

## PUSA Krishi Organizes SAMARTH 2024-25 Workshop: Nurturing the Indian Agri Startup Ecosystem



PUSA Krishi, ZTM-BPD, ICAR-IARI organized **SAMARTH 2024-25 Workshop: Nurturing the Indian Agri Startup Ecosystem** on November 6th and 7th, 2024, at the NASC Complex in New Delhi. The two-day event provided a comprehensive platform for collaborative discussions and in-depth insights into critical areas of the agri-startup ecosystem, including enhancing market access, exploring new funding avenues and building impactful stakeholder partnerships.



The first day of SAMARTH 2024-25 commenced with a welcome address by Dr. Akriti Sharma, CEO of PUSA Krishi, followed by the keynote speech delivered by the chief guest, Dr. R.B. Singh, Chancellor,

Central Agricultural University, Imphal, who shared his insights on the current and future landscape of the Indian agriculture sector. Dr. Singh highlighted the rapid innovations transforming agriculture, emphasizing how technology and research are re-shaping the industry. He strongly emphasized the importance of involving youth in agriculture to drive its growth and modernization. Dr. Singh pointed out that the future of agriculture lies at the intersection of STEM – Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics. He argued that agriculture should be at the heart of these disciplines, as scientific research, technological advancements and engineering solutions increasingly drive it.

Following Dr. Singh's keynote, Mr. Manoj Kumar, co-founder and CEO of Social Alpha provided an introduction to the organization and its initiatives in fostering innovation and entrepreneurship in the agriculture and rural development sectors.



The session then continued with Mr. Onkar Pandey, Director of Livelihoods & Prosperity at Social Alpha, who presented an overview of the 'Tectonic: Innovations for Agriculture and Rural Livelihoods' initiative. This was followed by a thought-provoking panel discussion on "The Challenges of Agriculture and Climate Change," which focused on the pressing issues facing rural communities due to changing climate patterns. The panel featured prominent experts, including Dr. R.N. Sahoo, PS, IARI, Sh. Satish Chandra Chintanmani, Executive Director, IATFM, and Mr. Saroj Mahapatra, Executive Director of PRADAN. The session was moderated by Mr. Kirti Prasanna Mishra, Co-founder and Director of Ecociate. In the afternoon, participants engaged in a learning session on Market Access,

Implementation & Pilot Testing for startups, followed by a presentation on Unlocking Success: Best Practices for Agri-Incubation by the PUSA Krishi.



The second day of the SAMARTH 2024-25 kicked off with high energy and insightful sessions aimed at strengthening the ecosystem for startups and incubators. Mr. Prasad Shetty, VP, SINE, IIT-Bombay delivered an informative session on importance of securing funding beyond initial grants and ensuring rigorous due diligence in selecting startups for incubation. Dr. Mrutyunjay Suar, Chairman of Bhubaneswar City Knowledge Innovation Centre, followed with a presentation on "Best Practices and Exploring International Collaborations," highlighting effective strategies for incubators to scale globally and establish fruitful international partnerships.

The next session, led by Dr. K. Suresh Kumar, Executive Director of PSG-STEP and Chairman, ISBA focused on "Creating Mentor, Investors & Industry Pool for Running a Successful Incubator," emphasizing the need to build a strong network of mentors, investors and industry experts to support the growth of startups.



The event concluded with a vote of thanks by Ms. Manisha Mani, Innovation Lead at PUSA Krishi, followed by the distribution of certificates to the participants. The two-day event offered practical insights and valuable networking opportunities for all attendees.

#### **About SAMARTH?**

SAMARTH is a program designed by PUSA Krishi to support the 29 Key Partners (KPs) and Rural Agri Business Incubators (RABIs) across India under the RKVY – RAFTAAR scheme. The program focuses on building the capacity and skill sets of incubation managers and their respective incubation centers, ensuring that agri-startups across India receive world-class mentorship and guidance.