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**NARVOS** NATIONAL ALLIANCE FOR REGENERATIVE VEG OIL SECTOR

# National Level CSO Networking Event under Regenerative Vegetable Oil Program: A Step Towards Net Zero Oilseed Farming

Under the project " *Promotion of Regenerative Agriculture Practices for a Food Secure and Climate Resilient Future* "

Venue: MR 10, Bharat Mandapam |

Time: 12:00 PM – 1:30 PM

27<sup>th</sup>  
September  
2025





## Executive Summary

The session emphasized the collective role of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), industry, financial institutions, and development partners in advancing regenerative agriculture in India. Organized by the Centre for Responsible Business (CRB) under the EU-India Partnership project, the initiative spans 12 districts of Madhya Pradesh, benefiting 35,000 farmers, including 10,000 women. The discussion focused on restoring natural capital, promoting soil health, biodiversity, and ecosystem services through sustainable practices. Speakers highlighted the need to integrate social and human capital, strengthen Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), and incentivize farmers for adopting regenerative methods. Industry representatives, including Nestlé, underlined the importance of data-driven monitoring, business case development, and awareness creation to encourage adoption. NABARD shared experiences from initiatives like Jiva and Natural Resource Management programs, emphasizing financial inclusion and the use of CSR funds to support watershed and land restoration. Development partners such as UNEP and GIZ discussed linking climate, biodiversity, and agriculture through systemic frameworks and capacity building. The session concluded that scaling regenerative agriculture requires collaborative efforts, effective communication, and supportive policies to ensure long-term sustainability, climate resilience, and improved farmer livelihoods across India's agricultural landscapes.

## Background of the session:

The “*National Level CSO Networking Event under Regenerative Vegetable Oil Program: A Step Towards Net Zero Oilseed Farming*” was convened on 27th September 2025 at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi. Themed “*A Step Towards Net Zero Oilseed Farming*”, the session created a platform for dialogue among civil society organizations (CSOs), development practitioners, policy experts, Corporate buyers and representatives from financial institutions. The discussions was organized with objective for a collective recognition that regenerative agriculture, particularly in the oilseed sector, is not only a pathway to climate resilient but also a necessary transformation for ensuring farmer resilience, environmental sustainability, and food security.



Fig 1. Panelists

## Setting the agenda

The session started with setting of context about the regenerative agriculture and importance of the CSO networking to promote regenerative agriculture by Mr Aditya Petwal (Assistant Director, CRB). He briefed the participants about the project “**Promotion of Regenerative Agriculture Practices for a Food Secure and Climate Resilient Future in the EU-India Partnership**” which is being implemented in the 12 districts of Madhya Pradesh, benefiting 35,000 farmers, including 10,000 women farmers. The project’s core objectives are to strengthen national and local collaboration in adopting regenerative practices within vegetable oil supply chains, promoting soil health, biodiversity, and ecosystem services. It focuses on enhancing the capacity of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to organize and facilitate policy dialogues at local, state, and national levels, ensuring that regenerative agriculture is integrated into policy discussions. The initiative seeks to create an enabling environment for innovation and collaborative learning, encouraging stakeholders to scale up regenerative practices. CSOs play a key role in engaging in policy dialogues within the EU-India Partnership, addressing critical priorities such as water, biodiversity, sustainable agriculture, and inclusive supply chains.



Fig 2. Aditya Petwal (CRB)

## Moderation of the Session

The session was moderated by Mr. Rijit Sengupta (CEO, Centre of Responsible Business). He emphasized the way regenerative agriculture is being promoted. “There is a need to consider other capitals – we would be doing a big mistake if we don’t consider them such as social capital, knowledge sharing and collective action are vital for sustaining regenerative practices and ensuring long-term adoption”. Women farmers play a key role in preparing and applying organic manures and bio-pesticides, which are not honoured. This dialogue set the tone for the session, highlighting the need to integrate social, economic, and environmental considerations into farming systems.



Fig 3. Rijit Sengupta (CRB)

## Experiences for the Field

The implementing agency representatives were asked first about the field strategies and experiences. For this project Solidaridad (lead partner) and CARD are the two implementing organizations. Dr. Vivek Sharma and Dr. Suresh Motwani shared their



Fig 4. Suresh Motwani (Solidaridad)



Fig 5. Dr. Vivek Sharma (CARD)

key strategies on implementing the project and their experience from the field. They said that they have adopted holistic approach to promote regenerative practices through demo plot and strategically selecting the lead farmers in the panchayat. It was highlighted the importance of why and what farmers are doing. If regenerative agriculture farming is not being applied the cost of doing cultivation will eventually increase as yield will ultimately fall via mono-cropping; in addition, benefits to farmers should be maintained.

## Perception of the Industries regarding regenerative Agriculture

As the representative of industry Ms. Sonakshi Tripathi of Nestle requested upon her experience in supporting sustainable agriculture practices including regenerative agriculture in India. Ensuring sustainable agricultural production requires maintaining the raw material base on which farming depends. Without soil fertility, biodiversity, and ecosystem health, productivity cannot be secured for the long term. However, despite growing interest in regenerative agriculture, adoption on the ground remains limited due to a lack of awareness among farmers. Bridging this gap demands not only knowledge dissemination but also the creation of a clear business case for farmers. Unless they see tangible benefits—such as improved yields, reduced input costs, or assured markets—the transition to regenerative practices will be slow. Farmer apprehensions must also be addressed directly. To overcome such concerns, extensive training and capacity building are essential. Farmers must be supported to view regenerative agriculture not as an abstract idea but as a practical shift from traditional methods toward a more sustainable, resilient, and profitable system of farming. Equally important is the establishment of robust data management tools. These can serve multiple purposes: helping farmers monitor progress, enabling buyers to track improvements, and providing evidence of long-term impact. Quantitative tracking through such tools not only builds trust across the supply chain but also enhances transparency and accountability. Finally, scaling regenerative agriculture requires strong collaboration. Individual efforts, while valuable, are not sufficient to demonstrate the systemic changes needed.



Fig 6. Sonakshi Tripathi (Nestle)

## Financial Schemes/Support in scaling regenerative agriculture

Dr. Samir Athalye (DGM NABARD) shared his learnings from NABARD's work/experience in supporting regenerative agriculture. Programs such as the Jiva project and natural resource initiatives have been successfully scaled across India, demonstrating the potential of regenerative and community-led approaches. Community-driven projects, in particular, have shown strong long-term impact, as they build ownership and collective responsibility among farmers. From a Farmer Producer Organization (FPO) perspective, aggregation has proven effective in strengthening procurement systems and improving market access. Additionally, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) resources are being leveraged to support watershed management activities, which not only address water scarcity but also promote broader natural resource management, ensuring sustainability and resilience for farming communities over time.



Fig 7: Dr. Samir Athalye (DGM NABARD)

## Role of Development agencies in convergence between climate, biodiversity, and regenerative agriculture

Rhea Malhotra (Project Officer, UNEP) shared her experience on building awareness and convergence between climate, biodiversity, and regenerative agriculture in India. She explained, TEEB (The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity) Agrifood program emphasizes a systems approach to make a strong business case for regenerative agriculture by integrating the concept of the four capitals—natural, social, human, and produced. This holistic framework ensures that interventions generate broad, long-term impact rather than isolated benefits. Priority systems under this approach include organic agriculture and agroforestry, with public sector



Fig 8: Rhea Malhotra (UNEP)

stakeholders working to promote a landscape perspective for greater sustainability. At the same time, the program focuses on building the capacity of agri-businesses, enabling them to embed regenerative principles within their business strategies and align profitability with environmental and social responsibility.

Farhad Vania (Portfolio Manager, GIZ) on the aspect of collaboration for scaling the regenerative agriculture. He relates the concept regenerative agriculture toward *Viksit Bharat 2047*, where sustainable agricultural production becomes vital, especially as India faces the challenge of limited land resources. Efficient and regenerative use of land is essential to meet growing demands while preserving ecological balance. From a bilateral perspective, India and Germany are already collaborating through numerous agricultural projects, highlighting the importance of shared learning and innovation. A key focus within these initiatives is strengthening farmer capacity, particularly in building awareness around climate change.



Fig 9: Farhad Vania (GIZ)

Equipping farmers with knowledge, skills, and adaptive strategies ensures that agricultural systems remain resilient, productive, and aligned with long-term sustainability goals.

It was further discussed that, the financial support for scaling the regenerative agriculture Smallholder farmers remain central to India's agricultural landscape, yet they face critical challenges in accessing capital despite the availability of government schemes. Strengthening financial inclusion is therefore essential to ensure they can adopt sustainable practices and enhance productivity. Equally important is capacity building in management and governance, enabling farmers to organize effectively and benefit from collective initiatives. The initiative was commended for providing a valuable platform to engage stakeholders and support farmer needs. In addition, the importance of payments for ecosystem services was highlighted, as such mechanisms can incentivize farmers to conserve resources while securing sustainable livelihoods.

In this regards Mr. Samir Athalye (DGM NABARD) asserted that finance is important aspect for sustainable agriculture finance is important. Aggregation plays a vital role in strengthening the agricultural sector by bringing farmers together for better bargaining power and access to markets. The speaker emphasized that the government alone cannot drive this change; collective efforts are necessary. He highlighted NABARD's FPO Accelerator program, which supports Farmer Producer Organizations in scaling up their activities and becoming more sustainable. Additionally, he stressed the importance of Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS), which provide essential credit and financial services to farmers at the grassroots level.

Ms. Rhea emphasized that incorporating diverse values at the policy level is crucial to ensure inclusive and sustainable development. Policies should not only focus on carbon reduction but also recognize the wider co-benefits such as improved soil health, biodiversity, and farmer livelihoods. A holistic approach will help in creating long-term positive impacts for both the environment and rural communities. Moreover, there is a strong need to provide proper valuation for the handholding cost of farmers, acknowledging their efforts and supporting them in the transition towards sustainable practices.

The experts discussed that, there is a strong need to ensure simple and straightforward communication when addressing farmers and consumers about sustainable practices. Complex messages often fail to create impact, while clear and relatable communication can drive real change. In this Ms Sonakshi cited the example of Nestlé's slogan "Good for you, good for the planet" shows how a simple message can connect with both individual and environmental benefits. Since awareness about regenerative agriculture is still limited, communication must be specific, easy to understand, and focused on its direct advantages

## Conclusion

The dialogue reinforced the urgent need for **collaborative frameworks** that bring together multiple stakeholders to scale regenerative agriculture in India. Civil Society Organizations play a pivotal role in mobilizing farmers, facilitating policy advocacy, and ensuring that local voices are represented in decision-making. **incentivizing farmers**, promoting **aggregation through FPOs**, and investing in **capacity building** are critical for sustaining regenerative practices. Financial inclusion and access to credit remain major challenges, requiring innovative partnerships between government programs, development agencies, and the private sector. Equally important is the **communication strategy**—messages about regenerative agriculture must be simple, relatable, and outcome-driven to build awareness among farmers and consumers alike.

The session concluded with a shared commitment to advancing regenerative agriculture as a cornerstone of India's sustainable development agenda—anchored in collaboration, inclusivity, and respect for nature's capital.

# Annexure

## 1. Some Glimses



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