

Minutes of the agriculture sector meeting held at the NCRC centre on 21.04.05

Objective of the meeting:

- To share the experiences of the NGOs working with the people affected in the agriculture sector
- To understand the types and quantum of damage experienced in the agricultural sector
- To discuss and understand the adequacy/ effect of the rehabilitation package offered by the Govt.
- To share best practices in reclamation and rejuvenation of agricultural land

The activities as described by the NGOs are tabled below:

Name of NGO	Activities carried out/location	Activities planned
RIM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relief compensation of Rs.3500/- worth of materials. • Cash for work Programme • Recreation – play materials to youngsters. 	Land reclamation – planning stage
LEISA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working in three clusters Vettaikaraniruppu, Arkur and Nagapattinam • Have cleared mudcast in 25% of the area. (expense @ 10,000 per acre) 	Desalination
DHAN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working in entire coastal belt • Involved in Relief initially and now in rehabilitation • Desilting canal – cash for work • Revolving fund for 150 SHGs to carryout land reclamation. • Removal of silt deposits • Draining water from ponds. • Seeds distributed for mulching 	To desilt 30 drainage canals and 800 ponds in Vedaranyam area
GOAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main objective is to provide employment to daily wage labourers who have lost their income • Identified common activity – removing sand /silt – being done in 500 acres of land. • Draining ponds. -Water harvesting works in final stage 	Closing activities by 30 th April. Not in a position to work on long-term basis.
TMSS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working in South Poiyyur • Desilted common pond under cash for work programme including forming a drainage canal from the pond leading to the sea • Pumped out water from small ponds enabling the pond to get filled with rainwater. • Soil samples have been sent for tests 	Bio compost / Vermi-compost Vermi-composting as an enterprise.
CASA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 200 MT of rice distributed in Pushpavanam, Kovilpettai on cash for work programme • 40,000 man-days of employment generated. • Took up desilting of canal, deepening of ponds to 	200 MT of rice ready for the phase II Have plan to work here for two to three years

	prevent out migration of agricultural labourers.	
TN Organic Farmers Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working in South Poigainallur • Tested pH and EC in 500 acres of land. Initial survey for entire land completed • 100 acres ploughed using disc plough • 300 vermi compost units • 5 Organic Manure trainings conducted. • 15 sprayers bought and made available for farmers 	Desilting in 4 km of drainage Fodder package
CYDA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desilting taken up • Vermi compost demonstration done • Motivation and trainings given to farmers for taking up vermicomposting. 	
CCD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concentrating Sirkazhi and Tharangampaadi taluk • Silt removal in agricultural land, deepening of canals, raising bunds under cash for work programme. • Cotton, Ragi and Daincha seeds distributed 	
LEED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working in six villages in Nagapattinam apart from Cuddalore district. • Kitchen garden promotion and planting of seedlings along roads and streets under cash for work programme. • Survey being done 	

Points of Discussion

1. Coverage of all Agricultural villages/ Hamlets

- i. During the course of sharing of experiences, it was evident that there were multiple NGOs working in same villages. This led to issues like :
 - a) Multiplicity of both technological and social approaches
 - b) Totally missing out on some far- flung/ little noticed areas, and
 - c) In the absence of a well defined list of activities, a mismatch in the services offered vis- a- vis actual needs
 - d) Dissimilarities in the proportion of work done thereby leaving some villages with just reclamation completed and some with rejuvenation also being taken up.

The following were discussed and agreed to:

1. *All the NGOs would specify the geographical area that they were working in.*
2. *The NGOs would also detail the activities already done and planned for the future*
3. *As far as possible, technologies adopted would be similar to what the partner NGOs in the same village were doing*
4. *Any area left uncovered would be taken up by either the closest / willing NGO*

2. Adequacy of Packages offered

- i. The Govt. is offering Rs. 12,500/ha. to all farmers, of which, Rs. 400 is for clearing the land and the rest is being provided in kind for reclamation purposes. Of this, some portion is provided as gypsum. There were three issues involved in this package:
 - a) Mud and Sand casts on the land surface, varying from 1 cm to 3 feet, sometimes required heavy machinery for clearing. Apart from this, the ponds also were affected and required cleaning. The NGOs were unanimous about the inadequacy of the amount provided for these activities
 - b) The technical appropriateness of “gypsum” was also brought into question. Studies, including the soil survey study of the Govt., have shown no significant increase in the pH of the soil. Addition of gypsum thereby would not achieve any results. On the contrary, adding of gypsum, during this dry season, would only exacerbate the low rejuvenation potential of the soil.
 - c) The methodology for assessing the damages was also not in keeping with the losses incurred. The calculation of the area damaged for perennials is based on the number of trees rather than the actual land damaged. This varied based on individual practices and was not a true reflection of the damaged area.
- ii. The Compensation package does not differentiate between seasonal/ one-time crop loss and perennial crop loss.
- iii. Most of the seasonal crops were ready for harvesting when irretrievably damaged. However, the Compensation package is not in keeping with either the market value or the costs incurred in cultivation of the crop.

A presentation made by Ms. Revathy of TNOFT on a Study commissioned by the NCRC is attached as annex for details on damage assessment.

The following were discussed and agreed to:

- i. *NCRC would design a format for assessing damage and send it to the NGOs*
- ii. *Based on the completed format, dialogues would be initiated with the authorities for additional support and restructuring of packages offered.*

The time frame agreed is:

Format for NGOs to be dispatched: 22nd April

Returning the completed formats: 7th May

Consolidated information: 10th May

Meeting for validation: 11th/12th May

3. Landless Agricultural Labourers

As per the rapid assessment, there are a total of 8036 affected families belonging to the small, marginal and landless in these identified areas. The break- up is as shown:

- Small – 3,472
- Marginal – 3,894
- Others – 670

The losses of the small and marginal farmers is two- fold: a) they have lost their yield, if any, as well as b) their livelihood as agricultural laborers.

4. Loss of Livestock

Livestock has generally been a supplementary source of income. However, with the loss of the main source of income, quick relief on at least the supplementary source would be beneficial for the affected.

Plan of Action

- 1. All the NGOs will assess the damages in their area of operation*
- 2. Based on this, attempts will be made to assess the actual losses incurred due to damages as well as the actual costs incurred for the cleaning of debris and silt/ sand castings*
- 3. This will be compared against the assessment of the Agri. Dept. to understand the gaps*
- 4. A dialogue will be initiated with the experts and the policy makers to revisit the premises of damage assessment and compensation allowed.*

List of participants

Sl.No.	Participant	Organisation
1	T. Saravanan	Development of Human Action (DHAN)
2	V. Karunakaran	
3	S.Raja	PEACE Trust
4	Fr. V. Adaikhalaraj	Thanjavur Multipurpose Social Service Society. (TMSS)
5	K.Sasikala Ramaverma	KUDUMBAM – LEISA Network
6	S.E.John Sundar	
7	Albert Horne	
8	P.Ramadass	
9	V.Vimal	
10	K.Solairani	World Vision India
11	David S.Pirasvithan	Gandepam Global Foundation
12	Rajkumar Thambu	
13	A.Srinivasan	CASA
14	Nirmal Kanthi Saha	TOFM
15	Jo o'Flanngar	CINI Child in need Institute
16	R.Ranganathan	GOAL
17	K.E.Murali	TEDE, LEISA
18	K.S.Kundavel	
19	S.Sivakami	Rejuvenate India Movement
20	Bhuvaneswari	
21	C.Chandrasekaran	CCD
22	Aparna Kher	Independent Consultant
23	Pradeep.K.V	CMS, NCRC
	Ajai Kuruvilla	SIFFS
	G.H.Manuel	NCRC
		CMS, NCRC