

# The Digital Ecosystem Opportunity for Indian Agriculture

## Making the Right Choices

Lecture Room 1, India International Centre, New Delhi | August 24, 2022

Organized by

IT for Change, SEWA Cooperative Federation, and Vrutti

### CONCEPT NOTE

On August 24, 2022, [IT for Change](#), [SEWA Cooperative Federation](#), and [Vrutti](#) are organizing a policy round-table on, 'The Digital Ecosystem Opportunity for Indian Agriculture: Making the Right Choices'.

In recent years, policymakers, agriculturists, research scholars, and a wider community of development practitioners have recognized the transformative role that digital technologies can play in addressing the productivity crisis in Indian agriculture. It is clear that we need to move beyond a narrow app-centric approach towards an ecosystem approach that accounts for a farmer-centric vision of value creation through digitalization.

NITI Aayog's [National Strategy on AI \(2019\)](#) recognizes the potential for smartification of every aspect of the agricultural value chain: from personalized agri-extension inputs to targeted farm credit, price discovery, real time yield forecasting, and market linkages. Keeping in line with this strategic vision, the union government has gone on to launch the [India Digital Ecosystem of Agriculture \(IDEA\)](#) as part of establishing an effective agri data exchange. The intent is to create an agricultural data marketplace for the integrated development of public and private farm services that are simultaneously personalized, privacy preserving, and competitive. State governments are also making their independent forays into this space to support the emergence of new agricultural economies. Traditional cooperative organizations, social enterprises, and open source technologists have all been working on straddling the worlds of technological and agricultural sustainability, through micro-initiatives that aim at building alternative agri-services paradigm beyond Big Agri and Big Tech.

These are still early days in the sector, but we are poised at a critical juncture where the techno-institutional design choices we make today will shape the pathways of agri value chain

digitalization for the foreseeable future - whether the digital wave bypasses the majority of farmers or enables a new agricultural paradigm that is fair and sustainable.

Against this backdrop, the round-table seeks to examine the following questions through dialogue and discussion between scholar-practitioners exploring farm sector digitalization and technological pathways for enhancing farm livelihoods, open source technologists working on digital public goods, and policymakers:

(1) What are the new opportunities that platform, data, and AI technologies offer for strengthening agricultural livelihoods and pathways to economic empowerment for marginal and small farmers in the Indian context?

(2) What kind of public policy scaffolding in terms of traditional agricultural policy areas and new digital public infrastructure creation is needed for farmer-centric digitalization of agricultural value chains?