

An aerial photograph of a rural landscape. In the foreground, there's a large green field. A winding, light-colored water channel or irrigation ditch cuts through the landscape, surrounded by patches of green grass and bare soil. To the right of the channel, there's a small, circular, stone-lined pond. The background shows more green fields, scattered palm trees, and a line of trees under a clear sky.

# Report on Review of Impact Indicators

*Hindustan Unilever Foundation*

March 2024



*Ernst & Young Associates LLP (EY) has been engaged by Hindustan Unilever Foundation (HUF) to review the performance against predetermined impact indicators for the fiscal year FY 2022-23. During the review process, EY has evaluated 13 Program Implementation Agencies (PIAs), making physical visits to 11 PIAs sample project locations and conducting virtual reviews of interventions from 2 PIAs. EY has interacted with key stakeholders such as panchayat members, user groups, officials from the MGNREGS and Agriculture departments, cooperatives, and community and institutional cadres. Furthermore, they have referred to documentation to review the reporting mechanisms of these impact indicators. EY carried out the entire review in compliance with the OECD DAC framework.*

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# **Review of Impact Indicators reported by Partner Implementing Agencies of Hindustan Unilever Foundation**

## **1. Introduction**

Hindustan Unilever Foundation (HUF) was established in 2010 as a philanthropic arm of Hindustan Unilever Limited, one of India's largest fast-moving consumer goods companies. HUF's mission is to make water security commonplace in India by catalyzing and amplifying effective solutions to India's water challenges. This is achieved through partnerships with non-profit organizations sharing a common mission and collaboration with other co-funding and government agencies.

HUF works across the country's diverse regions, river basins, and hydrogeological zones. The Foundation recognises that the diversity of India's water challenges mandates a range of solutions instead of a 'one-solution at scale' approach. Hence, programmes are designed with interventions appropriate for the interplay of groundwater and surface water in a region - addressing both the supply and demand side aspects. Recognizing this diversity, the approach involves a variety of solutions rather than a singular, large-scale method.

Putting communities and farmers at the center of these programmes, HUF has successfully implemented solutions that empower them to 'Know More' about their crucial water resources, 'Save More' through scientific conservation methods, and 'Use Less' water in agriculture.

To assess the impact of these programmes, HUF engaged EY (Ernst & Young Associates LLP) to conduct a comprehensive review of identified impact indicators. EY analyzed the data provided for the assurance objective to calculate quantitative impact metrics and conducted stakeholder consultations to assess the qualitative aspects and the impact on the community. Virtual reviews and consultations were conducted for some of the programme implementation agencies.

### **1.1. Scope of review**

- No. of water conservation structures created; no. of plantations (units or ha)
- No. of villages benefitting from water conservation work.
- No. of farmers benefitting from agriculture and water interventions and quality of impact through detailed stakeholder engagement (small/marginal, women) (qualitative)
- No. of farmers and households benefitting from agriculture and water interventions (small/marginal, women) (quantitative) and quality of impact through stakeholder interaction (qualitative)
- Assessment of additional income generated:
  - From Agriculture
  - From supply side work (MGNREGS)
- Community institutions created and operational on water governance and agriculture interventions.
- Effectiveness of community institutions (qualitative)

### **1.2 Approach**

1. A thorough examination of the quality of impact has been conducted through extensive engagement with stakeholders taking the above-mentioned scope into account.
2. EY utilized the OECD DAC framework to assess the impact, considering its five pillars: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability.
3. Stakeholder engagement was carried out both in the field and through desk reviews. The involved stakeholders comprised internal team members, representatives from programme implementing agencies, and beneficiaries. The EY team interacted with a diverse group including farmers, panchayat members, user groups, government department officials from MGNREGS and Agriculture department, cooperatives, and cadres (community and institution interface) to evaluate impact parameters.
4. The review encompassed an analysis of documents and data provided by implementing agencies for the period from April 1, 2022, to March 31, 2023.
5. The documents scrutinized included the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed with HUF for the projects, water calculation sheets, farmers' lists, training records, minutes of Focus Group Discussions (FGD), among others.

## 2. Review Outcome

### 2.1 Relevance

The focal issue pertains to agricultural sustainability and water conservation in programme areas marked by diminishing water tables, drought, rough terrain, and insufficient infrastructure. After engaging in local consultations with partners and farmers, it became apparent that a lack of awareness and restricted access to information regarding effective farming techniques and water conservation were major hurdles. This underscores the urgent requirement for customized interventions aimed at bridging these knowledge disparities and enabling local communities to embrace practices that alleviate the adversities stemming from environmental conditions and resource constraints.

Throughout implementation, PIAs trained officials to promote awareness of cost-efficient farming methods, water conservation, crop residue management, and soil health. The overarching programme objectives aimed at transforming farming practices, promoting efficient water consumption, and implementing supply-side interventions through enhanced infrastructure. These interventions not only addressed immediate challenges but also boosted accessibility to resources like informative apps, farmer communities, and government developmental programmes.



Image Source: VIKSAT (Overflowing checkdam during monsoon)



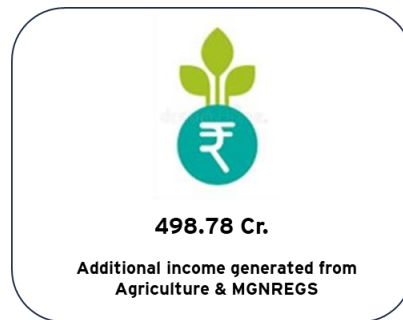
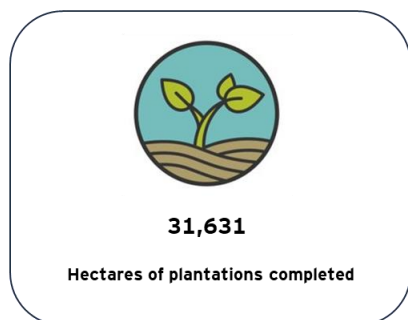
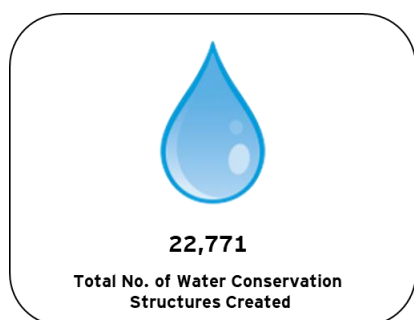
Image Source: PSSS (Pond at project location)

### 2.2 Impact

The programme impacts were thoroughly discussed with the beneficiaries from various regions, ensuring representation from diverse sections of society. Women participation in the discussions was more, highlighting how HUF's initiatives, in collaboration with local implementing agencies, have positively transformed their lives.

These programmes interventions have led to behavioral change in the farmers and noted substantial yield increase through novel techniques and organic farming, promoting both productivity and environmentally sustainable practices. The programmes have had a positive impact on water availability and increased agricultural production, resulting in additional income for households. These initiatives have also garnered support from external stakeholders, including the government, local bodies, and the community.

In many programmes, supply-side interventions are carried out through MGNREGS, providing locals with daily employment opportunities near their homes, thereby reducing migration. Due to these interventions, beneficiaries now have increased water availability for second crop, improve in yield through better farming practices, reduce input costs, achieving better crop quality, and enhancement in price realization through improved market connections.



## 2.3 Effectiveness

The primary objectives of the intervention programmes were to disseminate awareness, educate farmers, enhance income levels, and create additional employment opportunities for local people. The interventions resulted in substantial changes in programme geographies. Through these intervention, community upliftment and economic stability achieved via targeted efforts and capacity building enable year-round cropping activities.

Programme Implementing Agencies (PIAs) undertook the training of local cadres and selected representatives, who, being farmers themselves and integral members of the local community, were positioned to reach the village level. These representatives, trained by the PIAs, played a crucial role in facilitating the utilization of high-quality seeds, accessing government schemes, implementing water conservation, and farming interventions, and motivating local farmers to establish community collectives. To ensure the effectiveness of the interventions, robust monitoring and evaluation systems have been established, utilizing local community resource persons and village resource persons.

These interventions gave a platform to women for discussion and putting their needs and ideas on the table. The best example of women empowerment can be seen in interventions of SSP, where the Women Led Climate Resilient Farming (WCRF) or the One-Acre model has been implemented with the effective capacity building, propagating good governance, empowering women farmers, and installing leadership skills in them for successful management of agricultural interventions.



Image Source: PANI (Interaction with MKS members)



Image Source: VIKSAT (Stakeholder interaction)



## 2.4 Efficiency

The Programme Implementing Agencies (PIAs) play a pivotal role in enhancing programme efficiency through capacity-building initiatives. These initiatives include raising awareness about available resources and promoting more effective and advanced farming methods. Additionally, interventions involve the integration of digital technologies, such as farmer-centric apps that enable real-time monitoring of water levels and soil conditions, such as static soil moisture sensors in CIPT.

These applications empower farmers by providing valuable information on optimal chemical usage and weed control, fostering self-sufficiency. In specific programme locations, PIAs leverage digital technology to conduct thorough studies of the varied landscape before installing essential infrastructures. In certain regions, despite the presence of government programmes, due to a lack of enthusiasm and resources has constrained the dissemination of these initiatives to rural areas.

To address this limitation, PIAs collaborate with local cooperative societies and government departments, ensuring that villagers and local communities can effectively utilize these programmes. The design of these initiatives focuses on seamless integration with the existing network of cadres, team structures, and programme implementation frameworks. This collaborative approach involves a diverse range of stakeholders, including cooperatives in the case of CIPT, Tank Management Committee (TMCs) for Srijan, SHGs and Village Organizations for VIKSAT, NREGS cell, and other departments for PRADAN, as well as the Agriculture and Panchayati Raj departments for FES, among others, thereby maximizing their collective potential across all partner organizations.



Image Source: PRADAN Evergreen In East (Stakeholder interaction)



Image Source: SRIJAN (Farmer displaying Seed Bank)

## 2.5 Sustainability

The sustainability of interventions is guaranteed through the empowerment of local communities via capacity-building initiatives. These programmes are designed to enhance the self-reliance of farmers and community members after completion of existing interventions. Farmers undergo training to achieve self-sufficiency, enabling them to access resources and schemes for increased agricultural yields.

The Programme Implementing Agencies (PIAs) train local individuals to serve as representatives. These well-trained representatives work in collaboration with local authorities under robust governance structure. This structure not only ensures the effective and proper implementation of the programme but also strives to foster self-reliant communities. By empowering local communities with the necessary tools, knowledge and trust, the programme aims to create a sustainable and resilient foundation against the challenges posed by water scarcity. The involvement of local Gram Panchayats, or local government bodies, is sought to ensure the seamless continuation of operations and the implementation of best practices with their support and guidance whenever feasible.

The implementing agencies actively strive for the engagement of the private sector, civil society organizations, and government in collaborative action. Establishing multi-stakeholder alliances is crucial to advancing water governance initiatives, aiming to achieve last-mile connectivity for the effective delivery of "Water for Public Good."



Image Source: VIKSAT



## 2.6 Hindustan Unilever Foundation's Contribution to Programme



### Empowering Lives and Communities

The empowerment of farmers and other beneficiaries underscores the broader socio-economic impact of HUF's initiatives, reaching beyond the immediate scope of the project to uplift and empower communities at large.

### Beyond Finances- Uplifting Lives

HUF has wielded a notably positive influence on lives, extending beyond financial benefits to encompass the creation of livelihood opportunities for individuals not directly benefiting from the project.

### HUF's Transformative Impact

The introduction of digital platforms has streamlined data management, making it easier compared to the previous manual handling, which was cumbersome and challenging for timely record maintenance.



### Cultivating Brighter Lives- Flexible in Programme Implementation

HUF has been flexible in its fund utilization, as observed during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is not confined to spending funds solely on predetermined allocations, demonstrating adaptability to address emerging needs and ensuring optimal implementation beyond the initially planned structure.

### Sowing Seeds of Green Progress

HUF's commitment in raising awareness about sustainable practices is clearly demonstrated by the fact that farmers can now engage in multi-cropping, even in water-scarce areas.

### Sustainable Living with HUF

With the assistance of HUF interventions, community-level groups have been formed, empowering them to independently sustain the program objectives once the project is completed.

## 3. Case Studies

Hindustan Unilever Foundation (HUF) led PIA's initiatives that encouraged farmers to adopt various interventions in water-scarce regions. The standout aspect lies in instances where farmers, inspired by HUF's efforts, not only embraced but also took these practices to remarkable heights. These case studies illuminate the transformative power of sustainable agriculture in challenging environments, showcasing how farmers innovatively built upon HUF's interventions for lasting impact. Following are some examples.

### Case Study 1

#### Guniada Hill Ecological Restoration: Ridge to Valley Approach

##### Background:

- The entire hill was initially part of a forest area.
- Widespread deforestation practices led to the hill becoming barren, causing heavy rainwater runoff and rendering the land unsuitable for crop cultivation.
- Previous afforestation initiatives failed due to water runoff and extensive animal grazing activities.

##### PRADAN Intervention:

- Under "Evergreen in the East" initiative applied ridge-to-valley approach for the watershed.
- Constructed 30-40 structures, including staggered trenches on the hill, for water retention and enhanced soil moisture.
- Strategically developed trenches to deter grazing animals.
- Built farm ponds on flat land for agricultural water storage.

##### Impacts of PRADAN 's Holistic Approach:

- Successful forest canopy development.
- Marked biodiversity increase, showcasing ecological restoration.
- Transformation from barren to a thriving ecosystem with improved vegetation.
- Shift from one crop to two crop harvesting seasons, enhancing local livelihoods.

##### Note:

For such interventions through which ecological restoration occurs the client can go for Biodiversity Assessment which would showcase the actual impact of such interventions.



## Case Study 2:

### One-Acre Model: Empowering Female Farmers

#### Background:

- Initially, half-acre sugarcane and half-acre soya bean cultivation.
- Borewell supplied water for only half-acre, leaving the other half unused.

#### Current Practices with SSP PIA Intervention:

- Took 26 types of vegetables, via organic methods & seed saving.
- Plants on-farm fruit trees and maintains two vermicompost pits.
- Sells vegetables quickly for Rs 3000-5000 profit per visit.
- Engages in small agribusiness, earning Rs 10-12,000 monthly.
- Saves Rs 1100 monthly through biogas use.
- Credits success to SSP PIA training.
- Adopted sprinkler and drip irrigation for efficiency.

#### Social Impact

From a marginalized farming background, she faced traditional patriarchy, where women farming was taboo. Post-SSP intervention, she gained confidence, subtly challenging patriarchy. She convinced her husband, secured 20 gunthas, and achieved a bumper crop through organic farming and sprinkler methods. **This success shifted family perspectives and earned her societal respect.** SSP's "Sakhi" initiative recognizes such women, serving as inspiring examples for more women farmers.



Mrs. Rukmini Rameshwar Dalvi  
Edu.: 9<sup>th</sup> Std | Age: 43 | Child: 3  
Farm: 1 Acre | Village: Anusurda

## 4. Observations and Recommendations

1. It was observed across few programmes that the number of small, marginal & women farmers has been reported together in total for impact assessment. It is suggested that numbers of small, marginal & women farmers should be reported separately for correct representation of data.
2. It is recommended to use the primary and most recent & relevant data to calculate additional income/ person days etc., this can include CACP data, secondary sources etc.,
3. It is recommended that for crops where CACP price or MIS sheet are not available and market price is taken as reference to calculate the final income, FGDs (Focused Group Discussions) are done with the MKS members and Minutes of the same is recorded and signed by the members.

### Disclaimer:

*Our review is based on data shared by PIAs through HUF, and consultation with PIA representatives and HUF programme coordinators. The observations are based on review of documents/records and data/information provided by PIAs through HUF and discussions/interactions with key personnel.*

*Impact indicators presented in the summary are based on information provided by HUF during the field visit and desk review, and therefore, the review of impact indicators is valid for the PIAs engaged by HUF. The observations and recommendations presented are our interpretation of the information obtained in discussion with PIAs. Review of the impact indicators was undertaken based on consultations with PIA and HUF team as per questionnaire guided by Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development by Development Assistance Committee, and it was not possible to verify all necessary documentary evidence for data accuracy, completeness, and integrity. This summary is meant purely for internal consumption by HUF and only the extract from review report can be used in HUF's public disclosure. If any person chooses to reference the contents of the report externally, they do so at their own risk.*



*Annexure 1 - Review has been undertaken for the following 13 PIAs/Programmes*

Sl. No.	Programme Title	Partner Name	Location
1.	Securing Food and Livelihoods through in-situ soil and moisture conservation in Chhotanagpur plateau	PRADAN	West Bengal
2.	Sustainable solutions for water efficient; economically rewarding agriculture for small farmers in East UP	PANI	Uttar Pradesh
3.	Building Government System Capacity for Behaviour Change at Scale	FES	Odisha
4.	Evergreen in East	PRADAN	West Bengal
5.	Securing Water and Livelihoods through Community-Led Watershed Development in Semi-Arid, Drought Prone Region of Maharashtra	WOTR	Maharashtra
6.	Solution For Responsible Water Use and Long-Term Viability of Agriculture In Punjab	CIPT	Punjab
7.	Transforming water security and agricultural potential for small tribal farmers in dry-arid districts of Northern Gujarat	VIKSAT	Gujarat
8.	Reviving Bundelkhand's traditional tanks through community-led action to stabilise agricultural livelihoods in a region vulnerable to chronic water distress	SRIJAN	Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh
9.	Breakthrough Solutions for efficient water use in agriculture	MYRADA	Tamil Nadu and Puducherry
10.	Ensuring water security for agriculture through sufficiency and efficiency approach in the selected villages of Etah, Sumerpur-Hamirpur, districts in UP & Chhindwara district in Madhya Pradesh	PSSS	Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh
11.	Breakthrough Solutions for Efficient Water Use in Agriculture	BAIF	Maharashtra, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Gujarat
12.	Conservation and management of water in agriculture through three start-ups (Cultivate, Urdhvam, and My Harvest Farms)	Villgro Innovations Foundation	Punjab, Maharashtra
13.	Marathwada District Transformation Model	SSP*	Maharashtra

Note: \*New this year

*Annexure-2: The impact indicators provided by HUF*

S.No.	Partner Name	Location	No. of water conservation structures created	No. of villages benefitting from water conservation works & demand side management	No. of farmers benefitting from agriculture interventions	Hectares of plantation completed	Additional income generated from Agriculture and MGNREGS (in Cr.)
1.	Professional Assistance for Development Action (PRADAN)	West Bengal	19695	7288	82861	30296.39	36.89
2.	People's Action for National Integration (PANI)	Uttar Pradesh	143	300	71086	-	140.87
3.	Foundation for Ecological Security (FES)	Odisha	-	651	28597	-	36.86
4.	Professional Assistance for Development Action (PRADAN)	West Bengal	723	291	25171	1277.49	25.58
5.	Watershed Organisation Trust (WOTR)	Maharashtra	446	65	2798	-	-
6.	Centers for International Projects Trust (CIPT)	Punjab	-	213	14509	-	133.2

7.	Vikram Sarabhai Centre for Development Interaction (VIKSAT)	Gujarat	6	53	11754	-	30.09
8.	Self-Reliant Initiatives through Joint Action (SRIJAN)	Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh	109	100	10759		7.1
9.	Mysore Resettlement and Development Agency (MYRADA)	Tamil Nadu and Puducherry	44	30	3197	-	3.8
10.	Parmarth Samaj Seva Sansthan (PSSS)	Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh	474	36	10822	-	19.42
11.	BAIF Development Research Foundation (BAIF)	Maharashtra, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Gujarat	459	25	4698	56.75	11.40
12.	Villgro Innovation Foundation	Punjab, Maharashtra	667	287	1035	-	-
13.	Swayam Shikshan Prayog (SSP)	Maharashtra	5	250	34574	-	53.56

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