

NABARD's aggressive push for building climate resilience

NABARD pushes for climate resilient agro-ecological livelihoods and ecosystems

The impacts of global warming have been intensifying and making Indian agriculture more resource hungry. The landmark report on Sixth Assessment of Climate Change 2021, released by UNFCCC recently, has literally issued a 'code red' to humanity as we are rushing towards a 1.5 degree Celsius hotter planet by 2030.

As per the Global Climate Risk Index 2021, India stands seventh amongst the most vulnerable countries prone to climate change impact and has incurred losses of USD 69 billion (in PPP) in 2019. Agriculture related land use accounted for 17% of global GHG emissions and 16% of India's GHG emissions from all the sectors, while agriculture sector in India contributed about 650 million tonnes (Mt) CO₂e annual emissions in the year 2018.

Here are some initiatives from NABARD in mitigating climate change impact.

a) Mobilization of Climate Finance and related Capacity Building

NABARD has a unique distinction of being accredited as National Implementing Entity (NIE) of Adaptation Fund (AF) and National Adaptation Fund for Climate Change (NAFCC) as well as Direct Access Entity (DAE) of the Green Climate Fund (GCF).

As an NIE/DAE of various climate change funds, NABARD has facilitated sanctioning of 40 innovative and high impact climate change adaptation and mitigation projects with a total financial outlay of ₹1822 Cr. NABARD has also created a 'Climate Change Fund' during 2016-17 out of its profits for supporting regional conferences/seminars on climate change awareness, knowledge sharing, up scaling of innovative pilots, etc.

A Centre for Climate Change (CCC) has

also been established at Bankers Institute of Rural Development (BIRD), Lucknow, for facilitating capacity building of Financial Institutions on climate finance, resilience and adaptation finance, climate proofing of investments etc.

b) Promoting Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA)

NABARD has been promoting CSA through its climate change project interventions like scientific and climate compatible crop cultivation, water harvesting, water budgeting, crop advisory messages for the local communities, spring shed rejuvenation, tank rehabilitation, promotion of climate resilient indigenous breed of cattle, development of climate resilient cattle sheds, feed and fodder management, deployment of automatic weather stations etc. NABARD is also supporting

various NRM based activities through its dedicated funds viz., Tribal Development Fund (TDF) and Watershed Development Fund (WDF).

As of March 2021 about 835 Tribal Development projects spread across 29 states/UTs covering 5.3-lakh acre area have benefitted 5.60 lakh tribal families. NABARD's pioneering watershed development program including climate proofing of watersheds has covered 2.08 million ha area with a grant assistance of ₹ 2,181.00 crore. Through the given program avenues of sustainable livelihood have been created for 0.54 million tribal families with a grant assistance of ₹ 2,273.00 crore.

To provide scale advantage to small farmers, NABARD, through its dedicated funds, has enabled formation of 4000+ FPOs in the country and will increase these to 10,000 FPOs over five years.

c) Carbon Footprint Reduction

India has committed to reduce emission intensity (carbon footprint) of its GDP



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by 33% -35% from 2005 levels by the year 2030. NABARD has been playing a pivotal role in channelization of low cost climate finance and transfer of green technologies for developmental projects in India.

With a GCF loan support of ₹ 665 Cr, NABARD has facilitated sanctioning of the first private sector facility proposal of India – line of credit for solar rooftop segment for commercial, industrial and residential housing sectors. This is to unlock long-term and affordable private sector investment for the construction of 250 MW of rooftop solar capacity in India. The project has set a carbon footprint reduction potential of 2.60 lakh tCO₂e annually and a total of 5.20 million tCO₂e over 20 years.

NABARD under its NAFCC portfolio has facilitated sanctioning of project for 'Model carbon-positive eco-village in Phayeng, Manipur', which demonstrates undertaking adaptation measures to enhance GHG sequestration through various interventions like planting of 60,000 fruit-bearing plants in 65 hectares of degraded forest catchment area, replacing biomass as cooking fuel with renewable energy sources, training of 500 farmers in adopting climate-resilient agriculture practices etc.

To carry forward the climate action, we propose to introduce agro-ecological transformative approaches in the Natural Resource Management (NRM) portfolio of NABARD.

NABARD in consultation with ICAR institutes also promotes Integrated Farming System and Agro-forestry as bankable low carbon credit models.

(Views are personal, and do not necessarily represent the views of the organization the author belongs to)

