

# BANGLADESH UPDATE

## APRIL 2024

**Bangladesh is a focus country for PlantwisePlus. A range of activities have been implemented in-country under the programme's three impact pathways: pest preparedness, pesticide risk reduction, and farmer advisory.**

Around two-thirds of Bangladesh's population is engaged in agricultural activities, of which 80% rely on farming as their primary source of income. However, crop pests and diseases significantly impact smallholder yields, threatening livelihoods.

PlantwisePlus is a global programme led by CABI that empowers smallholder farmers to increase their incomes and improve food security and safety, while reducing biodiversity loss through **sustainable crop production practices**.

## Driving digital tools and courses usage in Bangladesh

PlantwisePlus delivers digital advisory tools and distance learning courses that improve the capacity of those supporting smallholder farmers to manage plant health problems.

**Mandatory certification:** In 2023, the Crop Pest Diagnosis and Crop Pest Management courses on the CABI Academy were opened up to all 27 core and focus PlantwisePlus countries. This significantly impacted participation, particularly in Bangladesh. In addition, the Director General of the Department of Agriculture issued a directive that certifications will become mandatory for Sub-Assistant Agricultural Officers (SAAOs) in the extension service by the end of the year.

**Enhanced capacity in bioprotection across the country:** Agricultural Extension Officers (AEOs) from across all of Bangladesh's 64 districts were trained as Master Trainers on the newly launched Introduction to Bioprotection Products course. These AEOs have not only enhanced their own knowledge of sustainable agricultural practices but have gone on to train a further 4,000 SAAOs. Now more farmers – around 1,000 per SAAO – can receive advice on sustainable plant protection options.

**#CABlinBD:** An online campaign using the hashtag #CABlinBD invited users to provide feedback on PlantwisePlus tools. Young people, professionals, and researchers shared their reviews on Facebook and LinkedIn. These valuable insights have helped CABI better understand how the tools are perceived by target groups, in particular regarding the user interface, content, and functionality.

***"Both application and course were helpful. We can learn a lot by it. It's really helpful to know about pesticide application and use of micro bioprotection."***

– University of Dhaka student review of the Crop Sprayer app and Introduction of Bioprotection Products course

## Further updates:

**Agro-input dealer training and certification:** Bangladesh is one of the few countries where the registration of agro-input dealers has no minimum educational qualification or mandatory training requirement. In 2023, CABI began discussing with the Department of Agricultural Extension the possibility of developing a training scheme linked to the mandatory registration/certification scheme for agro-input dealers. During a CABI-facilitated workshop to develop a framework for a training scheme, the Additional Secretary of Agriculture announced the integration of compulsory training into a new Plant Protection regulation. A working group was formed to create training materials. The next steps, already underway, involve finalizing training materials, implementing Training of Trainers (ToT), piloting the scheme, and potentially extending training to existing dealers within the new certification framework.

**National Forum:** A CABI-led PlantwisePlus National Forum at Bangladesh's Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) underscored the pivotal role of partnerships in strengthening the nation's plant health systems. Dr. Md. Saleh Ahmed, CABI's Country Representative in Bangladesh, inaugurated the event, emphasizing CABI's collaborative efforts with local partners and its commitment to expanding initiatives in the country. This inclusive gathering, comprising diverse stakeholders from government, research, NGOs, and the private sector, fostered constructive dialogue and laid the groundwork for a sustainable and resilient plant health system. | [Read the blog](#)

**Pest preparedness and management workshop:** CABI recently hosted a pivotal workshop dedicated to "Strengthening Pest Preparedness and Management in Bangladesh." The workshop aimed to validate national pest management findings and develop a collaborative roadmap involving government, researchers, NGOs, and the private sector. A significant outcome was a National Action Plan devised by 17 institutions, prioritizing prevention, detection, and control tasks primarily for government ministries. This collaborative approach lays the groundwork for a resilient pest management system in Bangladesh, ensuring sustainable agriculture and ecosystem security. | [Read the blog](#)

**Establishing mass rearing facilities for biological control:** In Bangladesh, brinjal farmers face challenges from insect pests like the brinjal shoot and fruit borer. *Trichogramma*, a parasitic wasp, is an excellent natural enemy that can control fruit borer. CABI has collaborated with the Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute (BARI) to establish a *Trichogramma* rearing facility (TRF). Given the key role of BARI in the future sustainability of such an approach, the TRF construction has now been initiated with a co-funding commitment from BARI. The next steps include making the TRF operational by late 2024, implementing CABI-led training by September 2024, discussing new production facilities with commercial partners, and providing feedback to stakeholders in Bangladesh.



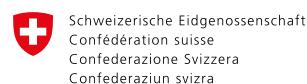
For further information on these activities or others under **PlantwisePlus in Bangladesh**, please contact:

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