Annual Report 2014

Needful actions and necessary preparations to move the program implementation of MTCP-II
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List of Acronyms

ANPFa : All Nepal Peasants’ Federation
BADC : Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation
BAFLF : Bangladesh Agricultural Farm Labour Federation
BAS : Bangladesh Adibashi Somity
BKF : Bangladesh Krishak Federation
BKS : Bangladesh Kishani Sobha
COAST : Coastal Association for Social Transformation
FAO : Food and Agriculture Organization
FO : Farmers’ Organizations
IFAD : International Fund for Agricultural Development
LRC : Labour Resource Centre
MTCP : Medium Term Cooperation Program
NGO : Non Governmental Organization
RIA : Regional Implementation Agency
SDC : Swiss Development Cooperation
SRIA : Sub Regional Implementing Agency
1. Executive Summary
Farmers of Bangladesh have been contributing to the national economy through their continuous and rigorous efforts in the agriculture sector. More than 50% of the total populations of Bangladesh depend on agriculture for livelihood; still farmers are facing various challenges. Agriculture plays a pivotal role in Bangladesh’s economy and in fact, agriculture determines people’s lives and livelihood of this region. This sector accounts for about 20% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and 60% of the national employment, it faces serious challenges posed by the decline of land availability. Rapid shrinkage of agricultural (1% per year) and rapid urbanization (12% in each year) are making the sector vulnerable.

Agriculture is also playing vital role in fighting against poverty and food insecurity. Even though the annual growth rate of Bangladesh is 6.3% and though it is doing pretty much well in food production compared to other developing countries, 32% people of this country are still living under the poverty line, About 40% of Bangladesh’s total population are calorie poor, consuming less than 2122 kcal per capita per day, while one-fifth of population are hard core poor who consume less than 1805 kcal per capita per day. Bangladesh has an estimated 40.2 million undernourished people in 2004-06. Among the total undernourished people in South Asia, 12% comes from Bangladesh. 27 million are unable to consume 1805 Kcal/person/day and 11 million are below the consumption level of 1600 Kcal/person/day (FAO and Bangladesh Government, 2011).1 About 26% people of Bangladesh are suffering from chronic food insecurity and 50 million people cannot meet their basic needs. There are about 47 million poor; among them 22.6 million people are categorized as extreme poor (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 2010)2.

Agriculture sector e.g. farmers have huge opportunities to contribute in fighting against poverty and food insecurity. But farmers are not getting appropriate attention from the service providers. Contributions of farmers of Bangladesh are not getting proper recognition. They are facing various challenges like access to markets, information, and agricultural technologies, and related services and public goods, lack of awareness of individual farmers of their basic rights. Even after producing some productions farmers are not getting their fair and just price for their products. Middlemen are getting the benefits of the hardship of the poor farmers.

Farmers’ groups have to raise their voices to uphold the legitimate demands of the farmers. We have to work together. Farmers have to increase their production, and their control over their production has to be established. MTCP2 in Bangladesh will have to set a plan of action for the welfare of the farmers of Bangladesh.

Farmers’ Organizations (FO) could play a vital role in addressing these challenges and in raising their voices. There are some FOs active in this country but they are not able to deliver the right services. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has identified 198114 FOs of various types. Eighty-one percent were formed with support from government agencies, 14 percent from national NGOs, 5 percent from

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international NGOs, and less than 0.01 percent – only 12 organizations – were formed autonomously. Just over 2 percent of FOs are federated at any level.

To ensure services for the farmers, to address their challenges strong FOs are needed. Capacities of FOs have to be improved. ‘Needful actions and necessary preparations to move the program implementation of MTCP-II/IFAD’ project is trying to provide support towards farmers’ organizations to work with these issues. Key objective of the project is to strengthen the farmers’ organizations’ capacities of engaging in active policy consultations related to the rural smallholders’ interests at national, sub-regional and regional levels, and to provide improved and inclusive services to the rural poor. Direct beneficiaries of this project are nine farmers’ organizations and we believe that more than 500 thousand farmers will be benefited indirectly. The active participation of these FOs in policy making process and policy intervention will benefit the whole agriculture sector of Bangladesh.

COAST is coordinating the “Needful actions and necessary preparations to move the program implementation of MTCP-II/IFAD project in Bangladesh. This project is known as MTCP 2, means Medium Term Cooperation Project. COAST is implementing project activities in association with All Nepal Peasants’ Federation (ANPFa). The project is funded by International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC). We have just completed the first year of the three years’ project.

MTCP2 in Bangladesh is working with nine farmers’ organizations. These organizations have been selected on the basis of the past tracks, commitment and activism. These nine FOs were selected from a national orientation meeting held in Dhaka where representative of Anpfa were present.

With the support of the project we can ensure self sustainability for some potential members based FOs.

So far we have implemented various activities like organizational level need assessment, organizational level strategic review and plan, financial and management skill development training for the leaders, training on advocacy, campaign and documentation, local and national level mobilization, national level seminar, research etc. Though one year is not enough to assess the result or impact of the project, from our assessment we can identify the following as key results we have achieved during the first year:

- Participant organizations have been able to identify their present status, challenges and they have taken strategic plan to build their own capacity.
- From organizational level assessment all the FOs are now well known about their organizational status and where to go and how
- FOs activities have been able to revamp field level status.
- A strong network has been build among the key Farmers Organizers

During the implementation of the first year we faced some challenges also. Major challenge was the slow and irregular fund transfer. Due to lack of appropriate and timely fund disbursement we could not implement the Annual Work Plan fully. The total budget for the first year was 33354 US dollar, we received 25000 dollar in two different instalments and the second one reached at our account almost at the end the of the first year.
During 2014 we have also learnt some lessons which will guide us in achieving effective results in the upcoming years. We have learnt that, there are various services for farmers, but they are not aware about it. Linkages among farmers and service providers can be vital in this regard. Access of farmers to the policy process of Bangladesh is also not up to the desired level. We have still a lot to do in this regard and strong-member based farmers’ organization can play vital role in this regard. We have also found that, farmers’ organizations in Bangladesh have strong local level influences, but at the national level they have to work more to influence the policies and farmers’ organization have to work a lot to ensure a better management within themselves.

A development project like the MTCP2 has various effective opportunities. One of the major opportunities of MTCP2 in Bangladesh is to ensure a huge farmers’ community with raised voice who are getting appropriate services from respective service providers. With the support of the project we can ensure self sustainability for some potential members based FOs. These self-sustained FOs can be able to ensure services for farmers.

We would like to thank Regional Implementation Agency (RIA) and the Sub-Regional Implementing agency to include Bangladesh to this very important project. We would also like to thank for their efforts in coordinating the activities. We would like to pay our gratitude to all the participating Farmers’ Organizations (FO) of Bangladesh. We have seen their passion and endeavour towards the effective implementation of the project activities.

We have already started the planning for the next year strategies and activities. We do believe that, if we can implement the project activities smoothly, millions of farmers of Bangladesh will be definitely benefited and strengthened FOs will be able to raise their voices and will also be able to influence the policies.
2. Detailed implementation progress by component
2.1 Activities at a Glance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Activities</th>
<th>Key Outputs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Component One: Strengthening FOs and their Networks</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Training for FO leaders on leadership, financial management, advocacy, campaign, media mobilization</td>
<td>Two leaders from each FO capacitated on organizational management, financial management, organizing advocacy or campaign events, media mobilizations, reporting and documentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Workshop to review the present status of the selected FOs</td>
<td>Desired qualities of a strong FO were determined and Process of organizational review was discussed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Organizational level workshop to review present status</td>
<td>Baseline of existing status of the FOs had been drawn. FOs had identified their strength, weakness, challenges and needs, FOs took plan of action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Component Two: FOs Participation in Policy Processes</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Meeting to identify local issues of advocacy and Mobilization</td>
<td>15 local level issues had been identified, later local mobilizations were organized with some of those issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Pre-budget seminar to raise the voice of the FOs</td>
<td>Specific demands were put from the FOs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Protest against budget</td>
<td>National and local level human chain, press conferences protesting reduced budget allocation for agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Meeting with farmers’ wing of political parties</td>
<td>To sensitize them towards farmers demands. Some MPs expressed their solidarity and took the issue to the parliament.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Research on Seed policy</td>
<td>It has been found that it is inadequate to ensure farmers interests and rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Local level issue based mobilization</td>
<td>Press conference, human chain and rally were organized on some local issues. Main aim was to aware people and reach farmers’ voice to the authorities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Meeting with farmers’ wings of political parties</td>
<td>This meeting was organized to sensitize the farmers’ wing of various political parties towards the MTCP goals and strategies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Component Three : FOs engagement in Agricultural Development Program</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Meeting to identify potential Value chain development areas</td>
<td>Production and marketing of quality local seeds were identified as potential value chain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Linkage development meeting with Service Providers</td>
<td>During these meetings farmers got changes to share their challenges with service providers. They have also learnt about various existing services they can get.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Training on services to farmers</td>
<td>Training for farmers were organized on available services from various service providers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.2. Component one: Strengthening of FOs and their Networks

2.2.1 Preparatory Meeting

The project activities in Bangladesh were initiated with two preparatory meetings of key Farmers’ Organizations of Bangladesh. The meetings discussed the project in details and set plan of actions.

In one meeting Mr. Keshab Khadka, Coordinator of the program for the South Asia region presented the key note. The first meeting was organized on 17th January 2014 in Dhaka Bangladesh. The meeting was chaired by Badrul Alam of Bangladesh Krishak Federation (BKF) and it was moderated by Rezaul Karim Chowdhury of COAST Trust. Leaders from the key farmers’ organization of Bangladesh participated in the program. The main focus of the meeting was to discuss about the existing situation of the FOs and agriculture of Bangladesh and to discuss about the program components, strategies of implementation.

The participants of the meeting were from the major National level farmers’ organizations of Bangladesh. They are the key activist for the interests of the agriculture, food security and farmers’ rights in Bangladesh. There were 20 participants in total. Of them 4 were female and remaining 16 were male participants.

One of the major outputs of the meeting is the clear understanding of the project goals, specific goals and implementation strategies among the FOs who would be the implementing partners here in Bangladesh.

From the meeting it COAST trust was requested to coordinate the program activities in Bangladesh.

On the next day of the meeting another meeting with partner FOs was organized. From that meeting draft plan of action with budget for the year of 2014 has been chalked out.

Output of the Activities

- Understanding of the project goals, specific goals, implementation strategies
- Selection of NIA and participating FOs

Participating FOs

Bangladesh Krishak Federation, Bangladesh Bhumihin Somity, Bangladesh Krishak Federation (JI), Labour Resource Centre, Bangladesh Adibhasi Somity, Bangladesh Kishani Sobha, Bangladesh Agricultural Farm Labour Federation and COAST Trust
2.2.2 Workshop to review the present status of the selected FOs

One of the key initial activities was a workshop to review the present status of the selected 9 FOs of Bangladesh. That two days workshop was organized on 9th-10th March at the COAST auditorium in Dhaka, Bangladesh. 18 participants from 9 organizations participated in the program. Some essential topics which were needed to discuss to set the parameters of a strong FO and effective leader of an FO were discussed. The discussions helped all the FOs to identify their present status and to set up a one year target to make them a well organized and strong FO. An action plan regarding an immediate workshop on organizational review and taking strategies for each of the organization was taken.

One of the key objectives of the MTCP 2 project is building capacities of the farmers’ organization. To implement capacity building activities for the selected FOs, it is important to know their existing status. It is important to know where the selected FOs are standing right now. It is also must to set some parameters, indicators or targets for each organization to be a strong organization or to be an organization with desired qualities. This workshop was meant to work in three ways:

a) To set the desired and effective parameters for a strengthened farmers’ organization
b) To identify the strategies and required actions to achieve these parameters
c) Assessing existing organizational capacities.

Another specific focus of the workshop was to enhance knowledge of key people of the selected FOs on advocacy, lobbying, networking, external relation, stakeholder relationship, documentation, financial management etc.

The following table presents a detail list of contents that were discussed during the workshop:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SL</th>
<th>Key Issues</th>
<th>Sub Issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Networking and Stakeholder Relation</td>
<td>• Importance/role of networking, Identifying possible advocacy partners for network building, Building relationship for networking, Networking with other organizations and peer groups, Networking with local, regional and international organizations, Forming alliance and maintaining it, Tools of networking, What is stakeholder.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Lobbying</td>
<td>• Different stage of lobbying: personal, social, institutional, Tools of lobbying, Relationship building, keeping sustainable relationship,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Campaign Communication</td>
<td>• Importance of Communication, What is Campaign communication, Communication Tools. Effective Communication, Media communication, Communication using ICT: Internet, social media, mobile etc. Behavioral approach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Governance and Constituency Building</td>
<td>• Accountability towards Board, Accountability towards members, ensuring participation of the members, Collecting Members, keeping sustainable management of membership, CSO building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Advocacy and campaign/Participation in policy discourse</td>
<td>• Definition of Advocacy, campaign, mobilization, Differences among these three terms, What advocacy does not mean, Base of advocacy, Tools of advocacy, Logical cycle of advocacy, Selection of issues to take participation, Gathering knowledge on the issue: constant reading and observation in the issue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Conducting/organizing meeting/Facilitation</td>
<td>• Role of facilitator, Importance of facilitation, Characteristics of a good facilitator, Things that should be avoided during facilitation, Characteristics of an effective meeting, Selection of participants, Environment of the meeting, Preparation for a meeting, things to be done during the meeting Follow up, Conflict management in meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Organizing campaign events</td>
<td>• Selecting issues, Gathering information, Taking position, Identifying stakeholders, Media mobilization, Follow up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Documentation/Process documentation</td>
<td>• Importance of Documentation, Using/selecting types of documentation, Process documentation, Writing Case studies using photos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Financial Governance/management</td>
<td>• Financial Policy, Record keeping system and procedures, Procurement process, Inventory management, Budget control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Sustainability of Movement/Organization</td>
<td>• Conditions of Sustainability, Financial Sustainability, Sustainability of activists and organizers, Case study of Phulbari and Rampal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An immediate output of the workshop was the Action Plan for the organizational level workshop. Details methodologies of the workshop were discussed. There was also group works on the issue. After detailed discussion action plan was finalized.

From the organizational level workshop each organization would assess their needs and they would also assess their existing position. Key policy makers of respective organizations were supposed to participate in the workshop.
2.2.3 Organizational level workshop to review present status

All the partner FOs organized workshops with their policy makers. They assessed their organizational status, identified some baseline status and set some targets to develop their existing capacities. All the organizations identified some baseline information according to the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Result Areas (KRA)</th>
<th>Baseline level</th>
<th>Target level</th>
<th>Proposed Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Registration/Legal status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Members</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existing services for members</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills of the leaders</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committees</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human resources</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status of Advocacy works</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Representatives from secretariat were present at all the FO level workshop. Later those organizational level plans had been discussed and finalized in another workshop.

2.2.4 Workshop to review of organizations plan of action

We organized a workshop to review the status of the selected 9 FO of Bangladesh. That two days workshop was organized during 9th-10th March at the COAST auditorium in Dhaka. An immediate output of the workshop was the Action Plan for the organizational level workshop. Details methodologies of the workshop were discussed. There was also group works on the issue. All the organizations had organized their in-house assessment workshop and took action plan according to the guideline.

A two days workshop took place to review those organizational plans. All the partners presented their plan and other partners made their valuable comments. It helped respective organization to make their plan effective.

In that workshop details about existing status and challenges of all the partner organizations were discussed. Thus it helped all the partners to understand each other and to know each other well.
2.2.5 Meeting to Identify local issues of advocacy and Mobilization

The meeting was held at the COAST Principal Office, Dhaka on May 26, 2014. The main purpose of the meeting was to identify local issues for mobilization. Decisions in this regard were as follows:

- Mobilization or advocacy related events would be organized in district-sub district level
- Issues must be a local issue which was possible to address by the local authority
- A facts finding should be done prior to the event. Farmers’ Organizations would make the primary assessment; they would collect primary data-statistics on the issue. The secretariat would support in finalizing it.
- For each event there must be a position paper with specific recommendations. Recommendations must be clear, specific, rationale and feasible.
- Before the commencement of the events there would be a one day workshop on documentation and communications.

15 issues had been identified from the meeting, these were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl</th>
<th>Districts</th>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Organizations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Rangpur</td>
<td>Land less, Khas land, unemployment</td>
<td>Mobilization, memorandum to the DC demanding distribution of khas land among actual landless/press conference</td>
<td>BKF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sathkira</td>
<td>Water crisis</td>
<td>Press Conference/ Mobilization</td>
<td>BKF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Khulna</td>
<td>Climate change/water crisis/Internal displacement/Rehabilitation for the displaced/</td>
<td>Press Conference/ Mobilization Demanding internal displacement policy</td>
<td>BKS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Barguna</td>
<td>Climate change and agriculture</td>
<td>Press Conference/ Mobilization</td>
<td>BKS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Dinajpur</td>
<td>Indigenous people, farmers and land</td>
<td>Focusing on Recognition of indigenous people, right to land: Mobilization/Press Conference</td>
<td>BAS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Chapai</td>
<td>Indigenous people, land</td>
<td>Focusing on Recognition of indigenous people, right to land: Mobilization/Press Conference</td>
<td>BAS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Dhaka</td>
<td>Khas land of Keraniganj</td>
<td>Memorandum to DC</td>
<td>BKF (J)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Patuakhali</td>
<td>Khash land/ appropriate distribution/ Distribution of forest land among farmers</td>
<td>Mass gathering, rally, Memorandum to DC</td>
<td>BKF (J)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Kurigram</td>
<td>Marketing of agri product</td>
<td>Press conference/ Mobilization</td>
<td>KKM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Sunamganj</td>
<td>Water management</td>
<td>Demanding embankment: human chain and press conference</td>
<td>KKM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Bogra</td>
<td>Dam repairmen</td>
<td>Press conference/ memorandum to DC</td>
<td>BBS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.2.6 Pre Budget Seminar

We organized a pre budget seminar on 6th April 2014. The title of that seminar was “Agriculture and Farmer Friendly Budget: Public-Private Sector in Seed Management” and it was held at the National Press club. Speakers urged for sufficient allocation for Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation (BADC) to rule over the multinational corporations (MNCs) and local companies who basically undermine the rights of farmers in the upcoming budget for the next fiscal year. The seminar was jointly organized by Bangladesh Krisha Federation, Bangladesh Vumihin Samity, and Bangladesh Federation of Agri-farm labours, Labour Resource Center, Kendrio Krishok Moitri, Bangladesh Kishani Shova and COAST Trust at the National Press.

Mustafa Kamal Akanda of COAST Trust moderated the seminar while Mr. A Kha Ma Jahangir Hossain MP and former State Minister to Textile, Mr. Shamsuzzaman Dudu of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), Mr. Anwar Faruk, the Additional Secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture, Mr. Dewan Siraj, the presenter of Agriculture program of BTV, Mr. Ziaul Huq Mukta of Oxfam-Asia, Mr. Aminur Rasul Babul of Unnayan Dhara Trust spoke as the panellists. The keynote paper is presented by Mujibul Haque Munir of COAST Trust.

In his keynote presentation Mujibul Haque Munir said, the entire agriculture sector of the country is being dependent on the seed marketed by the MNCs and local private sector companies. BADC, the public institute for agriculture who have been successfully contributing for the agricultural development since the liberation should be capacitated more to get out of this situation. The contribution of BADC in providing seeds to the farmers, however, is decreasing day by day. He adds that, Bt. Brinjal is being promoted in Bangladesh in spite of its health hazardous elements found by its own research. BADC should have been the capacity to monitor this kind of seed marketing.
Ziaul Huq Mukta of OXFAM said, no agricultural product should be imported that can threaten our own crop production. The imported crops should be well managed by tariff and other customs rules so that our growers of the same crop could be benefitted. He adds, more allocation in the upcoming budget should be sanctioned for agricultural research and invention of our own seeds. A Price Commission could be introduced in the country so that the proper price is ensured for the small-scale farmers.

Jibanananda Jayanta of Surokkha O Agragati Foundation said, there is no legal protection for the farmers if they end up in any financial loss by using unknown seeds promoted by seed companies. We should have reform the existing laws in this regard. Aminur Rasul Babul said, our farmers should have the right over the seeds. There should be system on how the government will compensate if any farmer fall in financial loss. Dewan Siraj of Bangladesh Television said, there should be budget allocation for marketing of the local agriculture production. The farmers should be involved in the national budget process.

Mr. Anwar Faruk, the additional Secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture said, the main problem of our agriculture is the farmers are not getting the just price of their crops. We should develop a value chain for their crop and a well management and preservation system for the surplus production.

Mr. Akram Hossain Chowdhury of Bangladesh Awami league said, we should focus on the empowerment of the marginalized farmers. Neither budget allocation nor the local companies and MNC matters if our farmers are well empowered and equipped.

Mr. Shamsuzzaman Dudu of BNP said, once the democracy is established in the country agriculture along with all other sectors will be developed in no time. We had corruption of 1500 billion Taka in the last 7 years. Democracy is essential to stop this.

Mr. A K M Jahangir Hossain MP said, I think the subsidy in agriculture is a kind of investment. If we spent money here it will return in many times through the agricultural production. He also said, we should consider the reality and the climate of our country while conducting research on the seeds. We can’t blame all kind of high yielding seeds in an average. Our populations have been increased in many times and old technology of agriculture is no more sufficient. He adds, BADC have many warehouses in the district level that are out of order. We should reinstall them to function properly.

2.2.7 Issue Based Mobilization: Post budget Press Conference
A press conference titled “National Budget 2014-15: Farmers’ expectations and reality. Inadequate budget for agriculture is suicidal for future self-sufficiency in food” was organized by Farmers’ Organizations of Bangladesh who are working with the Medium Term Cooperation Program (MTCP) of IFAD. The issue of the press conference was the insufficient allocation in the proposed budget for the year of 2014-15. The main objective was to raise the concerns and to place the specific recommendations.

The press conference was organized on 8th June at the National Press Club of Bangladesh situated in Dhaka.

The National Budget of Bangladesh has
been declared in the parliament on 5th June 2014 and it is found that the total proposed allocation for agriculture is 12390 Cr Taka which is 111 Cr Taka more than that of last year. But it was expected that the allocation for agriculture should have been increased as the total budget is. The Agriculture allocation is decreased by 0.73% where the total budget is increased by 5.34%. The subsidy for agriculture is unchanged as last year which is 9,000 Cr. Taka. As the inflation is accounted 7%, it means the subsidy is actually decreased. It is also worrisome that the Finance Minister in his budget speech said that invention of genetic engineering will be emphasized. Because there is a strong debate everywhere in the world on genetic engineering and GMO and we have witnessed the damage in Bangladesh already. Considering the above mentioned issues the press conference was organized.

Nine ‘farmers’ and right based organizations led by COAST Trust said that the allocation for agriculture in the proposed budget for the coming fiscal year 2014-15 is inadequate and suicidal for future self-sufficiency in food. They also urge to establish a National Price Commission to ensure the fair price for the agricultural products to save the local farmers. They said that through the enormous negligence to the agriculture, the government has failed to fulfil their promise of achieving self-sufficiency in food by 2012 mentioned in their election manifesto. If the situation goes like this the country will not be able to face the food crisis for the increased population by 2021 and the poverty will increase.

It was also said in the press conference that the allocation for the agriculture is only 4.95% of total budget i.e. 2,505.06 billion Taka and it is less than that of last year. Agricultural subsidy of 90 billion Taka remains unchanged from last year but its affect will be decreased for the 7% of inflation. Increased price of fuel and water will affect it as well. It will cause more food import in the coming years, they added.

Syed Aminul Haque of COAST Trust moderates the Press Conference, while Barkat Ullah Maruf of the same organization presents the keynote paper. Other speakers were Subol Sarkar of Bangladesh Bhumihin Samity, Aminur Rasul Babul of Unnayan Dhara Trust, Jayed Iqbal Khan and Mainuddin Hawladar of Bangladesh Krishok Federation and Golam Sarwar of Bangladesh Krishi Farm Shromik Federation.

Barkat Ullah Maruf in his keynote presentation said, though the government has been claiming that the country have achieved self-sufficiency in food but the reality is we have been importing food from 1.86 Million Ton to 5.15 million Ton every year. 2.3 million Tons of food is also imported last fiscal year. Food dependency of the country of increasing population will go worse unless adequate budgetary allocation and subsidy for agriculture is ensured.

He added, the local farmers are being abandoned due to the dumping of the highly subsidized agro-companies’ products as the government organization BADC have been weakened by less budget allocation and wrong policies.

Aminur Rasul Babul said, there is no compensation mechanism for the local farmers who get a great loss by using the untested seeds marketed by the foreign companies. Our farmers have almost no support and security from the government as the farmers in other countries have. He added, 500 million taka for agriculture in islands (remote chor development) is nothing but a dramatic surprise by the government.
We have seen this kind of allocation last year for the Haor areas but we have seen no implementation of it.

Subol Sarkar said, Cost of everything in agriculture is increasing including raw materials, fertilizer and water except the price of the crops and the hard effort of the farmers behind it. Farmers never got the cost he invested in return.

Syed Aminul Hauqe said, the country should have anti-dumping measures to protect the local farmers so that the highly subsidized agro-products don’t distort the local market of agricultural products. It ensures the local farmers to get the justified price for their crop. But due to the compromising attitude of the government of Bangladesh and misguided agriculture policy the multinational agro-companies are making money and in exchange the local farmers are being abandoned.

He added, agricultural research is very important the development of the country’s agricultural production but it’s a pity that we have almost no budget is seen in this regard.

2.2.8 Sharing meeting with farmers’ wing of political parties

On 26 April we organized a sharing meeting with farmers’ wing of some political parties. The aim was to take a common understanding and positing to raise voices on behalf of the farmers’ of Bangladesh. The specific objective was to share our demand from the upcoming budget. It was first of its kind. Nine grass roots level farmers’ organization and one farmers’ wing of a political party participate the meeting. Participant organization of the meeting were

a. Bangladesh Krishak Jote  
b. Bangladesh Krishak Federation  
c. Bangladesh Krishak Federation (8 organizations)  
d. Bangladesh Kishani Sobha  
e. Kendrio Krishak Moitri  
f. Bangladesh Agricultural Farm Labour Federation  
g. Labour Resource Centre  
h. COAST  
i. Bangladesh Bhumihin Somity  
j. Adibasi Somity

Discussing various agriculture related issues the forum had come upon some consensus. All the participants agreed that, as an agricultural country special attention must be given to the agriculture. Profit making trends of the private seed companies must be controlled and investment to the public sector must be increased. Besides that, cultivation of GMO and hybrid seeds must be discouraged.
2.2.9 Training on financial management

To enhance capacity of financial management we organized a special training on financial management. That two days training was organized on 27 -28th of May. The key sessions of the training were as follows;

a. What is Financial Management?
b. Procurement policy (Goods, Building, Development)
c. Exercise on procurement step
d. VAT, Tax, & Revenue stamp.
e. Budget (Definition, Preparation, Control, budget variance)
g. Cash book closing
h. mother account (Organization name, Joint signature,
i. Office Management:
 j. Staff recruitment process (Ad, CV, Exam, Employment letter, Joining letter,
k. Personal file c. Leave record system
l. Vehicle management system
m. Difference kinds of register, Format,
n. Exercise on voucher
o. Definition of Vouchers, difference kinds of vouchers, example
p. Received by, Paid by, Checked by, Approved by.
q. Report preparation system

2.2.10 Training for the leaders of FOs

Strengthening FOs in Bangladesh is one of the major objectives of the MTCP2. At the beginning of the project we made some assemenent of the participating organizations. From those asessments we had learnt that some ledearship development trainings were needed for the leaders of the FOs in Bangladesh. As the part of the cpacity building efforts we organized the training for the leaders of the participating FOs in Bangladesh. The 4 days trainign was organized in Cox's in bazar in July. Key contents of the training were:

- Types and strategis of management
- How to manage people and organizations
- Characteristics of a good manager
- Time management
- Planning
- Report writing and documentation
- Using ICT
- Motivation
- Conflict and stress management
- English efficiencies

Nine participants from nine organizations took part in the training where two of them were female.

2.2.11 Research on National Seed Policy
As a part of the policy advocacy and to ensure participation of FOs in the policy-making process, we have conducted research on the National Seed Policy of Bangladesh. The main aim of the research is to find out the ways to ensure farmers’ interest through this policy. Main focus was to find out whether there is any scope for the farmers for getting compensation if they are deceived by the seed companies. We have found that there is no such option for farmers. To us the policy is to facilitate private companies not for the interests of the farmers. For example, the paragraph no 11.2.2 (b) of the policy says that, Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation (BADC) will stop producing seeds that are being produced by private companies. The paragraph no 11.2.5 says that, BADC will withdraw its upazila (sub-district) based selling centers and these will be replaced by private companies. BADC is the state-owned public organization to produce quality seeds and to supply to the farmers with low cost. Weakening the BADC means more profit to the seed companies. We have prepared the research paper in Bangla.

2.2.12 Local level mobilization on National Budget
This is the first time in Bangladesh where Farmers’ Organizations are protesting the reduced or insufficient budget allocation for the agriculture sector. MTCP2 participating FOs organized district level rallies protesting the allocation. Four rallies in four districts were organized. A national level event was also organized in Dhaka. From the protests, speakers mentioned that, the proposed budget of 12,390 Cr Taka for agriculture in the FY 2014-15 is quite inadequate according to the demand and this approach of neglecting an important sector like agriculture will patronize the multinational companies instead of the poor and marginalized farmers of the country. They will not be able to compete with the companies in crop production and its price. They will end up being poorer and landless day labor. They also said the government, being forced by the World Bank and IMF, is decreasing the allocation for agriculture every year and neglecting the country’s most important sector. And this is how the government has failed to fulfill their promise of
making the country self-sufficient in food by 2012. If this situation continues it will be more and more
difficult to achieve the food demand for the increased population by 2021 (according to FAO it will be
180 million people and the food production target will be 47 million ton). Finally it will create more
poverty in this country. The proposed budget for agriculture is only 4.95% of the total budget and by
percentage it is less than that of last year. On the other hand our neighboring country India has
increased their agricultural allocation by 20% over last year and it is 7% of their total budget. Our
government should follow this example of India instead of bowing down to IMF and World Bank. Only
then our poor and marginalized farmers’ will be benefitted.

2.2. 13 Local level mobilization on various local issues

- Mobilization demanding khas land for landless: Bangladesh Krishak Federation organized a
human chain and rally in Barishal district demanding distribution of khas land (govt land) among landless
people. From the rally it was said that, local administration was not taking any initiative to do that. The
human chain also demanded actions against illegal land grabbers.

- Human chain demanding protection of farmers from water logging and counterfeit
pesticides and fertilizers: Labour Resource centre organized a human chain demanding immediate
action to protect farmers from water logging and counterfeit pesticides and fertilizers. It was organized
in Gopalganj district. The human chain also submitted a memorandum to the administration. 210 farmers including 140 female farmers took part of the human chain.

- **Mobilization demanding khas land for landless:** Bangladesh Kishani Sobha organized a press conference demanding distribution of khas land (govt land) among landless people. The press conference was organized in Rangpur district. From the press conference the main demand was to distribute khash land among the indigenous people.

- **Mobilization demanding capacity building of BADC:** Bangladesh Agricultural Farm Labour Federation (BAFLF) organized a press conference demanding capacity building of Bangladesh agricultural Development Corporation (BADC). This public organization has long history of supporting the agriculture in Bangladesh. Once upon a time it was the main source of quality seeds with low cost. But now it can provide only 15-20% of the seeds demand. Private companies are grabbing the seeds market with high price and most of the time low quality. So, demand was to strengthen capacity of the organization. On the other hand there have been various internal and external conspiracies to make the organization dysfunctional for the sake of various multinational companies. So, demand was there to protect the organization.

- **Mobilization protesting Violence against Indigenous people:** Bangladesh Adibasi Somity organized a press conference protesting violence against indigenous people. The press conference was organized in Chapai nababganj district.

### 2.2.14 Training for Farmers on Different Services and Sharing Meeting

To disseminate information about the existing services for farmers from the various government and private organization we organized 7 one day training in 7 districts. The aim of the training was to inform the farmers about the services and how to get those services.

After the training there was sharing meeting. These linkage meetings have created strong linkages among farmers and service providers.

For the training resource persons were from various government offices, mainly from the upazila or district upazila offices. They mainly described about the services.
The linkage meetings were also interesting and effective. In the linkage meetings officers from various government offices were present. Farmers got chances to share their challenges and problems with the officials. They also got information on how to get various services and from where.

2.2.15 National level workshop to identify value chain product

One of the major thrust of the MTCP2 program in Bangladesh is to establish value chain. We are working to promote a chain of adding value to farmers’ product. To identify a product to work with we organized a national level workshop to identify appropriate field to work with value chain. After an effective discussion we have decided to work with seeds. As there is a huge demand for quality seeds in Bangladesh and the market of seeds are being dominated some multinational companies. Our mission is to create some group of seed producers among farmers. We will try to establish a mechanism to train them, to support them to produce quality seeds and to be able to ensure marketing of the product.

3. Financial Analysis

3.1: Financial Management Systems: COAST has strong and international standard financial management policy. COAST always tries to maintain its accounting systems transparent and cost effective. It has a strong finance team along with an internal audit team who has a very proactive and independent audit mechanism. In COAST we usually maintain a central system for all projects; we have done such for the MTCP2 project also. But we also have respect to respective accounts or financial policies of our patrons.

As there were some local level activities implemented by participating FOs, we had to transfer some amount to them. Before transferring any amount to FOs, we had organized training on financial management for the leaders of FOs. From the training we had tried to build their capacity on managing accounts with standard and also in making expenditures according to the agreed budget and conditions. Details orientation was given and a deed was signed among COAST and FOs. Besides that, we had provided details of what to do and how before every transfer.

Usually in COAST all the projects and programs are being run with separate bank accounts. But we could not open the bank account at the beginning as we could not get the fund in time and we had to maintain the expenditures from COAST own fund. We managed most of the expenditures up to second quarters taking loan from COAST. Later a new account had been opened and still we are maintaining this. COAST regularly produces Bank Reconciliation report, the report of MTCP2 for the year of 2014 is attached with this report.

As some parts of the project expenditures were met from COAST and later parts from MTCP2 fund voucher numbers are not constant. Some duplication in numbers could be found.

3.2: Fund Status: The total budget for the 1st year was $ 34467, but we received $ 25000 in two installments. As the fund transfer experienced some difficulties and we could not receive the fund in time, some activities could not be implemented. At the end of the year we have been able to spent $ 20047. We have been able to spend 80.19% of the total amount we had received. The following chart can express the fund status at a glance:
It is to be noted that, in the financial report attached with this narrative one received fund amount has been mentioned as $ 25074, but actually we have received $ 25000. $ 74 has come here due to the variation of exchange rate between dollar and Bangladeshi taka.

**3.3 Program Cost vs Management Cost:** Of the total expenditure $ 12469 has been spent for program purpose and management cost is $7579. Program cost is 62.20% of the total fund we have received and management cost is 37.80%.

But the management cost could have been lower if we could get the total fund according to the budget. If we could get the full budget the management cost would be only 22.61%. But due to lower fund disbursement we had to cut various program keeping the management cost same.

**3.4 Component wise expenditure:** For the year of 2014 we worked with three different components, such as Strengthening FOs and their Networks, FO Participation in Policy Process and FO Services and Involvement in development Programmes.
Most of the amount have been spent under the component two i.e. FOs participation in policy process. The amount is $6054. We used highest amount for this component since we believed that we had a lot to do with this issue. Participation in policy process and strength of influence policy level for FOs in Bangladesh is a bit poor. We tried to address these issues. Cost for other component 1 and 3 are $4484 and $1931 respectively.

![Component expenditure chart]

**Component was expenditure in $**

3.4 Expenditure made by FOs: During the first year main focus on the participation in the policy process and capacity building of the FOs. FOs also organized some local level activities. We had transferred funds for those purposes. In total $4694 was spent directly by the participating FOs. As mentioned earlier, we had provided details of what to do and how before making every transfer to the FOs.

3.5: Support from SRIA and RIA in financial management: MTCP 2 has got continuous support from the SRIA-SA and RIA in financial management. Both the SRIA-SA and RIA have been providing us instructions and suggestions in this regard, they also keep continuous communication in this regard. We approached to SRIA-SA and RIA with some issues and all the issues have been settled effectively. We have also sent scanned copies of all bills and vouchers up to September 2014 to SRIA-SA and RIA.

We would like to thank the SIS mission also. Their observation and recommendations have also enriched the financial management systems of MTCP2 here in Bangladesh

4. Lessons Learned

During the first year of implementation of the project we have identified some specific learning, such as:
a. There are various services for farmers, but they are not aware about it. Linkages among farmers and service providers can be vital in this regard.

b. Even though farmers are playing vital role for the economy if Bangladesh, their voices are yet to be raised. Raised farmers’ voice can be effective in sensitizing service providers towards their challenges.

c. Value chain can be an effective tool of empowering farmers

d. To raise the voices of farmers, farmers’ organization must be strong, effective, self reliant and sustainable.

e. FOs in Bangladesh have strong local level base, but they will have to acquire strength in policy advocacy in national level.

f. In Bangladesh, there are very little opportunities for FOs in ensuring access to the policy level.

5. Conclusion

‘We have needs, we have people to work together, we have voices, we can hard work but we don’t know how to raise our voices in right way, how to find the right place to raise our voices. We can organize a press conference or a human chain, but we don’t know how to document it properly and how to pursue it. But MTCP2 has made us equipped with this knowledge. Hope we will be able to use these knowledge for the betterment of our farmers’- Zayed Iqbal Khan, Secretary of Bangladesh Krishak Federation

One year is not enough to measure proper impact of a development project. Even one year is a bit short time of analyzing the result also. A project like MTCP2 which is working with farmers’ organization of Bangladesh is definitely different from other projects and program in various dimensions. This project aims to ensure comparatively formal organizational structure of those organizations which are mainly political. FOs in Bangladesh are mainly working on claiming various legitimate rights. MTCP2 in Bangladesh is trying to ensure strong organizational structure within key FOs. So far we have confident that we are on the right track. In the first year we have identified what are the challenges for FOs in Bangladesh, we have also identified present status of the participating FOs and now we know where to go and how. From various capacity building processes we have taken effective plan of actions on creating linkages among farmers and service providers, we are also trying to equipped the farmers with various services. We have identified the value chain product and we are hopeful to start the value chain production from 2015.

We can understand that, we have still a lot to do to ensure FOs participation in the policy process, and we do have many challenges to face in the upcoming years. But we believe that, we will be able to face those challenges with effective strategic plans. To do that we will work in the both ways, we will try to strengthen capacities of FOs and we will also try to engage farmers directly with the MTCP2.