



**PROCEEDINGS OF
SESSION ON ALIGNING
WITH SUSTAINABILITY:
A CASE FOR
TRANSFORMING FOOD
SYSTEMS HELD AS
PART OF BHOOMI KA
CONFERENCE**



21 JANUARY, 2025

RANCHI, JHARKHAND

CRB CENTRE *for*
RESPONSIBLE
BUSINESS
Enabling Change for Impact

INTRODUCTION

Welthungerhilfe India co-hosted a session titled Unlocking Markets for Ecological Smallholder through FPOs and Participatory Guarantee System at Centre for Responsible Business' flagship event: India and Sustainability Standards 2024, with the theme of Sustainability 2.0: Leveraging Opportunities, Balancing Trade-offs and Navigating Pitfalls.

On the heels of successfully conducting the session, Welthungerhilfe India and Bhoomi Ka, alongside partners organised the Bhoomi Ka Conference 2025 on 'Food systems Transformation: Scaling Ecological Practices and Creating Smallholder Friendly Markets' on 21-22 January, 2025 in Ranchi, Jharkhand.

In the spirit of collaboration, Centre for Responsible Business was invited to conduct a session, given its thematic focus on sustainable and inclusive agricultural value chains. As part of its initiative on FPO-Industry^[1] interface on SDGs, a capacity building session was conducted using the Framework for FPO^[2] Industry Partnership on Sustainable Development Goals, which has been jointly developed by India Foundation for Humanistic Development (IFHD) and Centre for Responsible Business.

OVERVIEW OF PROCEEDINGS

Introducing the Context

Mr. Anshuman Das, Lead Expert – Agroecology and Food Systems, Welthungerhilfe India introduced the session as well as the Centre for Responsible Business and its representatives who were facilitating the session.



Mr. Anshuman Das, Lead Expert – Agroecology and Food Systems, Welthungerhilfe India introducing the session.

1: <https://c4rb.org/fpos-industry-interface-on-sdgs/>

2: https://c4rb.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Framework_FPO-%E2%80%93-Industry_Partnership_SDGfinalprpdf

Setting the Context

Rajat C set the Context in the lead up to the Capacity building component of the Session by highlighting the need for sustainable agricultural value chains. In it, he further elaborated on how sustainable agricultural value chains benefit smallholder farmers, FPO members and the larger local community. In addition, such value chains contribute to ensuring stewardship of natural resources for future generations as well as tapping an emerging market. He followed this up by introducing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and briefly went on to describe some programs and/or initiatives whereby, Centre for Responsible supports Sustainable Agricultural Value Chains.



Rajat C setting the Context on the Need for Sustainable Agricultural Value chains.

Introduction to the Framework

Nitya Chhiber introduced the Framework for FPO Industry Partnership on Sustainable Development Goals by highlighting the rationale of the Framework, namely, to help assess the contribution by FPOs towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and to demonstrate to buyers and brands how FPOs can help meet the latter's sustainable sourcing commitments.



Nitya Chhiber introducing the Framework for Framework for FPO Industry Partnership on Sustainable Development Goals

Group Work

As part of the group work component of the Session, participants were divided into Groups with the objective being to conduct self-assessment pertaining to two SDGs, namely, SDGs 5 and 13, respectively. It is to be noted that groups comprised members from a variety of different FPOs from varying geographical regions of India. Post working in groups, one representative from each group shared the results of the self-assessment on SDGs 5 and 13, with the wider group.



Photos of the Group Work where the participants spanning FPO members, SMEs, and ecopreneurs, among others reflected on the Sustainability-linked performance pertaining to SDGs 5 and 13 of the FPOs that they are affiliated to

KEY LEARNINGS

- In terms of the ease of use of the Framework, it was shared during the group work that there is a need to further customise the questions that form part of the self-assessment so as to keep the interests of smallholders/small farmers at the core. This is also one of the principles that govern the operationalisation of the Framework.
- Based upon feedback shared by the participants, key points have been noted that will be useful when a revision of the Framework is conducted.
- Diversity in the responses were gathered for the self-assessment focusing on SDG 5 and 13 and this can be attributed to the fact that participants hailed from different regions of India.
- It was useful to translate the framework in Hindi, given that this Capacity building session was conducted on a regional basis, which helped ensure granular and conceptual level of understanding among participants.

WAY FORWARD

As we move forward, the insights gathered from this session and from the entire conference proceedings will be instrumental in ensuring that sustainable agricultural practices continue to thrive. Since sustainable practices are a priority for downstream stakeholders to help them meet their respective commitments, it is imperative that upstream stakeholders, namely smallholder farmers and FPO members, are aware and understand sustainable practices. In the broader context, the United Nations has declared 2025 the International Year of Cooperative. Nationally speaking, FPOs continue to play a vital role in the agricultural value chain, which was highlighted as part of the Conference proceedings, though further support is required from the perspectives of policy and market linkages. Finally, we hope that this successfully conducted capacity building session forms part of an on-going collaboration between Welthungerhilfe India and Centre for Responsible Business, given mutual organisational-level interests on promoting sustainable and inclusive agricultural value chains.



Gathering of Participants at the Capacity Building Workshop held as a part of Bhoomi Ka Conference 2025 in Ranchi, Jharkhand facilitated by Centre for Responsible Business and hosted by Welthungerhilfe India, alongside Partners.

ABOUT THE ORGANISATIONS

Bhoomi Ka

Promoted by WHH, Bhoomi Ka is a dynamic network which brings together all stakeholders including farmers, ecopreneurs, eco-food entrepreneurs, experts and consumers in the ecological value chain, thereby ensuring consumption of clean, green and fair food for which farmers get a fair price.

Welthungerhilfe India

Welthungerhilfe (WHH) is one of the largest non-profit organizations in Germany implementing initiatives on food and nutrition security in rural areas of Asia & Africa, including India for the past six decades. In 2022 alone, WHH supported more than 18.8 million people in 37 countries around the globe. Our vision is a world in which all people have the opportunity to live a self-determined life in dignity and justice. To achieve sustainable food and nutrition security among the most vulnerable, our programs are built with key focus areas interrelated with hunger – agriculture and environment; water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH); economic development; humanitarian assistance; climate change; and civil society and advocacy. Innovation helps to scale the impact.

Centre for Responsible Business

Centre for Responsible Business (CRB) was established in 2011 as think-tank to pursue its vision, 'businesses integrate sustainability into their core business practices'. Given that sustainability is a multi-dimensional problem especially in the context of India and other emerging economies, CRB has adopted a model of engaging multiple stakeholders to develop action plans for promoting sustainable/responsible business, across various sectors in India.

CONTACT US

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