

Dissemination and Advocacy Meeting
Trade and Knowledge Sharing in HYV Rice Seeds
Scope for Agricultural Cooperation between Bangladesh and India
Hotel Metropolitan, New Delhi, 30th April 2015

Objectives

- To disseminate and advocate key messages on trade and knowledge sharing between Bangladesh and India in high yielding variety rice seeds
- To discuss larger aspects of agricultural cooperation between Bangladesh and India

Background and Context

Bangladesh and India are moving towards self-sufficiency in rice production but their productivity is still very low. Food security in these countries is, therefore, critically dependent on sustainable rice production, and this, in turn, is intrinsically linked to availability of and accessibility to quality rice seeds, the most important input. To address the future challenges to food security and livelihoods of small farmers, bilateral trade and knowledge sharing in HYV rice seeds can play an important role given the similarity in agro-climatic conditions in eastern and north eastern parts of India and Bangladesh.

Certain varieties of rice seeds with its origin in India are cropped throughout the border areas of Bangladesh and vice versa in the eastern and north eastern parts of India. Their demand is increasing and cross-border exchange is mainly done through informal channels. This demand can be met more efficiently through formal trade and knowledge sharing. Hence, it is important to understand what specific factors are limiting formal trade and knowledge sharing in HYV rice seeds between the two countries.

Considering the importance of good quality seeds for yield enhancement and the existence of informal trade in HYV rice seeds between Bangladesh and India, with support from Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, CUTS International, India and Unnayan Shamannay, Bangladesh implemented a project entitled '*Addressing Barriers to Rice Seeds Trade between India and Bangladesh*' (the RISTE Project).

Through action research, networking and advocacy, it has involved senior policy makers from seed industries, agricultural ministries, research organisations, NGOs, media and diplomatic and foreign trade specialists from both countries. This has provided excellent opportunities for influencing reforms for better harmonisation of knowledge sharing, seed regulations and trade policy between the two countries.

Therefore, the purpose of this meeting is to discuss the scope for bilateral trade and knowledge sharing in HYV rice seeds, particularly in the context of a recent agreement reached by the governments of Bangladesh, India and Nepal, and also some larger aspects of agricultural cooperation between the two countries and the role that public and private sector players can and should play.

One of its expected outputs is to outline how to sustain the momentum generated by this effort so that such cooperation can further support key constituencies in the agricultural community and translate that benefit to smallholder farmers in both countries.