

**Evaluation of the lead nongovernmental organizations appointed by the  
KSBDDB for the promotion of Bio-Fuels in the state of Karnataka**

**Department of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj**

**Executive Summary**

The important development objective of India is growth with equity. Energy is a critical input for the socio-economic development of any country, more so of India. Presently, fossil fuels are playing a predominant role in the energy sector of the country. However, these fossil fuel resources are limited, non-renewable, polluting and therefore to be used prudently. Renewable energy resources on the other hand are indigenous, non-polluting and virtually inexhaustible. India is endowed abundantly with such resources which are to be exploited to the national advantage.

The crude oil prices are sky rocketing causing strain on the country's economy. It is reported that the domestic crude oil is able to meet only about 27% of the demand, while the rest is met from imported oil. Search for viable alternatives for fossil fuels has thrown various possibilities.

Biofuels are one such alternative. Biofuels are derived from renewable biomass resources, and, therefore, provide a strategic advantage to promote sustainable development and to supplement conventional energy sources in meeting the rapidly increasing requirements for transportation fuels associated with high economic growth as well as meeting the energy needs of India's vast rural population. Biofuels can increasingly satisfy these energy needs in an environmentally be gain and cost-effective manner while reducing dependence on import of fossil fuels and thereby providing a higher level of National Energy Security.

Bio-ethanol and bio-diesel are two forms of biofuels which can be used as fuel for vehicles.

The Indian Government announced its 'National Biofuel Policy' during September, 2008, which aims at meeting India's 20% diesel demand with fuels derived from plants. Government of Karnataka adopted its Biofuel Policy during March 2009 with a set of objectives to propagate biofuel crops (pongamia, neem, mahua, simarouba, jaropha etc.) in the State without having friction with the food security policy of the State. To execute various activities as per the Policy, a separate Board by name Karnataka State Biofuel Development Board was established during 2010. The various activities of the Board are explained in the Report. The Board advocates cultivation of biofuel crops on degraded forest, revenue, institutional land by involving communities organized by VFCs Tank User's Groups, SHGs and NGOs.

The Board has identified lead NGOs for all the districts across the State to create awareness about biofuel crops and related issues amongst the communities

1. Objective of lead NGOs is to promote community participation in biofuel programs of the Board
2. Role of lead NGO is to:
  - Create awareness about biofuels amongst communities,
  - Capacity building of stakeholders viz., farmers, landless labourers, SHGs, VFCs, etc. through extension and training activities etc.
  - Facilitating biofuel crop cultivation including procurement of seed materials,
  - Facilitating marketing of seeds,
  - Coordinating various activities of the Board with the District Biofuel Monitoring Committee, Grama Panchayat /Zilla Panchayat, Department of Agriculture, Department of Forestry, Department of Watershed.

Board wanted to get the performance of these 32 lead NGOs evaluated to know their efficiency or otherwise while executing the expected role-responsibilities of these lead NGOs.

The evaluation study was assigned to the Regional Institute of Cooperative Management situated at Padmanabhanagar, Banashankari of Bangalore.

### **Objectives of the Study:**

- To assess the performance of lead NGOs in the implementation of various activities against the set objectives of the Board.
- To gauge the knowledge, expertise, capacity of the NGOs along with the nature and quality of coordination the NGO has with different stakeholders.
- To know the problems faced by the NGOs, if any.
- To assess the problems at the community level, if any.
- To suggest corrective measures, if required.

### **Hypothesis:**

The identified lead NGOs are expected to have those qualities (strong presence, good track record and network in the district, expertise in working with communities and other stake holders, other statutory requirements etc.) to deliver the expected outcome. It is to test as to what extent the said NGOs have succeeded in bringing out those results in their allotted districts.

### **Evaluation Questions:**

The Board had given as many as 13 questions which are to be probed by the Evaluating Organization. These questions (given in the main report) covered major roles the NGO is expected to play (expertise in the area, infrastructure available including manpower, availability of propaganda materials, conducting of awareness programs, work at the Grama Panchayat level, inputs about the

coordination with the District Biofuel Monitoring Committee, Department of Agriculture/Forestry/Watershed, organising Biofuel Farmer's Groups, VFCs, SHGs, execution of activities such as Suvarna Bhoomi, Baradu Bangara, Hasiru Honnu, sending periodical reports, attending audit queries etc.).

Board has given Terms of Reference (appended to main report), according to which the Study was undertaken.

### **Research Methodology:**

Performance of all the identified 32 lead NGOs in 30 districts across the State (Tumkur and Uttara Kannada had two lead NGOs, each) were evaluated as per the Terms of Reference of the Board.

Primary as well as secondary data/information was collected from the 32 lead NGOs. Data was also collected from other stakeholders such as Zilla Panchayats, Department of Agriculture etc. Beneficiaries were also interviewed to collect relevant information.

Keeping in view the Terms of Reference, five sets of questionnaires were developed to capture maximum data/information pertaining to the various activities executed by the lead NGOs in particular and others in general (questionnaires appended to the Report). These questionnaires were pilot tested with two lead NGOs and a presentation was made before the Karnataka Evaluation Authority for their comments and suggestions before taking up the field work.

A set of 18 evaluators who had previous experience in data collection were identified and were trained before taking up the data collection.

These evaluators collected abundant data/information from all the 32 lead NGOs and other stakeholders.

Data/information thus collected was analyzed and presented in the Report. Thus an attempt was made to capture the level of performance of the 32 lead NGOs in the execution of the biofuel project during 2012-13 and 2013-14, under various heads prescribed by the Board.

### **Performance of Lead NGOs Districtwise:**

Keeping the Terms of Reference of the Board, performance of all the 32 lead NGOs, under various heads is presented. Data and information from the primary and secondary sources have been used to give a detailed picture on the performance of NGOs in this chapter.

### **Ranking of the Lead NGOs:**

Keeping the data and information in view, all the 32 lead NGOs were ranked using 50 as the maximum score. The various role-responsibilities of the NGOs as prescribed by the Board and the output from certain activities were given weightage (out of 50), and the cumulative figures gained by each NGO was used for ranking. Three categories were created as satisfactory (score 70% and above), average (score 51% to 69%) and unsatisfactory (score 50% and below). As per this scoring, of the 32 lead NGOs, 21 were ranked as satisfactory, 7 average and 4 unsatisfactory. This gives an idea about the performance of the identified NGOs on a common scale. This also gives a comparative picture with regard to the performance of the 32 lead NGOs in the State. A brief analysis on the performance and limitations of the scale are presented.

### **Important Observations on the Performance of the Lead NGOs:**

In this chapter, with an idea of providing certain insights, the overall performance of 32 lead NGOs in the State, a general analysis of NGO performance against the evaluation questions is attempted using tables and graphs. Observations

on these tables, graphs etc. have been presented at the end of the chapter for ready reference.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations:**

In this chapter, a list of important conclusions emerged out of the study are presented. Some of these conclusions included those connected with the performance of lead NGOs-their ranking, success or otherwise of these lead NGOs with regard to their assigned tasks, performance of NGOs agro climatic zone-wise, level of coordination amongst the stakeholders, performance of NGOs under programs such as Suvarna Bhoomi, Hasiru Honnu and Baradu Bangara, etc.

In the backdrop of the conclusions, certain recommendations are made to improve the performance of NGOs(selection of new NGOs, providing training to NGOs, improving of monitoring mechanism at various levels, fixing of accountability, relook at the acceptance level of farmers for biofuel crops in different areas, etc.).

At the end, a couple of policy briefs are provided, in the light of the importance of the project and the need for its continuation.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The roles & responsibilities of the lead NGOs in implementing the biofuel project in the State has been explicitly made clear by the Board, (Explained at chapter 3 of the report). These lead NGOs are expected to help the biofuel cultivators and seed collectors in several ways. They are expected to coordinate with various stakeholders in achieving the objectives of the Board (propagate biofuel crop cultivation and increase biofuel production in the State as per the Biofuel Policy of the State and the Nation).

The KSBD Board had identified 32 lead NGOs to function in 30 districts (two districts had two NGOs) of the State. Board decided to get the performance of these 32 lead NGOs evaluated through an external agency (RICM) for the years 2012-13 and 2013-14. In accordance with the Terms of Reference of the KSBD, the performance of 32 lead NGOs was evaluated (details of the procedure followed is given in the report).

Analysis of the field data/information, threw out certain results, the details of which are presented individually (NGO wise) and collectively (for the State).

### **Following are the major conclusions of the study:**

- 1) Performance of 32 lead NGOs against delivery of their expected responsibilities was graded using a scale and are categorized under three groups as satisfactory, average and unsatisfactory. According to their performance, 21 NGOs were categorized as Satisfactory.
- 2) Performance of 7 NGOs were noted to be Average
- 3) Performance of 4 NGOs were adjudged as Unsatisfactory

4) It was clear from the above grading that 66% of the identified lead NGOs excelled with satisfactory performance; 22% with average performance and 12% with unsatisfactory performance. This analysis shows the wide variations which existed amongst 32 lead NGOs, though the roles & responsibilities prescribed by the Board were same for all NGOs.

5) It was clear that the performance of the lead NGOs did not have bearing on the agro-climatic zones of the State. Good performers amongst 32 lead NGOs were seen in all the agroclimatic zones. Hence, it is clear that the performance of the individual NGOs matter most in the success or otherwise of the project.

6) Though the main responsibility of the lead NGO was to create awareness on use of biofuels amongst the rural communities, many NGOs attempted it in their own way. However there was very wide variation in the execution of activities, such as information, Education, Communication (IEC).

7) Majority of the lead NGOs did not work closely with the Grama Panchayats (sharing information at grama sabhas, inclusion of biofuel activities in the GP action plans) which was very crucial from the point of view of bringing rural communities under the fold of the biofuel project.

8) Though, a few lead NGOs have understood the importance of formation of Farmer's Groups, VFCs, Tank Water User's Association, SHGs etc. and worked with those rural institutions, many seem to have not understood the importance of these institutions. They were not properly built and used.

9) Some of the lead NGOs got involved in the collection and marketing of biofuel seeds but not all.

10) Lead NGOs were expected to co-ordinate for the execution of important plantation programs such as Suvarna Bhoomi, Hasiru Honnu and Baradu Bangara. It was observed that the results under Suvarna Bhoomi were appreciable, whereas under Baradu Bangara, it was very disappointing and Hasiru Honnu falling in between

11) As there were too many stakeholders involved in the implementation, it was too much for the lead NGOs to coordinate between these bodies for the effective delivery of results.

12) Acceptance of certain biofuel varieties was an issue in certain districts (Udupi, Dakshina Kannada).

13) Timely disbursement of planting materials at reasonable prices was an issue at the farmer's level.

14) The project was new to all the stakeholders including the Board and in two years' time it is difficult for the NGOs to prove their capacity.

15) At the district level, it is the Zilla Panchayat which is responsible for all the developmental activities including those related to biofuels. Unfortunately, biofuel project never received required attention at the Zilla Panchayats. It was one amongst many programs under the fold of the ZP. ZPs have not recognized the biofuel activity as one among the priority sector; so was the case with the Department of Agriculture, Department of Forest. Accountability level, thus, was 'wafer thin' with the line departments.

16) Despite all the limitations, it is heartening to note that the Board has taken up various innovative programs in a short span of time. The efforts made by the Board

in propagating biofuel as a cost-effective, renewable source of energy, across the State in tune with the State and National Biofuel Policy are highly appreciable.

### **Recommendations:**

In the backdrop of the study, with the given conclusions, the following recommendations are made for the improvement of the project execution at the level of the lead NGOs;

1. Depending upon the performance of the 32 lead NGOs, all the 21 lead NGOs in the first category (satisfactory) could be retained. The first 4 in the second category (average) may be retained. The remaining 3 in the second category and all the 4 in the last category (unsatisfactory) are suggested to undergo a refresher training course before their continuance at the discretion of KSBDB.
2. While identifying the new lead NGOs, it is desirable not to identify those NGOs which are entirely from other fields and not in any way can understand the nuances of the biofuel project.
3. The lead NGOs are to be made more accountable to the Board.
4. The shortcomings of the lead NGOs discussed in the study may be borne in mind and corrective measures be taken on the uses such as inadequate awareness programs; not working at the Grama Panchayat level; not forming biofuel farmer's groups; not motivating and equipping VFC, SHGs, Water User's Committees etc.; improper execution of programs such as Suvarna Bhoomi, Hasiru Honnu and Baradu Bangara; non-attendance at the DMCs, non-submission of periodical reports, inadequate documentation of issues etc.
5. Involvement of rural community such as SHG, VFC, and Water users group needs to be strengthened.

6. The timely distribution of planting material is a key issue in plantation activity. Ensuring timely seedlings by the Forest Department is needed.
7. Monthly progress review at the district level is recommended for the development of biofuel programmes.
8. All the stakeholder departments at the district level are to be made accountable to the Board/RDPR/ZP.
9. As the lead NGOs may not have sufficient clout to coordinate various stakeholder departments, periodical review at the State level would help smooth coordination amongst various stakeholder departments.
10. There is a need to design 'Training Module' for all NGOs before implementing the programmes.
11. The Board may designate a person at the Zilla Panchayat to help execute various activities of the Board.

**Policy Brief:**

Board, in consultation with the RDPR, may have to create suitable monitoring mechanisms, at the district, divisional and state levels to follow-up various biofuel activities to get better results, including identifying a responsible officer to follow-up the activities at the Zilla Panchayat level.

Depending upon the acceptance level of the species of biofuel crop variety, district level plans are to be worked out.

Linking of biofuel program with MGNREGA need to be monitored at the State level by RDPR / KSBDB.

The accountability level of various stakeholders, especially Zilla Panchayats, Department of Agriculture, Horticulture, Forest, needs to be increased with the intervention from the State Government.