



INFOCUS

Agriculture, Rural Development, and Food Security

ADB takes a multisector approach to ensuring removing constraints on food security, particularly those affecting the poor, women, and other vulnerable groups

Challenge

Two-thirds of the estimated 1 billion to 1.5 billion people who are food insecure and poor live in Asia. By 2050, the world will have 2 billion more people, most living in Asia and the Pacific. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) states that, to feed the world's poor, food production must be increased by 70%, requiring about \$83 billion per year of new investments in agriculture. Increasing food production and productivity will be a major challenge in Asia, considering the stressed land and water resources, declining public rural investments, and adverse effects of climate change.

Strategy

ADB's long-term strategic framework for 2008–2020 (Strategy 2020) recognizes that sustainable food security underlies the inclusive growth strategy. In 2009, ADB approved the Operational Plan for Sustainable Food Security in Asia and the Pacific. The plan adopts a multisector approach to removing key constraints on food security, particularly those affecting the poor, women, and other vulnerable groups.

Response

The plan envisages ADB's multisector engagement for sustainable food security at \$2 billion annually for 2010–2012. ADB's agriculture and rural development sector operations will be sharply focused on strengthening backward and forward links along food chains, ensuring food security for the poor and vulnerable through partnerships with development partners, and providing programmatic support to agriculture research.

“Ensuring food security and reducing rural poverty are indispensable elements of attaining inclusive and sustainable economic growth in Asia.”

—Katsuji Matsunami, Advisor to the Director General and Practice Leader for Agriculture, Food Security, and Rural Development

ADB's Strategy 2020 meeting the needs of Asia and the Pacific

Strategic Direction

- Inclusive Economic Growth
- Environmentally Sustainable Growth
- Regional Integration

Drivers of Change

- Private Sector
- Good Governance
- Gender Equity
- Knowledge Solutions
- Partnerships

Read more at
www.adb.org/Strategy2020/

The global food and energy price surges in 2007–2008 exposed the vulnerabilities of poor households as well as governments and international systems to food and nutrition insecurity. While food prices declined in 2009, concern over sustainable food security remains great among policy makers and stakeholders in Asia and the Pacific for a number of reasons. First, average real prices of food in 2009 are still 17% higher than before the crisis (2006), and are projected to remain high. Second, the region is home to the largest number of poor and undernourished. Of the total 1.02 billion undernourished in 2009, 642 million or 63% are in Asia and the Pacific. A large number of poor households are net buyers of food, spending more than half of their income on food. Third, the region is one of the most vulnerable to the impacts of global climate change and economic shocks. Of particular concern are the growing shortage of water, the tapering growth of food crop production and productivity due to the long-term neglect of

investment in agriculture, and the greenhouse gas emissions contributed by agriculture. Fourth, despite these challenges, the region has the responsibility for stabilizing global food security as it is a major supplier and consumer of food, and home to a dynamic food and agriculture industry.

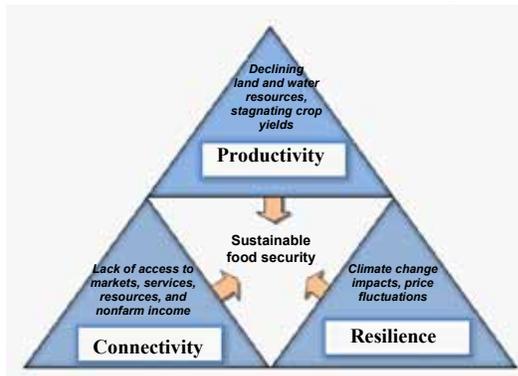
Approach and implementation measures

In 2009, ADB approved the Operational Plan for Food Security in Asia and the Pacific to improve the availability and access to adequate and safe food in a sustainable manner, especially for the large number of poor, women, and other vulnerable groups.

The plan identifies the three constraints on achieving sustainable food security: (i) stagnating food productivity and production; (ii) lack of access to rural finance, infrastructure, technology, markets, and nonfarm income opportunities; and (iii) threat of climate change and volatility of food prices. In

addressing these constraints, the plan focuses on three areas of influence—productivity, connectivity, and resilience.

Three Dimensions of Sustainable Food Security



The plan takes a multisector approach to sustainable food security. It notes that ADB's core activities (infrastructure, environment, regional cooperation and/or integration, finance, and education) and other areas of operation (agriculture, health, and disaster and emergency assistance) have significantly helped ease food security constraints (see the box for examples of multisector approaches).

ADB's multisector engagement in food security—some examples

Investments in irrigation development, improved management of natural resources, and enhanced financial services ease productivity constraints. Investments in transport infrastructure, trade facilitation, and promotion of small and medium-sized rural enterprises help reduce connectivity bottlenecks, while investments in disaster risk management, food-based safety nets, nutrition, and vocational training lessen resilience constraints.

To achieve sustainable food security in Asia and the Pacific, the operational plan aims to maintain the level of ADB's sustainable food security engagement at about \$2 billion annually from 2010 to 2012. To realize this target, the following measures will be taken:

- Adopt a multisector approach to ease constraints on food security, particularly those affecting the poor, women, and vulnerable groups, ensuring greater synergy in the lending and nonlending instruments of Strategy 2020's main areas of operation.
- Expand and deepen partnerships with donors, specialized agencies, civil society organizations, and the private sector.
- Continue to align ADB's operations in agriculture and rural development with greater focus and selectivity to support and enhance the impacts of ADB's core areas of operation.
- Increase support for programmatic agriculture and natural resources research to address long-term research areas.
- Invest in collaborative learning and knowledge development through a strengthened community of practice on agriculture and food security, inter-networking, and collaborative work with external partners.

Read more at www.adb.org/Documents/Reports/Sustainable-Food-Security/default.asp

Moving forward

To jumpstart the implementation of the plan, the Investment Forum for Food Security in Asia and the Pacific is being organized by the ADB with FAO and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). The forum will be held at ADB headquarters, the Philippines, on 7–9 July 2010. Read more at www.adb.org/Documents/Events/2010/Investment-Forum/default.asp

The priority agriculture research for Asia and the Pacific has been identified through a participatory approach. A cluster technical assistance project will be developed to tackle a major area in food security, in partnership with an international agriculture research center and in collaboration with national agriculture research centers.

Regional technical assistance is being provided to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) +3 (Japan, the People's Republic of China, the Republic of Korea) to deepen the rice trade, expand the outreach of the regional food information system, and develop a business model to operate a regional rice reserve system.

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For more references
www.adb.org/http://www.adb.org/Documents/Brochures/InFocus/agriculture.asp

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