

MINUTES OF AGRICULTURE REVIEW & PLANNING MEETING

Date : 05th April' 2006 (Wednesday)
Time : 10:20 am to 01:10 pm
Venue : NCRC Office, Collectorate, Nagapattinam
Organized by : NCRC, Nagapattinam

This meeting aimed at further discussions on the plans and implementations of the NGOs for the second season, the preliminary discussions for which had been carried out in the last two review and planning meetings itself.

Agenda:

1. Planning for second season:
 - Implementation
 - Capacity building
2. Taluk level meetings and planning workshops
3. 'Consolidating functions' for first year's works
4. Implementation in back water problem areas
5. Working on drainage systems
6. Assessment of the need for coordination

Planning for the Second Season:

The NGOs shared their plans for the second season, in addition to the ones mentioned in the previous two reviews and planning meetings.

- ✓ **Venture** told that it has two years' project plan in two Panchayats.
- ✓ **CREATE** told that they can utilize the remaining funds of the first year and doubtful if additional funds can be mobilized.
- ✓ **Bharathi** told that implementation of the plans it had mentioned in the last meeting, depends on the funding, which is not yet clear.
- ✓ **Sevalaya** came up with the development activities it has proposed to its funding agency. The NGO stated that before the end of this month the proposal will be finalized.

- ✓ TOFARM had confirmed its plans given in the last meeting.
- ✓ Ekta Parishad told that it has no problems with regard to funds. Besides, it is planning to incorporate the practice of 50% People's Contribution (PC) in all its plans and implementation.
- ✓ CCD was not present in the last two meetings and thereby shared its plans this time.
- ✓ World Vision shared that this year they will concentrate mainly on trainings and need – based capacity building.
- ✓ OFFER is yet to come up with clear plans for the second year but the NGO head had told NCRC that it is ready to take up few common works.
- ✓ BEST told that in addition to the first year's works and packages, it has more plans for the second season. CIKS and Sevalaya suggested that BEST should get approval from the agriculture engineering as few of its plans related to common works are technical oriented.
- ✓ CIKS would carry out most of its plans in Pulianthurai, Thandavankulam, Madavamedu (tsunami, backwater & also flood affected villages) Koolaiyar, Thirumullaivasal and one more village to be selected.
- ✓ The NGO gave a cost estimate for the establishment of 'skimming well' as the NGOs expressed interest.
 - Skimming installation - Rs. 70,000 to 80,000
 - Water testing - Rs. 8,000
 - Oil Engine - Rs. 22,000
 - Sprinklers - Rs. 20,000

A total cost of approximately Rs. 1, 20, 000 will be incurred till the final stage.
- ✓ CIKS also shared that they are planning for organizing a one day workshop for NGOs and provide orientation.

ANNEXURE: The Implementation plans of the NGOs

NCRC quoted few points and suggestions:

It would be preferable if all the NGOs do planning with first priority to completion of the reclamation activities started last year, then to developmental activities.

All the works have to have focus on salinity correction in tsunami relief and rehabilitation and other developmental activities can come in addition.

Since most of the NGOs are doing both – capacity building and implementation, it

would be better to keep selection of villages flexible at this stage to avoid duplication.

If many NGOs are interested, they can make a visit to the skimming wells already set up by CIKS – it will be very useful for cross – learning. CIKS also has a resource centre providing technical support & upgrading, good documentations, and various processes developed on paddy & vegetables, including a kitchen lab.

NGOs can interact with each other and exchange their unique resources with others. The farmers, instead of inter district or state exposure visits, can be taken for a visit to the other NGOs' work places and learn from each other.

NCRC asked the NGOs if they have identified the farmers' felt needs in their work areas – these many days the farmers were extending their hands for anything and everything, but this attitude has to be changed and the farmers have to be made self sufficient.

Venture told that around 10% farmers in their area are clear on their needs and requirements.

CWS has experienced that the 'need felt' farmers are very less compared to the total number. As a donor agency, CWS stated that nearly 90% funds were exhausted last year itself and further works in second year can be supported only after remobilization of funds. They said that this is the state with many other donor agencies.

NCRC told that last year only by June - July the damages were reassessed and proposals to donors for reclamation activities were sent. By August end, taluk level meetings were conducted for planning and allocation. In August, farmers became aware of the NGOs and reclamation plans. At that time, lot of funds had to be mobilized and spent in a shorter period. Delayed planning and funding lead to delay in implementation, non implementation of certain activities and no proper participatory planning possible with people in the first year. But this year, we have sufficient time to plan and prepare a responsible proposal to avail funds before the agriculture season starts and we have to make better use of it.

Taluk level meetings and workshops:

It was reiterated that before we go for Taluk – level meetings with NGOs, farmers and line departments, our plans should be intact. Working backwards from the start of the season, most of the NGOs told that it is necessary to be ready with plans for the development activities by May' 2006. Also, planning for effective implementation, with regard to funds, farmers' participation and eco friendly activities, is very important.

- ✓ Keeping in mind the experience with the farmers in the previous taluk level meetings, all the NGOs agreed to finalize things with their donor agencies and by 15th or 20th April will inform if they are prepared for the Taluk – level meetings.
- ✓ NCRC requested the NGOs to keep in mind that delay in planning meetings would mean postponing the agriculture season. Also, NGOs like TOFARM, Ekta Parishad, Kudumbam and CCD have given assurance for funds and implementation of their plans. Other NGOs are expected to do the same at the earliest.

'Consolidation functions' for first year works:

NCRC mentioned about the function conducted by BEST during 'aruvadai' (harvest) time, TOFARM's Harvest festival and Kudumbam's 21 villages' festival for providing a consolidation of the activities done so far to the farmers. NCRC suggested that all NGOs should initiate similar functions, at least in a small way so that:

- confidence of the farmers is gained
- experience sharing from both sides is made possible
- clear and broad planning for second season along with the farmers takes place.

Implementation in Back water problems areas:

NCRC told that in few areas where agriculture was affected by tsunami via back waters, it has been tackled but most areas are left unattended. Apart from this, the region is generally salinity prone and farmers face problems during full moon and no moon periods due to raise in back water levels. It was discussed that whether intervention into resolving this problem should be taken up by the NGOs or not. NCRC added that intervention in this area would mean land management, strengthening bunds on the banks of the rivers and constructing shutter across rivers/channels/drainages. This will prove to be an expensive project but it will be beneficial to the farmers. NGOs' and government's work can compliment each other in this process.

TOFM suggested that this issue can be kept open to the farmers but NCRC told that a conviction and sincere commitment from the NGOs will be required before doing so.

World vision shared that it had attempted to address this issue last year but could not succeed.

The NGOs agreed that this issue should necessarily be addressed but major roles and responsibilities for a long term will have to be taken by the NGOs. Also, constant

cooperation from the concerned government departments will be needed.

NCRC told it has identified few NGOs and donors who are interested to undertake this issue for a specific place in Sirkali. Further talk and planning on the same shall be done based on the need and opinion of all.

Working on Drainage systems:

All the participants felt that if no focus is laid on drainage systems, all the works done by the NGOs will further go unnoticed and it will be stated that NGOs did not do anything for salinity control. Coordination among government, NGOs and farmers is needed for proceeding with this issue. The importance of drainage channels in relation to salinity reduction was also discussed. The NGOs have to be cautious in taking up and doing government works already sanctioned or not and to be patient in execution / implementation.

Coordination by NCRC in the Second Year:

NCRC expressed that in the first year after Tsunami, a common and shared understanding was needed. A body for coordination and conflict resolution among the NGOs, government and farmers was necessary. A package in place for common implementation was necessary. The need for avoiding duplication of reclamation activities by NGOs in villages was necessary. In the wake of only few NGOs ready with their plans and ensured of donor support, the need for coordination at the central level had been discussed.

- ✓ Few NGOs told that a common platform will surely be needed for a longer time here.
- ✓ To this, NCRC told that as things are under control and close to normalcy, NCRC role's as a coordination body may be dissolved and it shall act as a common platform only. Also, out of 23 NGOs in agriculture, less than 50% have been regular to the recent three meetings, interacting and utilizing NCRC.
- ✓ NCRC stated that we can also confine our role to selected villages (with maximum damages), change methodologies and alter the strategies based on the needs and number of NGOs working. NGOs were requested to think about this issue and depending on the common needs of the NGOs and community, NCRC's role can be redefined.

General discussions:

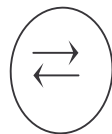
- ✓ CIKS stated that strengthening the community, mentally and technically, is very necessary to sustain the efforts taken by all of us to reclaim agriculture from Tsunami's effect. Capacity building would be a way of rejuvenating the farmers. But half the reclamation is done by itself if the farmers get back to where they were before Tsunami.
- ✓ Sevalaya added that various external factors would influence this and it is not so easy to change the farmers' attitude. Not only reclaiming from tsunami effects, but also putting the farmers at a higher level is needed for sustainability. The NGO told that the farmers should be able to avail the government subsidies and schemes – for this awareness among the farmers through SHGs is needed.
- ✓ NCRC analyzed the first year scenario and what is needed in the second year:

FIRST YEAR (2005):

SECOND YEAR (2006):



Delivery mode



Partnership mode

In the first year, it was a 'one way' mode - NGOs were providing and the farmers were simply receiving. But in second year, a 'partnership mode' is a must - for sustained ownership learning and carry - forwarding. It was so felt that planned working will lead to developments and promotion.

ANNEXURE: THE IMPLEMENTATION AND PLANS OF THE NGOS

No.	NGO	Implementation	Capacity Building
1.	VENTURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mushroom production - Develop a solar drier - Vegetable/ fruits processing - Agro forestry - Setting up of a nursery - Saline tolerant fruit seedlings - Develop seedlings for Mango & Gooseberry 	- as given in the previous meeting
2.	Sevalaya	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - widening of farm ponds - deep ploughing - planting of horticulture fruit trees - mango, guava & gooseberry - fodder (subabul) on bunds - casuarinas on <i>patta</i> lands 	- exposure programme

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - vermi compost - income generation programme by giving goats 	
3.	Ekta Parishad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reclamation of remaining farm ponds - nursery for bio mass - tree plantation – bio mass on bunds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - training on organic farming & vermi composting - documentation of traditional agriculture practices
4.	CREATE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - vermi compost pits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - training on developing azolla & panchakaviya - exposure visit for the farmers.
5.	CCD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - new farm ponds (50% PC) - drying yards (25% PC) - coir pith composting - raising of sea bunds at places wherever backwater rises and falls kitchen garden 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - training on Vermi Compost (VC) to 25 farmers (only 10% PC expected) - Setting up of 2 central units for VC - 2 Federations be formed with 49 SHGs - Exposure visits to Kerala, with support from CRI (an NGO) - 15 trials on cotton, groundnut green gram, black gram, sunflower and maize.
6.	World Vision	No field implementation plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - training in Soil fertility management and plant growth to farmers - North Poiganallur, Naluvadapathi, Pushpavanam and Vettaikaraniruppu. Kovilpathu and Periyakuthagai proposed.
7.	BEST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - First year's package activities - Cattle penning - Irrigation / drainage channels - Check dams – for irrigation purpose - Organic farming – <i>panchakaviya, mooligai</i> and <i>poochi verati</i> - Vermi compost - Threshing yards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to evolve plans
8.	CIKS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Skimming wells (oil engine, sprinkler units, etc) - one well can support 10 acres of land with groundnut/ vegetables - Provide saline tolerant paddy variety for 50 acres 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training – seed to harvest - Soil and Water analysis/test in 6 villages. - Training of 250 farmers – 10 programmes on organic farming - Institutionalizing <i>sanghams</i> – for sustainability and long lasting effects