Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) Project in Maharashtra

NABARD

India is a hotspot for climate change with 50% of the population depending on nature-based livelihoods for sustenance (agriculture, forests, fisheries, and allied occupations). As monsoon and temperature patterns become erratic, dependent communities, especially the poor, become more vulnerable as risks increase and traditional coping mechanisms fails. The macro impact of climate change will slow India's economic growth, affect health, and development, make poverty alleviation more challenging and degrade food and nutrition security.

Confronted by this challenge, a large-scale pilot project has been launched on Climate Change Adaptation in the semi-arid and rain fed regions of Maharashtra. Given the complexity of climate change impacts on nature and people which requires an integrated adaptation response, this project has brought together a unique blend of partners across sectors and scales the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) and Government of Maharashtra, as financiers and enablers; the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD), the Central Research Institute for Dry land Agriculture (CRIDA), the World Agro-Forestry Council (formerly ICRAF), the Mahatma Phule Agriculture University (SAU, Maharashtra) and the Bharati Vidyapeeth Institute of Environment Education and Research (BVIEER) as technology and knowledge partners; and WOTR which anchors the project, as Project Facilitating Agency.

The project in Ahmednagar district of Maharashtra with a fund support of USD 3.5 million, was taken up with an objective to develop the knowledge, strategies, and approaches that enable vulnerable communities to cope with Climate Change and adapt its the impending impacts. The impacts of climate change are very much evident in terms of delays in onset & withdrawal of monsoon, changes in temperature (particularly in winter), and unseasonal rainfall. Creating successful demonstration projects on community based adaptation practices is a key challenge to address these adverse impacts.

The project covers 18,512 ha and 23,345 population in 25 villages. The project adopted a knowledge driven, multi-disciplinary, and participatory approach involving watershed-based ecosystems management; integrated water resources management; adapative sustainable agriculture; locale and crop specific agro-met advisories; biodiversity conservation; renewable energy; institutional development; capacity building and empowerment of communities; development of tool kits, pedagogies and training modules; applied research; development communication, and policy engagement.

This project has been followed up by an SDC – supported consolidation phase – 'Scaling up Good Adaptation Practices' – involving the World Resources Institute (WRI). It seeks to understand how adaptation and resilience can be addressed in a semi-arid and rain fed agricultural contexts. A primary objective of this phase is to contribute towards policy debates on adaptation and rural development in India. This is achieved through rigorous research and evidence gathering for synthesizing good practices into policy recommendations with a view to mainstream effective adaptation practices.

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