IWMI-Tata Water Policy Program

Converting Science into Policy Action

Shilp Verma | shilp.verma@cgiar.org

Introduction

Established in 2000 as a co-equal partnership between the International Water Management Institute (IWMI), Colombo and Sir Ratan Tata Trusts (SRTT), Mumbai, the IWMI-Tata Water Policy Research Program (ITP) brings together scientific expertise and international experience of IWMI with a strong field presence, action orientation and strong investment in NRM-based rural livelihoods in Tata Trusts' Rural Upliftment Portfolio (RUP). Over the past two decades, the program has become a recognized 'brand' in the water-agriculture-energy-environment-livelihood domain. Not only is ITP a resource for the Trusts, but it has also established itself as an advisor, a thought leader and an influencer for key development interventions and government policies. ITP research has been cited in parliamentary debates and widely quoted in academic discourses; it has inspired and helped shape key water-agriculture-energy-livelihood initiatives of the Government of India, several state governments and donor organizations.

Scientific Expertise

IWMI is an international, non-profit, research-for-development organization, and is part of the consortium on international agriculture research, CGIAR

International Experience

IWMI conducts research globally through its offices in Sri Lanka, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Lao PDR, Egypt, Uzbekistan, Ethiopia, Ghana, South Africa, Italy and the United States

Partnerships

IWMI works with a large network of global academic and development partners. In India, IWMI is hosted by & operates through a Memorandum of Understanding with the Indian Council for Agricultural Research



Field Presence

Tata Trusts operate through a vast and diverse network of partners and associates with extensive field knowledge, presence and experience

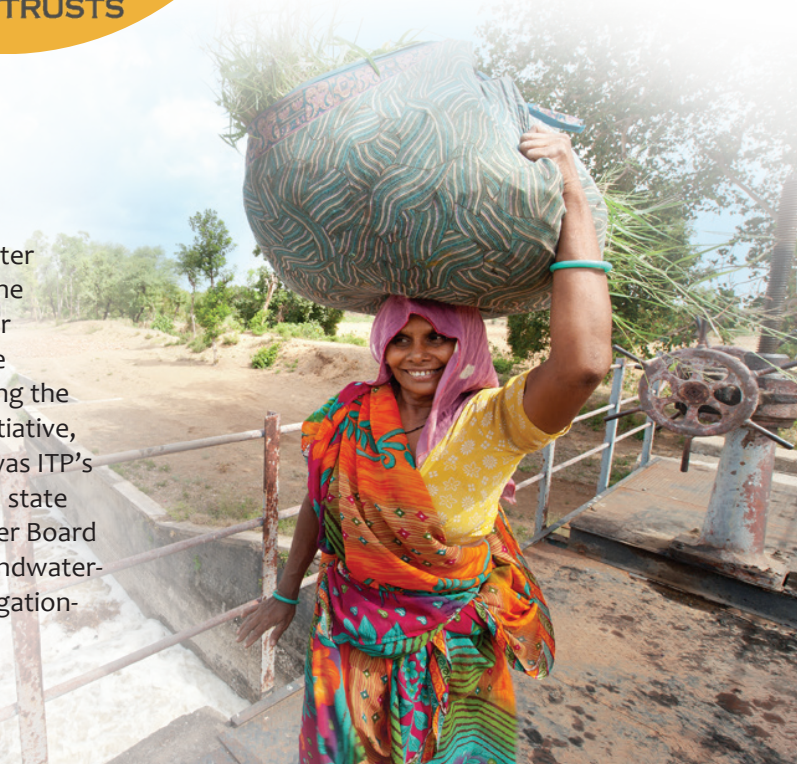
NRM and Rural Livelihoods

NRM-based interventions to support and enhance rural livelihoods figure prominently in Tata Trusts' grant portfolio

Field Action Labs

Tata Trusts partners and associates can offer ideal field labs for experiments and policy pilots for developing research-based and field-tested program design and policies

In 2014, for its ground-breaking work exploring energy use, food production and water availability in Indian agriculture, ITP won the UN-WATER "Best Practices in Water Management" award. ITP has been routinely invited for the annual pre-budget consultations with the Finance Minister and has contributed to several high-level central and state government committees. In 2016, ITP proposed re-visioning the Government of India's flagship irrigation development initiative, Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana (PMKSY). Not only was ITP's work appreciated by the Government of India and several state governments, but ITP also helped the Central Groundwater Board develop a new program, PMKSY-GW, specifically for groundwater-based irrigation development in some of India's most 'irrigation-deprived' districts.



Evidence-based Field Research

Conducting evidence-based research has been at the core of ITP's operating system. ITP continues to build on this strength in partnership with the trusts' RUP team, AOs, and field partners. Each year, ITP and RUP identify a core theme and 'development clusters' where the chosen theme is a high priority. The following three broad thematic areas are of direct relevance to RUP's efforts.

A. Water-Energy-Food Nexus

ITP emphasizes the strong link between India's water, energy, and food sectors. While government policies have boosted food security, they have also encouraged unsustainable agriculture, especially in Punjab and Haryana. Free or subsidized farm power expanded irrigation but caused groundwater depletion in many regions. ITP, a thought leader in this space, focuses on smart solar irrigation strategies, with pilots and demos in partnership with CInI and others. It is also exploring the gobar value chain and opportunities for solar energy to enhance livelihoods, particularly in tribal and hill districts, while promoting the 'nexus approach' in field programs.

B. Water Productivity, Demand Management and Risks

Water scarcity is a major driver of agrarian distress, prompting government and civil society to invest in solutions like soil and water conservation, water-efficient technologies, groundwater recharge, and demand management. Trusts' efforts in water-stressed northwestern and drought-prone peninsular India focus on improving water productivity to reduce stress. Climate change adds uncertainties, increasing extreme events like droughts and floods. Many states in western and peninsular India have flagship drought mitigation programs like Jal Yukt Shivar (Maharashtra); Mukhyamantri Jal Svawlamban Abhiyan (Rajasthan);

2001: ITP Established as a co-equal partnership betweenIWMI, Colombo and Tata Trusts (Sir Ratan Tata Trusts), Mumbai

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2005: Jyotigram Yojana Based on ITP research, Gujarat invests Rs.12.5 billion to deliver 24*7 power to villages and implement 'intelligent rationing' of farm power; later replicated in several states

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2007: Dugwell Recharge Based on an ITP presentation, govt. announced a National Dugwell Recharge Program with an outlay of Rs.18 billion across 100 hard-rock districts

2009: Piped Sardar Sarovar ITP argued for piped delivery of canal water in Narmada; years later, Gujarat is implementing this

2009: Gujarat's Agrarian Growth ITP's work on drivers of agri. growth in Gujarat was widely discussed, including in Parliament

2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012 20

2002: North Gujarat Initiative ITP invested Rs. 3.5 million to set up a field pilot in north Gujarat for sustainable groundwater management

2002: ITP Leader Awarded ITP Leader Prof. Tushaar Shah awarded the prestigious "Outstanding Scientist of the Year" award by CGIAR

2006: Central India Initiative Between 2003-06, ITP carried out research on water-centric tribal livelihoods in central Indian tribal heartlands; based on this, SRTT set up CInI Cell – later registered as Collectives for Integrated Livelihood Initiatives (CInI) for guiding livelihood investments in central India

CInI An Initiative of TATA TRUSTS

2012: Small Farmer, Prosperous Farmer (SFPF) ITP launches SFPF initiative to document best practices for creating smallholder prosperity

2012: National Irrigation Management Fund (NIMF) Govt. of India earmarked Rs. 67 billion to set up the National Irrigation Management Fund to improve performance of public irrigation systems

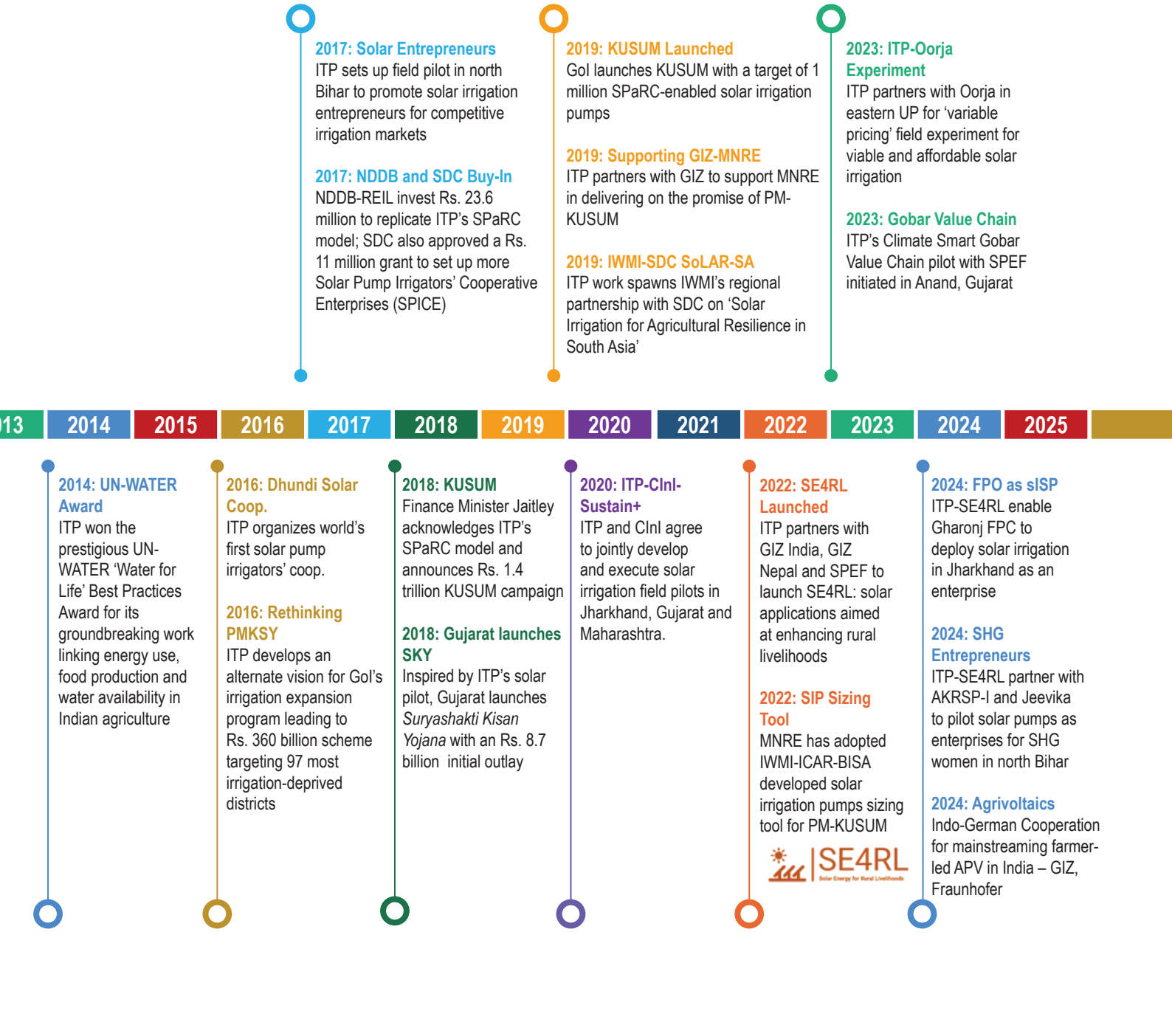
Mission Kakatiya (Telangana); Sujalam Sufalam Jal Sanchay Abhiyan (Gujarat); Kudimaramuthu (Tamilnadu) and so on. ITP draws lessons from these programs to enhance water productivity and risk reduction. In eastern India, floods hinder agricultural productivity, with IWMI pioneering solutions like UTFI (Underground Transfer of Floods for Irrigation) and IBFI (Index based Flood Insurance). This theme emphasizes improving land and water productivity while mitigating drought and flood risks for vulnerable areas and communities.

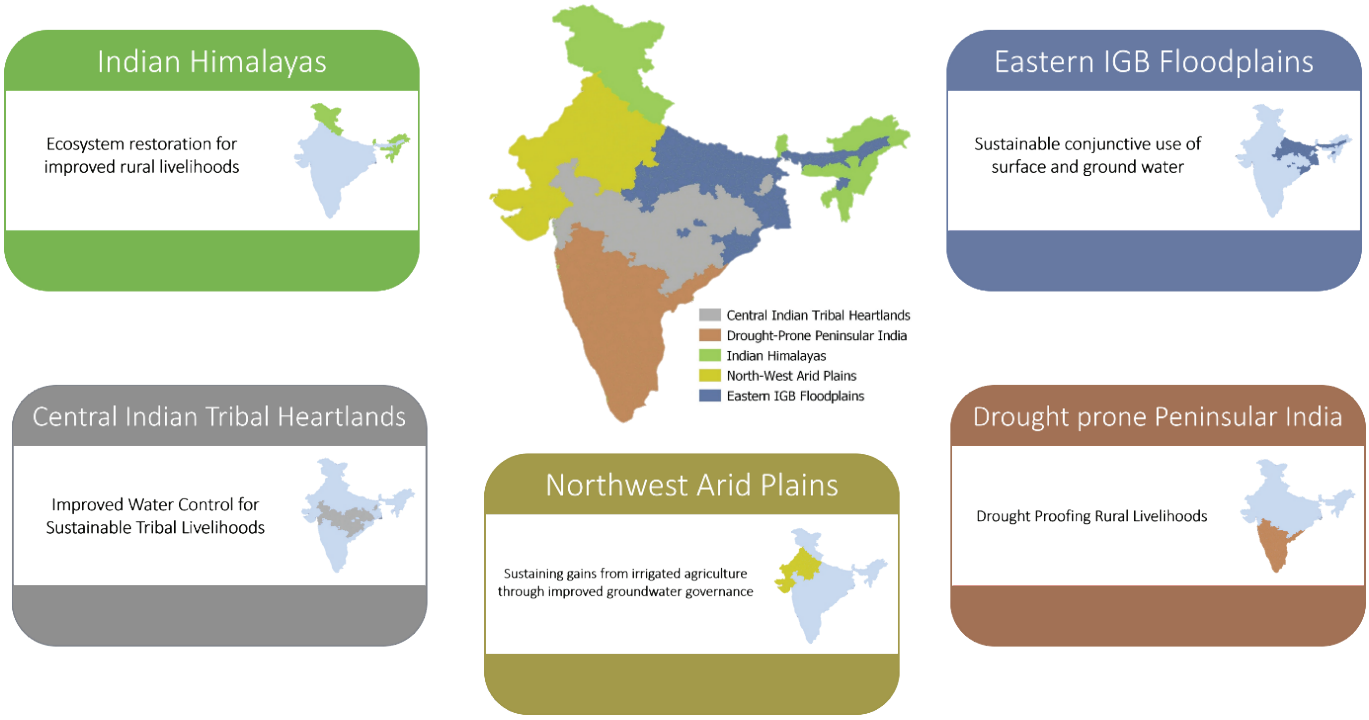
C. Catalyzing Smallholder Prosperity

Improving smallholder income is a key focus of Trusts' RUP initiatives, aligning with the Indian government's goal of doubling farmers' income. Through the 'Small Farmer, Prosperous Farmer' initiative, ITP has completed around 40 case studies where smallholders have achieved significant income growth, largely due to better water control. ITP aims to scale these successes in selected clusters, with learnings compiled in a smallholder prosperity compendium. Key areas include crop-livestock integration, high-value planting materials, fruit and vegetable cultivation, nurturing living soils, and market development. The theme also explores government efforts to boost income in irrigation-deprived areas.

Geographies, challenges, priorities, and opportunities

Over the past two decades, Tata Trusts' livelihoods and NRM portfolio has grown with a strong field presence and a network of Associate Organizations across various regions. The broader water-food-energy-livelihood ecosystem has also evolved. ITP classifies Trusts' key regions into five 'Development Clusters,' each with distinct water and agriculture challenges and priorities.

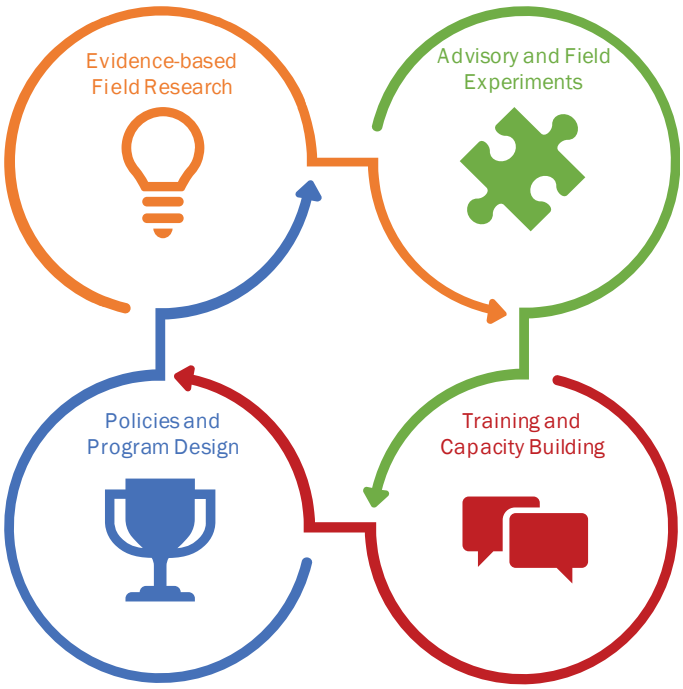




ITP's renewed strategy

In its renewed avatar, ITP will assume the role of the Trusts' 'water and agriculture' advisor, undertaking activities to enhance and maximise the development impact and effectiveness of RUP's initiatives and interventions. Based on discussions with the RUP core team and AOs, ITP has adopted a four-pronged strategy comprising research, field action, training and policies.

ITP's work on each thematic area has a strong bias for seeding field action and informing programs and policies. The focus is on sustainable, equitable and inclusive growth trajectories with special focus on underserved regions and underprivileged communities. ITP also enables capacity development by supporting young researchers and strengthen network of partners for enhanced collaborative 'research-for-development' (R4D).



Contact

IWMI Anand
203, Second Floor,
Cube-0675, Vallabh Vidyanagar
Anand 388 120. Gujarat, INDIA
iwmi-anand@cgiar.org | iwmi-tata@cgiar.org

IWMI Delhi
2nd Floor, CG Block C,
NASC Complex, DPS Marg,
New Delhi 110 012, India
iwmi-delhi@cgiar.org

Global Headquarters
127, Sunil Mawatha, Pelawatte,
Battaramulla, Colombo, Sri Lanka
iwmi@cgiar.org | www.iwmi.org

IWMI International Water Management Institute

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