

Promoting profitable cropping pattern in maize through public-private partnership

Intervention brief: Maize



Background

The maize sector contributes around BDT 17 Billion to the GDP of Bangladesh, with around 553,000 farmers and 138,000 labourers involved in a year (Maize CSS, 2010). The sector is growing parallel to the poultry sector. However, the demand of maize is still significantly higher than the net supply which has been met by imports.



Maize has emerged as a high value cash crop since the commercial cultivation started in the year 2000. The

cultivable lands across the country are suitable for maize cultivation. In Bangladesh, the commercially cultivated maize is grown with hybrid seeds. However, it is a labour intensive agriculture process and requires high initial investment, but is still profitable in terms of per unit yield compared to other competing crops such as wheat or Boro rice. It can be grown in both summer and winter seasons.

Maize possesses high potential in reducing poverty by providing huge rural employment as labourers and producers. Around 70% of the labourers in this sector currently are female.

Since 2007, Katalyst is working in char areas to promote maize to increase the income of char farmers. Due to lack of knowledge about appropriate crop timing, duration, profitability and suitable crops for that area, the farmers do not often make proper use of the land. The less profitable crops in the cropping pattern, which in turn leads to lower return for the farmers, can be replaced by more profitable crops and changing cropping pattern.

Target Beneficiaries

Katalyst's overall target group in the maize sector comprises farmers with 0.2 to 2.5 acres of lands. Maize sector has special focus on char areas where 70% of the farmers are marginal and small.

Locations

Katalyst is doing a pilot in Ulipur, Kurigram however the result of the pilot will be disseminated and the cropping pattern intervention will be focused on existing and potential maize growing areas.

Major activities

Katalyst has created a linkage between private seed companies of Ulipur *upazila* in Kurigram with the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE), which is mandated to increase the cropping intensity in Bangladesh. In consultation with *upazila* Agriculture Office (UAO) and Sub Assistant Agriculture Officer (SAAO) of Ulipur, 9 profitable and potential cropping patterns have been identified for 17 blocks in the *upazila*. Specific patterns have been identified for specific blocks. These are promoted through awareness programme including demonstration plots, farmers' meeting, field days and workshops. Private input

companies like Mamoon seed, CP and Bayer Crop Science are supporting a number of demonstration plots and organizing field days of their respective crops.

These private input companies have incentives in providing support to DAE as a huge market is being created for their product. The idea is to include as many seed companies as possible so that a wider range of crops get enlisted in the identified cropping patterns.

Key achievements

It is hoped that as a result of this linkage between DAE and input companies, the cropping intensity of the Ulipur *upazila* will increase with approximately reaching around 10,000 farmers.

Katalyst aims to organize a dissemination workshop with other *upazila* DAE personnel and the private sector to show case impacts of the programme on the cropping intensity.

New cropping patterns include adopting technologies of mixed cropping, relay cropping, intercropping of short and long duration crops in a

way to maximize the number of crops grown in the same land throughout the year. It thus ensures efficient utilization of land and higher profits from production for the farmers.

The private sector will be interested to collaborate with DAE as we have already seen Bayer Crop Science to have incorporated themselves with the pilot in Ulipur with their pesticides.



Way forward

The current pilot programme can be used to showcase the success of such a strategy to the concerned stakeholders.

It is anticipated that after seeing the benefit of this pilot initiative, the DAE officials of other regions will also be interested to replicate this program by observing the appreciable increase in the cropping intensity of Ulipur.

This will also increase the interest of the private seed companies to collaborate with DAE officials of other *upazilas* or districts to take similar initiative.

Katalyst also plans to collaborate with the Ministry of Agriculture to promote area wise profitable and potential cropping pattern throughout Bangladesh with the support from private input companies.

Implemented by



Funded by

