



Commercial Agriculture for Smallholders and Agribusiness

Rwanda's School Feeding Programme as a Business Opportunity for Inclusive Vegetable Supply Enterprises

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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

Commercial Agriculture for Smallholders and Agribusiness (CASA) is a programme funded by the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) – International Climate Finance (ICF), implemented by NIRAS and Swisscontact. CASA facilitates increased investment in agribusinesses by demonstrating the commercial and development potential of inclusive business models that bring smallholder farmers into the supply value chain, whilst also promoting their and agribusinesses' climate resilience and adaptivity. In Rwanda, CASA worked with agri-SMEs in vegetables, aquaculture and poultry value chains.

Vegetable producers in Rwanda face significant challenges related to poor market access, high post-harvest losses, and vulnerabilities stemming from climate change. These issues can reduce profits, limit expansion, and threaten food security. A significant portion of vegetable harvests is lost between the farm and the consumer. In 2021, post-harvest losses for vegetables were estimated at 45.5 percent. For high-value crops like tomatoes, losses can reach as high as 49 percent due to pests, diseases, and poor handling. There was a need to overcome these challenges, and the interconnected problems of poor market access, high post-harvest losses, and climate change vulnerabilities.

To this end, since October 2022 CASA Rwanda has worked on value chain assessments and building the commercial viability and investment readiness of agri-SMEs in Rwanda's vegetables value chain, while also fostering commercial linkages between these enterprises

and smallholder producers. This paper focuses on lessons emerging from CASA's partnership with [Agribusiness for Local Economic Communities \(AGRILEC Ltd\)](#), a private limited company, operating in the Eastern Province, Kayonza District, which ran from 2023 - 2025.

Farmers in Kayonza had limited access to markets for commercial vegetable production, with significant production, post-harvest, and marketing challenges that were undermining livelihoods. This paper reflects on how the AGRILEC Ltd business model was able to capitalize on the commercial opportunity presented by the Rwanda School Feeding Programme, not only providing a reliable offtake market for local smallholder farmers, but also supporting the provision of vegetables to thousands of school children. The AGRILEC partnership highlights the potential of emergent business models that seek to service school feeding contracts and how these can underpin local economic development for smallholder farmers. To indicate the scale of commercial opportunity, last year alone, AGRILEC Ltd was able to invest its own capital of RWF 164,000,000 (approximately £84,000) and generated up to RWF 330,400,000 (approximately £171,000) in revenue. The company got a net profit, after all costs including taxes, of RWF 51,260,000 (approximately £26,000).

This paper explores the business model deployed by AGRILEC and how it is able to generate a triple win for local communities. In doing so, it seeks to encourage its scaling throughout other areas of Rwanda and in other geographies.

HISTORY OF SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAMMES IN RWANDA

Rwanda's National School Feeding Programme (NSFP) started in 1995 with the establishment of the first boarding schools. It has since been scaled up to include pre-primary and primary schools. The programme expanded to include secondary schools in 2014. The Home-Grown School Feeding Initiative (HGSFI) was launched for primary schools in 2016, supported by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA), Mastercard and the World Food Programme (WFP). Around the same time, the Ministry of Education began drafting the national school feeding policy, which was approved in 2019. The government has since worked to scale the programme from pre-primary up to secondary schools through the NSFP. Funding for Rwanda's NSFP comes primarily from the government, which covers about 90 percent of the costs for pre-primary and primary students, supported by parental contributions and partnerships with organisations like the WFP and the Rockefeller Foundation. The government budget has significantly increased, reaching RWF 94 billion for 2025.

The NSFP has evolved from a pilot programme supported by partners since 2002 into a national policy that expanded to include all public and government-aided pre-primary, primary, and secondary schools by 2020. The programme has seen a massive increase in student

coverage, with over four million students benefiting by 2022, and a corresponding increase in government funding, with the goal of improving education, combating malnutrition, and supporting local farmers. Sustainability for Rwanda's NSFP involves enhancing local production through climate-smart agriculture, strengthening value chains for nutritious foods like beans, improving cooking efficiency to reduce fuel consumption, and fostering community and multi-sectoral partnerships. Key strategies include training teachers in nutrition and farming, promoting school gardens for fresh produce, introducing energy-efficient cooking technologies and processed foods, and collaborating with government agencies, local organisations, and financial institutions to ensure long-term sustainability.

Kayonza District is home to 166 schools, including 66 public, 46 subsidised, and 54 private institutions. The Government of Rwanda supports 108 of these schools (65 percent of the total) through the NSFP, benefiting 133,566 learners. Of these, 113,172 students are in pre-primary and primary schools (84.7 percent), while 20,394 are in secondary and technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions (15.3 percent). Vegetable supply requirements differ across educational levels due to varying nutritional needs, with students in secondary school requiring larger portions than pre-primary pupils.

INITIAL AGRILEC BUSINESS MODEL

AGRILEC Ltd is registered in Rwanda under the Rwanda Development Board (RDB) with registration issued in May 2024. The company's registered office is located in Kamonyi District, Rugarika Sector, within the Southern Province, while its field office is situated in the Eastern Province, Kayonza District, Mukarange Sector. AGRILEC Ltd specialises in the production and supply of fresh vegetables – including tomatoes, onions, cabbages, carrots, cucumbers, spinach, and garlic – to schools in Kayonza District under the NSFP. When first established in 2013, AGRILEC brought together 1,074 smallholder

farmers serving 27 schools. Today, it has reached 5,000 smallholder farmers and serves 100 schools. The company has also extended its services to the local markets, mainly Nyabugogo and Kimironko, depending on the needs.

At the beginning, AGRILEC Ltd faced some challenges such as of the lack of the required working capital to pay farmers, when there were delays from school payment; and the application of the contract farming model that became a challenge to the farmers at the beginning, with some seeking to deviate from the contract and sell their

produce to other buyers. To overcome these challenges, AGRILEC Ltd anticipated some solutions that worked. It negotiated advance payments in the contracts with its schools, so that they can cover the mandatory business running costs. AGRILEC Ltd made business partnerships, interactions, and collaboration with big agriculture input dealers like YARA (fertilisers), AGROTECH, and AGRAH CARE (equipment and seeds) who supply their products on credit, and used its unique business model of collaborating with farmers located near schools to maintain a competitive edge. Additionally, AGRILEC Ltd

utilised a sustainable market model to establish a long-term business partnership with farmers, offering price incentives alongside agronomist support.

AGRILEC Ltd is becoming a leading model for sustainable agribusiness in Rwanda, guided by its core values of quality, sustainability, inclusivity, and innovation. Its expertise has been recognised by the Rwanda Development Board (RDB) and its Managing Director and owner's contact have been listed on the RDB website as one of its experts in the country's agriculture sector.

OPTIMISING SMALLHOLDER-AGRIBUSINESS-SCHOOL FEEDING MODELS

In Rwanda, the production and supply of fresh and high-quality vegetables such as tomatoes, onions, cabbages, carrots, cucumbers, and spinach have a persistent problem of distribution. In Kayonza District, farmers had limited markets to sell their vegetables, where they faced significant challenges that threatened their livelihoods and food security, forcing them to watch their production rot or be thrown away, leading to substantial financial losses. The simultaneous problem of farmers being unable to find reliable and formal buyers – and buyers unable to find vegetables – is caused by deep-seated inefficiencies and a fundamental mismatch within the agricultural supply chain. The gap is primarily due to issues with market access, poor infrastructure, and lack of information, exacerbated by the lack of influence of intermediaries like AGRILEC Ltd. CASA Rwanda has supported AGRILEC Ltd to establish a contract arrangement model, initially with 5,000 smallholder farmers to supply 100 schools.

To address this challenge, CASA Rwanda linked AGRILEC with technical assistance to develop a full business development and investment plan. It helped the company establish contracting arrangements with farmers, including a climate-smart horticulture training system for contracted smallholders, extension services provision, facilitation of farmers in accessing quality agri-inputs, and a digital supply management system. Before, farmers sold their vegetables primarily through informal

channels, such as local spot markets and through middlemen, that exposed farmers to numerous risks and disadvantages. The quality required for vegetables to supply to schools should be fresh, clean, and free from damage, which needs more expertise like that provided by AGRILEC Ltd. Since AGRILEC Ltd received CASA Rwanda's technical assistance, the company's business has grown in terms of sales revenue, business expansion, increasing market and profitability. It went from supplying 27 schools in 2013 to up to 100 schools currently, and it is now planning for expansion to other districts.

To be able to supply schools, AGRILEC Ltd gets 90 percent of the vegetables from its 5,000 contracting farmers, while the remaining 10 percent comes from the company's own land. The Managing Director Alphonse Hategekimana said that the company plans to expand its own land for two reasons. First, he uses it as an example where his contracting farmers learn modern agriculture practices, and second, to get supplies in case one or more of his contractors have problems.

According to Hategekimana, the company has an initial contract with individual farmers that live near the schools it intends to supply. The contract establishes a formal partnership known as contract farming. This arrangement benefits both parties by securing a market for the farmers and a stable supply for the company. The contracts cover different aspects to ensure a fair

and productive relationship, including the exact type of vegetable to be grown, along with the required quality standards and quantities, the payment schedule, and the provision of an agronomist or other technical support to help the farmers meet the required quality and quantity standards. The contract specifies that the farmers near the schools are responsible for delivery of vegetables to schools. AGRILEC has agreements with over 100 schools it supplies in Kayonza. Every year the company signs a contract with each school, with a detailed list of all vegetables to be supplied, including variety, volume, schedule for delivery, payment schedule, and a statement on how failure to comply with any part of the contract will be handled. As vegetables are not included in the government tenders, Hategekimana negotiates these agreements himself with schools.

Once farmers used to produce just enough food to feed their own families, and they would sell any excess at local markets. Now because of the contracts with AGRILEC Ltd, farmers in Kayonza know that they have a stable and predictable market provided by the NSFP. Farmers now have a strong incentive to increase production with this formal market coupled with

supplying vegetables to schools where most of their children study. AGRILEC Ltd created a “virtuous cycle” that boosted local agriculture production and greatly increased the earnings for smallholders. Currently, AGRILEC Ltd has strategically positioned itself as a vital player in the NSFP in Kayonza District, consistently supplying vegetables to over 100 schools, helping the school ensure that over 85,316 students (43,212 girls) benefit from a balanced diet.

According to Bigirimana Paul, the NSFP Officer in Kayonza District, the Government of Rwanda provides rice, beans, kaunga (also known as kawunga in Kinyarwanda, made from maize flour and boiling water), oil and salt at the beginning of the academic year: “For vegetables, schools cover 30 percent of the need, while the remaining 70 percent is provided by other providers. In Kayonza, WFP, a humanitarian organisation, and AGRILEC Ltd and small competitors share this market.” This allows AGRILEC Ltd to create a stable market, enabling business expansion, and fostering community development, as well as a reliable income stream and plans for the future.

DELIVERING A TRIPLE-WIN: EMERGING BENEFITS OF AN OPTIMISED MODEL

AGRILEC's Key Offerings:

- **Vegetables for Schools:** Schools need to receive reliable, fresh produce that meets their nutritional standards and supports the health of learners. AGRILEC takes this opportunity and supplies high-quality fresh vegetables, such as tomatoes, carrots, onions, and spinach, to Rwanda's school feeding programme.
- **Contract Farming Services:** AGRILEC engages over 5,000 farmers under contract farming agreements. This model provides farmers with agricultural inputs, extension services provision, and guaranteed markets, enabling them to improve productivity and secure steady incomes. In addition, contracted farmers are facilitated for access to finance for working capital to embrace effectively good agriculture practices which require technologies and equipment. To get a loan,

farmers typically need to prove their credit worthiness through a good credit score and stable income. Since they do not have it, AGRILEC stands as a guarantor for smallholder farmers.

- **Supply Chain Management:** The company facilitates the aggregation, sorting, packaging, and transportation of vegetables from farms who live far from the schools, while farmers living near the schools are directly supplying them as stipulated in the contract. However, it is critical to enhance the logistics through adoption of refrigerated trucks. This ensures timely deliveries while maintaining quality standards.
- **Agronomy/Extension Services:** AGRILEC's dedicated agronomists work closely with farmers, offering ongoing training and field support. This ensures adherence to best agricultural climate smart practices and compliance with market quality requirements.

Core Elements of the Model:

- **Integrated Value Chain:** AGRILEC manages every step from production to delivery, including aggregation, sorting, grading, packaging, and distribution of fresh vegetables.
- **Contract Farming Partnerships:** Signed contracts with 5,000 smallholder farmers, providing inputs, training, and guaranteed market access.
- **Market Linkages:** AGRILEC also supplies private schools and hospitals in a different arrangement to the contract it has with schools, to ensure diversified revenue streams. Currently, the company works with 27 schools with a plan to reach 100 schools under the school feeding program.
- **Technology-Driven Operations:** AGRILEC is implementing smart supply systems to track produce, manage payments, and provide real-time operational insights.
- **Sustainability Framework:** AGRILEC operates under an Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) framework to ensure resource-efficient, inclusive, and climate-resilient practices.

Benefits for AGRILEC Ltd:

- **Demand:** The NSFP provided a large and consistent demand for vegetables on a regular basis throughout the school year. This stability helped AGRILEC Ltd plan their sourcing and logistics more effectively than with the fluctuating demand of the open market.
- **Purchasing:** The high-volume needs of schools create a significant purchasing market that AGRILEC tapped into. This allowed for economies of scale in procurement, sorting, and delivery, which increased its revenue.
- **Diversification:** By supplying schools, AGRILEC Ltd diversified its customer base beyond grocery stores and restaurants. This reduced business risk and provided a steady income foundation.
- **Opportunities:** As the company builds a successful relationship with schools in Kayonza District, this has served as a proven business model to expand into other school districts country-wide. AGRILEC plans to expand its activities to two more districts: Bugesera and Kamonyi.



- **Improved Brand Image:** Partnering with the NSFP has enhanced AGRILEC Ltd's reputation as a business that supports community well-being.
- **Strengthened Local Economy:** Participating in the NSFP strengthened the entire local food system. AGRILEC Ltd benefited by working with local farmers, which fostered community goodwill and promoted economic growth.
- **Reduced Food Waste:** A predictable demand schedule from school programmes allowed the company to manage their inventory more efficiently, minimising waste from unsold or perishable production.
- **Logistical Efficiencies:** Serving a centralised network of schools created more efficient and concentrated delivery routes. This lowered transportation costs compared to a dispersed customer base.
- **Promotes Local Production:** The NSFP encouraged the use of locally grown foods in school menus, supporting local food production.
- **Increased Visibility:** When farmers know that their products are going to local schools, it increases their visibility and strengthens their commitment to producing quality food for the community.
- **Community Involvement:** The NSFP fostered a collaborative spirit, involving farmers, parents, and teachers in the shared goal of providing good nutrition for children.
- **Skill Development:** Some school feeding programmes involved students in farming activities, which helped develop agricultural skills and knowledge that benefit them and their families in the long run. The school feeding programme and formal market with AGRILEC Ltd ensures increased production and thus income for farmers.

Benefits for Smallholder Farmers:

- **Contract Stability:** Agreements between AGRILEC Ltd and smallholder farmers are managed through five-year contracts. This provided smallholder farmers with a secure, long-term revenue stream that facilitated business investment.
- **Enhanced Food Security:** Local procurement strengthened local agri-food systems, contributing to food security and reducing social inequality.

While the impact of schools' purchases of local foods may be a small contribution to the overall Kayonza economy, the predictability of the school market provides a foundation upon which smallholder farmers can reliably market their products. Farmers are able to pay for school fees, health insurance and other family-related expenses. Some have bought motorcycles that are used as taxis and generate more income for the families that bought them.



A kitchen garden at Groupe Scolaire Gahini, a school located in Ngoma District

SUSTAINABILITY AND SCALABILITY OF THE MODEL

AGRILEC Ltd has met challenges in supplying the NSFP, including logistical issues like poor infrastructure and coordination in remote areas that required complex coordination among smallholder farmers, schools, and AGRILEC Ltd. Other difficulties included shortages in food supplies to meet growing demand, maintaining nutritional quality and safety standards, and managing increased demand, which can disrupt operations and lead to inconsistent meal provision. Keys to a successful school vegetable supply include effective planning and logistics, adequate funding/working capital, and strong community and government support.

Smallholder farmers need bank loans for several critical reasons, including boosting productivity and increasing income. Access to financial services is a major challenge for this group, who are often considered high-risk by traditional financial institutions due to their low income, lack of collateral, and susceptibility to environmental factors like droughts and floods.

There is a need for the utilisation of technologies. Smallholder farmers should be introduced to mobile apps and online platforms that can help them improve communication, logistics and monitoring. To respond to this, AGRILEC is developing a detailed vegetable farming extension booklet that will serve as a practical guide for farmers, complemented by digital resources for those with access to mobile devices. Workshops on waste management and sustainable farming practices will be integral to AGRILEC's capacity-building initiatives. These sessions aim at instilling environmentally-friendly habits in farmers, such as recycling organic waste and reducing dependency on non-renewable inputs.

Opportunities abound for businesses to build commercial relationships with schools and help drive up fresh produce consumption. In Kayonza District alone, AGRILEC Ltd is not enough, compared to the vegetable demand. Schools are the largest buyers of vegetables, not only in Kayonza, but probably in the country. We consider that 85,316 children participating in the NSFP presents a significant opportunity for smallholder farmers and AGRILEC Ltd, and a sure market that pushes them to meet their vegetable needs.

The Republic of Rwanda has five provinces that are divided into 30 districts. Until now, AGRILEC Ltd has served only one district, with plans to expand into two more districts. In Kayonza District, there are 27 areas that need suppliers and there are few competitors. They lack AGRILEC Ltd's expertise that can ensure food security, meet standards, ensure traceability and avoid losses of vegetables. The sure way to move forward is to support existing suppliers that do not yet have the expertise that AGRILEC has, to be able to satisfy this growing NSFP country-wide.

For new investors to succeed in supplying vegetables to the NSFP, they need to meet certain criteria: providers must adhere to specific nutritional guidelines, which state that a meal should provide 30-75 percent of a student's daily energy and nutrient needs, depending on whether it is a half-day or full-day programme. When selecting suppliers, they need to ensure they meet safety and nutritional guidelines, establish clear partnership agreements, and consider the sustainability of the programme by prioritising local procurement to support the community and potentially integrate nutrition education within the programme.

Although the NSFP is not the biggest driver of growth in the market for vegetables, AGRILEC Ltd revealed that the market is growing and will continue to grow as the NSFP is a priority for the Government of Rwanda and every year it increases funding for the programme, which means a need for new potential vegetables suppliers. Once in the business, the new companies should establish clear, written agreements with smallholder farmers, outlining expectations and responsibilities for both parties.

For farmers to produce more and be able to satisfy the market, ensuring the programme's long-term viability, farmers need to access funding and insurance. Funding and insurance are vital for vegetable farmers because they provide the financial stability needed to manage unpredictable risks and invest in long-term growth. Finally, the feeding programme can be integrated with nutrition education, cooking lessons, or gardening to reinforce healthy eating habits.

Leveraging a contract farming model to integrate smallholder farmers into its supply chain, AGRILEC's mission is to enhance food security, promote rural development, and deliver high-quality, nutritious vegetables to institutional buyers and local markets. Its operations align with Rwanda's NSFP, supporting over 31,000 students and benefiting over 5,000 smallholder farmers, with at least 55 percent of participating farmers being women and 30 percent youth.

With its clear, compelling business plan that demonstrates financial viability, addresses market needs, and shows a plan for sustainable growth, AGRILEC Ltd has been a good example for investors that they can get a return on their investment. Its market's reliability and its track record of good management are an insurance to any financial institutions.

There are concerns about the sustainability of this business model once the Government stops financing the NSFP. First, the consequences of discontinuing the Programme are enormous to an extent that the Government of Rwanda cannot afford. It could lead to a significant increase in student absenteeism and drop-out rates, negatively impacting student health, academic performance, concentration, and overall human capital development. The Government of Rwanda is increasing the NSFP budget annually, with a projected increase from RWF 94 billion in the 2024/25 fiscal year to RWF 135

billion in 2025/26. This rise reflects the Government's commitment to the programme's success in improving attendance and learning, and an increase in the number of beneficiaries.

The school feeding market presents a significant and reliable commercial opportunity for AGRILEC Ltd, and any other companies that would like to enter into this business, driven by consistent demand from public schools and the Government of Rwanda's commitment to improving child nutrition. The steady use of fresh vegetables in school kitchens provides a predictable market that can underpin the business's long-term growth. However, the sustainability of this opportunity depends on a company's ability to navigate public procurement regulations and mitigate inherent operational and financial risks faced by private investors.

Finally, the AGRILEC model employs a proactive approach to risk management, which identifies potential risks across the supply chain, contract farming, financial management, and market dynamics, while detailing robust mitigation measures. By integrating innovative solutions, farmer empowerment, and diversified market strategies, AGRILEC ensures resilience, operational efficiency, and sustained impact in the agricultural value chain.



A farmer working with AGRILEC to supply vegetables to a school in Ngoma District

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR KEY ACTORS

For Agribusinesses

To encourage existing suppliers to venture into the vegetable supply chain business, scale and replicate the AGRILEC business model. AGRILEC Ltd and other existing businesses should focus on increasing their existing operations' capacity and efficiency, while new investors should focus on replicating the successful AGRILEC business model in new districts across the country. Recommendations for agribusinesses include:

- Prioritise strong smallholder farmer relationships, securing quality produce. Lessons from AGRILEC highlight the value of demonstration plots and centring the community contribution to school feeding programmes. Formalising producer agreements into contract farming arrangements with smallholder cooperatives provides benefits to both the business and the smallholder suppliers.
- Identify the different product needs of different schools within the locality and plan an initial supply offering and a pathway to scale, i.e., Will you fulfil one product line or multiple? Will different vegetables come from different suppliers? How do production timelines align to ensure consistent delivery? How many schools will you service in years 1, 2, 3 and on?
- Post-harvest handling is critical to successful delivery of fresh products. There should be a clear plan for how logistics will be handled and also for initiating and then scaling investment into storage and transport infrastructure and equipment to ensure consistent supply of fresh vegetables.

For Investors

For investors entering the vegetable supply chain business, AGRILEC Ltd is a good example. While traditional retail remains viable, the highest growth and profit potential is found in the specialised model that AGRILEC Ltd uses to address NSFP market demands. To succeed, new investors in the vegetable supply chain should focus on strategies that mitigate risk, improve efficiency through infrastructure and technology, and foster strong, collaborative relationships with farmers. Recommendations for investors include:

- The highly perishable nature of vegetables necessitates investments in critical infrastructure like cold storage facilities, temperature-controlled transport, and proper post-harvest handling and packaging. This directly reduces significant post-harvest losses and maintains product quality.
- Investments are most effective when linked to stable and established supply chain relationships. This can be achieved through mechanisms such as long-term contract farming, which provides income stability for farmers and predictable supply for investors, de-risking the entire operation.
- Instead of solely relying on traditional, fragmented supply chains dominated by intermediaries, investors can facilitate vertical coordination, such as through producer organisations or cooperatives. These models can improve efficiency, ensure quality standards (e.g., specific inputs, traceability), and enhance market access for farmers, which in turn strengthens the overall supply chain.
- Success requires an alignment between supply and demand. Investors should leverage data and information and communication technology (ICT) to improve demand forecasting, which helps prevent oversupply or shortages and ensures product availability, a key performance indicator for supply chains.
- Investors who offer financial support, such as loans or 'lease-to-own' arrangements for technology, and strengthen extension services (knowledge and skills transfer) to farmers, can encourage the adoption of new technologies and best practices, further reducing losses and improving yields.

For Donors

AGRILEC Ltd's successes can help not only investors who want to invest their efforts and money into the sector, but also donors who want to support it. Rather than only funding production, donors can help address challenges across the entire agricultural value chain, from improving farming techniques to strengthening market access. To be able to do that effectively, they need partners with expertise and experience in the field like AGRILEC Ltd. Recommendations for donors include:

- Donors, by providing technical assistance to companies like AGRILEC Ltd, can help organise farmers into cooperatives and self-help groups, which improves their skills, bargaining power and access to markets. These groups can access financial services, such as credit and insurance, which were previously unavailable to many smallholder farmers.
- Fund facilities, such as storage centres, which help farmers reduce losses and meet market demand more consistently. Also promote value-added activities like processing and packaging, which creates additional income and employment opportunities.
- Provide capital for essential infrastructure such as storage facilities, processing plants, and cold-chain logistics to help farmer groups add value to their produce and reduce post-harvest losses.
- Support business management, marketing, and modern farming training programmes to equip farmers with the skills to run their operations more effectively.
- Enable cooperatives to negotiate better prices for both agricultural inputs and their harvested produce.
- Finance the adoption of innovations like climate-smart technologies, or blockchain for supply chain management, to improve transparency and traceability, which can build consumer trust and meet regulatory standards, and also research and development for climate-resilient and pest-resistant vegetable varieties to ensure stable yields.



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