



Market System for Chars (M4C)

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| Swiss Portfolio Outcome: | Sustainable and more inclusive economic development |
| Implementation Period: | 01.07.2020 – 30.06.2024 |
| Implementing Partner: | Swisscontact Bangladesh |
| Swiss Contribution: | CHF 5.7 million and co-contribution by Government of Bangladesh CHF 1.8 million |
| Modality: | Mandate |

General Description

Chars (riverine islands) are known to be the poverty pockets of Bangladesh for its geographically isolated location from the mainland. The inhabitants of the char regions have very limited livelihood opportunities owing to natural calamities and due to lack of adequate access to information and various facilities, and given they are mostly agro-based communities, it makes them more prone to climate induced vulnerabilities. The Making Markets Work for the Poor (M4C) programme is designed to create business incentives for agro-input companies to market their quality product and services to the char population at affordable prices. It also looks into financing options for farmers through local microfinance initiatives and other financial institutions.

Objectives

The M4C aims to increase the net income of the char households which will contribute to reduced vulnerability by increased savings, assets and diversification of farming activities. The programme will aid in facilitating the availability of high quality agro-inputs, products and services at affordable prices by the input companies and local service providers. The M4C programme targets at least 75,000 farm households for increased resilience of the farmers and enabling the farmers to invest in diversification of their farming activities.

Lines of Action / Components

- Facilitate partnership with agro-input companies to strengthen and expand their distribution channel to the chars.
- To enable capacity building (training, linkage) of local output market actors like traders, buyers, processors.
- The programme also engages larger agro-processing companies to source from the chars.
- Stimulate demand and awareness among char household regarding the post-harvest services.
- Facilitate partnerships with microfinance institutions to develop and expand customized seasonal loans for char farming households.
- Create awareness to stimulate demand amongst char households and other market actors regarding the new financial services.

Intended Impact in terms of Systemic Change

The M4C programme brings about a systematic change by introducing a demand driven market development concept across the agriculture value chain in char areas and creating a conducive business environment for all stakeholders to interact and work towards improving the livelihood of the char households.

Intervention Targets

- By the end of the programme in 2024, at least 75,000 char households will use improved services in agricultural sector (in input, production, output and financial services).
- At least 700 service providers (input, output and financial) will adapt and increase their business volume targeting the chars.
- 35 new/improved services (input, production, output and financial) will be promoted among the char households including 15 women-oriented and 14 services related to disaster risk reduction
- At least 4 national public or private sector actors (non-M4C partners) undertake and/or invest in char-focused initiatives.