



## ITC Limited



# ITC's Integrated Watershed Development Programme: Supporting Sustainable Livelihoods

## CASE STUDY



### Summary

Employing a participatory approach, ITC's programme assists smallholders to form village-level Water User Groups (WUGs), pool resources and use simple technologies to harvest and conserve water. Along with physical measures, ITC's model integrates initiatives intended to build the economic resilience of these communities by strengthening agriculture (Improved Agricultural Practices) and diversifying income streams (Livestock Development). Highly replicable, scalable and with in-built flexibility to adapt to different geographies, it currently covers 200,186 hectares across nine states. ITC's on-going public-private partnership projects with state governments and national agencies covering 158,255 hectares in five states are a clear validation of the model's success.

### Objective of Intervention

Aimed at small/marginal farmers across India, ITC's programme adopts an integrated and participatory approach with the following broad objectives: 'Reinforce the agricultural production base through soil conservation and augmentation of water resources, to raise productivity and enable crop diversification'.



Increase bio-mass cover in commons/wastelands/pastures thus reducing soil erosion, recharging groundwater, and meeting energy/fodder needs. Build up resilience of farmers to extreme climate episodes. Promote sustainable agricultural practices to optimize the gains from water resource development, reduce the severe impact of drought and build resilience in the face of the increasingly adverse effects of climate change. Implement all interventions through dynamic Village Institutions which would be empowered to evolve mechanisms to regulate and manage their resources and ultimately emerge as self-reliant community organizations that are agents of change and development. Leverage the diverse competencies of multiple stakeholders to create productive partnerships, beginning with the communities, ITC and NGOs who function as Project Implementation Agencies, and extending to technical/professional/academic agencies and the government at all levels. Enter into public-private partnerships in watershed development to achieve critical scale by bringing together the government's reach and resources with ITC's extensive experience as well as its professional and managerial expertise to ensure efficient last mile delivery of these projects.

## Type of Intervention and Location

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### Integrated Watershed Development

Initiated in 2000-01, ITC's programme currently operates across 1,182 villages in nine Indian states Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, and Telangana.

## Description of Intervention

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Targeting small/marginal farmers, ITC's programme mobilizes them to form Water User Groups (WUGs) who are the key decision-makers at every stage. They undergo intensive training so that they can plan, implement and monitor all activities—building water-harvesting structures, undertaking soil and moisture conservation measures and re-vegetating commons. These measures work towards reversing land degradation, extending critical irrigation and raising agricultural productivity. WUGs are also trained to handle all financial transactions, formulate regulations and water-user charges which go towards creating a Fund used to maintain existing structures, build new ones and invest in community assets. Though ITC is the major funding source, community contributions are mandatory and help to generate high ownership levels, crucial for long-term sustainability. Physical interventions apart, ITC's programme focusses on providing end-to-end solutions that address the spectrum of agricultural needs through interventions geared to improve farm productivity, broad-base farming systems and expand off-farm portfolios.



## Intangible or Tangible Benefit

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ITC's programme currently covers 200,186 hectares. 1,483 WUGs have built 6,464 water-harvesting structures and created a water storage capacity of approximately 24.97 million KI supporting a return to double/multi-cropping and crop diversification towards commercial varieties. There has been an average rise of 10–20 per cent in productivity across all ITC project areas which has also significantly raised household incomes. Civil work on structures and the rise in agricultural activities in the village have generated 4,733,000 person-days of employment, especially benefitting the landless, helping to reduce seasonal out-migration. Regeneration of water resources has improved the availability of drinking water points in the village.

## About ITC

One of India's foremost private sector companies with a market capitalization of US\$ 40 billion, a turnover of US\$ 8 billion and a current employee strength of over 32,000, ITC's businesses include Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG), Hotels, Paperboards & Specialty Papers, Packaging, Agri-business and Information Technology and the Company has a leadership position in nearly all these sectors. Its diversified portfolio is powered by its sustainability-centric strategy which drives it to pursue multiple drivers of growth based on its proven competencies, enterprise strengths and strong synergies between its businesses, and to develop innovative business models that embed social and environmental benefits in its multiple value chains. Acknowledged as a global exemplar in sustainability, ITC is the only enterprise in the world of comparable dimensions to be triple positive—carbon, water and solid waste recycling—positive for the past 10, 13, and 8 years, respectively. Over 43% of ITC's total energy requirements are met from renewable sources, demonstrating its commitment to a low carbon growth path. Several ITC businesses are critically dependent on agri-inputs, putting agricultural communities at the core of its value chains. ITC's multi-dimensional Social Investments programmes aim to address the vulnerabilities of these communities through initiatives that empower rural communities to conserve and manage local natural resources sustainably, broad-base farming systems and expand off-farm income portfolios with the overall aim of building sustainable rural livelihoods and promoting growth of rural economies. Dedicatedly nation-oriented, ITC's definitive objective is to create 'Enduring Values' for India. By integrating the larger obligations of nation-building with business competitiveness and aligning performance to triple bottom line dimensions, ITC's businesses and value-chains generate sustainable livelihoods for around 6 million people, many of whom belong to the most disadvantaged sections of the country.