UNCCD COP17 SIDE EVENT BRIEF

Side Event No. 100

Financing Climate-Smart Agriculture for Land Restoration: Linking Sustainable Land Management with Carbon Markets

Organizer: The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), India
Collaborating Partner: Value Network Ventures

Date: Tuesday, 18 August 2026
Time: 10:30 a.m.–12:00 noon
Venue: MET-01
Conference: Seventeenth Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification-UNCCD COP17
Location: Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

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1. Event Overview

Agricultural landscapes are central to food security, rural livelihoods and the global land restoration agenda. However, declining soil organic matter, water stress, nutrient imbalance, residue mismanagement and climate variability are increasingly affecting their productivity and resilience. Climate-smart agricultural practices, including Alternate Wetting and Drying in rice cultivation, soil organic carbon enhancement, improved nutrient and residue management, agroforestry, conservation agriculture and regenerative farming, can contribute to land restoration, water conservation, climate mitigation and resilient rural livelihoods. The side event will explore how carbon markets and results-based climate finance can mobilize additional resources for adopting and scaling such practices. It will particularly examine the institutional, financial and farmer-aggregation models required to connect smallholder agricultural landscapes with credible and inclusive carbon-finance opportunities.

2. Relevance and Contribution to UNCCD COP17

The session will contribute to the UNCCD COP17 agenda by positioning sustainable agricultural land management as a practical pathway for restoring productive landscapes, improving soil health, strengthening drought resilience and supporting rural livelihoods. It will demonstrate how carbon finance can complement public programmes, private investment and development finance in scaling restoration-oriented agricultural practices. The event will also generate recommendations on farmer aggregation, equitable benefit sharing, environmental integrity and institutional partnerships for developing agriculture-based carbon initiatives.

3. Overall Objective

To explore how climate-smart and sustainable agricultural land management practices can be linked with carbon markets to mobilize finance for land restoration, climate mitigation, water security and resilient farmer livelihoods.

4. Specific Objectives

The side event will:

- Highlight the contribution of agricultural land management to land restoration, soil health and drought resilience.
- Examine carbon-finance opportunities associated with AWD, soil carbon enhancement, improved nutrient and residue management, agroforestry and regenerative agriculture.
- Discuss practical models for farmer aggregation through FPOs, cooperatives, value-chain actors and local institutions.
- Explore project-development, investment and market-linkage pathways for agriculture-based carbon initiatives.
- Identify safeguards and benefit-sharing arrangements required to ensure meaningful farmer participation.
- Develop policy and institutional recommendations for scaling agriculture-based carbon finance.

5. Theme Focus

The discussion will focus on the relationship between sustainable agricultural land management, restoration finance and carbon markets. It will examine methane reduction and water conservation through Alternate Wetting and Drying, soil organic carbon enhancement, regenerative and conservation agriculture, improved residue and nutrient management, and agroforestry within agricultural landscapes. The session will also explore farmer aggregation, institutional arrangements, carbon-project structuring, investment readiness, environmental integrity, equitable benefit sharing and the role of public–private partnerships in scaling implementation.

6. Key Discussion Questions

1. How can agriculture-based carbon finance support UNCCD priorities on land restoration and sustainable land management?
2. Which agricultural interventions offer the strongest combination of land, water, climate and livelihood benefits?
3. What aggregation models can enable small and marginal farmers to participate at scale?
4. How can carbon revenues and other benefits be transparently and equitably shared with farmers?
5. What safeguards are required to protect food security, farmer autonomy and environmental integrity?
6. What policy, institutional and financial measures are needed to move from pilot projects to landscape-scale programmes?

7. Intended Participants

The event is intended for representatives of UNCCD Parties, government agencies, agricultural and environmental ministries, farmer producer organizations, cooperatives, carbon standards, registries, project developers, investors, development-finance institutions, research and technical organizations, civil society groups, community institutions and agricultural value-chain actors. Their participation will help bring together policy, technical, financial and field-level perspectives on scaling agriculture-based carbon finance for land restoration.

8. Speakers and Roles

Chair:
Dr V. Clement Ben
Inspector General of Forests, Forest Protection Division
Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
Government of India

Welcome Address:
Dr Syed Arif Wali
Associate Director, Land Resources Division
The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI)

Opening Remarks and Context Setting:
Dr J. V. Sharma
Senior Director, Land Resources Division
The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI)

Technical Presentation:
Mr Sayanta Ghosh
Associate Fellow, Land Resources Division
The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI)

Panel Moderator:
Mr Sandeep Roy Choudhury
Co-founder and Director
Value Network Ventures

Vote of Thanks:
Ms Neha Sharma
Associate Fellow
The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI)

9. Detailed 90-Minute Agenda

Time	Duration	Session	Speaker/Responsibility
10:30–10:35	5 min	**Welcome Address**	Dr Syed Arif Wali, Associate Director, TERI
10:35–10:40	5 min	**Opening Remarks and Context Setting**	Dr J. V. Sharma, Senior Director, TERI
10:40–10:50	10 min	**Technical Presentation:** Climate-Smart Agriculture, Sustainable Land Management and Carbon-Finance Opportunities	Mr Sayanta Ghosh, Associate Fellow, TERI

10:50–11:30	40 min	**Panel Discussion:** Scaling Agriculture-Based Carbon Finance for Land Restoration, Farmer Participation and Equitable Benefit Sharing	Panel members - to be finalized
		Panel Moderator	Mr Sandeep Roy Choudhury, Co-founder and Director, Value Network Ventures
11:30–11:45	15 min	**Audience Interaction and Question-and-Answer Session**	Moderator, panel members and participants
11:45–11:55	10 min	**Chair's Concluding Remarks:** Policy Priorities and the Way Forward	Dr V. Clement Ben, Inspector General of Forests, Forest Protection Division, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India
11:55–12:00	5 min	**Closing Remarks and Vote of Thanks**	Ms Neha Sharma, Associate Fellow, TERI

10. Expected Contribution and Outcomes

The side event is expected to strengthen understanding of agriculture-based carbon finance as a practical mechanism for advancing land restoration, sustainable land management and climate-resilient farming. It will help identify priority interventions such as Alternate Wetting and Drying, soil organic carbon enhancement, agroforestry, regenerative agriculture, improved nutrient management and residue management, while highlighting their potential benefits for soil health, water-use efficiency, emission reduction and farmer livelihoods. The discussion is also expected to generate practical recommendations on farmer aggregation, institutional arrangements, project structuring, investment readiness, market linkages and transparent benefit-sharing mechanisms. By bringing together government representatives, technical institutions, farmer organizations, investors and carbon-market actors, the session will support the identification of policy and partnership pathways for scaling credible, inclusive and farmer-centric agricultural carbon-finance initiatives across developing-country landscapes. Following the session, the organizers may prepare a concise outcome note capturing the key messages, priority interventions, recommended safeguards and benefit-sharing principles, institutional and policy requirements, and potential areas for future collaboration and project development.

11. Organizer Contact

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India Habitat Centre, Lodhi Road
New Delhi – 110003, India

Side Event Reference:

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