

Specialised professional services for SHFs – land preparation services



# 1. Pioneer partnership

2SCALE's partnership with Faranaya Agribusiness Limited (one of the largest sorghum aggregators in Ghana) evolved from a pilot to test the commercialization of land preparation services for smallholder sorghum farmers in 2018. Faranaya supports farmers to produce quality sorghum and aggregate for supply to Guinness Ghana Limited. The ambition is to supply on average 5,000 tons of sorghum annually to Guinness Ghana Limited. However, several constraints both at production and marketing stages in the sorghum value chain hampers the achievement of this ambition. One of these constraints is the inadequate access to land preparation services by smallholder farmers, especially women.

The use of bullock ploughing is the main source of land preparation in the operational areas of Faranaya i.e., North Eastern part of Ghana. This is due to the fragile nature of the soils, as most farmlands are degraded making the use of heavy equipment such as tractors inappropriate. Despite being the predominant source of land preparation, bullock ploughing as a commercial service is underdeveloped and access to the service depends mainly on personal/family relationships between farmers and bullock owners. This phenomenon favours male adult farmers since they own most of the bullocks and tend to prioritise their fellow men over women and the youth. The Faranaya partnership targets to reach at least 10,000 SHFs farmers (50% women, 40% youth) by 2023. To achieve a strong participation of women and youth in this partnership, access to land preparation services must be improved for these group of farmers.



## 2. Replicable practice

This practice is addressing the challenges left by the poor penetration of financial services in the operational areas of Faranaya. VSLAs were introduced to address the savings and credit needs of smallholder women farmers to upscale their economic activities. Cluster actors, mainly smallholder farmers, lacked adequate access to credit to expand and invest in value chain activities. The absence of financing opportunities to scale up business activities reduces the potential of clusters in supporting their growth needs. This makes the VSLA methodology relevant in raising capital to finance new businesses and to scale up existing businesses. It is a self-managed rural financing scheme where members of the association purchase shares weekly. The accumulation of the weekly shares is given out as loans to members with a marginal interest.

To summarize, this practice is addressing constraints in terms of:

Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Ownership:</b> The entire service is owned and controlled by farmers who render the service to fellow farmers. They are also responsible for maintaining the health of their bulls and are supported technically by veterinary officers. Thus, the ownership is largely in the hands of the grassroots actors.</li><li>• <b>Voice:</b> Since the service providers are community-based and are themselves farmers connected to Faranaya; they are able to agree locally among themselves on a ploughing schedule that ensures each farmer is served at the right time. Prices are negotiated and agreed upon between farmers and bullock owners in a transparent and fair manner.</li><li>• <b>Risks:</b> Bullock ploughing is an eco-efficient land preparation technique that preserves soil nutrients and make them available for plants' uptake. The adoption of this practice enables farmers to increase productivity thus generating more income especially for women and youth who normally have limited access to land preparation services. Bullock owners also had improved access to veterinary/animal health services which reduced the risk of losing their bulls to diseases.</li><li>• <b>Rewards:</b> Bullock owners give credit (with Faranaya as guarantor) to farmers who are unable to either make full or part payment for the service. This arrangement ensured more women and youth were able to access timely land preparation service while bullock owners generate enough revenue to maintain their animals and buy new ones and replace used equipment.</li></ul>
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# 3. Preconditions for replication

## **Network of existing bullock service providers**

The practice of bullock ploughing (and other animal traction practices) is not new. In most areas where access to these kinds of services are needed by farmers, there is likely to be existing bullock service providers who might not be properly organized and with limited or no commercial drive. To coordinate the service delivery and ensure equal access by all groups of farmers, these service providers will have to be identified and properly organized. This is necessary to facilitate training and better linkages with producer organizations and other stakeholders.

## **Access to veterinary services/experts and animal traction equipment**

Animal health and care is critical to maintaining the bullock service delivery business. Efforts must be made to ensure a reliable access to veterinary services and medication. Local production and or availability of equipment such as ridger ploughs must be facilitated.

## **Credit facilitation**

A suitable financial arrangement will ensure farmers can access the service without having to make full payment upfront. This was one of the key reasons that ensured the high participation of women in the pilot and scale up phases. Ideally, the off-taker (mainly business champion) serves as a guarantor and remits the amount owed by farmers to the service providers before final payments are made to farmers.



## 4. Results Achieved

- Jobs created for 171 bullock service providers (9% women, 49% youth) who were trained and connected to veterinary services.
- 819 farmers (42% women, 31% youth) had timely access to land preparation services for the first time. Since 2018, a total number of 1746 acres of land has been serviced, generating revenues of about USD 14,800 for the service providers.
- The quality of land preparation has also improved as a result of the training organized for bullock service providers.

## Want to know more?

To know more about this practice, please reach out to Jalil Zakaria, [jzakaria@2scale.org](mailto:jzakaria@2scale.org) 2SCALE Country Team Leader for Ghana.

You can also learn more about this case through the following resources:

- <https://www.2scale.org/en/updates/bullock-ploughing-transforms-sorghum-production-en>
- [https://www.linkedin.com/posts/2scale-africa\\_womeninagriculture-ghana-activity-6774736755435302912-z3cW](https://www.linkedin.com/posts/2scale-africa_womeninagriculture-ghana-activity-6774736755435302912-z3cW)
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y8p\\_ON743cE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y8p_ON743cE)
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zr\\_gLhWkxK8&t=34s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zr_gLhWkxK8&t=34s)

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