

Final Report

Review of the gender activities of the Integrated Farm Management Component (IFMC) Bangladesh



April 15 2018

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Executive Summary

The Department of Agricultural Extension and the Embassy of Denmark in Bangladesh are jointly carrying out the Integrated Farm Management Component (IFMC) as part of a wider effort to promote agricultural development and contribute to poverty reduction. The immediate objective of IFMC is increased agricultural production among female and male members of landless, marginal and small farming households. The project aims to ensure that women farmers benefit as well as men. A gender strategy was included in the Development Project Proposal (DPP) to guide mainstreaming of gender across project plans and operations.

This review was commissioned to assess implementation of the gender strategy and provide recommendations for strengthening gender mainstreaming in IFMC. The methods included analysis of project documents, interviews with the Embassy of Denmark and project staff, and focus group discussions with farmers and farmer facilitators in the field. The field work was carried out in eight sites in Rangpur district from February 10 to 13, 2018.

The IFMC gender strategy takes a mainstreaming approach addressing some aspects of programme design, implementation and monitoring. The strategy recognizes women as farmers with entitlement to agricultural services on equal terms with men. It states that women and men should share household responsibilities and decisions over income, and that women should have control over income they generate. The strategy implies an intent to reduce gender inequalities facing women farmers but does not have a clear goal or set minimum standards, making the expectations for project implementation unclear and posing a challenge for monitoring and evaluation.

IFMC prioritizes farmer empowerment and the DPP describes economic, personal and social empowerment. These descriptions do not address differences *among* small farmers and therefore do not address the changes needed to support empowerment of women given their lower status in the household and community compared to men. A new empowerment framework could support more gender-responsive design, implementation and monitoring for the next phase.

The field work found that Farmer Field Schools (FFS) are reaching women, who are 54% of all participants. Women FFS participants report increased income due to FFS and that this makes the extra hours of work to participate in the FFS worthwhile. Women are able to keep the small money earned from eggs and poultry and benefit from that cash in hand. The networks and mutual support among women farmers is an important benefit of FFS. Women and men often work jointly on field trials but women's contributions are not recognized. Women speak freely in women-only sessions but household dynamics affect women's willingness to speak out in FFS sessions when men are present. The field work found no evidence of any significant change in decision-making in the farm household and identified some examples where women's exclusion from decision-making in the household is replicated in FFS sessions. Observation of FFS sessions and review of the curriculum identified changes that could be made to increase accessibility for poor women and men and avoid reinforcing gender stereotypes.

Women's participation as Farmer Facilitators (FF) expands their roles and increases their recognition from family and community. They serve as role models for other women and the community and increase accessibility of FFS for women farmers. Women FF described working relations with their male counterparts as mutually-supportive with most decisions made jointly. Women FF tended to work more hours, however, and the division of work between male and female facilitators sometimes mirrors gendered division of labour in the household.

Farmers organizations (FO) were introduced in the current phase of IFMC. Plans for market linkages / FOs have been more explicit (than those for FFS) in addressing equitable participation of women farmers, however many of those plans are not fully in practice yet. Women reported increased income through their membership in the FO, and control over income from increased eggs and poultry production. Women earn money as day labourers for the FO, but the FOs visited were practising wage discrimination. The extent to which women are recognized as producers by the FO varied. There were positive changes in mobility for some women who could go unaccompanied to the Collection Point (CP). In another community women had stopped going to the local market because of the CP. Among the FOs visited no women were making contact with market actors and decisions were made almost entirely by men despite having women as one of three executive members.

Recommendations which can be addressed within the existing project and approach include:

1. Build on the potential of women as FF by increasing their numbers and roles in the project.
2. Strengthen facilitation skills of all FF to encourage more equal participation of women.
3. Adjust the FFS curriculum to remove any negative stereotypes and more effectively address gender differences among farmers.
4. Set standards to ensure that the work of women farmers is recognized.
5. Address questions of fair pay in market linkages and business focal point training.
6. Take active steps to support women's engagement with market actors.
7. Provide phones for women FO Executive Members; ensure they are listed on signboards.
8. Support Sub-assistant Agricultural Officers in gender-responsive monitoring of FFS.

Recommendations to be considered for the next phase:

9. Strengthen the gender strategy, recruit specialized gender equality expertise, and train all staff in their responsibilities to implement the gender strategy.
10. Adopt a more comprehensive definition of empowerment that can be applied to enable empowerment of women farmers as well as men.
11. Reconsider the household approach because it brings household gender dynamics into the FFS. If continuing with this approach take steps to mitigate the impact on women farmers.
12. Consider how the project can reduce women's drudgery, and be conscious of the project's impact on women's work hours.
13. To maximize empowerment for women and men farmers, balance targets for numbers reached with quality of change supported.
14. Set standard that women must be at least 50 per cent of CDOs and ACDOs and support the capacity of all A/CDO to integrate an understanding of gender equality in their work.

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1. Introduction and Background

The Department of Agricultural Extension and the Embassy of Denmark in Bangladesh are jointly carrying out the Integrated Farm Management Component (IFMC) as part of a wider effort to promote agricultural development and contribute to poverty reduction. IFMC builds on Danida's engagement in agriculture over the past two decades and the lessons learned through IFMC will shape the development of a next phase, expected to begin in 2019.

The development objective of IFMC is pro-poor, inclusive and sustainable growth and employment creation. The immediate objective of the component is: Increased agricultural production among female and male members of landless, marginal and small farming households. The specific objectives are:

1. Female and male farmers have been empowered and increased number of total farm activities and diversification adopting Integrated Farm Management (IFM) Farmer Field Schools (FFS) promoted technologies and management practices
2. Female and male farmers have been empowered in Farmer Organisations (FO) formation and linked to service providers, market actors and microfinance organisations to increase farm profitability
3. National meeting/seminar on farmer-centered extension approaches has been strengthened.

The project aims to ensure that women farmers benefit at least equally with men, and to contribute to closing gender gaps in project communities. A gender strategy is included in the Development Project Proposal (DPP) to guide mainstreaming of gender equality across project plans and operations. A mid-term review of the project, carried out by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Denmark) found that insufficient management attention had been given to gender equality and recommended that IFMC *'(a) revisit their gender action plans, (b) ensure proper understanding and attention to both gender but also to the wider empowerment aspects, and (c) ensure the incorporation of gender aspects in reporting.'*

This review of the gender activities of IFMC was commissioned to provide recommendations for improvements in the gender strategy, activities and reporting of the IFMC, support capacity of the project team through training and mentoring, and inform the next phase of the project. This report outlines the methodology applied to the gender review (section 2), analyses the gender strategy (section 3), presents findings on how gender equality is addressed in project implementation (section 4), and concludes (in section 5) with recommendations for strengthening the contribution IFMC makes to equality and empowerment of women farmers in Bangladesh.

2. Methodology

The review of IFMC's gender strategy was guided by an analytical framework that was developed through a review of literature on gender and agriculture, with particular focus on literature related to agricultural extension, technology transfer and Farmer Field Schools.

The framework, elaborated in the inception report, focused on four critical dimensions of gender equality within the context of agriculture: (1) the gendered division of labour, (2) access to and control over resources and benefits, (3) decision-making in the household and within the project, and (4) social norms and values. The review looked at how these issues were addressed in the gender strategy itself as well as in project implementation.

The gender strategy sets out the intent of the project to benefit women farmers as well as men. Reviewing the effectiveness and implementation of this strategy includes consideration of:

1. the strategy itself for how comprehensively it addresses the gender dynamics and inequalities in agriculture in Bangladesh.
2. the project structures, processes, activities and budget through which the gender strategy is intended to be implemented for how effectively they support implementation of the strategy
3. how the strategy is carried out in practice and the extent to which people implementing gender activities have the capacities and approach needed to address the needs and interests of women farmers equally with men.

Data for the review was collected through review of project documents, individual and group interviews with the Embassy of Denmark and project staff (at central and regional level) and participatory focus group discussions with farmers and farmer facilitators in the field. The field work was carried out in 8 sites in Rangpur district. The list of documents reviewed, interviews and focus groups conducted and the data collection tools are provided in Annexes 1, 2 and 3.



2.1 Limitations of the Review

All of the field visits were in one region, so any variation between regions was not captured. It is likely however that the observations from Rangpur represent a sizeable proportion of the project for several reasons: Rangpur is neither the most or least conservative area; IFMC and precursors have a long history there; the 8 sites visited included new FFS, graduated FFS, and FO, Muslim and Hindu communities. In addition, many of the findings from field visits could be triangulated through interviews with staff (from HQ, regional managers, and Rangpur regional staff) and document reviews.

The second limitation relates to the impact of advance preparations in communities and the effect of oversight by officials. Communities, FF and FO leaders had clearly prepared for the field visits in advance. In many cases farmers had been coached in key messages, and at points FGD participants were pre-selected to make the most positive impression. As well, the very visible oversight of DAE officers and Union Parishad officials can affect farmer's willingness to speak openly. It is natural that the implementing partner and local teams want to make the best impression, however it does pose a barrier to a clear and complete picture of how the project is working. The review team minimized the impact of this dynamic through: (1) in-depth FGD, in semi-private space, with only women farmers (anyone in a leadership role was asked to leave); (2) short, unobtrusive one-on-one interviews with people who were not being referred to FGDs or asked to speak publically; (3) after Day 2, requesting no official ceremonies and minimal official presence for the remainder; and (4) changing the itinerary for Day 4 so that FFS and FO had minimal notice of our arrival.

3. IFMC Gender Strategy

The gender strategy, set out on pages 14 and 15 of the Development Program Proposal (DPP), takes a mainstreaming approach, described in the DPP as 'considering and incorporating gender issues into all levels of IFMC, including objectives, outputs, activities, inputs, implementation arrangements, indicators, targets and monitoring and evaluation.'

The strategy begins with explicit recognition of women as farmers with entitlement to 'equal access to agricultural services, including training, advice, inputs, credit and marketing, on equal terms with male farmers.' This recognition is important as women are often not recognized as farmers (including in communities where IFMC is working, as described in section 4) and programmes often aim to meet women's needs rather than help realize their entitlements.

There is further elaboration on the standards of equality that the project is intended to meet, in the statement that women and men should share household responsibilities and decisions over income, and that women should have control over income they generate. The strategy recognizes, however, that these standards have not been met and that, given the gender-specific constraints to equality within the household, 'special measures' may be needed to effectively involve and benefit women in the project. Recognizing the unequal starting points

of women and men farmers, and proposing that the project take positive steps to overcome the specific constraints facing women, positions the project to work toward closing gender gaps.

The strategy primarily addresses aspects of programme design, implementation and monitoring, with two references to IFMC itself: ‘include all suitable women available at Upazila level, encourage and convince the hesitant ones, and; actively look for high potential female candidates for Regional positions.’

While the strategy implies an intent to reduce gender inequalities facing women farmers it does not have a clear goal or set definitive standards, making the expectations for project implementation unclear and posing a challenge for monitoring and evaluation. For example, is the project expected to take affirmative action to ensure women benefit equally with men, or is it enough to be aware of women’s current situation and involve them accordingly? The definition of gender mainstreaming does not help clarify the intentions as it addresses ‘gender’ but not ‘gender equality’ and speaks mainly to programme development rather than implementation or the organization itself.

3.2 Approach to Empowerment

IFMC’s approach to empowerment is important because of the project’s overall focus on farmer empowerment and because it relates to how gender is addressed. IFMC documents refer to three types of empowerment: economic, personal and social. No specific definition is given, however each are identified as resulting from increased skills and abilities. For personal and social empowerment there is also a description of what changes may signify that empowerment has happened, such as increased confidence, awareness of rights, and ability to pursue one’s own needs through engagement with markets or public institutions. The descriptions of empowerment do not address differences *among* small farmers, such as the differences between males and females.

A review of farmer empowerment approaches by the Danish Institute of International Development found that current frameworks ‘for understanding empowerment [focus on] ways that farmers can gain influence by being better organised and educated and how state institutions and markets can be made more responsive to farmer demands,’ which is consistent with the IFMC approach. The review goes on to identify three common problems with this approach: ‘(i) a tendency to approach farmer empowerment with interventions addressing only technical capacities; (ii) a tendency not to consider adequately the heterogeneity found within the category of farmer and the differing group interests present; and (iii) a failure to address broader political issues concerning structural changes that address more fundamental causes of poverty and marginalisation faced by large numbers of farmers.’ As the review discusses, women farmers are positioned differently from men in the household, community and market; the specific changes needed to support empowerment of women will therefore also differ.

Among the many frameworks for empowerment, one that addresses the limitations mentioned in the DIIS review, and that has been explored in terms of measurement, is the framework put

forward by Naila Kabeer in 'Resources, Agency, Achievements: Reflections on the measurement of women's empowerment' (1999). Kabeer defines empowerment as 'the process by which those who have been denied the ability to make strategic life choices acquire such an ability.' For this change to come about, three inter-related dimensions are needed: access to and control of resources; agency (the ability to use these resources to bring about new opportunities), and achievements (the attainment of new outcomes of value to that person). Kabeer's theory of empowerment highlights the interdependence between individual and structural change. Structures shape individual capabilities and choices, promoting the voice and agency of some people and inhibiting that of others. Social structures also help to shape individual interests so that how people define their goals and what they value will reflect their social positioning as well as their individual histories, tastes and preferences.

This approach to empowerment effectively integrates gender and other forms of social differentiation. It captures the value of learning, technical resources, solidarity and organization but also draws attention to the importance of *how* activities are carried out and the need for multiple and reinforcing strategies. If IFMC were to adopt this approach to empowerment it would imply:

- The need to analyze the structures that constrain women's and men ability to access and use resources to achieve their own goals, as well as their individual capabilities;
- The importance of trying to ensure that the structures created or reinforced by IFMC are in support of empowerment for women farmers as well as men
- Focusing capacity development on strengthening agency, the ability to act in one's own interest, as well as resources in the form of skills and knowledge, and addressing gaps in financial, social or other resources
- Careful consideration of the relationships between individual and collective empowerment, especially when groups include people of different social status, such as women and men and/or wealthy farmers as well as poor or marginalized farmers

4. Integration of gender equality in IFMC implementation

This section looks at how gender equality has been integrated in the implementation of IFMC, including farmer field schools, farmer organizations and the organization itself (structures, operations, reporting).

4.1 Farmer Field Schools

IFMC and its precursors have been operating FFS for almost two decades through partnership with the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE). DAE's reach makes it possible to implement FFS on a large scale: 17,100 FFS offered between June 2014 and Dec 2018. The advantage is that IFMC will reach 850,000 farmers, an important accomplishment given the population of Bangladesh and the challenges facing poor farmers. However, implementing at that scale requires a great degree of standardization, which works against the idea of experiential learning on which farmer field schools have been based. The standardization,

combined with the scale of implementation and the number of people (majority men) involved, also makes it more likely that FFS will reflect and reinforce common attitudes about the roles and position of women and men. The findings of the field work and review of documents support that supposition.

FFS are reaching women: project records show that **women are 54% of all participants**. Women reached through the field work reported that they have **more income** because their farm activities are more productive. The households also have more income overall and both women and men farmers said that they are able to save money for example by growing items that are expensive in the market and producing fertilizer. The majority of women say that they are **able to keep the money earned from poultry and eggs and are able to make decisions about how to use this cash**. Both women and men told us that this was possible because it was such small funds. Some women (not all) also can keep cash from selling produce from the homestead garden.

This extra production comes at the cost of **more work for women**. Both women and men describe long work hours for women, generally from 6 am to 9 or 10 pm, with little or no time for rest or leisure. Men get up later than women and generally finish work at dark (because they work in the fields). In order to attend FFS sessions many women get up at 3:30 or 4 to finish their household work beforehand. Some women said that increased productivity through FFS has also meant increased tasks and longer work hours. However women farmers were **proud of their increased production**, and felt that the improvements in their income were worth the increase in workload. In discussion with women they pointed out that the only way to reduce their workload was through time-saving technology or mechanization, something which the FFS have not addressed.

One of the benefits that women reported with most enthusiasm was the opportunity the FFS provided to develop **networks of mutual support among women**. Several women commented that although they had known each other and lived in the same community it was through the FFS that they developed stronger friendships and had the opportunity to share issues, problem solve together and support each other.

FFS are **accessible to women**. FFS support women in socially acceptable gender roles and contribute to increased production and therefore families and communities support the participation of women. However, the FFS approach and content tend to **reinforce existing gender roles**, and in doing that can limit options for women to expand those roles. For example, nutrition sessions are mandatory for women, rather than being mandatory for participation from each household or for everyone, reinforcing that women have sole responsibility for food management for the family. Other sessions are not as explicitly targeted but all levels of FFS staff and facilitators talk about homestead gardening as primarily for women and field crops or high value crops as primarily for men. This is reflected in the session content and facilitation.

Unfortunately, this also has the effect of reinforcing the idea that men are farmers and women are housewives – a characterization that we heard repeatedly from women and men in the communities. This is further underlined when **IFMC signboards for field trials name only male farmers** even if the work has been done jointly or primarily by women.

The field work provided **no evidence of any significant change in decision-making in the farm household**. When asked what decisions they make women talk about decisions over their own work, or being able to decide how to use the money they earn from poultry or eggs. Decisions over other resources, or other household responsibilities are either joint, or by the husband. Most women reported still needing their husband's permission to visit their parents, but did talk about strategies they have developed to make it more likely that he will agree.

Observation of FFS sessions showed that **male participants and FF replicate this pattern of decision-making during sessions**, speaking for women and marginalizing them in collective decision-making. For example, in one 'farm management analysis' (FMA) session, a woman farmer was introduced as representing the farm household to be analyzed. During the small group visit to her farm, her brother-in-law answered all questions on her behalf. The questions were asked by a man from the small group while all the women participants and male FF watched. In another FMA session, a male FF took over asking questions on behalf of the woman participant.

One of IFMC's indicators for empowerment of women farmers is whether they speak out more in public. Women were very vocal in FGDs and speak at events when requested by officials or FF. There was good participation in women-only FFS sessions however **in mixed FFS sessions few women spoke**. In FGDs women explained that they are sometimes criticized by male family members who are also in the FFS for speaking too much.

The household approach, while an effective way to support the whole farm, means that **household gender dynamics affect the FFS** contributing to the issues raised above. This is aggravated by the direction, in the FFS curriculum, to form groups by putting women and men from the same household in the same group. Given that women may be challenged if they speak out in front of husbands, and that men may speak for the house, it would be better to split households between different groups.



Some other points noted in the FFS curriculum and delivery:

- The sessions are very interactive. Participation is used as a method for imparting information with participants responding to questions on the topic or repeating information given by the FF. In the sessions observed or the written curriculum, there is little to no focus on building on the farmer's own experience or encouraging problem solving by the group.

Sample facilitation directions, which are similar for many modules, show the role of participation: ‘have participatory discussion on field environment, agricultural environment, ... Have to make them realise the importance of Agro Eco System by participatory discussion.’

- Some of the language used in the curriculum is academic when plainer words exist. For example, in the nutrition session, the FF was using Bangla word (written and spoken) as “*Khaddeyr bivajon*” (types or divisions of food) which could be more easily said and understood as “*khabarer vaag*”. Similarly *jinish* instead of *ponnoy* (products), *becha* instead of *bikroy* (selling) and many other examples.
- In most of the curriculum there is only reference to farmers, farm, household – no mention of women or men and therefore the different situation of male and female farmers are not addressed.
- Where there is specific mention it often reinforces conventional gender roles. For example:
 - Household Survey: asks name of men or women member, but then asks ‘is he a real farmer, is he interested for training’
 - Side effects of using Pesticides: roles are given for a skit including farmer, pesticide seller, farmer’s wife...
 - In the nutrition module, where one question asks: Is the same amount of food for male and female? If not, which food more required for male and why?
 - In several sessions of homestead gardening a statement such as this appears: ‘The fruit trees of home stead are attacked by insects and diseases at different times. However, the female farmers don’t have any knowledge related to this...’
- In some places the curriculum promotes negative stereotypes. One example is the role play for collective procurement of agricultural inputs and marketing produce (p 214 in the English curriculum). In the first three scenes male farmers are at a tea stall or on the way to the UAO or the market. Some of them have made a mistake but they meet with other farmers and come up with a solution. In the fourth scene women farmers are at home, they make mistakes, their husbands scold them, they do not solve the problem together.
- A gendered work analysis is included in one, separate session, but it is not well designed. No analysis of who does what is included in farm management analysis sessions.

4.1.1 Women as Farmer Facilitators

One of the positive contributions of IFMC to empowerment of women is through the involvement of women as Farmer Facilitators. IFMC has increased the number of women FF so that they now represent 25% of all FF. **Being a FF expands women’s roles and increases their recognition** from family and community. Having a woman FF also makes the FFS more accessible for women farmers. **Women farmers prefer having at least one woman FF** because they feel able to talk freely and ask questions to her. Women FF also provide **positive role models for women and men** in the communities where they work.

The women FF interviewed are all teamed with male FF, and they reported that **most decisions about how to run sessions are made jointly**, a positive step in a context where women often

do not have equal say in decision-making. The division of responsibilities between male and female FF to some extent reflect the gendered division of labour in the household. FF teams often, but not always, decide that the activities requiring mobility outside the community (related to market or field crops) or deeper technical knowledge (such as pest management) will be done by the male FF. Sessions related to nutrition, breast-feeding and making 'hazals' are always done by the woman FF (the hazals because it requires working with mud and water).

Although the two FF are paid equally, it appears that **women tend to work more hours for the same pay**. They arrive in advance of the FFS session to talk with the farmers and encourage their participation and often stay afterwards to answer questions and talk with individual farmers. One result is that women FF have stronger relationships with community members.

Some woman FF reported that it was a new learning experience to work with a male colleague as a peer. In research in Kenya, the opportunity that FFS can provide for unrelated women and men to work as peers was found to be an important contribution to positive change in gender relations¹. All the women FF interviewed were benefitting from the **increased income** they were receiving, but surprisingly **only two reported having their own bank account**, and only one had purchased a major asset (a cow) in her own name.

4.2 Market Linkages

Farmers organizations were introduced in the current phase of IFMC, beginning in communities where FFS had been conducted in the previous phase. The Market Linkages / FO teams have been more explicit than the FFS in addressing equitable participation of women farmers in planning and documents. For example, producing the 'tip sheet' on how to encourage real influence for women in the FO. The findings of the field work suggest, however, that many of these intentions are not yet in practice. This is partially related to difficulties in regular support and monitoring of FOs. There are many fewer FOs than FFS, they are often quite distant from each other, and the original plans for staff allocation meant A/CDO visited FOs about twice monthly. Recent adjustments in the allocation of staff are expected to improve this.

In IFMC and related initiatives, supporting farmers to organize themselves is put forward as an important strategy to strengthen farm profitability and for empowerment. A common discussion within project teams was that the FOs were seen more as an initiative of IFMC than of DAE, and the importance of building DAE ownership. There was no discussion of farmers' ownership of their organization. Incorporating a more rights-based approach would position FOs as belonging to the farmers, and IFMC and DAE as service providers and duty bearers with a responsibility to provide the needed supports.

¹ Esbern Friis-Hansen, Deborah Duveskog and Edward W. Taylor (2012) *Less noise in the household: the impact of Farmer Field Schools on Gender Relations*, Journal of Research in Peace, Gender and Development (ISSN: 2251-0036) Vol. 2(2) pp. 044-055. Available online@ <http://www.interestjournals.org/JRPGD>,

An issue related to ownership of the FO, is the confusion over 'rules' for FOs. Some FO are under the impression that membership is limited to 35 and have therefore been turning away other poor farmers, weakening the FO and reducing the potential impact on poverty reduction. Similarly, women farmers report that neighbouring women, who are not part of the FO, would like to use the collection point but this is not possible. These decisions suggest a very 'projectized' approach, that will reduce the sustainability and positive impact of the FO.

Women members of FO reported **increased income** through their membership in the FO, and that they are **able to keep income from increased eggs and poultry production**. In one community, women were earning less for eggs sold to the FO than those sold to neighbours (8 taka instead of 10) but the FO had the advantage of being able to take more eggs. It is not clear whether the produce men sold to the FO was also paid at less than market rate.

Women were **also earning money as day labourers for the FO, however the FOs visited were practising wage discrimination**. In one FO men earned three times as much as women, and in another, six times. In the second FO, private farmers in that community pay women up to three times more than the FO does, and pay men the same. While men are able to work longer hours than women (because of women's household responsibilities), the difference in wages is greater than the difference in hours. Farmers and IFMC staff suggested that the work men do is harder and therefore pays more, a common bias in relation to men's and women's work. A more likely scenario is that FO need to pay men market rates in order to secure their time, but women are expected to take lower rates to subsidize the FO. Alternative approaches are to set equal rates for men and women and pay women pro-rata for hours worked or to take into consideration the value added (in terms of market price) through the work done by women.



There was **variation in the extent to which women were recognized as producers** in the FOs visited: in one FO, 30 to 40% of producers listed in the books were women, but in the other FO only one woman was listed as a producer and then with her husband's phone number. Undoubtedly in either case women are contributing to the production but are less likely to be seen as farmers or be paid directly when they are not listed.

There were **positive changes in some women's mobility**, with

women reporting that they can go to the FO collection point on their own and stay there without their husbands although many of them would have to be accompanied by men to go

other places. However there were **no examples of increased access to markets or market actors for women**. Most communities reported that going to the market is for men; some women are able to go to market to shop for clothes and others not at all. **In one community, women used to go to the local market but now took their produce to the collection point** from where it was sold or taken to the market by men. The women reported that this saved them time and money (in transport costs) however it also reinforces markets as male space. None of the FO women met, including executive members, had been to market to purchase inputs or sell products on behalf of the FO or talked to traders on the phone. Generally women only have access to a family phone which is usually with their husband.

By setting and enforcing standards IFMC has ensured **strong presence of women in different roles and levels of FOs**. At least one of three Executive members must be a woman, and 50% of Business Focal Points (BFPs) are women. **However, within the FOs visited, decisions were made mostly by men**, communication from the FO to members was via men, and men were the public face of the FO (for example, listed on the signboard) regardless of which position(s) were held by women. For example, in one FO the Cashier (an older man), supported by other men, set the work rosters for women and men. His name was also listed on the sign as contact for the FO although the chairperson was a woman. In another example, a woman was the Cashier and her responsibility was limited to recording payments made and received; the male Chairperson was listed as the contact and made other financial decisions.

The review team did not have the opportunity to hold a FGD with women BFPs; this would be quite useful in future for exploring the effects of that role, and the related training, in their lives and their perspectives about the FO.

Women Community Development Officers (CDO) and Assistant CDO (ACDO) can be positive role models for women and men. In a FGD they were enthusiastic about the possibility of supporting women FO members. However they are lacking in strategies and also demonstrated how they are also affected by social norms about women. For example, in a discussion about the challenges of enabling FO women to engage with markets, some A/CDOs suggested linking women to services or the women welfare office as more accessible; one person said it is not necessary for women to go to market.

5. Recommendations

There are recommendations that can be addressed within the current structure and programme, and other ways forward that would require more fundamental changes and can be considered for the upcoming phase.

Recommendations within the existing approach and programme:

1. Build on the potential of women as Farmer Facilitators. Increasing their numbers and role can be one of the most important contributions IFMC can make on gender equality:

- a. Ensure that FF team are either mixed or all female and going into the next phase ensure that at least 50 per cent of FF are women. Male farmers may prefer male FF but they will learn from whoever has the knowledge they need. Women farmers will not participate as fully when there is no female FF.
 - b. Ensure that women FF are included in refreshers and regional meetings
 - c. Make opportunities for groups of women FF to come together to share experiences and problem-solve, creating a network of mutual support and solidarity.
 - d. In the next phase, pay FF through mobile banking which will require women as well as men to have bank accounts.
2. Strengthen facilitation skills of all FF with particular focus on (1) understanding their own gender biases and how to avoid bringing those into the FFS; (2) how to facilitate mixed and single sex groups to allow meaningful participation of women and avoid reinforcing gender stereotypes; and (3) facilitating experiential learning. This can be done through updating the FF training and through refreshers.
3. Adjust the FFS curriculum: (1) Immediately change any activities or sessions that promote negative stereotypes of women; (2) Integrate an analysis of the gender division of labour in all farm analysis sessions and add joint decision-making within the household to discussions of collective decision making (between farm households); (3) over the medium term, review the curriculum to more fully address women farmers as well as men and to create more opportunities for experiential learning.
4. Set standards for IFMC to ensure that the work of women farmers is recognized: (1) Signboards for trials should list all farmers involved; (2) IFMC or DAE staff visiting trials should ask about the contribution of women and men farmers, and where both are involved talk with both; (3) BFP training and FO monitoring can be used to encourage women being recorded as producers.
5. Market linkage training and IFMC support to FO can facilitate discussions of fair pay, providing models and proposing standards that FO can understand and apply. Once implemented, checking the pay scales should be a regular part of monitoring, with triangulation (asking women independently, looking at books, etc.) and where pay is unfair discussing the reasons behind this and looking for solutions.
6. Take active steps to support women dealing with market actors and being able to go to market. For example, in MLT take women to market to buy inputs or sell produce in groups, follow that with 'assignments' for women to go on own and report back, work with FO to assign women for dealing with buyers for some percentage of the crops sold through the collection point. When supporting new FO, always assess whether women went to the local market previously and where they did build on and strengthen that role.
7. To encourage women's fuller participation in FO Executive, make phones available to elected executive members that are only for FO business. List all three executive with

phone numbers on signboard. Monitoring visits can support women and the executive overall to work more equally and benefit from all three members' expertise and time.

8. The Sub-assistant Agricultural Officers visit each FFS regularly but they have no clear set of issues to review. Preparing a quality assurance checklist for them, which includes issues relating to how gender and farmer empowerment are being addressed, could strengthen the support and oversight for Farmer Facilitators.

Recommendations and considerations for the next phase:

9. In general, gender mainstreaming requires clear policy and standards, systems to implement and monitor, specialized expertise, and the commitment of front-line implementers. IFMC's gender mainstreaming can be strengthened through:
 - a. A new gender strategy that sets a goal for gender mainstreaming, sets standards for specific aspects of the programme and operations, assigns specific responsibilities, and sets out requirements for monitoring and evaluation
 - b. Recruit specialized expertise in gender equality and women's empowerment to provide technical assistance and monitor gender mainstreaming
 - c. Initial training on gender mainstreaming for all staff, suited to different levels and roles, followed up by opportunities for coaching and collective problem-solving, and reinforced by performance expectations and standards that are monitored.
10. Consider adopting a clearer more comprehensive definition of empowerment that can be applied to enable empowerment of women farmers as well as men. One option, the definition and operationalization of empowerment by Naila Kabeer, is described in Section 3. Whatever framework for empowerment is used, spell out the implications for each aspect of the project (for example, FFS curriculum and implementation, training of FF, role of Master Facilitators, FO development, etc.) and set standards.
11. Reconsider whether the household approach is the best way to achieve the programmes objectives, including the objectives for benefitting women farmers. One option is to pilot some communities with household approach and some with women-only FFS. When using that household approach take steps to reduce the ways that gender biases in households influence the implementation and value of the FFS/FO. For example: (a) give women autonomy as farmers within the FFS by putting household members in separate small groups; (b) make sessions that tend to be sex-segregated mandatory for women and men (for example nutrition and high value crops); and (c) aim for women to lead equal numbers or more of field trials, including in high value crops.
12. If IFMC wants to help reduce drudgery for women, then it needs to focus on technology that reduces the time required for specific production or for household tasks. IFMC teams can also be more conscious of the demands on women's time in terms of visits and events. Note that this does not mean to leave women out of events, but to recognize the burden on

women to prepare for events and adjust preparation accordingly. If events might start late consider having women come to event only when it is about to start or using the waiting time for learning or something that is useful to the women.

13. Balance targets for numbers reached with quality of change supported. Reaching enormous numbers as IFMC has requires standardization of delivery and minimizes the quality assurance and support that is possible. For purely technical inputs, standardized delivery may work in most cases. However, supporting experiential learning, facilitating empowerment and encouraging changes in gender relations is complex and standardized approaches are less likely to be effective especially when the people delivering them are not experts in social dynamics.
14. For market linkages: set standard that a minimum 50 per cent of CDO and ACDO are women, and then support the capacity of all A/CDO to integrate an understanding of gender equality in their work.

Annex 1: Documents Reviewed

List of documents reviewed

SI	Name of the Document	Author
1	Development Project Proposal for IFMC, AGEF	Department of Agricultural Extension, Government of Bangladesh
2	Baseline Survey Final Report, 2013	IFMC, Department of Agricultural Extension, Government of Bangladesh
3	Final Appraisal Report of AGEF II	August 2015, DANIDA
4	Inception Review of the Agricultural Growth and Employment Programme 2013 - 2018 (AGEF)	DANIDA
5	Mid-term Review of the Agricultural Growth and Employment Programme 2013 - 2018 (AGEF)	DANIDA, 7 March 2017
6	Operations manual of Integrated Farm Management Component 2013 - 2018	IFMC, Version 1.4, 9 October 2017
7	Annual Progress Report 2016-2017	IFMC
8	Annual Report July 2015- June 2016	IFMC
9	Annul Progress Report July 2014-June 2015	IFMC
10	Semi Annual Progress Report (July-December 2015)	IFMC
11	10-day training schedule for FO Business Focal Persons (BFP)	IFMC
12	Information sheet: Business Focal Person (BFP) Market Linkage Training	IFMC
13	Information sheet: DAE Officer Market Linkage Training	IFMC
14	Schedule/ Time Table of 3-days Training on Good Governance and Financial Management for FO Leaders	IFMC
15	Draft Handbook and Session Plans for FO Market Linkage Training for BFP at FO-level	IFMC
16	Information sheet: FO Leaders Training on Vision Development and Financial Management	IFMC
17	Information Sheet: IFMC Output 2:	IFMC

	How do we assure real influence of females in FOs?	
18	Draft Integrated Farm Management FFS Guide book (Session plan and Session Guide)	IFMC
19	Integrated Farm Management (IFM) FFS Curriculum	IFMC, January 2014
20	Good Governance and Rights in IFMC	IFMC
21	Gender and Marketing	IFMC
22	Market Linkage Training Manual (Bangla and English)	IFMC
23	IFMC FFS Guide Book (Bangla and English) (Session Plan and Session Guide)	IFMC

Annex 2: Itinerary of Interviews and FGD Conducted

Date and Day	Place	Activities
7 February, 2018 Wednesday	Embassy of Denmark	Initial meeting with Embassy
	IFMC HQ	Meeting with PD, IFMC
	IFMC HQ	Meeting with FFS Team, IFMC
	IFMC HQ	Meeting with Market Linkages Team, IFMC
	IFMC HQ	Meeting with M&E Team, IFMC
10 February, 2018 Saturday	Araji chadkhana Babupara IFM FFS, kishorganj, Nilphamari	FFS visit (with running session) and FGD (1)with women farmers
	Jugirghopa IFM FO, khansama, Dinajpur	FO visit (with MLT session)
	Parjaton Kendra,Dinajpur	Meeting with Regional IFMC Management Staff
	Parjaton Kendra,Dinajpur	Meeting with Regional IFMC Staff
11 February, 2018 Sunday	Rangpur Regional Office	Interview with Master Facilitator of IFMC
	Salaipur Hindupara IFM FFS, Mithapukur, Rangpur	Phase out FFS visit and FGD (2) with graduated women farmers
	IFMC Regional Office, Rangpur	FGD with women FFs (3)
	Mondalpara IFM FO, Razarhat, Kurigram	FO visit with bulking and FGD (4)with women farmers
12 February, 2018 Monday	IFMC Rangpur region office	FGD (5) with women ACDO & CDO of Rangpur Region
	Chaigari IFM FO, Sadullahpur	Travel
	Chaigari IFM FO	FO visit with bulking
	Chaigari IFM FO	FGD (6)with FO Executive Committee
	Bujruk Bishnupur IFM FFS, Palashbari	FFS visit (With running session)
	Bujruk Bishnupur IFM FFS, Palashbari	Interview with women SAAO
	RDRS Guest House	Meeting with Ms. Mezbafunnahar, Gender Focal Person, and Md. Mamunur Rashid, Agriculture and Environment Coordinator, RDRS

13 February, 2018 Tuesday	Syedpur Shahpara IFM FO, Taragonj, Rangpur	FO visit with bulking, FGD (7)with women farmers of FO and interview with BFP, Executive Committee Members
	Rahimapur, Pathanpara IFM FFS, Taragonj	FFS session visit
	Rahimapur, Pathanpara IFM FFS, Taragonj	FGD (8) with male farmers of FFS

Annex 3: Data Collection Tools

1. Checklist for Meeting with the HQ Teams: FFS, Market Linkage Team and M&E Team and Regional Team

Purpose of the meeting:

- To learn about their understanding of the gender strategy and their roles in implementation
- To learn about the challenges and the capacities needed to overcome those challenges

Questions:

- I. From your perspective, what is IFMC trying to achieve in terms of gender?
Notes: To listen the goals of their gender activities (meeting donor requirements, or including women, or closing gender gaps, etc.) and for their understanding of gender
- II. Please think back to last week – or any other typical week. What specific things did you do that were related to implementing the gender strategy? Take a minute to think about it, then write down a few points, and then we'll hear from all of you.
- III. What are three biggest challenges you and your team have faced in relation to gender in this project? It could be a challenge you face in your individual role, a challenge for the programme, or for the organization. Take a minute to think about it, then write your three top challenges down on a coloured card. Just write one challenge per card.
Possible follow up questions: We can ask about any challenges we noticed but that did not come up
- IV. What are the most positive results the project has achieved in terms of gender equality?
Possible follow up questions: We can probe further on some of the results they mention, or ask about others that have not been raised
- V. What would help you and your team to overcome challenges and get even better results?
Notes for us: we are listening for what they need, and what they think their team or the project needs in terms of other structures, incentives, capacities, etc.
- VI. What do you want to learn from our field visit?
- VII. Is there anything else you want to tell us? Or do you have any other questions for us?

2. FGD checklist for women farmer of IFMC

A. Gendered division of labour:

- What types of activities done by women and men farmers, at family level, society and agricultural field?
Women Farmers:
Men Farmers
- At present, how many hours a day you work? What are your responsibility/ daily work at home and with IFMC?
- The role / daily routine of women changed or not after participation in IFMC. If changed, what types of change happened, please mention.
- Do you think that you are benefitted by involving with IFMC? If yes, please mention.
- What challenges are you facing to work with IFMC as women farmer?
 - At household level
 - At society
 - In Farmer Organization (FO)
- Is there any achievement to work with IFMC? If yes, please mention:

B. Access to, and control over, resources and benefits

- As women, what difficulties are you facing to get access to, and control over your income, assets, benefits etc?
- Did you go to market yet? What is your role in the market? What is the attitude of people of your nearby market towards a women seller/ buyer?
- What cooperation you easily get from the men members of your family, FOs and other seller/ buyer of market? In your view, what kind of problem a women trader faced in a market?
- From growing to sell agricultural products in the market, what are your roles? What do you do with your earned income? What are your major expenses? How much you spent daily for yourself? Have you any savings at your own? What is your future plan by your savings?
- Do you have any contact with any Bank, NGO, and financial organization from where you can take loan to expand your farm / agro business?
- Due to be member of FO of IFMC, what change happened to you regarding access to resources and control over assets?
- Due to involving with IFMC, how are increases in household income, or other household level improvements, benefitting women?

C. Intra-household decision-making

- What types of decision taken by you at household level?
- Who takes the major decision in your household?
- Is there any changes happened in decision making process due to participation in IFMC?

D. Values and norms

- How the society/ people see you as women farmer? Due to participation in IFMC activities what changes have you seen at their attitude and behavior?
- What obstacles you faced during your mobility at your society, village, crop field and market? Is it changed due to your participation in IFMC?
- What types of committee membership, programmes are attended by you in IFMC and beyond IFMC? In FO what is the situation of women membership as general member, as Executive committee member?
- Due to participation in IFMC activities, what changes happened in your attitude, thinking and work?
- Do you think that women and men farmers are equal in terms of capacity, dignity and mobility?
- What are the positive sides of Farmers Organization, what initiatives of Farmers Organization are making good for women Farmer?
- What are the development areas of Farmers Organization to develop women Farmers? What initiatives of Farmers Organizations need to be changed as these are making women life difficult and women farmers' development is facing obstacles?
- What have you learnt from training/ workshops/ meeting about equity? How can FOs include the marginalized, excluded women farmers in the development activities?

Recommendations for development of women Farmers, FFS and FO: