

Workshop on 'Best practices in sustainable agriculture', ACCESS, 28th - 29th July, 2011, Kolkata



NABARD has undertaken many initiatives for promoting sustainable agriculture. The Regional Offices, CBOs, PIAs have also innovated locally depending on the local requirements. However, this vast knowledge base is not always tapped for sharing and dissemination in a systematic way. Outside NABARD also there are many successful experiments, models on sustainable agriculture practices. One of the mandates of NRMC is to identify such models and facilitate their replication.

With this objective, ACCESS Development Services, in collaboration with the Natural Resource Management Center, NABARD, is conducting a workshop on 28 & 29 July, 2011 in Kolkata, to showcase how sustainable agriculture practices have impacted the livelihoods of the poor. The workshop also intends to develop a strategy and action plan for furthering the agenda of sustainable agriculture (sustainable agriculture could include crop husbandry, animal husbandry, fisheries, integrated models/ farming systems etc.).

Objectives

The overall objectives of the workshop include

- Showcase how sustainable agriculture practices have impacted the livelihoods of the poor
- Create and share knowledge around sustainable agriculture practices

- Deliberate on the challenges of scaling up sustainable agriculture practices to influence the livelihoods of the poor at scale
- Emphasize on the need to identify, support and scale up such practices.
- Assess the likely roles of different stakeholders
- Develop a plan for furthering the agenda of sustainable agriculture within the country

Themes

Case studies are solicited on the following themes:

- Improvement of existing production systems (e.g. altered crop rotations, introduction of green manuring, use of plant species adapted to specific locations)
- Improved protection of natural resources (e.g. erosion protection)
- Increase in efficiency of existing resources (e.g. irrigation, use of technology, basic and advanced training)
- Introduction of regenerative branches of business (e.g. horticulture or aquaculture)
- Introduction of a new production element in existing enterprises (such as fruit trees to stabilize terraced fields, fish-farming in rice fields)
- Optimization of post-harvest systems (e.g. storage)
- Increase the value of agricultural products through further processing
- Improvement of channels of distribution (e.g. market access)
- Access to loans and other financial services
- Covering risk (e.g. through land law, support of producer groups)

Process

- As a precursor to the workshop, resource persons from practicing organizations will be invited to send in detailed papers in about 3000 words, highlighting how sustainable agriculture practices promoted by them have helped in furthering ecological (issues relating to soil fertility, water, biodiversity, pollution, landscape and climate), economic (employment, market, credit and risk) and social sustainability (issues related to inclusiveness, local acceptance, indigenous knowledge, gender, food security, participation etc.).
- Cases would be invited through ACCESS's regional offices, various networks, postings on websites of NABARD, NRMC and ACCESS etc.
- These would then be adjudged on predetermined criteria by a panel of eminent judges drawn from NABARD, sector experts, ACCESS Development Services, among others.
- The top cases would be invited to present their papers in a two day workshop before a larger audience.
- While the first day of the workshop will focus on presentations of best practices, the second day will deliberate on the challenges of scaling up sustainable agriculture practices to influence the

livelihoods of the poor at scale, assess the likely roles of different stakeholders and develop a plan for furthering the agenda of sustainable agriculture within the country.

- The workshop will be held in a consultative and participative mode.

Participants

- The workshop is an all India event, and everyone can send in their case studies.
- The participants for the two day workshop will be invited depending upon the shortlisted cases looking into the replicability aspect from CBOs, NGOs, NABARD, Farmers Clubs, academic institutions, KVKs, Govt. agencies etc. A total of about 100 persons will participate in the workshop (about 30 resource persons and 70 participants)

Expected Outcome

- Identification of successful best practices and their documentation
- Sharing and facilitation of replication of the identified models/ practices

Time line

Activities	Time line
Submission of papers by agencies/ individuals identified by regional office (regional office themselves can also participate)	05 June, 2011
Screening and selection of cases	20 June, 2011
Last date of revisiting the paper, if required	30 June, 2011
Workshop	28-29 July, 2011
Release of publication	28 July, 2011

Structure of the papers / case studies

- Introduction
- What is the innovative / best practice or the model?
- What are the success criteria in the given context / background information?

- Process adopted
- Institutions involved
- Problems / issues faced
- How they were overcome?
- How to replicate?
- Word limit: 3000

Check list

The paper / case studies should include

- Title of the paper
- Name of author / agency
- Complete address
- Contact numbers
- E-mail address
- State / location where the case being documented has been implemented

Selection Criteria

- **Focus:** The practices must have focus on small and marginal farmers and clearly support strategies in at least one of the thematic areas viz. improvement of existing production systems; improved protection of natural resources; increase in efficiency of existing resources; introduction of regenerative branches of business; introduction of a new production element in existing enterprises; optimization of post-harvest systems; increase the value of agricultural products through further processing; improvement of channels of distribution; access to loans and other financial services and covering risk
- **Community Empowerment:** The sustainable agriculture practices must demonstrate strong bias to promote socio-economic empowerment of small and marginal farmers.
- **Applicability:** The sustainable agriculture practices should have direct relevance to the livelihoods of small and marginal farmers.
- **Replicability:** It should reflect the ability of the approaches to adapt sustainable agriculture across similar geographical settings in a cost effective manner.
- **Scalability:** The practices must have ability to expand in terms of geographical reach.
- **Impact:** The sustainable agriculture approach should have long term results and potential impact in terms of social, economic and environmental benefits derived by the communities or individuals.
- **Sustainability:** The practices must have ensured ecological, economic and social sustainability going beyond growing food, to espousing broader principles that support the just treatment of farm workers and food pricing that provides the farmer with a livable income

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