

Annual Report FY 2025–2026

A year of conserving traditional rice varieties, building green rural enterprises, and strengthening farmer-led organisations across Tamil Nadu.

Reporting period: April 2025 – March 2026

Impact Snapshot

4,964	178	20,000	5
Farmers and producers onboarded across 3 districts	Traditional rice varieties conserved at the TRC	Acres under TRV cultivation, 9 districts	Green enterprises set up and handed to FIGs

1. The Sustainable Agriculture Value Chain Development Project

The Sustainable Agriculture Value Chain Development Project, supported by the Supraja Foundation in Hong Kong, is currently underway for a three-year period, from November 2022 to October 2025.

Geographic Reach

The project covers a wide footprint across three distinct districts in Tamil Nadu:

Districts: Tiruvannamalai, Dindigul, and Pudukkottai

Scale: 10 taluks, 14 blocks, 72 panchayats, and 175 hamlets

Green Value Chain Linkages

The project aims to establish sustainable linkages between the production and marketing of value-added products, including tamarind, coconut, honey, kodo millet, foxtail millet, little millet, and groundnut. Additionally, it actively promotes the creation and operation of green enterprises.

Stakeholders and Beneficiaries

The project successfully onboarded 4,964 beneficiaries, with women making up 43% (2,134 individuals). Core operations are driven by five Farmer Producer Companies (FPCs) and five Farmers Interest Groups (FIGs):

District	Participating Farmer Producer Companies
Tiruvannamalai	Cheyyar Farmer Producer Company Ltd (CFPCL); Chengam Sustainable Agriculture Producer Company Ltd (CSAPCL)
Dindigul	Kurinji Sustainable Agriculture Producer Company Ltd (KSAPCL); Ayyampalayam Farmers Producer Company Ltd (AFPCL)
Pudukkottai	Pudukkottai Organic Farmer Producer Company Ltd (POFPCL)

In addition to these FPCs, five Farmers Interest Groups (FIGs) from the same districts are also actively participating.

The project has successfully onboarded a total of 4,964 beneficiaries, with women comprising 43% (2,134 individuals) across the three districts.

Capacity Building and Enterprise Development

Training and Orientations: Conducted 47 orientation meetings and 18 training programs on sustainable agricultural tech, organic farming, green manure seed production, and value addition.

Exposure Visits: 5 visits were organized for FPC representatives focusing on dairy management, soil/water conservation, seed certification, Miyawaki forests, and mango processing.

Governance: Held monthly review and planning meetings with FPC Boards of Directors.

Green Enterprise Development

The project facilitated the establishment of five green enterprises, one in each Farmers Interest Group (FIG), to create sustainable rural livelihoods through processed foods, cattle feed, and organic inputs. These include an enriched farmyard manure production unit, two neem seed processing units, a green manure seed production unit, and a coir rope and mat manufacturing unit.

To strengthen value-addition capacity, the project also provided a range of equipment and machinery, including millet murukku and idly/dosa batter-making machines, vacuum packing and automatic filling machines, sealing machines (including a hand sealer), inkjet printers, two cattle feed production units, a pneumatic single-head oil filling machine, and an air compressor.

As part of the sustainability strategy, all value-addition and green enterprise equipment established under the project were formally handed over to the respective Farmers Interest Groups. The enterprises are currently managed and operated by the FIGs, ensuring community ownership and long-term sustainability of project interventions.

Financial Linkages and Compliance

The project also supported the financial strengthening and statutory compliance of the participating FPCs. Two FPCs successfully repaid their loans to NABKISAN Finance Limited and the Society for Rural and Environmental Development (SRED). All five FPCs completed their statutory compliance requirements for the financial year 2024–25, including annual audits, statutory filings, and GST compliance. The FPCs continued to procure agricultural produce such as millets, tamarind, coconut, groundnut, honey, and fruits directly from farmers, undertake value-addition activities, and market processed products through various channels.

43% (2,134)

Women among 4,964 beneficiaries

47 + 18

Orientation meetings + training programs

5

Green enterprises established

2 of 5

FPCs cleared NABKISAN / SRED loans

Monitoring and Outreach

Regular monthly review meetings were held to effectively monitor project progress. Continuous monitoring and review mechanisms were implemented throughout the year to track project progress and performance. The project team participated in the Supraja Partners Meeting held in Aurangabad, Maharashtra, from 27–29 January 2026.

External Evaluation and Assessment

Monk Prayogshala Research Services Ltd. conducted Focus Group Discussions with farmers, Farmers Interest Groups (FIGs), FPC Directors, Chief Executive Officers, traders, and financial institutions. This was followed by joint qualitative and quantitative assessments undertaken jointly by Monk Prayogshala Research Services Ltd. and Robas Research during October 2025 and March 2026. Additionally, two representatives from the Supraja Foundation conducted the final evaluation visit in September 2025. Endline data were collected and analyzed by CIKS, and the final project report was subsequently submitted to the Supraja Foundation.

2. Strengthening Chengam SAPCL: A NABARD-Supported Initiative

Implemented under NABARD's Producer Organisation Development Fund (PODF) scheme since April 2023, the project provides handholding support to the Chengam Sustainable Agriculture Producer Company Limited (CSAPCL) in Chengam Taluk, Tiruvannamalai District.

Two training programs were conducted for the Directors and CEO, covering topics such as neem seed powder processing, business plan preparation for neem seed powder, and cattle feed processing. To further enhance their understanding, an exposure visit was organized for the CEO to Akshayakalpa Organics to learn about dairy management, and another to the Seed Certification Department for insights into certified seed production.

To ensure smooth functioning and effective decision-making, regular monthly meetings for the FPC Directors were consistently held at the CSAPCL office. The company has successfully completed all statutory compliance requirements for the financial year 2024–25, including accounts audit, annual filing, and GST filing.

3. CIKS and MCRC Collaborate on Traditional Rice Variety Conservation

The Centre for Indian Knowledge Systems (CIKS), in collaboration with the Murugappa Chettiar Research Centre (MCRC), is implementing a five-year project from April 2023 to March 2028. This initiative is dedicated to the conservation, cultivation, documentation, and scaling up of Traditional Rice Varieties (TRVs).

Samba 2025 Season Activities

During the Samba 2025 season (July 2025 – January 2026), CIKS conserved 178 traditional rice varieties across 1.45 acres at its Technology Resource Centre (TRC), following seed-to-seed cultivation practices. The harvested seeds were securely stored in the centre's seed bank. Additionally, 5 boutique rice varieties were cultivated on 5.02 acres, with their seeds now housed in a dedicated storage room. Detailed documentation of the characteristics of both the 178 conserved TRVs and the 5 boutique varieties was completed.

All seeds were cultivated organically using natural inputs such as organic manures and growth regulators, while sustainable, non-chemical pest and disease management practices were employed. To safeguard crops from wild pig attacks, a range of preventive measures was implemented, including lighting and sound systems, application of human hair, bursting of crackers, drone-based organic repellent spraying, barbed wire fencing, and manual crop monitoring.

The project successfully distributed 500 kg of seeds from 16 traditional rice varieties for seed production across 33 acres in farmers' fields within Tiruvannamalai District.

Navarai 2026 Season and Seed Distribution

For the Navarai 2026 season (January – April 2026), two boutique varieties were cultivated over 6.47 acres, and these crops are currently in the vegetative stage.

Training, Procurement, and Knowledge Sharing

Experiments have been initiated with twenty-five TRVs harvested between December 2024 and March 2025 to evaluate storage methods for extending seed germination viability. The methods tested include storage in ash, mud pots, dhaniya kuthir, GrainPro bags, cocoon bags, vacuum-sealed packs, refrigeration, and soil storage. All necessary materials, including mud pots, Gada cloth, GrainPro bags, cocoon bags, and other related items, have been procured for the study. Nine batches of germination tests were conducted from June 2025 to March 2026. As of March 2026, seeds stored under refrigeration and vacuum-packing conditions demonstrated significantly better germination results compared to other methods.

To promote knowledge sharing, 5 sessions on organic cultivation methods for traditional rice were conducted across various districts, including Chengalpattu and Kancheepuram, Tiruvannamalai, Pudukkottai, Nagapattinam, and Mayiladuthurai.

As of 31st March 2026, 23.623 tons of 11 TRVs worth Rs. 12.97 lakhs were procured for distribution during the forthcoming Samba 2026 season.

178 TRVs conserved on 1.45 acres

23.6 Tonnes Seed procured for Samba 2026

500 kg Seed distributed across 33 acres

4. Revitalizing Traditional Rice Varieties: Namma Nellu Programme

In 2025-2026, our core objectives were to conserve germplasm and promote Traditional Rice Varieties (TRVs). This initiative involved enhancing seed production and processing, adding value to products, and raising awareness. We made significant progress in these areas, ensuring the resurgence and sustainability of TRVs.

Conservation and Cultivation Efforts

CIKS successfully conserved 178 TRV varieties and produced high-quality seeds organically across 1.45 acres at the CIKS Technology Resource Centre (TRC) in Chengalpattu district, Tamil Nadu. A meticulous documentation of 24 characteristics for these TRVs was completed, including: plant height, leaf length, tiller count, panicle length, key dates such as flowering and harvest, grain and straw yield. To ensure quality, seed germination tests were conducted to provide farmers with the best possible seeds. Seed production of 7 TRVs was cultivated in 13.5 acres, with all seed production technologies, including roguing operations, carried out in the fields. A total of 12.309 metric tonnes of seeds from two traditional rice varieties were procured.

Scaling Up and Farmer Empowerment

CIKS's support enabled farmers across eight districts in Tamil Nadu to cultivate TRVs on over 20,000 acres. To support these farmers, we organized orientation meetings, training sessions, and monitoring visits. Market connections were established with six farmer producer companies, several traders, and

a private limited company, enabling farmers to market TRV grains and rice through diversified channels.

In Tiruvannamalai district, 2.43 metric tonnes of seeds from 16 TRVs were distributed to 113 farmers, facilitating quality seed production across 162 acres. Market linkages were also established for marketing 30 MTs of six certified organic TRVs to premium markets.

Value Addition and Product Development

To diversify product offerings, sixty training sessions were conducted to empower Joint Liability Group members in creating value-added products from TRVs, such as vadagam, rice cookies, and six different snack varieties. Based on orders received, nearly 1 MT of value-added products was produced and marketed.

Capacity Building and Awareness

Various initiatives were implemented to build capacity and raise awareness. These included the *Aadiperukku* seed sowing festival, sustainable TRV cultivation training for staff, capacity-building workshops for farmers, and awareness programs for students. To effectively manage challenges, techniques such as the use of crackers and nighttime monitoring were employed to deter wild pigs in TRV fields. Experiments were conducted aimed at protecting TRVs from pests and diseases while increasing yield, following the principles of Vrkhshayurveda. Additional experiments were carried out to extend the seed germination viability of TRVs. The organic certification for CIKS land was renewed following a thorough inspection by the organic certification agency IMO, Bangalore.

To further promote awareness, TRVs were showcased at seven exhibitions and seed festivals. The *Aadiperukku* festival was celebrated with 75 participants from FPCs, traders, media representatives, and organic farmers. These activities are supported by several individual donors.

178 TRVs documented for 24 traits	12.3 Tonnes Seed procured from 2 varieties	30 MT Certified-organic rice to premium markets
20,000 Acres cultivated, 8 districts	60 Value-addition training sessions	7 Exhibitions and seed festivals

5. Turbo Energy Private Limited – Support for Conservation and Promotion of Traditional Rice Varieties (TRVs)

This part of the report highlights the CIKS's achievements, supported by Turbo Energy Private Limited, from April 2025 to March 2026. The initiative focused on conserving, cultivating, and promoting Traditional Rice Varieties (TRVs) to enhance agricultural biodiversity and support rural livelihoods in Tamil Nadu.

Conservation and Seed Production

CIKS conserved 178 TRVs at its Technical Resource Centre (TRC) in Sukkankollai, documenting agronomic traits and ensuring seed purity through sustainable practices. Seed production for 16 TRVs

took place over 38.02 acres, yielding 23.623 tons of quality seeds valued at Rs. 12.97 lakhs for distribution in Samba 2026.

Scaling Up Cultivation

The project expanded TRV cultivation to over 20,000 acres across nine districts, including Chengalpattu and Thanjavur. Farmers received training in sustainable practices, organic management, and post-harvest handling, which opened premium market opportunities through certified organic cultivation.

Research and Innovation

Research focused on seed germination, storage, nutritional characteristics, and Vrکشayurveda practices. Results indicated that refrigeration and vacuum packaging preserved seed viability, while organic formulations improved pest management and productivity. Nutritional analyses began to document the health benefits of traditional rice.

Promotion of Rural Livelihoods

The initiative fostered rural livelihoods by training women in Joint Liability Groups to create TRV-based bakery and snack products, enhancing skills and providing supplementary income.

Capacity Building and Awareness

Numerous training programs, workshops, and exhibitions were organized to promote knowledge on TRVs, biodiversity conservation, and organic farming, benefiting thousands of farmers and stakeholders. Infrastructure development at the CIKS TRC supported long-term conservation efforts.

Community Engagement

On August 3, 2025, a seed sowing festival at the CIKS TRC highlighted community support, with seeds from 60 long-duration TRVs sown, showcasing the initiative's collaborative spirit.

6. Support for Sustainable Agriculture Activities from WOKA Foundation

The WOKA Foundation of USA extended their support for a three-year period (from December 2022 to November 2025) and further extended up to October 2026 for sustainable agriculture activities of CIKS. This vital support primarily covers human resources and various aspects of Traditional Rice Varieties (TRVs) conservation, characterization, scaling up, and biochemical and nutritional analysis. Beyond TRVs, the funding also focuses on building the technical and soft skills of CIKS team members

Season-by-season progress

Navarai, Feb–May 2025 6 TRVs grown on 4.23 acres using the System of Rice Intensification (SRI).	Samba, Jul 2025–Jan 2026 178 TRVs cultivated across 1.45 acres at the TRC, with crop and genetic-purity protection through roguing and documentation.	Navarai 2025 seed production 6 varieties yielded 10.7 metric tons of seed; 396 kg allocated to farmers for further production.
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Seed germination experiments were conducted at TRC and the Tamil Nadu Seed Certification Department, utilizing advanced storage methods that improved seed longevity.

Seed Production and Decentralized Inputs

To scale up the cultivation of TRVs, seed production for six varieties was completed in the Navarai 2025 season, yielding 10.7 metric tons for distribution, with 396 kg allocated to farmers for further production. The project also initiated decentralized production of inputs, including green manure seeds and organic supplies like vermicompost and biopesticides.

Value addition

Value addition efforts were notable, with the inauguration of a bakery unit that produced 529.35 kg of cookies from TRVs, along with the development of six ready mixes and the operation of a processing unit for rice milling and flour production.

Awareness and Education

Educational initiatives included press meets and training sessions aimed at raising awareness about TRVs and sustainable practices, complemented by collaborations with Akshayakalpa Organics for marketing. A hands-on Farming Certification Programme was implemented for students at Sprouts Montessori School, focusing on TRV cultivation and product development. The project also celebrated the significance of TRVs during the *Aadiperukku* event on August 3, 2025, attended by 75 participants, while renovations to a new storage facility and the value-added products unit were completed.

10.7 Tonnes

Seed yield, Navarai 2025 (6 varieties)

529 kg

TRV cookies from new bakery unit

75

Participants at *Aadiperukku* event

7. Google Ad Grants

In 2025 October, CIKS was accepted into the Google Ad Grants programme. Through this, we received the Google Ad Grants of value USD 10,000 per month in free Google Search advertising, enabling us to reach a wider audience without additional marketing expenditure. The programme also provided all CIKS team members with professional business email addresses on our organisational domain, replacing personal Gmail accounts, resolving recurring storage limitations and bringing greater consistency to our official communications. Beyond these, the programme opens access to a broader suite of tools including YouTube for Nonprofits and Google Workspace, equipping CIKS with the digital infrastructure to communicate, collaborate, and grow its impact more effectively.