



inclusive microeconomics

M-CRIL Webinar 4

14 May 2020

COVID-19 coping strategies of FPOs

Can the crisis be reinvented as an opportunity?

Time: 14:00 India, 15:00 Myanmar,
15:30 Cambodia, Indonesia/Java,
16:30 Philippines, Singapore
8:30 GMT

Duration: 75 minutes

Webinar to exchange experiences and practices in coping with economic disruption caused by the global pandemic

Background

As the events surrounding COVID-19 unfold, the M-CRIL team is committed to delivering thoughtful analysis and resources that will help the inclusive finance and the livelihoods ecosystem to deal more effectively with the current uncertainty and disruption. We aim to help livelihoods support agencies and other stakeholders, the development community and financial inclusion providers to deliver services sustainably and at the same time assist their clients/users to cope better with their livelihoods activities, financial stress at this challenging time.

To facilitate this, **M-CRIL is conducting a series of webinars** to bring together stakeholders in the inclusive finance and livelihoods promotion ecosystem in the Asia region with the objective of discussing and sharing experience and practices that stakeholders can learn from, modify and adapt to their respective country contexts. **This is the fourth webinar in the series.**

Agenda for Webinar 4, 14 May 2020

The effect of lockdown due to novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) has emerged as a formidable challenge for farmers (including FPOs) and their activities, businesses and governments globally. COVID-19 is literally changing everything about us including how we will undertake and manage agriculture and its support ecosystem. Key fallouts of COVID-19 have been very limited agricultural activities due to a sudden labour shortage in a number of states; very restricted movement of farm produces to markets and their sale; and a limited access by farmers to agricultural inputs among others. At the same time, the government is putting in place programmes to facilitate the sale of farm produce through e-NAM, a centralised control system for transport of essential items; and others in rural areas to support the incomes of landless families as well as small and marginal farmers. These programmes and MNREGA programme will undoubtedly play a key role in this effort.

The purpose of this Webinar is to facilitate an exchange of ideas on how the sector in general and FPOs, in particular, have leveraged relationships, networks and resources to turn the COVID-19 crisis into an opportunity

- 1 How to enable farm and FPO operations in spite of the lockdown
- 2 How to use all available resources most effectively to enable crop productivity, farm operations, storage, transportation and trading; and processing of grains as well as other agricultural produce
- 3 How to leverage recently announced government programmes and to gear the economic support promised by the government to create productive assets that can contribute towards a prosperous rural economy.

Topics to be covered by the discussion include

Impact on FPO operations and its magnitude

- The challenges and problems currently facing FPO operations and their magnitude
- Varying responses – or a lack of these – to deal with the inability of FPOs to function. What are some of the efforts and the thinking in the livelihoods support community?

Operating FPOs under lockdown conditions

- How to support farmers with ongoing farm activities
- Issues in harvesting, threshing, storage
- Aggregation of vegetables, horticultural produce and grain and transport to warehouse, markets/buyers
- Market intelligence, finding buyers and appropriate price setting
- Examples of leveraging existing relationships/resources to undertake operations in this lockdown

How are FPOs leveraging government programmes/initiatives to help farmers and to contribute to the supply chain

- Transport of farm produce by FPOs
- Marketing of farm produce by FPOs
- Supply of agricultural inputs by FPOs
- Others logistics and infrastructures

Turning the crisis into an opportunity

- Using fiscal policy to support FPO operations
- Crafting a MNREGA response to create productive assets in some parts of rural areas leveraging the availability of surplus migrant labours– irrigation, storage, processing, testing centres
- Innovative roles that FPOs can consider and play with their social capital in this crisis to benefit farmers meaningfully, including the access to banks finance for farmers and FPOs

Output of the Webinar

M-CRIL will summarise the key discussion points/takeaways in a note to be circulated to all participants and published more widely, within a week of the webinar. The note will provide

- Knowledge sharing and guidance for FPO managers and their promotion institutions
- Information on innovation and development of appropriate practices
- Support to government, donors/impact investors to review their action plans for working and enhancing the agriculture and FPO ecosystem in the coming months/year in light of continued social distancing and lockdown advisories in various geographies.

Follow up webinars will be organised on emerging issues as the crisis evolves!