

Annapurna Farm Support Fund



About Annapurna

Annapurna is one of Auroville's oldest, largest and most productive farms. It is the only IMO certified farm of Auroville producing grain and dairy products. Annapurna also serves as Auroville's granary--procuring, processing and storing grain from other farms. It has 135 acres, out of which 30 acres are intensively cultivated with food crops – rice, millets, oilseeds, while the remaining land has fodder, timber, and forest. For the viability of the farm in the long run, and to manifest Annapurna's vision of meeting the needs of community, Annapurna needs periodic investments.

To that end, Annapurna now has a group of Aurovilian volunteers as a Support Group. To raise funds for necessary investments, the Annapurna Support Group has decided to solicit support from the community by inviting all to join an Annapurna Support Fund.

Annapurna Support Fund

The Annapurna Support Fund operates on the basic principle of asking people to invest a certain amount, say Rs. 10,000/- for a minimum period of 1 year. The interest accumulated during this period goes to fund actual expenses that further Annapurna's growth as a farm. Please check the FAQ below for details about Annapurna Support Fund.

What is the Annapurna Support Group?

Just a voluntary group of ordinary citizens, who at the request of Tomas, the Annapurna farm manager, are trying to help the farm. The undersigned are regular members of the group who are behind this initiative.

What is the Annapurna Support Fund?

The Annapurna Support Fund is a fund where the interest accrued from the fund will go to meet certain initiatives of Annapurna that are deemed as being necessary for the community or vital for farm development.

Our target is to raise at least Rs. 30 lakhs, which will then be invested by the Financial Service in a secure interest-earning bond. Rs. 30 lakhs can earn an interest of about Rs. 20,000/month, which will be allocated towards specified farm expenditure. Only actual expenses of the farm as deemed necessary by the managers of the Support Fund will be met. One example, actually an immediate need, is increasing the acreage under rice cultivation in the coming season by 2 acres to meet current demands in Auroville.

The fund will be built up by:

a) **Individual investments** (In this case, the capital or the money invested by an individual will always belong to the owner. **This option is available only to people directly connected to Auroville and via the Auroville Financial Service Account**).

AND

b) **Donations** (Donors will not be able to withdraw their money from the Support Fund, but their donation can only be used for this specific purpose of supporting the farm).

Why does Annapurna need a Support Fund?

Annapurna is one of Auroville's most productive farms, but with adequate investments, it is envisaged that it can triple its production. Funds for investment cannot always be generated from the farm itself. Also, providing for the needs of the community is different from income-generating activities. For example, it would actually be profitable for Annapurna to reduce cultivation and processing of grains altogether and concentrate on making cheese, but this would mean that Auroville is moving towards self-sufficiency in organic grains, which is against Auroville's core value of self-sufficiency and food security. To take the above example, increasing the acreage under rice cultivation in the coming season by 2 acres would require an immediate investment of Rs. 1 lakh and given the current prices, it is unlikely that Annapurna would be able to get this investment back from future sale of rice. Currently Annapurna is a financially viable farm and hence deemed worthy of additional support, in keeping with current thinking in the community that we should seek to support 2-3 farms that are doing well. At present, average monthly costs of the farm are about Rs. 4 lakhs, which is met through sale of farm products. **The interest from the Support Fund will only go towards new investments and meeting unforeseen expenses and not operational costs.**

What about helping other farms through similar initiatives?

Yes, our hope is that similar initiatives will be started in other farms. We sincerely hope that this pilot project, once it is successful, can be replicated at other farms in Auroville fostering the needed paradigm shift by closely linking food production to the community.

Who will manage the Support Fund?

Some members of the Annapurna Support Group, namely Otto (Financial Service), Anandi (PTDC), Lucas (EcoPro) and Tomas (Annapurna) will form the management group that will basically decide which expenses of Annapurna to support.

How long will the Support Fund be operational?

The Support Fund will be operational indefinitely - as long as there is a need for it to exist.

Is there a minimum contribution necessary to join the Support Fund?

No. There is no minimum amount for contribution. We would like the fund to be accessible to all who feel called to support Annapurna.

Will investors into the Support Fund be able to pull out their investments in the future?

Yes. Investors can get back their capital investment. They are merely donating the interest accrued from the capital. Support Fund managers would, however, need an advance notice of say 3 months, before the individual pulls out their capital in order to bridge the gap by finding new investors. Coupons will be issued by the Management Committee of the Support Fund, guaranteeing the return of capital, when so requested.

Pls. note that donors cannot withdraw their donations. Only investors can.

Are there any other responsibilities or benefits for investors/donors?

We see contributors to the Support Fund and any volunteers as being part of Annapurna's larger support group. For this larger support group, we plan on having a regular, short e-newsletter to inform them of how their investments are being used in Annapurna. We are also thinking of organizing site-visits or other activities that would support a vibrant community-supported agriculture initiative in Auroville. We are also happy to hear from the community of how we can strengthen the relationship between consumers and farmers.

Has anyone pledged to join the support fund yet?

Yes. We have had a wonderful positive response to the Support Fund both from inside and outside the community of Auroville. We have still not reached our target though, so any contribution big or small is welcome.

How do I invest or donate?

Within Auroville:

You can transfer money to the Auroville Financial Service Account 251367.

Outside of Auroville:

Please contribute to Auroville Unity Fund via our donation channels.

Please drop an email to annapurnafarm@auroville.org.in mentioning the amount transferred and specifying whether the amount is an investment or a donation.

More questions?

Email annapurnafarm@auroville.org.in

Thank you!

In community,

Annapurna Support Group:

Alan, Anandi, Isabelle, Lucas, Martin, & Tomas

Otto (Advisor); Bindu (Administration)

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