

Feed The Future Evidence and Action Towards Safe, Nutritious Food: ETF EatSafe



RAPID MARKET ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR FOOD SAFETY IN TRADITIONAL MARKETS

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SUMMARY

The FTF EatSafe activity sought to improve food safety in traditional markets, adopting a systems approach and a focus on consumer demand. Traditional markets in LMICs are complex spaces at the core of food systems. Traditionally neglected, they are now recognized as key food environments where most people in LMICs procure their food, and where consumer demand meets supply chains.

Since traditional markets exhibit a range of structural, governance, and socio-cultural features, the same intervention can succeed in one market but not in another. For anyone seeking to work in markets, it is essential to understand individual market conditions so that programs can be tailored. A rapid market assessment accomplishes this goal.

FTF EatSafe developed a [Rapid Market Assessment Tool](#) that synthesizes key information needed to select and refine program activities to improve food safety in traditional markets. It can be deployed in 1-2 days with minimal resources.

This brief shares:

- What the tool assesses
- How to use the tool
- Recommendations based on pilot findings in five markets

CONTEXT

A food safety market assessment needs to cover key factors that impact which initiatives are viable and effective in a given context. EatSafe utilizes a '3-legged stool' model to frame what is needed (and hence needs to be assessed) to improve food safety in traditional markets:

- **Positive Behavior Change:** what motivations and incentives could be used to encourage market actors to adopt safer food practices? What is the current knowledge, attitude, and practices around food safety and relevant topics?
- **Appropriate Technologies and Best Practices:** what technologies and best practices are accessible and affordable in the market?
- **Enabling Environment:** what is the state of market infrastructure, governance, and social networks that could support food safety initiatives, including demand creation and behavior change work?



By utilizing this framework, the assessment can capture key relevant information and organize it in a way that is most useful to improve food safety in the markets, and these three categories generally require different intervention activities.

MARKET ASSESSMENT DESIGN

The design of a market assessment tool should balance completeness against level of effort. The FTF EatSafe Market Assessment tool was designed so that a small team of field technicians (who do not need to be food safety specialists) could complete it in 1-2 days, with minimal data analysis required. It is a tool that, for example, a value chain project could utilize before planning food safety work in local markets.

Topics the assessment focuses on are:

- **General market information:** basic information about the market and the community it serves, e.g., commodities sold, demographics of vendors and consumers, market days.
- **Enabling environment:** including shop structures and market infrastructure, market governance, and social networks.
- **Technologies:** what tools, technologies, or recommended/mandated best practices are available or utilized in the market.
- **Market stakeholder knowledge, attitudes, and practices:** what stakeholders (primarily vendors, consumers, market management) know, think, or do as it relates to food safety.
- **Facilitating factors for behavior change activities:** information needed to design and implement demand creation/behavior change work, e.g., what media do people use? Are there community events a program could add to? Are there spaces for people to gather for public activities or training?

The FTF EatSafe Food Safety Market Assessment Tool aligns with other USAID efforts to assess and improve food environments, such as [Market-Based Food Environment Assessments](#), but adds a focus on food safety. It can be implemented independently or in combination with other tools.

DATA COLLECTION APPROACHES

The tool adopts a mixed-method data collection approach that maximizes cost-effectiveness. It does not aim to have large-sample statistical power. Instead, it relies on a flexible iterative approach where direct observations are verified and complemented by key informant and/or small focus group interviews. Data collection methods include:

- Direct observations of market features and select observable behaviors.
- Short, structured questionnaire for market management.
- Qualitative Key Informant Interviews (KII) with stakeholders and Focus Groups Discussions (FGD) with market consumers and vendors.

STRUCTURE OF THE QUESTIONS

The tools were designed so that most questions can be answered through observation, while others require engagement with market stakeholders.

Where possible, pre-coded answers were developed for easier data collection and analysis (e.g., 'Yes/'No', or a frequency scale such as 'Always'; 'Most Times'; 'Sometimes'; 'Generally Not'; 'Never').

Some KII and FGD questions are open ended and invite additional insights.

HOW TO IMPLEMENT THE MARKET ASSESSMENT

The assessment visit to the market should be carefully planned and purposeful. Much of the information is collected through observations, so it is crucial to establish a clear protocol that provides guidance on the places to visit, the order of visits, and the assessment activities. It is essential to choose appropriate times and locations for observations, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and one-on-one interviews. This ensures that the data collected accurately captures market operations while being culturally sensitive and minimizing disruption to vendor activities. Market stakeholders can offer valuable advice on appropriate approaches.

Implementing the market assessment should follow a simple yet systematic approach to ensure comprehensive data collection and analysis (see Box 1). The process begins with securing all relevant permissions from regional and local authorities. Data collection starts with mapping the market's spatial layout (Step 1) to understand its main structures and operations and to plan the rest of the assessment. Ideally, the map should be verified through an in-person market walk, though it can be drawn or obtained beforehand. The verified map can be in electronic format (e.g., GIS, CAD) or hand-drawn and scanned.

Box 1. MAT Implementation Steps:

1. **Market Mapping** to delineate the market area and plan assessment activities.
2. **Stakeholder Interviews and Document Review** with market management and review relevant documents (e.g. market by-laws).
3. **Market Walks and Observations:** Perform market walks and observations using a structured checklist to assess physical conditions and hygiene practices.
4. **Focus Group Discussions (FGD)** with market actors including vendors, consumers, and associations for their perspectives and insights on KAPs.
5. **Key Informant Interviews (KII)** with key market actors to obtain in-depth perspectives on specific issues identified during the assessment.
6. **Data Analysis** including SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats), to identify target areas for improvement, facilitating factors, and obstacles.

After obtaining an overview of the market, relevant documents, such as market policies, regulations, upgrade plans, and historical data, are reviewed for additional information and to serve as reference materials. These documents are often provided by management or other responsible authorities.

Next, direct market observations (Step 3) are conducted using a structured checklist to assess the market's physical conditions, hygiene practices, and overall environment. This step can be carried out either before or after the interview with market management (Step 2). Following this, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) (Step 4) are organized with various market actors, including vendors, consumers, and associations, to gain insights into their perspectives, experiences, and Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices (KAP) regarding food safety and market operations. Having information from Steps 1-3 prior to conducting the FGDs can be very helpful.

Finally, key informant interviews (KIIs) are conducted with key market actors, including vendors, consumers, and representatives from associations. These interviews offer in-depth perspectives on specific issues identified during the market walks and FGDs. By following this approach, the market assessment will comprehensively cover various aspects of the market environment, enabling the design of effective interventions to improve food safety practices.

VALIDATION OF THE EATSAFE MARKET ASSESSMENT TOOL IN ETHIOPIA

The Market Assessment Tool was piloted in five traditional markets across Ethiopia, covering the Sidama, Oromia, South, and Central regions, as part of the validation exercise, and 65 participants were engaged from the different markets. During this phase, technical experts provided valuable feedback that further refined the tool's functionality and adaptability. The implementation followed the outlined process in the above section, enabling efficient data collection across multiple markets within a condensed timeframe. This approach allowed for a thorough understanding of market dynamics and the identification of areas needing improvement.

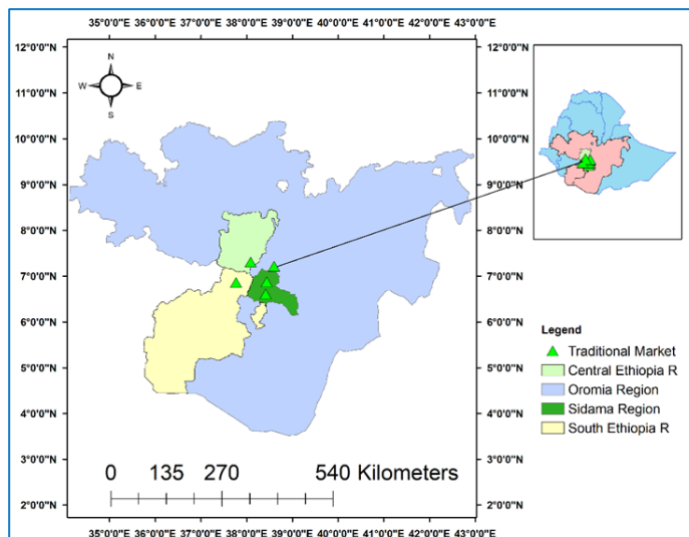


Figure.1 Locations of the study markets in Ethiopia

PILOT OUTCOMES

The market assessment provided a comprehensive understanding of the food safety landscape across the five traditional markets. For example, inadequate infrastructure is a shared challenge - affecting sanitation, waste management, and overall market cleanliness. Differences between the markets though included the level of collaboration between the vendors, and that between vendors and market management. The important role of women in Ethiopian markets was another clear finding, highlighting the need for gender inclusivity in program design.

The piloting phase refined key questions and identified less relevant ones, streamlining the assessment process. The Market Assessment Tool proved effective and user-friendly, requiring no sophisticated equipment or prior food safety expertise. Its practical, streamlined approach enabled comprehensive data collection while minimizing resource requirements, demonstrating its suitability for broader applications in diverse market settings.

After data collection, the data should be reviewed and summarized to effectively support program design activities. Simple open-source data collection and synthesis platforms such as SurveyCTO or other electronic forms can be used to standardize the market assessment process. This approach is particularly cost-effective if assessing multiple markets, as demonstrated by the FTF EatSafe market census in Nigeria. SWOT-like analyses can help classify the information and identify the most viable intervention strategies. MAT questions can be scored quantitatively, for example, on a 1-3 scale, to facilitate comparisons across markets. A short report should be shared with market authorities and other interested stakeholders to foster further engagement.

FROM ASSESSMENT DATA TO PROGRAM DESIGN

The data from the assessment can be utilized in different ways by different stakeholders.

Entity	Use
Program Designers	Select and design effective food safety and food systems initiatives
Local Government	Prioritize market support; define and implement food safety standards
Market Management Authorities	Ensure adherence to standards and drive market upgrades
Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)	Provide guidance for integrated development work incorporating behavior change, capacity building, and enabling environment activities
Vendor Associations	Promote self-regulation among members and advocate for safe practices
Researchers	Design and test innovative food safety solutions appropriate to market conditions and their context
Policymakers	Develop effective policies and strategies based on market needs
Consumers	Advocate for and adopt safer food handling practices
Donors/ Investors	Provide financial and technical support for sustainable food safety initiatives

UTILIZING THE DATA FOR BEHAVIOR CHANGE AND DEMAND CREATION WORK: FTF EATSAFE'S EXAMPLE

In the case of FTF EatSafe, the data generated on the study markets came from extensive research activities. But the scope of the information collected was similar to that generated by FTF EatSafe's Rapid Market Assessment tool. For that reason, the information from the rapid assessment should be utilized in the same way that EatSafe used its formative research – to determine which behavior change interventions are likely to be most appropriate and impactful for the target market(s).

Interested parties should reference the FTF EatSafe Behavior Change Intervention Implementation guide, for more information on which information was used to guide intervention selection, and design. The interventions were categorized into 5 categories or 'buckets' – i.e., In-Market Information Center; Mass Media Communication Campaign; Signalling; Training; & Collaborative Networks, with each meeting a need, and utilizing specific resources, and local stakeholders, as conditions permitted. See Figure 2 for the individual EatSafe market initiatives, and how they split between the 5 intervention 'buckets'.

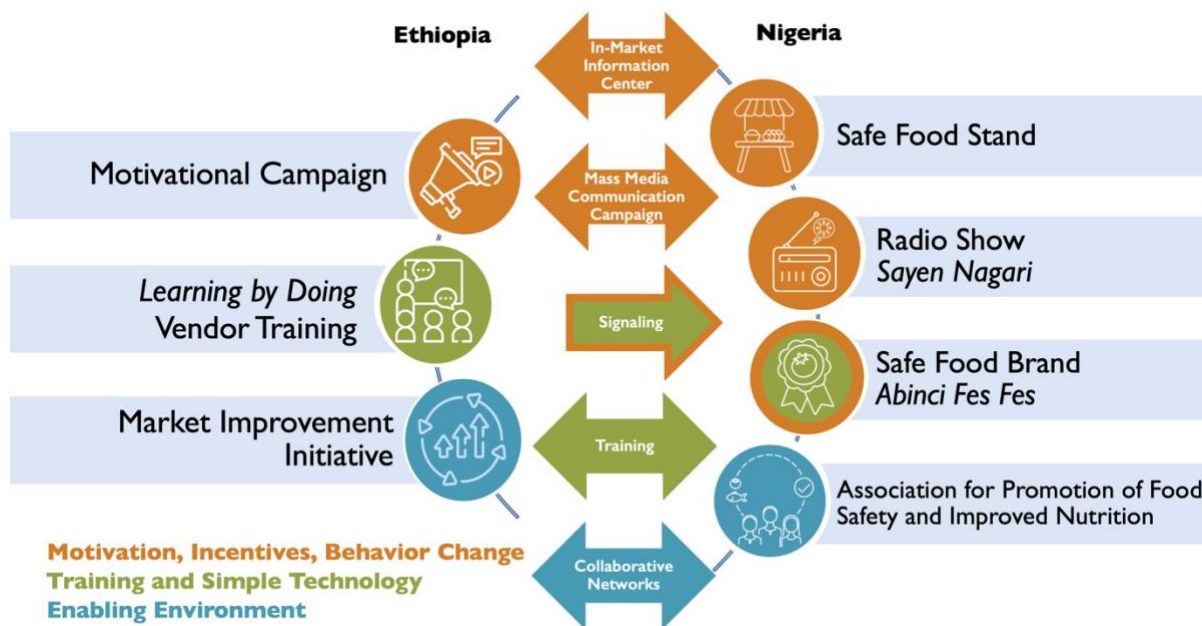


Figure 2. FTF EatSafe behavior change interventions across the 5 categories, and how they relate to the '3-legged stool' domains (color-coded)

For more details on FTF EatSafe program activities, visit gainhealth.org/eatsafe or contact EatSafe@gainhealth.org

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