

Report on the Start-up Meeting of
The Reverse Linkage Project between Bangladesh and Turkey on “Enhancing Capacity in Cotton Varieties Development”; Aydin - Turkey; 7-8 November 2019

Introduction

1. The Start-up Meeting of the Reverse Linkage Project between Bangladesh and Turkey on “Enhancing Capacity in Cotton Varieties Development” was organized in Aydin, Turkey on 7-8 November 2019. This meeting marks the start-up of the project actual implementation.
2. The objective of the start-up meeting is to set the detailed implementation arrangements of the project. These include the composition of the project’s Joint Coordination Committee, the schedule of the project activities, the names of the Bangladesh’s Cotton Development Board (CDB) staff to be involved in each training, the disbursement aspects, etc. The program of the meeting is provided in Annex-1.
3. The meeting was attended by representatives of the project partners, namely the Turkey’s Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Turkey’s Cotton Research Institute (CRI), Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA), Bangladesh’s Cotton Development Board (CDB) , Bangladesh’s Ministry of Agriculture, Bangladesh’s Economic Relations Division, Bangladesh’s Planning Commission, Bangladesh’s Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division, the Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre (SESRIC), and Islamic Development Bank (IsDB). The list of participants is provided in Annex-2.
4. Prior to starting the meeting, the Bangladeshi delegates mounted a study visit to the CRI and other institutions concerned with the cotton sector in Aydin, Nazilli and Izmir. The Bangladeshi delegates visited the Izmir Institute of Technology, cooperative gin factory, CRI’s delinting factory, fiber technology and seed quality laboratories as well as oil factory.
5. In his opening remarks, Mr M. Koray Şimşek, Acting Director of CRI, welcomed the participants and reiterated the CRI’s willingness to participate in this Reverse Linkage project. The participants also indicated the commitment of their respective organizations towards the project full success.

Introductory Presentations

6. The team of CRI presented a short documentary film about CRI’s history, role, capabilities and achievements in the cotton sector in Turkey, which was well received by the attendees.
7. Dr Md. Farid Uddin, Executive Director, CDB gave a presentation about the cotton sector in Bangladesh, as well as the role of CDB towards increasing the Bangladesh’s local cotton production.
8. The IsDB representative made an overall presentation on the project in order to ensure that all its partners have common understanding of the project context, current CDB’s capacity gaps, project activities and outputs. The IsDB representative also shared the “Project Information Package” which will be the base for assessing the project progress, as well as a communication tool to inform the project team members about its details.

The Project’s Joint Coordination Committee

9. The IsDB representative presented the Terms of Reference (ToR) of the project Joint Coordination Committee (JCC), which will be responsible for ensuring the successful implementation of the project, through a continuous follow-up and a smooth coordination amongst the different partners.
10. The project partners designated their members of the JCC as follows:
 - a. CDB Dr Md. Farid Uddin, Executive Director (Chairman)
 - b. CRI Mr M. Koray Şimşek, Acting Director
 - c. Turkey’s Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry TBD

- d. Bangladesh's Ministry of Agriculture TBD
 - e. Bangladesh's Economic Relations Division TBD
 - f. Bangladesh's Planning Commission TBD
 - g. TIKA Mr Ramazan Okutan, JCC
 - h. SESRIC Mr Onur Caglar, Technical Cooperation Specialist
 - i. IsDB Mr Sameh Hussien, Senior Sector Specialist
 - j. Member Secretary Dr Md Kamrul Islam, CDB
11. The CDB team indicated that Dr Md Kamrul Islam, Senior Scientific Officer will be the Bangladesh's Project Director. The CRI team indicated they will designate the Turley's Project Director within one week. The above-mentioned Bangladeshi institutions will designate their members of the JCC within two weeks.
12. The JCC will meet tentatively every eight months in Bangladesh.

The Timetable of the Project Activities

13. The participants discussed thoroughly the timetable of the project activities and set specific planned start and end date for each project activity and the first meeting of the Joint Coordination Committee, taking into consideration the cotton seasons in both Turkey and Bangladesh. The agreed upon planned dates are given in Annex-4.
14. The CRI will check with the Izmir Institute of Technology the suitability of specific activity dates, namely "Biotechnological Tools and Techniques for Cotton". Similarly, the CRI will check with Adnan Menderes University the feasibility of them organizing the course on "Cotton Breeding".
15. The representative of TIKA indicated that he will confirm within two weeks the feasibility of TIKA's coverage of the air-tickets pertaining to the activities planned for January 2020 as well as the equipment purchasing plan.
16. The representative of IsDB indicated that the Bank is coordinating with the Presidency of Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB) so that they confirm their support to the scholarships under the project, as indicated in the attached timetable.
17. The planned end date of the project technical activities is the end of June 2022, without the completion report.

The Names of the CDB Trainees

18. Dr Md. Farid Uddin, Executive Director, CDB explained that the criteria of trainees' selection will be (i) academic qualification, (ii) past performance in CDB, (iii) job requirements and (iv) potential future in the CDB.
19. For every training, the list of CDB staff shall be shared at least one month prior to the training date.
20. During the training, there will be a dual communication channel between CDB and CRI in order to discuss the performance of trainees and instructors and act accordingly.
21. The participants emphasized that trainees should share the knowledge with the CDB staff and within Bangladesh in general, in order to enhance the project output and impact.

The Disbursement and Procurement Arrangements under the Project







22. It was agreed that the IsDB's contribution will be disbursed as follows:
- The per-diem to be paid to Bangladeshi trainees will be provided upon arrival to Turkey through the IsDB's office in Ankara.

- The per-diem to be paid to Turkish experts will be provided upon arrival to Bangladesh through the IsDB's office in Dhaka.
 - For the CRI's project coordination allowance, it will be paid after every three months to the CRI's bank account upon receiving and reviewing a financial claim from CRI.
 - For the CDB's project coordination allowance, it will be paid after every three months to the CDB's bank account upon receiving and reviewing a financial claim from CDB.
23. The contribution of Government of Bangladesh will be disbursed directly to the account determined by CDB as per its internal rules and procedures. The agricultural equipment under the project will be procured by CDB according to the Government of Bangladesh rules and regulations.
24. For the contributions of SESRIC, it will transfer to the bank accounts of the Turkish experts the per-diem indicated in the project financing plan. In general, SESRIC requires getting the details of each activity at least month in advance, including the passport copy and details of expert's bank account.
25. TIKA's contribution will be utilized as follows:
- TIKA will purchase the IT equipment and transfer them to CDB according to TIKA's rules and regulations.
 - TIKA will handle the issuance of the e-tickets for both Bangladeshi trainees and Turkish experts as indicted in the financing plan, in coordination with the Turkish Airlines as well as the two project directors from CDB and CRI.
26. The CDB and CRI will communicate to IsDB the details of their bank accounts that will be used in the project, before the end of November 2019, through official letters.

Conclusion

1. This report does not constitute a formal commitment and legally binding agreement, and it is subject to any necessary approval by the concerned authority levels in CRI, CDB, TIKA, SESRIC and IsDB.
2. The participants expressed their thanks and appreciation to the CRI for hospitality as well as the excellent arrangements of the meeting.

Signatures

 Mr M. Koray Şimşek, Acting Director, Turkey's Cotton Research Institute (CRI)	 Dr Md. Farid Uddin, Executive Director, Bangladesh's Cotton Development Board (CDB)
 Md. Zahurul Hoque Joint Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Bangladesh	 Mr Ramazan Okutan, Expert, TIKA
 Mr Onur Caglar, Technical Cooperation Specialist, SESRIC	 Mr Sameh Hussein Reverse Linkage Section, IsDB

Attachments:

- 1- The Program of the Start-up Meeting.
- 2- The list of participants in the Start-up Meeting.
- 3- The timetable of the project activities.