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# AGRO-INPUTS PROJECT IN BANGLADESH

Quarterly Progress Report

Year 3: April 1, 2015 – June 30, 2015



Prepared for the United States Agency for International Development under USAID Cooperative Agreement No. AID-388-A-12-00005, Agro-Inputs Project in Bangladesh implemented by CNFA.

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# USAID Agro-Inputs Project in Bangladesh

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*Photo: In a pointed gourd field at Jhikargacha, Jessore southern Bangladesh, women labourers are harvesting from the field.*

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## Acronyms

ACME	USAID Accelerating Capacity for Monitoring and Evaluation
ACI	Advanced Chemical Industries
AESA	USAID/Agriculture Extension Support Activity Project
AIP	USAID Agro-Inputs Project in Bangladesh
AIN	Aquaculture for Income and Nutrition Project
AIRN	Agro-Inputs Retailers Network
AIS	Agricultural Information Service of the DAE
AOA	Articles of Association
AVAS	Association of Voluntary Actions for Society
BADC	Bangladesh Agricultural Development Council
BCPA	Bangladesh Crop Protection Association
BFA	Bangladesh Fertilizer Association
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
BSA	Bangladesh Seed Association
COP	Chief of Party
CPP	Crop Protection Product
DAE	Department of Agricultural Extension
DO	Development Objective
DQA	Data Quality Assessment
EMMP	Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Plan
FFD	Farmer Field Days
FTF	Feed the Future
FO	Field Officer
GIS	Geographic Information System
GLC	Gender Lens Committee
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
ICA	International Certification Assistance
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
ISTA	International Seed Testing Association
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MIS	Market Information System
MOA	Ministry of Agriculture
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPOB	Monthly Price Outlook Bulletin
OCA	Organizational Capacity Assessment
OCD	Organizational Capacity Development
PERSUAP	Pesticide Evaluation Report and Safer Use Action Plan
PNGO	Partner NGO
QGIS	Quantum Geographic Information System
SHC	Seed Health Committee
SMS	Short Message Service
TOT	Training of Trainers
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
WEAI	Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index
WHO	World Health Organization

## Project Background

### Key Project Details

<b>Title:</b>	Agro-Inputs Project (AIP) in Bangladesh
<b>Start Date:</b>	September 17, 2012
<b>Project Duration:</b>	Five Years
<b>Type of Award:</b>	Cooperative Agreement No. AID-388-A-12-00005
<b>Award Amount:</b>	\$14,028,602
<b>Main Implementer:</b>	CNFA
<b>Sub Implementers:</b>	Spatial Systems Associates Capacity Building Service Group (CBSG) The Nielsen Company (Bangladesh) Ltd. GMark Ashroy Foundation <i>Banchte Shekha</i> Association of Voluntary Actions for Society (AVAS)

### Project Objectives and Interventions

The objective of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Agro-Inputs Project (AIP) in Bangladesh is to improve the supply of quality agricultural inputs through input retailers. Its central effort is the creation of a sustainable Agro Input Retailers Network (AIRN) through Intervention 1. Interventions 2-4 are designed to work in concert and holistically with Intervention 1. AIP's four interventions and key activities include:

- **Establish an Agro-Inputs Retailers Network:** Creation of AIRN, a first-of-its-kind agro-inputs training organization serving retailers in the Feed the Future (FTF) zone;
- **Improve Effectiveness of Agricultural Inputs Market Information Systems:** Distribution of 115,000 hard copy (e-copies will be used when possible) Monthly Price Outlook Bulletins, supported by an innovative Geographic Information System (GIS) - based input market information system; demand creation for improved quality inputs through 500 demonstration plots;
- **Enhance Knowledge and Application of Quality Standards:** Promotion of input quality standards to 50 input supply companies and 3,000 AIRN retailers. Eight new input quality standards developed by industry associations (with public and private stakeholders) presented to USAID for referral to the Bangladesh Policy Research and Strategy Support Program (BPRSSP); knowledge and demand for quality inputs increased through communications and outreach campaign;
- **Strengthen Local Organizations' Institutional Capacity:** Three organizations receive comprehensive organizational capacity assessment (OCA) and necessary assistance in organizational capacity development (OCD); organizational strengthening of these organizations, and utilization of their technical expertise to implement AIP-related activities via sub-award.

## Executive Summary

### Intervention 1: Establish an Agro-Inputs Retailers Network

AIRN's membership drives in Y3Q3 took place in 12 new *upazillas*. To date, 2,210 members have joined AIRN from 74 *upazillas* within 18 districts. Of these, 1,125 AIRN members have earned accredited status; the remaining retailers will be awarded accredited status after completing the required basic trainings. Through cost-sharing with five input supply companies, and a sub-agreement with partner GMark Consulting Limited (GMark), a total of 2,105 retailers have received basic trainings, including 374 this quarter with 980 retailers in process of accreditation.

AIP/AIRN developed the training capacity of its existing AIRN field officers (FOs) with the cooperation of the Bangladesh Agricultural University. Once trained, AIP/AIRN will create a trainers' pool from with 5-7 members from the trained FOs who will conduct basic retailer training as certified trainers. The same batch of trainers will work as trainers under the AIRN training organization.

AIRN continued its registration process with the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) in Q3, which commenced in Y2Q4 and will be completed at the end of Y3. Interim members of the AIRN Advisory Board reviewed amendments to the AIRN Articles of Association (AoA) and will continue discussions during the next quarter towards the development of AIRN's governing body. During the meeting, board members reviewed AIRN member services, revenue generating mechanisms, and internal capacity. Additionally, to date, a total of 71 *upazilla* AIRN ad-hoc committees have been formed to advance AIRN *upazilla*-level activities, such as encouraging members to promote quality inputs and sharing new information among members.

AIP completed a training needs assessment of women agro-inputs retailers with support of partner GMark. Based on this needs assessment, AIP will conduct tailored trainings beginning in August 2015.

AIP also assists agro-input companies and associations to obtain international quality standards certifications. A scope of work for an International Certification Assistance (ICA) consultant to assess agro-inputs companies and associations was developed in Y3Q3 to provide assistance to companies and associations in Y4.

Of the 16 matching grants approved by USAID, AIP disbursed its first grant to Swapna Mondal in Batiaghata, Khulna for furniture and other general accessories to organize her inputs shop. The AIP Grants Team also worked on procurement for the other 15 grantees in Jessore, Khulna and Barisal. During the reporting period, AIP identified an additional 27 grant applicants.

During April and May 2015, AIP organized two study tours, including one domestic and one international, for 27 participants (15 domestic and 12 international, respectively) including AIRN ad-hoc committee member representatives. During the domestic study tour, participants visited the ACI formulation plant, Gazipur, Bangladesh Seed Association (BSA), and the seed wholesale distribution market at Siddique Bazar, Dhaka to better understand supply chain issues. For the international study tour, participants attended a tailor-made course through the National Agricultural Extension Training Center of Kasetsart University,

Thailand. In this visit, participant retailers became more aware of issues concerning quality inputs, input supply networking, and the use of safety materials for handling agro-chemical products.

To promote dissemination of quality inputs information to farmers and retailers, AIP finalized drafts for 5 informational posters to address the needs of farmers and retailers on 1) quality seed; 2) quality fertilizer; 3) safe use of crop protection products (CPPs) (two); and 4) nutritionally dense crops for children and pregnant and/or lactating mothers. Three booklets on seed, fertilizer and CPPs to be disseminated mainly among retailers, farmers and other relevant stakeholders were approved by USAID and will be printed in the next quarter. AIP continues to disseminate project information online through the AIP website and a Facebook page launched for the project to communicate with various stakeholders on a regular basis.

### **Intervention 2: Improve Effectiveness of Agricultural Inputs Market Information Systems**

AIP distributed three issues of the Monthly Price Outlook Bulletin (MPOB) in Y3Q3 using modified designs and including success stories, AIRN news, and market information to 7,500 stakeholders. Meanwhile, a study on the most commonly traded agro-inputs in the FTF zone was completed and findings will be used to revise the agro-input related contents in the MPOB, beginning with the August 2015 issue.

Collection of GPS data points for retailers' shops increased this quarter; as of June 30, 2015, AIP collected a total of 1,620 points which are supplemented by a photo of the AIRN member's shop. A comprehensive map of the GoB's registered agro-input companies, wholesalers, and retailers in the FTF zone was also developed.

In Q3, AIP completed the selection process for vendor Event Exposure to organize the second AIRN Agro-Tech Fair, to take place from November 30-December 2, 2015 in Jessore. AIP will finalize a formal contract with USAID approval in Q4. In the meantime, AIP has communicated with potential speakers for its "Speakers' Corner" during the Fair on promoting quality input issues and presenting the latest technologies

Under collaborative initiatives with other FTF programs on establishing demonstration plots, AESA and AIP established 21 demonstration plots on chili (3) and mung bean (18) in Jessore, Barisal, and Patuakhali.

6,440 farmers (4,980 male and 1,460 female) participated in 127 farmer field days (FFDs) organized by AIP, in collaboration with input supply companies, to demonstrate improved traits and inform farmers on sources of quality inputs (namely, AIRN retailers). During FFDs, AIP also educated farmers and retailers on the safe and judicious application of CPPs.

### **Intervention 3: Enhance Knowledge and Application of Quality Standards**

As an active member of the Seed Health Committee (SHC), formed by MOA, AIP is extending technical and logistical support to jointly organize meetings for fixing seed health standards of rice, wheat, jute, and potato. In its fifth meeting, held in June 2015, the committee drafted seed disease parameters for three crops (potato is pending) that will be finalized in the next meeting (Y3Q4).

#### **Intervention 4: Strengthen Local Organizations' Institutional Capacity**

This intervention is designed to build the capacity of local organizations to become potential future implementers of USAID activities. Capacity building support will be provided to industry association partners - BSA, BFA, BCPA and AIRN. In Y3, CBSG concluded OCA of all three business associations and is expected to start OCD of BCPA and BFA. While the assessment of BSA took place during Y2Q3, the same was carried out for BFA and BCPA during the first three quarters of Y3. As per the OCAT score, BFA ranked the highest, followed by BCPA, while BSA stands a distant third. Based on mutual discussion, the OCD for BFA and BCPA will kick start in Q4, while the same for BSA will begin in Y4Q1.

## Intervention 1: Establish an Agro-Input Retailers' Network

### 1.1.1 Selection of 90 out of 122 *upazillas* in 20 FTF districts

A total of 2,210 retailers have joined AIRN as members from 74 *upazillas* in 18 districts, including 368 new members in this quarter. Among them, 1,125 retailers are accredited members while the remaining 1,085 will obtain accredited membership status after completing the required training, which includes agribusiness management and business ethics, generic agronomic use of inputs, and safe and judicious use of pesticides.

As of June 30, 2015, AIRN has organized 71 membership drive events (see Table 1) to increase the network AIRN members and form *upazilla* chapters' ad-hoc committees. In addition, AIRN has organized three special drives for underserved areas to include members from Muladi, Mehendiganj and Charfasion *upazillas* respectively under Barisal and Bhola districts. *Upazilla* chapters' ad-hoc committee formation in the later *upazillas* will be completed in Y3Q4.

**Table 1: AIRN Detailed Working Districts and *Upazillas***

Division	Name of districts	Name of <i>upazillas</i>
Khulna • 09 Districts • 40 <i>Upazillas</i>	Khulna, Jessore, Jhenaidah, Bagherhat, Satkhira, Meherpur, Chuadanga, Magura, Narail	Batiaghata, Dacope, Dighalia, Dumuria, Phultala, Terakhada, Paikgachha, Rupsa Chaugachha, Keshabpur, Sharsha, Bagherpara, Jessore Sadar, Jhikargachha, Manirampur, Jhenaidah Sadar, Kaliganj, Harinakunda, Shaikupa, Maheshpur, Kotchandpur, Fakirhat, Chitalmari, Bagherhat Sadar, Kachua, Mollahat, Satkhira Sadar, Kalaroa, Tala, Meherpur Sadar, Mujibnagar, Gangni, Chuadanga Sadar, Alamdanga, Jibannagar, Magura sadar, Sreepur, Shalikh, Kalia, Narail Sadar
Barisal • 06 Districts • 17 <i>Upazillas</i>	Barisal, Jhalokati, Patuakhali, Pirojpur, Bhola, Barguna	Barisal Sadar, Babuganj, Bakerganj, Banaripara, Wazirpur, Agailjhara, Gournadi, Jhalokati Sadar, Nalchity, Rajapur, Patuakhali Sadar, Nesarabad, Nazirpur, Pirojpur Sadar, Bhola Sadar, Daulatkhan, Amtali
Dhaka • 03 District • 14 <i>Upazillas</i>	Faridpur, Gopalganj, Madaripur	Faridpur Sadar, Nagarkanda, Sadarpur, Saltha, Boalmari, Alfadanga, Bhanga, Madhukhali, Kotalipara, Gopalganj Sadar, Tungipara, Kashiani, Madaripur Sadar, Kalkini

### 1.1.2 Assessments of Private Sector Agricultural Input Companies

AIP is in the process of assisting agro-input companies and associations to obtain international quality certifications. This process will take place in two phases:

- **Phase I:** situational analysis of companies/associations for international certification;
- **Phase II:** assistance for companies/associations to obtain international certification.

A scope of work for an International Certification Assistance (ICA) consultant to provide the situational analysis of agro-inputs companies and associations in Phase I was developed this quarter. One international certification expert (local consultant) is supporting AIP to assist agro-inputs companies and relevant associations to achieve international certifications and/or implement international standards. AIP will engage the local consultant for 30 days over the period from June 21 to September 30, 2015.

### 1.1.3 Identify Training Needs of Retailers

AIP has completed a training needs assessment of women agro-inputs retailers with the support of GMark. Based on this needs assessment, Gmark will deliver modules to women retailers on agri-business management and ethics; nutrition awareness; safe & judicious use of agro-chemicals; environmental safety-net procedures at the retail shop; quality seed, fertilizer and pesticide; and crop-based agronomic practices, including pest & disease management.

Customized training for women retailers will be organized in the next quarter, along with the additional company-led training for ensuring AIRN certification.

### 1.1.4 Working Purpose, Objectives, and Modalities of AIRN

This quarter, interim members of the AIRN Advisory Board discussed and reviewed amendments to the AIRN AoA; discussions will continue during Y3Q4. During these meetings, the Advisory Board decided to organize a series of discussion meetings with field and Dhaka-level government stakeholders, including the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE), to solve problems of micronutrient adulteration at the field level, based on a recent study performed by AIP. It was suggested that the AIRN basic training module include micronutrient issues as well.

The Board members also reviewed AIRN's member services, revenue-generating mechanisms, and its internal capacity. The Advisory Board will share developed services and membership criteria with a wider stakeholder audience through regional consultative workshops for input and feedback during Q4, after which the Board will review and approve.

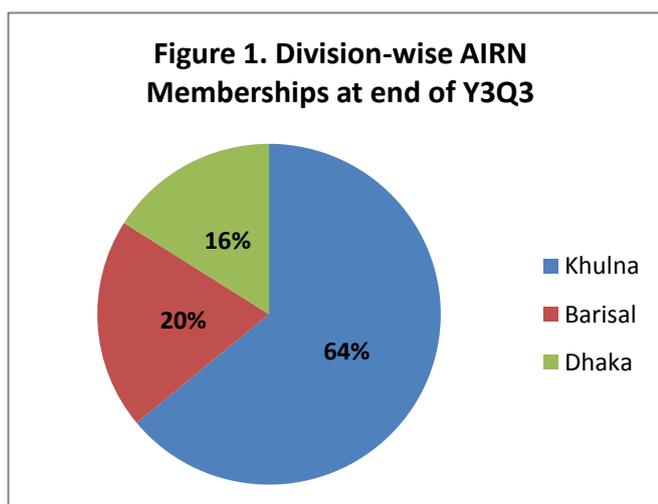
### 1.1.5 AIRN Structure and Members

At the end of Q3, 71 *upazilla* AIRN ad-hoc committees were formed with a total of 2,210 agro-input retailers joining the network as members. In addition, 52 women retailers joined AIRN as “provisional” members - a membership category created to assist potential women in the process of establishing an agro-inputs shop (e.g., obtaining required GoB licenses, small grant application development support).

A law firm is still working to secure the license and registration of AIRN. It is expected that the process will be completed by end of Y3. Draft bylaws required for the registration will also be reviewed by the Advisory Board by the end of Y3.

#### 1.1.5.1 AIRN Membership Drives

To date, there are 2,210 total AIRN members including 1,125 accredited members, 1,033 associate members, and 52 provisional members from 74 *upazillas* in 18 districts. For



membership selection, AIP has emphasized Khulna and Jessore and their adjacent districts as they are prominent for year-round vegetables and other crop production sites, as well as areas with a high concentration of retailers and inputs companies (see Figure 1). Dhaka and Barisal have received less focus in terms of AIRN membership due to their riverine nature and a lower concentration of retailers and companies, as most of the land produces only one crop per year.

**Table 2: AIRN membership status by Division**

Division	Total districts	Total upazillas	Provisional members	Associate members	Accredited members	Total members
Khulna	09	40	43	558	811	1,412
Barisal	06	21	09	229	194	432
Dhaka	03	13	0	246	120	366
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>1,033</b>	<b>1,125</b>	<b>2,210</b>

### 1.1.6 Credit Guarantee Fund

The Credit Guarantee Fund has been removed in the modified Program Description submitted to USAID as USAID has a larger program for credit guarantees with the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) Bank. Given the accessibility of this facility, AIP would rather encourage retailers to utilize BRAC’s services rather than competing with the entity. The project is waiting for USAID’s approval of the modified Program Description to formally discontinue this activity.

### 1.1.7 Gender Lens Committee

During the reporting period, one Gender Lens Committee (GLC) meeting was held to address leadership skills development, including gender equity and diversity issues, of women agro-retailers. A mapping exercise was completed to identify women retailers’ opportunities to become members of local committees (*shomity*) or associations. At present, three women agro-retailers are active members of local market (*haat bazar*) committees. Inclusion of another 47 women retailers in the respective local market committees is underway as GLC members initiate dialogue with the existing committee members.

In addition, GLC members determined a set of capacity building initiatives for approved grant applicants and worked with the Senior Training Advisor to revise training modules to make them more gender inclusive.

### 1.1.8 Creation of Women Retailers through AIRN

Of the 16 matching grants approved by USAID, AIP disbursed its first grant to Swapna Mondal in Batiaghata, Khulna for furniture and other general accessories to organize her shop. The AIP grants team also worked on procurement for the other 15 grantees in Jessore, Khulna and Barisal.

AIP identified 27 grants applicants after completing site visits, assessing



**Swapna Mondol, first grantee of AIRN, sells seeds to a female farmer.**

community feedback, evaluation by AIP’s Technical Evaluation Committee and subsequent approval by the Chief of Party (COP). In addition, AIP’s three partner NGOs (PNGOs) organized three public meetings with 216 potential women grantee participants, 32 of which are in the grant application process. AIP assisted potential women retailers to receive 42 licences from the DAE for retailing pesticides and 27 seed licenses from MOA for retailing seeds.

### 1.1.9 Strengthening Agricultural Input Wholesale Associations

#### 1.1.9.1 Directory of Input Supply Companies, Wholesalers, and Directory of GoB-registered Retailers

In Y3Q3, AIP issued tenders to the selected printing house vendor to publish a directory of agro-input companies and wholesalers. AIP expects the directory to be printed and complete by the end of August, 2015.

#### 1.1.9.2 Capacity Development of BSA, BFA, and BCPA

As per the OCAT score, BFA and BCPA ranked strongly, whereas BSA was a distant third. BFA and BCPA are more stable organizations with well-resourced secretariats. BSA, however, struggles with a weak, under-manned and under-funded secretariat. BCPA and BFA has welcomed the OCD initiative and expressed interest to initiate the year-long OCD exercise, to begin in Y3Q4. On the other hand, a tailored OCD for BSA will begin in Y4.

## 1.2 Trainings and Study Tours

### Retailers’ training:

In this reporting period, AIP trained 374 retailers (see Table 3) on “*Krishi Upakoron Satik Babohar O Bikroy Bishok*” (“appropriate use and sales of agricultural inputs”). GMark, ACI Limited, Bayer Crop Science Limited and Lal Teer Seed Ltd. worked jointly with AIP to conduct these trainings. The use and sales of agricultural inputs is a basic training required to obtain AIRN accredited membership status.

**Table 3: Training Summary for Y3Q3**

Consulting firm/company	Number of batches	Total retailers trained
GMark Consulting Limited	6	142
ACI Limited	2	50
Bayer Crop Science Limited	2	65
Lal Teer Seed Limited	5	117
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>374</b>

### Domestic Study Tour for AIRN members to ACI Formulation Plant and BSA:

In April, AIP organized a domestic study tour for 15 participants, including AIRN ad-hoc committee member representatives, to visit the ACI formulation plant in Gazipur, the BSA, and the seed wholesale distribution market at Siddique Bazar, Dhaka.

The retailers found this tour to be informative as they learned about agrochemical supply and quality control systems, wholesale seed market transactions, packaging, and storage systems

of different seed companies. They also learned discussed the activities and working modalities of BSA.

### **International Study Tour on Agribusiness and Quality Inputs for AIRN Members:**

AIP organized a tailor-made course for AIRN retailers through the National Agricultural Extension Training Center of Kasetsart University, Thailand. A total of 12 participants (including 3 females) participated in the course in May, 2015. The major objective of the course was to provide participants first-hand knowledge of various agro-inputs businesses in Thailand - their management and ability to provide quality inputs - which might be replicated in Bangladesh. The course was a combination of classroom lectures, visits to input suppliers, agro-input associations, and farmer demonstrations.

During the course, participants had the opportunity to exchange experience and learning while interacting with a number of private companies and governmental institutions such as TJC Chemical Co., Ltd, Saksiam International Co., Ltd, Thai retailer shops, the Asia Pacific Seed Association (APSA), Kamtrade Co, Ltd, Thai Fertilizer and Agricultural Supplies Association (TFAS), Thai Crop Protection Association, Department of Agricultural Extension (DOAE), Seed Association of Thailand, and the Asian Vegetable Research and Development (World Vegetable Center).

Through this visit, participant retailers have become more aware of the use of safety materials for handling agro-chemical products. In addition, they are better motivated to promote quality issues especially in dealing with farmer customers.

#### **1.2.1 Development of Training Modules**

AIP is in the process of organizing special training drives for women retailers as most of them are new to agro-inputs businesses. To ensure better knowledge of business management, GMark is assisting AIP to modify existing training modules based on training needs assessment findings to be more responsive to the needs of female agro-retailers.

Once these revised modules are completed, GMark will organize a two-part training in August and September, 2015. The first part will be a 3-day basic training on agri-business management and ethics, nutrition awareness, safe and judicious use of agro-chemicals, environmental safety-net procedures at the retail shop and quality seed, fertilizer and

#### **Thailand trip brings changes in business attitudes**

Advisor of AIRN Fultala *upazilla* (Khulna district) committee, Mr. Sheikh Motaleb Hossain participated in the AIP international study course on agro-business and quality inputs at Kasetsart University, in Thailand in May 2015. During that visit, Motaleb received first-hand knowledge of various agro-inputs businesses in Thailand and their style of management. He gained knowledge on retailing, specifically supplying quality agro-inputs to farmers, interacted with successful agro-input supplier associations and service organizations to understand their role in promoting quality inputs and services.

After returning from the trip, Motaleb was motivated to better organize his shop by applying AIRN recommendations as well as according to what he experienced in Thailand. *Sheikh Enterprise* now displays pesticides according to the recommended WHO color codes and proper ventilation is maintained. Salesmen now wear gloves and masks while selling or handling chemical products. The shop also has installed a fire extinguisher in case of emergency. *Sheikh Enterprise* is now an example in agro-input retailing for other retailers in Fultala *upazilla*. His shop has also increased its reputation among local farmers.

Motaleb commented that he will continue upgrades to his shop in order to set an example to neighboring retailers "I will continue positive changes at my shop to set an example for other retailers to organize their shops in systematic way".

pesticide. The second part will cover crop-based agronomic practices, including pest & disease management.

### **1.2.2 Master Trainer Selection, TOT, and Trainings**

#### **TOT and Master Trainer Selection:**

No training of trainers (TOT) was performed this quarter.

### **1.3 AIRN Promotion - Prepare and Distribute Brochures**

AIP continues to disseminate project information online through the AIP website and a Facebook page launched for the project to communicate with various stakeholders on a regular basis. The website has been updated with success stories, photos, information on AIRN, and a retailer membership map.

In addition, AIP finalized drafts for 5 informational posters to address the needs of farmers and retailers on 1) quality seed; 2) quality fertilizer; 3) safe use of crop protection products (CPPs) (two); and 4) nutritionally dense crops for children and pregnant and/or lactating mothers (cobranded with the USAID Agricultural Value Chains Project, AESA, Horticulture Project, and AIN). In addition, the final draft of a leaflet on use of micro-nutrient fertilizers has been developed.

#### **1.3.1. Branding and Marketing Campaign for AIRN**

A draft has been finalized for a comprehensive six month “super edition” (January-June 2015) of the AIRN newsletter. AIP is working to prepare a Bangla version of the newsletter, including layout and design, by mid-August 2015. This issue highlights successes of women grantees and AIRN networks as well as the AIRN Call Center, which provides farmers a reporting mechanism for poor quality agro-inputs.

AIP also promotes the AIRN Call Center through all printed communications materials and its Facebook page. The Call Center is being incorporated into AIP’s “Did You Know?” or “*Apni Janen Ki?*” multi-media campaign strategy. This includes sending short messages via cell phones to farmers and retailers, information dissemination through the AIP website, AIP Facebook page, television, and radio programs.

#### **1.3.2. Public Awareness Campaign for Proper Use of Seed, Fertilizer and Pesticides**

USAID has approved contents of three booklets on seed, fertilizer and CPPs to be disseminated mainly among retailers, farmers and other relevant stakeholders i.e., *upazilla* level government agriculture officers, FTF projects and members of three national agro-input associations (i.e., BSA, BFA, BCPA). These booklets are in the process of being printed and will be co-branded with the three national associations logos as well as that of the AIS, a mass communication wing of the MOA.

For better consistency, contents of these booklets are also being promoted through MPOB on a regular basis. In addition, for proper use of seed, fertilizer and pesticides short messages (SMS) have been selected that will be shared via cell phones in Y3Q4.

### **1.3.3. Booklets Improvement**

Printable versions of the three booklets on seeds, fertilizers and CPPs are complete and ready for printing. To include the AIS logo, an important partner co-branding the booklets, AIP is revising its MOU with AIS. AIP is following up with AIS and the MOA on a regular basis to expedite the MOU revision and renewal. AIP anticipates that printable versions of the booklets will be cleared for dissemination by the end of Y3Q4.

### **Summary of Intervention 1 Key Activities for Next Quarter**

AIRN will continue its membership drive in the next quarter, and plans to cover 10 new *upazillas*. There will be four regional consultative workshops in Faridpur, Barisal, Khulna and Jessore with AIRN *upazilla* representatives to identify potential network services and define the organizational structure needed to offer such services.

AIP will also conduct a study through key informant interview questionnaires to analyze the existing status and need for international certification among agro-inputs companies and relevant associations.

Refresher trainings on women retailer creation and environmental compliance will be held with PNGOs in the next quarter. Grants procurement, shop organization, and agreement signing ceremony will be conducted for approved grantees and other internally approved grantees (USAID approval pending). In addition, the revised sub-agreements with PNGOs will be finalized for USAID concurrence.

Per the Program Description modification, AIP proposes discontinuation of its guarantee fund in the next quarter as USAID has a larger program for a credit guarantee with BRAC Bank.

To promote gender issues, AIP will conduct one GLC meeting, organize six demos with high-value nutrient crops with six women retailers, assess 57 women's current status in agro-inputs business using Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) tools and conduct three community acceptance garnering sessions for AIP grantees. In addition, together with Gmark, AIP will develop one module on nutrition awareness.

AIP will launch its "Did you know?" campaign activities in full effect starting in August 2015 following finalization of contracts with two vendors for printing and audio-visual activities. Activities under this campaign in next quarter are: completion of six posters, five billboards, 10 tin board signs and audio-visual documents i.e., three public service announcements for television, bulk SMS services via cell phones and one promotional video on AIRN.

## **Intervention 2: Market Information Systems**

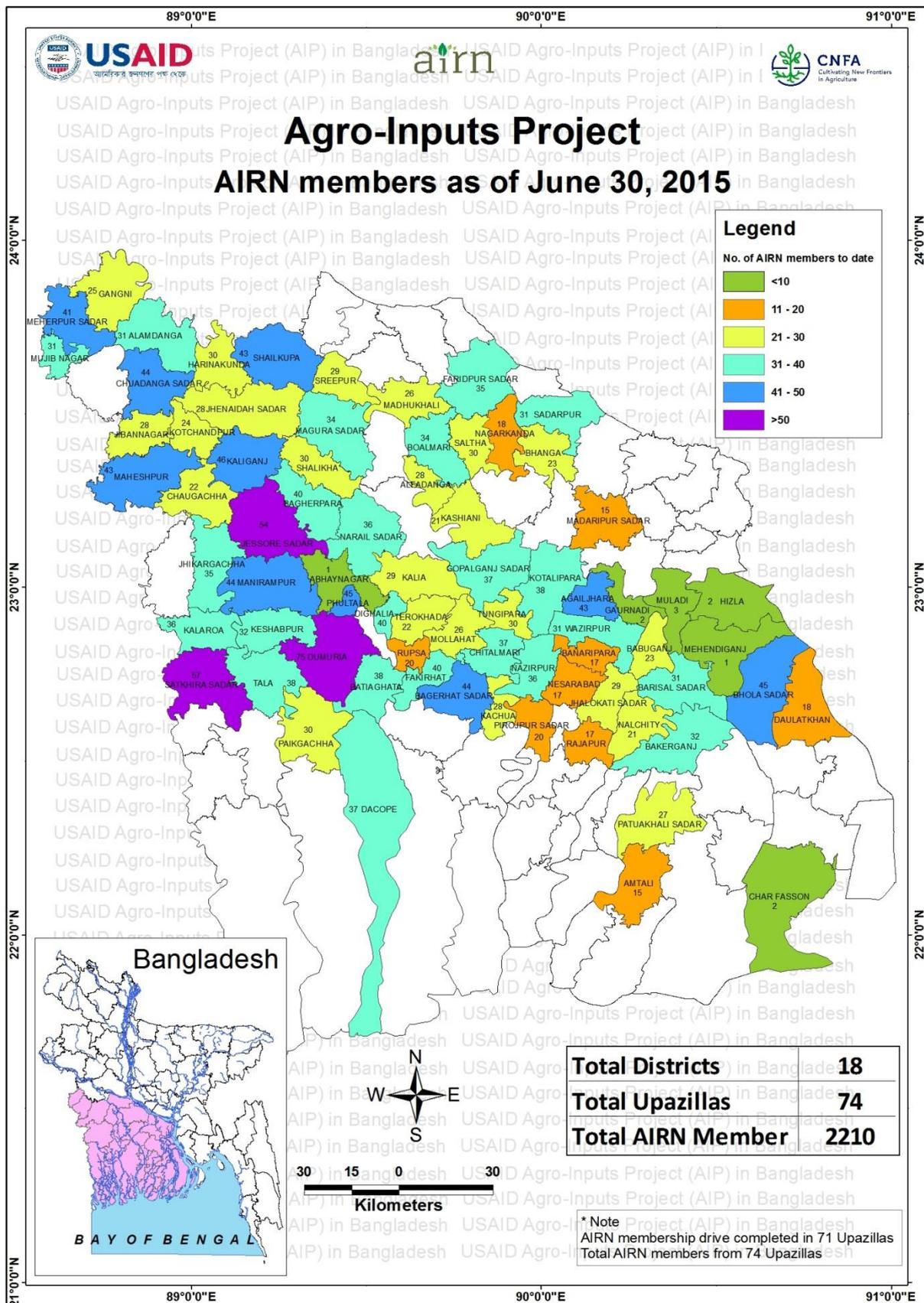
### **2.1. Analysis and Distribution of Agro-Inputs Monthly Price Outlook Bulletin**

AIP distributed three issues of the MPOB using modified designs and including success stories, AIRN news, and market information to 7,500 stakeholders. Meanwhile, a study on the most commonly traded agro-inputs in the FTF zone was completed and findings will be used to revise the agro-input related contents in the MPOB, beginning with the August 2015 issue.

### **2.1.1 GIS Development**

AIP hosted a GIS point of contact meeting this quarter with the participation of other USAID projects working in the FTF zone for better cooperation to upload and share data in USAID's Geo-Portal. For capacity building of participants, a half-day learning and sharing session on Open Street Map and quantum GIS (QGIS) was also organized during the meeting. Collection of GPS data points for retailers' shops increased this quarter; as of June 30, 2015, AIP collected a total of 1,620 points which are supplemented by a photo of the AIRN member's shop. A comprehensive map of the GoB's registered agro-input companies, wholesalers, and retailers in the FTF zone was also developed (see Figure 2).

**Figure 2: AIRN members as of June 30, 2015**



## 2.2 Agricultural Exhibitions

With the theme “Did you know: quality agro-inputs are around you?,” AIP is finalizing a formal contract with selected vendor Event Exposure to organize the second AIRN Agro-Tech Fair, to take place from November 30-December 2, 2015 in Jessore. After receiving anticipated approval from USAID in Q4, the final contract will be signed to begin activities. In the meantime, AIP has communicated with potential speakers for its “Speakers’ Corner” on promoting quality input issues and presenting the latest technologies.

## 2.3 Demonstration Plots with other FTF Programs

Under collaborative initiatives with other FTF programs on establishing demonstration plots, the AESA project and AIP established 21 demonstration plots on chili (3) and mung bean (18) in Jessore, Barisal and Patuakhali. During the reporting period, FFDs were organized on mung bean that produced a higher yield in the demo plots as compared with a trial plot using traditional varieties and technologies. Due to attacks of a viral disease, farmers discontinued the chili plots jointly established with Lal Teer this quarter.

### 2.3.1 Identification of Collaborators and Plots

Following AIP’s PERSUAP, AIP found 224 allowed demo plots out of 375 proposed by ACI, Syngenta and Lal Teer for the remainder of the summer:

**Table 4: Demo plot evaluation for PERSUAP compliance**

Company name	Total proposed demos	Allowed plots
ACI	141	109
Syngenta	65	50
Lal Teer	169	65
<b>Total</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>224</b>

In addition, to demonstrate quality products, AIP has signed a MOU with a new input supply company, Getco Agro Vision Ltd. (Getco). Per the MOU, Getco and AIP will jointly establish 100 demo plots and provide training to 300 retailers. AIP and Getco will also collaborate in other areas, such as international certification (ISO, ISTA) and developing GIS data.

### 2.3.2 Field Days

This quarter, 6,440 farmers (4,980 male and 1,460 female) participated in 127 field days organized by AIP, in collaboration with input companies, to demonstrate improved traits and inform farmers on sources of quality inputs (namely, AIRN retailers). During FFDs, AIP also educated farmers and retailers on the safe and judicious application of CPPs.

**Table 5: Farmers field days as of June 30, 2015**

Company Name	Demo established	FFD organized	Total
ACI	5	5	400
Ag-Ext	18	18	2,975
Lal Teer	15	15	719
Syngenta	33	89	2,346
<b>Total</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>6,440</b>

### 2.3.3 Demonstrations to promote high value nutritious crops and technologies

A list of high-value nutrient crops has been shared with both male and female AIRN agro-inputs retailers so they can take necessary measures to procure and promote these seeds in the upcoming winter season. This initiative will guide farmers in selecting highly nutritious crops to ensure diversified food consumption at the household level.

To demonstrate nutritious crops, 6 women retailers from Barisal, Jessore and Khulna have been identified to conduct household level demo plots in the upcoming winter season. With the guidance of respective companies on seed and technologies, each female retailer will lead two farmers (one male and one female) in establishing 12 plots of nutrient-rich vegetables.

#### Summary of Intervention 2 Key Activities for Next Quarter

GIS development plans for the next quarter include placing the GIS-MIS platform onto an Amazon cloud server and developing a web-based data collection workflow for monitoring and evaluation (M&E) which will also work offline via Dropbox.

Based on the signed MOU with Getco, AIP will jointly establish 100 demo plots and provide training to 300 retailers. In addition, AIP and Getco will collaborate in other areas, such as international certifications (ISO, ISTA) and developing GIS data. AIP will complete the evaluation of 72 demonstration plots proposed by Syngenta for upcoming *aman* rice season by mid-August, 2015.

AIP will complete all preparatory tasks for the Agro-Tech Fair 2015, including reviewing guest speaker presentation content and finalizing the list of participant companies and organizations as well as individual participants. In addition, AIP will develop content of relevant publications for the Agro-Tech Fair, i.e., promotional posters, banners, and brochures.

## Intervention 3: Quality Control and Standards and Regulatory Standards

### 3.1 Adherence to Industry Standards

As an active member of the SHC, formed by the MOA, AIP is extending technical and logistical support to jointly organize meetings to modify seed health standards for rice, wheat, jute, and potato. In its fifth meeting, held in June 2015, the committee drafted seed disease parameters for three crops (potato is pending) that will be finalized in next meeting (Y3Q4).

**Table 6: Seed-borne diseases being discussed by the Seed Health Committee**

Crop	Seed-borne disease identified	Causal organism	Seed health standards (parameters)
Rice	Bakanae <sup>1</sup>	<i>Fusarium moniliforme</i>	
Wheat	Leaf blight <sup>2</sup>	<i>Bipolaris sorokiniana</i>	

<sup>1</sup> Bakanae is a common seedling disease in rice caused by the fungus *Fusarium moniliforme*/*Fusarium fujikuroi*/*Gibberella fujikuroi*. Infected seedlings exhibit abnormal elongation, chlorosis, and in severe cases, can lead to death.

<sup>2</sup> *Bipolaris sorokiniana* is the most predominant fungi responsible for wheat seedling leaf blight, spot blotch, and root rot.

Jute	Stem rot <sup>3</sup>	<i>Macrophomona phaseolina</i>	Yet to be finalized
Potato	Bacterial wilt/brown rot <sup>4</sup>	<i>Ralstonia solanacearum</i> ( <i>Pseudomonas solanacearum</i> )	
	Blackleg/seed tuber soft rot <sup>5</sup>	<i>Erwinia carotovora</i> subsp. <i>atroseptica</i>	
	Scab <sup>6</sup>	<i>Streptomyces scabies</i>	

The committee is currently analyzing the extent of damage and financial implications caused by the infestation of diseases. The SHC is also analyzing the seed supply situation and anticipating the impact of imposing seed health standard parameters.

### 3.2 Certification and Business Ethics

During Q3, discussions were held with the AIN project to initiate a joint training for AIRN accredited retailers who have a wider portfolio which includes aquaculture. The training might take place in the next quarter. Business ethics and behavioral change are addressed in these mandatory trainings; while it is difficult to monitor on a daily basis, the retailers seem to be more aware of the positive correlation between farmers’ output and their sales.

AIP initially envisioned the formation of an AIRN Business Ethics Committee (BEC) to “determine the business ethics necessary for AIRN membership.” However, given a stronger focus on AIRN as a training organization, BEC activity will be discontinued.

#### 3.2.1 AIRN Certification

Through the end of Q3, 1,125 AIRN members (including 4 women retailers) were certified as “accredited” members. AIRN had a total of 52 “provisional” (women) members at the end of the quarter and had a total of 1,033 (including 5 women retailers) as “associate” members. Provisional members, upon obtaining the required GoB licenses and initiating business operations, become associate members of AIRN. Following completion of the obligatory basic trainings and related membership requirements by the retailer and any of his/her shop employees, the retail shop receives accredited member status.

### 3.3 Monitoring

Through identification by AIRN’s Call Center, based in Khulna, AIP notified one input supply company of quality issues reported by farmers this quarter. The company has addressed this issue positively and has followed up directly with farmer users. To promote the Call Center further, approximately 5,000 promotional materials, including leaflets, posters and stickers, bearing AIRN Call Center messages have been printed and distributed among agro-inputs retailers in Barisal and Khulna.

<sup>3</sup> *Macrophomina phaseolina* is the major pathogen of jute and causes seedling blight, leaf spot and stem rot.

<sup>4</sup> Brown rot is a disease caused by the bacterium *Ralstonia solanacearum*. The disease has the potential to cause significant yield losses, through the rotting of tubers in affected host plants.

<sup>5</sup> Tuber soft rot is caused by contamination by *Erwinia spp.* It occurs mostly superficially in lenticels and wounds, where it can overwinter until planting time.

<sup>6</sup> *Streptomyces spp.* is a plant pathogen causing corky lesions to form on tuber and root crops while decreasing the growth of seedlings. It causes the potato disease common scab, which is an economically important disease in many potato growing areas.

### **3.4 Coordination on Policy, Legal, and Regulatory Constraints**

Based on signed MOUs with BFA and BCPA, AIP is collaborating with these industry associations to collect their opinions on how to address policy and legal constraints that restrict the availability of quality inputs supply. AIP also contributes to policy reform as a member of MOA's Seed Regulatory Reform Committee. In June 2015, the seventh meeting of the Seed Regulatory Reform Committee was held and a draft seed policy is in circulation for review and comments.

#### **Summary of Intervention 3 Key Activities for Next Quarter**

AIP will jointly organize dialogue with BCPA on the safe disposal of pesticide containers with active participation of government and other stakeholders. As per the MOU with BCPA, AIP will also assist the association to organize trainings for its member retailers focusing on quality inputs and safe use of pesticides.

In the next quarter, AIP will continue to promote the AIRN Call Center through posters, leaflets, bulk SMS and other methods of promotion. In addition, AIP will look to link farmer callers to other sources of information, such as the farmer query system developed by the AESA project.

### **Intervention 4: Strengthening Local Organizations**

#### **4.1 Organizational Capacity Assessment**

The third party, contracted by the project, finished assessing the organizational capacity of all three business associations - BSA, BCPA and BFA. While the assessment of BSA took place during Y2, Q3, the same was carried out for BFA and BCPA during Y3, Q1-Q2 and Y3, Q2 respectively. As per the OCAT score, BFA ranked the highest, followed by BCPA, while BSA stands a distant third. This means BSA, despite the best efforts, may not reach a stage where they can get a direct USAID award. However, steps have been agreed to gradually improve their organizational capacity.

The project shared the outcome of the organizational capacity assessment (OCA), which the two associations – BFA and BCPA wholeheartedly welcomed. Detailed organizational capacity development plans for these two associations have already been agreed upon with them, starting from Y3, Q4 and ending in Y4, Q4.

However, BSA representatives are divided on the OCD initiatives. While the Secretariat feels the need for it, a part of the Executive Committee thinks the time and effort required to carry out the OCD process may disrupt regular day-to-day operations of the secretariat and will be lost if the Executive Director leaves the job. In face of such reservations, the project has encouraged them to take up a tailored OCD and they seem to be okay with this. But since they are busy with their election, their OCD may start late in Y4, Q1.

In addition, the project aims to assess the capacity of AIRN, once it is registered and ready, at least six months after starting operations. The registration process has been underway for quite some time, in fact, overdue by now. It is expected that AIRN will be registered by Y3, Q4. The business plan, which is currently being planned with the AIRN advisory board (ad-hoc committee) through a consultation process, should be ready by Y4, Q1. The OCD for

AIRN may start in Y5, Q1, which gives an entire year during the LOP for strengthening the AIRN secretariat.

## **4.2 Training Design**

For the sustainability and transformation of AIRN into a training organization, AIP/AIRN has taken the initiative to develop the training capacity of existing AIRN FOs with the cooperation of the Bangladesh Agricultural University. Through a practical technical training covering topics including agronomic practices, pest and disease management, appropriate doses, and quality seed and fertilizer (macro & micro plant nutrients), the FOs will improve their capacities as trainers. After the training, AIP/AIRN will create a trainers' pool of 5-7 members from the trained FOs who will conduct basic retailer training as certified trainers. The same batch of trainers will work as trainers under the AIRN training organization.

AIRN retailer training is currently provided by the AIP/AIRN and its partner GMark, as well as input supply companies. AIP/AIRN has established a good reputation at the field level for providing quality training for the retailers, which has been appreciated by USAID and other FTF projects.

### **Summary of Intervention 4 Key Activities for Next Quarter**

A tailored OCD with BSA will commence after November 2015 to accommodate BSA's busy schedule. The OCD process for BCPA and BFA is in the works and will be started the next quarter.

Based on demand by AIRN members, AIP will produce illustrated materials on agronomic practice, pest and disease management, agri-business, and nutrition awareness. AIP will hire short-term consultants to prepare a number of training materials such as booklets, flip charts, food cards, and brochures on technical issues for distribution among retailers.

## Project Management and Cross-Cutting Themes

### 1. Staffing

Staff departures this quarter include Russell Williams, Senior Capacity Building Advisor and Syed Ashraf Hussain, Office Manager – Khulna. AIP hired new team members, including Zunaed Rabbani as AIRN Capacity Building Director, Arifur Rahman, Office Manager – Khulna, and Rajibul Islam as Office Aide for Dhaka.

Additionally, AIP hired five data entry operators for M&E, three environmental interns and a local consultant for international certification assistance on a short-term basis. The project has also initiated the process to recruit an additional M&E specialist (Khulna) as well as a Grants Officer (Barisal).

### 2. Sub-awards

AIP continued its management of six organizational sub-awards for specific task sets. The table below details each sub-awardee and its activity:

**Table 7: AIP sub-awardees**

Sub-awardee	Main tasks	Contact details
<b>Ashroy Foundation</b>	Field and community based assistance to AIP in matching grant making to establish women owned and operated agro-input retail shops	<b>Momotaz Khatun</b> Executive Director Ashroy Foundation 16 Ahsan Ahmed Road Khulna-9100, Bangladesh. Tel: +880 41 812113 Cell: +880 1711 004579 E-mail- <a href="mailto:ashroy.foundation@gmail.com">ashroy.foundation@gmail.com</a>
<b>Association of Voluntary Actions for Society (AVAS)</b>	Field and community based assistance to AIP in matching grant making to establish women owned and operated agro-inputs retail shops	<b>Rahima Sultana Kazal</b> Executive Director Alekanada Road, Barisal Bangladesh Tel-0431-2173131 Mobile: 0 1711 884551 E-mail- <a href="mailto:rskazal@yahoo.com">rskazal@yahoo.com</a>
<b>Banchte Shekha</b>	Field and community based assistance to AIP in matching grant making to establish women owned and operated agro-inputs retail shops	<b>Angela Gomes</b> Executive Director Banchte Shekha Shaheed Mashiur Rahman Road, Arabpur, Jessore-7400, Bangladesh Tel-0421-66436,68885 Mobile:01713400388 E-mail- <a href="mailto:angelagomes52@yahoo.com">angelagomes52@yahoo.com</a> <a href="mailto:info@banchteshekha.org">info@banchteshekha.org</a>
<b>Spatial Systems Associates</b>	Co-designing and setting up AIP's Market Information System, backed by a Geographical Information System	<b>Larry Newman</b> Spatial Systems Assoc., Inc. 6345 Woodside Court Columbia, MD 21046 Suite 201 T: 410-423-1870 F: 410-423-1871 E-mail <a href="mailto:info@spatialsys.com">info@spatialsys.com</a>
<b>Capacity Development Service Group</b>	Organizational Capacity Assessment and Organizational Capacity Development	<b>Obaidur Rahman</b> , Chief Executive Capacity Building Service Group 6/1 Block B Lalmatia, Dhaka 1207 Bangladesh T: +880-181-19245-993

Sub-awardee	Main tasks	Contact details
		E-mail: <a href="mailto:cbsg_bd@yahoo.com">cbsg_bd@yahoo.com</a>
<b>GMark Consulting Ltd.</b>	Basic trainings of AIRN member retailers: basic business management and ethics, agronomic use of agro-inputs, safe use of pesticides, and human nutrition	<b>Md. Saifuddin Khaled</b> , Chairman and CEO GMark Consulting Ltd. Suite 604, H#145, R#03, Block #A Niketan, Gulshan 1 Dhaka-1212, Bangladesh T: +880-2-8836775 Cell: +880-1713 094686 E-mail: <a href="mailto:info@gmarkbd.com">info@gmarkbd.com</a> ; <a href="mailto:Khaled@gmarkbd.com">Khaled@gmarkbd.com</a>

### 3. Matching grants

This subject is treated in section 1.1.8.

### 4. Communications and Public Relations

To advance the “Did You Know” multi-media campaign, AIP initiated the procurement process to identify the two most qualified vendors, including reviewing all technical and financial proposals, reviewing samples of their previous jobs, conducting site visit meetings at vendor offices, and negotiation meetings with potential vendors by a procurement committee. At present, AIP is preparing documents to obtain USAID approval for the two selected vendors to conduct activities under the “Did you know?” campaign to promote the recognition of quality agro-inputs.

### 5. Gender

AIP initiated participation of male counterparts or family decision makers during membership drives to encourage better participation by women. In addition, 25 male retailers have been identified to serve as mentors to support women retailers’ development through experience sharing, company linkages, problem solving, and information exchange. During the reporting quarter, AIRN members from Batighta provided support to Swapna Mondal, a woman grantee, to procure inventory from BADC. This mentorship between women and male retailers will reduce gender discrimination in the agro-inputs retailing sector.

A profile of 50 women retailers has been developed to provide support based on the WEAI tools. Capacity building activities will be taken and tailored to individual results and support required.

As women are new to the agro-inputs business in Bangladesh, 26 community acceptance “garnering sessions” were conducted during the quarter for 26 women grantees entering the agro-inputs business to secure support from their families and neighbors. In total, 1,526 participants attended the sessions (608 females).

In the next quarter, AIP will conduct the following activities to promote gender issues:

- Organize six demos with high-value nutrient crops with six women retailers;
- Assess 57 women’s current status in agro-inputs business using WEAI tools;
- Conduct three community acceptance garnering sessions for AIP grantees;
- Together with Gmark, develop one module on nutrition awareness.

(See Section 1.1.7 for more information on gender).

## 6. Environment

### **Environmental Evaluation of Demo Plots:**

Of 171 demonstration plots proposed by ACI, Syngenta and Lal Teer, AIP private sector partners, AIP has selected 142 based on its USAID approved environmental compliance checklist. In its analysis of potential plots, AIP focused on parameters such as demo proximity to water bodies, households, livestock, and/or ecologically critical areas while applying AIP's PERSUAP guidelines on pesticides. In addition, the project considered pesticide toxicity classes, chronic human toxicity, ground water contamination and ecotoxicity as defined by World Health Organization (WHO).

### **Session on Safe Use of Pesticides with Demo Farmers**

AIP oriented 6,440 farmers on safe use of pesticides by organizing 73 awareness sessions at FFDs showcasing demonstration plots. The sessions included basic classification of pesticides, safe timing of application, precautions during mixing and applying pesticides, wearing personal protective equipment while mixing and applying pesticides, safe storage of pesticides, post-application hygiene, disposal of pesticide containers, as well as emergency treatment for pesticide poisoning.

### **Monitoring environmental compliance at retailers' shops**

In line with the environmental mitigation and monitoring plan (EMMP), AIP monitored 26 AIRN accredited retailers' shops in four districts. During monitoring, issues such as the selling of quality pesticides, use of personal protection equipment (e.g., gloves, face mask, long sleeved shirt), adherence to WHO color coding in pesticide shop arrangement, checking pesticide labels, shop floor's cleanliness, shop ventilation and availability of spill checking materials were found to be satisfactory. The retailers were also interested maintaining a stock of personal protection materials in their shops for sale to farmers.

## 7. Key Constraints

No major political unrest or constraints during the period.

## Key Issues of Interest

### **Research & Technology**

**MIS:** A key area of interest for AIP is the on-going creative application of a GIS system to underpin an AIRN MIS. This MIS will allow for visual representation of agricultural input distribution networks, transportation infrastructure, client concentrations, cropping patterns, product and price trends, and other information. The system will capture information on input retailers and demonstration plots, wholesalers and supply companies, and other points of interest related to agricultural input retailers in the FTF focus area. In addition, the system will serve as an important tool for monitoring AIP activities and evaluating progress towards achieving program objectives.

Building on technical assistance from AIP sub-recipient Spatial Systems Associates, the AIP MIS team is working to launch "Version 2" of the AIRN MIS web application and supporting field data collection tools. The GIS/MIS tool will be migrated to a cloud-based server in Y4.

**Mobile Money:** AIP and the USAID-funded MStar activity conducted a “quick assessment” to understand the existing transaction behavior and payment mechanisms between agricultural wholesalers and retailers. In order for electronic payments to make sense, it has to be implemented across the value chain starting from companies and government suppliers. While AIRN has authority over the retailers and suppliers, the companies and government suppliers will probably be beyond the scope and unless the payment mechanism is introduced and implemented from the top down, it will be extremely challenging to ensure adoption at the bottom. Hence, no immediate next steps have been proposed at this point.

### **Nutrition Integration**

During this quarter, AIP continued to include specific content on nutrition integration which provides retailers with basic nutrition information to share with farmers as an advisory service during sales. As women are generally responsible for feeding of family members, female retailers (and future grantees) will be supported to conduct shop-level demonstration plots on nutritious crop varieties toward better nutrition education. In addition, AIP worked with the AIN project to jointly develop posters with nutrition messaging, focusing particularly on vegetables and small fish consumption.

### **Global Climate Change Mitigation**

Various input companies have developed hybrid (non-GMO) rice seed that is saline-tolerant which AIP is encouraging to be sold by AIRN member retailers. An opportunity for demonstration of planting materials is possible through collaborative demonstrations. Some vegetable hybrids that have been commercially released, e.g., tomatoes, that ripen more slowly once harvested help farmers who have transportation problems due to troubled roads. AIP will seek to hold such demonstrations and will encourage companies with which it works to develop vegetable varieties resilient to climate change effects.

## Annex 1: Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

The AIP M&E Plan includes 13 indicators (including one process and two cross-cutting indicators) that are used to monitor progress and manage performance through the life of the project at the output and outcome levels. They include four FTF indicators to facilitate USAID/Bangladesh’s annual reporting, and nine custom indicators that USAID/Bangladesh established as part of its Development Objective (DO) 2 PMP. Together, these indicators provide a comprehensive measurement of AIP’s effectiveness in meeting targeted results.

Now halfway through the project, AIP is rigorously and realistically reviewing its M&E Plan, particularly the listed indicators, to measure the project’s achievements in a more effective and efficient manner. Through a consultative process with USAID/Bangladesh and Accelerating Capacity for Monitoring and Evaluation (ACME) project, AIP will finalize these changes and submit the revised document to USAID/Bangladesh in August.

As of the end of Y3Q3, AIP has made the following progress against its indicators.

### 1. Total sales of quality inputs by AIRN retailers (custom indicator)

AIP aims to induct and certify 3,000 agro-inputs retailers over the life of the project, who sell quality agricultural inputs in the 20 FTF working districts. This indicator directly collects the sales amount from the certified retailers’ sales registers (logbook), where the retailers record client sales. AIP is tracking the progress of its objective titled “Improved supply of quality agricultural inputs through input retailers” through this indicator. Measuring the progress through this custom indicator is a bit challenging, as the major responsibility rests with the project beneficiaries, who record each and every transaction in the logbook provided by the project, which becomes difficult for the retailers, particularly in the peak cropping season.

**Table 8: Total sales of quality inputs by AIRN accredited retailers:**

	Target (\$)	Achieved in Y3Q3 (\$)	Achievement (Cumulative) (\$)	Cumulative Sales (\$) by sex
Sales of quality inputs	100 million	2,094,348	7,663,484	Male retailers- 7,595,579 Female retailer – 67,904
Sales of quality inputs per retailer	33,333		6,812	

AIP has achieved approximately 8% of the target (\$100m) to date. AIP only began reporting on this indicator in Y2Q3, taking sales data from only 5 certified retailers; in a year period, the number has gradually grown to reach 1,125 retailers (end of Y3Q3). Per retailer sales, volume is relatively good (\$6,812 against the target \$33,333), when the length of accredited status per retailer is considered (see Table 9). It is highly likely that the current rate will see a sharp increase with the growing number of certified retailers in line with AIP’s redoubled efforts in Y4 and Y5. At the same time, AIP is taking realistic strategies to accelerate the rate further by enabling the existing retailer members to strengthen their member services (e.g. networking, exploring new supply chains, and disseminating best practices) and advertising the retailers in their respective communities as sources of quality inputs through multi-media campaigns.

**Table 9: No. of AIRN accredited retailers (by joining date):**

Year	Quarter	No. of accredited retailers		
		Male	Female	Total
Year 2	Quarter 2	5	-	5
	Quarter 3	138	-	138
	Quarter 4	177	2	179
Year 3	Quarter 1	327	1	328
	Quarter 2	178	2	180
	Quarter 3	294	1	295
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,119</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1,125</b>

## 2. Number of farmers purchasing inputs from AIRN retailers (custom indicator)

Over the life of the project, 3,000 certified retailers are to reach 1 million smallholder farmers in 20 FTF districts with quality inputs and embedded services. This indicator counts the number of smallholder farmers (owning 5 hectares or less of arable land) who purchase agricultural inputs from AIRN certified retailers. Measuring the indicator requires counting the unique number of farmers, irrespective of number of purchases.

As of June 30, 2015, 1,125 certified retailers covered 22% of the total target. The critical aspect of measuring this indicator is to separate out the farmers as ‘new’ and ‘old’ farmers<sup>7</sup> by the respective retailers. Apart from retailers’ efforts to make the distinction, AIP is trying to avoid the double counting of farmers via a database storing the farmers’ cell phone numbers as a ‘matching variable’.

**Table 10: No. of AIRN farmer customers (as of 30 June, 2015)**

Division	Target – No. of farmers over LOP	Achievement - No. of farmers, as of Y3Q3	Target – No. of farmers per retailer over LOP	Achievement - No. of farmers per retailer, as of Y3Q3
Barisal	1,000,000	41,615	333	215
Dhaka		17,383		145
Khulna		161,973		200
	<b>1,000,000</b>	<b>220,971</b>	<b>333</b>	<b>196</b>

In terms of farmers per retailer, it currently stands at 196, with a final target of 333.

## 3. Number of agro-input retailers in the network (custom indicator)

This indicator counts the number of retailers who join AIRN to offer quality inputs and embedded services to the smallholder farmers. AIP originally provisioned two types of membership, a) Associate Member, and b) Accredited Member. The Associate members are those who are committed to sell quality inputs, and have retail shop with license from government’s authority. For an Associate retailer, to become an AIRN Accredited retailer (symbolized by a signboard/logo of AIRN), he/she must complete/pass AIRN’s business management and technical training. This process indicator counts both types of retailers.

<sup>7</sup> In the case where a farmer purchases more than once from a certified retailer, he or she is still counted only once (old), while he or she will be treated as ‘new’ in case of first purchase. In addition, if more than one farmer in a households is purchasing inputs, all the farmers in a household will be counted

**Table 11: Number of agro-input retailers in the network**

Division	Target	Achievement in Y3 Q3	Achievement (Cumulative)
Barisal	3,000	51	423
Dhaka		55	366
Khulna		231	1,369
	<b>3,000</b>	<b>337</b>	<b>2,158</b>

AIP realistically expects to meet the remaining target by the end of Y4; the current pace of implementation is conducive to reaching the target due to its expanding relationship with related stakeholders.

#### 4. Gross margin per hectare, animal or cage of selected products (FTF indicator)

The gross margin (GM) calculation includes a measurement from five data points (total production, total value of sales, total quantity of sales, total recurrent cash input costs, and total units of production). AIP decided to calculate GM in demonstration plots of brinjal (eggplant), which AIP organizes jointly with agro-input companies. This calculation was rescheduled from Y2 to Y3, as the companies faced some technical difficulties to organize the stipulated number of demo plots. AIP is carrying out the first calculation in August-September 2015 to report the progress in the annual progress report and via the FTFMS.

#### 5. Number of MSMEs, including farmers, receiving business development services from USG-assisted sources (FTF indicator)

This FTF indicator counts the number of retailers completing/passing business management and technical training. AIP jointly organizes this customized training course with six agro-input companies for respective companies' retailers. The topics include: business management, safe use of pesticide, agronomics, and nutrition. AIP directly organizes the same training through a pool of trainers associated with GMark Consulting Ltd. for the retailers beyond the six companies.

**Table 12: Number of MSMEs, received training by division**

Division	Target	Achievement in Q3 Y3	Achievement (Cumulative)
Barisal	3,000	-	380
Dhaka		68	331
Khulna		306	1,394
	<b>3,000</b>	<b>374</b>	<b>2,105</b>

By the end of Y3Q3, AIP almost reached the target set forth in AIP's Year 3 Implementation Plan, with a cumulative target through Y3 of 2,559. Capitalizing on the experience of conducting the training courses since the project start, AIP is now concentrating on the quality of training contents (such as better facilitation, new technical material and other effective training tools).

#### 6. Number of AIRN retailers with increasing application and adoption of quality standards for agricultural inputs (custom indicator)

AIP tracks the number of retailers who apply and adopt quality standards for each input category (seed, fertilizer and crop protection product) as a result of AIP/AIRN facilitation. This custom indicator also measures the smallholder farmers served by AIRN retailers to see the level of application and adoption of the same learnt from the AIRN retailers.

To determine the attribution to AIP, this measurement includes control experimentation, which means four separate groups: AIRN retailers and smallholder farmers served by AIRN retailers (program groups); and non-AIRN retailers and smallholder farmers served by non-AIRN retailers (control groups). In Y3Q4, AIP is measuring the progress by designing a proxy indicator (survey document) which is closely related to the government standards documents as its measure of this indicator, to be conducted by a third party. AIP will repeat the study in Y5 as a follow up to compare the progress over the period.

### 7. Number of retailers who adopted the Seal of Quality (new)

This indicator counts the number of AIRN Accredited retailers who joined AIRN to offer quality inputs and embedded services to the smallholder farmers. For a retailer, the prerequisite of having the AIRN certification (symbolized by a signboard/logo of AIRN) is to join AIRN and to complete/pass AIRN’s business and technical training.

As of the end of this reporting period, a total of 1,125 agro-input retailers enrolled as Accredited retailers and another 1,059 retailers are listed as Associate retailers, and are in the pipeline to become Accredited retailers in near future. AIP has adopted specific and realistic approaches to meet the targets, included in the Implementation Plan Y4.

AIP is now at a point to boost the certification process by synthesizing and capitalizing the learning from past membership drives and several formal and informal assessments of working modalities within the agro-inputs sectors. In addition to this, formation of the AIRN Board of Directors and systemizing the AIRN governing structure will add further pace to the process.

**Table 13: No. of retailers who adopted the Seal of Quality by division**

Division	Target	Achievement in Q3 Y3	Achievement (Cumulative)
Barisal	3,000	27	194
Dhaka		18	120
Khulna		250	811
<b>I</b>	<b>3,000</b>	<b>295</b>	<b>1,125</b>

### 8. Number of retailers who adopted the Seal of Quality (on-going)

This indicator is included in the above and is subject to replacement with a suitable indicator in the next revision of AIP’s M&E Plan.

### 9. Number of policies/regulations/administrative procedures in development stages of analyzed, drafted and presented for public/stakeholder consultation as a result of USG assistance

This custom indicator adapted the FTF indicator # 4.5.1-24 to report the progress in improving private sector engagement in regulatory environment through contributing to defining key constraints in policies/regulations/administrative procedures. AIP limits its efforts within the first two stages: Stage 1: analysis, and Stage 2: organize public on the proposed new or revised policy.

AIP made significant effort in reviewing all 11 sections of the National Seed Policy 1993 with BSA and leading agro-input companies, and submitted formally to the MOA. As part of

the process, AIP successfully analyzed (Stage 1) the existing policy with sections, and organized public debate (Stage 2) with relevant agro-input associations, companies, and the BPRSSP of IFPRI.

AIP is actively working with business associations on issues for promotion of increased and effective advocacy to influence the legal and regulatory framework affecting each major input supply association. AIP aims to identify eight policy constraints to present to USAID for submission to the BPRSSP.

### **10. Number of farmers and others who have applied new techniques of management practices as a result of USG assistance**

AIP sets this FTF indicator to measure the total number of smallholder farmers that applied improved technologies or management practices learnt through AIRN retailers. These new practices could result from certain retailer-farmer interactions including purchase of quality inputs, clientele (embedded) services on the part of the retailer, and attendance at FFDs around crop demo sites. AIP is conducting a study to measure this indicator in Y3 (revised schedule) through a third party consulting firm, and the results will be incorporated into the Y3 annual report and FFTMS.

AIP has incorporated the following broad technology types, disaggregated from the FTF Indicator Handbook:

- Crop Genetics
- Cultural Practices
- Pest Management
- Disease Management
- Soil-related Fertility and Conservation
- Other (e.g. improved mechanical and physical land preparation)

This study will be repeated annually through Y5.

### **11. Number of individuals who have received USG supported short-term agricultural sector productivity or food security training**

This FTF indicator measures the number of individuals who have gained significant knowledge or skill through interactions that are intentional, structured, and purposed. This includes farmers, entrepreneurs (agro-input retailers), representatives of private sectors, agro-inputs companies, and extension agents/specialists of government and non-government organizations. The specific capacity building events include ToT, FFDs, day-long workshops, agricultural exhibitions, and study tour/learning visit.

Initially, AIP planned to conduct three FFDs at each demo sites; this number was reduced in Y2 to only one. Thus, this will lower the cumulative achievement figures.

**Table 14: Number of individuals who have received USG supported short-term agricultural sector productivity or food security training**

Division	Target	Achievement in Y3Q3	Achievement (Cumulative)
Training of Trainer (ToT)	42	-	67
Study Tour	125	17	97
FFD	50,000	6,440	13,740

	<b>50,167</b>	<b>6,457</b>	<b>13,904</b>
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Indicator-wise data (FTF + Custom with cross-cutting) are presented in the following Tables 15 and 16.

**Table 15: Feed the Future Indicators**

#	Name of Indicator	Classifications	Unit of Measure	Disaggregated by		Baseline	Target and Achievement			
							Target Y3	Achievement in Q3 of Y3	Achievement in Y3	Achievement Cumulative (LOP)
1	Gross Margin per hectare, animal or cage of selected product <sup>8</sup>	FTF Indicator # 4.5-16, 17, 18 (RiA)	US dollars per hectare	Type	Crop	BL to be obtained using 'before' and 'after' method once the first assessment is done	TBD Y3	-	-	-
2.	Number of MSMEs, including farmers, receiving business development services from USG-assisted sources	FTF Indicator # 4.5.2-37 (S)	Number	Size :	Micro	0	1,500	374	664	2,105
					Small	0		-	-	-
					Medium	0		-	-	-
					Total	0	1,500	374	664	2,105
				MSME Type	Seed	0		-	-	1
					Fertilizer	0		-	-	-
					Agro-Chemical	0		-	-	-
					Mixed Variety	0		374	664	2,104
				Sex	Total	0	1,500	374	664	2,105
					Male	0		374	664	2,103
Female	0		-		-	2				
Total	0	1,500	374		664	2,105				
3.	Number of farmers and others who have applied improved technologies or management practices as a result of USG assistance	FTF Indicators # 4.5.2-5 (RiA) (WOG)	Number of farmers	Type	New	0		-	-	-
					Continuing	0		-	-	-
					Total	0	171,500 <sup>9</sup>		-	
				Sex	Male	0		-	-	-
					Female	0		-	-	-
					Total	0	171,500	-	-	-
4.	Number of Individuals who have received USG supported short-term agricultural sector	FTF Indicators # 4.5.2-7 (RiA) (WOG)	Number	Type of individuals	Producers	0		6,440	9,908	13,740
					People in government	0		-	-	-
					People in private	0		17	53	153

<sup>8</sup> Calculating gross margin was subject to include stipulated number of demonstration plots by the agro-input companies. For some technical reasons, the companies were not able to do this. Thus, the study has been deferred to Y3.

<sup>9</sup> This assessment has been deferred to Y3's winter season. A third party will gauge annually through a sample survey. The number of famers served by the retailers was found to be inadequate to draw a representative sample in Y2. Due to the delay in forming AIRN in Y1, AIP was not able to join retailers into AIRN and therefore could not reach farmers as planned. The project is now in its way to mitigate the delay.

#	Name of Indicator	Classifications	Unit of Measure	Disaggregated by	Baseline	Target and Achievement				
						Target Y3	Achievement in Q3 of Y3	Achievement in Y3	Achievement Cumulative (LOP)	
	productivity or food security training				sector firms					
					People in civil society	0		-	7	11
					Total	0	22,057	6,457	9,968	13,904
				Sex	Male	0		4,995	8,330	11,941
					Female	0		1,462	1,638	1,963
					Total	0	22,057	6,457	9,968	13,904

**Table 16: Custom and Cross-Cutting Indicators**

#	Name of Indicator	Classifications	Unit of Measure	Disaggregated by	Baseline	Target and Achievement				
						Target Y3	Achievement in Y3Q3	Achievement in Y3	Achievement Cumulative (LOP)	
<b>Custom indicators</b>										
1	Total sales of quality inputs by certified retailers annually	Custom	US dollar	Sex of retailers	Male	0		2,079,254	6,640,067	7,595,580
					Female	0		15,094	43,862	67,904
					<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>\$8.75 mil</b>	<b>2,094,348</b>	<b>6,683,930</b>	<b>7,663,484</b>
2.	Number of farmers purchasing from certified retailers	Custom	Number of farmers	Sex of farmers	Male	0		55,927	180,812	219,088
					Female	0		451	1,702	1,883
					<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>100,000</b>	<b>56,378</b>	<b>182,514</b>	<b>220,971</b>
3.	Number of Agro-Inputs Retailers in the Network	Custom	Number of retailers	Sex of retailers	Male	0		332	1,365	2,144
					Female	0		5	11	14
					<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2,500</b>	<b>337</b>	<b>1,376</b>	<b>2,158</b>
				Type of retailers	Seed	0		-	1	3
					Fertilizer	0		-	-	-
					CPP	0		-	-	1
					<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>		<b>337</b>	<b>1,375</b>	<b>2,154</b>
4	Number of AIRN retailers with increasing application and adoption of quality standards for agricultural inputs <sup>10</sup>	Custom	Number of retailers and farmers	Sex of retailers	Male	0				
					Female	0				
					<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>TBD</b>			
				Sex of farmers	Male	0				
					Female	0				
					<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>				
					Type of standards	Seeds	0			
Fertilizer	0									
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>									
5	Number of retailers who adopted seal of quality (new)	Custom	Number of retailers	Sex of retailers	Male	0		294	799	1,119
					Female	0		1	4	6
					<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,400</b>	<b>295</b>	<b>803</b>	<b>1,125</b>
				Type of retailers	Seed	0		-	1	3
					Fertilizer	0		-	-	-
					CPP	0		-	-	1
Mixed variety	0		295	802	1,121					

<sup>10</sup> This is to be performed by a third party assessment. Sufficient number of Accredited AIRN members must be in the 1sy assessment, i.e. baseline, and this number (of Accredited members) will be reached by winter , year 3

					Total	0	1,400	295	803	1,125
6.	Number of retailers who adopted seal of quality (on-going) <sup>11</sup>	Custom	Number of retailers	Sex of retailers	Male	0				
					Female	0				
					<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	TBD			
				Type of retailers	Seed	0				
					Fertilizer	0				
					CPP	0				
					Mixed variety	0				
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>									
7.	Number of Policies/Regulations/ Administrative Procedures in each of the following stages of development as a result of USG assistance in each case: Stage 1: Analyzed; Stage 2: Drafted and presented for public/stakeholder consultation	Custom (adapted FTF # 4.5-24)	Number of policy/regulation/ administrative procedure	Sector	Seed	0				1
					Fertilizer	0				
					CPP	0	4	0	0	1
				Stage	Analyzed	0			1	
					Drafted	0			1	
					<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1<sup>12</sup></b>
				<b>Cross cutting indicators</b>						
8.	Strengthened organizational capacities of related local organizations	Cross cutting (CC)	Percent	None		0	0	0	0	1 <sup>13</sup>
9.	Collaborative initiatives increased	CC	No. of event	Partner	Category					
					FTF Implementers			1	3	3 <sup>14</sup>
					Input Association					4 <sup>15</sup>
					Input Private Companies			5	8 <sup>16</sup>	9

<sup>11</sup> This will be filled in after the first and subsequent 3<sup>rd</sup> party audits of Accredited AIRN Members.

<sup>12</sup> AIP successfully advanced GoB Seed Policy to Stage 3. Stage 1 was analysis; Stage 2 was public debate; Stage 3 was formal submission to GoB of a revised Seed Policy, itself containing 11 sections.

<sup>13</sup> Organizational capacity assessment of the Bangladesh Seed Association yielded a 38.5 (of 100) baseline against the 8 fields within USAID's financial pre-award criteria

<sup>14</sup> Organized demonstration plot with Ag-Extension Project in three cropping seasons

<sup>15</sup> Four input associations participated with AIP in policy advocacy issues, while three of them participated in int'l study tour and one participated in AIP's organizational capacity strengthening efforts. Here the number of associations counted once, irrespective of number of events they participated in.

<sup>16</sup> Jointly organized demonstration plots with input companies.

					Government					5
					<b>Total</b>			6	11	21
				Activity	Type 1 (Demonstration plots)			71	255	338
					Type 2 (Study Tour)					1
					Type 3 (Agriculture Fair)					
					Type 4 (Policy Administration)					11 <sup>17</sup>
					Type 5 (Org. Capacity building)					2 <sup>18</sup>
					<b>Total</b>			71	255	352

<sup>17</sup> Meetings and policy dialogues were organized with related government agency/ministry including Ministry of Agriculture

<sup>18</sup> AIRN and BSA