



Sector Brief – Post-Harvest

Vision

Smallholder farmers, including women and disadvantaged groups, have improved access to a diverse range of post-harvest and forward market functions and therefore increase their income.

Why Post-harvest?

The post-harvest cross-sector in Sahaj comprises of a diverse range of functions, which includes assembling, grading, sorting, cleaning, storage, packaging, processing; transportation; distribution, supply chain management, credit support, selection of agro-input and crop, and forward market linkages. Post-harvest management and forward market linkages play an important role to bridge the gap between the producer and the consumer. In Nepal, significant agricultural produce is lost because of a lack of proper post-harvest management. The farmers also need a diversified forward market for them to reduce the risk of overproduction and price fluctuations.

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 post-harvest activities. An improvement in post-harvest management and forward market linkages 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 post-harvest loss and improving market connectivity.

What are the problems?

Farmers and key market actors have limited knowledge on post-harvest management and practices which affects the quantity and quality of the produce at different nodes of the value-chain. For example, the quality of maize may deteriorate because of limited availability and use of shelling and drying, packaging and storage facilities. Similarly, improper handling of perishable produce such as fruits and vegetables results in significant loss in quantity and quality.

Farmers in general have limited access to markets, including processing companies and facilities. There is a dependence on middleperson who often control access to market. Weak

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 post-harvest 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.

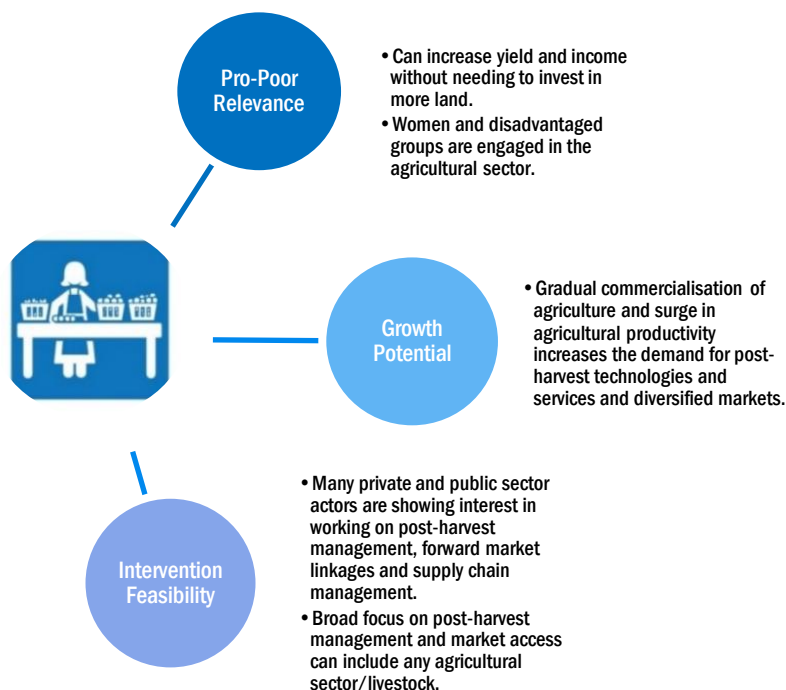
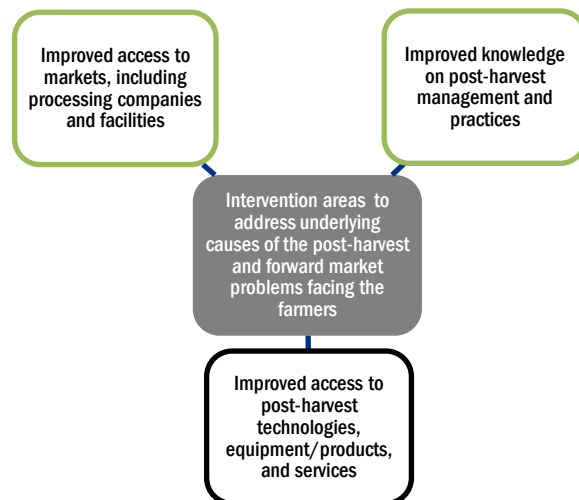
linkages with the forward markets and limited understanding of quality requirements often make it difficult for the farmers to shift to commercial farming.

What are the opportunities?

Post-harvest cross-sector is becoming more important with the gradual commercialisation of agriculture in Nepal. The increase of road infrastructure in rural areas is also an opportunity for increasing market access. Additionally, the growth of farmer groups and cooperatives can be useful to link markets.

Usage of mechanisation and technology is a key factor to improve quality of produce post-harvest. They can help farmers save time as well as improve quality of products. Small holder farmers cannot afford to buy these machines and technology. Hence promoting custom hiring services in rural parts of Nepal can benefit the farmers. Providing rental services for plastic crates can help minimise loss in tomatoes, citrus fruits, etc

Consumer preferences are shifting towards better quality products asserting the need to maintain post-harvest standards. Agrobusiness companies like processors and large-scale retailers are showing more interest in market expansion by reaching out to the farmers directly. This creates opportunities for many smallholder farmers to profitably engage with the end markets.



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 post-harvest 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 agrobusiness companies to expand into new areas, facilitating extension services to smallholder farmers and a buy back guarantee for agricultural products to address the weak market linkage. The

programme works with private and public-sector partners to provide smallholder farmers with information on post-harvest management and give updates on market trends. Sahaj’s partners also promote low-cost and user-friendly post-harvest technologies and services to reduce post-harvest losses.

