

# UNLOCKING THE POTENTIAL OF BANGLADESH'S SMALLHOLDER FARMERS

Smallholders make up 85 percent of Bangladesh's farming community and play a pivotal role in providing food for approximately 170 million people. Smallholder family farming is unique in the ability to integrate various aspects, reducing environmental impact while boosting resilience. However, the path for most smallholder farmers in Bangladesh is far from easy. They grapple with challenges such as limited access to finance, markets, essential value chain services, technology and critical information. Adding to this burden, climate change, rising input prices, gender inequality, and pressing food security and nutrition concerns further compound their struggles. These multifaceted issues demand solutions that are customized to the specific needs and context of each community. Harnessing the power of innovation in the GAFSP's Missing Middle Initiative (MMI), the project placed the empowerment of producers' organizations (POs) at the forefront. By adopting the transformative MMI approach, which combines capacity-building initiatives, investment grants, and a systematic guidance and monitoring framework, smallholders, working through their POs, have witnessed remarkable improvements in their livelihoods. Farmer and producer organizations have been empowered to lead the way in meeting the unique needs of their communities.

## WHAT DID THE PROJECT DO?

The project's groundbreaking approach centered around the welfare of farmers and played a pivotal role in reducing poverty among more than 10 000 smallholder farmers. Results showed an impressive 35 percent increase in the average annual household income for members of POs. The project also had a profound impact on household non

## KEY FACTS

Latest Approved Budget  
USD 3 701 000

Duration  
March 2018-March 2023

Resource Partner  
Global Agriculture and  
Food Security Program (GAFSP)

Partners  
Sara Bangla Krishak Society (SBKS);  
Producer organizations (SBKS  
members); Ministry of Agriculture,  
Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries,  
Bangladesh Bank

Beneficiaries  
Farmers and producer organizations.

## ACTIVITIES

- f* 54 POs have value chain projects/businesses that are generating revenues for POs, 56 are operating revolving credit from member savings and 54 increased income using their value chain projects.
- f* 55 POs created a service fee payment mechanism for the FBFs after the closure of the project.
- f* 50 POs generate net plus incomes after the first cycle of production with the MMI Grant and have transparent decision making and bookkeeping, including PO account management.
- f* 52 POs have an effective data collection system, enhanced organizational performance and were eligible to apply the MMI grant as a result of the pilot grant.
- f* 57 POs implemented collective business plans for new product, business or marketing arrangements.
- f* 74 percent of PO members adopted new production and/or value chain modality (e.g. community seed village, safe beef cattle production, community fish culture, safe vegetables).
- f* 55 virtual calbentres are operational and 86 percent are linked with local output and input markets.
- f* 1 959 individuals from 51 POs submitted loan applications, 88 percent of which were approved by the lender.