

CONCEPT NOTE

Advancing Inclusive Agriculture Transformation in Odisha 20 December | Bhubaneswar, Odisha

Context

The agricultural and food sector is undergoing a significant transformation, driven by advancements in technology, evolving policies, and dynamic market conditions. Odisha stands at the cusp of this transformation, presenting an opportunity to evaluate how inclusive, resilient, and sustainable its agricultural landscape is becoming.

To measure and guide this transformation effectively, the state may require comprehensive and measurable indicators that track progress, inclusivity, and sustainability across various programs and policies. However, the lack of such indicators limits the capacity to assess long-term performance, resilience and inclusiveness. By establishing Inclusive Agricultural Transformation (IAT) indicators, the Government of Odisha aims to adopt a data-driven, evidence-based approach to guide policymaking and resource allocation, ensuring equitable and effective agricultural development.

In collaboration with the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and with support from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Odisha is proactively addressing these gaps. The Policy Roundtable will serve as a platform to bring together diverse stakeholders to deliberate on strategies, challenges, and solutions to foster a sustainable and inclusive agricultural transformation in Odisha. The HLPF aims to understand and showcase the bodies of work towards advancing inclusive agricultural transformation in Odisha.

Objectives and Themes

The Policy Roundtable is structured around five key themes that reflect the foundational elements of Inclusive Agricultural Transformation.

1. The first theme focuses on **conceptualization of the inclusive agricultural transformation** customized to the Odisha context. A varied set of indicators have been developed and analyzed in this context. HLPF fosters a significant opportunity to ground truth the indicators and work towards validation. Focusing on inclusive agricultural transformation HLPF will focus on risks, adaptation, mitigation and coping towards healthy and sustainable food systems.
2. The second theme focuses on enhancing **market access** for smallholder farmers. Market access is a cornerstone of agricultural transformation, determining how effectively farmers can sell their produce and secure stable incomes. However, achieving meaningful market access is complex, involving considerations like trade costs, connectivity, and time-to-market efficiency. The roundtable will explore how economic frameworks, including network analysis and usage of geospatial data can be used to better understand the connections between farmers and markets. This theme will also examine indicators such as the proportion of agricultural produce sold, changes in income, and trade stability to evaluate progress. These discussions aim to provide insights into creating a market environment that is not only accessible but also equitable, ensuring that the benefits of transformation reach all farmers.

3. Focusing on sustainable food systems, the third theme addresses the pressing challenge of **climate risks** and emphasizes the importance of adaptive strategies to safeguard agricultural livelihoods with environmental sustainability. Odisha's agricultural sector is highly vulnerable to climate variability, making resilience a crucial component of transformation. The roundtable will delve into adaptive practices, such as climate-smart agriculture, improved water and soil management, and diversification of cropping patterns. Discussions will focus on measurement framework for resilience that helps mitigate the impacts of climate change but also strengthens the ability of farmers to adapt and thrive in changing environmental and economic conditions.
4. With the dominance of small farmers the primacy of markets, the fourth theme explores **structural changes in Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs)** as a critical step toward ensuring economic and financial sustainability. While the Government of Odisha has been actively promoting FPOs in various sectors, including fruits, vegetables, and millets, many FPOs struggle to survive beyond their initial funding cycles. The roundtable will investigate the reasons behind these challenges and identify structural reforms to address them. A key focus will be on examining whether smaller, task-specific FPOs are more effective than larger, general-purpose ones. Drawing on successful FPO models from across India, discussions will aim to provide actionable recommendations for Odisha, enabling FPOs to become sustainable and impactful agents of change.
5. The final theme emphasizes the importance of **data integrity** through collection and curation **at a granular level**. Accurate and reliable data is the backbone of evidence-based policymaking and program evaluation. The roundtable will highlight the need for robust data systems that enable real-time monitoring and analysis of agricultural programs. This includes integrating digital tools to streamline data collection and ensuring that the data collected is accessible and actionable for all stakeholders. By aligning on methodologies for data integrity and accessibility, the roundtable aims to create a roadmap for using data to drive decision-making, ensuring transparency and improving outcomes across the sector.

Through these five themes, the Policy Roundtable seeks to foster meaningful discussions and collaborations that will guide Odisha's journey toward Inclusive Agricultural Transformation. By addressing market access, climate resilience, FPO sustainability, and data-driven decision-making, this event will lay the groundwork for a transformation that is equitable, resilient, and sustainable, setting a benchmark for agricultural development in the region. The roundtable will invoke national and international expert consultations. The roundtable will also lead to the establishment of an Advisory Group comprising representatives from the GoO, IFPRI, key stakeholders, and technical partners. This group will provide guidance on indicator refinement, oversee implementation, and offer strategic advice on scaling up the use of IAT indicators across Odisha's agricultural programs.