



# India Agtech Playbook

Australia-India Tech  
Connections Program

October 2025

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# About this program

The Australia – India Tech Connections Program helps Australian clean energy technology (cleantech) and agricultural technology (agtech) businesses build meaningful partnerships in India.

India is now the world's third-largest tech ecosystem, fuelled by strong digital infrastructure and a culture of entrepreneurship, offering significant opportunities for Australian businesses and investors. However, firms remain cautious due to limited familiarity with India's market dynamics and regulations.

Delivered in partnership with the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and supported by the Centre for Australia India Relations (CAIR), this program provides the insights, tools and capability training businesses need to build trusted partnerships and diversify economic links in a complex global environment.



**Find out more  
about this program**

## About us



Asialink Business is Australia's National Centre for Asia Capability. It equips businesses with the insights and skills to seize opportunities in Asia.

To succeed in the region, Australian businesses need to understand how to adapt business models, meet diverse consumer needs, operate effectively in-market, and respond quickly to emerging opportunities.

Asialink Business delivers practical training, tailored insights, advisory services and events that empower organisations to navigate Asia with confidence.

Established in 2013, Asialink Business is supported by the Australian Government, Department of Industry, Science and Resources, and is proudly part of Asialink at the University of Melbourne.



**Confederation of Indian Industry**

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) works to create and sustain an environment conducive to the development of India, partnering Industry, Government and civil society through advisory and consultative processes.

For 130 years, CII has been engaged in shaping India's development journey and works proactively on transforming Indian Industry's engagement in national development. With its extensive network across the country and the world, CII serves as a reference point for Indian industry and the international business community.

In the journey of India's economic resurgence, CII facilitates the multifaceted contributions of the Indian Industry, charting a path towards a prosperous and sustainable future. With this backdrop, CII has identified "Accelerating Competitiveness: Globalisation, Inclusivity, Sustainability, Trust" as its theme for 2025-26, prioritising five key pillars. During the year, CII will align its initiatives to drive strategic action aimed at enhancing India's competitiveness by promoting global engagement, inclusive growth, sustainable practices, and a foundation of trust.

# About this playbook

India stands on the brink of a generational transformation in its agricultural ecosystem - driven by rapid digitalisation, strong policy support, and shifting consumer demand. For Australian businesses, there are tremendous opportunities to access scale. However, success will require businesses to adapt solutions to India's local context, build trusted relationships, persevere with regulatory requirements, and navigate market dynamics with patience and cultural intelligence.

**The India Agtech Playbook** has been developed to equip Australian SMEs and scaleups with the insights and tools to navigate this market. Inside, you'll find:

- A snapshot of emerging opportunities, demand drivers and policy incentives shaping India's agtech landscape.
- A readiness diagnostic to help you assess expansion preparedness and manage risk.
- Guidance on engagement pathways, stakeholder considerations and negotiation strategies tailored to the Indian business environment.
- Case studies and practical checklists that bring real-world lessons to life.

This Playbook is not a comprehensive market entry manual. Instead, it fills critical knowledge gaps and offers applied, actionable insights to help Australian agtech businesses chart a realistic and successful pathway into India.

## How do we define agtech?

Digital, biological and engineering technologies applied across the food and agriculture value chain to improve productivity, resilience and livelihoods. It encompasses a broad range of tools such as precision farming, IoT, biochemicals, digital platforms, and agri-finance solutions.





# Executive summary

India's agriculture sector is entering a decisive phase of transformation. With over half a billion middle-class consumers, demand for nutritious, safe, high-protein, and sustainable food is rising sharply.

At the same time, persistent challenges - low productivity, climate volatility, resource constraints, fragmented markets, and supply chain inefficiencies - create an urgent need for innovation. Agtech solutions are gaining prominence across the value chain, supported by strong policy incentives, with increased mechanisation, digitalisation and analytics enhancing outcomes in efficiency, quality and sustainability.

To succeed in India, Australian businesses must go beyond technology and ambition - success depends on thorough preparation, trusted relationships, patience and perseverance. This playbook is designed to equip SMEs and scaleups with practical strategies to navigate complexity, build the right relationships, and position for long-term growth in one of the world's most dynamic markets.



## Opportunities & challenges

- Demand for solutions is increasing across the value chain from bio-inputs and logistics through to precision agriculture and animal husbandry.
- Soil health, drought management, and access to finance are emerging hotspots
- Decades of growth runway exist due to the market size and growth potential, productivity imperative, digital adoption and climate vulnerability.
- Strong and consistent policy drivers include the AgriStack portal, digital agriculture mission, soil health cards, and farmer credit schemes
- Australian businesses should prepare to navigate issues around small farm size, fragmented markets, infrastructure gaps, price sensitivity, digital literacy, and scarcity of talent.



## Readiness & risk

- Success requires more than technology; firms must be market-ready.
- Businesses should assess their readiness across a range of factors including central and state regulatory knowledge, operational capability, and cultural preparedness before committing resources.
- The risk landscape in India is complex. Businesses should be prepared to address common risks around payment delays, poor cold chain infrastructure, land disputes, IP leakage, operational risk, regulatory breaches, and partner non-performance.



## Engagement pathways

- Relationships are central to successful market entry; counterparts can range from large conglomerates and digital platforms to traditional farmer-facing organisations.
- Businesses should understand what counterparts are looking for and have realistic expectations on their risk appetite and approval timeframes.
- When selecting a counterpart, businesses should be mindful of key criteria like strategic and cultural fit, reputation, governance, and political alignment. Seek advice and recommendations from trusted sources.
- When negotiating, understand and respect the relationship-centric business culture widely prevalent in India.

# 01

## Why India?

Key factors driving opportunities  
in the Indian agtech market



# Why India?

India's agriculture sector is ripe for innovation. Widespread access to digital infrastructure, supportive policy settings and rapid consumer demand growth are spurring uptake of productivity and sustainability enhancing solutions. With current yields still low in many areas, even modest improvements can deliver outsized gains. The agtech sector is already expanding rapidly, projected to add \$144 billion to the Indian economy by 2030.<sup>1</sup>

New technologies are reshaping farming practices: precision farming, drones, IoT, and AI are enhancing on-farm decision making, while digital platforms are opening direct access to markets. Government policy support remains strong. Agtech has become a national priority, promoting the uptake of new technology into the ecosystem.<sup>2</sup> A suite of ambitious programs including establishing information portals such as AgriStack and online trading platforms are reinforcing market momentum and encouraging foreign participation.<sup>3</sup>

Progress is already visible. Digital advisory platforms are scaling across millions of farmers and ag-fintech solutions are unlocking crop loans and post-harvest finance. India also offers access to a vast pool of tech talent, supported by the presence of global tech giants such as Microsoft, Google and Amazon and globally ranked universities, driving innovation and building local digital capability. Together, these developments are creating opportunities across the entire agricultural value chain.

Australia is well placed to compete. Its reputation for high-quality food and the recent free trade agreement with India offer it a competitive advantage. Australian inputs and technology can benefit from India's growing exports to Middle Eastern and European markets. Australian agriculture can also benefit from engaging with India's world-leading innovations in frugal engineering and digital-first solutions.

The opportunity, however, is not without complexity. Australian businesses must navigate varying state-level regulations, uneven rural infrastructure, small land holdings, a highly price-sensitive market, and fierce competition from rivals based in China, Europe and Israel. Success in India requires careful preparation, alignment with trusted local counterparts, and a sustained commitment to building relationships and understanding the realities of India's farm economy.



## Views from the Advisory Committee Members of the Australia India Tech Connections program



***“ From frugal innovation to advanced tech, Australia-India Agtech partnerships create solutions neither could achieve alone. ”***

Angeline Achariya, CEO, Innovation GameChangers and Board Director Wine Australia and The Australian Institute of Food Science & Technology



***“ By blending Australia’s agtech innovation with India’s agricultural strength, we can sow the seeds of shared prosperity. ”***

R.K. Gangwar, Managing Director, Mawana Sugars Ltd.



***“ Despite the differing agricultural systems between Australia and India, an acute focus on shared challenges is essential to catalysing long-term partnerships that can generate real tangible impact in the field. ”***

Will Taing, Director, Beanstalk Agtech









# India agtech opportunity map

## Agro-chemicals<sup>4</sup>

Current size: \$50.3 billion (2023)

CAGR: 6.5% (2024–2030)

## Bio-tech<sup>5</sup>

Current size: \$198 billion (2024)

Future size: \$457 billion (2030)

CAGR: 15% (2024–2030)

## Controlled-environment vertical farming, hydroponics, aquaponics<sup>8</sup>

Current size: \$1.52 billion (2024)

Future size: \$5 billion (2033)

CAGR: 12.7% (2025–2033)

## Ag-fintech – crop loans, value chain and post harvest financing<sup>13</sup>

The rapid uptake of digital payments has created new opportunities for financial services

## Soil health management<sup>14</sup>

Increased awareness of soil degradation creates opportunities for innovative solutions to support sustainable farming and climate resilience.

## Drought management

Offers opportunities to enhance climate resilience, safeguard agriculture and drive innovation in water, crop and fintech.

## Water management<sup>9</sup>

Current size: \$855.7 million (2024)

Future size: \$2.53 billion (2033)

CAGR: 12.48% (2025–2033)



India's agtech opportunities span the entire value chain. This opportunity map pinpoints the areas most relevant to Australia, identified through analysis of India's demand growth, national policy priorities and Australia's capabilities.

### Agriculture drones<sup>6</sup>

Current size: \$221.6 million (2024)

Future size: \$962.7 million (2033)

CAGR: 28.1% (2025–2033)

### Animal husbandry and dairy<sup>7</sup>

Current size: \$21.16 billion (2024)

Future size: \$37.2 billion (2033)

CAGR: 6.3% (2025–2033)

### Small machinery and equipment<sup>10</sup>

Current size: \$27.6 billion (2025)

Future size: \$41.56 billion (2030)

CAGR: 8.50% (2025–2030)

### Supply chain logistics – cold chain<sup>12</sup>

Current size: \$38.9 billion (2024)

Future size: \$103 billion (2033)

CAGR: 10.86% (2025–2033)

### IoT, sensors, analytics<sup>11</sup>

Current size: \$917.84 million (2024)

Future size: \$14 billion (2033)

CAGR: 40.58% (2025–2033)

Inputs

Growing

Processing and distribution

Enabling

# Demand drivers for agtech



## Market size and growth potential

- *Growing middle class:* Over 430 million strong; driving strong demand for healthy and safe agricultural products.
- *Food economy:* Projected to reach \$2.1 trillion by 2035.<sup>15</sup>
- *Shifting demand:* Rising incomes and shifting diets - from staples to vegetables, fibre, and micronutrients - create significant opportunities for agtech solutions.



## Modernisation imperative

- *Wastage:* High levels of wastage, with 5-7 intermediaries between farmers and consumers.<sup>16</sup>
- *Productivity:* Increased mechanisation, digitisation, and pay-as-you-go equipment models are helping small farmers improve yield.



## Digital economy

- *Growth:* The digital economy is expected to grow twice as fast as the overall economy, accounting for one-fifth of national income by 2030.
- *Farmer adoption:* More than 40% of farmers used e-payments in 2024, compared with 11% in 2022. The direct to consumer (D2C) model is gaining popularity through online platforms.<sup>17</sup>



## Resource constraints

- *Efficiency:* Reduced availability of arable land, rising labour and input costs have increased demand for solutions that boost yield or cut resource dependence.<sup>18</sup>



## Climate change resilience

- *Climate risks:* Droughts and heat create climate vulnerability and resource constraints on soil and water.<sup>19</sup> Farmers will need to mitigate against climate risks.





# Policy and incentive stack

India's agtech sector is backed by a stack of supportive central government policies and incentives, signalling clear long-term commitment. This overview highlights major national policies and measures shaping the agtech ecosystem. State government schemes also exist but are not captured here.

Layer	Key scheme/recent action	Opportunity areas
Digital & automation infrastructure	<b>Digital Agriculture Mission (2021-25)</b> <sup>20</sup> Helps modernise agriculture in India with \$476 million in funding for technology and pilot projects	Digital and automation solutions Data analytics and insights
	<b>AgriStack Portal</b> <sup>21</sup> Integrates farmers' data into a federated database and offers open Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) to support digital agriculture	Digital services Financial technology (fintech) Water and resource management Supply chain and logistics
	<b>'Kisan Drone' scheme</b> <sup>22</sup> Provides a 40-50% capital expenditure subsidy and demo grants to support farmers' use of drones for agricultural activities	Agricultural drones
Quality planting & input health	<b>Clean Plant Programme (CPP)</b> <sup>23</sup> Offers grant funding for the establishment of "nucleus" nurseries and labs that focus on healthy plant material production	Bio-tech and advanced farming systems
	<b>Soil Health Card Scheme</b> <sup>24</sup> Funds soil testing and the issuance of soil health cards	Soil health management



Layer	Key scheme/recent action	Opportunity areas
Sustainable & climate-smart production	<b>National Mission on Natural Farming (NMNF)</b> <sup>25</sup> Offers cluster grants and training support	Sustainable inputs
	<b>Zero Budget Natural Farming (ZBNF/PKVY)</b> <sup>26</sup> Promotes chemical-free farming by offering 50-60% cost-share inputs and farmer trainers	Sustainable inputs
	<b>National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA)</b> <sup>27</sup> Provides capital subsidies and training to promote the adoption of rain-fed technologies and improve water-use efficiency	Climate-smart solutions Water and resource management
Water, energy & resource efficiency	<b>Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY) – Per Drop More Crop</b> <sup>28</sup> Offers a 55% micro-irrigation subsidy to farmers and provides soft loans through NABARD's Micro Irrigation Fund (MIF)	Water and resource management
	<b>Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan (KUSUM)</b> <sup>29</sup> Includes a 30-50% subsidy for solar pumps and feeder solarisation	Water and resource management
Farmer finance & risk management	<b>Kisan Credit Card (KCC)</b> <sup>30</sup> Provides farmers with low-interest loans up to ₹500,000, helping them invest in inputs, equipment and machinery	Ag-fintech services
	<b>PM Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY)</b> <sup>31</sup> An agri-insurance scheme that offers 50-60% premium subsidy, while also incorporating technology for yield mapping	Ag-fintech services

# Challenges

While India's agtech opportunities are immense, Australian businesses must be mindful of the challenges that come with entering a fast-moving and complex market. Issues around small farm size, infrastructure, cost, digital literacy, funding, scarcity of talent and regulations can affect timelines and strategies. Preparing carefully is essential but so is staying agile, as conditions and policies can shift quickly. Key challenges you may encounter in the Indian market include:



## Size of farms and scalability

- The small size and fragmented nature of farms in India make it difficult to implement scalable and cost-effective agtech solutions across the country

**Australian firms could struggle to gain traction if their products are designed for large-scale farms**



## Price/return on investment

- Highly price sensitive market
- High upfront costs for technology adoption and uncertain returns on investment make farmers hesitant to embrace new solutions

**Australian firms will need to be able to demonstrate value addition through local pilots**



## Infrastructure & ecosystem

- Infrastructure maturity varies by region
- Rural areas can lack adequate storage, transport, and connectivity

**Location matters as Australian companies can face infrastructure bottlenecks, payment delays or weaker policy support**



## Regulation - state and central

- Complex and sometimes conflicting regulations at both the state and central levels create uncertainty, making it challenging for agtech businesses to navigate and scale their operations
- India has introduced increasingly stringent environmental compliance requirements<sup>32</sup>

**Australian firms may encounter delays or inconsistent rules that impact project feasibility**



### Digital literacy

- Low digital literacy among small-hold farmers limits their ability to fully utilise agtech tools

**Australian firms targeting farmers directly may need to work with farmer producer organisations (FPOs) or cooperatives**



### Resource & talent

- The agtech sector struggles to attract and retain skilled talent due to competition from other industries and a lack of specialised training in rural areas

**Australian firms may face delays in scaling if local skills are lacking**



### Seasonal business variations

- India's agriculture sector is highly seasonal which has the potential to significantly impact cash flows. Heavy monsoon dependency drives unpredictable business cycles, while festival and harvest seasons impact operational flows and working capital needs

**Agtech providers must adapt to seasonal inventory and financing requirements, ensuring solutions align with farmer's cash flow cycles and seasonal risk management needs**

## Navigating state-level variations

India's federal structure means that while national policies set the overall direction, the business environment, incentives and infrastructure quality can vary widely between states.

### What this means for Australian businesses:

- Expect regional diversity in regulatory processes, land acquisition rules, infrastructure readiness, and subsidy availability.
- Prioritise states with strong innovation ecosystems, local incubators, and industry clusters relevant to your technology.
- Engage early with state agencies and tap into local accelerators for market access and pilot support.
- Leverage networks like CII, and Austrade's state-level offices in Mumbai, Bengaluru and Hyderabad for introductions and up-to-date regulatory insights.





India's market is complex, but success comes with patience, preparation, and trusted partners.



**Aussan Laboratories**, a producer of organic sanitisers, faced initial scepticism, with many doubting the product's effectiveness. To overcome this, the company conducted extensive lab and field trials, providing clear proof of performance that built credibility and trust. They also addressed cultural and systemic hurdles by engaging senior decision-makers, starting with small-scale exporter trials to prove compliance, and establishing a local lab and team to demonstrate long-term commitment.



**Agridpower Ltd**, a leading silicon fertiliser company, faced a couple of challenges. The first was the need to educate farmers and retailers through repeated field demonstrations and training, being a completely new nutrient it was a pre-requisite. Another challenge was to navigate through the regulatory process. Provisional approval in 2017 was followed by three years of commercial trials and an additional year of securing state-level licenses. While approvals are now faster thanks to digitisation, the company's experience underscores the importance of sustained engagement and patience when entering the Indian market.



**Alluvium Group**, a leading environmental consultancy, noted that while India offers significant opportunities, success demands persistence, patience, and a strong local presence. The market can be slow-moving, with hierarchical decision-making and bureaucracy often extending timelines. Companies should also be mindful of corruption risks – they established clear internal policies and streamlined communication protocols between Australian and Indian teams to ensure transparency and compliance.



# 02

## Am I ready?

Assessing expansion readiness  
and risk mitigation





# Am I ready?

This section helps you assess whether your business is equipped to enter India's complex but high-potential market with confidence.

As this playbook has outlined, India offers vast opportunities in agtech for Australian firms.

However, India is a complex and competitive market. Success depends not only on technology but also on strategic preparation. Being well-prepared allows businesses to anticipate challenges, avoid costly mistakes, and build the resilience needed for long-term success.

This section outlines key criteria to assess your readiness and help your business prepare:

- The expansion-readiness diagnostic is a practical tool for businesses to assess market entry readiness across areas such as regulatory knowledge, culture capability and operational readiness. Use the tool as a starting point - don't wait to tick every box before acting. It's impossible to prepare for everything, so be flexible and responsive as you move forward with market entry.
- The risks and mitigation section highlights the key risks associated with partnering in India and provides practical mitigation strategies. By understanding potential pitfalls and how to address them, businesses can enter the Indian market with greater confidence, make informed decisions, and increase their chances of long-term success.





# Expansion-readiness diagnostic

Successfully entering a new market like India requires a strategic and rigorous approach. This checklist serves as a vital tool, providing a framework to assess your company's expansion-readiness across key areas.

## Technology readiness

- Q** Is the core technology at or beyond Technology Readiness Level (TRL) indicating a successful pre-commercial demonstration?

**EVIDENCE/TEST**  
**TRL $\geq$ 8 with independent test reports and field data spanning at least 12 months**

## Regulatory path

- Q** Do you understand central vs state-level rules impacting your product? Have you mapped import restrictions for inputs or certification requirements?

**EVIDENCE/TEST**  
**Ensure that at least 60% of the relevant regulatory landscape is mapped with at least one legal or policy partner engaged in India**

## Indian business culture

- Q** Does your team have India experience or cross-cultural capability?

**EVIDENCE/TEST**  
**Staff have experience working in India or with Indian partners or have undertaken specific training**

## Product market validation

- Q** Is your technology adaptable to smaller farm plots? Can it function in low-connectivity, high humidity environments?

**EVIDENCE/TEST**  
**Pilot results showing viability on small plots and demonstrated offline/mobile-first usability. Develop a plan to run pilots in India**

## Capital readiness

- Q** Do you have committed cash or credit to fund the India set-up and pilot?

**EVIDENCE/TEST**  
**A minimum of 18 months of financial runway must be secured**

## Linguistic localisation

- Q** If you are deploying directly to farmers, are you prepared to interface in regional languages and dialects?

**EVIDENCE/TEST**  
**Prepare plans for vernacular support systems and training materials in local languages**

## Risk management hygiene

- Q** Are you tracking key risks such as foreign exchange (FX) exposure, legal/IP risks, export-control regulations, and change-in-law clauses?

**EVIDENCE/TEST**  
**A well documented risk register highlighting key risks and mitigation strategies**

## Operational readiness

- Q** Are your leadership, operations, finance and HR functions structured and resourced for an India launch?

**EVIDENCE/TEST**  
**A complete organisational chart, process documents, budget allocations, and a detailed hiring plan**

# Risks and mitigation

Entering a new market comes with risks. The following outlines key risks specific to the Indian market, along with practical strategies to navigate and mitigate them.



## Policy reversals/ duty change

**IMPACT:** Margin erosion

**MITIGATION:** Use pass-through clauses and quarterly price resets in contracts; maintain close contact with local industry bodies and advisors to anticipate changes early.



## Payment delays

**IMPACT:** Cash-flow stress

**MITIGATION:** Anticipate delays as common; secure overdraft facilities; negotiate milestone-based payments.



## Weak cold-chain & logistics gap

**IMPACT:** Quality deterioration or spoilage; limits on scalability of perishables

**MITIGATION:** Explore partnerships with emerging digital platforms for last-mile delivery; bundle traceability and quality assurance systems with the product.



## Climate risks (erratic monsoons, droughts, pests)

**IMPACT:** Market volatility

**MITIGATION:** Adapt offerings to climate-smart use cases; pilot across diverse climatic zones.



## Foreign exchange volatility

**IMPACT:** Cost overruns

**MITIGATION:** Apply forward hedging; increase local sourcing; establish USD-denominated payment terms where possible.



## IP leakage

**IMPACT:** Competitive threat

**MITIGATION:** Register patents in India; diversify component manufacturing/sourcing where possible; recognise that relationships often underpin IP respect.





## Operational risk

**IMPACT:** Project delays & cost overruns

**MITIGATION:** Establish clear standard operating procedures and service level agreements with local partners; invest in strong local relationships to address unforeseen bottlenecks; maintain contingency staff and support training.



## Regulatory/ compliance breaches

**IMPACT:** Fines; operational stoppages; legal exposure

**MITIGATION:** Conduct regular compliance audits; provide staff training; leverage local advisors and industry networks to stay ahead of regulatory changes.



## Vendor/partner non-performance

**IMPACT:** Missed milestones; cost overruns

**MITIGATION:** Enforce SLAs with measurable KPIs; link payment to performance; rely on trusted relationships to flag issues early.



## Data sovereignty risk

**IMPACT:** Mandatory data localisation; government access to data for policy purposes

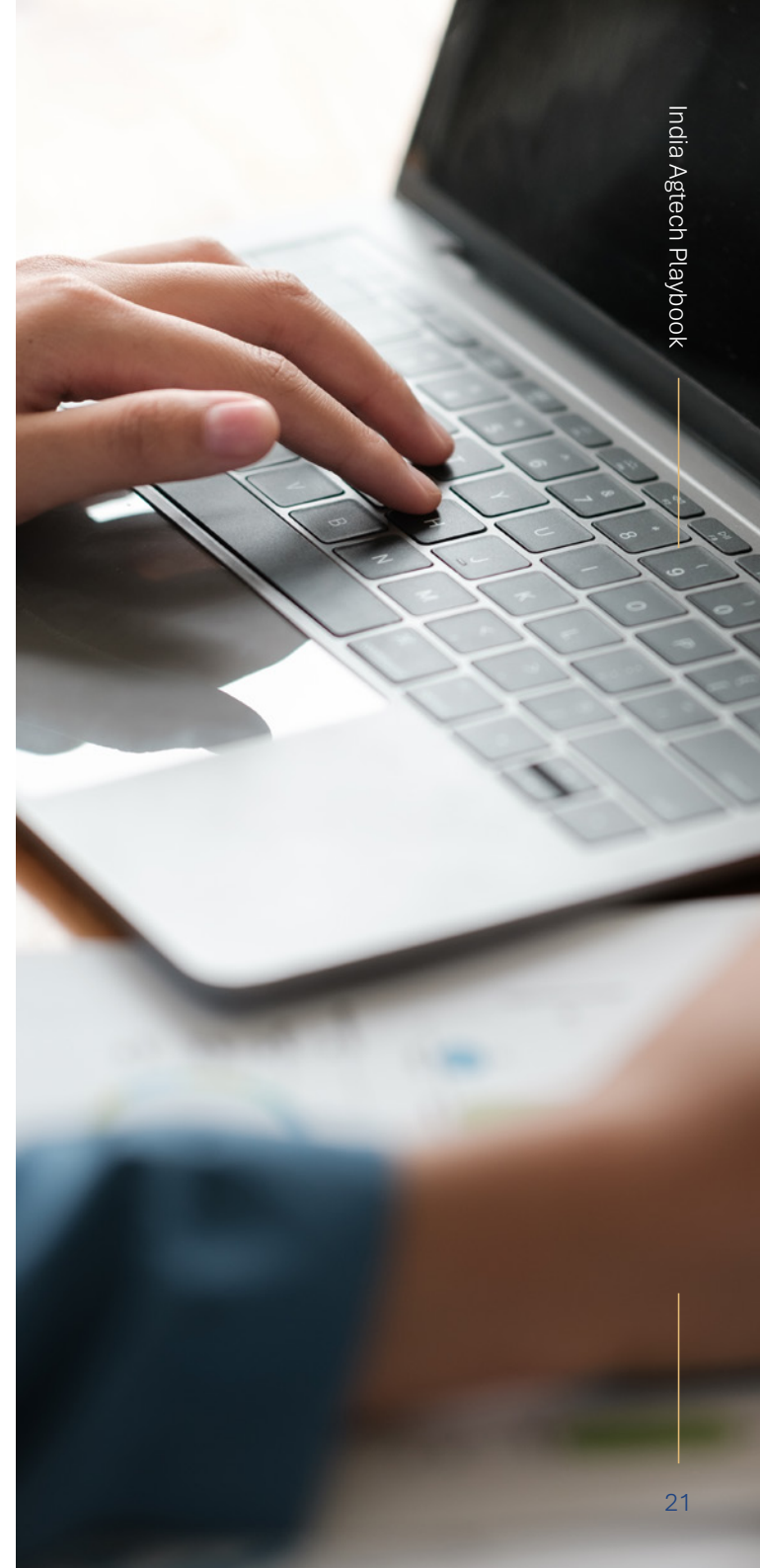
**MITIGATION:** Comply with local data-hosting laws using secure in-country servers, minimise and anonymise data, and include strict contractual and encryption safeguards to limit access and misuse.



## Rural banking infrastructure gaps

**IMPACT:** Delayed payments and uptake of new technology

**MITIGATION:** Partner with local banks, financial institutions, and agri-fintechs; design flexible financing models; and build contingencies for payment delays and low digital adoption.



# 03

## Engaging in India

Understanding Indian counterparts and  
navigating nuances in business culture



# Engaging in India

Relationships are at the heart of doing business in India. Time spent actively engaging with stakeholders on the ground helps businesses understand cultural nuances, build trust, and respond quickly to opportunities and challenges.

Australian firms succeed by engaging with a diverse set of counterparties across India's agricultural ecosystem. These range from farmer producer organisations and cooperatives, to digital platforms, retailers, agribusiness conglomerates, government agencies, and ecosystem enablers. Each offers a different engagement pathway, and each comes with its own opportunities, risks, and expectations.

Careful alignment is essential. Farmer producer organisations (FPOs) can aggregate demand but are price-sensitive; startups are fast-moving and open to co-development but may be unproven; conglomerates can scale quickly but have slower approval cycles; government agencies provide credibility and access to schemes but require patience. Understanding what each counterpart is looking for - and how Australian solutions fit - helps firms focus their efforts and avoid wasted energy.

Business culture in India also has its own rhythm. Deals move at a different pace, with senior sign-off required and a strong emphasis on relationship-building before commercial terms are finalised. Negotiations are often lengthy, evolving over multiple discussions, and it is common for terms to shift as conditions change. Trust, presence, and patience are the currencies of progress.

By treating relationship building as a process, choosing the right pathway, aligning with counterpart needs, and adapting to India's relationship-driven business culture, Australian agtech firms can position themselves for long-term success in one of the world's most dynamic agricultural markets.

## Inclusive engagement expands reach and adoption

Women perform an estimated 70% of agricultural labour in India yet often lack formal decision-making authority. Effective engagement must recognise gendered roles within mixed farming households and tailor outreach accordingly. Building partnerships with women's self-help groups (SHGs), cooperatives and FPOs can enhance adoption and trust. Approaches should also reflect regional differences in gender norms and cultural hierarchies - particularly in how technology demonstrations, credit access, and training are delivered. Designing gender-sensitive engagement protocols can significantly increase technology uptake and long-term impact.<sup>33</sup>

These examples illustrate how Australian businesses have engaged in the Indian market.



**Aussan Labs** entered India together with a local partner and, over three and a half years, built on-the-ground capability by establishing an office, technical team, and R&D facilities. The company benefited from regulatory approvals that classified Aussan L44 as a shelf-life enhancer rather than a preservative, enabling both domestic food security uses and export opportunities. Strategic partnerships with vendors and major corporates - spanning from street-level retailers to multinationals - further accelerated market acceptance and scale.



**Agripower Ltd** conducted extensive research trials across the country to evaluate its product's performance in different climatic zones, beginning in 2013. After passing through multiple rounds of approvals, farmer demonstrations and state specific trials, they started commercialising their silicon fertilisers in 2021. Agripower is now selling its product through 4 different brands across 20 major states, serving almost 500,000 farmers across India.







# Agtech engagement pathways

Finding the right business counterpart is a crucial component of successful market entry. Below are the relevant considerations involved in engaging with key stakeholders in the Indian market.

Typical role for an Australian agtech firm	What the partner is looking for	Risk appetite	Internal / regulatory approval speed	Examples of Australian collaborations
<b>Indian counterpart: Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) &amp; cooperatives</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• License or co-develop technology</li> <li>• Technical support and training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Affordable smallholder-ready solutions; visible yield/price gains</li> </ul>	<b>Low</b>	Slow	ConnectOne Club runs digital auctions for Kerala spice FPOs (VGCP, eCardamom)
<b>Indian counterpart: Agtech providers &amp; digital platforms</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• License or co-develop technology</li> <li>• Supply niche components or services (APIs, AI, sensors)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Differentiated modules with clear ROI; fast integration; co-marketing</li> </ul>	<b>High</b>	Fast	GoMicro × ConnectOne Club co-building AI-based certification to de-risk ag trade
<b>Indian counterpart: Retail &amp; food-processing / distribution</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proven technologies ready to deploy at scale</li> <li>• Technical support and training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low-cost, reliable quality assurance; fast ROI; export-grade compliance</li> </ul>	<b>Medium</b>	Medium	Heat & Control India manufactures equipment in Chennai, serving processors nationwide.

Typical role for an Australian agtech firm	What the partner is looking for	Risk appetite	Internal / regulatory approval speed	Examples of Australian collaborations
<b>Indian counterpart: Large agribusinesses &amp; conglomerates</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Licence or co-develop technology</li> <li>Supply niche components or services (traceability, automation)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proven at scale; compliance/ESG reporting; predictable savings</li> </ul>	<b>Medium</b>	Medium	GrainCorp operates on-the-ground in Gurugram, engaging large Indian buyers/offtakers.
<b>Indian counterpart: Government &amp; state agencies</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proven technologies ready to deploy at scale</li> <li>Technical support and training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alignment with schemes/ standards; Make-in-India localisation; credible delivery partners</li> </ul>	<b>Low</b>	Slow	Rubicon Water × Govt. of Karnataka - automated gates & control systems across the canal network.
<b>Indian counterpart: Ecosystem enablers (T-Hub, Atal Innovation Mission, etc.)</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Licence or co-develop technology (pilot frameworks)</li> <li>Technical support and training (mentors/testbeds)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clear pilot use-case and pathway to scale; validated impact</li> </ul>	<b>High</b>	Fast-medium	Novolo in the RISE Accelerator; MoU with Coffee Board of India to enable quality assurance pilots.



# Counterpart selection criteria

This section outlines the key counterpart engagement criteria for companies looking to enter the Indian market, helping them evaluate potential partners based on strategic fit, reputation, financial stability, regulatory compliance, governance, and political alignment.



## Strategic & product fit

### WHY IT MATTERS

The counterpart should give you something you don't have such as access to farmer networks, digital platforms, processing facilities etc.

### TYPICAL EVIDENCE

Size of farmer/member base; distribution reach; existing customer channels.



## Reputation & execution track-record

### WHY IT MATTERS

In India, reputation opens doors. A counterpart trusted by farmers or regulators reduces your execution risk.

### TYPICAL EVIDENCE

References from trusted advisors, proof of successful project delivery; referrals from FPOs, government or industry associations.



## Regulatory hygiene

### WHY IT MATTERS

Counterparties must comply with input, food safety, and data regulations. Non-compliance can create reputational or legal risks.

### TYPICAL EVIDENCE

Licences for seed/fertiliser distribution; Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) approvals.



## Corporate governance

### WHY IT MATTERS

Strong boards and transparent practices are a proxy for professionalism and reduce reputational risk.

### TYPICAL EVIDENCE

Details of board structure, independent directors, auditor reports, corporate social responsibility disclosures.



## Political capital

### WHY IT MATTERS

In India's federal system, alignment with influential stakeholders can accelerate approvals and access. Over-reliance, however, can create dependency risks.

### TYPICAL EVIDENCE

Media scan, integrity checks, political-exposure reports.



## Cultural fit

### WHY IT MATTERS

Business in India is relationship-driven. Trust, communication style, and alignment of values are as important as the contract.





### TYPICAL EVIDENCE

Direct interactions, recommendations from peers, site visits, and trial projects.

# Negotiating in India

This section offers practical insights for negotiating in India, covering key aspects of the business landscape, a guide to engaging with various stakeholders, and essential tips for ensuring successful negotiations.

## Understanding the landscape

Traits	What this means for you
 <b>Dynamic and unpredictable</b>	Policy shifts and fast-moving technology adoption can change deal parameters overnight. It's important to stay agile.
 <b>Relationship centric</b>	Trust precedes transactions; connection is the real currency.
 <b>Hierarchical</b>	Senior sign-off is mandatory; decisions cascade top-down.
 <b>Price-sensitive, value-driven</b>	Expect hard and lengthy negotiating and requests for "best price".

## Organisation type cheat sheet

### Public- sector

#### Central and state agriculture departments

- Cautious, process-heavy; long approval cycles
- Strict compliance, formal tenders

### Professional-managed

#### Large agribusinesses, multinationals, processors and input firms

- Mid-level empowerment varies; moderate pace
- Value credentials and detailed proposals

### Promoter-led

#### Family businesses, SMEs, startups

- Nimble, risk-taking; swift but firm bargaining
- Decisions pivot on relationship and speed

### FPOs and cooperatives

#### Cooperatives of farmers or milk producers

- Member driven, semi-public entities
- Decisions often slow, trust and local presence are critical

# Guidelines for successful negotiations

Here are some essential tips for negotiating successfully in India:

- ✓ **Lead with trust, not terms**  
Seek credible introductions. Invest time in meals, small talk and shared stories before numbers.
- ✓ **Map the decision chain**  
Identify & engage the real power-holder early; match them with your own senior executive.
- ✓ **Plan for “Indian-Stretchable-Time”**  
Timelines stretch; patience signals respect.
- ✓ **Lead with value, leave room to move**  
Show the full value of your offer – product, service and support – rather than competing on price. Build flexibility into scope, timing and add-ons so you can adjust without discounting when negotiations evolve.
- ✓ **Negotiate with a best-alternative handy**  
Negotiating is expected; know your walk-away and leave room to offer concessions.
- ✓ **Listen between the lines**  
Phrases like “we’ll try” often mean “no”; confirm politely in writing.
- ✓ **Give respect & show harmony**  
Avoid public criticism; frame objections as suggestions in private.
- ✓ **Treat the contract as a living document**  
Minor re-negotiations post-signature are not uncommon; use multiple communication channels to address issues. Legal action is a last resort.
- ✓ **Mind the festival calendar**  
State and national holidays trigger staff leave & logistics bottlenecks; avoid crunch deadlines then.
- ✓ **Document, yet stay flexible**  
Follow each meeting with clear minutes and email recaps to lock in commitments.
- ✓ **Respect diversity**  
Avoid a one-size-fits-all assumptions. Be prepared for different languages and styles of engagement across states and organisations.



# 04 More information

## Additional resources

Expanding your business in India requires careful preparation and a deep understanding of the local market. Asialink Business offers a suite of practical resources and training designed to help you build your India business capability, increase your chances of commercial success, and avoid common pitfalls.

### India Doing Business Guide

The India Doing Business Guide is an essential resource for Australian businesses and investors seeking to grow in India. Whether you are just starting out or already established in India, this guide provides practical and detailed information to support your business growth, plus links to reputable external resources for further information.

**Doing Business Guide: India | Asialink Business**  
<https://asialinkbusiness.com.au/publication/doing-business-guide-india/>



### Doing Business in India – Online course

The Doing Business in India online self-paced course provides an opportunity for participants to acquire knowledge of how to do business and maximise business outcomes with stakeholders in India.

**Doing Business in India | Asialink Business**  
<https://asialinkbusiness.com.au/course/doing-business-india/>



# Acknowledgements

This Playbook draws on the experience and perspectives of businesses and experts working at the forefront of Australia–India cleantech collaboration. We would like to acknowledge the contributions of:

## Australian business:

- The Alluvium Group
- Agripower
- Aussan Laboratories
- Novolo
- Rubicon Water

## Indian business:

- AGI Milltec
- Agnext Technologies
- City Greens
- Fowler Westrup
- ITC
- Mahindra & Mahindra
- Satsure Analytics

## Government and ecosystem:

- Austrade
- CII CoE for Innovation, Entrepreneurship & Startups
- CII Food and Agriculture CoE
- CII-ITC CoE for Sustainable Development
- Global Victoria
- T-Hub
- ThinkAg
- Trade and Investment Queensland

## Advisory Committee

This Playbook benefitted from valuable insights from the following experts:



**Angeline Acharya,**  
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and Board Director Wine Australia  
and The Australian Institute of  
Food Science & Technology



**Rakesh Kumar Gangwar,**  
Managing Director,  
Mawana Sugars



**William Taing,**  
Director, Beanstalk Agtech

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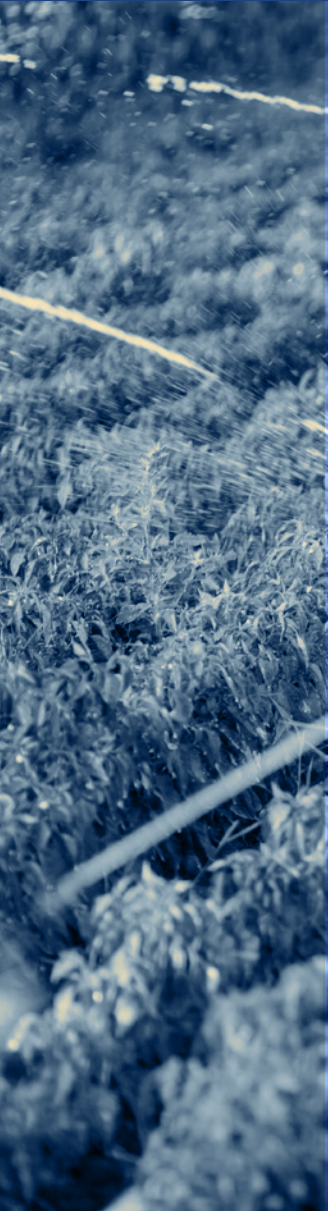
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*This program is supported through a grant from  
the Centre for Australia-India Relations.*