



Bayer CropScience Limited,
Bangladesh
Masum Plaza (4th to 7th Floor)
Plot#13, Road#15, Sector#03
Uttara, Dhaka-1230
www.bayer.com.bd

News Release

New alliance to unlock potential of smallholder farmers

Creating a Better Life for smallholder farmers in Bangladesh

- “Better Life Farming”, a global, multi-stakeholder partnership to support smallholder farmers has been launched in the country
 - Initiative will support smallholder farmers to earn additional farm incomes through sustainable agriculture and agri-entrepreneurship
 - Agri-entrepreneurship will operate via via Better Life Farming centers, which will provide agri-inputs, crop advisory and market linkages under one roof to smallholder farmers
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Bangladesh, Dhaka, November 25, 2020: With an objective to provide holistic and innovative solutions for smallholder farmers in developing economies, Bayer, International Finance Corporation (IFC, a member of the World Bank Group) and Netafim launched the ‘[Better Life Farming](#)’ alliance in 2018. The alliance was launched in Bangladesh on November 24, 2020.

Md. Mesbahul Islam, Hon’ble Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, presided as the Chief Guest at the virtual launch event of the Better Life Farming (BLF) alliance in the country along with Peter Fahrenholtz, Ambassador, Federal Republic of Germany and key officials from the Ministry of Agriculture and representatives from Bayer, BCIC and ACI. In Bangladesh, [Bayer](#) operates as a joint venture with Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC) and Bayer AG.

In Bangladesh, the BLF alliance will include global partners: Bayer with its expertise in seeds, crop protection, and agronomy; IFC, the development finance institution for impact assessment and [ACI](#) as the local partner to create awareness about precision irrigation, balanced crop nutrition and soil health. The overall objective is to support smallholder farmers to increase crop yields and farm incomes through sustainable agriculture and agri-entrepreneurship.

An integral aspect of Better Life Farming is its agri-entrepreneurship model, which will operate via “Better Life Farming Centers”. These centers will be run by rural agri-entrepreneurs who will enable knowledge and technology transfer on good agricultural practices and deliver services such as market linkages, access to agri-inputs and crop advisory. Each BLF center will cover a group of 500 farmers from five to six nearby villages and also serve as a mini collection center from where offtakers can collect agricultural produce.

Speaking at the launch event, Zahidul Islam, Managing Director, Bayer CropScience Limited, Bangladesh, said, “With Better Life Farming, we want to support smallholders in Bangladesh to earn sustainable incomes from their farm. Our agri-entrepreneurship model is designed to empower rural youth to be a part of the agri value chain and generate additional employment opportunities. When smallholder farmers will succeed in generating higher incomes, it will increase the contribution of agriculture to our country’s economic growth.”

35 Better Life Farming Centers have been set up across Bangladesh with plans to scale up to 50 centers by the end of 2020. The Better Life Farming alliance will pursue a gender-smart approach in the country by promoting women agri-entrepreneurs to serve women smallholder farmers. To ensure long-term economic viability of the agri-entrepreneurship model, Bayer will work closely with the International Finance Corporation (IFC) to promote financial literacy among smallholder farmers who aspire to be agri-entrepreneurs.

“Sustainability is at the core of all the initiatives under the Better Life Farming alliance and that means creating value for all the stakeholders involved. We will measure the success of our initiative through the economic, social and environmental impact that we create for smallholder farmers and their local communities,” summed up D. Narain, Global Lead for Bayer’s Smallholder Farming initiatives.

Better Farms, Better Lives

In June 2020, Bayer introduced a new global initiative – ‘Better Farms, Better Lives’ to support smallholder farmers tide over the immediate challenges due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. Through this initiative, Bayer is supporting 20 lakh smallholder farmers in Asia, Africa and Latin America, with farming kits containing Bayer’s hybrid seeds, crop protection products, personal protective equipment and safety & training materials. In Bangladesh, the initiative has supported 1 lakh rice and vegetable smallholders across 51 districts, during the Boro and Aman seasons. Beneficiary smallholders have received hybrid seeds of the crops cultivated in their region along with training & advisory on crop, disease and pest management.

By 2030, [Bayer is committed](#) to helping more than 100 million smallholder farmers in developing countries as part of its global sustainability commitments. The immediate Covid-19 response through the ‘Better Farms, Better Lives’ initiative complements Bayer’s ongoing smallholder support activities, which will aid in mid-term recovery and building long-term resilience for smallholder farmers.

About Better Life Farming alliance

The ‘Better Life Farming’ alliance aims to help ensure more safe, nutritious and affordable food for the growing world population, advancing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal of ‘ending hunger, achieving food security and improved nutrition, and promoting sustainable agriculture.’ The efficient use of available resources, such as water, fertilizer, and energy, will empower growers to produce higher quality crops, generate higher incomes, and make farming attractive for future generations so that rural communities can prosper. For more information about the alliance and its work with smallholders, please visit www.betterlifefarming.com

About Bayer

Bayer is a global enterprise with core competencies in the life science fields of health care and nutrition. Its products and services are designed to benefit people by supporting efforts to overcome the major challenges presented by a growing and aging global population. At the same time, the Group aims to increase its earning power and create value through innovation and growth. Bayer is committed to the principles of sustainable development, and the Bayer brand stands for trust, reliability and quality throughout the world. In fiscal 2019, the Group employed around 104,000 people and had sales of € 43.5 billion. Capital expenditures amounted to € 2.9 billion and R&D expenses to € 5.3 billion.

For more information, go to www.bayer.com

Media Contact

Md. Johirul Islam

Bayer CropScience Limited, Bangladesh

E-mail: johirul.islam@bayer.com

Tel: +8801841082689

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