

Partnership Snapshot: Shreenagar Agro Farm

Shree Kisan Innovation Hub: Knowledge and Skill Development Centre

Shreenagar Agro Farm (SAF), established in 2002, provides 'one stop solutions' to a network of over 3,700 smallholder farmers, of which nearly 50% are women. SAF's feed manufacturing plant and hatchery farm is located in Rupandehi district of Province 5 and their products are currently marketed in Province 3, 5, 6 and 7. SAF runs an agri-service center at their factory premises which provides technical services for farmers. They also have contract farming arrangement with most farmers with a buy back guarantee of eggs and ready birds. In 2018, SAF established the Shree Kisan Innovation Hub, a women-driven knowledge platform designed to promote agriculture innovation ecosystem development and skills development in Nepal. Working closely with other public and private sector organizations, the Hub specialises in agribusiness incubation, policy advocacy, scaling-up innovations, and knowledge transfer. Drawing on its partnerships with national and international academia, private sector and NGOs, SAF launched its partnership with UKaid Skills for Employment Programme (सीप) in November 2019, to introduce market-relevant poultry, livestock and entrepreneurship training using classroom and field-based settings in Province 5.

In collaboration with national and international poultry/livestock firms and academia, SAF is ensuring improved accessibility to quality, market-relevant trainings. To date, with support from UKaid सीप, 367 farmers/agri-entrepreneurs/job seekers have been skilled in poultry, livestock, cattle, aquaculture and agri-entrepreneurship modules. These market-relevant training courses aims to ensure increased incomes and productivity for at least 1,500 farmers, entrepreneurs, and agri-businesses by December 2020 (pre-COVID scenario); this partnership has the potential to train and enable employment and entrepreneurship for about 4,500 youth by 2022.

Summary of Activities

- A classroom and field-based training facility catering to the livestock sector with special focus on poultry is being established in Butwal, Province 5 – serving neighbouring Provinces as well.
- SAF is building practical curricula and training capability (via training of trainers - ToT) in partnership with international and national stakeholders like Lohmann Tierzucht (Germany), Cobb-Vantress (USA), Aqua Vet (India), and HICAST (Nepal) on key areas aligned with industry-needs on the following:
 - Curriculums finalised: Commercial Poultry Farming, Commercial Aquaculture Farming, Commercial Cattle & Goat Farming, Livestock and Aquaculture Processing & Marketing, Agri Entrepreneurship and Financial Literacy, Mobile Livestock & Aqua Farming
 - Curriculums being finalised: Breeder Farm & Hatchery Management, Feed Mill Quality and Operation and Cooking & Hospitality.
- SAF is establishing a close and regular liaison with Nepali academic partners to help upgrade their capacity -- building faculty capacity, strengthening academia-industry linkages e.g. via meaningful apprenticeships, on-the-job training, and internships, and advocating for improved practical curriculum and qualifications.
- SAF is working to formalise productive, meaningful long-term partnerships with identified national and international partners-- agri-business employers, and input, service, and finance providers -- to draw on expertise, build capability of SAF and consortium partners, and harmonise efforts to enable i) employment for trained graduates; ii) support services to set-up of agri-enterprises e.g. access to finance; and iii) access to input for improved farm management by farmers e.g. Day Old Chicks, improved feed, technical services, buy back mechanism etc.
- SAF is collaborating with existing digital business platform – Smart Krishi to strengthen the digital solutions to improve information, training, and advisory services; and to also bring key agri-stakeholders in a common digital platform to increase and improve market and end-user connections.
- SAF is mobilising trainees through private sector partners like Smart Krishi and R&D Innovative Solution, NGO partner Paurakhi Samuha Nepal, academic institute partners, and local Municipalities.



Second Batch of the Commercial Poultry Farming Training in Butwal, Province 5

SUMMARY OF OTHER KEY PARTNERSHIP ELEMENTS

Key Achievements:

- Development of international-standard curriculums (10) with technical support of Cobb, Lohmann, PUM (Netherlands), Aquavet, Department of Livestock and local experts
- Construction of state-of-the-art training centre/lab in Butwal and model farms for farm-based trainings
- ToT by international expert to local trainers and experts
- Curriculum approval from Agriculture Information & Training Centre, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development

Key Innovations:

- Development of curriculums/training packages in collaboration with international organisations/experts & localised with more practical and on farm training
- Setup 'one stop solution' centres (raw materials, skilling and buy back) via contract farming which can be easily replicated to other locations
- Adapted to the current scenario and introduced international standard online courses immediately post-lockdown with participation from migrants as far as Saudi Arabia
- Virtual Model Farm Tours and discussions with real farmers incorporated in online courses

Sustainability and Scalability:

- Collaborated with government bodies, farmers' cooperatives and institutions for building sustainability
- Local bodies (Municipalities) sponsored skilling of locals and successfully onboarded paying participants for online courses
- Developed one stop solution for farmers/contract farming from selling inputs to skilling solutions to buy back of chicks/eggs/birds/livestock
- Exploring other Provinces; have already set up an agri-centre in Province 2 and working on introducing the commercial fish farming curriculum in Province 2

Inclusion and Safeguarding:

- Successfully skilled 77 women, 154 people from disadvantage groups and 3 persons with disability (20% of all trainees are women and 41% DAG)
- Instituted Employee Safeguarding Practices immediately after the lockdown, which provided boarding facilities for farm employees to restrict movement, set up sanitization tunnels, and provided remote working option for staff, among others

Value for Money:

- *Economy:* ISO 9001:2015 company
- *Efficiency:* Hired external experts, part-time experts and upskilled more in-house trainers
- *Effectiveness:* 50% Co-investment, 72 people and 134 self-employed till June 2020
- *Equity:* Skilled 77 women and 157 DAG

Risk and Challenges:

- Practical sessions are not possible due to COVID-19 imposed guidelines, but SAF has started conducting hands on practical training in small groups at local level by maintaining COVID safety guidelines
- Farmer community has limited access to internet for online trainings, but agri-centres connected as smart kiosk centres with internet and audio-visual facilities
- Movement restricted and as per government guidelines, and restriction in gathering of people for physical trainings

Lessons Learnt:

- Online classes work well given the right support and technology
- Use of agri-centres imperative for subsistence farmers
- Contract farming model in broiler production proven to enhance employment opportunities