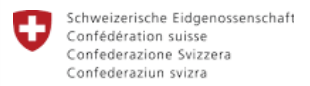




Annual Report 2015

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



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A. Executive Summary

MTCP2 Bangladesh started its journey of the year 2015 with great enthusiasm. Inspired and strengthened by the previous year's achievements, participating Farmers' Organizations (FO) were pretty much eager to go furthermore. Activities of 2015 were designed keeping this spirit in mind. Major focus for 2015 was to develop a strong value chain where farmers could run and control all the process of production and marketing of their products. Considering the importance of seeds in Bangladesh agriculture MTCP2 Bangladesh decided to promote local seeds and to make farmers self-reliant in seeds. So, the main objective of the value chain efforts was to produce local seeds by farmers and to supply these seeds to local and national level farmers with low cost. MTCP2 Bangladesh is hopeful that, this endeavor will benefit farmers in two ways: ensuring additional income for producer farmers' family and ensuring seeds security for their agriculture.

MTCP2 Bangladesh is also keen in capacity building of farmers. During 2015 there were some capacity building trainings for the frontline farmers. In the previous year, there were trainings mainly for farmers' leaders; in 2015 there were training for the farmers at the village level. Some change agents have been created; these agents will take the knowledge and messages to the village level farmers.

In 2015 MTCP2 has included one Fisher Folk organization in its journey. Bangladesh Fish Workers Alliance (BFWA) is a national platform of small-scale fish workers. This platform is formed and run by fish workers and it has members in all the regions of Bangladesh. BFWA is a member of the World Forum of Fisher People (WFFP), which is internationally renowned and recognized platform for fishers. MTCP2 believes that, inclusion of BFWA will open windows for fisher people of Bangladesh to raise their voices and to strengthen their organizational capacities.

For this period, there were some relevant events (local or national), which have affected the implementation of the program. In 2015 MTCP2 Bangladesh organized national level press conference on the

proposed budget of the Bangladesh. From the press conference held in the National Press Club in Dhaka, MTCP2 Bangladesh participating 10 farmers' and rights based organizations termed the budget for the year of 2015-16 as businessmen friendly who use agriculture for making profit, this budget is not farmers' friendly. Some local level

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mobilizations were also organized protesting the reduced allocation for the agriculture sector. To establish linkages among the different service providers and the farmers-fishers sub district and village level linkage meetings were organized. From these meeting farmers and fishers have been able to know the available services within their areas and how to get those. 14 farmers groups are now producing paddy seeds with a local and eco-friendly technique. Two sharing meetings were organized to extend the knowledge of value chain among more farmers of the working area. Two participating organizations organized their general assembly. From these events MTCP2 platform and FOs have been able to reach their voices to the policy makers. Motivated from our mobilization one Member of Parliament raised these issues in the Budget Session of the Parliament. We have also communicated with many government officials and they are about our issues and demands. It has been found that, government officials, service providers have also been sensitized towards farmers and fishers.

In terms of component 1, total 4 activities were conducted (1 training, 1 workshop and 2 General Assemblies of two organizations) engaging a total of 50 number of farmer leaders from number of FOs. The focus of the activities for component 1 for this year was on revival of organizational committees, review of organizational review and management capacity building. In terms of component 2, total of 3 activities were conducted (30 sub district and village level linkage meeting among service providers and farmers-fishers, 1 post national budget press conference) engaging a total of 2139 farmers from 10 number of FOs. The focus of these activities was primarily on policy influence and establishing linkages with service providers.

In terms of component 3, total 1 activity was conducted (2 sharing meeting on value chain). In terms of program management, 7 steering committee meetings were conducted which resulted in taking important decisions and actions related to program management

Key program challenges encountered during this year includes delayed release of fund and the political instability during the whole 1st quarter. From January 5 there was serious country wide political violation. Due to the volatility movement from the capital to other districts and it was almost impossible to arrange event during that time.

14 farmers' groups are now producing seeds with improved quality using a local and low cost technology



B. Summary of Key Activities and Outputs

| Component | Activities | Result/Outcome |
|-----------|---|---|
| 3 | Sharing meeting on Value chain | People of the Char (remote sandbar island) got knowledge on value chain, importance of local seed production. |
| 2 | Union level linkage meeting with service providers (with fishers) | Fisher people learnt about government services, laws and regulations. Service providers' sensitized towards fisher people. Opportunities of access to the services for fisher people have been increased. |
| 1 | Regional Meeting of Bangladesh Fish Workers Alliance | Regional committee of BFWA has been reformed, it was a part of the General Assembly of the organization |
| 2 | Upazila Based linkage meeting with Service Providers (with farmers) | Farmers learnt about government services, laws and regulations. Service providers sensitized towards farmers. Opportunities of access to the services for farmers have been increased. |
| 2 | Union level linkage meeting with service providers (with fishers) | Fisher people learnt about government services, laws and regulations. Service providers sensitized towards fisher people. Opportunities of access to the services for fisher people have been increased. |
| 2 | Post budget Press Conference | Farmers' voices on budget raised, their concerns were echoed in national medias. |
| 1 | 4th General Assembly of BFWA | National Committee of the BFWA formed |
| 1 | Organizational Review | BFWA National Committee reviewed their strength and weakness, they prepared their action plan |
| 1 | Training on Financial Management | FO leaders got skills and knowledge on financial management |
| 2 | Regional Meeting of Bangladesh Fish Workers Alliance | Regional committee of BFWA has been reformed, it was a part of the General Assembly of the organization |
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C. Analysis of the Activities

1. On Results of Activities

• During 2015 the outputs of component 2 and 3 have been found to be most significant. Due to delayed fund MTCP2 Bangladesh have not been

able to implement all the planned activities. Most of the activities were implemented under the component two. Main activities under this component were the linkage meeting with service providers. Organizing General Assembly was also another significant activities. FOs have been able to organize long due assembly and now have their new leaders. All the FOs have new committees and they are now working with new strength and new enthusiasm.

- Component two has the highest cost. As one of the major focus of this year was to ensure more services for farmers, we organized various field based programs and thus cost was high.
- Almost all the components faced challenges during 2015. MTCP2 Bangladesh mainly faced two challenges i.e. delayed fund receive and political instability in Bangladesh. From January 5 there was serious country wide political violation. Due to the volatility movement from the capital to other districts and it was almost impossible to arrange event during that time. During that period, we did not arrange mass event. We arrange mainly indoor events. We advised all our participants to bear their ID cards with them, so that they can show when it is required. We went to mass people to arrange the event; we had not invited them to gather in a city place.



Local level orientation to farmers on various government services

2. On Gender concern

- In a country like Bangladesh it is a bit tough to ensure women participation or to ensure gender balance. Considering the need of women participation and women empowerment among the farmer and fisher communities special attention was there to

During 2015 in MTCP2 different meeting and training total direct participants were 2139 farmers and fishers. Among them 1570 were women, about 73.39%. It is better than the previous year. It shows the evident improvement in women participation in MTCP2 Bangladesh.

ensure women participation. We have calculated that, during 2015 in MTCP2 different meeting and training total direct participants were 2139 farmers and fishers. Among them 1570 were women, about 73.39%. It is better than the previous year. It shows the evident improvement in women participation in MTCP2 Bangladesh.

- In the local level activities women participation is more than others. It is still very tough to ensure desired level of women participation in district or national level event. We are working to improve the situation by taking some special measures like special awareness program, special allowance for women etc.

3. On Program Management

- NIA plays the role of platform. The main responsibility of NIA is to ensure smooth and effective coordination of program activities. The monthly coordination meeting with the participation of the all FOs discusses all the common and individual concerns and issues. NIA sometimes facilitate individual or bilateral meeting to solve concern.
- NIA keeps regular and transparent communication with all FOs. NIA also shares all the decisions and updates regularly and effectively with all FOs. When any issue or concern is raised from FOs, NIA makes appropriate response quickly. These continuous efforts from NIA keep the FOs united and active.



Sub district level linkage meeting among farmers and service providers

4. On Facilitating factors

- The main force or strength of the MTCP2 Bangladesh has been the team spirit among the participating FOs. All the FOs have been working with one common and same goal i.e. the enhance capacities of farmers/fishers organizations and increased participation of farmers/fishers in services. As soon as fund was received all FOs worked hard to implement the scheduled activities.

D. Details of Major Activities

1. Preparatory Meeting: MTCP2 Bangladesh's activities in 2015 were started with a preparatory meeting of the National Steering Committee. The preparatory meeting was held at the COAST Principal Office, Dhaka on February 02, 2015. The meeting was presided over by Badrul Alam of Bangladesh Krishak Federation. Golam Sarwar (BAFLAF), Subal Sarkar (BBS), Jayed Iqbal Khan (BKF-JI), Sabina Yasmin (BKS), Shibly Anwar (LRC) and Rina Akhter of KKM were present in the meeting. The meeting was facilitated by Md. Mujibul Haque Munir of COAST Trust. The meeting discussed details about the Annual Work Plan and Budget, Fund carry over, Fund Request for the 1st Tranche, Plan of Activities for the First Quarter and New participating organization, External Survey.

The Annual Work Plan and Budget (AWPB) for 2015 were discussed in details and it was approved by the Steering Committee. Agreed budget for 2015 was \$ 61750.01. The committee was agreed that, in 2015 major focus would be on Value Chain Development. Local seed production and marketing would be the focus for that year. The committee was also agreed that, support to community radio in airing awareness program on agriculture and fisheries would be a new intervention in 2015.

From the meeting Bangladesh Fish Workers Alliance was included in MTCP2 Bangladesh. It was expected that, as in Bangladesh we had farmers, female farmers, indigenous group, farm labours, fisher group would add a new dimension in terms of participation. In 2016 we will include more two organizations. The meeting also decided that, an external survey would be conducted to identify the strength, weakness of participating organizations. The survey would also identify recommendations. The meeting welcomed the idea and process.



2. Formation of Core Committee and Training on Value Chain:



As mentioned earlier, major focus for 2015 was to develop a value chain. MTCP2 Bangladesh took the following activities to make that endeavour successful:

- Developing a Core Group on value chain, which group will supervise the whole process and which will ensure the effective implementation of the activities.
- Developing one trainer/focal person for each participating FO on Value Chain
- With the technical support of the focal person, each FO will establish at least one farmers' group.
- Each group will have at least five members.
- All members of the groups will be trained on value chain i.e. on local seeds production, marketing etc.
- There will be one person at the secretariat who will provide technical support to the whole process.
- Farmers group will produce seeds and supply it to local and national farmers.
- Advertisement, campaign of seeds produced by the farmers will be arranged.

Maria Model Local technique of seed production

Maria is a densely populated village in Amrul Union of Shahjahanpur upazila of Bogra. Farmers of this village invented a technique of collecting quality seed, which is called Maria Model.

Maria Model is a technique of seed preservation. The farmers of that village, mainly the women, preserve the seeds for next year paddy production in this system.

One hen or duck egg, water, salts and tub is needed for this model. Firstly we have to take 4-5 litters of water in the tub, and then 1 Kg salt is to be mixed with that water. Salt mixture will be going until the egg is floated on the water. When egg floating on the tub water, it is ready for paddy seed wetting. Seeds that lay bottom of the tub should be separated and these are ready for preservation. Other floating seeds should be rejected since these are not quality seeds. Paddy seeds laying bottom of the tub should be dried in the sunshine and after that they would be ready for plantation. Thus we can find out seed with quality.

Dried paddy seeds can be kept in a jar or air tight pot with Neem leaf and Tobacco leaf. The jar should be closed tightly with clay and cow dung.

- There will local and national level seeds fair to promote farmers production.

To form the core group and to develop one trainer for each FO, MTCP2 Bangladesh organized training on 9th March in Dhaka. Chief of all FOs and one person from each FO participated in the training. In the training a local technique of seeds production named Maria Model was discussed. Participants got details idea on the model. Techniques of producing and marketing seeds were discussed. Strategies of farmers' group formation, management of the group, advertisement of the seeds were also discussed. A detail plan of action was taken from the training. It is to be noted that, MTCP2 Bangladesh is going to form farmers' group who will produce and supply seeds produced with a local technique named Maria Model. Some farmers of Bangladesh have invented this model and it has been now widely recognized by various organizations. It is found that, using this technology, in various parts of the country farmers are gaining income by selling seeds to local markets, they have also become self reliant on seeds.

3 Orientation of Maria Model at Farmers Level

One of the keystones of the vale chain development process is the group formation. All the participating organizations have formed Value Chain group. According to plan, each FO is supposed to form at least one group. Bangladesh Krishak federation (JI) has formed five groups and Labour Resource Centre has formed two groups. In total 14 groups have been formed.

All the groups are based at the village level under various districts of Bangladesh. All the groups, except group of Kendriyo Krishak Moitree, have been provided orientation on Maria Model. All groups have taken their own plan of action. We have experienced immense interests among farmers with the value chain and with the techniques. They are pretty much confident that, they will be able to change their future with the initiative. Here are some pictures of field level orientation:



4 National Level Mobilization in response of national Budget

The national Budget of Bangladesh was passed in the parliament in last 30th June. It was proposed in 4th of June. We have found that, the national budget has been increased by 23,13% compared to the last year budget, but allocation for agriculture has been increased only by 3.43%. MTCP2 Bangladesh decided to organize national and local level mobilization protesting the allocation for agriculture.

4.1 National Level Press Conference

From the press conference held in the National Press Club in Dhaka, MTCP2 Bangladesh participating 10 farmers' and rights based organizations termed the proposed budget for the year of 2015-16 as businessmen friendly who use agriculture for making profit. This budget is not farmers' friendly, they added. They said that, the allocation for agriculture in the proposed budget for the coming fiscal year is inadequate and suicidal for future self-sufficiency in food. They also urge to establish a National Price Commission to ensure fair price for the agricultural products to save the local farmers.

The press conference titled "National Budget 2014-15: Farmers' expectations and reality. Inadequate budget for agriculture is suicidal for future self-sufficiency in food" was jointly organized by Bangladesh Krishak Federation, Bangladesh Bhumihin Samity, Bangladesh Agricultural Farm Labour Federation, Labour Resource Center, Kendrio Krishok Moitri, Bangladesh Kishani Shova, Bangladesh Krishak Federation (JI), Bangladesh Adibasi Somity, COAST Trust and EquityBD.



Badrul Alam of Bangladesh Krishak Federation moderated the press conference, while Md. Mujibul Haque Munir of COAST Trust presented the keynote. Among others Subal Sarker of Bangladesh Bhumihin Somity, Jayed Iqbal Khan of Bangladesh Krishak Federation, Golam Sarwar of Bangladesh Agricultural Farm Labour Federation, Aluaddin Shikder of Kendrio Bangladesh Adibasi Somity, Unnayan Dhara and Rezaul Karim Chowdhury of COAST Trust also spoke at the occasion.



Md Mujibul Haque Munir said, size of the national budget has been increased by 23,13% compared to the last year budget, but allocation for agriculture has been increased only by

3.43%. Last year budget for the agriculture ministry was 5.12%, for 2015-16 it is only 4.30% of the total budget. Proportionately it is the lowest allocation in last five years. Allocation for agriculture is declining in a regular basis. Only 1.9% of the Annual Development Plan (ADP) is allocated for agriculture ministry, it is the same as the last year allocation. Agricultural subsidy of 90 billion Taka remains unchanged from last year but its affect will be decreased due to projected 6.2% rate of inflation. Increased price of fuel and water will affect it as well. It will cause more food import in the coming years.

From the press conference farmers organizations placed some specific demands such as: allocation for agriculture should be increased compared to the size of the total budget, subsidy should be increased and effective utilization of it should be ensured, national Price Commission is must to ensure just price for farmers, import of harmful foreign seeds must be stopped, jute should be given special priority to regain its golden era. It is to be noted that, once Jute was the main cash crop of Bangladesh. Jute was the source of main foreign exchange income. It was called golden fibre of Bangladesh. The largest Jute mill in the world was in Bangladesh. Bangladesh is still second in Jute production. But now a days export income has been decreased, production has also been decreased since farmers are not getting appropriate price. Many Jute mills have been closed.

4.2 Local Level Mobilization in response of national Budget



In response of the national budget, three MTCP2 participating FOs organized three local level mobilizations. They organized human chain and rally protesting lower allocation for agriculture. Detailed guideline on arranging the event was provided from the NIA secretariat. From the rally and human chain specific demands were placed. Motivated from our mobilization one Member of Parliament raised these issues in the Budget Session of the Parliament. We have also communicated with many government officials and they are about our issues and demands. In the above here are some photos of those local level mobilizations: Here are some photos of those local level mobilizations:

4.3. General Assembly and Organizational Review

Capacity building of participating organizations is one of the key objectives of MTCP2 program. To strengthen organizational management MTCP2 provided support to reform participating organizations' management committee. During 2015 two organizations organized their General Assembly. Bangladesh Fish Worker Alliance (BFWA) and Coastal Farmers' Association (CFA-COAST Trust) organized their assembly. These two organizations got their new leaders in a democratic process.

Coastal Farmers' Association organised its General Assembly in the coastal island district Bhola. CFA has about 36000 members, it has its members and rural level committees in remote Char (isolated sandbar island) areas. The Central Committee was formed from the meeting where representatives from Union level committees participated. Slogan of the event was, 'We demand fair price of our products'.



New National Committees of CFA and BFWA



With the support of MTCP2 Bangladesh, Bangladesh Fish Workers' Alliance - BFWA, one of the participant organisations, organised the General Meeting. This meeting was a result of conclusion of an almost two months long process. Bangladesh has mainly five fisheries areas, BFWA has its regional committees in all these five areas. Members of these five areas elected their representatives in a regional meeting. Representatives come through those regional processes form the national committee. The next day of the general assembly newly formed committee organized organizational review. From that review they identified their strength, weakness and took future plan of action.

4.4 Dissemination of knowledge through Community Radio

Poverty doesn't only mean to have a minimum a daily income of below \$1.25, it also includes powerlessness, voicelessness, vulnerability, and fear. Poverty can be divided into two main dimensions: income poverty, which is the lack of income necessary to satisfy basic needs; and human poverty which is the lack of human capabilities for example poor life expectancy, poor maternal health, illiteracy, poor nutritional levels, poor access to safe drinking water and perceptions of well-being (UNDP, 2003). Having the right information at the right time can help in finding a solution to the issue of poverty.



Information has a strong link with poverty; poverty is also to be deprived of the information needed to participate in the wider society, at the local, national or global level.

Knowledge or information gap is one of the major determinants of poverty and discriminations. If we go to some information of the developed countries we will find that, they are more capable of knowledge designation and information sharing. For example, all of the developing countries of the world own a mere four percent of the world's computers, USA has more telephones than people, whereas Africa has a mere 6.6 telephones per 100 inhabitants

In a country like Bangladesh, Community Radio can be an effective platform to raise the voices of the poor, to enhance people's capacity of claiming the legitimate rights and to eradicate discriminations. Community radio can play a significant role at the grassroots level for rural development. For instance, issues of poverty, agriculture, gender inequality, education, social problems among others could be the focus for programming. Radio activities can make a significant change in a community's life.

Community Radio can play the following roles in the poverty alleviation and reducing discriminations:

- Community Radio can facilitate effective flow of information, which can support community people, specially the marginalized to have an improved livelihood.
- Community Radio can act as a platform of dialogue. It can establish linkage among the Rights Holders and the Duty Bearers.
- Community Radio can enhance capacities of the duty bearers as well as it can also sensitize duty bearers to the rights holders
- It also can play a role of Social Watchdog, by doing this it can ensure accountability of the service providers towards the community people

MTCP 2 Bangladesh is utilizing the power of community radio. During 2015 MTCP2 Bangladesh provided support to coastal Community Radio named Radio Meghan to broadcast special programs for farmers and fishers.



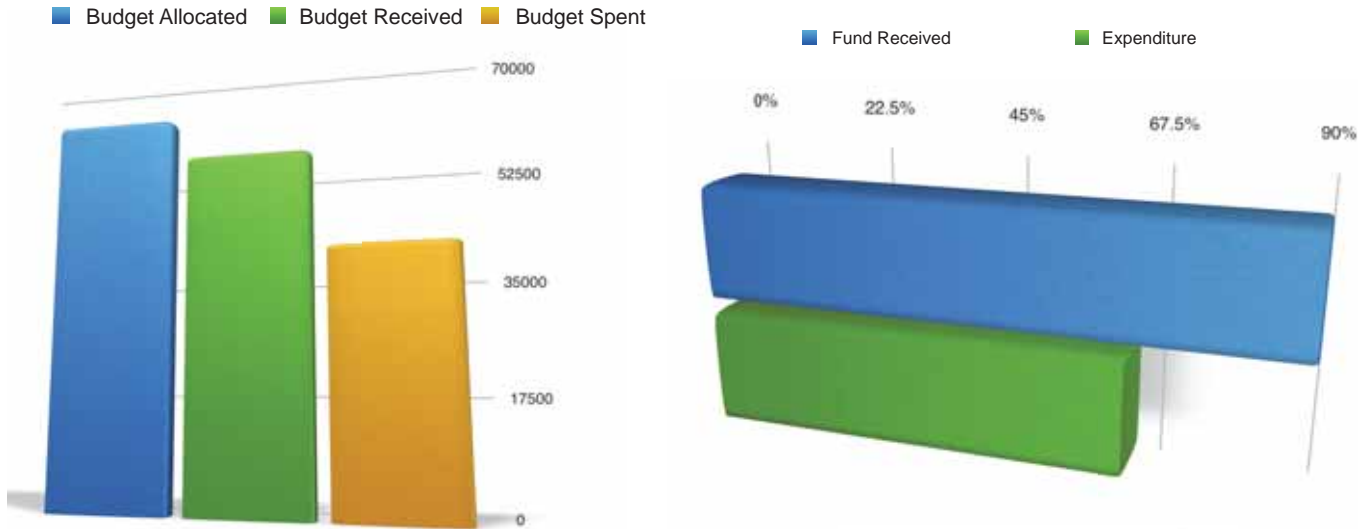
Main beneficiaries of this radio are the Fishers and Farmers of the coastal sub district Char fasson. One of the major professions of the Char Fasson area is Fishing, an important number of people are involved in fishing. They are facing various challenges; specially they are not getting the weather signal in time. Community radio can help them in this regard. Fisher people have little knowledge on sustainable fisheries, fisheries laws, rights, rules on access to the fishing grounds. Middlemen and influential people exploit fishermen in various ways; fisher people also don't have appropriate access to their rights and finance. They also have little knowledge on government services, their access to those services are also limited. MTCP2 Bangladesh provided support to broadcast program on various awareness, weather forecasting, and live communication with service providers. Community radio program helps the fishers of the area to enhance their capacity in facing these challenges.

Farmers of Char Fasson are also suffering from various challenges. One of the major challenges is knowledge gap. Land grabbing is common in Char Fasson, lack of government services, excessive use of pesticides are other problems that the farmers are facing. Unavailability of linkages among the farmers and different service providers is also another serious problem. With the support of MTCP2 Radio Meghna broadcasts regular program focusing the challenges of the farmers, way out of those problems, there are programs with the participation of farmers. There are also some programs with the participation of the service providers.

E. Financial Statement

Total budget for 2015 was 61450; MTCP2 Bangladesh received 55200 in total. Among the received fund total expenditure was 40174. We received

about 90% of the budget and of that received amount about 65% has been spent. In 2015, funds were received as follows: USD 5,000 in May, USD 25,700 in August, and USD 24,500 on November 20. USD 18,800 were unspent and carried over into 2016. Due to delayed transfer we could not utilize the entire fund we had got. The following tables present the financial status



Timely fund availability was a major challenge during the reporting year. During the first quarter we managed program activities from the unspent amount of the previous year (\$5000) and later we got another \$5000.

F. Challenges Faced

Another major challenge was the political instability during the whole 1st quarter. From January 5 there was serious country wide political violation. Due to the volatility movement from the capital to other districts was almost impossible and it was bit tough to arrange event during that time. During that period, we did not arrange mass event. We arrange mainly indoor events. We advised all our participants to bear their ID cards with them, so that they can show when it is required. We went to mass people to arrange the event; we had not invited them to gather in a city place.

G. Learning and Recommendations

Key learning for the period can be identified as: Knowledge and information can play vital role in empowering people, community radio can play effective role in disseminating knowledge and minimizing gaps among the service providers and farmers-fishers.

Another important learning from the FOs and Farmers is that, even though farmers are working in lands, they don't have appropriate knowledge on land management. From that learning MTCP2

Bangladesh has decided to have some activities on land management in the year of 2016.

Major recommendation will be to allocate more funds for the logistic support for NIA. At present there is no K&M officer, even there is no full time Coordinator and Account official. Budget should allocate enough funds to minimize these lacking.

Though two years are 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 last two year:

G. Conclusion

- 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
- FOs have started Value Chain

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.

FOs participating in MTCP2 Bangladesh (2015)

| Name of FO | Contact Person | e-mail |
|--|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Bangladesh Krishak Federation | Badrul Alam | gip@dhaka.net |
| Bangladesh Bhumihin Somity | Subal Sarkar | bbsbangla@yahoo.com |
| Bangladesh Krishak Federation (Ji) | Jayed Iqbal Khan | krishakfederation2002@yahoo.com |
| Bangladesh Adibasi Somity | Biswanath Sing | |
| Bangladesh Kishani Sobha | Sabina Yasmin | sabinabanna@gmail.com |
| Bangladesh Agricultural Farm Labour Federation | Golam Sorwar | bafbfd@gmail.com |
| Bangladesh Fish Workers Alliance | Md. Mujibul Haque Munir | munir@coastbd.net |
| Coastal Farmers Association (COAST Trust) | Maksudur Rahman | maksudur.coast@gmail.com |
| Labour Resource Centre | Shibly Anowar | labourrc@gmail.com |
| Kendriyo Krishk Moitri | Aluddin Sikder | sikderaluddin1@gmail.com |

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