



## EU-SWITCH Asia 2018 Lessons Learned

### Sustainable consumption & production of tomato & mango products in Bangladesh

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# Project Background



**Project Title:** Improving consumer awareness and access to certified safe tomato and mango products in Bangladesh

**Location:** Bangladesh; Regions: Dhaka, Rajshahi, Natore

**Duration:** 1 Jan 2016 = 31 Dec 2019

**Beneficiaries:** 10,000 farmers (5,000 mango farmers and 5,000 tomato farmers)

**Project partners:** Centre of Excellence for Agro Food Skills (CEAFS) and the Consumers Association of Bangladesh (CAB)

## **3 Overall Objectives**

- O1 – Greater consumer confidence in domestically produced processed horticultural products
- O2 – Reduced food safety incidences in the domestically processed horticultural products
- O3 – Inclusive business development in the fruit and vegetable processing industry

## **1 Specific Objective**

SO – At the end of the four-year project at least 50% of the domestically processed tomato and mango products marketed and consumed in Bangladesh will be certified safe.

## **5 Expected Results**

- R1 – Consumer awareness on certified safe domestically produced mango and tomato products
- R2 – Setting (voluntary) food safety standards for the selected processed horticultural products
- R3 – Capacities of mango and tomato growers and other supply chain partners upgraded
- R4 – Independent monitoring and certification of safe production and supply arrangements
- R5 – Activities are effectively and efficiently coordinated and implemented

# Overall project ambitions

## Situation / Lessons Learned

**Situation:** The project plan shows a lot of potential and ambition.

### Lessons learned:

- A change in behaviour in complex matters, such as farming, and in a situation with over 10,000 farmers making their individual decisions, takes a long time.
- Some of the goals relate to consumer awareness, and this is something influenced by many factors, some of which are not controlled by or within the influence of the project team. Moreover, these processes are slow and diffuse. Hence confidence is easily lost and can only be built gradually.

## Way Forward

The SNV project team will continue to focus on executing the project activities that focus on raising knowledge among farmers and confidence of consumers on food safety issues in 2019.



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# Consumer perceptions

## Situation / Lessons Learned

**Situation:** The project carried out an online survey using SurveyMonkey.com in 2018 as another method to gauge consumer perceptions on food safety.

### Lessons learned:

- SNV incorrectly assumed that the online survey would generate a large number of responses in a shorter time frame than the face-to-face paper surveys conducted during the baseline and MTE surveys. Feedback from some consumers indicated that they found the online-survey to be too long as it took some of them 15-20 minutes to complete. With this being the case, SNV asked CAB to carry out the survey using a face-to-face interview with consumers in Dhaka to increase the number of overall responses.
- A consistent method of measuring consumer perception would have been easier and better for comparison purposes.

## Way Forward

The project will carry out a final survey to gauge consumer perception on processed mango and tomato products in 2019. This survey will be much more concise to assess consumer perceptions on processed mango and tomato products.



# Gender

## Situation / Lessons Learned

**Situation:** In 2016, the project revealed there were no women farmers. In 2017, the project had 284 female farmers. As of the end of 2018, 1,241 (12.4%) of the 10,000 mango and tomato beneficiary farmers are women.

### Lessons learned:

- Many women do not declare to be farmers because female farmers are not welcome in the current social structure.
- Focus group discussions led to the conclusion that around 15% of producers are women and more than 90% of post harvesting activities are being conducted by women.

## Way Forward

The project team will continue to work with Agro-processing companies and Hub-leaders to ensure the participation of female producers in capacity building trainings to increase their level of knowledge in food safety issues, GAP and GHP.



# Traceability issues

## Situation / Lessons Learned

**Situation:** The farmers have improved their knowledge on the implementation of GAP; however traceability remains an issue.

### Lessons learned:

- Some 2,000 farmers (20%) of the project's beneficiary farmers are illiterate and are unable to write in the record keeping books. Record keeping is vital to overall traceability which is required for certification.

## Way Forward

Farmers who are not literate are being assisted by SNV Field Team Members, literate members of the farmers group and their educated family members as well as DAE SAAOs.

Agro-processing companies will share their purchasing schedule in advance through SNV so that farmers are well aware of the dates to supply their fresh mango and tomato.

What's on My Plate:  
**The Importance of  
Food Traceability**



# Certification

## Situation / Lessons Learned

**Situation:** Bangladesh lacks its own certification bodies.

### Lessons learned:

- The project proposal assumed that, at least during the project period (2016-2019), the infrastructure of food safety authorities and certifying bodies would have been established. That this is not the case has hindered the project. For instance, no local GAP audits could be done as the Bangladeshi Accreditation Board, as of the end of 2018, is not yet accredited and Bangla GAP does not yet exist.

## Way Forward

The project will continue to pursue certification of the agro-processing companies and farmers third independent, third-party audit firms.





# Food safety issues and testing

## Situation / Lessons Learned

**Situation:** Lack of record keeping system of food safety incidences in Bangladesh

### Lessons learned:

- There is no GoB agency reporting on food safety incidences in Bangladesh. Such reporting falls under the mandate of the BFSA and the NFSL which are responsible for food safety in Bangladesh. Both the BFSA and NFSL have indicated to SNV that they do not have adequate human resources in place to carry out such reporting on overall food safety incidences in Bangladesh.
- The lack of NFSL accreditation led the BFSA to request SNV to test a sample of fresh mangos at the accredited SGS laboratory in Chennai, India in 2018.
- It would have been better not to try to test on all possible aspects by different laboratories and methods, but to select a set of key aspects to be tested several times in a comparable way.

## Way Forward

The project will carry out a final round of food safety testing at the NFSL in 2019 as it is now accredited.

The project will continue to share the results of food safety testing with the agro-processing companies and the BFSA to bring attention to areas of continuous improvement in food safety.





## THANK YOU

**SNV, CEAFS and CAB welcome any comments or suggestions stakeholders may wish to make, in order to help us to improve our lessons learned and the communication of such lessons learned.**

