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## STRENGTHENING LOCAL FOOD SYSTEMS (IMPACTED BY COVID-19) BY PROMOTING CLIMATE-RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE URBAN AND PERI-URBAN AGRICULTURE VALUE CHAINS

April 2024

SDGs:



Country:

Solomon Islands

Project Code:

TCP/SOI/3801

FAO Contribution:

USD 495 000

Duration:

1 August 2021-31 December 2023

Contact Info:

FAO Representation in Solomon Islands  
FAO-SB@fao.org

### Implementing Partners

Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL); Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MHMS); Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development (MEHRD); Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, Disaster Management and Meteorology; City and provincial councils of selected islands.

### Beneficiaries

Urban and peri-urban households, youth and women, small scale farmers and food vendors.

### Country Programming Framework (CPF) Outputs

**CPF 2018–2022, Output 3:** Food control and business practices identified and promoted to facilitate efficient agri-food value chains which provide safe, nutritious and affordable food.



### BACKGROUND

Solomon Islands is comprised of over 1 000 islands with a population that grows at a rate of 2.3 percent annually. In this context, there is a need to ensure that the personal health of the country's citizens is supported through the consumption of affordable and nutritious food containing vital vitamins and protein, and that these foods are accessible.

In 2009, in Solomon Islands, just under 20 percent of the population lived in urban centres. In 2017, this figure had increased to 23.3 percent, with the urban population growing at twice the rate of the rural population. Increased urbanization is accompanied by changing patterns of food consumption with consequent health implications, including a rise in non communicable diseases. Furthermore, climate change and disaster risk management are significant issues given the current and future impacts expected, and the associated risks posed to natural ecosystems such as coastal and marine environments, fisheries, agriculture, water resources, health, biodiversity, infrastructure, and industry. In addition, COVID-19 impacted food production and related food supply chains for food systems in Honiara and the provinces. In these circumstances, the promotion of local food consumption for healthy diets has been identified as a priority by the government.

This project aimed to support this priority area by enhancing resilient, sustainable, and nutrition sensitive value chains and diets in urban and peri-urban communities with the objective of improving food security, nutrition and livelihoods in the Guadalcanal, Renbel, Malaita, Isabel, and Western provinces in Solomon Islands.

### IMPACT

The project significantly contributed to the improvement of food security and the creation of livelihood and employment opportunities for the urban population in the agrifood sector in Solomon Islands through the enhancement of resilient, sustainable, and nutrition-sensitive value chains and diets. Through this project the urban and peri-urban communities, households, youth and women, small-scale farmers and food vendors acquired the technical knowledge and expertise to sustainably produce, supply and consume safe, high quality, nutritious food products, contributing to the achievement of the project's aim.

### ACHIEVEMENT OF RESULTS

The project was designed with a clear approach that sought to disseminate essential technical expertise and skills across various aspects of food systems, including assessment, production, safety, nutrition, and agribusiness. Technical experts from within the country and from overseas played a vital role in enhancing beneficiaries' knowledge and introducing innovative practices.

The project was structured on the basis of four Outputs designed to respond to the identified problem. These Outputs included actions and activities that aimed to: (i) strengthen the capacities of national and local institutions to coordinate and plan for resilient and sustainable urban and peri-urban agriculture value chains for food security and nutrition; (ii) strengthen capacities of value chains actors in the selected urban and peri-urban region on climate resilient and sustainable agriculture and food production systems; (iii) strengthen business and food safety capacities of stakeholders and vendors in selected food markets; and (iv) strengthen capacities of selected communities to adopt healthy diets.

The project's activities were aligned with national policies, such as the Solomon Islands Food Security, Safety and Nutrition Policy and contributed to the achievement of SDGs 2, 3, and 15. Despite encountering some delays, the project achieved significant results, including the development and publication of a national assessment report on the food system of the Solomon Islands.

In 2023 FAO partnered with the University of Wollongong and developed a report titled “National assessment of the Solomon Islands food system”, which is accessible at <https://doi.org/10.4060/cc4175en>.

Training workshops conducted in Honiara, Auki and Gizo provided theoretical knowledge and practical sessions on various topics, including climate-resilient agriculture practices, soil improvement, and model garden establishment. The workshops were well received by participants and are expected to improve production for healthy diets. Additionally, collaborations with project-hired consultants and government institutions facilitated the dissemination of technical knowledge across different areas, including post-harvest management, food safety and nutrition.

The establishment of demonstration gardens and nurseries in strategic locations, such as Honiara, Gizo and Auki proved highly advantageous for beneficiaries. These sites were selected in collaboration with city and town councils and agriculture authorities to ensure free access for those in need. Furthermore, the project organized Training of Trainers (ToT) workshops and provided technical support to enhance participants' skills in agriculture production practices, business management and marketing.

Efforts were also made to improve market management and food safety through training workshops conducted for market vendors, women's associations, and faith-based groups.

Overall, the project's achievements in raising awareness, providing technical training, and establishing sustainable food production systems laid a solid foundation for continued progress in promoting safe, nutritious diets and enhancing food security in the Solomon Islands.

### IMPLEMENTATION OF WORK PLAN AND BUDGET

The project took the necessary actions to address the challenges detected in each phase and to adapt the workplan accordingly. The implementation of the workplan involved providing technical guidance, training, and knowledge-sharing opportunities to governmental institutions, and developing a comprehensive, climate-resilient food systems approach to improve food and nutrition security.

The Mobile Market Initiative aimed to facilitate the sale of food to families, particularly during the period of COVID-19 lockdown. However, challenges arose when attempting to procure a vehicle for the initiative, as vehicles were not allowed to be purchased under the rules for Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) projects. Despite initial consultations between relevant parties, the lack of a vehicle hindered progress in operationalizing the Mobile Market.

Another aspect of the workplan involved promoting school garden schemes and raising awareness of healthy, climate-sensitive, and sustainable diets in selected schools. Although a semi-permanent nursery was established in a Gizo school, the early closure of national schools due to the 2023 South Pacific Games in Honiara prevented the continuation of the activity. Plans are in place to resume this initiative in 2024 through the development of an exit strategy to ensure continuity when schools resume classes. Additionally, awareness-raising workshops on healthy diets in Honiara and provincial workshops in Gizo and Auki were conducted, along with four training workshops aimed at promoting the consumption of safe and nutritious food.

### FOLLOW-UP FOR GOVERNMENT ATTENTION

The Government of Solomon Islands has prioritized the promotion of local food consumption for healthy diets as outlined in various policy documents, such as the Nasinol Lokol Kaikai framework 2014, the Solomon Islands Food Security, Food Safety and Nutrition Policy (2010-2015), the Solomon Islands National Nutrition and Healthy Lifestyle Plan (2007-2017), and the Agriculture and Livestock Sector Policy (2015-2019). These policies emphasize the importance of synergizing efforts across the agriculture, fisheries, health and education sectors to address food and nutrition challenges through improved production and marketing practices for small farmers.

To ensure the effective integration of project outcomes into broader policy frameworks, the government is expected to undertake follow-up actions. This entails incorporating the lessons learned and achievements of the project into existing policies and strategies. By doing so, the government aims to seamlessly integrate the project's initiatives and outcomes into ongoing efforts to enhance food security, promote healthy diets, and address nutrition challenges across the nation. This multisectoral approach underscores the government's commitment to tackling food and nutrition issues comprehensively and sustainably.



## SUSTAINABILITY

### 1. Capacity development

The project collaborated with key stakeholders such as the MAL, Honiara City Council (HCC), the MHMS, and the MEHRD. This partnership facilitated effective capacity-development efforts in agriculture, food production, and information dissemination. Through shared responsibilities, training sessions, awareness campaigns, and follow-up actions were conducted.

The government aims to integrate project outcomes into broader policies, aligning with the MAL's action plans. This approach will continue the enhancement of institutional capacities and support sustainable development in agriculture and food production.

### 2. Gender equality

The project made women visible as an important part of the target population, considering their limited access to and control over resources. In fact, more women than men attended the training activities and participated in the theoretical and demonstration training provided on climate resilience and sustainability in agricultural production systems. The project collaborated with UN Women and built capacities of women vendors in the agriculture markets to better their businesses.

### 3. Environmental sustainability

The actions implemented under the project, such as demonstration garden models and other farming practices like soil preparation, nursery establishment and composting, were oriented towards ensuring the protection of the environment for sustainable farming and marketing.

### 4. Human Rights-based Approach (HRBA) – in particular Right to Food and Decent Work

The project adopted a Human Rights-based Approach, focusing particularly on the Right to Food and Decent Work by building the capacity of beneficiaries in areas such as food production, agribusiness management, marketing skills and finance. This approach promoted the creation of decent work opportunities and access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food, contributing to overall well-being and dignity.

### 5. Technological sustainability

The project introduced new technologies that increased the capacity of beneficiaries to become self-sustainable, equipping them with the technical knowledge and skills necessary to implement improved agricultural practices. Additionally, stakeholders improved their capacity through active participation in project activities, and hands-on training covering all aspects of the agricultural process. This emphasis on technological advancement ensures the long-term viability and resilience of the local food systems.

### 6. Economic sustainability

At the time reporting, no additional resources had been mobilized; however, the sustainability of the project relies on increased income generation and production with the potential to be sustained over time.



## DOCUMENTS AND OUTREACH PRODUCTS

- **FAO & University of Wollongong.** 2023. *National assessment of the Solomon Islands food system.* Honiara, FAO. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cc4175en>.



## ACHIEVEMENT OF RESULTS - LOGICAL FRAMEWORK

<b>Expected Impact</b>	<b>Enhanced food security, nutrition and livelihoods of urban and peri-urban communities in Solomon Islands</b>		
<b>Outcome</b>	Resilient, sustainable and nutrition-sensitive value chains and diets enhanced in urban and peri-urban communities		
	<b>Indicator</b>	Urban and peri-urban value chains analysed, with decision makers, actors and consumers trained on climate- and nutrition-sensitive approaches.	
	<b>Baseline</b>	0	
	<b>End Target</b>	At least 5 urban and peri-urban value chains in Honiara, Auki, Gizo and Buala analysed, with decision makers, actors and consumers trained on climate- and nutrition-sensitive approaches by project end.	
<b>Comments and follow-up action to be taken</b>	Urban and peri-urban households, youth and women, farmers, farmers' organizations, and food vendors gained the necessary technical knowledge and expertise to consistently produce, consume and supply safe, high-quality, nutritious food products to their families, communities and markets in Solomon Islands. In addition, awareness was raised on how to increase the resilience of the food system to climate shocks and stresses.		
<b>Output 1</b>			
Capacities of national and local institutions strengthened to coordinate and plan for resilient and sustainable urban and peri-urban agriculture value chains for food security and nutrition			
<b>Output 1</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Achieved</b>
	Governmental institutions have received and discussed evidence-based recommendations to promote integrated policies and plans with a more comprehensive food system approach to food and nutrition security.	At least one multi-stakeholder dialogue (involving at least 10 governmental institutions) conducted to discuss policy recommendations from local food systems report by project mid term.	Yes
<b>Baseline</b>	0		
<b>Comments</b>	Governmental institutions received and discussed evidence-based recommendations to promote integrated policies and plans with a more comprehensive food system approach to food and nutrition security.		
<b>Activity 1.1</b>	Assess local food systems, their role in the improvement of nutrition and food security and the priority climate risks threatening the overall goal of nutrition and food security		
	<b>Achieved</b>	Yes	
	<b>Comments</b>	A national assessment of the Solomon Islands food system was carried out, and an assessment report was developed and published.	
<b>Activity 1.2</b>	Provide technical guidance, training and knowledge sharing opportunities to governmental institutions for a comprehensive climate-resilient city-region food systems approach to food and nutrition security		
	<b>Achieved</b>	Yes	
	<b>Comments</b>	This activity was not conducted as a stand-alone workshop. The topics were amalgamated and the information was conveyed in related workshops by providing technical guidance and sharing technical knowledge.	

<b>Output 2</b>	Strengthened capacities of value chains actors in the selected urban and peri-urban region on climate-resilient and sustainable agriculture and food production systems		
	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Achieved</b>
	Agriculture food value chains actors trained on climate-resilient sustainable agriculture and food production systems in the selected urban and peri urban areas.	At least 40 extension workers and 200 farmers trained on climate resilient sustainable agriculture and food production systems in Honiara, Auki, Gizo and Buala by project end.	Yes
<b>Baseline</b>	0		
<b>Comments</b>	A hundred and twenty participants attended three training workshops in Honiara, Auki and Gizo. The workshops included theory and practical sessions on demonstration gardens, the establishment of vegetable and crop nurseries, climate-resilient agriculture best practices, soil improvements and the establishment of model gardens. The training conducted was well accepted by participants and is anticipated to improve the production of peri-urban and urban food systems for healthy diets. The training was done in collaboration with the hired consultants on specific areas such as post-harvest practices, food safety, nutrition, marketing, and agribusiness. Seventy participants attended the Training of Trainers (ToT) workshops on improved handling of food produce and agribusiness practices for success.		
<b>Activity 2.1</b>	Reinforce existing demo gardens (for training purposes) in the urban/peri-urban area of each selected province		
	<b>Achieved</b>	Yes	
	<b>Comments</b>	Existing demo gardens identified and built new ones in Honiara, Auki and Gizo. These gardens proved to be highly beneficial in the targeted communities. The sites were selected by the city and town council authorities in collaboration with MAL and agriculture authorities. The sites included existing agriculture sites, women's associations and schools where access would be free for all who required assistance. Three training workshops were conducted, and three demonstration gardens (Honiara, Gizo, Auki) and five nurseries were established (Honiara: 1, Gizo: 2, Auki: 2).	
<b>Activity 2.2</b>	Train trainers (extension workers) and urban and peri-urban cooperative members on climate resilient and sustainable production practices for selected value chains		
	<b>Achieved</b>	Yes	
	<b>Comments</b>	Two ToT workshops were conducted in Honiara: - Workshop 1: Forty participants comprising representatives from a market vendors association, faith-based women's groups, women farmer associations, and schoolteachers coming from the targeted provinces, including Honiara, Guadalcanal, Malaita and Western Provinces. - Workshop 2: Specifically requested by the MAL for key government and institutional officers to be trained on agribusiness skills. The workshop was organized in collaboration with the World Bank Project, the SIART Project (MAL), and the workshop's costs were shared. A total of 30 participants attended, coming from MAL, Ministry of Commerce, Immigration, Labour and Industry and the Solomon Islands National University. The training was conducted by a FAO international agribusiness consultant.	
<b>Activity 2.3</b>	Train selected producers on all relevant practices from soil preparation to post-harvest management and marketing		
	<b>Achieved</b>	Yes	
	<b>Comments</b>	Selected producers, farmers, market vendors, women's associations, faith-based groups, teachers, and fishers were trained on all agriculture production practices, including soil improvement preparation, climate-resilient practices, post-harvest management, business management and marketing, food safety and nutrition.	

<b>Output 3</b>	Business and food safety capacities of stakeholders and vendors strengthened in selected food markets		
	Indicators	Target	Achieved
	Stakeholders and vendors trained on business management and food safety in selected food markets.	At least 300 market vendors and stakeholders trained on business management and food safety across at least five food markets by project end.	Yes
<b>Baseline</b>	0		
<b>Comments</b>	A fair number of stakeholders and beneficiaries attended training on business and food safety across Solomon Islands.		
<b>Activity 3.1</b>	Provide technical guidance and training to improve the management of existing urban/peri-urban food markets in Honiara		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	A total of 120 market vendors, members of women’s associations and faith-based groups attended training on market management, business management, and food safety. The training on improving markets in peri-urban and urban areas was carried out in the other workshop sites of Gizo and Auki by merging it with other training topics.	
<b>Activity 3.2</b>	Provide technical support to the government “Mobile Marketing vehicle” initiative		
	Achieved	Partially	
	Comments	The Mobile Market Initiative was designed to bring food for sale to families, and it was to be operated by the Honiara Central Market Vendors Association (HCMVA), facilitated by Livelihood Sector Committee (LSC). With a plan to serve Honiara City in times of lockdown and restricted movement of residents due to crisis, the initiative required a vehicle to be purchased under the project and utilized by the LSC, MAL and HCMVA to operationalize the Mobile Market. However, it was then discovered that vehicles cannot be purchased under TCP projects. Initial consultations between the LSC, MAL, HCC and the project coordinator took place, but ultimately, the activity could not be carried out because of the lack of a vehicle.	
<b>Activity 3.3</b>	Provide technical support to market vendors on business management and food safety		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	Four training workshops were conducted, and technical support was provided for all participants who attended the training workshops in Honiara, Gizo and Auki on post-harvest practices, food safety, nutrition and marketing and agribusiness management. There were also hands-on practical sessions conducted on cooked food preparation and sale, and food safety presentations on fruit, vegetables, fish, and other marine products in markets. All these were linked to agribusiness management and marketing topics. A total of 140 beneficiaries participated.	

<b>Output 4</b>	Capacities of selected communities strengthened to adopt healthy diets		
	Indicators	Target	Achieved
	Communities in the selected urban and peri urban areas have received information and training on healthy and nutritious food.	At least 300 households (including women and youth) and school staff and students trained on the production, preparation, and consumption of healthy and nutritious food by project end.	Yes
<b>Baseline</b>	0		
<b>Comments</b>	A semi-permanent nursery established in the school at Gizo in Western Province raised awareness and provided information and training on healthy and nutritious food. Several workshops were conducted to raise awareness on the consumption of safe, nutritious food. The initiative will be continued in 2024 by the MAL's extension arm in consultation with the MEHRD.		
<b>Activity 4.1</b>	Promote school garden schemes and raise awareness on healthy, climate sensitive and sustainable diets in selected schools		
	Achieved	Partially	
	Comments	Due to the early closure of national schools on 24 October 2023 because of the SP Games in Honiara, the project could not continue to promote the school garden schemes; however, plans are in place to continue in 2024. The MAL's extension section in Gizo designed an exit strategy to continue the nursery and school garden scheme when classes resume. Raising awareness on healthy, climate-sensitive and sustainable and nutritious diets among students was also addressed during the workshops in Honiara and the provincial workshops in Gizo and Auki.	
<b>Activity 4.2</b>	Raise awareness on the preparation and consumption of safe and nutritious foods		
	Achieved	Partially	
	Comments	Four training workshops that raised awareness on the consumption of safe and nutritious food were conducted.	

**Partnerships and Outreach**

For more information, please contact: [Reporting@fao.org](mailto:Reporting@fao.org)

**Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations**

Viale delle Terme di Caracalla

00153 Rome, Italy