

Solidaridad

South & South East Asia



OVER 1,000 INDIAN FARMERS SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETE THE WORLD'S FIRST SUSTAINABLE CASTOR BEAN PROGRAM

**Arkema, BASF, Jayant Agro-Organics, and Solidaridad join forces with the mission of
enabling sustainable castor bean production in India**

02 May 2018, India: Leading chemical companies have empowered 1,019 Indian farmers in their journey to create a framework for sustainable castor bean production. **Arkema**, a global leader in specialty chemicals and advanced materials; **BASF**, the world's leading chemical company; **Jayant Agro-Organics Ltd.**, a pioneer in castor oil based chemicals in India, and **Solidaridad**, an international civil society organization, came together for **Project 'Pragati'** (Hindi word for progress). With this first-of-its-kind initiative globally, the companies are developing a sustainable castor framework titled **'SuCCESS' (Sustainable Castor Caring for Environmental & Social Standards)**. On May 2nd, 2018, the first 10 producer groups, representing the **1,019 castor farmers** were formally awarded their certificates for their tremendous achievements in improving the sustainability of their farming practices.

A baseline survey of more than 1,000 castor farmers was conducted in 2016 on issues relating to their productivity, social impact, environment, health and safety. Based on the initial findings, Project Pragati was launched in May 2016 in Gujarat, India as this region produces nearly 70% of the world's supply of castor beans. The project aims to address these issues with the development of a sustainability framework designed to evaluate the social, economic, agronomic, and environmental performance of the Indian castor farmers.

Key outcomes of the project to date:

- A yield improvement of 55% vs the 2016 baseline
- Safety kits and pesticide storage boxes distributed to all 2,700 participating farmers
- More than 1,000 hours of classroom training
- Completion of soil and water tests across 41 villages
- Health camps set up in 26 villages
- Five demo plots created for better agricultural practices field demonstration
- More than 2,000 hectares of castor farming are now in accordance with the project framework

Since its launch, Project Pragati has led to intensive farmer engagement and adoption of best agricultural practices within the castor community. These results have been audited by independent third party inspection agencies. To date, over 2,700 farmers have been trained by the project and 1,019 farmers have now been successfully certified and recognized under the project.

By educating, and disseminating best agricultural and environmental practices, Project Pragati, enables farmers to access the full benefits of productivity through better practices. In addition, aids in creating awareness and incentivizes them to take responsibility towards health, environment, safety and society.

While the project continues to positively impact the farming community, the founders are now considering opening the project for participation to all interested stakeholders to enhance sustainability for the castor industry within the next 12 months.

For more information on the sustainable castor project, please contact info@castorsuccess.org

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