



# Experiences in Systemic Change

## P4P Purchase for Progress

In the five-year, twenty-country Purchase for Progress (P4P) pilot initiative, WFP explored ways in which its programme design and food procurement could better support smallholder farmers in developing countries. During the pilot, P4P enabled WFP to purchase US\$148 million-worth of food more directly from smallholder farmers. These purchases demonstrated that buying from smallholder farmers is a viable business undertaking. Today, WFP continues to source its food needs from smallholder farmers, with a corporate commitment to substantially increase these purchases.

The P4P pilot yielded many achievements beyond metric tons procured. It transformed the lives of hundreds of thousands of farmers, especially women, supporting them to grow more, sell more, earn more and become more competitive players in their local markets. As a pilot and beyond, P4P is driving a wide variety of systemic changes, which are seen across gender relations, farmers' organizations, local economies, market systems and national governments.

The P4P pilot also drove a wide range of transformations within WFP, altering the way the organization addresses procurement, programming, policy, monitoring, learning and evaluation. Plus, P4P catalysed innovative pro-smallholder approaches, adding strong impetus to well-established efforts and providing new openings for initiatives targeting marginalized rural households.

### Generating Systemic Change

During the pilot period, P4P and partners addressed the complex problems faced by smallholder farmers to help sustainably link them to markets. These factsheets provide insights into the knowledge that has emerged out of P4P's experiences. Systemic

### What's next

Knowledge built and lessons learned under the P4P pilot continues to be critical to the way in which WFP supports smallholder farmers. Mainstreaming of P4P was ratified in the 2014-2017 WFP Strategic Plan, and the approach is now being implemented in over 35 countries worldwide.

P4P is currently developing comprehensive Smallholder Market Support Guidance. This guidance will be rolled out in 2017, and will provide substantial concrete guidance to implementers on how best to support smallholder markets in various contexts.

This guidance, alongside lessons learned and best practices developed during the P4P pilot, will help drive forward the development of a coherent framework for WFP support to smallholder markets. P4P will play a major role in these efforts and will continue to build on synergies.

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change takes time, but the five-year pilot has already begun pointing to broader shifts in a variety of areas, including:

- **Gender equality:** P4P adopted a gender transformative approach, to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. Through efforts which included the provision of time- and labour-saving equipment such as tractors and shellers; awareness-raising about the benefits of gender equality; and by increasingly purchasing crops which can be farmed and controlled by women farmers, P4P has supported women to be active participants in transforming rural agriculture.
- **Farmers' organizations:** The P4P pilot primarily engaged with farmers' organizations (FOs). This helped incentivize farmers to work collectively to build stronger businesses. By providing FOs with storage infrastructure and equipment, inputs, access to credit and training, P4P has strengthened their capacity to improve production and aggregation, reduce post-harvest losses and efficiently market members' commodities.
- **Pro-smallholder procurement:** Adaptations in WFP's procurement procedures were made to match smallholders' limited capacities, including allowing the purchase of smaller quantities, waiving performance bonds and competition, and leniency towards defaults and delays in delivery. P4P has also supported smallholder farmers to build sustainable linkages with outside buyers—both private and public.
- **Government ownership:** Governments played a key role in P4P in a variety of ways, including by: coordinating the initiative through national steering committees, strengthening the capacity of farmers' organizations and their members, engaging in pro-smallholder procurement and providing an enabling environment. Governments' commitment to developing sustainable smallholder farming systems has proven essential to make rapid gains in increasing productivity and market capacity.
- **Food quality and safety:** Procurement under P4P played an integral role in changing the way WFP, FOs and governments approach food quality and safety. Purchases from P4P-supported smallholder farmers illustrated the importance of addressing the root causes of quality issues through prevention and early detection, and have enabled WFP to take a leading role in advocating for better food quality standards. WFP supports smallholder farmers and their organizations to produce higher quality crops, and partners with national and local governments to improve quality control infrastructure and regulation.
- **Partnerships:** P4P provided impetus for public, private, academic and civil society actors to work together and leverage their investments to effectively address the needs and realize the potential of smallholder farmers. Powerful and novel partnerships have been facilitated in staple food supply chains, bringing together many partners that were previously working towards similar goals in isolation.
- **Financial inclusion:** By increasing the availability of financial services, P4P fostered engagement in local value chains by farmers and FOs, and enabled them to: invest in productive assets; aggregate crops for sale; and smooth out consumption patterns after harvest.
- **Transforming WFP:** P4P catalysed transformations within WFP. Under the complex, contextual, time-consuming, and operationally challenging approach of P4P, WFP reviewed and enhanced its ways of working in areas such as procurement, food quality and safety, staffing and human resources.

P4P has been made possible by a broad range of partnerships and the generous support of donors such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Howard G Buffet Foundation, European Union, governments of Belgium, Brazil, Canada, France, Ireland, Luxembourg, South Korea, United States of America and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.