



Solidaridad

SOPA

NEWSLETTER

NARVOS

NATIONAL ALLIANCE FOR REGENERATIVE VEG OIL SECTOR

August 2026

Initiated Under

Vol-VIII

**Promotion of Regenerative Agriculture Practices for a Food Secure
& Climate Resilient Future in the EU-India Partnership Programme**



Funded by
the European Union

Solidaridad



Editorial Foreword

Dear Readers!

Climate change is reshaping agriculture, and India's vegetable oil sector is no exception. Delayed monsoons and erratic rainfall lead to the need to produce food while protecting natural resources. Yet this season also showed our farmers' resilience responding swiftly to improved rains and renewing soybean cultivation proof that resilience grows stronger with the right knowledge, partnerships, and practices.

This edition highlights regenerative agriculture as a practical pathway to climate-resilient, economically viable oil supply chains. From healthy soils and water management to carbon markets and digital tools, these practices boost productivity while restoring ecosystems. Through the EU-India Partnership Programme, NARVOS brings together government, research institutions, industry, FPOs, and development partners to drive this transition.

Inside, you'll find field stories of collaborative impact like strengthened multi-stakeholder engagement, lead farmers championing regenerative groundnut cultivation, and women farmers transforming their livelihoods. These examples affirm that sustainable agriculture isn't just an environmental imperative it's an investment in food security, farmer prosperity, and rural resilience.

Going forward, our commitment must extend beyond individual projects to building an ecosystem where regenerative produce is recognized, valued, and rewarded by markets. Let's build a resilient vegetable oil sector for farmers, consumers, and generations to come.

Happy Reading!

Dr. Suresh Motwani
Programme Lead, NARVOS

Feature Story



Monsoon revival brings fresh hope for India's soybean season

After weeks of uncertainty, the kharif season has taken a positive turn. Improved monsoon rainfall during July has accelerated soybean sowing across India's major soybean-growing states, bringing renewed optimism to farmers, traders, and the vegetable oil industry.

The season began on a challenging note. Delayed and uneven rainfall slowed field preparation and planting, raising concerns over reduced acreage and lower production. However, the revival of the monsoon has helped farmers return to their fields, narrowing the gap in soybean sowing. While the total area under soybean cultivation is still estimated to be around 3% lower than last year, the difference has reduced considerably as planting picked up during the second half of July.



Soybean plays a strategic role in India's food and nutrition security. It contributes significantly to the country's edible oil supply while also providing high-protein meal for the poultry, dairy, and livestock sectors. A healthy soybean crop, therefore, has implications that extend beyond farmers' fields to consumers, processors, and the broader agricultural economy.

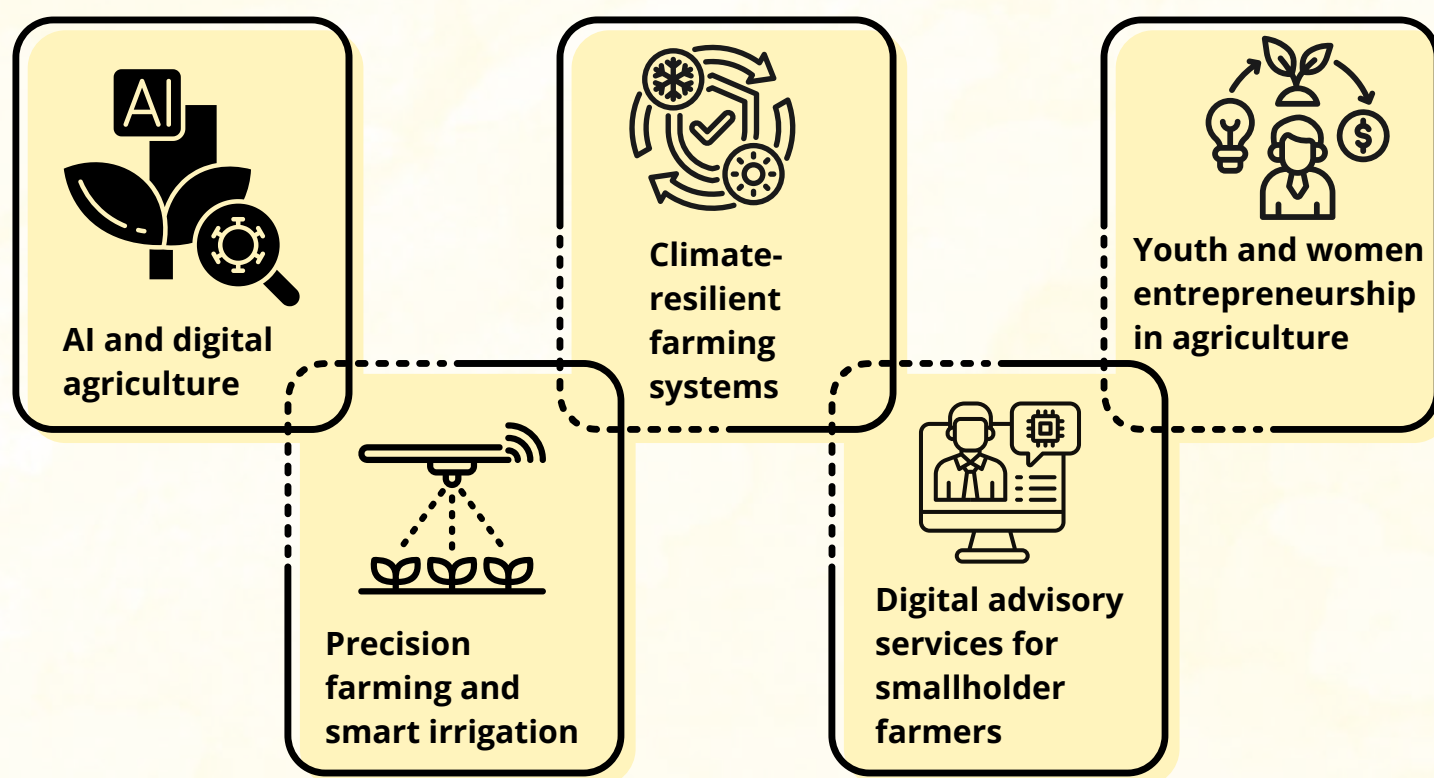
The encouraging progress in sowing also highlights the resilience of Indian farmers. Despite weather uncertainties, they have responded quickly to favourable rainfall and completed planting within the available window. If rainfall remains well distributed through the crop growth stages, the country could witness a good harvest, helping stabilise domestic edible oil supplies and supporting farmer incomes.

However, weather alone cannot determine the success of the soybean season. Sustained productivity will depend on adopting improved agronomic practices, maintaining soil health, ensuring balanced nutrient management, and promoting regenerative agriculture. Healthy soils with better moisture retention are more resilient to climate variability and can help farmers achieve stable yields even under changing weather conditions.

As India continues its journey towards greater self-reliance in vegetable oils, every successful soybean season matters. A stronger harvest not only reduces dependence on imports but also strengthens rural livelihoods and contributes to a more resilient and sustainable vegetable oil sector.

FAO Global Conference on Smart Farming (Rome, Italy), 1-3 July 2026

This was one of the biggest agriculture events of the month. Organized by the Food and Agriculture Organisation, the conference brought together governments, researchers, agribusinesses, and technology companies to discuss:



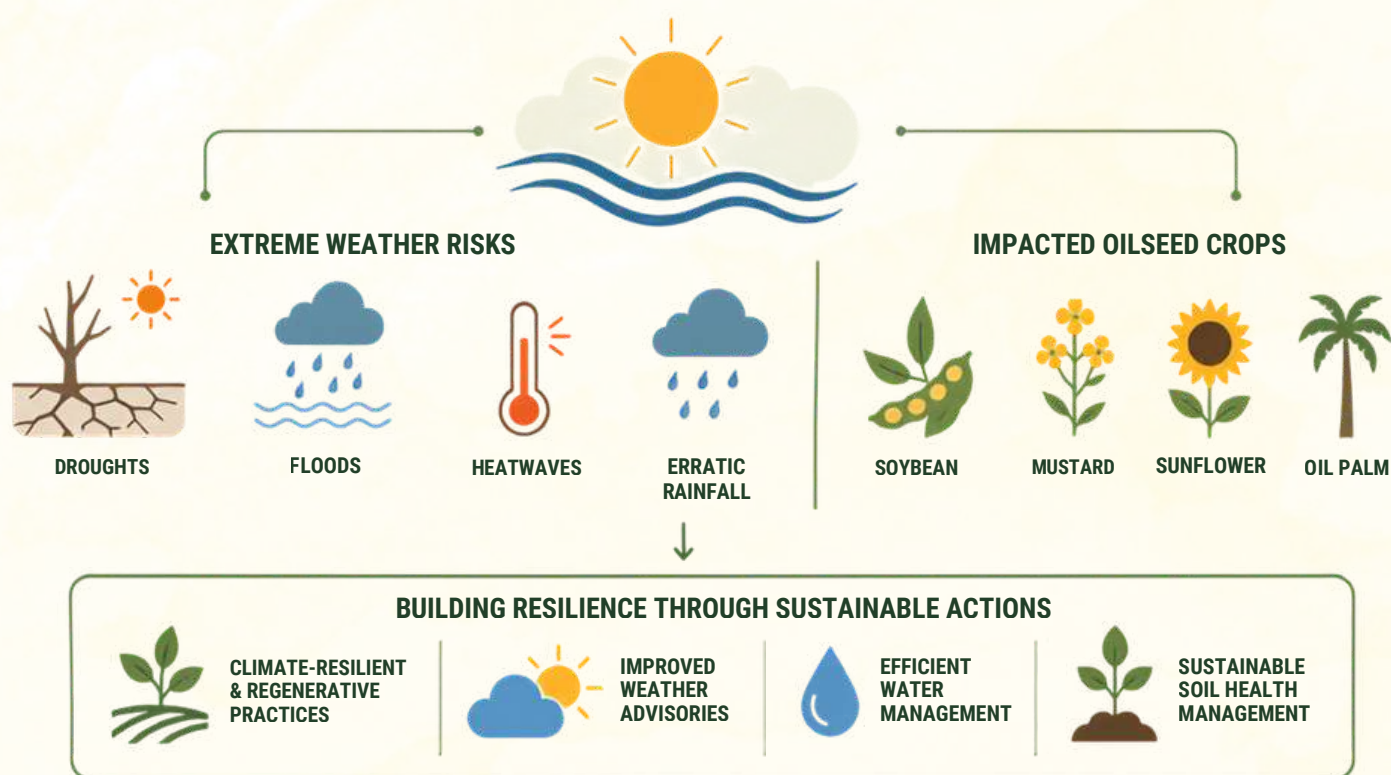
The conference emphasized that digital technologies will be critical for transforming global agrifood systems while improving productivity and sustainability.

Super El Niño Raises Concerns for Global Agriculture



Meteorologists are closely monitoring the development of a potential Super El Niño during 2026–27, which could bring prolonged droughts, floods, heatwaves, and erratic rainfall across major agricultural regions. These changing weather patterns pose significant risks to crop productivity, including oilseed crops such as soybean, mustard, sunflower, and oil palm. The development reinforces the need to accelerate the adoption of climate-resilient and regenerative agricultural practices, supported by improved weather advisories, efficient water management, and sustainable soil health management, to strengthen the resilience of the vegetable oil sector.

SUPER EL NIÑO RAISES CONCERNS FOR GLOBAL AGRICULTURE

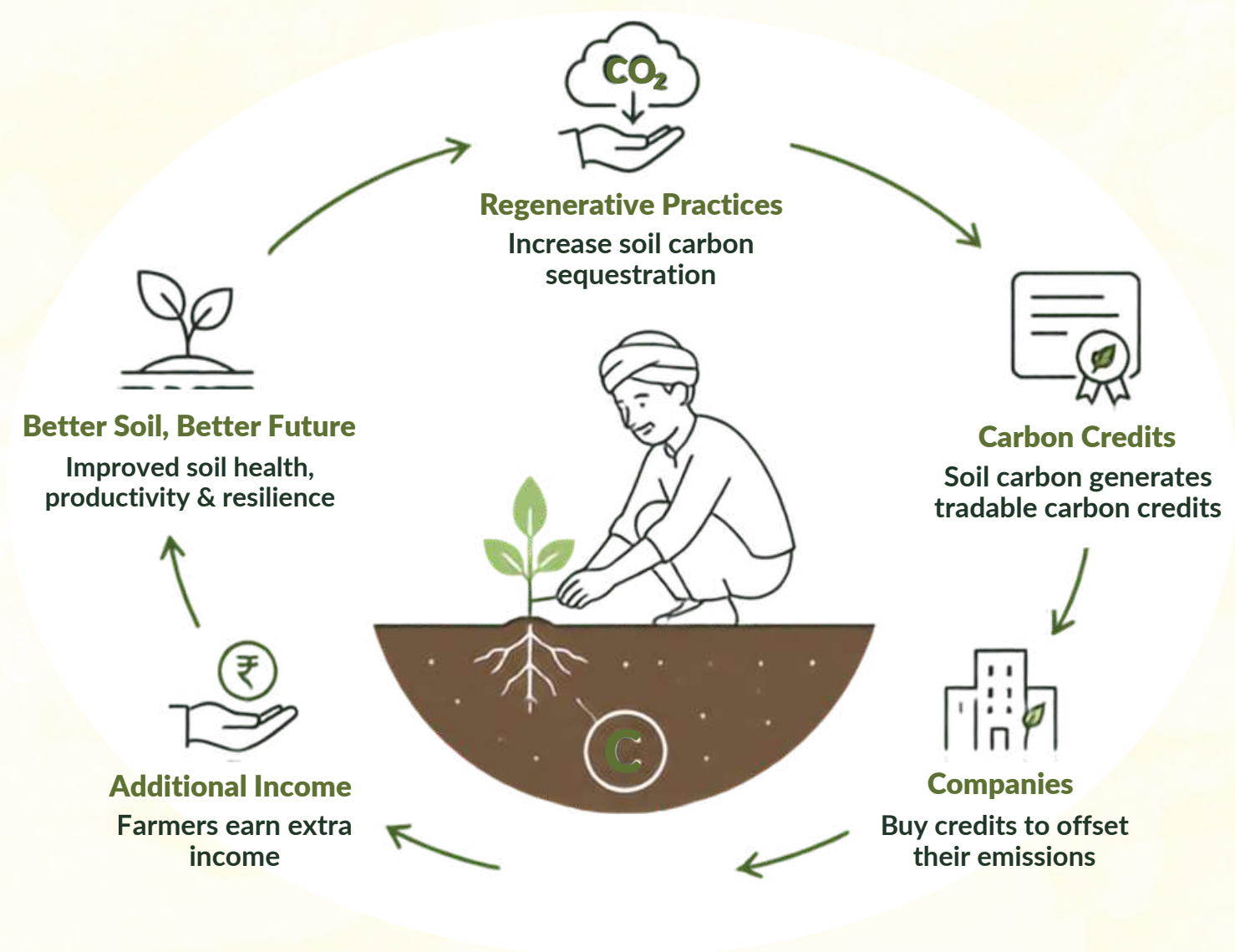


Can Indian farmers benefit from carbon markets?



As the world races towards Net Zero emissions, agriculture is emerging as a key part of the climate solution. Through regenerative practices such as minimum tillage, cover cropping, crop diversification, and improved nutrient management, farmers can increase the amount of carbon stored in their soils. This "soil carbon" has the potential to generate carbon credits, which companies may purchase to offset a portion of their emissions.

Although India's agricultural carbon market is still evolving, pilot projects are demonstrating how smallholder farmers could earn additional income while improving soil health and resilience. However, challenges such as measuring soil carbon, certification costs, and ensuring farmer participation need to be addressed. With the right policies, transparent carbon accounting, and strong farmer institutions, carbon markets could become an important incentive for scaling regenerative agriculture in India's vegetable oil sector.



Key Enablers for Success



Accurate soil carbon measurement



Affordable certification & verification



Strong farmer institutions



Supportive policies & transparent carbon accounting

Policy Thoughts

India's answer to global climate change and food security challenges



Climate change, geopolitical tensions, and disruptions in global fertilizer and energy supply chains have intensified concerns over food and energy security worldwide. For India, home to over 1.4 billion people, ensuring a resilient food system while reducing dependence on fossil fuels has become a national priority. Rising input costs, erratic weather, and resource degradation have highlighted the need for a transition towards renewable energy and regenerative agriculture.

India possesses significant natural advantages to drive this transition. With abundant sunshine, an extensive coastline, and the world's largest livestock population, the country has immense potential to harness solar, wind, and biogas energy while promoting climate-resilient farming systems.



Recognizing this opportunity, the Government of India has introduced several initiatives to accelerate green growth. Rooftop solar programmes are helping households reduce electricity costs, while the PM-KUSUM (Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthan Mahabhiyan) scheme is enabling farmers to adopt solar-powered irrigation and decentralized solar power generation. Under the scheme, farmers receive 60–90% financial assistance for solar pumps and can earn additional income by supplying surplus electricity to the grid. More than 21.77 lakh farmers across the country, including 37,689 farmers in Madhya Pradesh, have benefited from the programme. The state also has an estimated wind energy potential of 5,500–11,000 MW, strengthening its role in India's renewable energy journey.

The transition to sustainable agriculture is equally important. Under the National Mission on Natural Farming (NMNF), Bio Resource Centres are being established to promote the production and use of bio-inputs such as Jeevamrit, Beejamrit, vermicompost, and bio-pesticides. These centres, managed by Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), Self-Help Groups (SHGs), and agri-entrepreneurs, are reducing farmers' dependence on synthetic fertilizers while improving soil health and lowering cultivation costs. Portable biogas units are also gaining popularity by providing clean cooking fuel alongside nutrient-rich organic slurry for farms.

Supporting this national movement, Solidaridad has established over 300 Bio Resource Centres across villages and panchayats, improving farmers' access to affordable, locally produced bio-inputs. At the Nico Roozen Centre of Excellence for Regenerative Agriculture, bio-inputs prepared using Indigenous Technical Knowledge (ITK) are being supplied to farmers at nominal prices. Since June this year, more than 200 litres of bio-inputs have been distributed, with demand continuing to rise during the Kharif season as farmers experience improved soil health, better crop performance, and reduced input costs.

Beyond bio-inputs, Solidaridad is promoting regenerative farming practices such as crop diversification, agroforestry, bio-mulching, nutrient recycling, biochar application, legume intercropping, protective cultivation, and IoT-based weather advisories. These interventions are helping farmers build resilience against climate variability while restoring agroecosystems and improving productivity.

Crop residue management has emerged as another important pillar of regenerative agriculture. Through the distribution of over 4,000 vermibags across Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, and Rajasthan, Solidaridad has enabled farmers to add approximately 3,000-4,000 tonnes of compost to agricultural soils annually over the past four years. These efforts improve soil organic matter, reduce chemical fertilizer use, and discourage residue burning. To further strengthen these efforts, the Government of Madhya Pradesh is formulating a comprehensive Crop Residue Management (CRM) Policy. The policy aims to promote biomass utilization, custom hiring centres, residue aggregation, transportation infrastructure, and bioenergy enterprises while discouraging stubble burning. It also seeks to create opportunities in carbon markets, carbon sequestration, and climate finance, opening new avenues for sustainable rural enterprises and farmer incomes.

REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE INTERVENTIONS

Building resilience, restoring agroecosystems and improving productivity



Diversification



Agroforestry



Bio-mulching



Nutrient
Recycling



Biochar
Application



Legume
Intercropping



Protective
Cultivation



IoT-based Weather
Advisories

From The Field ►►

NARVOS Strengthens Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration for Regenerative Vegetable Oil Supply Chains

Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration is one of key component of NARVOS, under the EU-Indian partnership programme The National Alliance for Regenerative Vegetable Oil Sector (NARVOS) convened Multi-Stakeholder Workshop on Regenerative Agriculture for Sustainable Vegetable Oil Supply Chains in different places of Madhya Pradesh. The workshops brought together representatives from government departments, research institutions, industry, Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), civil society organizations, and development partners to foster collaboration and accelerate the transition towards regenerative agriculture.



The workshop began with a call for collective action to build resilient, environmentally sustainable, and economically viable vegetable oil value chains. Workshops highlighted regenerative agriculture as a systems-based approach that restores soil health, conserves water resources, enhances biodiversity, and improves farmers' livelihoods. He also proposed the establishment of a Multi-Stakeholder Platform (MSP) to facilitate knowledge exchange, policy dialogue, and coordinated action among key stakeholders.

The technical sessions featured experts from SOPA, IIT Indore, ICAR-IISR, BASF Nunhems, Vippy Industries, GSITS, and other partner organizations. Discussions focused on climate-resilient soybean production, Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), wider adoption of bio-inputs, improved seed varieties, weather-based advisory services, and the use of digital technologies to enhance farm productivity and sustainability.

One of the key outcomes of the workshop was the strong commitment from industry stakeholders to strengthen market linkages for regenerative soybean. Participants emphasized the importance of enabling policies, premium pricing mechanisms, farmer capacity building, and greater investments in research and innovation to scale regenerative agriculture across India's vegetable oil sector.

Lead Farmers Equipped to Drive Regenerative Groundnut Cultivation

As the Kharif season progresses, attention largely turns to soybean in Madhya Pradesh, but groundnut remains an equally important oilseed crop in India's journey towards vegetable oil self-reliance. India continues to rely heavily on edible oil imports, making the sustainable enhancement of domestic oilseed production a national priority. Improving the productivity and resilience of crops such as groundnut through regenerative agriculture is therefore not only an environmental necessity but also an economic and strategic imperative for strengthening the country's vegetable oil sector.



Recognising this opportunity, the SEA-Solidaridad Sustainable Vegetable Oil Mission organised a Training of Trainers (ToT) on Regenerative Groundnut Model Farm Practices at the Mandsaur Resource Centre. The programme focused on developing a cadre of lead farmers from Mandsaur, Neemuch, Ratlam (Madhya Pradesh), and Pratapgarh (Rajasthan), who will act as local resource persons and catalysts for scaling regenerative groundnut cultivation in their respective regions.

The training represents a critical shift from demonstrations to a farmer-led extension model. By investing in lead farmers, the programme aims to create locally available technical expertise, accelerate peer-to-peer learning, and improve the adoption of regenerative practices at the village level.

The session emphasised that model farms are not merely demonstration plots but learning hubs designed to showcase how regenerative practices can restore soil health, optimise input use, improve water efficiency, enhance productivity, reduce cultivation costs, and build climate resilience.

Technical sessions equipped participants with practical knowledge on soil health management, integrated nutrient management, efficient water-use practices, bio-input application, crop residue management, and integrated pest management. These interventions are central to improving resource-use efficiency while ensuring that productivity gains are achieved without degrading natural resources.

Beyond technical knowledge, the programme created a platform for lead farmers to exchange field experiences, discuss implementation challenges, and identify locally relevant solutions. Such peer learning is essential for adapting regenerative practices to diverse farming conditions and increasing farmer confidence in adopting new approaches.

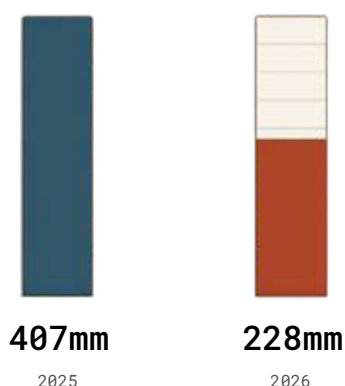
For NARVOS (National Alliance for Regenerative Vegetable Oil Sector), this capacity-building initiative is strategically significant. Scaling regenerative agriculture requires more than technologies it requires local champions who can demonstrate success, influence neighbouring farmers, and build trust within communities. Lead farmers trained through this programme become the last-mile ambassadors of regenerative agriculture, helping translate scientific recommendations into practical field adoption.

Climate Resilience in Focus ▶▶

The monsoon is no longer something Indian farmers can bank on.

Erratic rains and rising heat are turning oilseed farming into a gamble. Regenerative agriculture is emerging as the strategy that lets soil not the sky carry the risk.

RAINFALL RECEIVED, RATLAM DISTRICT - SAME PERIOD, YEAR ON YEAR



-45%

shortfall — enough to tip the district into El Niño-affected status

Source: Dainik Bhaskar, 18 July 2026

From crisis response to built-in resilience Farming has long treated drought as an emergency to react to once damage is visible. With climate shocks arriving more often, that playbook is running out of road.

Regenerative agriculture flips the sequence: instead of leaning on rainfall or more inputs, it strengthens the farm's own capacity to hold moisture, cycle nutrients, and keep producing through stress before the next dry spell hits.

Healthy soil holds water like a tank holds fuel

More organic carbon in the soil built through compost, residues, cover crops, and biological inputs means more rainfall absorbed and stored for dry weeks ahead.



Absorb

Organic carbon lets soil soak up more of every rain event instead of shedding it.



Retain

Minimum tillage and residue cover cut runoff so water infiltrates rather than escapes.



Recycle

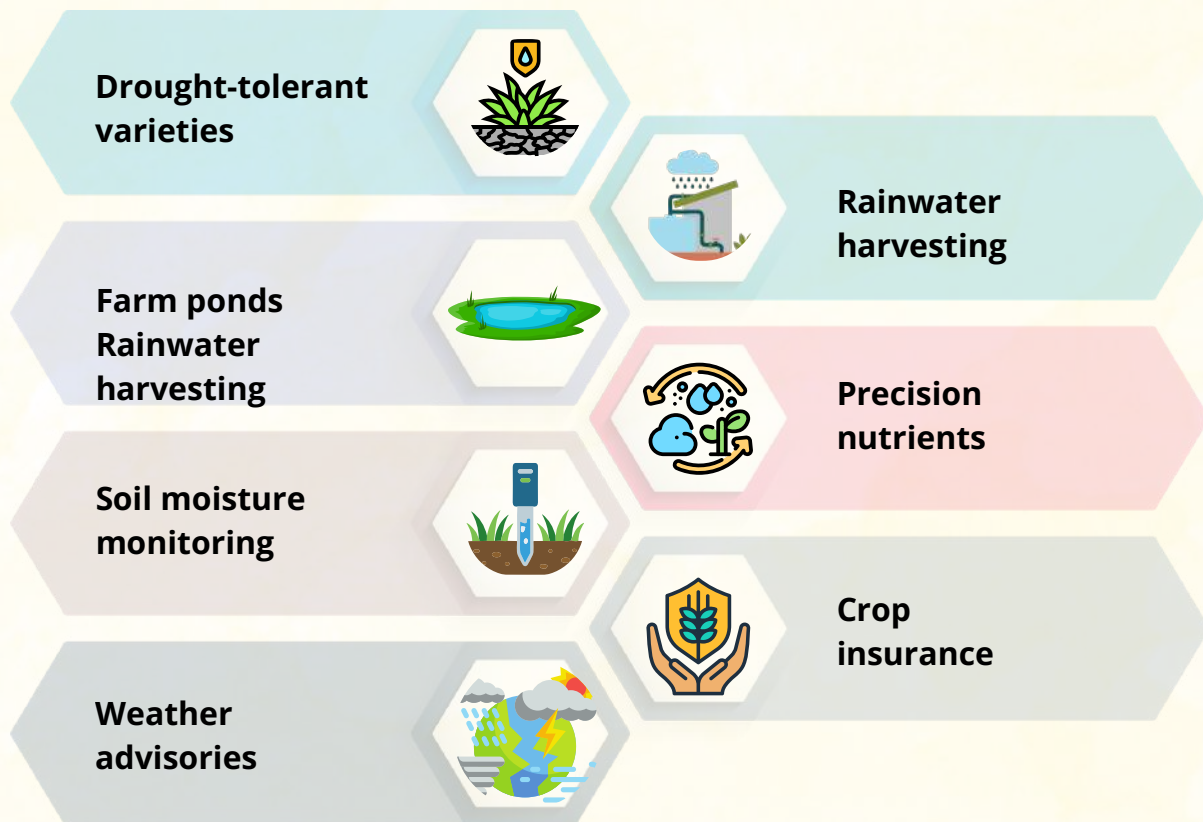
Active soil biology keeps nutrients available and plants better able to tolerate stress.

One crop, one bad season, one bad year

Intercropping and rotation spread exposure across several crops, improve soil fertility, and cut pest pressure so income doesn't rise or fall on a single harvest. Pairing this with bio-inputs and tighter nutrient management also lowers cultivation costs.

Regeneration is the foundation, not the whole house

Paired with the right infrastructure and information, resilient soil goes further:



Resilient soils today, resilient harvests tomorrow

Through regenerative model farms, farmer capacity building, technology-enabled advisory services, water conservation work, and partnerships across the vegetable oil value chain, NARVOS is helping farmers adopt practical, science-based responses to a changing climate.

45%

Rainfall deficit driving this issue's urgency

6

Climate risks mapped to regenerative fixes

4+

Oilseed crops under threat: soybean, groundnut, mustard & more



Water & Regenerative Farming >>

Every drop counts

PDMC (Per drop more crops) brings pressurized irrigation to farmers facing declining groundwater and erratic rain and it works best paired with regenerative soil practices.

Where: Ratlam · Mandsaur · Neemuch · Jhabua · Ujjain

WATER SAVED VS. FLOOD IRRIGATION



30–60%

less irrigation water used, with the same or better crop growth — through drip and sprinkler systems delivering water straight to the root zone.

The Problem

Flood irrigation loses water to evaporation, runoff, and deep percolation. In districts already short on rain and groundwater, that waste is no longer affordable. PDMC the Per Drop More Crop component of PMKSY makes efficient irrigation the default, not the upgrade.

PDMC + Regenerative Farming



Mulching

Less evaporation, better efficiency



Cover crops

More moisture held, better infiltration



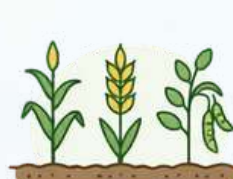
Minimum tillage

Structure and retention preserved



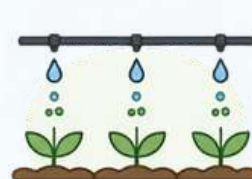
Organic matter

Greater water-holding capacity



Crop diversification

Lower climate & market risk



Precision nutrients

Sharper fertilization efficiency

NARVOS on the ground

We pair PDMC-supported irrigation with soil organic carbon building, mulching, and cover crops so every drop saved is also a drop retained.

What This Means for Farmers



Higher irrigation efficiency, less water wasted



Better yields and stronger farm profitability



Lower production costs



Stronger resilience to drought and rainfall swings



Groundwater protected for the next generation

Success Story ►►

The woman who taught her soil to breathe again A story from Jamni village, Sehore district, Madhya Pradesh

There is a particular kind of tiredness that comes from working land that no longer wants to work with you. Manu Malviya knew it well. Every season on her family's four acres, the soil felt a little harder under the plough, the input costs crept a little higher, and the harvest soybean, then wheat, then soybean again gave back a little less than the year before.



It is an old story across rural Madhya Pradesh: land tired out by decades of chemical shortcuts, families running faster just to stay in place. For Manu and her husband, raising eight mouths five daughters and one son on the strength of that soil, "enough" was a word that rarely showed up at the end of a season. Then something shifted.

A different kind of lesson

Manu found her way into the EU-India Partnership Programme on Regenerative Agriculture, implemented by Solidaridad not through a lecture hall, but through Farmer Field Schools, where the classroom was her own field and the textbook was the ground beneath her feet.

She learned to read her soil before feeding it, testing it rather than guessing. She began brewing Jeevamrut and Ghana Jeevamrut living, microbe-rich concoctions and layering vermicompost back into the earth. She left crop residue on the surface instead of clearing it away, letting it mulch down and hold on to moisture the soil used to lose to the sun. She cut back on chemical fertilizers and pesticides, leaned on weather advisories to time her decisions, and turned to natural methods for keeping pests in check.

None of it happened overnight. But the land noticed.



“

The programme gave me the confidence to make decisions on my own farm," Manu says. "By improving my practices, I brought down my costs and improved my yield. Now I feel like a regenerative farmer not just a farmer.

”

The soil answers back

Within a few seasons, the change was impossible to miss. The earth held water longer after rain. The crops looked sturdier, more resilient. And the ledger told its own story: yields climbed by around 15%, while spending on chemical inputs fell by nearly a third.

Emboldened, Manu didn't stop at wheat and soybean. She planted tomatoes a new crop, a new risk, a new income stream.

In 2024, that single decision returned an extra profit of roughly Rs. 60,000. She didn't let it sit idle. She bought another buffalo, growing the family's small dairy operation into something sturdier, now bringing in close to Rs. 2,000 a week in milk sales alone.

One healthier field had quietly become several sources of income, each feeding the others.

What the harvest really grew

It would be easy to stop the story here a farm turned around, a balance sheet in the black. But the real yield of Manu's regenerative fields shows up somewhere else entirely: in her children's lives.

- ✓ Her eldest daughter completed an MBA and now works from home after marriage.
- ✓ Her second daughter works as a nurse in a government hospital.
- ✓ Her third daughter, a Computer Science Engineering graduate, works as a software engineer in Bengaluru.
- ✓ Her fourth daughter, employed at a railway ticket counter, took the whole family on their first-ever flight a lifelong dream fulfilled.
- ✓ Her fifth daughter is preparing for government service exams.
- ✓ Her son, an Agricultural Engineering graduate, now works with an agriculture-based company perhaps carrying forward the very fields that raised him.



Six children, six different paths, one farm that finally earned enough to make room for all of them.

"My husband was hesitant at first," Manu admits. "He feared we'd lose money if we changed how we farmed. But our son encouraged me to try. Once we saw the results, he came fully on board. Today our farm is healthier, our income is better, and our family is happier."

Passing it on

Manu didn't keep what she'd learned to herself. Word travels in a village faster than any pamphlet, and soon neighbouring farmers especially women began asking what she was doing differently. Today, an estimated 40 to 50 women farmers in Jamni have started adopting regenerative practices of their own, drawn in by soil they could see and feel improving under their own feet.

Manu is candid about the barriers many of these women still face limited access to land, limited access to irrigation but she keeps sharing anyway: low-cost techniques, honest experience, one conversation at a time. She believes women have a far bigger role to play in reshaping how India farms, and she's not waiting for permission to prove it.

Manu Malviya's story is one thread in the larger fabric the EU-India Partnership Programme on Regenerative Agriculture is trying to weave: restoring soil, strengthening incomes, and building resilience against a changing climate one farm, one family, one field at a time.

Voices From The Stakeholder ►►

“Earlier, like many farmers, I believed burning crop residue was the easiest option. Through regenerative agriculture, I learned that crop residue is not waste it is a valuable resource that can restore soil health. By using a waste decomposer instead of burning, my soil has become softer, retains more moisture, and requires less irrigation. I have also reduced my cultivation costs while improving the fertility of my land. Regenerative agriculture has shown me that protecting the soil today is the best investment for securing better harvests and a sustainable future for the next generation.”



Pawan Parmar
Regenerative Farmer
Sehore, Madhya Pradesh

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