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in Agriculture

AGRO-INPUTS PROJECT IN BANGLADESH

Annual Performance Report (Year 3: October 1, 2014 – September 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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*Photo: AIRN retailer, in his farmer customer's field, observes crop after using quality inputs.
Photo taken by Md. Abdur Rahman, AIRN Program Officer, Jhenaidah*

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Acronyms

ACME	USAID Accelerating Capacity for Monitoring and Evaluation
ACI	Advanced Chemical Industries
AESA	USAID/Agriculture Extension Support Activity Project
AF	Ashroy Foundation
AIP	USAID Agro-Inputs Project in Bangladesh
AIRN	Agro-Inputs Retailers Network
AIS	Agricultural Information Service of the DAE
AVAS	Association of Voluntary Actions for Society
BCPA	Bangladesh Crop Protection Association
BFA	Bangladesh Fertilizer Association
BS	Banchte Shekha
BSA	Bangladesh Seed Association
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
GIS	Geographic Information System
GM	Gross Margin
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
ICA	International Certification Assistance
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
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
OCAT	Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool
OCD	Organizational Capacity Development
PERSUAP	Pesticide Evaluation Report and Safer Use Action Plan
PNGO	Partner NGO
PO	Program Officer
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
PSA	Public Service Announcement
SHC	Seed Health Committee
SMS	Short Message Service
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
WEAI	Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index
WHO	World Health Organization

Project Background

Key Project Details

Title:	Agro-Inputs Project (AIP) in Bangladesh
Start Date:	September 17, 2012
Project Duration:	Five Years
Type of Award:	Cooperative Agreement No. AID-388-A-12-00005
Award Amount:	\$14,028,602
Main Implementer:	CNFA
Sub Implementers:	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-Inputs Retailers Network (AIRN) through Intervention 1. Interventions 2-4 are designed to work in concert 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 and advisory service provider 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 (MIS); 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-Input Retailers Network

As of the end of Year 3 (Y3), AIRN has 2,568 member retailers from 80 *upazilas* in 19 districts. Among them, 1,504 retailers are Accredited members, while others are in the process to be awarded with accredited membership status. An interim AIRN Advisory Board was formed to develop the network and its services, including defining the governance structure and prioritizing business activities.

During this year, AIP developed knowledge and expertise among 727 AIRN retailers (715 male, 12 female) on quality agro-inputs, safe and judicious use of pesticides, and business management. Partner companies such as GMark Consulting Ltd., ACI Ltd., Bayer Crop Science Ltd. and Lal Teer Seed Ltd. have assisted the project by organizing trainings.

In addition, two advanced trainings were organized for AIRN member retailers, in cooperation with two USAID projects - Aquaculture for Income and Nutrition (AIN), implemented by World Fish; and Farmer to Farmer Program (F2F), implemented by Winrock International – on aquaculture inputs and safe use of pesticides, respectively.

As an additional service to track and ensure quality inputs in the FTF zone, the AIRN Call Center was launched for farmers to report problems with purchased agro-inputs. AIRN has been successful in addressing reported problems with the concerned companies.

Intervention 2: Improve Effectiveness of Agricultural Inputs Market Information Systems

This year, AIP developed a GIS-MIS web-based user interface to demonstrate data on the FTF-zone agro-input market to various audiences including companies, wholesalers, retailers, donors and other FTF implementing partners.

AIRN retailers received a total of 12 issues of the Monthly Price Outlook Bulletins (MPOB) from AIP in Y3. Many agro-retailers have found this publication to be a useful tool to improve their businesses through strengthened supply linkages.

In collaboration with private companies ACI Ltd., Bayer CropScience Ltd., Lal Teer Seed Ltd., and Syngenta, as well as the USAID Agriculture Extension Support Activity project (AESAs), AIP established 156 demo plots for demonstrating improved varieties of rice, chili, mung bean and brinjal.

Intervention 3: Enhance Knowledge and Application of Quality Standards

AIP launched its “Did you know: quality agro-inputs are around you?” multi-media campaign on quality inputs with a number of new activities including short message service (SMS) via cellphone, public service announcements (PSA), billboards, leaflets, and posters. To strengthen the campaign at the field level, AIP signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Agriculture Information Services (AIS), a mass communication wing of the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA).

AIP published and disseminated two issues of the bilingual AIRN newsletter among its stakeholders. Additionally, AIP launched a new Facebook page, which is reaching a wide audience and has received approximately 4,500 hits since its creation in May 2015.

In order to ensure better quality adherence among the private inputs sector, AIP is in the process of assisting agro-input companies and associations in obtaining and implementing international standards certification. During the reporting year, AIP completed the first phase of the International Certification Assistance (ICA) program.

AIP is rolling out tasks for a second AIRN Agro-Tech Fair to be held in this reporting year. The project has produced a promotional brochure, placed promotional advertisements in national newspapers, and is actively communicating with companies and other potential participants.

Intervention 4: Strengthen Local Organizations' Institutional Capacity

The Organizational Capacity Assessments (OCA) of the Bangladesh Seed Association (BSA), Bangladesh Crop Protection Association (BCPA), and Bangladesh Fertilizer Association (BFA) were completed in Y3 with the support of a local third party organization.

A number of activities related to Organizational Capacity Development (OCD) were started in Y3 and will continue through Y4 of the project. While BSA requested to postpone its OCD until November 2015, kick-off meetings were held for BFA and BCPA in July 2015 to orient them on the year-long OCD process.

Performance against project indicators can be found in Annex 1.

Intervention 1: Establish an Agro-Input Retailers Network

Task 1.1 Develop AIRN as a High Quality Technical Training and Advisory Services Center

1.1.1 Create Modules and Train Master Trainers to Conduct Quality Training

Create Training Modules

AIP revised its training module on ethics and safe and judicious use of agrochemicals by adding information on environmental safety-net procedures at the retail shop. Additionally, the project incorporated a new module on the production of high-density nutritious crops. Following the module revisions, AIP organized 3-day trainings for retailers and 4-day training for master trainers.

Since most of the women grantees are new to agro-input retailing, a customized training module was prepared by partner GMark with two training tiers for improved understanding. The first module introduces AIRN membership, agri-business and ethics, nutrition awareness, and safe use of pesticide handling. The second module highlights identification of quality seed, fertilizer, and crop protection products and introduces the new retailers to basic agronomic practices. The women retailers' module includes a wider scope for hands on exercises on shop organization (following WHO color codes) and record keeping (registering customers' sales information).

Master Trainers Trained for Conducting Quality Training

AIP trained 38 participants including representatives from companies and AIP Program Officers (POs) as master trainers during the reporting period. Participants received training on various topics, such as USAID environmental compliance (22 CFR 216) and “*Krishi Upakoron Satik Bebohar O Bikroy Bishok*” (appropriate use and sales of agro-inputs related training). The master trainer courses complement the participants' expertise on facilitation and delivery of technical messages at the field level.

Table 1: Training for master trainers

Training Course Name	Achievement in Y3			Cumulative From Y1-Y3		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Training of Trainers (TOT)	34	04	38	79	09	88

Retailers' Training (Basic and Advanced)

AIP, in collaboration with GMark Consulting Ltd., ACI Ltd., Bayer CropScience and Lal Teer Seed Ltd., trained 727 retailers (715 male, 12 female) on “*Krishi Upakoron Satik Babohar O Bikroy Bishok*” (“appropriate use and sales of agricultural inputs”) during the reporting year. Retailers were trained on agri-business and ethics, nutrition awareness, agronomic practices, safe and judicious use of pesticides, sales record keeping, and maintaining shop shelves according to WHO color codes. Considering educational background, experience and other special needs of women retailers, AIP organized a customized basic training for them (see above).

In addition, 154 retailers received advanced training on aquaculture & horticulture agro-inputs management (79) and improved knowledge in safe and judicious use and handling of pesticides (75). AIP organized these trainings from August-September 2015, in collaboration with two USAID projects, AIN project implemented by WorldFish, and the F2F program implemented by Winrock International, respectively. This training was very effective in presenting to retailers new practices which will be useful for them and their farmer-customers. The training covered a variety of topics such as:

- Effects of body exposure during spraying pesticides;
- Proper backpack sprayer use;
- Proper pesticide shelving and storage;
- Need for and use of gas respirators;
- Proper understanding of chemical level in crop protection products (CPP).

Table 2: Training status - basic and advanced

Training Course Name	Achievement in Y3			Cumulative To Date		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Business Management Training (BMT)	715	12	727	2,188	15	2,203
Advanced training on Aquaculture & Horticulture Agro-Inputs Management	79	0	79	79	0	79
Advanced training on Improved Knowledge in Safe and Judicious Use and Handling of Pesticides	69	6	75	69	6	75

NB: Unique number of total training recipients 756; 125 retailers have attended more than one training course.

1.1.2 Illustrate Best Practices via Domestic and International Study Tours

In the reporting year, AIP completed two domestic and one international study tour for 51 total participants.

Visit to AIRN Agro-Tech Fair

In the first quarter, 24 AIRN ad-hoc committee representatives visited the AIRN Agro-Tech Fair 2014 in Jessore to interact with supply companies and other stakeholders, as well as to learn about new products and technologies. As it is envisioned that AIRN may hold its own agricultural fairs when it becomes an independent entity, the members also observed and discussed the mechanics of fair organization.

Study Tour to ACI Formulation Plant and BSA

In April 2015, AIP organized a domestic study tour for 15 participants 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 informative as they learned about the agrochemical supply chain and quality control systems as well as wholesale seed market transactions.

Thailand Study Course

In May 2015, AIP organized a tailor-made study course for AIRN retailers through the National Agricultural Extension Training Center of Kasetsart University, Thailand. From the course, a total of 12 participants received first-hand knowledge on various agro-inputs businesses in Thailand and had the opportunity to exchange experiences while interacting with a number of private companies and government institutions.

Through visits and discussions, participant AIRN retailers have become more aware of the use of personal protection equipment for handling agro-chemical products. In addition, they are better motivated to promote quality issues in dealing with farmer customers.

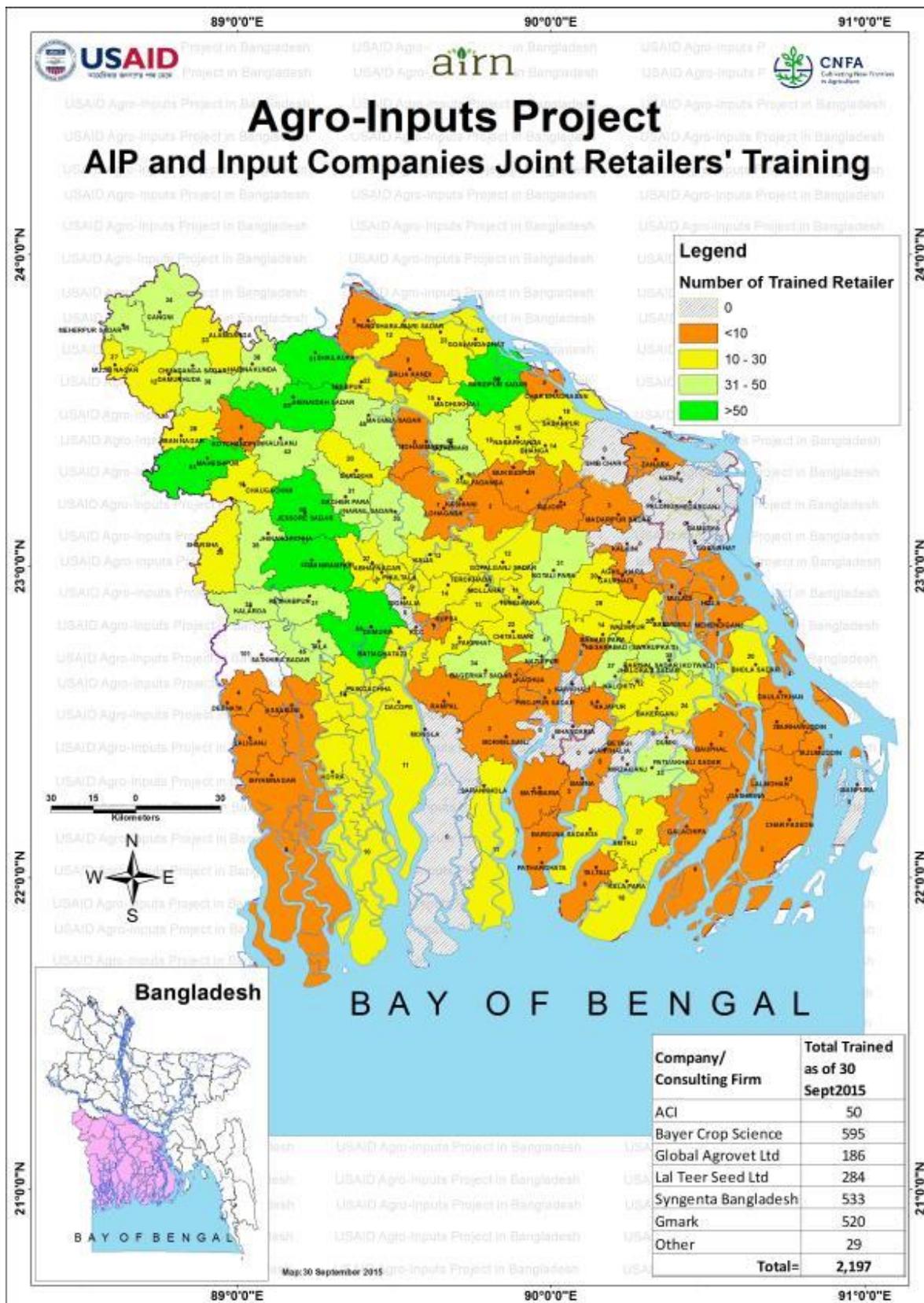


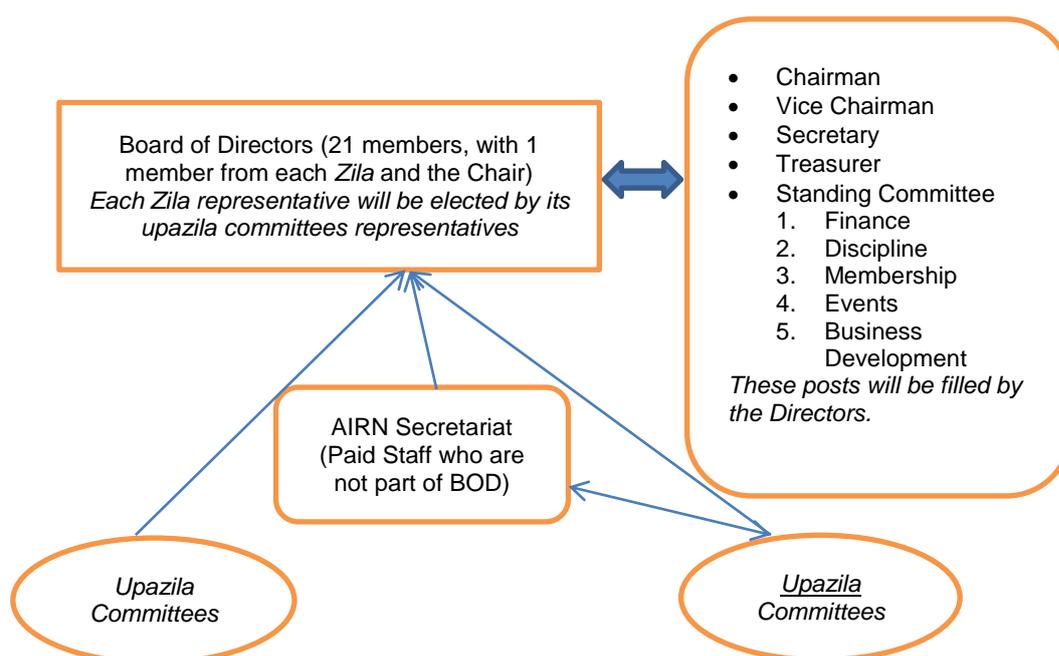
Figure: 1 Retailers' training map

Task 1.2 Develop Governance, Membership Structure, and Training and Services Strategy for AIRN

1.2.1 Identify Flexible Governance

In close consultation with the temporary AIRN Advisory Board, AIP has primarily identified the governance structure for AIRN in its initial years. As per the existing plan, the “National AIRN” will work as the Secretariat for the network, with 90 *upazila* chapters represented by 20 district representatives, who will be nominated and elected by the *upazila* committees. It is planned that the interim Advisory Board, which now consists of 7 members, will be joined by 3 female retailers, bringing the number to 10 members by the end of Y4.

Figure 2: Tentative AIRN governance structure



Meanwhile, the project will focus on developing capacity of the board members to run AIRN effectively.

1.2.2 Define Membership Structure

The membership structure of AIRN has been re-defined based on consultation with the AIRN Advisory Board members, as follows:

Type of Retailer:	Provisional Members	Associate Members:	Accredited Members:
Pre-requisite Criteria:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interested to join AIRN - Women-entrepreneurs only - Interested in AIP matching grant program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - GOB license holder - Physical shop in place (rent/own) - Expressed interest to join AIRN at the membership drive event or to the ad-hoc committee and willing to pay the membership fee - Committed to not selling food from the same shop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Passed the basic training - Signed the “code of conduct” - Agreed to maintain logbook properly

1.2.3 Build Additional Services

AIP identified a number of potential member services in coordination with the AIRN Advisory Board and in consultation with members during regional consultative workshops in Y3Q4. Illustrative services include intensive training on business management, group procurement, and facilitating access to financial institutions.

As an additional service, AIP has operated the AIRN Call Center since March 2014 in Khulna for reporting problems in purchased agro-inputs. The objectives of the Call Center were advertised to retailers and farmers through stickers, posters, leaflets and other communications materials; AIP received 377 calls from April-October and continues to market the service to farmers and retailers. AIP responds to patterns of poor quality products through detailed analysis and communicating identified issues with the respective companies.

Task 1.3 Promote AIRN among Agro-Inputs Dealers in the FTF Zone

1.3.1 Increase AIRN Membership among Agro-Retailers

During the reporting year, a total of 1,786 new members joined AIRN despite challenges in organizing membership drives due to the unstable political situation in the first three months of 2015. In total, 2,568 retailers from 80 *upazilas* in 19 districts are now members of AIRN. Among them, 1,504 retailers are Accredited members while others are in process to be awarded accredited membership status once they complete the required basic trainings on agri-business management, business ethics, and safe and judicious use of pesticides.

Table 3: AIRN Working Districts

Division	Name of Districts	Name of <i>Upazilas</i>
Barisal 06 Districts 20 <i>Upazilas</i>	Barisal	Agailjhara, Babuganj, Bakerganj, Barisal <i>sadar</i> , Banaripara, Gournadi, Wazirpur, Hijla, Muladi, Mehendiganj
	Barguna	Amtali, Barguna <i>sadar</i>
	Bhola	Bhola <i>sadar</i> , Doulatkhan, Charfassion
	Jhalokati,	Jhalokati <i>sadar</i> Nalchiti, Rajapur
	Patuakhali	Dashmina, Kalapara, Patuakhali <i>sadar</i>
	Pirojpur	Najirpur, Nesarsabad, Pirojpur <i>sadar</i>
Dhaka 04 Districts 15 <i>Upazilas</i>	Faridpur	Alfadanga, Boalmari, Bhanga, Faridpur <i>Sadar</i> , Madhukhali, Nagarkanda, Sadarpur, Saltha
	Gopalganj	Gopalganj <i>sadar</i> , Kashiani, Kotalipara, Tungipara.
	Madaripur	Kalkini, Madaraipur <i>sadar</i>
	Rajbari	Rajbari <i>sadar</i>
Khulna 09 Districts 41 <i>Upazilas</i>	Bagherhat	Bagherhat <i>sadar</i> , Chitolmari, Fakirhat, Kachua, Mollahat,
	Chuadanga	Alamdanga, Chuadanga <i>sadar</i> , Jibonnagar
	Jessore	Abhaynagar, Bagherpara, Chaugachha, Jessore <i>sadar</i> , Jhikargacha, Keshobpur, Manirampur, Sharsha
	Jhenaidah	Horinakundo, Jhenaidah <i>sadar</i> , Kotchadpur, Kaliganj, Maheshpur, Sailkupa
	Khulna	Batiaghata, Dacope, Dighalia, Dumuria, Phultala, Paikgachha, Rupsha, Terakhada
	Meherpur	Gangni, Meherpur <i>sadar</i> , Mujibnagar
	Magura	Magura <i>sadar</i> , Sreepur, Shalikha,
	Narail	Kalia, Narail <i>sadar</i>
Satkhira	Kolaroa, Satkhira <i>sadar</i> , Tala	

Table 4: AIRN membership status by division

Division	Total districts	Total <i>Upazilas</i>	Associate Members	Accredited Members	Total Members
Khulna	09	41	581	1,039	1,620
Barisal	06	24	238	281	519
Dhaka	04	15	245	184	429
Total	19	80	1,064	1,504	2,568

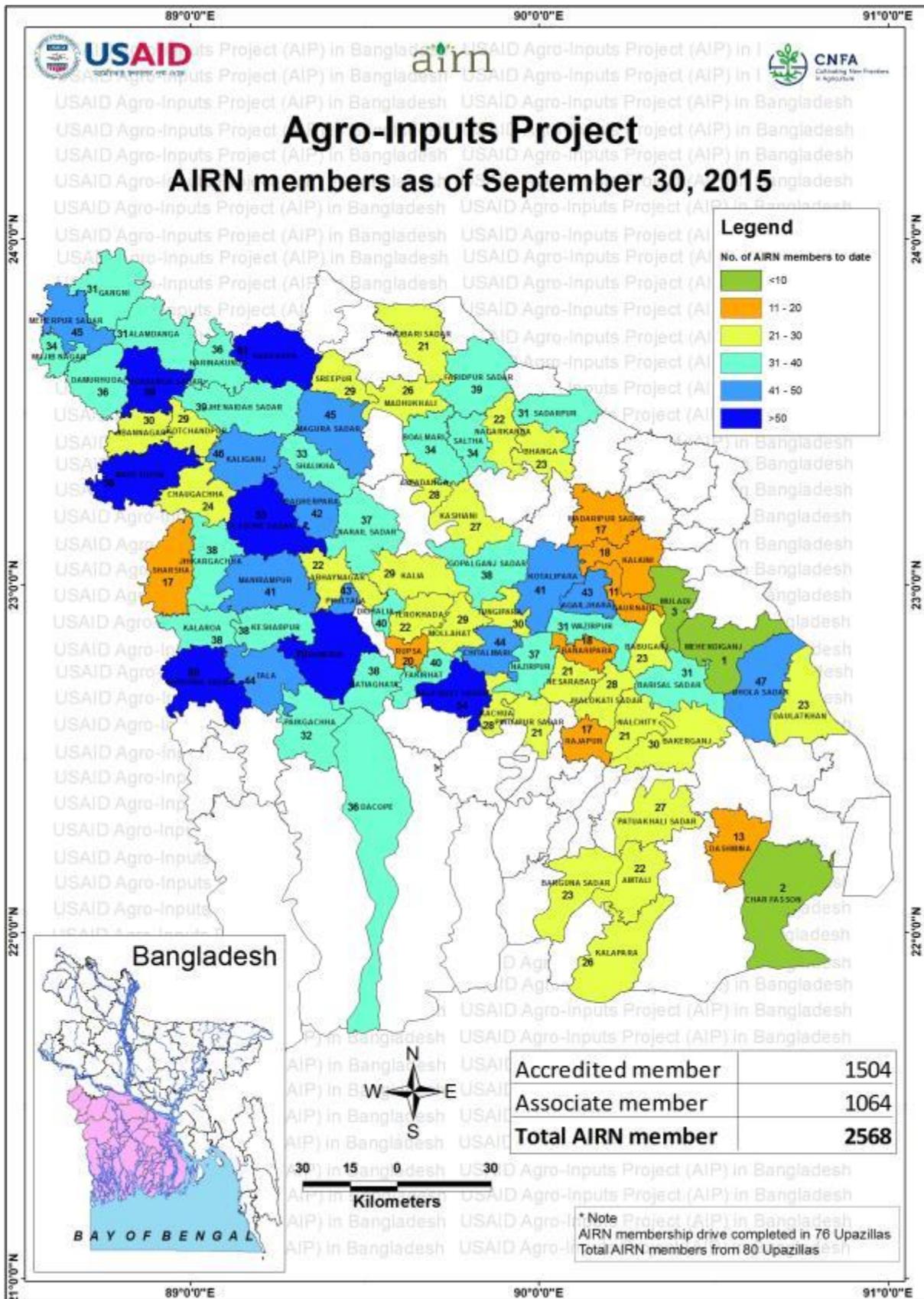


Figure 3: AIRN membership across FTF Zone

Summary of Intervention 1 Planned Activities for Y4

AIP will organize training for more than 2,500 retailers in Y4, to be conducted by GMark Consulting Ltd., Syngenta, Getco Agro Vision Ltd, ACI Ltd., Global Agrovvet Ltd. and Lal Teer Seed Ltd. on agri-business management and safe and judicious use of pesticides. In addition, an advanced technical training on crop production technology and agronomic/horticultural practices will be held for AIRN POs in Y4Q1.

Through an MOU with AIP, Syngenta will provide training to 100 government doctors in the southern districts for proper diagnosis and treatment of people exposed to CPP.

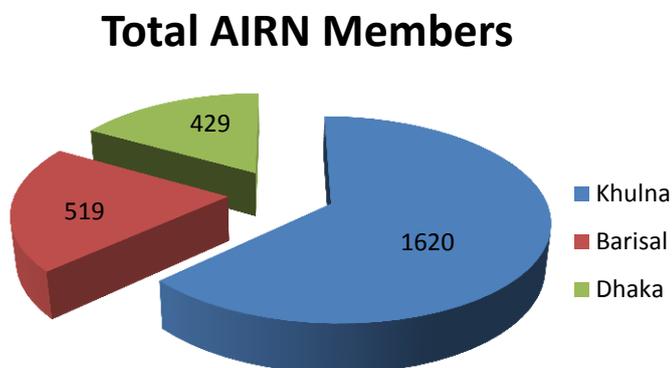


Figure 4: AIRN membership status by division

AIP will organize three domestic study tours for select AIRN retailers in December 2015, May 2016, and August 2016, respectively.

In Y4, AIP will recruit a total of 600-800 retailers to the AIRN as Associate members, while approximately 1,800 Associate members are targeted to achieve Accredited membership status after completing basic trainings (numbers account for attrition). AIRN will hold outreach events in each district to give the retailers a better understanding of what to expect from AIRN, how to avail its services, and how to contribute to AIRN's growth and sustainability.

AIP will continue its AIRN Call Center services in Y4 to promote the sale and use of quality agro-inputs.

Intervention 2: Improve Effectiveness of Agricultural Inputs Market Information Systems

Task 2.1 Develop GIS for Agricultural Input Supply and Demand

2.1.1 Develop Input-Specific MIS Tool

The most significant activity under this task was the development of a GIS-MIS web-based user interface. The interface displays data collected from the field overlaid with base layers (such as roads and crop patterns) and will support critical analysis and decision making about the agro-inputs market for various audiences. For example, on the web-based interface, USAID can observe AIP work at a glance, while FTF partners can identify opportunities for information sharing, such as AIN and AESA's use of maps to link their farmer producer groups to quality inputs through AIRN retailers. A map consisting of data on government registered agro-input companies, wholesalers, and retailers in the FTF zone was developed during the reporting year and will be distributed as a directory to AIRN members in Y4 (see section 2.2.1).

Task 2.2 Improve Dissemination of Input Supply Information

2.2.1 Create and Distribute Directory of Input Supply Companies and Wholesalers

In order to make input supply information better available to AIRN retailers, AIP is creating an input supply directory based on survey information provided by a third party contractor. AIP has cross-checked the content of the AIRN supplier directory (contact information of input supply companies and wholesalers) to confirm accuracy and authenticity of data at the field level. The project has confirmed 64% accuracy of data while additional checks are ongoing, to be completed by late October 2015. To develop the directory for print version, a preliminary layout was created.

Task 2.3 Improve Agro-Inputs Monthly Price Information

2.3.1 Create and Distribute Agro-Inputs Monthly Price Outlook Bulletin (MPOB)

This year, a total of 12 issues of the MPOB, a monthly publication of AIP, were distributed to AIRN members. Bulletins included information on agro-inputs and have assisted AIRN members in developing new supply linkages in the FTF zone. Many retailers refer to the MPOB to purchase products at a better price.

AIP has updated the list of major and most prominently traded agro-inputs (and associated suppliers) in the MPOB through a study across the FTF zone in Y3. As a result, a number of new products have been included as of the August 2015 edition.

Price information: A tool with benefits

Md. Mahmud Khandakar, a member of the Agro-Inputs Retailers Network (AIRN) in southern Bangladesh, has been selling agro-inputs for 18 years in Kotalipara *upazila*, Gopalganj. Mahmud never thought about joining any network to improve his business until he heard about AIRN in September 2014 while attending an AIRN membership meeting. There he heard and identified with AIRN's motto "promote quality inputs to improve your business."



Mahmud reads the MPOB.

Information and knowledge about quality inputs from AIRN have been useful tools to Mahmud, who has applied his learning to ensure quality inputs in his shop. His reliability and commitment to quality products has increased his popularity among farmer customers. Like the other more than 1500 Accredited AIRN members, he receives the Monthly Price Outlook Bulletin (MPOB) containing price information of highly traded agro-inputs. For Mahmud, the MPOB is a vital tool towards making a profit, as he is better aware of recent wholesale prices in his region.

"I was aware of farmers who were commercially producing mangoes that had been suffering from a fungus. I learned about an appropriate fungicide from the MPOB bulletin and immediately started collecting information about it from companies and agricultural extension officers," Mahmud described. "After confirming that it was the appropriate formulation, I bought 240 bottles of that fungicide and sold all of it to farmers, who found it very useful when applying at the pre-fruit bearing stage."

Like Mahmud, many AIRN members have commented that the MPOB is helpful for them, as well as for farmers, in comparing prices and learning about new products.

Task 2.4 Increase Awareness and Demand for Quality Inputs

2.4.1 Conduct Collaborative Demos and Field Days

During the reporting period, AIP established 156 demo plots to demonstrate improved varieties of rice, chili, mung bean and brinjal. Private companies ACI, Lal Teer and Syngenta, as well as AESA collaborated with AIP to organize these plots.

To demonstrate the results of the plots, AIP organized 369 farmers' field days (FFDs) with participation of 11,634 farmers, including 1,631 female farmers.

For example, AESA demonstrated "BARI-6" variety of mung bean in Barisal and Patuakhali with improved agricultural practices for seed sowing (in line), fertilizer (dose, time, method), irrigation, weeding (twice) and harvesting. The yield was about double in comparison with farmers experience. For example, one demo farmer named Abdur Rashid Mridha in Patuakhali district yielded 150 kilograms of mung bean compared to his previous experience of 60 kilograms.

Unfortunately, demo plots of chili "Demen F1" variety established at Keshobpur *upazila* of Jessore district showed very poor results in terms of germination compounded by leaf curl and mosaic disease attack.

Demonstrations of brinjal are described in Annex 1.

Table: 5 Number of demos and field days in Y3

Company name	No. of Demos	No. of Field Days
Syngenta	96	257
ACI	13	13
Lal Teer	28	80
Ag Ext Support Activity	19	19
Total:	156	369

Summary of Intervention 2 Key Activities for Y4

After migrating the GIS-MIS platform to online storage, AIP will link a basic Graphical User Interface (GUI) to the project website, showing base layer and basic information on AIRN member retailers, product trends and crops. Analytical maps will be found under a separate tab with map descriptions. These modifications to the interface will be completed by the end of Y4Q2. For this purpose, a brief and detailed user guide/manual on operational functions and security of the cloud will be developed for interested stakeholders. In addition, AIP will upload surveyed base layer information on government registered companies, wholesalers and retailers who sell agro-inputs in the FTF zone.

In Y4, AIP will print 12 monthly issues of MPOB and continue its dissemination among stakeholders. Also, the content of MPOB will be updated after conducting a study across the FTF zone on major and most prominently traded agro-inputs and associated companies.

Intervention 3: Enhance Knowledge and Application of Quality Standards

Task 3.1 Enhance Stakeholders' Knowledge on Industry Quality Standards

3.1.1 Promote Quality Inputs through Multi-Media Campaigns

In order to raise widespread awareness of quality agro-inputs in the FTF zone, AIP finalized its “Did you know: quality agro-inputs are around you?” multimedia campaign strategy with a number of new outreach activities such as SMS via cellphone, PSAs, billboards, leaflets, and posters. Materials will illustrate how to recognize quality inputs, according to GoB statues and conventional wisdom, and where to source them. To develop campaign materials, the project contracted with two local communications and media firms. The roll-out of communications activities will begin in Y4Q1.

To promote the campaign at the field level through state-owned, union-level information centers, mobile video projection, TV, and radio stations, AIP signed a MOU with the AIS, a mass communication wing of the MoA. The project will also develop a number of publications and communications materials jointly with AIS.

Aligning with the campaign’s intent to increase the knowledge of and demand for quality inputs, the project disseminated 120,000 posters, stickers and leaflets to retailers to promote the AIRN Call Center, which reports problems with purchased agro-inputs (see section 1.2.3). In addition, a booklet on CPPs and their safe use was published and disseminated to relevant stakeholders, while another two booklets on seed and fertilizer are in the printing process.

3.1.2 Reach Agro-Retailers and Farmers via Development and Distribution of Publications on Quality Standards

Newsletter

AIP published and disseminated two issues of the bilingual AIRN newsletter (October – December 2014; January-June 2015 “super edition”) among its stakeholders which highlight positive changes and experiences of retailers after joining AIRN, successes of women grantees and AIRN networks, and the AIRN Call Center.

Website and Facebook

AIP continues to disseminate project information online through the AIP website and Facebook page to promote success stories, photos, information on AIRN, and retailer membership maps. Since its inception in May 2015, the project Facebook page has reached a wide audience and received approximately 4,500 hits within five months.

Photo competition

To develop a systematic project photo documentation system with contribution from field-level POs, AIP arranged two monthly photo contests during the reporting period. These photos portray project activities and best practices and are regularly updated to show project accomplishments on Facebook, the AIP website, and other printed project materials.

Task 3.2 Better Quality Adherence among Private Sector Agro-Input Companies

3.2.1 Improve Supply-Side Quality through Certification and Traceability

International Certification Assistance (ICA)

To ensure better quality adherence in the inputs sector, AIP is in the process of assisting agro-input companies and associations in obtaining and implementing International Organization for Standardization (ISO) certification.

This year, AIP completed Phase I of the initial ICA program by assessing the current status of 5 agro-input companies (Syngenta, Lal Teer Seeds, ACI, Global Agrovot and NAAFCO) and two 2 associations (BFA and BCPA) and identifying necessary areas of assistance. Based on outcomes of the first phase, AIP will develop a second phase 3 companies and 1 association to assist them in preparation to obtain and/or implement international certification.

Traceability

A standard inputs traceability system aims to assure farmers of the authenticity of purchased agro-inputs by identifying counterfeiting product. To support traceability of inputs in the FTF zone, AIP began discussions with partner companies Lal Teer Seed Ltd and Syngenta Bangladesh Ltd have which have shown positive interest in this program. Accordingly, AIP has organized a tri-partite meeting between Syngenta, AIP, and WinMiaki (a local technology solutions company) to identify areas of cooperation and mutual activities on traceability.

Task 3.3 Promote Knowledge of Quality Standards through Agricultural Exhibitions

3.3.1 Conduct AIRN Agro-Tech Fairs

In line with the multimedia communications campaign theme “Did you know: quality agro-inputs are around you?” AIP is rolling out its second AIRN Agro-Tech Fair, which will take place during Y4. An event management vendor is assisting AIP in organizing the fair.

Meanwhile, AIP has produced a promotional brochure and started communications with companies and other potential participants.

Advertisement for Fair promotion has been published in three national newspapers and one international agriculture journal in India. The project has also identified guest speakers for seminars and the article writers for the printed souvenir (memento) to promote quality input issues and present the latest technologies.

Task 3.4 Analyze Agricultural Inputs Policy and Regulatory Constraints

3.4.1 Analyze Standards and Policy Implementation

Seed Health Standards

Realizing the importance of quality seed, the MoA formed a committee to review and fix seed health standards of four notified crops. In Y3, AIP, as a member of this committee, extended technical and logistical support in developing disease infestation parameters for rice, wheat, and jute, which are in their final stages. The project plans to assist in obtaining final approval for all notified crops, including potato, in Y4.

Policy and Regulatory Constraints

In Y3, AIP analyzed the Government of Bangladesh’s (GoB) National Seed Policy and held a series of meetings with BSA to collect input for the MoA’s Seed Policy Reform Initiative as a

representative of the private seed sector. As a member of Seed Regulatory Reform Committee, the project is reviewing seed policy acts and regulations, making recommendations on required amendments, which are designed to encourage and support private sector seed enterprises to produce hybrid seeds; establish farmers' rights; introduce DNA fingerprinting in quality maintenance; and empower the Seed Certification Agency to better regulate quality of seed.

3.4.2 Develop Quality Standards

See 3.4.1: Seed Health Standards.

Summary of Intervention 3 Key Activities for Y4

AIP will implement its multimedia campaign to promote knowledge of quality inputs among farmers and retailers via creation and airing of 3 PSAs; printing and distribution of 4 posters and 2 leaflets; installation of 7 billboards; and dissemination of more than quarter a million SMS to farmers and input retailers. In addition, AIP will promote its AIRN Call Center in various promotional materials and arrange quiz competitions for the retailers in the MPOB as well as during FFDs to increase information to retailers and farmers on quality inputs.

The project will support agro-input companies and associations in preparation for international certification under the ICA program. AIP will also assist agro-input companies to develop a standard traceability system that can assist agro-input suppliers and farmers in avoiding counterfeit products.

Intervention 4: Strengthening Local Organizations' Institutional Capacity

Task 4.1 Assess Organizational Capacity of Selected Local Organizations

4.1.1 Conduct Organizational Capacity Assessments (OCA)

This intervention is designed to build the capacity of local organizations to increase capacity and compliance with USAID award eligibility requirements. Capacity building support was provided to industry association partners - BSA, BFA, BCPA – via an Organizational Capacity Assessment (OCA). In Y2, AIP initiated the process of assessments of the three business associations through a contract with a local service provider. In Y3, CBSG completed the OCA of 3 business associations; as per the Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool (OCAT) score, BFA ranked the highest, followed by BCPA, while BSA stood a distant third. BSA, despite the best efforts, may not reach a stage where they can meet USAID award eligibility requirements. However, steps have been agreed upon to gradually improve their organizational capacity.

Task 4.2 Design and Implement Capacity Building Program for Selected Local Organizations

4.2.1 Design and Implement Organizational Capacity Development (OCD) and Improved Membership Services for Business Associations and AIRN

Based on the results of the OCA, detailed capacity development of the 3 associations was planned, which will continue through the end of Y4. While BSA requested to postpone the OCD until November 2015, kick-off meetings were held for BFA and BCPA in July 2015 to initiate and explain the year-long process. A two-day workshop was also held in August 2015 on USAID rules and regulations with active participation from both associations.

Summary of Intervention 4 Key Activities for Y4

OCD for two associations, BFA and BCPA, will continue in Y4. In addition, a customized plan will be developed for BSA to be completed in Y4 once it agrees to come on board.

Cross-Cutting Themes

Gender

In Y3, AIP focused on identifying potential women retailers to join AIRN. To improve gender equality and leadership development, the project implemented the following :

- AIRN Advisory Board incorporated three women as advisory committee members from Barisal, Khulna and Jessore;
- AIP assessed baseline information of 12 women retailers following USAID's Women Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) for developing their leadership skills;
- AIP identified 150 male retailers as mentors for developing knowledge and hands on learning experiences for 50 women retailers in networking and problem solving. This mentorship between women and male retailers will work towards reducing gender discrimination in the agro-inputs retailing sector;
- AIP facilitated inclusion of women retailers in local bazar committees to increase their capacities in public speaking, problem solving and decision making.

Environment

Session on Safe Use of Pesticides with Demo Farmers

During the reporting year, AIP organized 5 orientation sessions (59 participants) to generate a common understanding of USAID's environmental compliance requirements among AIP staff, staff from partner NGOs (PNGOs), partner company representatives, and FTF project partners. The sessions covered AIP's Pesticide Evaluation Report and Safer Use Action Plan (PERSUAP), safe use of pesticides and personal protective equipment (PPE) and demonstration plot check lists.

Environmental Evaluation of Demo Plots

Through environmental evaluations, the project approved 592 (of 775) plots proposed by Syngenta, ACI, Lal Teer Seeds Ltd., GETCO Agro Vision Ltd. and AESA for demonstration in both summer and winter seasons. Due to a heavy and prolonged rainy season, a significant number of farmers could not establish demonstrations in the selected plots. Finally, to make farmers aware of the results of the demo plots and safe use of pesticides, AIP facilitated 369 FFDs on 156 established demo plots. As a result, a positive trend (30% or more) is found in the application of protective measures by community farmers while mixing, loading and applying chemical pesticides.

Implementation of Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Plan (EMMP)

As per AIP's EMMP, 43 AIRN retail shops were assessed for cleanliness, shelf arrangement as per WHO color codes, regular hand washing after handling of chemicals, and usage of gloves and masks as needed. AIP found a positive and satisfactory trend in these practices. Further, retailers have started counseling client farmers on safe use techniques of pesticides.

Other Issues

Grants

Selection of Women Grantees

For identification and selection of women retailers to participate in AIP's matching grant program, AIP organized a total of 36 public meetings in Khulna, Jessore and Barisal districts with assistance from its three PNGOs: Ashroy Foundation (AF), Association of Voluntary Actions for Society (AVAS), and Banche Shekha (BS). These meetings resulted in more than 400 applications from interested women candidates to operate agro-inputs retail business in their localities. Grant criteria include previous business experience, ownership of management of a shop space, education level, financial ability, and potential customer base. From more than 400 applicants, 332 applications were selected for further review.

As of September 30, 2015, a total 78 grant applications were evaluated by assessing applicants' strengths, weaknesses, family support, financial and physical capability as well as feasibility of business success. 57 of these applications were selected to obtain in-kind matching grants; 16 have been awarded, while 41 are currently under review by USAID. Meanwhile, AIP has supported 9 (of 16) women grantees to complete their grants disbursement process following basic training on proper shop arrangement.

Fostering Community Acceptance

AIP facilitated acceptance of, and commitment to, women retailers by community members, local elites, local government representatives, and private sector representatives during 41 community acceptance sessions.

Assistance in Obtaining Licences

As an embedded support, AIP assisted 86 potential women grantees to receive licenses for seed (36) and pesticides (50) from the MoA and Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE), respectively.

In addition, for improved and more efficient implementation of grants in Y4, AIP's PNGOs recruited an additional nine staff.

Table 6: Grants activities at a glance

#	Activities Performed	Total
1	Public meetings	36
2	Primary applications evaluation (women)	403
3	Client base assessment (women)	248
5	Grants' applications finalization	78
7	Community acceptance meetings	41
9	Grants support for shop organization	14
11	Assistance for obtaining agro-input license (women)	86

Sub-Recipients

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

		Lalmatia, Dhaka 1207 Bangladesh T: +880-181-19245-993 E-mail: cbsg_bd@yahoo.com
GMark Consulting Ltd.	Basic trainings of AIRN member retailers: basic business management and ethics, agronomic use of agro-inputs, safe use of pesticides, and human nutrition	Md. Saifuddin Khaled , 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: info@gmarkbd.com ; Khaled@gmarkbd.com
Innovision Consulting Private Ltd.	Conduct surveys for AIP M&E indicators on 1) Application and Adoption of Quality Standards for Agricultural Inputs and 2) Improved Technologies or Management Practices	Rahid Ahmed , Head of Research Innovision Consulting Private Ltd. Level-6, Block - B, Road - 3, Niketan Gulshan-1 T: +8801911748867 Email: rahid.ahmed@innovision-bd.com
Expressions Ltd.	To promote AIP's quality inputs awareness campaign, by producing TVC/PSAs on quality agro-inputs and disseminating messages on via 500,000 SMS to farmers and retailers.	Tropa Majundar , Head of Creative and Expressions Social House 10A, Rd 25A, Block A, Banani, Dhaka 1213 T: 02-8832728 Email: business@expressionsltd.com
MediaCom Ltd.	To promote AIP's quality inputs awareness campaign, the service provider will provide print materials such as billboards and posters	Ajoy Kundu , Director – Mediacom Ltd Rupayan Centre, 10 th Floor, 72 Mohakhali C/A, Dhaka 1212 Tel: +880-2-9841521-9 Email: mediacom@mediacombd.com
The Nielsen Company (Bangladesh) Ltd.	Conduct survey of agro-inputs companies and wholesalers who channel products and services to the FTF districts and develop a master list of all GoB-registered agro-input retailers within the same geographic areas.	Anam Mahmud , Managing Director House 70, Road 15A (new), Dhanmondi, Dhaka 1209, Bangladesh; Tel: +88 02 9125839

Program Management

In Y3, AIP made staffing replacements and additions to support the grants program, communications program, finance team, and field operations:

Table 8: AIP staffing changes

Name	Title	Date of Joining	Replacement (R) or New (N) Position
Alexis Ellicott	Chief of Party	Nov 12 2014	R
Arpona Rani Ghosh	Communications Director	October 12, 2014	R
Md. Habibul Islam	Finance Officer	October 16, 2014	N
Md. Habibur Rahman	Operations Manager	January 4, 2015	R
Nawmin Islam	AIRN Call Center Officer and Data Processor	January 4, 2015	N
Farhana Alam	Communications Specialist	March 1, 2015	N
Bibi Ayesha	Program Officer	April 1, 2015	R
Arifur Rahman	Office Manager-Khulna	April 1, 2015	R
Zunaed Rabbani	AIRN Capacity Building Director	May 3, 2015	R
Biswajit Kumar Hazra	Grants Officer	October 19, 2014	N
Md. Rajibul Islam	Office Aide	July 1, 2015	R
Masud Rana	Grants Officer	July 22, 2015	N
Dr. Shahidul Islam	Technical Communications Specialist	January 19, 2015	N

In addition, several staff members departed from AIP, including Mark Treacy (Chief of Party; former Capacity Building Advisor) on March 31, 2015; Russell Williams (Senior Capacity Building Advisor) on May 15, 2015; Syed Ashraf Hussain (Office Manager-Khulna) on May 23, 2015; Md. Mamun (Office Aide-Barisal) on June 30, 2015; and Sajeda Yasmin (Gender Specialist) on September 28, 2015. In addition, the key personnel position held by Md. Mehedi Hasan (Agricultural Input Supply Chain Advisor) was replaced by Mahbub Alam (existing project staff) as of August 10, 2015.

Key Constraints

Out of 68 working days in Y3Q2 quarter (2 holidays), a total of 60 days (88%) were marred by general strikes (*hartals*) and blockades (*oborodhs*). These political disturbances severely disrupted road traffic and movement by rail and waterways in and outside of Dhaka, thus curtailing project activities.

Summary of Cross-Cutting/Other Key Activities for Y4

Grants

A total of 163 public meetings will be held to receive more than 1,500 primary grant applications. Among them, AIP plans to short list 780 applicants in order to identify 243 women retailers as grantees. To develop leadership and business management skills, the project will engage 750 AIRN male retailers as mentors for 250 AIRN women retailers. In addition, 6 batches of learning visits will be organized for women retailers. The project will complete the entire grant disbursement process during Y4.

Environment

AIP will monitor and ensure environmental compliance during the second AIRN Agro-Tech Fair and other activities in compliance with AIP's EMMP. A total of 200 demonstration plots will be evaluated following USAID environmental compliance requirements, and 120 retailers' shops (including grantees) will be monitored according to the EMMP checklist.

Annex 1: Monitoring and Evaluation

AIP revised its M&E Plan (for the second time) and submitted to USAID/Bangladesh for approval in July 2015. The proposed number of indicators in the revised M&E Plan is reduced from 13 to 11 (including one process and two cross cutting indicators). They include three FTF indicators to facilitate USAID/Bangladesh's annual reporting, and eight custom and cross cutting indicators were established by USAID/Bangladesh as part of its Development Objective (DO) 2 PMP.

This revision will ensure proper reporting of the progress of AIP interventions in line with its recent program modification and changed definition of direct beneficiaries. Through a consultative process with USAID/Bangladesh and the Accelerating Capacity for Monitoring and Evaluation (ACME) project, AIP finalized these changes.

In June 2015, USAID/Bangladesh and ACME project jointly conducted a Data Quality Assessment (DQA) for AIP to assess the strengths and weaknesses of reported data and overall data management following the five data quality standards (validity, reliability, integrity, precision, timeliness). AIP is expecting a report on the outcome of the DQA; however, based on the initial comments of the team, AIP has taken the following steps:

- a) Revised the logbook maintained by AIRN retailers by adding more information in order to ensure proper recording of input sales and farmers' information;
- b) Updated the data collection manual, and;
- c) Strengthened existing ways to reduce double counting of indirect beneficiaries (farmers).

In the last quarter of Y3, AIP introduced a new data collection method through an online file sharing platform (Dropbox), backed by GIS, to collect timely and accurate data from the field.

As the approval on the revised M&E Plan is pending, AIP is still reporting on its previous set of indicators. In this Annex, 11 indicators (including indicators 8 and 9 in which AIP has proposed to drop) are described in detailed for this reporting period.

As of the end of Y3, AIP has made the following progress against its indicators:

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

AIP set a target to induct and certify 3,000 agro-inputs retailers over the life of the project who sell quality agricultural inputs in the 20 FTF districts. This indicator directly collects the sales amount from the Accredited retailers' sales registers (logbook), where the retailers record client-wise 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 become particularly busy during the peak cropping season but have to record each transaction in the logbooks provided by the project. As the project continues, however, AIP is making progress to improve retailers' records, particularly in the last quarter of Y3 by making some operational improvements such as rewarding high performing AIRN POs that reach out and motivate the retailers to record sales. As a result, the sales records have increased significantly in the last quarter of Y3 compared to prior quarters.

Table 1: Total sales of quality inputs by AIRN Accredited retailers

Indicator	Target (\$)	Achieved in Y3Q4 (\$)	Achieved in Y3	Achievement (Cumulative) (\$)	Cumulative Sales (\$) by sex
Sales of quality inputs	100 million	6,504,518	13,188,447	14,187,703	Male retailer- 14,054,699 Female retailer – 133,004
Sales of quality inputs per retailer	33,333	4,325	11,158	9,433	Male retailer – 9,458 Female retailer – 7,409

To date, AIP has achieved 14.2% of the total target (\$100m). This level of achievement is still low when compared to the target, as AIP approaches its fourth implementing year. However, achievements are satisfactory when one notes that AIP only began reporting on this indicator in Y2Q3, beginning with sales data from only five Accredited retailers. In a period of 15 months, the number has gradually grown to reach 1,504 retailers by the end of Y3.

Per retailer sales volume is relatively good (\$9,433 against the target \$33,333), when the length of Accredited status per retailer is considered (see Table 2). As mentioned earlier, due to a few operational decisions, the sales volume saw a significant increase in the last reporting quarter. 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.

Table 2: No. of AIRN Accredited retailers (by joining date)

Year	Quarter	No. of Accredited retailers			Sales generated		
		Male	Female	Total	Sales (\$) by quarter	Cumulative sales (\$)	% of total target (\$ 1m)
Year 2	Quarter 2	5	-	5	13,604	13,604	0.01
	Quarter 3	138	-	138	90,545	104,149	0.10
	Quarter 4	177	2	179	904,311	1,008,460	1.01
Year 3	Quarter 1	327	1	328	1,583,946	2,592,406	2.59
	Quarter 2	178	2	180	3,002,678	5,595,084	5.60
	Quarter 3	294	1	295	2,088,101	7,683,185	7.68
	Quarter 4	367	12	379	6,504,518	14,187,703	14.19
Total		1,486	18	1,504	14,187,703		

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 Accredited retailers. Measuring the indicator requires counting the unique number of farmers, irrespective of number of purchases.

As of September 2015, 1,504 Accredited retailers covered 31.6% of the total target famers. The critical aspect of measuring this indicator is to separate the farmers as “new” and “old” farmers¹ by the respective retailers. Apart from retailers’ efforts to make the distinction, AIP has made an effort to avoid the double counting of farmers via a database storing the farmers’ cell phone numbers as a “matching variable” by each retailer and across retailers. This way of avoiding double counting was found to be complicated, as cell phone usage patterns in rural areas are different than in urban Bangladesh; many farmers reported that they do not use a

¹ In the case where a farmer purchases more than once from an Accredited 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.

particular cell phone number, rather, a number is being used by other family members alternately. To address the problem, AIP will use composite variables (farmer name, father's name, village, etc.) to ensure that data points match.

Table 3: No. of AIRN farmer customers (as of 30 September, 2015)

Target – No. of farmers over LOP	Target – No. of farmers per retailer over LOP	Achievement - No. of farmers in Y3Q4	Achievement - No. of farmers, as of Y3	Achievement - No. of farmers (cumulative)	Achievement - No. of farmers per retailer, as of Y3
1,000,000	333	95,024	277,538	315,995	210

In terms of farmers per retailer, it is currently 210 with a LOP 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 provisioned two main 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 and pass AIRN's business management and technical training. This process indicator counts both types of retailers.

Table 4: Number of agro-input retailers in the network

Division	Target	Achievement in Y3Q4	Achievement in Y3	Achievement (Cumulative)
Barisal	3,000	97	335	520
Dhaka		62	330	428
Khulna		251	1,121	1,620
Total	3,000	410	1,786	2,568

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 organized jointly with agro-input companies. This calculation was rescheduled from Y2 to Y3, as the companies faced technical difficulties to organize the stipulated number of demo plots. AIP conducted the first calculation in August-September 2015 to report the progress in the annual progress report and via the FTFMS.

The sample size for this calculation was 50 (demonstration plots); for this sampling purpose a list of more than a hundred demo plots were identified. Later, a significant number of the demo plots were abandoned by the farmers due to prolonged rainy season and by companies as they could not supply the principal inputs to the demo farmers in a timely fashion. To meet the reporting requirement, AIP carried out the calculation with available demo plots (29), though findings with this sample size were not statistically reliable.

The reported GM of brinjal per hectare found as \$7,285. It should be noted that AIP proposed to drop this indicator in its recent M&E Plan revisions.

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 and passing Business Management Training (BMT). 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. In Y3, AIP introduced advanced training courses for AIRN retailers to further strengthen their skill on select technical aspects and business management.

Table 5: Number of MSMEs, received training by division

Division	Target	Achievement in Y3Q4	Achievement in Y3	Achievement (Cumulative)
A. Business Management Training				
Barisal	3,000	51	137	431
Dhaka		-	96	331
Khulna		12	494	1,441
Total	3,000	63	727	2,203
B. Advanced Training (for retailers)				
Barisal		19	19	19
Dhaka		39	39	39
Khulna		96	96	96
Total		154	154	154
Grand Total		217	881	2,357

By the end of Y3, AIP almost reached the target set forth in AIP's Y3 Implementation Plan, with a cumulative achievement of 2,357 training recipients (target 2,559). In Y3, a total of 881 retailers attended training courses, most of which were jointly organized with input companies. Of these 881, the unique number of retailers was 756, meaning 125 retailers attended more than one training course.

Capitalizing on the experience of conducting training courses since the project start, AIP is now concentrating on the quality of training content (such as better facilitation, new technical materials and other effective training tools). For advanced training, AIP is selecting new topics by assessing the growing demand of quality aspects of inputs and farming techniques, so that the retailers can provide better embedded services to their client farmers.

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 facilitation. This custom indicator also measures the smallholder farmers served by AIRN retailers to see the level of application and adoption of the same learned through interaction with AIRN retailers.

To determine the attribution to AIP, this measurement includes control experimentation, which includes 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 measured the progress by designing a

proxy indicator (survey document) which is closely related to the government standard documents as its measure of this indicator (survey was conducted by a third party). AIP will repeat the study in Y5 as a follow up to compare the progress over the period.

For this study, representative samples were drawn from both “program” and “control” groups for retailers and smallholder farmers. The population size of program retailers was 650 (those enrolled as AIRN Accredited retailers before January 1, 2015) and smallholder farmers was 30,000 (those listed as clients before October 1, 2014), while appropriate sampling techniques were followed to select samples from control groups (retailers and smallholder farmers).

Table 6: Application of quality standards by retailers and smallholder farmers

#	Issues	Program	Control
A. Retailers			
1.	Ability to recognize the attributes of different seed varieties	81%	65%
2.	Ability to identify tag color of seed categories:		
	Breeder seed	12.1%	7.3%
	Foundation seed	76.7%	73.2%
	Certified seed	67.2%	61.0%
	Truthfully labeled seed	75.0%	75.6%
3.	Ability to recognize quality seed:		
	By germination test	94.1%	88.3%
	Examining packet (air tight/flawless packet)	35.3%	33.8%
	Verifying packaging date	49.2%	41.6%
4.	Selling open/loose seed	19.7%	13.9%
5.	Ability to recognize the adulterated fertilizers	94.1%	92.0%
6.	Ability to recognize the quality of pesticides by:		
	Through the labels on the packet/bottle	63.8%	59.5%
	Through concentration of active ingredients provided on the labels	34.1	34.5
	Origin of the pesticide	12.9	8.6
	Marketing company/brand name	72.8%	77.6%
	Date of expiry	10.8%	10.3%
7.	Storing pesticides at shops:		
	In closed cupboards under key and lock	14.2%	16.2%
	Maintaining WHO color codes	59.7%	47.9%
B. Smallholder farmers			
1.	Conducting germination test for seed	19%	13%
2.	Seed priming before sowing	83%	77%
3.	Application of balanced fertilizer	86%	82%
4.	Application of micronutrient	75%	59%
5.	Applying prescribed fertilizer dose	75%	71%
6.	Application of recommended method of mixing pesticide	6%	5%
7.	Cleaning sprayer after use: in a safe place away from the locality and ponds/rivers	12%	14%
8.	Keeps pesticide away from children under key and lock	18%	19%
9.	Use of expired pesticides	12%	11%
10.	Habits of reading instruction contained in the pesticide container	75%	61%

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

This indicator counts the number of AIRN Accredited retailers who 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 and pass AIRN’s business and technical training.

As of the end of Y3, a total of 1,504 agro-input retailers were enrolled as Accredited retailers; another 1,064 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 Y4 Implementation Plan.

AIP is now at a point to boost the certification process by synthesizing and capitalizing 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 7: No. of retailers who adopted the seal of quality by division

Division	Target	Achievement in Y4Q3	Achievement in Y3	Achievement (Cumulative)
Barisal	3,000	80	202	274
Dhaka		64	151	184
Khulna		235	829	1,046
Total	3,000	379	1,182	1,504

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

AIP proposed to drop this indicator in the revised M&E Plan and is subject to replacement with a newly developed custom indicator titled “Number of Accredited retailers declared as champion retailers”.

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 (custom indicator)

This is a custom indicator adapted from 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. To date, AIP has concentrated its effort on seed policy issues designed to encourage and support private sector seed enterprises to produce hybrid seeds, establish farmers’ rights, introduce DNA fingerprinting in quality maintenance and empower the Seed Certification Agency to better regulate quality of seed.

Together with BSA and leading agro-input companies, AIP made significant effort in reviewing all the 11 sections of National Seed Policy 1993 and submitted formal comments to MoA. As part of the process, AIP successfully analyzed the existing policy with sections (Stage 1), and organized a public debate (Stage 2) with relevant agro-input associations, companies, and the IFPRI-implemented Bangladesh Policy Research and Strategy Support Program (BPRSSP).

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/BPRSSP.

In the submitted revised M&E Plan, AIP has proposed to convert this custom indicator into a FTF indicator (# 4.5.1-24) in line with AIP’s extended efforts on this particular policy advocacy initiative.

10. Number of farmers and others who have applied improved technologies or management practices as a result of USG assistance (FTF indicator)

This FTF indicator is intended to measure the total number of smallholder farmers that applied improved technologies or management practices learned through AIRN retailers. These new practices could result from retailer-farmer interactions, including purchase of quality inputs, clientele (embedded) services on the part of the retailer, and attendance at farmers' field days (FFD) around crop demo sites. AIP conducted a study to measure this indicator in Y3 (revised schedule) through a third party consulting firm to incorporate the results 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)

The sample study represented the smallholder farmers (30,000 who were in the AIP database before October 1, 2014) served by the AIRN accredited retailers, thus the findings extrapolated across the number (30,000). The findings of the study are presented in Table 8.

Table 8: Application of improved technologies or management practices by smallholder farmers

#	Technology types or management practices	Value	Remarks
1.	Crop genetics (application of improved/certified seed)	30,000	The reported farmers applied at least one of the improved technologies or mgt. practices mentioned under this type disaggregates.
2.	Cultural practices (application of seedling production & transplantation, cultivation practices)	30,000	As above
3.	Pest management (application of IPM, improved insecticides and pesticides, improved and environmentally sustainable use of insecticides and pesticides)	28,500	As above
4.	Disease management (application of improved fungicide, appropriate application of fungicides)	18,540	As above
5.	Soil-related fertility and conservation (Application of integrated soil fertility management, soil mgt practices, improved fertilizer etc.)	24,300	As above

AIP proposed to drop this indicator in line with the changed perspective of defining direct beneficiaries.

11. Number of individuals who have received USG supported short-term agricultural sector productivity or food security training (FTF indicator)

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 Training of Trainers (ToT), FFDs, day-long workshops, agricultural exhibitions, and study tour/learning visit.

Initially, AIP planned to conduct three FFDs at each demo site; this number was reduced in Y2 to only one. Thus, this will lower the cumulative achievement figures which were revised to 21,333 per the recently submitted revised M&E Plan.

Table 9: Number of individuals who have received USG supported short-term agricultural sector productivity or food security training

Division	Target	Achievement in Y3Q4	Achievement in Y3	Achievement (Cumulative)
Training of Trainer (ToT)	42	24	38	88
Study Tour	125	-	47	97
FFD	50,000	1,726	11,634	15,466
Total	50,167	1,750	11,719	15,651

Summary of M&E Key Activities for Y4

1. Review data collection tools and formats;
2. Revise data collection manuals/guidelines;
3. Develop and conduct qualitative assessment as back up for performance evaluation (final evaluation);
4. Carry out internal DQA;
5. Review M&E plan;
6. Update M&E databases.

Table A: Feed the Future Indicators

#	Name of Indicator	Classifications	Unit of Measure	Disaggregated by		Baseline	Target and Achievement			
							Target Y3	Achievement in Y3Q4	Achievement in Y3	Achievement Cumulative (LOP)
1	Gross Margin per hectare, animal or cage of selected product.	FTF Indicator # 4.5-16, 17, 18 (RiA)	US dollars per hectare	Type	Crop (Brinjal)	0	GM calculation was done in Y3. This will be the BL of subsequent years	7,290	7,290	7,290
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	92	756	2,232
					Small	0		-	-	-
					Medium	0		-	-	-
					Total	0	1,500	92	756	2,232
				MSME Type	Seed	0		-	-	1
					Fertilizer	0		-	-	-
					Agro-Chemical	0		-	-	-
					Mixed Variety	0		92	756	2,231
				Sex	Total	0	1,500	92	756	2,232
					Male	0		75	739	2,213
Female	0		17		17	19				
Total	0	1,500	92		756	2,232				
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		30,000	30,000	30,000
					Continuing	0				
					Total	0	171,500	30,000	30,000	30,000
				Sex	Male	0		29,680	29,680	29,680
					Female	0		320	320	320
					Total	0	171,500	30,000	30,000	30,000
4.	Number of Individuals who have received USG supported short-term agricultural sector productivity or food	FTF Indicators # 4.5.2-7 (RiA) (WOG)	Number	Type of individuals	Producers	0		1,726	11,634	15,466
					People in government	0		-	-	-
					People in private sector	0		20	73	173

#	Name of Indicator	Classifications	Unit of Measure	Disaggregated by	Baseline	Target and Achievement			
						Target Y3	Achievement in Y3Q4	Achievement in Y3	Achievement Cumulative (LOP)
	security training			firms					
				People in civil society	0		4	11	15
				Total	0	22,057	1,750	11,718	15,654
			Sex	Male	0		1,742	10072	13,578
				Female	0		8	1646	2,076
				Total	0	22,057	1,750	11,718	15,654

Table B: Custom and Cross-Cutting Indicators

#	Name of Indicator	Classifications	Unit of Measure	Disaggregated by	Baseline	Target and Achievement				
						Target Y3	Achievement in Y3Q4	Achievement in Y3	Achievement Cumulative (LOP)	
<i>Custom indicators</i>										
1	Total sales of quality inputs by certified retailers annually	Custom	US dollar	Sex of retailers	Male	0		6,437,503	13,077,570	14,054,699
					Female	0		67,015	110,877	133,004
					Total	0	\$20 mil	6,504,518	13,188,447	14,187,703
2.	Number of farmers purchasing from certified retailers	Custom	Number of farmers	Sex of farmers	Male	0		94,129	274,941	313,217
					Female	0		895	2,597	2,778
					Total	0	100,000	95,024	277,538	315,995
3.	Number of Agro-Inputs Retailers in the Network	Custom	Number of retailers	Sex of retailers	Male	0		391	1,756	2,535
					Female	0		19	30	33
					Total	0	2,500	410	1,786	2,568
				Type of retailers	Seed	0		-	1	3
					Fertilizer	0		-	-	-
					CPP	0		-	-	1
					Mixed variety	0		410	1,785	2,564
					Total	0		410	1,786	2,568
4	Number of AIRN retailers with increasing application and adoption of quality standards for agricultural inputs ²	Custom	Number of retailers and farmers	Sex of retailers	Male	0		612	612	612
					Female	0		-	-	-
					Total	0		612	612	612
				Sex of farmers	Male	0		25,525	25,525	25,525
					Female	0		275	275	275
					Total	0		25,800	25,800	25,800
				Type of standards	Seeds	0				
					Fertilizer	0				
CPP	0									

² The study included different parameters of quality standards for both retailers and smallholders, and realistically the findings by parameters varied one to another. Due to space limitation in the reporting format, the highest response value, one each for retailer and farmer, was chosen to report here, while the detailed findings presented in Annex 1 : Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (see the description for indicator # 6). The findings of the sample based study is extrapolated across the “population” framed for the study; population size of retailers is 650, and 30,000 for smallholder farmers (male – 29,680, female – 320)

					Total	0				
5	Number of retailers who adopted seal of quality (new)	Custom	Number of retailers	Sex of retailers	Male	0		367	1,166	1,486
					Female	0		12	16	18
					Total	0	1,400	379	1,182	1,504
				Type of retailers	Seed	0		-	1	3
					Fertilizer	0		-	-	-
					CPP	0		-	-	1
					Mixed variety	0		379	1,181	1,500
				Total	0		379	1,182	1,504	
6.	Number of retailers who adopted seal of quality (on-going) ³	Custom	Number of retailers	Sex of retailers	Male	0				
					Female	0				
					Total	0	TBD			
				Type of retailers	Seed	0				
					Fertilizer	0				
					CPP	0				
					Mixed variety	0				
				Total	0					
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				
				Stage	Total	0	4	0	0	1
					Analyzed	0				1
					Drafted	0				1
					Total	0	4	0	0	1 ⁴
<i>Cross cutting indicators</i>										
8.	Strengthened organizational capacities of related local organizations	Cross cutting (CC)	Percent	None		0				1 ⁵

³ A 3rd party audit of Accredited AIRN Retailers was determined for this particular indicator; this activity is redundant in line with modified program description (PD).

⁴ AIP successfully advanced GoB Seed Policy to Stage 3: formal submission to GoB of a revised Seed Policy, containing 11 sections

⁵ 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

9. Collaborative initiatives increased										
9.	Collaborative initiatives increased	CC	No. of event	Partner	Category					
					FTF Implementers			1	4	4 ⁶
					Input Association					4 ⁷
					Input Private Companies			2	10	11 ⁸
					Government					5
					Total			3	14	24

⁶ Organized demonstration plot and training

⁷ 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.

⁸ Jointly organized demonstration plots with input companies.