

Feed the Future Food Systems for Nutrition Innovation Lab Country Activity Brief - Bangladesh 2023-2024

Introduction

The Feed the Future Food Systems for Nutrition Innovation Lab (FSN-IL) is at the forefront of catalyzing the transformation of food systems to improve nutrition across diverse global contexts. Operating its activities in Bangladesh, Malawi, Mozambique, and Nepal, FSN-IL collaborates with governments, research and academic institutions, private sector stakeholders, and development partners to address the unique challenges within each country's food system.

Through its closely interlinked domains of research for development (R4D), human and institutional capacity development, and stakeholder engagement, FSN-IL works to identify scalable solutions that address critical gaps in food systems, prioritizing improved access to nutrient-rich perishable foods, food safety, and reducing food loss and waste.

The country-specific update below offers a snapshot of FSN-IL's ongoing efforts to reduce food loss and waste, promote nutrient-dense diets, and accelerate the adoption and scaling of food systems innovations tailored to the broader context and needs of Bangladesh.

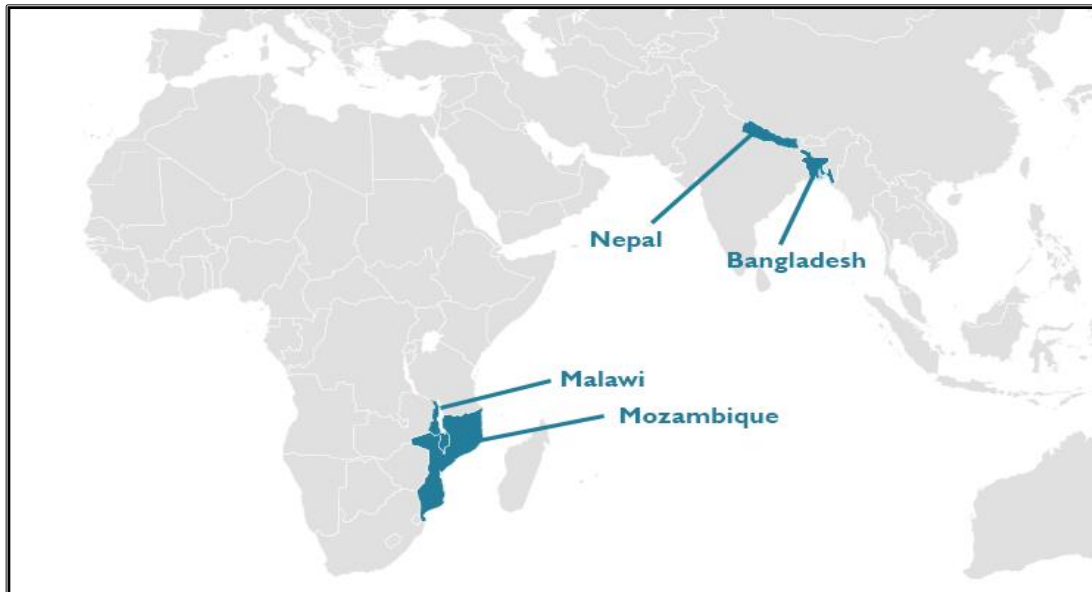


Figure 1: Map of FSN-IL Focus Countries

Bangladesh Activity Brief | Key Highlights from FY2024

Circular Food Systems Workshop on Food Loss and Waste | Nagarkot, Nepal | May 2024

In May 2024, a Circular Food Systems Workshop was held in Nagarkot, Nepal with 13 participants from Nepal and 12 participants from Bangladesh. The three-day, interactive workshop led by Thriving Solutions involved in-depth discussions and modules featuring case studies and context-relevant examples. At the end of the training, participants applied newly learned circular economy concepts by working in groups to create roadmaps tailored to country-specific goals identified by their team members. Impacts of this training include generating awareness and enhancing local

stakeholder capacity to understand and implement circular economy strategies related to food systems and nutrition, thereby driving sustainable long-term outcomes in various sectors, projects, and policy planning.

Food Frontiers 3.0 | Planned

This year, FSN-IL and consortium partner GAIN Bangladesh are jointly organizing Food Frontiers 3.0 (FF3.0), a first-of-its-kind start-up competition that will mobilize, engage, and educate women and youth about the challenges that Bangladesh faces across its agrifood system. FF3.0 will focus on greater youth engagement, creating dialogue around every aspect of Bangladesh's food system, from farm to fork, and encouraging the development of innovative, scalable, and sustainable ideas that will transform the food system. The outcome will be a group of start-ups that will lead this transformation. To reinforce the outcome and ensure that the selected start-ups successfully navigate the challenging phase of attracting investments and beyond, FF3.0 will also have a robust support mechanism in place. These top tier start-ups will go through intensive training and capacity development workshops, taught by renowned experts both locally and abroad, to ensure they are prepared for the pre-seed phase. Additionally, FF3.0 will facilitate investor meetings where start-ups will meet angel investors and venture capitalists to pitch their ideas.

Given the current political climate in Bangladesh, FSN-IL had to postpone the initial planning and preparation of the event. The planning is expected to kick off in November/December of this year.

FY2023 R4D Competitive Award 1: Breaking the Vicious Cycle of Loss and Waste: Evaluating and Scaling Cold Chain Storage Innovations in Bangladesh | Ongoing

FSN-IL is currently engaged in an activity to identify and promote a scalable business model to cost-effectively provide cold storage services for fruit and vegetable farmers and traders in Bangladesh. To fulfill this objective, the activity will evaluate the cost-effectiveness of existing and potential cold storage technologies that could be scaled in Bangladesh. It will also generate information on whether import policies and value added taxes are inhibiting the cost-effectiveness and scalability of cold storage solutions. The activity will estimate demand for a cold storage technology among different types of fruit and vegetable farmers and traders, and evaluate a cost-effective, private sector-led business model for scaling a cold storage technology solution sustainably over time among smallholder farmers and traders.

FY2023 R4D Competitive Award 2: Upgrading Value Chains of Nutrient-dense Perishable Agricultural Commodities in Bangladesh: Technological Interventions and IT-based Business Model Development to Reduce Postharvest and Nutrient Loss | Ongoing

FSN-IL is currently engaged in an activity to develop a sustainable IT-based lean business model for fruit, vegetable, and fish value chains by adopting innovative storage, packaging, and cooling facilities in Bangladesh. The project will focus on two USAID FTF zone of influence districts (Satkhira and Jeshore) for fruits and vegetables and one district (Kishoregunj) for small fish species. The activity will evaluate the current institutional framework (technology, market, regulation, and policy), identify the knowledge gap for post-harvest and nutrition loss across the fruit, vegetable, and fish value chains, co-create socio-technical innovation bundles of storage, packaging, and cooling technologies for reducing post-harvest loss and maintaining nutritional status, and evaluate the cost-effectiveness of proposed innovation bundles.

FY2024 Competitive Award Selection and Final Proposal Review | Planned

FSN-IL is engaged in an extensive co-creation process with an EOI that was successfully selected through a competitive review.