

THE MAPPING & EXCHANGE OF GOOD PRACTICES (MEGP) INITIATIVE FOR MILLETS MAINSTREAMING IN ASIAN AND AFRICAN COUNTRIES

Overview of the Initiative

The problem of poor nutrition and food insecurity persists, despite growth in global food production, supply and distribution. Climate change further poses a risk to nutrition and food security, as agriculture has always been climate dependent. The sector has become even more vulnerable in current times where varied weather patterns are observed. As the global temperature continues to rise and distort weather patterns, extreme events are predicted to be more frequent in the future. These events are hampering food and nutrition security of millions of vulnerable populations, especially smallholder farmers. It is in this context, millets, often termed as ‘nutri-cereals’, contribute substantially to food and nutrition security. They are poised to be the crops of the future, being a climate-smart crop.

Despite the vast potential of millets to expand dietary diversity, its cultivation and consumption are witnessing a sharp decline in our country, owing to demand and supply-side constraints. The per capita consumption of millets fell drastically from 32.9 kgs to 4.2 kgs from 1962-to 2010¹. Some of the responsible demand-side factors include²:

1. Increasing urbanization and per capita incomes are changing consumer tastes and preferences
2. Poor social status and inconvenience/lack of traditional knowledge to prepare millets (especially sorghum)
3. Lower shelf life of milled grains
4. Rice and wheat are included at a larger scale in PDS
5. Millets haven’t been uniformly included in PDS

Supply-side factors include

1. Lack of industrial demand for value-added millet products discourages farmers from cultivating millets
2. Low profitability- low remuneration for millets vis-à-vis competing crops
3. Green Revolution has favored the production of rice and wheat, including output price incentives and input subsidies
4. Lack of access to quality seeds
5. Inadequate infrastructure such as processing technologies, unique milling equipment, etc. to address total value chain

1 Assessing Millets and Sorghum Consumption Behavior in Urban India: A Large-Scale Survey, 2021

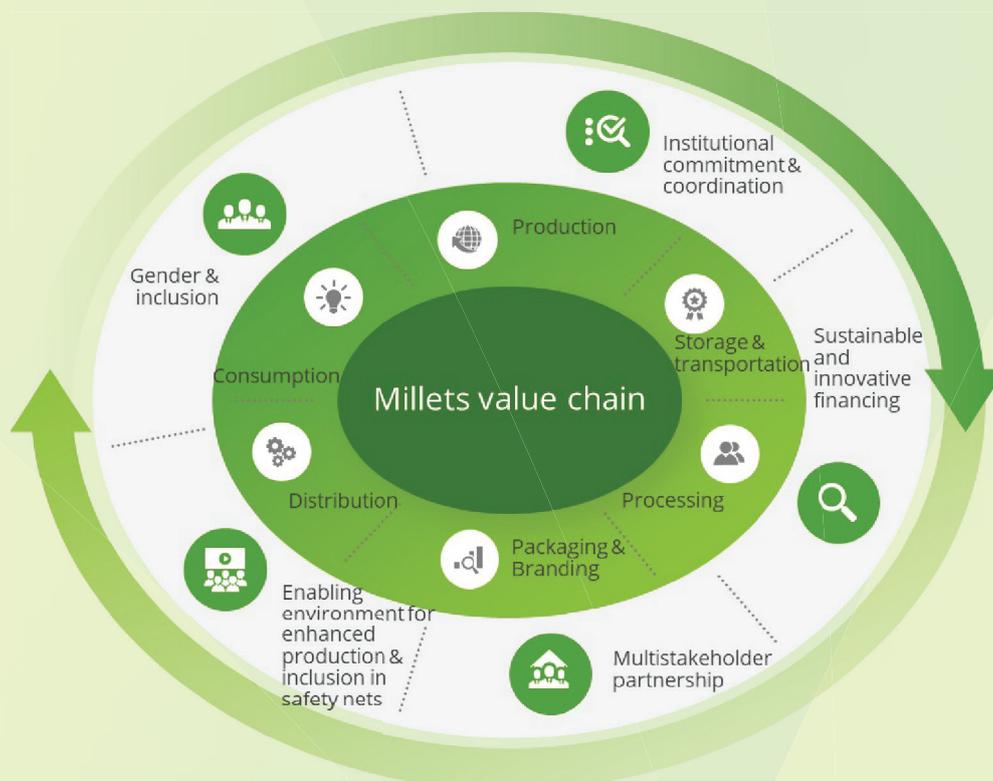
2 Millets Value Chain for Nutritional Security: A Replicable Success Model from India (2016)

NITI Aayog, Government of India in collaboration with United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), India is launching the MEGP Initiative, which aims to map and exchange the best practices for millets mainstreaming in Asia and Africa. The initiative will support the documentation of good practices and lessons learnt, and also present an opportunity of experience sharing amongst Asian and African developing countries. A compendium of good practices is targeted to make it easier for the government, both in India as well as abroad, to better understand what it entails, and trigger informed decisions if they wish to scale up/replicate this idea. It will unlock various South-South Cooperation (SSC) & South-South & Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) pathways and shall offer a policy choice of mutual collaboration through study visits, expert deployment, demonstration sites, peer coaching networks, technology and/or knowledge transfer, and policy dialogues.

Applications are invited from organizations and practitioners from African and Asian nations to participate in the initiative. Solutions can range from grassroots to the regional level.

Categories

Entries for “the MEGP Initiative”, are invited in two main categories as per the following millets mainstreaming framework (A detailed note is attached):-



1. Millet value chain (production, storage & transportation, processing, packaging & branding, distribution & consumption)
2. Mainstreaming dimensions (institutional commitment & coordination, multi-stakeholder partnership, sustainable and innovative financing, gender & inclusion, and enabling environment for safety nets inclusion)

There also exists a dedicated category on millet recipes to enhance the knowledge on the cooking method and develop diversified millet recipes that could be included in the daily diet in both urban and rural areas.

The solutions and good practices must respond to the demand and supply side factors, and address the decline of millet production.

We will also appreciate entries capturing forgotten practices particularly the traditional and indigenous community practices and would motivate practitioners, organizations and individuals who are working for the revival of such practices to share their experiences through this initiative.

Eligibility

Organizations and practitioners from government or non-government organizations, multilaterals or FPOs/SHGs/PACS/Cooperatives and private sector/startups are encouraged to participate with a case story of the intervention that has been conceptualized and implemented in some geography. Solutions at conceptual stage will not be eligible. Entries are being invited from African and Asian countries.

Benefits to the Participants

- Access to bridge initiatives like back-supporting millet startups
- Access to regional platforms for learning dissemination
- Access to networking platforms, including donors, innovation labs, research institutes, government departments etc.
- Linkages with government departments for potential scale-up
- Publication support

The MEGP Initiative will bring together a publication of good practices, which will provide a learning and dissemination platform for all eligible entries. Some of the selected entries will also be shortlisted for further support, including invitation to the regional conference in November 2022. Mentorship support will be provided by a range of experts to the winners and they will be further linked to key stakeholders including donors, research institutes, private sector and Government Departments. An important component is the bridge initiative for the winners which will link the solutions to different Government departments in India for potential scale-up.

Evaluation Criteria

- Innovation (novelty of the solution)
- Practicality (ability to address significant current or emerging need)
- Gender & Inclusion (ability to reach the last mile, the most marginalized and the excluded, particularly women)
- Impact (potential to improve outcomes at scale)
- Sustainability (potential for scale-up and alignment with the public/private systems)

Timelines

- 10th July 22:** Preparation, social media run-up
- 19th July 22:** Announcement of the MEGP initiative. Applications invited
- 25th July – 30th September 22:** A series of national & international dissemination events to solicit applications
- 18th October 22:** Last date for submission
- 15th November 22:** Shortlisting of top 10 entries in each category
- 30th November 22:** Presentation and announcement of winners
- 4th Week of December 22:** Organization of the regional conference. Launch of Good Practices Compendium
- 3rd Week of January 23:** Invitation to the Knowledge Management & Networking platform

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Chair

1. Dr. Shobhana Pattanayak, Former Agriculture Secretary, Gol and India's Presidential Candidate for IFAD

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1. Dr. Chindi Vasudevappa, Vice Chancellor, National Institute of Food Technology Entrepreneurship and Management (NIFTEM)
2. Ms. Shubha Thakur, Joint Secretary (Crops and Oilseeds), Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Govt. of India
3. Dr. Sridevi Annapurna Singh, Director, Central Food Technological Research Institute (CFTRI) Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)
4. Dr. R Hemalatha, Director, National Institute of Nutrition- ICMR
5. Chef Manjit Gill, President, Indian Federation of Culinary Associations

Member Secretaries

1. Dr. Neelam Patel, Senior Adviser (Agriculture), NITI Aayog, Govt. of India
2. Ms. Pradnya Paithankar, Head- Climate Resilience, DRR, SSTC, World Food Programme, India

For any queries or support with the application submission, please write to/call us at pranay.sinha@wfp.org (+91- 8789529566) or saloni.bhut@niti.gov.in (+91-8297243051)