



Position Title: Project Lead – Water Security & Salinity Mitigation
Project: Water Security & Soil Salinity Mitigation in Saline Belt of Akola District (36 months)
Location: Akola District, West Vidarbha.
Reporting To: Thematic lead / Program Head

Apply on: jitendra.deshmukh@yraindia.org or trupti.thombare@yraindia.org

Position Summary

The Project Lead will take overall responsibility for planning, implementation, monitoring, and successful completion of the 36-month project aimed at reducing water insecurity and soil salinity in saline-affected areas of Akola. The role requires strong technical, managerial and community-engagement skills. The Lead will manage a multi-disciplinary field team, coordinate with farmers, SHGs, local institutions, and government agencies, and ensure interventions are implemented sustainably, on time and within budget. Leveraging government resources for the successful implementation is mandatory.

Key Responsibilities

1. Project Planning & Implementation

- Conduct baseline assessments (soil salinity, water availability, cropping patterns, livelihoods) and periodic soil & water testing in collaboration with technical experts.
- Develop a detailed project work-plan, timelines and budgets for all components (soil reclamation, water conservation structures, crop planning, community mobilization, capacity building).
- Oversee field implementation of interventions: farm ponds, check dams, recharge structures, saline-tolerant cropping plans, soil reclamation practices, water-use efficiency measures.
- Establish and facilitate community-led micro-watershed management committees or similar local institutions for participatory decision-making and maintenance of interventions.

2. Stakeholder Engagement & Coordination

- Build and maintain relationships with farmers, SHGs, local leaders, village institutions (Gram Panchayats, water/land committees), women's collectives, youth groups.
- Coordinate with government departments (agriculture, soil & water conservation, watershed, rural development), extension services (e.g. KVK), research organisations and technical experts to align projects with government schemes and leverage convergence.
- Represent the project in district-/block-level forums, stakeholder meetings, and liaise for requisite permissions, linkages and support.

3. Team Leadership & Capacity Building

- Lead, mentor and supervise field staff (project officers, field supervisors, community mobilisers), guide them in technical, community facilitation and documentation tasks.
- Organise and conduct training, awareness workshops, demonstrations on salinity management, water conservation, improved cropping and soil practices for farmers and community groups.

4. Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning (MEL)

- Design and implement a robust M&E framework: define indicators (soil health, water availability, cropping yield, household water access, community participation), conduct periodic monitoring, baseline & endline surveys, document progress, challenges, lessons learned.
- Prepare regular progress reports (monthly, quarterly, annual), financial reports, documentation (case studies, success stories), and final project report.

5. Financial Management & Compliance

- Develop and manage project budgets, track expenditures, approve field-level expenses, ensure financial compliance with donor and organisational norms.
- Maintain records for audit, ensure timely fund utilisation, transparency and accountability.

6. Sustainability and Community Ownership

- Facilitate community-led planning and decision-making to ensure local ownership of interventions.
- Strengthen local institutions (water user groups, village committees) for maintenance and sustainability of water & soil management structures beyond project support.
- Promote practices that enhance resilience (e.g. crop diversification, water-efficient cropping, community-based water conservation) and build local capacities for long-term water security.

Qualifications & Skills

- Graduate or Post-Graduate in Agriculture, Soil Science, Water Resource Management, Environmental Science, Rural Development, or related field.
- Minimum **3–5 years** (or more) of relevant field experience in watershed management / water conservation / soil & salinity mitigation / agriculture-based rural development projects. Experience in saline-affected or drought-prone regions will be preferred.
- Demonstrated experience in leading teams and managing multi-stakeholder, multi-site development projects.
- Strong technical knowledge in soil salinity, soil testing, water conservation techniques (recharge structures, farm ponds, check dams, water-harvesting), sustainable agriculture, crop planning.

- Experience in community mobilization, capacity building, working with farmers, SHGs, village institutions, government departments, and research agencies.
- Proficiency in local language(s) (Marathi / Hindi), good communication, facilitation and documentation skills.
- Excellent report writing and computer skills (MS Office, data entry, basic data analysis).
- Ability to design and implement M&E frameworks, collect and analyse data, and prepare periodic project reports.
- Strong financial acumen for budget preparation, expenditure tracking and compliance.

Remuneration & Contract Duration

- Contract length: 36 months (with potential for extension based on performance and funding).
- Remuneration: As per organisational norms and candidate's experience — to be discussed during recruitment.
- Travel: Frequent field travel within project area; occasional travel to district headquarters / government offices as needed.

Key Competencies / Personal Attributes

- Leadership, integrity, transparency, commitment to community-led development.
- Empathy, cultural sensitivity, ability to work in rural context and build trust in communities.
- Problem-solving, adaptability, proactive approach, ability to work under resource constraints.
- Collaborative mindset — teamwork with community, staff, government, other stakeholders.
- Strong work ethic, honesty, accountability, and passion for sustainable development.