



Netherlands Enterprise Agency



Food security and SDGP

Sustainable Development Goals
Partnership Facility (SDGP)

Food security

Food security is an urgent global challenge. Recent estimates suggest that world hunger has slightly decreased in recent years. But millions of people still struggle to access sufficient, safe and nutritious food. Around 2.3 billion people experienced moderate or severe food insecurity in 2024. Food security is also affected by climate change¹, conflict² and forced displacement, which have severe impacts on food security in vulnerable regions³. Together with a growing world population, these challenges mean we need new and more sustainable ways to produce and distribute food.

The Sustainable Development Goals Partnership facility (SDGP) contributed to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2: Zero hunger. SDGP supported food security through public-private partnerships (PPPs). This approach recognises that food insecurity is complex and cannot be addressed by the public or private sector alone. By bringing together governments, businesses, knowledge institutions and farmer organisations, PPPs make sustainable solutions possible. These solutions create economic opportunities and deliver social impact.

This factsheet looks at lessons learnt about food security from SDGP projects. It shows how public-private partnerships put these approaches into practice in different situations. It also highlights the challenges, what worked well and practical lessons to help with future plans and projects.



The Sustainable Development Goals Partnership Facility

The Sustainable Development Goals Partnership Facility (SDGP) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) contributed to the implementation of the agenda for aid, trade and investment. The programme supported public-private partnerships (PPPs) that create new solutions to improve food security and private sector development.

The main goals of SDGP were to help achieve SDG 2: Zero hunger, SDG 8: Decent jobs and economic growth and SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals. It also contributed to SDG 5: Gender equality, SDG 12: Responsible consumption and production and SDG 13: Climate action. With a budget of €65 million, SDGP supported 34 projects. These projects helped improve value chain efficiency and sustainability, nutrition and better work and income in low- and middle-income countries.

SDGP impact on food security

SDGP projects used different interventions to strengthen food security. Most projects worked on improving productivity. These improvements were achieved by helping farmers get better inputs, such as seeds and tools, and producing better crops. Projects also improved farming methods. These include making farm work more efficient through better crop care, such as fertilisation, pruning and growing different types of crops. Many projects also encouraged farmers to try new methods and change their habits. Nutrition and sustainable farming practices were particularly relevant, as these are essential for achieving long-term results. See also “Nutrition and SDGP”.

Across all projects, the main goal was to increase production while making sure farming remained sustainable. This included better agricultural practices, improving soil health, managing water

¹ [Climate change impacts on food security in the European Union | Think Tank | European Parliament](#)

² [Sustaining peace | FAO Emergency and Resilience | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations](#)

³ [Global Report on Food Crises \(GRFC\) 2025 | World Food Programme](#)

better and reducing pesticide and other chemical use. Some projects helped improve the production of organic fertilisers or compost. Examples include **Developing a Low-Carbon Coffee Value-Chain** in Kericho, Kenya, and **Building inclusive value chains in organic soybean, sesame and shea** in Uganda.

Climate-resilient practices helped create more resilient and sustainable agricultural systems. Examples of climate-adaptive strategies include:

- Agroforestry, with examples of projects including **Agroforestry interventions for uphill food and income security and downhill tea plantation protection** in Rwanda, and **ASASE** in Ghana.
- Climate-resilient crops, with plant varieties that adapt well to climate change.

As an example, the **COASTS** project in Bangladesh used adaptive strategies to create long-term agricultural livelihood opportunities. It also improved the productive use of high-salt farmland. The project trained over 10,000 farmers affected by high salt levels. The farmers were trained in mainly nature-based climate-adaptive saline agriculture techniques. All trained farmers also received salt-tolerant inputs alongside on-site practical training during their first year. This led to a significant increase in vegetable production.

Finally, salt-tolerant seeds were produced and a grassroot level distribution system set up. For more information, read factsheet “**Climate Adaptation and SDGP**”.

To strengthen food security, projects also worked on improving local markets and increasing farmers’ incomes. In several cases, better product quality helped farmers reach markets that pay higher prices. They were also able to join certification schemes that helped improved their position in the market and earn a higher income.

Within SDGP, this meant supporting local supply chains and helping local economies grow. This included promoting local food production and processing to create greater economic value domestically. Examples of projects include **Developing a Low-Carbon Coffee Value-Chain** in Kericho, Kenya, **Sugar and Steam** in Indonesia,

and **Innovating the Ugandan Potato Value Chain** in Uganda. By strengthening these activities, SDGP aimed to improve food security while making sure that a larger share of the economic benefits stayed inside the country.

Finally, improving value chain efficiency and logistics was an essential part of increasing productivity. This included investing in infrastructure and hardware, and better links between producers, suppliers and buyers. Together, these improvements help create more efficient, inclusive, and sustainable food systems.

The **Increased Maize Value Chain Efficiency** project in Rwanda introduced the Cob Model. 89,100 farmers adopted the model, more than the target of 61,154. The model improved maize production efficiency, product quality and cooperatives’ professionalism. As a result, the percentage of maize delivered as cob to the company increased from 20% to 76% of total production. 15 cooperatives under the SDGP project supplied 18% of this maize. The project greatly improved local sourcing in Rwanda. The percentage of rejected maize dropped from 95% in 2019 to less than 2% by 2024. As a result, it was possible to buy 100% of the grade-1 maize needed within the country.

Another example is the **Innovating the Ugandan Potato Value Chain** project in Uganda. In this project, different partners played a role across the value chain, from production, seed production, offtake and processing to business development. The project improved access to farming inputs and markets by connecting producers directly with suppliers and buyers. In addition, the project built a storage facility and aeroponic screenhouses. This helped reduce post-harvest losses and improved local access to seeds.

Lessons learnt in SDGP

1. Promote climate adaptation and grow more diverse crops

Instead of only increasing yields, farming systems must prepare for risks and encourage farmers to grow different types of crops. This is essential to deal with future challenges such as supply chain disruptions and the effects of climate change. This means encouraging farmers to adopt sustainable farming techniques, use climate-adaptive interventions and improve biodiversity. Read factsheet “**Climate Adaptation and SDGP**” to know more.

Growing a variety of crops was also an effective way to improve food security and stabilise farmers’ household incomes. More diversity of crops protects farmers from changes in prices, pests and extreme weather. It does this by making sure that if farmers lose 1 crop or its price falls, other crops can make up for the loss. It reduces dependence on a single type of food. This makes sure that households have access to different nutritious foods, even if 1 crop fails.

Several projects used crop diversification. For example, **Smart Farming, Healthy Food** in Bangladesh with vegetables and **AgriJob Booster** in Chad with vegetables and poultry (egg) production.



2. Take a value chain approach

Improving connections between farmers and private sector buyers helps support economic growth and creates opportunities for higher incomes and jobs. This increases farmers’ purchasing power and boosts the supply of food to local markets. Partnerships that worked on connecting farmers to important players in the value chain, such as buyers, proved effective. Examples include **EcoCajou** in Côte d'Ivoire, **Innovating the Ugandan Potato Value Chain** in Uganda, and **SUCCEEDS** in Vietnam. This works well because it focuses on issues that weaken the value chain. Read the factsheet “**Business Cases and SDGP**” to know more.

By strengthening every step from farm production to consumption, improving efficiency and stabilising supplies, this contributes to more local and economical production. This also makes sure that households can have access to different nutritious foods, even if 1 crop fails.



3. Involvement of strong (local) private partners

In some projects, the financial capacity of private partners was a major challenge. In some cases, private actors found it difficult to raise enough money to grow their activities, invest in infrastructure, or keep operating during uncertain economic times. This caused some partners to leave, which slowed operations or meant having to find new partners. It is therefore important to involve private partners who have enough money to handle financial problems and have a long-term interest in the country.

4. Adaptability

Working on food security comes with risks and changing situations. SDGP projects dealt with several major challenges:

- The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted supply chains, restricted mobility and delayed project activities. It also made it harder for farmers and businesses to reach markets.
- Extreme weather shocks caused by climate change negatively affected farm productivity.
- Political stability and local rules played an important role in developing markets. Weak government support, strict regulations and poor infrastructure often slowed down project work.

The projects **Powering Aquaculture Progress (PAP)** and **MasterPeas** in Myanmar showed the importance of adaptability. The political crisis in Myanmar has created severe problems, including lower incomes. Export limits and inflation also drove up prices.

Despite these challenges, the projects worked successfully because of the commitment and adaptability of the partners.

Another example of a project adapting to changes was the **EAT:FRESH** project in Tanzania. At first the project only worked on avocados. During the pandemic, the team decided to add bananas. This enabled them to offer a wider range of products and reduce risks from changing market demand and avocado harvests.

5. Ensure local coordination, integration and adoption

Having a good local coordinator was an important theme across SDGP projects. Adapting project activities to the local context and culture greatly improves how well people adapt new methods and supports long-term sustainability. This included having project coordination on the ground who understood the local situation and worked directly with target groups. This way they could help carry out project activities smoothly. To support local adoption projects also invested in building local skills and showing the results (“seeing is believing”). Read **“Capacity Development and SDGP”** to know more.





6. Strengthen farmer cooperatives

Projects supported farmer organisations by setting up cooperatives and helping them develop their businesses, bundle produce and negotiate for better prices together. This included providing advice to help improve management, governance, finances and business development. Regular advisory services and training led to greater professionalism, clearer leadership roles and improved financial operations and coordination. This in turn made cooperatives more attractive to buyers. Farmers combining their crops also results in being able to supply higher quantities. Examples of relevant projects include **Innovating the Ugandan Potato Value Chains** in Uganda, **Increased Potato Value Chain Efficiency in Great Lake Region** in Rwanda, and **Increased Maize Value Chain Efficiency project** in Rwanda. Supporting farmer cooperatives also makes them more sustainable. The small-scale farms gain more economic power and a stronger voice in the supply chain. This makes sure they have more capacity after the project ends.

7. Connection with existing structures

SDGP projects should connect with existing government structures and align with national initiatives and policies. This creates an opportunity for stronger partnerships and makes sure that project activities support broader goals.

The **EAT:FRESH** project in Tanzania showed the value of working closely with local government. By working with local leaders in Njombe and Iringa, the project built strong relationships. This helped align with regional priorities and made sure project activities were embedded within existing governance structures.

The **Increased Potato Value-Chain Efficiency in the Great Lakes Region Rwanda** project worked with cooperatives to reach many farmers in cooperatives. This aligned very well with Rwanda's plans to support cooperatives. The project's work on improving the quality and availability of seed potatoes matched the MINAGRI Crop Intensification Program started in 2007. This shows that projects can build on long-standing government initiatives.

8. Access to finance

Access to finance remained a major challenge across all projects. Limited money and lack of bank loans often make it harder for farmers to invest in better technologies and farming methods. Several SDGP projects set up Village Savings and Loan (VSLAs) to help farmers build their savings, take out loans and manage their finances and businesses. Examples include **Transforming Nigeria's Vegetable Markets** and **ASASE** in Ghana.

Some projects helped farmers get loans from banks, such as the **Smart Farming, Healthy Food** project in Bangladesh. The project showed that climate-smart agriculture is profitable, which encouraged banks to invest in the sector. Farmers repaid 100% of their loans. This helped build trust with financial institutions, leading to better financial products for farmers. These efforts connected small-scale farmers to formal financing, reduced reliance on informal credit and supported sustainable farming practices. Read factsheet "**Business Cases and SDGP**" to know more.

Conclusion

SDGP projects show many different ways to improve food security.

This includes:

- **Improving sustainable farming:**
Making food production cleaner and better for the environment.
- **Solving supply chain problems:**
Removing obstacles between farmers and buyers.
- **Growing different crops:**
Helping farmers diversify their crops and income sources.
- **Using climate-smart methods:**
Helping farmers adapt to changing weather patterns.
- **Connecting farmers to better markets:**
Helping farmers reach markets that pay higher prices.

Successful projects often rely on strong local and private partners to achieve better results and market success. Working closely with local private partners and existing government systems is essential for long-term sustainability.

Projects also need enough time and flexibility to adapt to changing situations. Creating lasting changes in habits, building trust among partners, and seeing clear improvements in food security often take more time than expected.

Food security is complex. It needs solutions that combine economic opportunity with social impact, technical innovation with local knowledge, and short-term results with long-term sustainability. By working together, the global community can make real progress towards SDG 2: Zero hunger.



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- Public-Private Partnerships and SDGP
- Capacity Development and SDGP
- Business case and SDGP

Sources

Information is based on the final reports and final evaluation reports of SDGP projects, as well as discussions with the relevant RVO project advisors. Additional relevant information was collected from external studies financed by the SDGP [Impact Accelerator for public-private partnerships](#) and external literature.

This is a publication of

Netherlands Enterprise Agency

Prinses Beatrixlaan 2 | 2595 AL Den Haag

Postbus 93144 | 2509 AC Den Haag

+31 (0) 88 042 42 42

klantcontact@rvo.nl

www.rvo.nl

These factsheets aim to provide an overview of SDGP interventions and lessons learnt on specific themes. The factsheets are the result of an analysis performed by the Sustainable Development Goals Partnership Facility (SDGP) team, based on available project documentation. The factsheets are prepared to the best of our knowledge, but are not necessarily complete and will be updated when relevant. This article is intended for learning purposes and internal use by the Dutch government. Suggestions for updates or improvements can be shared with sdgp@rvo.nl

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