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AUSTRALIA–INDIA AGRIBUSINESS: STRATEGIC PATHWAYS FOR SHARED VALUE

STRATEGIC BRIEF

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AUTHORS

Vanita Yadav, Somu Bhattacharya, Nicky Morrison, Basant Maheshwari, Maria Estela Varua, David Tissue, Brajesh Singh, and Sapna Narula.

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Locked Bag 1797, Penrith, NSW 2751, Australia

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Australia–India agribusiness relationship is increasingly important in advancing food security, climate resilience, digital transformation, and Indo-Pacific economic diversification. As both countries navigate supply chain volatility, geopolitical realignment, and accelerating climate risk, structured collaboration in agribusiness offers strategic value beyond bilateral trade expansion.

The two agricultural systems demonstrate both structural asymmetry and strong complementarity. India's agricultural production base is substantially larger than Australia's in aggregate value terms, while both countries record broadly similar agricultural export values. Australia exports a high proportion of its production through highly mechanised systems integrated into global markets, while India retains a large domestic production base with growing capability in agro-processing, digital agriculture, and scalable technology deployment, indicating significant potential for deeper value-chain collaboration.

This configuration creates four priority shared-value pathways for roundtable discussion:

1. **AgTech and digital agriculture collaboration:** pairing Australia's precision agriculture and research strengths with India's scale in digital deployment and advisory systems.
2. **Workforce capability and skills alignment:** co-developing sector-specific competency standards, micro-credentials, and mobility pathways to support adoption and productivity.
3. **Sustainable trade and traceability systems:** strengthening transparency, measurement and verification, and standards alignment to build resilient export pathways and credibility.
4. **Trust-based governance architecture:** establishing practical institutional mechanisms (forums, pilots, data protocols, reporting routines) that embed reciprocity and measurable outcomes at scale.

AgriMaitri provides a practical platform to advance these pathways. By anchoring collaboration in measurable outcomes, co-investment, and structured governance, the partnership can move from dialogue to demonstrable pilot initiatives — strengthening bilateral trust while contributing to resilient agrifood systems across the Indo-Pacific.

AUSTRALIA–INDIA AGRIBUSINESS: STRATEGIC PATHWAYS FOR SHARED VALUE

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Agribusiness cooperation between Australia and India is unfolding within a period of global transition marked by climate volatility, supply chain disruption, geopolitical realignment, and accelerating digital transformation. For both countries, strengthening agrifood collaboration is not simply a matter of expanding trade volumes — it is about building resilient value chains, diversifying strategic partnerships, and reinforcing Indo-Pacific economic stability.

Australia brings advanced agriscience capability, high-productivity farming systems, biosecurity strength, and export-integrated supply chains. India brings scale, a rapidly expanding consumer market, strong digital deployment capability, and growing agro-processing and AgTech ecosystems. This Strategic Brief provides a concise evidence base for the roundtables and identifies priority pathways for practical cooperation and pilot initiatives.

For Australia, deeper agribusiness collaboration with India supports supply-chain diversification, reduces concentration risk in export markets, expands access to rapidly scaling digital agriculture ecosystems, and strengthens Australia's leadership role in Indo-Pacific agrifood governance.

AGRIBUSINESS: SCOPE AND SYSTEM CHARACTERISTICS

Agribusiness refers to the integrated system of activities involved in the production, processing, distribution and marketing of agricultural products (FAO, n.d.; Davis & Goldberg, 1957). It encompasses input supply (seeds, fertilisers, machinery), on-farm production, post-harvest handling, processing, logistics, retail, and the policy and institutional settings that shape these activities. Agribusiness, therefore, extends beyond primary production to include the interconnected technologies, labour systems, regulatory frameworks and supply chains that link farm to market.

Unlike many industrial sectors, agribusiness operates under distinctive structural conditions. Production cycles are seasonal and biologically constrained; price volatility is influenced by weather, pests, disease and global trade dynamics; many products are perishable; and government policy (subsidies, tariffs, biosecurity and environmental regulation) plays a significant shaping role.

For the purposes of this brief, agribusiness is considered across four broad domains: agriculture, livestock, fisheries and forestry. This systems perspective is important for understanding both the complementarities and the governance challenges shaping Australia–India collaboration.

KEY EXPORT SECTORS IN AUSTRALIAN AGRICULTURE

In Australian agriculture, the primary sub-sectoral focus is on broadacre farming, fruits and vegetables, plantation crops, and fodder exports. The reported Australian gross value of agricultural production for 2024–25 is AUD 88.4 billion, including livestock (ABARES, 2024a, 2024b). With the inclusion of fisheries and forestry, this value increases to AUD 94.3 billion (or up to AUD 99.7 billion, based on revised ABARES estimates from December 2024).

The significance of exports remains paramount, as nearly 72% of Australian agricultural produce is exported (ABARES, 2024b). To identify the importance of exports in Australia's total agricultural production value, the top five commodities—which together contribute more than 50%—were cereals (17%), cattle (16%), fruit and nuts (8%), vegetables (7%), and milk (7%) (ABARES, 2024a, 2024b). Over the past five decades, compositional shifts in output have increased the production share of five commodities: fruit, vegetables, meat, oilseeds, and pulses. Table 1 presents Australia's key agri-food export categories to India, illustrating a structure dominated by primary agricultural commodities.

KEY EXPORT SECTORS IN INDIAN AGRICULTURE

In India, agriculture and allied activities (as termed by the Government of India) remain the backbone of the nation's economy, contributing about 16% to the national output and supporting around 46.1% of the population (Government of India, Ministry of Finance, 2025). Within agriculture, the main contributors are cereals (with paddy and wheat accounting for 85% of the gross value of output within cereals); fruits and vegetables (with cereals, fruits, and vegetables together accounting for 54.1% of total agricultural produce); pulses; oilseeds; and condiments and spices. Growth in the allied sector has been driven by milk and dairy products, livestock, fisheries, aquaculture, meat and eggs, forestry, and logging.

The gross value added of agricultural produce in India, estimated at AUD 885.3 billion in 2023–24 (INR 4,878 thousand crore with an average exchange rate of AUD 1 = INR 55.10, NSO, MoSPI, Government of India, 2025), is substantially higher than that of Australia (refer Figure 1). This asymmetry illustrates the structural contrast between India's large, domestically oriented agricultural base and Australia's comparatively smaller but highly export-integrated production system. Table 2 presents India's key agri-food export categories to Australia, illustrating a strong diaspora-driven demand in Australia, making India's agri exports uniquely positioned versus other suppliers.

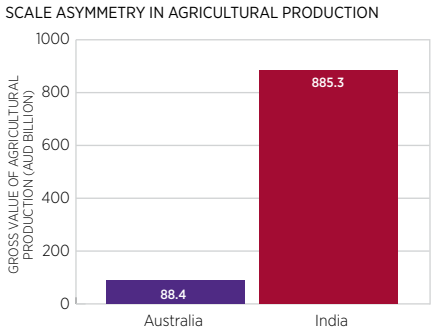

Figure 1. Scale asymmetry in agricultural production between India and Australia.

Note: India's production value is reported as gross value added (GVA) and Australia's as gross value of production/output (GVP/GVO); accounting methodologies differ. The figures are presented to illustrate relative scale and strategic context rather than as a precise like-for-like economic comparison.

Table 1: Australia's Top Food and Agricultural Exports to India

NO.	PRODUCT CATEGORY	EXPORT VALUE (USD)	YEAR
1	Edible vegetables and certain roots and tubers	$1.09B	2024
2	Edible fruits, nuts, peel of citrus fruit, melons	$117.34M	2024
3	Cereals	$39.45M	2024
4	Milling products, malt, starches, inulin, wheat gluten	$11.90M	2024
5	Oil seeds, oleaginous fruits, grains, seeds	$11.16M	2024
6	Beverages, spirits and vinegar	$6.32M	2024
7	Fish, crustaceans, molluscs, aquatic invertebrates	$2.82M	2024
8	Live animals	$2.21M	2024
9	Miscellaneous edible preparations	$1.60M	2024
10	Meat and edible meat offal	$1.55M	2024
11	Animal, vegetable fats and oils	$1.30M	2024
12	Vegetable, fruit, nut food preparations	$866.05K	2024
13	Dairy products, eggs, honey, edible products	$802.72K	2024
14	Cereal, flour, starch, milk preparations	$733.24K	2024
15	Residues and waste from food industries, animal fodder	$631.18K	2024
16	Sugars and sugar confectionery	$130.31K	2024
17	Coffee, tea, mate and spices	$74.12K	2024
18	Cocoa and cocoa preparations	$33.32K	2024
19	Products of animal origin	$349.45K	2023
20	Live trees, plants, bulbs, roots, cut flowers	$17.52K	2023
21	Meat, fish and seafood preparations	$578	2023

Source: Trading Economics (2026a)

Table 2: India's Top Agriculture and Food Exports to Australia

NO.	PRODUCT CATEGORY	EXPORT VALUE (USD)	YEAR
1	Cereals	$86.34M	2024
2	Coffee, tea, mate and spices	$85.27M	2024
3	Miscellaneous edible preparations	$82.98M	2024
4	Rubbers (natural rubber – plantation crop)	$193,981	2024

Cereals

NO.	CEREAL CATEGORY	EXPORT VALUE (USD)	YEAR
1	Rice	$85.69M	2024
2	Buckwheat, millet and canary seed (cereals not specified elsewhere)	$611.48K	2024
3	Grain sorghum	$23.09K	2024
4	Oats	$12.93K	2024
5	Barley	$4.07K	2024
6	Corn (maize)	$1.57K	2024
7	Rye in the grain	$212	2024
8	Wheat and meslin	$135	2024

Coffee, Tea and Spice

NO.	PRODUCT CATEGORY	EXPORT VALUE (USD)	YEAR
1	Coffee, coffee husks, substitutes with coffee	$23.89M	2024
2	Tea	$15.31M	2024
3	Ginger, saffron, turmeric, thyme, bay leaves	$13.96M	2024
4	Pepper (genus piper, capsicum or pimenta)	$13.79M	2024
5	Seeds (anise, badian, fennel, coriander, cumin)	$10.45M	2024
6	Nutmeg, mace and cardamoms	$6.18M	2024
7	Cinnamon and cinnamon-tree flowers	$948K	2024
8	Cloves (whole fruit, cloves and stems)	$738.29K	2024
9	Vanilla beans	$5.61K	2023

Miscellaneous Food Preparation

NO.	PRODUCT CATEGORY	EXPORT VALUE (USD)	YEAR
1	Food preparations not specified elsewhere	$60.67M	2024
2	Sauces and preparations therefor; mixed condiments; mustard flour and meal	$11.40M	2024
3	Extracts, essences, concentrates of coffee, tea, mate; roasted chicory	$10.64M	2024
4	Soups, broths, preparations therefor; homogenised composite food	$184.59K	2024
5	Yeasts, other single-cell micro-organisms; prepared baking powders	$97.02K	2024
6	Ice cream and other edible ice	$23.88K	2023

Source: Trading Economics (2026b)

COMPLEMENTARITIES IN AUSTRALIAN AND INDIAN AGRIBUSINESS

The agri-food trade flows between Australia and India reveal a pattern of functional complementarity and structural asymmetry. Australia's export profile is dominated by large-scale shipments of minimally processed agricultural commodities, enabled by its highly mechanised production systems and deep integration with global value chains. By contrast, India's agricultural exports to Australia—although limited in overall volume—primarily consist of cereals, nuts, spices, and processed or prepared food products that correspond to the diversified dietary preferences and multicultural consumption patterns characteristic of the Australian market. These differentiated trade patterns highlight divergent patterns of comparative advantage but also underscore the extent to which demographic heterogeneity and market-specific consumer dynamics shape the composition of bilateral agri-food trade between Australia and India.

Overall, India's agricultural sector is larger than Australia's, with the gross value of India's agricultural and allied sector output in 2023–24 being approximately AUD 885 billion (after currency conversion). This is substantially higher than Australia's agricultural output (AUD 88.4 billion, ABARES, 2024b). Despite this considerably large difference in production volume, India's agricultural export value (AUD 71.7 billion in 2025) remains nearly similar to Australia's agricultural export value (AUD 71.6 billion in 2023-24) (see Figure 2).

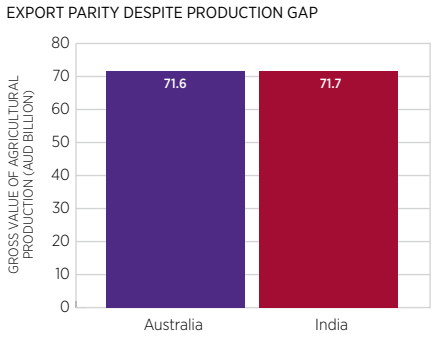

Figure 2. Agricultural export value parity despite production scale differences. This near parity in export value, when viewed alongside the production gap, highlights contrasting export intensities and differing market orientations in the two agrifood systems.

In other words, Australia exports a much larger share of what it produces, while India exports only a small fraction of its very large production base. Together, these trade patterns highlight India's significant potential to expand its agricultural export base and point to the complementary strengths of the two countries, offering opportunities for deeper trade engagement and cooperation.

STRATEGIC IMPLICATION

This structural asymmetry presents a significant opportunity. Australia's export-oriented production systems and regulatory credibility can complement India's production scale and expanding processing capability. Targeted collaboration could focus on upgrading value chains, strengthening standards alignment, expanding traceability systems, and co-developing export-ready products and pilots for Indo-Pacific markets.

REVIEW FINDINGS: EMERGING THEMES IN SHARED VALUE PATHWAYS

THEME 1: INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY

Literature indicates that agricultural innovation enhances productivity, incomes, and food security when it is embedded in effective value-chain arrangements and supported by enabling institutions. Over the years, the impact of agricultural supply chain innovation on poverty alleviation and food security in developing countries has been a central concern for both researchers and policymakers.

Innovation is increasingly conceptualised as a process of co-production (Hartwich & Negro, 2010; Jasanoff, 2004), in which value-chain actors interact, cooperate, and coordinate to generate new knowledge, technologies, and practices for shared outcomes. Two prominent innovation approaches are the open innovation model (Chesbrough, 2003) and the agricultural innovation system (Devaux et al., 2018; Klerkx et al., 2019).

Pioneering developments in precision, smart, and sustainable agriculture also appear across the literature, where researchers increasingly highlight how modern technologies can be integrated with farming systems in ways that integrate agriculture with modern technologies in an environmentally friendly manner. With the application of advanced technologies such as robots, sensors, cloud computing, big data analytics, and artificial intelligence, farms and agricultural enterprises can operate more economically, effectively, and sustainably (Miller et al., 2025).

Progressive technologies such as unmanned aerial vehicles or drones with autonomous flight control, equipped with lightweight and powerful multispectral, hyperspectral, and thermal infrared cameras, are increasingly being used to assess crop biomass accumulation and fertilization status, detect weeds, monitor crop macronutrient (e.g., calcium, magnesium, potassium, sodium) levels, quantify abiotic stress, estimate crop yield and evaluate sodicity and drought tolerance in relation to crop physiological performance (Cheng et al., 2024; Das et al., 2022; Choudhury et al., 2022).

AGTECH: AN EMERGING GROWTH AREA FOR BOTH AUSTRALIA AND INDIA

Despite agriculture being described in literature as the least digitised of all sectors in the US and Australian economies (Blackburn et al. 2017), initiatives are now emerging to promote equitable data access and safeguard against data misuse. While expectations of global economic growth driven by digital technology adoption in sustainable agriculture remain high (Chavas & Nauges 2020), concrete evidence is still only beginning to emerge. Investments in agri-food supply chains, which exceed USD 30 billion (Burwood-Taylor 2021), still represent only a fraction of the global value of food systems, estimated at about USD 8 trillion (van Nieuwkoop 2019).

The key revenue growth drivers for AgTech emerge for both Australia and India. Agtech application examples include the rapid expansion of precision agriculture technologies, supported by increasing adoption of AI-driven analytics, IoT sensors, and drone-based monitoring systems that enable real-time assessment of soil, crop, weather, and pest conditions. These technologies enhance farm productivity through predictive analytics, resource-efficient input use, and targeted interventions, helping reduce water, fertiliser, and pesticide use while improving yields and sustainability. In parallel, growing emphasis on climate-smart agriculture—driven by climate variability, resource pressures, and government support—is accelerating investment in automation, data-enabled decision-support platforms, and sustainable operational practices across both countries

PERSPECTIVES ON FUTURE PATHWAYS

Realising the full potential of Indo-Australian AgTech and innovation will depend not only on advances in AI, sensing, robotics and climate-smart tools, but also on the organisational capabilities that translate these tools into superior decisions and measurable outcomes. This aligns with the "technology fallacy," which argues that people, culture and processes are decisive determinants of digital transformation success, not technology alone. Prioritising co-design with end-users, systematic knowledge translation, and agile implementation—while sharing trial evidence and practices bilaterally to avoid duplication—can shorten learning cycles, conserve resources, and accelerate resilient, inclusive value-chain upgrading across both countries.

STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS FOR BILATERAL COLLABORATION

Australia's strengths in precision agriculture, research-led innovation, biosecurity systems, and emerging traceability capability complement India's scale in digital extension, mobile-enabled advisory systems, and rapidly expanding AgTech ecosystems. Bilateral pilots that link advanced sensing and analytics with scalable farmer advisory platforms could accelerate productivity, climate adaptation, and resilient value-chain upgrading in both countries.

THEME 2: TRAINING, SKILLS AND AGRI WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

As industry talent needs and workforce development strategies evolve, the workforce, work models, and training environments are undergoing significant transformation worldwide, including in India and Australia. Digital and AI-enabled learning are proposed to improve access, personalisation and skills relevance when embedded in well-designed models of practice, though equity and implementation challenges remain (e.g., infrastructure, pedagogy, and support for learners) (Zou et al. 2025; OECD, 2023).

SECTOR-SPECIFIC SKILLS AND EMERGING LEARNING TECHNOLOGY

In light of this broader transformation, the global smart learning market is projected to reach approximately USD 177–179 billion by 2030 (≈16–17% CAGR), underscoring rapid diffusion across education and corporate training worldwide (Grand View Research, 2026). Emerging technologies such as AI, IoT, and automation are rapidly reshaping skill requirements across sectors, making it essential to implement sector-specific, technology-driven workforce training frameworks that address skills gaps, improve adaptability, and strengthen workforce resilience (Adegbite, 2024).

For agribusiness, the implications are clear: reframing talent development must go hand-in-hand with strategic adoption of emerging learning technologies to enhance job-ready capabilities, practical application, and retention—supported by national skills and workforce initiatives that are already underway in Australia and in India.

Critically for the agri-food system, sector-specific skill frameworks and credentials need to be identified, including competency standards, micro-credentials, and trainer capacity to address productivity, sustainability, and value-chain needs. Building a future-ready agri workforce in India and Australia requires reframing talent development alongside digitally enabled training models.

Evidence shows that information- and communication-technology (ICT)–based extension—spanning mobile/SMS advisories, videos and voice services—raises awareness, adoption, yields and incomes when messaging is well designed and accompanied by user training and complementary supports, while poorly designed roll-outs underperform (systematic review of 49 studies) (Mulungu, Kassie, & Tschopp, 2025). Moreover, when technologies are knowledge-intensive bundles, training that is participatory, structured, and suited to cognitive load measurably improves both knowledge and uptake at scale (Hörner et al., 2022).

At the same time, the shift toward data-intensive, precision agriculture heightens demand for digital and analytical skills, and adoption is shaped by capability, perceived complexity, and enabling conditions, underscoring the need for competency-based curricula and micro-credential pathways that map to roles.

STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS FOR WORKFORCE COLLABORATION

Digital transformation is reshaping agribusiness skills requirements across both countries. Opportunities exist to co-develop sector-specific micro-credentials, align competency standards, build trainer capacity, and explore mobility pathways under evolving Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) arrangements. A coordinated workforce agenda would strengthen AgTech adoption, improve productivity outcomes, and support inclusive rural economic development. Mapping competency standards across both countries and exploring mutual recognition of selected agribusiness qualifications could accelerate skilled mobility under CECA while supporting AgTech adoption.

THEME 3: TRADE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Agriculture—the backbone of global food security—accounts for approximately 70% of global freshwater withdrawals, occupies about 11% of the world's land surface, and contributes roughly 22% of anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions (FAO, 2009). In 2021, global agricultural trade surpassed US$200 billion for the first time (UN Comtrade, 2021). Between 1995 and 2022, the share of low- and middle-income countries in global agricultural trade increased from 30% to 40%, while high-income countries, including Australia, maintained a steady 60% share over the same period (FAO, 2025).

AGRIBUSINESS VALUE CHAINS

Agribusiness value chains serve as dynamic mechanisms that drive sustainable economic growth and strengthen national food security. (Alawode, 2025). In agribusiness, supply chains focus on the efficient sourcing, transport, storage, and delivery of products, whereas value chains encompass the full range of activities that add value from inputs to final consumption, emphasising quality enhancement and competitive advantage.

The agribusiness value chain typically spans input planning and supply (e.g., seeds, irrigation, fertilisers, equipment, labour), on-farm production (agronomic practices), and primary post-harvest operations such as picking, sorting/grading, packing, and warehousing. It then proceeds downstream through aggregation/collection, processing (primary and, where relevant, secondary/industrial), storage and distribution/marketing, and culminates in consumption in domestic or international markets. This sequencing aligns with widely used agri-food value-chain frameworks that also recognise the role of support services and the enabling environment (FAO, n.d.).

Enhancing efficiency and coordination across these stages—via effective crop planning and input procurement, productivity-oriented production systems, improved grading and packaging, and well-orchestrated distribution through wholesalers, channel partners and retailers—raises competitiveness and value creation chain-wide, reinforcing the long-term value proposition for end markets.

TRADE AND SUSTAINABILITY – A COMPLEX RELATIONSHIP

Over the past quarter-century, research on trade and sustainability has examined how openness shapes environmental outcomes and social equity, with recent systematic reviews emphasising context-dependent and mixed empirical results across pollutants, regions, and institutions (Chaudhry, 2025). Within the global emissions profile, agriculture, forestry and other land use (AFOLU) contributed about 13–21% of anthropogenic GHGs in 2010–2019 (IPCC, 2022), underscoring the sector's centrality to sustainable trade and supply chains. Scholarly perspectives typically fall into three strands—critical of trade's environmental impacts, supportive of trade's role in diffusion and scale, and mixed—reflecting evidence that while "pollution-haven" dynamics are observed in some settings, trade and foreign direct investment can also transmit cleaner technologies and practices when institutions are robust. Accordingly, current policy guidance stresses integrated approaches that align environmental, social and economic objectives across the trade system and has become embedded in OECD and WTO-adjacent agendas

EMERGING TRADE AGREEMENTS AND GLOBAL LANDSCAPE

India and Australia are moving from their interim Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA, in force since December 2022) toward a Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) that aims to widen market access, include services and digital trade, and formalise cooperation in Agtech and mobility. CECA is positioned to build on ECTA's tariff cuts while aligning with each country's broader trade strategies and partnerships, including India's recent push to diversify agreements and Australia's effort to reduce concentration risks and deepen ties across the Indo-Pacific. In agriculture, discussions focus on calibrated openings and standards, reflecting sensitivities in sectors such as dairy and horticulture, and the need to connect trade with resilient supply chains and innovation agendas for both countries. This strategic agenda sits within a changing geopolitical landscape—where both governments seek reliable, rules-based economic links with like-minded countries—making an upgraded India–Australia agreement a platform for stable, sustainable agrifood exchange in the region.

While opportunities are significant, agricultural trade between India and Australia also involves calibrated openings in politically sensitive sectors. A pragmatic, phased approach focused on complementary commodities and joint innovation initiatives may provide a more durable pathway than rapid liberalisation.

The transition from ECTA to CECA creates a policy window to embed AgTech collaboration, standards harmonisation, and skilled mobility within a broader trade architecture. Aligning AgriMaitri pilots with CECA negotiations could ensure that regulatory cooperation, mutual recognition, and digital trade provisions reinforce practical agribusiness outcomes rather than remaining separate policy streams.

STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE TRADE

Rising expectations around emissions disclosure, biosecurity integrity, circular-economy compliance, and supply-chain transparency require trusted and verifiable systems. Bilateral cooperation in traceability infrastructure, sustainability measurement and verification, and standards alignment could strengthen export resilience and position the partnership as a credible Indo-Pacific model for sustainable agrifood trade.

THEME 4: POSITIONING THE PARTNERSHIP AS A TRUSTED PLATFORM FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION AND LEADERSHIP IN THE INDO-PACIFIC

As firms increasingly engage in cross-border business alliances to compete in dynamic global markets, mutual trust has emerged as a key factor in strengthening cross-border partnerships (Boersma et al., 2003). Effective partnership governance mitigates performance risks by integrating formal and relational mechanisms: contracts and trust are complementary, not substitutive, and together enhance exchange performance (Poppo & Zenger, 2002).

TRUST-ORIENTED TRANSNATIONAL GOVERNANCE

A nation's "cultural modernity," grounded in its economic, political, social, and cultural conditions, has been reported as the most influential basis for transnational trust (Kleiner, 2015). In this context, cultural values play a greater role in generating transnational trust than economic strength. Past research consistently highlights mutual trust as central to the governance of transnational and multi-faceted relationships. Evidence from cross-border technology business relationships suggests that cultivating mutual trust is a practical governance capability—one that enables open communication, task coordination, and more resilient cross-border partnerships (Musarra et al., 2022).

With an increasing focus on exports, organisations are developing governance capabilities to foster mutual trust (Malys & Fonfara 2018; Ahamed & Noboa, 2023) by ensuring reliability and consistency in their policies, contracts, and behaviour; promoting reciprocity in both behavioural and commercial practices; and encouraging leaders to act with accountability and empathy across all levels of the alliance. Social Exchange Theory suggests these efforts involve reinstating a shared sense of purpose through ongoing communication forums that emphasise mutual goodwill and collaborative exchange.

TRUSTED PLATFORM OF INDO-PACIFIC COOPERATION AND LEADERSHIP

Credibility in agrifood trade increasingly depends on meeting circular-economy rules for secondary materials, as international trade can both support and constrain this transition (OECD, 2023/2024). Since Basel COP-14 expanded controls on plastic waste effective 2021, cross-border movements require clearer documentation and assurance, reinforcing the need for shared rules, mutual-recognition protocols, and transparent disclosure to make reliability observable.

Emerging Australia–India trade cooperation—including mutual recognition arrangements for trusted exporters and Australia's expanding national agricultural traceability systems—creates a foundation for high-visibility pilots that could integrate end-to-end traceability and third-party verification for priority commodities. Platform legitimacy can grow when agribusiness leaders turn principles into measurable actions, using standardised measurement, reporting, and verification systems that shift trust from individual relationships to organisation-wide routines that scale across the value chain. Aligning any Australia–India agribusiness initiatives with existing national sustainability and biosecurity frameworks would create shared standards, reduce verification burdens, and strengthen the integrity of cross-border agribusiness trade.

Operationalising a trusted platform

Beyond principles, institutional mechanisms are required to embed trust at scale. Options include joint working groups, structured data-sharing protocols, pilot commodity corridors, shared verification frameworks, and regular bilateral governance forums. Embedding transparency, reciprocity, and measurable outcomes within organisational routines can shift trust from individual relationships to durable system-level capability.

AGRIMAITRI
A SHARED PATH FORWARD

Strengthening agribusiness collaboration between India and Australia constitutes a strategic opportunity with mutual benefits and leadership across the Indo-Pacific. The partnership aligns complementary capabilities: India's vast and expanding consumer market, deep agricultural base supporting millions of livelihoods, and emerging leadership in agro-processing, digital agriculture, and cost-effective production; and Australia's world-class agriscience, advanced farming technologies, biosecurity and quality standards, and high-value export orientation (DFAT, 2025; Varghese, 2018).

Together, these strengths create opportunities for shared value pathways to accelerate food-security outcomes, drive inclusive economic growth, and advance climate-resilient, sustainable production systems. Anchored in trust-oriented governance, co-investment, and measurable outcomes, the partnership can enhance productivity, innovation diffusion, and agri-workforce capability—reinforcing bilateral trust and delivering shared benefits for Indo-Pacific cooperation and leadership. If implemented with measurable milestones and institutional continuity, AgriMaitri could evolve into a standing platform for Indo-Pacific agrifood cooperation rather than a time-bound project.

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