



Raising Impact

Guiding Philanthropy with Rigour

Cause Area: Income & Jobs

Rural Economic Growth: Increasing Incomes of Smallholder Farmers

Oct 2026

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Raising Impact (RIO) as a Strategic Partner

**Raising Impact provides
bespoke philanthropy
advisory**

**We act as a bridge
between three pillars:
intentional
philanthropists, expert
implementers, and
evidence**

Our advisory is built on three core pillars

Evidence Led

We prioritise data & evidence when unpacking key problems, applying structured frameworks to evaluate problem-severity & existing fund flows

Regionally Rooted

We blend methodological rigour with deep regional understanding to deliver contextually grounded insights, verified through on-ground partnerships

Cost Effective

We prioritize interventions that offer the most significant impact per dollar spent, with the potential to scale across regions

Our approach is guided by three main principles

Research the Problem

We understand donors' intent and help them identify interventions likely to generate the most impact per dollar, without dictating their priorities.

Identify Doers

We identify high-quality implementers, assess evidence of impact, and surface opportunities for capital, without prescribing how they work.

Maximise Impact

We maximise the impact of every dollar spent in the social sector by bridging the gap between intent, implementation, and evidence.

We identify high-impact opportunities, validate with experts, evaluate cost-effectiveness, and connect donors to vetted organisations

01



Cause-Area Research

State and sector analyses to identify areas for maximizing philanthropic investment potential

02



Expert Engagement

Experts and field partners validate research, implementation fidelity and feasibility

03



Structured Evaluation

Cost-effectiveness analysis using adapted GiveWell and Founders Pledge methods

04



Capital Deployment

Donors matched with vetted, deployment-ready organisations

Raising Impact offers structured communication, multidisciplinary expertise, and close partnership guiding philanthropists' strategic decisions on scale and impact



Communication Cadence

Weekly calls establish a rhythm for research presentations, operational updates, and collaborative problem-solving — keeping the philanthropist fully informed.



Multi-disciplinary Team

Our team combines analysts, sector experts, and senior leaders who bring a strategic ecosystem view across agriculture, health, education, and livelihoods.



Journey with the Philanthropist

The philanthropist partners with RIO to drive key decisions: target beneficiaries, impact thresholds, scale, priority geographies, and implementation models.

The founding team brings deep experience in Indian philanthropy, combining sector expertise with a strong focus on evidence, impact, and collaboration



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Case Study: Raising Impact for Smallholder Farmers' Incomes

Funder 1 - A look into how their journey with RIO began

ABOUT THE FUNDER

- First-generation entrepreneur; co-founder of an IPO-listed company, one of India's largest hiring platforms.
- Relatively new to philanthropy, with some early giving in livelihoods.
- An early-stage funder, open to a learning journey to deploy capital more effectively.
- Keen to back interventions proven to be doing genuine good.

THE STARTING POINT

Where they were, and how RIO came in

- 1 Their giving had centred on blue-collar youth skilling, extending their work on employment
- 2 ***Key question: "How can I maximise the impact of my giving to increase incomes and drive economic growth"***
- 3 RIO nudged them toward a population view of who is most burdened by low income, while keeping the funder within their cause area of interest

What followed: a structured search for defining the problem precisely, and find who is proven to solve it.

Funders journey with RIO

1. Define the problem



2. Identify interventions & partners



3. Enable deployment

Communities most burdened by low income

Farmers & MSMEs: ~80% of India's workforce

Small & marginal farmers

Farmers are ~50% of low-income households

THE GOAL Raise the incomes of smallholder farmers by diversification into horticulture and allied through evidence-backed, cost-effective nonprofits.

Fast growing demand gap + more harvest cycles + diversification makes horticulture & allied a better option for smallholders

Funder 1 Outcome: The commitment, and how we measure our own counterfactual

THE OUTCOME

USD 3-5M

committed to farmer-income
diversification over five years

USD 1M near-term deployment

In the funder's own words...

"RIO's process is the product"

"Without this process, our capital would have been directed very differently, and almost certainly less effectively."

OUR COUNTERFACTUAL SURVEY

We administer a standard counterfactual survey at every grant commitment.

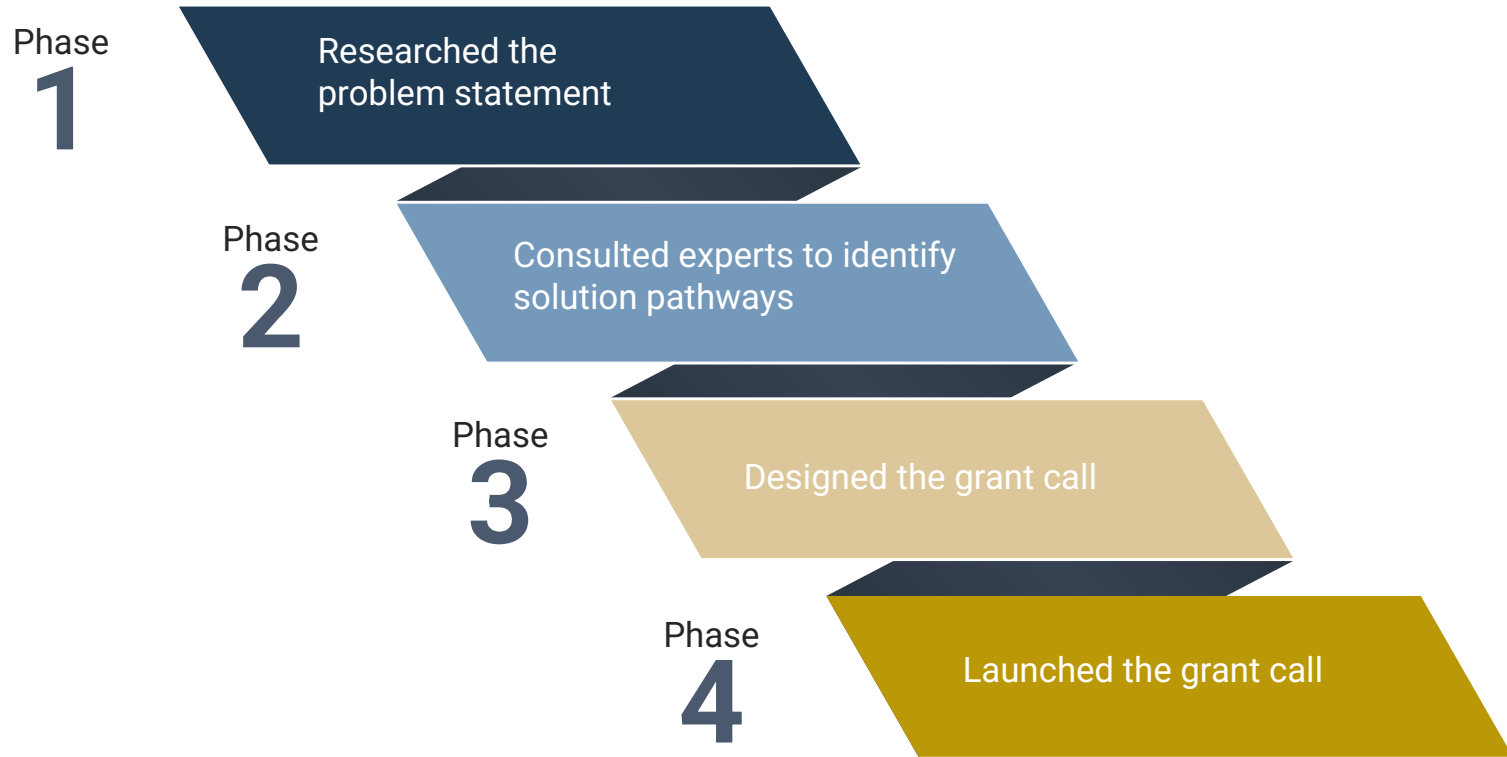
It captures not just a score, but the reasoning: what the funder would have done without us.

For this funder:

- Cause focus: sharpened & shifted toward farmer-income enhancement (Score: 3/5 on how much RIO reshaped their thinking)
- Organisations funded: RIO surfaced organisations the funder would not have found on their own. (Score: 5/5)
- RIO's influence: the primary advisory input, directing the funder's commitment to the selected organisations (Score: 5/5).

We moved the funder from informal, relationship-led giving to a structured, evidence-based commitment.

Our engagement progressed through four phases, from problem research to expert-informed design and successful grant call launch



Phase 1: Focused on farmer income after identifying severe agricultural poverty & a lack of formal research on effective implementers



Narrowed the Focus

Used a structured framework to narrow from broad "livelihoods" down to a specific, tractable focus: farmer income enhancement.



Built the Evidence Base

Analyzed official data, high quality reports based data & evidence across the hierarchy showing severe income inadequacy in Indian agriculture, establishing the scale and urgency of the problem.



Discovered Critical Gaps

Most effective NGOs lack peer-reviewed studies — not because they don't work, but because they lack resources for formal research. This insight shaped the grant call design.

Key Learning: Evidence review remained inconclusive regarding sustained, definitive increases in farmer incomes, leading to the idea of a grant call

01

Evidence Sourced

We sourced research relevant to farmers' incomes in India and LMICs to identify interventions and their impact outcomes ([Link](#))

02

Inconclusive Results

Our analysis found inconclusive evidence on interventions' ability to drive sustained, long-term income growth in complex farming contexts.

03

Ground-Up Approach

We adopted a bottom-up approach and launched a grant call to learn directly from NGOs what is genuinely working on the ground.

Phase 2: Consulted experts to identify livelihood pathways and mapped six priority states based on problem severity & enabling conditions



Consulted Experts

Engaged agricultural livelihood specialists and incubation experts to deepen understanding of the problem and shape the grant call process.



Identified Pathways

Research revealed clear intervention pathways: high-value crops, animal husbandry, fisheries, and allied agricultural activities.



Prioritised Geographies

Mapped 6 priority states — UP, MP, Odisha, Bihar, Jharkhand & West Bengal — based on severity of agricultural poverty and enabling conditions. ([Link](#))

Key learning: There is momentum for diversification into horticulture & allied sectors, but entry barriers need to be addressed effectively by NGOs

01

Growing Sector

High-value agriculture has grown, led by fruits and vegetables, with rising demand for diverse commodities across Indian markets.

02

Entry Barriers

Farmers face barriers to diversification: limited knowledge, poor access to finance, inputs, markets, infrastructure, and price volatility.

03

Grant Call Design

The grant call tackles diversification scale barriers through inputs, finance, advisory support, value addition, and market access interventions.

Phase 3: We designed a closed grant call with specific eligibility criteria and a two-stage screening process for high-capacity organizations



Launched Grant Call

Targeted organisations already showing results implementing diversification projects into horticulture & high-value allied sectors.



Set Screening Criteria

Clear criteria: ₹3+ crore budget capacity, 3+ years of operation, working in UP, MP, Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha or West Bengal.

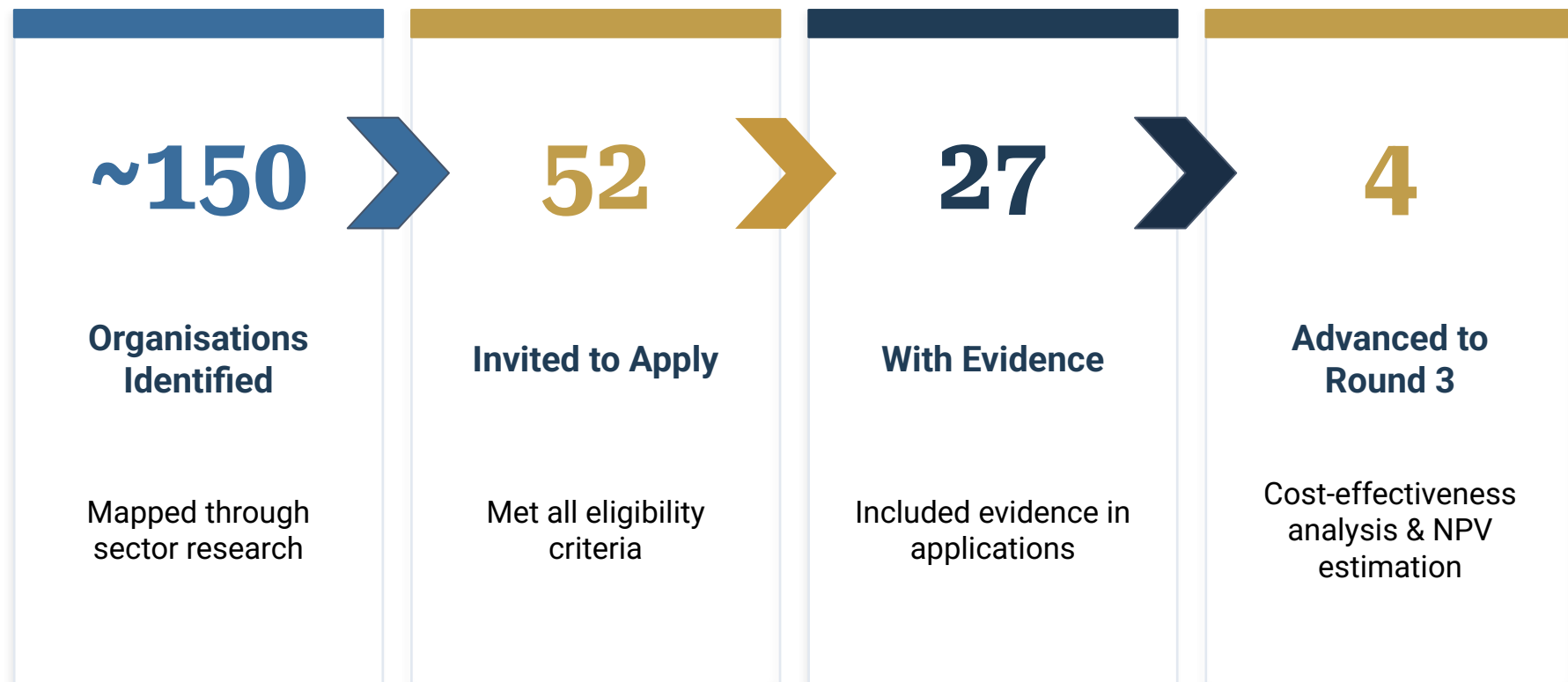


Two-Stage Screening

Two-stage screening: first for basic eligibility, then deep assessment of organizational strength, program quality, and evidence.

Note: On-farm productivity gains must drive income through increased crop yields (not improved market pricing). Non-farm opportunities such as retail are strictly excluded to maintain agricultural focus.

We invited 52 qualified organizations from 150, resulting in 27 advanced evaluations, and 4 with detailed impact and cost-benefit data



After two evaluation rounds, four organizations have been selected based on their projected % income increases for smallholder farmers

Organisations	Cost-Effectiveness Multiple	Program Model
A	86	Ultra-low-cost model leveraging a WhatsApp-based platform for peer learning among smallholder farmers.
B	18	Tech-first early stage org using open-source AI (drone + chatbot) to scale an innovative agroforestry model
C	18	Rigorous evidence-backed Wadi model scaled to 240,000 households through strong government partnership and implementation fidelity
D	16	Guides crop shifts, enables cluster farming, and provides saplings, training, and market linkages.

Note: Organisations have been anonymised for the purpose of data protection.

Partner with us to deploy capital where it matters most...

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Raising Impact

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WHY PARTNER WITH US

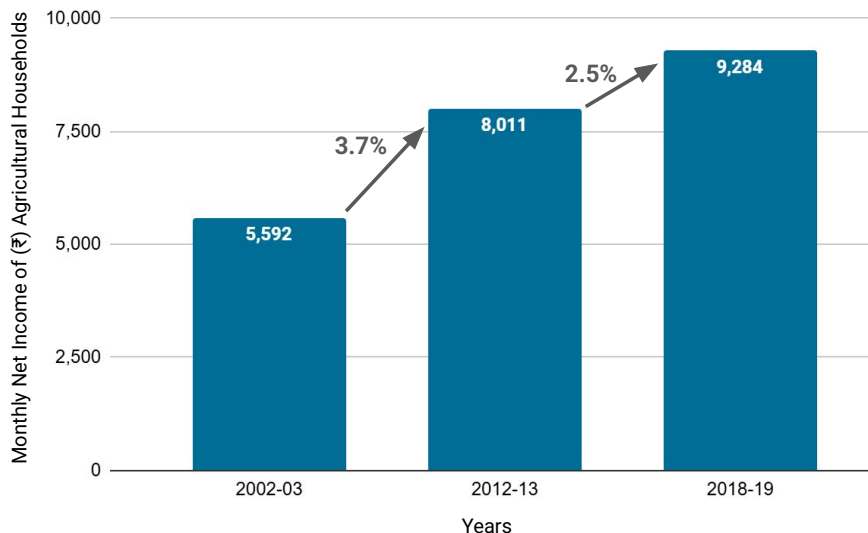
- Data-based assessments of cause areas
- Pre-screened, high-fidelity organizations ready for capital
- Rigorous cost-effectiveness analysis

Annexure 1 - The Income Problem for Marginal & Smallholder Farmers

Despite a policy focus and over 25 central schemes, farmers' incomes have grown slowly over decades, a clear sign that existing strategies are failing to uplift them

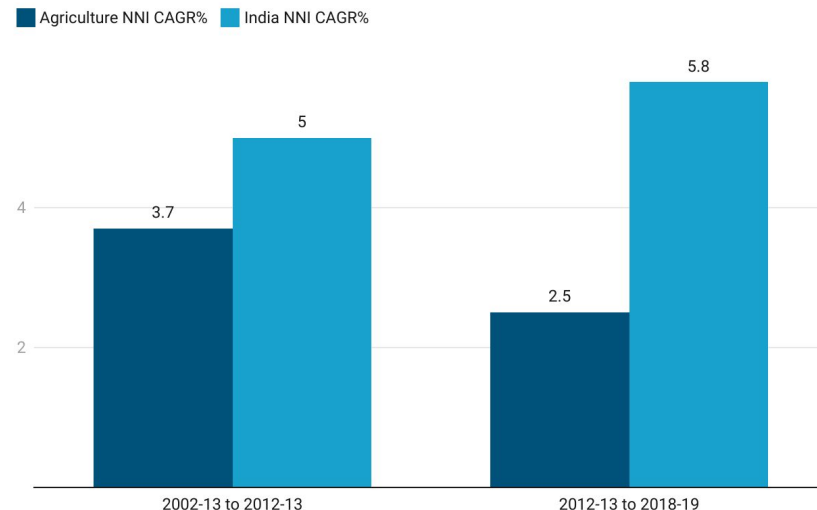
India's GDP growth rate averaged at ~7% over the last three decades, yet income of agricultural households grew at a meagre 3%.

Monthly Net Income of (₹) Agricultural Households from all Sources at Constant Prices (base 2015–16)



Source: [Bathla, S., Kumar, A., Kumar, N., & Hussain, S. \(2025\). Doubling farmers' income: A promising target fraught with challenges.](#)

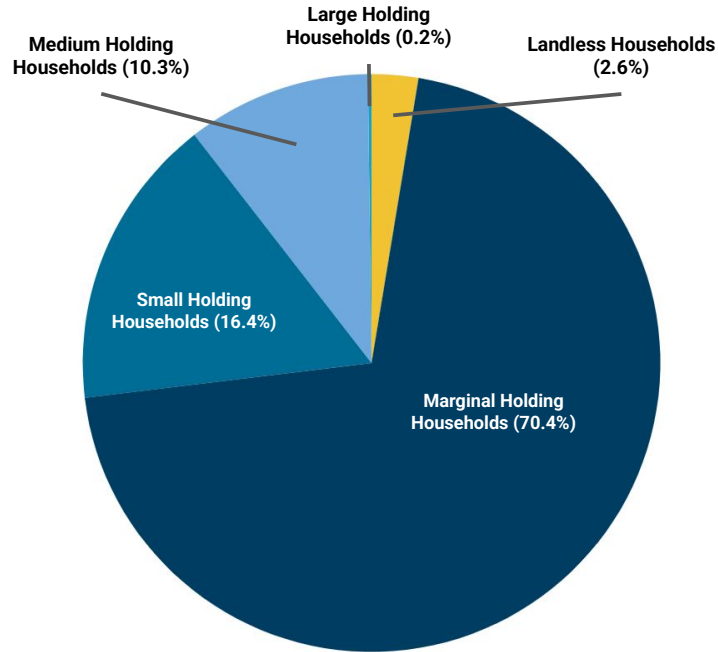
Compound Annual Growth Rate of Net National Income Per Agricultural Household & Total Sources Per Capita for India across two decades



Source: National Statistical Office (NSO) • Created with Datawrapper

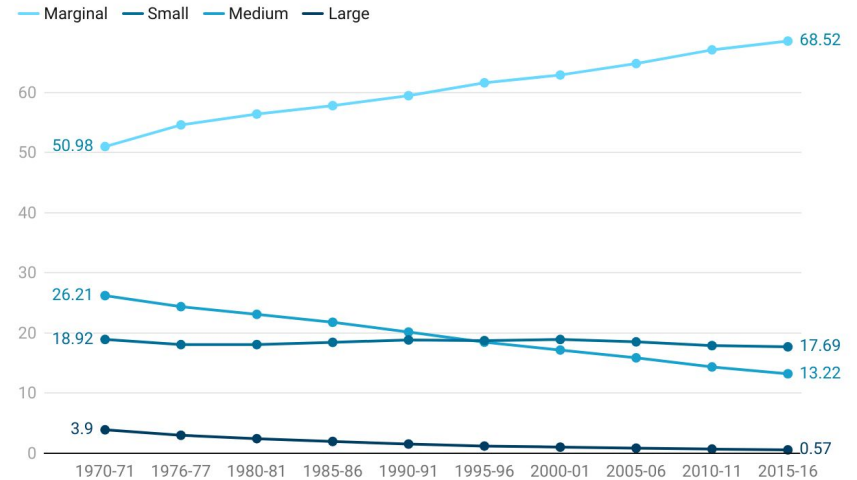
With 89.4% of farmers being landless, small, or marginal, the steady rise in marginal holdings over four decades confirms growing land fragmentation

Distribution of Agricultural Households by Size Category of Ownership Holdings (2018-19)



Source: [Situation Assessment Survey of Agricultural Households & Land & Livestock Holdings of Households in Rural India, 2019](#)

Evolving Share of Landholdings (percentage) for All Social Groups from 1970-71 to 2015-16



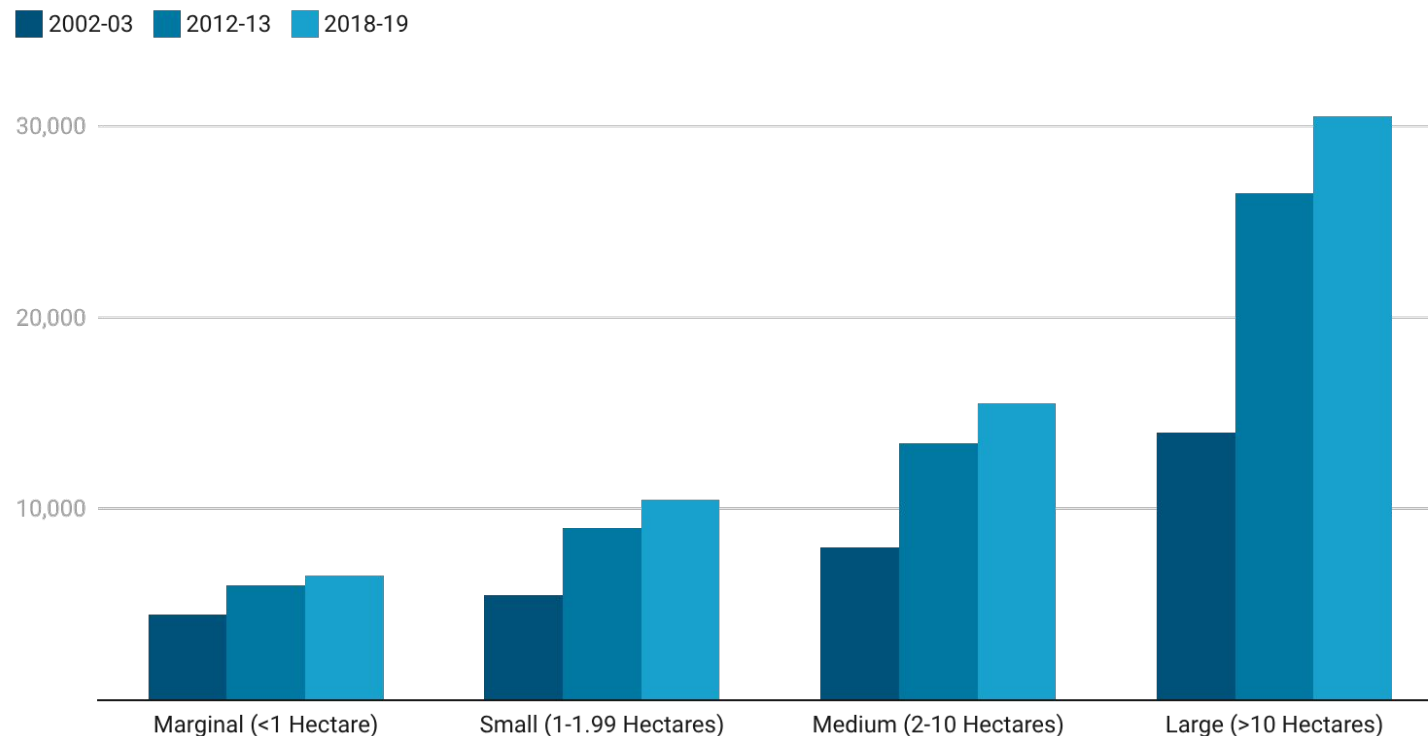
Agriculture Census 2015-16

Source: Agriculture Census Division, Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, GoI, 2018 • Created with Datawrapper

Source: [Agricultural Census 2015-16 \(2018\)](#)

Medium & large-holder farmers earn 2X to 5X of marginal & small-holder farmers; marginal farmer incomes barely increased, even as others doubled their incomes

Farmers' average household Income as per size of landholding (₹/month at 2015–16 prices)



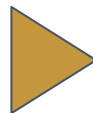
Source: Bathla, S., Kumar, A., Kumar, N., & Hussain, S. (2025). Doubling farmers' income: A promising target fraught with challenges • Created with Datawrapper

Annexure 2 - Diversification as the Solution Pathway to Improve Incomes

Expert panel consulted include eminent agro-economist Dr. Ashok Gulati

Highlighted diversification into horticulture, high-value crops, and allied sectors as the single biggest lever to boosting smallholder incomes and rural economic growth

Aligning with existing govt programs provides philanthropic capital with a multiplier effect and better RoI



Expert Insights

- **Focus on solving for a specific problem**, i.e. low profitability due to monocropping & cultivating staples in select geographies.
- **Leverage the potential of high-value allied sectors** like poultry, goatery, piggery, etc., to supplement incomes from cultivation.
- **Convergence of programmatic interventions with government schemes and strengthening of intermediaries like FPOs** will help achieve better price realisation & scale.

Output share declined for cereals, pulses, and oilseeds, while fruits, vegetables, milk, meat, and eggs increased – an encouraging momentum for horticulture & allied sectors

		Agricultural Commodities	% Output Share 1970-71	% Output Share 1995-96	% Output Share 2020-21	Trend
 Crops Sector		Cereals	37.1	25.3	16.7	▼
		Pulses	4.7	4.2	3.9	▼
		Oilseeds	8.2	8.2	5.2	▼
	➡	Fruits & Vegetables	12.4	14.6	19.4	▲
		Other Crops	22.6	22	17.9	▼
 Livestock Sector	➡	Milk Group	10.2	17.4	24.3	▲
	➡	Meat Group	1.6	3.8	8.1	▲
	➡	Eggs	0.5	0.9	1.2	▲
		Other Products	2.8	3.5	3.3	▼

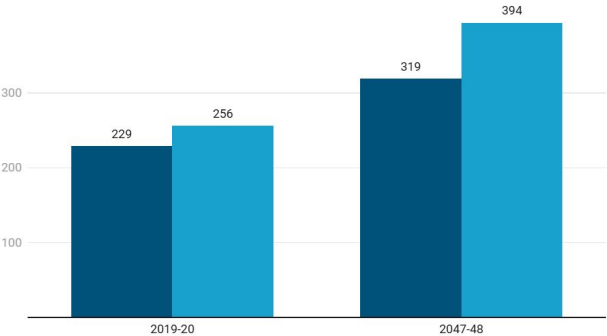
Source: [Chand, R., & Singh, J. \(2023\). From Green Revolution to Amrit Kaal: Lessons & Way Forward for Indian Agriculture. NITI Aayog. Page 7.](#)

Demand is expected to outpace supply for fruits, vegetables, pulses, and oils, while cereals maintain surplus, highlighting need for diversification beyond staples

Rice, Wheat, Maize: Demand-Supply Gap

(Million Tonnes)

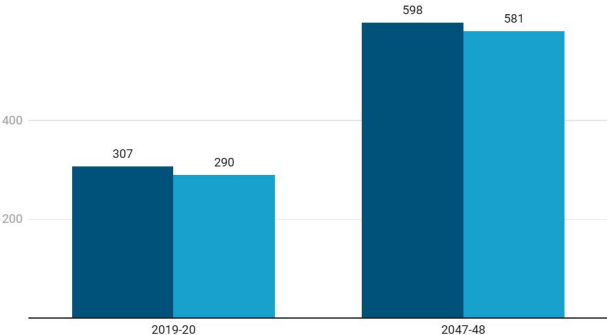
■ Demand (BAU) ■ Production (BAU)



Fruits & Vegetables: Demand-Supply Gap

(Million Tonnes)

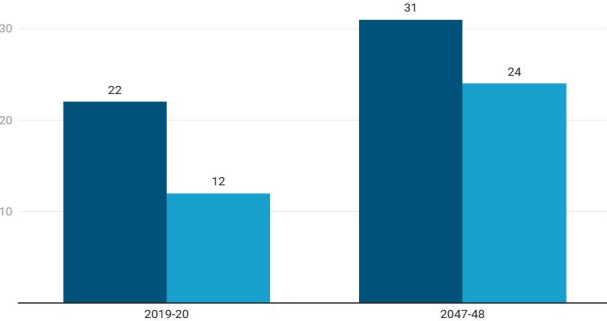
■ Demand (BAU) ■ Production (BAU)



Edible Oils: Demand-Supply Gap

(Million Tonnes)

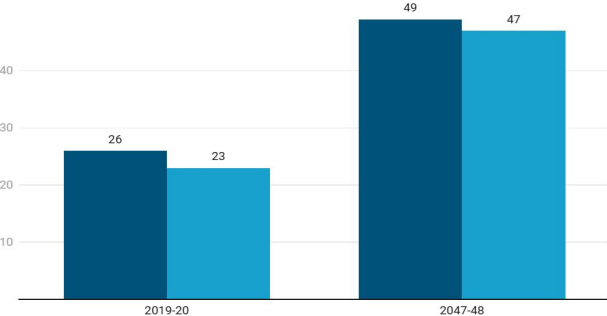
■ Demand (BAU) ■ Production (BAU)



Pulses: Demand-Supply Gap

(Million Tonnes)

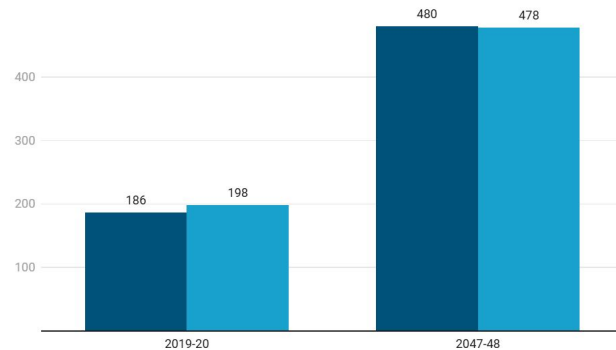
■ Demand (BAU) ■ Production (BAU)



Milk and fish remain balanced, eggs show surplus, while meat faces a growing deficit, indicating uneven diversification across high-value foods

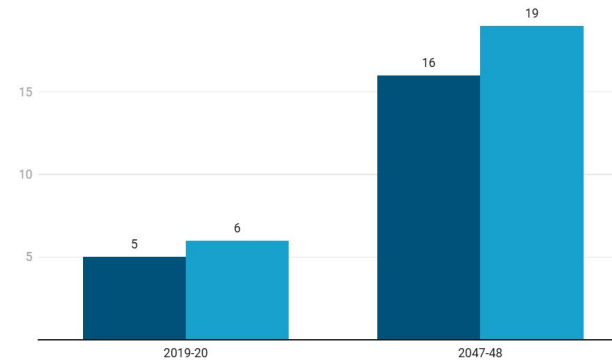
Milk: Demand-Supply Gap

■ Demand (BAU) ■ Production (BAU)



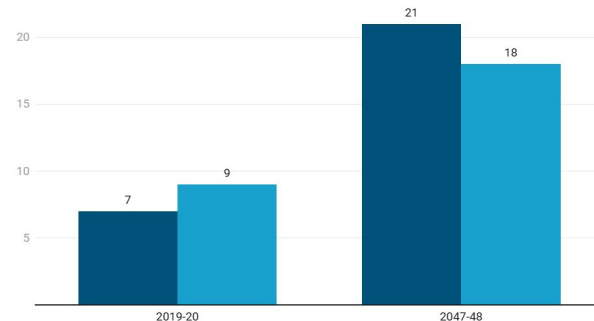
Eggs: Demand-Supply Gap

■ Demand (BAU) ■ Production (BAU)



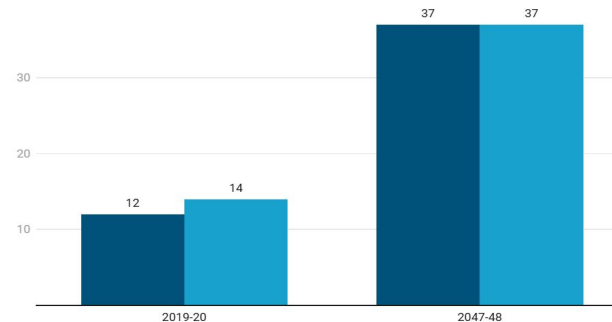
Meat: Demand-Supply Gap

■ Demand (BAU) ■ Production (BAU)



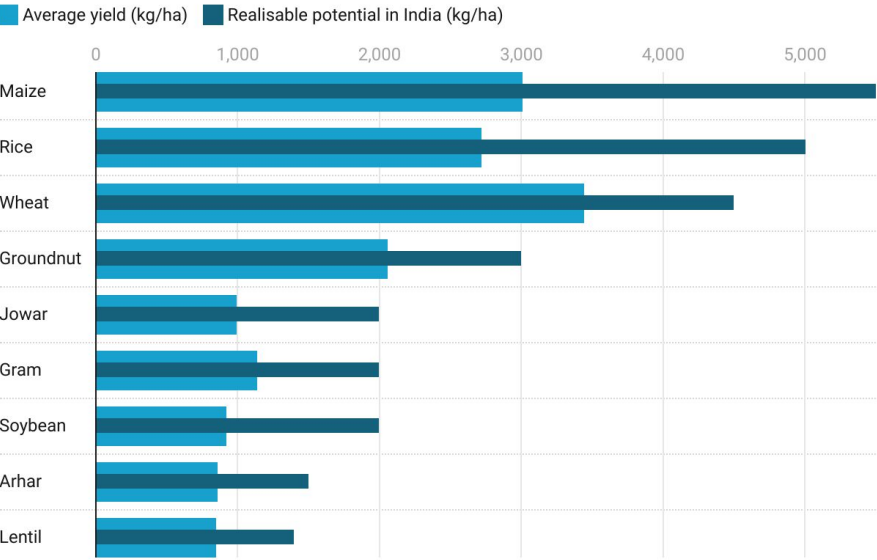
Fish: Demand-Supply Gap

■ Demand (BAU) ■ Production (BAU)



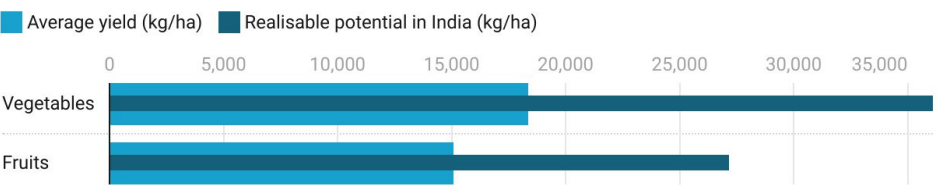
Horticulture shows much larger yield gaps than staples, indicating significantly greater productivity gains potential in fruits and vegetables

India's position in world production in 2019 and realizable yield potential for major crops



Data source: Directorate of Economics & Statistics; Indian Council of Agricultural Research; Food and Agriculture Organization of United Nations (FAO).
Source: NITI Aayog, 2024 • Created with Datawrapper

India's position in world production in 2019 and realizable yield potential for horticulture



Data source: Directorate of Economics & Statistics; Indian Council of Agricultural Research; Food and Agriculture Organization of United Nations (FAO).
Source: NITI Aayog, 2024 • Created with Datawrapper

UP, MP, Odisha, Bihar & Jharkhand are primed for philanthropic investment due to high need indicators balanced by enabling factors

						Worse				Better
Problem Severity / Need						Enablement / Leverage				
States	Avg. HH Income 2018-19 (₹)	Avg Rural MPCE 2023-24 (₹)	Rural MDPI Score 2019-21	DFI Shortfall 2022-23 (%)	Marginal Land Share 2015-16 (%)	RKVY Budget Utilisation (%)	No. of NGOs	Active FPOs		
Uttar Pradesh	8061	3481	0.118	-27.16	80.18	70.29	16	1639		
Madhya Pradesh	8339	3441	0.111	-54.71	48.33	48.56	16	699		
Odisha	5112	3357	0.079	-48.1	74.74	62.89	20	462		
Bihar	7542	3670	0.176	32.29	91.21	57.75	15	359		
Jharkhand	4895	2946	0.16	-64.53	69.98	37.87	16	221		
West Bengal	6762	3620	0.064	-35.97	82.81	75.77	8	466		
Assam	10675	3793	0.095	-14.2	68.13	72.09	8	173		
Meghalaya	29348	3852	0.156	NA	52.82	48.4	4	8		
Maharashtra	11492	4145	0.048	-7.96	51.13	51.98	17	3818		
Tamil Nadu	11924	5701	0.011	-32.65	78.41	70.23	14	656		

Note: DFI Shortfall is based on targets set by the Doubling Farmers' Income Committee in 2016. Click [here](#) to access the data analysis.

Annexure 3 - Evaluation Parameters for the Grant Call

Round 1 screened nonprofits on eligibility, farmer focus, geography, financial capacity, implementation stage, and proven income impact evidence

1 Organisation Type

Registered Non-Profit (Society, Trust, or Section 8 Company) with a minimum of 3 years of operational experience

2 Target Beneficiaries

Must primarily work with small and marginal landholding farmers as the core beneficiary group

3 Geographical Focus

Interventions must target priority states including UP, MP, Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, and West Bengal

4 Financial Capacity

Minimum annual budget of ₹3 Crores and demonstrated ability to absorb and effectively utilise a grant of ₹2 Crores

5 Intervention Stage

Growth or Mature stage implementation directly leading to farmer income increase through high-value crop diversification and allied sectors

6 Impact Evidence

Proven track record supported by third-party evaluations, robust baseline-endline studies, or detailed impact reports

In Round 2, we evaluated organisations for impact, differentiation, scalability, adaptability, team strength, and financial sustainability to assess overall effectiveness and growth potential

1 Impact & Effectiveness

Assesses how the intervention improves farmer incomes and the extent to which impact is measured, validated, and evidenced.

2 Approach & Differentiation

Examines what sets the model apart – including its core design, value proposition, and the use of technology or innovation.

3 Scale & Growth

Evaluates the model's ability to expand reach sustainably and serve a larger number of farmers over time.

4 Learning & Adaptation

Explores how the organisation incorporates external feedback and iterates on its approach to continuously improve effectiveness.

5 Team & Organisational Strength

Focuses on team cohesion, motivation, and the internal factors that enable sustained impact delivery at scale.

6 Financials & Funding

Reviews funding sources, financial sustainability, and planned utilisation of the additional grant capital provided by Raising Impact.

Round 3 assessed organisations on vision, programme model, scaling pathways, technology use, and leadership and governance

1 Organisational Vision

Explores strategic priorities, resource allocation across workstreams, and the long-term vision for transforming the agricultural ecosystem

2 Program Model

Examines how the intervention is designed and executed, including trade-offs between scaling, partnerships, and rigorous impact validation

3 Scaling Pathways

Assesses routes to scale, partnership models, replication fidelity, operational constraints, and mechanisms for sustained impact post-exit

4 Role of Technology

Evaluates how technology enables delivery and scale, its role in reducing operational dependency, and plans for sustainable financing

5 Leadership & Governance

Focuses on decision-making structures, organisational agility, team decentralisation, stakeholder influence, and ability to navigate challenges and evolve

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Raising Impact

Guiding Philanthropy with Rigour

WHY PARTNER WITH US

- Data-based assessments of cause areas
- Pre-screened, high-fidelity organizations ready for capital
- Collective intelligence of Sattva Consulting & Veddis Foundation
- Rigorous cost-effectiveness analysis