

Mandated by



Rural Development and Cooperatives Division
Ministry of LGRD & Cooperatives



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Intervention Area Brief: Agro-input Supply and Production Services

Between 2012-18,
107,000 char households
accessed high quality agro-inputs and
production services, and increased
income by **BDT 990 million.**

Background

Agriculture i.e. crop production and cattle rearing, have always been the key livelihoods option for the northern char¹ dwellers. Despite the natural endowment and potential, their income from agriculture has been substantially low due to poor productivity and substandard quality of agricultural produce, resulting from unavailability (and use) of high quality agro-inputs and production services. Moreover, agricultural land and production on the chars are susceptible to climatic hazards like floods, river erosion, hailstorms, cold waves and seasonal diseases. Leading national agro-input companies considered expansion to char markets risky and cost-intensive and had almost zero presence in the haats/bazars catering to the chars. This phenomenon was mainly triggered by factors such as inadequate distribution set-up and higher costs of sales generation within chars compared to the mainland. At the same time, the public agencies were unable to conduct char specific research and extension of essential agricultural technologies due to lack of resources.

M4C's Approach

Agro-input companies (AIC) have been the key driver of M4C's intervention to improve supply of quality agro-inputs and production services. Initially, the AICs undertook several marketing activities such as training and demonstration, to generate awareness on agro-inputs for specific crops i.e. maize and chilli. As they gradually expanded area coverage, the focus shifted from specific crops to overall agro-inputs for the chars. Additionally, after the closure of Chars Livelihoods Programme (CLP), M4C included livestock in its portfolio. However, the continued efforts of AICs required integration of char markets in their annual sales plan, regular sales staff deployment, full distribution set-up and attainment of the minimum sales target. Thus, M4C signed three-year long sales development plans with partner AICs in 2016 and 2017 and supported them through market research, sales and marketing planning, cost sharing and sales tracking. M4C also forged partnerships with public research and extension agencies for improving quality of chilli, jute, groundnut and livestock produced on the chars.










¹Chars are riverine land, susceptible to erosion and soil deposition, which remain disconnected from the mainland either seasonally or throughout the year.

Implemented by



Partnerships and Key Achievements

- To support promotion and distribution of quality agro-inputs and production services, since 2012, M4C has partnered with seven agro-input companies, namely Auto Crop Care Limited (ACCL), various units of ACI Limited (Seeds, Fertilizers, Crop Care), ACI Godrej Private Limited, Metal Seeds, NAAFCO Group and Petrochem (Bangladesh Limited).
- M4C also partnered with five public agencies namely Oilseeds Research Center (ORC) and Spices Research Center (SRC) of Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute (BARI), Bangladesh Jute Research Institute (BJRI), Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) and Department of Livestock Services (DLS) to conduct research on production, preservation and appropriate use of agro-inputs (seeds, fertiliser), cultivation techniques; and extension through capacity building trainings and demonstrations.

 Partners	 Partnership Duration	 No. of Additional Sales Staff Appointed	 No. of Distributors Established/ Engaged	 No. of Retailers Engaged	 Total Sales Growth (BDT Million)	 Char Sales Growth (BDT Million)
Auto Crop Care	2012-18	4	6/19	439	25.0	18.4
ACI Crop Care	2016-18	9	9/19	490	24.4	24.3
NAAFCO	2013-18	5	13/25	388	17.1	15.1
Petrochem	2013-18	8	19/25	266	19.9	13.0
Subtotal		22	47/88	690	85.9	70.8
ACI Godrej	2016-18	8	3/14	471	37.5	26.9
Total		30	50/102	1,103	123.4	97.6

Lessons and Way Forward

- The partnership between M4C and AICs was a successful one since the focus on sales growth from new markets was kept at the heart of this collaboration. This was made possible by driving sales development plans through market research, sales and marketing planning and regular sales tracking. In doing so, agro-input companies and projects could attain impact, scale and sustainability in a shorter time span.
- Between 2015-2017, M4C identified major haats/bazars connecting the char dwellers, distributors and retailers, agro-inputs (crops) and cattle feed market size and the market share of leading agro-input companies by conducting detailed area/market assessments. Using the information obtained, M4C will bring out publications titled Char Information Book, Char Agro-input Market Potential etc. which will be widely disseminated by and archived at Char Development Research Center (CDRC).
- For two consecutive years (2017, 2018), M4C organised Char Sales Conference to recognise the achievements of partner agro-input companies and their staff in increasing sales from the char markets. By December 2019, M4C will organise more events, i.e. National-level Agro-input Company Meet and National Char Sales Conference to disseminate the potentials, strategies and lessons learned with prospective agro-input companies.

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