

Joint Declaration of Intent

Between

**The Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
of the Federal Republic of Germany**

and

the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare of the Republic of India

on

**Agroecology and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources
(Lighthouse Initiative)**

The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare (MoA&FW) of the Republic of India and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of the Federal Republic of Germany (BMZ), hereinafter referred to as "Sides",

- Acknowledge the friendly relations existing between the Federal Republic of Germany and the Republic of India,
- Desire to strengthen and intensify those friendly relations through development cooperation in a spirit of partnership, and
- Intend to contribute to social and economic development, protection and sustainable use of natural resources, as well as sustainable and just agriculture and food systems.

The Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany share a long, trustful and successful development cooperation where important progress has been achieved towards sustainable economic development.

In this regard, both Sides intend to continue their successful cooperation to support India's development efforts, in consonance with India's and Germany's ambitious reform agenda and the internationally agreed Paris Climate Goals and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

This Joint Declaration is one of the initial deliverables of the Indo-German Partnership for Green and Sustainable Development that will be launched in the context of the next Indo-German Intergovernmental Consultations.

Globally, agriculture and food systems are facing extreme challenges, ranging from coping with climate change, soil erosion and poor soil health, severe water stress, biodiversity including Agrobiodiversity loss, poor nutrition and unsafe foods, declining farm productivity and farmer incomes as well as low rates of adoption of technologies and innovations, finally loss of regional cultures including food culture and regional identities. At the same time, ecosystems (e.g. forests) that provide crucial ecosystem services – including high biodiversity, food and natural fiber production, water and nutrient cycling, and climate regulation – are increasingly under pressure.

These challenges are highly complex, interlinked and context specific. They affect the entire society, and not only the rural population. Agriculture and allied sectors (forestry, fisheries, animal husbandry, local needs, processing and manufacturing, trade, crafts) provide livelihoods for more than two thirds of the population in India's rural areas, with strong and close interlinkages to the urban areas. India's rich ecosystems including the plentiful forests act as carbon sink and water reservoirs and provide resources and essential ecosystem services to millions of people. Sustainable and participative approaches to management of natural resources, afforestation and sustainable agriculture hence are crucial.

Germany acknowledges India's successful transition from a food-deficit to a food-surplus nation, which is now looking to adopt alternative and sustainable farming models such as natural farming on a large scale. India has a broad range of unique farming models with potential to improve farmers' income, livelihoods, food security and environmental health. Further, Germany recognises India's emphasis on sustainable and participative approaches to the management of natural resources. Germany congratulates India for taking up the challenge of sustainable natural resource management and income enhancement of farmers through its flagship programmes and policies with the ambitious goal to double farmers' income.

The herewith jointly decided Indo-German Partnership on Agroecology and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources (potentially including sustainable aquaculture and fisheries, forest, water and soil management, processing/manufacturing, trade, crafts) will be closely aligned to the 2030 Agenda. It will call for progressive and transformative steps which are urgently needed to contribute to a worldwide shift onto a more sustainable and resilient path. Agriculture and food systems are deeply inter-twined with economies, cultures, societies, governance, health, climate, natural capital and the environment, including biodiversity and are uniquely placed to contribute to the majority of the SDGs, India's vision of "Atmanirbhar Bharat" (self-reliant India) as well as the achievement of India's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement.

For the purposes of this joint declaration of intent, both sides understand agroecology to be an overarching approach that considers the complexity of our food system challenges. They understand that it aims at transforming agriculture and food systems towards sustainability and resilience, going beyond agricultural production. The approach should encompass a variety of social, political and environmental aspects that help maintain healthy agroecosystems, while providing safe and nutritious food for all. Internationally agreed guidelines like the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) ten elements of Agroecology or the

recommendations of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) on Agroecological and Other Innovative Approaches will provide guidance for our joint cooperation in this area.

A bottom-up approach which addresses agriculture and food systems in a holistic way – based on scientific evidence and India's own needs, experiences and local knowledge & technologies – will guide the agroecological transformation process being supported through this Lighthouse Initiative. This approach will trigger innovation and awareness, supported by an increasing demand for, and acceptance by Indian farmers, consumers, and civil society. The continuously promoted interaction between people and nature will lead to a higher appreciation of a healthy environment as well as to an increasing demand for improved quality and standards in food and food system.

Both Sides are convinced that a world free of hunger and poverty within existing planetary boundaries is possible. Having this overall goal in mind, the aim of this Lighthouse Initiative intends to support the transformation towards sustainable agriculture and food systems, taking a holistic and integrated view with a focus on rural and regional development encompassing all dimensions of sustainable development and all levels of action including Lifestyle for Environment (LIFE) or sustainable lifestyle.

The above-mentioned approaches reveal critical avenues to reach this goal. They will instruct our Lighthouse Initiative on Agroecology and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources.

The key areas for cooperation under this Lighthouse Initiative will be:

Strategic Dialogue

Bringing together all partners in the field of agroecology and sustainable management of natural resources, including the BMZ, the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection, the Federal Ministry for Food and Agriculture and other German authorities, on the Indian side the MoA&FW, the Ministry of Environment, Forest, Climate Change, the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), etc. – as well as key international partners such as International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), civil society and private sector – is an essential success factor. Therefore, both Sides intend to gather all pertinent players to ensure an aligned and holistic approach to strengthen relevant institutions and programmes, and to develop their capacities.

Building up on India's achievements, both Sides want to intensify the Indo-German exchange on the value proposition of agroecology and sustainable management of natural resources. To emphasize the success of this endeavor, both Sides aim to define the objectives of the Lighthouse Initiative until 2030, on the basis of existing Indian plans, programmes and targets, and preferably at the impact level.

Both sides concur that the pathway to agroecological transformation requires cooperation and interlinkages to other sectors like energy, digitalization, climate, health, nutrition, approaches adapted to the natural conditions and rural development, environment and biodiversity. Both Sides aim to support the approach of agroecology and sustainable management of natural resources within these meaningful economic areas. Innovative Renewable Energy-Systems, Artificial Intelligence-based technology without affecting biodiversity and resilient farming,

backed by adapted innovative efficient and more productive agriculture and forestry techniques, as well as proven concepts like Farmer Producer Organisations and the scaling up and revitalisation of successful traditional farming practices are aspects that should be integrated more actively into sustainable farming. In this regard, the Lighthouse Initiative will foster joint research, knowledge exchange and innovation between academic institutions and practitioners (including farmers) of both countries, as well as technology and scientific knowledge transfer through incentivising exchange and partnerships with the private sector and research cooperation.

To oversee the implementation, a Working Group will be constituted with the line ministries, i.e. Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change and Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying and NITI Aayog.

Financial and Technical Cooperation

The Lighthouse Initiative will perfectly complement and further strengthen the already existing initiatives in the Indo-German-Cooperation. The interlinkage between financial and technical cooperation is crucial to support a successful transition process flanked by technical capacity development and access to financing to implement innovative processes and achievements in the field of agroecology and sustainable natural resource management.

Intelligent grant and credit systems can also enable small-scale farmer groups and start-ups to participate in upcoming and increasingly expanding local, national and international markets and to meet the demand for natural and organic production and processing. In this context, the very successful cooperation between the German Development Cooperation and NABARD should be enhanced as much as possible.

India has already promoted a number of novel approaches and success stories in various states, including the Himalayan region and Andhra Pradesh, such as community-managed natural farming, zero-budget natural farming, organic farming and integrated farming systems. Cooperation with such ongoing approaches will be pursued and consistently enhanced. In addition, provision of financial means and technical support for new measures in the field of agroecology and the sustainable management of natural resources, like sustainable aquaculture and fisheries, forest and water management, prevention of soil erosion, promotion of value chains and trade, including processing, food safety, certification, healthy diets, consumer awareness and protection will be pursued under the Lighthouse Initiative. Further, it is envisaged to support the sustainable management of forest ecosystems with a landscape approach to stabilise or increase ecosystem services (water, climate, soil, biodiversity) and to strengthen sustainable development opportunities. This holistic approach will subsequently raise awareness and heighten the demand for a sustainable agroecological system and thus a healthy environment.

Both Sides concur that the technical cooperation project “Supporting Agroecological Transformation Processes in India (SuATI)” will provide coordinating support for the Lighthouse Initiative.

The German side appreciates recent Indian accomplishments within the area of agroecology and the sustainable management of natural resources and aims to take up India's proposals on working with flagship programmes like the Jiva Programme of NABARD and the Natural Farming programme under the centrally sponsored scheme Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana

(PKVY), as well as supporting policies and programmes of Indian States, and of the private sector in the relevant fields.

Against this backdrop, the BMZ expresses its intention to provide up to 300 million Euro for financial and technical cooperation until 2025 subject to the availability of funds and high quality project development. The Indian Side is invited by the BMZ to propose suitable projects for loan and grant financing from Financial Cooperation and Technical Cooperation well in advance of the annual negotiations to enable a smooth establishment of the intergovernmental commitments in the fields of agroecology and sustainable management of natural resources.

Further Forms of Cooperation

The transformative agenda of agroecology is knowledge intensive and requires innovative solutions and validated scientific data. Hence, India and Germany envisage to establish a joint Research Center supported by financial cooperation which will serve as a scientific contact point for the existing research landscape. It will work to enhance value-added technology and to facilitate scientific transfer – as well as developing and sharing state-of-the-art knowledge with practitioners in India, Germany and other countries. The Indian Government will examine in detail on how such a center will complement the existing research landscape. It is also proposed to work closely with the Indian Council for Agricultural Research (ICAR) and Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE). A multi-level exchange between Indian and German scientists will support the effort of fostering agroecology as a scientific approach.

Following the intended conduct of a conference on scaling up agroecology in the Himalaya region, both Sides will welcome a multi-stakeholder platform on agroecology for the region.

India plays a pioneering role in the area of agroecology and sustainable natural resource management throughout the world. South-South networks of exchange and mutual learning will be supported. This may include operational agreements for joint implementation of triangular cooperation projects with other South-Asian or African countries.

Both Sides concur that the areas of cooperation identified in the Joint Declaration of Intent will be formalised through separate arrangements between the Sides in writing.

Both Sides share the view that after three years, in 2025, they will review the absorption capacity of funds in the sector.

This Joint Declaration of Intent comes into effect on the date of signature.

Signed in Berlin and New Delhi on 02 May 2022

For the Federal Ministry for Economic
Cooperation and Development
of the Federal Republic of Germany

For the Ministry of Agriculture and
Farmers' Welfare
of the Republic of India

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