

SECOND EDITION



THE CITYFOOD MARKET HANDBOOK FOR HEALTHY AND RESILIENT CITIES

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



FUNDED BY



This document is a deliverable of the “Strengthening local fresh food markets for healthier food environments within planetary boundaries” project.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

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ABOUT ICLEI - LOCAL GOVERNMENTS FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND CITYFOOD PROGRAM

ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability is a global network of 2,500+ local and regional governments committed to sustainable urban development. Since 2013, its CityFood Program (ICLEI CityFood) has leveraged the transformative power of food to build resilience. CityFood accelerates local and regional action for sustainable food systems, fostering collaboration across ICLEI’s Regional Offices and key global and regional partners.

ABOUT THE GLOBAL PROGRAM TRANSFORMATION OF FOOD SYSTEMS

Commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, the program strengthens local, national and global Transformative Initiatives that shape food systems for healthier diets within planetary boundaries. Taking a systemic, partnership-based approach, it focuses on governance, vision-building, solution development, and broad political and social mobilization for improved food systems.

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Foreword



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Food systems and urban development have been well-established pillars of German Development Cooperation for many years. However, the integration of urban food systems as a specific approach remains less explored. This makes this publication valuable, as it not only enriches the ongoing discourse, but also provides concrete inspiration for practical implementation.

Cities have immense potential for food systems transformation. They are dynamic hubs, home to growing populations with increasing purchasing power and changing eating habits. Complex value chains provide income and livelihoods. However, these changes come with significant challenges. Consumers demand affordable, safe, and nutritious food, climate change puts increasing pressure on cities, food loss and waste are pervasive issues, and urban sprawl often outpaces infrastructure development. Municipal administrations as key actors have to take the lead, bringing together the necessary stakeholders to establish approaches for the effective governance of the transformation processes.

To this end, the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development supports the “Global Program Transformation of Food Systems,” implemented by GIZ, as part of its special initiative “Transformation of Agriculture and Food Systems”. Through ICLEI and local initiatives in Lusaka and Lilongwe, the program empowers local stakeholders, especially women and municipal administrations, to develop practical solutions for strengthening fresh food markets and thus contribute to food systems transformation.

We extend our sincere gratitude to ICLEI and their team for this outstanding work together with GAIN and the World Farmers Markets Coalition. We are confident that this publication will reach a wide audience and inspire meaningful impact in both urban and rural contexts. By strengthening local fresh food markets, we can contribute to a more resilient and sustainable food system that benefits all communities and promotes healthier environments for generations to come.



GINO VAN BEGIN

Secretary General

ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability

Access to adequate nutrition is a human right. Yet, food insecurity remains an unrelenting challenge, and access to nutritious and affordable food continues to be a daily struggle for millions. With one in four people facing food insecurity and over three-quarters of them living in urban and peri-urban areas, it is clear that bold, transformative actions by local and regional governments are urgently needed.

ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability sees local and regional governments as champions of change with the power to shape sustainable and equitable food systems. Through our CityFood Program, launched more than a decade ago, we have been proud to lead the way in driving food systems transformation. This Program has become a hub for fostering healthy people, healthy climate, and healthy landscapes, bringing together urban food experts and committed city leaders from across the globe to co-create actionable solutions in key areas such as urban food environments, public food procurement, food education, and food loss and waste.

Among the many topics we have tackled, one that I find truly fascinating is the influence of urban food environments on diet, nutrition and health outcomes. Local governments have a unique and pivotal role to play, particularly in transforming food markets. Recognising the food market’s significance to overcome food insecurity, provide nutritious food, and ensure a sustained income for farmers, we have joined forces with other committed networks and organizations. This handbook is a testament to that recognition, offering inspiration, practical tools, and stories from around the world to guide cities in harnessing the full potential of food markets.

Foreword



LAWRENCE HADDAD

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Food markets across the world are vital, culturally infused, everyday places connecting people and the food system within cities, urban-rural landscapes and across territories and borders. They are abuzz with people sourcing, handling, storing, financing, selling, choosing, buying, repurposing, processing, and wasting food. Operating at different scales with different ownership, mandates, management and financial models, these markets involve the public, private and/or non-profit sectors, and communities. From wholesale to retail, and everything in between, these markets sell a wide range of healthy and unhealthy foods. Examples range from permanent to temporary and mobile, street, organic, farmers and municipal public markets.

Local governments, including city governments, are well positioned and mandated to lead, co-design, coordinate, implement and sustain healthy food environments. This mandate

extends critically to markets which are mini food environments in themselves. The challenges of access to affordable healthy food, good food hygiene and safety, and lower food loss and waste affect communities most intensely. Local governments can bring stakeholders together, to flip the narrative of markets solely as cost and service delivery centres towards community food places worthy of innovative financial and infrastructural investment to leverage many other opportunities for just food systems transformation, advancing nutrition for all.

This handbook inspires me because it brings together examples of towns and cities around the world where local governments are actively working with stakeholders to make food markets agents of equitable and sustainable transformation. Local food markets are the capillaries of change. If they are not functioning for improved nutrition outcomes they will remain out of reach.



RICHARD McCARTHY

President

World Farmers Markets Coalition (WFMC)

A funny thing happened on the way to the 21st Century. Humanity unexpectedly rediscovered an ancient mechanism —the public market. Whether your market is traditional, municipal, wholesale, or a newly-minted farmers market, all share one key ingredient: The multiple checkout line. This technique facilitates multiple transactions, choice, and therefore also, trust. This purposeful assembly of competing vendors in a public setting is the special sauce. We must better understand what these institutions have in common, as well as where each approach provides its own costs and benefits to leverage.

Please invest in upgrades to physical space. Vendors and shoppers alike deserve to find one another in clean and safe environments. Plumbing, electrical, hygiene, lighting, and similar investments are welcome. Many markets operate just fine without any physical permanence. Maybe it is time to enjoy the moveable feast! Unless soft infrastructure

investments in management and governance leadership are also made, important opportunities will be missed. How so? Consider this illustration. I know my way around many brick and mortar markets, but always struggle to locate the market office. Usually, it is tucked back where no one can find it. Are staff hiding from the public? By contrast, the new generation of farmers' markets are devoted to greeting the public beneath welcome tents, in order to orient and educate consumers. It is this ethos and leadership style that we must invest in.

Let the market be the first place where relationships are built and food is sold – from land to hand.

Executive summary

Urban areas face growing challenges in ensuring food and nutrition security due to rapid urbanization, climate change, and rising socio-economic inequalities. Food markets, which provide access to affordable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food, are uniquely positioned to address these interconnected issues. Beyond their function as convenient food hubs ensuring the availability and accessibility of food, markets are entry points for fostering inclusivity, supporting equitable urban food systems and resilient livelihoods, and contributing to urban food security.

This second edition of the handbook builds on the first by expanding and enhancing its content, including 15 additional case studies from cities across Africa, Asia, Europe, and North and South America. These add to the 16 featured in the first edition, bringing the total to 31 and broadening its geographical scope. This edition offers fresh insights into the challenges and innovations emerging in rapidly urbanizing contexts.



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The handbook highlights the importance of food markets as critical food environments, and serves as a practical guide to support local governments with inspiring and actionable policies and strategies to transform their respective markets. The handbook begins by defining food markets, exploring their diverse scale, operations, and focus, and offering concrete examples from cities worldwide on how they engage with markets. This includes management arrangements, infrastructure, hygiene standards, and services that define different food market environments, offering insights into how these factors influence food security and the livelihoods of market actors.

To support effective policy and planning, this handbook provides tools and strategies for assessing market environments, building on lessons learned from Lusaka, Zambia and Lilongwe, Malawi, where such studies were undertaken. These assessments enable cities to critically evaluate the state of their market environments and develop tailored strategies for improvement.

At the core of the handbook is the **CityFood Market Action Framework**, which provides a structured approach to transforming food markets in cities. Now informed by **31 global case studies**, the framework highlights actionable strategies and innovative solutions that have successfully addressed local challenges facing food markets and emphasizes opportunities to support them.

The framework focuses on **four key pillars**:

Policy and Governance:

Suggests strategies for integrating food markets into urban planning and policy frameworks, fostering collaboration across departments and government levels, and exploring partnerships with key market actors and community organizations.

Market Infrastructure:

Proposes solutions to improve and invest in both physical and digital infrastructure, and in soft infrastructure linked to empowerment through investment in training, skills, and inclusive governance platforms. These enable voices to be heard and be part of solutions, such as managing infrastructure, to tackle issues including resilient livelihoods, post-harvest losses, and food hygiene and safety.

Funding and Incentives:

Identifies opportunities to raise and/or provide financial resources to sustain food markets and to assist producers and vendors in promoting local, sustainable and affordable produce, while encouraging consumers to support such efforts.

Capacity Building and Awareness

Raising: Sheds light on community engagement initiatives, such as workshops and awareness campaigns, as essential tools to foster behavioural change toward healthier eating and sustainable consumption.

The four pillars are supported by practical recommendations within the handbook including policies that ensure equitable food access, the adoption of digital tools to improve market efficiency, and educational initiatives to raise awareness about the benefits of healthy and sustainable food consumption. The handbook concludes with case studies from around the world, offering valuable lessons on how cities can unlock the potential of their food markets. These examples showcase successful transformations, including but not limited to inclusive governance models, investments in infrastructure, promotion of sustainable food systems, and improvements in market hygiene and accessibility.

By reimagining food markets as dynamic urban spaces fostering innovation and inclusivity, the handbook provides a clear roadmap for action, backed by evidence-based strategies and inspiring success stories. It calls on policymakers, urban planners, market actors, and international organizations to collaborate in prioritizing food markets within broader urban development agendas. Aligning efforts across sectors and government levels presents an opportunity to transform food markets into powerful agents of change, addressing pressing issues such as food insecurity, malnutrition, biodiversity loss, and climate change.

Glossary

CIRCULAR ECONOMY | An economic model that preserves the value of resources by reintegrating them into the production cycle. In food markets, it involves reducing waste, repurposing byproducts, and promoting sustainable practices like eco-friendly packaging and local supply chains.

FOOD DISTRIBUTION | The process of transporting and delivering food products from producers or suppliers to intermediaries, retailers, or directly to consumers.

FOOD ENVIRONMENT | The High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE) defines the food environment as “the physical, economic, political, and socio-cultural context in which consumers engage with the food system to make their decisions about acquiring, preparing, and consuming food” [1].

FRESH FOOD MARKET | A subset of food markets that specialises in the sale of perishable, minimally processed food items such as fruits, vegetables, meats, seafood, dairy, and baked goods.

FOOD HYGIENE | All practices and arrangements across the food supply chain which facilitate food safety, ensuring that there is no harm to a person’s health during consumption.

FOOD MARKET | Place or system where food products are bought and sold. Food markets may vary greatly depending on a number of factors – including their infrastructure, size and location, the frequency at which they operate, who owns them and how they are governed, as well as the types of products they sell. For more details, please refer to Chapter 5.

FOOD SECURITY | According to FAO, food security exists “when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life” [2].

FOOD SUPPLY CHAIN | The network of activities involved in producing, processing, distributing, and delivering food from farms to consumers. When referred to as the food value chain, the focus is on adding value at each stage, such as enhancing quality, sustainability, and market appeal.

FOOD SYSTEMS | The UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) defines food systems as: “Food systems encompass the entire range of actors and their interlinked value-adding activities involved in the production, aggregation, processing, distribution, consumption and disposal of food products that originate from agriculture, forestry or fisheries, and parts of the broader economic, societal and natural environments in which they are embedded” [3].

FOOD WASTE | A reduction in the quantity or quality of food caused by the actions or decisions of retailers, food services, or consumers. Inedible parts of food, such as peels or bones, are excluded from this definition [4].

GENDER | Social and cultural construct that varies across societies and evolves over time. It defines the roles, responsibilities, and opportunities people can access and it determines how power and privilege are distributed [5]. Gender is also intertwined with other social identities (such as socioeconomic status, age, background and roles within food systems) which collectively affect how people experience food environments [6].

MARKET COMMITTEE | A governing body responsible for managing and regulating market operations, including vendor coordination, infrastructure maintenance, and rule enforcement. It typically includes market managers and elected vendors as well as other stakeholders such as local government officials, community members, food safety experts, and farmer representatives, ensuring diverse perspectives and effective oversight.

MARKET MANAGERS | Individuals or entities commonly employed by the city government, responsible for overseeing the operations and administration of a market.

MARKET MASTERS | Similar functions to market managers (defined above) on a small market scale.

VENDORS | Individuals or entities selling goods in food markets. The term covers anyone actively engaged in sales, including direct sales by farmers and resales by intermediaries. This term is most commonly recognised across different regions (e.g., compared to “trader”).

VULNERABLE GROUPS | Populations at higher risk of food insecurity, including low-income households and communities in food deserts with limited access to affordable, nutritious food.



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About this handbook

This handbook is a practical guide for local governments interested in leveraging the potential of food markets to enhance urban food security, nutrition and resilient livelihoods. Businesses, researchers, non-governmental and civil society organization representatives, and community members will also find valuable insights and lessons within its pages. It provides structured information and real city-case studies with actionable insights, focusing on publicly managed markets that operate on a regular basis, be it daily, weekly, or even monthly.

Markets stand as critical food environments bringing together multiple actors of the food system, from farmers to market managers, vendors and consumers. Food markets are typically convenient places, where food sold

is sometimes specific to groups such as fruits, vegetables and grains, and other times specific to production types including organic, agroecological and/or locally produced food.

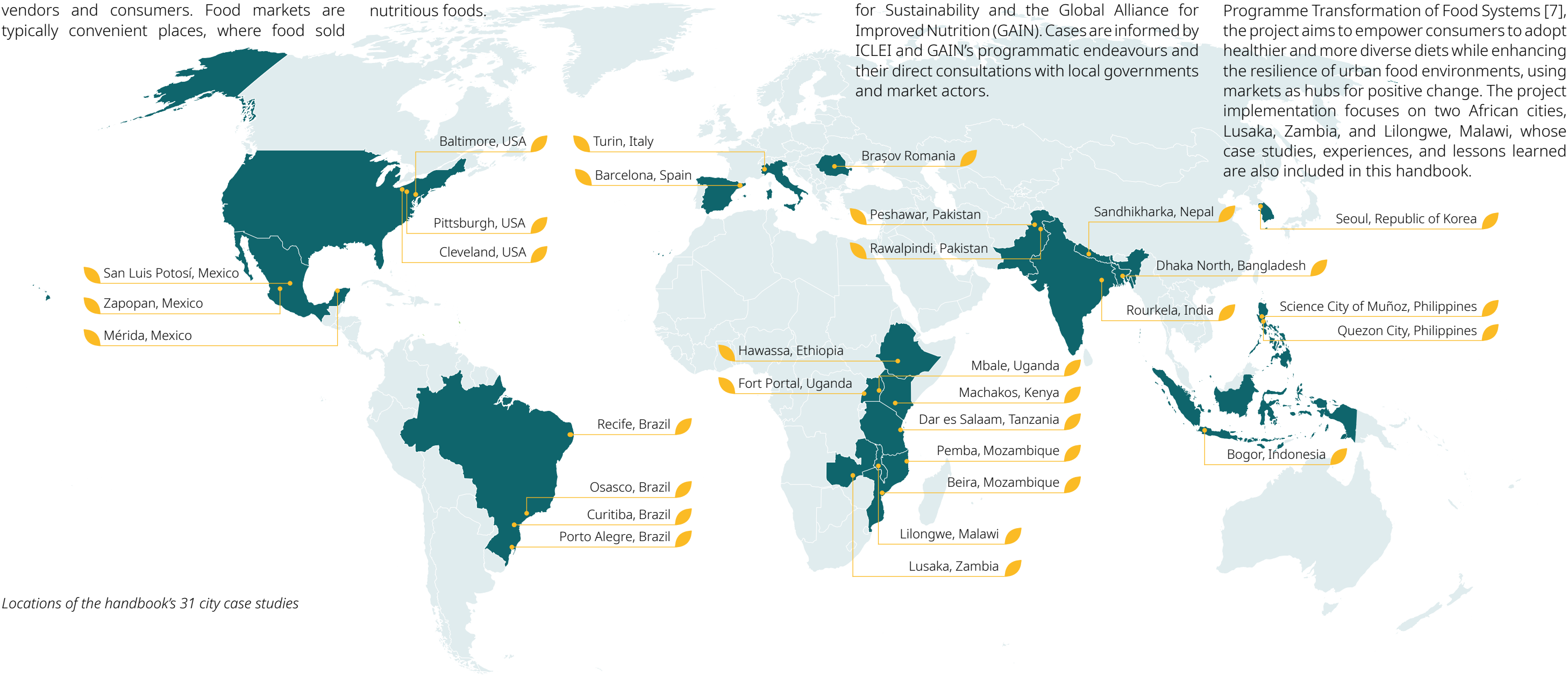
Operating at different scales and in formally and informally designated selling spaces, these markets also vary with respect to management arrangements, hygiene, infrastructure and the provision of basic services. As such, they are key entry points for localising and accelerating sustainable development and addressing inclusion and equity. When provided with adequate support, food markets can indeed positively impact the availability, accessibility and affordability of a diversity of safe, fresh and nutritious foods.

A selection of local strategies that strive to strengthen the value of food markets are showcased in this handbook. This selection encourages interested stakeholders and readers to critically assess food market environments, rethink local food systems and climate resilience strategies, enhance the effective promotion of and investment in locally led, inclusive governance and management of markets, and design and finance innovative infrastructure and service delivery models.

This second edition builds on the first, adding 15 new case studies to further enhance the **CityFood Market Action Framework**, supported by four pillars. In total, the **31 case studies** featured in this handbook were developed by ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability and the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN). Cases are informed by ICLEI and GAIN's programmatic endeavours and their direct consultations with local governments and market actors.

In the first edition, the selection of suitable cities focused on ensuring diverse geographic representation, showcasing a variety of food market-related initiatives led by local governments and their partners, and engaging cities interested in sharing their strategies. The goal was to identify exemplary practices across various sub-topics, offering insights that can be shared, scaled and/or adapted to different contexts.

This handbook is one of the outputs of the **Strengthening local fresh food markets for healthier food environments within planetary boundaries** project funded by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and supported by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). As part of GIZ's Global Programme Transformation of Food Systems [7], the project aims to empower consumers to adopt healthier and more diverse diets while enhancing the resilience of urban food environments, using markets as hubs for positive change. The project implementation focuses on two African cities, Lusaka, Zambia, and Lilongwe, Malawi, whose case studies, experiences, and lessons learned are also included in this handbook.



Locations of the handbook's 31 city case studies



What food markets are and why they are important

An increasing number of people are migrating to and living in urban areas globally. This rural-urban population transition has often been associated with urban poverty and deteriorated socio-economic conditions, leading to changes in lifestyles and diets as well as inequalities within cities [8]. These trends have also had a significant impact on how food is produced, handled, marketed, governed, and consumed worldwide [9]. In the past, keeping people fed was an important mandate of nation states, enabling governments to retain charge over spaces, people, and economies [10]. The mandate to feed people then moved to cities.

Over time, cities and urban areas have become key centres of human civilisation with unique food system-related complexities—from population densification to urban sprawl and increased distances to where food is produced.

The right to adequate food is a basic human right and at the core of Sustainable Development Goal 2 “Zero Hunger,” yet many urban residents continue to face barriers in this regard [9]. While urban diets are typically more diverse than rural diets, they tend to be lower in quality due to spatial inequalities in accessing local food markets. Although food markets are generally accessible in some capacity, urban sprawl, gentrification, and the displacement of poorer residents to more affordable areas often increase the distance and reduce the convenience of reaching established markets. This limits the availability, affordability, and accessibility of nutritious foods like fruits and vegetables, contributing to the loss of traditional food cultures. Challenges in preparing and storing nutritious meals at home and the rising consumption of convenient, but often more unhealthy foods such as ultra-processed items high in salt, fats and/or sugar [6] have also contributed to increased burdens of malnutrition in urban areas. Low-income households who form the majority of the urban population, and groups such as women, children and elderly people are particularly vulnerable to food insecurity mostly due to accessibility and affordability challenges. Notably, approximately three quarters of the world’s food insecure population now reside in urban and peri-urban regions [11].

Cities are best positioned with mandates, locations and routine engagements with communities to leverage food security, nutrition and sustainability opportunities inherent in food markets.

Some food markets were created to improve public hygiene by upgrading the physical structure of the point of sale, while others were established for competent authorities to gain greater control over commerce through the collection of fees, taxation and the control of prices. Beyond this, food markets serve as



Alto Gingone market in Pemba, Mozambique. ©GAIN

socio-cultural spaces and key sites for livelihood generation, engagement, communication and educating the public about healthy food choices. In certain regions, food markets are critical for food security and subsistence, while in others, they cater to more specialised demands, offering niche products. Additionally, food markets are important for local food systems resilience.

Bridging the gap between rural and urban areas, and more widely across territories and borders, food markets support the availability of diverse, healthy foods, drinks and non food related items and contribute to stabilising prices, shortening food supply chains, enhancing food security, and fostering economic opportunities. Unlike corporate value chains, in which not all farmers can participate due to production quantity requirements, local food markets also give farmers and vendors greater control over pricing [12].



Zooming into food markets: Types and how they function

Markets where food is sold are known by various names and framings, including public or municipal markets, street markets, territorial markets, local markets, traditional markets, organic markets, farmers’ markets and wet markets. Many more names for these types of markets are found in languages other than English —from *souks* to *bazaars*, *sabzi mandis* and *mercati*, to name a few.

Food markets can range from large, permanent municipal markets with several hundreds of vendors to smaller, temporary setups such as roadside stands, open-air markets, kiosks, or street stalls. They can vary greatly across contexts, taking diverse forms and serving different purposes. It is widely recognised that more needs to be done to bridge multiple disciplines’ interpretations, programmatic activities and evidence of and about these markets [13]. This includes definitions of privately managed markets, kiosks and supermarkets and public

and informal versions of markets where micro, small, and medium market related businesses operate from [14].



Ginger and garlic vendor in Pakistan. ©GAIN

DEFINING A FOOD MARKET

Defining a typology for food markets is challenging and may not reflect their diversity and complexity. **In this handbook the following indicators are utilized to help provide an overview of food markets, based on various lenses that can be used to observe them:**



SIZE

Markets can be large or small depending on several factors – from calculating the number of vendors or consumers to measuring their physical space.



FREQUENCY

Markets can operate daily, weekly, several times per week, or seasonally.



LOCATION

Location matters not only in reflecting the characteristics of whom the market serves and the distance participants travel to attend but also in shaping the broader social and economic roles that local markets play. While neighbourhood markets may target consumers of a particular town district, municipal markets often draw consumers and vendors from all over the region, thereby serving as economic flagships. At the same time, these markets serve as hubs for community interaction and cultural exchange.



LAND TENURE

Land tenure highlights how land ownership or rental arrangements shape the market's location, structure, operations, and access.



MARKET OWNERSHIP

A market can be owned by a municipality, private individual, for-profit company, civil society entity, social enterprise, or farmer cooperative. Ownership can serve as a proxy for the kind of issues markets may face, as well as for what sort of investments may be needed to bolster the market.



GOVERNANCE

While there is no single method for maintaining good governance, an important element is alignment in what a market intends to do with how it evaluates its efficacy. To assess the market governance structure, key questions include whether the market has operating procedures, guidelines, and/or rules and regulations to ensure its good functioning, from food safety to people's security, and whether these are published. Other elements include establishing a governing board as well as a selection committee or team to evaluate prospective vendors and mechanisms for consumer input.



INFRASTRUCTURE

Physical infrastructure provides insight into the resources necessary to operate a market. For instance, indoor markets may encounter expensive challenges from electricity to roof maintenance or the presence of public restrooms. Categories span from outdoor sheds and indoor halls to entire districts of market buildings and open-air spaces that operate as a singular market system and need to include everything to effectively function, from roads to access the space to hygiene facilities, storage, cooling facilities, and electricity sources.



PRODUCT TYPES

Depending on the kind of market, products on sale may vary significantly – from their origin (region and country versus local and global supply chain) to their production method (from regenerative to organic to conventional) to types of food (fruits and vegetables, grains, proteins, processed food, etc.).

This diversity in food retail landscapes is well represented in the 31 case studies selected for this handbook. A few examples are outlined below:

Examples from the **United States** include **Baltimore**, where municipal markets have operated for over 200 years and offer various products, including local farmers' produce, eggs, meat products, and prepared foods. In **Cleveland**, the increasing role of farmers' markets and farm stands reflects a growing consumer and farmer desire to join forces, enable direct sales, and deliver greater transparency in local food systems.

The **Seoul Metropolitan Government (SMG)**, Republic of Korea, oversees 418 traditional markets, including 52 large-scale markets with over 1,000 shops. Most, however, are neighborhood alley food markets embedded in residents' daily lives. SMG prioritizes support by urgency rather than size, ensuring small markets get what they need.

In **Barcelona, Spain**, 38 municipal markets operating daily are complemented by weekly farmers' markets, providing residents with fresh produce from the region.

Quezon City (QC), Philippines, operates eight public markets which run daily from 5:00 AM to 9:00 PM, with peak activity occurring in the early hours due to vendor deliveries from major supply points like the Balintawak and Q-Mart wholesale markets.

In **Bogor, Indonesia**, markets also serve as culinary hubs, where street food vendors delight residents and tourists with treats like *Toge Goreng* —a traditional dish of stir-fried bean sprouts— and roasted sweet cassava.

In **Curitiba, Brazil**, the market landscape is also varied and includes a large municipal market, regional market, 79 different organic and cooperative markets as well as *Sacolões da Família* (Family grocery stores) selling fruits and vegetables, which the city explicitly leverages for social inclusion and the right to adequate food.

Across Southern Africa, food markets such as open-air markets, kiosks, and street vendors remain vital to food security [15]. In both **Lilongwe, Malawi** and **Lusaka, Zambia**, open-air food markets (comprising municipal markets that form the majority, but also cooperative and private markets) play an essential role in providing a wide variety of nutritious, affordable, locally-grown produce, serving the most vulnerable and food-insecure communities.



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Unlocking the full potential of food markets: Lessons from cities around the world

UNCOVERING CHALLENGES

Food markets typically share similar functions, activities, and commercial relationships, playing a key role in shaping both local economies and societal dynamics. This commonality leads to shared challenges across countries, such as sustainability issues, food loss and waste or farmers' access to markets. Food markets also encounter unique challenges based on their specific contexts, including governance related issues, inequitable access to resources, and limited infrastructure which often hinder their potential to deliver fair prices, safe food, and livelihoods for small-scale farmers [16].

Gender disparity has also long been a challenge in urban food markets, where it shapes who earns income, who takes on the labor of food preparation, and who has access to the resources necessary for meaningful economic participation. In most markets, women vendors frequently lack access to land, secure tenure,

legal recognition, adequate infrastructure, or decision-making spaces, and financial capital barriers limit their household food security and ability to run market-based businesses [17].

- **Braşov, Romania:** The size of local farms, which are often small to medium-sized, makes it difficult to maintain a supply of goods year-round. Fresh food becomes less available and more expensive during winter, pushing consumers toward supermarkets as alternatives.
- **Cleveland, United States:** Infrastructure issues hinder the ability of the city's markets to source locally, impacting both processing and distribution capabilities.
- **Lusaka, Zambia and Lilongwe, Malawi:** Food safety and handling standards are major issues due to the lack of basic trading infrastructure and Water, Sanitation and

Health (WASH) facilities. High food wastage is also a challenge due to absence of storage facilities and limited market infrastructure.

- **Peshawar, Pakistan:** Food safety is compromised by the use of pesticides, milk adulteration, inadequate food handling practices, and inconsistent enforcement of regulations.
- **Rourkela, India:** About 34% of fruits and over 44% of vegetables are wasted annually due to inadequate storage facilities, resulting in lower revenues, food contamination, and increased water, and energy consumption.
- **Quezon City, Philippines:** The President of the Federation of Market Vendors, herself a woman and senior resident, has pointed out how women and older vendors remain underrepresented in decision-making within markets and continue to face challenges in accessing training, capital, and formal livelihood opportunities. Similar dynamics have been observed globally, where women market traders, despite making up a significant share of informal food vendors, often remain excluded from urban policy discussions [5].

EMBRACING OPPORTUNITIES

When managed effectively, food markets provide more than just food: They offer a platform for learning, for changing behaviours of producers, consumers, and anyone interacting with them. They can serve as places to facilitate business incubation for vendors as well as safe and secure places for women vendors to operate in and be a part of decision-making and governance. These numerous benefits are not automatic, instead they require intentional investment in markets and city governments, such as through capacity-building, infrastructure investment, and inclusive governance mechanisms. While the degree of autonomy may vary depending on the policy, governance structures and regulatory context, local governments have the opportunity and the responsibility to ensure access to sufficient, safe and healthy diets that are responsive to cultural preferences and

planetary boundaries as well as gender and vulnerable communities like low income urban residents.

- **Rourkela, India:** In 2021, Rourkela, in collaboration with partner organizations, launched the "[E-cool Mandi](#)" project. The initiative installed solar-powered decentralised cold storage facilities across various market locations, benefiting approximately 1,650 vendors and nearly one million residents.
- **Recife, Brazil:** The city has made significant investments in structural improvements across its market facilities in recent years, including the construction of new spaces for vendors and visitors and extensive refurbishments to existing infrastructure. These upgrades have increased the markets' appeal to residents, tourists, and collaborators alike.
- **Bogor, Indonesia:** The city designated 14 street vendor operating zones, each linked to a culinary centre. These zones provide vendors with essential infrastructure such as running water, and allow them to register as legal street food vendors. Registered vendors are eligible for food handling training, while their operations are more easily monitored to ensure food quality and safety.
- **Pittsburgh, USA:** The [Adopt-A-Lot program](#) has enabled community farms like [Shiloh Farms](#) not only to grow fresh produce, but also to provide educational programming that strengthens community connections. It has also allowed the [Mwanakuche Farm](#) to expand the range of produce available to residents, introducing varieties not typically found in Pittsburgh markets and thus enriching the city's food culture.

Local governments can create enabling conditions for inclusive, equitable and just food systems transformation by providing a framework defined by tools such as regulations, taxes, infrastructure investment, favorable vendor fees and other subsidies. However, they also need other actors within the rural, peri-urban and urban continuum and wider territories —from

producers, gatherers and fishers to markets, last mile vendors and consumers in the formal and informal food systems— to be a part of this transformation [18]. This includes their food related practices and support of local food markets and fair food prices. In this context, an inclusive governance that manages markets through cross-departmental and multi-level collaboration, ensuring that all stakeholders are engaged in decision-making processes is essential for securing food accessibility and affordability.

- **Lusaka and Lilongwe:** Both cities established multi stakeholder networks to address challenges facing food market environments. Consultations identified critical areas for intervention, including investment into upgrading market infrastructure, improving waste management, implementing cold storage facilities, and integrating nutrition awareness raising for consumers within market spaces.
- **Turin, Italy:** The municipality actively collaborates with local associations, including farmers' and trade organizations, to improve the overall management of markets. Each market is overseen by an elected "Market Committee," composed of representatives from different product sectors (such as food, non-food, and producers). These committees work with the municipality to support the functioning of their specific market areas by providing consultative input on regulations, service provision, stall allocations, and organizational matters.

Addressing the challenge of gender in food markets requires systems that respond to gendered realities. Inclusive governance mechanisms like multi-actor platforms and urban planning that mainstream gender and social inclusion, regulations that protect and empower women, and targeted investments in infrastructure and basic services are all essential. Practical measures like providing safe, clean sanitation facilities, designated spaces for women, and permitting night trading with

adequate lighting—so women can safely extend their working hours—can make markets more accessible and equitable.

- In **Dhaka**, a breastfeeding corner was set up for mothers in markets, making it easier for them to balance caregiving and work. **Bogor City** integrated gender equality and social inclusion into food safety programs by ensuring equal access to training for street food vendors. **San Luis Potosí** developed food security programs that targeted low-income households, mostly women, while additional initiatives combined food support with a gender perspective, offering personalized assistance, nutrition education, and workshops on household economy. These measures not only supported women in their daily lives but also strengthened community ties and promoted fairer local economies [19].

Targeted interventions need to be informed by initial assessments of the food environment within which the markets are embedded, as well as of the markets as urban food environments themselves. Cities, in collaboration with key stakeholders, should conduct preliminary assessments as a critical first step before planning interventions, as this enables cities to gain a comprehensive understanding of community needs, market dynamics and governance structures and functions. These assessments should include, amongst others, collecting background data on the current state of markets, identifying potential partner organizations, clarifying areas needing intervention, and addressing any health and safety issues that affect the local population. Assessments should consider the specific needs of the market community including farmers, vendors, and consumers, and cross-cutting considerations like gender, youth, urban low-income communities, and the informal food sector, with a particular focus on food security and nutrition outcomes.

Photo on the right: Kilombero Market, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. ©GAIN





How to assess food markets and identify opportunities for transformation

Various food market assessment methodologies have already been developed to better understand the functioning of food markets in cities. These include FAO's [Mapping of Territorial Markets: Methodology and Guidelines for Participatory Data Collection](#) [20], which includes sets of model questionnaires designed to facilitate preliminary market analysis and gather insights from both vendors and consumers. Another key resource is the [Guidelines for Market-Based Food Environment Assessments Instruction Manual](#) by USAID Advancing Nutrition [21], which includes a comprehensive instruction, along with data collection and analysis sheets for conducting market-based food environment assessments, that are modified to be applicable in low- and middle-income country settings.

In addition, GAIN's governance and market assessment tools, which were developed during and post COVID-19, have been scaled and

transferred across contexts, working with local stakeholders and partners, to multiple cities in sub-Saharan Africa and Southern and Southeast Asia. These tools were designed to be used alone, as part of mixed methods approaches and for participatory action research as per interest in 'whole-of-society' food systems governance and market assessment [22].

These assessments provide valuable insights into the availability of different types of produce as well as the characteristics of both food vendors and consumers, and identify key challenges that may require targeted interventions [17]. Due to their participatory nature, market assessments can foster new collaborations between food market actors and government stakeholders, paving the way for more inclusive policy making, the co-creation of platforms and initiatives, and the development of new infrastructure.



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From assessment to action: A step-by-step guide inspired by Lusaka and Lilongwe

In both cities, the food market assessments primarily aimed at understanding the food market landscape and at engaging relevant actors in the selection of markets and the design of targeted interventions. The **Methodology and Guidelines for Participatory Data Collection** was used as a basis and adapted to assess food markets in **Lusaka** and **Lilongwe**.

These assessments encompassed stakeholder mapping, articulating challenges, and compiling existing initiatives and projects aimed at improving food markets.

Additionally, this process identified transformative initiatives linked to food markets, food environments and existing multi-actor networks, and identified potential support needs. A strong

emphasis was placed on market investment readiness, assessing the capacity of the selected food markets to attract and effectively utilize investments they may receive. This focus aims to ensure the financial sustainability of the planned investment and to maximise their long-term impact. Detailed explanation of how the investment readiness was conducted can be found in the explainer document [here](#).

A successful food market assessment is one that is done in a participatory manner, actively engaging and empowering both food market actors and the community they are serving. Aligning interventions with the specific needs and goals of stakeholders that are directly involved in the day-to-day operations of food markets promotes the development of a sustainable and resilient market ecosystem. The following components are essential to consider and incorporate when designing a socio-technical intervention for food market environments.



1. DESKTOP REVIEW

Conducting a desktop review is a useful first step in the food market assessment process. In this online scoping, you can look out for key food market studies that were produced in the city, map local and international organizations (NGOs, civil society organization, philanthropies, local and national level public sector actors, private sector actors) who are doing food market-related work, any past projects that have taken place, as well as project proposals that have not yet been funded. You might find that some cities lack published information on their food markets, while others have already been well-studied. This alone can be considered a finding.

2. ONE-ON-ONE CONSULTATIONS

Through the desktop review, you should have an initial overview of the food market actors in the city. As a next step in this assessment, you might find it valuable to meet with these stakeholders one-on-one, preferably in person. When doing so, you should make sure to include local government actors, for instance, from the Health, Environment, Social Development, and Planning departments, as well as national government actors such as the Ministry of Agriculture. During these consultations, you can find out more about capacities, challenges, opportunities, and past interventions relating to food markets in the city, as well as get on-the-ground information regarding additional players in the market ecosystem.

¹ The Market Investment Readiness Index is a tool developed by ICLEI Africa Secretariat and its partners to assess the potential of food markets to attract and effectively utilize investments. By systematically testing and refining this index, the project aimed to create a robust framework that can guide future investments in urban food markets, ensuring they are better equipped to meet the needs of the urban population and contribute to healthier food environments. The refined tool will be published upon completion. For more information, contact iclei-africa@iclei.org.

3. RESEARCH

For a deepened understanding of the food market ecosystem in the city, you may consider commissioning a local research project. Key research items include: 1) mapping the totality of public, private, and cooperative food markets across the city, 2) conducting an investment readiness assessment on a selection of food markets, 3) working with the relevant department to assess the overall capacity of the market and associated business model, and 4) looking at the historical investments in the city to uncover key lessons learned.

In the cases of **Lusaka** and **Lilongwe**, the Market Investment Readiness Index was applied to evaluate the capacity of food markets to attract and efficiently utilize investments. The Market Investment Readiness Index¹ can be used to guide the evaluation of market readiness. Key factors to consider are the current state of infrastructure and services, the governance and management model of the food market, its socio-economic importance and resilience towards climate shocks, and the willingness and ability of the markets to receive and manage funding. Each of these focus areas can have a scoring matrix, which can then be combined to reach a final investment readiness rating. You may want to consider adapting these categories and weighting them according to the city's investment priorities.

4. MULTI-STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS

While research can uncover many key insights, it is important to validate emerging findings against the institutional knowledge that is built into a city. This knowledge sits with local councillors, academics, private sector players, NGOs, consumers and other key stakeholders. Conducting multi-stakeholder consultations in the form of workshops, which involve the participants consulted and identified during the one-on-one consultations, would provide a valuable platform for integrating diverse perspectives. City councils serve as good starting points for these conversations.

As many cities do not have a dedicated food systems office, it is important to create a sense of buy-in across all departments involved in food markets.

To do this, you may want to facilitate a cross-departmental engagement with local government officials to gain a more nuanced perspective of the existing or future city or ward-level projects, goals, potential synergies, or the subtle politics surrounding a particular food market.

Disseminating the research and scoping findings amongst the local government departments is an important part of building capacity and getting people to work together. You may also want to disseminate the information back to a larger multi-stakeholder group composed of all the people you interviewed during the one-on-one consultations. These feedback sessions create a sense of momentum amongst involved actors. They can be used as a critical touchpoint to validate information and get additional input on unforeseen risks, opportunities, and synergies. You may even want to formalize these groups into a Task Force (composed of city council members across departments) that

can support market interventions and a Steering Committee (made up of broader food system actors) that can provide advisory support to ensure the sustainability of the action.

5. SITE VISITS

It is recommended that all actors involved in the food market assessment take the time to visit a range of markets in the city.

The quickest way to contextualise market interventions is by visiting the food markets themselves, and talking to market leaders, vendors, and customers.

Make sure to observe correct protocols when visiting a food market, which depending on your context, could involve seeking out the market chair or section leader to announce yourselves. If they are available, you can request that they move through the market with you and help to facilitate discussion with other market actors. Take the time to listen to the vendors' perspectives on the market and let them guide you to areas they think can be improved upon.

6. CO-CREATION WORKSHOPS

The second-to-last step in the food market assessment process is to host a co-creation workshop at the food market, involving the market leaders, vendors and consumers. If you are seeking to foster changes at a food market, it is important to build a sense of ownership amongst market actors, and leverage their expert knowledge.

Start by asking the various actors about the pain points and highlights of their market experience.

Together, you can write up some potential solutions on Post-it notes. Following this, create an investment priority timeline along a single line, showing current needs on one side and future needs on the other. Place each Post-it on the timeline, each time asking the market actors where they feel it should be placed in order of priority. The resulting investment timeline will provide you with clear next steps regarding food market interventions. Note that the desired interventions may include both hard infrastructure investments and capacity building or governance support.

7. SYNTHESIS AND DOCUMENTATION OF FINDINGS

Bringing all the 6 steps together, the final step is consolidating the insights generated throughout the assessment and documenting them in a structured manner. This synthesis ensures that the evidence, perspectives, and learnings gathered are translated into comprehensive accounts that can inform decision-making and future action. In the cases of Lusaka and Lilongwe, the market assessment findings were developed into detailed reports for each city.

The full reports are available here: [Lusaka Food Market Assessment](#) and [Lilongwe Food Market Assessment](#).



Vendor focus group taking part in the co-creation workshop in Lilongwe, Malawi. ©ICLEI Africa



Transforming food markets: The CityFood Market Action Framework

Local governments have the opportunity to translate insights —whether from food market assessments or other relevant studies— into effective action. In this section, we explore how cities worldwide have adopted innovative policies and strategies to support their food markets. These examples offer valuable lessons and practical approaches that can be adapted to diverse local contexts.

Drawing on the case studies from around the world, several overarching entry points have indeed been identified as critical for cities to consider when establishing and managing food markets. These include policy and governance, market infrastructure, funding and incentives, and capacity building and awareness raising.

When brought together, the pillars of the CityFood Market Action Framework can transform how food markets operate, bringing fresh and healthy food closer to local communities.

After introducing the overarching framework, this section will dive into each of the four pillars, highlighting inspiring and replicable practices from the cities featured in the case studies.



I. POLICY AND GOVERNANCE

To ensure the existence, security and efficient functioning of food markets, it is essential to put robust market legislation, local food policies and innovative governance structures in place. In addition to improving market operations, this involves establishing a foundational framework and ensuring policy and governance that allows all types of food markets to exist and thrive [24]. Key actions include:

- Facilitating access to food markets through urban planning
- Fostering policy integration and collaboration across departments and government levels
- Establishing participatory decision-making mechanisms
- Building partnerships with external organizations

II. MARKET INFRASTRUCTURE

infrastructure investments are essential to effectively and sustainably operate food markets. These include physical and digital which are also closely interlinked with the availability of soft infrastructures, such as governance mechanisms, policies, and training. This pillar focuses on the need for local governments to ensure that food markets are well equipped and that vendors have access to essential facilities. Key actions include:

- Upgrading and sustaining physical market infrastructure
- Leveraging digital tools to streamline market operations



CITYFOOD MARKET ACTION FRAMEWORK

PILLARS OF ACTION

III. FUNDING AND INCENTIVES

Mobilizing financial resources from both public and private sectors, providing vendors with necessary funding and incentives for growth, and collaborating with market managers to develop innovative business models for food markets that allow revenue from income-generating market components (e.g., pay-as-you-use cold-storage units) to be ring-fenced for reinvestment into market infrastructure, being either self-financed markets or owned partially or totally by a public institution. Key actions include:

- Securing funds for food market development
- Connecting farmers to markets
- Enhancing food access for vulnerable communities



IV. CAPACITY BUILDING AND AWARENESS RAISING

This includes enhancing knowledge and skills among market vendors, staff, and consumers, ensuring safe and hygienic practices while promoting nutrition awareness and sustainable consumption. Key actions include:

- Strengthening vendor capabilities and incentive structures
- Mainstreaming sustainable food practices within the market space
- Engaging consumers through education and awareness raising
- Unlocking the social potential of food markets





THE CITYFOOD MARKET ACTION FRAMEWORK IN PRACTICE

I. Policy and Governance

Local governments have various policy and governance tools to effectively support food markets. Yet, achieving success in this area requires close collaboration with a wide range of actors. This includes other city departments, the food and non-food private sector together with coordination and coherency with other government levels and national policy and development strategies, including food systems and nutrition commitments.

FACILITATING ACCESS TO FOOD MARKETS THROUGH URBAN PLANNING

The location of food markets is crucial in ensuring access to healthy food, as consumers often choose food outlets based on how close and convenient they are to reach [25].

Physical location is also important to market vendors who need to ensure they can easily and affordably travel into/out of their market, as well as easily sell to consumers, and other retailers and restaurants. This is particularly important for lower-income residents, who often have limited mobility options and rely on walking, biking, or public transportation, and whose diet suffers even more from not being able to access markets [26]. Cities are responsible for determining where markets should be located, which buildings or public spaces to host them, and the permits or regulations that apply to them. By doing so in an inclusive and equitable manner, cities can improve access to food markets for all residents. To achieve this, local governments should integrate food markets into broader urban planning efforts, also considering the connectivity to transportation and food distribution networks.

The City of **Cleveland**, for instance, supports farmers' markets, farm stands and privately owned markets through its zoning codes, which require an approval process to ensure compliance with established standards. Additionally, the city implements a "[15-minute city planning framework](#)," which aims to ensure residents can access essential services, including food, within a 15-minute commute by public transport, walking, or biking [27]. Moreover, as part of the zoning code, the city's Urban Garden District Initiative ensures that urban garden areas are appropriately located and protected to meet the needs for local food production, allowing equitable access to the gardens' food supply throughout the city.

Likewise, in **Pittsburgh**, one of the most significant efforts to link land use planning with food security has been the [Adopt-A-Lot program](#). Developed as part of the city's [Vacant Lot Toolkit](#), the program aims to give residents a straightforward, affordable pathway to use city-owned vacant land for food production. Here, residents and grassroots organizations are able to convert neglected spaces into community gardens, many of which grow fruits and vegetables that supply households and local food networks, including markets.

In **Lilongwe**, the local government has formally zoned five roadside areas as "off-street markets" to allow food vendors, vital to the city's food provisioning system, to build trading stalls in an organized and safe manner, through predefined design specifications to ensure their stalls are well-maintained and do not obstruct traffic. Moreover, these vendors are now registered with the city council and contribute through regular monthly fees, formalising their businesses with the urban economy.

Similarly, in **Bogor**, the municipality operationalizes 14 official city culinary zones where street vendors sell food. In each zone, a culinary centre established by the city provides vendors with fixed operating locations, and

places where they can receive training on nutrition, hygiene, food safety and food waste supported by the Department of Health.

Likewise, **Quezon City** is implementing a "one-stop shop" model to streamline processes for municipal permits and compliance, where markets are regulated through local ordinances, zoning plans, and administrative circulars, ensuring vendors' compliance with safety and sanitation standards.

In **Hawassa**, the adoption of the Food and Nutrition Policy, along with Ethiopia's National Food Safety and Quality Strategy, improved quality surveillance systems in the food markets also through the adoption of risk-based approaches across the food value chain, and established capacity-building for inspection authorities, targeting safer environments within domestic markets.



Culinary centres in the city of Bogor provide permanent locations and essential infrastructure to street vendors. ©GAIN

FOSTERING POLICY INTEGRATION AND COLLABORATION ACROSS DEPARTMENTS AND GOVERNMENT LEVELS

The management of food markets intersects multiple mandates beyond food policy, including urban planning, housing and social services, climate and the circular economy, and as such, many different departments within the municipality have an influence on how food markets are run. Other levels of government are also often involved in aspects of the market, as is the case for agricultural produce regulations and food safety monitoring in some countries.

To effectively develop market-friendly public policies and legislation, local governments need to foster better policy integration and cross-department collaboration at the municipal level and also look into ways to collaborate with regional and national governments.



Illustration of the collaboration between stakeholders in effective food market management in the Machakos Municipal Market. ©GAIN

This process requires first to map existing policies, competencies and responsibilities within the city administration with a view to assess where synergies lie, and identify barriers food markets may face when operating within or interfacing with municipalities. Such an approach provides a solid foundation for food markets to operate securely, deliver essential services, and foster sustainable practices, while ensuring market policies align with broader urban development strategies [18].

To enhance availability, accessibility, hygiene and food safety in markets, the Departments of Health, Agriculture, Sanitation, Environment, Transport, and Urban Planning within the Municipal Council of **Beira, Mozambique**, work in close collaboration. These departments, along with representatives from a women's association and a consumer group, form the multi-stakeholder market management committee that was co-designed and established shortly after the COVID-19 pandemic. This committee has successfully operated for the past few years and offers a scalable city-market model of inclusive governance.

In **Machakos, Kenya**, where market management is the mandate of the County government, collaboration across departments and levels has proven critical in the effective management of food markets, bringing together several County departments (Trade, Industry, Tourism and Innovation; Water, Irrigation, Environment, Sanitation and Climate Change; Agriculture, Food Security and Cooperative Development; and Health) to work hand in hand with market committees, who are capacitated to support these goals and activities on a daily basis.

Another example is **Peshawar**, where several policies and partnerships aim to support the Metropolitan Government's objectives of shortening food supply chains, improving food security and nutrition, and zoning markets. Achieving these goals requires coordination across different food-related sectors and government entities, spanning local, provincial, and national spheres —Peshawar's market

committees and municipal corporations, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Food Safety and Halal Food Authority, and the Pakistan Standards and Quality Control Authority, to name a few. Collaborative efforts on stabilising food market prices, especially of culturally preferred foods, setting guaranteed minimum prices, and food safety legislation and monitoring help make food in the markets more safe and affordable.

Similarly, the **Science City of Muñoz** demonstrates the importance of structured policies and coordinated action in market management. The city has developed and is actively implementing a dedicated waste management policy, which provides a coherent framework and institutionalizes mandatory waste segregation in the local public markets. Community engagement has been a critical factor in its success with coordinated efforts across various city offices, including the Market Administration and City Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO). To make it work, clear responsibilities were established for waste management, with roles including enforcing waste segregation policies, coordinating daily collection schedules, and deploying dedicated eco-cleaners in market areas.

In **Dhaka North**, market management is typically overseen by committees comprising vendors, city authorities, and, in some cases, civil society representatives who handle daily operations, hygiene, and conflict mediation. The Dhaka North City Cooperation enforces municipal and national regulations on food safety, waste management, and vendor conduct.

In **Porto Alegre**, both conventional and organic farmers markets have been regulated as an economic activity and recognized as intangible cultural heritage. Bringing these competencies together has strengthened the markets' cultural and economic value. Tourism has also been incorporated by strengthening the "Caminhos Rurais" (Rural Paths) initiative, which combines agriculture and tourism to promote local value and community belonging. The same is happening in Turin, where the "Torino

Riflessa" initiative promotes local markets through proposed itineraries featured in the city's tourist guide.

On the other hand, **Osasco City** has strengthened access to fresh food through coordinated initiatives across multiple departments. Street markets, the municipal market, urban gardens, and the Food Bank work together to serve vulnerable populations, while programs such as the Our Future Food Assistance Card integrate social protection, education, and nutrition objectives. The integration between traditional markets and social policies has proven to be an effective strategy to expand access to healthy food, promoting social justice and sustainability.

ESTABLISHING PARTICIPATORY DECISION-MAKING MECHANISMS

While local governments can drive change through regulations, taxation, subsidies, and incentives, other actors such as farmers, consumers, food retailers, institutional buyers, and food companies hold significant influence on the food retail landscape. In many contexts, key decisions may include establishing transparent pricing systems, improving access to financial services, investing in market infrastructure, and incentivising the production and promotion of a diverse range of nutritious foods, for instance, through support for organic or agroecological farming practices [21].

Inclusive partnerships involving all actors along the food supply chain, such as farmers, vendors, consumers, processors, community organizations, and local authorities from rural, peri-urban, and urban areas, are essential for creating viable and equitable food market models that make healthy food accessible and affordable.

Inclusive partnerships can take the form of multistakeholder platforms, management bodies or advisory boards, enabling actors to actively participate, particularly during major decision-making processes (e.g., market renovations, new infrastructure, opening hours, market locations). By establishing inclusive participation mechanisms, each group can advocate for their specific interests: Vendors for the support of livelihoods, consumers for food access, affordability and public health, and community for public space and civic engagement.

A successful example is the [Good Food Council and Good Food Parliament](#) in **Mbale, Uganda**, which was established as a multi-stakeholder platform for dialogue, accountability and collective decision-making, with the goal of improving food safety in the city. One of the key outcomes from this has been the development of a Food Ordinance, which promotes safe food practices in the markets. Through this governance structure, local farmers are able to voice their needs, while other actors, including

the municipality, gain a clearer understanding of how best to support farmers in addressing challenges related to accessing food markets.

Similarly, in **Lusaka**, the Lusaka Food Policy Council (LFPC), established in 2020, has a mission to encourage and facilitate dialogue and collaboration among food-related organizations, agencies, services, farmers and food distributors, consumers, businesses, and government to develop strategies for the promotion and facilitation of a functional, sustainable food system for the city. The recent city council approved the city-region food systems office, which will support LFPC in this role.

The **Bogor** government is working together with street food vendors association leaders to establish a cross-sectoral working group, develop multi-stakeholder operating guidelines as part of the regional development plan, and capacitate local leaders on nutrition, food safety, and the reduction of food waste. This structural improvement not only promotes the

inclusion of small-scale food supply chain actors and small and medium enterprises but, in turn, enhances the availability of diverse, fresh, and seasonal foods.

Fort Portal's Food Safety Ordinance was developed through a participatory approach where market leaders and city officials contributed to shaping practical, context-specific regulations on food safety, handling, pesticide use and slaughtering practices. This inclusive process built ownership among stakeholders, ensuring that the ordinance —though still awaiting formal gazettement— is already being applied informally, improving compliance and laying the groundwork for long-term food safety improvements.

The [GAIN-EatSafe](#) initiative, in **Hawassa**, promotes stronger market governance through collective engagement. It fostered local stakeholder collaboration which also supported the development of Market Improvement Plans (MIPs) to address infrastructural and regulatory gaps. By engaging diverse stakeholders and building awareness across the community, this initiative laid the groundwork for longer-term change.

Understanding key relationships between government and markets as well as the wider food system, is essential for identifying strategic entry points for intervention. When selected thoughtfully, these entry points can help overcome constraints, address structural weaknesses, and strengthen connections across components and subsystems, ultimately generating broader and more lasting benefits [29].

This is true, especially for **Quezon City** that has institutionalized collaboration with vendor associations to ensure that market management decisions are inclusive and responsive. A central partner in this effort is the Federation of Market Vendors, representing over 300 members across eight public markets. Rather than viewing vendors as passive recipients of policy, the city recognizes them as key stakeholders whose daily

experiences provide critical insight into market operations. Through the Federation, vendors actively participate in addressing pressing issues such as rental agreements, sanitation practices, and infrastructure improvements. Monthly coordination meetings between association representatives and local government offices are held to provide a platform for continuous feedback, negotiation, and joint problem-solving, enabling policies to adapt in real time to the needs of the market community.

BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS WITH EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

Inclusive and empowered decision-making are preconditions for successful market operations and investments. However, the actual implementation and management of markets requires collaboration with a broad range of actors, such as local organizations, food recovery initiatives, and the private sector.

Partnerships can improve a program's effectiveness, increase the impact of market interventions, ensure transparency, foster greater buy-ins, and expand its reach. By adopting a systems approach that recognizes the interconnected social, economic, and environmental dimensions of food, local governments can better align investments and policies to enhance efficiency across multiple objectives, and deliver outcomes that are more equitable, sustainable, and resilient for all [29].

Several cities have partnered with the private sector to support food market management, particularly in separating, collecting, and processing food waste. For example, **Lusaka** collaborates closely with private entities to implement waste separation in its markets, as does **Cleveland**. In January 2023, the City of



Street with market stalls in Peshawar, Pakistan. ©GAIN

Cleveland launched a pilot project to reduce and rescue food waste at its historic [West Side Market](#). Partners included the [Hunger Network](#), a community food rescue organization, as well as local composting partners [Rid-All Green Partnership](#) and [Rust Belt Riders](#). The project conducted a waste audit and found that most of the food waste was compostable. Over its duration, the West Side Market rescued 2,269 pounds (1.13 tons) of food for distribution to 12 organizations and composted almost 40,000 pounds (18.14 tons) of food. Following this, the city developed recommendations for food waste and food recovery, including the installation of on-site refrigerators and rolling carts for food safety and flexibility.

Such partnerships are not limited to food loss and waste, but they can also be leveraged for advocacy and knowledge gathering. **Curitiba**, for instance, has built partnerships with the private sector to develop monitoring tools and raise public awareness on healthy food consumption. Similarly,

Dar es Salaam, together with the [Transforming Urban-Rural Food Systems](#) (TURFS) consortium, is conducting an exploratory study to inform a city roadmap to a climate smart, regenerative, circular food system that is also inclusive, equitable and just. This study focuses on better understanding food system relationships in key areas e.g., local and urban agriculture, supermarkets, and public food markets and governance with a view of developing a roadmap which reduces barriers and leverages opportunities for systemic transformation.

For **Pittsburgh's** city planners, the discussion around food markets is about reimagining food access in ways that are sustainable and equitable in the long term. For this reason, the city's Allegheny County collaborates with [Just Harvest](#), a local nonprofit to implement the Fresh Corners initiative. It helps corner stores in underserved areas stock affordable, healthy produce, ensuring walkable access—especially in neighborhoods identified as food deserts.



THE CITYFOOD MARKET ACTION FRAMEWORK IN PRACTICE

II. Market Infrastructure

A food market's infrastructure encompasses both physical and digital elements, including the facilities where markets are held, storage spaces, logistics that support the market operations, and digital platforms that enhance connectivity and efficiency.

But infrastructure also includes and requires soft components to work effectively. These include governance platforms, regulations, training for people working in and around the market, etc., which are further analyzed in the other three pillars of the CityFood Market Action Framework.

Physical and digital infrastructure plays a vital role in resilience and enhancing vendors' livelihoods, food hygiene practices, food

safety, reducing food waste, nutritional quality of food, and increasing market connectivity and efficiency. Whether markets are open-air or housed within a closed structure, municipalities can play a key role in supporting the vendors and facilities needed to set the stalls and store products, manage waste, and ensure that consumers can effectively access and utilize the space.

The level of municipal involvement in these aspects can vary significantly. In some cities, food markets are privately managed and held on private property, with the municipality's role limited to enforcing safety measures. In others, the municipality takes full responsibility for organizing and regulating the food market, managing buildings, issuing permits, and more. Nevertheless, with regards to ensuring adequate infrastructure, even those markets run by private or nonprofit entities need municipal support, whether through public-private investments,

permitting processes, or access to municipal services such as district-wide internet access, road access, street lighting, and waste services. Digital infrastructure, such as online platforms, can further enhance market operations by connecting producers and consumers, facilitating sales, and providing real-time insights into market performance.

UPGRADING AND SUSTAINING INFRASTRUCTURE

Rapid urbanization is increasing the demand for fresh produce in urban areas, placing significant pressure on the existing market infrastructure. Farmers and vendors often face challenges in transporting, storing, hygienic handling, and selling their produce. This is due to inadequate trading facilities, lack of roofing, and insufficient WASH facilities, resulting in high levels of food loss and waste, reduced nutritional quality of food and loss of potential income.

To address these challenges, local governments can play an important role by directly providing or facilitating investment in infrastructure upgrades, such as cold storage, drainage systems,

solar-powered stalls, waste management and composting systems, and energy-efficient facilities. These enhancements will ultimately help meet the growing demand for fresh and healthy food in urban areas.

The **Seoul Metropolitan Government** has focused its market-related policies on modernizing the aging infrastructure of food markets. In 2025, a significant share of the city's KRW 29.3 billion (approximately USD 22.5 million) budget for markets was directed towards infrastructure upgrades, aimed at preserving both the competitiveness and unique value of these spaces. Key measures included expanding convenience infrastructure such as customer centers, restrooms, and arcades, as well as enhancing safety through upgraded CCTV and improved fire, electrical, gas, and drainage systems. Markets are required to apply once a year to access this budget, and the city prioritizes improvements based on urgency rather than market size to ensure the public funds are directed to where they are most needed.

Similarly, **San Luis Potosí's** Promotion of Local Food Production and Processing program aims to revitalize municipal markets as safe, functional, and inclusive spaces through various measures, including physical improvements such as system maintenance, ramps, and safe pedestrian routes.

Another case can be seen in **Rourkela**, where 83% of farmers and vendors cited the lack of storage options as the primary reason for distress selling. Building on this observation, investments in cold storage and improved market infrastructure became the priority measure to prevent distress sales by farmers and created more sustainable economic opportunities for them. Through the project "[E-cool Mandi](#)," the municipality has shown significant benefits in reducing vegetable wastage and improving the livelihoods of women vendors.

Another major effort was the Model Market Upgrades in **Dhaka** by the DNCC, which introduced practical improvements including better sanitation facilities, drainage systems,

waste bins, reorganized stalls, and upgraded lighting. These changes were first tested in the Mohakhali and Mohammadpur Town Hall markets in the city. The results included cleaner, safer, and more user-friendly market spaces. Farmers and consumers benefited from more direct connections, decreasing reliance on traders. The upgraded markets also supported food safety and nutrition by making fresh produce healthier and more affordable.

A number of cities have implemented programs to separate organic waste in food markets and recycle it into compost, which can later be used as fertiliser for urban agriculture and gardens. For instance, **Lusaka** has introduced bio-digesters in markets and transformed a former dumpsite into a well-managed facility where waste is processed and repurposed. Other cities like **Barcelona** have implemented recycling programs to ensure organic waste collection in municipal markets.

Some cities have explored and implemented innovative strategies and temporary infrastructure to ensure a consistent supply of fresh food to local communities, as exemplified by Braşov. With only one food market serving a population of 47,500 inhabitants, **Braşov** faced challenges in providing accessible, healthy food to its most vulnerable residents. To address this, the municipality invested in pop-up markets ("flywheel markets"), taking place weekly in the city's outskirts, including in its most economically disadvantaged neighbourhoods, offering a regular supply of fresh foods to lower-income households.

LEVERAGING DIGITAL TOOLS TO STREAMLINE MARKET OPERATIONS

Beyond physical infrastructure, local governments can also leverage technology to improve management of both physical and virtual markets. These include optimizing operations for food market actors across the spectrum, strengthening market accessibility, improving connection between farmers and consumers, and gaining valuable insights into market performance through data-driven approaches.

One such approach involves setting up digital platforms to directly connect producers and consumers and facilitate market sales. **Braşov** is in the process of launching an online platform that will allow consumers to pre-order farmers' produce and get it directly delivered to the market.

In **Curitiba**, the Municipal Secretariat of Food and Nutritional Security (SMSAN) collaborates with the Curitiba Social Action Foundation to make electronic vouchers available to vulnerable families purchasing food at [Family Warehouses](#), which are subsidised food retail centres serving 388,000 families. As part of broader efforts to modernize the markets and improve their efficiency and accessibility, **Baltimore** helped streamline operations and facilitate payment methods for vendors and farmers by implementing a unified point-of-sale (POS) system across the city's markets, with the sales data generated also being used to support bids for new investment.

Turin municipality launched two applications, one for consumers and the other one for vendors. The first, [TorinoMercati](#), provides up-to-date information about the city's markets, including historical insights, fun facts, and geolocation to help users find the nearest one. The app also provides direct access to each market's home delivery platform, currently in its pilot phase, with a real-time showcase of available products and prices. TorinoMercati has been widely embraced across the city, supported by a broad promotional campaign that included large-scale advertising and branded merchandise. The second app, [Merc@to](#), is for vendors to pay for their stall daily and only when they actually use it, unlike the previous system where they had to pay an annual subscription, regardless of the time they actually used the stall.

In addition to such infrastructure provisions, local governments also play an important role in enabling supportive environments and establishing regulations for digital spaces, most notably for food safety. In **Bogor**, the rise of food online digital marketplaces like [Go-Jek](#) and [GrabFood](#) has facilitated expanded opportunities



Rourkela's cold storage facilities. ©Pratham Parida, Koel Fresh Private Limited



Fresh food trader. Lizulu Horticulture Market, Lilongwe, Malawi. ©ICLEI Africa

for street food vendors by providing both physical and virtual platforms, increasing access to their offerings and raising awareness of local culinary foods. However, food safety remains a challenge, particularly in digital marketplaces where consumers lack full transparency into vendors' operations. To address this, the city is developing a multi-stakeholder platform to improve food safety, nutrition, hygiene, and waste reduction among street food vendors.

Quezon City has introduced digital payment options, such as PalengQR, to help modernize vendor operations and encourage broader participation, especially among younger entrepreneurs. The city also introduced the QC e-Services Kiosk where residents from Quezon can access services such as the [Business One-Stop Shop](#) (an initiative designed to streamline and simplify business-related transactions, allowing business owners to conveniently apply for, renew, and amend their permits and licenses through a digitalized system), [QCitizen ID](#), QC Vax Easy, occupational and health permits.



Financial support for food market actors is critical to facilitate the sale of affordable, fresh, and locally sourced products. Public financing mechanisms (which can be complemented by private sector investments) may take various forms from investing in infrastructure upgrades to providing technical expertise and support, offering market stalls at no or minimal cost, and supporting access to healthy food through food-purchasing assistance programs.

SECURING FUNDS FOR FOOD MARKET DEVELOPMENT

In order to support access to markets (physical and economic) for both producers and consumers, and to upgrade the market infrastructure, municipalities can partner with private investors or leverage public financing opportunities. In the past two years, **Baltimore** has thus successfully raised over USD 2 million for redevelopment projects through

a combination of federal and state grants as well as non-governmental grants. These funds have enabled the city to lower barriers for new businesses by reducing startup costs, in addition to facilitating [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program \(SNAP\)](#) authorization. The unified POS systems also helped support fundraising efforts, by offering accurate sales data on the market in its totality to provide insights on its performance.

Similarly, **Pemba's** municipal government policy emphasizes partnerships by working together with local and international non-profit organizations. Supported by funds from the Norwegian government and by GAIN for the actual implementation, the city constructed a hybrid wholesale-retail public food market in 2023-2024. The physical market structure and climate-resilient infrastructure, including cold rooms, were complemented by capacity and co-design solutions investment in enabling

conditions, such as, management training, financial payment mechanisms and food safety practices. Together, these measures aim to improve access to safe, diverse, nutritious foods while supporting vendor livelihoods and the health of vendors and consumers.

Turin successfully upgraded market infrastructure and financed promotional initiatives by leveraging multiple funding sources to complement its own budget. A significant contributor was the municipality's "dedicated fund for the support, promotion, and revitalization of the local economy," financed by large-scale retail distributors. Since 2010, retail chains wishing to open new outlets in the city have been required to contribute a percentage of their investment to offset the potential negative impact on local businesses.

CONNECTING FARMERS TO MARKETS



Providing tailored support to local and smallholder farmers is critical to help them overcome common barriers such as inadequate infrastructure, access to finance, or limited market reach.

Supporting local and smallholder farmers can take the form of financial assistance (e.g., microloans or subsidies for market stall setup) but also in-kind support (e.g., designating a portion of market stalls for their use, offering mentorship programs, or providing logistical support). Promotion of local products within the markets and throughout the city can also enhance visibility and sales [24, 25, 28, 30].

Merida's **Círculo 47** supports local producers and promotes short supply chains by connecting them to fair markets, adding value to their products, scaling up production, and highlighting their bio-cultural heritage. After an agricultural census in June 2023, the program established a baseline and identified 17 production categories, ranging from livestock and crops to honey,

tortillas, and value-added goods. To date, **Círculo 47** has facilitated 250 connections between 76 producers and markets.

Similar approaches can be seen in **Braşov**, the city supports local farmers by prioritising their access to market stalls, applying a discount rate, and allowing them to only pay rent for days they actively use the space. Likewise, **Cleveland** has implemented the [Gardening for Greenbacks Program](#), which supports economic development for urban farmers and food businesses, offering up to US \$5,000 in grants and supporting farmers in the form of infrastructure, garden tools, or supplies needed to expand and sell to local markets.

In the markets of **Science City of Muñoz**, most vegetables come from nearby districts (barangays), while livestock, especially pigs often arrive from other provinces. To strengthen local farming, the City Agriculture Office supports farmers by providing seeds and other inputs, offering training programs, monitoring prices, and promoting sustainable practices like turning rice husks into biomass.

Similarly, in **Sandhikharka Municipality**, the Vegetables Production and Marketing Group (VPMG) brings together around 400–500 women vegetable producers from the city and nearby rural areas, helping them reach markets and engage with municipal authorities more effectively than they could on their own.

ENHANCING FOOD ACCESS FOR VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES

Providing financial incentives to consumers — such as vouchers— can also prove particularly effective in supporting low-income households' access to local fresh and healthy food. Based on this observation, many countries and cities have implemented food assistance programs and policies. **Baltimore**, for instance, works with the U.S. Department of Agriculture on the [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programme \(SNAP\)](#), a national program aiming to provide food-purchasing assistance for low-income

households. The city has facilitated SNAP authorizations so that almost every market accepts SNAP payments to expand access to fresh food. Other municipalities across the U.S. have also fostered SNAP through legislation requiring all markets in their jurisdiction to partake by funding the infrastructure and technology needed for markets to accept and process these benefits or via matching programs to supplement federal funding.

In **Pittsburgh**, the [Food Trust's Nutrition Incentives program](#), offering Food Bucks, helps make fresh produce and other healthy foods accessible and affordable. Food Bucks are primarily SNAP incentives earned at the point of purchase by shoppers paying with SNAP, and FBRx produce prescriptions are distributed to patients by their healthcare providers.

In **Curitiba**, which placed the human right to adequate food at the centre of its food policy, Family Markets offer high-quality fruits and vegetables at affordable prices in areas identified as food deserts, strategically located near bus terminals and Family Warehouses, making them easily accessible to city residents. The [Food Bank and Solidarity Table](#) initiative also redirects edible food rescued from public facilities to provide free, dignified, and safe food to socially vulnerable people. Food Bank and Solidarity Table beneficiaries are supported by the [Food and Nutritional Security Schools Project](#), which launched a social incubator in which residents can access professional training courses and job opportunities in collaboration with educational institutions, commerce, and industry to reach higher levels of social emancipation.

Quezon City is committed to enhancing access to markets for vulnerable communities by systematically integrating Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) considerations into all stages of program planning and implementation. This entails the development of GESI-responsive livelihood support initiatives, the establishment of clear performance indicators coupled with regular outcome

evaluations, and strategic investments in digital tools and capacity-building programs aimed at empowering women, youth, and senior residents. Furthermore, the institutionalization of disaggregated data collection, alongside the designation of GESI focal points within local organizations, will serve to ensure that programs not only reach but also adequately address the specific needs of the most vulnerable and underrepresented groups within Quezon's food and market systems.

In **Sandhikharka Municipality**, the Southasia Institute of Advanced Studies (SIAS) carried out a 2.5-year project called "Co-producing a Shock Resilient Business Ecosystem for Women-led Enterprises (CREW)." The project worked with women entrepreneurs to strengthen their resilience across social, political, environmental, economic, and technological areas. Key support included access to business information, digital tools, financial literacy training, branding, and e-commerce platforms to help women-led enterprises withstand shocks. CREW was further supported by the [Gender Equality in a Low Carbon World \(GLOW\) Program](#), which focused on gender-inclusive, low-carbon, and technology-driven solutions for women farmers. Through mobile-based information systems, digital training, and e-commerce linkages, GLOW helped women farmers improve market access, strengthen financial skills, grow their businesses, and adopt more environmentally sustainable farming practices.



THE CITYFOOD MARKET ACTION FRAMEWORK IN PRACTICE

IV. Capacity Building and Awareness Raising

While adapting the policy framework and investing in physical infrastructure are essential pillars to support food markets, they alone do not suffice to raise the sale and consumption of good quality and healthy food. In that regard, **local governments are instrumental in influencing both what vendors promote and sell, and what consumers choose to buy.**

STRENGTHENING VENDOR CAPABILITIES AND INCENTIVE STRUCTURES

Food vendors are vital to urban economies in most emerging economies, providing self-employment to millions. However, many face challenges such as limited business and nutrition literacy skills, alongside constraints in accessing formal credit, which restrict their ability to tap into new market opportunities and leave them vulnerable to economic shocks [31]. In addition, unlike high-income countries, which typically have well-established systems

for regulating and enforcing food hygiene and safety, many low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), especially at the local and city level, lack the resources (funding, knowledge, tools) skills and/or infrastructure to take proper care of food hygiene and food safety [32]. This area connects central issues such as costs and benefits of vendors' businesses to food hygiene skills, nutrition, reduced food waste goals, market infrastructure investment, provision of basic services like water, and food systems governance [22,33].

To facilitate compliance and implement enforcement of food safety related regulations it is necessary to provide the conditions — the infrastructure, the access to them and the training to use them— for vendors, market committees, city government officials and others, to successfully achieve these requirements. However food hygiene and safety often depends on the actions of supply chain actors, related

traceability, and consumers's behavior. This responsibility falls particularly on market vendors, who are one key actor in the food supply chain being in direct contact with consumers and thus being solicited on food hygiene and safety. On the other hand of the supply chain, increasing consumer awareness through campaigns and education offers a further dimension to food hygiene and safety interventions.

Increasingly cities in LMICs are implementing a variety of food hygiene and food safety initiatives to support vendors and attain required standards.

In **Mbale**, the city council thus provides training and extension services to farmers aimed at improving agricultural practices, knowledge on timely harvesting, safe food handling practices and appropriate storage methods. To further enhance food safety practices, the [Good Food for Cities \(GF4C\) programme](#) facilitated a food safety training program and invited vendors to put what they had learned into practice by participating in a competition. Such programs, taking a holistic approach to addressing food safety by implementing market upgrades and training, have shown to be effective in shifting the perspectives of consumers and vendors towards improved food safety and hygiene practices.

In **Beira**, leadership initiatives such as the Good Food Campaign promote food hygiene and safety practices among market vendors who are voluntary campaign members. A combination of market infrastructure investments over recent years, including WASH structures, food safety training, and the city council led design and implementation of the multi-stakeholder market management committee; further support resilient markets by providing a safe, clean food space with hygienic practices to the benefit of vendors and consumers, including in some of the most vulnerable community areas of Beira.

Hawassa introduced a comprehensive food safety program in Aroge Gebeya market through the GAIN-EatSafe initiative, combining

behavior change strategies with vendor training conducted in the market. Through culturally resonant messaging delivered through community radio, posters, and public events, the program successfully raised awareness of hygiene and food safety, particularly among women, who make up the majority of vendors and customers. At the same time, short and flexible training sessions within the market provided practical guidance on food handling, hygiene practices, and storage methods, supported by the distribution of low-cost materials such as soap, disinfectants, water purification tools, and colour-coded crates. This integrated approach helped vendors strengthen their capacity to comply with food safety standards while fostering safer market environments for consumers.

To improve the safety of the food sold, **Fort Portal** has officially recognized vendors as vital contributors to the food system. The municipality has registered and mapped the vendors by name and street location, and then clustered them near water and sanitation facilities. A cost-sharing scheme enabled vendors to obtain food handling gear such as aprons, improving hygiene standards and strengthening customer trust. At the same time, linkages with agroecological farmers have enhanced the quality of food sold in the markets.

To enhance local vendors' skills, **Quezon City** launched the first-ever [Vendor Business School](#) (VBS), a joint project of the CGIAR Resilient Cities Initiative and the Quezon City Government. The program was designed to equip vendors with essential business skills to improve their livelihoods. Over the course of 10 weeks, vendor-students attended group sessions covering key topics such as business record-keeping, sales growth strategies, food safety, customer relations, leadership, climate change adaptation, and crop seasonality. To complement these classes, the program also provided three months of one-on-one coaching, giving vendors personalized guidance to strengthen and apply what they learned.

MAINSTREAMING SUSTAINABLE FOOD PRACTICES WITHIN THE MARKET SPACE

Municipalities have a critical role in incentivizing market managers, committee leaders and food group leads, and vendors to sell nutritious, sustainably produced food. They should also promote such produce within the market space and encourage sustainable practices, such as reducing and effectively managing food waste. Recognizing this, **Barcelona** launched its [Green Commerce](#) initiative which trains and incentivizes vendors to sell local and organic produce sourced directly from farmers and local fish markets. This program, which has now been extended to all the city's municipal markets, also encourages vendors to collaborate with food banks in order to tackle food waste.

This issue has also similarly been tackled by SMSAN in **Curitiba** through initiatives such as the [Food Waste Reduction Project](#). Following a diagnosis that identified usable organic waste generated at public markets and fairs, social institutions were mapped and registered to which edible foods could be redirected. To support these efforts, the city provides vendors with training on food separation to encourage an increase in food donations, as in the Curitiba Municipal Market, which aims to become the country's first zero-waste market. Moreover,



Blue stalls signaling resellers at the Astra Market.
©Andrei Paul, Braşov Municipality

the Metropolitan Region Food Development Program provides technical and institutional support to local family farmers and thus facilitates their access to markets.

Similarly, **Zapopan** is looking into developing spaces in municipal markets for the sale of produce that does not meet supermarket aesthetic standards. This initiative arises from the city's latest waste diagnosis, which revealed that a significant portion of discarded food was still in good condition for consumption.

In **Turin**, the RePoPP project offers another innovative response to food waste while promoting social inclusion and solidarity. The initiative, led by a local non-profit association, engages young migrants in precarious situations in collecting surplus food at the end of the market day. This food is then distributed for free at a dedicated stand for low-income families. Any remaining items are repurposed, cooked, and made available the following afternoon to those in need.

Beyond training programs, additional tools can be explored, such as in **Lusaka**, which launched a campaign to mandate vendors to clean markets on the last Saturday of each month. The **Science City of Muñoz** manages waste in its public markets with CENRO enforcing mandatory waste segregation at the source, supported by dedicated collection personnel and eco-cleaners. Waste is collected twice daily, and eco-cleaners maintain cleanliness throughout market operating hours. Market vendors are required to separate their waste into designated trash and compost bins, with non-compliance subject to a PHP 500 (USD 8.73) fine for the first offense. Collected waste is transported to the Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) for processing and diversion.

ENGAGING CONSUMERS THROUGH EDUCATION AND AWARENESS RAISING

Collaborating with market leaders and vendors is critical in helping to shape markets as food environments which offer consumers many

healthy, safe and affordable food choices. However, it is also important to complement this with consumer awareness and education to facilitate more informed food choices. This is why a number of cities have decided to organize market tours or school visits to harness the potential of markets as spaces of learning and awareness raising.

Braşov organizes food market tours —among adults and children— to raise awareness of the benefits of eating fresh, local and seasonal products. In **Barcelona**, similar tours are organized for pupils to learn about sustainable food consumption and ways to prevent food waste. Both cities also put in place a dedicated labelling or colour-coding system to make it easier for consumers to identify farmer stalls. In addition, **Barcelona** complemented these efforts by rolling out a broader advertising campaign around the importance of local products for cooking traditional and seasonal dishes.

In **Pittsburgh**, the [Food Trust's Healthy Corner Store Initiative \(HCSI\)](#) and Heart Smarts program collaborate to ensure that residents have access to nutritious food and information to choose healthier options in their local corner store. By providing in-store nutrition education, targeted incentives, and technical assistance, the programs support store owners in transforming their businesses into accessible community health hubs.

Some cities have chosen to focus their awareness-raising efforts on specific groups and thematic areas. In **Bogor**, for example, most schoolchildren purchase their daily snacks and meals from street food vendors. To promote healthier diets and encourage informed food choices, the city has launched several programs to improve childhood nutrition at home and in schools. These campaigns —such as [Eat Fish on Friday](#), the [National Breakfast Week](#), the [Safe Food Movement](#), and the [Healthy Schools Campaign](#)— help connect city-level initiatives with national efforts. In collaboration with the Bogor Municipal Government, the Ministry of

Cooperatives and Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (MSMEs) actively promotes local food systems and micro-businesses, including those within city street markets. This includes initiatives like festivals that showcase local produce, such as the Koro bean. During the COVID-19 pandemic, in a time where markets were key in ensuring urban residents had access to food, the **Dhaka North** City Cooperation also leveraged its markets as institutions to promote public health through food safety campaigns and trainings on hygiene and waste management.

UNLOCKING THE SOCIAL POTENTIAL OF FOOD MARKETS

As urban spaces, food markets can be leveraged further as an essential component of a city's social fabric.

Food markets bring all types of populations across genders, ages, and socio-economic classes together and represent spaces of social cohesion, dialogue, and the celebration of local food cultures.

To unlock the often untapped potential of food markets, local governments can begin by analyzing consumer patterns and socio-economic profiles across different markets to tailor programs to diverse needs. In **Braşov**, for example, research revealed that permanent markets are more popular among the elderly, while pop-up markets attract families. This insight allowed the city to customize social activities —such as tastings and music events— to better match the preferences of different consumer profiles.

Similarly, in **Barcelona**, municipal markets hosted over 500 cultural and gastronomic events in 2023 alone and organized market tours for over 7,000 students. In **Recife**, public markets serve as vibrant hubs for tradition, culture, and cuisine. During Carnival season, markets gain even more

prominence, hosting decentralized events that attract both tourists and locals. The same occurs during the region's traditional São João festival in June, when CONVIVA Mercados e Feiras, the municipal authority managing markets and fairs, integrates its facilities into the artistic lineup with itinerant performances.

In **Rawalpindi**, "Food Streets" are an innovative way in which the Rawalpindi Development Authority is attempting to reimagine street food for vendors and consumers through better

planning, investment and modernization. An approach increasingly adopted by other cities throughout the Punjab Province, these initiatives aim to establish Food Streets as socio-cultural hubs and economic zones, capturing the city's historic value and providing desirable places of food, tradition, social interaction and livelihood generation. In Rawalpindi, the New Kartarpura Food Street at Chandni Chowk was recently opened, serving as a family-friendly marketplace whose design was inspired by Ramadan food festivals.



Market stall in Recife, Brazil. ©Divulgação CONVIVA/PCR



Photo on the right: Lizulu Horticulture Market, Lilongwe, Malawi. ©ICLEI Africa



Case studies: Cities transforming their food markets around the world

The following 31 global case studies provide concrete examples of how local governments from Africa, Europe, North America, South America, and South Asia have developed strategies and innovative solutions to address challenges in food markets. They served as inspiration for the four pillars of the CityFood Market Action Framework. Jointly developed by ICLEI and GAIN, with valuable contributions from cities and regional partners, the case studies reflect a rich geographic diversity from across the ICLEI and GAIN networks, offering a suite of solutions that can apply to different contexts. The selection prioritized local government-led

initiatives, aiming to identify good practices across various sub-topics that could be shared and replicated.

These case studies not only showcase innovative solutions but also highlight the power of collaboration and local leadership in transforming markets. Cities can shape the future of food markets through policy, infrastructure, and innovation, influencing what is grown, traded, and consumed. By learning from these experiences, urban leaders can adapt and scale impactful strategies that foster sustainability, resilience, and inclusivity.



Baltimore, USA

GOVERNANCE & MARKET CONTEXT

Baltimore is home to one of the oldest continuously operating public market systems in the United States, with six historic public markets serving the city for over 200 years. Initially focused on fresh produce, these markets have diversified over time to include a mix of local farmers' goods, produce aggregators, and prepared food vendors. Each market is unique, providing a wide array of fresh foods, with most offering access to [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programme \(SNAP\)](#) benefits, USA's largest nutrition assistance program. In addition to its public markets, Baltimore hosts a robust network of farmers markets, which play a vital role in the city's local food system. Among these, the Baltimore Farmers Market stands out as the largest in the state of Maryland, serving as a community cornerstone for 47 years. Building on this legacy, the city plans to launch a new outdoor farmers market on repurposed city land in the coming year. This market will focus on offering eggs, poultry, and locally sourced beef and lamb, further enhancing access to fresh, regionally produced foods.

Baltimore's public markets are managed by a quasi-city agency that operates independently but collaborates with a board of directors. This agency, supported by a 12-person administration



556,723
inhabitants



239 km²
city's surface

MOST IMPORTANT ECONOMIC SECTORS

- Financial and professional services
- Health and bioscience technology
- Culture and tourism
- Information and creative services
- Logistics
- Advanced manufacturing

DID YOU KNOW?

Baltimore is home to the oldest continuously operating public market in the U.S., with Lexington Market founded in 1782 —serving flavors and history for over 240 years.

Photo: Baltimore Lexington Market. ©Abigail Lammel

team, handles all aspects of market operations, including maintenance, Point of Sale (POS) systems, and small business support. In addition, Baltimore plays a key role in organizing an annual convention alongside a dedicated group of individuals who manage local and farmers' markets. This event attracts participants from surrounding regions, offering a platform for learning, networking, and sharing innovative solutions that benefit the broader community.

CHALLENGES

Baltimore faces a significant challenge with food deserts, with limited grocery stores across the city. While public and farmers' markets aim to address this issue, the high cost of local produce remains a barrier, and partnerships with community development organizations remain

vital. Additionally, Baltimore aims to expand access to fresh food by increasing the reach of SNAP infrastructure and license on behalf of multiple markets.

Over the past decade, small-scale independent farmers have been retiring and closing up operations, and it is becoming difficult to integrate new farmers into municipal markets. Active farmers have found limited capacities to operate stalls themselves, leading to the local produce being sold by vendors instead. To address this challenge, there is a recognised need for more comprehensive support to these municipal markets, and redevelopment efforts are underway to improve access to healthy food in economically depressed areas. Partnerships charitable foundations are being explored to secure grants for these community development projects.

POLICIES AND INITIATIVES

Baltimore's Food Policy and Planning Division, supported by experts in food access, resilience, and systems planning, is at the forefront of building a fair and sustainable urban food system. Through the [Baltimore Food Policy Initiative \(BFPI\)](#), the division focuses on three core pillars: fostering interagency collaboration, coordinating the [Food Policy Action Coalition \(Food PAC\)](#), and engaging [Resident Food Equity Advisors \(RFEA\)](#). These efforts work together to address disparities in health, economics, and the environment, particularly in communities facing high levels of food insecurity.

The division's approach prioritizes four key strategies. First, it uses policy to create a more equitable food system by integrating food considerations across government initiatives and collaborating with residents on research, planning, and policy-making. Second, it builds resilience at individual, community, and systemic levels by tackling urgent food needs while fostering long-term sustainability and equity. Third, the division supports and amplifies the local food economy through initiatives like ["Good Food Procurement"](#) standards and programs

that back local food businesses and recovery efforts. Finally, it promotes urban agriculture by identifying and making city-owned land available for farming, creating pathways to land ownership, and supporting growers in adopting sustainable, responsible, and profitable practices. These efforts reflect Baltimore's commitment to ensuring food equity and resilience for all residents.

Baltimore's public and farmers' markets operate under strict regulatory frameworks. Businesses must be registered federally and at the state level and obtain a city food licence to operate in the markets. These businesses are also subject to regular inspections to ensure compliance with food safety standards. The markets are currently implementing unified POS systems to streamline operations, and to help ensure accurate sales data, facilitate diverse payment methods, and enable efficient tracking of customer retention metrics. This technological advancement is part of broader efforts to modernise the markets and improve their efficiency and accessibility, with the data generated also being used to support bids for investment and the viability of markets.

RESULTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

In the past two years, Baltimore has successfully raised over USD 2 million for redevelopment projects through a combination of federal and state grants as well as non-governmental grants. These funds have enabled the city to lower the barriers for new businesses by reducing startup costs, facilitating SNAP authorisation, and hiring a Food Equity Manager. To effectively secure funding for food market initiatives within the city, Baltimore recommends several strategies, including hiring a dedicated development person or outsourcing grant writing, staying current with policy changes and grant opportunities, and utilizing leases, and a unified POS system for aggregated information on market sales, payment methods, and customer retention metrics.



Barcelona, Spain

GOVERNANCE & MARKET CONTEXT

Barcelona is home to 38 public fresh food markets, which are distributed across the city's ten districts and all housed under covered buildings. 65% of the population has a market within a 10-minute walking distance, and 85% of consumers go there by foot. Legally, local regulations from the Barcelona City Council govern market operations, while sanitary, agricultural, and trade regulations are issued by the Regional Government of Catalonia.

The management of municipal markets is shared between public and private actors:

- The Barcelona Municipal Markets Institute (IMMB), an autonomous entity within the city council, is responsible for the maintenance of buildings, administration, commercial management, and market promotion, collaborating with various city departments on food policy, waste management, and mobility.
- The Federation of Municipal Markets of Barcelona (FEMM) brings together various vendor associations and represents their interests within the IMMB's Board of Directors. Each market is coordinated by its own vendor association (which includes a Director from the IMMB), that is responsible for the daily maintenance of market equipment, overall market supervision and revitalization efforts.



1,660,000
inhabitants



99 km²
city's surface

MOST IMPORTANT ECONOMIC SECTORS

- Food Processing and manufacturing
- Culture and tourism
- Services

DID YOU KNOW?

Barcelona's markets are home to different cultural traditions. During the Feast of Sant Joan in June, celebrating Catalonia's patron saint and the summer solstice, markets fill with cake and cava. Come Halloween, it's all about chestnuts and sweet potatoes, keeping the centuries-old tradition alive for market-goers.

Photo: Sant Antoni Market. ©Barcelona City Council

In addition to the 38 municipal markets, there are weekly farmers' markets, directly managed by each district. The IMMB maintains a close relationship with the districts and neighbourhood associations, which also play an important role in market management and are involved in the city council's decision-making process.

CHALLENGES

The City of Barcelona faces various challenges in enhancing and leveraging fresh food markets, including the promotion of shorter food supply chains and direct engagement of farmers from the region. In addition to limited agricultural space around the city, farmers indeed face a range of regulatory, bureaucratic and time constraints that hinder their direct access to markets and can discourage new generations

from taking up agriculture-related jobs. These challenges notably resulted in rising tensions between the municipal and the farmers' markets.

Fresh food markets also face an increasing competition with supermarkets, which have longer opening hours and often remain cheaper. In the poorest neighbourhoods in particular, many people favor supermarkets over (more expensive) markets, a symptom of economic and social inequality in consumer access to markets.

POLICIES AND INITIATIVES

To address these challenges, the IMMB has launched a number of initiatives, including those targeting students, to promote fresh and local produce and educate residents on their benefits. The IMMB has also harnessed the power of markets as important spaces for social inclusion (notably catering to elderly people and newcomers) by hosting events in the markets themselves², and as means to address climate challenges, by reducing food waste and increasing the energy efficiency of buildings.

Barcelona has been working to promote local and regional products to increase the competitiveness and sustainability of municipal markets. Through the [Green Commerce program](#), vendors are incentivised to sell more 'green food products' —i.e., food coming directly from farmers or from the fish market auction. Incentives focus on the marketing and distribution of local products through vendor training (e.g., on how to use social media as a promotion tool) and a new labelling system that makes it easier for consumers to spot stalls selling "green products". The municipality has also developed a commercial campaign to advertise such sales through informative material showcased in the market and continues to promote traditional and seasonal dishes, linking them to the widely recognised Mediterranean diet. As of April 2024, around 500 vendors were part of this project.

To tackle food loss and waste, the IMMB established awareness-raising initiatives (i.e., encouraging vendors to set up partnerships with food banks), recycling programs to separate organic waste in markets, and infrastructure improvements to add new cold storage spaces. Through the [Plastic Zero](#) project, part of the Green Commerce program, the IMMB aims to tackle single-use plastic waste.

RESULTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Barcelona's various initiatives have achieved significant results over the past years. The latest figures show that 60.7% of the local population buys in fresh food markets. The municipality leverages its fresh food markets as an essential component of the social fabric, hosting multiple cultural and gastronomic activities (550 events in 2023 only), and organizing market visits for children and youth (7,000+ students in 2023). The city managed to curb the markets' total waste by 26.8% since 2019 and scale up the production of renewable energy (e.g., through solar panels on markets' roofs), providing a stable hot water supply and reducing GHG emissions by 151 tons.

These interventions, combined with multiple educational activities, aim to increase the number of people buying at municipal markets. The municipality is also trying to mitigate tensions between municipal and farmers' markets by facilitating farmers' access to municipal markets and financially supporting existing farmers' markets.

Looking ahead, along with continued investments into energy-saving and renewable market infrastructure, the IMMB is planning on improving municipal market management by enhancing data collection on consumption and purchase habits to help decision-making, strengthening the role of vendors' associations and the FEMM, and working on an economic support model to promote vendors' associations' economic self-sufficiency.

² "Mercats per la Porta Gran" and "Menja't el Món"



Beira, Mozambique

GOVERNANCE & MARKET CONTEXT

Regulating, investing in, and overseeing markets is a municipal responsibility situated with the Beira Municipal Council and part of the mandate of the Promotion of Economic Activities and Markets Council. To facilitate the availability, accessibility, hygiene and food safety in markets, this council is supported by various other municipal government departments, including the Departments of Health, Agriculture, Sanitation, Environment, Transport, and Urban Planning. PROCONSUMERS, the Association for the Study and Defense of the Consumer, is a national initiative that also has a presence within public markets, settling disputes between vendors and consumers, ensuring that consumers are not sold unsafe food and that scales are calibrated correctly [34].

Beira has 14 public (formal) food markets, categorised as Wholesale Supply, District, Rural and/or Provisional Markets. These markets sell fresh food products, such as fruits and vegetables, fish and animal-sourced products. While public markets are registered with the municipality and vendors pay fees to occupy their spaces, there remains a large degree of informality in and around these markets. Approximately 40 informal markets have emerged spontaneously, often in response to the demand for fresh food



 592,090 inhabitants

 620 km² city's surface

MOST IMPORTANT ECONOMIC SECTORS

- Agriculture
- Fisheries
- Services

DID YOU KNOW?

As a major port city with the Indian Ocean on one side and landlocked countries like Zimbabwe and Malawi on the other, Beira is a strategic and vital economic hub for the region.

Photo: Munhava Market, renovated with support from GAIN's Keeping Food Markets Working Project. ©GAIN

and other goods, especially in underserved areas. They also appear outside of public food markets, providing important complementary goods, like dried and canned items, as well as processing services, including grinding, pressing or slicing fresh products like leaves or coconuts. These products and services are not found in formal public markets as these tend to focus on the sale of fresh foods. With the connectedness of formal and informal markets, some vendors choose to sell in both public and informal street markets but at different times [34].

CHALLENGES

Climate change is evident in rising sea-levels, severe flooding events, and increasing occurrence of high-impact cyclones and tropical storms. Beira's infrastructure including that of roads and markets as well as supply chains

and market operations have been significantly impacted by such climate disruptions. Additionally, availability of food in Beira is largely dependent on long and cross-border supply chains and trucker transportation, but with some products coming from close by, like eggs. In this way, the economic resilience of both nearby small-holder farmers and long supply chains, as well as internal market constraints each have significant influence on how vendors sell and stock food [34].

Public, local food markets often fail to receive essential public services, like basic WASH and waste management services [34]. Due to municipal capacity and budget constraints, many public markets lack service support and infrastructure like designated raised stalls, roofs, ice makers, cool rooms and renewable energy. This in turn impacts nutritional and food safe quality and affordability of fresh food and resultant food waste.

POLICIES AND INITIATIVES

Beira Municipal Council has implemented several strategies and plans to manage its markets more effectively. The city's 2035 Master Plan includes zoning regulations to organize market locations and support efficient urban growth [35]. To enhance basic services, the Water and Sanitation Infrastructure Administration works to improve water supply management and drainage systems, ensuring markets have access to clean water and proper sanitation [36]. Waste management is governed by the Environment Act and Solid Waste Management Regulations (2014, 2016), which establishes frameworks for efficient waste collection and disposal, and maintaining clean market environments [37]. The Beira Municipal Recovery and Resilience Plan outlines strategies to enhance urban infrastructure and environmental sustainability, essential for market functionality and food supply chains [35]. Leadership initiatives such as the Good Food Campaign promote food safety and hygiene standards among market vendors through voluntary membership [35].

Collaborations with organizations and experts have benefited Beira's markets and urban resilience planning. This includes rehabilitation and requalification of public food markets post [Cyclone Idai](#) in 2019, as well as food safety training and establishment of market inclusive governance mechanisms. In this way, Beira Municipal Council has substantially supported all eight public food markets and improved market infrastructure, management and inclusive governance in the markets of Munhava, Massamba and Gorjao, which are located in three of the most populous and poorest areas of Beira.

RESULTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

To this day, Beira City Council's co-designed multi-stakeholder market management committee, established post COVID-19, continues to be successfully operational and offers a scalable city-market model of inclusive governance. The committee falls under the government unit Markets and Fairs and is framed by co-designed values, including gender inclusion, open and committed cooperation, stakeholder ownership and action.

Investments in market infrastructure are reshaping the availability of sufficient, safe and nutritious food, as well as food handling and safety in Beira's markets, which may ultimately lead to improved food security and diet quality for consumers, and livelihood prosperity for vendors. There is a need to provide market vendors with food washing and cooking facilities, as well as cold room storage. Additionally, the municipality is exploring how to inclusively and equitably integrate informal markets into formal governance structures and the formal economy—while maintaining their flexibility—within existing resource constraints. Providing basic services and developing better trading spaces to enhance market environments is a priority for informal markets [35].



Bogor, Indonesia

GOVERNANCE & MARKET CONTEXT

Bogor's Development, Planning, Research, and Innovation Agency oversees multiple departmental mandates related to food systems, serving as the main authority for food vendors. The city has 14 officially recognised street food vendor zones, where the municipal government, supported by private sector donations, has established culinary centres - permanent spaces equipped with basic services for vendors. Vendors who operate from culinary centres benefit from being automatically registered as legal street food vendors and are eligible to receive support by the local government. There are currently 5,000 registered street food vendors and kiosks [38], with an estimated 12,000 vendors working within the city³. This means that approximately 7,000 vendors are not formally recognized in the governance structure of the informal food market ecosystem of Bogor, and therefore are at risk of being evicted daily.

Vendors within the same operating zones form registered cooperatives, with elected leadership and governing bodies to manage daily operations. Membership grants vendors legal



 1,114,018 inhabitants

 111 km² city's surface

MOST IMPORTANT ECONOMIC SECTORS

- Agriculture and fishing
- Transport and communication
- Trade and hospitality

DID YOU KNOW?

Bogor is a culinary hotspot, famous for its vibrant street food scene. Must-try treats include Toge Goreng, fried sprouts with noodles and tofu, and Ubi Bakar Cilembu, roasted sweet cassava.

Photo: Focus group of women street food vendors from an informal association as part of GAIN's Inclusive Urban Food Systems Project. ©GAIN

employee status within the cooperative, allowing them to access social security benefits such as health insurance and pension funds.

CHALLENGES

While popular, many street food vendors operate on sidewalks and roads, contributing to traffic congestion. Additionally, much of the food sold is unhealthy, and with 99% of school children in the city purchasing snacks and meals daily from street food vendors [39], there is a need for an improved enabling environment in Bogor that promotes and increases access to safer and healthier street food options.

Mobile food marketplaces and delivery apps are widely used in Indonesia, [Go-Jek](#) and [GrabFood](#) originating in Indonesia. The rise of digital food marketplaces through these apps has provided street food vendors with both a physical and virtual marketplace, expanding access to their offerings. However, when ordering online, consumers cannot assess hygiene conditions of the food stalls where meals are prepared. Additionally, food delivery poses health challenges, as delivery agents serve multiple vendors, often causing delays in food arrival [38]. Presently, only one culinary centre has methods for managing and separating solid waste between the city's weekly garbage pickups. Infrastructure including WASH facilities are not provided to individual kiosks within culinary centres, but shared amongst two or three kiosks. As a result, less than 50% of kiosks within culinary centres have direct access to WASH facilities, preferring to avoid setup costs by washing at communal water stations⁴.

POLICIES AND INITIATIVES

Government objectives for market improvement include preserving tradition and cultural heritage, supporting short food supply chains, enhancing food security and nutrition, and reducing food loss and waste [40]. Various programs target childhood nutrition both at home and in schools, such as the [Eat Fish on Friday](#) campaign to combat stunting, [National Breakfast Week](#), the [Safe Food Movement](#), and the [Healthy Schools Campaign](#). The Ministry of Cooperatives and MSMEs alongside Bogor Municipal Government also works to promote local food systems e.g., through festivals which showcase local produce like *koro* beans [41].

The Ministry of National Development and Planning Agency, Directorate of Food and Agriculture coordinates national plans through legislation. This includes the National Action Plan for Food and Nutrition, the National Pathway

for Food Systems Transformation, and the National Medium- and Long-Term Development Goals [42]. Meanwhile, the President oversees food governance, reserves, and trade systems [43]. The West Java Provincial Government manages staple food distribution and pricing, focusing on wet markets and key staples [44].

RESULTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

The city is working together with GAIN and street food vendor association leaders to establish a cross-sectoral working group and multi-stakeholder platform as part of inclusive local food systems governance and localisation of the United Nations Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) national pathways. The aim is to increase communication and collaboration between vendors and governmental actors, with a focus on food safety and reducing food waste. This effort is further supported by the recent development of a capacity-building tool tailored for street food vendors, covering nutrition, food hygiene, safety, and food waste reduction. In 2023, Bogor Municipal Government officially became a signatory of the [Milan Urban Food Policy Pact](#), reinforcing its commitment to food systems transformation [45].

³ Informal discussion with Ela Rosliana, S.Sos - head of Division micro/small/medium enterprises. This data was obtained from the results of coordination in the MSME sector with the civil service police unit.

⁴ Informal conversation between GAIN Indonesia and the Bogor Department of Health.



Braşov, Romania

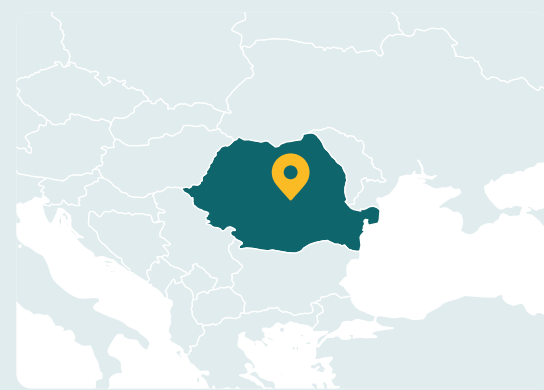
GOVERNANCE & MARKET CONTEXT

Public fresh food markets in Braşov are managed by the [Public Markets Administration Service](#), a municipal institution under the Braşov administration. This service oversees trade activities, product quality control, and market management. Legally, fresh food markets are regulated at both the local and national levels. At the local level, regulations address practical matters such as stand allocation [46], while at the national level, broader regulations define who is permitted to trade in markets [47].

There are six permanent public markets — Dacia, Astra, Tractorul, Star, Bartolomeu and De Miercuri— spread throughout the city, but not equally distributed. During summer weekends, publicly-managed pop-up markets (referred to as “flywheel markets”) also move throughout the city.

CHALLENGES

Limited access to markets is one of Braşov’s most pressing challenges. While there is one shop for every 1,700 inhabitants, there is only one market for every 47,500 inhabitants. This is particularly true in the Bartolomeu Nord and Noua neighbourhoods on the city’s outskirts, where residents need to take multiple means of public transport to reach a market. This creates



480,000
inhabitants



1,640 km²
city’s surface

MOST IMPORTANT ECONOMIC SECTORS

- Culture
- Tourism
- Services

DID YOU KNOW?

On the 9th of March, guests and friends are served a bowl of Mucenici—dumplings boiled in syrup with walnuts. This traditional dessert marks the Feast of the 40 Martyrs of Sebaste.

Photo: Astra market. ©Andrei Paul, Braşov Municipality

significant barriers to accessing healthy food, especially for vulnerable groups.

Additionally, most farmers in the Braşov region are small or medium-sized, making it challenging for markets to ensure a stable flow of goods throughout the year. This causes significant differences in the availability and price of fresh foods in the winter period (November-March) compared to the most productive season (April-October), ultimately pushing people to purchase at supermarkets. Finally, other challenges include the high administrative burden for small-scale farmers to sell in public markets, as well as the prevention and management of food waste within markets.

POLICIES AND INITIATIVES

To counteract challenges and incentivise residents to buy from local markets, the municipality has put in place a number of

initiatives to inform people on the origin, quality and benefits of the market’s products. These are complemented with measures to support local farmers.

- **Promoting local and sustainable food production:** The municipality has implemented a color-coded system to distinguish between the two types of market vendors. Agricultural producers, who sell their own produce, have yellow stalls, while vendors, who sell products sourced from wholesale markets or farmers who do not sell directly, have blue stalls.
- **Supporting direct sales from farmers:** National and local legislation [48, 49] provide specific incentives for local farmers. Farmers benefit from the direct allocation of stalls on a first-come first-served basis and only pay the rent when they actually use the stalls. Local farmers have an additional discount of 3 RON.
- **Raising awareness among consumers through dedicated educational activities:** Braşov, through the [FoodCLIC](#) project, uses markets to raise awareness among adults and children to the benefits of eating fresh, local and seasonal products, types of food and where they can find the best prices. Interventions also take place in schools (starting with vulnerable neighbourhoods), in which students can taste local products and learn about the benefits of buying local and having a healthy diet.

RESULTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Braşov is committed to leveraging fresh food markets to promote locally grown foods, encourage the local population to buy fresh and healthy products and to support small-scale producers. In the near future, the city foresees adding green stalls to markets, to signal typical products coming from the mountains surrounding Braşov. With that same aim of promoting local culinary tradition, Braşov is also planning to increase the number of local

fairs that sell such products, as they deem it particularly important for young people to get to know these foods.

To enhance access to markets, the municipality also wants to increase the number of pop-up markets, taking place weekly in the outskirts of the city and allowing the most vulnerable neighbourhoods to have direct access to healthy food. Braşov recognises and values the social function of both permanent and pop-up markets and wants to further leverage their potential in bringing people together. Investing in both types of markets indeed allows to reach different target audiences —permanent food markets being favored by the elderly, while pop-up markets attract families and younger generations (e.g., by organizing tastings and music events).

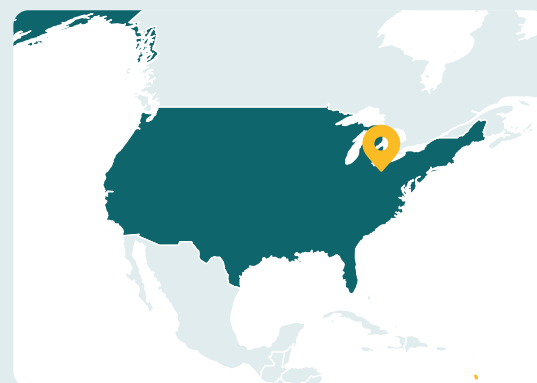
On the farmers’ side, to facilitate the connection with consumers, the municipality is planning to launch an online platform where people will be able to see and pre-order farmers’ produce, that will be then delivered directly at the market. As for food loss and waste, Braşov plans two types of actions: to invest in additional (cold) storage spaces inside markets in order to preserve the food and, on the other hand, to partner with local food banks, such as [Banca Regională Pentru Alimente Braşov](#) to ensure that food surplus is systemically donated rather than thrown away.



Cleveland, USA

GOVERNANCE AND MARKET CONTEXT

Cleveland's food retail landscape is diverse, encompassing brick-and-mortar retailers, grocery stores, convenience stores, farmers' markets, and farm stands. Farmers' markets operate directly between producers and consumers, running throughout the summer and sometimes year-round, while farm stands are managed by farmers on their own production land. Both are supported by city zoning codes and undergo an approval process to ensure compliance with standards. A notable exception is the [West Side Market](#) [50], a market historically owned and managed by the City of Cleveland that recently transferred management and operation to the Cleveland Public Market Corporation (CPMC). The CPMC, with its independent staff and community-led board of directors, will effectively and comprehensively address the evolving needs of merchants and customers at the West Side Market. While the City of Cleveland retains ownership of the market's land and facilities, CPMC will independently manage the Market's operations, oversee renovations and upgrades, develop and promote new public programs, and lead fundraising efforts for capital projects, fostering a collaborative approach with various stakeholders to expand opportunities for local producers and restaurant vendors [51].



361,607
inhabitants



213.6 km²
city's surface

MOST IMPORTANT ECONOMIC SECTORS

- Agriculture and forestry
- Food processing and manufacturing
- Culture and tourism

DID YOU KNOW?

Cleveland's prime spot on Lake Erie, one of the world's greatest freshwater resources, has fueled industrial growth and sustained livelihoods. Its rich food history—from thriving urban agriculture to the rise of supermarkets—reflects the city's diverse heritage and vibrant community.

Photo: Westside Market. ©Anna Zaremba, Cleveland City

Collaboration in Cleveland's broader food retail ecosystem involves private market operators, community development organizations, and the city departments. The city's Economic Development Department works closely with private entities to offer financial incentives, including tax breaks and funding opportunities for grocery and convenience stores. Cleveland implements the [Gardening for Greenbacks Program](#), which supports economic development for urban farmers and food businesses, and supports farmers in the form of infrastructure, garden tools, or supplies needed to expand and sell to local markets. Additionally, the city supports markets through the [Neighborhood Retail Assistance Programme \(NRAP\)](#) [52], which provides loans to entrepreneurs to promote locally-owned, non-chain restaurants and retail.

CHALLENGES

Inadequate infrastructure hinders the ability of Cleveland's farmers' markets to source locally, impacting both processing and distribution capabilities. Additionally, urban farmers struggle with accessing funding opportunities, as some local funding processes are somewhat inconvenient, while federal applications are extremely rigorous, creating substantial barriers. Despite these challenges, the current administration remains committed to food access and sustainability supported by a community that values these efforts.

POLICIES AND INITIATIVES

In Cleveland, a series of strategic policies and initiatives has been introduced to tackle food waste reduction, strengthen local food systems, and promote a circular economy. The [Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Food Policy Coalition \(CCCFPC\)](#), founded in 2007, focuses on improving access to affordable, nutritious food and reducing food waste, in order to enhance public health, boost the local food economy, and lessen environmental impacts. Other key efforts include the [Circular Cleveland Roadmap](#) and the [Climate Action Plan](#) both of which prioritise minimising food loss, enhancing the resilience of local food networks, and fostering sustainable practices throughout the city.

In January 2023, the city undertook a pilot project to reduce and rescue food waste at the West Side Market, in collaboration with [Hunger Network](#); a community food rescue organization, and [Rid-All Green Partnership](#) and [Rust Belt Riders](#), the local composting partners. The project conducted a waste audit and found that most of the food waste was compostable. Over its duration, the West Side Market rescued 2,269 pounds of food for distribution to 12 organizations and composted almost 40,000 pounds of food [53]. Following this, the city developed recommendations for food waste and food recovery, including the installation of on-site refrigerators and rolling carts for food

safety and flexibility. In January 2024, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) committed USD 11.5 million toward innovative and scalable waste management initiatives aimed at reducing and diverting food waste from landfills across the country. As part of this initiative, Cleveland has been awarded USD 340,961 to enhance its waste management efforts. This funding will enable the city to expand residential composting drop-off sites, increase overall waste diversion, and broaden access to composting services. Additionally, it will provide subsidised monthly composting service subscriptions to SNAP-eligible households, ensuring that low-income residents can participate in sustainable waste management practices [54].

RESULTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Cleveland's collaboration with local partners underscores the effectiveness of community-based initiatives. Adopting approaches that involve multiple stakeholders, conducting waste audits to understand specific needs, and implementing targeted solutions that engage local organizations and residents are proving important in combating food waste in markets. In addition, Cleveland's proactive stance in securing USDA funding to support residential composting and expand access to low-income households underscores the value of federal partnerships and financial support in expanding waste management efforts.



Curitiba, Brazil

GOVERNANCE AND MARKET CONTEXT

The Municipality of Curitiba has a 30-year track record in food policy and, since 2019, has strategically strengthened its role in the public sphere to uphold Food and Nutritional Security and the Human Right to Adequate Food. These efforts are led by the Municipal Secretariat of Food and Nutritional Security SMSAN which coordinates an integrated urban food agenda guided by three strategic lines of action: Food Access, Metropolitan Common Market, and Urban Agriculture. It supports the city's diverse market ecosystem, which includes Curitiba Municipal Market, the Cajuru Regional Market, 79 fairs⁵ of different categories (organic markets, cooperative markets), and 11 *Sacolões da Família*, food markets selling fruit and vegetables.

The Curitiba Municipal Market, spanning across 16,800m², houses 359 commercial units selling over 72,000 products, including an exclusive section for organic products. This section, a pioneer in Brazil, celebrated its 15th anniversary in 2024 and includes 13 establishments offering everything from food to cosmetics and clothing. Aiming to become the country's first zero-waste market, the Curitiba Municipal Market also

⁵ The fairs are organized by the Municipal Department, with each vendor responsible for setting up their stall and managing the sale of their products. The city's role is limited to managing and organizing the space, without direct involvement in commercial activities.



1,773,000
inhabitants



434.8 km²
city's surface

MOST IMPORTANT ECONOMIC SECTORS

- Food processing and manufacturing
- Services

DID YOU KNOW?

In Curitiba's fairs, you can find capybara-shaped pastries called "*capistel*," a fun tribute to the capybaras that roam the city's parks and attract visitors worldwide.

*Photo: Fresh food stall inside Cajuru Market.
©Collection of the Municipal City Hall of Curitiba*

participates in the Food Bank program, collecting tons of food from vendors to supplement diets of people in need.

CHALLENGES

Local challenges that SMSAN aims to tackle include combating food loss and waste, reducing the overweight rate among the population, decreasing consumption of ultra-processed foods, empowering socially vulnerable populations, and promoting food production based on sustainable agri-food models.

POLICIES AND INITIATIVES

The City of Curitiba uses an innovative integrated approach to improve food and nutrition security while combating food waste:

- **The Family Warehouse Program** ([Programa Armazém da Família](#)) benefits over 388,000 families by providing access to food at prices lower than conventional markets. Management of the program's 50 units falls under the responsibility of SMSAN and through agreements with the Curitiba Social Action Foundation, electronic vouchers are distributed to vulnerable families for purchasing food at Family Warehouses.
- **The Family Markets Program** ([Programa Sacolão da Família](#)) offers various high-quality fruits and vegetables in areas identified as food deserts, through fixed stores with prices lower than traditional retail. The program addresses the lack of accessible alternative sources in some city neighbourhoods for low income groups. They are located near bus terminals and Family Warehouses, making them easily accessible to residents.
- **Farmers' Markets** are set up in locations determined by demographic density, food availability, socioeconomic characteristics, and the local population's interest. There are 79 market locations in the city, with 982 commercial points and 378 permit holders.

Food waste and food access for vulnerable residents has been tackled in the above markets and public facilities managed by SMSAN through the [Food Waste Reduction Project](#). Following an assessment that identified usable organic waste from public markets and fairs, social institutions were mapped and registered to establish a Food Bank and Solidarity Table initiatives, which aims to direct edible food rescued from public facilities to provide free, and safe food to socially vulnerable people. As such, edible food from the Curitiba Municipal Market, Cajuru Regional Market and Family Warehouses is donated to [Food Bank and Solidarity Table](#) initiatives, and Family Markets permit holders are trained to separate food that is not commercially viable, but suitable for human consumption. Through the Solidarity Market Project, vendors at Farmers' Markets are also capacitated by SMSAN on separation, and donation of foods to social institutions that collect the supplies at the end of each market.

Beneficiaries of the Food Bank and Solidarity Table are also supported by the [Food and Nutritional Security Schools Project](#), which offers professional training courses to the most vulnerable residents and utilizes SMSAN's commercial facilities as a social incubator. Through the establishment of five Food and Nutritional Security Schools, residents are able to access professional training courses and job opportunities in collaboration with educational institutions, commerce, and industry to achieve social emancipation.

The Metropolitan Region Food Development Program (PRODAM) provides technical and institutional support to enhance the production of the green belt formed by family farmers in the Metropolitan Region of Curitiba. This initiative aims to facilitate access to public procurement and conventional markets.

RESULTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Key learnings from Curitiba's experience include the importance of collaboration among various sectors, which can enhance resources and expertise, creating a more conducive environment for agricultural development and professional training. With financial support from the Brazilian Development Bank, the Curitiba Food Supply Fund has been administered by SMSAN to support Curitiba's Food and Nutritional Security programs, projects, and actions. This enabled the expansion of the Family Warehouse and Family Markets Programs to all regions of Curitiba, boosting private sector entrepreneurship in previously underdeveloped areas while regulating consumer prices and promoting sustainable economic development. Due to the evident benefits to residents and popular acceptance, municipalities in the Curitiba Metropolitan Region have signed agreements with the Municipality to implement Family Warehouse units in their territories.

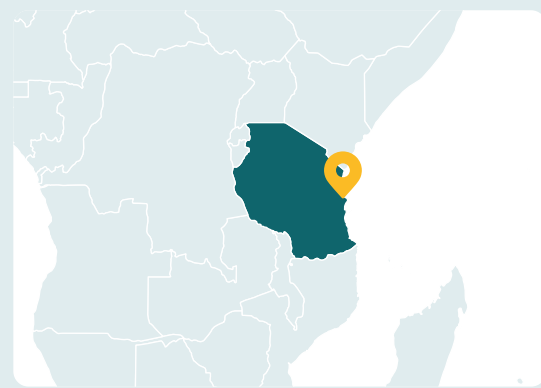


Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

GOVERNANCE AND MARKET CONTEXT

Food is sold through direct farmer-to-consumer channels, to supermarkets and via middlemen who facilitate sales in local markets. There are 13 public local food markets under city government mandate, spread across the city's five municipalities of Temeke, Ilala, Kinondoni, Ubungo, and Kigamboni. Municipalities are overseen by the Dar es Salaam City Council and the Regional Commissioner's Office and each municipality is managed by a municipal council.

Market management by municipalities is conducted by appointed personnel or outsourced contractors who have responsibilities such as revenue collection and waste management. Municipal councils are tasked with reinvestment of market revenues into WASH infrastructure, business compliance, and training for small-scale entrepreneurs. However, implementation is inconsistent. Market vendors pay fees on a daily or monthly basis [56]. The day-to-day internal market management is carried out by market committees, which typically comprise elected vendors and business owners from the respective market. An exception is the largest market, Kariakoo Market, in Ilala District, which is managed by the Kariakoo Market Corporation (KMC). KMC reports directly to the



~8,000,000
inhabitants



1,393 km²
city's surface

MOST IMPORTANT ECONOMIC SECTORS

- Tourism
- Fishing and marine resources
- Trade and commerce
- Transportation and logistics

DID YOU KNOW?

Dar es Salaam has a youthful population and is projected to be one of five African megacities with more than 10 million residents by 2029 [55].

Photo: Buguruni Market. ©GAIN

central (national) government via the Ministry of State for the President's Office - Regional Administration and Local Government [57].

Informal markets, typically located along roadsides and at traffic lights, comprise movable stalls, allowing vendors to operate without regulation or payment of fees. These are especially prevalent in areas distant from formal markets, such as Kunduchi ward in Kinondoni Municipality. Small-scale stalls known as "genge" also operate in neighbourhoods, selling fresh foods to households [57].

CHALLENGES

Dar es Salaam is vulnerable to flooding, sea level rise, water scarcity, and disease outbreaks. [58]. There is limited coordination between the city and different levels of government, as well as stakeholders like local universities, who gather data on food systems to address

climate change and urban planning, including Urban-Peri Urban (UPU) agriculture [56]. The need for proper drainage systems in markets and elsewhere is pressing as existing systems are unable to handle the volume of rainwater, causing flooding. Vulnerability is heightened by the location of homes and urban agriculture in unzoned, unplanned areas near rivers [56]. Lack of adequate infrastructure and waste management services impacts the availability and accessibility of affordable, safe, and nutritious food from markets. Market access is constrained by inadequate public transport, which further hinders efficient food distribution [56].

POLICIES AND INITIATIVES

Nationally, policies governing markets often fall under the Department of Agriculture, with specific stipulations for cultivation, farmer access to markets, post-harvest protocols, and storage requirements. Examples include the Ministry of Agriculture Food Security and Cooperatives' National Agriculture Plan (2013) [59], which aims to support farmer access to both international and local markets, as well as the Ministry of Industry, Trade, and Marketing also administers the Agricultural Marketing Policy (2008) [60], which has a provision for managing the quality of agricultural products reaching domestic, regional and international markets. Interestingly, agricultural extension officers have a close advisory relationship with UPU formal and informal food producers.

The city is committed to food systems goals, including supporting small-scale farmers. Formalising centrally located informal markets via introducing Wamachinga identity cards for informal vendors is in progress. Such formalised vendors can operate without the risk of police removing their stalls [61]. Through the city network C40's Inclusive Climate Action Fund, the city is acting to reduce organic waste, especially in informal settlements, by engaging and training informal waste sector workers [62].

RESULTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Poverty reduction, enhancing urban availability and access to safe, nutritious food, climate resilience, and land and settlement management are viewed as priorities by the city [56]. Additionally, the [Transforming Urban-Rural Food Systems \(TURES\)](#) consortium is conducting an exploratory study with the City of Dar es Salaam to inform a scalable city roadmap to a climate-smart, regenerative, circular food system that is also inclusive, equitable and just [63]. This study focuses on a better understanding of local and urban agriculture, supermarkets, and public and informal markets and governance, reducing barriers and spotlighting opportunities for systemic transformation of the city's food environment.



Dhaka North, Bangladesh

GOVERNANCE AND MARKET CONTEXT

Dhaka city's administration is split into 6 corporations dividing the megacity, of which the Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) is one. DNCC's administrative mandate covers 54 wards in the Dhaka northern area, and is supported by 72 elected councilors and a mayor. DNCC enforces municipal regulations aligned with national policies on food safety, waste management, and vendor conduct and manages over 130 fresh food markets throughout its administrative area, ranging from large government-owned market structures to smaller privately managed spaces.

The governance of fresh markets in DNCC involves coordinated efforts of the Health Department and the Food Safety Authority, which together form a Technical Working Group (TWG). Markets are typically managed by committees comprising vendors, city authorities, and at times civil society representatives, responsible for overseeing daily operations, food hygiene and safety, and mediating conflicts. In DNCC, Karwan Bazar stands out as a major wholesale food hub operating within an approximate space of 8 hectares comprising 1,789 permanent and 180 temporary shops that generate substantial daily revenue [64].



 **5,990,723 (2022)**
inhabitants [64]  **197 km²**
city's surface

MOST IMPORTANT ECONOMIC SECTORS [64]

- Retail trade
- Service industry
- Food processing

DID YOU KNOW?

Dhaka's "Kacha Bazar" is a daily gathering point where nearly 85% of residents buy fresh food, produce, meat, and fish. Lively markets like this bazar anchor the city's food supply and distribution while also serving as social hubs, fostering community livelihoods [65, 66].

Photo: Karwan Bazar. ©GAIN Bangladesh

CHALLENGES

Dhaka's fresh food market landscape faces significant challenges, including inequitable access to markets, with several markets located relatively far from low-income neighborhoods in addition to being limited in the basic amenities they provide. Around 40% of markets do not have toilets, and among those that do, only 7% provide segregated facilities for men and women. Infrastructure and service gaps such as outdated structures, unmanaged waste and inadequate fire safety measures further undermine the functionality, safety, and reliability of these essential public spaces [67].

Notably, environmental conditions like the monsoon season lead to periodic waterlogging occurring in and around the markets that lack drainage, and road congestions linked to expansion of vendor operations into the streets

further compound challenges. In terms of social inclusion, voices of consumers, women vendors and marginalized groups are often excluded from decision-making and governance processes, which lead to lacking accountability. Market distortions also occur through the operations of agents who typically link farmers to market vendors.

POLICIES AND INITIATIVES

Partnerships between government and organizations such as the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), funded by international donors have supported investment in market infrastructure upgrades and the establishment of a participatory governance platform. One flagship initiative is the Vendor-Consumer Affiliation Program, which facilitates stakeholder feedback through dialogues, surveys, and public forums. Infrastructure improvements under the Model Market Upgrades initiative introduced new sanitation facilities, drainage systems, waste bins, reconfigured stalls, and lighting, piloted in Mohakhali and Mohammadpur Town Hall markets. Additionally, the Vendor-Consumer Affiliation Program has created regular forums for transparent communication among vendors, consumers, and municipal officials to co-develop solutions. Food safety campaigns provided hygiene training, waste management training, and public health awareness during COVID-19, while gender-inclusive policies promoted women's integration into decision-making structures and expanded safer, gender-segregated facilities [68, 69]. Strategic planning to shape interventions for inclusive, resilient, and safe market systems also drew on evidence from the [Dhaka Food Agenda 2041](#), a co-created long-term vision and resource document for policy making and planning. FAO, in partnership with DNCC, has also led market renovation and modernization projects, tendering updates in 2023 for Mohammadpur Town Hall and Mohakhali markets to improve infrastructure, sanitation, user comfort, and food safety [67].

Sustained success nevertheless depends on continued political commitment and DNCC's ability to allocate the annual budget for maintenance of upgraded infrastructure in fresh markets beyond the project lifetime. In parallel, the Neighborhood Farmers' Markets initiative was piloted under FAO's Dhaka Food System (DFS) project in Ward 6 of DNCC and is planned for expansion to five additional sites in North Dhaka, in collaboration with the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Work for a Better Bangladesh Trust, and the Department of Agricultural Extension. These neighborhood markets aim to empower farmers with fairer market access, improve food safety and deliver safe, nutritious produce to consumers.

RESULTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

The pilot market project in DNCC has demonstrated improvements in infrastructure, hygiene, safety, consumer satisfaction and access to fresh produce. Waste management became more efficient, while infrastructure upgrades reduced the impacts of seasonal flooding. The pilot evaluation of DNCC's fresh market upgrades demonstrated that 34% of markets adopted food loss and waste reduction techniques [70]. Gender-targeted infrastructure and policy reforms further boosted women's participation in governance and economic activities, and farmers and consumers gained direct access, reducing reliance on agents. The Vendor-Consumer Affiliation Program enhanced transparency and mutual trust between market actors, and the success of these pilot initiatives is now driving scale-up to other markets. These achievements were underpinned by strong municipal leadership, sustained partnerships, and an evidence-driven approach that consistently integrated community voices. In the future, DNCC envisions the development of modern wholesale markets, one each in North and South Dhaka, modeled after Beijing's, China, large-scale facilities, designed with integrated power infrastructure and traffic relief measures to address congestion and enhance distribution efficiency [71].

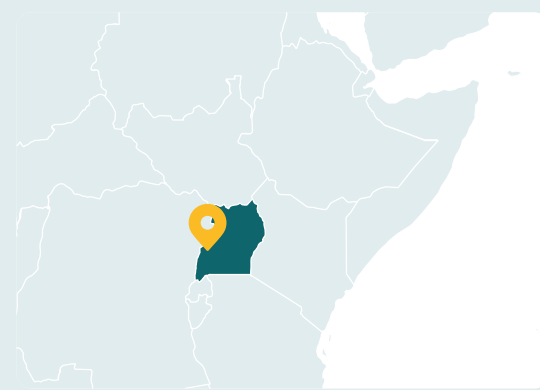


Fort Portal, Uganda

GOVERNANCE AND MARKET CONTEXT

Fort Portal City, located in the Kabarole District, owns and operates more than seven markets, ranging from daily static markets to mobile markets that rotate across rural trading centers. All markets within Fort Portal are publicly managed through the City Commercial Office, Production Office and Health Office. Oversight rests with both the city's political wing (Mayor and Councilors) and its technical wing led by the City Clerk.

Partnerships play an important role in improving food markets. The city collaborates with organizations such as the Kabarole Research and Resource Centre (KRC) Uganda, CARE, Rikolto, YAWE and Hivos, among others. With the support of these organizations, formalized under the [Fort Portal Food System Lab](#) [72], the city launched the consumer advocacy group [Coalition of the Willing](#) [73]. Its core activities include community sensitization on nutrition and food safety, cooking demonstrations to promote Indigenous recipes, quarterly progress and advocacy strategy meetings and participation in District Nutrition Coordination Committees. Part of the Coalition's success is its strong member network promoting healthy, diverse, and safe diets. These include religious leaders, traditional leaders of the



 137,549
inhabitants

 128.27 km²
city's surface

MOST IMPORTANT ECONOMIC SECTORS [64]

- Agriculture
- Trade
- Tourism

DID YOU KNOW?

Fort Portal is an officially designated "Tourism City," known for its scenic crater lakes and the cultural heritage of the Tooro Kingdom. The city and its partners actively promote Indigenous foods such as matooke, millet, and maize as part of their nutrition and cultural-heritage agenda.

Photo: Mpanga Market. ©ICLEI Africa

Tooro Kingdom, education-sector heads, health professionals, media, artists, and Orugali women's groups which demonstrate the preparation of Indigenous, nutrient-rich foods in community sessions.

CHALLENGES

Despite being an agricultural hub that exports to neighboring cities and countries, Fort Portal City has one of the highest stunting rates (40.6% of children under five) in the region [74]. This is largely attributed to the overconsumption of a few staple crops, rather than a diversity of produce. A survey of traders in Rwimi conducted by the KRC found that for maize, only 4% stays within the district; 20% is shipped to neighboring districts, while 50% is destined for Rwanda and 25% is sent to Tanzania. Despite this large and growing trade in food, the irony is that the population of Kabarole District is food insecure.

Food safety is also a challenge, as it is hard to regulate the use of harmful chemicals in the production and sale of fresh produce, such as tomatoes and onions. While some farmers practice organic or agroecological methods, their produce tends to be slightly more expensive, limiting demand among price-sensitive consumers. Regarding market infrastructure, only one market has permanent facilities such as toilets, water points, and waste management systems. Waste disposal remains inadequate, with garbage often accumulating near stalls. Weak enforcement of existing policies and limited cold chain infrastructure further complicate food safety and storage.

POLICIES AND INITIATIVES

Fort Portal, together with KRC Uganda and other partners, is addressing these challenges through several initiatives. A key milestone has been the co-development of a **Food Safety Ordinance**, setting clear guidelines on food safety, handling, pesticide use and slaughtering practices tailored to Fort Portal's market context. Its success lies in the participatory approach used during its development: Market leaders and city officials contributed to shaping practical, context-specific regulations. This inclusive process built ownership among actors, ensuring that the ordinance, though still awaiting formal gazetting, is already being applied informally, improving compliance and laying the groundwork for long-term food safety improvements.

In addition, the city also integrates food systems into broader development frameworks. The [Kabarole District Nutrition Action Plan \(KDNAP\)](#) explicitly supports a multi-sectoral approach to nutrition, recognizing the key role of community influencers in disseminating nutrition information, encouraging behavior change and supporting the implementation of Uganda's national nutrition policy at the local level.

Small-scale farmers in Fort Portal are also supported in transitioning to agroecology. To improve market access, the KRC has introduced

the **Rwenzori Fresh** brand which markets vegetables grown using agroecological practices. The brand particularly targets young farmers, equipping them with digital skills to market produce via social media and other online tools.

Lastly, the city has shifted its approach on street food vending, officially recognizing vendors as vital contributors to the food system. Vendors have been registered, mapped by name and street location, and clustered near water and sanitation facilities. Through a cost-sharing scheme, vendors acquired food handling gear such as aprons, which improved hygiene and boosted customer confidence. Vendors have also been linked to agroecological farmers, ensuring better food quality.

RESULTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Bringing together vendors, farmers, civil society, and policymakers through platforms like the Coalition of the Willing and locally-produced research has ensured policies such as the Food Safety Ordinance reflect local realities and gain strong community support. Hundreds of street food vendors are now formally recognized and connected to safer produce supply chains, while also being able to contribute significant tax revenue when working conditions are improved. Many vendors report increased customer numbers and incomes after upgrading hygiene standards and branding.

While convincing consumers to pay a fair price for agroecological products remains a challenge, branding and targeted marketing are promising strategies to shift perceptions. A dedicated mobile application is under development to connect farmers directly to high-value customers, especially health-conscious and higher-income households. Fort Portal is committed to continuing efforts on all fronts and across sectors and food systems actors, strengthening its food markets as hubs for safe, nutritious, and sustainable food.



Hawassa, Ethiopia

GOVERNANCE AND MARKET CONTEXT

Ethiopia's 2018 national Food and Nutrition Policy prioritises food safety and quality throughout food value chains and its implementation in food markets offers numerous potential benefits for food security, nutrition and the local economy. Ensuring consistent enforcement and coherent regulation nevertheless has proven to be a gradual process, as oversight responsibilities for food safety are shared among the National Ministries of Health, Agriculture, and Trade along with 11 semi-autonomous agencies. In Hawassa, the city government manages three local and traditional food markets, each serving different neighbourhoods. Residents tend to shop one or more times per week at the market, especially on designated market days (Mondays and Thursdays) when fresh food is most available and vendors are most active [77]. Aroge Gebeya, Hawassa's largest and oldest traditional market, plays a vital role in the city's food environment and local economy. The market is officially under the oversight of the Hawassa City Mayor's office, with operational responsibilities assigned to the municipal trade and market development office. In turn, market linked responsibilities, such as tax collection, market infrastructure, and regulatory enforcement are assigned to various local authorities, at times with limited coordination among them.



 **441,536 (2023)**
inhabitants [75]  **50 km²**
city's surface

MOST IMPORTANT ECONOMIC SECTORS

- Textile manufacturing
- Fishing
- Tourism

DID YOU KNOW?

Founded in 1952, Hawassa sits on Lake Hawassa in the Great Rift Valley. Formerly called *Adare* "field of cattle" in Sidama, reflecting the area's rich grazing land and abundant water that supported pastoralism and farming [76].

Photo: Aroge Gebeya Market. ©GAIN 2023

CHALLENGES

Aroge Gebeya market governance and operations are challenged by the fragmentation of regulatory authority, infrastructure constraints and barriers to food hygiene and safety. Responsibilities for food safety are divided across multiple federal ministries and regional/local offices, resulting in overlapping mandates, weak coordination, and inconsistent enforcement. This encompasses risk to human health posed by sub-standard storage of dry and fresh foods and by live animals in the market area.

Poor market infrastructure impacts the quality of the market environment, access to structures and basic services, needed for food quality, hygiene and safety. This includes unpaved, congested walkways, damaged drainage systems, inadequate waste disposal, and a lack of clean water and sanitation services. These challenges are compounded by the conflation of

food quality with food safety, with the assumption that clean-looking produce is safe to eat. Vendors and consumers have limited awareness of cross-contamination risks, foodborne pathogens, and/or hygienic food handling techniques. Although vendors express a willingness to learn, their routine practices often diverge from this interest, due in part to the lack of enabling infrastructure and access to basic services. The latter is especially the case for unregistered vendors - many of whom are women - who operate without legal recognition and access to permanent stalls and amenities that can support food hygiene and safety practices.

POLICIES AND INITIATIVES

The adoption of the Food and Nutrition Policy [78], along with Ethiopia's National Food Safety and Quality Strategy for Primary Agricultural Produce (2024) [79] illustrates a stronger political commitment and action towards food hygiene and safety, including with respect to local food environments such as urban fresh food markets. It encompasses regulation, improved surveillance systems, capacity-building for inspection authorities, and the adoption of risk-based approaches across the food value chain.

The 2022, GAIN-EatSafe (Evidence and Action Towards Safe and Nutritious Foods) food safety intervention in Aroge Gebeya market complemented these government-led commitments, with a focus on empowering vendors and consumers in respect of best food hygiene and safety practices. The intervention was further enhanced by efforts to strengthen market governance through collective engagement and the EatSafe approach comprised investment in training and communications, rooted in culturally resonant messaging (emphasizing themes such as protecting family health) and the delivery thereof via community radio, posters, and public events. These communications were particularly impactful among women, who made up 80% of vendors and 60-70% of customers in the market. In parallel, flexible, short duration, hands-on training on hygiene practices, food

handling techniques, and storage methods were held within the market, tailored to vendors' time and resource limitations. Vendors were also equipped with low-cost materials, including soap, disinfectants, water purification tools, and colour-coded crates to facilitate food safety compliance [80].

RESULTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Initiatives like EatSafe in Aroge Gebeya's food market resulted in consumers starting to use food safety cues to select vendors and food products. They also engaged more in discussions about food safety with others and took additional steps at home to reduce risks. Vendors, in turn, adopted improved food hygienic handling practices, demonstrated greater awareness of their role in ensuring safe food, and invested in tools and training to meet rising consumer expectations - from handling to the storage and display of food. Ultimately, enabling food environments that offer quality and safe food is linked to political will via policy and strategy, as well as city and market-led initiatives in empowering governments, value chains and market actors. To address infrastructural and regulatory gaps, fostering local actor collaboration in governance and the development of Market Improvement Plans (MIPs) also served key. Increased awareness and engagement among consumers, vendors, and local authorities laid the groundwork for long-term, locally-led change. Economic benefits were observed alongside vendors' improvements in food hygiene practices and offerings of quality and safe food, with associated increased levels of consumer trust and in some cases, improved sales by vendors. Finally, communication campaigns proved more impactful when localised, culturally sensitive, and supported by trusted community champions.



Lilongwe, Malawi

GOVERNANCE AND MARKET CONTEXT

Lilongwe City has 27 wards, divided into four sectors (Old Town, Capital Hill, Kanengo, and Lumbadzi). Across the city, there are 43 municipally owned and operated markets, of which five are off-street, with each ward having at least one local market. A number of informal markets also exist. While various national ministries (Trade, Health, Agriculture) participate in setting regulations to govern different aspects of the market, the day-to-day management sits with the local government's Department of Commerce, Trade and Industry. Each market is overseen by a market master/mistress employed by the said department, cooperating closely with the Department of Health, which is responsible for market cleanliness, waste collection, disease prevention, and management, as well as the Engineering Department, which is responsible for the lighting, fire management, and the construction and cleaning of drainage systems.

Lilongwe has two regulations (Lilongwe Market and Vending by-law and Lilongwe City Council Business Permits Licence) that allow cooperatives or individuals to run private markets.



989,318
inhabitants



393 km²
city's surface

MOST IMPORTANT ECONOMIC SECTORS

- Public administration
- Retail and wholesale
- Light manufacturing
- Transport
- Banking and tourism-related industries

DID YOU KNOW?

Using the inter-cropping technique, food is grown on a small scale in most open spaces within the city.

*Photo: Lizulu Horticulture Market, Lilongwe.
©ICLEI Africa*

CHALLENGES

One of the key governance challenges Lilongwe City Council faces is the management and regulation of street vendors in the city. There has been a rise in street vending in the city as the existing markets are mostly overcrowded, disrupting service provision. Further, the vendors respond to their customers, who seek convenience and purchase produce along the road instead of entering a market space. While street vending provides key livelihood opportunities, it is deemed illegal under the Market and Vending by-law. It is considered problematic as it compromises food safety, causes road congestion, and negatively impacts

the fees-paying vendors' revenues in the markets. There is also a perception that street vendors do not fit the image of a modern city. This contributes to commercial retailers' lack of investor interest, such as the supermarket chain Shoprite.

POLICIES AND INITIATIVES

The City Council has adopted a two-tiered approach to eliminating street vending. Firstly, the Department of Commerce, Trade and Industry is working with the Planning Department to formally zone certain roadside areas as 'off-street markets,' of which five have been established. These markets are designed to accommodate street vendors seeking better visibility and foot traffic. The off-street markets allow vendors to build trading stalls organised and safely, following predefined design specifications. The off-street market pilots have been established in low-density, high-income areas close to the supermarket, making them desirable trading locations.

Where possible, the Lilongwe City Council is using off-street markets to make provision for street vendors safely. However, the sheer number of street vendors poses a problem.

To curb street vending, the City Council has established a municipal police force whose primary responsibility is to manage and control street vending. This hard view is not always politically favorable, but is deemed a necessary action to ensure food safety and manage the sale of fresh foods in the city.

RESULTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

The off-street markets have proved successful thus far. The serviced vendors are content in terms of visibility and accessibility to customers. They mostly respect the design guidelines, their

stalls are neatly presented, and they do not block the traffic. They have also been registered with the City Council and pay monthly fees.

However, there are challenges, such as the lack of proper infrastructure to address storage and the perishability of fresh foods. The attractiveness of stalls could also be improved if the vendors had access to more funds or if the City Council could build them uniformly. Additionally, the absence of sanitary facilities such as toilets and water is an inconvenience to the vendors and presents a health and safety risk.

Regarding the rest of the street vendors, the challenge remains to include them safely in the retail sector. Every day, vendors are chased off the street by police, and every day, they return. If the vendors are caught, their items are confiscated, and in line with the Market and Vending by-law, the police are allowed to dispose of the confiscated items. Sometimes, these interactions lead to violence, and street vendors have very few rights in this situation. Although the off-street markets have been a success, for impacts to be visible, off-street markets need further expansion.



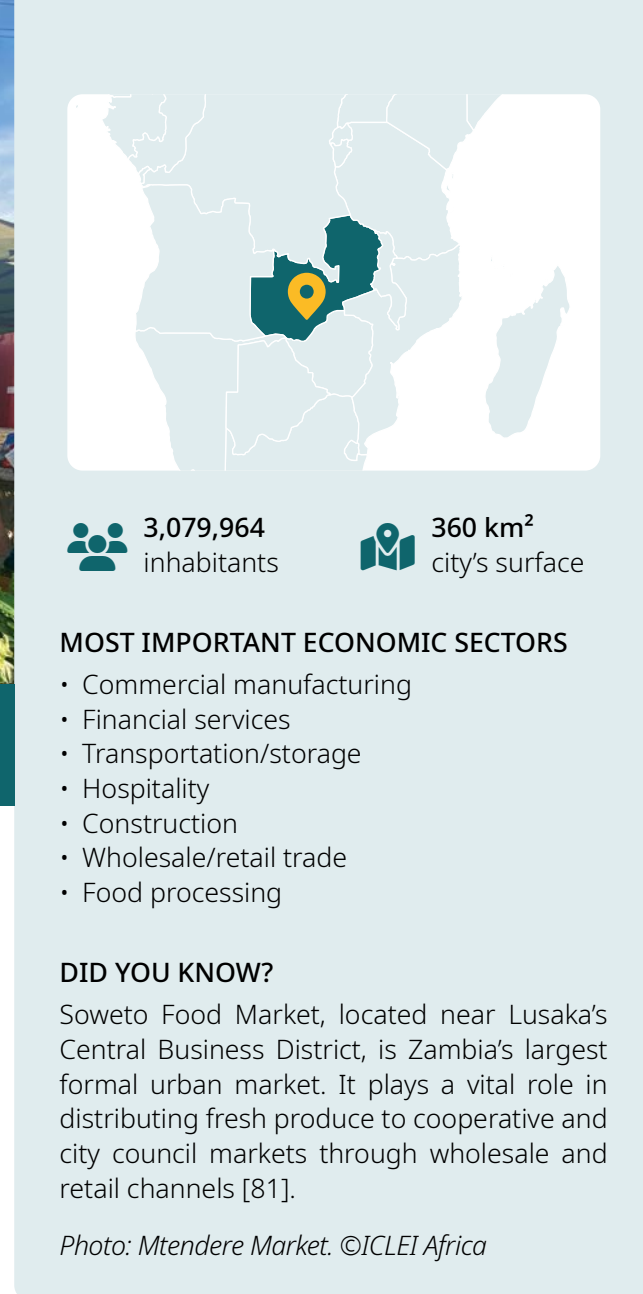
Lusaka, Zambia

GOVERNANCE AND MARKET CONTEXT

Lusaka City has 32 markets overseen by the Lusaka City Council (LCC), 60 independent cooperative markets across seven constituencies, and 33 wards, mainly in densely populated, unplanned, low-income residential areas. More than 30% of fresh food originates from nearby rural and food-producing districts, supporting an informal food sector serving about 80% of the population through market stalls, mobile and street vendors, and kiosks [82].

The Markets and Bus Stations Act recognises council-established markets, managed by market managers (for large markets) or market masters (for small markets) and Market Advisory Committees, and independent cooperative markets governed by market committees. Other relevant legislation includes the Public Health Act, Solid Waste Regulation and Management Act, Food Safety Act, and Local Government (Street Vending and Nuisances) Regulations (SI No. 12 of 2018).

LCC's Department of Housing and Social Services works with Public Health, Planning, Finance, and the Lusaka Integrated Solid Waste Management Company (LISWMC) to oversee market management. The Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development



provides Council oversight. Council-operated markets often include independent producer associations offering trading rights and occasional storage facilities.

For consistent water supply, LCC provides market services such as infrastructure maintenance, solid waste management, lighting, sanitation, cleaning, and water boreholes. Vendors pay market levies to LCC, which cover utility bills. LCC licenses cooperative shop owners, and services are managed through the collection of the levies by the cooperatives. The Council is developing a levy-sharing mechanism aligned with the Markets Act to collect market levies, while waste management and ablution block fees will be shared with cooperatives.

CHALLENGES

Lusaka's markets lack adequate infrastructure and amenities such as storage facilities. The Council is responding by modernising markets and building multi-storey facilities with local and national government funding. With assistance from the Disaster Management and Mitigation Unit (DMMU), a multi-storey market was constructed in the Central Business District (CBD) to relocate street vendors and expand trading space. LCC is utilizing Public Private Partnerships (PPPs), including build-operate-transfer agreements to develop markets, and leasing services like ablution facilities and provision of storage, and recently approved a private company to offer solar-powered cold storage in a CBD market.

Solid waste management, especially food waste, is a significant challenge, with 38% of fresh market produce wasted. In 2018, LCC established LISWMC to manage solid waste, enforcing the Polluter Pays Principle to hold vendors accountable for their waste. The Council collaborates with private entities to implement waste separation in markets. With the support of the Japan International Cooperation Agency, the Chunga dumpsite was transformed into a well-managed facility where waste is processed and repurposed.

Competition among marketeers, commercial establishments and home shops exacerbates street vending, a complex political issue. Nevertheless, street vendors through the Vendors Association are being engaged to relocate to designated areas.

POLICIES AND INITIATIVES

The Markets Act and related legislation ensure well-managed markets by regulating marketeer behaviour. The 2018 SI that prohibited street vending and imposed penalties is pivotal in addressing this issue, promoting trade in designated markets and food safety. The Council's dialoguing with the informal sector represents an improved approach. The establishment

of LISWMC in 2018 to oversee solid waste functions, including contracting out to the private sector and introducing bio-digesters in some markets, is significantly improving waste management. Furthermore, the Government's Make Zambia Clean, Green, and Healthy Campaign mandates vendors to clean markets on the last Saturday of each month. Initiatives like the 2020 Lusaka Food Security Initiative and the Lusaka Food Policy Council, led by the Mayor's office, promote a collaborative approach to enhancing an integrated food system.

RESULTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

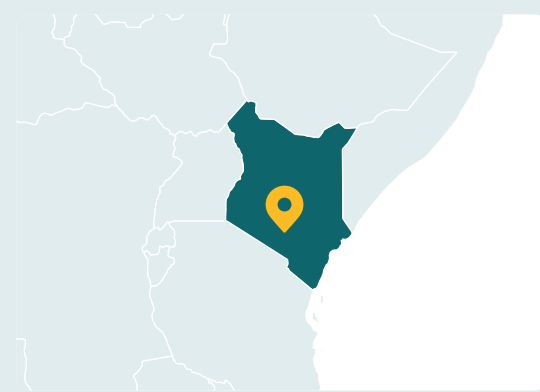
Regulating markets and enhancing infrastructure, sanitary conditions, and food safety are crucial steps requiring vendors' and consumers' enforcement and responsibility. Redesigning food systems based on circular economy principles is essential to tackle food waste effectively. Public-private partnerships hold promise in significantly enhancing market environments. Governance improvements will also involve regulating market middlemen who influence food pricing. Key drivers of change include bolstering political commitment, enhancing the Council's capacity for regulation and market management, raising awareness among vendors and consumers, and fostering partnerships.



Machakos, Kenya

GOVERNANCE AND MARKET CONTEXT

In Machakos, market management is the mandate of the County Department of Trade, Industry, Tourism, and Innovation. This includes collecting revenue, ensuring that scales are calibrated, and overseeing elections of vendor-constituted market committees. Fees are collected daily by the market manager and Department of Trade revenue officers using digital tech hand units and vendor-unique number codes. Other county departments' mandates intersect with market operations. The Decentralized Unit has a directorate of waste management tasked with market waste collection and inspectorate services to ensure security. The Department of Water, Irrigation, Environment, Sanitation and Climate Change provides WASH infrastructure and services, while the Department of Agriculture, Food Security and Cooperative Development focuses on the formulation, implementation, and monitoring of agricultural legislation, regulations, and policies that influence food supply, quality, and affordability. Under the Department of Health, the public health mandate covers the health and safety of markets and compliance overseen by inspectors. The nutrition mandate under this department oversees messaging and educational campaigns that aim to influence the markets and broader food environment [83].



250,000 [83, 84]
inhabitants



307 km²
city's surface

MOST IMPORTANT ECONOMIC SECTORS

- Agriculture
- Manufacturing and industrial activities
- Trade and commerce
- Tourism
- Transport and logistics

DID YOU KNOW?

Machakos' traditional food markets thrive on fresh produce from neighbouring counties, including the agriculturally rich Kiambu, and even through cross-border trade with Tanzania [85].

Photo: Marikiti Market. ©GAIN

CHALLENGES

The hot, arid climate, reliance on long food supply chains, and double taxation of food as it is transported across county boundaries present challenges for local markets, e.g., in maintaining year-round availability of safe, fresh fruits and vegetables [86]. This has a knock-on effect on prices and the volume of food loss en route to the markets. Infrastructure is often lacking, such as roofing, raised stall surfaces, cold rooms, and adequate washroom facilities for both men and women, and basic service provision, such as emptying markets' trash bins and water, is unreliable [86]. Such investments are challenged by lack of investor confidence which tends to be informed by classic, cost-benefit profit and risk models that are unsuited to local and traditional publicly managed food markets.

The absence of a robust intergovernmental coordination mechanism creates challenges for the transformation of locally-led food systems. This affects the role of publicly managed markets as transformation hubs, limits investment in market infrastructure, and hinders the capacity building and engagement of vendors and market committees as key partners. According to the market stakeholders, insufficient coordination between county governments, market committees, and vendors as well as national and county-level governance result in inefficiencies, including overlapping market design projects and unclear responsibilities [86].

POLICIES AND INITIATIVES

The Markets Development and Management Guide aims to standardise the development of markets in Kenya with guidelines for planning, design and management [87]. Responsibility for food systems has devolved to county governments via the County Governments Act (2012). Machakos County has enacted several laws, including the Food Safety Act (2022) and the Machakos County Public Market and Stalls Act (2016), which designates vendor operation areas and market governance structures [88].

Machakos County collaborates with local and global private sector, non-government, and research partners to better support its food systems transformation. Since 2020, the county has worked with GAIN and Marikiti Market in Machakos town to co-design an inclusive governance market action plan and improve county and market committee and vendor management, nutrition, and food safety capacities. This collaboration has invested in incremental infrastructure improvements, starting with WASH facilities and later expanding to roofing and a dual-powered cold storage room, primarily for storing vendors' vegetable stocks.

Thanks to GAIN, county and market stakeholders now benefit from step-by-step de-risked infrastructure investment, are capacitated in systems thinking, nutrition, food safety, and

waste reduction, and are effectively leveraging their leadership and food system relationships. In 2024, GAIN further connected stakeholders with four other county governments and markets through the sub-Saharan African Kongamano workshop, co-hosted by the Kenyan government, to facilitate knowledge-sharing, networking, and inspiration among county representatives alongside partners and donors.

RESULTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Recognising food hygiene and safety as a local and global challenge, the Kenyan national government, Nigeria, and Bolivia have led efforts to develop the Codex Alimentarius "Guidelines for Food Hygiene Control Measures in Traditional Markets" since 2022. These were officially adopted in November 2024. Moving forward, Machakos County and market committees will focus on implementing and operationalizing these guidelines.



Mbale, Uganda

GOVERNANCE AND MARKET CONTEXT

In Mbale City, roughly 90% of the urban population purchase their fresh produce from fresh food markets. The city has seven municipally owned markets. Mbale Central Market (MCM) is the main hub where produce is aggregated and sold to small-scale vendors or directly to consumers. On the outskirts, several smaller, unregistered markets operate. While these lack proper infrastructure and essential services, they play a crucial role in ensuring residents' access to fresh food.

The overarching governance of food markets sits with the Mbale City Council (MCC). The Commercial Department is in charge of the daily market operation within the MCC. At the same time, the Food Department is responsible for ensuring food safety standards are adhered to in the market. Each municipal market is managed by a market master/mistress, who is employed by the MCC, and a market executive elected by the vendors every two years. Notably, the MCC has partnered with Rikolto, Global Consumer Centre (CONSENT), and the Food Rights Alliance (FRA) on the Good Food for Cities (GF4C) program, which aims to improve market infrastructure and food safety and hygiene practices in the market.



~650,000
inhabitants



518.6 km²
city's surface

MOST IMPORTANT ECONOMIC SECTORS

- Agriculture
- Tourism
- Trade

DID YOU KNOW?

83.6% of Mbale's territory is dedicated to subsistence agriculture—bringing farm-fresh produce straight to your plate.

Photo: Mbale Central Market. ©Peter Businda, Rikolto

CHALLENGES

One of the biggest challenges in Mbale City is post-harvest food loss and waste. Key drivers of food loss include a lack of awareness around safe food handling practices, bad road networks and inappropriate transport solutions, a lack of proper trading stands and the absence of cold storage infrastructure. Food loss across the supply chain is affecting food security in the city, as well as directly impacting the livelihoods of small-scale farmers and market vendors.

The MCC is taking a value-chain approach to address this challenge. At the farmer level, they provide training and extension services to improve skills and knowledge of modern agricultural practices, timely harvesting, safe food handling practices, and appropriate storage methods. At the market level, the GF4C program has worked to co-design and build 70 new attractive trading stalls at the Mbale Central Market that promote food safety and preservation.

To further improve food safety practices, the GF4C program facilitated a food safety training program at MCM and invited the vendors to practice what they had learned by participating in a competition. The contest awarded vendors prizes based on personal hygiene, stand cleanliness, product safety, customer service, market hygiene, and sanitary conditions. Even those who did not win reported that they enjoyed participating in the competition as they saw increased customers in response to the positive changes they had made to their stalls.

POLICIES AND INITIATIVES

One of MCC's most successful initiatives, in collaboration with Rikolto, CONSENT, and FRA, is the establishment of the [Good Food Council \(GFC\)](#) and the [Good Food Parliament \(GFP\)](#). These councils serve as mechanisms for consultation, dialogue, co-production, and review among food system actors. Originally created to address food safety in markets, they have since expanded their scope to tackle broader market-related challenges.

The GFC is made up of 19 members who represent a diverse set of food system actors, such as political and technical officials from MCC, vendors, farmers, business representatives, media, researchers and cultural institutions. The Council makes decisions and develops action plans for food system interventions, which are put forward for consideration by the GFP. Once implemented, the Council reviews the interventions monthly to assess their success and adapt plans as needed. Progress is shared and discussed with the Parliament to foster transparency, inclusivity and accountability.

The GFP is a wider multi-stakeholder platform consisting of over 70 food system actors, including those who sit on the Council. The Parliament helps to strengthen coordination and implementation of the interventions by sharing experience and knowledge, exploring different viewpoints and building momentum towards a shared goal. All proceedings are relayed to the

public through the media, and the Parliament posts its resolutions to the relevant MCC offices for implementation.

RESULTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Taking a holistic approach to addressing food safety by implementing market upgrades, training programs, and innovative activations, such as the competition held at MCM, has shown to be effective in shifting the mindsets of consumers and vendors towards improved food safety and hygiene practices. The vendors at the market have experienced an increase in sales in response to the positive changes they have made. With this buy-in, the market management committee can better regulate food safety. This intervention has proved truly successful, as other non-beneficiary vendors have since improvised their own upgrades in line with the beneficiary stalls, as they saw the benefits to the vendors' businesses.

The GFC and GFP have successfully elevated urban food issues on the city's agenda, enabling more coordinated discussions and decision-making. A key outcome has been the development of a Food Ordinance aimed at addressing food safety issues in the markets. Further, dialogue and accountability mechanisms have been established through these platforms, and the regular interactions between food system actors have created the space for a more unified response to food system challenges in the city.



Mérida, Mexico

GOVERNANCE AND MARKET CONTEXT

Mérida boasts 14 municipal markets managed by the Subdirectorate of Public Markets, in addition to *tianguis*⁶ and temporary markets supervised by the Subdirectorate of Markets Specialized in Street Trading. Concessions are granted to tenants in accordance with the Mérida Municipal Market Regulations [92], the municipality's main instrument regulating the provision of services in public markets and fixed, semi-fixed, or mobile stalls operating on public roads and in public buildings.

Although the municipality has formal authority over the management and operation of markets, in practice, many vendors manage their own spaces, limiting regulatory control. In alignment with processes outlined in Mérida's Integral Plan for the Regulation of Commerce, the municipality regularly updates an official registry of market vendors and defines spaces for new markets, while aiming to improve the efficiency of existing municipal public markets and provide new options to relocate vendors who sell on public streets.



 995,129 [89]
inhabitants

 874.4 km²
city's surface

MOST IMPORTANT ECONOMIC SECTORS [90]

- Trade
- Construction
- Food industry
- Real estate industry

DID YOU KNOW?

Mérida preserves rich Maya civilization heritage, rooted in pioneering advances in astronomy, mathematics, and physics. In 2019, UNESCO named it a Creative City of Gastronomy for its commitment to preserving and promoting its rich cultural and culinary traditions [91].

Photo: Lucas de Gálvez Market. ©Municipality of Mérida

CHALLENGES

Main challenges faced by Mérida's food markets include the deterioration of infrastructure, a lack of resources, and the resistance of some tenants to regulatory processes. Since most markets are located in aging buildings, floors and walls show significant wear and retrofitting new services becomes difficult, posing challenges to modernization efforts. Cleanliness is another priority issue due to its direct impact on public health, and while regulations on hygiene exist, they require a revision and dedicated capacities for more efficient implementation. Albeit not a frequent occurrence, climate-related disasters

such as tropical storms also cause occasional damage to markets, which affects the social fabric of the city, as they are important spaces for people to come together and of exchange.

POLICIES AND INITIATIVES

To address these challenges, the city is implementing two initiatives that seek to strengthen Mérida's food system resilience, by promoting environmentally responsible practices and consumer awareness to ensure equitable access to nutritious food.

The *Círculo 47* [93] program works to improve the sustainability of agriculture in the districts of Mérida by connecting producers with fair markets, adding visibility and value to their products, expanding production and promoting their biocultural heritage, having previously identified 17 production categories ranging from livestock and crops to honey, tortillas, and value-added goods. One of the project's key initiatives is the modernization of municipal facilities to transform them into comprehensive food centers. Improving infrastructure carries benefits for multiple market actors including producers, who see their incomes rise as products become more attractive to consumers and due to improved distribution throughout the peninsula and the expansion of export opportunities. The initiative also encompasses capacity-building programs and logistics support for producers across the municipality's 47 precincts, in-depth market analyzes, and the establishment of a legal framework for soil conservation, ensuring producers have the resources and systems needed to thrive in a changing climate and competitive market.

Simultaneously, the municipality also fosters public demand for fresh foods from local producers as opposed to large retail chains through food education, nutrition and diabetes prevention consultations, and maternal and child nutrition campaigns held by its Municipal Center for Nutrition and Diabetes Care. Each program is geared toward a specific audience, such as

people who may have at-risk family members, and formats vary, ranging from affordable in-person and virtual workshops to individual consultations and community talks [94].

LESSONS AND LOOKING AHEAD

Food system initiatives in Mérida are aligned with the Municipal Development Plan of Mérida (2024-2027) and the State Development Plan (2024-2030). The municipality's work on *Círculo 47* has already shown successes in supporting local producers and promoting short supply chains. To date, *Círculo 47* has facilitated 250 connections between 76 producers and fair markets such as Slow Food Mérida Norte, Yaaxtal Eco Stores, and the Club Sibarita Food Festival, and organized 47 events, Bee Day celebrations and agroecological fairs involving 242 participants. It has also fostered the creation of the Mérida Fair Trade Technical Committee, aligned with the Latin American and Caribbean Network of Fair Trade Small Producers and Workers (CLAC).

The city's current priorities are to improve market cleanliness, organization, and regulations. Through initiatives such as the Green Wall of Mérida's oldest and most visited Lucas de Gálvez Market, the municipality also seeks to improve the environment and image of its markets as hubs for culture, socializing and well-being.

⁶ Designated spaces on streets where shops selling food, clothing and other products are located semi-permanently on certain days designated by the customs and traditions of each town



Osasco, Brazil

GOVERNANCE AND MARKET CONTEXT

The municipality of Osasco implements public policies that facilitate access to adequate food through a variety of facilities and initiatives, such as street markets, the municipal market, urban gardens, and the local food bank. Street markets - open-air markets temporarily set up along public streets - are one of the city's main mechanisms for providing fresh food to the urban population.

Currently, Osasco hosts 54 street markets distributed across its territory (35 in the South Zone, 19 in the North Zone). These markets operate from Tuesday to Sunday, and two of them open at night. Approximately 800 vendors take part, 200 of whom are dedicated exclusively to selling fruits, vegetables, and greens. The markets generate about 1,100 direct jobs and 500 indirect ones, including suppliers, transport workers, waste collectors and informal assistants. It is estimated that around 500,000 people are served weekly, demonstrating the vital role these markets play in the city's food landscape. The management, maintenance, and operation of these spaces are overseen by the Department of Urban Oversight and Control, which is part of the Secretariat for Public Safety and Urban Control.



728,615 [95]
inhabitants



64.954 km² [96]
city's surface

MOST IMPORTANT ECONOMIC SECTORS [90]

- Industry
- Service

DID YOU KNOW?

Osasco is known as the "hot dog capital," a title earned thanks to its strong industrial roots and working-class culture, which fostered the rise of popular snack bars - many of them featuring creative and generous recipes that have become local traditions.

*Photo: Jardim Veloso neighborhood.
©Fernanda Cazarini*

In addition to the street markets, Osasco also has the *Mercadão* (Municipal Market), located in the city centre. Hosted in a building of approximately 2,200 m², the market operates from Monday to Saturday as well as on Sundays and holidays with reduced hours. The *Mercadão* is a key hub for food supply in the city, offering a wide variety of items such as meat, fish, grains, seeds, dairy products, spices, and fresh produce. It houses 25 stalls and employs 88 workers, serving around 2,800 people per week.

CHALLENGES

Despite the wide availability of food throughout the city, territorial and socioeconomic inequalities pose challenges to ensuring the human right to adequate food. In areas of high social vulnerability, the presence of street markets may not be sufficient to guarantee access to a

balanced diet, especially for low-income families who often cannot afford buying fresh produce. As such, the municipal government acknowledges that food supply through street markets must be complemented by public policies targeting populations in vulnerable situations.

POLICIES AND INITIATIVES

Launched in 2021, the [Programa Nosso Futuro](#) (Our Future Program) is an innovative initiative that integrates multiple public policies through intersectoral collaboration, offering comprehensive and human-centred support to families in vulnerable situations. Through a food assistance card with a monthly credit, the initiative provides autonomy to 32,000 families, enabling them to purchase fresh, nutritious food from local establishments and thereby stimulating the local economy. In addition to expanding access to food, the program aims to create other co-benefits by linking participation to regular school attendance and updated vaccination records for children and adolescents. Further support is also available through the Osasco Food Bank, created to combat hunger and prevent food waste. The food bank receives donations that do not meet commercial standards but are still safe for consumption from produce distributors, supermarkets, and private companies, and the collected items are redistributed to families in vulnerable situations through more than 100 civil society organizations.

In addition to improving access to food markets, the municipality also fosters self-sufficiency of its residents. The urban agriculture policy transforms underutilized urban areas into productive spaces through agroecological practices, encouraging the cultivation of fruits, vegetables, and greens. The program promotes training and educational activities for consumers, provision of inputs, and technical assistance, contributing to food security, environmental education, and the strengthening of community networks. Currently, 21 urban gardens are in operation throughout

the municipality, covering an area of 26,848m² with 1,387 garden beds, involving 70 farmers and 280 people indirectly. In the northern zone of the city, there is the Eixo Verde, a productive corridor extending over 8 km.

RESULTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

The integration between traditional public food distribution facilities (street markets and the municipal market) and the social policies implemented by the Secretary of Family, Citizenship and Food Security has proven to be an effective strategy to expand access to healthy food, promoting social justice and sustainability.

Street markets remain a cornerstone of the city's food system, but their social impact is amplified when coordinated with programs that ensure access for those who need it most. The experience of the Our Future Food Assistance Card, for example, demonstrates how targeted income transfers focused on food can be a tool for empowerment and local development. Meanwhile, the Osasco Food Bank highlights the importance of public policies that combat food waste and ensure equitable distribution. The Urban Agriculture Program not only encourages local cultivation of healthy foods but also creates income-generation opportunities by allowing farmers to sell their products directly within the productive spaces. Osasco's municipal government also emphasizes the importance of social participation, engaging in active listening with its residents through conferences and workshops, as well as municipal councils. This qualified engagement has been essential to building public policies that are fairer and more responsive to the city's real needs. As a next step, Osasco seeks to further enhance the intersectoral coordination of its policies and strengthen the monitoring and evaluation of its programs, aiming to ensure transparency, efficiency, and measurable results in the fight against food insecurity.

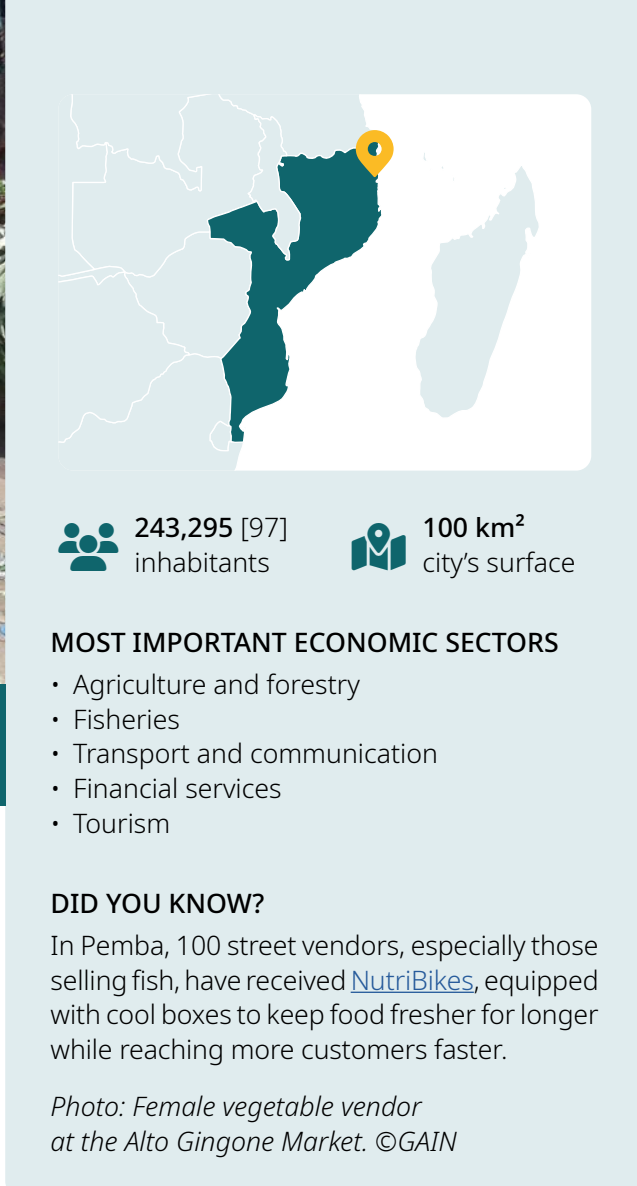


Pemba, Mozambique

GOVERNANCE AND MARKET CONTEXT

At the national level, the Ministry of Agriculture oversees food supply and pricing, while the Ministry of Industry and Trade develops policies to support industrial production, trade, and agricultural marketing. The Department of Food Security manages the food supply chain [98]. While these national bodies regulate food availability and affordability, the management of Pemba's markets falls under the Municipal Economic Activities Department. Mandated responsibilities include registering public markets, provision of basic services like WASH and waste management, infrastructure maintenance, health and food safety compliance, and vendor regulation [98]. They do so by collaborating with other departments, such as the Planning and Finance, Urbanization, Health, Transport and Sanitation departments.

Local food markets in Pemba are the primary source of food for urban residents and important socio-economic hubs [98]. Pemba has 12 public (formal) markets and at least 16 informal markets [98]. Informal markets are often located on roadsides and vacant lots, especially in the neighbourhoods of Alto Gingone, Josina Machel, Chuiba, Maranganhe, Eduardo Mondlane, and Machara. Several public and informal markets' locations intersect, with some vendors selling



their products in both formal and informal spaces, depending on the time of day, demand, or vendors' needs [98]. Typically, women sell fruits and vegetables, while male vendors sell eggs, dairy, and packaged foods [98].

CHALLENGES

Pemba faces significant challenges regarding the availability and access to affordable, safe, and nutritious food for residents, as well as food loss and waste [98, 99, 100]. Soils and other conditions in Pemba are unsuited to urban agriculture. Food value chains extend from local sea-fresh caught produce to a few hydroponically grown urban and local fresh vegetables sourced 1- 2 hours drive outside the city to longer value chains spanning multiple provinces and cross-border with Zimbabwe and South Africa. Two main supermarkets and several

local food markets are key to food accessibility and livelihoods in Pemba. However, municipal (public) market management is complicated by budget constraints, fragmented administrative activities and responsibilities, vendor skills gaps, and entrenched unfavorable practices [98]. In markets, WASH facilities, waste management services, and cold storage are unavailable or poor [98].

POLICIES AND INITIATIVES

A key initiative is a hybrid market, a wholesale-retail public food market built in Pemba between 2023-24, with funding from the Norwegian government and technical implementation by GAIN. This is a novel, innovative design based on best practices, guidance from World Union of Wholesale Markets members such as SIMAB, technical requirements, co-design inputs from Pemba Municipality, vendors, and other market leaders from markets in the city [101]. The market is designed to promote a sense of community and food place, as evident in markets through-out the city and country. It also aimed to provide conditions including skills and financial payment mechanisms, to make accessible safe, diverse, nutritious foods, to support on-going maintenance of climate resilient infrastructure (including cold room), ensure robust management and facilitate efficiency in food systems relationships for a resilient and future fit market.

The land on which the market is built is owned by the municipality, and the site was selected based on the city's development plan with a view to growth of the community, public transport and road infrastructure as well as distribution relationships with other local markets and last mile vendors. Recently opened in mid-2024 and supported by contracts, the market promises to illustrate how such a market design, with and for low-income communities, can be financially viable and robust, even if not making large profits. It also serves to promote locally-led ownership of activities, such as the reduction of food waste, food hygiene, and progress towards

social, health, gender equity, livelihoods, food security and nutritional well-being goals, while also being environmentally sensitive.

RESULTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Pemba's municipal government has identified several goals for improving food systems, including supporting short food supply chains, building resilience, and reducing food waste in the markets [98]. The municipality is committed to food and nutrition security e.g., designing zoning regulations which aim to more evenly distribute markets throughout the city [98]. There are also local environmental policies, which focus on promoting recycling and the use of eco-friendly materials, while financial and capacity-building support for Small and Medium Enterprises within markets aim to help vendors maintain and grow businesses. Leadership programs run by the city help train market managers and vendors on best practices for market and financial management, quality control and customer service. Vendors are also required to be licensed and subject to health and food safety regulations [98].

Public and Private partnerships, including with local and international non-profit organizations, are encouraged through municipal government policy. Partnerships are on a voluntary and incentive-based programmatic arrangement with benefits including provision of technical assistance, training and resources. Furthermore, under the recently elected new Mayor, Pemba intends to reinvigorate its city to city learning and best practices network and resource access benefits via the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact of which it is a signatory [45].



Peshawar, Pakistan

GOVERNANCE AND MARKET CONTEXT

The Capital Metropolitan Government Peshawar governs the city. As a part of this governing body, the Municipal Corporations, which oversee smaller areas of the city, are responsible for the regulation of 'formal' (public) markets. This includes market location zones, vendor operating permits, WASH infrastructure and services, and solid waste management [102]. Day-to-day market governance is led by market committees reporting to the Capital Metropolitan Government. Like elsewhere in Pakistan, Peshawar's markets tend to be produce-specific. Presently, there are seven main public markets within Peshawar: fruit and vegetable markets (Kala Mandi, Chamkani Subzi Mandi, and Dalazak Road), meat and fish markets (Hashtnagri, Ghanta Ghar and Chargano Chowk respectively), and an egg market (Firdus) [103]. About one-third of the city is under the jurisdiction of the nearby military base and thus managed as cantonments. These areas have separate governance structures, including cantonment boards comprised of appointed and elected members. Some markets fall within the cantonment bounds [102, 103].

Typical for Pakistan, Peshawar's food outlet sector is diverse, reflecting strong cultural preferences for food types and ways of selling, as well as routines of buying small quantities daily



 4,758,763 inhabitants

 1,275 km² city's surface

MOST IMPORTANT ECONOMIC SECTORS

- Agriculture
- Manufacturing
- Food processing
- Services
- Pharmaceuticals

DID YOU KNOW?

Peshawar boasts a dynamic and youthful population, with 30% under the age of 15. Its rich cultural diversity continues to grow, fueled by people from surrounding areas and from Afghanistan.

Photo: Food vendor in Peshawar food market.
©GAIN

and larger quantities on the weekends [104]. Meat-based diets, mainly including lamb and beef, are favoured by Peshawar residents. Food is sold in the spazi mandis, specialist markets like meat markets and small shops. Market 'stalls' are usually owner-operated by vendors, who are mostly male because of inheritance practices [104, 105]. Last mile vendors (informal sector) vitally distribute food from urban and peri-urban markets to households, often selling directly to women and vulnerable households at this interface.

CHALLENGES

Food safety is a challenge, including the use of pesticides by suppliers, adulteration of milk, handling practices, and consistent enforcement of compliance [104]. Food loss significantly

impacts the availability of fruits and vegetables from long food supply chains. Food waste in the markets largely results from inadequate WASH infrastructure, the absence of cold storage facilities, and poor food hygiene and handling. Inconsistencies in solid waste disposal in markets further exacerbate food safety concerns [104].

POLICIES AND INITIATIVES

Addressing WASH awareness and the implementation of routine associated practices is a cornerstone to achieving local ownership of hygiene and food safety concerning food in the markets. Similarly important is creating a market vendor culture of awareness and asking questions regarding suppliers and transporters, even if there are challenges in enforcing regulations regarding the late use of pesticides and adulteration of milk. Together, these can have a beneficial knock-on effect of reducing food waste in the markets and facilitating accessibility of quality, safe, and nutritious foods.

The Municipal Corporation collaborates with various actors at the national and district level, including the Pakistan Standard and Quality Control Authority – Peshawar and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Food Safety and Halal Food Authority who operationalize both the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Food Safety and Halal Food Authority Act (2014) and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Local Government Act (2019) [106, 107]. The latter aims to improve local capacities for providing services and infrastructure, including those related to markets like WASH [103]. Peshawar's policy option toolkit, co-designed during COVID-19, also illustrates how the markets and Peshawar government can address challenges for WASH, food hygiene and safety, and food waste [108].

Several policies and partnerships aim to address the Peshawar Government's objectives for shortening food supply chains, targeting improving food security and nutrition, and zoning for markets. Sectors coordinate across food groups to stabilise food market prices,

set guaranteed minimum prices, and facilitate affordability. The federal government subsidises basic commodities, which the Utility Stores Corporation provides to the public at lower-than-market prices [103].

RESULTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

In Peshawar, the implementation of the Local Governments Act (Act no. XXV, 2019) [108] has been successful in encouraging inclusive food systems management involving a diversity of local actors, such as representative authorities, regulators, and private companies [108]. Coordination among these actors is viewed as crucial. The government recognises that all actors need further capacitation on food safety, nutrition, and market management, and co-designed management solutions are needed for informal food markets. In Peshawar, charity-based food distribution networks like The Saylani Welfare International Trust further support food security and nutrition for vulnerable communities.



Pittsburgh, USA

GOVERNANCE AND MARKET CONTEXT

The City of Pittsburgh is the core of the Greater Pittsburgh metropolitan area, which stretches across Western Pennsylvania with nearly 2.5 million people. With the city government's jurisdiction only extending as far as Pittsburgh's municipal boundaries, the city focuses on what it can directly impact, including zoning, land use, staffing, and direct programming, such as the [CitiParks Farmers Markets program](#) under the City of Pittsburgh Parks and Recreation Department. The city coordinates all operations at its markets: Vendor registration and support, event management to drive visits, communications to showcase all market offerings, and market services (such as composting and SNAP exchange). Pittsburgh sees markets' job as "to create a vendor mix that serves the community, ensures best chance at financial success for vendors, and is compelling to customers" [110].

CHALLENGES

The city has a somewhat limited jurisdiction over markets within Pittsburgh. Out of many markets currently in operation, only four are city-run, while the rest are managed either privately or by non-profits. There is no single organization or forum that brings together the



 **302,971** [109]
inhabitants

 **151 km²**
city's surface

MOST IMPORTANT ECONOMIC SECTORS [90]

- Education
- Healthcare
- Life sciences
- Advanced manufacturing
- Financial services
- Technology

DID YOU KNOW?

Pittsburgh hosts an annual pickle festival, Picklesburgh, to celebrate the city's culinary history dating back to the 19th Century, when German and Eastern European immigrants popularized pickling as a preservation method.

Photo: Tustin St. Community Garden operating through Pittsburgh's Adopt-A-Lot program.
©Yasmine Baiod

city's key departments such as City Planning and City Parks, city-run markets, independently-run markets, non-profits, suppliers, and vendors. To fill this gap, the city hired the World Farmers Markets Coalition in 2019 to develop a comprehensive set of recommendations titled [Strengthening Pittsburgh's Farmers Markets](#) to improve its public markets. These included hiring a dedicated staff member to manage the markets and expanding access for low-income residents (SNAP recipients) through the [Food Bucks program](#) partnership, which provides an extra USD 2 to spend on produce for every USD 5 spent on food stamps [111].

During the pandemic, the city moved to reduce duplication between municipal and privately run markets, closing three public sites. Today, Pittsburgh balances maintaining markets in low-income neighborhoods with operating in higher-income areas, where they tend to be more profitable for vendors. The balancing act involves investing in markets that will draw a large number of residents while also being accessible via transit or located near communities with few food retail options. For Pittsburgh's city planners, the discussion around food markets goes beyond simple transactions: it is about reimagining food access in ways that are sustainable and equitable in the long term, as healthier food often comes with a higher price tag, making it harder for low-income residents to access nutritious options.

POLICIES AND INITIATIVES

Pittsburgh's [Adopt-A-Lot Program](#) launched in 2015 is a key example of how the city is using creative, community-driven solutions for food access and affordability. The program emerged in response to Pittsburgh's large number of vacant and abandoned properties, estimated at around 30,000 structures and lots at the time. As the former Mayor William Peduto acknowledged, "This problem is simply too large for the city to tackle on its own" [112]. The program invites residents and community groups to take on stewardship of these vacant spaces, offering USD \$0 leases for temporary access. In response to the demand for long term opportunities, the city is now developing a new urban agriculture program to expand growing opportunities in parks and greenways, and supporting the Land Bank as a pathway to affordable ownership for communities willing to turn unused land into productive urban gardens [113]. In parallel, Just Harvest is working with the County government to invest in its Fresh Corners initiative, which works to stock corner stores with affordable, healthy produce to tackle food deserts more directly.

Pittsburgh recognized a growing collective interest of its residents in self-sustainability, and sought to meet it through careful coordination across city departments and close collaboration with community members. The program's impact is already visible. Early participants such as the [Black Urban Gardeners and Farmers \(BUGS\)](#) and [Shiloh Farms](#) continue to grow produce and offer fresh food and educational programming to community residents, while also working toward owning the land they cultivate. Newer projects like the [Mwanakuche Farm](#) stand out: Somali Bantu volunteers started the farm in 2017 and have expanded the variety of crops available locally, including produce not typically found in Pittsburgh markets. They've since established a second farm just outside the city limits in Mercer County, which raises chickens and goats..

RESULTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Ideating and enacting Adopt-A-Lot took considerable cooperation and innovation from a broad range of actors in the community and an exhaustive list of departments concerned with city land. Committing to these complex discussions allowed the Planning Department to standardize temporary leasing protocols in its [Vacant Lot Toolkit \(VLTK\)](#), which effectively served as a precursor to Adopt-A-Lot by setting necessary standards to streamline bureaucratic approvals [112]. For any city considering a similar initiative, this upfront standardization, and as one City Planning staff described it, "trying to focus on what can happen instead of what can't happen," emerge as clear recommendation from Pittsburgh.

Pittsburgh is undergoing its first Comprehensive Planning process, and food systems are a core priority. The city hopes fresh food supply will shift to originating more within the city's limits, even from those former vacant lots. Shiloh Farms, for example, operates its farm stand in North Point Breeze, while [Grow Pittsburgh](#) sells its produce at two independently-run markets in the neighborhoods it serves [114].



Porto Alegre, Brazil

GOVERNANCE AND MARKET CONTEXT

The city has a diverse food supply network, made up of farmers' markets different in model and size, strategically located to serve the population. They include 33 model fairs managed by the Viva Feira Modelo Association, seven producers' markets run by ASSUMEC, two horticultural markets, 24 'yellow stalls', in addition to the Municipal Public Market and eight organic fairs. Although smaller in number, these fairs have increased their relevance through the quality and variety of products offered, including items for specific dietary needs (e.g. gluten-free), reinforcing their role in health promotion and inclusion. In total, there are more than 40 conventional fairs and other street distribution points, attracting around 50,000 people per week. This network decentralizes food commercialization and facilitates public access to fresh products.

In addition to supporting fairs and local production, the city government promotes events that strengthen the relationship between producers and consumers, such as FestPoa Rural, which gathers 7,000 people over one week, and the Family Farming Fair. Another highlight is the traditional Fish Fair, which builds on 245 years of history, established eight years after the city's founding. In 2025, following severe flooding in



1,332,000
inhabitants



496.8 km²
city's surface

MOST IMPORTANT ECONOMIC SECTORS

- Services
- Commerce
- Health

DID YOU KNOW?

Porto Alegre was a pioneer in establishing its Municipal Public Market in 1869 and in organizing Brazil's first agroecological fair in 1989.

Photo: Porto Alegre Municipal Market. ©Julia Ferreira, Prefeitura Municipal de Porto Alegre

the previous year, the event marked its comeback, exceeding expectations with 535 tons of fish sold in five days. The fair is held in the city center, far south, and in Restinga, one of the most populous neighborhoods in southern Brazil.

CHALLENGES

In Porto Alegre, producers and vendors are dealing with a series of ongoing challenges. A lack of generational succession is putting the future of farming at risk, while competition between traditional street fairs and large distribution networks makes it difficult for smaller producers to maintain an edge. The transition to agroecological practices also comes with high costs, and many farmers do not have the technical support they need to make that shift successfully. Logistics add another layer of difficulty, especially for organic products, which must be transported separately from other goods.

POLICIES AND INITIATIVES

Farmers markets, both conventional and organic, have been regulated as an economic activity and recognised as intangible cultural heritage. Their value is also supported by the diversity of models available, ranging from 'yellow stalls' integrated into public facilities to mobile sales points, which were recently regulated to expand producers' and consumers' access to healthy food. Initiatives such as the *Caminhos Rurais* (Rural Paths) build on their merit, combining agriculture and tourism as a strategy for promoting the local economy and community belonging.

On the production side, the city government provides inputs, machinery, and training to all producers to improve organization and expand access to markets, including public procurement. In 2015, a law officially established the Agroecological Transition in Porto Alegre, with the aim of supporting organic and agroecological production systems and strengthening the supply of healthy and sustainable food. In addition, the Municipal Plan for Sustainable Rural Development (2023), managed by the Secretariat for Citizen Governance and Rural Development, promotes funding, technical assistance, and services to rural producers, encouraging low-carbon agriculture and agroforestry systems. It covers more than 2,500 hectares and benefits 197 producers (including 90 family farmers), strengthening the city's fresh produce distribution system

In the last two years, the city has been innovating by developing a comprehensive strategy to supply food produced through agroforestry systems to the municipal school network. To tackle logistical barriers in public procurement, the city government for instance provided a refrigerated truck and has supported producers' organization within a governance strategy to prepare them for regular supply. The city also maintains gardens in several public facilities, such as Social Assistance Reference Centers, schools, and other spaces. In 2024, it combined tradition and sustainability with the implementation of community agroforestry gardens, four in each of the city's 17 regions.

RESULTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

The city has adopted several strategies to strengthen local food systems and public policies. According to the Secretariat of Economic Development, Tourism and Events, one effective approach has been to hold fairs in squares and parks, aligning the supply of healthy food with the daily habits of residents who already use these spaces. Community engagement has also been central to the success of agroforestry gardens, where investments focus not only on establishing the gardens but also on their maintenance and long-term sustainability. To that end, the city hired a community agent and partnered with civil society organizations to provide training on agroforestry systems, and choosing garden locations through Participatory Budgeting ensured that community participation was built in from the start. At the same time, participation in the municipal school supply chain has expanded significantly, with the number of producers growing from six to 27 in just two years, though logistics remain a major challenge for small-scale farmers. These initiatives illustrate how integrating food networks with sectors such as health and education expands the reach of public policies, while improved coordination, shared best practices, and partnerships across public and private actors strengthen governance and raise broader awareness around healthier eating practices.



Quezon City, Philippines

GOVERNANCE AND MARKET CONTEXT

Quezon City operates eight daily public markets selling dry goods, produce and prepared food, with peak activity occurring in the early hours due to deliveries from major supply points like the Balintawak and Q-Mart wholesale markets. Despite their decentralized locations, all markets fall under the direct supervision of the local government, responsible for business permitting, market operations, infrastructure maintenance, and sanitation enforcement. Key actors include the Market Development and Administration Department, in addition to market masters and administrative staff, often stationed on-site, who manage day-to-day concerns. A 'one-stop shop' model has been implemented in some markets to streamline processes for permits and compliance, and interdepartmental collaboration is visible, especially among the technical, sanitation, and composting teams.

While there is no presence of private companies in the city's market management, partnerships with local associations and other sectors are gradually being explored. The city currently works in collaboration with vendor associations, such as the Federation of Market Vendors, which includes over 300 members from eight markets. These associations play an active role in resolving vendor concerns, such as rental disputes,



 **3,318,641 (2025)**
inhabitants [115]

 **161.11 km²**
city's surface

MOST IMPORTANT ECONOMIC SECTORS [117]

- Wholesale and retail trade
- Manufacturing
- Constructions
- Administrative and support services
- Accommodation and food

DID YOU KNOW?

Quezon City is the largest of Metro Manila's 17 cities and municipalities, accounting for nearly one-quarter of the region's land area [116].

Photo: Two women shop for vegetables at Project 4 Public Market. ©Claudia Isabella Ragandap/ICLEI Southeast Asia

sanitation, and infrastructure needs. Monthly coordination meetings between the association and Local Government Units (LGUs) offices ensure continuous feedback and responsiveness.

CHALLENGES

Despite the city's ongoing efforts to improve its public markets through various programs and infrastructure upgrades, they remain uneven across markets, and access to livelihood assistance is still limited by strict eligibility requirements. Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) remains a critical gap. According to the President of the Federation of Market Vendors who herself is a woman and senior resident, many women and elderly vendors continue to face barriers in accessing formal livelihood opportunities. These challenges include limited access to capital, inadequate

technical training, and lack of representation in market-related decision-making. Digitalization has also introduced new challenges, particularly for older vendors who are less familiar with cashless payment systems. Additionally, inadequate infrastructure such as non-functional facilities for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) and leaking roofs continue to affect both vendors and consumers, further limiting full participation in the city's market system.

POLICIES AND INITIATIVES

To address barriers to inclusion, Quezon City has implemented several policies and initiatives that strengthen its public markets. One of the city's main initiatives promoting inclusivity is the [Joy of Urban Farming program](#). It actively engages senior residents, PWDs, and other community members in urban agriculture, offering both livelihood and wellness benefits. It also provided start-up kits and technical training, enabling them to grow and sell their produce directly in public markets. This integration not only improves livelihoods but additionally enhances visibility and social participation [118].

Digital, physical and soft infrastructure upgrades also serve key in Quezon's approach to making markets more inclusive. The city has introduced digital payment options, such as PalengQR, to help modernize vendor operations and encourage participation especially among younger entrepreneurs. Additionally, it launched [QC e-Services Kiosks](#) where residents can access services such as the Business One-Stop Shop, QCitizen ID, vaccination registration, occupational and health permits, real property tax payment, and PWD and Senior Citizens Affairs IDs. The city is currently making key infrastructure enhancements in its public markets, such as installing PWD-accessible restrooms and maintaining composting facilities. In support of healthier communities, the city is promoting partnerships under the [Healthy Public Food Procurement \(HPFP\) Policy](#) to encourage the sourcing of nutritious food, and to support local vendors, Quezon launched

the [Vendor Business School](#), where participants attended group sessions to strengthen their business knowledge and skills. Furthermore, the LGU holds regular weekly meetings with vendors to foster collaboration and ensure their concerns are heard and addressed [119].

RESULTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Quezon City's initiatives to improve its public market system have showcased encouraging steps in integrating Gender Equality and Social Inclusion. The Joy of Urban Farming program in particular has engaged a wide range of actors who have found opportunities in food production, composting, and micro-enterprise. Elderly farmers and women compost operators highlighted that their engagement with the program benefited their health, income, and self-esteem. Access to urban land, composting tools, and seed propagation training allowed them to meaningfully contribute to farming and market activities near their homes.

The Quezon City Government's efforts to improve its public markets stand as a strong example of good governance and political commitment, which have led to concrete achievements such as the establishment of composting programs, PWD-accessible facilities, and regular vendor consultations. These successes are largely attributed to policy and institutional support for inclusion, clear coordination across departments, and the city's openness to community feedback.

Moving forward, it is vital to mainstream Gender Equality and Social Inclusion into every stage of program planning and implementation. This includes developing GESI-responsive livelihood support, monitoring and evaluation, and investing in digital tools and capacity-building for women, youth, and senior residents. The collection of disaggregated data and establishing GESI focal points within local organizations can also help ensure that programs not only reach, but also consider the most vulnerable and underrepresented groups in the city's food and market systems.

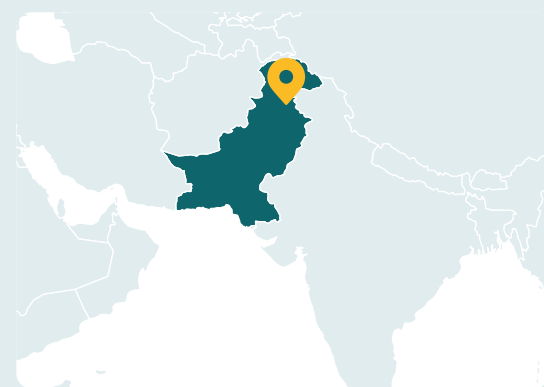


Rawalpindi, Pakistan

GOVERNANCE AND MARKET CONTEXT

The sprawling city of Rawalpindi is located in Pakistan's Punjab province. Rawalpindi's society and economy is closely intertwined with its neighbouring twin city Islamabad with an expanding development of housing estates in Rawalpindi to accommodate residents economically active in the capital. Like elsewhere in Pakistan, markets - from large fruit and vegetable *sabzi mandis* to small food outlets and street food vendor streets selling fresh food, dry staples and/or cooked meals - are an important part of everyday life in the city. Islamabad and Rawalpindi share a main *sabzi mandi*. Most retail vendors, small-scale wholesale traders, market vendors and street food vendors purchase fruits and vegetables from this *sabzi mandis* for further distribution, with an additional wholesaler located in the Rawat area of Rawalpindi.

Rawalpindi has a vibrant grain market with hundreds of wholesale vendors supplying to most parts of northern Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and poultry, fish and other meat is also sold in privately operated markets [124]. Areas well known for their markets in Rawalpindi include Ganj Mandi, Raja Bazar, Liaqat Bagh, Ghauri Town, Commercial Market, and Shamsabad.



 2,480,000 [120]
inhabitants

 108 km² [121]
city's surface

MOST IMPORTANT ECONOMIC SECTORS [122]

- Finance
- IT
- Communications service industries
- Construction
- Agriculture
- Tourism

DID YOU KNOW?

Residents and visitors can enjoy a variety of local street food meals in the area around Rawalpindi's Kartarpura road. These include the famed Kala Khan Nihari, a spicy meat stew made by slow cooking bone marrow, naan bread, barbecued, spiced and fried tawa chicken and fruity yoghurt lassis [123].

Photo: Allocated street food vendor space.
©GAIN 2024

In Rawalpindi, markets are managed by the city administration, whose mandates include food price regulation and basic service provision of electricity, water, and waste management. The Rawalpindi Development Authority is responsible for various mandates such as the investment in new and upgraded market infrastructure. Deputy Commissioners, serving as district heads, supervise all markets through an assigned Assistant Commissioner who liaises with market committees and ensures adherence to regulatory frameworks, including those set by price controllers and food safety authorities. The district office of the Punjab Food Authority is responsible for enforcing food safety regulations,

while the Punjab Government has launched a [real-time online portal](#) to track food prices [124]. The private sector, characterised by large and Micro, Small and Medium-sized enterprises from transporters to millers, commission agents and food vendors, also plays a role in routine logistics and market operations, at times indirectly influencing prices of fresh fruits and vegetables in the markets.

CHALLENGES

Governance and management of Rawalpindi's diversity of food markets faces numerous challenges from unclear and overlapping administrative roles, limited market infrastructure, insufficient access to basic services, rising traffic congestion, and food price instability. Many of Rawalpindi's streets are densely lined with registered and unregistered street food vendors, selling a range of fresh foods, beverages and cooked dishes from mobile street carts or the 'street' floor, where they are regarded as "encroachments" by government. Traffic congestions pose a particular challenge, as roads around the city, such as those leading into the suburban housing estates or to the Rawat highway to the Islamabad, are filled with street food vendors, occupying pockets of unused public land.

While registered and unregistered street food vendors struggle with the challenges mentioned, the latter are more vulnerable, especially to uneven enforcement of regulations. The administration's allocation of trading stall places struggles to meet the demand of registered and unregistered street food vendors and similarly fails to meet the ever growing demand of urban consumers whose daily routines often include purchasing street food. As a result, urban planning, vendor trading permits and food hygiene and safety standards fall short of goals, including reducing traffic congestion, supporting registered vendors located in officially designated areas, and facilitating food hygiene and safety compliance.

POLICIES AND INITIATIVES

Food Streets are an innovative way in which the Rawalpindi Development Authority is attempting to reimagine street food for vendors and consumers through better planning, investment and modernization. An approach increasingly adopted by other cities throughout the Punjab Province, these initiative aim to establish Food Streets as socio-cultural hubs and economic zones, capturing the city's historic value and providing desirable places of food, tradition, social interaction and livelihood generation. Designed to be official, organized spaces for street food vendors to operate in designated areas, Food Streets are able to provide a structured environment that significantly addresses challenges of poor hygiene, traffic congestion, and a lack of business security linked to unregulated street vending. In Rawalpindi, the New Kartarpura Food Street at Chandni Chowk is a recently opened Food Street, a family-friendly marketplace, whose design was inspired by Ramadan food festivals.

RESULTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Plans are in progress to scale the development of new Food Streets, modernize existing markets and establish cultural and social food hot spots to improve Rawalpindi's food landscape. This includes restoring Raja Bazaar, a traditional market, and other historic areas of the city where local markets are growing. These plans offer opportunities for registered food vendors who can afford to pay for the rented outlet space. However, such opportunities are beyond the reach of unregistered vendors who are too poor to formalise their operation. Additionally, while the government strives for regulation and formalization of Food Streets, it nevertheless can also lead to a dependency on government policy and potentially limit vendor autonomy compared to traditional street vending. There is thus a need to co-develop solutions to urban planning, service provision, financing and legal legitimacy with regards Rawalpindi's most vulnerable, unregistered street food vendors.



Recife, Brazil

GOVERNANCE AND MARKET CONTEXT

The City of Recife boasts 42 market units comprising fairs, markets, and fairgrounds. Fairs have seasonal event schedules, while fairgrounds and markets are permanent, enclosed spaces where vendors have fixed stalls operating throughout the year, providing a consistent venue for regional products and interaction. The management, maintenance, and day-to-day operations of public fairs and markets in Recife are the responsibility of the municipal authority CONVIVA Mercados e Feiras (CONVIVA). The authority also implements initiatives to preserve traditional practices while integrating modern amenities, ensuring these hubs remain relevant and accessible to locals and visitors. As a result, Recife's markets not only facilitate the sale of goods but also serve as vibrant centres of culture, preserving and promoting the rich regional heritage, traditions, and cuisine while fostering community engagement and supporting local economies.

CHALLENGES

Despite Brazil being one of the world's largest food producers, the lack of regular access to adequate and healthy food represents fundamental challenges for building a more just and sustainable society, a challenge that



1,488,920
inhabitants



218 km²
city's surface

MOST IMPORTANT ECONOMIC SECTORS

- Tourism
- Tertiary Services

DID YOU KNOW?

Recife can be seen as the "capital of markets," as there are more than 40 bustling hubs showcasing the city's rich culture, history, and vibrant cuisine.

*Photo: Boa Vista Market.
©Divulgação CONVIVA/PCR*

Recife also faces. Food waste, especially in organic solids, remains high due to the absence of effective policies to address the issue. Additionally, inadequate management of organic waste contributes to a cycle of waste and missed opportunities for resource utilization.

POLICIES AND INITIATIVES

The Recolheita Project, developed by Caisan – the Intersectoral Chamber for Food Security and Nutrition, in collaboration with city departments and agencies in Recife, aims to tackle these challenges by reusing food that is still fit for consumption and adequately disposing of organic waste. The central goal is to combat hunger by connecting donors to the Recife Food Bank and promoting access to adequate and healthy food. Furthermore, the project seeks to reduce waste and promote the composting of organic solid waste generated in public markets and fairs, transforming this waste into valuable ecological resources. The pilot project,

conducted at the Encruzilhada Market, showed positive results by collecting 2.2 tons of compost between December and March 2023. After processing, this resulted in approximately 6 tons of compost used by the municipal composting facility. This initial success reinforced the decision to expand the project to other facilities managed by CONVIVA, with target beneficiaries to include individuals assisted by the Recife Food Bank, from the social assistance network, and those in food and nutritional insecurity situations.

Recife's public markets also serve as meeting points for tradition, culture, cuisine, bohemian life, and celebrations that capture the collective imagination of Recife's residents in these spaces. The city's greatest cultural asset is Carnival, known not only for its multicultural nature but also for preserving lyrical blocks and Frevo de Bloco. During the Carnival season, markets gain even more prominence, hosting decentralised events that attract tourists and locals. This also happens during the region's traditional festival of São João in June, when CONVIVA-managed facilities join the artistic grid with itinerant performances.

RESULTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

In recent years, significant investments have been made in structural interventions across the facilities the authority manages. This investment includes the construction of new spaces to accommodate vendors and visitors, as well as refurbishments that have enhanced existing facilities, making them more prominent for residents, tourists, and collaborators.

Despite these significant investments, further progress is needed in various areas to improve public spaces. Public procurement calls have been promoted since 2021 to establish public-private partnerships to strengthen furnishing, service utensils, graphic standardisation, and visual layout in the city's markets and fairs. Today, some markets have benefited from these initiatives, ensuring better equipment for permit holders and visitors while relieving the municipal

budget. The counterpart for the private sector is that there will be exclusivity in the display of the winning brand.

Further efforts will focus on fostering public-private partnerships and developing sustainable and responsible production cycles for food reuse and composting, which will alleviate urban cleaning challenges and integrate these initiatives into public management policies. Additionally, there will be a continued emphasis on supporting entrepreneurship among vendors who have long been integral to the city's public markets and fairs.



Rourkela, India

GOVERNANCE AND MARKET CONTEXT

Through smart solutions, Rourkela aims to achieve a healthy, safe, and sustainable food environment strengthened by strong institutional, social, and economic infrastructure. Rourkela has made significant strides in various food-related initiatives, such as reshaping markets to prevent distress sales by farmers, ensuring food security for all, and promoting community participation in food intervention planning. Furthermore, the city has improved early childhood nutrition and redeveloped the food infrastructure through the Purnanjali Program. The Rourkela Municipal Corporation (RMC) plays a crucial role in food market management in the city [126].

CHALLENGES

Rourkela's fresh food markets face significant challenges due to inadequate vegetable storage facilities. This has led to high rates of food wastage, with 34% of fruits and 44.6% of vegetables wasted annually, at the same time fueling distress sales, food contamination, and increased water, energy, and soil consumption to produce the same amount of food, resulting in losses for farmers and vendors and adverse economic and environmental impacts. A pilot survey indicated that 83% of farmers and vendors cited the lack of storage options as the



primary reason for distress selling. The COVID-19 pandemic aggravated these food waste issues by reducing consumer demand, emphasising the need for effective and sustainable solutions to support the local food market and reduce the waste in the city [127].

POLICIES AND INITIATIVES

To address these challenges, the RMC, in collaboration with the District Horticulture Department, NGOs, Farmer Producer Organizations, and Koel Fresh Pvt Ltd., launched the “[E-cool Mandi](#)” project in 2021. This initiative, funded by Bloomberg Philanthropies and managed by UNDP, involved the installation of five solar energy-based decentralized cold

storage facilities at various market locations, designed to benefit about 1,650 vendors and nearly one million residents, with plans to scale up city-wide by 2025. The project began with a pilot at the VSS market in Chhend. The vendors can store their produce at a minimal cost of INR 0.20 per day per kg.

The project also has a gender focus. Each e-cool mandi is managed by 5-7 women, including digital inventory management operations. This initiative was initially started with a 5MT cold room operated by Maa Tarini Self Help Group with support from Koel Fresh Pvt. Ltd, a startup venture from the city. Subsequently, an additional 4 nos of SHGs participated in the project, namely Jai Mata Di SHG, Maa Mangala SHG, Sukanya SHG, and Binapani SHG, operating a cumulative 115 MT cold room capacity in the city. As a supporting activity, an Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) program titled “[Cold Room Ambassadors](#)” has been conducted to create awareness and promote the e-cool mandis, intended to serve 1650 farmers and small vendors. Around six EVs are deployed in the city to distribute items to consumers and bulk institutions like hostels, hospitals, hotels, events, and others. After implementing the cold room, small and marginal vendors residing in Rourkela saw a 10-30% increase in revenue growth [128].

RESULTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

The “E-cool Mandi” project has significantly reduced vegetable wastage and improved vendors’ livelihoods. Looking ahead, the city council plans to extend the project across all markets in Rourkela, further promoting clean energy through the “Solarization Rourkela program.”

The introduction of refrigerated storage tools has reduced vegetable product waste, leading to a decrease in distressed selling and an increase in vendors’ gains by up to 30%. The project has empowered women by involving them in managing the vegetable bank and the online delivery services, opening new opportunities for

meaningful livelihoods. The city council’s holistic approach includes long-term plans to secure and enrich the livelihoods of small and marginal vendors and create meaningful opportunities for women federations under the Mission Shakti Program. This involves technical and non-technical training, stakeholder engagement, and scaling up the project across all markets in Rourkela. Initial challenges included onboarding vendors and women federations, which were overcome through participatory discussions and co-creations with stakeholders. Demonstrating tangible outputs through pilot projects was essential in gaining the support and participation of core users like farmers and vendors. However, by fostering trust through participatory discussions and demonstrating the project’s value via pilot initiatives, the team successfully onboarded 1400 vendors. The Women’s Federation was crucial in mobilization, utilizing local networks and culturally sensitive approaches. The experience underscored the need for effective communication, resource allocation, and the value of demonstrating tangible outcomes to gain stakeholder buy-in.



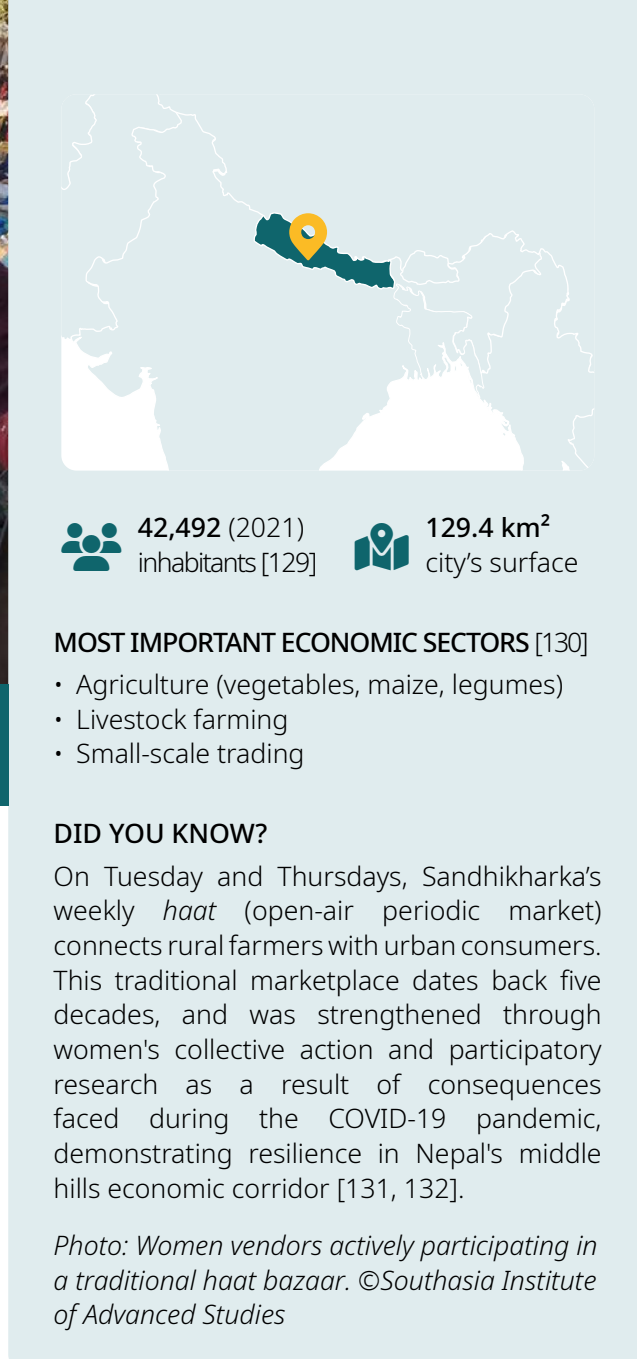
Sandhikharka, Nepal

GOVERNANCE AND MARKET CONTEXT

Sandhikharka municipality officially manages the *haat* market, operating twice weekly at two separate locations within the town. The market has experienced multiple relocations from *Khula Manch*, an open space for public assembly (1988) to Bagaincha under the shade of mango orchard (1990) and near the Buspark (2011) due to municipal planning decisions [133]. The Vegetables Production and Marketing Group (VPMG) serves as the primary farmers' collective, representing 400-500 women vegetable producers in Sandhikharka Municipality and nearby rural areas. This cooperative structure functions as an intermediary between individual farmers and municipal authorities, though it operates within informal governance frameworks. [134]

CHALLENGES

COVID-19 lockdown resulted in *haat* closure from March 2020, causing women farmers' income to decrease by nearly 50% while simultaneously increasing their unpaid care responsibilities and exposure to gender-based violence [135]. Women faced challenges across age, caste, ethnicity, and income levels, including limited mobility, restricted decision-making authority, and inadequate access to formal



financial services. Intermediaries and local traders in turn took advantage of the situation by importing vegetables from the Terai plains, which further affected local producers' market position. Despite relaxed COVID-19 restrictions, municipal authorities showed limited interest in reopening the market, a hesitation that small and women farmers believe was influenced by intermediaries and traders. Even after *haat* bazaar reopened, the market continues to operate without permanent sheds or infrastructure. Climate-related pressures only deepen these insecurities, making it even harder for women-led agricultural businesses to sustain themselves [133, 135].

POLICIES AND INITIATIVES

The Southasia Institute of Advanced Studies (SIAS), through the 2.5 year project 'Co-producing a shock resilient business ecosystem for women-led enterprises (CREW)' funded by IDRC Canada, implemented participatory action research across five resilience domains: social, political, environmental, economic, and technological [135]. The project developed comprehensive interventions including business information systems, digital technology access, financial literacy, branding support, and e-commerce platform linkages to create shock-resilient women-led enterprises [136]. SIAS facilitated formal workshops bringing together VPMG representatives, municipal officials, researchers, and private sector actors to address market reopening through collaborative problem-solving. Interventions included VPMG executive restructuring to increase women's leadership representation, targeted support such as free vegetable transport, household-level outreach, and mass media campaigns through radio and television.

RESULTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

The *haat* reopened in September 2022, reaching full operational capacity by January 2023, with women farmers achieving significant price improvements with cauliflower selling at NPR 70 per kg compared (USD 0.50) to the NPR 40 per kg (USD 0.28) offered by intermediaries [133]. The intervention elevated women's voices in public forums and higher nodes of agricultural value chains, with municipal commitment to permanent market infrastructure, including land allocation and shed construction. Women farmers restored direct market access, eliminating dependence on exploitative intermediaries while improving cooperative governance structures. The initiative supported 400-500 women producers across the target municipalities. Local government uptake of research results contributed to climate-smart and gender-friendly entrepreneurial engagement plans, demonstrating scalability potential for the ecosystem of support model.

Through participatory action research, women from marginalized groups were able to share their concerns and experiences directly. The approach looked not only at livelihoods, but also at the social, political, environmental, economic, and technological hurdles they face in everyday life. By coming together under the VPMG, women built a stronger collective voice to fight for their rights. Community platforms also created space for dialogue and joint decision-making, helping local governance become more inclusive and responsive. An integrated support system combined practical assistance with capacity building creating a resilient, women-led market ecosystem. The Sandhikharka work within the broader CREW project demonstrates that sustainable women's economic empowerment requires systematic intervention across multiple resilience domains, with participatory research serving as a critical mechanism for transforming local governance and market systems.

In addition to Sandhikharka, the CREW project was implemented in two more districts. In Ramechhap District, the project focused on improving market access for women farmers through local cooperatives, enhancing financial stability and participation in agricultural value chains. In Dolakha District, the project emphasized skill-building and entrepreneurship, strengthening women's confidence and expanding opportunities for small business development [135].



San Luis Potosí, Mexico

GOVERNANCE AND MARKET CONTEXT

The Municipal Commerce Department manages and operates two key publicly owned municipal markets, in which authorities oversee all operations, enforce regulations, and manage market use without outsourcing their operation to private companies. Among them, the San Luis Potosí Municipal Market offers a range of fresh produce, livestock, dairy items, packaged fruits, and prepared food, supported by municipal policies that promote local production. Daily administration, regulatory compliance, and the application of sanctions are handled by the market administrator and designated staff, and market operations follow municipal regulations for plazas and markets. In addition to the two public markets, the city also operates six fixed public markets and supports more than 20 rotating *tianguis* (street markets) routes, comprising about 133 weekly assemblies across different neighborhoods. This decentralized approach brings fresh food and basic goods to areas with limited access to large commercial stores [139, 140, 141].

CHALLENGES

In 2020, CONEVAL, the National Commission for the Promotion of Food Security, reported that 12.5% of the municipality's population - about 111,321 people - faced food deprivation. The monthly cost of a basic food basket per



886,040
inhabitants



1,333.7 km²
city's surface

MOST IMPORTANT ECONOMIC SECTORS [137]

- Transportation and electrical equipment manufacturing
- Metal, food, plastic and rubber manufacturing
- Chemical industry
- Non-metallic minerals

DID YOU KNOW?

The Municipality of San Luis Potosí has a vast cultural and culinary offering, ranging from its traditional Procession of Silence during Holy Week and Buche Alley to its iconic "enchiladas potosinas" and major cultural events like the Corn Fair [138].

Photo: Hidalgo Market. ©Municipality of San Luis Potosí

person was MXN 1,383.84 (USD 75.84) in rural areas and MXN 1,810.09 (USD 99.20) in urban areas. This translates to one fifth and one third of a person's salary in formal employment respectively, with even higher shares for those in informal employment or people needing to provide for dependants and family members. As such, one of the municipality's main priorities is to ensure that the majority of the population of the municipality has access to a basic food of good quality at an affordable price, depending on their income. To address this challenge, the municipality has implemented various programs to provide information, support, and food to residents in need.

In the area of health and nutrition particular to markets, many food vendors in the municipality offer traditional and popular foods, but little

emphasis is placed on nutrition education or incentives to promote healthy eating habits in public markets. In addition, the infrastructure of some fixed markets is aging and requires investment to improve sanitation, waste management, accessibility and food storage. In the *tianguis*, logistical challenges such as traffic disruption, waste collection and lack of services are frequent.

POLICIES AND INITIATIVES

The Municipality of San Luis Potosí has a holistic approach in strengthening markets, targeting actors and sectors across the food chain. Priority market operations include fostering short food supply chains by encouraging direct sales between producers and consumers, particularly through traditional markets and mobile street markets, keeping entry regulations low for new and small vendors. To reduce food loss and waste, the city is testing pilot projects with local universities and organizations focused on waste management, food donation strategies, and composting.

Consumer awareness is promoted through educational and nutrition campaigns held in municipal spaces, which encourage the community to buy fresh produce at markets, and rehabilitation programs, such as the *De Corazón Mi Hogar* (My Home from the Heart) [142]. Local markets themselves are valued not only as centers of commerce but also as cultural landmarks and the city supports initiatives that preserve traditional food practices, culinary heritage, and community gatherings. Finally, there is an emphasis on promoting local food crops and species, highlighting regional ingredients and biodiversity through market offerings, culinary events, and educational programs.

One standout effort of the municipality is the Promotion of Local Food Production and Processing program, which aims to revitalize and professionalize municipal markets as safe, functional, and inclusive spaces that are essential for access to fresh food and for supporting local economic development. This strategy combines infrastructure upgrades for improved accessibility

and safety, the formalization of tenants, and prioritization of local producers and women entrepreneurs. Staff have received training in inclusive customer care, and complementary entrepreneurship programs have been launched to connect producers directly with consumers [143]. Among them is the *Emprende Natural*, a learning community focused on food producers and processors, offering educational strategies with opportunities for exposure and validation. The program includes events to encourage community engagement and support to small vendors, such as the *Feria del Elote* held in the city's El Parque de Morales, celebrating local corn-based foods and highlighting the nutritional and cultural value of corn in Mexican cuisine [144]. During these events, workshops are also held and printed materials are distributed to encourage conscious food choices and to recover ancestral culinary knowledge.

LESSONS AND LOOKING AHEAD

In San Luis Potosí, recent initiatives have brought a steady but positive shift in the way food markets operate and are perceived. Upgrades to infrastructure and hygiene in municipal markets have improved customer satisfaction and increased vendor participation. Over time, the municipality has seen clear benefits, including the promotion of local food production and processing, greater access to markets, stronger local economies, reduced food vulnerability, and the creation of valuable collaboration networks.

Together, these measures have improved access to healthy food, created better working conditions, and strengthened the links between rural production and urban markets. Testimonies from vendors and customers highlight the importance of continuing these programs, with the goal of positioning San Luis Potosí as a state leader in initiatives that provide tangible support to communities. While challenges remain, the municipality now has a strong foundation in market development and sustainable food security, with the potential to set clear, achievable goals for the short, medium, and long term.



Science City of Muñoz, Philippines

GOVERNANCE AND MARKET CONTEXT

Given the city's predominantly agricultural landscape, its two public markets primarily offer fresh produce, serving as centralized trading hubs for products sourced locally and from neighboring cities and provinces. Both markets are managed by the Local Government Unit (LGU) in coordination with various city departments and vendor associations. This collaborative approach ensures the proper management of infrastructure, vendor compliance, and daily operations.

According to the Market Master, the Science City of Muñoz Public Market operates under strict daily regulations. Vendors with permanent stalls are required to obtain an annual municipal permit and pay a daily fee of PHP 20 (USD 0.34) for each day they sell. Most vegetables sold at the market are sourced from nearby barangays, while livestock is usually brought in from other provinces. The City Agriculture Office provides continuous support to local farmers through the distribution of agricultural inputs, training programs, price monitoring, and the promotion of sustainable practices such as biomass production using rice husks. The City Veterinary Office also plays a critical role in maintaining food safety by inspecting slaughterhouses and ensuring that all meat products are safe for public consumption. Public markets also have



102,823 (2023)
inhabitants



147.9 km²
city's surface

MOST IMPORTANT ECONOMIC SECTORS

- Agriculture

DID YOU KNOW?

The city earned its title as a "Science City" due to the presence of key institutions dedicated to agriculture, biotechnology, and aquaculture. These include the Central Luzon State University, the Philippine Rice Research Institute, and the Philippine Carabao Center.

*Photo: Science City of Muñoz Public Market.
©Jameela Antoniette Mendoza/
ICLEI Southeast Asia*

Market Vendors Associations, which facilitate communication with the LGU, participate in trainings and promote initiatives such as the digitalisation of market transactions.

CHALLENGES

Despite the city's efforts to manage its operations, various challenges continue to arise. The city's public wet market generates a high volume of organic waste, including food scraps and spoiled produce, primarily due to the continuous influx of agricultural products. This type of waste is often heavy and decomposes quickly, leading to foul odors and attracting pests, which deter potential customers and affect vendors' day-to-day operations and sales. According to some farmers in the city, the limited access to cold storage and post-harvest facilities contribute to the rapid spoilage of perishable goods, and rising costs of fertilisers add further strain to

their production and profitability. Limited waste disposal infrastructure and insufficient cleaning add to these challenges.

POLICIES AND INITIATIVES

The city addresses these challenges through a multi-faceted strategy aimed at fostering a circular economy. To manage waste in public markets, the City Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO) reinforces a mandatory waste segregation at the source outlined in the city's dedicated waste management policy (with non-compliance linked to a fine of PHP 500.00 (USD 8.60) for the first offense), enforced by collection personnel and eco-cleaners. To further ensure cleanliness, the city has also implemented a twice-daily waste collection schedule in the public market, with scheduled shifts for eco-cleaners who maintain the area throughout operating hours. Segregated waste is transported by city trucks to the Materials Recovery Facility (MRF), where it undergoes processing for diversion separating biodegradable waste from non-recyclable residuals. This organic waste is subjected to a composting process, becoming a valuable organic fertilizer.

This market-to-MRF system is significantly complemented by the city's [Bakuran Ko, Gulayan Ko](#) (My Backyard, My Vegetable Garden) program. The initiative highlights urban agriculture and backyard gardening among residents, distributing seedlings and encouraging the use of recycled containers for planting. Participants in this program can request compost fertilizer directly from the MRF, which is a key component of a city ordinance promoting food production. The program is structured as a competition across four levels: Barangay Councils, Public Elementary and High Schools, Private Elementary and High Schools, and Households, each with distinct criteria and prizes. Notably, Barangay Council participants reported that most of their harvests are consumed within their communities, while some are sold in nearby public markets. This effectively links food production back to local commerce and helps close the economic loop.

Because of the city's approach, noticeable improvements have occurred, particularly in the public markets. Buyers have observed a significant reduction in litter and foul odors, making the area cleaner and encouraging longer visits and more frequent purchases. Meanwhile, some urban farmers shared that the *Bakuran Ko, Gulayan Ko* program not only supplements their daily food needs but also provides a modest source of income.

RESULTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

The Science City of Muñoz has made significant progress in addressing its waste management challenges in its local public market. Its success is mainly from its multifaceted strategy that comprises clear policy direction, coordinated effort among LGU offices, strong institutional oversight, and active community engagement. The Bakuran Ko, Gulayan Ko program empowered households to convert organic waste into compost for use in backyard gardening, offering direct, tangible benefits to participating communities, while fostering a sense of ownership and reducing the volume of organic waste.

Institutional responsibility was another key element in the city's strategy, with specific offices, including the Market Administration and CENRO, being tasked with clear mandates related to waste management. Lastly, the establishment of open and consistent communication channels with market actors, particularly vendors, played a vital role in the effective management of not only waste but also other aspects of operations at the Science City of Muñoz Public Market. By promoting collaboration with vendor associations and maintaining regular avenues for communication, the city government was able to implement the regulations smoothly and build broad-based support for cleaner, more sustainable, and well-managed market practices.



Seoul, Republic of Korea

GOVERNANCE AND MARKET CONTEXT

Seoul Metropolitan Government (SMG) supports 418 traditional markets (as of January 2025) and neighborhood alley shopping districts run by small businesses under the Special Act on the Promotion of Traditional Markets and Shopping Districts. 52 are large-scale markets with over 1,000 shops; the rest are neighborhood markets embedded in daily life.

Given the diversity of market sizes, products, and visitors, SMG tailors support to specific needs. The city's 2025 budget allocates KRW 29.3 billion (≈USD 22.5 million) across 19 projects for traditional markets, with the largest share for facility modernization. The support system involves Small Enterprise and Market Service (under the Ministry of SMEs and Startups), SMG, and local district offices. Funding is delivered via vendor associations or shopping district promotion organizations, or managed directly by the public sector [145].

CHALLENGES

Traditional markets have been facing serious challenges due to the rise of large discount stores and online shopping platforms. Additionally, persistent issues, including hygiene concerns, limited parking, and a lack



9,335,734
inhabitants



605.2 km²
city's surface

MOST IMPORTANT ECONOMIC SECTORS

- Cultural Tourism
- Beauty & Fashion
- Finance & Business
- Smart Tech & Digital Innovation Economy
- Design-Driven Urban Manufacturing

DID YOU KNOW?

Collaboration between diverse actors is a cornerstone for the preservation of Seoul's traditional markets. A noteworthy example is the launch of two Starbucks Korea stores in Gyeongdong and Gwangjang Markets, highlighting each market's charm, offering nostalgia to middle-aged visitors and fresh experiences to younger generations and tourists.

Photo: Mangwon Market. ©Mangwon Market Merchant Association

of public facilities, continue to deter shoppers. To address these issues, the SMG continues to implement diverse measures to preserve the competitiveness and unique value of traditional markets. Nevertheless, such efforts have also faced resistance from aging merchants reluctant to change and criticism from external observers, which is further complicated by diverse interests of stakeholders such as land owners, retail tenants, and nearby competitors.

POLICIES AND INITIATIVES

To date, the city's market-related policies have primarily focused on modernizing facilities. This includes expanding pedestrian areas

and parking, establishing customer centers, upgrading restrooms and arcades, and improving safety through CCTV, fire, electrical, gas, and drainage system enhancements [146]. As a result, 59 customer centers have been established, now serving as vendor association offices, libraries, or kids' cafes. In addition, the SMG is working to expand online sales channels, support the production of meal kits, and promote digital transformation by helping traditional markets adopt e-commerce platforms through online discount events and store entry support. In 2024, 49 markets participated in an online flash sale event, resulting in an average sales increase of 83% compared to the previous month [145].

The SMG also extends its financial support to traditional markets through fair selection processes and enhanced promotional activities aimed at improving their social image. Markets may apply once per year, submitting detailed plans on scope, goals, and budgets, with annual financial reviews to ensure transparency. To prevent support from concentrating only on well-organized markets, each project prioritizes improvements based on urgency rather than market size, such as modernizing fire prevention facilities even in unregistered markets.

Two markets in particular show the successes of collaboration between market actors. Mangwon Market exemplifies how markets can actively leverage external resources with innovative approaches. The market promotes the Zero Waste movement by offering reusable shopping bags and encouraging customers to bring their own containers. Vendors give coupons to customers who bring their own containers to purchase food, and these coupons can later be exchanged for standard government-designated trash bags (which are normally purchased) through the vendors association. Collaboration with environmental organizations and influencers also enables cultural, music and culinary events, transforming the market from a space of sale into one for experiencing culture.

Active promotional campaigns also address public criticism and aim to enhance the image of markets. Gwangjang Market, a popular tourist destination located in central Seoul, was previously criticized for high prices. In response, the SMG, district offices, vendors associations, and street food vendors' cooperatives worked together to introduce standardized pricing, food samples, and fair trade practices. While the vendor association led internal reforms, the city promoted these changes, helping Gwangjang Market retain its status as Seoul's largest traditional market and a major national tourist attraction.

The SMG strives to improve policy acceptance by maintaining continuous communication with the Small Enterprise and SEMAS, district offices, and vendors associations. In addition, as of 2025, 120 traditional market managers are dispatched to promote Seoul's policies to vendors and help incorporate their feedback into policymaking [145].

RESULTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

True progress requires not only the passionate and proactive participation of vendors but also efforts by the government and local communities to communicate and understand each other's perspectives. It is on this foundation that governments like SMG can provide flexible support and present a clear policy vision, ultimately enabling the sustainable development of traditional markets and the restoration of public trust. Ultimately, the future of traditional markets depends on effective communication, innovative thinking, active community involvement, and the government's committed role as a partner.



Turin, Italy

GOVERNANCE AND MARKET CONTEXT

Turin has 42 local markets spread across eight districts, developed over the 20th century to meet the needs of a growing urban population driven by industrial development. In recent years, 14 farmers' markets have been introduced in central squares, usually held monthly or on weekends, offering agri-food products directly from small local producers. In addition, a new 'Covered Market for Agricultural Producers' is currently being built in a renovated historic building on one of the main streets in the city centre. Four of the most central markets form the Porta Palazzo market, the largest open-air market in Europe, which has accompanied Turin's social transformation, developing a vibrant multicultural identity and serving as a meeting point for cultures, economies, and generations.

The municipality plays an active role in managing and promoting markets. The Department of Commerce oversees food markets, the Department of Public Works ensures infrastructure and technical services, and the Local Sanitary Institution handles hygiene controls. The municipality also collaborates with associations, including farmers' associations, to improve management. Each market is supported by a Market Committee, composed of



850,000
inhabitants



130 km²
city's surface

MOST IMPORTANT ECONOMIC SECTORS

- Industry
- Automotive
- Engineering
- Food production

DID YOU KNOW?

Turin is the city with the highest number of daily markets in Italy. Its Porta Palazzo Market, the largest open-air market in Europe, is considered the city's true 'port' as it welcomes goods and cultures from all over the world.

Photo: Porta Palazzo Market. ©Municipality of Turin

representatives from different sectors who work with the municipality to facilitate the functioning of that specific market area.

CHALLENGES

Turin, once an industrial city with high factory employment, now faces socio-economic challenges caused by an ageing population, demographic decline, and rising income inequality. Many elderly citizens live on low incomes, while the large student population cannot fully sustain the local market economy. Although tourism has grown and markets are being reframed as tourist destinations, their main users remain locals. Dependence on a shrinking and ageing population, together with competition from other food outlets and shifting consumer habits, has created a mismatch between supply and demand, impacting small

businesses and vendors. The city's priority is to revive the role of local markets by building on the "economics of proximity" and recognising them not only as commercial spaces but also as places of identity, connection, and community support.

POLICIES AND INITIATIVES

Turin has developed several revitalization initiatives to support vendors, raise consumer awareness, and highlight the cultural and social significance of markets. A redevelopment plan was launched for ten markets, addressing physical upgrades such as paving and stalls, new stall layouts to minimise vacant spaces, and a modernised allocation system with the app Merc@to. Through the app, vendors can pay for daily use only when occupying their stall, and a similar model is intended to be applied to utility charges.

To promote city markets, two major campaigns have been launched to increase the accessibility and support the vendors. The first campaign introduced Italy's first market app, [TorinoMercati](#) (available in Italian, English and French), which provides updated information on the local and farmers' markets, their history, curiosities, and a home delivery system now piloted at Porta Palazzo with the support of a Start-up of the Polytechnic University of Turin. The platform includes a real-time online showcase of available products and prices, which market operators have been trained to use and update independently. It also promotes sustainable delivery using cargo bikes and reduced packaging, ensuring moderate costs and multiple payment options. The second campaign, [Torino Riflessa – la città vista dalle vetrine](#), tells the story of Turin through the evolution of local commerce, presenting tourist itineraries that highlight shops, artisan workshops, and local markets, with a special focus on Porta Palazzo.

Social innovation has also been promoted through REPOPP, a project by a local non-profit association that reduces food waste, recovers

organic matter, and fosters solidarity. Young unemployed immigrants collect surplus food at the end of the day and distribute it free of charge to low-income families. Leftovers are repurposed, cooked, and made available the following day. This initiative not only supports those in need but also helps integrate vulnerable groups into community life.

RESULTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

The city of Turin is committed to improving market management, supporting vendors and the local economy, and strengthening the social and cultural role of markets, also through innovative digital platforms. Success has been driven by political will and mayoral support and effective coordination among municipal departments, in addition to the linking of key sectors, such as tourism and markets. These efforts were further reinforced by industry studies, which helped to develop solutions to the socio-economic dynamics, while local associations, farmers, and vendors ensured long-term engagement through Market Committees. Physical redevelopment was supported by EUR 11 million (USD 12.97 million) from the COVID-19 recovery PNRR fund.

Despite its strong commitment, municipal funding alone was insufficient to cover the costs of campaigns and interventions. Additional resources came from a dedicated fund for the support and revitalization of the local economy, financed by large retailers opening new outlets who are required to contribute a set amount to offset negative impacts on small businesses.

Together, these efforts allowed Turin to strengthen the role of its markets as economic, cultural, and social hubs, while modernising their infrastructure, management, and image. Markets are now increasingly recognised not only as places of trade but also as essential spaces of identity, belonging, and solidarity in the city.



Zapopan, Mexico

GOVERNANCE AND MARKET CONTEXT

The municipality of Zapopan owns, regulates, and maintains 16 markets distributed across the city, directly managed by the Department of Markets and governed by the Plazas, Markets, and Floor Regulations. Other departments involved are the Department of Public Sanitation and the Department of Street Markets and Open-Air Commerce. Vendors in Zapopan's municipal markets are predominantly local residents, whose main activity is focused on supplying goods and providing basic services. They are an essential part of the local economic fabric, with many families maintaining a long tradition within markets, contributing to the stability and continuity of commercial activity in these spaces. Any citizen may engage in commercial or service activities within the market, which entails obtaining the corresponding license and authorization, paying fees, and ensuring product quality and hygiene of their assigned spaces. In July 2024, the Zapopan municipality updated its regulations for street markets and street vendors, to improve its market landscape. These regulations are enforced by the municipality as part of its local laws [150].

CHALLENGES

According to the Zapopan National Development and Governance Plan 2024-2027, 11.5 % of Zapopan's residents were moderately or

1,476,491 [147]
inhabitants

893.15 km² [148]
city's surface

MOST IMPORTANT ECONOMIC SECTORS

- Electronics
- Trade and services sector
- Food industry
- Construction [148, 149]

DID YOU KNOW?

Zapopan derives its name from the Nahuatl word *Tzapopant*, meaning place of sapotes. The corresponding Nahuatl hieroglyphic depicts a sapote fruit tree.

Photo: Atemajac Market.
©Municipality of Zapopan

severely food insecure in 2020. To tackle this issue, the municipality has developed various initiatives and programs [151]. Key challenges nevertheless lie in securing the support of all involved departments, raising awareness among administrators, vendors, and consumers to prevent food waste, and establishing collaboration with local producers for the sale of fruits and vegetables that might not meet aesthetic standards.

Each department within the municipality also faces different challenges based on its roles and responsibilities. For the Department of Environment for instance, it is important to provide local producers with tools and alternatives to reduce food loss and waste. These include waste separation, donating edible fruits and vegetables for human consumption and animal feed, and creating opportunities to sell 'imperfect' fruits and vegetables. Another challenge linked to limited community interest,

leading to neglect mainly in school and community urban gardens, which, in addition to market-related activities, offer a second pillar to strengthen food security of the city. Therefore, the goal of the department is to maintain schedules and training consistently, in addition to securing financial resources and community commitment for the continuity of these programs.

POLICIES AND INITIATIVES

Zapopan is currently implementing two programs with relevance to food markets: community kitchens and urban gardens. The [Community Kitchen program](#) aims to provide nutritious meals across the municipality, reducing food insecurity and ensuring access to food as a human right, with priority given to the most vulnerable populations. Each meal includes a balanced portion of protein and carbohydrates, a serving of fruit, and a beverage [152, 153]. This program goes hand in hand with food markets, as fresh food can be purchased at the markets and, in turn, can be used as input for the soup kitchens. The [Urban Garden program](#) focuses on establishing gardens in urban, school, family, and community settings in the city, supported by theoretical and practical training in sustainable organic production. This initiative involves several municipal agencies working together. Complementing these efforts, Zapopan, in collaboration with the Western Institute of Technology and Higher Education (ITESO), developed the [Guide to Preventing Food Waste](#). This resource offers practical recommendations, tips, and recipes to help residents reduce organic food waste at home [154].

LESSONS AND LOOKING AHEAD

The programs implemented so far have shown promising results in strengthening Zapopan's food security. By December 2024, 68 gardens spanning across 3,895 m² have supported 6,546 residents, and in 2024, 9 kitchens delivered 477,105 portions of fruit. The municipality of Zapopan reaffirms its commitment to its community and seeks to continue and expand coverage their coverage.

Aligned with the Guide to Preventing Food Waste, an additional project in Markets and Street Markets is currently under development, building on a two-year pilot focusing on separating organic waste for composting. This initiative arises from an updated waste diagnosis, which revealed that a significant portion of discarded food was still in good condition. The goal is to implement measures to recover such foods, following a hierarchy that prioritizes recovery for human consumption, animal feed, and composting. Additionally, this project seeks to create a space in municipal markets for the sale of fruits and vegetables which do not meet aesthetic standards required by supermarkets. This initiative provides an option for producers to avoid food waste and raises awareness among consumers about these types of products, which are nutritionally in perfect condition.



Conclusion

As shown in this handbook, food markets have immense, yet often untapped potential to drive food system transformation. They play a crucial role in addressing key challenges such as malnutrition, food insecurity, sustainable food production, farmers' and vendors' livelihoods, circularity and waste management, and the well-being of local communities, including gender equity. In this context, local governments have the opportunity and the responsibility to support and strengthen their food markets as hubs for health and nutrition, learning, behaviour change, and civic life.

Through its CityFood Market Action Framework, this handbook offers actionable tools and strategies to guide policymakers and stakeholders toward supporting and sustaining markets as essential components of the urban food landscape. The case studies and

strategies presented here demonstrate the real-world impact of well-supported markets, from Barcelona's awareness raising activities to Lusaka's multi-stakeholder engagement and Quezon's initiatives promoting social inclusion. They offer replicable models and practical insights that can inspire governments around the world to strengthen their local food systems.

The pathway to nourishing our communities and securing our food systems lies in the food markets of our cities and towns. By embracing their potential, we can create healthier, more resilient, and sustainable futures for all.

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