

# Viability of the Farmer's market pilot of Dhaka's Food System project

Assessment using the Roadmap approach

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# Background Dhaka Food Systems project

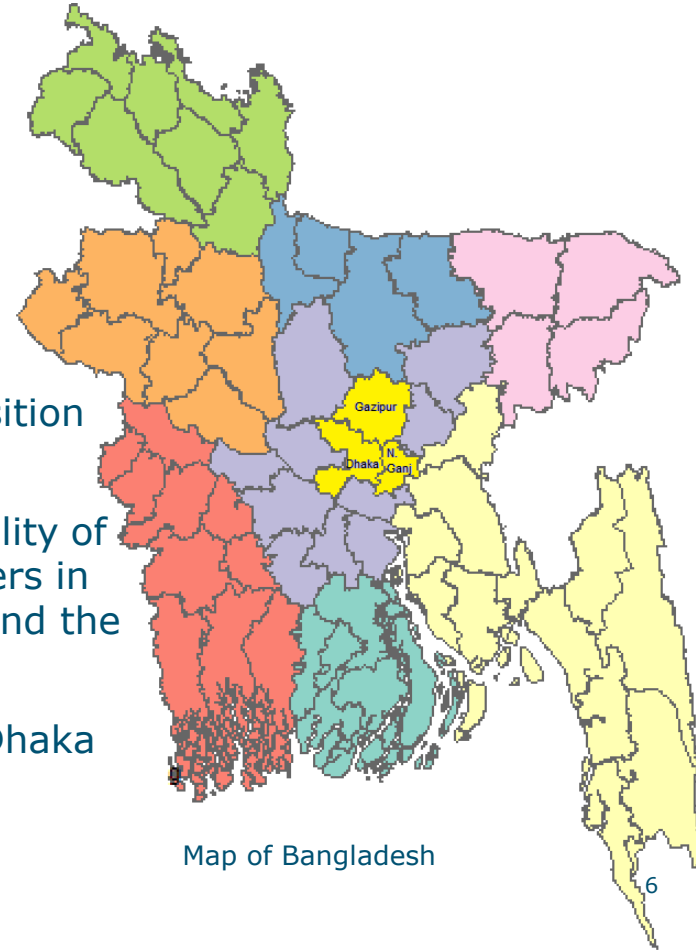
- Rapid urbanization of a growing population has challenged established efforts to ensure access to sufficient, affordable, nutritious, safe and sustainably sourced food.
- The effectiveness and resilience of urban food systems relies strongly on well-functioning food value chains, linking rural production areas to urban consumer markets. Addressing challenges in rural-urban food value chains is an effective entry point to improve urban food system outcomes.
- An integrated food value chain intervention roadmap approach was developed in the Dhaka Food Systems (DFS) project to support stakeholders in the process of selecting, designing and implementing interventions that aim to intervene in food supply chains and enhance the resilience of Dhaka's food system.
  - Link to intervention roadmap approach: <https://doi.org/10.18174/632576>
  - More information about the DFS project: <https://www.wur.nl/en/research-results/research-institutes/centre-for-development-innovation/show-cdi/improving-dhakas-food-system.htm>

# Assessing the viability of the implemented pilot

- The intervention roadmap approach structures the problem and formulates a strategy to implementing the selected intervention successfully by creating a conducive environment.
- The intervention roadmap approach can be used in any city, region and country, and the roadmap makes the activities, timeline, resources and involved actors visual and replicable.
- The aim of this document is to showcase the activities that were needed to executed the farmers' market pilot, it assesses the economic viability of the pilot, and it describes the learnings to make the pilot sustainable in the long-term, and scale it towards other cities, regions and countries.
- This document is directly linked to the lessons learned report of the DFS project
  - This document can be found at the DFS project website:  
<https://www.wur.nl/en/research-results/research-institutes/centre-for-development-innovation/show-cdi/improving-dhakas-food-system.htm>

# Farmers' markets pilot strategy

- Consumers in Dhaka face problems with the access to safe, healthy and affordable food. Vegetables contain harmful chemicals and consumers prefer to purchase fresh, safe and nutritious food.
- Farmers in Bangladesh are often dependent on middlemen and have difficulties in reaching urban consumers directly, resulting in a weak negotiation position and low farmgate price.
- The aim of this intervention is to increase the accessibility of safe, nutritious, and fresh foods for community members in Dhaka, and to bridge the gap between the producers and the consumers, minimizing the interference of middlemen.
- A total 16 farmers' markets have been established in Dhaka North City Corporation (CC) (6), Dhaka South CC (6), Gazipur CC (2), and Narayanganj CC (2) (yellow area).



Map of Bangladesh

# Farmers' markets pilot characteristics

- Weekly Friday market (weekend day)
- Farmers sell fresh fruits and vegetables directly to consumers
- Outdoor location near street sides, appointed by the ward councilors
- Fixed day price based on prices at nearby markets





# The objectives

1. Have a timeline overview of the key activities of the pilot
2. Explore the lessons learned of the pilot and consequent advice for further continuation of the pilot activities without the project's support
3. Explore lessons from literature about similar pilots
4. Draw conclusions about economic viability, sustainability and scaling of the pilot



# Methods to achieve the objectives

## Interviews with:

- Work for a Better Bangladesh (WBB) representatives
- Farmers participating in the farmers' market
- Management Committee & City counsilers

Conducted in collaboration with  
and results validated by FAO

## Literature study:

- Systematic literature search resulting in 103 studies
- Selection of key search terms: short supply chain, direct sales, business to consumer, farmers market
- After further selection, lessons incorporated from 4 studies

# Results

# Overview of pilot activities and roadmap

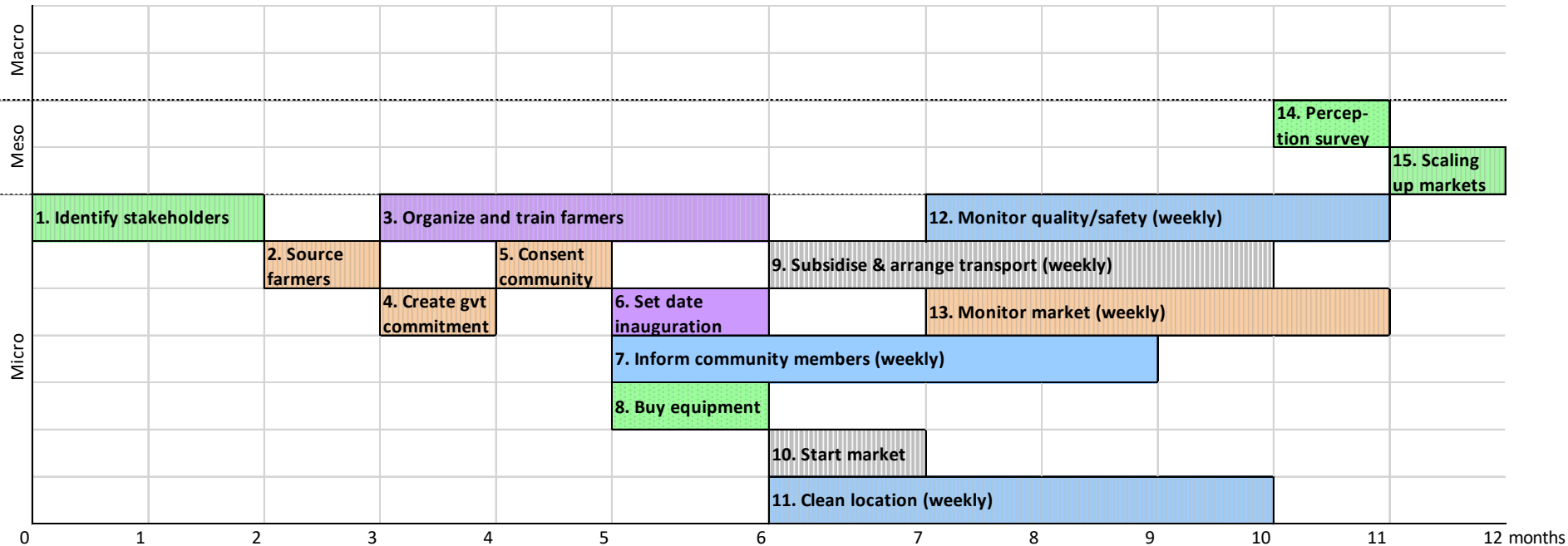
- The success of implementing a selected intervention greatly depends on the conditions in which the intervention is implemented. It is therefore important to not only select an appropriate intervention, but also describe the necessary supportive actions and boundary conditions to create a conducive environment.
- The selected intervention (farmers' market pilot) and supportive actions (all conducted activities to create a conducive environment for its execution and to create sustainability in the long-term) are 'classified' on implementation time, intervention type, intervention level and implementing actor.
- An overview of the classified intervention and supportive actions is provided in a table (activities)
- Thereafter the outcomes are visualized in a figure (roadmap)

# Overview of pilot activities

\* Below activities are not complete in all details, but summarize the key activities

Time	What	Repetition	Har/Org/Sof (a)	Mic/Mes/Mac (b)	Key actor(s)
a	1. Identify stakeholders in appointed and producing locations	Once	Orgware	Micro	WBB
b	2. Source nearby farmers that practice safe farming	Once	Orgware	Micro	WBB & Dep. Agr. Extension
c	3. Organize and train farmers	Once	Orgware	Micro	WBB & Dep. Agr. Extension & farmers
c	4. Create commitment from ward councilor office	Once	Orgware	Micro	WBB & Ward councilor & FAO
d	5. Create consent among community people	Once	Orgware	Micro	WBB & Ward councilor office & community
e	6. Set date for inauguration	Once	Software	Micro	WBB & ward councilor office & farmers
e	7. Inform people about farmers' market	Weekly	Software	Micro	Ward councilor office
e	8. Buy equipment	Once	Hardware	Micro	WBB & FAO
f	9. Subsidize and arrange transport	Weekly	Orgware	Micro	WBB & farmers & FAO
f	10. Start weekly markets	Once	Orgware	Micro	WBB & farmers & FAO
f	11. Clean appointed location	Weekly	Orgware	Micro	Ward councilor office
g	12. Monitor quality & safety production	Weekly	Orgware	Micro	Dep. Agr. Extension
g	13. Monitor farmers' market	Weekly	Orgware	Micro	WBB & Ward councilor office & FAO
h	14. Implement perception survey	Once	Software	Meso	WBB
i	15. Scaling up towards 15 additional farmers' markets	Once	Orgware	Meso	WBB & FAO

# Overview of pilot activities



Hardware		Orgware		Software		
PS	GO	NGO	PS/GO	PS/NGO	GO/NGO	PS/GO/NGO

PS = Private sector  
GO = Governmental Organisation  
NGO = Non-Governmental Organisation

# Key lessons learned from the pilot (1)

## Farmers

- Farmers who agreed to participate in the farmers' market and took part in all preparations, did not participate during the start of the farmers' market or did not come to the farmers' market anymore after a few week
- Let farmers being in charge and take ownership of their own organisations was succesful, as they organized their own transport and supply.
- Being part of the farmers' market is economically viable for the participating farmers, even when transportation was no longer subsidized. However, paying for the costs to replace currently used equipment and other unexpected costs can become a challenge
- The quality and safety of the products should be monitored regularly to guarantee the products sold at the farmers' market apply with the consumer demand

# Key lessons learned from the pilot (2)

## Market representatives

- Commitment from the local representative (ward councilor office in Dhaka) (political goodwill, approval, and protection from local gvt representatives) has a high priority. Without this commitment the farmers' market could not exist in Dhaka.
- Establishing a market committee, with local community leaders, is of high interest to select a suitable location and understand the demand
- It is important that the market is monitored weekly by the market committee or a government official to be able to intervene and assist where needed (police, price, questions)
- It was needed that the market committee communicated and promoted the farmers' market to consumers regularly to establish a good customer base



# Key lessons and advice from literature (1)

*Lessons from similar pilots and activities described in literature can help to further optimize the current pilot activities to make them more economic viable and sustainable. These lessons can also provide ideas for continuation and scaling.*

- Farmers are interested in internal certification systems, but demand for directly marketed produce is already there even if its non-certified. However quality standards and diversity of products should be maintained [1,2].
- Demand for products marketed in short supply chains will stay when consumers benefit via lower prices, reduced environmental costs, better traceability, fairer compensation to producers and enables consumer to make more conscious choices, like purchasing healthy, safe, organic or seasonal products [3].
- Technical support, adequate infrastructure, good communication technology, and regular training in customer orientation and product expertise benefit farmers' direct marketing [2,4].

# Key lessons and advice from literature (2)

- A young generation farmers with a minimal level of educations are essential prerequisites to implement new direct-to-consumer sales innovations [4].
- Supply should be at least once a week and farmers are most eager to participate if it won't involve selling large shares of their yields through these new channels [1,3].
- Although the intervention is economically beneficial for farmers, it is important that farmers do not depend completely on the NGO or government intermediary role, and that other stakeholders keep their interest in the intervention [2].

[1] Enthoven, L., Skambracks, M., & Van den Broeck, G. (2023). Improving the design of local short food supply chains: Farmers' views in Wallonia, Belgium. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 97, 573-582. doi:10.1016/j.jrurstud.2023.01.016

[2] Freidberg, S., & Goldstein, L. (2011). Alternative food in the global south: Reflections on a direct marketing initiative in Kenya. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 27(1), 24-34. doi:10.1016/j.jrurstud.2010.07.003

[3] Lanfranchi, M., & Giannetto, C. (2015). A case study on the role of farmers' markets in the process of shortening the food chain and the possible economic benefits for consumers. *Quality - Access to Success*, 16(144), 94-98.

[4] Karmakar, A., Khan, Z. H., Roshid, M. M., Shamme, F. B., & Rahman, M. A. (2022). A Study of Farmers Direct Marketing: Assessing the Factors for the Home to Land Approach. *European Journal of Business and Management*, 14(22), 2222-1905. doi:10.7176/EJBM/14-22-05

# Post-pilot continuation

# Key lessons for continuation of the activities

- Test food safety in laboratory. Now dependent on trust between farmers and community
- Maintain quality and diversity of products, and ensure smooth supply to the weekly market as per customer demand (safety & quality)
- Create subsidy, fund or annual budget to hire support staff and maintain equipment
- Keep the engagement of the local representative of the government and private sector
- Create further institutional linkages with relevant ministries and city corporations
- Create ownership of Local Government division (LGD) (e.g. via food desk) and city corporation
- Legitimize the farmers' markets in city corporations' regulations; administrative authorization
- Maintain agricultural land, especially near the city, despite urbanization

# Key lessons for scaling current activities to other cities and regions

- Find the right local representatives and the nearby agricultural production areas
- Select a market location at a roadside, and near water supply and washrooms facilities
- Select motivated farmers with a business mindset and finance management skills
- Create a market management committee to regularly monitor the farmers' market
- Source for a starting capital and fund/annual budget to guarantee support
- Build and maintain institutional support with relevant ministeries (e.g. marketing, agriculture) across administrative levels
- Translation to the local context is always needed when implementing farmers' markets in other countries

# Conclusion

- The farmers' markets are economically viable for farmers on the short-term, as they are still profitable while paying for their own transportation. The farmers' market are currently still present while the subsidy stopped a few months ago. However, an annual fund or budget should become available to be able to hire staff to monitoring the market regularly in the long term and to monitor the quality and safety of the supplied products. Besides, a monthly saving system should become in place at farmer level to be able to repair or replace broken equipment, and to pay any unexpected costs.
- The farmers' market is currently not sustainable, as it depends on the commitment from one elected local representative/government. It is needed to legitimize farmers' markets by including the administrative authorization in city corporations' regulations.

# More information

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