



## Quarterly Partners' Meeting FOLU India CREST 30 Aug 2022, 2:30 pm – 3:30 pm (IST)

Present: Dr. Jayahari, Dr. Ruchika, Devisha Poddar *FOLU India and WRI India*; Karishma Vohra, Sanjna Das *WWF India*; Mr. S. Vijay Kumar; Rijit Sengupta, Aditya Petwal, Nitya Chhiber *CRB*

### **Summary of Proceedings**

#### *Discussion on Work done since last Quarterly Partners Meeting*

The meeting began with the Coordinating unit sharing about what it has been working on under the CREST Initiative. Aditya, member of the coordinating unit spoke about research that has been begun on a commodity-specific basis, more specifically on pulses/maize. Then he spoke about the development on the Concept Note towards the slotted session at ISS 2022. The Coordinating unit has proposed that the session integrate discussion on a Matrix that has been developed and will take on the form of being ready reference material for corporates. It has been suggested that companies that are approached for this session focus on commodities that are important from an Indian exports' perspective. Dr. Jayahari has suggested to invite Dr. Nadir Godrej and the Indian Oil Seeds Export Promotion Council, as the latter has expressed interest in working together in Madhya Pradesh. In relation to the preparations on the session for ISS 2022, it has been advised by Dr. Jayahari that majority of the arrangements such as identification of companies as well as identification of moderator and panelists, are all completed by end of September. In terms of the Session planning, Dr. Jayahari has also suggested that a role for each of the member partners of CREST Initiative can be thought of. It has also been suggested that a segment of the session can be on reflections by CREST members.

#### *Inputs into Session Planning at ISS 2022*

Members of the CREST Initiative then shared details on the nuances of session planning. Mr. Vijay Kumar has suggested to focus on sugar and basmati as the commodities keeping in mind that in terms of basmati, it is GI tagged. Dr. Jayahari further advised that there has been focus on soya in MP and was not able to think of the name of the second commodity. Mr. Vijay Kumar then spoke about the use of molasses to ethanol conversion as well as the use of broken rice for ethanol conversion.

The representative of WWF India advised that with regards to Oil Seeds, India is a net importer of oils seeds and that there are a lot of commodities that can be considered. She has mentioned APEDA and wanted to clarify whether NTFPs also fall under the scope of export-based commodities to consider. Dr. Ruchika highlighted that given the consideration of timelines, there may be a need to zero down on the commodities. She summed up her remarks by mentioning the question of trade-offs and laid emphasis on simultaneous approaches.

#### *Co-ordinating Unit Update on Outreach*

A comms-based update was then provided by a coordinating unit member, Nitya who welcomed guest blogs by CREST Initiative members, which will accordingly, be uploaded on to the Blog Insights section on the CREST webpage. She went on to highlight that the current priority is to assist the FOLU India Country Platform team on finalizing the Action Agenda with the Coordinating team having been allocated Chapter 6. Furthermore, the Coordinating Unit will be developing an Appendix using a given template to accompany this Chapter. Other updates from the FOLU Fortnightly meetings were also shared, including interest on millets, as demonstrated by FOLU India members as well as funding updates. It was advised to her that the frequency of updating on FOLU Fortnightly meetings be increased and to not wait till the next quarterly meeting.

In relation to the discussion on the Concept Note, Mr. Vjjay Kumar mentioned that while the idea of international companies and their Indian companies to convince the Indian government to sign on the sustainability agenda is a story by itself, he mentioned that given the concept note, this session as planned is not so aligned in this regard. Dr. Ruchika further reiterated that it is not necessary to put all eggs in one basket in terms of following up with Indian counterparts of Glasgow Declaration signatories. She highlighted that this is overall a difficult conversation.

#### *Member Updates*

The representative of WWF India advised that with regards to the session, the focus area can be broadened and then the focus can be decided. She went on to provide a CREST member update and highlighted that WWF India's majority of work focuses on oilseeds with particular focus on palm and that palm as a commodity has reached an evolved stage of development. She mentioned that WWF India is beginning to explore soya as a commodity and keep it under the CREST agenda and that work on it has already been begun by WWF Global. She went onto highlight WWF India's work on cotton, which is aligned with standards such as BCI. She mentioned that the Sustainable Agriculture team is looking into cotton and mentioned that a member of the Sustainable Agriculture team can be present in the next meeting, if mutually convenient. She ended by saying that there can be an overall focus on sustainable exports in value chains. This would come down to what commodities are chosen jointly by CREST members. She then mentioned the list of Companies who are a part of the Business for Nature Coalition (<https://www.businessfornature.org/call-to-action#CTA-signatory-list>).

#### *Proposed Areas of Focus*

Mr. Vijay Kumar mentioned that there is not enough data on buffalo meat exports, and which has adverse implications, such as lack of clarity on certain aspects of the value

chain. One should look at this commodity throughout the value chain as well as its re-classification. He further went on to mention that he is not at all sure that the emissions prescribed to bovines are properly calculated due to the case of multi-use animals. He ended by highlighting the importance of focusing on this in relation to lack of data and, which therefore, contributes to the inability to fight data with data. Hence, he recommends that there is enough granular disaggregation of data, and it should form part of the regulatory framework and reiterated the fact that APEDA should be made partner in some form in CREST as part of addressing this and related issues. In this regard, Aditya, member of the coordinating unit mentioned the HLEG report that identifies commodities that have potential for high import substitution.

#### Action Points

- To finalize the note for the session at the Conference by end of September including Moderator, Panelists, as advised by Dr. Jayahari
- Given discussion on approaches were highlighted regarding Outreach for companies under Glasgow Declaration ([https://www.tropicalforestalliance.org/assets/Agricultural-Commodity-Companies-Corporate-Statement-of-Purpose\\_final-v2.docx.pdf](https://www.tropicalforestalliance.org/assets/Agricultural-Commodity-Companies-Corporate-Statement-of-Purpose_final-v2.docx.pdf)), to proceed based on joint agreement
  - Plan A entails reaching out to Indian counterparts of MNCs who have signed on the Glasgow Declaration
  - Plan B is to simultaneously follow an approach between selecting commodities and reaching out to companies, which may be working on these commodities
- Coordinating unit to contribute towards finalizing the Action Agenda – India in coordination with FOLU India
- Co-ordinating Unit to share update on Research on Pulses/Maize
- Development of a Dashboard for all Responsible Sourcing tools of commodities