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USAID/INDIA SOUTH ASIA AGTECH HUB FOR INNOVATION (SAATHI) PROJECT MID-TERM PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

FINAL REPORT

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ACRONYMS

AIP	Agricultural Innovation Partnership
APPL	Aqua Agri Pvt. Ltd.
APS	Annual Program Statement
B2B	Business to Business
BAA	Broad Agency Announcement
BDS	Business Development Services
BFS	Bureau of Food Security
BTD	Bangladeshi Taka
CDCS	Country Development and Coordination Strategy
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CLA	Collaborating, Learning and Adapting
CLAIM	Collaborating, Learning and Adapting in India Mechanism
CLIN	Contract line item number
COVID	corona, 'V' for 'virus,' and 'D' for disease
DFI	Development Finance Institution
DO	Development Objective
EG	Economic Growth
EQ	Evaluation Question
ETPL	Eruvaka Technologies Pvt. Ltd.
FTF	Feed the Future
FSO	Food Security Office
GCI	Grameen Capital India
GOB	Government of Bangladesh

GOI	Government of India
GON	Government of Nepal
IFFCO	Indian Farmers Fertilizer Cooperative Limited
ITT	India Triangular Training
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
INR	Indian Rupees
IO	Intermediate Indicator
IP	Implementing Partner
KII	Key Informant Interview
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NCML	National Collateral Management Services Limited
SAATHI	South Asia AgTech Hub for Innovation
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
SOW	Statement of Work
TL	Team Leader
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	United States Dollar
USG	United States Government

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

This evaluation report presents the findings, conclusions and recommendations of an evaluation team deployed by Panagora Group between July and September 2020 to carry out a midterm performance evaluation of the South Asia AgTech Hub for Innovation (SAATHI) project. SAATHI is a 36-month project valued at approximately USD 2.5 million, which was contracted by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in India on September 28, 2018, and is implemented by Dalberg Advisors. The project seeks to improve Feed the Future (FtF) indicator outcomes in nearby countries through commercial transfer of Indian agricultural innovations and technologies. Dalberg's approach is to set up a "financially viable" firm (platform) offering a set of services on a commercial basis to Indian firms to facilitate expansion of their operations to Bangladesh and Nepal.

The midterm evaluation sought to answer the following evaluation questions (EQs) through focusing on 15 related sub-EQs, which are included below in the conclusions section of this summary:

1. To what extent has the ag platform model been an effective approach to transfer innovations and technologies to other countries?
2. How effectively does the design and establishment of the platform support cross-country transfer of agricultural innovations and technologies in South Asia?
3. To what extent have the selected Indian agricultural innovations and technologies been adopted in the target countries?
4. What key aspects of the project should be addressed at this stage of implementation to maximize outcomes over the remainder of the project implementation period?

The primary purpose of this evaluation was to inform USAID/India's decision-making process to determine whether or not SAATHI will achieve the intended results of catalyzing food and nutrition security outcomes in South Asia by supporting cross-country innovation and technology transfer.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The evaluation team deployed a mixed methods approach including an initial document review and subsequently utilizing key informant interviews (KIIs) of project stakeholders and a quantitative survey of companies contracting and non-contracting with SAATHI. A site visit to SAATHI offices was planned but proved to be unfeasible due to travel restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic at the time of this mid-term evaluation. The evaluation team utilized several data analysis methods to derive findings, which included triangulation, content analysis and trend analysis. These analyses occurred both sequentially and in parallel to data collection in order to derive probing questions and strengthen findings as they emerged. Potential biases and limitations that have implications for the types of findings and conclusions that can be drawn from this evaluation include positive response ('halo') bias, sample bias, selection bias, subjective measurements, sampling limitations and site visit limitations.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

USAID analyses show that food security and nutrition challenges in the South Asia region persist on a significant scale despite India “transforming into an ag-tech innovation lighthouse”. Based on this assessment, in 2018 the Mission announced their intention to intensify the use of innovative private sector engagement models to leverage India’s innovative, complex, and diverse private sector to improve regional food security outcomes.

In this context, USAID India contracted with Dalberg Advisers through a broad agency announcement (BAA) to implement the 36-month SAATHI project with the unique approach of facilitating the transfer through a commercially sustainable “platform” providing business to business (B2B) matchmaking services and export promotion support to targeted Indian agribusinesses. Project progress is measured against 18 monitoring and evaluation (M&E) indicators and 18 contract line-item numbers (CLINS), which over the course of 36-months will lead to the incremental establishment of formal contracted partnerships with at least 35 companies for professional services through the platform to generate revenues totaling USD 500,000 resulting in sufficient cash flow revenue for sustainable operation of the platform post-project.

As the time of this evaluation, SAATHI had signed 17 contracts with 12 companies in India and Bangladesh for services categorized in three typologies: 1) private partner search; 2) investment facilitation; and 3) project advisory and business consultancy. The technical areas of contracted companies fall into four broad categories, including agricultural inputs, supply chain and traceability software, cold chain equipment and financial services. Terms of payment are based on a success fee with execution milestones generally based on introductions to a specified number of potential partners (the platform also anticipated nominal up-front inscription or “registration” fees but was only successful in negotiating this in four cases).

CONCLUSIONS

EQ1: EXTENT TO WHICH THE AG PLATFORM MODEL BEEN AN EFFECTIVE APPROACH TO TRANSFER INNOVATIONS AND TECHNOLOGIES TO OTHER COUNTRIES?

1.1. Is it an effective approach for addressing food security challenges in other countries?

To date, the ag platform approach has not been an effective approach for addressing food security challenges in other countries. Since inception, the platform has not successfully transferred innovations or technologies as demonstrated by the failure to realize success fees at the point of this midterm evaluation. Furthermore, the inherent tension between commercial and food security-related outcomes means that the platform is oriented toward neighboring FtF countries, namely Bangladesh and (planned) Nepal, which often does not align with the strategic objectives of Indian companies with regard to market expansion. Furthermore, there is a correlation between company size and tendency to utilize in-house capacity to undertake market expansion, which results in challenges to fulfilling a mandate of contracting with more “established” firms. As a result, actual contracting tends to be opportunistic, as SAATHI struggles to execute contracts in order to secure future operating revenues (and meet performance objectives related to CLINS) while at the same time undermining the platform’s targeting of export ready companies interested in penetrating the target markets. Finally, current COVID-19-

related disruptions have contributed to a delay of platform activities in a number of ways, further reducing effectiveness.

1.2. How effective have the project interventions been in fulfilling the requirements of the private companies in the target countries and in addressing the agriculture and food security challenges of the target countries?

To date, project interventions have not been effective in fulfilling the requirements of the private companies in the target countries or in addressing the agriculture and food security challenges of the target countries as demonstrated by the failure to realize success fees related to technology transfer at the point of this midterm evaluation.

1.3. Are these interventions demand driven?

To date, interventions are not demand-driven. Rather, platform interventions have focused on highlighted market “gaps” related to innovations and technologies occurring in India but not yet present in Bangladesh. Likewise, contracted clients have been identified opportunistically through outreach via personal staff networks as opposed to through targeted marketing of services.

1.4. Was there a needs assessment conducted to determine the selection of particular technologies that address specific needs in the target countries?

Despite voluminous assessment of market “gaps” (and food security challenges in Bangladesh), to date no formal needs assessment has been conducted to determine the selection of particular technologies that address specific needs in the target countries.

1.5. Do the technologies approved so far respond to a specific challenge that was previously determined in the need assessment document or were they simply selected for convenience to the contractor (“low hanging fruits phenomenon”)?

With no formal needs-assessment completed to date, the technologies approved so far do not respond to a specific challenge that was previously determined in a need assessment document. While all of the contracting companies to date are agriculture-related, technologies approved do not respond to a specific challenge that was previously identified in a needs assessment. Further the selection of companies and related technologies have been selected through personal networks. It appears they may have been selected for convenience to the contractor (what the USAID India Mission refers to as “low hanging fruits” phenomenon).

1.6. How are approved contracts measured? Is there a structured business plan that defines the clauses of the contract, the obligations from each to the contract and a financial analysis of approved transactions over the short and long term?

The SAATHI *Blueprint* includes business and revenue plans. Specific contract obligations and a financial analysis of approved transactions are further evaluated in the following section (see Effectiveness of Platform Design – Findings). Contracts were executed on an opportunistic basis leveraging personal contacts.

1.7. How do the approved technologies correspond to feed the future (FTF) indicators?

The approved technologies directly or indirectly “correspond” to at least five FtF indicators. Despite their opportunistic selection, further assessment of the products of contracting companies may reveal direct or indirect correspondence to additional indicators, especially economic growth indicators.

EQ2: HOW EFFECTIVELY DOES DESIGN AND ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PLATFORM SUPPORT CROSS-COUNTRY TRANSFER OF AGRICULTURAL INNOVATIONS AND TECHNOLOGIES IN SOUTH ASIA?

2.1. Do the platform business model and revenue model practically address sustainability and scalability?

While the platform business model and revenue model as laid out in the SAATHI *Blueprint* address sustainability, the platform is currently not reaching its break-even point in terms of cash flow. Further, based on its current service offerings, SAATHI is unlikely to reach this point prior to the end of project support following the 36-month implementation period. Following project support, platform operations are highly unlikely to be sustainable. The platform business and revenue model do not address scalability. Activity design documents are silent on the issue of how SAATHI revenues can be reinvested to promote the growth of the platform. Moreover, scalability is challenged by manpower constraints within SAATHI itself.

2.2. Has the platform been able to implement the business model and revenue model as planned?

The project has not been able to implement the business model and revenue model as planned. Contracted services to date have been overwhelmingly related to private partner search and terms of payment are based entirely (with the exception of limited receipt of “registration or “commencement” fees), which are as yet unrealized. Furthermore, COVID-19-related disruptions have undermined progress on some platform activities.

EQ3: TO WHAT EXTENT HAVE THE SELECTED INDIAN AGRICULTURAL INNOVATIONS AND TECHNOLOGIES BEEN ADOPTED IN THE TARGET COUNTRIES?

3.1. Are there signs of measurable development outcomes in the target countries?

To date, there are no signs of measurable development outcomes in the target countries. As of the time of writing, the ag platform has yet to realize any transfer of innovations and technologies to producers.

3.2. Are the project interventions geared towards accomplishing development results in the target countries?

The project interventions are geared towards accomplishing development results in the target countries to the extent that the products and services of contracting companies support the growth of agricultural incomes and production. However, these results are not yet unrealized.

3.3. To what extent have the project interventions been effective in addressing gender issues in the target countries?

To date, the project interventions have had no impact on addressing gender issues in the target countries. The products and services of contracting companies to date are gender neutral.

EQ4: WHAT KEY ASPECTS OF THE PROJECT SHOULD BE ADDRESSED AT THIS STAGE OF IMPLEMENTATION TO MAXIMIZE OUTCOMES OVER THE REMAINDER OF THE PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD?

4.1. Is there evidence that the project outcomes are likely to grow, scale up and out, past the project period of implementation (sustainability)?

There is currently no evidence that the project outcomes are likely to grow, scale up and out, past the project period of implementation, calling into question the sustainability of the platform. Based on results to date and current cash flow, the continued operations of the platform are highly unlikely to be sustainable beyond the life of the project.

4.2. What changes/improvements need to be made to make the project more scalable, sustainable, and to achieve an enhanced development impact?

- The platform’s geographic selection of Bangladesh is challenged by India-based companies’ perceptions of the poor attractiveness of this market. Enhanced awareness of opportunities and mitigating strategies are needed to augment interest;
- Improvements in sub-sector identification and private company selection: selected sub-sectors need to more closely take into account FTF indicators and the existing enterprise landscape; and,
- Resource allocation needs to facilitate contract servicing and the platform revenue model needs to address cash flow challenges through adoption of activities that can generate intermediate term incomes.

4.3. What recommendations can improve geographic selection, sub-sector identification, beneficiary private company selection, resource allocation and the platform revenue model?

- Changes and improvements in geographic selection: include target markets perceived as more attractive to client countries, notably raising China and the “large” markets in Southeast Asia including Indonesia, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam as potential targets. Nonetheless, limited existing platform capacity and current platform orientation to Bangladesh make this suggestion likely unviable given the current resource allocation;
- Improvements in sub-sector identification and private company selection: reassess sub-sectors to focus more closely on the existing enterprise landscape for areas related to FTF indicators and undertake quantitative demand analyses of these sub-sectors; and re-design service marketing to tailor outreach to a broader range of viable companies, while improving communication to these companies regarding opportunities and problem mitigation in the target markets; leverage the existing export promotion eco-system to enhance the effectiveness of marketing; and,
- Changes in resource allocation and improvements in the platform revenue model: increase activity scope by focusing on new services to improve cash flow, including non-success-based fee activities such as trade fairs and delegations marketed to a more targeted audience of viable companies; explore franchise structures and commission-based agents to mitigate the platform limitations on platform workforce capacity to service contracts and consider revising the relationship between the platform and the parent company to include greater financial and manpower surge capacity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this evaluation lead the Panagora evaluation team to the overall conclusion that the SAATHI activity, within its current business and financial plan, as well as the realities of current implementation approaches, will not meet USAID objectives over the remaining life of the project and will not be sustainable following the project. Given this, the overarching recommendations of the evaluation team consist of two options:

Option 1: Discontinue the SAATHI Activity: In order to mitigate further resource losses, USAID would discontinue SAATHI project activity. The multiple challenges described herein make it highly improbable that SAATHI will achieve expected outcomes or reach financial sustainability in its current form and within the remaining time period. Further, project documentation and KIs make it clear that current COVID-19-related disruptions further mitigate against project success and make it even more difficult to take corrective measures.

Option 2: Suspend SAATHI activities until the resolution of the COVID-19 impacted period to minimize resource losses while undertaking a re-design toward to more effective and sustainable model: Under this option, USAID would recognize the risk of potential platform failure and suspend the activity while Dalberg Advisors undertakes a thorough financial and business plan re-design that clearly and convincingly addresses sustainability issues. The new plan would be informed by reliable data on technology demand in targeted sub-sectors in the target countries that clearly supports FtF objectives, a robust marketing strategy that identifies a wide group of viable export ready companies with an established track record of providing products and services in the targeted sub-sector, and include a revised organizational structure that can effectively support this strategy. The re-design would include realistic financial and business plans that create revenue streams in the short-term, while building long-term revenue.

If USAID chooses to suspend the activity pending re-design, the evaluation team recommends the re-design be based on the following principles to improve platform performance going forward:

1.1 Consider re-assessing sub-sector focus to better enhance food security and nutrition impacts

- Implement a re-defined opportunity search better oriented around FTF indicators in the target markets.
- Reassess the competitive landscape of existing firms in the identified sub-sectors.
- Develop quantitative demand models and assess barriers to entry (and mitigation approaches) for entering firms.

1.2 Consider re-defining the service marketing strategy to better target viable clients

- Given the current challenges to sustainability in the scale of operations, develop a strategy for identifying a wide pool of viable client companies that are export ready for the target market(s).
- Assess available communications strategies for marketing export opportunities identified in the target markets to receptive Indian firms.
- Assess the potential for leveraging the existing export support “eco-system”.

I.3 Consider diversifying services and revenue models to improve SAATHI financial sustainability

- Evaluate the demand for potential non-success fee-based services that can smooth intermediate phase cash flow, such as trade delegations and fairs (including virtual events).
- Consider engaging commission-based sales representatives in target markets to service success-fee-based services.
- Revise the relationship between the platform and the parent company to include financial and manpower surge capacity.

EVALUATION BACKGROUND

USAID in India contracted Dalberg Advisors to implement the South Asia AgTech Hub for Innovation (SAATHI) project in India, Bangladesh and Nepal on September 28, 2018.¹ SAATHI is a 36-month project valued at approximately USD 2.5 million (SAATHI) that seeks to improve FtF indicator outcomes in nearby countries through commercial transfer of Indian technologies. Dalberg's approach is to set up a "financially viable" firm offering a set of services to Indian firms to expand operations to Bangladesh and Nepal. Between July and September 2020, Panagora Group deployed a six-person, remote evaluation team to implement this mid-term performance evaluation. This evaluation report presents the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation team (see Annex I: Evaluation Timeline).

EVALUATION PURPOSE

As per the statement of work (SOW) for this mid-term performance evaluation, the primary purpose of this evaluation is to inform USAID/India's decision-making processes for achieving the intended results of catalyzing food and nutrition security outcomes in South Asia by supporting cross-country innovation and technology transfer from India to Bangladesh and Nepal.² To that end, this evaluation gathered and synthesized information regarding the performance of the SAATHI project to date and assessed achievements versus expected results. Specifically, the evaluation analyzes and comments on:

- Whether the project theory of change and project implementation approach are valid?
- Whether the project approach and the geographic focus continue to be relevant?
- Whether there is a need for modifying the project approach and geographic focus to accomplish the project results?

The findings are intended to guide USAID/India in learning about what has worked well, and what needs to be rectified going forward in order to achieve project objectives over the remaining period of project implementation.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Through the findings derived from data collected over the course of this mid-term performance evaluation, the evaluation team sought to provide conclusions and recommendations related to the following evaluation questions (EQs) and sub-EQs.

¹"SAATHI Contract no. 72038618C00002" USAID/India, New Delhi, September 2018

² "Statement of Work - Mid-term Performance Evaluation of the South Asia AgTech Hub for Innovation (SAATHI) project" USAID/India, June 22, 2020

TABLE I: EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND SUB-EVALUATION QUESTIONS

QUESTION	SUB-QUESTIONS
1. To what extent has the ag platform model been an effective approach to transfer innovations and technologies to other countries?	<p>1.1 Is it an effective approach for addressing food security challenges in other countries?</p> <p>1.2. How effective have the project interventions been in fulfilling the requirements of the private companies in the target countries and in addressing the agriculture and food security challenges of the target countries?</p> <p>1.3. Are these interventions demand driven?</p> <p>1.4. Was there a needs assessment conducted to determine the selection of particular technologies that address specific needs in the target countries?</p> <p>1.5 Do the technologies approved so far respond to a specific challenge that was previously determined in the need assessment document or were they simply selected for convenience to the contractor (“low hanging fruits phenomenon”)?</p> <p>1.6. How are approved contracts measured? Is there a structured business plan that defines the clauses of the contract, the obligations from each to the contract and a financial analysis of approved transactions over the short and long term?</p> <p>1.7. How do the approved technologies correspond to feed the future (FTF) indicators?</p>
2. How effectively does the design and establishment of the platform support cross-country transfer of agricultural innovations and technologies in South Asia?	<p>2.1. Do the platform business model and revenue model practically address sustainability and scalability?</p> <p>2.2. Has the platform been able to implement the business model and revenue model as planned?</p>
3. To what extent have the selected Indian agricultural innovations and technologies been adopted in the target countries?	<p>3.1. Are there signs of measurable development outcomes in the target countries?</p> <p>3.2. Are the project interventions geared towards accomplishing development results in the target countries?</p> <p>3.3. To what extent have the project interventions been effective in addressing gender issues in the target countries?</p>
4. What key aspects of the project should be addressed at this stage of implementation to maximize outcomes over the remainder of the project implementation period?	<p>4.1. Is there evidence that the project outcomes are likely to grow, scale up and out, past the project period of implementation (sustainability)?</p> <p>4.2. What changes/improvements need to be made to make the project more scalable, sustainable, and to achieve an enhanced development impact?</p> <p>4.3. What recommendations can improve geographic selection, sub-sector identification, beneficiary private company selection, resource allocation and the platform revenue model?</p>

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

Over the course of fieldwork, the evaluation team deployed a mixed methods approach building on an initial document review and subsequently including both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods, to derive findings. Data analysis was parallel and sequential in order to identify emerging themes and trends for probing in order to strengthen findings as they emerged and formulate conclusions as well as to test the accuracy of these conclusions following fieldwork (see Annex 2: Evaluation Matrix).

DATA COLLECTION

The evaluation team employed four data collection methodologies, including: 1) document review and indicator analysis; 2) key informant interviews (KIIs); 3) a quantitative survey; and 4) site visits. However, the planned site visits to SAATHI offices proved to be unfeasible due to restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic, which occurred at the time of this mid-term evaluation.

DOCUMENT REVIEW AND INDICATOR ANALYSIS

Document review entailed assessment of project-related literature in order to understand the context and underlying concept of the project, as well as to understand how Dalberg Advisers have implemented SAATHI to date. Documents reviewed by the team included the SAATHI contract (there were no subsequent modifications), project reporting including inception, quarterly and annual progress reports, evaluation and strategy documents related to SAATHI, background research documents on topics related to the project themes and context, standard operating procedures (SOPs) and SAATHI memorandums of understanding (MOUs) and contracts (see Annex 3: Research Bibliography).

Initial document review informed the development of draft and final data collection protocols. The team's quantitative methods specialist also implemented a performance analysis based on reported progress in order to evaluate the degree to which the SAATHI project is on track to reach indicator targets and CLIN midpoint targets as defined in the SAATHI contract (see Annex 4: Performance Analysis).

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

Following document review and indicator analysis and concurrently with the quantitative survey, the evaluation team leader and agri-business specialists implemented KIIs with purposively selected samples of each SAATHI project stakeholder group. KIIs consisted of in-depth facilitated discussions conducted with individuals or small functional groups of related individuals (e.g., up to four participants) using a semi-structured “evolving subject-driven” approach. In this case, “semi-structured” means that the team utilized a pre-existing data collection protocol (guide), while “evolving subject-driven” refers to an iterative process in which information is assembled transversely across successive interviews so that it can be aggregated and analyzed in a cohesive and consistent manner.³

³ King, Gary, Robert Keohane, and Sydney Verba *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research* Princeton University Press” Princeton University Press, 2016

The purpose of the KIIs was to probe results of the document review and indicator analysis for more specific findings related to the EQs. KII participants were purposively selected according to the likelihood of significant knowledge of SAATHI project activities, as well as convenience of access so as to access the largest number of informants possible over the course of data collection within the limited time and personnel resources available to the evaluation team. To guide the KIIs, the team developed data collection protocols (interview guides) for KIIs following initial unstructured interviews with USAID and Dalberg staff (see Annex 5: Data Collection Protocols).

The evaluation team identified the following stakeholder groups for KIIs:

- 1) **Donor Staff** – USAID/India and USAID Bangladesh Mission staff;
- 2) **Implementing Partner Staff** – Including Dalberg and Grameen Capital India (GCI) staff;
- 3) **SAATHI Project Staff** – Including all available staff at the SAATHI platform; and,
- 4) **Agribusiness Staff** – Including companies contacted by SAATHI through road shows and workshops stratified by companies that established MOUs and contracted and those that did not contract with SAATHI (non-contracting companies were interviewed to provide a counterfactual to understand why some companies did not contract despite having interacted with SAATHI).

Initially, the evaluation team requested a provisional list of respondents from each stakeholder group during a kick-off meeting with USAID/India. Based on this list, the logistics coordinator scheduled the

TABLE 2: KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS BY STAKEHOLDER GROUP	
STAKEHOLDER GROUP	KIIS (#)
Donor Staff	4
Implementing Partner Staff	5
SAATHI Project Staff	4
Agribusiness Staff	17
Total	30

interviews over a three-week period. Ultimately, the team was able to interview 30 individuals, including four donor staff, five implementing partner staff, four SAATHI Project staff and 17 agribusiness staff. Unfortunately, two staff at USAID Bangladesh responded that they were either not sufficiently engaged with the SAATHI project to provide inputs or they were preparing to transfer out of the Mission and hence declined to be interviewed. Also, staff at one agribusiness, Ecozen Technologies, was unavailable for interview (see Annex 6: Key Informant Interview List).

QUANTITATIVE SURVEY

The quantitative methods specialist implemented a remote quantitative survey in parallel with qualitative data collection under the guidance of the evaluation team leader. The survey consisted of multiple choice and forced ranking (Likert scale) questions posed to agribusiness that interacted with SAATHI over the course of project implementation stratified by contracting and non-contracting companies. The team initially planned to target a survey sample size scaled to ensure a 95% confidence level with a 5% margin of error utilizing the Cochran Sample Size Formula. However, due to the very limited sample size, the team pursued a universal population of all *willing* respondents at interacting agribusinesses. Because it is too early for results to have materialized at farm level, the team did not seek to sample farmers or farm-facing individuals to determine impact. The quantitative methods specialist facilitated application of the surveys by phone or Skype. The purpose of the surveys was to understand the effectiveness of the platform model (EQ1) and how effectively the platform supports cross-country

transfer of innovations and technologies (EQ2), as well as to understand the anticipated extent to which technologies will be adopted and their anticipated impact (EQ3) as well as to provide insights into key aspects for improvement (EQ4) (see Annex 5: Data Collection Protocols).

DATA ANALYSIS

For the quantitative surveys, under the supervision of the team leader, the quantitative methods specialist input data into a database and conducted basic analysis on an ongoing basis throughout survey implementation to identify emerging trends, such as frequency distribution and sub-group comparison via cross-tabulation. These analyses were transmitted to the evaluation team as they became available and used to inform probing questions during concurrent KIIs. Upon completion, the specialist aggregated the survey responses into an online Excel-based spreadsheet and presented the data in a series of visualizations determined in coordination with the team leader.

In the case of financial data, the senior financial analysis specialist participated in document review and KIIs with donor staff, implementing partners and SAATHI staff to derive related to the business model and revenue model that informed findings and conclusions related to EQ2 and the anticipated scalability and sustainability of the SAATHI platform. This data was analyzed to assess the degree to which SAATHI is implementing economic and financial analysis related to technology transfers between companies. This analysis also assessed the credibility of financial data sources and the analytical methods themselves, as well the how the analysis is applied.

The evaluation team utilized methodological triangulation of data obtained initially during indicator analysis and the quantitative surveys to develop parallel protocols with same or similar questions across KIIs. Throughout KIIs, overseen by the team leader, the evaluation team members recorded data directly into audio recording software for subsequent transcription (and translation in the case of non-English interviews) by the Panagora support team at Grant Thornton India. In addition, the team members conducting the interviews transcribed key notes into MS Word doc-based forms in real time in order to analyze feedback on a daily basis to identify emerging trends in order to generate further probing questions (see Annex 4: Evaluation Matrix).

Following data collection, data analysis methods used by the team to derive conclusions included:

- **Triangulation** – Subsequent to fieldwork, triangulation enabled the evaluation team to cross-verify and cross-validate findings that emerged from distinct data sources to identify correlations between findings related to the four evaluation questions. Methodological triangulation also enabled the evaluation team to strengthen potential linkages in cases where results obtained through one method were less conclusive than another method;
- **Content Analysis**– Content analysis entailed the team’s intensive review of KII and other data to identify and highlight notable examples of SAATHI successes and challenges that contributed to or hindered progress against indicator targets identified through indicator analysis; and,
- **Trend Analysis** – Trend analysis enabled the team to further examine SAATHI progress toward targets, beyond the initial indicator analysis, over time to identify anticipated convergence (or divergence) of activity outcomes over the remaining life of the project and how specific exogenous and endogenous events may be contributing to these outcomes.

Following submission of the final evaluation report, all interview transcripts and survey datasets collected by the evaluation team will be made available to USAID in a format scrubbed of identifying text in order to protect respondent confidentiality. All audio recordings will be destroyed in order to protect respondent confidentiality.

LIMITATIONS AND POTENTIAL BIASES

The evaluation methodology has a number of potential biases and limitations that have implications for the types of findings and conclusions that can be drawn from this mid-term performance evaluation. These, and the steps the evaluation team took to mitigate them, include:

- **Positive response ('halo') bias:** Probing questions regarding finance issues and development outcomes may result in positive response bias *i.e.* the tendency of respondents to subjectively focus on positive outcomes. The teams mitigated this bias by probing for both successes and challenges to develop the most holistic picture possible of SAATHI achievements and challenges relative to the evaluation questions. Responses were also triangulated against data collected from other SAATHI stakeholders, as well as external documents.
- **Sample bias:** The evaluation team pursued a universal sample of all willing participants at all companies interacting with SAATHI. This included companies attending workshops in New Delhi and in Dhaka, as well as all companies that executed MOUs and/or contracts with SAAATHI, which produces a universe of approximately 34 companies ($n = \sim 34$). However, a limited number of these companies was willing to participate in the survey resulting in a small sample size of only 16 companies. Due to the limitation in sample size, certain types of inferences from the planned quantitative survey were rendered invalid and the data derived is limited to an illustrative set of perceptions of participating companies.
- **Selection bias:** Selection bias is an inherent risk when implementers help to facilitate contact with members of some stakeholder groups. The team worked closely with USAID and SAATHI staff to organize KIs and with project stakeholders. However there remains a risk that SAATHI staff selected the most active, responsive, or engaged individuals meaning that the team only heard from key informants to report positive experiences. To mitigate the risk of selection bias, prior to launching data collection, the team requested that SAATHI staff provide a universal list of stakeholders. Subsequently, the team identified individuals from this list to contact for interviews.
- **Subjective measurements:** Qualitative approaches can result in performance analysis being dependent on the professional opinions and experience of the evaluation team, which may result in findings, conclusions, and recommendations derived from their subjective interpretations. The team mitigated this bias through systematic triangulation of findings across stakeholder groups and methods and by drawing evidence-based conclusions and recommendations based on the data rather than on their professional experiences. In addition, where possible the team sought out the professional opinions of relevant skilled personnel to collaborate and review findings and conclusions to improve their accuracy and soundness.
- **Site visit limitations:** Due to restrictions on movement related to the COVID-19 pandemic occurring at the time of fieldwork for this mid-term performance evaluation, the team was unable to travel to field sites to undertake in-person observations. As such, a planned site visit to the SAATHI offices in New Delhi had to be canceled.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

PROJECT CONTEXT

In situational analyses, USAID notes that despite advances, food security and nutrition challenges in the South Asia region persist on a significant scale proportionate to the region’s significant population.⁴ However, the agency also notes that “India is transforming into an ag-tech innovation lighthouse and there is great potential to transfer food security and ag-tech innovations from India to other countries, starting with Bangladesh and Nepal”.⁵ In 2020, in its Country Development and Cooperation Strategy (CDCS), USAID/India states its intention to “intensify its use of innovative private sector engagement models in large part due to changes in the country context and India’s innovative, complex, and diverse private sector, which allows for the use of pay-for-success models...”.⁶ In KIIs conducted over the course of this evaluation, USAID India staff referred to a “research and development (R&D) component of their programming strategy”, which they applied in the design of the platform.⁷

Reflecting this context, in 2018 USAID/India implemented a broad agency announcement (BAA) for the co-creation of a project to transfer Indian technologies to nearby Feed the Future (FtF) countries. The USAID website defines the BAA procurement process as follows:

“One of USAID’s procurement tools is the Broad Agency Announcement (BAA), a competitive and collaborative research and development process used to seek innovative solutions to development challenges from public, private, for-profit, and nonprofit partners. Through a BAA, we define a problem, co-create a solution, and explore available resources. Often, but not always, a BAA will result in agreement with a partner or consortium of partners.”⁸

As such, the BAA process focuses on “co-creation” through a collaborative brainstorming opportunity, which can result in spontaneous partnerships forming around innovative concepts.

PROJECT DESIGN

USAID/India subsequently contracted with Dalberg Advisers to implement the 36-month SAATHI project, with a budget of approximately USD 2.5. Emerging from the BAA, this project had some similarities with previous USAID/India projects that aimed to transfer Indian agricultural technologies to African FtF countries, notably the Agricultural Innovation Partnership (AIP).⁹ However, a unique feature proposed by Dalberg Advisers during the BAA would be facilitating the transfer through a commercially sustainable entity providing business to business (B2B) matchmaking services and export promotion support to targeted Indian agribusinesses.

⁴ “SAATHI Contract no. 72038618C00002” USAID/India, New Delhi, September 2018

⁵ Ibid

⁶ “Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) January 1, 2020 – December 31, 2024” USAID/India, 2020

⁷ For example, evaluation KIIs donor staff

⁸ <https://www.usaid.gov/partnership-opportunities/respond-solicitation/broad-agency-announcements> retrieved September 16, 2020

⁹ Originally, Trilateral Partnership to Reform Agricultural Curriculum at Lilongwe University of Agricultural and Natural Sciences.

The stated aim of the project would be to harness Indian private sector innovation to achieve the following Impact: *Improved food security, nutrition, and livelihoods for communities in Bangladesh (and Nepal)*. The project would achieve this through the Outcome: *Innovations proven in India increasingly adopted and scaled among other countries* (see Annex 8: SAATHI Platform Results Framework).

As reported in the SAATHI Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) plan, the project's approach entails setting up an "independently operated, financially viable, innovation hub that transfers agricultural innovations from India to Bangladesh, thereby improving agricultural livelihood and nutritional outcomes."¹⁰ As described, in the SAATHI contract, this entails creating a "platform" as follows:

"This Platform will support cross-country innovations and technology transfer to improve agriculture productivity, food security, and incomes in South Asia, starting with the GFSS target country of Bangladesh as the primary focus and Nepal as a minor secondary focus. The Contractor will ensure that the Platform will offer appropriate services to Indian entities in transferring their technologies and approaches to the target countries. The services to be offered and the contract beneficiary Indian entities will be identified through a thorough research by the Contractor and decided in consultation with USAID."¹¹

The project envisioned three typologies of Indian agribusinesses (entities) as clients.¹²

1. Large multi-national corporations and conglomerates with Indian and Bangladesh presence;
2. Mature business with established presence in multiple states/countries; and,
3. Young Indian companies with Bangladesh relevant products and services

As designed by Dalberg Advisors, the steps outlined for platform set-up are as follows.

- Identifying unmet agricultural livelihood & nutritional needs in Bangladesh, and the underlying reasons for needs being unmet;
- Identifying relevant innovators in the landscape in India, their willingness to expand in Bangladesh, and services/support they require from this platform;
- Developing the strategy and blueprint of a financially sustainable platform to support/ facilitate the transfer of best-in-class technologies and innovations relevant to the Bangladesh context;
- Launching the Platform, staffed and managed by a dedicated team of professionals, experts and advisors; and,
- Supporting the Platform to succeed and scale up by providing an increasing number of companies access to key services and support and enabling them to scale cross-border.

Implementation of the contracted project was planned to occur over five consecutive stages over the 36-month implementation period:¹³

¹⁰ "Food Security & Ag-Tech Market Access and Analytics Platform in India – Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (MEL)" Dalberg Advisors for USAID

¹¹ "SAATHI Contract no. 72038618C00002" USAID/India, New Delhi, September 2018

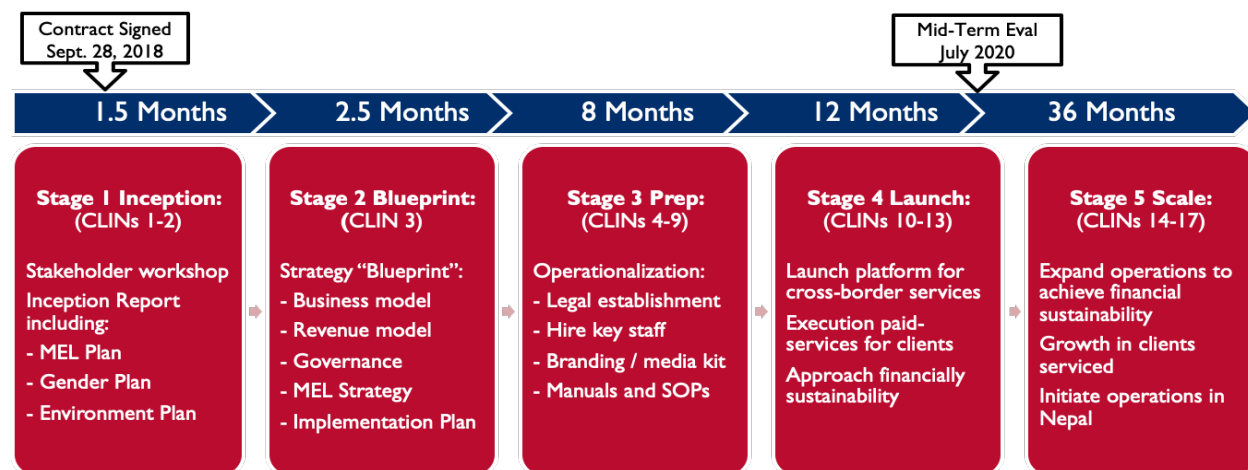
¹² "South Asia AgTech Hub for Innovation (SAATHI) Platform - CLIN 3: Strategy Blueprint" Dalberg Advisors for USAID, April 2019

¹³ "Food Security & Ag-Tech Market Access and Analytics Platform in India– Inception Report" Dalberg Advisors for USAID

- Stage 1: Inception (Contract Line Item Number (CLIN)s 1-2): Conducting stakeholder consultation workshop and development of inception report that includes the workplan, MEL Plan, Gender Plan and the Environment Plan;
- Stage 2: Blueprint (CLIN 3): Development of platform’s detailed strategy that includes business model, services, revenue model, operational and governance structure, MEL strategy, and implementation plan;
- Stage 3: Preparation (CLINs 4-9): Undertaking activities for platform’s operationalization, which include platform’s legal and infrastructural establishment, hiring of key staff, platform’s brand and media kit development, preparation of manuals and standard operating procedures for platform services, and partner identification and developing different models of partnership;
- Stage 4: Launch (CLINs 10-13): Launching the platform to support cross-border transfer of businesses. This phase will include execution of formal partnerships and making paid-services available to platform clients, while approaching financially sustainability; and
- Stage 5 Scale (CLINs 14-17): Expanding and growing platform operations while aiming to achieve financial sustainability. Under this phase, the platform will mainly strive for growth in the number of clients serviced and as a result, increased revenues. Further, expansion of the platform services to enable cross-border diffusion to Nepal will also be initiated during this phase.

The timeline and primary outputs of each of these stages are illustrated in the following figure.¹⁴

Figure I: SAATHI Timeline and Outputs



Source: “Food Security & Ag-Tech Market Access and Analytics Platform in India– Inception Report” Dalberg Advisors

PROJECT MONITORING

Over the course of these five phases, project progress is measured against 18 M&E indicators and 18 CLINS, which over the course of 36-months lead to the incremental establishment of formal partnerships with at least 35 companies contracted to provide agreed upon payments for receiving professional services through the platform totaling USD 500,000 resulting in sufficient cash flow revenue

¹⁴ “Food Security & Ag-Tech Market Access and Analytics Platform in India– Inception Report” Dalberg Advisors for USAID

for sustainable operation of the platform post-project (see Annex 9: Summary of Contract Line Item Numbers).

Throughout implementation, Dalberg Advisors envisioned a robust learning process. As stated in the project blueprint:

“Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting (CLA) activities will also be undertaken throughout the project’s lifecycle. Learning will occur at i) the project level, ii) the Platform company at the Platform level, and iii) broader agri-sector and development sector stakeholders at the eco-system level; while collaboration will happen through i) Dalberg’s consultative activities and ii) Development of focused knowledge products.”¹⁵

As initially designed by Dalberg Advisors, the primary technologies SAATHI would focus on commercializing in Bangladesh would be agronomic, especially seeds and inputs, and digital software, especially supply chain management and traceability software. SAATHI services would be marketed through virtual media as well as trade expos and “roadshows” and would entail five areas to link between ag-technology innovators in India and Bangladesh and additionally in Nepal during the third and final year of implementation in Stage 5: 1) match-making; 2) execution support; 3) proto-typing; 4) market intelligence; and 5) financing, presumably facilitated through Dalberg’s partner GCI (see Annex 10: Planned SAATHI Service Areas).¹⁶

PROJECT PROGRESS

Following design activities at the Blueprint Phase, SAATHI realigned its business plan around three types of services: 1) private partner search; 2) investment facilitation; and 3) project advisory and business consultancy.¹⁷ At the time of writing of this report in September 2020, roughly at project mid-point, SAATHI had signed 17 contracts with 12 companies in India and Bangladesh, mostly for private partner

TABLE 3: TYPOLOGIES OF CONTRACTED SAATHI SERVICES

PARTNERSHIP SEARCH AREA	(#)
Private partner search	15
Investment facilitation	2
Project advisory and business consultancy	0
Total	17

searches, while two contracts entail investment and trade finance facilitation, as illustrated in adjacent table.¹⁸ In all cases, terms of payment are on a success fee basis (i.e., commission on successful sales) with execution milestones generally based on introductions to a specified number of potential partners. In four cases, terms of payment include an initial up-front inscription or “registration” fee (see Annex 11: Summary of SAATHI Contacts to Date):¹⁹

Analysis of project progress to date found that SAATHI is on track to meet CLIN targets as per the project workplan. Through the first three quarters of year-I (i.e., until April-June 2019), there were no

¹⁵ “South Asia AgTech Hub for Innovation (SAATHI) Platform - CLIN 3: Strategy Blueprint” Dalberg Advisors for USAID, April 2019

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Evaluation KIs, SAATHI staff

¹⁸ SAATHI Contracts, September 6, 2019 – June 24, 2020

¹⁹ Contract payment terms are specified in SAATHI contracts in USD, as well as Indian Rupees (INR) and Bangladeshi (BDT). At the time of writing, exchange rates for these currencies are approximately USD 1.00 = INR 75 and USD 1 = BDT 85.

targets mandated for the 18 M&E indicators. In the fourth quarter of year-1 (i.e., July-Sept 2019), SAATHI fully achieved its revised target with regard to indicator no. 8, 11 and 12. For indicator 10, SAATHI achieved only one-third of its target in this period.

In Quarter-1 of Year-2 (i.e., Oct-Dec 2019), SAATHI realized no further progress against the 18 M&E indicators, but SAATHI successfully continued achievement of CLIN targets. In Quarter-2 of Year-2 (i.e. Jan-March 2020), SAATHI significantly achieved most targets. However, disruptions due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and related lock-down subsequently slowed progress of SAATHI activities (see Annex 4: Project Performance Analysis).

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

This section presents the findings of the evaluation team related to the four EQs and 15 sub-EQs addressed by this evaluation. Each EQ and its sub-EQs is followed by summary conclusions based on the data analysis carried out by the evaluation team.

EFFECTIVENESS OF PLATFORM MODEL – FINDINGS

This section presents the findings of the evaluation team with respect to the first EQ and sub-EQs, which are related to the strategic model of the ag platform as follows:

EQ1: EXTENT TO WHICH THE AG PLATFORM MODEL BEEN AN EFFECTIVE APPROACH TO TRANSFER INNOVATIONS AND TECHNOLOGIES TO OTHER COUNTRIES?

EQ1 Sub-evaluation Questions

- I.1. Is it an effective approach for addressing food security challenges in other countries?
- I.2. How effective have the project interventions been in fulfilling the requirements of the private companies in the target countries and in addressing the agriculture and food security challenges of the target countries?
- I.3. Are these interventions demand driven?
- I.4. Was there a needs assessment conducted to determine the selection of particular technologies that address specific needs in the target countries?
- I.5. Do the technologies approved so far respond to a specific challenge that was previously determined in the needs assessment document or were they simply selected for convenience to the contractor (“low hanging fruits” phenomenon)?
- I.6. How are approved contracts measured? Is there a structured business plan that defines the clauses of the contract, the obligations from each to the contract and a financial analysis of approved transactions over the short and long term?
- I.7. How do the approved technologies correspond to feed the future (FTF) indicators?

As noted, USAID India intended the “ag platform” model proposed by Dalberg, and subsequently contracted, “to support cross-country innovations and technology transfer to improve agriculture productivity, food security, and incomes in South Asia” (see above Project Overview).²⁰ During the BAA co-creation event, Dalberg Advisors introduced a unique approach centered on facilitating these technology transfers through a commercial entity providing services the private agribusiness sector on a sustainable cost recovery basis. As per the SAATHI contract, the platform was expected to source the innovations from recognized Indian private sector companies with specialized in technologies required to achieve improved food security outcomes:

“The Contractor will focus on those Indian companies that have established reputation in the market and have proven technologies ready for transfer to the target countries. The Contractor will avoid working with early stage innovators and start-up companies.”²¹

²⁰ “SAATHI Contract no. 72038618C00002” USAID/India, New Delhi, September 2018

²¹ Ibid.

In this sense, SAATHI regards itself as part of a competitive landscape that includes other, often large-scale, consulting firms that provide business development services to companies seeking market expansion, such as Price Waterhouse Cooper, Deloitte and Dalberg Advisers itself (note that post-design, SAATHI restructured its services around just three categories: 1) private partnership search; 2) investment facilitation; and 3) project advisory and business consultancy).²² However, in KIIs, the team noted inherent tensions between commercial and food security-related “development” impacts.

TABLE 4: SAATHI STAFF AND POSTINGS

STAFF POSITION	POSTING
Chief Executive Officer (CEO)	New Delhi
Administrative Officer	New Delhi
Research and Communication Associate	New Delhi
Country Representative-Bangladesh	Dhaka
Assistant – Bangladesh	Dhaka

First, despite Mission openness to operations in alternative, presumably more lucrative or in-demand markets, the platform is orientated toward Bangladesh as a destination country for technology transfer.²³ For example, of five project-funded staff positions, three are based in New Delhi, while the remainder are based in Dhaka. Nonetheless, throughout KIIs with agribusiness staff, respondents expressed a low-level of interest in the

Bangladesh market for their products, which they tended to view opportunistically only after their interaction with SAATHI. For example, in one KII, a company CEO stated that his company had “enough market for their products in India, and therefore, never looked beyond India for marketing (their ag inputs) in other countries”. However, after a meeting with SAATHI, they considered exploring the market in Bangladesh.”²⁴

Highlighting the “opportunistic” character of SAATHI service utilization, the quantitative survey carried out by the evaluation team showed that, of companies surveyed, Bangladesh-based companies perceived demand for their products and services in Bangladesh as equally divided into enjoying “very high”, “high” and “small” demand in the Bangladesh market. On the other hand, the majority of India-based companies surveyed perceived the demand for their products and services as “small” in the Bangladesh market, as illustrated in the following figure.²⁵

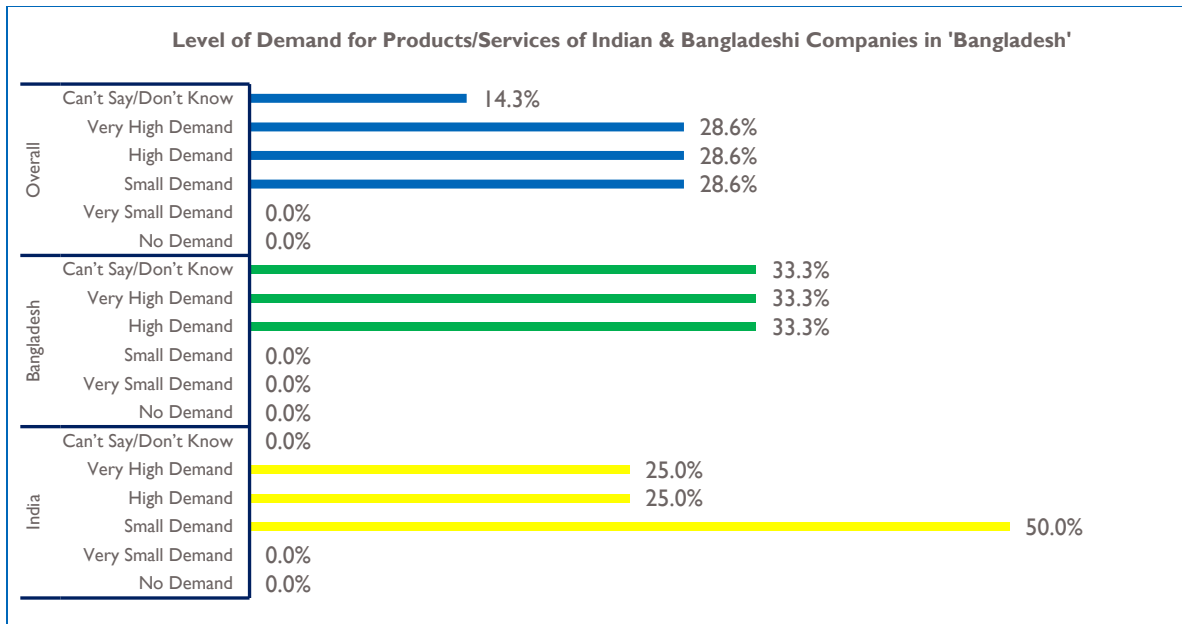
²² Evaluation KII, SAATHI staff

²³ KIIs, donor staff

²⁴ KIIs, agribusiness staff

²⁵ Quantitative survey analysis implemented by the evaluation team.

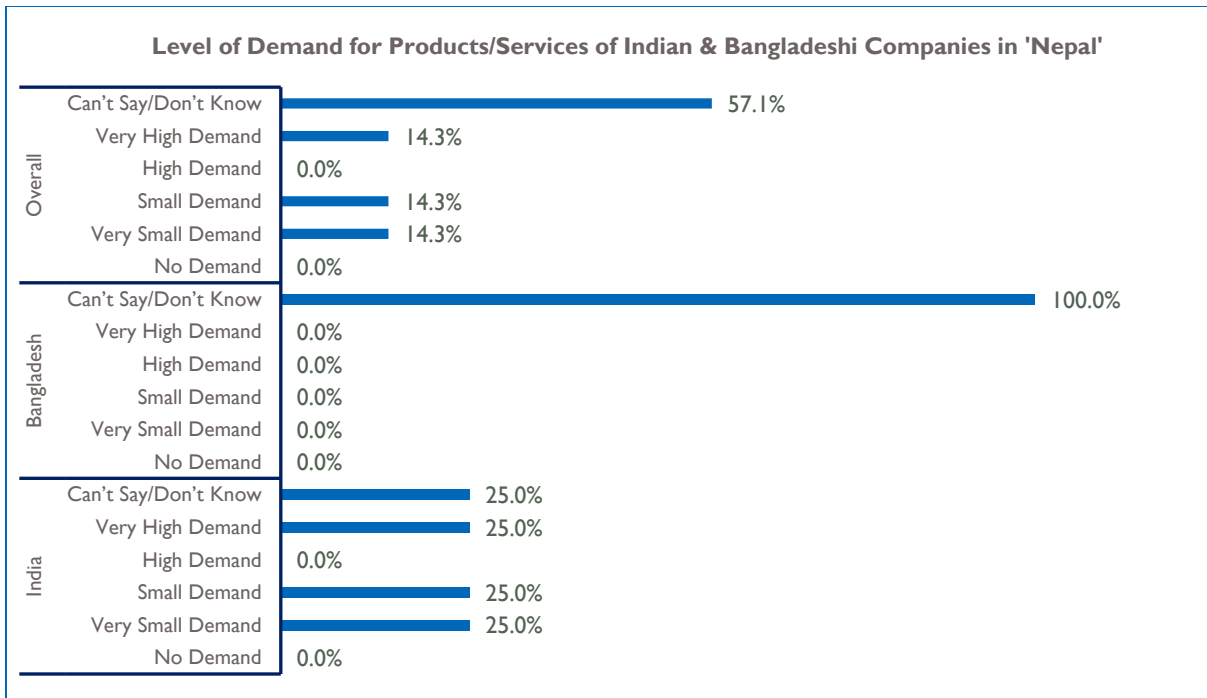
Figure I: Perceived Level of Demand for Products/Services in Bangladesh



Concurrently, survey respondents at India-based companies reported the same perception for demand for their services in Vietnam and Myanmar, with the majority rating demand as “small”. On the other hand, the same India-based respondents were equally split between “very high” “small” and “very small” demand for their services in Nepal, though none reported perceiving the demand as “high”.²⁶

²⁶ Ibid.

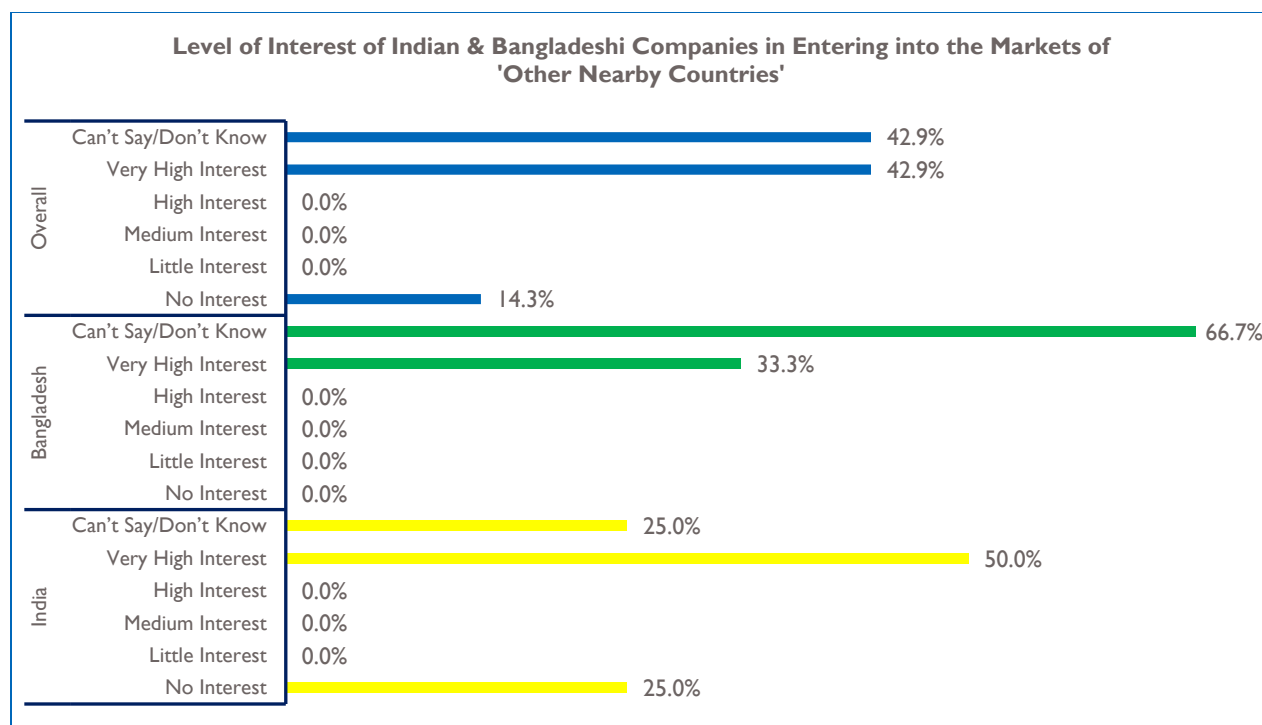
Figure 2: Perceived Level of Demand for Products/Services in Nepal



Interestingly, as illustrated by the figure above, a significant number of both India and Bangladesh-based companies reported that they “can’t say / don’t know” the level of demand for their products in Bangladesh or Nepal, suggesting that these companies had not previously assessed demand in these countries (further illustrating the “opportunistic” character of openness to utilizing SAATHI services).²⁷

²⁷ Ibid.

Figure 3: Level of Interest in Entering Other Nearby Countries



On the other hand, the majority of both India and Bangladesh-based companies reported a “very high” level of interest in entering other nearby countries, including Bangladesh and Nepal, but also including Vietnam and Myanmar, as illustrated by the figure above.²⁸ This suggests that, despite the significant size of the Indian market (overwhelmingly the largest market in the region by population), companies interacting with SAATHI are interested in expanding their product and service sales internationally.

In terms of openness to utilizing external consulting services to provide B2B matchmaking services, the majority of Bangladesh-based companies (67%) had previously hired such services, while only 25% of India-based companies had done so as illustrated in the following figure.²⁹ On the other hand, 50% of India-based companies indicated that they were “very likely” to hire these services.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

Figure 4: Companies that had Previously Hired Consulting Service for B2B Matchmaking Contacts

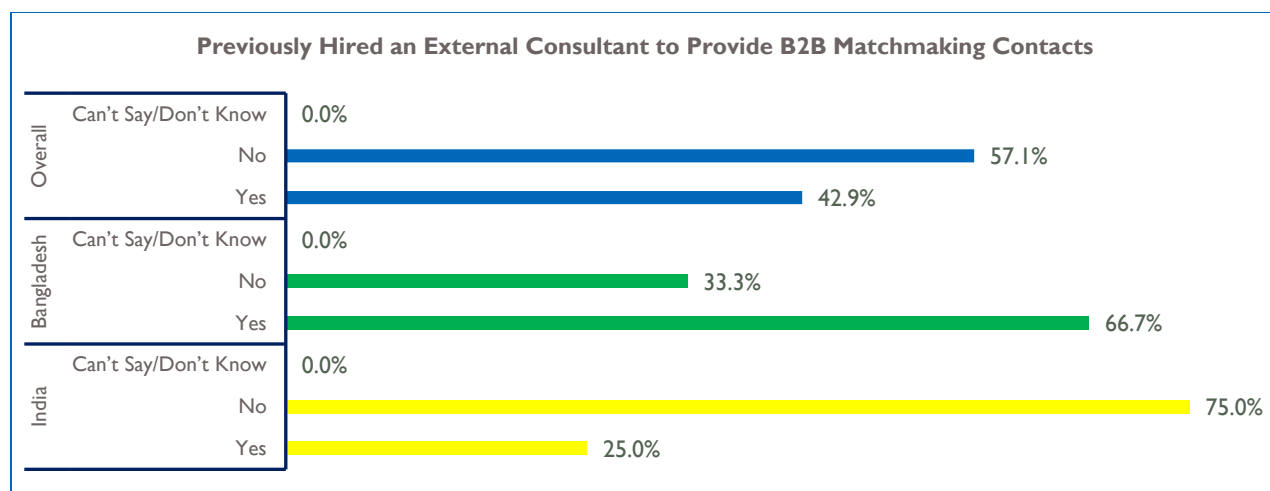
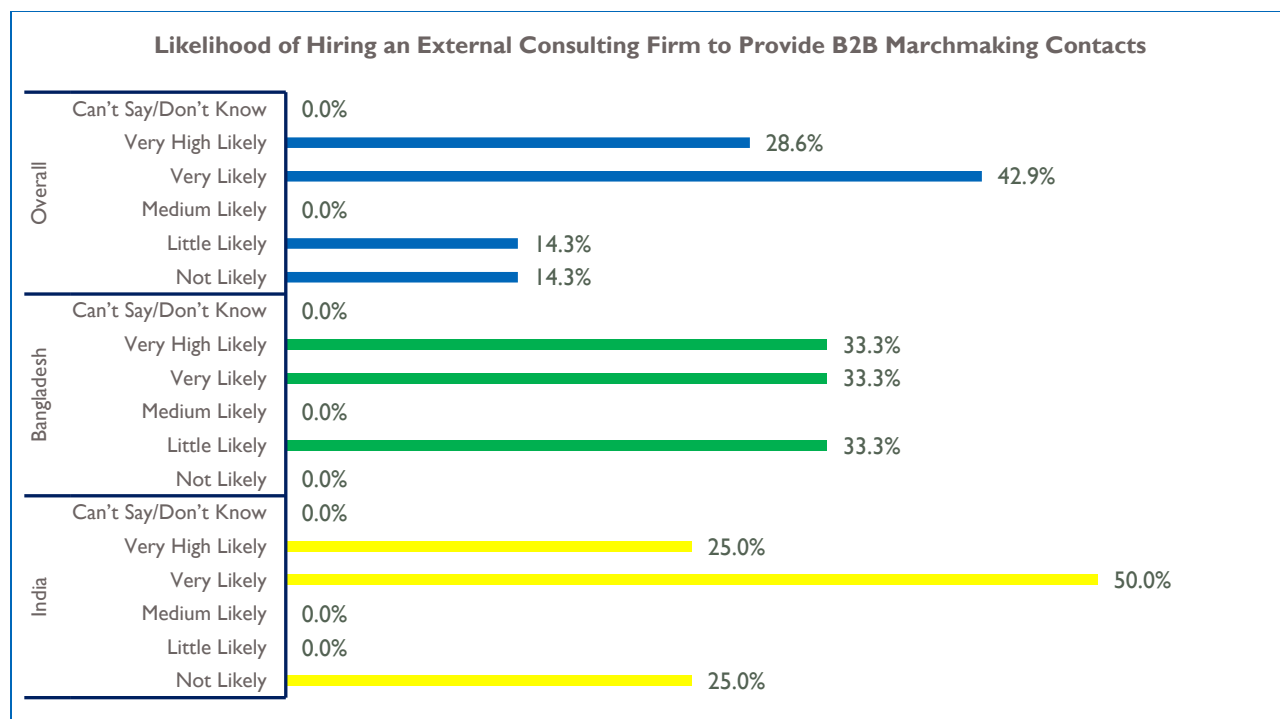


Figure 5: Likelihood of Hiring External Consulting Services for B2B Matchmaking



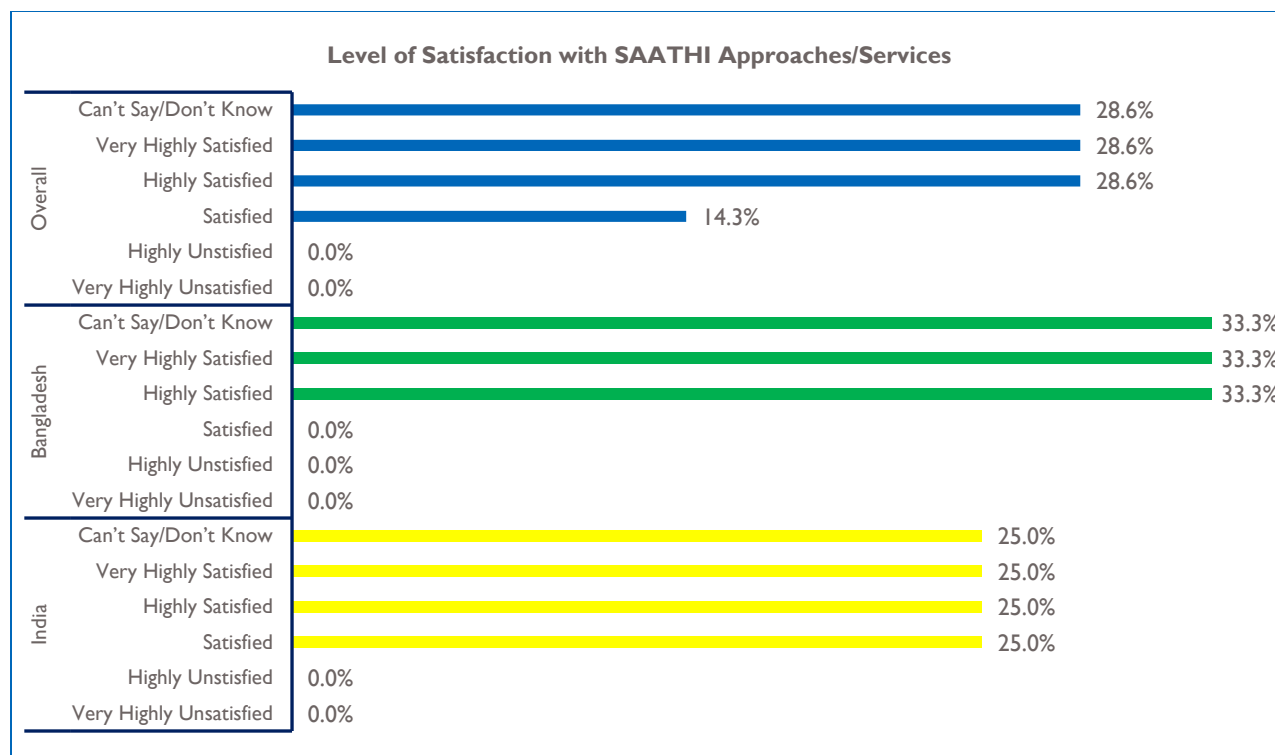
Despite this reported likelihood of India-based companies to hire external consulting services for B2B matchmaking, throughout the KIIs, unsurprisingly the evaluation team noted a correlation between company size and tendency to undertake market expansion through utilization of internal capacity. That is, larger firms are more likely to possess sufficient in-house manpower to pursue market expansion without the use of external consultants. As the general manager at one large-scale India-based agribusiness stated, “we were interested in the knowing more about the SAATHI project... but we

already have marketing staff that handle our sales (in new markets)”.³⁰ This tendency mitigates against the SAATHI mandate to “focus on those Indian companies that have established reputation in the market and have proven technologies ready for transfer to the target countries.”³¹

Indeed, SAATHI has had mixed results in complying with the contracted mandate to “avoid working with early stage innovators and start-up companies”.³² Analysis of contracting company age and size shows that at several of the 12 contracting India-based companies are still within the initial start-up timeframe of operations (for example, Ananya Seeds, CropIn and Vivantaa Capital), while the majority of contracted companies have annual turnover of less than USD 10 million.³³ On the other hand, SAATHI has also achieved contracts with several well established companies (for example, IFFCO Kisan, contracted on September 12, 2019, is affiliated with Indian Farmers Fertilizer Cooperative Limited, the oldest and largest farmer cooperative in India).

In terms of fulfilling the requirements of the private companies in the target countries, in the quantitative survey, the majority Bangladesh-based companies reported “very high” or “high” levels of satisfaction with SAATHI approaches and services, while India-based companies were divided evenly between levels of satisfaction, as illustrated by the following figure.³⁴

Figure 6: Level of Satisfaction with SAATHI Approaches and Services



³⁰ Evaluation KII, agribusiness staff

³¹ “SAATHI Contract no. 72038618C00002” USAID/India, New Delhi, September 2018

³² Ibid.

³³ Evaluation team analysis of KII-derived data.

³⁴ Quantitative survey analysis implemented by the evaluation team.

However, notably a significant number of both India and Bangladesh-based companies reported that they “can’t say/don’t know” their level of satisfaction with SAATHI services and approaches. Analysis of SAATHI contracts to date reveals the likely underlying rationale for this response i.e. that payment terms on all contracts to date are overwhelmingly based on a success-based fee (see Annex 11: Summary of SAATHI Contracts to Date). That is, notwithstanding a nominal “registration fee” (in any case, limited to four companies willing to pay any up-front fee), payment for services is derived from successful sales through partners, or directly into the Bangladesh market (to date, the service contracted is overwhelmingly *private partnership search*). However, to date, no such successes have been realized and thus services are not yet fulfilled, despite the project’s timely completion of CLINs to date (see Annex 4: Performance Analysis). As expressed with a KII with a regional manager for one contracting agribusiness, “we have yet to see if the partnerships facilitated by SAAATHI will result in revenue to (our) company”.³⁵ As a corollary, there has been no activity related to planned *investment facilitation* services by GCI, though they describe identifying several potential impact investors.³⁶

Unsurprisingly, the lack of revenue to date presents a cash flow challenge to the platform that also calls into question the viability of the SAATHI business plan (for more analysis of the platform business plan, see the following section Effectiveness of Platform Design). In addition, KIIs revealed that certain technologies impose timebound delays in realization of potential success fees, especially agricultural inputs that require Government of Bangladesh (GOB) testing-based certification prior to obtaining import approvals (notably, seeds and growth stimulants require a testing procedure that takes at least two years).³⁷ Use of success-based fees also underscores the opportunistic character of SATHI service use, since company risk is limited by not being required to provide upfront payment.

Calling into question the efficacy of the SAATHI marketing plan, which consists of marketing services through extensive online promotion, as well as through roadshows and trade expos, throughout KIIs, contracting companies highlighted that they came into contact with SAATHI solely through personal contacts with SAATHI staff (notably the SAATHI CEO). As one general manager stated in a KII, “I knew (the CEO) from previous (industry) networks. Previously (to his outreach), we had not heard of SAATHI”.³⁸ This also suggests that the platform has opportunistically relied on personal networks to meet its contracting objectives as laid out in CLINs at the “Launch” and “Scale” stages, as opposed to implementing a strategic identification of companies that met certain food security-related needs in the target markets (see Annex 9: Summary of Contract Line-Item Numbers).

An additional key finding of the evaluation team is that the extensive analysis carried out by SAATHI during the “Blueprint” Phase entailed the identification of market gaps (especially agricultural approaches and technologies that have emerged in India but are as of yet absent in Bangladesh, such as “food parks”), assessing these as potentially financially viable market innovations as opposed to food security enhancements, further demonstrating the tension between commercial and food security-related outcomes.³⁹ In contrast, the team found that the platform did not implement a formal needs assessment to identify strategic food security needs in the target countries and determine their level of demand (this

³⁵ Evaluation KII, agribusiness staff

³⁶ Evaluation KII, implementing partner staff

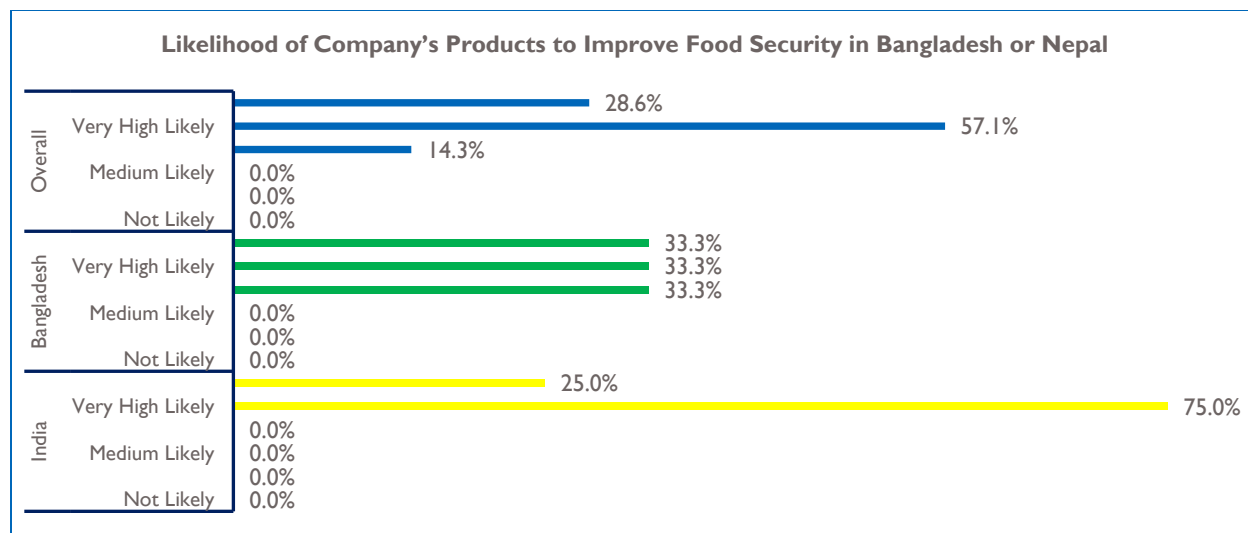
³⁷ Evaluation KII, agribusiness staff and SAATHI staff

³⁸ Evaluation KII, agribusiness staff

³⁹ “South Asia AgTech Hub for Innovation (SAATHI) Platform - CLIN 3: Strategy Blueprint” Dalberg Advisors, April 2019

was confirmed in interviews with SAATHI and USAID staff)⁴⁰. However, in the quantitative survey, an overwhelming majority of India-based companies ranked the likelihood their products to improve food security as “very high” as illustrated in the figure below.⁴¹

Figure 7: Likelihood of Company's Products to Improve Food Security in Bangladesh or Nepal



Despite the apparent opportunistic character of service contracting, an analysis by Dalberg Advisers indicates a high level of potential impacts on FtF indicators of the initial ten contracts.⁴² This analysis focused on five key indicators: 1) client revenue (USD); 2) number of farmers receiving USG assistance; 3) women farmers (5 of total farmers); 4) farmer revenue (USD); and 5) food production (MT). As cited in the analysis, quantitative impacts were based on data “sourced from the clients with whom the, from SAATHI team's industry knowledge and from desk research and conversations with experts.”⁴³ Analysis of contracts by the evaluation team found the following findings related to additional potential impacts:

1. While the Dalberg analysis addresses only five indicators, the products related to contracting clients may be directly and indirectly related to seven FtF indicators, as follows: 1) Economic Growth (EG).3.1-14 “Value of new USG commitments and private sector investment leveraged by the USG to support food security and nutrition”; 2) EG 3.2: “Number of individuals participating in USG food security programs”; 3) EG.3.2-7: “Number of technologies, practices, and approaches under various phases of research, development, and uptake as a result of USG assistance”; 4) EG.3.2-26: “Value of annual sales of producers and firms receiving USG assistance”; 5) EG 3.2-27: “Value of agriculture-related financing accessed as a result of USG assistance”; 6) CBLD-9: “Percent of USG-assisted organizations with improved performance”; and 7) GNDR-2: “Percentage of female participants in USG-assisted programs designed to increase access to productive economic resources”;
2. Products associated with three companies (Ananya Seeds, A.R. Malik Seeds and Aqua-Agri) may have a direct impact on food production, as well as an increase in both farm productivity and farmer

⁴⁰ Evaluation KII, agribusiness staff and SAATHI staff

⁴¹ Quantitative survey analysis implemented by the evaluation team.

⁴² “SAATHI Contracts (1-10) – Impact Potential” Dalberg Advisors for USAID, July 2020

⁴³ Ibid.

- income. Products associated with other companies may have an indirect influence on food production, as well as on improvements in productivity and increased farmer income; and
3. One company (Vivantaa Capital) may not have any impact on farmer income, food production and farm productivity as their financial products may help in financing activities not directly related to primary production.

In several cases, for example Aqua-Agri, private partnership searches or investment facilitation may not directly impact farmer-related outcomes if they increase sales of mother companies without subsequent income flow down to producer level impacts.

Finally, the evaluation team found that an important external factor in platform effectiveness has been COVID-19 disruptions related to the coronavirus pandemic, which has occurred globally since approximately March 2020 and has affected day-to-day activities in India particularly acutely. As described in recent project quarterly reports, COVID-19-related disruptions have included:⁴⁴

- Restrictions on domestic travel and movement, which has resulted in delays in signing new and in-progress contracts;
- Restrictions on international travel, which has resulted in some delays in meetings between Bangladeshi and Indian companies, as well as a delay in a visit to Nepal; and,
- Restrictions on large gathering, which has resulted in delay of physical launch of a knowledge report;

Likewise, in KIIs SAATHI staff notes that companies have taken a conservative approach to finances, limiting expansion and investment activities.⁴⁵ On the other hand, in the quantitative survey, the majority of respondent companies rated the level of COVID-19 impact on expansion activities as “no impact” (Bangladesh and India-based companies).⁴⁶

EFFECTIVENESS OF PLATFORM MODEL – CONCLUSIONS

This section presents the conclusions of the evaluation team for sub-EQs based on findings related to the following EQ:

EQ1: EXTENT TO WHICH THE AG PLATFORM MODEL BEEN AN EFFECTIVE APPROACH TO TRANSFER INNOVATIONS AND TECHNOLOGIES TO OTHER COUNTRIES?

➤ 1.1. Is it an effective approach for addressing food security challenges in other countries?

To date, the ag platform approach has not been an effective approach for addressing food security challenges in other countries. Since inception, the platform has not successfully transferred innovations or technologies as demonstrated by the failure to realize success fees at the point of this mid-term evaluation. Furthermore, the inherent tension between commercial and food security-related outcomes means that the platform is oriented toward neighboring FtF countries, namely Bangladesh and (planned) Nepal, which often does not align with the strategic objectives of Indian companies with regard to market expansion. Furthermore, there is a correlation between company size and tendency to utilize in-

⁴⁴ “Quarterly Report 3 - Report Period: April – June 2020” Dalberg Advisers for USAID, New Delhi, June 2020

⁴⁵ Evaluation KIIs, SAATHI staff

⁴⁶ Quantitative survey analysis implemented by the evaluation team.

house capacity to undertake market expansion, which results in challenges to fulfilling a mandate of contracting with more “established” firms. As a result, actual contracting tends to be opportunistic, as SAATHI struggles to execute contracts in order to secure future operating revenues (and meet performance objectives related to CLINS) while at the same time undermining the platform’s targeting of export ready companies interested in penetrating the target markets. Finally, current COVID-19-related disruptions have contributed to a delay of platform activities in a number of ways, further reducing effectiveness.

- ***1.2. How effective have the project interventions been in fulfilling the requirements of the private companies in the target countries and in addressing the agriculture and food security challenges of the target countries?***

To date, project interventions have not been effective in fulfilling the requirements of the private companies in the target countries or in addressing the agriculture and food security challenges of the target countries as demonstrated by the failure to realize success fees related to technology transfer at the point of this midterm evaluation.

- ***1.3. Are these interventions demand driven?***

To date, interventions are not demand driven. Rather, platform interventions have focused on highlighted market “gaps” related to innovations and technologies occurring in India but not yet present in Bangladesh. Likewise, contracted clients have been identified opportunistically through outreach via personal staff networks as opposed to through targeted marketing of services.

- ***1.4. Was there a needs assessment conducted to determine the selection of particular technologies that address specific needs in the target countries?***

Despite voluminous assessment of market “gaps” (and food security challenges in Bangladesh), to date no formal needs assessment has been conducted to determine the selection of particular technologies that address specific needs in the target countries.

- ***1.5. Do the technologies approved so far respond to a specific challenge that was previously determined in the need assessment document or were they simply selected for convenience to the contractor (“low hanging fruits phenomenon”)?***

With no formal needs assessment completed to date, the technologies approved so far do not respond to a specific challenge that was previously determined in a need assessment document. While all of the contracting companies to date are agriculture-related, technologies approved do not respond to a specific challenge that was previously identified in a needs assessment. Further the selection of companies and related technologies have been selected through personal networks. It appears they may have been selected for convenience to the contractor (what the USAID India Mission refers to as “low hanging fruits” phenomenon).

- ***1.6. How are approved contracts measured? Is there a structured business plan that defines the clauses of the contract, the obligations from each to the contract and a financial analysis of approved transactions over the short and long term?***

The SAATHI Blueprint includes business and revenue plans. Specific contract obligations and a financial analysis of approved transactions are further evaluated in the following section (see Effectiveness of Platform Design – Findings). Contracts were executed on an opportunistic basis leveraging personal contacts.

➤ **1.7. How do the approved technologies correspond to feed the future (FTF) indicators?**

The approved technologies directly or indirectly “correspond” to at least five FtF indicators. Despite their opportunistic selection, further assessment of the products of contracting companies may reveal direct or indirect correspondence to additional indicators, especially Economic Growth Indicators.

EFFECTIVENESS OF PLATFORM DESIGN – FINDINGS

This section presents the findings of the evaluation team with respect to the second EQ and sub-EQs, which are specifically related to platform operational and financial design as follows:

EQ2: HOW EFFECTIVELY DOES THE DESIGN AND ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PLATFORM SUPPORT CROSS-COUNTRY TRANSFER OF AGRICULTURAL INNOVATIONS AND TECHNOLOGIES IN SOUTH ASIA?

EQ2 Sub-evaluation questions:

- 2.1. Do the platform business model and revenue model practically address sustainability and scalability?
- 2.2. Has the platform been able to implement the business model and revenue model as planned?

The SAATHI contract defines two expectations with regard to the platform business and financial revenue model as follows.⁴⁷

1. A well-designed cost structure & model: The Contractor will design a cost structure for the Platform with minimal setup costs, moderate fixed costs (that can be recovered through baseline Platform services), and then a variable cost structure which is always profitable based on the services that get delivered based on costs incurred.
2. A well-designed revenue model: Based on the fixed cost and the variable cost strategy described above, the Contractor will develop a four-pronged revenue model for the Platform that will seek to make it fully self-sustaining between months 24-36. The Contractor will use the time between launch and Month 24 to test the effectiveness and scalability of different revenue streams and refine the revenue mix so that it fully supports sustainability and scalability.

As per the SAATHI contract, possible revenue streams that the implementer could design to ensure the financial feasibility of the platform would include:⁴⁸

1. Platform membership fee for “baseline services”: This will be a nominal fee which will bring access to “baseline services” to Platform members as well as investors and donors. The goal is to tweak

⁴⁷ “SAATHI Contract no. 72038618C00002” USAID/India, New Delhi, September 2018

⁴⁸ Ibid.

the baseline service mix to drive sufficient revenue growth so that at least 50% of fixed operational costs are supported in Year 2 and 100% of fixed operational costs supported in Year 3.

2. Dedicated service fees for customized services delivered to organizations on the Platform: The Platform will also be equipped to provide a range of involved services to companies and organizations both in India and in destination countries such as Bangladesh for which the Platform team will charge a fee using a cost+ model. These services will be priced at near-market rates so that they are profitable but also make the Platform a preferred provider of these services to companies on both sides.
3. Financing fee: As the Platform matures, a full spectrum of financiers, impact investors, development finance institutions (DFIs), and donors can use this Platform to identify investable companies / grantees and invest capital in select companies. The Platform will provide financing services to companies on the Platform including creating (i) Pitch sessions, (ii) Deal books, (iii) Virtual meetings with investors, and even (iv) Support with developing investment plans and business plans.

Over the course of Stage 2, i.e. the Blueprint phase related to CLIN 3 between months 1.5 and 2.5 of project implementation, Dalberg Advisors undertook creation of a *Strategy Blueprint*, which included business and financial plans based on market assessment for services similar to anticipated platform services (the Blueprint is silent on plans to reinvest revenues to achieve scalability).⁴⁹

“SAATHI’s financial projections have been estimated based on a model that was built ground up from estimating its fixed and variable cost base and layering in estimates for sales and revenues based on early testing with potential clients... Services are costed based on a benchmarking exercise that identified what consumers were paying for similar market entry and diffusion services in the region and internationally and validated with companies in one-on-one interviews. Further, services were discounted 10-30% from the market value of competing products in order to offer an attractive value proposition to new clients.”

This model that derived from this assessment predicted the platform would achieve financial sustainability by the end of the second year of project implementation as follows:⁵⁰

“The financial model... estimates SAATHI’s to break even by quarter 4 of year 2 and cumulative profits of USD ~130,000 by the end of year 3. This is an estimate based on assumptions of the model, which will be updated as the platform operates and learns by observing market forces.”

As noted, post-design, the SAATHI business plan was restructured to include three types of services from which the platform would derive cash flow (down from an initial five types of services): 1) private partnership search; 2) investment facilitation; and 3) project advisory and business consultancy.⁵¹ Furthermore, the platform blueprint identified three types of revenue models:⁵²

- I. Membership model, which would be an annual membership that would offer a standardized package of services and a flat fee would be charged that will cover access to a base of set services;

⁴⁹ “South Asia AgTech Hub for Innovation (SAATHI) Platform - CLIN 3: Strategy Blueprint” Dalberg Advisors for USAID, April 2019

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Evaluation KII, SAATHI staff

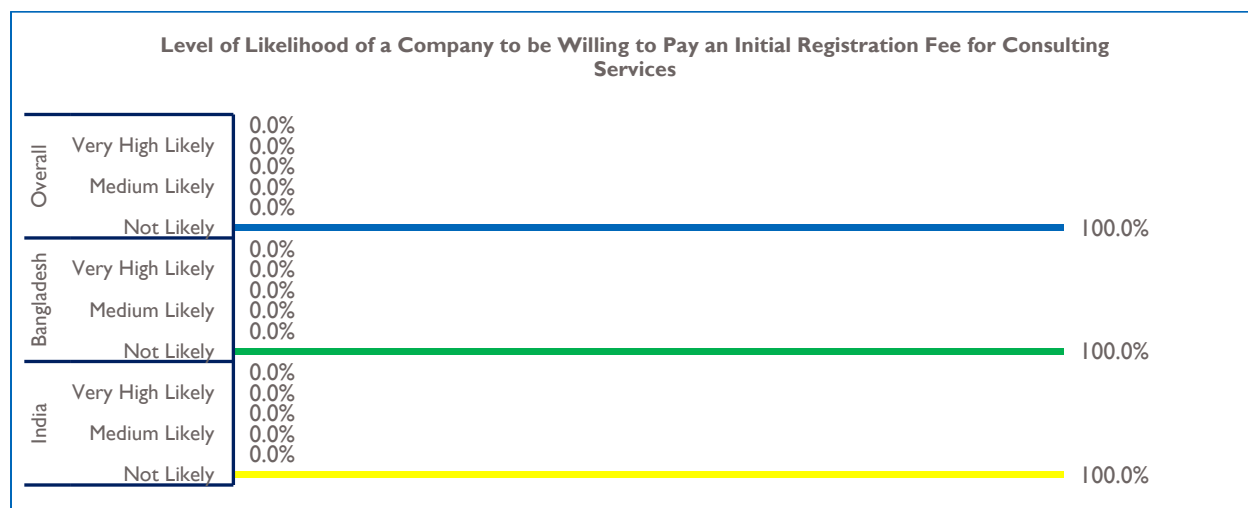
⁵² “South Asia AgTech Hub for Innovation (SAATHI) Platform - CLIN 3: Strategy Blueprint” Dalberg Advisors, April 2019

2. Pay per use, which would include charging for services based on a simple mark-up, which will be benchmarked to the prevailing market rates of these services; and,
3. Value model, a success-based model where SAATHI will receive a proportion of the commercial value created through its services. Free add-ons like mentorship and networking support will also be added to increase the likelihood of success.

As noted, terms of payment for executed service contracts to date has been based on the third option (“value” or “success-based” model) for partnership search or facilitation (see Effectiveness of Platform Model – Findings and Annex II: Analysis of SAATHI Contracts to Date). In KIIIs, agribusiness staff express satisfaction with the rates of SAATHI fees for these partnership searches.⁵³ This was confirmed by responses obtained in the quantitative survey of agribusiness staff in which all staff at India-based companies agreed that SAATHI fees were “reasonable” (although only 65% of staff at Bangladesh rated SAATHI fees similarly.⁵⁴ This suggests the SAATHI has priced their partnership or facilitation fee competitively vis-à-vis prevailing market rates for similar services.

However, in KIIIs, agribusiness staff expressed strong resistance to payment of fees not related to incremental sales or other direct revenues. For example, one CEO stated that his company would only consider success-based terms of payment as “we are not certain about the (viability of the market) and... our shareholders would not accept these expenses.”⁵⁵ Furthermore, agribusiness staff participating the quantitative survey expressed resistance to payment of even nominal fees, in this case referring specifically to initial “registration” or “inscription” fees, as illustrated in the following figure.⁵⁶ This suggests the some revenue models are not likely to be viable (i.e., “revenue” and “pay per use”).

Figure 8: Likelihood of Willingness to Pay (Up-Font) Registration Fee



⁵³ Evaluation KIIIs, agribusiness staff

⁵⁴ Quantitative survey analysis implemented by the evaluation team.

⁵⁵ Evaluation KII, agribusiness staff

⁵⁶ Quantitative survey analysis implemented by the evaluation team.

TABLE 5: SAATHI MONTHLY RECURRING FIXED COSTS

ITEM	INR	SD
Office rental- Gurgaon	46,250	617
Office rental- Dhaka	36,000	480
Social booth fee	165,000	2,200
Chartered Accountant	20,000	267
Staff salaries	1,143,000	15,240
Fundraising	300,000	4,000
Travel	150,000	2,000
Contingency	50,000	667
Total	1,910,250	25,470

In KIIIs and related project documents, the evaluation team noted the budget for recurring monthly fixed platform costs included office rentals in New Delhi and Dhaka, social booth charges, chartered accountant fees, staff salaries, costs associated with fundraising and travel, and contingency costs. The sum budget for these costs is approximately INR 1,910,250, or approximately USD 25,000 per month.⁵⁷ In terms of revenue, in KIIIs SAATHI staff stated that Dalberg Advisers provides a monthly transfer of USD 50,000 against fixed and variable costs pending submission of five executed contracts each quarter. In cases where variable costs result in platform expenditure exceeding this transfer, Dalberg issues payment for the balance against a line of credit to SAATHI, for which it expects repayment against future revenue.⁵⁸

In KIIIs with SAATHI staff, respondents stated that, as of the end of August 2020, SAATHI has received total revenues of USD 5,500.⁵⁹ Despite the stated reticence of client companies to agree to up-front fees, this revenue was derived entirely from initial “registration” or “commencement” fee that became payable upon contract execution. Further analysis of SAATHI cash flow by the evaluation team reveals the following:

- By the project end-term (12th Quarter), SAATHI needs to generate at least 60% of the USD 500,000 anticipated in success fees from 35 contracts as per targets set out in the project CLINs. This must be derived not merely from existing contracts but generated as revenue from anticipated contracts as per CLIN objectives of 35 contracts, presumably as success fees, in order to be cash flow positive at the end of the 36-month project period. Beyond this date, support from Dalberg Advisers for recurring fixed, as well as variable, costs will cease.
- In order to become financially completely sustainable SAATHI following the end of project support, the platform is required to generate USD 500,000 (less USD 5,500 already received in “registration” fees) from the 35 existing and anticipated contracts in order to break even against sunk costs.

Regarding financial sustainability, the evaluation team noted a number of factors that mitigate the potential for reaching this break-even point or generating sufficient income to continue platform operation post-project. First, as noted, certain contracting client products or technologies entail time-bound delays in transfer to Bangladesh due to testing and approval required imposed by the Government of Bangladesh *i.e.*, seeds and other agricultural inputs (see Effectiveness of Platform Model – Findings). In addition, the reliance on success-based fees results in incremental workload increases on

⁵⁷ Evaluation KIIIs, SAATHI staff and project documents

⁵⁸ Evaluation KII, SAATHI staff

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

fixed staff (which, as noted, is currently five members). That is, following contract execution, existing staff is required to service contracts through oversight of sales to collect these fees. This is because, in contrast to competitors in the consulting service market, the platform relation to the mother company i.e., Dalberg Advisors, does not provide for surge capacity in terms of additional manpower required to service contracts. As noted in KIIs with SAATHI staff, cash flow is currently “unsustainable” and the anticipated outlook for the platform is bankruptcy following the end of project support.⁶⁰

Finally, as noted, assessment of recent project quarterly reports, as well as KIIs with SAATHI staff, reveal a number of COVID-19-related disruptions that staff predicts will continue to restrict project operations for the foreseeable future (see Effectiveness of Platform Model – Findings).⁶¹

EFFECTIVENESS OF PLATFORM DESIGN – CONCLUSIONS

EQ2: HOW EFFECTIVELY DOES THE DESIGN AND ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PLATFORM SUPPORT CROSS-COUNTRY TRANSFER OF AGRICULTURAL INNOVATIONS AND TECHNOLOGIES IN SOUTH ASIA?

➤ 2.1. Do the platform business model and revenue model practically address sustainability and scalability?

While the platform business model and revenue model as laid out in the SAATHI *Blueprint* address sustainability, the platform is currently not reaching its break-even point in terms of cash flow. Further, based on its current service offerings, SAATHI is unlikely to reach this point prior to the end of project support following the 36-month implementation period. Following project support, platform operations are highly unlikely to be sustainable. The platform business and revenue model do not address scalability. Activity design documents are silent on the issue of how SAATHI revenues can be reinvested to promote the growth of the platform. Moreover, scalability is challenged by manpower constraints within SAATHI itself.

➤ 2.2. Has the platform been able to implement the business model and revenue model as planned?

The project has not been able to implement the business model and revenue model as planned. Contracted services to date have been overwhelmingly related to private partner search and terms of payment are based entirely (with the exception of limited receipt of “registration or “commencement” fees), which are as yet unrealized. Furthermore, COVID-19-related disruptions have undermined progress on some platform activities.

EXTENT OF TECHNOLOGY ADOPTION – FINDINGS

This section presents the findings of the evaluation team with respect to the third EQ and sub-EQs, which are related to the adoption of Indian agricultural innovations and technologies in the target countries, as follows:

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ “Quarterly Report 3 - Report Period: April – June 2020” Dalberg Advisors for USAID, New Delhi, June 2020 and Evaluation KII, SAATHI staff

EQ3: TO WHAT EXTENT HAVE THE SELECTED INDIAN AGRICULTURAL INNOVATIONS AND TECHNOLOGIES BEEN ADOPTED IN THE TARGET COUNTRIES?

EQ3 Sub-Evaluation Questions

- 3.1. Are there signs of measurable development outcomes in the target countries?
- 3.2. Are the project interventions geared towards accomplishing development results in the target countries?
- 3.3. To what extent have the project interventions been effective in addressing gender issues in the target countries?

As noted, to date the platform has yet to realize the transfer of innovations and technologies to the target countries as evidenced by the of lack success-based fee revenue to date (see Effectiveness of Platform Model – Findings). Analysis of the project implementation timeline demonstrates that the 12 initial project months were dedicated to analytical work over three phases: 1) Inception; 2) Blueprint; and 3) Prep, which allows for approximately six months to realize transfers as illustrated by the following figure.

Figure 9: SAATHI Timeline to Service Launch



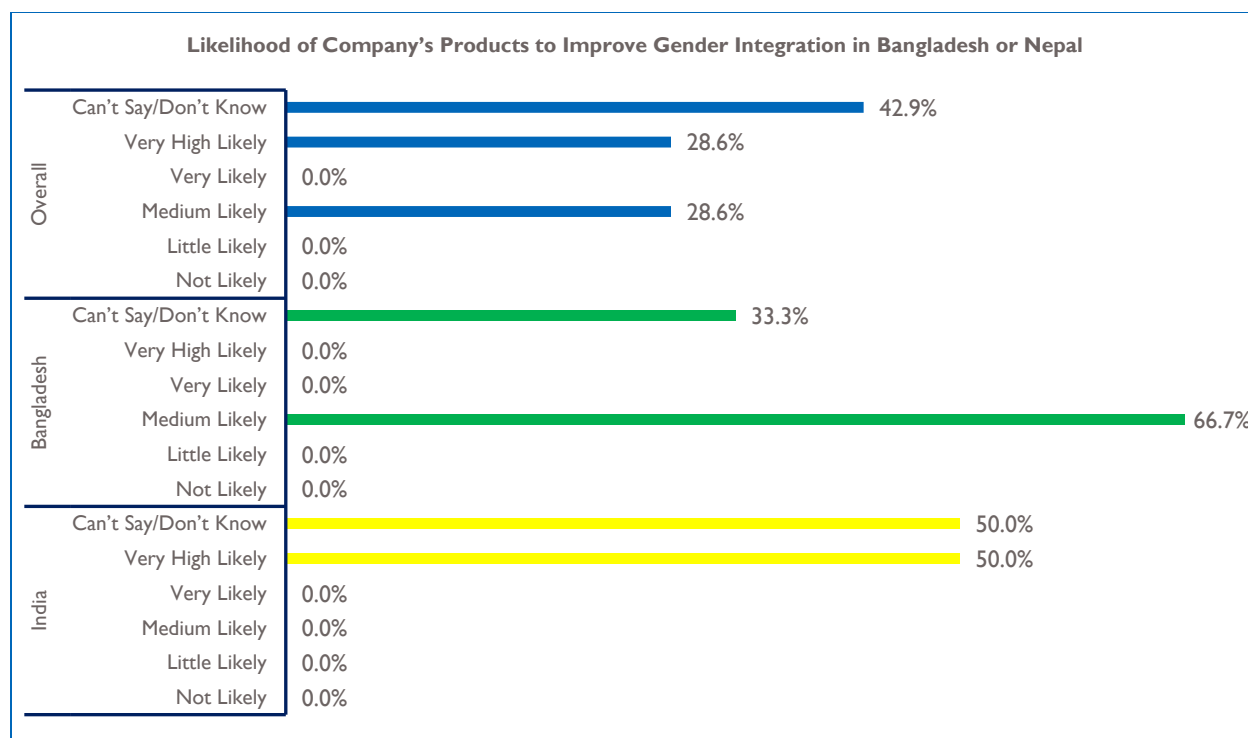
TABLE 6: TECHNICAL AREAS OF SAATHI CONTRACTING COMPANY' PRODUCTS AND SERVICES	
TECHNICAL AREA	(#)
Agricultural inputs:	
• vegetable seeds (4)	
• growth stimulants (1)	7
• aquaculture feed (1)	
• tillage equipment (1)	
Supply chain and traceability software	2
Cold chain equipment	2
Financial services	1
Total	12

Analysis of SAATHI contracts to date demonstrates that the products and services of contracting client companies are related to four broad categories; 1) agricultural inputs (seeds, growth stimulants, feed and tillage equipment), supply chain and traceability software, cold chain equipment and financial services, as illustrated in adjacent table (see Annex II: Summary of SAATHI Contracts to Date and Project Overview). In KII, agribusiness staff described the impact of their technologies as “gender neutral”. For example, one CEO stated that “(our products) are used equally by men and women”.⁶² In contrast, in the quantitative survey responses, staff at India-based companies ranked their products as “very likely” to improve gender integration (staff at Bangladesh-based companies rated this as “medium”), as illustrated in the following figure.⁶³

⁶² Evaluation KII, agribusiness staff

⁶³ Quantitative survey analysis implemented by the evaluation team.

Figure 10: Likelihood of Company's Products to Improve Gender Integration



EXTENT OF TECHNOLOGY ADOPTION - CONCLUSIONS

This section presents the conclusions of the evaluation team for sub-EQs based on findings related to the following EQ:

EQ3: TO WHAT EXTENT HAVE THE SELECTED INDIAN AGRICULTURAL INNOVATIONS AND TECHNOLOGIES BEEN ADOPTED IN THE TARGET COUNTRIES?

➤ 3.1. Are there signs of measurable development outcomes in the target countries?

To date, there are no signs of measurable development outcomes in the target countries. As of the time of writing, the ag platform has yet to realize any transfer of innovations and technologies to producers.

➤ 3.2. Are the project interventions geared towards accomplishing development results in the target countries?

The project interventions are geared towards accomplishing development results in the target countries to the extent that the products and services of contracting companies support the growth of agricultural incomes and production. However, these results are unrealized.

➤ 3.3. To what extent have the project interventions been effective in addressing gender issues in the target countries?

To date, the project interventions have had no impact on addressing gender issues in the target countries. The products and services of contracting companies to date are gender neutral.

KEY PROJECT ASPECTS TO ADDRESS - FINDINGS

EQ4: WHAT KEY ASPECTS OF THE PROJECT SHOULD BE ADDRESSED AT THIS STAGE OF IMPLEMENTATION TO MAXIMIZE OUTCOMES OVER THE REMAINDER OF THE PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD?

EQ4 Sub-Evaluation Questions

- 4.1. Is there evidence that the project outcomes are likely to grow, scale up and out, past the project period of implementation (sustainability)?
- 4.2. What changes/improvements need to be made to make the project more scalable, sustainable, and to achieve an enhanced development impact?
- 4.3. What recommendations can improve geographic selection, sub-sector identification, beneficiary private company selection, resource allocation and the platform revenue model?

In KIIs with members of all stakeholder groups, respondents expressed strong doubts as to the post-project sustainability of project outcomes based on the current ag platform model and its related activities.⁶⁴ For example, as noted in KIIs with SAATHI staff, respondents stated that the cash flow is currently “unsustainable” and the anticipated outlook for the platform is bankruptcy following the end of project support.⁶⁵ In addition, with regard to scalability, the current staff structure was described as “skeletal” (the current staff team consists of only five members (see Effectiveness of Platform Design – Findings)).⁶⁶

Furthermore, the relationship with the platform’s mother company (Dalberg Advisors) does not include provisions for financial or manpower-related “surge” capacity. Rather, although Dalberg Advisors was responsible for initial assessment that informed platform design (especially during the Inception, Blueprint and Prep phases, which occurred in months 1-12 and are related to CLINs 109), the current relationship between the parties is limited to monthly payments of USD 50,000 to cover recurring fixed costs and variable costs.

In contrast, the business model for expansion of other firms that define the competitive landscape for provision of similar services to SAATHI (such as Price Waterhouse Cooper, Deloitte and Dalberg Advisers itself), includes significant home office surge capacity to facilitate revenue development required for staff evolution. Finally, as noted, project progress reports describe a number of COVID-19-related disruptions that SAATHI staff anticipates will continue to restrict project operations for the foreseeable future (see Effectiveness of Platform Model - Findings).⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Evaluation KIIs, donor, implementing partners, SAATHI and agribusiness staff.

⁶⁵ Evaluation KII, SAATHI staff

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ “Quarterly Report 3 - Report Period: April – June 2020” Dalberg Advisors for USAID, New Delhi, June 2020

By topic, over the course of data collection for this midterm evaluation, stakeholders provided the following recommendations related to improving project scalability, sustainability, and to achieving enhanced development impact:

Improved geographic selection

- **Consider wider geography:** As noted, the majority of India-based companies surveyed perceived the relative demand for their products and services as “small” in the Bangladesh market, and over the course of KIIIs with agribusiness staff, a number of respondents stated that they had not considered the Bangladesh market as a target for expansion previous to contact with SAATHI (see Effectiveness of Platform Model - Findings).⁶⁸

In addition, in these KIIIs, respondents listed a number of *perceived* constraints to their expansion in Bangladesh, which included low consumer purchasing power, bureaucratic delays or red tape hindering operating and/or exporting activities, and anticipated bias against Indian products. Also, a significant number of agribusiness staff stated that the Indian market for their products and services was not yet saturated (meaning they would therefore tend to prioritize available resources for use in domestic market expansion).⁶⁹

Nonetheless, the country most cited by respondents as attractive for expansion was China, followed by “large” markets in Southeast Asia including Indonesia, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam. Respondents cited the perceived growth in consumer purchasing power and improvements in the enabling business environment as key factors when considering the attractiveness of these markets to a limited degree, additional responses also included Latin America and the United States).⁷⁰ USAID India staff also stated their openness to SAATHI operation in non-FTF countries.⁷¹

However, the evaluation team also notes the limited capacity of SAATHI staff and the staff orientation toward Bangladesh as mitigating against the viability of SAATHI expansion into additional markets. Presumably, the platform’s current fixed operating budget and the platform’s lack of financial and manpower surge capacity would present significant challenges to expansion into these markets. Finally, the tendency of larger companies to handle market expansion through utilization of in-house capacity would likely act as a constraint to SAATHI expansion in these markets (see Effectiveness of Platform Model – Findings).

Sub-sector identification and private company selection

- **Reassessing and re-targeting market demand analysis:** As noted, SAATHI has yet to carry out a formal needs assessment to align their client search with food security needs in Bangladesh, and to quantify market demand for identified related Indian products and services. Also, as noted, to date successfully contracting companies have been identified through personal staff networks as

⁶⁸ Quantitative survey analysis implemented by the evaluation team and evaluation KIIIs, agribusiness staff

⁶⁹ Evaluation KIIIs, agribusiness staff

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Evaluation KIIIs, donor staff

opposed to through a targeted marketing strategy focused on strategic sub-sectors (see Effectiveness of Platform Design - Findings).⁷²

In KII, a number of respondents suggested that SAATHI staff should re-visit its market assessment to more closely correlate with food security requirements in the target countries.⁷³ Presumably, this reassessed market analysis would pair FTF indicator-related innovations and technologies available in India with the existing enterprise landscape in Bangladesh, analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of identified existing sub-sector companies and cataloging their needs through quantitative assessment. The re-visited market assessment would also better evaluate operating constraints and quantify demand for Indian innovations and technologies and ways of mitigating these. In addition, a reassessed market analysis would also take a more flexible and strategic approach to outreach to potential clients through an improved marketing plan. This marketing plan would assess the viability of selected communication strategies that could be exploited to address perceived challenges to market expansion and communicate these more effectively to a wider audience of potential Indian clients as well as improve currently low awareness of opportunities. Specifically, respondents suggested leveraging the wider existing export promotion “eco-system” to communicate opportunities identified, such as national and state-level export promotion programs.⁷⁴

Resource allocation and improvements in the platform revenue model

- **Increased activity scope (focus on new services to improve cash flow):** Currently contracted platform services are overwhelmingly focused on private partner search (with a limited number of contracts focused on finance facilitation). Likewise, terms of payment for services are overwhelmingly structured around a success fee-basis (see Annex I I: Analysis of SAATHI Contracts to Date). This has resulted in unsustainable cash flow and strain on existing platform manpower to service contracts and collect revenues undermining the sustainability of platform operations (see Effectiveness of Platform Design - Findings).⁷⁵

However, in KII with agribusiness staff, respondents at some agribusiness suggested that they were open to participating in some forms of trade promotion activities, despite reticence to provide up-front fees for services (though, notably, respondents at one company described a previous trade delegation to Bangladesh as “disappointing” due to the low level of participating Bangladeshi staff).⁷⁶ In addition, in the quantitative survey carried out over the course of this midterm evaluation, respondents from contracting and non-contracting companies indicated that they were “very likely” or “medium likely” to engage with both trade delegations to Bangladesh and with in-bound trade fairs in Bangladesh as illustrated in the following figures (though, as illustrated Bangladesh-based staff indicated greater willingness than India-based staff).⁷⁷ This suggests that potential viability of non-success-fee based services that could improve platform cash flow in the short(er) term.

⁷² Evaluation KII, agribusiness staff and SAATHI staff

⁷³ Evaluation KII, donor staff

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Evaluation KII, agribusiness staff and SAATHI staff

⁷⁶ Evaluation KII, agribusiness staff

⁷⁷ Quantitative survey analysis implemented by the evaluation team.

Figure 11: Likelihood of Companies to Engage with Trade Delegations to Bangladesh

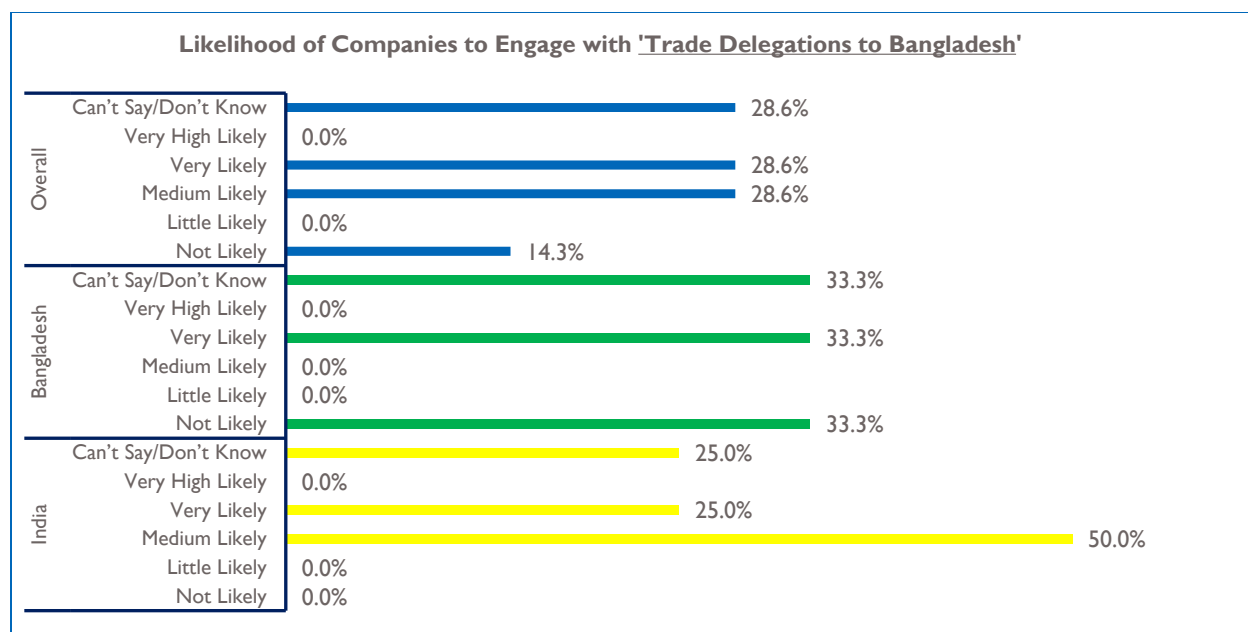
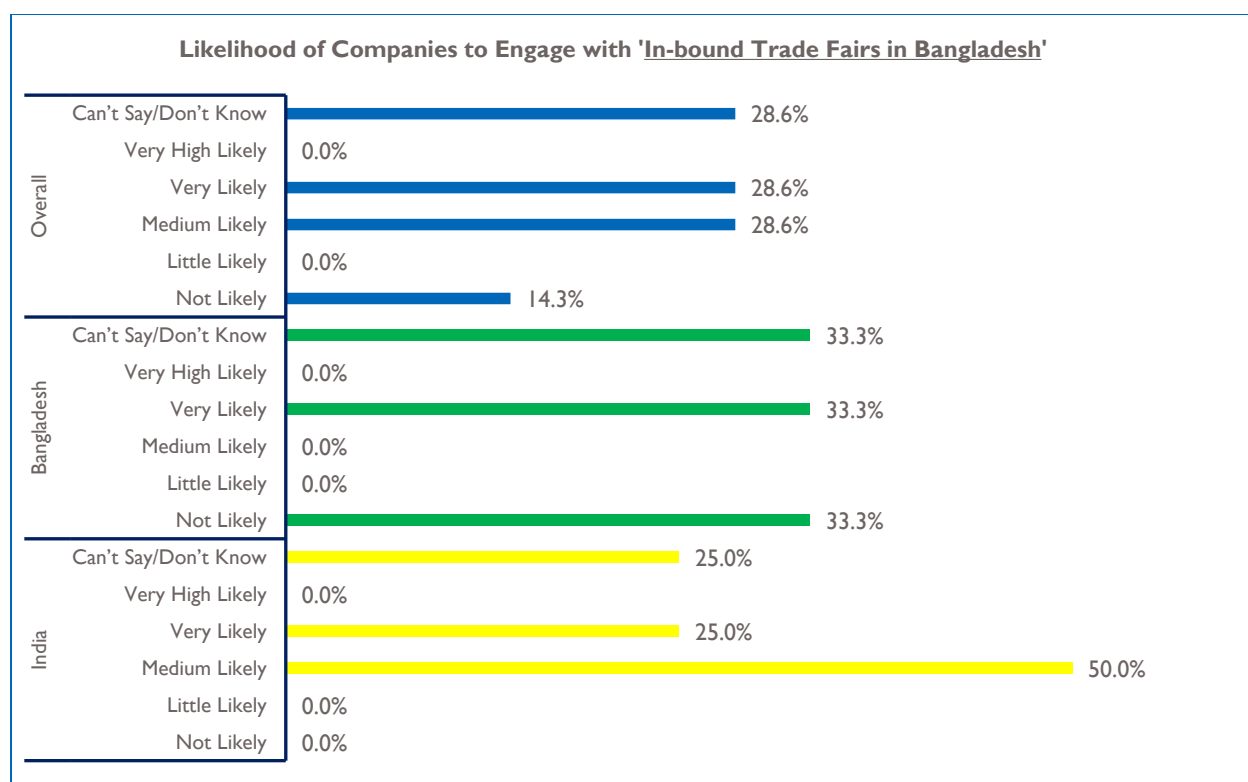


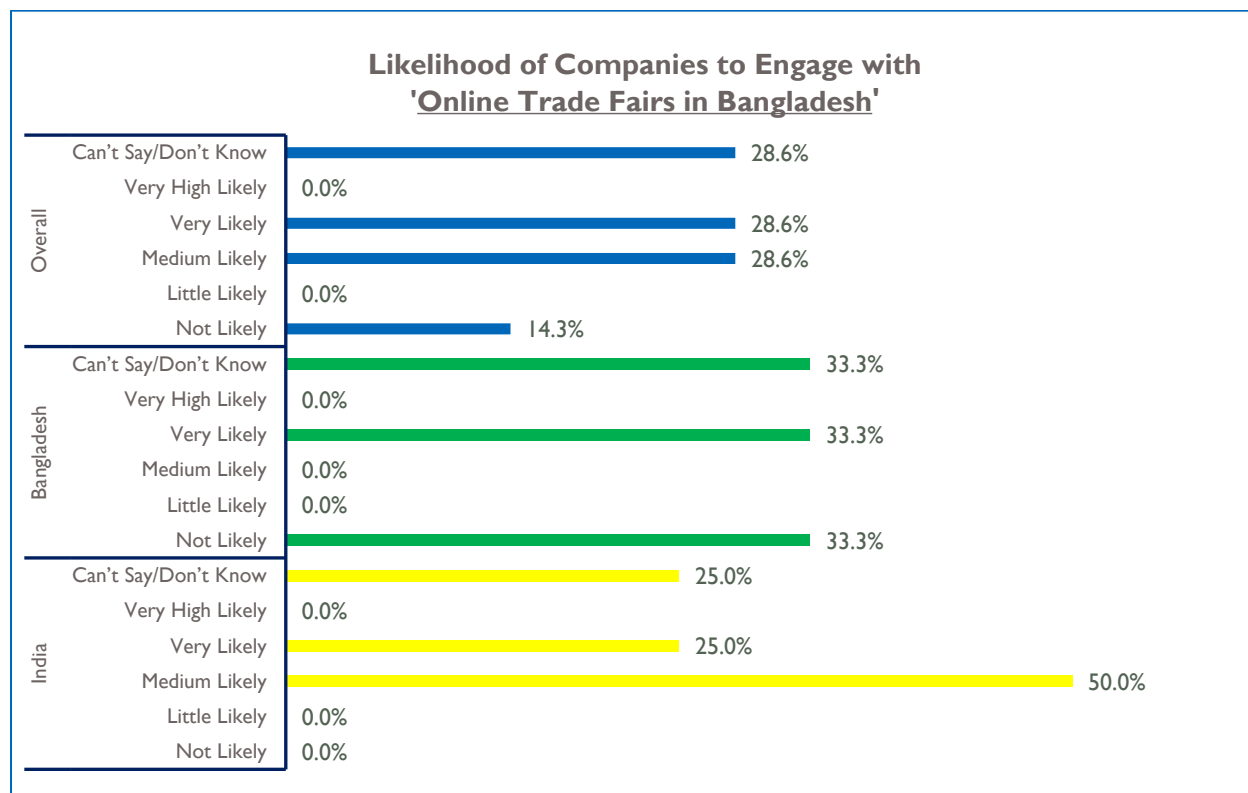
Figure 12: Likelihood of Companies to Engage with Indian Trade Fair Delegations in Bangladesh



In light of the notes current COVID-19 disruptions to platform activities, it is notable that surveys responses also indicated that agribusiness staff are equally willing to consider engaging with online trade

fairs as illustrated by the following figure.⁷⁸ These virtual activities would presumably entail lower operating costs as well as revenues.

Figure 13: Likelihood of Companies to Engage with Online Trade Fairs in Bangladesh



- Franchising or commission-based agents in target countries:** Additional recommendations for restructuring resource allocation and improvements in the platform revenue model discussed during the course of this evaluation also included launching a “franchise” model or engaging commission-based agent in the target countries.⁷⁹ Such a model would presumably address manpower constraints on platform contact servicing by engaging qualified entities and/or individuals to undertake follow-up on success fee-based contracts on a commission basis. This approach would presumably draw on the rich entrepreneur pool of sales staff located in the target countries.
- Re-define relationship between SAATHI and parent company (Dalberg Advisors):** Finally, an additional recommendation for restructuring resource allocation and improvements in the platform revenue model raised over the course of this evaluation was re-defining the relationship between SAATHI and parent company Dalberg Advisors to include deployment of surge capacity over the course of revenue development by the platform.⁸⁰ This restructuring would entail engaging Dalberg Advisor staff in (especially staff based in target countries) to undertake improved

⁷⁸ Quantitative survey analysis implemented by the evaluation team.

⁷⁹ Evaluation KII, agribusiness staff

⁸⁰ Ibid.

market analyses and contract serving activities. This recommendation would bring the platform more closely into alignment with the model utilized by competitive companies in the market for the types of services offered by SAATHI and would presumably leverage Dalberg interest in the viability and future revenue of the platform.

KEY PROJECT ASPECTS TO ADDRESS – CONCLUSIONS

This section presents the conclusions of the evaluation team for sub-EQs based on findings related to the following EQ:

EQ4: WHAT KEY ASPECTS OF THE PROJECT SHOULD BE ADDRESSED AT THIS STAGE OF IMPLEMENTATION TO MAXIMIZE OUTCOMES OVER THE REMAINDER OF THE PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD?

➤ **4.1. Is there evidence that the project outcomes are likely to grow, scale up and out, past the project period of implementation (sustainability)?**

There is currently no evidence that the project outcomes are likely to grow, scale up and out, past the project period of implementation, calling into question the sustainability of the platform. Based on results to date and current cash flow, the continued operations of the platform are highly unlikely to be sustainable beyond the life of the project.

➤ **4.2. What changes/improvements need to be made to make the project more scalable, sustainable, and to achieve an enhanced development impact?**

- The platform’s geographic selection of Bangladesh is challenged by India-based company perceptions of the poor attractiveness of this market. Enhanced awareness of opportunities and mitigating strategies are needed to augment interest;
- Improvements in sub-sector identification and private company selection: selected sub-sectors need to more closely take into account FTF indicators and the existing enterprise landscape; and,
- Resource allocation needs to facilitate contract servicing and the platform revenue model needs to address cash flow challenges through adoption of activities that can generate intermediate terms incomes.

➤ **4.3. What recommendations can improve geographic selection, sub-sector identification, beneficiary private company selection, resource allocation and the platform revenue model?**

- Changes and improvements in geographic selection: include target markets perceived as more attractive to client countries, notably raising China and the “large” markets in Southeast Asia including Indonesia, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam as potential targets. Nonetheless, limited existing platform capacity and current platform orientation to Bangladesh make this suggestion likely unviable given the current resource allocation;
- Improvements in sub-sector identification and private company selection: reassess sub-sectors to focus more closely on the existing enterprise landscape for areas related to FTF indicators and undertake quantitative demand analyses of these sub-sectors; and re-design service marketing to tailor outreach to a broader range of viable companies, while improving communication to these companies regarding opportunities and problem mitigation in the target markets; leverage the existing export promotion eco-system to enhance the effectiveness of marketing; and,

- Changes in resource allocation and improvements in the platform revenue model: increase activity scope by focusing on new services to improve cash flow, including non-success-based fee activities such as trade fairs and delegations marketed to a more targeted audience of viable companies; explore franchise structures and commission-based agents to mitigate the platform limitations on platform workforce capacity to service contracts and consider revising the relationship between the platform and the parent company to include greater financial and manpower surge capacity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this evaluation lead the Panagora evaluation team to the overall conclusion that the SAATHI activity, within its current business and financial plan, as well as the realities of current implementation approaches, will not meet USAID objectives over the remaining life of the project and will not be sustainable following the project. Given this, the overarching recommendations of the team consist of two options:

Option 1: Discontinue the SAATHI Activity: In order to mitigate further resource losses, USAID would discontinue SAATHI project activity. The multiple challenges described herein make it highly improbable that SAATHI will achieve expected outcomes or reach financial sustainability in its current form and within the remaining time period. Further, project documentation and KIs make it clear that current COVID-19-related disruptions further mitigate against project success and make it even more difficult to take corrective measures.

Option 2: Suspend SAATHI activities until the resolution of the COVID-19 impacted period to minimize resource losses while undertaking a re-design toward to more effective and sustainable model: Under this option, USAID would recognize the risk of potential platform failure and suspend the activity while Dalberg Advisors undertakes a thorough financial and business plan re-design that clearly and convincingly addresses sustainability issues. The new plan would be informed by reliable data on technology demand in targeted sub-sectors in the target countries that clearly supports FtF objectives, a robust marketing strategy that identifies a wide group of viable export ready companies with an established track record of providing products and services in the targeted sub-sector and include a revised organizational structure that can effectively support this strategy. It would include realistic financial and business plans that create revenue streams in the short-term, while building long term revenue.

Figure 14: Possible SAATHI Re-Alignment Strategy Elements



If USAID chooses to suspend the activity pending re-design, the evaluation team recommends the re-design be based on the following principles to improve platform performance going forward:

1.1 Consider re-assessing sub-sector focus to better enhance food security and nutrition impacts

- Implement a re-defined opportunity search better oriented around FTF indicators in the target markets.
- Reassess the competitive landscape of existing firms in the identified sub-sectors.
- Develop quantitative demand models and assess barriers to entry (and mitigation approaches) for entering firms.

I.2 Consider re-defining the service marketing strategy to better target viable clients

- Given the current challenges to sustainability in the scale of operations, develop a strategy for identifying a wide pool of viable client companies that are export ready for the target market(s).
- Assess available communications strategies for marketing export opportunities identified in the target markets to receptive Indian firms.
- Assess the potential for leveraging the existing export support “eco-system”.

I.3 Consider diversifying services and revenue models to improve SAATHI financial sustainability

- Evaluate the demand for potential non-success fee-based services that can smooth intermediate phase cash flow, such as trade delegations and fairs (including virtual events).
- Consider engaging commission-based sales representatives in target markets to service success-fee-based services.
- Revise the relationship between the platform and the parent company to include financial and manpower surge capacity.

ANNEXES

ANNEX I: EVALUATION TIMELINE

TABLE 7: EVALUATION TIMELINE – DELIVERABLE DUE DATES	
TASKS/DELIVERABLE	DATE (2020)
Begin Document Review	July 7 – August 23
Work Plan submitted to USAID/India	July 17
Work Plan approved by USAID	July 22
Inception Report submitted to USAID	August 4
Full evaluation team recruited	August 7
Inception Report approved by USAID/India	August 11
Evaluation team kick-off meeting	August 11
Begin weekly check-in meetings with USAID/India	August 11 - 23
Data collection and analysis	August 17 – September 1
Provisional List of Specific KII Respondents submitted to USAID	August 24
Survey Protocols finalized	August 24
KII protocols finalized	August 24
Consultative Presentation with USAID/India	September 2
Produce Draft Evaluation Report	September 3 - 13
Draft Evaluation Report submitted to USAID/India	September 21
USAID/India reviews DRAFT report and provides comments	September 21- 26
Evaluation team reviews comments and finalizes report	September 26-October 1
Final Evaluation Report submitted to USAID/India	October 1

*Precise dates may vary slightly depending on availability and logistics.

TABLE 81: EVALUATION TIMELINE - GANTT CHART													
ACTIVITIES AND MILESTONES	JULY				AUGUST				SEPTEMBER				
	6	13	20	27	3	10	17	24	31	7	14	21	28
Document Review	█	█	█	█	█	█	█						
Draft Work Plan	█	█											
Inception Report			█	█	█								
Identify and recruit full evaluation team staff			█	█	█								
Team Kick-Off Meeting						█							
Weekly Check-In Meetings						█	█	█	█	█	█	█	
Provisional List of Specific KII Respondents						█	█						
Survey Protocols finalized						█	█						
KII protocols finalized						█	█						
Quant. Methods (indicator analysis and survey)						█	█	█	█				
Key Informant Interviews						█	█	█	█				
Consultative Presentation (initial findings and conclusions)									█				
DRAFT Evaluation Report									█	█	█		
FINAL Evaluation Report											█	█	█

ANNEX 2: EVALUATION MATRIX

TABLE 9: EVALUATION MATRIX

EVALUATION QUESTION	DATA SOURCE	DATA COLLECTION METHOD	DATA ANALYSIS METHOD
1. To what extent has the ag platform model been an effective approach to transfer innovations and technologies to other countries?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly and annual reports Evaluation and strategy documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicator analysis Survey - Contracting and non-contracting companies KIIs – all stakeholder groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Triangulation Content analysis Trend analysis
2. How effectively does the design and establishment of the platform support cross-country transfer of agricultural innovations and technologies in South Asia?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly and annual reports Evaluation and strategy documents SAATHI Contracts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicator analysis Survey - Contracting and non-contracting companies KIIs – all stakeholder groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Triangulation Content analysis Trend analysis Financial analysis
3. To what extent have the selected Indian agricultural innovations and technologies been adopted in the target countries?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly and annual reports Evaluation and strategy documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicator analysis Survey - Company staff interfacing with farmers KIIs – all stakeholder groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Triangulation Content analysis Trend analysis
4. What key aspects of the project that should be addressed at this stage of implementation to maximize outcomes over the remainder of the project implementation period?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly and annual reports Evaluation and strategy documents Background research documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicator analysis Survey - Contracting and non-contracting companies Survey - Company staff interfacing with farmers KIIs – all stakeholder groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Triangulation Content analysis Trend analysis

ANNEX 3: RESEARCH BIBLIOGRAPHY

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“Quarterly Report 3 - Report Period: April – June 2019” Dalberg Advisors for USAID, New Delhi, June 2019

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“SAATHI Contract - Partner Search - Waterbase Ltd.” June 1, 2020

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“SAATHI Contract - Partner Search – Blue Star International FZCO” June 24, 2020

ANNEX 4: PROJECT PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

SAATHI employs 18 M&E indicators and two Intermediate Indicators (IOs) and 18 CLINs against which Dalberg monitored project progress on a quarterly and reported to USAID India. The 18 M&E indicators with cumulative and yearly targets are as follows.

TABLE 10: SAATHI M&E INDICATOR AND CUMULATIVE AND ANNUAL TARGETS

OUTCOME (OC)	INTERMEDIATE OUTCOME (IO)	OUTPUT (OP)	M&E INDICATOR	TARGETS - CUMULATIVE	DATA SOURCES	YEAR 1		YEAR 2	YEAR 3
						TARGET	ACTUAL TARGET	TARGET	TARGET
OC 1: Innovations proven in India increasingly adopted and scaled among in other countries			1. Number of Ag Tech innovators enrolled by the platform for services to expand into Bangladesh and Nepal	~39 (total)	Platform-reported	N/A	N/A	20	19
			2. Number of Indian Ag Tech innovations/ products/ services scaled up by in the target geography	~10	Platform-reported	N/A	N/A	5	5
			3. proportion of female participants in USG assisted programs designed to increase access to productive economic resources (assets, credit, income or employment)	5	Platform-reported	NA	NA	0.1	0.15
			4. Value of annual sale of farms and firms receiving USG assistance	USD 5 million	Company-reported	N/A	N/A	1.5	3.5

TABLE 10: SAATHI M&E INDICATOR AND CUMULATIVE AND ANNUAL TARGETS

OUTCOME (OC)	INTERMEDIATE OUTCOME (IO)	OUTPUT (OP)	M&E INDICATOR	TARGETS - CUMULATIVE	DATA SOURCES	YEAR 1		YEAR 2	YEAR 3
						TARGET	ACTUAL TARGET	TARGET	TARGET
	IO 1: Established platform providing services to AgTech companies		5. Number of individuals (farmers adopting products and service of Platform’s client companies) participating in USG food security projects	~10,000	Company-reported	N/A	N/A	5000	5000
			6. Number/ value of additional investments in the platform	USD 100,000	Platform-reported	N/A	N/A	0	100000
	OP 1.1: Relevant Indian innovation pipeline identified		7. Quarterly platform revenue	USD 100,000	Platform-reported	N/A	N/A	40,000	80,000
			8. Number of AgTech innovators approached by/ approaching the Platform	150	Platform-reported	50	90	50	50
	OP 1.2: Indian innovations for development impact shared with other countries		9. Public/ customized market intelligence shared	10	Platform-reported	N/A	N/A	5	5
	OP 1.3: Indian innovation companies		10. Attendance/ participation in trade shows/ road shows	~5 events	Platform-reported	0	1	3	2
			11. B2B discussions initiated/ supported	50 meetings	Platform-	0	3	25	25

TABLE 10: SAATHI M&E INDICATOR AND CUMULATIVE AND ANNUAL TARGETS

OUTCOME (OC)	INTERMEDIATE OUTCOME (IO)	OUTPUT (OP)	M&E INDICATOR	TARGETS - CUMULATIVE	DATA SOURCES	YEAR 1		YEAR 2	YEAR 3
						TARGET	ACTUAL TARGET	TARGET	TARGET
		engaged/contracted with the platform			reported				
			12. Number of AgTech companies signing MOUs with the platform	5	Platform-reported	5	10	0	0
		OP 1.4: Companies paid for and received Platform services for diffusion	13. Number of AgTech companies purchasing and/or receiving Platform services	39	Platform-reported	N/A	N/A	20	19
	IO 2: India-Bangladesh innovation partnerships formed/ diffused		14. Number of partnerships formed between client companies and stakeholders in Bangladesh and Nepal	10	Platform-reported/ company reported	N/A	N/A	5	5
		OP 2.1: Companies paid for and received Platform services for diffusion	15. Number of partnerships formed between client companies and investors	2	Platform-reported	N/A	N/A	1	1
			16. Number of AgTech companies purchasing and/or receiving Platform services	39	Platform-reported	N/A	N/A	20	19

TABLE 10: SAATHI M&E INDICATOR AND CUMULATIVE AND ANNUAL TARGETS

OUTCOME (OC)	INTERMEDIATE OUTCOME (IO)	OUTPUT (OP)	M&E INDICATOR	TARGETS - CUMULATIVE	DATA SOURCES	YEAR 1		YEAR 2	YEAR 3
						TARGET	ACTUAL TARGET	TARGET	TARGET
		OP 2.2: Companies received financing from Platform for cross-border diffusion	17. Amount of funds and investments committed to this platform for the target GFSS countries	USD 2.5 million	Platform-reported	N/A	N/A	USD 1 Million	USD 1.5 Million
			18. Value of agriculture related financing accessed by firms as a result of USG assistance	USD 500,000	Platform-reported	N/A	N/A	200000	300000

TABLE 11: PROGRESS AND INDICATOR TARGETS

INDICATOR	TARGETS - CUMULATIVE	YEAR 1		YEAR 2	YEAR 2 (TARGET Q2 (JAN-MARCH 2020) REPORT)	YEAR 3	YEAR-1 (ACHIEVEMENT- ACTUAL)				YEAR-2 (ACHIEVEMENT- ACTUAL)			
		TARGET	ACTUAL TARGET	TARGET			Q1 (OCT-DEC 2018)	Q2 (JAN-MARCH 2019)	Q3 (APRIL-JUNE 2019)	Q4 (JULY-SEPT 2019)	Q1 (OCT-DEC 2019)	Q2 (JAN-MARCH 2020)	Q3 (APRIL-JUNE 2020)	Q4 (JULY-SEPT 2020)
1. Number of Ag Tech innovators enrolled by the platform for services to expand into Bangladesh and Nepal	~39 (total)	N/A	N/A	20	19	19	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	15	15	N/a

TABLE II: PROGRESS AND INDICATOR TARGETS

INDICATOR	TARGETS - CUMULATIVE	YEAR 1		YEAR 2	YEAR 2 (TARGET Q2 (JAN-MARCH 2020) REPORT)	YEAR 3	YEAR-1 (ACHIEVEMENT- ACTUAL)				YEAR-2 (ACHIEVEMENT- ACTUAL)			
		TARGET	ACTUAL TARGET	TARGET			Q1 (OCT-DEC 2018)	Q2 (JAN-MARCH 2019)	Q3 (APRIL-JUNE 2019)	Q4 (JULY-SEPT 2019)	Q1 (OCT-DEC 2019)	Q2 (JAN-MARCH 2020)	Q3 (APRIL-JUNE 2020)	Q4 (JULY-SEPT 2020)
		2. Number of Indian Ag Tech innovations/ products/ services scaled up by in the target geography	~10	N/A			N/A	5	5	5	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a
3. proportion of female participants in USG assisted programs designed to increase access to productive economic resources (assets, credit, income or employment)	5	NA	NA	0.1	2	0.15	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	0	0	N/a
4. Value of annual sale of farms and firms receiving USG assistance	USD 5 million	N/A	N/A	1.5	2	3.5	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	NA	NA	N/a
5. Number of individuals (farmers adopting products and service of Platform's client companies) participating in	~10,000	N/A	N/A	5000	5000	5000	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	0	0	N/a

TABLE 11: PROGRESS AND INDICATOR TARGETS

INDICATOR	TARGETS - CUMULATIVE	YEAR 1		YEAR 2	YEAR 2 (TARGET Q2 (JAN-MARCH 2020) REPORT)	YEAR 3	YEAR-1 (ACHIEVEMENT- ACTUAL)				YEAR-2 (ACHIEVEMENT- ACTUAL)			
		TARGET	ACTUAL TARGET	TARGET			Q1 (OCT-DEC 2018)	Q2 (JAN-MARCH 2019)	Q3 (APRIL-JUNE 2019)	Q4 (JULY-SEPT 2019)	Q1 (OCT-DEC 2019)	Q2 (JAN-MARCH 2020)	Q3 (APRIL-JUNE 2020)	Q4 (JULY-SEPT 2020)
		USG food security projects												
6. Number/ value of additional investments in the platform	USD 100,000	N/A	N/A	0	0	100000	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	0	0	N/a
7. Quarterly platform revenue	<u>USD 100,000</u>	N/A	N/A	40,000	1,00,000	80,000	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	0	0	N/a
8. Number of AgTech innovators approached by/ approaching the Platform	150	50	90	50	50	50	N/a	N/a	N/a	92	92	90	90	N/a
9. Public/ customized market intelligence shared	10	N/A	N/A	5	5	5	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	4	4	N/a
10. Attendance/ participation in trade shows/ road shows	~5 events	0	1	3	3	2	N/a	N/a	N/a	1	1	19	19	N/a
11. B2B discussions initiated/ supported	50 meetings	0	3	25	25	25	N/a	N/a	N/a	3	3	21	21	N/a
12. Number of AgTech companies signing	5	5	10	0	0	0	N/a	N/a	N/a	10	10	0	0	N/a

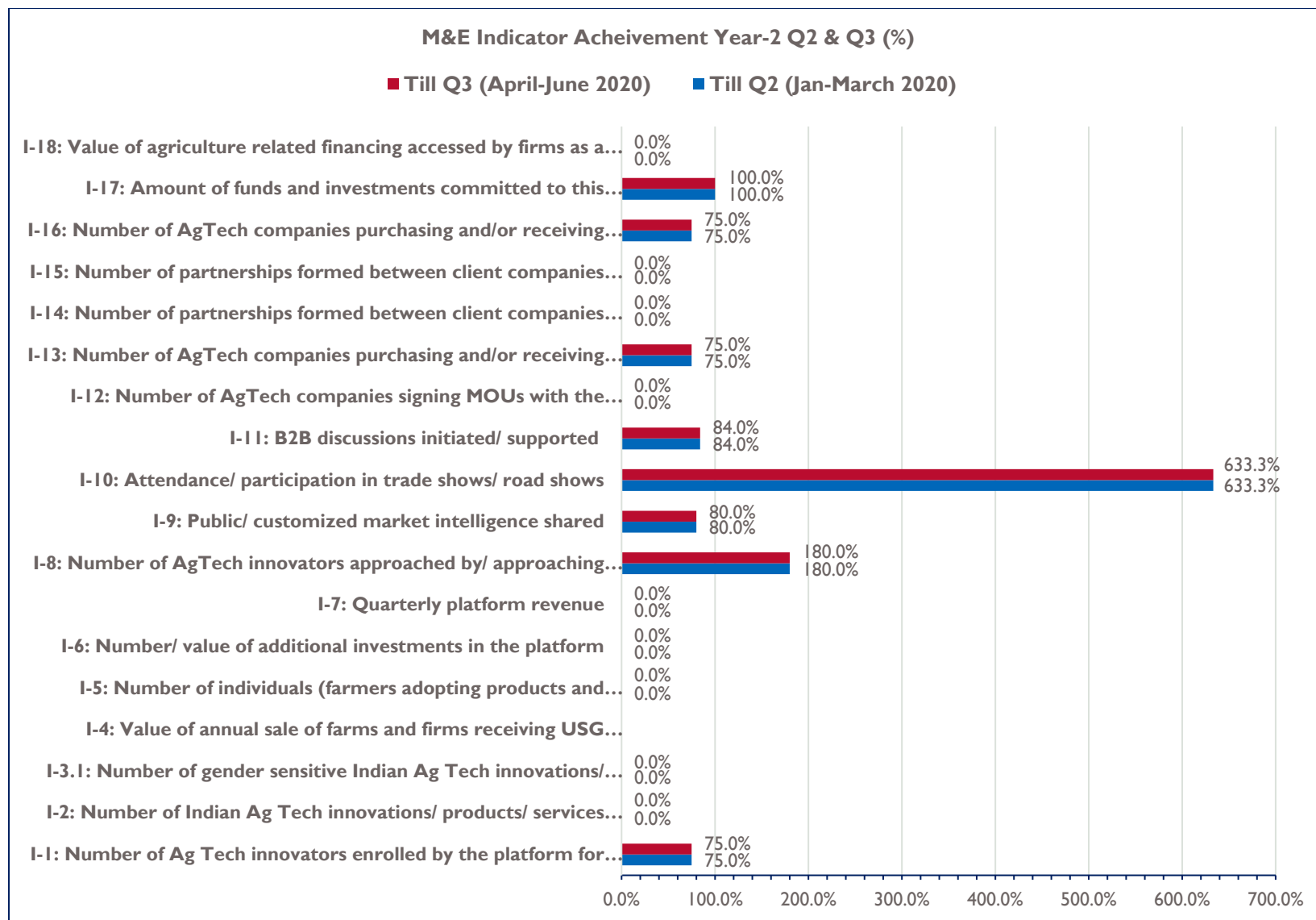
TABLE 11: PROGRESS AND INDICATOR TARGETS

INDICATOR	TARGETS - CUMULATIVE	YEAR 1		YEAR 2	YEAR 2 (TARGET Q2 (JAN-MARCH 2020) REPORT)	YEAR 3	YEAR-1 (ACHIEVEMENT- ACTUAL)				YEAR-2 (ACHIEVEMENT- ACTUAL)			
		TARGET	ACTUAL TARGET	TARGET			Q1 (OCT-DEC 2018)	Q2 (JAN-MARCH 2019)	Q3 (APRIL-JUNE 2019)	Q4 (JULY-SEPT 2019)	Q1 (OCT-DEC 2019)	Q2 (JAN-MARCH 2020)	Q3 (APRIL-JUNE 2020)	Q4 (JULY-SEPT 2020)
		MOUs with the platform												
13. Number of AgTech companies purchasing and/or receiving Platform services	39	N/A	N/A	20	20	19	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	15	15	N/a
14. Number of partnerships formed between client companies and stakeholders in Bangladesh and Nepal	10	N/A	N/A	5	5	5	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	0	0	N/a
15. Number of partnerships formed between client companies and investors	2	N/A	N/A	1	1	1	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	0	0	N/a
16. Number of AgTech companies purchasing and/or receiving Platform services	39	N/A	N/A	20	20	19	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	15	15	N/a
17. Amount of funds and investments committed to this platform for the	USD 2.5 million	N/A	N/A	USD 1 Million	1	USD 1.5 Million	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	1	1	N/a

TABLE 11: PROGRESS AND INDICATOR TARGETS

INDICATOR	TARGETS - CUMULATIVE	YEAR 1		YEAR 2	YEAR 2 (TARGET Q2 (JAN-MARCH 2020) REPORT)	YEAR 3	YEAR-1 (ACHIEVEMENT- ACTUAL)				YEAR-2 (ACHIEVEMENT- ACTUAL)			
		TARGET	ACTUAL TARGET	TARGET			Q1 (OCT-DEC 2018)	Q2 (JAN-MARCH 2019)	Q3 (APRIL-JUNE 2019)	Q4 (JULY-SEPT 2019)	Q1 (OCT-DEC 2019)	Q2 (JAN-MARCH 2020)	Q3 (APRIL-JUNE 2020)	Q4 (JULY-SEPT 2020)
		target GFSS countries												
18. Value of agriculture related financing accessed by firms as a result of USG assistance	USD 500,000	N/A	N/A	200000	250000	300000	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	0	0	N/a

Figure 15: SAAHI Progress Against Indicators



Progress Against CLINS

Year1-Q1 (Oct-Dec 2018)

In Quarter I of the assignment, the Dalberg team's objective was to conduct research and benchmarking to prepare documentation which was to lead to the setup of a separate, financially viable, innovation platform that transfers agricultural innovations from India to Bangladesh starting 2019. The platform company aimed at to provide specific services ("service areas" in the results framework), a set of measurable activities that lead to critical outputs and intermediate outcomes, which in turn contribute to the project objectives of innovations proven in India increasingly adopted and scaled amongst other countries.

The Dalberg team relied on a highly collaborative research method in CLINs 1, 2 and 3. There were bi-weekly check-ins with the USAID team throughout the course of the quarter. In-person presentations and feedback sessions with the USAID team were conducted during October, November, and December 2018

The project team worked on three CLINs during the period pertaining to this QPR. The CLINs and the relevant work and outputs created during them are mentioned below:

CLIN 1- STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION WORKSHOP

During October 2018, the Dalberg team designed, curated and facilitated stakeholder consultation workshop with representatives from:

- The Indian public and private agricultural ecosystem on October 22nd, 2018, at the Claridge's Hotel in New Delhi, India: and,
- The private agri-industry in Bangladesh on November 26th, 2018 at the Westin Hotel in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

The workshop was attended by key stakeholders from the Indian agricultural ecosystem, who participated in a problem solving and design session with the Dalberg teams. The workshop was used as a platform to share the project's objectives and vision for the Indian market, and to receive buy-in from a select group of key influencers in the space. The group provided early inputs into the challenges faced by enterprises in entering international markets and co-designed the wireframe of services that could help them overcome market entry and expansion barriers. These inputs were collated and synthesized to shape the research strategy and hypothesis in CLINs 2 and 3 of the assignment.

CLIN 2- INCEPTION REPORT

During November 2018, the Dalberg team prepared the inception report for the project after intensive consultations with the USAID team to understand their objectives and expectations from the project, as well as experiences with past agricultural innovation assignments. Dalberg consulted with internal gender and monitoring and evaluation experts to layout a high-level MEL and gender strategy for the assignment. In addition, the Dalberg team began consultations with stakeholders (private companies, industry experts, and investors) from the agriculture ecosystem in India, Bangladesh, and Nepal to sharpen our hypothesis, and begin receiving inputs in innovator needs and appropriate platform services.

Through this exercise, the Dalberg prepared an inception report containing a detailed description of implementation plans, staffing and team structure, MEL plans, gender plans, and environment plans for the assignment.

CLIN 3-PLATFORM BLUEPRINT AND IMPLEMENTATION ROADMAP: (DECEMBER 2018)

In the month of December 2018, for CLIN 3, which began in parallel to CLIN 2, the Dalberg team followed its mixed-methods approach of literature review, in-person consultations, and workshops to develop the blueprint for the platform's strategy. The team reviewed literature on the ag-tech industry, country policies, and cross-border trade, and conducted extensive consultations with over 60 stakeholders spread across India, Bangladesh, and Nepal, representing AgTech innovators of various sizes and maturity, industry experts, investors, and government officials.

During its immersive field visit to Bangladesh, where the team conducted 1-1 interviews with senior private sector leaders in the agricultural space, Dalberg organized a half-day workshop with a select group of top management from private sector agricultural firms, and collected valuable inputs on their innovation needs, preferred modes of partnership with Indian AgTech innovators, and key asks from the platform. The team then synthesized all the insights from its research and benchmarking process, and developed an exhaustive blueprint of the platform's strategy, which was presented and submitted to the USAID team at the end of the month for feedback and comments.

YEAR 1-Q2 (JAN-MARCH 2019)

In this QPR (January – March 2019) Dalberg received feedback from the USAID team based on which it revised and updated the official strategy blueprint and began to work on operationalizing the platform in parallel. For this, the team began work with various subcontractors for specialized services. This included onboarding and extensively consulting with lawyers to set-up the platform as an entity, hiring a recruiting agency to scout for right talent to staff the platform, and onboarding and working with web-developers and design agency to develop branding and website for the platform.

The project team worked on CLIN 4, 5 & 6 during this period pertaining to this QPR. The CLINs and the relevant work and outputs created during them are described below:

CLIN 4- PLATFORM SET-UP IN INDIA

For CLIN 4, in the month of February 2019, the Dalberg team pursued extensive consultations with the legal counsel of Dalberg and USAID to formulate a plan of action for the platform's set up in India. This was followed by the pursuance and completion of a series of paperwork that included approvals, certifications, and identifications. The project team finally got approval and a final go-ahead on 8th April 2019. After several drafts and reviews, the incorporation option for the platform was finalized. The team then began engaging with a team of tax consultants and lawyers to begin compiling all documentation, filling checklists, and providing detailed responses to all queries and needs for company registration and incorporation.

CLIN 5 - PLATFORM PRE-LAUNCH RECRUITMENT

A recruiting agency was hired in February 2019 to draft the job descriptions for the CEO, Research and Communications Associate, and the Bangladesh Partnerships Manager. Several profiles were circulated and shortlisted, following which the team began the process of conducting extensive interviews for both the positions. Top candidates for the CEO and Associate positions have been shortlisted and interviewed. The team simultaneously initiated discussions in Bangladesh for leads on hiring the Partnerships Manager and advisors. The Bangladesh partnerships manager were recruited at a later stage (around July 2019) once the India team has begun operations and could determine the specific profile of a Bangladesh Manager that would help support them.

CLIN 6 - PLATFORM PRE-LAUNCH COMMUNICATION

CLIN 6, included two key activities i.e. domain acquisition and a communications plan. On the former front, a domain name for the platform, under “saathi.asia” had been bought and shared with the web developed for an official website transfer. An email address using the domain had been created for the Associate. The project team had also hired a design specialist and a website development agency to initiate brand building and communication activities. The different components of the communications kit included a brochure, a corporate film, e-posters and banners, social media banners, an official website, brand guidelines, and public relations kit as per comparable quality norms of the industry. By the end of April 2019, the team had reviewed and finalized the brochure in coordination with the designer. The brand guidelines have been sent to the USAID team for approval. The website was completed and had been transferred onto the platform’s domain by mid-May 2019. The banners and posters were in the process of being developed and were finalized after minor tweaks, following branding approval from USAID.

Year 1-Q3 (April-June 2019)

In QPR 3, the project team continued work on CLIN 4, 5 and 6 and also took over activities of CLIN-7.

CLIN 4- PLATFORM SET-UP IN INDIA (APRIL - ONGOING)

Like the team’s efforts in year 1 Q-2 for CLIN 4 activities, the Dalberg team continued in Q-4 also and finally got approval and a final go-ahead on 8th April 2019 for a plan of action for the platform’s set up in India. After several drafts and reviews, the incorporation option for the platform was finalized and then engaged with a team of tax consultants and lawyers to incorporate the company. The name ‘South Asia Ag-Tech Hub for Innovation Private Limited’ had been reserved for the company and the final application has been made for incorporation. The team worked with the lawyers to reply to queries from the registrar of companies and expected the process to be completed in early July 2019. The team had finalized Awfis, a coworking space in Gurgaon for the SAATHI staff to move into by July 2019.

CLIN 5 - PLATFORM PRE-LAUNCH RECRUITMENT

In this quarter, the Dalberg team continued the hiring process started in February 2019 for the new platform. Final candidates were offered the job and they accepted the same. The Research Associate had been onboard since the 22nd of April and the CEO joined on the 3rd of June. The team along with the CEO started scouting for the Associate Director in Bangladesh.

CLIN 6 - PLATFORM PRE-LAUNCH COMMUNICATION:

In continuation of previous quarter's progress, a domain name for the platform, under "saathi.asia" had been bought and shared with the web developer for an official website transfer. An email address using the domain had been created for the CEO and the Research Associate.

The project team had completed the key components of the communications and branding kit and the platform's brand guide as per comparable quality norms of the industry. By the end of April 2019, the team had reviewed and finalized the brochure in coordination with the designer.

The website wireframe became ready, and the platform had submitted the first round of documents to USAID's website governance board. It further completed additional documentation work. The website was completed and had been transferred onto the platform's domain by mid-May 2019. The banners and posters were in the process of being developed and were finalized after minor tweaks, following branding approval from USAID.

CLIN 7 - CONTRACTING TEMPLATE

CLIN 7, included developing legal templates for the SAATHI team to enter into partnerships and contract with ecosystem partners and clients for their business. This CLIN involved developing four main templates – 1) MoU with Partners, 2) MoU with clients 3) Sell-side agreement/contract and 4) buy-side agreement/contract. The team went through multiple iterations with the lawyers and took inputs from the CEO as well. All the templates have been finalized as of the last week of June and are going final reviews for submission.

Year 1-Q4 (July-September 2019)

CLIN 8 - IN-PRINCIPLE AGREEMENTS PRIOR TO LAUNCH

The SAATHI team far exceeded its commitments for CLIN 8, by delivering 10 MOUs with companies in India and Bangladesh

CLIN 9 - PRE-LAUNCH SERVICE DESIGN

Platform set-up in India and contracting templates: In CLINs 4, 7 and 9, extensive consultations took place with the legal counsel of Dalberg, following which the project team was successful in obtaining the "Certificate of Incorporation" for South Asia Ag-tech Hub for Innovation on 20th August 2019. With this, the Platform could be officially registered as a private limited company, in turn, enabling SAATHI to engage with clients directly and enter into agreements for service provision.

SAATHI organized a launch event for the Platform, tentatively scheduled for the first week of December. The event, anticipated to be attended by 100+ industry leaders, government officials and development organizations will help SAATHI build credibility and gain visibility as a Platform.

In-principal agreements prior to launch: The SAATHI team in India leveraged the CEO's extensive industry relationships along with Dalberg and USAID's networks to conduct 1-1 business development meetings with approximately 25 companies in India, and 15 companies in Bangladesh. With effective client engagement, the team was able to establish MOUs with 6 Indian and 4 Bangladeshi companies who

expressed interest in formalizing their relationship with the Food Security and Ag-Tech Market Access and Analytics Platform in India / Sep 30th, 2019.

Five types of legal contracts, imperative to SAATHI's success, had been developed:

- MoU with Partners;
- MoU with clients;
- Sell-side agreement/contract;
- buy-side agreement/contract; and,
- Non-disclosure agreement.

In addition, four professionally edited service manuals have been created for the Platform's core services.

Platform pre-launch recruitment: SAATHI was a 3-member team in India, headed by Girish Aivalli, its Chief Executive Officer, having over two decades of strategic and operational experience in the industry. Its other employees included a Research and Communications Associate and an Operations and Management Executive. In Bangladesh, the company had onboarded an Advisor, Anwar Faruque, who assisted SAATHI in navigating the local context and initiating conversations with the owners of agribusinesses in the country. Mr. Faruque is the Former Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Govt. of Bangladesh and is extremely well regarded in the industry. With the above, the project team completed CLIN 5, ensuring SAATHI is ready to conduct operations and provide services efficiently.

Dalberg has defined a detailed list of indicators and MEL plan to measure the outcomes and outputs of the project based on USAID requirements. Year 1, however, mainly focused on research, strategy formulation and operationalization of SAATHI. Most of the indicators, therefore, became applicable from the next year when SAATHI conducts business. Data against some initial output indicators has been shared in the detailed report below and shows that the project is on track Dalberg has followed a meticulous reporting plan that includes monthly meeting updates, structure and timely CLIN deliverables and quarterly reports to USAID.

Year 1 did not include any commercial contracts/ formal agreements, therefore did not include any leveraging, cost sharing or financial monitoring of financing beyond project finances directly payable to Dalberg for project deliverables.

Year 2

For Year 2 of SAATHI, following target were fixed as follows:

- Continued high-touch business development efforts, i.e., to meet CLINs 10-13;
- Initiation of operations in Nepal;
- Long-term communications plan;
- Outreach through research and analysis;
- Workshops and conferences;
- Diversified revenue model;
- Formalization of investor relationships;
- Development of an MEL framework; and,

- Delivery of services

Year 2- Q1 (Oct-Dec 2019)

In Quarter 1 of Year 2 of the assignment, the Dalberg team's conducted research and benchmarking to prepare documentation that led to the setup of a separate, financially viable, innovation platform (private limited company called SAATHI) that would enable transfers of agricultural innovations from India to Bangladesh starting 2019 through cross-border private sector partnerships.

In Quarter 1 of second year (Oct 19- Dec 19), the project team completed Clin 9 and made significant progress towards CLIN 10 and 11 Food Security and Ag-Tech Market Access and Analytics Platform in India / December 2019

CLIN 9 - PRE-LAUNCH SERVICE DELIVERY:

In CLIN 9, the project team completed the development of professionally edited and structured standard operating procedures for 1-1 engagements for clients and partners in India, and Bangladesh respectively. The CLIN was achieved utilizing the SAATHI's CEO's experience in undertaking some of these services including field tests for seeds, Dalberg's experience in providing partner search and advisory services, inputs from finance experts for Financing Advisory and Investment Facilitation services and valuable feedback from the USAID team. The SOPs detailing out step by step action items for each service area were developed to ensure efficiency in work, consistency in processes, reduction in errors, and continuity in business operations. The SOPs were for the following four services:

- Overseas Partner Search,
- Field Testing and Prototyping,
- Financing Advisory and Investment Facilitation, and
- Business and Agri-Project Advisory.

CLIN 10 - LAUNCH PARTNERSHIPS:

For CLIN 10, the platform utilized multiple channels to seek out and shortlist credible leads in order to establish formal relationships with five companies with agreed upon payments for receiving professional services through the platform. Of the 9 companies who signed an MoU in the previous quarter, 5 companies expressed interest in establishing a contract, and had reached advanced stages of discussions in this quarter. In this quarter, several new companies were approached, out of which, 15 new conversations were initiated across India and Bangladesh, bringing the pipeline of potential leads to 54. These companies varied in size from USD 1 million to USD 2 billion. They were spread across sectors that were identified as high demand sectors in Bangladesh such as digital agriculture, farm inputs, post-harvest, and farm machinery and implements. The project team pursued the companies closely and completed 6 B2B meetings between potential clients from Bangladesh and India.

The SAATHI team also attended USAID's Mission Meeting on December 4th and introduced the company and its services among implementation partners, who expressed interest in the platform. The SAATHI team had attended 6 conferences in this quarter where the CEO was a Jury Member and a Speaker for two of the conferences. These resulted in 3-5 potential leads per conference.

In addition, the team visited Bangladesh three times with a two-fold agenda - establishing commercial contracts and strengthening SAATHI's footprint in Bangladesh. In order to strengthen the Bangladeshi presence, a Country Representative was recruited in Bangladesh named Mr. Mahbub Rahman. Mr. Rahman had added a new layer of confidence among Indian clients and is credited with generating 15 leads.

Conversations with potential leads were in advanced stages, with companies expressing interest in opportunities through SAATHI.

However, the delay in meeting CLIN 10 can be attributed to two specific reasons:

1. Lack of incoming leads leading to high dependency on time-consuming push strategies. Due to delay in approval on the website from USAID, SAATHI was unable to have a digital presence during this period and therefore could not generate incoming interest. The CEO had to largely rely on more time-consuming strategies like multiple one-on-one meetings to identify good leads. This led to delayed conversion into contracts.

2. Reasons typical of the contracting process as follows:

- Multiple rounds of 5-6 in-person meetings were required per client from introduction to deal closure phase,
- Adoption of services largely relies on timing and internal commitments for clients i.e. acquisition deal, ERP upgradation, closure of financial year, international travel,
- Establishment of trust in a new business concept like SAATHI has led to additional rounds being needed for Bangladeshi clients in particular,
- Closure of contract between two clients solely depends on negotiations and speed of execution between parties,
- SAATHI had been taking the above into consideration and structuring contracts and fees accordingly. Overall, clients had been appreciative of the high touch approach, support, and accessibility provided by SAATHI. All 23 conversations were in near completion stages and mainly depended on alignment of both partners involved in a deal, which the CEO is monitoring and facilitating closely.

Year 2- Q2 (Jan-March 2020)

In this Quarter 2 of the second year (January 2020- March 2020), the project team completed both CLIN 10 and 11, completing CLIN 11 a week before the due date. Details of Quarter 2 activities are listed below:

CLIN 10 ACHIEVEMENT

The Platform signed contracts to establish formal partnerships with five companies in India and Bangladesh for receiving professional services through the Platform for a combination of fixed and pay-for-performance fee. These companies vary in size from USD 2 – 15 million and are spread across sectors that were identified as high demand sectors in Bangladesh, such as digital agriculture, farm inputs, post-harvest, and aquaculture.

CLIN II ACHIEVEMENT

The Platform cumulatively established 10 formal partnerships and implementation plans with companies in India and Bangladesh for receiving professional services through the Platform for a combination of fixed and pay-for-performance fee totaling over USD 80,000.

The timely completion of CLIN II was a result of SAATHI's high touch approach to build relationships with clients. With multiple interactions and constant focus on client context, SAATHI was able to keep the conversation going until the signing of contracts.

In this quarter, the Platform continued to undertake several activities to both increase brand awareness and further lead generation. These are listed below:

Building brand awareness through digital marketing: The team onboarded a seasoned digital marketing firm to launch SAATHI online and ensure the company is "discoverable" across Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter. The Platform currently awaits SAATHI's website approval from USAID, as a website is critical platform for lead generation and brand visibility. The Platform is also running targeted advertisement campaigns on Twitter to target potential leads and build brand credibility through increased engagements on the forum.

o Developing a pipeline of leads: The Dalberg and SAATHI team reviewed 96 potential leads across various in-demand industries such as aquaculture and fisheries, food processing, and dairy and poultry in order to build a warm pipeline of leads for the CEO. These were identified using multiple sales tools, targeted digital marketing, and reputed conferences and trade shows in the sectors mentioned above. The above leads were analyzed and contacted over multiple weeks, resulting in 14 qualified leads that are being pursued by the CEO for further engagements. These companies vary in size from USD 15 to USD 300 million. However, there has been a slowdown in the response given the current COVID-19 pandemic, but the team is continually following up over phone calls and emails.

Attending events and conferences: The team attended 5 conferences and was able to develop a steady pipeline of leads through diligent networking at these events. In early February, the CEO attended the International Seafood Show in Kochi and introduced SAATHI's services to 20+ companies. Later in the month, SAATHI became a sponsor and the CEO participated as the keynote speaker for a conference on "Promoting collective actions for strengthening value chain for safe and nutritious food in Bangladesh" in Dhaka. In March 2020, the SAATHI team attended ASSOCHAM's 2nd National Conference on Food Value Chain Partnerships, and sponsored CII's "Innovations and Entrepreneurship in Agriculture: Moving towards Agriculture 2.0" held in New Delhi.

Hiring activity for the Director for Investments and Financial Advisory: The team identified the need for a senior person to head the Investments and Financial Advisory portfolio of SAATHI. The Dalberg team assessed over 15 candidates for the role and was in the process of final interviews with 4-6 strong candidates. Dalberg expected to make a final decision in April 2020 / early May 2020.

Development of a knowledge report: In this quarter, the Platform hired an external research consultant to undertake an in-depth report on "Indian Agri Innovations for South Asia." The first draft of the report, includes detailed interviews from industry stalwarts that have spearheaded innovations across sectors such as warehousing, dairy processing, mega food parks, custom hiring models etc. The report,

which is 50+ pages in size, is currently under final design, editing and review. It is expected to launch in the next quarter.

Year 2 - Q3 (April-June 2020)

Quarter 3 of the second year (April 2020 - June 2020) was severely impacted by the COVID 19 pandemic. Most of this period was spent under lockdown leading to a major slowdown in business activities. Agribusinesses, both in Bangladesh and India, were reluctant to make commercial commitments for new projects and maintained a 'wait and watch' approach due to uncertainties in their businesses.

The SAATHI team also made some progress in the execution of the 10 contracts that were signed in the last quarter, however, response from clients remained slow and indecisive because of the current uncertainty in business. SAATHI identified relevant partners for Indian companies in Bangladesh, initiated online conversations and developed necessary documents where required. 7 out of the 10 contracts had seen some movement due to SAATHI's efforts, however, final closing of contracts between partners is dependent on clients' willingness to commit to new businesses during this situation.

Since a large part of SAATHI's revenue is dependent on the performance of these contracts, it was expected to be a substantial delay in realization of this revenue due to the impact of pandemic.

To keep the sector engaged despite the given situation and to continue to strengthen the SAATHI brand, the SAATHI team hosted two webinars to engage with agribusinesses in India and Bangladesh on the impact of COVID, completed and released a knowledge report on 'Indian Agri Innovations for South Asia' and partnered with CII on an Ag Tech innovation contest to be held in the next quarter.

CLIN 12 - ACHIEVEMENT:

SAATHI worked with multiple warm leads from the previous quarter but was able to close only 5 of those as new contracts towards CLIN 12, with total expected revenue of US\$ 16,000. These contracts were spread across high need sectors including aquaculture, warehousing, and trade financing.

Due to the impact of the pandemic, clients stayed away from any upfront fees and only committed to pay-for-performance fees, thus greatly impacting SAATHI's immediate revenue realization. These contracts were spread across high need sectors including aquaculture, warehousing and trade financing and company sizes ranged from USD 2 – 400 million.

SAATHI signed 15 contracts with an expected revenue of ~US\$100,000 (a combination of fixed and pay-for-performance fee).

Just as signing of new contracts, execution of signed contracts also faced a major hit because of COVID. Many of the partners that SAATHI had identified and engaged with earlier dropped off from the discussions or asked to wait indefinitely till their current business situation improved. This led to additional efforts on SAATHI's front in re-starting partner search.

Despite this slowdown, SAATHI made some progress in the execution of signed contracts. Identification of potential partners, initial conversations between potential partners and progress in the development

of financial documents for the investment facilitation contracts were some of the key activities undertaken. However, there had been significant delays in finalizing deals due to indecisiveness and lack of commitment from the clients as a result of COVID. This had led to delays in revenue realization for SAATHI.

Other business development activities:

In this quarter, the Platform continued to undertake several virtual activities to increase both brand awareness and lead generation. These are listed below:

Building brand awareness through digital marketing: SAATHI continues to build its position as a thought leader in the ecosystem through its steady release of content in the form of articles, videos, micro-blogs. The videos have highlighted the various successful agri innovations from India that can be replicated in South Asia that can directly benefit farmers and the agricultural ecosystem in the region. The articles have focused on relevant topics such as the Government of India's financial outlay for the sector, digital technologies, new business models etc.

Developing a pipeline of leads: In this quarter, the SAATHI team organized video conferencing calls and introduced SAATHI to 20 new companies. Under its sector focused leads generation strategy, the team also engaged a Market Research Specialist in Bangladesh to develop a directory of companies in the aquaculture sector. This is in response to the project team's research on the scope of SAATHI's services in the sector, and initial demand from Indian clients to expand into the country. The team is currently conducting outreach and consistent follow ups with all identified leads through phone calls and emails. GCI and Head of Financial Advisory are developing a prospective deals pipeline, from their networks, of companies with funding needs with potential for Bangladesh expansion/partnership. However, interest in cross border trade, at the moment, is low. With restrictions on international travel and increasing risk of the virus, most companies prefer to wait and respond later.

Hosting and attending events and conferences: The project team organized two successful webinars in the beginning of this quarter that focused on the impact on Covid-19 on agribusinesses in India and Bangladesh respectively. The webinars were attended by influential senior leaders from the industry in both countries who expressed major concerns as a result of COVID. The discussions from the webinar were collated into two high impact presentations with a sectoral focus on farm operations, seeds, agrochemicals, farm machinery, fertilizers, and warehousing and cold storage. In addition, the CEO also attended and made presentations at two webinars – 1) Direct Vs Procurement Model hosted by NIAM, Jaipur and 2) ASSOCHAM India. Towards the end of the quarter, SAATHI collaborated with The Confederation of Indian Industries, to host an Agri Innovation Contest to recognize agricultural innovations in India by small to large corporations.

Hiring activity for the Director for Investments and Financial Advisory: The team has onboarded a candidate for the role of Head of Investments and Financial Advisory portfolio of SAATHI (refer to Annex D2 for details). He has been brought on board on a 3-month contract, after which his role may be extended based on his performance and mutual agreement. He is leading the execution work on the investment facilitation contract, for which he is developing detailed financial and investment documents. He is also initiating new conversations through his existing networks.

Development of a knowledge report: In this quarter, the team completed the in-depth report on "Indian Agri Innovations for South Asia." The report includes detailed interviews from industry stalwarts that

have spearheaded innovations across sectors such as warehousing, dairy processing, mega food parks, custom hiring models etc. The report, which is 70+ pages in size, is currently being circulated within the industry and in public forums through digital marketing campaigns.

Here too, we had to move forward with a contractual role instead of a full-time role because of reluctance from candidates to switch jobs in the given scenario.

Based on the above analysis, it is clear that no progress was achieved in quarter 3 of year 2. As a result, SAATHI devised a set of mitigation measures related to COVID-19. At the same time, SAATHI continued to carry out business activities in modified ways to adjust to the COVID-19-related business and financial risks. The risks and associated mitigations adopted by SAATHI are listed below.

TABLE 12: SAATHI COVID-19 RISKS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

PRECAUTION / RISKS	IMPACT	MITIGATION MEASURES/ ALTERNATE STRATEGIES
Restrictions on national travel due to lockdown	Delay in signing of new and in-process contracts	Adopt a "digital approach" to conducting meetings i.e. phone calls, video conferencing, emails
Restrictions on international travel	Some delays in meetings between Bangladeshi & Indian companies	Keep clients engaged through emails and phone conversations. Conducted cross-border introductions via video conferencing
Restrictions on international travel	Nepal Visit postponed	Continue research and outreach to Nepal, set up initial phone/ video conversations with select leads
Restrictions on large gatherings	Delay in physical launch of knowledge report	Conduct a soft launch online in May 2020

Source: "Quarterly Report 3 - Report Period: April – June 2020" Dalberg Advisers for USAID, New Delhi, June 2020

ANNEX 5: DATA COLLECTION PROTOCOLS

INFORMED CONSENT – KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

Thank you for taking the time to meet with us today. My name is [NAME]. I am a researcher from a company called Panagora Group, which based in the United States. Our team is speaking with people in to conduct an evaluation of a project about agriculture technology transfer called the South Asia AgTech Hub for Innovation or SAATHI for short.

We would like to conduct a brief discussion with you today to learn about your experience with this topic. Your responses, along with responses from other participants will be compiled into findings for a report. The report will be publicly available once it is complete, but it will not include your name or other identifying information. Readers will not be able to identify the specific individuals we spoke to from any specific quotes or data in the report.

It is important to understand that while we would like your help in this study, you do not have to participate if you do not want to, and you do not have to answer any questions if you feel uncomfortable doing so. The objective of this research is to improve the performance of projects like this one.

Please note that we plan to record this interview. The recordings will be used to transliterate the interview so that we can review the content later. The recordings will not be shared with any third party.

The interview is expected to take about 60 minutes.

You may ask questions at any time during our discussion. If you have questions or concerns about the research after we leave today, you can contact me at [EMAIL] or [PHONE NUMBER].

Do you have any questions before we start?

By saying “yes,” and participating in this study, you are indicating that you have heard this consent statement, had an opportunity to ask any questions about your participation, and voluntarily consent to participate.

Will you participate in this interview? You may answer yes or no.

- Yes, I will participate
- No, I will not participate

Are you okay with us recording the interview? You may answer yes or no.

- Yes, I am okay with recording the interview
- No, I am not okay with recording the interview

INFORMED CONSENT - SURVEY

My name is [NAME]. I am a researcher from a company called Panagora Group, which based in the United States. Our team is speaking with people to conduct an evaluation of a project about agriculture technology transfer called the South Asia AgTech Hub for Innovation or SAATHI for short.

We would like to conduct a brief survey with you today to learn about your experience with this topic. Your responses, along with responses from other participants will be compiled into findings for a report. The report will be publicly available once it is complete, but it will not include your name or other identifying information. Readers will not be able to identify the specific individuals we spoke to from any specific quotes or data in the report.

It is important to understand that while we would like your help in this study, you do not have to participate if you do not want to, and you do not have to answer any questions if you feel uncomfortable doing so. The objective of this research is to improve the performance of projects like this one.

The interview is expected to take about 45 minutes.

PLEASE CHECK AND SIGN THE CONSENT BOX BELOW.

I AGREED ____ I DO NOT AGREE ____

NAME: _____

My signature affirms that I have read the informed consent statement above and agreed to participate in this survey. The respondent consented to the interview.

INTERVIEWER'S NAME _____ / ____ / ____

SIGNATURE AND DATE _____ / ____ / ____

KII GUIDE – DONOR, IMPLEMENTING PARTNER AND SAATHI STAFF

Interview Date:

Interviewer:

Respondent Name:

Respondent Organization:

Respondent Job Title:

BG.1 Background

B.1: Please provide an overview of the concept behind the SAATHI project?

EQ1. To what extent has the ag platform model been an effective approach to transfer innovations and technologies to other countries?

EQ1.1: Please describe the needs assessment for SAATHI technologies?

EQ1.2: Please describe the approval process for SAATHI technologies /contracts?

EQ1.3: Please describe the anticipated impact of SAATHI technologies?

EQ1.4: How does the SAATHI focus on *commercialization* of technologies change the project design (compared to similar earlier projects that focused on develop-oriented technology transfer)?

EQ2. How effectively does the design and establishment of the platform support cross-country transfer of agricultural innovations and technologies in South Asia?

EQ2.1: How did SAATHI determine needs in the target markets (probe around specific technologies based on contract assessments)?

EQ2.2: How have the actual revenues differed from initial revenue projections?

EQ2.3: What analytical tools has SAATHI used to develop sustainability projections?

EQ2.4: What additional financial data is available for analysis?

EQ3. To what extent have the selected Indian agricultural innovations and technologies been adopted in the target countries?

EQ3.1: What is the timeframe for impact for the various typologies of technologies that the contracted companies specialize in (probe around various types of technologies)?

EQ3.2: How do the various typologies of technologies contribute to development outcomes in Bangladesh (Nepal) (probe around various types of technologies)?

EQ3.3: How do the various typologies of technologies contribute to gender equality in Bangladesh (Nepal) (probe around various types of technologies)?

EQ3.4: How effective have you found SAATHI's approach to establishing relationships between Indian and Bangladeshi companies (probe around partnership development, outreach, business plan development, etc.)?

EQ4. What key aspects of the project that should be addressed at this stage of implementation to maximize outcomes over the remainder of the project implementation period?

EQ4.1: How can SAATHI improve its financial sustainability (probe around new types of activities / types of activities suggested in other interviews)?

EQ4.2: How can SAATHI strengthen the development impact of its activities (probe around new types of activities / types of activities suggested in other interviews)?

KII GUIDE – AGRIBUSINESS STAFF

Interview Date:

Interviewer:

Respondent Name:

Respondent Organization:

Respondent Job Title:

BG.1 Background

B.1: In what year was your company established (age of firm)?

B.2: What are the areas/scope of operations and geographies covered (key markets)?

B.3: Does your company have previous experience in Bangladesh (if yes, describe)?

B.4: What is your company's annual turnover (in INR)?

B.5: How did you initially learn about SAATHI?

B.6: Have you contracted similar B2B services previously (probe around type and success)?

B.7: Why did you choose to work with SAATHI? What is the main motivating factor?

B.8: What are the challenges have you encountered working with SAATHI?

B.9: Is the fees charged by SAATHI good value for money (probe around payment terms)?

EQ1. To what extent has the ag platform model been an effective approach to transfer innovations and technologies to other countries?

EQ1.1: Please describe the anticipated use of your technologies in Bangladesh (Nepal) (probe around adaptations / approvals / registration that may be required to operate in Bangladesh)?

EQ1.2: Does the platform serve the purpose of a company looking for cross-border business expansion?

EQ1.3: Which SAATHI services are you accessing? Did you already receive those services?

EQ1.4: What are your experiences in accessing SAATHI services (probe around difficulties in working with SAATHI/ accessing services)?

EQ1.5: What have you found effective about SAATHI services and why?

EQ2. How effectively does the design and establishment of the platform support cross-country transfer of agricultural innovations and technologies in South Asia?

EQ2.1: How effective are SAATHI services in supporting entry into the Bangladesh (Nepal) market?

EQ3. To what extent have the selected Indian agricultural innovations and technologies been adopted in the target countries?

EQ3.1: What is the timeframe for impact of the technology your company specializes in?

EQ3.2: How will your technologies contribute to development outcomes in Bangladesh (Nepal)?

EQ3.3: How will your technologies contribute to gender equality in Bangladesh (Nepal)?

EQ4. What key aspects of the project should be addressed at this stage of implementation to maximize outcomes over the remainder of the project implementation period?

EQ4.1: What additional services could SAATHI provide your company (probe around new types of activities / types of activities suggested in other interviews)?

SURVEY FORM – AGRIBUSINESS STAFF

Interview Date (DD/MM/2020): ___/___/2020

Interviewer: Mr./Mrs.....

Respondent Name: Mr./Mrs.....

Respondent Organization:

Respondent Job Title:

Background

B1: Company location (check only one option)

India	1
Bangladesh	2
Nepal	3

B2: Product types (check all that apply)

Agricultural inputs (seeds)	1
Agricultural inputs (non-seeds)	2
Financial services	3
Software	4
Other	5
Other (please specify):	

B3: Current relationship with SAATHI (check only one option)

No contract or MOU	1
MOU	2
Contract	3
Multiple contracts	4

Can't Say/Don't Know	5
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B4: How did you **first** hear about SAATHI (check only one option)

Invited to workshop	1
Personal contacts	2
Other	3
If 'other', please specify:	
Can't Say/Don't Know	4

EQ1. To what extent has the ag platform model been an effective approach to transfer innovations and technologies to other countries?

EQ1.1: How much unmet demand do you believe there is for your products in the following countries? (enter 1-5 where 1 = "no demand" and 5 = "very high demand")

How much demand in Bangladesh?	
How much demand in Nepal?	
How much demand in Vietnam?	
How much demand in Myanmar?	
How much demand in other country?	
If 'other', please specify:	
Can't Say/Don't Know	6

EQ1.2: Prior to learning about SAATHI, how interested was your company in entering the following markets? (enter 1-5 where 1 = "not interested" and 5 = "very interested")

Bangladesh	
Nepal	
Myanmar	
Vietnam	

Other	
If 'other', please specify:	
Can't Say/Don't Know	6

EQ.3: How did your company initially become engaged with SAATHI (check one option)

Personal contact from SAATHI staff	
Invited to workshop/event	
Learned about SAATHI via online media	
Other (please specify):	

EQ2. How effectively does the design and establishment of the platform support cross-country transfer of agricultural innovations and technologies in South Asia?

EQ2.1: Have you previously hired an external consultant to provide B2B contacts to facilitate cross-border business expansion? (check only one option)

Yes	1
No	2
Can't Say/Don't Know	3

EQ2.2: How likely is your company to hire an external consulting firm to provide B2B contacts to facilitate cross-border business expansion? (enter 1-5 where 1 = "not interested" and 5 = "very interested")

How likely?	
Can't Say/Don't Know	6

EQ2.3: How likely is your company to be willing to pay an initial registration fee for consulting services? (enter 1-5 where 1 = "not likely" and 5 = "very likely")

How likely	
Can't Say/Don't Know	6

EQ2.4: How much has COVID-19 impacted your company’s plans for expansion into Bangladesh or Nepal? (enter 1-5 where 1 = “very high impact” and 5 = “no impact”)

Level of impact	
Can’t Say/Don’t Know	6

EQ3. To what extent have the selected Indian agricultural innovations and technologies been adopted in the target countries?

EQ3.1: How likely are your company’s products to improve food security in Bangladesh or Nepal? (enter 1-5 where 1 = “no impact” and 5 = “very high impact”)

How likely?	
Can’t Say/Don’t Know	6

EQ3.2: How likely are your company’s products to improve gender integration in Bangladesh or Nepal? (enter 1-5 where 1 = “not interested” and 5 = “very interested”)

How likely?	
Can’t Say/Don’t Know	6

EQ3.3: Will your technologies be implemented by farmers in Bangladesh? (please enter “Yes” or “No”)

Yes	
No	

EQ3.4: Please estimate how many months will pass before your technology can be implanted by farmers in Bangladesh?

Number of months	
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EQ4. What key aspects of the project that should be addressed at this stage of implementation to maximize outcomes over the remainder of the project implementation period?

EQ4.1: How likely would your company be to use the following services? (enter 1-5 where 1 = “not likely” and 5 = “very likely”, and enter ‘6’ if ‘Can’t Say/Don’t Know’)

Trade delegations to Bangladesh	
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Trade delegations to Nepal	
In-bound trade fairs in Bangladesh	
In-bound trade delegation from Nepal	
Trade fairs in Bangladesh	
Trade fairs in Nepal	
Online trade fairs in Bangladesh	
Online trade fairs Nepal	

EQ4.2: How satisfied are you with the approaches/services of SAATHI? (enter 1-5 where 1 = “very much unsatisfied” and 5 = “very much satisfied”)

(Ask only if answer in Q-B3 is either 2, 3, or 4)

Can't Say/Don't Know	6
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EQ4.3: Is the fee charged by SAATHI is reasonable? Do you consider this as value for money? (check only one option)

Yes	1
No	2
Can't Say/Don't Know	3

EQ4.4: How likely you will refer approaches/services of SAATHI to other companies in your country?

(enter 1-5 where 1 = “very much unsatisfied” and 5 = “very much satisfied”)

(Ask only if answer in Q-B3 is either 2, 3, or 4)

Can't Say/Don't Know	6
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ANNEX 6: KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW LIST

TABLE 13: KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW LIST			
DATE	NAME	ORGANIZATION	TITLE
Donor Staff (USAID)			
8/18/20	Vamsidhar Reddy	USAID India	Development Assistance Specialist
8/18/20	Chandan Samal	USAID India	Senior M&E Specialist
8/26/20	Mustapha El Hamzaoui	USAID India	Director
09/8/20	Aniruddha Roy	USAID / Bangladesh	Private Sector Adviser
Implementing Partner Staff			
8/18/20	Nirat Bhatnagar	Dalberg Advisors	Partner
8/18/20	Kanishka Bhattacharya	Dalberg Advisors	Associate Partner
8/18/20	Richa Sharda	Dalberg Advisors	Program Manager
8/26/20	Royston Braganza	Grameen Capital	CEO
8/20/20	Ankit Bhatia	Grameen Capital	Asst. Vice President (Investments)
SAATHI Project Staff			
8/18/20	Girish Aivalli	SAATHI	CEO
8/18/20	Mahbub Rahman	SAATHI	Country Representative-Bangladesh
8/18/20	Shreya Das	SAATHI	Research and Communication Associate
8/18/20	Divyata Bhola	SAATHI	Operations and Management
Agribusiness Staff			
8/19/20	Samitha Haldar	SourceTrace	Director-South Asia and Europe
8/19/20	Abhiram Seth	IFFCO AquaAgri	Managing Director
8/20/20	Sopan Malik	Malik Seeds	Managing Director
8/28/20	Manpreet Kaur	Vivantaa Capital	Founder

TABLE 13: KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW LIST

DATE	NAME	ORGANIZATION	TITLE
8/20/20	Sreeram Raavi	Eurava Technologies	Founder
8/21/20	Mohit Malhotra	MitraWeb	Founder
8/21/20	Dr. L. K. Pandey	Ananya Seeds Pvt. Ltd.	Managing Director
8/24/20	Sathyavageeswaran Abhiraman	Blue Star International FZCO	General Manager
8/24/20	Dawwod Bin Ozair	Blue Star International FZCO	Regional Manager
8/24/20	Marhew Joseph	Blue Star International FZCO	Regional Manager
8/24/20	Kunal Prasad	CropIn Tech	COO & Co-Founder
8/24/20	Sandeep Malhotra	IFFCO Kisan	CEO
8/25/20	Akib Kamal	Meridian Group-Bangladesh	Director
8/25/20	Nalin Rawal	NCML	Head-CWIG
8/26/20	Sadid Jamil	Metal-Bangladesh	Managing Director
9/14/20	Mustafazir Rahman	Partex Agro	Assistant General Manager
9/16/20	Ramakanth V Akula	WaterBase Limited	CEO

ANNEX 7: EVALUATION TEAM POSITIONS AND TASKS

The evaluation team was comprised of six members, the names and job descriptions of which are as follows:

David Rinck - Senior Agriculture Evaluation Specialist (Team Leader): The evaluation will be led by the Senior Evaluation Specialist (Team Leader). The Senior Evaluation Specialist will be responsible for overall implementation of the evaluation, including finalizing development of the data collection tools ensuring that all expected tasks and deliverables are achieved on time and of high quality. He will oversee the overall design of the evaluation framework, including methodology determination, organization of schedule and meetings. He will also lead interviews and manage other data collection events, supervise, and actively lead data analysis with input from team members, lead the development of conclusions and recommendations based on findings derived from the data and draft the initial presentation of findings and draft and final evaluation report.

Vithal Karoshi - Senior Agri-Business Specialist: The evaluation will be supported by a Senior Agri-Business Specialist with at least ten years of international agricultural business experience and a graduate level degree in a related field. S/he will have significant experience in agricultural business, finance, investment, commercialization, and extensive prior experience working in South Asia. The Senior Agri-Business Specialist will participate in document review and KIs and provide input, including contextual background, into all data collection and analysis activities. This team member will speak Hindi in addition to English.

Rafiq Sarkar - Senior Agri-Business Specialist (Bangladesh): The Senior Agri-Business Specialist (Bangladesh) will be based in Bangladesh and have at least ten years of international agricultural business experience and a graduate level degree in a related field and significant experience in agricultural business, finance, investment, commercialization in Bangladesh. This person will participate in document review and KIs with informants in Bangladesh and provide input, including contextual background, into all data collection and analysis activities. This team member will speak Bengla in addition to English.

Chetan Bhakkad – Senior Financial Analysis Specialist: The Financial Analysis Specialist will support the evaluation team in implementing the cost-benefit analyses related to evaluation question two, including participating in some surveys and interviews related to costs and revenue. He/she will have experience with quantitative methods and financial analysis and reporting. This team member will speak Hindi in addition to English.

Santosh Kumar – Mid-Level Quantitative Methods Specialist: The Quantitative Methods Specialist will support the design and implementation of all quantitative data collection as well as analysis, and visualization reporting on the data, including being primarily responsible for the implementation of the surveys overseeing the Assistant Quantitative Methods Specialist. This team member will also lead in the creation of a database to store quantitative data and will participate in and oversee data entry. He/she will have extensive experience in quantitative methods, including analysis and visualization, and

some familiarity with the agricultural sector of India and Bangladesh. This individual will be a fluent Hindi speaker in addition to English.

TBD – Junior Logistics Coordinator: Under the direction of the Team Leader, the Logistics Coordinator will be responsible for scheduling contacts with interviewees and survey subjects. This team member will maintain a schedule of all interviews by stakeholder group in order to guarantee the continuity of workflow throughout data collection (the schedule will maintain the anonymity of contacts in line with USAID guidance on interviewee confidentiality). He/she will have proven organizational skills related to scheduling workflow. Familiarity with the Indian and Bangladeshi agricultural sectors is desired, as well as Hindi and Bengla skills in addition to English.

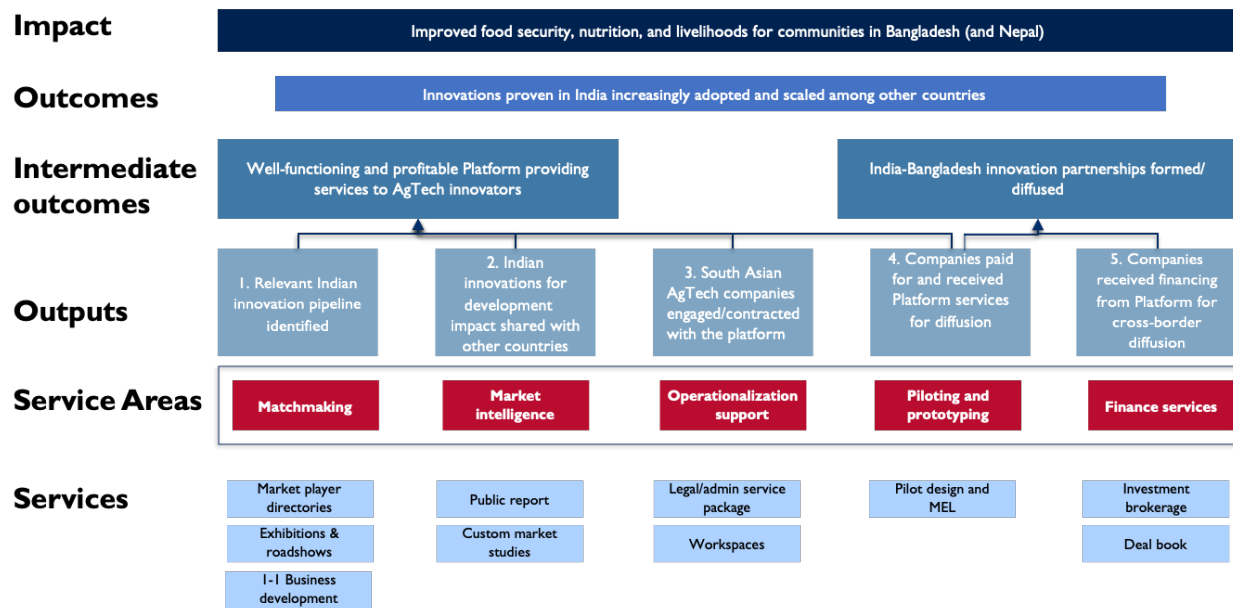
TABLE 14: EVALUATION TEAM POSITIONS AND TASKS

POSITION	LOE	TASKS
Team Leader – David Rinck	50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation Work Plan and Inception Report • Design of the evaluation methodology • Overall supervision of the evaluation team • Oversight of data collection and analysis • Over responsibility for DRAFT and FINAL Evaluation Report
Senior-level Agribusiness Specialist (India) - Vithal Karoshi	40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft summaries of findings from document review as assigned by TL • List of key informants for interviews • Review and input for finalization of data collection instruments • Site visit to SAATHI office (if travel restrictions allow) • Contextual briefings on topics related to interviews (oral) • Written summaries of findings from key informant interviews • Draft sections of consultative presentation as assigned by TL • Draft sections of evaluation report as assigned by TL
Senior-level Agribusiness Specialist (Bangladesh) - TBD	30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft summaries of findings from document review as assigned by TL • List of key informants for interviews • Review and input for finalization of data collection instruments • Contextual briefings on topics related to interviews (oral) • Written summaries of findings from key informant interviews • Draft sections of consultative presentation as assigned by TL • Draft sections of evaluation report as assigned by TL
Senior-level Financial Analyst – Chetan Bhakkad	30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft summaries of findings from document review as assigned by TL • List of key informants for interviews • Review and input for finalization of data collection instruments • Site visit to SAATHI office (if travel restrictions allow) • Written summaries of findings from key informant interviews (related to Evaluation Question 2) • Draft sections of consultative presentation as assigned by TL • Draft sections of evaluation report as assigned by TL
Mid-level Statistician/QMS Santosh Kumar	30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and implement indicator analysis, quantitative data collection data collection methodology, analysis methodology and data collection instruments • Review and input for finalization of quantitative data collection instruments • Written summaries of findings from indicator analysis and quantitative surveys including data visualizations in consultation with TL • Draft sections of consultative presentation as assigned by TL • Draft sections of evaluation report as assigned by TL

Junior Logistician – Jatin Harjai	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Update and manage interview planner as assigned by TL• Weekly status report to Team Leader on meetings scheduled, logistics arranged, and record management updates
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ANNEX 8: SAATHI PLATFORM RESULTS FRAMEWORK

Figure 16: SAATHI Platform Results Framework



Source: “South Asia AgTech Hub for Innovation (SAATHI) Platform - CLIN 3: Strategy Blueprint” Dalberg Advisors for USAID, April 2019

ANNEX 9: SUMMARY OF CONTRACT LINE-ITEM NUMBERS

TABLE 15: CONTRACT LINE-ITEM NUMBERS

NO.	CLIN	DESCRIPTION	STAGE	ESTIMATED DAYS FROM AWARD DATE
1	Stakeholder consultation workshop	Organize a 1-2-day workshop with a pre-decided agenda, organized in a decent conference facility, with a minimum of 15 representatives of key stakeholder organizations and facilitated by Dalberg.	Stage 1: Inception	15
2	Inception report	Prepare and submit a high-quality edited report with a minimum of 25 pages consisting of detailed implementation plan, implementation team structure, roles and responsibilities, Monitoring Learning and Evaluation plan, Gender assessment and Plan, Environmental Monitoring and Mitigation Plan.	Stage 1: Inception	45
3	Platform blueprint and implementation roadmap	Prepare and submit a high-quality edited report with a minimum of 50 pages consisting of details on how the Platform will be structured; the professional services offered by the Platform; governance structure of the Platform; comprehensive business plan including financial, economic and management analysis; Monitoring Evaluation and Learning Plan of the Platform and implementation roadmap of the Platform establishment and running. A high-quality PowerPoint should be developed and submitted about the overall business plan.	Stage 2: Blueprint	120
4	Platform set-up in India	Establish the Platform as per the Platform blueprint, including registration of the Platform as a legal entity and establishment of logistics including professional working space and required technology equipment for the Platform staff.	Stage 3: Preparation	210
5	Platform pre-launch recruitment	Hire the Chief Executive Officer for the Platform with demonstrable professional achievements and a well-qualified professional staff for the Platform.	Stage 3: Preparation	210
6	Platform pre-launch communication	Create the Platform brand, website, brochure and public relations kit, prepared as per comparable quality norms of the industry.	Stage 3: Preparation	270

TABLE 15: CONTRACT LINE-ITEM NUMBERS

NO.	CLIN	DESCRIPTION	STAGE	ESTIMATED DAYS FROM AWARD DATE
7	Contracting templates	Develop legally valid templates that would be used by the Platform to enter into partnerships with different types of entities.	Stage 3: Preparation	270
8	In-principle agreements prior to launch	Sign Letters of Intent or MOUs with at least five private companies and / or investors that would implement activities to contribute to the Platform to achieve its results	Stage 3: Preparation	350
9	Pre-launch service design	Develop professionally edited manuals and / or standard operating procedures for at least four professional services that the Platform will offer upon launch.	Stage 3: Preparation	350
10	Launch partnerships	Platform executed contracts to establish formal partnerships with at least five companies with agreed upon payments for receiving professional services through the platform.	Stage 4: Launch	450
11	Launch stage progress achievement 1	Platform has, cumulatively (since launch), executed contracts including implementation plans to establish formal partnerships with at least 10 companies with agreed upon payments for receiving professional services through the platform totaling US\$ 50,000.	Stage 4: Launch	540
12	Launch stage progress achievement 2	Platform has, cumulatively since launch, executed contracts including implementation plans to establish formal partnerships with at least 15 companies with agreed upon payments for receiving professional services through the platform totaling US\$ 75,000.	Stage 4: Launch	630
13	Launch stage progress achievement 3	Platform has, cumulatively since launch, executed contracts including implementation plans to establish formal partnerships with at least 20 companies with agreed upon payments for receiving professional services through the platform totaling US\$ 100,000.	Stage 4: Launch	720
14	Scale stage progress achievement 1	Platform has, cumulatively since launch, executed contracts including implementation plans to establish formal partnerships with at least 25 companies with	Stage 5: Scale	800

TABLE 15: CONTRACT LINE-ITEM NUMBERS

NO.	CLIN	DESCRIPTION	STAGE	ESTIMATED DAYS FROM AWARD DATE
		agreed upon payments for receiving professional services through the platform totaling US\$ 200,000.		
15	Scale stage progress achievement 2	Platform has cumulatively since launch, executed contracts including implementation plans to establish formal partnerships with at least 30 companies with agreed upon payments for receiving professional services through the platform totaling US\$ 350,000.	Stage 5: Scale	890
16	Scale stage progress achievement 3	Platform has, cumulatively since launch, executed contracts including implementation plans to establish formal partnerships with at least 35 companies with agreed upon payments for receiving professional services through the platform totaling US\$ 500,000.	Stage 5: Scale	980
17	Country two launch (Nepal)	Platform has executed contracts including implementation plans to establish formal partnerships with at least four companies with agreed upon payments for receiving professional services through the platform with focus on transferring agricultural technologies and approaches to address food and nutrition security in Nepal.	Stage 5: Scale	1050
18		Reimbursable costs for payments against subcontracts made by Dalberg to companies and investments for innovations such as Block Chain and Food Security Bond and also for activities such as market research, market entry support activities for companies.	Stage 5	Year 3

Source: "SAATHI Contract no. 72038618C00002" USAID/India, New Delhi, September 2018

ANNEX 10: PLANNED SAATHI SERVICE AREAS

TABLE 16: PLANNED SAATHI SERVICE AREAS

#	SERVICE AREA	POTENTIAL OFFERINGS
1	Match- making	<p>Partnership formation support in destination country: Large and medium sized established ag-tech and food security related companies as well as fast growing growth enterprises can enter markets such as Bangladesh through a variety of “entry modes”. These entry modes include direct entry, joint ventures, distribution partnerships, IP licensing, and some others. However, the key to success across all these market entry modes is being able to identify and tie-up with suitable destination country partners who can deliver a range of business services to enable successful market expansion. However, most companies find it hard to understand the landscape of potential partners in a new country, conduct proper due-diligence, and identify opportunities. These challenges become a key bottleneck which prevents companies from investing in cross-border expansion. The platform can create a whetted list of business partners and foster partnership formation between the Indian company and the destination country organization as a key service that will be hugely valuable. Enabling such partnerships under different models, such as franchising, IP licensing fees, or export models, can provide access to new markets to these innovating companies.</p>
2	Execution support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Logistics and liaison support: Even as these companies form partnerships for expansion, they will require on ground support to set-up business presence in the new environment. Companies will benefit from services that help them with recruiting local management, registration of the company, getting appropriate licenses, hiring office space, and other similar services. All of these are highly localized activities which the platform can facilitate for companies in India wanting to expand to these destination markets. • Staffing & people solutions in the destination country. Often, companies seeking to enter a new market cannot hire people till they have adequate licenses, and this slows down the pace of expansion significantly. Also, in many cases, visas for management team members working in India who would need to relocate to a destination country would become a challenge. The platform could offer staffing solutions to companies on the platform where key team members are hired by the platform and are then tasked with running company functions in the destination country. From our discussions, we understand that this would be a very valuable service to offer to companies on the platform and will reduce time to market and setup costs significantly.

TABLE 16: PLANNED SAATHI SERVICE AREAS

#	SERVICE AREA	POTENTIAL OFFERINGS
3	Proto-typing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prototyping and customization support: While the need for technology in the agriculture sector may be similar between India, Bangladesh (and Nepal), the design to implement these technologies may be different. Each country has its unique sets of on-ground challenges that companies need to account for each time they enter a new country. The platform will support the companies in customizing and testing their solutions within the new country through well-designed pilots before they make a decision to increase their investment. These customizations and prototyping services could include simple things such as language translation of user-manuals to carrying out small-run product placements to test market demand.
4	Market intelligence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market research & regulatory information: There are often huge risks associated with starting operations in other countries. A large part of this risk can be mitigated by enabling access to information, especially relating to: (i) Regulatory and legal environments in the destination country; (ii) Government landscape, policies and interventions that companies looking to enter the market can get support from and (ii) Market intelligence and opportunity identification based on which innovator organizations can plan their expansion. Most companies would benefit from such “public-good” market and regulatory information as it would reduce the investments, they would need to make in conducting thorough market studies, or invest in learning how to navigate the regulatory environment in the destination country.
5	Financing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to “blended” & growth capital: The ag-tech innovation ecosystem in India, and elsewhere, is being driven through a combination of philanthropic and impact funding and is beginning to receive increasing levels of VC activity though this is restricted to some value chains. Large food companies are also seeing limited PE investments. To truly catalyze growth in this space, blended growth capital that packages different types of funding (VC, impact, public, grants, outcome-based instruments) in effective baskets is needed, and the availability of such capital will greatly accelerate inter-country growth between India and other GFSS interest countries. A special case in point could be a food security bond (pay for success model) for an enterprise or a pool of enterprises to scale their operations to a specific geography and exhibit quantifiable outcomes and sustainability to later tap into more traditional sources of equity and debt financing. Also, blended financing that includes philanthropic or DFI investments focused on certain outcomes, such as malnutrition / improved food fortification, along with impact capital (seeking nominal returns) could be combined to finance country-specific expansion opportunities for companies on this platform. The platform could offer services to enable companies get access to finance and then charge a range of fixed fees or performance-based fees.

ANNEX 11: SUMMARY OF SAATHI CONTRACTS TO DATE

TABLE 17: SUMMARY OF SAATHI CONTRACTS TO DATE

NO.	Date	PARTY	ACTIVITY SUMMARY	CHARGES
1	Feb. 10, 2020	Ananya Seeds Pvt. Ltd.	Introductions to a maximum of 6 importers and distributors of vegetable and other seeds in Bangladesh for the purpose of marketing, sales and distribution of seed products.	At signing – INR 50,000 After signing agreement – INR 1 lakh After placement of first order – INR 1 lakh Sales commission – 1% of total sales revenue over 5 years
2	Feb. 10, 2020	Ananya Seeds Pvt. Ltd.	Support to create a seed supply corridor to the Bangladeshi market.	INR 14 crores or USD 2million including 42 lakhs service fee.
3	Feb. 19, 2020	Cropin Technology Solutions Pvt. Ltd.	Introductions to BRAC Seeds & Agro Enterprise and support negotiating software sales.	USD 2000 annually @ USD 500 per quarter.
4	Feb. 19, 2020	Cropin Technology Solutions Pvt. Ltd.	Introductions to A.R Malik Seeds Pvt. Ltd. and support negotiating software sales.	USD 2000 annually @ USD 500 per quarter.
5	Feb. 19, 2020	Cropin Technology Solutions Pvt. Ltd.	Introductions to The Metal Group Ltd. and support negotiating software sales.	USD 2000 annually @ USD 500 per quarter.
6	Feb. 19, 2020	Cropin Technology Solutions Pvt. Ltd.	Introductions to Supreme Seeds Company Ltd. and support negotiating software sales.	USD 2000 annually @ USD 500 per quarter.
7	Mar. 3, 2020	A.R Malik Seeds Pvt. Ltd.	Introductions and negotiations for seed samples for testing and research in Bangladesh.	1-time service fee – BDT 50,000
8	Mar. 3, 2020	A.R Malik Seeds Pvt. Ltd.	Introductions and negotiations with Cropin Technology Solutions Pvt. Ltd. and IFFCO Kissan Sanchar Ltd. to develop a National Crop Platform through	1-time service fee – BDT 50,000

NO.	Date	PARTY	ACTIVITY SUMMARY	CHARGES
			mobile app and voice-based farm advisory services platform.	
9	Mar. 9, 2020	Ecozen Solutions Pvt. Ltd.	Support to enter Bangladeshi market for sale of solar cold rooms, solar irrigation pumps and controllers.	5% of fee received to the company from clients ("Service Fee").
10	Mar. 11, 2020	Aqua Agri Pvt. Ltd. (APPL)	Introduction to importers and distributors in Bangladesh of seaweed cultivars for manufacture of growth enhancers and bio-stimulants.	Service fee – INR 2 lakhs Commission on first order – INR 2 lakhs 1% of gross annual revenue from facilitated sales for 5 years
11	Mar. 13, 2020	Vivanta Capital	Introduction to parties interested in obtaining cross-border trade, short-term and value chain finance and commodity-linked finance from partner banks.	Success fee of 10% of total fee earned net costs.
12	Apr. 12, 2020	Sourcetrace	Introduction to fruits and vegetables retailers chains interested in traceability software.	15% of gross annual revenue derived from facilitated contracts over 5 years.
13	June 1, 2020	Waterbase Ltd.	Introduction to importers and distributors of shrimp feed in Bangladesh.	1-time fee upon receipt of first order – INR 50,000
14	May 28, 2020	Eruvaka Technologies Pvt. Ltd. (ETPL)	Partner with SAATHI in development of on-farm aquaculture diagnostic software as Eruvaka Bangladesh.	Signing fee – INR 1 lakh After Zoom calls with 3-4 clients – INR 50,000 After first contract signing - INR 1.5 lakh
15	Apr. 16, 2020	Agriyoda Innovations Pvt. Ltd.	Introduction to plantations (coffee, tea, rubber, coconut, cacao, etc.) interested in purchasing digital tracing systems.	15% of gross annual revenue derived from facilitated contracts for 5 years.

NO.	Date	PARTY	ACTIVITY SUMMARY	CHARGES
16	June 9, 2020	M.I.T.R.A. Agro Equipment Private Limited	Introduction to tractor importers and distributors and other relevant agribusiness companies in Bangladesh.	Sales commission of 2% on sales up to INR 1 crore and 2.5% on sales greater than INR 1 crore.
17	June 24, 2020	Blue Star International FZCO	Introduction to interested parties, organizations and companies in Bangladesh for their cold storage products and equipment.	Post signing a commercial contract INR 300,000. Fee of 1% of total invoiced value ex-factory for first three and a half years.