



Geodata Based Information Services for smallholder farmers in Bangladesh (GEOBIS)

GEOBIS uses spatial and other geodata for providing effective, time and location specific advisory services to smallholder farmers in Bangladesh. It is aimed at improving agricultural productivity and farmer income, upgrading agricultural zoning and at improving the management of weather related emergencies.

GEOBIS will provide farmers with weather related information, advice on the usage of seeds, land preparation, sowing, transplanting, irrigation, fertilizers and agrochemicals, and advice on preventive and remedial measures for controlling pest and diseases.

Farmers will be informed through mobile phones, call centre, a website, app-based services as well as personal advice via extension officers and Lal Teer's field staff. Since illiteracy rates are high and the usage of smartphones is limited, the network of extension officers will initially be the most important channel in conjunction with the mobile phone. Throughout the project,

GEOBIS partners will encourage and expect the involved farmers to become more knowledgeable and technologically independent.

Target user group

The primary users are farmers in 14 Northern districts of Bangladesh. They largely practice multi-cropping and cultivate very small plots of land, averaging 0.5 acre. GEOBIS will also cater to the information needs of agricultural researchers and students of its public partner, a local university. At a later stage other potential customers in the financial or retail sector will also be considered.

Business proposition

The project will assess several business propositions, depending on the communication channel used and the farmers' willingness to pay. Examples are: a fee for a phone call to a customer advisor or interactive voice response, a subscription to text messages or automated outbound calls, a fee for advice from an extension officer, or a subscription to a web-based application.

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Important is the reach of the service. The consortium will use the network of extension officers and distribution partners of the applicant to enroll 330,000 farmers as users within 3 years, enabling the service to become economically viable.

Partnership

- Capacity building and research: Interdisciplinary Centre for Food Security (ICF) at Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU) (Bangladesh)
- Geo data processing and earth observation for user applications: Alterra, Wageningen University, (Netherlands)
- Imagery, software and consultation for utilization of earth observation data: Netherlands Geomatics & Earth Observation B.V./NEO (Netherlands)
- IT-platform and web-based solutions: mPower (Bangladesh)
- Mobile- and web-based communications: Multisourcing Limited (Bangladesh)
- Lal Teer Seed Limited (Bangladesh)

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