

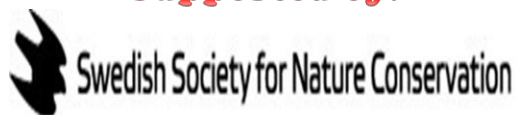
Partner's Orientation Report

December 23, 2013



Pilot Project to Promote Organic Consumption in the State of Rajasthan (ProOrganic)

Supported by:



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Objectives of Project

The objective of partner's orientation was to inform all partners about the project activities, objectives and their possible role for its successful implementation. This meeting, which was organised a day prior to formal launch of the project, was in continuation of the scoping visit done to all partners by the team members in November 2013. Since scoping was done by one member each at each partner's place, so to bring them and discuss at a common platform, the orientation was conducted.

A day's event was participated by four partners from Kota, Chittorgarh, Dausa and Udaipur. CUTS will be taking charge of Jaipur directly and Pratapgarh will be the combined responsibility of Chittorgarh partner. Each partner was asked to accompany one of his colleague.

Deepak Saxena, Senior Programme Coordinator, CUTS welcomed all the participants and briefed them about the objectives of the meeting. Prior to this, Saxena requested the participants to introduce themselves, brief about their organisation, their experiences and share their knowledge in organic farming, if any.

Introduction about Objective of the Meeting

In the opening remarks, George Cheriyan, Director, CUTS International said sustainable consumption, being part of the consumers right to healthy environment is recognised by UN guidelines for consumer protection. Consumers have the right to safe food and also need sustainable agriculture to ensure food security. These are two important issues around which the whole project ProOrganic is woven.



Speaking about sustainable agriculture, Cheriyan pointed out that India is basically an agrarian society. As a result of the green revolution, India is a food sufficient country. However, the interest in agriculture related activities in the country are reducing day by day, and the agriculture sector is declining simply because the income it should generate is not as per the expectations. On other side, number of households is increasing resulting into a decrease of landholdings, which again reduces the farming generated income.

Cheriyan said that in the past years, commercialisation of agriculture has taken place and thereby increasing the use of in chemicals and pesticides but now the time has come to take a backward move as of earlier days.

On safety of food, Cheriyan highlighted the need of awareness on increase in organic culture among general masses by highlighting the adverse effects of non-organic food items. Mentioning a case of Kerala, George said that Kerala is 50 percent short of required food for consumption, as a result, rice and vegetables come from nearby states. People are shifting away from farming on account of very high wages in Kerala. He quoted a case of Kerala, where the use of a chemical 'endosulfan' caused much harm, so it was later banned by the State Government.

George highlighted the importance of the 'ProOrganic' project. He said that it is an effort towards ensuing safe food for all by promoting sustainable agriculture. Educating consumers on adopting organic consumption will create a demand for organic food and to meet this demand more production is required and for this farmers need to be made aware. There is also a need to advocate for the change in the policy of the government. Cheriyan mentioned about the ground reality survey to be conducted, under the project, which will help to gauge the level of awareness among general consumers on organic farming.

Addressing to the project partners, George urged them to be not only active but also proactive to make ProOrganic project a great success.

Deepak Saxena later presented a translated version of George's speech in Hindi for the convenience of the participants.

Insight into 'ProOrganic' Project

Amarjeet Singh, Project Coordinator, CUTS then took over the following session and started presented the organic scenario in Rajasthan and said that the State is ranked first in the country concerning production of rapeseed and mustard, coriander, cumin, fenugreek, guar and moth. He informed that nearly 65 percent of the population (56.5 million) is dependent on agriculture in the country. Rajasthan is the largest State having a big untapped growth potential for organic farming and export of organic products.

Singh presented a brief overview of the project, which is being implemented in six districts Kota, Jaipur, Udaipur, Pratapgarh, Chittorgarh and Dausa covering 102 *gram panchayats*. In a span of two years, research, advocacy and awareness related activities would be implemented involving all the stakeholders. This project is supported by Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC). The overall objective of the project is to promote organic consumption and for this research, capacity building, awareness campaigns and advocacy related activities would be conducted during a



period of 2 years of the project period.

Singh said that the project is expected to result in better informed consumers and farmers about organic consumption and farming; better policies and enforcement thereof by sensitised policymakers in the State. This will boost organic farming and consumption in the State and in the long run will provide sustainable environment and lifestyle. The broader objectives of the whole project are:

- To generate awareness among consumers about organic products
- To encourage capacity building of farmers to adopt organic farming
- To promote and increase consumer's demand for organic products
- To encourage consumers to shift towards organic products and sustainable consumption and
- To sensitise and advocate with concerned stakeholders, including government agencies to promote organic products in the State of Rajasthan.

Involvement of District Partners (Memorandum of Understanding)

After the brief overview of project, Memorandum of Understanding was signed with all the four partners. Chittorgarh partner was allocated Pratapgarh in addition, while, Kota, Dausa and Udaipur signed their MoUs separately.



Next session began with stock taking of partner's experience in organic farming and their expectations from the project. All the partners narrated their experience by introducing themselves, then briefing about their organisation and lastly their involvement in the field of organic culture activities.

The project team interrupted the session by a few queries from the team with explanations. There were a few apprehensions with regard to implementing of project activities from a couple of partners but were smoothly clarified.

Overall Scenario of Organic Farming

S. R. Sharma, Assistant Professor, Department of Soil science and Agriculture Chemistry of S K N College of Agriculture, Jobner (Jaipur) was the key speaker in the session.

Sharma mentioned that the world market for organic food production is estimated to be worth around 35 billion annually. The annual growth rates of world-wide sales are between 10 percent 30 percent. He said that it is estimated that the market could be worth between \$100 and \$ 190 billion by 2006. More than 130 countries currently produces commercial quantities of

certified organic food and agricultural products. Strong consumer demands high premiums and government subsidies to convert organic production methods are driving further growth in the production. Sharma said that developing countries, where existing agricultural production techniques are dependent on lower inputs and are close to being organic, could provide source of the production and growth needed to satisfy demand.



Quoting the figures of Rajasthan, he said that the gross cultivated area in the State is 20.69 m ha and out of which 33.3 percent area falls under irrigation. The recommended dose of FYM per hectare is 5-10 t ha⁻¹. Therefore, Sharma further added about the importance of organic farming, its need and about vermin compost and its preparations, precautions to be taken and the method of its application.

To sum up Dr. Sharma spoke briefly on management of soil in order to get sustainable quality before organic farming.

Basics of Organic Farming and Sustainable Consumption

Hari Mohan Gupta, a retired Additional Director from the Department of Agriculture of Government of Rajasthan and currently leading a non-government organisation named Society for Organic Culture Movement SOAM spoke as the main speaker of the session.

Gupta started with an introduction and principles of organic farming and its effective management. Defining organic farming, he said that it is such a production system, which largely excludes the use of synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, growth regulators etc. It relies on crop residues, animal manures, organic wastes, green manures, biological methods to control insect-pests.

Raising his deep concern over the rising trends of using chemical pesticides, he reiterated the need of more usage of vermin composting, which is not only eco-friendly but also cost effective. He said that it is an effective way to

recycle agricultural and kitchen wastes. The application of vermin compost not only supplements plant nutrients (macro and micro) but also increases soil water retention, microbial population, nutrient content and carbon content of the soil.



Gupta said that if we talk about overnight shifting from chemical farming to organic farming then, it is not practically possible as it may threaten food security. So, it would also be better and preferable to start the organic farming in a command irrigated land.

He urged the government to provide more subsidies to farmers, so that the organic farming is cheaper.

Planning of Implementation of Activities

Lastly there was a general session lead by Amarjeet Singh, who shared all activities one by one along with timeline for both the first and the second year. The first such activity after the launch, which is a research work, was discussed at length. It was conveyed to the partners that they have to cooperate and support the agency involved in the data collection.

Similarly other activities along with the partner's role in and the budget etc. was also discussed.

Summing Up and Vote of Thanks

Arjun Kant Jha, Project Officer summed up the days' proceedings with a vote of thanks to all partners and requesting them to take a pledge to look the way forward and ensuring that the objectives of the project, which CUTS has initiated are accomplished and to make the project not only be a grand success but also to nurture it as a replicable model on organic farming issues, in future.

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Meeting Agenda

Time	Subject	Facilitator
11.00-11.05	Welcome of Participants	Deepak Saxena
11.05-11.30	Introduction and Objective of the Meeting	George Cheriyan
11.30-12.00	MOU Signing	Partners and Team
12.00-13.00	Presentation on ProOrganic Project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Background • About the Project • Objectives of the Project • Geographical Area of the Project • Activities to be Implemented • Period 	Amarjeet Singh
13.00-14.00	Feedback from Partners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner's Experience in Organic Farming • Partner's Expectations from the Project • Any other Issue (with permission) 	ProOrganic Team led by Amarjeet Singh
14.00-15.00	Lunch Break	
15.00-15.30	Overall Scenario of Organic Farming	Dr. Sri Ram Sharma, Professor, SKM University, Jobner
15.30-16.00	Basics of Organic Farming and Sustainable Consumption	Mr Hari Mohan Gupta CEO Society for Organic Agriculture Movement Jaipur
16.00-17.30	Planning of Implementation of Activities (interaction with the partners) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Year with Timeline • Second Year 	ProOrganic Team led by Amarjeet Singh
17.30	Summing up and Vote of Thanks with a Pledge from Partners to Look at the Way Forward	Arjun Kant Jha