

## Empowering Indian smallholders to reach their farming potential

*In Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand, the Better Life Farming alliance has helped smallholders double yields and triple income.*

By 2050, there will be nearly 10 billion people in the world, and an estimated 50 percent more food will be needed to meet the future demand for nutritious food. Therefore increasing food production is going to be vital. More than 80 percent of the food produced in developing countries is done by smallholders who farm on less than two hectares of land (Source: FAO). Smallholder farmers are more vulnerable to challenges such as lack of finance, adverse climate impacts, irrigation management, pests and crop diseases, rural migration and fluctuating commodity prices. Because of these challenges they are able to realize only a fraction of their potential productivity.

Bayer, International Finance Cooperation (IFC, a member of the World Bank Group), Netafim, and Swiss Re Corporate Solutions, have formed the 'Better Life Farming' alliance to provide holistic and innovative solutions for smallholder farmers. The alliance will provide holistic and innovative solutions for smallholder farmers including seeds, precision irrigation, crop protection and insurance, all of which will be tailored to meet specific local needs of smallholder farmers.

By connecting global expertise with local insights and partners, and providing advanced agronomic solutions, the alliance aims to help farmers grow their farms into commercially viable and sustainable farming businesses, rather than just a means to thrive.

In India, the Better Life Farming alliance focuses mainly on green chili and tomato smallholders in the states of Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand, since they have one of the lowest yields in India. Besides the global partners (Bayer, IFC, Netafim and Swiss Re), the local partners in India include Yara Fertilizers, Green Agrevolution Pvt. Ltd and Big Basket. Over the last 2 years, Indian smallholders from both the states who participated in the pilot project witnessed doubling of yields and were able to triple the net incomes from their small farms.

### How does it work?

**// High quality Input and Technology:** Farmers are provided with advanced technologies in the areas of seeds, crop protection, irrigation and fertilizers

**// Training:** The alliance introduces many good agricultural practices to increase the production of green chilies such as crop nursery, mulching, and staking. On-farm training is given on demonstration plots during the season, before the season classroom training is given, demonstrating the strength of the whole program. A field officer is available for individual consulting to the farmer

**// Price Transparency & Market Access:** DeHaat (Green Agrevolution) sends automatic messages with daily information on price for farmers to sell produce to the alliance through mobile collection centers. Yields are picked up at the farm gate and farmers receive money in their bank accounts.

**// Bargaining Power:** The price transparency created by the alliance has led to increased competition in the local market which has increased the bargaining power of smallholders

### Key figures

**//** In Uttar Pradesh we started working with 20 chili farmers in 2016, which increased to 250 in 2017. In 2018, we are working with 1570 farmers in 121 villages.

**//** In Jharkhand we started our pilot in 2017 with 37 tomato farmers and in 2018 we will be working with 500 farmers in 52 villages.

**//** In green chili, our farmers have touched 15 metric tons per acre which is more than India's national average and in tomato; our farmers have touched 20 metric tons per acre which is almost 3 times the average yield in Jharkhand.