

BUSINESS DRIVERS FOR FOOD SAFETY

The Challenge

Farm products pass through many hands on their way to consumers. Some are sold closer to the point of production in village markets, whereas some move through complex systems of aggregators, transporters, storage operators, and retailers, on their way to small towns and urban centers. As it moves through this system, food is susceptible to contamination and spoilage, resulting in seriously negative impacts on health, nutrition, economic development, and general well-being.

Local businesses within this system – micro, small, and medium-sized food enterprises (SMEs) – have the potential, however, to substantially reduce these negative effects by adopting better food safety standards and practices. FTF's Business Drivers for Food Safety project (BD4FS) aims to strengthen capacities of these key actors and make them agents of positive change in the effort to reduce malnutrition, pre-consumer food loss, and overall hunger.

Our Approach

BD4FS complements other Mission FTF programs through capacity building activities targeting SMEs in the food sector. With a goal of improving access of poorer consumers to safe, nutritious foods, the BD4FS approach includes strengthening formal sector SMEs as a strategic component of overall food systems development. By investing in the development of formal market linkages that are increasingly driven by growing consumer demand and awareness – and addressing constraints to food safety both within production zones and within market sheds linked to them – USAID programs can accelerate the availability of safer, nutritious food choices for informal market consumers more quickly and sustainably than by working solely on informal production and market systems. In this way, BD4FS aims to improve the adoption of food safety practices more quickly and sustainably in the village kiosks, as well as the market sheds, than by focusing capacity building among village kiosks only.

Building incentive-based business-to-business relationships within formal food systems that are linked to food-deficit areas is key to our approach. In this way, BD4FS complements and strengthens other FTF programs that focus more on home- and village-based informal market improvements. Working in close collaboration with local experts and key institutions serving local businesses, our aim is to co-design locally appropriate, innovative, and sustainable approaches for delivering food safety training, certification and technical assistance to food enterprises. This characterizes our dual-objective approach of improving SME food safety capacities in the system, while also building local capacities to deliver ongoing food safety training and technical assistance once the project is completed. The food enterprises themselves, and the array of institutions serving them, are all part of our business-to-business model for food safety capacity building.

Consumers in FTF countries access food through two broad categories of market actors:

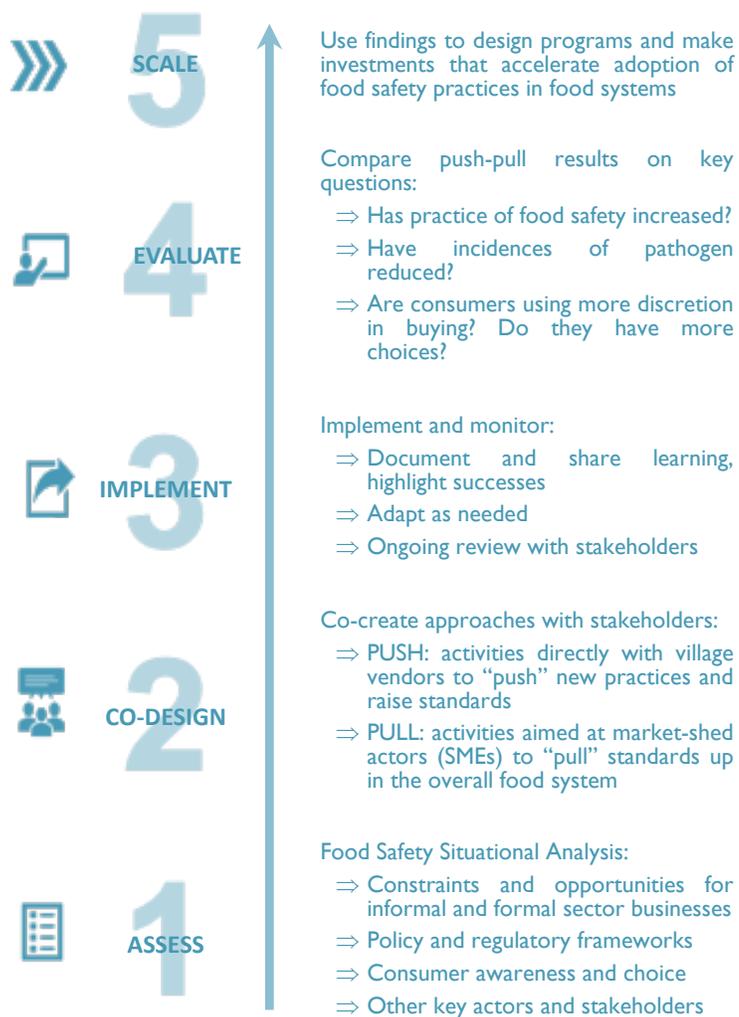
- ⇒ Village vendors and traders, largely informal, that sell in markets where base-of-the-pyramid consumers mainly purchase food, and that operate from kiosks or market stalls, with little or no infrastructure – such as cooling storage and reliable sources of clean water – to help prevent foodborne pathogens.
- ⇒ Small- and medium-sized food businesses – traders, processors, transporters, retailers, food services – that connect rural producers to consumers in nearby small towns or more distant peri-urban or urban centers; they tend to be more formalized – oftentimes registered – and subject to more government scrutiny.

BD4FS develops and compares capacity building interventions with both categories to determine most effective approaches for reducing loss and preserving micro-nutrient content.

Our attitude is not that “formal is better,” but rather “safer is better.” By helping SMEs set a higher standard of food safety practice, we can leverage their efforts to pull along other actors in the food system to a higher standard. For example, food safety training and technical assistance to food enterprises in the market sheds is, in our approach, complemented by TA and training on food safety to kiosk owners in zones linked to those sheds. To build greater momentum for food safety improvements in the communities where we work, BD4FS engages with media to develop outreach programs that target village vendors, SMEs, and consumers. We convene business owners of all sizes to facilitate dialogue about the

benefits of practicing food safety, linking this dialogue with public institutions responsible for policy, regulation and enforcement: an important goal for BD4FS is to help advance a “culture of food safety” through our work with businesses.

BD4FS Approach to Food Safety Development



What We Do

Our approach begins with a baseline assessment of food safety challenges to village market vendors and market-shed SMEs. Using a risk-based approach, we identify the most significant threats to human health – which pathogens, which deficiencies in food safety technology or practice, etc. – and work with the mission and other stakeholders to prioritize the areas we will work on during the implementation phase. This “food safety situational analysis” is then utilized in co-designing strategies and activities that help businesses accelerate adoption of technologies and practices that improve food safety, reduce food loss, and retain nutritional value of foods in the marketplace. Measuring the incidence of food-borne pathogens in the supply chain is an important indicator for the work we do.

BD4FS works in phases – beginning with assessment and culminating in a plan for scaling mission programs. Throughout implementation, BD4FS monitors, documents, and shares learning and best practices with other implementing partners and stakeholders. Our aim is for the program to be a learning experience so that all key actors can improve their impact on building safe and nutritious food systems serving all consumers.

BD4FS is funded by USAID and implemented by Food Enterprise Solutions (FES). The activity is managed by USAID’s Office of Market and Partnership Innovations (MPI), which strives to reduce poverty, fight hunger and improve nutrition by increasing the productivity and profitability of smallholder farmers through a diverse portfolio that combines market-led innovation and dissemination of technology. Through this partnership, BD4FS is co-creating initiatives that are tailored to working with USAID and the private sector. For more information, please contact Dr. Lourdes Martinez Romero, AOR, USAID/BFS/MPI at lmartinezromero@usaid.gov or Russ Webster, FES President and BD4FS Chief of Party, at russ.webster@foodsolutions.global.