



# PARIBARTAN

## Launch Event and Adaptation Marketplace

# EVENT REPORT



04 June 2024



Krishibid Institution Bangladesh (KIB), Convention Hall, Khamarbari, Farmgate, Dhaka



## **Project Overview**

PARIBARTAN, “Participatory Action Research on Locally-led Iterative Learning and Inclusive Business Models for Adaptive Transformation in Bangladesh Polders” is a research project that seeks to enhance farmers' capacity to adapt to changing conditions. It will do this by providing processes and tools that support individual and collective farmer decision-making about potential adaptation options (and supporting business models), and by enabling farmers to trial and test these adaptation options while engaging other stakeholders for knowledge support and help with resource access. A variety of guides will be produced so that the processes and tools used can be shared and scaled. This initiative also seeks to enhance stakeholder capacity to support farmers and farming communities by helping relevant stakeholders become more 'engageable'.

### **Study Areas**

Polder 31-Batiaghata, Khulna  
Polder 43/2F-Amtali, Barguna

### **Project Duration**

August 2023 - December 2027

### **Goal of the Project**



*To develop and showcase locally driven learning processes for climate change adaptation.*



## **Event Background**

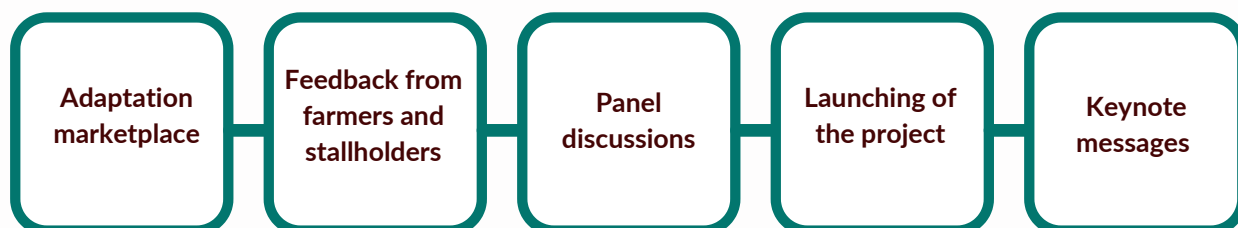
The launching of the project followed by an adaptation marketplace brought together diverse stakeholders to explore innovative solutions for climate resilience and sustainable development. This platform aimed to foster collaboration, share knowledge, and empower communities to lead the way in environmental stewardship.

The event objectives were as follows:

- To encourage interaction between farmers and adaptation solution providers and learn from this multistakeholder interaction
- To explore the extent to which locally led adaptation (LLA) is understood and used by different stakeholders within the agricultural space

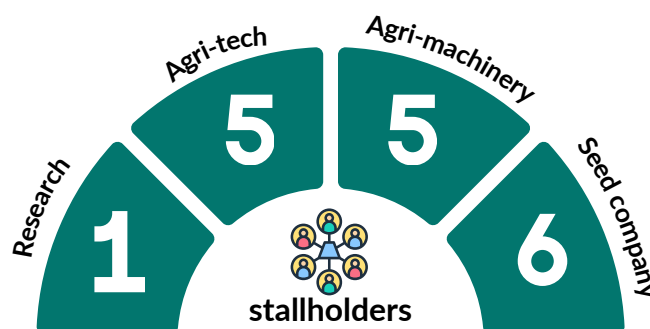


## **Key Elements of the Programme**



## Adaptation marketplace

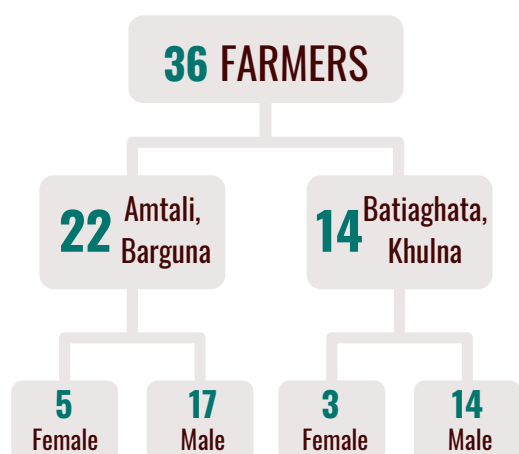
The 'Adaptation Marketplace' provides farmers with an opportunity to see a comprehensive range of adaptive services for, and solutions to, their changing climate conditions; and provides stallholders an opportunity to adjust and fine-tune their proposed solutions to meet the needs of farmers and farming communities.



## Feedback from farmers and stallholders

Farmers representing Water Management Groups (WMGs) from the target areas interacted with various stallholders.

Event organizers collected farmers' and stallholders' views and feedback on the event using a guided questionnaire post adaptation marketplace engagement.



**18** Farmers  
**11** stallholders

These structured and valuable insights/feedback on the event's effectiveness, relevance, and impact from the farmers' perspectives helped to assess the event's success and identify areas for improvement in future engagements.

## Panel discussions

The panel discussions centered on the challenges and opportunities for climate adaptation in Bangladesh's agricultural sector, particularly in the polder regions. Key topics included improving farmers' access to finance, disseminating climate-resilient technologies, building the capacity of extension officers, and increasing the availability of stress-tolerant seeds.



Panelists are listed left to right as shown in the picture:

- Dr. Sharmin Afroz, Consultant on Political Economy of polder areas in Bangladesh.
- Dr. Mazharul Anwer, Scientific Officer, On-Farm Research Division (OFRD), Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute (BARI).
- Dr. Md. Abdul Mueyed, former Director General, Department of Agricultural Extension.
- Mahfuz Ahamad, Chief Water Management, Bangladesh Water Development Board.
- Mr. Md Amir Hossain, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), ABEDIN Equipment Ltd.
- Sadman Sadek, Founder and CEO, Digital Innovation for Impact (DII).



## Finding Solutions for Climate Challenges at the Marketplace: Farmers' Insights

Analyzing farmer responses at two stages of mapping between –

- 1. Climate change and Agricultural productivity:** informs that salinity, erratic rainfall, temperature variations and extreme heat significantly affect agricultural production
- 2. Climate-related Agricultural challenges and solutions:** informs that the subsequent potential solutions identified by the farmers at the marketplace included
  - Saline tolerant seed varieties (e.g., Dhan 7600, Supreme Seed, 'green Line' of ACI seeds, hybrid seeds for year-round farming)
  - Irrigation machinery (e.g., RK Mutual's Arial Flow Pump)
  - Advisory services (e.g., iFarmer service on pesticide use)

Surprisingly, very few farmers identified heat-tolerant seeds as a solution. Most noted lack of solutions for extreme heat impacts, like pesticides drying out quickly. Many highlighted the need for financial support to employ advanced technology. *"In terms of mechanization, Bangladesh is now sufficiently equipped to address climate stress, but there is a major concern about price hikes. As a result, most farmers cannot afford updated machinery; the price needs to be reduced"* – stated by Mr. Md Amir Hossain, CEO, ABEDIN Equipments Ltd.

### Water Management Issues

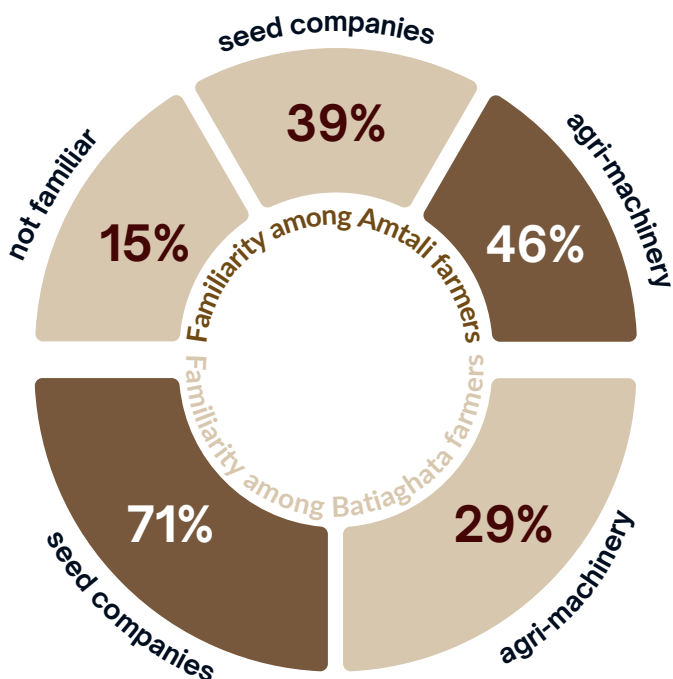
*A dominant response from the farmers concerned water management issues and accordingly, the lack of any solutions at the marketplace. Now, are water management issues (which includes damaged and poorly maintained water infrastructures, filled-up canals and ponds) a climate change impact? No.*

But do they worsen the impacts of climate change on agriculture? *Yes, manyfold.*

Hence, most conversations with farmers reflect their primary view that solving these issues would address a significant portion of their agricultural problems.



### Farmer's Familiarity with Marketplace Adaptation Options



### Developing Solutions for Climate Challenges: Supplier's Perspectives

Insights were mainly received from the seed and agri-tech companies. Weather forecasts would be very helpful for the seed suppliers but they informed the lack of such data. A panelist, Sadman Sadek, Founder and CEO, Digital Innovation for Impact (DII), suggested, *"A national climate information service that offers a one-stop-shop for weather data, making it readily available for a wide group of stakeholders to build services on top of."* Currently, various forecasting models—from short-to-medium range forecasts to seasonal forecasts – operate in silos. The seed stallholders at the marketplace also acknowledged the need of such comprehensive weather forecasts to provide advisory services and to enable them to make informed decisions. Improved capacity of the farmers to access digital information and building awareness among the youth (next generation of the farmers) is also required.



## How do and can farmers decide what to try?

Farmers prioritize time efficiency and reduced physical labor to achieve quicker harvesting. This mostly reflected decisions about the agro-machinery sector. Regarding other sectors, the farmers believe that information from catalogues/leaflets (as provided by the stalls) and digital advisory services (such as Dr. Chashi at the marketplace) will enable decision-making. Furthermore, platforms providing weather updates and field-level training would help them too.

Discussions indicated that currently, farmers' decisions are mostly individual and based on solving immediate at-hand problems such as quicker harvest to prevent nor'westers (kalboishakhi storms) from damaging crops. They may be called 'quick fixes'. What seemed to lack is the consideration of sustainable, long-term solutions.



### **Role of the Water Management Groups (WMGs)**

Farmers identified ways that Water Management Groups (WMGs) could enhance decision-making - by advising on market supplies and adaptation solutions, representing farmers at events, disseminating gained knowledge and training farmers. A WMG member at the event mentioned that he maintains a registrar's book where farmers can write down their problems. Despite these potential roles, WMGs are constrained due to challenges like lack of funds, technical support, and are unresponsive to farmer's needs.



## Multi-stakeholder Interaction

Farmers have limited information on who they can reach out to for support and resources. This lack of information hinders their ability to access necessary assistance and opportunities.



The farmers reiterated needing both technical and financial assistance from government. Panel experts believed that with the right training and capacity building efforts, the extension officers of the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) could take on the role of agriculture and climate stress managers in the polder regions. A major step forward in this direction would be establishing a separate wing for climate change within the DAE, as stated by Dr. Abdul Mueeed. The Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute (BARI) has been developing various new technologies and saline tolerant seed varieties, but the means for local farmers to reach out to BARI for support remain unclear.

Most of the stallholders at the marketplace feel that farmers can easily approach their companies for knowledge and information. 'Supreme Seed Company Ltd.' maintains an accessible channel for farmers through its telemarketing department, which serves as a direct point of contact where officers are available to promote seed varieties and address farmers' inquiries and challenges promptly. 'Laal Teer Seed Ltd.' And 'ACI Seeds' believe that their marketing has ensured reach at the most local level. 'iFarmers' offers toll-free numbers providing advisory services to 60 individuals daily alongside convenient loan applications through the iFarmer app. 'Ispahani Agro Limited' has established call centers and digital platforms, facilitating easy communication for farmers seeking assistance and information.



### **Launching of the event**



The Paribartan project was formally launched at the event through a signing ceremony. The signing was led by the Chief Guest, Dr. Shaikh Mohammad Bokhtiar, and included Special Guests Mr. Badal Kumar Biswas, Dr. Debasish Sarker, Ms. Nardia Simpson, Dr. Nathu Ram Sarker, and Dr. Veronica Doerr. The ceremony was chaired by Mr. Timothy J. Krupnik, with the participation of the project team.

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## Keynote messages



**Ms. Nardia Simpson, the Acting High Commissioner of the Australian High Commission,** stated that “the adaptation marketplace was a great initiative to get farmers and marketplace actors in one place” and that she hopes to see more of this initiative across Bangladesh.

**Dr. Shaikh Mohammad Bokhtiar, Executive Chairman of the Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council, (BARC)** emphasized the country's commitment to resilient food investment and climate-resilient agricultural practices for sustainable agricultural development.



**Dr. Nathu Ram Sarker, Executive Director of Krishi Gobeshona Foundation (KGF):** “this project is different in nature than other agricultural projects in Bangladesh as it follows a bottom-up approach”



**Dr. Timothy Krupnik, Country Representative, CIMMYT,** emphasized that the PARIBARTAN project is dedicated to fostering change by enabling communities to make their own decisions regarding water management, sluice gate activities, and farming systems. He highlighted that this objective can only be achieved through the decentralization of decision-making and the empowerment of farming communities to express their vision for development and change.



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\*\*Abreshi Rahman (logo winner), ICCCAD

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*\*\*The project team selected a unique logo from 21 submissions in a contest held to choose the project logo. The winning design, created by Ms. Abreshi Rahman from Chittagong Independent University (BBA), aligns with Paribartan's objectives of change, sustainability, and community empowerment.*

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