

**SoLAR**  
**Solar Irrigation for Agricultural Resilience**  
**Issue No. 13: July–Sept 2023**

IWMI had an engaging week at the Stockholm World Water Week (August 20-24) packed with lively workshops and sessions, profiling IWMI's SoLAR work and partnerships. It provided an opportunity to meet several donors and discuss shared priorities and opportunities to strengthen outreach to key networks that gather in Stockholm. A consultation with partners on future strategies was held on the sidelines to discuss collaborations from the [Transformative Futures for Water Security \(TFWS\)](#) initiative. [Alok Sikka](#), Country Representative (CR), IWMI India, and [Manohara Khadka](#), Nepal IWMI CR, in a panel discussion explored policy solutions for Himalayan water security, which was highly appreciated.



*Alok Sikka speaking on Addressing Water Security Challenges in the Himalayan Region at the World Water Week, Stockholm (Photo: IWMI)*

The quarter saw an independent comprehensive evaluation of the SoLAR-SA project undertaken with [Christopher Scott](#), Professor - Ecosystem Science & Management at Pennsylvania State University - leading the team. As part of the evaluation, [field visits](#) were done in project sites in [Bangladesh](#) and [India](#), in addition to Delhi-IWMI office and partner visits. Country-wise gaps and opportunities were identified, a summary presentation was done by the team in the presence of SDC, and a report was tabled with macro and micro-level recommendations for the project. [Read more>>](#)



From left to right - Zahid Osmani, Ahsan Habib (NGO Forum), Irene Hofstetter (Swiss Development Corporation), Christopher Scott and team accompanied by [Archisman Mitra](#) (IWMI India) (Photo: IWMI)

## Country Highlights

### [Bangladesh](#)

#### Nine hundred farmer households' follow-up survey done

A follow-up survey with 900 farmer households was completed in [Bangladesh](#). The baseline data was collected in 2021, and along with the NGO Forum, the team returned to interview the same group of farmers this year in July to understand the impact of solar irrigation pumps over time. The survey also explored how fuel price increases in 2022 impacted agricultural production in the country and the extent to which solar irrigation pumps.

### [India](#)

#### Key Insights from [India](#) Solar to be conveyed to policymakers



The [7th C-PMC meeting](#) took place on July 27th at the IWMI New Delhi office. During this meeting, the [C-PMC members](#) recommended that the insights gained from the [India](#) SoLAR component should be conveyed to policymakers. Subsequently, the project lead, [Alok Sikka](#), together with the IWMI team and [Divya Sharma](#) from SDC, met with the Deputy Secretary of MNRE to present findings from

the India component and discuss potential future collaborations with MNRE.

Furthermore, a workshop was organized on August 19, 2023, by GERMI in partnership with IWMI and GUVNL. The primary aim of this workshop was to share the feedback received from farmers during the SKY farmers' training implementation with GUVNL officials.

#### Eighth PSC Meeting Held



The [8th PSC meeting](#) for the SoLAR-SA was held on September 18<sup>th</sup> at the IWMI Delhi office from 2:00 pm to 3:30 pm. During this meeting, [Alok Sikka](#), CR, India, IWMI welcomed [Jonathan Demenge](#), the head of the cooperation as the new chair. It was followed by [Darshini Ravindranath's](#) comprehensive presentation outlining the project



progress country-wise and summarizing the way forward for the project. She also emphasized the need for a greater policy outreach and engagement.

### [Nepal](#)

#### **SoLAR video showcased at WEFE Nexus Actors Training**



Solar Irrigation was presented as a WEFE nexus solution, and the [SoLAR Video Documentary](#) was showcased on (June 29), as part of the modular training on Developing Leadership Capacity for WEFE Nexus Actors. Government professionals, experts and young professionals participated in this event. It is organized by GREAT International and funded by Biodiversity and CIAT Alliance. IWMI was part of the NEXUS Gains Initiative under WP5. [Watch Documentary Here >>](#)

#### **Solarization of Agriculture is not a choice though it's pace can be...**



Nepal became the official member of International Solar Alliance (ISA), and this workshop held on July 9, 2023, was one of the first events organized by ISA as part of the Technical Country Mission. One of the main objectives is engaging with stakeholders to generate awareness of ISA's programmatic support to member countries, the ADB KSTA, planned activities, and promotion of

solar irrigation. Shilp Verma from IWMI presented on the topic [Read more>>](#)

### [Pakistan](#)

#### **Meeting at PARC to discuss training of farmers and experts**

The IWMI Solar team met Bashir Ahmad, Director PARC on August 22, 2023, to discuss modalities for conducting two separate training sessions for 25 female and 25 male farmers on the effective use of solar pumps for precision surface irrigation, drip irrigation, tunnel farming and alternative uses of solar installed equipment. Also, specialized training was provided to 25 water experts, technicians, and partners in the private sector on equipment standardization and selection procedures. [Read more>>](#)

## **Country Highlights : *From the Fields***

### [Bangladesh](#)

#### **Evaluation Team visit to Grid Integration sites in [Bangladesh](#)**

[Archisman Mitra](#) facilitated and accompanied the evaluation team that included Wais Kabir, Stephanie Buechler, Prahars Patel, Christopher Scott. The evaluation team held extensive



meetings with IDCOL officials, various government officials and undertook field visits to see the grid integration sites, BADC and BMDA sites. [Read more>>](#)  
[India](#)  
**Evaluation team visit to Anand, Gujarat**



Christopher Scott and team accompanied by [Deepak Varshney](#) at a site in Gujarat India (Photo: IWMI)

The Mid-term SoLAR project evaluation took place from 19 July to 12 August in Anand, Ahmedabad, Rajkot, Delhi, and [Bangladesh](#) to assess the outcomes and outputs of the project. Farmers from each DISCOM, regional researchers, research fellows, IF grantees, implementation country partners and officials, donor partners were involved in this comprehensive assessment by the external evaluation team. [Read more>>](#)

#### [Nepal](#)

#### **Chhipharmai-2 Rural Municipality Field Visit: Community interaction and capacity building**

The IWMI team of [Amrita Rauniyar](#) (Consultant) and Nabina Lamichhane (Consultant) visited Chhipharmai-2 rural municipality on August 5-6 to conduct meetings on community governance and institutional mechanism development. They asked farmers to get ready for capacity-building training and to document if there were any problems with the pump or system. The project is being implemented by IWMI Nepal [Read more>>](#)

#### [Pakistan](#)

#### **Model site showcasing effective utilization of solar pump: IWMI team visit**





On August 29, 2023, the IWMI SoLAR team visited a model field site showcasing effective utilization of solar pumps for precision surface irrigation, drip irrigation, and tunnel farming in Saroba, Rawalpindi, Punjab. [Read more>>](#)

## New Staff Alert



### **Darshini Ravindranath**

joined as Senior Researcher – Solar Energy and Climate Resilience (Project Lead). She has over 15 years of experience with diverse organizations including government, research institutes, multilateral development agencies [Read bio>>](#)



### **Novaira Junaid**

joined IWMI Pakistan Office in Lahore as National Researcher – Economist. She is a macroeconomic and public policy expert, with a focus on sustainable growth, inequality, and poverty. Her professional [Read bio>>](#)



### **Gaurav Tripathi**

is a data analyst consultant working on survey data from Bangladesh under the SoLAR project. He has over 15 years of experience of research in agricultural economics. He has worked on secondary data [Read bio>>](#)



### **Kriti Sharma**

joined SoLAR-SA Project at IWMI Delhi as a research consultant and holds an MSc in Economics, specializing in Environment and Resource Economics from The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) School of [Read bio>>](#)

## Meet Our SoLAR Champions



### [PC Sharma](#)

ISA NFP/CP Coordinator  
Joint Director (Programme)  
International Solar Alliance Secretariat

#### **How does the solar project contribute to your organization's mission?**

ISA is working with the mission of contributing to SDG 13 (Universal energy access) and SDG 7 (Combating climate Change). This project is contributing to ISA mission of providing sustainable energy access to the remote areas and climate resilient agriculture. These actions lead to addressing the issues of food security and poverty alleviation also. The deployment of solar irrigation replaces the use of fossil fuels resulting.. [Read more](#)

[>>](#)



### [Amrita Rauniyar](#)

IWMI-Nepal Consultant

#### **What is your role in the project?**

I am working as a consultant at [IWMI Nepal under the SoLAR project](#). In this project, I have contributed to developing a summarized report on the impact evaluation of solar irrigation pumps (SIPs). This evaluation encompasses quantitative data gathered through phone and household surveys, as well as qualitative analysis involving GESI (Gender Equality and Social Inclusion) assessment. In a grid-connected pilot project, I am developing a database of monitoring parameters based on the monitoring framework guidelines and overseeing its operation and maintenance activities.. [Read more >>](#)



## SoLAR in News



Mr. Zain Akbar from IWMI Pakistan along with Claudia Ringler wrote a blog on “*Groundbreaking but not a Universal Solution: Renewable Energy in Irrigation.*” for Welternährung [Read here >>](#)

reasons  
to be **cheerful**

With droughts on the rise, India's pastoralists are turning to modern techniques to conserve water — and a way of life. This talks about one of the IF grantees, Urmul Seemant from Rajasthan [Read here >>](#)



The adoption of solar-powered groundwater extraction systems reduces reliance on conventional energy sources such as diesel pumps. This minimizes greenhouse gas emissions and contributes to global efforts in mitigating climate change. Shisher Shrestha, [Nepal Solar Country lead](#) wrote in Kathmandu Post on [Read here >>](#)

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## On the Reading List

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The WELL Labs report on Farmer Responses to Solar Irrigation in India was launched on July 26, 2023.

[Farmer Responses to Solar Irrigation in India Agent-Based Modeling to Understand Sustainable Transitions WELL-LABS - Solar Irrigation for Agricultural Resilience \(SoLAR\) || IWMI](#)

Shrestha, G., Uprety, L., Khadka, M., Mukherji, A. (2023). Technology for whom? Solar Irrigation Pumps, women, and smallholders in Nepal. Accepted by Frontiers in Sustainable Food systems. [DOI: 10.3389/fsufs.2023.1143546](#)

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## In partnership with



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*We thank Aariz Raza and Shibani Chattopadhyay, IWMI India, for providing overall technical support in bringing this newsletter out.*

*For further information, please get in touch with our Communications Team, SoLAR Project, IWMI at [iwmi-solar@cgiar.org](mailto:iwmi-solar@cgiar.org).*

*Images courtesy: IWMI -SDC-SoLAR Project*

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