



## SEPTEMBER 2019 NEWSLETTER

### ISSUE 7

#### In this newsletter:

##### Project Update

- STAC  
Enterprises
- Deshpande  
Foundation

##### SSI-I Approaches

- Agri-  
Entrepreneur  
model
- National Spice  
Sustainability  
Platform

The Sustainable Spices Initiative – India (SSI-I) program completed three years in July 2019. Over these years, the program has reached out to around 80,000 smallholder farmers to train them on sustainable agricultural practices and has been successful in mobilizing the industry and contributing towards a sustainable supply chain in the spices sector.

One of the success stories of our intervention is our engagement with STAC, in which we are working with turmeric farmers in the tribal belt of Kandamal, Odisha. After three years of working with these farmers, the project is now self-sustainable. It has established a certified organic brand for sustainable produce from the project region and has created market linkages for direct procurement. We are also pleased to update on the water harvesting progress under SSI-I's chili program in Bellary, being implemented by Deshpande Foundation.

SSI-I is working towards introducing new approaches to create impact at scale, which includes Agri-Entrepreneur model to promote village-level entrepreneurship and ensuring quality of services to the farmers; and establishing a National Spice Sustainability Platform that will bring together organizations with a common goal of promoting sustainability.

We are happy to share the program updates in this newsletter, and hope you enjoy reading it.

## STAC Enterprise

SSI-I has been engaging with STAC for three years, to support sustainable turmeric production in Kandamal district of Odisha. Over these years, the project has worked with more than 12,000 turmeric farmers to train them on sustainable agricultural practices, including botanical application and preparation, and data management through demo plots and group trainings. This project also works with women farmers and conducts group training for women on the following topics:

- Leadership and life skill training
- Package of practices - turmeric
- Entrepreneurship development
- Pre and post-harvest
- Grading, processing and packaging

After three years of project implementation, the quality of turmeric from the project area has improved substantially. The project is now self-sustaining, and has created market linkages for direct procurement. As a result, the income of the turmeric farmer in the region has also increased. STAC has started their own processing unit and launched 'Vedik Farm' – as a brand of organic turmeric from the region.



Training provided to village-level trainers



Turmeric demonstration plot

### Farmer story:

**Jaya Kashi,**  
Turmeric farmer  
Village Tillory



Jaya is an SSI-I farmer, cultivating turmeric in her 2-acre land in Kandamal, Odisha. She has been working on her field for several years, however, after associating with the SSI-I, she has been consciously using the package of practices promoted under the project.

Since then, she is harvesting contamination-free produce, which has resulted in improved earnings for her. This year she sold turmeric at Rs. 60 per kg, directly to the market.

Speaking about her SSI-I journey, she says, "The project has not only helped me to improve my farming practices but also in learning about profits and resource management. Earlier, I was engaged in agricultural activities, domestic activities and some social work, but was not taking decisions by myself. Under the project, we are also made aware about this and now I am taking decisions about the agricultural activities and also at my home. This has given a boost to my self-confidence."

## Deshpande Foundation

Deshpande Foundation is working with 1,850 chili farmers under the project, to train them on SSI-I sustainable agricultural practices (SAP) principles.

**SAP Training:** The farmers were made aware on sustainable agricultural practices for chili, which includes integrated pest management and responsible agrochemical use. Deshpande Foundation also focused on community mobilization, innovative technology for farming practices, market linkages and collaboration with the government in the trainings.

**Water Harvesting training:** For effective water management, the participating farmers were made aware on the benefits of farm ponds. The farmers were informed on the optimum size of the pond, along with its cost and benefits to the group. Farm Ponds provides critical life-saving water to irrigate rain-fed lands and significantly improves farmer's income by creating additional livelihood opportunities. Till now, under the project, more than 50 farm ponds have been made. Standard size of farm pond is 100x100x12 feet, which can harvest about 33 lakhs litres of water and can irrigate 4-5 acre of land.

**Chili Dryer project (in collaboration with Stanford University):** Chili dryer has been set up under the project in collaboration with the Stanford University as a pilot project. The dryer takes three to four days to dry 500 kg of chili in one cycle. Currently, work is being done to bring down the cost of the technology and scale adoption.



Farmer training under the project



Chili dryer



Creating water harvesting structures under the project



## Agri-Entrepreneur model

IDH is working towards establishing Agri-Entrepreneur model in areas where there were SSI-I farm programs to secure the work put into farmer training over the last seasons and establish potential market aggregators, in which village or cluster-level entrepreneurs are identified to provide services to the farmers. IDH in collaboration with their partners SFI will provide mentorship and tools to the AEs to develop their revenue streams, while also ensuring quality of services to the farmers.

The proposed model has shared value for each stakeholder:

Farmers	Access to good quality input Access to government services and financial services. Access of buyers of all the types of crops the farmers are growing in the region Training and advisory support
Input companies	Villages level sales channel establishment. Feedback from farmers is easy. Ability to innovate on financial products linked to inputs.
Banks	Access to farmers who are a part of value chain, hence reduced risk. Ability to sell customized financial products as per farmer's requirement.
Buyers	Reliable supply of aggregated quality. Aggregation support Farmer outreach
Government	AE can act as a last mile delivery provider of services/information Job creation in Rural villages

The Agri-Entrepreneurs is designed to provide a basket of services to the village community in which they operate. Some of the service offering opportunities include:

- **Consolidation & sale of Inputs**
- **Aggregation and sale of agri-produce**
- **Blended Services:** mechanization, crop advisory, labor contracting, and livestock advisory
- **Agri Processing**
- **Financial Services Banking Correspondent:** credit, insurance and other govt services on behalf of Banks and other Financial Institutions.

The AEs will be supported by an AE mentor who will provide support for a period of 24 months, by way of:

- Aiding them in understanding the legal requirements and obtaining the licence, if required.
- Access to training material and business support for a period of one year.
- Access to business opportunities with IDH partner brands.
- Access to existing government support and credit facility as per govt policies.
- Working capital loans.



### National Spice Sustainability Platform

India is a leading producer, exporter and consumer of spices in the world. So far, IDH, through the SSI-I program, has been focusing only 10 per cent of the export market. To reach scale and promote sustainability across the remaining 90 per cent of the domestic sector, IDH has initiated engagement on a common platform, in collaboration with other stakeholders in the Spice Industry.

Collaborative efforts by the organizations will focus on Sustainable Development Goals built into the system to educate the farmers and primary producing groups (FPSs/SPS/Aggregators) the importance of social, economic and environmental aspects in spice production. These farmer groups will then be given market access to sell their produce directly to these participating retailers and exporters.

World Spice Organization will be the Secretariat for this Initiative and will have a Core Committee with representation from each organisation to monitor the progress.

This new collaborative approach is expected to consolidate the different efforts of the various key players in the Indian Spice industry to ensure greater synergies and effective outreach.

