

Support to Agroecological Transformation Processes in India (SuATI)


Project Context

Agriculture and food systems are central to India's economy, providing livelihoods for more than 50% of the population. The Green Revolution has shaped Indian agriculture, transforming the country from a food-scarce to a food-secure nation. While it played an important role in ensuring calorie supply, it tended to prevent diversification of production and diets. The environmental and social problems associated with industrial agriculture are increasingly evident: 71% of India's cultivated land is overused, moving in a direction that would no longer support farming. The average land holding size has reduced continuously from 2.28 ha. in 1970–71 to 1.08 ha. in 2015–16. The impacts of climate change are further compounding these challenges.

Agroecological approaches show promise to increase farm incomes, re-cultivate degraded land, improve nutrition security through diversification, and reduce adverse environmental impacts. In India, there is a growing number of sustainable business models combining traditional circular farming practices with innovative

technological and management approaches. The Government of India increasingly promotes agroecological approaches, e. g. through the National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture and the recently launched National Mission for Natural Farming. Likewise, there are several state initiatives to shift to organic and natural farming.

Project name	Support to Agroecological Transformation Processes in India (SuATI)
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Project region	Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Assam
Lead executing agency	Ministry of Agriculture and Farmer's Welfare (MoA&FW) National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD)
Duration	01/2021 – 12/2028



Agroecology is a holistic approach that applies ecological and social concepts to the design and management of agriculture and food systems. The 13 interconnected principles of agroecology, as defined by HLPE (2019) in Figure 1, sum up the whole scope of the innovative approach. The five levels of food system change defined by Gliessmann (2016, Figure 2) can serve as a roadmap that outlines in an almost stepwise manner a process for transforming food systems.

Against this background, the technical cooperation project **“Support to Agroecological Transformation Processes - SuATI”** was commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) as part of the global BMZ Initiative **“Transformation of Agriculture and Food Systems”**. The project is implemented by GIZ India in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare (MoA&FW), the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) and the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD). SuATI is focused on the states of Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Assam.



Objective and Project Approach

The objective of SuATI is to strengthen agroecological transformation processes of agricultural and food systems at national and state level in India through five interlinked output areas:

- 1. Improve knowledge on agroecological and similar sustainable agricultural practices:** SuATI aims to improve the exchange and coherent application of knowledge on agroecological practices by supporting knowledge platforms and networks on agroecology, developing training modules and capacity building, incl. peer-to-peer approaches, and facilitating national and state-level research partnerships on evidence of agroecological approaches.
- 2. Support implementation of agroecological programmes with focus on market development, crop and income diversification at state level:** SuATI strengthens the implementation of agroecological approaches with a focus on market development, thereby reinforcing a core idea of agroecology – the link between producers and consumers. Support is provided in the identification and upscaling of successful agroecological business models through farmer organisations, the enhancement of consumer awareness as well as advice to state departments on the agroecological orientation of programmes.
- 3. Anchor agroecological principles and approaches in national programmes:** At national level, SuATI works with the MoA&FW, NABARD and the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) of MoRD to anchor agroecological principles in national programmes and support their operationalisation. Focus is placed on cross-sectoral and cross-policy exchanges and the translation of resulting recommendations into action.
- 4. Demonstrate landscape-based planning, implementation and monitoring of agroecological approaches:** In cooperation with NABARD, SuATI supports the strategic and technical requirements for landscape-based planning, implementation and monitoring of agroecological approaches in NRM projects. This includes digital and participatory planning methods for implementation and impact monitoring, capacity enhancement of various target groups and local innovations.
- 5. Strengthen Indo-German dialogue and cooperation on agroecology:** As anchor project for the Indo-German Lighthouse “Agroecology and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources”, SuATI supports intersectoral policy and technical dialogues on agroecology to create additional acceptance and stimulate joint initiatives. A flexible funding mechanism allows for rapid and demand-driven responses to opportunities that arise from policy dialogues and multi-stakeholder processes under the Lighthouse.

Contribution to the 2030 Agenda

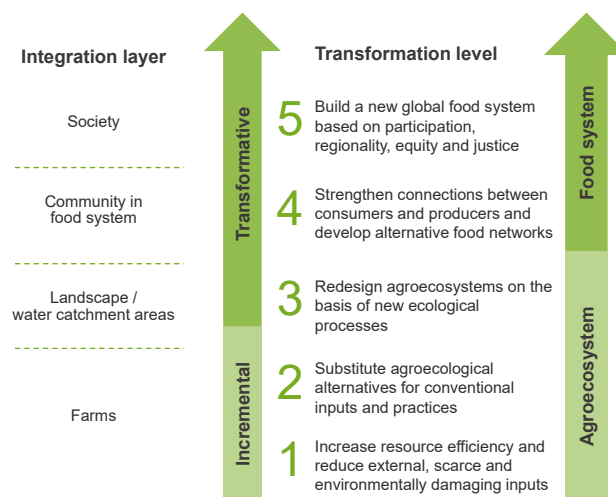
SuATI contributes to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):



Figure 1: 13 Principles of Agroecology, adapted from HLPE (2019)



Figure 2: Five Levels of Food System Change by Gliessmann (2016)



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