

Founding year: 2016
 Country in Operation: Nepal

ICT for Agriculture (IFA)

IFA is an agriculture technology (AgTech) company based in Nepal, providing localized agriculture extension services enabled by Information Communications Technology (ICT). Its mission is to scale digital solutions for the agricultural last mile and improve smallholder's financial inclusion, livelihood and climate resilience.

Innovations

Agriculture is a knowledge-intensive undertaking. IFA was created to bridge the information gap and develop an ecosystem to serve smallholder farmers to improve their production and livelihoods. It aims to make ICT accessible and affordable across Nepal. The company provides localized information on crops and animals, input supplies and market price through an SMS, android and social media platform 'Krishi Guru'. Currently IFA has inventoried agriculture practices of more than 100 crops and livestock. It offers low-cost agriculture extension in terms of crop and livestock disease management advisory and direct Q&A with experts via premium content package of flexible subscription periods: 1 day, 1 week or 1 month. IFA is committed to sharing information to reach last mile thus many contents such as crop-specific best practices, weather forecasts, agriculture news and market price of selected crops are freely available to farmers.

Application to Agriculture Insurance

Built on the initial success of providing necessary agriculture-related information to assist farming, IFA is now looking to incorporate insurance feature in its app to provide financial literacy education and facilitate policy servicing. Given the pervasive low understanding of insurance in rural Nepal, insurers can benefit from IFA's reach to farmers and its social media engagement to increase knowledge around insurance products. A new service on agriculture insurance is being developed which includes:

- Education on agriculture insurance
- Selection of insurers and their offerings
- Online application and information verification
- Premium payment through digital wallet
- Ongoing communication with insurers including reporting claims



Partnerships and Next Steps

Since connectivity is essential for business continuity, IFA seeks partnership with telcoms to expand the scope of work. Currently it works with Nepal's largest telecom Ncell with 16 million users to provide no cost data for using android platform. The IFA-Ncell partnership aims to improve agriculture value chain through digitalization and connectivity. IFA is also working to establish digital wallet integrated with banks to facilitate commodity trade on its platform. Lastly input suppliers and agriculture extension agencies are partners to enable knowledge dissemination on IFA platform. Within the first three years of operation, IFA have achieved 400,000 active users. Through partnership with ecosystem players, IFA strives to empower 2 million farmers toward 2025 by knowledge and technology.

Contacts

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About the Agriculture Insurtech Challenge

The path to unlocking the full potential of agriculture insurance in improving livelihoods of 2.5 billion smallholder farmers, often poor and marginalized, comes with various challenges. Whatever changes the world undergoes in the coming decade towards the realization of SDGs by 2030, our progress can only be meaningfully measured against the welfare of those individuals. Purpose-led entrepreneurs and social enterprises perceive challenges as opportunities to stimulate creativity, progress and value creation as they envision and create a new reality, leveraging the benefits of technology. To partner with such innovators to advance insurance in rural Asia, GIIF organized an agriculture insurtech innovation challenge in 2019 to best select and endorse Asian-grown enterprises. Out of 100+ applicants, 9 startups won the financial support in the three categories: Data & Analytics, Sales & Distribution and Premiums & Claims.



About the The Global Index Insurance Facility (GIIF)

The Global Index Insurance Facility (GIIF) is a dedicated World Bank Group's program that facilitates access to finance for smallholder farmers, micro-entrepreneurs, and microfinance institutions through the provisions of catastrophic risk transfer solutions and index-based insurance in developing countries. As of 2019, GIIF's regional partners have facilitated approximately 7.6 million contracts, covering close to 38 million beneficiaries primarily in Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean. GIIF's objectives are to provide access to financing for the vulnerable; to strengthen the financial resilience of the poor against the impact of climate change and natural disasters, and to sustain food production for local communities and larger markets.

