



Climate Smart Beef Value Chain for the Women

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Guidelines and Strategy Paper [2024]

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Climate-Smart Beef Value Chain for Women

Introduction and Organizational Overview

ABSS Limited, a grade-one cooperative based in Jashore District, Khulna, Bangladesh, has served as a leader in community-centered development since its founding in 2011. ABSS is committed to advancing sustainable economic opportunities, particularly through programs that support gender equity, financial inclusion, and skill development. With a mission aligned to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the cooperative focuses on initiatives that uplift rural communities, drive economic growth, and prioritize environmental sustainability.

In May 2019, ABSS Limited launched its **Livestock Development Program** through the **Cooperative-to-Farmer (C2F) approach**, an innovative model that enables direct farmer engagement by providing technical, operational, and financial support to smallholder farmers. Through this approach, the organization has established a sustainable livestock farming ecosystem that enhances local food security, strengthens rural economies, and creates a pathway to economic independence.

To advance this model further and deepen its community impact, ABSS Limited has developed the **Climate-Smart Beef Value Chain for Women** initiative. This program aims to create a group of empowered, climate-smart women beef farmers who will engage in sustainable livestock farming while contributing to both economic and environmental resilience. The project integrates best practices in climate-smart agriculture, such as vermi-composting and resource efficiency, to mitigate the environmental impact of livestock farming. This initiative provides targeted support for women farmers, who receive training, resources, and access to a reliable market, enabling them to grow as self-sustaining livestock entrepreneurs.

Program Goal

To empower a class of climate-smart women beef farmers, employing the C2F approach to achieve sustainable community development, economic resilience, and environmental responsibility.

Objectives

1. Foster a profit-sharing livestock farming model that empowers women in rural communities.
 2. Develop and support climate-smart livestock practices to enhance sustainability.
 3. Build a structured, women-led farming network that strengthens local economies.
 4. Promote community-led development by supporting women farmers to become self-reliant livestock managers.
 5. Establish a revolving fund for sustainable financing of livestock and environmental initiatives.
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Key Implementation Guidelines

I. Membership Criteria for Farmers

To participate in the program, farmers must meet the following criteria:

- Be a registered member of ABSS Limited.
- Have a minimum gross deposit of BDT 10,000 per animal with ABSS Limited.

- Own or have access to a farm space with the capacity to accommodate at least three cattle and a feed storage area.
- Show a willingness to commit to climate-smart livestock practices, including vermi-composting.
- Commit to a minimum contract period for sustained program engagement and resource utilization.
- Demonstrate honesty, reliability, and an eagerness to engage in livestock farming as a primary livelihood.

2. Group Formation and Governance

Each group will consist of **5-10 women farmers** and will be organized with a governance structure:

- **Chairperson:** Leads the group and serves as the main liaison with ABSS Limited.
- **Member Secretary:** Manages records, group activities, and operational logistics.
- **Executive Members:** Responsible for carrying out day-to-day group tasks and supporting the cooperative's initiatives.

This structure will enhance accountability, promote shared decision-making, and support cohesive group operations.

Program Activities

1. Group Formation and Training

- Provide training on climate-smart livestock management and vermi-composting.
- Support group governance and strengthen member cohesion through workshops and ongoing mentorship.
- Ensure access to technical training and resources from livestock experts.

2. Livestock Acquisition and Management

- ABSS Limited assists in procuring cattle and ensuring quality stock for the farmers.
- Establish farm infrastructure with adequate space, shade, and feed storage, as per program guidelines.
- Oversee the provision of feed, treatment, and all necessary operational costs, handled by the farmers.

3. Climate-Smart Vermi-Composting

- Each farmer will commit to establishing a vermi-compost plant.
- Training will be provided on producing and selling vermi-compost, creating an additional income source and contributing to sustainable farming practices.

4. Profit and Loss Sharing Structure

- **Profit Sharing:** Farmers receive 75% of profits from both beef sales and vermi-compost, while ABSS Limited retains 25%.
- **Risk Fund:** A 2% procurement fund from each cattle sale goes into a risk fund to manage illness or other unforeseen livestock issues.

5. Market Linkages and Sales Support

- ABSS Limited will facilitate market connections for the sale of livestock and vermi-compost.
- Farmers will also be trained in market navigation and customer engagement to support independent sales and strengthen market literacy.

Roles and Responsibilities

For Farmers

- **Daily Care:** Oversee feeding, cleaning, and routine health checks for cattle as per cooperative guidance.
- **Vermi-Composting:** Establish and maintain vermi-compost plants, following ABSS-provided guidelines for quality compost production.
- **Record Keeping:** Document cattle growth, health records, and vermi-compost output with accuracy.
- **Market Engagement:** Participate actively in sales activities and promotional efforts for beef and compost products.
- **Sustainability Practices:** Follow climate-smart practices in feed usage, waste management, and resource conservation.

For ABSS Limited (Cooperative)

- **Training and Technical Support:** Provide ongoing training in livestock care, sustainable farming, and compost production.
- **Operational Cost Coverage:** ABSS Limited will cover all major operational costs, including feed, treatment, electricity, and other utilities.
- **Market Facilitation:** Act as the primary market liaison, arranging for the sale of livestock and vermi-compost and establishing market connections.
- **Risk Management:** Manage the risk fund and provide replacement cattle as per guidelines in case of illness, ensuring farmers can sustain their operations.
- **Asset Transfer:** At the end of the designated period, transfer ownership of depreciated assets to the farmers with proper documentation, allowing for independent continuity of farming.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The program will be regularly evaluated to ensure adherence to climate-smart practices, effective group functionality, and financial transparency. Key performance indicators (KPIs) will include cattle health and growth, compost production levels, and income improvements for farmers.

- **Quarterly Reviews:** Regular check-ins on livestock health, feed efficiency, and environmental impact.
- **Annual Impact Assessment:** Comprehensive assessment of the program's contribution to women's economic empowerment, rural sustainability, and community impact.

Future Partnerships and Expansion

The "Climate-Smart Beef Value Chain for Women" initiative will explore additional partnerships for resources, funding, and market access. Expanding this program could further strengthen rural resilience, increase women's participation in agriculture, and bolster climate-smart practices across a broader range of ABSS Limited's cooperative networks.