

Friends of Champions 12.3 India network partners meeting

MINUTES OF MEETING

September 1, 2022 | Held virtually | Shaurabh Anand, Shweta Lamba, Ruchika Singh and Nitya Sharma

INTRODUCTION

WRI India organized the first meeting of Friends of Champion 12.3 India network partner on September 1, 2022. The meeting was attended by participants from the Agricultural Department of the Embassy of the Netherlands, India; the Centre for Responsible Business; GreenPod Labs; Omnivore; Sangam Venture; WWF India; and the Food and Land Use India (FOLU) Coalition platform. (See Appendix for the full list of participants.) The meeting's main agenda was to identify key areas of action and collaboration for the Friends of Champions 12.3 India network. Mr. Shaurabh Anand made an introductory presentation on the issue of food loss and waste and the Friends of Champion 12.3 India network. Dr. Ruchika Singh, director of the Sustainable Landscape and Restoration Programme, WRI India, moderated the meeting discussion. The following key messages emerged from the discussion.

KEY MESSAGES

Formation of thematic working groups

Ms. Devyani Hari from the Centre for Responsible Business (CRB) proposed the idea of formulating working groups based on different thematic areas to facilitate the interactions and work among partners. Ms. Hari mentioned that CRB will be interested in working in the areas of developing a business case for reducing food loss and waste, policy engagement, and working with private-sector players. Ms. Hari also mentioned that the network should envisage a role to connect solution providers to problem areas. Elaborating further on working groups, Mr. Abhilash Sethi from Omnivore mentioned that groups can be created based on a few selected crops, and partners can work together to understand all aspects of the value chain of selected crops. He mentioned that potatoes can be a good example in this case as there is a lot of damage happening in the case of potatoes due to a mismatch between production and demand.

CONTENTS

- 1 Introduction
- 1 Key messages
- 2 Way forward
- 3 Participants
- 4 Acknowledgments

The content of these conference proceedings reflects the views of the conference participants and does not necessarily reflect the views of the World Resources Institute or other conference partners. These proceedings aim to faithfully reflect the conversations and content generated at the conference but for ease of readability some wording has been edited.

Collecting robust data on food loss and waste

Mr. Abhilash Sethi brought out the fundamental issue of data unavailability, which is acting as a barrier to addressing this problem. He mentioned that India has been a production-heavy country. He highlighted the need to understand the demand and supply trends for some selected crops so that the mismatch between demand and supply is reduced. The mismatch between demand and supply arises because we have not fully understood shifting consumption trends in India. There is an immediate need to understand the production, consumption, and export trends of certain crops so that we work on aligning all sectors to reduce the loss or damage. He also expressed interest in supporting or conducting small-scale pilot studies to quantify the ground level of post-harvest losses. Mr. Deepak Rajmohan from GreenPod Labs stressed the need to have an institution that works for collecting data on food loss and waste. He mentioned the example of ReFED, which works to collect data on this aspect. He mentioned that we need to look at food loss and food waste separately. Mr. Michiel van Erkel from the Agricultural Department of the Netherlands Embassy also seconded the idea for data collection and mentioned the study conducted by the department on this front.

Need for policy and institutional support

Engaging with government is critical for ensuring that large-scale systemic changes are implemented. Mr. Deepak Rajmohan brought out the need for the policy-level institutional support that is required to push forward actions for reducing food loss and waste. He mentioned problems on the certification front, where lack of a regulatory authority is a barrier for scaling up actions. Ms. Hari added the point that conducting pilot studies and then going back to the government with data and evidence will help get the government's attention on food loss and waste.

Need for creating an ecosystem and generating greater awareness

Mr. Karthik Chandrasekar from Sangam mentioned that lack of an ecosystem is perhaps the biggest problem in scaling up the actions on reducing food loss and waste. He mentioned that although there are several entrepreneurs working in this space, we need a place to connect all major stakeholders. Participation from the government will act as a major boost in creating the right ecosystem. Mr. Rajmohan strongly emphasized the need for generating greater awareness on the issue. He believes that lack of action is not due to lack of incentivization but due to lack of awareness about available solutions. Mr. Erkel proposed the idea of establishing a center for excellence for selected commodities where a suitable environment is created for the exchange of knowledge on the issue of food loss and waste. Mr. K.M. Jayahari from the FOLU India platform also supported the idea of a center of excellence that focuses on food loss and waste. He also stressed the point that we need to have different strategies for food loss and food waste. He further mentioned that awareness-raising campaigns on the various issues related to food waste (such as quantitative pricing) are much needed for current times.

WAY FORWARD

The following action points emerged from the discussion:

- The network will further deliberate on the idea of working groups and a center for excellence. The crop selection can be done based on the potential for export, food parks etc. Action point: WRI India to get back to partners on potential ideas on working groups and centers of excellence.
- Knowledge sharing will be strengthened with network and partner members. Mr. Rajmohan mentioned that Greenpod Labs is currently working with 12 different fruits and vegetables, and he will be happy to share what has been learned. Mr. Chandrasekar also showed interest in presenting what was learned from Northeast India. Action point: WRI India to add this into the agenda for the next meeting.

- Entry points for conversation with government authorities need to be identified and discussed. Mr. Michiel van Erkel mentioned that we need think how food loss and waste can contribute to existing government schemes, such as “Doubling Farmers’ income.” Approaching government authorities with a clear value proposition will help initiate the conversations. Action point: Further discussion on strategy and entry points is needed. WRI India to add this as an agenda item for the next meeting.
- Partners suggested a few organizations and individuals that can be part of the network. Mr. Abhilash Sethi suggested that a subject expert from Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, and Wageningen University and Research, Netherlands would be a suitable addition to the network. Mr. Michiel van Erkel suggested reaching out to Robobank Foundation for its representation. Ms. Devyani Hari suggested two organizations, namely Sodexo and Jain Irrigation, as potential partners to the network. Action point: WRI India to follow up with each partner organization individually for connections and invitation to the network.
- The network will have quarterly meetings for reviewing progress. Action point: WRI India to send a meeting invitation for the next meeting in January 2023.

PARTICIPANTS

Mr. Abhilash Sethi, Omnivore

Mr. Deepak Rajmohan, GreenPod Labs

Ms. Devyani Hari, Centre for Responsible Business

Ms. Nitya Chhiber, Centre for Responsible Business

Mr. Karthik Chandrasekar, Sangam Venture

Dr. KM Jayahari, Food and Land Use (FOLU) Coalition India Platform

Mr. Michiel Van Erkel, Agricultural Department, Embassy of Netherlands, India

Mr. Rick Nobel, Agricultural Department, Embassy of Netherlands, India

Mr. Sumit Roy, WWF India

Dr. Ruchika Singh, WRI India

Dr. Shaurabh Anand, WRI India

Ms. Meenakshi Kakar, WRI India

Ms. Shweta Prajapati, WRI India

Ms. Shweta Lamba, WRI India

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to thank all Friends of Champions 12.3 India network members from organizations including Agricultural Department of the Embassy of the Netherlands, India, Centre for Responsible Business, GreenPod Labs, Omnivore, Sangam Ventures, WWF India, and Food and Land Use (FOLU) India, for participating in the first Friends of Champions 12.3 India network meeting. Their valuable inputs during this discussion were instrumental in taking forward the objectives of the network. The authors are thankful to colleagues at WRI India who supported with their inputs and efforts towards finalizing this document, including the communication team which helped in editing and designing this document. For this publication, WRI India is grateful to Norway's International Climate and Forest Initiative (NICFI) through FOLU India for providing financial support for this work under the project "Building a collaborative network of organizations under Friends of Champions 12.3 for reducing food loss and waste in India".

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Saurabh Anand was previously working as Senior Project Associate at WRI India's Sustainable Landscapes and Restoration programme.

Shweta Lamba is Senior Project Associate at WRI India's Sustainable Landscapes and Restoration programme.
Contact: Shweta.Lamba@wri.org

Ruchika Singh is Director at WRI India's Sustainable Landscapes and Restoration.
Contact: ruchika.singh@wri.org

Nitya Sharma is Program Manager (Food Loss and Waste) at WRI India's Sustainable Landscapes and Restoration programme.
Contact: nitya.sharma@wri.org

ABOUT WRI INDIA

World Resources Institute India is a research organization that turns big ideas into action at the nexus of environment, economic opportunity, and human well-being.

Our challenge

Natural resources are at the foundation of economic opportunity and human well-being. But today, we are depleting Earth's resources at rates that are not sustainable, endangering economies and people's lives. People depend on clean water, fertile land, healthy forests, and a stable climate. Livable cities and clean energy are essential for a sustainable planet. We must address these urgent, global challenges this decade.

Our vision

We envision an equitable and prosperous planet driven by the wise management of natural resources. We aspire to create a world where the actions of government, business, and communities combine to eliminate poverty and sustain the natural environment for all people.

Our approach

COUNT IT

We start with data. We conduct independent research and draw on the latest technology to develop new insights and recommendations. Our rigorous analysis identifies risks, unveils opportunities, and informs smart strategies. We focus our efforts on influential and emerging economies where the future of sustainability will be determined.

CHANGE IT

We use our research to influence government policies, business strategies, and civil society action. We test projects with communities, companies, and government agencies to build a strong evidence base. Then, we work with partners to deliver change on the ground that alleviates poverty and strengthens society. We hold ourselves accountable to ensure our outcomes will be bold and enduring.

SCALE IT

We don't think small. Once tested, we work with partners to adopt and expand our efforts regionally and globally. We engage with decision-makers to carry out our ideas and elevate our impact. We measure success through government and business actions that improve people's lives and sustain a healthy environment.



LGF, AADI, 2 BALBIR
SAXENA MARG, HAUZ
KHAS, NEW DELHI 110016,
INDIA +91 11 40550776
WWW.WRI-INDIA.ORG