

# NURTURING RESILIENT **COMMUNITIES**



# SAPLING

*Strengthening Climate-Resilient Food Systems and Nutrition Governance, South Asia*

**Donor:** Gates Foundation

2022-2023

The South Asian Policy Leadership for Improved Nutrition and Growth (SAPLING), a unique multi-stakeholder policy advocacy platform, served as a pioneering regional platform aimed at supporting South Asian countries to adopt a food systems approach for tackling malnutrition, aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). With climate change increasingly threatening food and nutrition security in the region, SAPLING Phase 2 design strategically placed climate resilience at the heart of its mission.

We led the designing and planning of SAPLING Phase 2 through a participatory and evidence-informed process, focusing on strengthening strategy, governance, and implementation planning to ensure SAPLING's continued relevance and impact across the region.

By placing climate resilience and systems thinking at the centre of its work, SAPLING Phase 2 laid the groundwork for more robust, sustainable, and inclusive nutrition policies in South Asia. Our support was critical in anchoring this next phase of strategic action and policy leadership across the region.

## FOCUS AREAS



**Climate-Resilient Food Systems:** Integrated and redefined approaches around climate-resilient agriculture, food safety, and post-harvest loss reduction illustrating the pathways towards improved nutrition.



**Regional Policy Advocacy Momentum:** Convened regional consultations and roundtables across India, Nepal, and Bangladesh to build alignment and commitment to SAPLING's agenda.



**Governance and Transition Planning:** Developed SAPLING's governance and management and supported the Foundation in identifying a long-term anchor institution for the Secretariat.





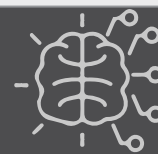
# Preparation of Strategy Document for State Climate Change Knowledge Centre, Uttar Pradesh

As part of the Indo-German Technical Cooperation on climate change, GIZ—on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)—partnered with the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MoEFCC) to implement the climate change-focused initiatives through the Climate Adaptation and Finance in Rural India (CAFRI project).

Under this initiative, the Directorate of Environment (DoE), Government of Uttar Pradesh, with GIZ's support, advanced several climate action efforts aligned with the State Action Plan on Climate Change (SAPCC) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG Vision 2030). One of the key components of this agenda was to conceptualise and operationalise a State Knowledge Centre on Climate Change (SKCCC) under the National Mission on Strategic Knowledge for Climate Change (NMSKCC).

We provided technical support to DoE, Government of Uttar Pradesh and GIZ in developing a strategy document and a Detailed Project Report (DPR) for establishing the SKCCC.

The project assessed climate knowledge centres across India, identified best practices and gaps, and tailored insights for Uttar Pradesh. These were further sharpened with consultations with key stakeholders, including the Department of Environment, Directorate of Science & Technology, and GIZ, to deliver a strategy document outlining SKCCC's vision, mission, objectives, and a 10-year roadmap.



**Donor**

GIZ India

**State**

Uttar Pradesh

## OUTCOMES AND IMPACT

**Established a strategic and operational roadmap** for Uttar Pradesh's first State Climate Change Knowledge Centre, a significant milestone in building institutional capacity for climate adaptation and mitigation.

Created a model to serve as a **hub for research, data exchange, policy advisory, and knowledge dissemination**, directly contributing to more climate-resilient planning and practices in the state.

Aligned with **national mission and the SAPCC**, ensuring the **centre's long-term relevance, funding prospects**, and potential for scaling best practices across other states.



# Implementation of the Infrastructure for Climate Resilient Growth (ICRG) Programme

**Donor:** Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (Previously DFID)

**Collaboration:** Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD), Government of India (GoI)

**States:** Bihar, Odisha, and Chhattisgarh

The ICRG programme, led by us with support from FCDO, partnered with the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) and state governments in Bihar, Odisha, and Chhattisgarh to embed climate resilience into India's flagship rural employment scheme – Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS).

The programme addressed long-standing challenges in rural infrastructure, such as poor asset quality, limited climate-resilient design, and inadequate links with the livelihoods of those living in poverty.

## Objectives

- Strengthen the capacity of the states and community for improved planning, implementation, and monitoring of MGNREGS assets.
- Enhance technical ecosystems by training institutions and networks of resource persons at the district and block level, including Barefoot Technicians, for effective implementation.
- Improve MGNREGS systems and tools to support climate-resilient, high-quality rural infrastructure, with a focus on IT innovations.
- Generate and share evidence to inform national policy and demonstrate how resilient assets can secure rural livelihoods.

By embedding climate resilience into public works, ICRG redefined how rural infrastructure is planned and delivered, creating a model for climate-smart livelihoods and sustainable rural development in India.

## IMPACT



792 climate-resilient works designed



24,618 households directly benefitted



7,775 hectares of irrigated area created



1,51,752 households indirectly reached



66 hectares of new plantations



34,000 tonnes of carbon sequestered



35,340 people trained on climate-proofing MGNREGS assets



## Climate-Adaptive District Plan for Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Sikkim

As part of the SDC-supported project “Strengthening State Strategies for Climate Actions,” we undertook a strategic initiative to embed climate resilience into district-level planning across three climate-sensitive states: Madhya Pradesh, Sikkim, and Uttarakhand.

The project integrated climate-adaptive planning into local governance, benefiting vulnerable communities through more responsive and future-ready development strategies. Working in one district in each of the three states, we facilitated the development of climate-smart district plans, using a participatory and evidence-based approach that contributed significantly to broader policy thinking on climate change adaptation.

While adopting a systems approach, the process integrated research, field engagement, institutional analysis, and capacity building to craft comprehensive and implementable Climate Adaptation Plans.



### Donor

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)

### States

Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Sikkim

## Strategic Sectoral Evaluation of Rural Development Schemes in India

**Donor:** NITI Aayog

**Collaboration:** Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD), Government of India

To strengthen the governance and effectiveness of India’s rural development efforts, the Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office (DMEO), NITI Aayog, initiated a third-party, independent evaluation of Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) under the Ministry of Rural Development. We were entrusted with the task of undertaking a sectoral review of key rural development programmes to support the rationalisation and integration of schemes for improved outcomes.

We served as the evaluation partner, leading a comprehensive sectoral review of the Rural Development sector, to unlock the sector’s full potential by integrating programmes and harmonising strategies for long-term, sustainable growth.

The evaluation adopted the REESI+E framework (Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Sustainability, Impact + Equity), ensuring a holistic and equity-centred approach to assess six flagship schemes: **MGNREGA, PMAY-G, PMGSY, DAY-NRLM, NSAP, and SPMRM.**

These sector-wide insights laid the foundation for evidence-based policy reforms and helped shape a more resilient, integrated rural development policy framework aligned with India’s long-term growth ambitions.

