Solidaridad SOPA

Volume -1

NEWSLETTER

NARVOS

NATIONAL ALLIANCE FOR REGENERATIVE VEG OIL SECTOR

Initiated Under

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 Forward

Dear Esteemed Readers!

As the EU–India Partnership Programme on "Promotion of Regenerative Agriculture Practices for a Food-Secure & Climate-Resilient Future" approaches two years of implementation, this inaugural newsletter is an important milestone. It comes at a moment when the programme has moved beyond pilots and concepts to building institutional pathways for long-term, sector-wide transformation.

A key outcome of the EU–India Partnership Programme has been the establishment and institutionalisation of the National Alliance for the Regenerative Vegetable Oil Sector (NARVOS) as a national multi-stakeholder platform initiated by Solidaridad. Conceived not as a parallel initiative, but as a core mechanism within the programme, NARVOS aligns regenerative agriculture practices with markets, policy frameworks, and value chains.

This first edition is presented as a Programme & Platform Digest, capturing the two-year journey of implementation and the emergence of NARVOS as a credible, action-oriented alliance for India's vegetable oil sector. It reflects the collective efforts undertaken across landscapes and institutions to translate regenerative agriculture from field-level practice into policy dialogue, industry engagement, and scalable systems change.

The Digest highlights key milestones - ranging from the launch of NARVOS and its working groups, to state-level expansion through the Odisha Chapter, farmer-led pilot interventions, industry participation, and growing attention to gender inclusion and institutional strengthening. These developments signal an important shift: regenerative agriculture is increasingly being recognised not only as an agronomic approach, but as a strategic pathway for strengthening farmer livelihoods, climate resilience, and domestic edible oil security.

As this foundation is laid, the focus now moves toward momentum and continuity. Future editions of the newsletter will place greater emphasis on NARVOS platform actions, emerging collaborations, policy and market linkages, and shared ownership among stakeholders—reflecting the transition from programme-led implementation to collective sectoral action.

We invite readers to view this Digest as both a reflection of progress achieved and a marker of what lies ahead. The coming phase will be defined by how effectively this collective platform converts credibility into sustained engagement and shared responsibility for advancing regenerative agriculture in India's vegetable oil value chains.

Enjoy Reading!

Dr. Suresh Motwani
Programme Lead
General Manager, Solidaridad

NARVOS- NATIONAL ALLIANCE FOR REGENERATIVE VEG OIL SECTOR
A key institutional KPI of the EU–India partnership programme

The National Alliance for the Regenerative Vegetable Oil Sector (NARVOS) is a national multi-stakeholder platform established as a key institutional outcome of the EU–India Partnership Programme on "Promotion of Regenerative Agriculture Practices for a Food-Secure & Climate-Resilient Future."

Conceived as a core mechanism for long-term sectoral transformation, NARVOS brings together farmers, industry leaders, policymakers, research institutions, and civil society organisations to drive collective action toward a resilient, inclusive, and climate-smart edible oil ecosystem in India.

India stands at a critical juncture where climate stress, resource degradation, and economic pressures are converging on agriculture. Erratic rainfall, declining soil fertility, groundwater depletion, and rising input costs are increasing farmer vulnerability, even as the country strives to ensure food and nutrition security for a growing population.

These challenges are particularly acute in the edible oil sector, where India imports nearly 60 percent of its requirements at an annual cost exceeding ₹1.5 lakh crore, exposing the sector to global volatility and supply disruptions. Domestic oilseed production continues to face constraints from soil degradation, water stress, climate variability, and rising cultivation costs directly impacting farm productivity and incomes.

Regenerative agriculture offers a systems-level pathway to address these interconnected challenges by restoring soil health, improving water-use efficiency, enhancing biodiversity, and reducing dependence on chemical inputs. While these practices strengthen farm resilience and productivity, their long-term impact depends on supportive policies, institutional frameworks, and market alignment.

The EU–India Partnership Programme plays a catalytic role in enabling this transition by developing collaboration across farmers, research institutions, industry, civil society, and policymakers. Within this framework, NARVOS functions as the programme's primary platform for translating regenerative agriculture from field-level practice into policy, market, and institutional systems, ensuring scalability, sustainability, and shared ownership beyond the project lifecycle.

Why NARVOS Was Needed
The Sector Context

At the time of programme design, vegetable oil value chains in India faced persistent challenges related to sustainability, farmer incomes, and limited adoption of regenerative practices. Baseline assessments across intervention geographies revealed low awareness of regenerative agriculture among smallholder farmers, with negligible market recognition or differentiation for regenerative produce. These gaps highlighted the need for a coordinated approach that could simultaneously strengthen knowledge, enable adoption, and build market and policy alignment.

Baseline insights also pointed to structural livelihood challenges, including modest average farm incomes and rising cultivation costs, underscoring the urgency of improving productivity, reducing input dependency, and enhancing value addition. In response, the EU–India Partnership Programme adopted a multi-pronged strategy that combined field-level demonstrations, capacity building, institutional strengthening, and stakeholder engagement.

Early interventions—including the establishment of demonstration plots across multiple districts and crops—generated practical evidence on how regenerative practices could be locally adapted and economically viable. More importantly, these experiences demonstrated that sustained impact would require moving beyond isolated interventions toward a shared platform that could align farmers, institutions, industry, and policymakers. This realisation directly informed the emergence of NARVOS as the programme's key institutional outcome—designed to translate learning into scale, policy influence, and long-term sectoral transformation.

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What NARVOS Offers

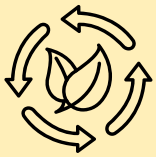
Facilitate Collaboration
among key stakeholders for regenerative practices in vegetable oil cultivation.

Serve as a National Knowledge Hub
to build consensus, share innovations, and drive transformation.

Enable Policy Dialogues and Uptake
to create a supportive environment for sustainable agriculture.

Multi-Stakeholder Engagement
by developing dialogue across value chains

Ensure Sustainability Beyond Projects
through institutionalization and ownership by stakeholders.



Showcase Learnings
from regenerative agriculture pilots conducted with smallholder farmers.

Capacity Building by Equipping
farmers and FPOs with skills in regenerative practices.

Evidence-Based Advocacy
by leveraging pilot results to inform and influence policy.

Collaborative Governance Through
institutional mechanisms to ensure inclusive decision-making.

Knowledge Sharing Through
through events, publications, and learning exchanges to disseminate best practices.

A Closer Look at Regenerative Agriculture

All NARVOS-supported interventions are aligned with core regenerative agriculture principles, including soil health restoration, biodiversity enhancement, water stewardship, reduced chemical dependency, climate resilience, and farmer-centric livelihoods.

Benefits of Regenerative Agriculture

- Biodiversity Enhancement
- Climate Change Mitigation
- Water Conservation
- Food Security & Nutrition
- Healthier Communities
- Improved Crop Resilience
- Improved Crop Resilience
- Stable & Sustainable Yields
- Reduced Input Costs
- Restored Soil Health
- Stable & Sustainable Yields
- Enhanced Farmer Incomes
- Reduced Input Costs
- Risk Reduction

Pillars of Regenerative Agriculture

- Climate Resilience & Carbon Sequestration
- Biodiversity Enhancement
- Water Restoration
- Knowledge, Innovation & Local Adaptation
- Reduced Chemical Dependency
- Farmer-Centric & Livelihood - Focused Approaches
- Soil Health Restoration

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From Programme Design to Platform Delivery What has NARVOS enabled?

INSTITUTIONAL AND PLATFORM-LEVEL ENABLEMENT

NARVOS has been institutionalised as a national multi-stakeholder alliance, serving as the primary coordination and delivery platform of the EU–India Partnership Programme for regenerative vegetable oil systems. It has created a structured space where farmers, FPOs, industry associations, research institutions, civil society organisations, and policymakers jointly shape solutions rather than operating in silos.

To operationalise collaboration, NARVOS established three thematic Working Groups:

Supply Side Strategy Working Group

Members
Research institutions, academics, NGOs

Functions
- Sustainable production practices
- Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) capacity building:
- Input supply chain management
- Crop diversification and rotation

Demand Side Strategy Working Group

Members
Small, Medium, and Large Businesses, Financial Institutions

Functions
- Market development
- Branding and labeling
- Business-to-business (B2B) engagement
- Consumer awareness

Policy Engagement Working Group

Members
Government, Development Aid Institutions, representatives from other Working Groups

Functions
- Policy support for regenerative agriculture
- Incentives for sustainable production
- Regulatory framework
- International cooperation

These working groups have enabled the translation of regenerative agriculture from principle into practice, policy, and market systems—positioning NARVOS as a permanent institutional mechanism rather than a time-bound project output.

SECTOR-WIDE ENGAGEMENT THROUGH NATIONAL AND STATE-LEVEL EVENTS

NARVOS has catalysed sector-wide engagement through high-visibility national and state-level convenings, reinforcing collective ownership of the regenerative transition.

The formal launch of NARVOS at the National Multi-Stakeholder Conference on Regenerative Agriculture (Bhopal, August 2025) marked a foundational milestone. The event brought together industry leaders (SEA, SOPA, AWL, Bunge), policymakers, research institutions, civil society organisations, and farmer representatives—signalling strong industry and policy buy-in for regenerative vegetable oil systems.

The discussions at the conference focused on regenerative agriculture pathways, on-ground implementation models, and the critical role of industry in enabling adoption at scale. Deliberations emphasised that industry engagement—through sustainable sourcing, investment in farmer capacity building, and alignment with policy frameworks—is essential for mainstreaming regenerative practices. The strong presence and support of civil society organisations further reinforced the importance of inclusive, farmer-centric approaches in driving this transition.

Another key NARVOS convening took place on 26 August 2025 in Indore (Madhya Pradesh), where a multi-stakeholder workshop was organised to support dialogues and consultations for the development of a White Paper and policy recommendations. Prominent policymakers, research institutions, industry representatives, and civil society organisations united to reflect on programme learnings and field-level evidence, and to identify policy and institutional pathways for scaling regenerative agriculture within the vegetable oil sector. The consultation reinforced NARVOS's role as a policy translation platform under the EU–India Partnership Programme, connecting on-ground implementation with longer-term sectoral and policy priorities.

Building on this momentum, NARVOS expanded its footprint through the launch of the Odisha State Chapter (Bhubaneswar, November 2025). This marked a strategic shift from national coordination to decentralised, state-driven action. The Odisha Chapter aligned regenerative agriculture with the state's oilseed potential, rice fallow utilisation, and long-term edible oil mission—demonstrating how NARVOS adapts national vision to state-specific priorities.

The Odisha Edible Oil Mission aims to

- Convert 9.8 lakh hectares of rice fallows into productive oilseed cultivation
- Bridge the 58% yield gap using regenerative agriculture and improved seed systems
- Develop 100–150 FPOs for seed, aggregation, and processing enterprises
- Generate ₹49,410 crore in economic output and ₹6,770 crore in revenue for the state
- Reduce India's edible oil import gap by 5.4% by 2030.

Thematic platforms such as the Soy Farmers Conclave 2025, Panchayat Conferences on Regenerative Agriculture, and Multi-Stakeholder Policy Dialogues further strengthened engagement across the value chain, connecting farmers directly with industry, research, and government institutions.

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TRANSLATION OF STRATEGY INTO FIELD-LEVEL ACTION

NARVOS has enabled large-scale field implementation by connecting platform-level strategy with structured on-ground action under the EU–India Partnership Programme.

Key achievements include:

- **Establishment of 66 demonstration plots across 13 districts and 7 agro-climatic zones**
- **Engagement of over 35,000 farmers across 450 villages.**
- **Development and rollout of crop-specific regenerative packages of practices for soybean, mustard, groundnut, sesame, and linseed, validated by ICAR and other technical institutions.**

Pilot interventions have been established across the identified clusters to support farmers in strengthening their knowledge and adoption of regenerative agricultural practices. These pilots are serving as proof-of-concept sites, generating field-level evidence on the agronomic, environmental, and economic benefits of regenerative approaches in vegetable oilseed cultivation.

The selection of clusters and participating farmers has been guided by a combination of factors, including farmers' willingness to adopt new practices, geographical representation, and socio-economic contexts. Given that Madhya Pradesh is one of India's leading oilseed-producing states, pilot clusters have been strategically distributed across diverse agro-climatic zones to reflect the state's varied production systems.

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Best Practices on the Demonstration Plots

Site-specific agronomic planning:
Adoption of locally adapted crop calendars, soil-test–based nutrient application, and crop choices tailored to agro-climatic zones to maximise productivity and resilience.

Integrated nutrient management (INM):
Balanced use of organic inputs (FYM, compost, bio-fertilisers) complemented with judicious and need-based chemical fertilisers, resulting in improved nutrient-use efficiency and lower input costs.

On-farm biomass recycling:
Utilisation of crop residues, green manuring, and farm waste to enhance soil organic carbon and reduce dependence on external inputs.

Digital and advisory support for decision-making:
Use of weather advisories, pest surveillance, and real-time agronomic guidance to enable timely interventions and reduce climate-related risks.

Farmer-led experimentation and learning:
Demonstration plots function as living laboratories, enabling farmers to compare conventional vs regenerative practices and observe yield, cost, and soil-health outcomes firsthand.

Enhanced biodiversity at farm level:
Promotion of beneficial insects, pollinators, and natural predators through habitat management, border crops, and reduced pesticide use.

Risk mitigation and income stability:
Diversification of crops and practices to spread climatic and market risks, contributing to more stable farm incomes over seasons.

These pilots have generated evidence on

- **These pilot initiatives have generated robust field-level evidence, showing a reduction in input costs by 15–25% through optimized use of fertilizers, agrochemicals, and irrigation.**
- **Soil organic carbon and soil moisture retention improved by 10–20%, leading to enhanced water-use efficiency.**
- **Farmers reported yield improvements in the range of 8–20%, resulting in higher net farm incomes.**
- **The adoption of regenerative practices has strengthened farmers' resilience to climate variability, helping stabilize production despite erratic rainfall patterns and temperature stress.**

Through Farmer Field Schools, exposure visits (including to the Nico Roozen Centre of Excellence), and digital advisory platforms, NARVOS-supported interventions have enabled farmers to observe, test, and adopt regenerative practices with confidence.

Each Farmer Field School is designed to train a cohort of approximately 500 farmers, with one pilot unit serving as the focal learning site. This approach has facilitated peer learning, practical experimentation, and the gradual scaling of regenerative practices at the community level.

Lead farmers and project staff visited the Nico Roozen International Centre of Excellence for Regenerative Agriculture to gain hands-on exposure to regenerative practices. Through expert interactions and field demonstrations on soil health, water conservation, biodiversity, and sustainable cropping, participants were inspired to replicate successful models in their villages.

A digital platform that connects farmers with agricultural experts to address present-day agricultural issues, focusing on topics relevant to farmers needs.

FROM DIALOGUE TO DIRECTION: POLICY, MARKET, AND GENDER OUTCOMES

Beyond field implementation, NARVOS has enabled system-level outcomes by integrating policy engagement, market alignment, and gender inclusion into platform action.

Policy dialogues and consultations have initiated the development of white papers and recommendations aligned with national priorities on edible oil self-reliance and climate resilience.

Nearly 100 Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) have been engaged through NARVOS-enabled capacity-building initiatives conducted across multiple locations, reflecting the programme's geographically distributed approach to strengthening the regenerative agriculture ecosystem. Through a series of workshops, consultations, and learning forums, CSOs were trained on regenerative agriculture principles, policy engagement, and advocacy—enhancing their ability to support farmers and articulate field-level evidence in decision-making spaces. This capacity enhancement has enabled CSOs to participate more effectively in policy dialogues on sustainable agriculture and inclusive vegetable oil supply chains, reinforcing their role as critical enablers of systemic change beyond the programme's immediate implementation areas.

Multiple policy dialogues and consultations organized with participation from CSOs, policymakers, researchers, and private sector stakeholders. Work was initiated on the development of white papers to provide policy recommendations aligned with EU, India partnership priorities.

Gender-focused platforms, including the Women Farmers Summit and targeted policy meets, have elevated women farmers from participants to decision-makers —linking regenerative agriculture with financial access, market inclusion, and leadership roles.

Special emphasis was placed on the active inclusion of women farmers through targeted outreach, capacity-building, and leadership-oriented interventions. Women's participation was strengthened across field-level implementation as well as institutional and governance platforms, enabling them to move from participation to decision-making roles.

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Two Years of Learning, Evidence and Scale-Up

LEARNING LANDSCAPES ACROSS AGRO-ECOLOGICAL ZONES IN MADHYA PRADESH

To capture the diversity of India's oilseed-growing regions, the EU–India Partnership Programme engaged across multiple agro-ecological zones in Madhya Pradesh. These landscapes served as learning sites where regenerative agriculture approaches were adapted to different cropping systems, climate conditions, and farmer realities—generating evidence that now informs the national NARVOS platform.

Central Narmada Valley:
Soybean-based regenerative practices were demonstrated in Budni (Sehore district), generating learning on soil health restoration and input optimisation under relatively high-rainfall conditions. Implementation was led by Solidaridad in collaboration with local partners.

Vindhya Plateau:
Across Sehore, Vidisha, and Raisen districts, soybean-focused interventions supported learning on scaling regenerative practices across contiguous production clusters, strengthening the foundation for wider replication under Solidaridad's leadership.

Malwa Plateau:
In Ujjain, Neemuch, Ratlam, and Dewas, regenerative approaches were tested across diverse oilseed crops such as soybean, mustard, and groundnut. These clusters enabled crop-specific adaptation of regenerative principles in relatively water-stressed contexts.

Nimar Plains:
The Thikri block of Barwani district served as a focused learning site for oilseed-based regenerative practices, generating insights on resource-efficient cultivation under semi-arid conditions.

Jhabua Hills:
In the ecologically sensitive Thandla block of Jhabua district, soybean-based regenerative pilots supported learning on climate resilience and farmer adaptation in rainfed and tribal farming systems.

Northern Hill Region (Chhattisgarh Plains of Madhya Pradesh):
Mustard and linseed-based regenerative interventions in Dindori and Ghugri (Mandla) generated important learning on regenerative approaches in mixed and forest-linked agro-ecologies. Implementation was led by CARD, with strategic support from Solidaridad.

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SDGs advanced through NARVOS

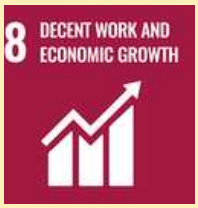
Through its integrated focus on regenerative agriculture, inclusive value chains, and climate resilience, the National Alliance for the Regenerative Vegetable Oil Sector (NARVOS) contributes to multiple Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). By aligning field-level action with policy dialogue and market engagement under the EU–India Partnership Programme, NARVOS advances sustainability outcomes that extend beyond agriculture to livelihoods, ecosystems, and institutional systems.

Key SDGs advanced through NARVOS include:

SDG 2 – Zero Hunger:
Improved farm productivity, soil health, and climate resilience support sustainable food and nutrition security while strengthening domestic oilseed production.

SDG 5 – Gender Equality:
Focused engagement of women farmers and women-led institutions enhances participation, leadership, and access to knowledge and opportunities within regenerative value chains.

SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth:
Regenerative practices reduce input costs and improve farm incomes, contributing to more stable and resilient rural livelihoods.



SDG 12 – Responsible Consumption and Production:
Promotion of sustainable production systems and responsible sourcing aligns supply-side transformation with market and industry commitments.

SDG 13 – Climate Action:
Climate-resilient farming practices, reduced chemical dependency, and improved resource efficiency support adaptation and mitigation efforts in agriculture.

SDG 15 – Life on Land:
Restoration of soil health, biodiversity enhancement, and ecosystem stewardship contribute to long-term land sustainability.

Strengthening the Ecosystem: Role of Key Programme Partners

The EU–India Partnership Programme is anchored in strong institutional collaboration, recognising that systemic transformation in the vegetable oil sector requires coordinated action across policy, markets, and field implementation. Under the NARVOS platform, programme partners have played complementary and reinforcing roles—ensuring that regenerative agriculture is not approached as a standalone intervention, but as an integrated, scalable, and inclusive sectoral transition.

Key partner contributions include

Solidaridad (Lead Implementing Partner):
Provided overall programme leadership and coordination, anchored NARVOS as a national multi-stakeholder platform, and integrated field implementation, policy engagement, market dialogue, and knowledge management under a unified strategic framework.

Centre for Responsible Business (CRB):
Enabled structured policy dialogue and evidence-based consultations, supporting the development of White Papers and policy recommendations that link field learnings with national sustainability and responsible business priorities.

Centre for Action Research and Development (CARD):
Strengthened grassroots implementation through mobilisation of smallholder farmers, with a strong focus on women farmers and tribal communities, ensuring inclusion, local adaptation, and social equity within regenerative agriculture initiatives.

Solvent Extractors' Association (SEA) and Soybean Processors Association of India (SOPA):
Facilitated industry engagement and market dialogue, helping align regenerative production systems with private-sector perspectives on sourcing, sustainability, and long-term sector competitiveness.

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Ground Stories

Dinesh Saw His Soil Breathe Again

"I never believed farming without chemicals could give such results—but now, I have seen it with my own eyes," says Dinesh Ninama, a regenerative farmer from Village Chowki in Jaora block of Ratlam district, Madhya Pradesh.

Farmer Background: Tradition Meets Struggle

With 8 acres of land and a family of nine to support, Dinesh has long juggled dual responsibilities—farming alongside his father and brother, and working as a mason on building contracts to sustain household expenses. For years, like most others in his village, Dinesh depended heavily on chemical fertilizers and pesticides in the hope of maintaining crop yields.

But over time, the results were disheartening. Despite rising input costs, crop production stagnated. The soil turned hard and lifeless. His father often reminisced about a time when farming thrived naturally—when the soil was soft, fertile, and yields abundant without synthetic inputs. Dinesh began to question whether that era could ever return.

The Turning Points

In September 2024, Dinesh was introduced to the “Promotion of Regenerative Agricultural Practices for a Food Secure and Climate Resilient Future”—an initiative under the EU-India Partnership and implemented by Solidaridad. Skeptical but curious, he decided to participate and was soon selected as a lead farmer due to his enthusiasm and commitment.

Regenerative Farming Experiment With Mustard Crop

In October 2024, Dinesh began cultivating mustard on a one-acre demonstration plot using regenerative agriculture principles with the support of Solidaridad. He made a radical shift: replacing his conventional use of 60 kg DAP (Diammonium Phosphate) and 10 kg urea with vermicompost sourced from a local entrepreneur supported by Solidaridad. Vermicompost is rich in organic carbon, beneficial microbes, humic acids, and plant growth hormones. It enhances soil structure, increases water retention, and fosters microbial activity that improves nutrient cycling.

He also applied homemade bio-inputs prepared using traditional recipes and local resources, under the guidance of the Solidaridad field team like: -

Jeevamrut- *a natural bio-fertilizer made using cow dung, cow urine, jaggery, gram flour, and soil from the farm bund. It is a microbial culture that enhances soil fertility, improves microbial activity, and promotes plant growth. It is widely used as a low-cost, eco-friendly alternative to chemical fertilizers.*

Neemastra- *an organic pest repellent prepared by fermenting neem leaves, neem cake, cow urine, and water. It is highly effective against sucking pests and acts as a natural insecticide without harming beneficial insects. Neemastra plays a vital role in Integrated Pest Management (IPM) in sustainable agriculture.*

Panch Patti Kadha- *a traditional formulation made by boiling a mixture of five types of leaves—typically neem, custard apple, guava, papaya, and hibiscus—along with cow urine. It works as a natural pest deterrent and boosts plant immunity. This kadha is applied as a foliar spray on crops.*

Kanda Tonic - *an organic growth promoter made from cow dung cakes (kandas), cow urine, jaggery, and sometimes banana or other bio-ingredients. It enhances plant growth, improves yield, and supports microbial life in the soil. It is particularly useful during the vegetative stage of crop growth.*
Bio-inputs like Kanda Tonic and Jeevamrut act as microbial inoculants. They introduce beneficial bacteria and fungi that decompose organic matter and release nutrients in a plant-available form.
The results were transformative.

Kanda Tonic

Panch Patti Kadha

Outcomes

- **Input Cost Savings:**
  - **DAP: ₹3,500 saved**
  - **Chemical pesticides: ₹5,500 saved**
- **Yield Increase: Mustard yield rose to 11 quintals per acre, up from the usual 8 quintals—a 37.5% improvement.**
- **Net Additional Income this year: Approx. ₹19,000 from Mustard (sold at ₹9,000 per quintal)**

With improved soil structure and water-holding capacity due to organic matter, Dinesh reported a 25–30% reduction in irrigation needs. Earlier, he irrigated the mustard crop 4 times per season. After adopting regenerative practices, he reduced it to 3 irrigations, saving approx. 40,000–50,000 liters of water per acre.

From belief to practice

Encouraged by this success, Dinesh began producing his own vermicompost at home in bags. In just three months, his first batch was ready and applied to his garlic crop. The results were again positive, reinforcing his confidence in natural farming methods.

With the profits earned, Dinesh reinvested in his secondary livelihood by purchasing centering plates for 400 sq. ft. at ₹30/sq ft—a strategic move to strengthen both his income sources.

Beyond income reviving soil health

Perhaps the most heartwarming moment was the reaction of his father, who, upon seeing the renewed health of their farm, said with emotion:

"When I was young, our soil was alive—dark, fragrant, full of life. I see that coming back."

Today, Dinesh is not just a farmer—he is a local champion of regenerative agriculture. He is actively encouraging other farmers to shift from chemical-intensive farming to regenerative farming practices.

His journey reflects the potential of regenerative agriculture to not only improve farm productivity and farmer incomes, but also restore ecological balance and intergenerational sustainability.

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Breathing New Life into the Soil, Opening New Pathways to Income
An inspiring story of an elderly farmer couple from Ratlam

Age may have crossed 70, but the spirit to learn, adapt, and bring change remains as strong as ever. This is the inspiring story of Dayaram Patidar and his wife Maya Bai, farmers from Gram Panchayat Rusalpura in Jawra block of Ratlam district, who embraced regenerative agriculture to not only restore the health of their soil but also create a new and sustainable source of income.

During the Kharif season of 2024, under the guidance of Solidaridad, Dayaram Patidar began cultivating groundnut on half an acre of previously under productive land. Earlier, like many farmers, he relied heavily on chemical fertilizers and pesticides. Through the intervention, he was introduced to natural alternatives such as vermicompost, Kanda Tonic, Neemastra, and Jeevamrit. As part of the demonstration, vermicompost was also provided to help him transition smoothly.

Dayaram was trained in both the preparation and application of vermicompost—a natural organic fertilizer produced using cow dung, dry leaves, vegetable waste, and earthworms. Rich in organic carbon and essential nutrients, vermicompost significantly improves soil fertility and enhances the soil's water-holding capacity.

Sharing his experience, Dayaram says, ***"Earlier, I used to harvest only 4–5 quintals of groundnut from half an acre. This time, the yield increased to 11 quintals. At a market price of ₹6,000 per quintal, I earned ₹66,000. By switching to organic inputs, I also saved nearly ₹2,200 on chemical pesticides. From now on, we will completely stop using chemical fertilizers and sprays."***

The transformation did not stop there. Dayaram's wife, Maya Bai, took charge of vermicompost production herself. Within three months, she prepared the first batch and applied it to mustard, chilli, and tomato crops. Encouraged by the successful results, she expanded the activity and began preparing vermicompost in three additional units. So far, she has produced nearly 30 quintals of vermicompost, out of which 16 quintals have already been sold at ₹400 per quintal.

Their collective efforts have inspired others in the village as well. More than 10 farmers in Rusalpura have begun adopting regenerative agricultural practices.

With a warm smile, Maya Bai says, ***"We have brought our soil back to life. Now, whatever income we earn will be used for the education of our grandchildren, so their future can be brighter."***
This story stands as a powerful example of how knowledge, determination, and regenerative practices can rejuvenate both the land and livelihoods, even in the later years of life.

NARVOS Looking Ahead
From Learning to Collective Action

With a strong evidence base, institutional credibility, and multi-stakeholder alignment now established, NARVOS enters its next phase with a clear shift in focus from platform creation to platform-led action. The emphasis moving forward will be on converting credibility into continuity, and scale into collective action, ensuring that NARVOS functions as a living, action-oriented alliance rather than a time-bound programme outcome.

In this next phase, NARVOS will become lighter, sharper, and more outcome-driven—prioritising facilitation, coordination, and strategic alignment over documentation. The platform will increasingly operate through shared leadership and distributed ownership, with stakeholders playing active roles in shaping agendas, advancing commitments, and translating learning into action across policy, markets, and geographies.

KEY PRIORITIES IN THE NEXT PHASE INCLUDE

Strengthening State-Level Chapters and FPO Engagement:

Deepening engagement at the state and cluster levels by anchoring NARVOS within Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) and local institutions, ensuring that platform priorities remain grounded in farmer realities while enabling decentralised action.

Operationalising NARVOS Working Groups and Leadership Structures:

Establishing thematic and sector-focused working groups to drive action on priority areas such as policy engagement, market alignment, farmer institutions, and knowledge exchange, with clear roles for platform members.

KEY PRIORITIES IN THE NEXT PHASE INCLUDE

Continue....

Advancing Policy Translation and Advocacy

Moving from consultation to influence by advancing evidence-based policy recommendations through structured dialogue with government institutions, aligning regenerative agriculture with national priorities on climate resilience, farmer incomes, and edible oil self-reliance.

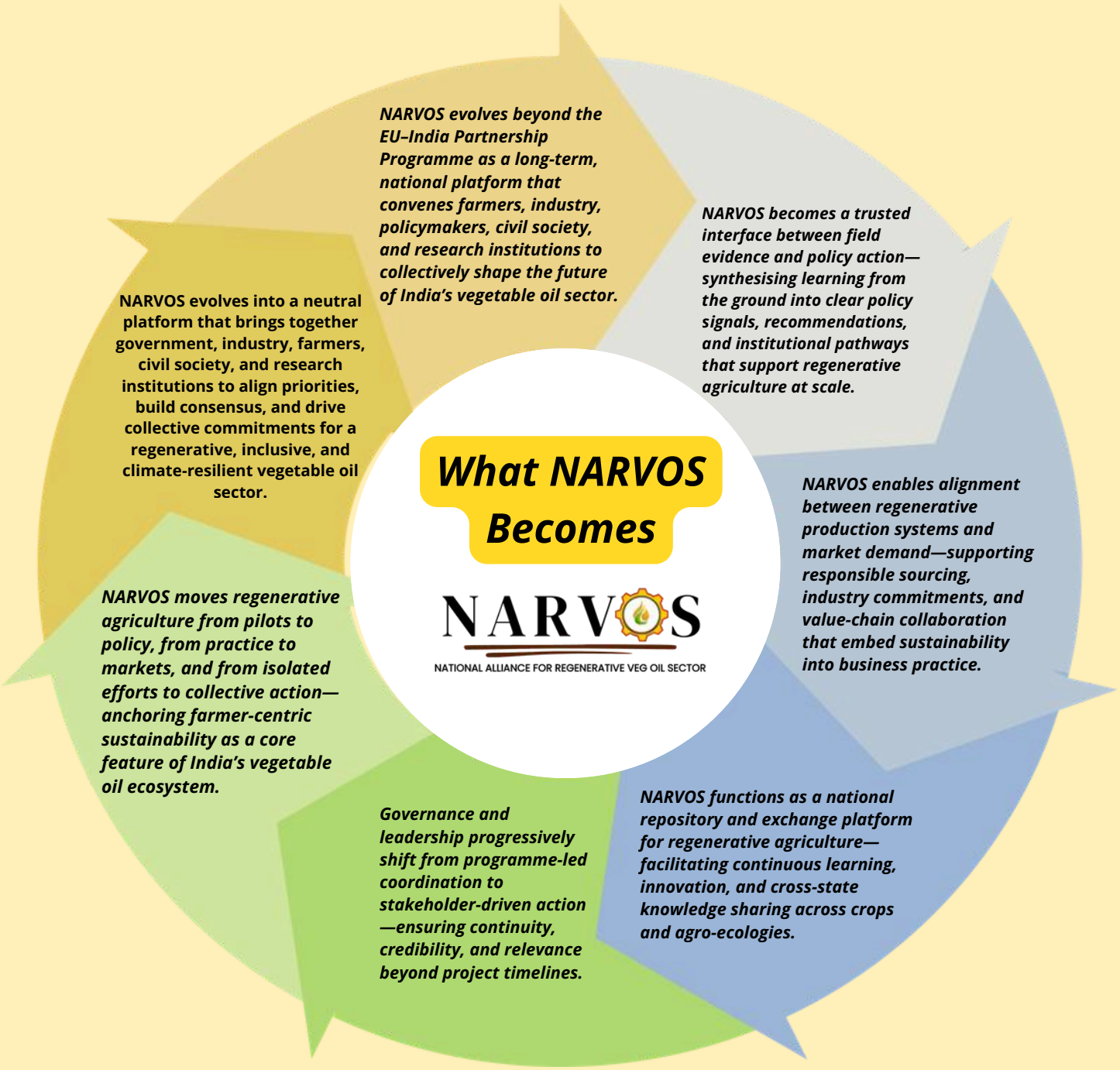
Deepening Industry Participation and Market Alignment:

Strengthening engagement with industry actors to support responsible sourcing, market differentiation, and long-term demand for regeneratively produced oilseeds, linking sustainability commitments with viable business models.

Ensuring Continuity Beyond the Programme Lifecycle:

Positioning NARVOS as a self-sustaining platform by embedding learning systems, partnerships, and governance mechanisms that enable ongoing collaboration, adaptation, and scale beyond the EU–India Partnership Programme.

What NARVOS becomes from a Programme Outcome to a Permanent National Platform



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