



## Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) Sector Brief

### Why are we in this sector?

Women farmers make up almost 50 per cent of the workforce in Bangladesh's agriculture sector, which is the lifeline for more than 25 million rural households across the country. The Government of Bangladesh considers the economic empowerment of women as one of the main drivers for the country's future development. However, most women still lack full and equal participation in the economic life. Consequentially, Katalyst strives to provide women farmers with income-generating opportunities and new perspectives to improve their lives.

A striking feature of women's employment in Bangladesh is that very few women formally own their own businesses or assets, and only 25 per cent of women can be classified as self-employed. These numbers demonstrate that women are predominantly clustered in the unpaid family labor category, thus placing them at the bottom of the empowerment pyramid.

Compared to men, women have less access to markets, agriculture information, finance, essential

good quality inputs and resources. Katalyst aims to close this gender gap by better integrating women farmers into its agriculture core sectors (maize, vegetable, farmed fish). Working together with the private sector, Katalyst in Phase 3 (2014 - 2017) of the project identifies and develops sustainable ways of including women farmers into the value chains of private companies. This empowers women to move away from unpaid labor and informal work to own account work as farmers and entrepreneurs.

### Vision

*"An increased number of women will achieve improved access to quality inputs, information, knowledge and market linkages. As a result, these women will benefit from enhanced economic empowerment."*

— Implemented by —



— Funded by —





## What constraints do we address?

Women farmers across the vegetable, maize and farmed fish sectors need better access to quality inputs such as seed, fish fingerlings, fertiliser and crop protection solutions in order to improve their yields and increase their incomes. They furthermore need access to more information and knowledge on the benefits and appropriate usage of these quality inputs. Due to socio-cultural constraints, women farmers also have limited direct access to markets to sell their produce, preventing them from having control over their income. Katalyst addresses these three main constraints (quality inputs; flow of information and knowledge; market linkages) in order to contribute to women's economic empowerment.

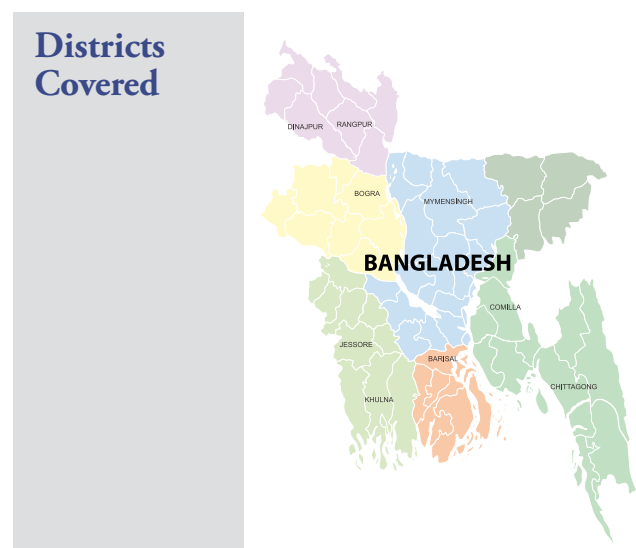
## What changes do we want to see?

Private input companies will create improved service packages and delivery mechanisms in order to provide women farmers and entrepreneurs with quality inputs. In order to help improve the cultivation practices of women farmers, relevant knowledge and information will be disseminated by private companies, NGOs and other market actors. Private companies, leverage partners and local trader associations will further create improved market access for women farmers and entrepreneurs. Ultimately, these steps will lead to women's empowerment by enhancing their decision-making authority as economic agents within the household and beyond.

## How do we realise these changes?

At least two major seed companies that partner with Katalyst will conduct a door-to-door promotion campaign to make women farmers aware of the

benefits of quality seed. Katalyst will work with various input companies to provide training and relevant information on profitable cultivation techniques to women farmers. Katalyst will also link institutional buyers of quality vegetables to the clusters of women growers. In order to empower women fish farmers, Katalyst is working together with local fish hatcheries that provide training in homestead pond cultivation of high value fish species. In collaboration with input companies, women farmers that cultivate sweet water prawn are being trained by NGO partners in appropriate cultivation techniques to increase their yields. Activities in the maize sector will incorporate family-approach training in order to ensure that paid women laborers and household members have access to quality information. Until December 2015, Katalyst's interventions in the WEE sector have benefitted 16,260 small farmers\*.



\*Validated until September 2015.

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