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## Good Practice Note in EAS – 2: BAEN\_ March 2018

### **Increasing Cropping Intensity: Way to Increase Crop Productivity**

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#### **Introduction**

The agriculture of Bangladesh is rich in diversity of crops, technology adoption and variation of nature of farming and farmers category in different agricultural regions. A large number of the people of Sylhet region of Bangladesh have been working and residing in England and other countries for a long time and their lands were fallow with any crop cultivation. Considering many of the parameters, the agriculture of Sylhet region is quite different from other regions of Bangladesh. Absentee land owner, fellow land, natural calamities etc. are the main characteristics of agriculture of Sylhet region. Considering all these issues a project namely **‘Increasing Cropping Intensity in Sylhet Region’** is being implemented under the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) in the area. The project exercises a number of good practices for extension and advisory services. As result, the ultimate crop production of Sylhet region in Bangladesh is increased. Some of the good practices on extension and advisory services of the projects are noted here.

#### **Creating opportunity for using local resources**

The project is implementing demonstrations and field days on various types of crops and technologies suitable for Sylhet region. Thus, the fellow land of Sylhet is now covered with various types of crops which increased cropping intensity, as a result increased crop productivity. Project supports the farmers with training, inputs and logistics. Once upon these lands were brown and full of dust but now they are full of color and live with various crops. A demonstration is followed by a field day. In the field day meeting the success of the demonstration is shared with the farmer of that locality. This practice is working in the Sylhet region very well. Farmers are now interested in agriculture. They are using their resources, fellow lands for growing crops. Farmers are now producing various crops profitably and the technologies are being extended to the other farmers though the motivation of these demonstrations and field days.

### Arranging motivational tour for the Farmers and for the Officers

The project arranges motivational tour to agro-technology rich areas. Farmers visit various improved agro-technology and gain practical knowledge and get motivated to adopt the visited technologies. Motivational tours are also arranged for the Officers so that they can extent newly found advanced technologies to the farmers. This practice is a successful one in encouraging farmers for learning a new technology and it also make the farmer ready to take risk for investing money for adopting a new technology. When a farmer practically visits a successful farmer, it creates a linkage between the successful farmer and the visiting farmer.

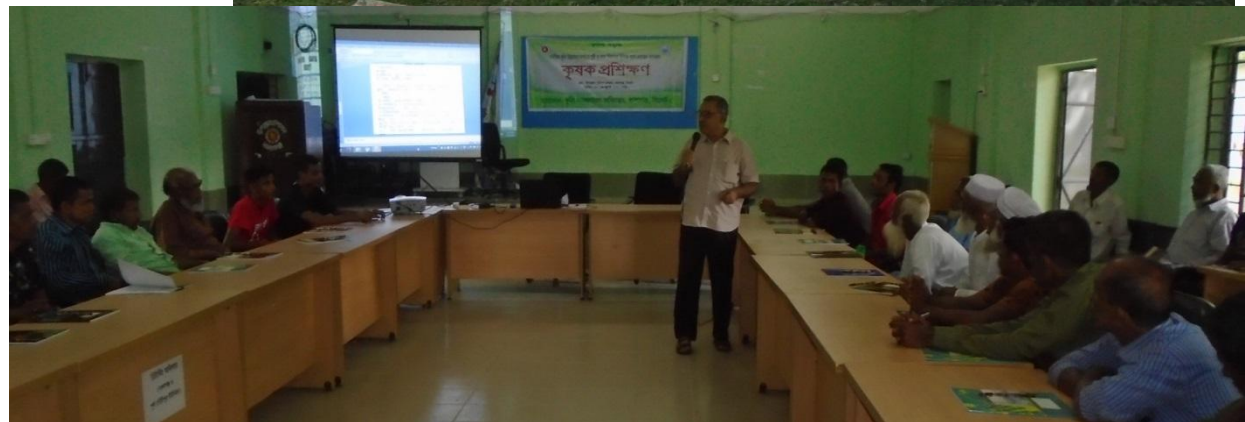


### Linking farmers to markets

Marketing of agro-products is a great problem for the farmers of Bangladesh. The project is not only supporting the production but it also linking farmers to the markets. In the project area, Department of Agricultural Marketing (DAM) as a part of the project prepared group of farmers, created leadership and provided training to facilitate proper post-harvest practices and marketing. With the help of this initiative, farmers can purchase their inputs and sell their produces with logical price.



### Capacity Development



Increasing Cropping Intensity in Sylhet Region Project' of DAE follows a good strategy in capacity development of the Sub-Assistant Officers of DAE (Extension Service Provider) and the Farmers (beneficiaries). Village based farmers groups are created and training are provided to them as per their requirements. Trainings are made live, enjoyable and attractive to the farmers using ICT. Some agricultural inputs like seed, sapling, etc. are provided to the farmers. After providing training, trained farmers are followed-up if they are working accordingly. Project also provides training for the Officers of DAE on various good practices and strategies of extension and advisory services. Making the training attractive to the farmer is a challenge of this practice. Out-door practical session and using training material properly can help in overcoming the challenge.

### **Extension through engaging people through agro- technology fair**

The project 'Increasing Cropping Intensity in Sylhet Region' DAE engaged people in agro-technology fair. Project arranges very attractive fair demonstrating suitable agro-technologies. People visit the fair and gain knowledge and are motivated to adopt agro-technologies. This agro-technology fair is the biggest farmers' gathering of the locality. Engaging farmer is a challenge of this practice.

### **Decentralization of Extension**

Decentralization of extension is a good practice in this project. Since agro-climatic and weather situation and land suitability is ever-changing especially in Sylhet region, decision on choosing crops and technologies are taken locally. Even it is done at very grass-root level. Most of the activities of the project is implemented by Upazila (Sub-district) level Office of DAE called Upazila Agriculture Office (UAO).



### **Partnerships and Collaboration**

Increasing Cropping Intensity in Sylhet Region Project of DAE has set a very unique example of Partnerships and Collaboration. It has partnership with Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation (BADC) for facilitating irrigation and seed support and



partnership with Department of Agricultural Marketing (DAM) to facilitate marketing support to the farmers. Partnership among various government and non-government organizations is also a good practice in this project.

As a part of sharing of ideas, the project activities were presented in an Idea Sharing Workshop organized by the Society for Bangladesh Agricultural Extension Network (BAEN) in October 2018. BAEN Team visited three Upazilas Sub-district) of Sylhet district namely Golapgonj, Balaganjand Bianibazarduring 12-13 January 2018. BAEN Team observed the success of the project. On 12 January 2018, a farmer of Golapgonj opined that he was very happy with the activities of the ‘Increasing Crop Intensity in Sylhet Region’ project. Most of the Members of his family were living in foreign countries. He never cultivated his land. As a result, his lands were fallow. By the initiatives of the project he was motivated to cultivate his lands with varies types of crops including vegetables and fruits. After adopting the agro-technologies of the projects, he increased the cropping intensity of his land and increased crop productivity.



BAEN Team found similar findings in BalaganjUpazila at afternoon on 12 January 2018. A large number of people of this upazila are working in England. As a result, their lands are fallow. The project took initiative to motivate the land owners of the area to grow crops. Then they thought that it was better to cultivate the lands instead of keeping those fallow. Now the fallow lands are green with crops, vegetables and fruits.

On 13 January 2018, BAEN Team visited BianibazarUpazila to obser the activities of the project. It was found that farmers were highly motivated with the activities of the project by taking training from the project, participating exchange visit, observing agr-technological fair. Some of the farmers were taken the leadership to motivate other farmers of the area to cultivate their



land with various types of crops. The BAEN Team was very satisfied with the activities of the project by observing the green fields of the areas.

### **Conclusion**

Increasing Cropping Intensity in Sylhet Region Project of DAE in Bangladesh is practicing much good practices for extension and advisory services. Some of the practices are getting tremendous success. Farmers are adopting agro-technologies by getting advisory services from the project. Training, field day, motivational tour, agro-technology fair, creating opportunities for using local resources etc. of the project motivated the farmers to cultivate fallow land. These practices have the potentiality of being replicated to other regions. Adoption of agro-technologies is being disseminated farmers to farmers by the initiatives of the project. Before implementing the project, a large proportion of the land of Sylhet region was under fallow land. Now it is under cultivation. These initiatives increased the cropping intensity of Sylhet region of Bangladesh and definitely it increased the crop productivity of the region.

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