

2023-2024 Inspire Challenge: Reducing the gender digital divide in agriculture

Reflections on trialing a *Pay for Results Grant*



INITIATIVE ON
Digital Innovation

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Scope of this document

This report presents a snapshot of lessons learned* from conducting a competitive grant awarded to five projects, using a *Pay for Results* approach — making a portion of the award contingent on the achievement of defined outcomes by each project at the end of the program.

*Lessons learned are framed as considerations written for anyone who may be considering a Pay for Results approach

Focus

Close the gender digital divide

Goal of the 2023-2024 Inspire Challenge

Increase women's participation in existing **digital agri-food services and programs.**

Scope of the 2023-2024 Inspire Challenge

Five Challengers had six months to achieve their individual gender inclusion goals.

Inspire Challenge Sponsors

CGIAR Initiative on Digital Innovation

CGIAR Initiative on Diversification in East and Southern Africa

CGIAR AgriLAC Resiliente Initiative

USAID Feed the Future

Approach

Pay for Results

Reasoning

By **linking funding to results** (instead of outputs like reports or papers), a *Pay for Results* program aims to improve the effectiveness and sustainability of interventions, contributing to positive social and economic outcomes.

Incentive

60% of the total possible grant is awarded only if results are achieved. 40% is awarded for participating.

\$20,000

awarded for being selected and participating in the Inspire Challenge

up to **\$30,000**

for achieving **Pay for Results targets** established with each Inspire Challenge participating team

Lessons learned

from running a

Pay for Results Program

Pay for Results Considerations

The Pay for Results approach used in the 2023-2024 Inspire Challenge required additional resources and supervision across the duration of the grant period (relative to what was planned, and what may be expected from a traditional program with a lump sum award).

1

**Planning &
framing the
challenge**

2

**Selecting
challenge
participants**

3

**Setting up
project pilots**

4

**Executing
project pilots**

5

**Evaluating
performance
of project
pilots**

Consideration 1

Planning & framing the challenge

Articulate what project and team profiles are desirable (maturity, scale of project, capabilities needed, additional attributes), to help inform outreach strategy, application form fields, and level of support that should be offered to teams.

Set a reference expected performance target (relative or absolute) as a baseline for the Pay for Results metrics — this can be adjusted per project but serves as a common starting point and limits broad deviations.

Establish clear scoping parameters for the challenge (open/negotiable goals vs. constrained/fixed goals) to plan how much effort will need to be spent up-front with teams to sharpen briefs and targets.

Consideration 2

Selecting participants

Probe for key attributes related to team engagement capacity and performance tracking (to be collected from application forms, from desk research, from interactions with applicants) — these might include stage or phase of projects, availability of historical data, ability to collect new data, clarity of attribution, seasonality and timing, etc.

Plan for a due diligence phase before final project selection, including interactions with applicant teams to evaluate fit — to reduce chance of selecting unprepared teams.

Consider what provisions could be made that allow different types of teams and projects to participate in the challenge — allowing, for instance, both new initiatives as well as scaling efforts to participate in the challenge under slightly different modalities of targets.

Consideration 3

Setting up project pilots

Clearly articulate objectives and/or hypotheses to test during projects — narrowing and sharpening them to a core set that responds to the challenge theme and that is feasible for the challenge timeframe.

Set a time limit for establishing individual Pay for Results targets with teams — they could include a few rounds of iterations for calibration, but having a reference baseline performance target should accelerate this activity.

Agree on and commit to clear protocols for interactions with teams — roles on both sides (challenge team and sponsor team), communications, milestones, tools and platforms.

Allocate legal resources for contract writing and terms negotiations with each team.

Consideration 4

Executing project pilots

Safeguard a minimum timeframe for project execution (excluding setup phase and closing/reporting phase) — E.g. if the total challenge duration is 6 months, ensure that at least 3 months are focused on execution and data collection.

Observe consistent milestones across projects (E.g. target commitment, intake, mid-point report, close) for better comparison of progress and performance across teams.

Set a reporting standard that is achievable for teams and reviewing staff — E.g.: this may be shallower in depth of reporting, but higher in frequency of reporting events..

Be prepared and make provisions for pivoting and unforeseen events and consider contingencies and impact on possibility to qualify for Pay for Results targets with adjustments.

Consideration 5

Evaluating performance of project pilots

Expect consistent standards of evidence across all teams — require projects to submit documents and proof of results in a digestible format that evaluators can review.

Require submission of clearly articulated learnings, in addition to project narrative and data, from each team.

Use a sliding scale or tiered approach to evaluating performance against Pay for Results targets — instead of all or nothing.

Make room in evaluation for achievement factors that fall outside of agreed targets — there may be positive outcomes that weren't contemplated in initial framing that merit reward.

Pay for Results

Checklist of Considerations

Planning & framing the challenge	Selecting challenge participants	Setting up project pilots	Executing project pilots	Evaluating performance of project pilots
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Articulate what project and team profiles are desirable	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Probe for key attributes related to engagement capacity and performance tracking	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clearly articulate objectives and/or hypotheses to test during projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Safeguard a minimum timeframe for project execution	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expect consistent standards of evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Set a reference expected performance target	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plan for a due diligence phase before final project selection	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Set a time limit for establishing individual Pay for Results targets with teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observe consistent milestones	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Require submission of clearly articulated learnings
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish clear scoping parameters for the challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consider what provisions could be made that allow different types of projects and teams to participate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Agree on and commit to protocols for interactions with teams• Allocate legal resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Set a reporting standard that is achievable for teams and reviewing staff• Be prepared and make provisions for pivoting and unforeseen events	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use a sliding scale to evaluate performance• Make room in evaluation for achievement factors that fall outside of agreed targets

Reference

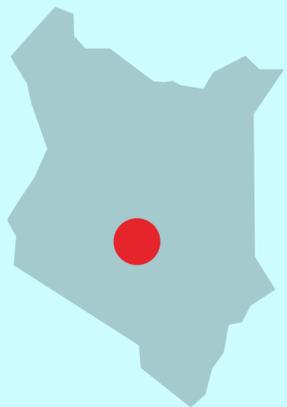
5 Inspire Challenge Participants



Sprout — Climate Smart Coffee

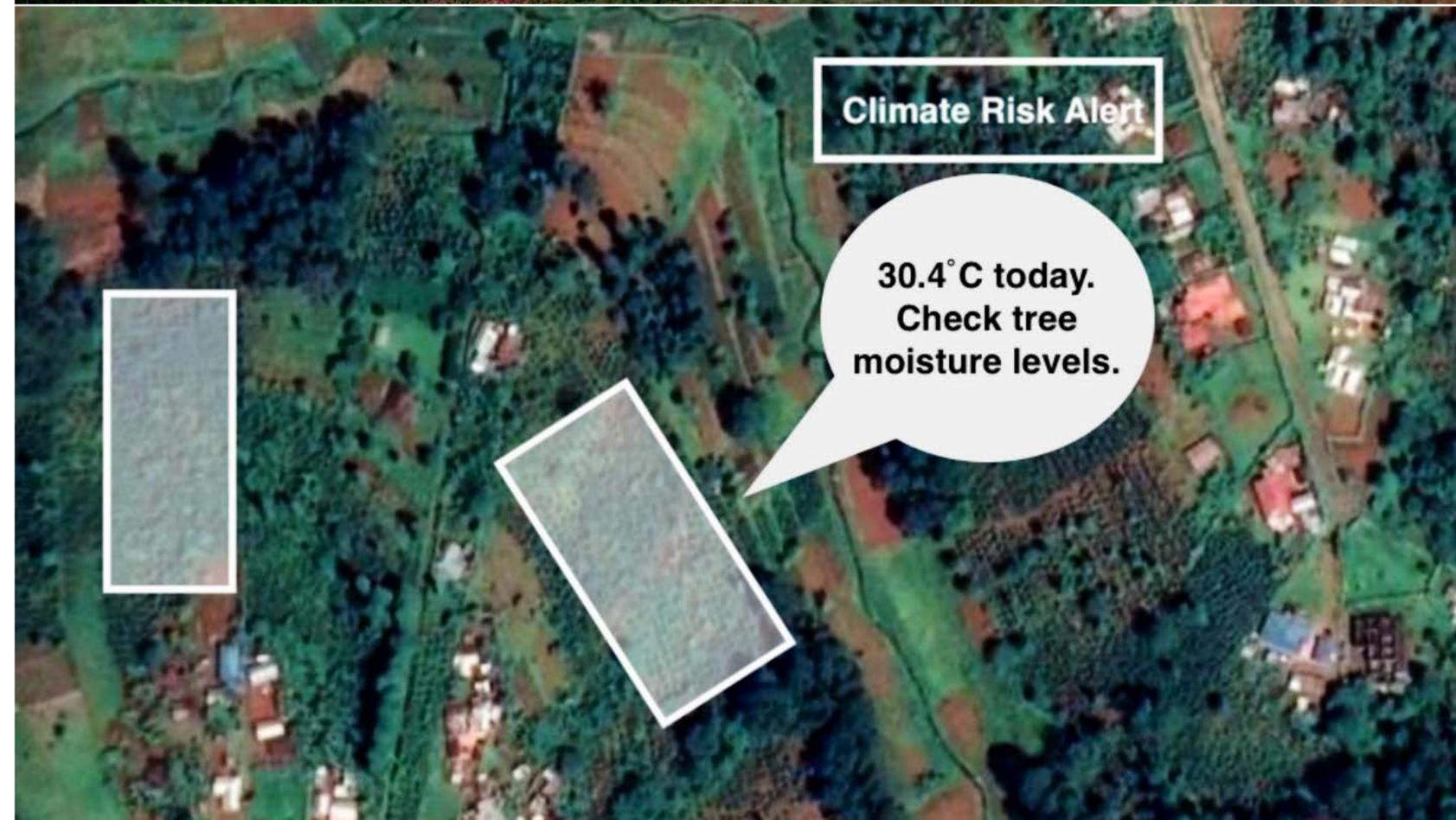
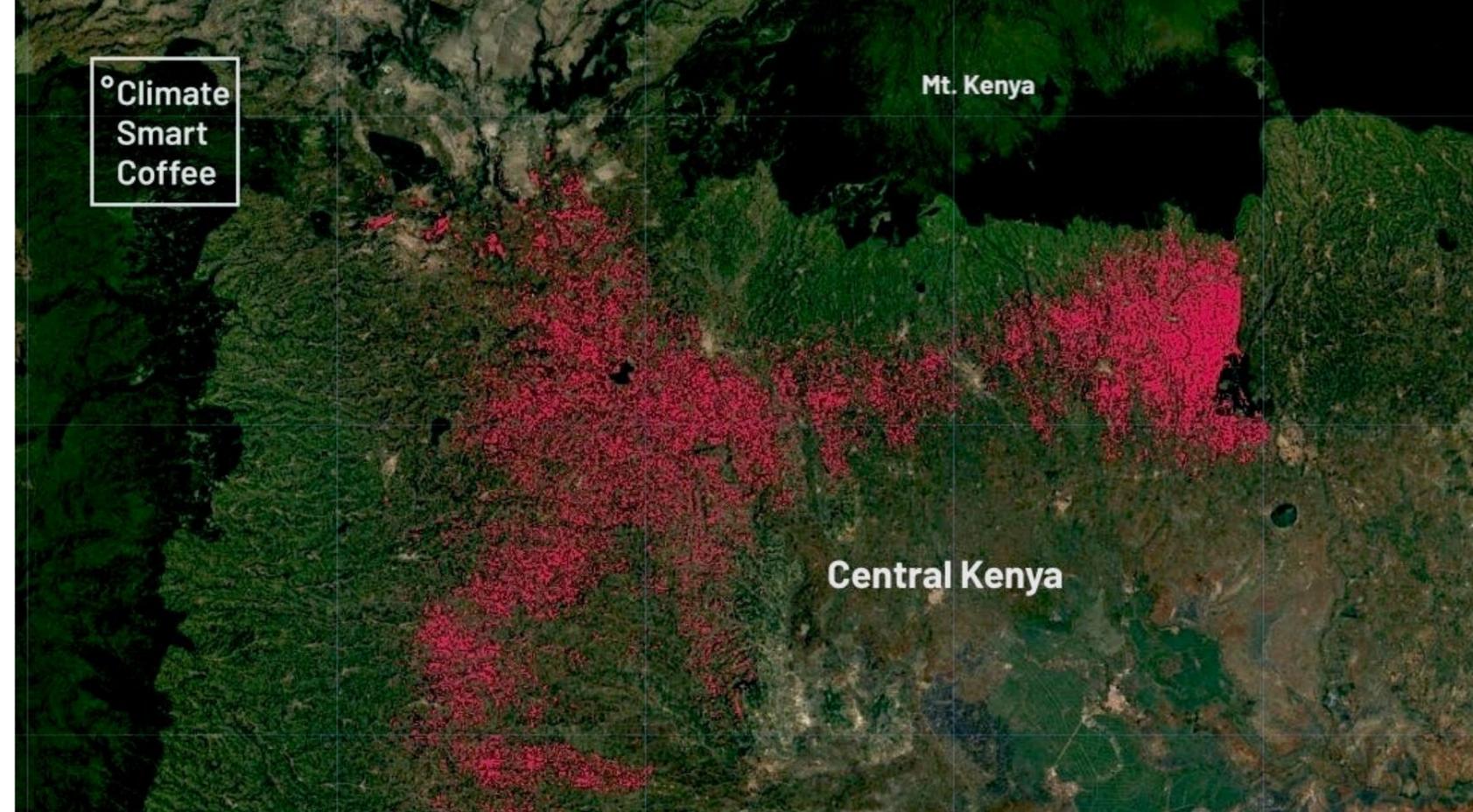
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Challenge site

Mount Kenya region, Kenya



Sprout — Climate Smart Coffee

Climate Smart Coffee is a **climate insurance program** that protects smallholder coffee farmers that includes adaptive, agro-weather advice sent to farmers via mobile phones to better prepare them for unexpected weather events or pests.



Sprout – Climate Smart Coffee

During the Inspire Challenge, Sprout – Climate Smart Coffee aimed to

identify the channels and pathways that are most effective to provide advice to women coffee farmers. Feedback to the SMS alerts currently being sent to around 1000 farmers in Kenya is extremely low, rendering the effectiveness of advice unknown.

Additional Goals

Identify mechanisms to establish a 2-way channel with farmers to fine-tune advice and collect richer feedback

Better understand the role of farmer cooperatives to activate women engagement with digital tools

Sprout – Climate Smart Coffee

Target Metric for
Pay for Results
award

**30% Feedback
response rate** from
Women farmers on
sent Sprout Coffee
Alerts

**Target Metric was reported as achieved, yet
feedback signal used was weak** (effort-
intensive voice calls were counted as a feedback
mechanism)

Other achievement: Learned that smartphone
penetration is higher than expected (~71%) in
pilot region

Other achievement: Confirmed crucial role of
farmer cooperatives as a way to build trust to
onboard new tools and learn about how they are
being adopted

sproutprotect.com/



Agroconsultas

—

Challenge site

Entire user base, concentrated in Argentina



Agroconsultas

Agroconsultas leverages digital technologies to empower farmers by providing them with access to **world-class technical support and training** so they can be more productive and sustainable.



Claudia Fernandez



Don Mario

5/18/2024

Altos de Chipión, Córdoba, Argentina

Insumos y servicios



Insumos



Semillas y plantines



Trigo

Buenas.. fecha optima de DM CATALPA para noreste de Córdoba.altos de Chipion



Servicio Técnico Don Mario

5/18/2024

Buen día Claudia!

Respecto a la consulta, la recomendación es a partir del 25/5 al 20/6 con una densidad recomendada de 260 - 300 pl./m2



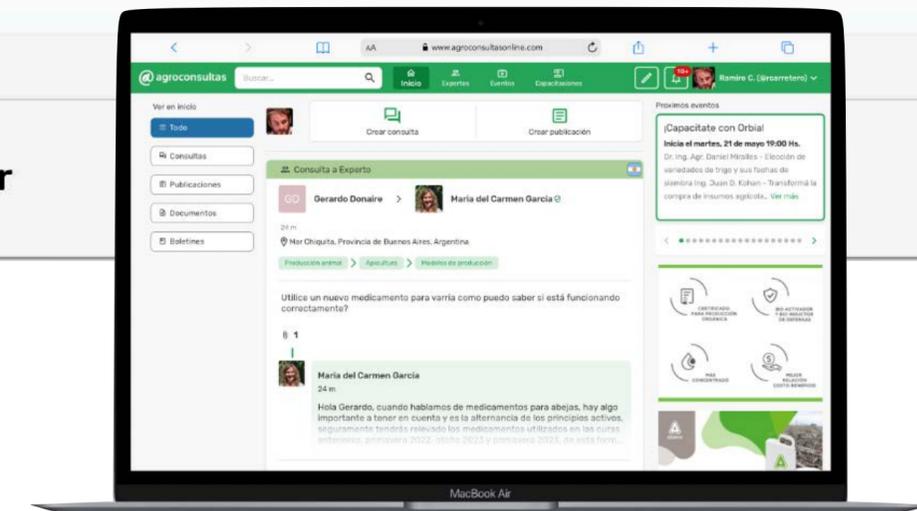
Útil



Comentar



Compartir



Agroconsultas

During the Inspire Challenge, Agroconsultas aimed to

Increase active engagement by female farmers on the digital platform.

Women are currently less likely to request advice from an expert. While ~15% of registered users are women, only ~10% of requests are posted by women.

Additional Goals

Increase the number of female experts on the platform providing advice

Increase the number of female registered users on the platform

Increase interactions by female users on the platform across a variety of tracked metrics (visits and actions)

Agroconsultas

Target Metric for
Pay for Results
award

**100% Increase (2x)
in the number of
queries* made by
women** on the
platform in the
period Apr 1 - Sept
30, 2024 relative to
Apr 1 - Sept 30, 2023

Target Metric was achieved!

Other achievement: Site analytics are now
disaggregated by gender

Other achievement: Added 30 women experts
to platform (24.9% of experts are now women,
up from 13.6%)

Other achievement: Established a relationship
with *Red de Mujeres Rurales* in Argentina to
partner on activities to improve inclusion

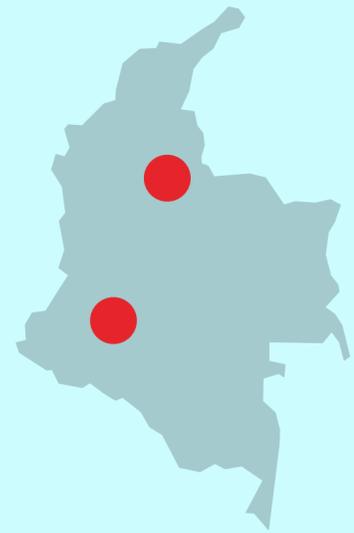
agroconsultasonline.com/



Innovakit

Challenge site

Huila and Santander, Colombia



Innovakit

Innovakit is a technological platform that enables **knowledge transfer between producers, technicians and rural workers.**

Its various services include technological tools, training for producers, quality assurance, and access to credit.



Innovakit

During the Inspire Challenge,
Innovakit aimed to

Pilot a Digital Influencer program to increase knowledge sharing between women farmers on digital platforms.

Additional Goals

Implement a digital micro-learning program to promote financial health

Increase awareness and applications to microcredit

Innovakit

Target Metric for
Pay for Results
award

**50% of women
engage at least
once via Whatsapp
during a one month
period
and
30% of women
apply for a
microcredit loan**

Target metric was not achieved (and results
claimed need review)

Other achievement: Hired two Digital
Influencers to fuel digital engagement of rural
women across two regions in Colombia

Other achievement: Developed video training
modules delivered and a micro-learning course
on financial health via Whatsapp which can be
leveraged to scale into new regions or new
cohorts of rural women.

innovakit.com/

Wombees

Challenge site

Various sites across India



Wombees

Wombees (women for bees) is building a *golden revolution* to create a scalable and replicable model for sustainable **income generation through scientific beekeeping.**



Wombees

During the Inspire Challenge,
Wombees aimed to

**Train 1000+ rural women across India to become
beekeepers** using the bee-kind app and in-person
support.

Additional Goals

Identify factors that will
enable scaling of
outreach and training
efforts across India

Increase income by
women farmers in India
by selling honey and
other bee hive products

Wombees

Target Metric for
Pay for Results
award

500 users of Bee-
kind advisory
services

**35% of women
beekeepers
improve their
scientific
beekeeping
practices**

Target metric was not achieved (and results
claimed need review)

Other achievement: Built a pipeline of 5-10
training programs either started or about to
start across India

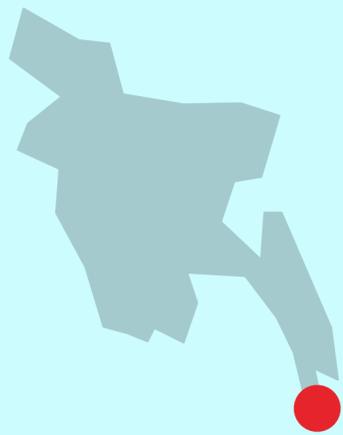
Other achievement: Observed a high level of
interest, curiosity, and drive in women (far more
than that of men) — “women are better
beekeepers”

letsendorse.com/

Farm2Go



Challenge site
Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh



Farm2Go

Farm2Go connects smallholder farmers to new markets, giving them an increased chance to earn a **better price for their commodities.**

A mobile application for Aggregators allows them to register farmers and collect deposits, which Traders can view on a web application to negotiate offers.



Farm2Go

During the Inspire Challenge,
Farm2Go aimed to

Increase frequency of deposits of farming products by women to Farm2Go Aggregators.

Currently in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, only 17% of existing registered female farmers have made more than one deposit.

Additional Goals

Learn how to measure the success of
Aggregator training

Increase interest from retail outlets to create demand on the platform

Farm2Go

Target Metric for Pay for Results award

40% of all registered women (since inception of the program) **will have made at least 2 deposits of products with F2G aggregators in Cox's Bazaar**

Pilot was cut-short due to inability to reach contractual agreement

Other achievement: Reignited Farm2Go program in Cox's Bazaar, after distancing for over a year

Other achievement: Gender focus of the Inspire Challenge has sparked interest in collaboration with Gender, Protection and Inclusion unit at WFP

**For more details or documents
on the 2023-2024 Inspire
Challenge, please contact a
member of the team.**



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