

# Proceedings of Orientation Workshop for FPOs

9 FEBRUARY 2024 | GUWAHATI

## INTRODUCTION

The orientation workshop served as a formal introduction to a collaborative program spearheaded by the three organisations North Eastern Regional Agricultural Marketing Corporation Ltd, Media Management Group for Literacy and Development and Centre for Responsible Business. This initiative is to be implemented in partnership with select Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) and corresponding Cluster-Based Business Organisations (CBBOs) in the North Eastern Region (NER). The workshop was strategically organised to ensure that participants gain a comprehensive understanding of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Additionally, the workshop aimed to introduce participants to a structured framework approach to identify, assess, and monitor progress on SDGs. This would enable better integration of FPOs in agriculture value chains, particularly those led by buyers and brands committed to sustainability.



Welcome Remarks being made by Ms. Sanghamitra Phukan, Project Lead, North Eastern Regional Agricultural Marketing Corporation Ltd ahead of the Round of Introduction by all participants

## ABOUT THE TRIPARTITE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN NERAMAC-MMGLD-CRB



From Left to Right: Rijit Sengupta, Chief Executive Officer, Centre for Responsible Business (CRB); Commodore Rajiv Ashok (Retd.), Managing Director, North Eastern Regional Agricultural Marketing Corporation Ltd (NERAMAC); Atul Dev Sarmah, Secretary-General, Media Management Group for Literacy and Development (MMGLD)



From Left to Right: Nitya Chhiber, Senior Programme Officer and Rijit Sengupta, Chief Executive Officer, Centre for Responsible Business; Commodore (Retd.) Rajiv Ashok, Managing Director, North Eastern Regional Agricultural Marketing Corporation Ltd; Antara Ragini, Program Officer and Atul Dev Sarmah, Secretary-General, Media Management Group for Literacy and Development

sustainable agriculture practices; while ensuring local value - addition of their produce, promoting climate-smart agriculture and facilitating women's empowerment through this initiative.

Exploring opportunities to contribute towards SDGs in the NER has been a common objective of MMGLD and CRB over the last few years. Through collaborative efforts, the two organizations engaged with esteemed scholars, experts, governmental bodies, civil society organizations (CSOs), and businesses to pinpoint key areas to promote sustainability and advancing SDGs in the region.

Based on further discussions with regional stakeholders and experts, MMGLD and CRB conceptualised an initiative to localise SDGs to help advance Climate-Smart and Inclusive Agri-Value Chains in select locations of the North Eastern region. As recommended by the Ministry of the Development of the North Eastern Region (MDoNER), CRB and MMGLD engaged with and onboarded the North East Regional Agriculture Marketing Corporation Ltd. (NERAMAC) as a third partner in this project.

The initiative will focus on building trust, strengthening capacity, investing in local value-addition and building confidence of select Farmer Producers Organisations (FPOs) from the region, to drive transformation of agri-value chains, particularly targeting certain SDGs [viz, SDG 2 (Sustainable Agriculture); SDG 5 (Gender Equality); SDG 8 (Decent Work); and SDG 13 (Climate Action)].

10 FPOs selected by NERAMAC will receive support in using SDG indicators to track their contribution specifically on

## OVERVIEW OF PROCEEDINGS

### OPENING REMARKS

In his opening address, Commodore Rajiv Ashok (Retd.), Managing Director of North Eastern Regional Agricultural Marketing Corporation Ltd (NERAMAC), expressed his happiness at the enthusiastic participation of the 10 FPOs in the event. He emphasized NERAMAC's collaboration with MMGLD and CRB, specifically focusing on Sustainable Development—a continuation of NERAMAC's efforts to enhance value and introduce innovative projects for FPOs in the region. Atul Dev Sarmah, Secretary-General of MMGLD, underscored the need to seize the abundant opportunities in the North-Eastern Region while dealing with the inherent challenges faced by the region. He highlighted the significance of improved logistics, communication, and connectivity, emphasizing how concerted efforts by FPOs could facilitate their integration into national agri-value chains. Rijit Sengupta, Chief Executive Officer of CRB, emphasized the importance of integrating sustainability principles into FPOs. He envisioned this integration as a transformative process, propelling FPOs from the region to the status of 'champion FPOs'. Such a transformation, he noted, would enhance their visibility among market players, particularly companies committed to sustainable agri-value chains.



Rijit Sengupta, CEO, Centre for Responsible Business Setting the Context and introducing the joint NERAMAC-CRB-MMGLD Project



FPO Representatives interacting with Rijit Sengupta, Chief Executive Officer, Centre for Responsible Business; Atul Dev Sarmah, Secretary-General, Media Management Group for Literacy and Development and Commodore (Retd.) Rajiv Ashok, Managing Director, North Eastern Regional Agricultural Marketing Corporation Ltd

## APPLICATION OF A FRAMEWORK APPROACH

During the workshop, participants were introduced to a 'Framework for FPO-Industry Partnership on SDGs'.

This framework has been conceptualised and developed through a dynamic and iterative process, based on interactions throughout the stages of its conceptualisation and development with experts in the agri-food sector and insights from FPOs at the grassroots level. It emerged that no such framework for FPOs was available, that considered ground realities and the local context in the Indian agri-value chain. CRB and India Foundation for Humanistic Development (IFHD) have registered positive interest from a number of national and international organisations on this framework and are laying the groundwork for its application soon.

From the time of its conceptualisation, this framework was agreed to be bottom-up and participatory, placing the interest of smallholders (small farmers) and agri-communities at its core. This would help FPOs become competitive, resilient and have better access to finance and markets. Based on the prevailing market realities, it is evident that traceability of the impacts at the farm and

community level is no longer optional, but a requisite expectation from buyers. As a result, this framework is poised to capture the attention of agri-food companies, as well as related agencies, during procurement processes.

## GROUP WORK

A group exercise was conducted to facilitate participants' understanding of this framework, and its application within their respective FPOs.

The exercise involved connecting the framework with specific hypothetical 'pilots' relevant to their FPOs. The FPOs and CBBOs present were divided into groups and tasked with applying the Framework and conducting Self-Assessments for SDGs 5 and 13. This allowed for a detailed understanding of tailoring assessments to gender equality and climate action within their organizations. The group work was designed to encourage FPOs to embrace a data-driven and sustainability-focused approach at the operational level.



Photos of the Group Work where the FPOs and CBBOs had a chance to carry out an Exercise focusing on SDGs 5 and 13

## WAY FORWARD

Going forward, it is envisioned that the awareness on the SDGs provided via the presentations as well as the group work provides the FPOs and CBBOs with the confidence to imbibe a sustainability lens as part of their operations. Further, this would also allow for local champions and facilitators to be identified.

Given that market actors, such as brands and buyers, are increasingly laying an emphasis on sustainable sourcing and procurement practices, this approach of encouraging FPOs to assess themselves to identify existing or potential sustainability-related challenges will provide a basis for the development of customized roadmap for each FPO. This roadmap document will in turn inform how best the three partner organizations can work with each FPO to develop a strategy to help integrate specific SDG targets into local value-addition opportunities.



Group Photograph depicting Gathering of Representatives from NERAMAC, CRB and MMGLD along with 10 FPOs and 6 Cluster Based Business Organizations (CBBOs)

# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX 1: AGENDA OF PROGRAM

Time	Agenda Item
09:30-10:00	Participants Registration
10:00-10:15	<p><b>Introduction to NERAMAC, CRB and MMGLD</b>  <b>Commodore Rajiv Ashok (Retd)</b>, Managing Director, North Eastern Regional Agricultural Marketing Corporation Ltd (NERAMAC)  <b>Atul Dev Sarmah</b>, Secretary-General, Media Management Group for Literacy and Development (MMGLD)  <b>Rijit Sengupta</b>, CEO, Centre for Responsible Business (CRB)</p>
10:15-10:30	<p><b>Introduction by the FPO Representatives</b>                      2 mins for each FPO</p>
10:30-10:35	Group Photograph
10:35-10:50	High Tea
10:50-11:15	<p><b>Setting the Context</b>  <b>Introduction to a Joint NERAMAC-MMGLD-CRB Project</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Purpose of the Partnership (Climate Smart Agriculture and Inclusive Agri-Value Chains)</li> <li>Champions among FPOs - the Need for it</li> <li>Improving sustainability to enabling excellence</li> </ul> <p>Q&amp;A (5 mins)  <b>Rijit Sengupta</b>, CEO, Centre for Responsible Business (CRB)</p>
11:15-12:00	<p><b>Improving Sustainability performance to create FPO Champions: A Suggested Framework</b>  <b>Nitya Chhiber</b>, Senior Programme Officer, CRB  <b>Antara Ragini</b>, Program Officer, MMGLD</p>
12:00- 12.45	<p><b>Group Work: Applying the Framework</b>  <b>Nitya Chhiber</b>, Senior Programme Officer, CRB  <b>Antara Ragini</b>, Program Officer, MMGLD</p>
12:45 - 13:00	<p><b>Concluding Remarks / Way Forward</b>  <b>Commodore Rajiv Ashok (Retd)</b>, Managing Director, North Eastern Regional Agricultural Marketing Corporation Ltd (NERAMAC)  <b>Atul Dev Sarmah</b>, Secretary-General, Media Management Group for Literacy and Development (MMGLD)</p>
13:00	Break for Lunch

## APPENDIX 2: WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT LIST

Workshop on Localising the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to help advance Climate-Smart and Inclusive Agri-Value Chains in the North Eastern Region				
9 FEBRUARY 2024   GUWAHATI				
First Name	Middle Name	Last Name	Organization / FPO	Signature
1	Ashok	Rajiv	NERAMAC	[Signature]
2	Chhiber	Nitya	CRB	[Signature]
3	Sarmah	Atul	MMGLD	[Signature]
4	Sengupta	Rijit	CRB	[Signature]
5	Chhiber	Nitya	CRB	[Signature]
6	Ragini	Antara	MMGLD	[Signature]
7	Sarmah	Atul	MMGLD	[Signature]
8	Sengupta	Rijit	CRB	[Signature]
9	Chhiber	Nitya	CRB	[Signature]
10	Sarmah	Atul	MMGLD	[Signature]
11	Sengupta	Rijit	CRB	[Signature]
12	Chhiber	Nitya	CRB	[Signature]
13	Sarmah	Atul	MMGLD	[Signature]
14	Sengupta	Rijit	CRB	[Signature]
15	Chhiber	Nitya	CRB	[Signature]
16	Sarmah	Atul	MMGLD	[Signature]
17	Sengupta	Rijit	CRB	[Signature]
18	Chhiber	Nitya	CRB	[Signature]
19	Sarmah	Atul	MMGLD	[Signature]
20	Sengupta	Rijit	CRB	[Signature]
21	Chhiber	Nitya	CRB	[Signature]
22	Sarmah	Atul	MMGLD	[Signature]
23	Sengupta	Rijit	CRB	[Signature]
24	Chhiber	Nitya	CRB	[Signature]
25	Sarmah	Atul	MMGLD	[Signature]
26	Sengupta	Rijit	CRB	[Signature]
27	Chhiber	Nitya	CRB	[Signature]
28	Sarmah	Atul	MMGLD	[Signature]
29	Sengupta	Rijit	CRB	[Signature]
30	Chhiber	Nitya	CRB	[Signature]

Workshop on Localising the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to help advance Climate-Smart and Inclusive Agri-Value Chains in the North Eastern Region				
9 FEBRUARY 2024   GUWAHATI				
First Name	Middle Name	Last Name	Organization / FPO	Signature
1	Chhiber	Nitya	CRB	[Signature]
2	Sarmah	Atul	MMGLD	[Signature]
3	Sengupta	Rijit	CRB	[Signature]
4	Chhiber	Nitya	CRB	[Signature]
5	Sarmah	Atul	MMGLD	[Signature]
6	Sengupta	Rijit	CRB	[Signature]
7	Chhiber	Nitya	CRB	[Signature]
8	Sarmah	Atul	MMGLD	[Signature]
9	Sengupta	Rijit	CRB	[Signature]
10	Chhiber	Nitya	CRB	[Signature]
11	Sarmah	Atul	MMGLD	[Signature]
12	Sengupta	Rijit	CRB	[Signature]
13	Chhiber	Nitya	CRB	[Signature]
14	Sarmah	Atul	MMGLD	[Signature]
15	Sengupta	Rijit	CRB	[Signature]
16	Chhiber	Nitya	CRB	[Signature]
17	Sarmah	Atul	MMGLD	[Signature]
18	Sengupta	Rijit	CRB	[Signature]
19	Chhiber	Nitya	CRB	[Signature]
20	Sarmah	Atul	MMGLD	[Signature]
21	Sengupta	Rijit	CRB	[Signature]
22	Chhiber	Nitya	CRB	[Signature]
23	Sarmah	Atul	MMGLD	[Signature]
24	Sengupta	Rijit	CRB	[Signature]
25	Chhiber	Nitya	CRB	[Signature]
26	Sarmah	Atul	MMGLD	[Signature]
27	Sengupta	Rijit	CRB	[Signature]
28	Chhiber	Nitya	CRB	[Signature]
29	Sarmah	Atul	MMGLD	[Signature]
30	Sengupta	Rijit	CRB	[Signature]



# ABOUT THE ORGANISATIONS



## ABOUT NERAMAC

The North Eastern Regional Agricultural Marketing Corporation Ltd (NERAMAC, [www.neramac.com](http://www.neramac.com)), established in 1982 as a Government of India Enterprise, is presently under the administrative purview of the Ministry of Development of the North Eastern Region (MDoNER). NERAMAC has in the recent years redefined its role in the NER beyond marketing and has heavily invested its energies into activities that affect rural communities in a more holistic manner in order to expose them to the myriad options made available by the Gol for development.

## ABOUT MMGLD

The Media Management Group for Literacy and Development (MMGLD, [www.mmglid.in](http://www.mmglid.in)), a non-profit organisation established in 2000, implements projects aimed at assisting comprehensive development efforts, including human resource development, social development, and a clean and sustainable environment, with a focus on the North East region. The organisation's overarching engagement strategy centres around the localization of Sustainable Development Goals, with a concerted effort to foster connections and partnerships within the private sector in the region.

## ABOUT CRB

Centre for Responsible Business (CRB, [www.c4rb.org](http://www.c4rb.org)) is a think-tank established in 2011 to promote understanding among relevant stakeholders on social, environmental and economic sustainability issues, leading to achievement of certain SDGs. Pursuing the above purpose, the organisation has been carrying out action and policy research; contributed towards building capacity and expertise; and convening multiple stakeholders to find solutions to complex sustainability challenges in India and beyond.

## CONTACT

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