

**Green-Ag : Mizoram
STATE PROJECT MANAGEMENT UNIT
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
AIZAWL, MIZORAM**

PRESS RELEASE

Green-Ag project will transform Indian Agriculture

Aizawl, Mizoram – July 28, 2020: The Green-Ag Project State Inception workshop inauguration programme, was held in Aizawl to inform and orient different stakeholders about the project objective.

The Green-Ag project aims to catalyse sustainable transformation of Indian agriculture, without compromising the country's food security and farmers' income. The project seeks to mainstream biodiversity, climate change, and sustainable land management objectives and practices into Indian agriculture.

The Green-Ag Project is funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) through its sixth funding cycle. The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare (MoA&FW) is the National Executing Agency and FAO is the designated GEF Implementing Agency. The Ministry of Environment Forests and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) is the GEF Operational Focal Point and coordinates all GEF projects in the country.

Shri Tomio Shichiri, FAO – India Representative, virtually addressed the Mizoram government team from New Delhi office. He emphasized that the Green-Ag project will help the local people to take advantage of rich agrobiodiversity present in their landscape for sustainability of agriculture & livestock production practices, promotion of secondary agriculture, establishment of green value chains and thereby enhancing their incomes.

“Green-Ag project will bring a paradigm shift in forest management to provide a better ecosystem services, conservation of biodiversity and reduction in human-wildlife conflict in the project landscape,” says Mr. Shichiri.

Dr. Alka Bhargava, Additional Secretary, Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers' Welfare (DAC&FW), Government of India, and Member, National Project Steering Committee (NPSC) of Green-Ag project, also virtually attended the programme. She termed the Green-Ag project is a medium to strengthen the symbiotic link between sustainable agriculture, conservation of biodiversity and development.

“This project becomes unique for its site selection. The landscape has revenue villages and community land in close conjunction with national parks and protected areas,” said Ms. Bhargava.

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She took this opportunity to explain recent initiatives taken by Union government in the agriculture sector and the benefits that may accrue to Mizoram farmers.

“Sustainable Agriculture is the main component of this project and given the unique advantage of Mizoram, in terms of agro-climatic conditions, water availability and hard working population, the state can produce niche products like Passion fruits to the entire country and explore export markets too,” said Bhargava.

She also listed out different ongoing programmes under various ministries, which could be converged to get better results for Green-Ag project. Also, she urged Mizoram Government to increase to consider diversification of crops. She dwelt upon the need of improving water use efficiency in agriculture sector in the state by adoption modern techniques of irrigation.

Shri. C. Lalrinsanga, Hon'ble Minister, Agriculture, Irrigation & Water Resources and Cooperation Department, Govt. of Mizoram, was the Chief Guest of this event. He laid stress on the balance between natural resource conservation and the fulfillment of economic needs.

“As population increasing, we cannot afford to be unsustainable,” says Lalrinsanga, who addressed in person to the stakeholders in the capital city held at the SAMETI conference Hall, Aizwal.

He also said that his ministry would support Green-Ag project as this will help in economic upliftment to the people of 35 villages of this area.

Dr. Thomas Hofer, Senior Forestry Officer, RAP, Lead Technical Officer (LTO), Green-Ag Project, FAO RAP, Bangkok, virtually addressed the Mizoram stakeholders. He emphasized upon inherent complexities and emerging opportunities in this project. He underscored upon the uniqueness of this project and keen interest is being shown by the GEF in the outcomes of the project.

“The success of this programme would tell the world how Landscape Assessment approach can bring change at both local and global level” said Hofer.

Mizoram is one of the five states (Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Mizoram, Odisha, and Uttarakhand) where the project is being implemented. The geographical area of Mizoram project landscape is 145 670 ha, in Lunglei and Mamit district having 35 villages and includes two protected areas, “Dampa Tiger Reserves” and “Thorangtlang Wildlife Sanctuary”. The Department of Agriculture (Crop Husbandry), Government of Mizoram, is the nodal agency for this project.



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Background

Agriculture has made immense progress in contributing to the country's food security. India is one of the largest exporters of agricultural produce. Over the years, the contribution of agriculture to the GDP has come down considerably. However, it continues to be the largest source of livelihoods in India. While Indian agriculture adopted intensive agricultural practices to make great strides in production and productivity, and emerged as a net exporter of food grains, universal adoption of these intensive practices have undermined agrobiodiversity. Additionally, critical natural resources like land, soil, and water, particularly groundwater aquifers have been negatively impacted. The agriculture sector in the country is critically poised to address issues of its long-term sustainability.

For this, agriculture sector needs to fully integrate environmental concerns in its policies, plans and programmes to ensure that the sector's negative environmental impacts are mitigated and positive contributions are enhanced. Environmental mainstreaming is important, especially in the context of a changing climate.

The Green-Ag project aims to catalyze sustainable transformation of Indian agriculture, without compromising the country's food security and farmers' income. The project seeks to mainstream biodiversity, climate change, and sustainable land management objectives and practices into Indian agriculture. The project supports harmonization between India's agricultural and environmental sector priorities and investments so that the achievement of national and global environmental benefits can be fully realized without compromising India's ability to strengthen rural livelihoods and meet its food and nutrition security. The project also supports greater coherence between Government of India's policies, investments, and institutions concerned with conservation and agricultural production at landscape level so that they are mutually compatible.

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The project adopts a landscape approach and is being implemented in five high-conservation-value landscapes, wherein each landscape includes a mix of conservation and production areas. The project states are : i) Madhya Pradesh, ii) Mizoram, iii) Odisha, iv) Rajasthan and v) Uttarakhand with a total budget of USD 33 558 716. The project duration is from 01 April 2019 to 31 March 2026.

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The Project is designed to achieve multiple global environmental benefits in at least 1.8 million ha of land in five landscapes with mixed land use systems. This will include the following key targets:

- Institutionalization of intersectoral mechanisms (agricultural and allied sectors, forestry and natural resources management, and economic development) at the national and five States to facilitate continued mainstreaming of environmental concerns and priorities related to resilience into the agriculture sector beyond project end
- Strengthen at least six key National and State level agricultural programmes (missions) with result based environment indicators integrated into their policy and planning frameworks
- A reduction in the threat index from baseline at critical sites of high biodiversity importance
- Bringing in at least 104 070 ha of farms under sustainable land and water management (including organic farming and agrobiodiversity conservation)
- 49 million tCO₂eq Greenhouse gas emission sequestered or reduced through sustainable land use and agricultural practices and improved agroecosystems management