CRISP
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Centre for Research in Schemes and Policies

Monthly Updates- August 2026

Empowering Tribal Economies through Regenerative Natural Agriculture and Livelihoods (ETERNAL)

Overview

Project ETERNAL is being implemented across Odisha and Jharkhand in partnership with The Gates Foundation. The project works to unlock the economic potential of tribal communities by strengthening regenerative natural agriculture, diversifying livelihoods, and building community ownership over natural resources, while preserving indigenous knowledge and cultural identity. Operating at no cost to state governments, CRISP functions as a systems-reform partner, providing technical guidance and field support, with state ownership central to the design.

Project Goal

The objective is to catalyse a nature-based economic resurgence of tribal communities in Odisha and Jharkhand, rooted in sustainable livelihoods, dignity, and local ownership. Despite rich natural resources and deep indigenous ecological knowledge, tribal households in both states continue to face livelihood vulnerabilities and persistent poverty. ETERNAL seeks to address this by leveraging two landmark legislations, the Forest Rights Act (FRA) and the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act (PESA), to secure and activate community rights, and by building economic systems around regenerative agriculture, Non-Timber Forest Produce, and women-led enterprise.

Key Pillars

- **Strengthening the implementation of PESA and FRA at the village level**
- **Promoting low-input, chemical-free farming and revive natural agriculture**
- **Enhancing NTFP-based livelihoods**
- **Strengthening SHGs and producer groups/womens collectives**
- **Value Addition & Market Access**

Progress this Month

Jharkhand

- Identified 5 districts and 5 blocks for establishing PESA Schools of Learning/Practice
- Conducted PESA Training Needs Assessment (TNA) field visits in Pakur and Ranchi districts. The assessment highlighted strong community ownership over Jal, Jangal, and Zameen and the active role of traditional leaders (Pradhans and Godits) in local governance. However, key institutional gaps remain across Gram Sabhas, particularly in Gram Kosh management, Standing Committees, and systematic record-keeping.
- Finalisation of the MEL framework is underway with the MEL manager.
- Scheduled IFR field visits from mid-September.

Odisha

- Scoping visit for selection of pilot site for regenerative agriculture in Bissamcuttack block of Rayagada district and Pottangi block of Koraput district was conducted. Pilot site selection in Bissamcuttack block has been tentatively done and community consent taken.
- Giving priority to NTFP a scoping study was conducted to understand NTFP market linkage. Consultation with government stakeholders and community members has been held.
- Continuous engagement with SIRD&PR on PESA Capacity Building of elected PRIs.

Way Forward

Jharkhand

- Get the project approval letter from JSLPS. Next, the team seeks to undertake visits to Potka and Noamundi Blocks to understand the NTFP value chains and also set up VDVKs in the 2 pilot blocks.
- Analyse TNA findings and identify priority capacity-building needs for the Schools of Learning/Practice
- Undertake IFR field visits from mid-September

Odisha

- Regenerative agriculture pilot sites to be identified in Potangi Block of Koraput district
- Preparation of action plan to connect with existing state machinery on NTFP market linkage
- Continuing engagement with SIRD&PR on PESA

Photo Gallery





Gram Sabha meetings in Littipara block, Pakur