

SAFE BD: Project Overview

Funded By: STDF & IFIC Bank PLC
Implemented By: Swisscontact
Project Duration: 2025 - 2028

Funded by “The Standards and Trade Development Facility” (STDF) & IFIC Bank PLC, and implemented by “Swisscontact”, the project ‘Improving the Implementation of Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Best Practices for Export-Oriented Vegetables in Bangladesh’ known as **SAFE BD**, aims to improve export-readiness of specific vegetable value chains by strengthening SPS compliance across public and private actors.



Implementation Partners



MoC
(Ministry of Commerce)



DAE
(Department of Agricultural Extension)



BFVAPEA
(Bangladesh Fruits, Vegetables and Allied Products Exporters Association)



SGS Bangladesh
(Société Générale de Surveillance)

Background

Bangladesh grows over 15 million metric tons of vegetables annually but exports less than 0.3% due to challenges in meeting international SPS standards. Gourd varieties, a key export crop, face frequent rejection in markets like the EU and UK due to pest infestations and pesticide residue.

In response to these, the SAFE BD project builds on the STDF - supported P-IMA study, which identified critical SPS investment needs. The project adopts a public-private partnership model, bringing together government bodies (DAE, MoC), the private sector (exporters, biopesticide companies), and farmers to promote practical, scalable, and sustainable solutions.

Objective

To increase market access and income for Bangladeshi vegetable exporters and farmers by improving the implementation of SPS best practices for gourd varieties. This will be achieved by building the capacity of farmers, exporters, and government stakeholders to ensure safer food, better compliance, and more environmentally sustainable farming.

Challenges in Bangladesh's Vegetable Exports



68.7%
drop in fruit and vegetable exports in the last decade¹



95%
farmers skip pre-harvest intervals leading to unsafe pesticide residue levels²



0.3%
of vegetables produced exported³, highlighting..



63%
of export rejections linked to microbial contamination⁴

1. Dhaka Tribune (2024). Export of fruits, vegetables to Europe sees sharp decline.

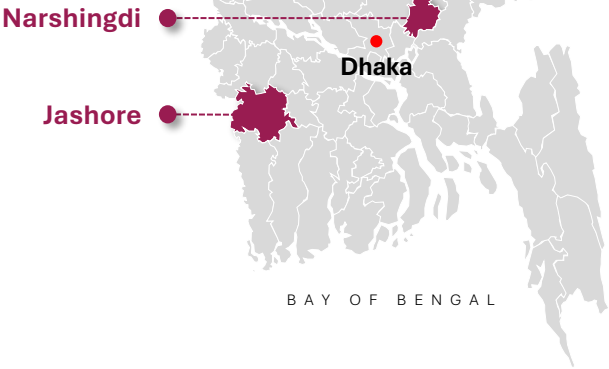
2. Department of Agriculture Extension. Agricultural Extension Manual. 4th ed., Department of Agriculture Extension, 2018

3. Export Promotion Bureau. “Exporter’s Database: Exporter List (Goods).” Export Promotion Bureau

4. Rejection of vegetable shipments from Bangladesh to Australia, China, EU-28, Japan, United States (2010-2020)

Project Locations

Jashore and Narshingdi districts of Bangladesh



Beneficiaries

- 2,500 gourd farmers (30% women)
- 40 gourd exporters
- DAE officials and SPS inspectors
- Biopesticide companies and testing labs

How do we want to achieve this?

If the capacities of public and private actors in Bangladesh’s vegetable export value chain are strengthened at both the micro-level (farmers, exporters) and meso-level (government agencies, trade associations), then compliance with international SPS standards will improve. This will result in greater export competitiveness and market access for Bangladeshi vegetables. Therefore, **SAFE BD focuses on four linked outcomes:**

Outcome 1 Improved on-site implementation of pest risk management principles for gourd varieties by DAE	Outcome 2 Improved implementation of SPS best practices by vegetable exporters and farmers for gourd varieties	Outcome 3 Improved trade linkage of Bangladeshi vegetable exporters with institutional buyers in the EU and UK	Outcome 4 Improved financial literacy and access to formal finance among farmers, exporters, and SMEs
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Desired Impact

 US\$ 4M projected rise in vegetable export	 2,500+ Farmers experience increase income	 Boosts competitiveness of Bangladesh’s agri-exports	 Safer environment through increased biopesticide usage	 Access to formal finance through targeted training
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