



Sector Brief – Crop Protection

Vision

Smallholder farmers, including women and disadvantaged groups, have improved access to effective crop protection solutions, knowledge on safe and judicious use of crop protection techniques, reduce crop loss and therefore increase income.

Why Crop Protection?

Crop protection is the practice of protecting agricultural crops from losses caused by pests, diseases and weeds. In Nepal, 25- 35% agricultural yield is lost because of inappropriate crop protection solutions and practices (MoAD, 2014)

Most farmers in Nepal are smallholders, and women and disadvantaged groups are engaged as labourers across various value-chains. As there are high rates of male migration, women are increasingly engaged in the entire agricultural process, including crop protection activities. Reduction of crop loss through better crop protection solutions will increase their yield and income without needing to invest in more land. Sahaj targets smallholder farmers, including women and people from disadvantaged backgrounds, with the objective of increasing their income by reducing crop loss.

What are the problems?

There are limited product options on quality chemical and non-chemical crop protection inputs. Moreover, when crop protection inputs are available in the market, they may be or sub-standard because of poor quality control on imports, a lack of proper disposal of expired products and low-quality products acquired through illegal trading. The lack of monitoring mechanism from the government is another factor that perpetuates the supply of sub-standard products.

Sahaj, also known as the Nepal Agricultural Market Development Programme, is a joint initiative of the Government of Nepal and the Government of Switzerland. It is mandated by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and designed as a 12-year programme. For the first phase from March 2016 to December 2019, Sahaj works in the goat, maize and vegetable sectors, and crop protection and postharvest cross-sectors.

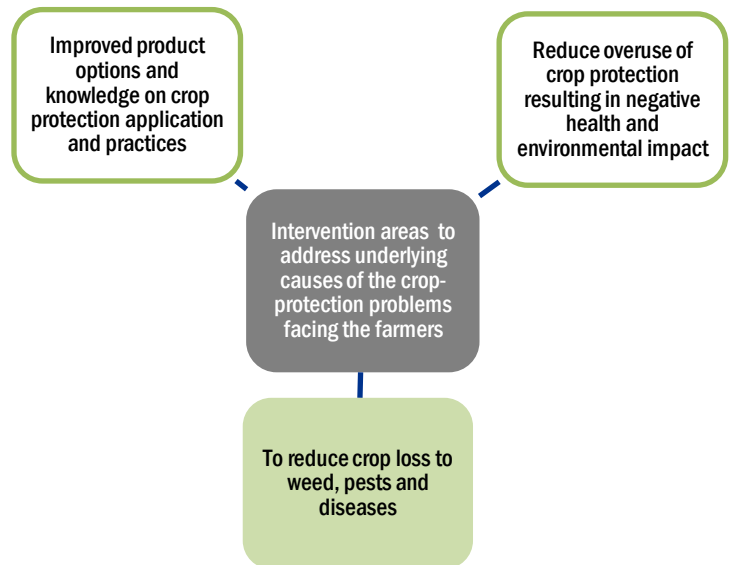
Sahaj, during the first half of Phase 1, focused on two geographical clusters in Nepal. Based on the pro-poor market potential of the selected sectors, Sahaj has gradually been expanding with a national focus to other road corridors from mid-2017. While maintaining the national mandate, Sahaj has been intensifying its activities in Province 1 and in the Terai region.

Another problem is that farmers lack knowledge on the proper application of crop protection solutions. Although many farmers use crop protection inputs, they still lack proper knowledge about its effective application. A considerable number of farmers do not use any form of crop protection solutions and lose crops to pests, diseases and weeds. On the other hand, some farmers overuse crop protection solutions, especially synthetic pesticides. This creates unnecessary costs and results in negative health and environmental impact. Furthermore, misuse of crop protection also increases the probability of pests becoming pesticide resistant.

What are the opportunities?

There is an untapped market for crop protection solutions, both synthetic and non-synthetic, because many farmers lose a substantial portion of their crops to pests, diseases, and weeds

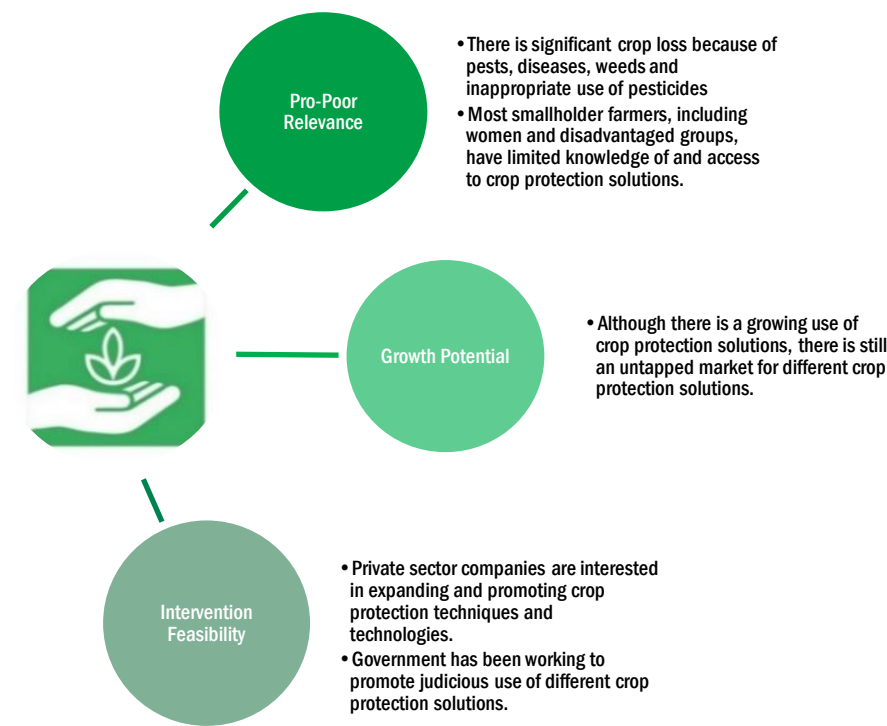
Many private sector companies are showing interest to invest in expanding their market with different crop protection solutions. There is an increased awareness on food safety and judicious use of pesticides among producers and consumers. This provides crop protection input companies with an opportunity to promote different solutions and their judicious use.



How do we plan to bring changes?

Following the Inclusive Markets approach, Sahaj, in partnership with different market actors, analyses the constraints facing the poor farmers and addresses the root-causes of the constraints in the crop protection cross-sector with targeted interventions. It adopts an indirect and facilitative approach where the market actors lead the design and implementation of pro-poor business models and activities.

Sahaj works with private sector businesses, including importers, formulators and distributors, to increase the capacity of the market actors, increase the availability of good quality inputs for smallholder farmers and provide information on judicious usage of crop protection inputs by extending the service capacity of the companies to benefit those farmers. The programme facilitates the availability of safety products and provides information on their application by working with importers and manufacturers. It further addresses policy constraints to create a conducive business environment.



Business Enabling Environment (BEE) is also a cross-cutting intervention area of the programme in the sector.