

# AIF REVITALIZING THE AGRI SECTOR



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**A**s a result of brilliantly nurtured proactive initiatives undertaken since 2020, Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF) is now embarking & flying on a rock-solid drone. It is poised to reach new heights with a vision to broaden investment horizons and transform the agriculture landscape through the development of cutting-edge post-harvest infrastructure. AIF shall increase farmer income to unprecedented levels. This shall broaden the scope of AIF and encompass more farmers and agri-entrepreneurs under the umbrella of AIF.

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**T**his year, four new activities brought under the ambit of the scheme, viz: Integrated Spirulina production and processing units, Sericulture processing units, Honey processing units and Plant quarantine units. The scheme has been perennially improved to meet the needs of its stakeholders and to make it more acceptable to all. As a result, more players have been brought into the ecosystem, thus enabling the program’s objectives to be achieved.

#### Helping Farmers, Helping Nation

This transformative AIF scheme has created 27,440 projects at a staggering cost of Rs 38,485 crore, with a sanction of Rs 22,618 crore. The result has been the generation of over 4.35 lakh manpower, the saving of 1.5 LMT of food grains and 22.7 TMT of horti produce annually. In addition, farmers have benefitted from better price realization by about 20-25%.

The remarkable growth in loan sanctions by Lending Institutions, which increased by 127% during the third financial year, is a testament to the proactive initiatives undertaken during 2022-23. The exceptional ability of the leadership to take initiative and drive positive change that was recognized and appreciated by various stakeholders made a significant impact on the brilliant success of AIF. Implementation of effective strategies, identification and addressing potential challenges to effectively navigate obstacles and achieve positive results and proactively seeking out opportunities for pitching in AIF at every possible forum did wonders.

There have been hundreds of virtual interactions with different stakeholders to keep afloat millions of farmers’ hopes for better price realization for their hard-earned produce. The initiatives include FPO & PACS workshops, workshops for State officials, 30 Master Trainer sessions for Banks and State Government officials, training sessions for Bank branch officials, potential customer forums, and sessions for DDMS/LDMs.

#### AIF State Conclaves

Many programmes were conducted in physical mode to spread awareness about AIF, providing handholding support and interactions with stakeholders. Eight AIF State Conclaves were conducted in Kerala, Telangana, Punjab, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, and Rajasthan. This increased the flow of applications through the Portal to a large extent.

Sensitisation programmes were undertaken by conducting CII Agri-Business Conclave, setting up Stalls in all the relevant Exhibitions, and pitching AIF at various events and hundreds of Workshops by State level PMUs. Skill development programmes were undertaken at Bankers’ apex-level Training Colleges and high-level “Banker as Anchors” programme was also organised in Mumbai involving Training Heads and top Executives of various Banks.

#### Boosting up Agri-Entrepreneurs

Through various outreach programmes, AIF has been able to connect with lakhs of agriculture entrepreneurs and farmers, over 30,000 bank officials, over 10,000 state and district officials, over 5,000 primary agricultural cooperative societies, 2000 FPOs & CBBOs, as well as over 500 APMCs and state marketing boards. Mrs Shobha Karandlaje, Hon’ble Minister of State, MoA&FW has been a leading light in boosting and promoting AIF Scheme during her tours all over the country.

Annual AIF Award ceremony was held in Delhi July 2022, graced by our visionary Hon’ble Minister for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Sh. Narendra Singh Tomar and Hon’ble MoS Agriculture Sh Kailash Choudhary to honour the best performing Banks and States under AIF financing which acted as a great source of motivation to all stakeholders.

To further accelerate progress, two special campaigns were launched among Banks NOBOL (Nation-wide One Branch One Loan) and BEST (Bankers Enabling Sustainable Transformation in Agri through infrastructure) during 2022-23 with a view to put the Bankers on a mission mode and inculcate a competitive spirit which yielded rich dividends by way of adding extra sanctions under AIF. Shri Manoj Ahuja, Secretary, MoA&FW has been instrumental in pitching AIF at every possible opportunity during his interaction with various stakeholders in different fora.

#### ‘Main Bhi Krishipreneur’

Presently, #Mainbhikrishipreneur is on roll from 10th April to 8th July 2023, showcasing the success stories of all the agripreneurs/ framers/FPOs/SHGs who took AIF loans for creating post-harvest infrastructure & are now thriving.

The objective of this campaign is to highlight the hard work behind the project and how it has not only benefitted an individual or a family but also positively impacted the surrounding areas by creating multiple employment opportunities. It is also expected that next generations will choose to become Krishipreneurs aka Agripreneurs, in helping the nation grow with their innovation, and this name will be pronounced confidently.

With this in mind and in order to attract the newGen towards agriculture, state-of-the-art technology and sensor based Agriculture Drone and intensive use of Internet of Things (IOT) and AI in agriculture are being promoted on a wide scale. Shri Abhilaksh Likhi, Addl.Secretary, MoA&FW stands as an unwavering pillar of support in nurturing and handholding the Scheme resulting in the scheme reaching newer heights during 22-23.

Agriculture Infrastructure Fund as a real game changer is poised to become the harbinger of blissful change in the life of the farming fraternity and others engaged in agriculture by making the sector more vibrant and resilient through innovation and novel initiatives.