

Partnership Snapshot: Shreenagar Agro Farm

Enhancing Farmers' Productivity and Stimulating Agriculture Growth through Skilling, and Improved Market Linkages

UKaid Skills for Employment (सीप) Programme's partnership with Shreenagar Agro Farm (SAF) is enabling an industry-led skills training approach to expand a combination of classroom and farm-based skilling capability coupled with enhanced market linkages for the farmers and aspiring agri-entrepreneurs in Lumbini and Madhesh Province.

Nepal's Agriculture Development Strategy (ADS) 2015 - 2035 prioritizes self-reliant, sustainable, competitive, and inclusive agriculture sector through: enhanced productivity; profitable commercialisation and competitiveness while promoting inclusiveness; sustainability; development of private sector and cooperatives; and connectivity to market infrastructure; information infrastructure and ICT. Besides, Nepal Labour Force Survey (NLFS) III carried out by Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) in 2017/18 maintains that the sector employs 66% of Nepal's total population and contributes about 36% of the nation's overall GDP. Transformation towards a more commercialised agriculture requires skilled farmers, and enabled agri enterprises that can respond to market needs.

By skilling smallholder farmers and small agri-enterprises, enhancing their productivity, and improving linkages for better input and technology adoption and market access—complementing to the key growth priorities of ADS too—UKaid सीप and SAF successfully completed pilot phase of the partnership in April 2021 benefiting 2,148 farmers in poultry, livestock, cattle, aquaculture, and agri-entrepreneurship. The partnership entered scale-up phase in December 2021.

KEY FACTS:

Pilot Phase Timeline: November 2019 - April 2021

Scale-up Phase Timeline: December 2021 – July 2024

Geographic coverage: Lumbini and Madhesh Province

Scale-up Targets:

- Benefit up to 7,250 farmers/agri-entrepreneurs including 40% people from disadvantaged communities and 50% women and 40 PWD.
- Establish and expand classroom and farm-based skilling facilities.
- Improve curricula/training manuals developed during the pilot phase covering key market-led topics and enhance skilling capability in partnership with international and national stakeholders.
- Expand and deepen collaboration with ecosystem actors and industry players for facilitating and enabling: 1) employment for skilled graduates; 2) support services for set-up of agri-enterprises; and 3) access to input for improved farm management by farmers.
- Further enhance the uptake of Shree Kisan Mobile App that serves as a farm data recording/monitoring tool, marketplace, knowledge centre.
- Serve as a one-stop-solution for farmers—for raw materials, skilling to buy-back guarantee—through contract farming.



After graduating, Kamala Pudasaini began layers chicken farming, which has grown to production of over 1,000 chicks and 800 eggs a day. Photo Courtesy: Shreenagar Agro Farm

Over the pilot phase, SAF introduced market-relevant poultry, livestock and entrepreneurship skills using classroom and farm-based settings in Lumbini Province. In collaboration with national and international poultry/livestock firms and academia, this partnership has improved accessibility to quality, market-relevant skilling. Building on the achievements, learning and experiences from the pilot phase, SAF will continue to follow-on demand assessments, and consultations/discussions with ecosystem stakeholders, including employers for subsequent job placements/livelihood linkages, serving as a one-stop-solution for farmers—from input, skilling, to buy-back guarantee through contract farming. Our partnership with SAF is designed to strengthen the skilling and accompanying livelihood-creation system in selected agri products/sectors, benefiting greater number of rural-based farmers and agri-MSMEs in Lumbini and Madhesh Province.

Summary of Scale-up Activities:

1. Strengthen and expand training and livelihood-creation and farm productivity—enhancing system and services benefiting up to an estimated number 7,250 farmers with augmented focus on mobilization of and support for women and people with disabilities.
2. Continue to expand and formalize multi-sectoral collaborations with federal and local governments, cooperatives, academia/training firms, and other private sector and ecosystem actors to leverage resources, expand results, and strengthen the wider system.
3. Improve and refine curricula and training delivery mechanism developed during the pilot phase also aligning with NSTB/CTEVT curricula, and among other nationally recognized standards. Incorporate Digital Financial Literacy module in each training discipline to familiarize farmers on proper use of digital banking/wallets.
4. Improve certification branding for enhanced value creation of SAF's service, as well as wider recognition through linkages/co-branding with GoN (CTEVT/Department of Livestock), international firms, and increased adoption by the private sector.
5. Further accelerate deployment of tech-based solutions (e-learning platform and Shree Kisan mobile App) that complement offline skilling and essential, interlinked livelihood-creating service package.
6. Strengthen monitoring, evaluation, and reporting systems and enhance strategic communications and marketing.

Pilot Phase Key Achievements:

- Trained 2,148 farmers. Successfully placed/supported self-employment 1,506 people against the pilot target of 1,500; of this, 720 were women (144%) and 1,082 were people from disadvantaged groups.
- Promoted self-employment as agri-MSMEs and enhanced productivity for smallholders in poultry, livestock, fishery and processing sectors; and expanded commercial maize farming.
- Initiated industry-led contract farming model for poultry farmers to secure reliable markets through trainings, input (chicks and feed) access, and buy-back guarantees of ready birds, eggs and maize.
- Established classroom, lab and farm-and factory-based training service through 'Shree Kisan Innovation Hub: Knowledge and Skills Development' in Lumbini Province, with capacity to cater to poultry, livestock, fishery, basic hospitality, commercial maize farming and general agriculture entrepreneurship and management sectors.
- Introduced industry-led training manuals covering 12 areas coupled with technical advisory in formal and informal capacity from international organizations such as Cobb Vantress, Lohmann GMB, Aeres Training Centre International, Amul and Aqua Vet Consulting. The manual covered: a) commercial boiler production; b) commercial layer production; c) commercial goat production; d) commercial maize farming; e) agri-entrepreneurship development; f) commercial cattle farming; g) meat processing; h) feed mill and operation; i) commercial fish farming; j) dairy processing; and k) breeder farm management. Post-COVID, primary focus was placed on training and livelihood-strengthening in maize farming. Tested an online training system, to adapt and leverage digital platforms for continuity of marketing and service, albeit in limited theory-focused capacity.
- Established diagnostic lab facility for poultry and cattle related diseases at training centre in Butwal to offer and enable access to disease and pest diagnosis for smallholder farmers, MSMEs, government, and industries with the province, and nearby.
- Initiated linkages with financial institutions to better connect farmer networks to sources of finance, to address existing gaps.



Participants after completing the seven days Commercial Broiler Chicken Farming Training at Butwal in Lumbini Province. Photo Courtesy: Shreenagar Agro Farm