

Sustainable Water Fund (FDW) Annual Narrative Report Summary

1.1	FDW project code	FDW17109
1.2	Project Name	Water Efficiency in sustainable cotton-based production systems in Maharashtra, India
1.3	Project partners	Partner 1 (Lead): Solidaridad Network Asia Limited Partner 2: Welspun India Limited Partner 3: BioCare Pvt. Ltd. Partner 4: Technische Universiteit Delft (TU Delft)
1.4	Country	India
1.5	In-country locations	Wardha, Yavatmal, Amravati, Nagpur, Nanded - Maharashtra
1.6	Project Start / End Dates	01/08/2018 – 31/12/2023
1.7	Reporting period	01/01/2020 – 31/12/2020
1.8	Project budget and current expenditure	Total project budget: € 3,334,920 Expenditure to date: € 279,619 Cumulative expenditure: € 322,282

1.9

Executive progress summary

The implementation phase of 'Water efficiency in sustainable cotton-based production systems in Maharashtra, India' began in November 2019, with the first objective being generating willingness among the local farmers to join the project. During this reporting year, Solidaridad and partners have identified and mobilised 20,000 farmers in the region; develop a training curriculum on Good Agriculture Practices for them, and work towards initiating their thought process on awareness related to such practices and their benefits- for the farmers themselves and the environment. Out of planned 20,000, 11,000 cotton farmers were trained in the year one on good agricultural practices covering pre-and post-monsoon practices. The training curriculum covers every stage in cotton cultivation - from land preparation, sowing, pest management, irrigation timings till the time for harvest. The mobilisation benefited in initiating water user groups, 7 Water user groups were initiated in this year, having 5-6 progressive farmers as their member.

The year 2020 brought unprecedented challenges for everyone, and these challenges from the project's perspective also instigated the exploration of alternative methodologies to achieve best possible results. One of them was the usage of virtual and digital technologies to deliver crop advisories to farmers via WhatsApp video calls, SMS and voice messages, all project farmers were enrolled under these services. All 30 demonstrations have started this year having 5 weather stations, and on farm monitoring equipment to monitor soil moisture, temperature and crop and pest monitoring. About 13000 existing water structures were identified with the help of the Govt Irrigation Department. The initial target of constructing/rejuvenating 500 water structures for the reporting year could not be met due to lockdown and post relaxation, with the additional funding support of Solidaridad own fund raising a total of 39 farm ponds have been constructed and rejuvenated. A hydrological assessment of the project region has been completed by Solidaridad and TU Delft, which is currently utilised for planning and implementations.

With the current approaches and operation mechanisms, Solidaridad and partners are optimistic that this year will be better suited for generating significant progress towards the realisation of the project's outputs and outcomes. In addition, further exploration of fine-tuning the training delivery to the farmers and adopting conclusions from different learnings through the project will be implemented as and when required.