

Making the Agricultural Sector more Sustainable and Resilient in Bangladesh

IFC is working with leading seed companies in Bangladesh to promote sustainable farming practices, such as the production, distribution, and adoption of stress-tolerant seed varieties that withstand prolonged periods of submergence, high levels of salinity, and drought conditions.

As a result of IFC's engagement, over 145,000 farmers were exposed to practices that increase productivity, facilitate access to supply chains, and knowledge and are environment friendly.

“We have very much appreciated IFC's role in supporting the private sector's efforts to contribute to the nation's food security. The scope of our collaboration in recent times has been expanded to supporting farmers in stress-prone areas, which is critical to adapting to climate change.”

—Mahbub Anam, Managing Director of Lal Teer, one of the four leading seed sector firms in Bangladesh



RESULTS AND IMPACT

- 139,000 farmers trained on stress-tolerant and high-yielding seeds varieties (Some on seed use; others on seed production).
- 67 percent of project-supported farmers adopted recommended varieties.
- 14 percent paddy yield increase for project-supported farmers compared to 10.9 percent for control farmers.
- 88 percent vegetable yield increase for project-supported farmers compared to 5.5 percent for control farmers.
- 15 percent revenue increase for project-supported farmers.
- 3,602 farmers produced better quality seeds and linked to seed supply chain; 2,200 of them are women.
- 71.9 percent cumulative increase in lead firms' sales revenue.

*This series provides examples of IFC's impact, expertise and lessons learned working with clients and partners.

The Opportunity

Agriculture is a major economic driver in Bangladesh, accounting for 16 percent of the country's gross domestic product and providing employment for 65 percent of its labor force. However, Bangladesh is losing 1.75 percent of its arable land each year— faster than its population growth of 1.5 percent. By 2025, the agriculture sector will have to feed 19 million more people with considerably less land under cultivation.

Climate change poses an especially serious challenge to Bangladesh's agricultural output, and puts its food security at risk. As a low-lying country situated on a delta, Bangladesh experiences salt water intrusion, land erosion, and drought and can expect increased flooding, and more intense natural disasters.

Women are largely invisible players in the agricultural sector. They are often left out of capacity building programs, and their potential impact on household income is hardly recognized.

It is imperative for farmers to change traditional farming methods and adopt climate-smart practices (e.g., stress tolerant seed varieties) for sustainable agriculture and ensure food security.

Similarly, agribusinesses will have to adjust to increased supply chain disruptions, decreased productivity, and workforce instability (e.g., displacement, illness).

IFC's Approach

IFC is actively promoting climate-smart agricultural practices in Bangladesh, working with both the private and the public sectors to build greater efficiencies in the use of their resources.

More specifically, IFC works with:

- Bangladesh's some of the largest private seed companies (e.g., Supreme Seed Ltd., ACI Ltd., and Lal Teer Ltd.) to demonstrate the business case for

stress-tolerant and high yielding seed varieties, provide extension services to farmers on seed production and on-farm management practices, and encourage more investment in the business.

- Farmers to increase their awareness of climate-smart agricultural practices that can improve their yield and revenue
- Women farmers to formalize their role in post-harvest activities in specific communities and train them on seed production, micro-entrepreneurship and market-linkages.
- Dealers and retailers to expose them to new seed varieties, understand their applications in specific cropping seasons and environmental conditions
- The Bangladesh government to bring together public and private sector representatives to a constructive dialogue and collaboration in promoting stress-tolerant seeds and other adaptive inputs.

IFC's objective is to support farmers in adapting to climate change as well as strengthening food security and social inclusion by:

- Increasing the production, distribution, and adoption of stress-tolerant and promoting them to farmers who can benefit from them but are not aware of their availability or the respective farming practices.
- Promoting high-yielding seed varieties, which boost agricultural output.
- Including rural women in seed production in remote areas and linking them to formal seed supply chains.

IFC, a member of the World Bank Group, is the largest global development institution focused exclusively on the private sector.

IFC CLIENTS: ACI Ltd., LalTeer Ltd., Supreme Seed Ltd. and others