



Commercial Agriculture for Smallholders and Agribusiness

# What Drives Enterprise-level Growth? Lessons from the CASA Programme and emerging implications for market systems in Nepal

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Commercial Agriculture for Smallholders and Agribusiness

The Commercial Agriculture for Smallholders and Agribusiness (CASA) Programme aims to drive global investment for inclusive climate-resilient agri-food systems that increase the income of smallholder farmers.

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# INTRODUCTION

This paper explores what drives meaningful enterprise development in agribusiness, what enables firms not only to grow but to build the systems, mindset, and relationships needed to sustain that growth, utilising experiences and learnings from the Commercial Agriculture for Smallholders and Agribusiness (CASA) Programme. While agri-SMEs are increasingly recognised as critical enablers of inclusive economic development, there remains limited understanding of how these enterprises evolve in real-world conditions, and how technical assistance and investment can best support that journey. Case-based learning on what drives lasting firm-level change, and how support can better align with enterprise incentives and capabilities, is still needed.

The paper also examines how targeted enterprise support, focused on productivity, competitiveness, and strategic capability, can lay the groundwork for broader systemic engagement in the agricultural market system. While systemic change is not treated as a separate theme, the analysis considers whether internal shifts within firms generate early signals of systemic change by strengthening their ability to influence, connect with, or contribute to transformations in the wider market environment.

To contribute to that learning, the paper draws on a year-long engagement tracking four agri-SMEs supported through CASA Nepal's Centre of Expertise (CoE)<sup>1</sup> portfolio. These enterprises, operating in medicinal and aromatic plants, fish feed, meat processing, and nutrition, were among CASA's earliest CoE partnerships in sectors beyond its core work in the dairy and vegetable value chains. Most were already commercially active and growing; one, though earlier-stage, met selection criteria based on ambition and potential. All were chosen for their ability to demonstrate scalable enterprise models and influence broader market dynamics.

While these four firms form the backbone of the case analysis, the paper also draws on enterprise-level insights from CASA's broader partnership portfolio. This

wider lens helps validate the patterns seen in the CoE cases and strengthens the relevance of lessons for other development programmes, implementers, and investors working to unlock the potential of agri-SMEs.

CASA's role in these partnerships was not to spark growth from scratch, but to provide tailored support aligned with each firm's strategic ambitions, often helping them to act on priorities they had identified but not yet pursued. In some cases, technical assistance revealed the value of capabilities firms had not yet seen as urgent. This demand-led yet catalytic approach supported firms in strengthening the systems and practices they might otherwise have delayed.

Each partnership was also designed to test whether enterprise-level support could go beyond operational fixes to contribute to a more dynamic role for agri-SMEs in shaping market interactions and outcomes.

To track progress, the paper applies the Kaizen Matrix, a tool that assesses change across two dimensions: external motivation ("incentives") and internal capacity ("independence"). The goal is not just to document outcomes, but to understand how firms build the confidence and systems needed to sustain growth without continued donor support.

Findings are grouped under four themes that reflect where and how enterprise capabilities evolved:

- Operational Efficiency and Productivity
- Competitiveness and Market Expansion
- Strategic Capability and Internal Systems, and
- Ecosystem Engagement and Supply Chain Linkages.

Ultimately, the paper argues that when technical assistance is embedded, flexible, and responsive to a firm's growth trajectory, it does more than fix short-term bottlenecks – it strengthens the underlying foundation for growth. That is what creates lasting impact beyond any single project.

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1. FCDO established several Centres of Expertise to provide specialised support and expertise to partner governments in developing countries. A CoE voucher was used by the British Embassy in Kathmandu to commission CASA to apply its programme approach to explore enterprise development for enhancing the competitiveness and productivity of agri-SMEs to generate learning as they formulated the Nepal in Business programme.

# THE CASA PROGRAMME

As a programme funded by the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) – International Climate Finance (ICF), CASA demonstrates the business case for global and national investment in climate-resilient agri-food systems that increase smallholder farmer incomes. The programme facilitates increased investment in agribusinesses by generating evidence of the commercial and development potential of inclusive business models with smallholder farmer supply chains. CASA achieves this by:

- Demonstrating the commercial viability and building the investment-readiness of small and medium-sized (SME) agribusinesses with smallholder farmer supply chains
- Helping impact and return-oriented investors to increase the impact of their investments through the provision of inclusive technical assistance
- Strengthening the voices of smallholder producers (especially of women in agribusiness decision-making)

and their positions within supply chains (through improved offtaking or aggregation arrangements); and

- Filling the information, evidence and learning gaps holding back investment.

In Nepal, CASA worked primarily with agri-SMEs in the dairy and vegetable value chains, as well as agribusinesses from other value chains through the Centre of Expertise (CoE) voucher, of which the projects it supported are the primary focus of this paper. The CoE voucher was discrete funding allocated to the CASA Programme for supporting agribusinesses to improve their competitiveness and productivity. This was a pilot scheme for an upcoming FCDO project which focused on enterprise development to unlock economic prosperity by generating growth, expanding businesses, and addressing income poverty in Nepal. The learnings from this pilot would subsequently be used to inform the development and implementation of the upcoming project.

## OVERVIEW OF THE PARTNERSHIPS AND DIAGNOSTIC APPROACH

### CASA's CoE Partnerships

Agri-SMEs in Nepal face persistent challenges that limit their growth and competitiveness. Common issues include low production efficiency, limited access to markets, inconsistent product quality, and weak organisational capacity. These constraints reduce their ability to attract investment to scale operations. To address these gaps, CASA provided targeted technical assistance to four selected mid-sized agri-enterprises under FCDO's CoE funding.

The firms were selected based on clear criteria: initially, a minimum of 50 employees (later adjusted to 25), demonstration of strong local backward linkages to smallholder farmers, paid-up capital of at least

£300,000<sup>2</sup> (NPR 5 crores), smallholder supply chain, scalable business model, and potential to create jobs. These criteria ensured that supported enterprises had both growth potential and a meaningful role in local value chains.

CASA's portfolio under the CoE included four enterprises that met the criteria: Annapurna Fish Feed, Poshilo, Satya Herbs and Spice Products, and Urban Food Industries, operating in different agri-value chains but sharing common challenges around production efficiency, market access, product quality, and organisational capacity. Each partnership was designed to test whether tailored support<sup>3</sup> could strengthen firm-level competitiveness while also laying the groundwork for wider systemic engagement.

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2. £1 = NPR 150

3. CASA's approach was usually to subsidise (often up to 100%) the cost of hiring consultants (as Technical Assistance) from the local market and assisting in the design of the TOR for those consultants to do their work.

## Identifying Partner Needs: Porter's Value Chain Analysis

CASA used Porter's Value Chain Analysis (Figure 1) to diagnose firm-level constraints by mapping both primary activities and support activities. The Porter's Value Chain framework is a tool that breaks down a business into its key activities (such as operations, logistics, marketing, and support services) to analyse where and how value is created within the firm<sup>4</sup>.

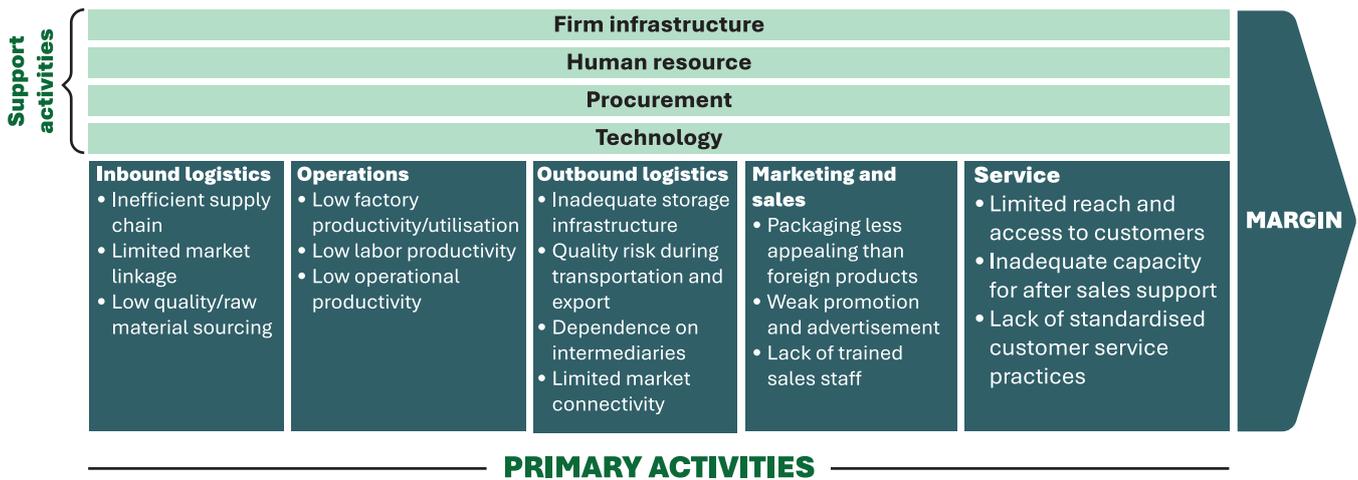


Figure 1: Porter's Value Chain Analysis

This approach helped identify where each enterprise was losing value, facing operational bottlenecks, or doing something well that presented opportunities to build on. Based on the diagnosis, CASA co-developed with the partner a tailored set of interventions aimed at strengthening three outcome areas, which were seen as the biggest bottlenecks to the growth of their business, and where they should focus on strengthening:

- **Supply Chain Strengthening:** building better sourcing practices, formalising aggregation channels, and deepening supplier/buyer relationships

- **Productivity:** improving production processes, workforce capacity, and use of technology, and
- **Competitiveness:** enhancing product quality, branding, marketing, and customer diversification and expansion.

These diagnostics provided the rationale for the technical support facilitated through each partnership and served as the foundation for tracking change using the Kaizen Matrix framework outlined in the next section (and also Annex 1). Table 1 summarises CASA's targeted interventions for each partnership based on the Porter's Value Chain Analysis framework.

4. Porter, M E (1985) *Competitive Advantage: Creating and Sustaining Superior Performance*. Free Press.

*Table 1: Summary of CASA Partners*

SME Partner	Sector	Intervention
<a href="#">Annapurna Fish Feed</a>	Fish Feed	Demonstrating the commercial viability of large-scale production of fish feed
<a href="#">Poshilo</a>	Agri-processing	Improving competitiveness of agribusiness through product diversification and extensive marketing
<a href="#">Satya Herbs and Spice Products</a>	Medicinal and Aromatic Plants	Improving the competitiveness of export-oriented agri-SME
<a href="#">Urban Food Industries</a>	Meat Processing	Improving competitiveness of agribusiness through innovation and product diversification

For each, CASA's tailored support included subsidised technical assistance to strengthen production capacity, such as upgrading processing facilities, improving product quality, and introducing new product lines. CASA also facilitated strengthening of the supply chain by helping businesses onboard and train smallholder farmers, improve sourcing systems, and ensure consistent product standards. CASA also improved linkages with cooperatives and federations – such as Nepal Agricultural Co-operative Central Federation Ltd (NACCFL) and Fishery Association Nepal – to improve the supply chain and support market systems development and scale. In terms of market expansion,

CASA facilitated access to new domestic and export markets by guiding product development, helping secure necessary certifications, and supporting promotional activities. Additionally, CASA helped partners navigate the investment process by providing support with business plan development, financial projections, and the preparation of documentation required for loans or equity financing. CASA also helped link them with the right investors, from banks to equity investors. These combined efforts contributed to increased revenues, job creation, and stronger, more resilient agribusinesses (see Annex 2 for detailed activities).

## METHODOLOGY: APPLYING THE KAIZEN FRAMEWORK IN CASA

### Design and Analytical Approach

This study used a longitudinal qualitative case study approach to assess enterprise development. Data were collected over one year to track changes in firm behaviour, capacity, and performance. To guide the analysis, the Kaizen Matrix was used as a tool to capture progress in enterprise performance across two dimensions:

- **Incentive**, which reflects external signals of growth (e.g., expanded customer base, increased turnover, new partnerships), and

- **Independence**, which reflects internal capacity-building (e.g., improvements in human resource, strategy, innovation, or systems).

Each enterprise was evaluated using a set of 12 indicators, six measuring incentive and six measuring independence. To make sense of the data across multiple enterprises, the incentive and independence indicators were grouped into four thematic areas that highlight common patterns seen throughout the partnerships (see Table 2). This approach helped CASA understand not just whether businesses were improving, but how and why those improvements were happening.

*Table 2: Kaizen Indicators Grouped by Thematic Categories*

Theme	Incentive Indicators	Independence Indicators
<b>1. Operational Efficiency and Productivity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attributing growth due to success of pilot TA</li> <li>• Increasing turnover</li> <li>• Increasing capacity through consultancy programme (where related to operations)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing investment in human resources</li> </ul>
<b>2. Competitiveness and Market Expansion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing customer base in terms of both volume and geographic reach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving strategy in marketing</li> <li>• Marketing to new areas</li> <li>• Investing in R&amp;D to create new products and services</li> </ul>
<b>3. Strategic Capability and Internal Systems</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing capacity through consultancy programme (related to systems, HR, finance)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving internal synergy</li> </ul>
<b>4. Ecosystem Engagement and Supply Chain Linkages</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Benefiting from interconnected markets and supporting functions</li> <li>• Proposing further partnership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expanding and strengthening network</li> </ul>

In addition to firm-level analysis, the study also looked for early signs of systemic change, i.e., unintended or ripple effects that extend beyond individual firms into the wider market system.

## Data Collection

**Structured Interviews:** Primary data were collected through quarterly interviews with enterprise managers and key staff. A semi-structured tool based on Kaizen indicators was used to document changes in internal operations, staff development, marketing strategies, customer reach, and supply chain linkages (Annex 1).

**Key Informant Interviews (KIIs):** To understand broader dynamics and triangulate findings, interviews were conducted with project staff, service providers, vendors, and other stakeholders involved in the partnerships.

These discussions helped validate enterprise-level findings and identify areas of systemic interaction.

**Case Story Development:** In-depth documentation of each enterprise was developed to capture the sequence of change, highlight specific interventions, and surface lessons related to enterprise transformation and market engagement.

**Monitoring Reports:** CASA's quarterly and annual reports, as well as internal monitoring data, were reviewed to cross-verify outcomes. These helped confirm reported changes and provided an institutional memory of engagement with each partnership.

**Broader Portfolio Review:** To contextualise the enterprise-level findings and validate broader patterns, the analysis also draws on examples from CASA's wider portfolio beyond the CoE partnerships.

# FINDINGS: EVIDENCE OF ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

## 1. Operational Efficiency and Productivity

This theme captures how enterprises enhanced their internal operations, cutting costs, managing inventory, and increasing production efficiency. In the Kaizen Matrix, this aligns with incentive indicators such as *attributing growth to technical assistance* and *building capacity through consultancy*. It also signals progress toward independence when firms begin *reinvesting in internal systems and staff* to sustain these gains.

All four enterprises used CASA support to address operational ‘pain points’ and accelerate internal improvements (see Annex 2 for detailed activities). However, what stands out is how many of these changes were later sustained, scaled, or institutionalised through the enterprises’ own investments, marking a shift from external support to internally-driven management improvements. This evolution signals increasing strategic maturity.

Satya Herbs streamlined production and introduced internal quality control with early CASA-funded technical

support. This was done through targeted staff training in processing, sanitation, and quality control, and by bringing in an herb expert to transfer technical knowledge on extraction (see Annex 2). As a result, delivery times dropped from 20 to 10 days, and production costs fell by 40%. These improvements were attributed directly to CASA support. What set Satya apart, however, was what followed: women trained under CASA support and encouragement were promoted to operate heavy machinery, marking a shift in internal workforce norms and signalling movement toward the independence quadrant (Table 3).

Urban Food Industries also moved beyond technical assistance to embed operational changes. A CASA-arranged expert helped reduce wastage to 10% for frozen meat and 25% for pork. This efficiency allowed Urban to scale its product lines and handle growing orders from large retailers. The company hired 11 new employees (eight of them women) (Table 3) and later invested its own funds in new production equipment. It is a clear sign that operational improvements were institutionalised, not one-off results.



*Processing sausages at Urban Food Industries premises*

**Table 3: Staff Growth and Role Shifts Across Enterprises**

Partners	New Positions Created	Promotions through CASA Support Skills Transfer
<b>Annapurna</b>	Total 15 staff (Four women - HR person, Supply chain staff; Sales and marketing staff; Lab resource person)	Lab resource person – 1 Nutritional expert – 1
<b>Poshilo</b>	Sales reps hired; BFI and ESG consultant rehired post-CASA	
<b>Satya</b>	Short-term herb expert appointed; product formulation improved	Women promoted to operate heavy machinery
<b>Urban</b>	11 new jobs (eight women)	NA

Annapurna Feed, which launched its production with CASA support, rapidly scaled during five months of partnership to 1,180 tons of fish feed and £597,841 in revenue (Tables 4 and 5). The company improved feed formulation and inventory management, resulting in better product quality and lower spoilage. It hired 15 new staff (four women in technical and managerial roles) and promoted its lab technician following training from a CASA-paid consultant. Most notably, Annapurna began integrating climate-smart aquaculture principles into its operations, showing adaptability and long-term thinking.

**Table 4: Enterprise Revenue Growth During CASA Support**

Partners	Revenue Increment at Beginning of Partnership	Revenue after Partnership
<b>Annapurna</b>	Zero (start-up phase)	£597,841 in five months of partnership
<b>Poshilo</b>	£8,000 (NPR 12,00,000) per month	£10,667-12,000 (16-18,00,000) per month
<b>Satya</b>	£6,666 (NPR 10,00,000) per month	£14,666 (NPR 22,00,000) per month
<b>Urban</b>	£80,000 (NPR 12,000,000 per month in sales)	£96,000 (NPR 144,00,000) (+£16,000) from new products (July-December 2024)

**Table 5: Production Volume Expansion (Start to End of Partnership)**

Partners	Sales in Volume at Beginning of Partnership	Sales in Volume at End of Project
<b>Annapurna</b>	0 (just launching)	236 tons per month (1,180 tons in five months, with production increasing month on month)
<b>Poshilo</b>	6,000 kgs per month	10,000 kgs per month
<b>Satya</b>	2,048 kgs per month	13,061 kgs per month
<b>Urban</b>	23,800 kgs per month	26,000 kgs per month

Poshilo Foods expanded production by 67% from 6,000 to 10,000 kg per month, and increased revenue by 50%, rising from £8,000 to £12,000 (Tables 4 and 5). CASA supported the early roll-out of a digital system for procurement and production tracking. While still in the adoption phase, Poshilo had begun onboarding staff and modifying internal workflows, an early sign of ownership.

### Implications for Future Programming

Operational improvements were not isolated upgrades; they became platforms for enterprise growth. The data show that CASA's support unlocked cost savings, faster delivery, and better inventory control, but the more meaningful signal of enterprise development was what happened next: reinvestment, staff training, and forward planning.

From a Kaizen perspective, this reflects a shift from incentive-driven uptake to early signs of internal independence. Enterprises that saw tangible performance gains were more willing to invest in people and systems to sustain them. CASA's approach of hiring consultants from the market to provide the services to these enterprises ensured that the skills remained available to the enterprises and others for future use.

Broader learning across CASA's non-CoE partnerships further supports this:

- Sujal's pivot to longer-shelf-life dairy products during market disruptions shows how adaptability in operations, especially product processing and storage, can sustain supply chains and farmer income.
- The Team Ventures collaboration confirms that agribusinesses need strong internal systems before they can attract or absorb investment. Clean finances, inventory controls, and staffing capacity are not just internal issues, they directly impact investment readiness.
- From Narti and Martin Dairy, we learn that even when operational improvements are introduced, internal governance and institutional bottlenecks can stall implementation. Continuous follow-up and strong internal buy-in are critical to ensure improvements translate into actual gains.

Key learning messages for future programming include:

- **Target early operational bottlenecks:** Addressing tangible pain points (e.g., waste, delivery delays) helps enterprises see immediate value in TA, building trust and momentum.

- **Pair operational support with internal capacity-building:** Improvements stick when staff are trained to manage, implement, and troubleshoot new systems, not just when consultants deliver fixes.
- **Look for reinvestment as a signal of ownership:** When firms allocate their own resources post-support, it is a clear indicator that they have moved toward strategic autonomy.
- **Ensure readiness to act on support:** Firms must have the flexibility, governance structure, and internal alignment to absorb and implement improvements. Without this, even strong TA may stall.

**Sujal Dairy Pvt Ltd** is a leading Nepali dairy processor producing a wide range of products and operating one of the country's largest skimmed milk powder plants. CASA partnered with Sujal Dairy in an 18-month project to support dairy sector growth by introducing new technologies, improving data collection, and strengthening direct farmer connections. The partnership established four Bulk Milk Chiller Centres (BMCs) and implemented a Management Information System to enhance supply chain efficiency. This digitalisation improved milk procurement, ensured timely farmer payments, and provided tailored support services.

**Team Ventures** is a Kathmandu-based alternative investment firm that provides long-term, sector-agnostic funding to high-growth businesses for sustainable returns. In partnership with Team Ventures, CASA supported Nepal's first dedicated private equity investment in agriculture by helping allocate to agribusinesses £6.2 million from international funds and £390,000 from local funds. CASA provided technical assistance by designing investment frameworks, conducting market research, and strengthening Team Ventures' capacity to develop and structure agribusiness deals. The partnership also integrated ESG and gender-lens approaches to enhance operations and attract future investments.

**Narti Multipurpose Cooperative Ltd** is a farmer-led organisation that supports smallholder farmers—mainly women—through agricultural inputs, financial services, and market access. The partnership with CASA supported Narti Cooperative in expanding its production base, improving post-harvest and marketing services, strengthening governance, and transitioning from a producer group to a producer SME.

**Martin Dairy Products Pvt Ltd** is a modern Nepali dairy company specialising in flavoured milk, sourcing from local farmers and operating a state-of-the-art processing and packaging facility. CASA partnered with Martin Dairy to support its growth by assisting with investment materials, connecting the company to investors, and developing a marketing strategy, while also providing GMP training to farmers to boost milk collection and promote women's participation.

## 2. Competitiveness and Market Expansion

This theme explores how enterprises moved from passive sellers to active market players, diversifying products, entering new markets, and improving branding and packaging (see Annex 2 for detailed activities). Through a Kaizen lens, early signs of competitiveness are often driven by incentives: expanding the customer base and increasing capacity through consultancy. But longer-term shifts toward independence emerge when enterprises internalise marketing, invest in R&D, and respond directly to customer or buyer signals.

CASA's role was not to introduce competitiveness, but to amplify efforts already underway. Support helped

enterprises accelerate branding, expand into new markets, and attract new buyers. More importantly, it enabled a shift in how enterprises approached markets, moving from ad hoc sales to strategic demand-shaping and differentiated outreach.

Urban Food Industries is a clear example. With CASA's support, Urban co-developed a new frozen meat line with an international expert consultant and secured listings in 27 Bhatbhateni (supermarket) outlets (Table 6). While CASA facilitated initial branding and promotion, Urban later reinvested £55,480 (Table 7) to scale the product line and retained the marketing firm that CASA had linked. This move institutionalised digital marketing as a core business function, not a temporary boost.

**Table 6: Geographies and Market Expansion**

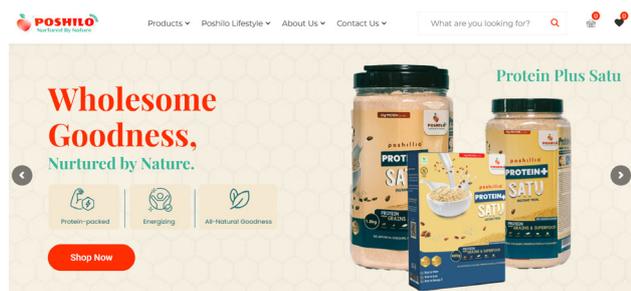
Partner	Pilot Reach During CASA	Adaption/Geographic Area/ Market Expansion
<b>Annapurna</b>	Fish producing areas of Chitwan district	Expanded to provinces 2, 3, 5 and 6
<b>Poshilo</b>	Online e-commerce platform Daraz, two regional dealers, 25 gyms in provinces 3 and 4, Retail (BigMart and Saleways)	New regional dealers (3), ministry institutions, Salesberry (30 outlets), Bigmart (100 outlets) and expanded to India (export)
<b>Satya</b>	Exports to India	Expanded to multiple countries beyond India – Portugal, Netherlands, UK and New Zealand
<b>Urban Foods</b>	Local distribution; scoping of 22 new partners	27 Bhatbhateni outlets in Kathmandu and a few major cities in Nepal

**Table 7: Investment Brought in by Partners**

Partners	External Investment Acquired through CASA Support	Independent Investment Post-CASA Support (by third party/ bank)	Independent Investment Post-CASA support (by partner)
<b>Annapurna</b>	Team Venture investment £1,182,788		£37,884
<b>Satya</b>	£275,000	NA	£32,000
<b>Poshilo</b>	£129,000	£200,000	NA
<b>Urban</b>	NA	NA	£55,480

Satya Herbs upgraded its packaging, branding, and export strategy through a CASA-supported certification, formulation consultant and marketing firm. It expanded into four new international markets – Portugal, UK, Netherlands, and New Zealand (Table 6) – and continued managing its own digital presence post-engagement, signalling ownership of its export positioning.

**Poshilo Foods** used CASA’s support to reposition its products toward health-conscious consumers, targeting breastfeeding mothers, gymgoers, and school children. This led to listings in major outlets (Table 6). Beyond these wins, Poshilo also began independently executing marketing campaigns and exploring regional exports to India. Since then, Poshilo independently launched a new snack line and secured £200,000 in third-party investment, on top of £129,000 mobilised through CASA support (Table 7). This signals both investor confidence and the firm’s own commitment to growth.



***Poshilo have established a premium market position through consistent branding***

**Annapurna Feed** focused its marketing on expanding the adoption of its species-specific fish feed. Supported by CASA’s outreach campaigns and demonstration ponds, Annapurna increased its institutional customer base by 20%, reaching 35 commercial farms across four provinces. While digital marketing uptake was slower, Annapurna’s expansion strategy and continued customer

acquisition efforts show growing capacity to compete in a fragmented feed market.

Enterprise-led product diversification also emerged as a key trend. Urban launched four new frozen products (with more in the pipeline); Satya introduced Shilajit and extracts; and Poshilo added new snacks. Product diversification was driven by enterprise responsiveness to market signals, underscoring their adaptive capability.

### **Implications for Future Programming**

Support in marketing and branding often delivers visible wins, but CASA’s partnerships went further, triggering enterprise-led market expansion and making firms more investable. As enterprises grew their reach, they did not just sell more; they invested more, both in outreach and in their systems. The ability to independently secure and manage third-party investment suggests not just market presence, but strategic readiness.

In Kaizen terms, these are clear markers of independence: firms internalised their customer acquisition strategies and demonstrated the capacity to attract and absorb external capital. The combination of commercial growth and investor confidence is a strong proxy for enterprise maturity.

This pattern is visible across other CASA partnerships:

- Paicho’s journey reinforces this: strategic marketing support enabled the company to access retail chains, develop new dealer networks, and unlock export deals. Notably, its ISO and HACCP certifications, supported through technical assistance, made it competitive in international markets.
- Pabitra Seed’s success in developing a new brand, launching digital tools, and using promotional visits to attract institutional buyers also confirms that combining branding with clear customer targeting delivers both market and financial returns.

**Paicho Pasal** is a rural-based company that sources fresh produce from over 30,000 smallholder farmers and sells to urban markets while also processing unsold items, promoting direct market access and traditional barter systems. The partnership with Paicho supported the company's expansion by upgrading collection and processing facilities, enhancing marketing, diversifying products, adopting technology, and obtaining quality certifications. CASA's support helped Paicho raise over £530,000 in investment, build new facilities, train 15,000 farmers, and expand into national and international markets, including exports to the US and Japan.

**Pabitra Seeds** is a women-owned agribusiness specialising in certified seed production, marketing, and distribution of various vegetable and climate-resilient seeds in Surkhet, Nepal. The partnership with Pabitra Seeds involved two CASA-supported phases: Phase 1 facilitated investment and marketing to expand operations and reach 4,000 farmers, while Phase 2 focused on empowering seed producers through subsidising seed production trainers at Pabitra, in turn specifically trained by experts in gender inclusion and climate adaptation, to train 3,500 new smallholder farmers.

**Himalayan Supervores Pvt Ltd** is a Kathmandu-based agribusiness specialising in processing and supplying pre-cut vegetables sourced from smallholder and commercial farmers to national and international markets. The partnership with Himalayan Supervores supported the expansion of their vegetable processing business by helping secure bank investment, training new smallholder suppliers, improving product quality and operations, and achieving GMP and HACCP certifications to enter international markets.

**Mangalam Dairy and Foods Industry**, founded in 2019, is a growing dairy company in Province 2 led by Sabal Singh with strong family expertise in the sector. CASA partnered with Mangalam to secure financing for processing facilities, strengthen its milk supply chain by connecting collection centres and supporting farmers, paying for a dairy technologist to improve product quality, and expand market presence through training and marketing campaigns.

- From Himalayan Supervores, we learned that market segmentation requires real-time adaptability, especially when navigating between local and export markets. Firms need the ability to tailor certification, pricing, and messaging strategies to shifting buyer requirements.
- Mangalam's marketing turnaround shows that agri-SMEs facing pressure from informal competitors can compete if they leverage trusted branding, product quality, and strategic outreach. The CASA-subsidised marketing consultant support was critical in repositioning Mangalam's brand in a saturated market.

Key learning messages for future programming include:

- **Invest in marketing early, but design for handover:** Enterprises responded well to visible wins in branding and customer acquisition, but those that institutionalised marketing functions reaped longer-term benefits.
- **Track not just market entry, but market adaptation:** The ability to sustain product lines, enter new markets, or shift marketing approaches is a clearer sign of capability than a single campaign or sales deal.
- **Pair market expansion with investment readiness:** While market expansion improves enterprise visibility and competitiveness, investment readiness depends on trusted financial systems and transparent reporting. CASA's support was most effective where both areas progressed in tandem, even if through separate interventions.
- **Support enterprises to 'show their books':** Transparent systems and formalised internal processes are often the deciding factor in investor decisions. These are quiet but critical wins.
- **Branding and certification should be paired with operational discipline:** As seen with Paicho and Satya, export readiness and buyer confidence are not just about visuals; they require consistent quality assurance, compliance systems, and timely delivery capacity.

### 3. Strategic Capability and Internal Systems

This theme focuses on how enterprises strengthened internal coordination, governance, and decision-making through policy development, digitalisation, and human resource investments (see Annex 2 for detailed activities). It reflects progress along the Kaizen independence indicator *improving internal synergy*, and the incentive indicator *increasing capacity through consultancy programmes* (specifically where focused on finance, HR, or admin systems).

Strategic capability is not just about having systems in place; it is about whether those systems are embedded in daily operations, influence decision-making, and evolve with the business. CASA's work helped several firms move beyond reactive operational problem-solving to establish clearer processes, transparent governance, and more forward-looking planning.

Internal capability was often an overlooked barrier. Many enterprises entered CASA support with limited documentation, ad hoc financial systems, and centralised decision-making. Growth, especially market or investor-facing, put pressure on these weak spots. CASA interventions targeted early-stage digitalisation, policy development, and staff coordination. Where enterprises internalised these tools, they became more agile, transparent, and confident – critical foundations for sustained growth and investment-readiness. Where they did not, even well-designed marketing or supply chain strategies ran into internal bottlenecks.

Urban Food Industries provides a strong example of progress on internal systems. Initially focused on production and marketing, Urban quickly identified gaps in internal governance and requested support to develop a full set of organisational policies, including finance, procurement, and HR. CASA supported Urban to hire external consultants from the market to develop policy across HR, finance, and procurement, and ran financial literacy sessions for staff. By institutionalising these policies and digitalising sales tracking and marketing, Urban created a stronger link between strategy and day-to-day operations. This not only improved internal cohesion, it positioned Urban as a more credible and structured player in the market, better able to engage buyers, lenders, and public agencies on equal footing.

Poshilo Foods, in preparation for scale, received support to digitalise its supply chain and financial management systems. At the time, the firm was struggling to track procurement, production volume, and supplier

transactions. CASA enabled Poshilo to engage local IT companies in the design and early implementation of a software system that would centralise these records. While full integration was still underway at the time of review, Poshilo had begun training staff and adapting workflows to use the system. This represents progress toward the *independence* quadrant of the Kaizen matrix, where internal tools begin to drive behaviour rather than external oversight. These digitalised systems helped Poshilo present more reliable data to potential buyers and improve trust with rural suppliers, further embedding the enterprise in the value chain. CASA also connected Poshilo to federations like NACCFL, making it easier for the company to source directly from farmers beyond the project's support.

Satya Herbs and Annapurna Feed made more targeted but meaningful changes. Satya upgraded its quality control protocols, essential for export certification, while Annapurna improved internal communication, particularly between field staff and management. These may seem like small wins, but they reflect growing attention to internal coordination, laying groundwork for more structured decision-making.

While CASA's enterprise support focused on internal growth levers, productivity, competitiveness, and strategic planning, evidence across cases shows that these upgrades positioned enterprises to engage more confidently and credibly with the broader system. Whether attracting new buyers, influencing upstream practices, or serving as entry points for finance and technology, these businesses began to shift how market actors interact and collaborate. This suggests that enterprise resilience, when intentionally supported, can serve as a conduit for market system change.

#### Implications for Future Programming

Improving enterprise performance is ultimately about internal capability. CASA-supported enterprises that invested in digitalisation, policy frameworks, and staff coordination were better equipped to manage growth and sustain performance beyond the life of the programme. These kinds of investments also reduce reliance on individual leaders or external consultants, signalling deeper institutional maturity. From a Kaizen perspective, these examples reflect a shift from externally-supported functionality to internally-embedded systems, where decisions are made proactively, not reactively.

This was echoed across other CASA partnerships:

- Paicho is a standout example. In preparing for equity investment and going public (initial public offering, or IPO), Paicho institutionalised financial reporting, internal control procedures, and board governance practices, many of which were introduced during CASA support but refined internally. This built the internal confidence and credibility needed for investor engagement and continued post-CASA IPO planning.
- Sujal Dairy adopted an MIS and payment alert system to improve farmer-level transparency. While CASA initially supported this, Sujal absorbed system management and later redirected support toward other strategic priorities, demonstrating internal ownership and prioritisation of systems that added the most value.
- Pabitra introduced a digital inventory system to manage seed stocks and customer orders. Staff training on the system improved coordination across procurement, production, and sales, showing how digitalisation supported more efficient and consistent internal workflows.
- Martin Dairy's delayed decision-making due to unclear internal authority structures serves as a cautionary tale. Without clearly defined roles and streamlined governance, even marketing efforts backed by external support lost momentum.
- Nepal Dairy's ability to pivot to shelf-stable products during COVID-19 lockdowns was grounded in improved internal communication and scenario planning. CASA's support enabled the shift, but the execution relied on internal systems being flexible and responsive.

**Nepal Dairy Pvt Ltd** is a pioneering dairy company in Nepal, known for producing high-quality, value-added dairy products with a focus on innovation and local sourcing. CASA partnered with Nepal Dairy to decentralise dairy processing by building the capacity of rural micro-processors, facilitating skill transfers, securing buyback agreements for assured markets, and increasing local milk demand and farmer incomes through co-investment.

Key learning messages for future programming include:

- **Support foundational systems early:** Many small firms do not prioritise internal systems until growth challenges emerge. Early policy or digitalisation support can prevent bottlenecks later.
- **Link tools to people:** Tools alone do not build strategic capability; programmes should embed training, routines, and communication protocols alongside system upgrades.
- **Use policy development as a gateway to independence:** A firm with internal SOPs and documented procedures is better positioned to absorb future support, comply with investor requirements, or lead scale initiatives.
- **Invest in governance early, not as an afterthought:** From Paicho's IPO planning to Martin Dairy's operational delays, internal governance capacity proved to be a key enabler (or blocker) of strategic progress.
- **Look at internal systems as enablers of systemic engagement:** Strong internal capability did not just improve enterprise resilience; it enabled agri-SMEs to formalise offtake relationships, gain credibility with financiers, and influence value chain standards. Programmes that build strategic capability within firms are also laying the groundwork for those firms to lead, not just participate in, wider market system shifts.

## 4. Ecosystem Engagement and Supply Chain Linkages

This theme explores how enterprise-level transformation can begin to influence the wider market system through stronger supplier and buyer relationships, formal partnerships, regulatory engagement, and demonstration effects that shift market norms. These are signals of systemic engagement, where targeted support to individual enterprises contributes to changes beyond their operations. In the Kaizen Matrix, this theme aligns with indicators around benefiting from interconnected markets and supporting functions, proposing further partnerships, and strengthening networks as a signal of growing independence.

CASA support helped firms build meaningful relationships that extended beyond one-time supplier or buyer transactions. These ranged from formal partnerships and regulatory engagement to upstream capacity-building with smallholder farmers and ongoing collaboration with consultants. CASA also provided platforms for partner SMEs to share their experiences and insights, helping them establish themselves as credible players in their industries. These events also served as valuable networking spaces to connect with investors, buyers, and other market actors. Several enterprises capitalised on the supporting functions and market linkages facilitated through CASA.

Satya Herbs embedded ecosystem engagement across its operations. While CASA supported its herb formulation and berberis extraction work, Satya worked with regulators to address trade code gaps, enabling the first-ever export of the product from Nepal. This created a regulatory precedent for others in the MAPs sector. The firm also trained over 1,000 farmers (Table 8) in sustainable harvesting, strengthening its raw material base while contributing to upstream resilience and climate adaptation.

**Table 8: Summary of Farmers Trained**

Partnership	Number of Farmers Trained	Purpose of Training
<b>Annapurna</b>	<b>2,160</b>	Farmers trained on fish farming methods with the help of demo-ponds and proper feed usages
<b>Poshilo</b>	<b>1,002</b>	Farmers trained on good agricultural practices
<b>Satya</b>	<b>1,028</b>	Sustainable and proper harvesting practices to improve the quality of raw materials and assure re-generation of wild herbs
<b>Urban Foods</b>	<b>277</b>	Farmers trained on animal husbandry, particularly pig rearing to improve quality
<b>Total farmers trained</b>	<b>4,467</b>	

Annapurna Feed used demo-ponds and awareness campaigns to build trust in its Carp-specific feed. As it continued these efforts independently, other suppliers began offering similar niche products, disrupting what had previously been a generic feed market. Farmers now have more options, and Indian suppliers have reportedly lowered their prices to distributors, though it remains to be seen whether these cost savings are reaching farmers. This marks a notable ripple effect.

To support market systems development and scale, CASA used Annapurna's pilot to demonstrate the viability of locally produced *Pangasius* feed. By documenting the business case and engaging industry actors through a workshop, CASA encouraged replication and crowding-

in. Partnerships with government and farmer networks further supported uptake of better practices beyond the project. Annapurna also attracted private equity from Team Ventures, part of a broader shift in how structured agribusinesses are perceived by investors.

Poshilo Foods, after gaining impressive visibility through CASA's support, transitioned from a consumer brand to a value chain enabler by white-labeling its multigrain *satu* for brands like Golyan and Aphrodite. The innovation has since been imitated by others, including Bhalo and Organic Online, who now offer multigrain variants in a market previously limited to single-grain *satu*. This kind of first-mover effect, where others replicate a successful business model, suggests early diffusion of innovation.

### Implications for Future Programming

Ecosystem engagement is often the clearest signal that an enterprise is thinking beyond itself. Enterprises that build partnerships with suppliers, consultants, and public actors do not just grow their businesses; they help shape the conditions for others to grow too. In Satya and Annapurna's cases, this translated into early signs of market system change. From a Kaizen perspective, these enterprises moved beyond isolated uptake to establish ongoing, self-initiated relationships, placing them well into the independence quadrant.

This was echoed across other CASA partnerships:

- Paicho used CASA's initial support to engage retail networks and an investment intermediary. Post-engagement, it anchored downstream distribution through dealership models and built trust with a lead investor, showing how network-building supported both sales and financing.
- Sujal Dairy formalised working relationships with veterinary service providers and feed suppliers, using them as part of an integrated model to support milk quality and farmer productivity. These actors remained engaged beyond CASA's involvement.

Founded in 2021, [Mandala Agrifresh](#) is a Nepali supply chain company focused on reducing post-harvest losses in the horticulture sector through affordable, sustainable technologies. With CASA's support of paying for a research coordinator, Mandala piloted innovative solutions like Modified Atmosphere Packaging bags and ethylene absorbers to extend the shelf life of vegetables. Action research trials with crops like leafy greens and chilies were conducted in provinces 2 and 5, reaching over 500 farmers and traders. Findings were documented to build evidence for wider adoption and advocate for government support, aiming to scale these technologies across Nepal's vegetable value chain.

[S K Dairy](#), established in 2018, sources milk from 3,750 farmers in Province 5 and sells a range of dairy products. With CASA's 18-month support, the company diversified its product line, improved mozzarella and hard cheese quality, and strengthened its supply chain. CASA facilitated expert consultations and GMP training for 1,566 farmers, and supported packaging upgrades, software development, and energy efficiency improvements. The partnership also helped attract over £42,000 in investment to upgrade operations, boost sustainability, and increase farmer participation in formal markets.

- Mandala leveraged research and stakeholder convening to secure alignment with provincial authorities, particularly around cold storage. Its ability to present data-backed proposals strengthened its credibility with policymakers, laying the groundwork for coordinated investment.
- S K Dairy, facing disruptions in its milk supply, expanded sourcing networks to new geographic areas and diversified its supplier base. This pivot helped maintain operations and build resilience through broader network engagement.

Key learning messages for future programming include:

- **Position enterprises as ecosystem actors, not just beneficiaries:** Programmes should encourage firms to build supplier, service, and regulatory relationships, not just rely on donor-managed facilitation.
- **Support firms to lead in setting norms:** Technical support should include tools to engage with regulators or standard bodies, especially where firms are introducing new products or approaches.
- **Track ecosystem-building as a form of resilience:** Enterprises with broader networks are more likely to sustain gains and weather shocks than those operating in silos.

## Overarching Insights for Future Programming

The thematic analysis of CASA-supported enterprises reveals common patterns that deepen our understanding of what enables businesses to move beyond initial uptake of support toward sustained, independent growth. These cross-cutting insights highlight critical factors and offer guidance for future programming aimed at fostering independent, resilient businesses.

### 1. Leadership Commitment is Foundational

Consistent across all themes, active leadership emerged as a key enabler of sustained change. Enterprise leaders who champion operational improvements, market expansion, and internal system upgrades create an environment where continuous improvement becomes part of the organisational culture. Programmes should engage leadership early and support their role as change agents to embed lasting practices.

**2. Internalising Technical Assistance Accelerates Independence**

Firms that absorb the rationale behind technical assistance support, adapting tools and workflows beyond the initial intervention, show greater capacity to sustain gains. Technical assistance is most effective when it builds enterprise-level problem-solving skills rather than delivering one-off fixes. Embedding learning processes and encouraging adaptation helps firms evolve independently.

**3. Tangible Performance Gains Motivate Reinvestment**

Visible improvements, such as reduced costs, faster delivery, or expanded markets, reinforce confidence and willingness to invest further in people, systems, and processes. Early “quick wins” create momentum that drives enterprises toward greater ownership and strategic maturity.

**4. Integrated Capacity Building Strengthens Strategic Capability**

Supporting enterprises across multiple dimensions simultaneously (e.g., operations, marketing, internal systems, and ecosystem linkages) enables holistic growth. This integrated approach reduces the risk of bottlenecks and helps firms build the internal coordination necessary to manage scale and complexity.

**5. Ecosystem Engagement Extends Impact and Resilience**

Enterprises that actively build and maintain relationships with suppliers, buyers, regulators, and service providers not only grow their businesses but also contribute to broader market system development. Positioning firms as ecosystem actors encourages norm-setting and collaborative growth, enhancing resilience to shocks.

## CONCLUSION

CASA’s partnerships reveal that targeted support to aspiring agribusinesses can go beyond firm-level growth and begin to influence the wider market system. Across diverse contexts and business models, CASA-supported enterprises showed gains in productivity, competitiveness, market access, internal systems, and strategic capability. These improvements were not isolated; many firms also began to shape their surrounding ecosystems through supplier influence, regulatory engagement, and imitation by peers, and by purchasing support services such as the ones facilitated by CASA because they understand the benefits demonstrated and see the incentives to do so in the future.

The thematic findings provide practical insight into what works when building enterprise resilience, while the overarching patterns reinforce that deep, sustained change is more likely when firms internalise support, leadership is engaged, and momentum is built through early wins. What it also shows is that enterprise resilience is directly linked when they access, acquire and benefit from market-based support services, such as linking them to federations like NACCFL and

Fisheries Association, and networking events that helped them to acquire investment, thus strengthening cooperatives. CASA’s experience suggests that enterprise development, when done with intention and strong partnerships, can trigger ripple effects beyond the firm itself.

That said, some limitations should be acknowledged. This paper captures outcomes and early signals of change, but full systemic impact is difficult to measure at this stage. The partnerships’ close-out was relatively recent, and many effects, such as supply chain shifts or market norms and the development of the support market, could still be unfolding. In addition, while the paper draws on several enterprise partnerships, it is not exhaustive and may not capture all nuances across the broader portfolio.

Nonetheless, the evidence and examples presented here offer practical lessons for programmes aiming to strengthen agri-SMEs in a way that is both enterprise-centric and market-aware. Investing in enterprises as agents of change rather than isolated beneficiaries holds promise for creating more resilient, self-sustaining market systems.

## ANNEX 1: KAIZEN MATRIX INDICATORS AND GUIDING QUESTIONS

Category	Indicator	Guiding Questions
Incentive	Increasing capacity through consultancy programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do you find information and consultancy services provided by us beneficial? In what way?</li> </ul>
	Increasing customer base	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>After testing, will you commercialise the innovation?</li> <li>Are there any changes in your marketing, sales, or production strategy resulting from the partnership?</li> <li>Does this shift (if any) affect company approach in aspects other than marketing, sales, or production?</li> <li>What is the reason for your hesitation to create demand from other consumer segments?</li> <li>What opportunity do you think you should not miss in the next six months?</li> </ul>
	Attributing growth due to success of pilot TA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Which activities will you continue to invest in? Why? How much?</li> <li>Which activities will you no longer invest in? Why?</li> <li>Would you have conducted these anyway without our partnership? Why?</li> <li>Would you have carried these out this early without our partnership? What was the original plan?</li> </ul>
	Benefiting from interconnected markets and supporting functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do you think selling your product and services has become easier or cheaper over time? How?</li> <li>Is there any third party involved in providing you with services?</li> </ul>
	Proposing further partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If you benefit from activities in the initial partnership, why do you still need us?</li> </ul>
	Increasing turnover	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How much have your sales increased due to the partnership?</li> <li>Have you made any changes in your product portfolio composition?</li> </ul>
Independence	Improving internal synergy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do your field staff communicate to higher management regarding activities in this partnership and its impact on sales?</li> <li>Do you record visits, clients, sales data and other items, or issues requiring follow-up from your field staff?</li> </ul>
	Increasing investment in human resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Did you hire more staff to sell/produce &lt;PRODUCT/SERVICE&gt;? In what division?</li> <li>Did you train your staff to sell/produce &lt;PRODUCT/SERVICE&gt;? What kind of training?</li> <li>Has investing in HR led to increased sales?</li> <li>How much increase in &lt;PRODUCT/SERVICE&gt; sales would you expect next year after investing in HR?</li> <li>How did you respond to increased sales (if any)? Did you feel burdened?</li> <li>Have you promoted any staff member because of increased sales?</li> <li>Have you revised staff incentives due to increased sales?</li> </ul>
	Improving strategy in marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have you made any changes in your product portfolio composition as a result of the partnership?</li> <li>Are you testing any other innovation as follow-up to the pilot?</li> <li>Which activities will you continue to invest in? Why?</li> <li>Which activities would you no longer invest in? Why?</li> </ul>
	Expanding and strengthening network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have you established any partnerships with institutions or individuals that directly or indirectly affect smallholder farmers?</li> <li>If so, what is the goal/potential benefit of the partnership(s)?</li> </ul>
	Marketing to new areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You are producing and marketing to the &lt;NEW SECTOR&gt; sector, and/or to &lt;NEW REGION&gt; ...</li> <li>Would you have done this anyway without our partnership? Could you tell us more about it?</li> <li>Would you have done this earlier without our partnership? What was the timescale of the original plan?</li> <li>To what extent is the PSP investment leverage due to the partnership?</li> </ul>
	Investing in R&D to create new products and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You are producing and marketing a (new) product line ...</li> <li>Would you have done this anyway without our partnership? Could you tell us more about the plan?</li> <li>Would you have done it this early without our partnership? What was the timescale of the original plan?</li> </ul>

## ANNEX 2: CASA-SUPPORTED ACTIVITIES

**Table 1: CASA-supported Activities for Improving Efficiency and Productivity**

Partnership	Activity	Agenda
<b>Annapurna</b>	TA support to provide training to local nutritionist of Annapurna Feed through an expert	Support to improve the quality of its fish feed
<b>Poshilo</b>	Support for Banking and Financial Institutions (BFIs) engagement to leverage debt financing	Help Poshilo secure additional finance required to expand their product range and increase production to capture new market segments
<b>Satya</b>	Third party technical assistance to leverage investments	Support Satya with a business consultant for 15 days to develop a growth strategy for the company to help secure debt financing
<b>Urban</b>	TA support for meat expert	Support to improve product quality and product diversification through an expert

**Table 4: CASA-supported Activities for Improving Competitiveness and Market Expansion**

Partner	Activity	Agenda
<b>Annapurna</b>	Hire media agency to develop leaflets, website, social media and radio advertisements for the company	Strengthen marketing of Annapurna for market/brand positioning, clearly showcasing the company products and their benefits
	Upgrade packaging	Improve the uptake of Annapurna's products
<b>Poshilo</b>	Development and execution of a branding strategy for improved brand positioning and export market penetration	Create a strong brand positioning to differentiate their products and create demand
	Sales training	Improve capacity of Poshilo's marketing/sales staff on marketing practices and scoping
	Marketing campaign	Promote Poshilo products and stimulate demand
	Management training	Equip management team with skills to influence decision making, create efficient processes and empower their teams and the company
<b>Satya</b>	Acquisition of NS and FSSAI certification for export	Support to attain international quality certification to help with exports, especially to India
	TA support for acquiring certifications (Organic, ISO 9001, HACCP, and GMP)	Help improve product uptake and to expand its market destinations
	Product marketing and packaging support through hiring a designer	Improve branding and designing along with re-designing the company's logo
<b>Urban</b>	Support in website development	Develop website to improve online presence
	TA support for marketing	Improve product uptake through packaging designs, social media promotions, marketing agency to collect customer feedback, and lab testing to ensure quality
	TA to scope new meat suppliers	Pinpoint opportunities for refining the supply chain to enhance productivity and competitiveness of Urban Food and help procure high-quality lean pork meat
	TA for capacity building of marketing team	TA to boost the company's marketing capabilities by recruiting a skilled marketing consultant for a three-month term to assist in drafting marketing strategies and devise effective approaches to enhance competitiveness and increase market share

**Table 5: CASA-supported Activities for Improving Strategic Capabilities and Internal Systems**

Partner	Activity	Agenda
Annapurna	TA support to provide training to local nutritionist of Annapurna Feed through an expert	Improve the quality of its fish feed
	Hire GESI expert to conduct Gender Sensitisation Training with all current company staff	Revise Annapurna's HR policy to make it gender sensitive and responsive and to ensure gender parity and diversity in the company
Poshilo	Development of production, supply chain and financial management software	Support Poshilo to digitalise processes to ease expansion through development and operationalisation of supply chain and production management software and a financial management software
	Development of Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)	Draft operational policy to help staff realise the steps to be taken to safely and efficiently operate machines and additionally provide a framework on how each specific task within the factory should be completed
	Development of Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) policy	Help draft ESG policies to remain competitive in the market and attract customers, employees and investors who expect transparency and sustainability
Satya	TA to hire technical expert to train factory staff on machine handling and labour productivity along with product diversification and quality improvement	Increase the efficiency and productivity of the factory staff along with quality improvement and product diversification
Urban	TA support for meat expert	Improve product quality and product diversification
	TA support for policies	Help draft foundational documents such as finance, procurement, and HR policies that are essential for streamlined operations and overall efficiency
	Support for energy audit	Conduct energy audit to improve energy efficiency of the company
	Support for waste management	Help Urban Food enhance its understanding of bone management opportunities for additional income generation, such as potential uses in the feed and fertiliser industry

**Table 6: CASA-supported Activities for Improving Ecosystem Engagement and Supply Chain Efficiencies**

Partner	Activity	Agenda
Annapurna	Conduct awareness campaigns on benefits of fish feed, especially Annapurna's feed to farmers	Improve awareness through demo-ponds about the benefits of using external feed to enhance fish production, accelerate growth, plus teaching them climate-smart techniques for sustainable aquaculture practice
	Conduct workshop bringing together members of the fish feed association to share business case and learnings from Annapurna	Help other stakeholders recognise the incentives that Annapurna identifies, highlighting investment potential of business case and conveying these insights with other local feed producers in the market
Poshilo	Scoping and scouting of farmer aggregators and co-operatives	Build a strong supply chain that can provide continuous flow of required raw materials for both current and future line of diversified <i>Satu</i> products.
	Support to conduct GAP training to supplying farmers	Strengthen its supply chain by providing Good Agriculture Practice training to capacitate farmers on production practices, pre-harvest and post-harvest handling, storage, and packaging for transport
Satya	Subscription to international trade platform	Connect with international buyers for export
Urban	Farmer training	Promote sustainable harvesting practice and improve product quality
	Farmer training	Ensure and promote hygienic meat production



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