systems while paying particular attention to the impact migration has on food security to create sustainable, resilient urban food systems. The Water-Food-Energy-Ecosystem Nexus plays an important part in meeting these challenges. Lessons will be drawn from Kampala, Nairobi and Dhaka.