



## Grounding of Millet Mission in Odisha, *Kharif 2017*: Some Suggestions<sup>1</sup>

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The “Special Programme for Promotion of Millets in Tribal Areas of Odisha” (hereafter, Millet Mission) was announced in the Agricultural Budget by the Honourable Finance Minister of Odisha on 18 March 2016. In pursuance to this, a tripartite agreement was signed between the Directorate of Agriculture and Food Production (DOAFP), Government of Odisha (GOO), Watershed Support Services and Activity Network (WASSAN) and NCDS on 27 February 2017. As part of this agreement, NCDS is to be the State Secretariat for the Mission that oversees the Programme Secretariat anchored by WASSAN and the Research Secretariat anchored by NCDS. One of the activities of the Research Secretariat is to prepare policy briefs.

This policy brief is based on deliberations at the orientation-cum-action plan preparation workshop for the districts of Gajapati, Kandhamal, Nuapada and Rayagada held during 23-24 May 2017 at IMAGE, Bhubaneswar. The purpose of this brief is to provide real-time feedback. Some of the suggestions are elaborated below.

- **Early Release of Funds:** There was a discussion that monsoon is likely to set-in early in 2017. Given this, to ensure smooth functioning of the Mission, there is a need to release the budget for 2017-18 at an early date.
- **Administration Cost for the Actual Working Period:** In the first year budget, administration cost is provided for nine months only. As many of the Facilitating Agencies (FAs) have already started working from mid-May and the Programme Secretariat has already started working from April, the administration cost should be increased to ten months in case of FAs and 12 months (one year) in case of Programme Secretariat.
- **Availability of Quality Seeds:** Another important point for Kharif 2017 is the availability of adequate amount of good quality seeds. Efforts should be made to ensure production to source good quality seeds or to make use of locally available seeds. Plans also should be made for multiplication of quality seeds for the subsequent season.
- **Additional Funds for Procuring Seeds:** With regard to seeds, another suggestion that came up is that working capital for seed centre should be enhanced from Rs 12,000/- to Rs 60,000/-. This is necessary because Rs.12,000/- (@ Rs.1,000/- per month) has been budgeted as rent payment for the storage of seeds. However, there is an urgent need to purchase seeds and this will require additional funds.
- **Formation of Working Group for Development of Seeds:** The availability of good quality seeds being crucial, there is a need to form a working group with Odisha University of Agriculture Technology (OUAT) and National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources (NBPGR) among others on development of pure line varieties of the local seeds for the programme.
- **Additional Funds for Centralised Training:** The demand for centralised training on different aspects from the district officers as also FAs has increased. This requires

<sup>1</sup> This policy brief is an outcome of the two-day workshop held during 23-24 May 2017 at Institute of Management of Agricultural Extension (IMAGE), Bhubaneswar and is an output of the Research Secretariat on Millet Mission at Nabakrushna Choudhury Centre for Development Studies (NCDS).

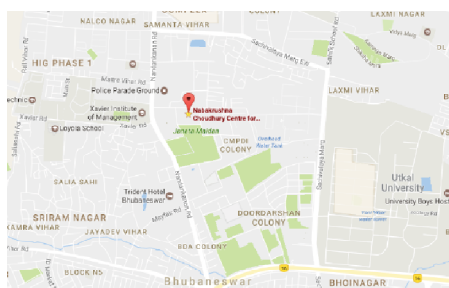
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additional funding. The Programme Secretariat in consultation with the Department/Directorate may prepare a detailed note on the additional fund required.

- **Creation of a Central Technical Support Unit:** There is a need to develop a Central Technical Support Unit at state level for supporting processing enterprises. This unit should extensively train and support the local mechanics and youth on the maintenance of machines. This will also prevent us from repeating the mistakes of the past, as under the Initiative for Nutritional Security through Intensive Millets Promotion (INSIMP), National Food Security Mission, where most of the machines broke-down and became non-functional. The Department/Directorate may facilitate provisioning of space already available in Bhubaneswar for similar purposes. The Programme Secretariat may be requested to facilitate the training. The Programme Secretariat in consultation with the Department/Directorate may prepare a note on this (including additional funding requirement, if any).
- **Additional Funds for the Travel of District/Block Officials:** It was brought to the notice that the officials at the block and district level do not have any funds earmarked for travel purposes with regard to this programme. There needs to be clear direction for use of existing resources towards travel for this programme or apportioning of additional funds for this specific purpose. The Programme Secretariat in consultation with the Department/Directorate may prepare block-specific requirement.
- **Additional Funds for Regular Interactions/Meetings:** This programme will require regular interactions/meetings between the government officials, FAs, and community based organisations (CBOs). No specific funds have been earmarked for this purpose. The Programme Secretariat in consultation with the Department/Directorate may prepare a district-specific requirement.
- **Collaboration with Indian Institute of Packaging:** There is need to explore a collaboration with Indian Institute of Packaging, Mumbai for the packaging of processed millet products. This will help increase its shelf-life after processing and also increase brand value of marketability.
- **Collaboration with Millet-related Research Institutes:** There is also a need to explore collaboration with Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), and other research institutes, particularly those involved in millet research like Indian Institute of Millet Research (IIMR), Hyderabad.
- **Concerns Regarding Eucalyptus Plantation:** In many of the traditional millet growing areas of the State, one observes plantation of eucalyptus tree. This is a water-intensive crop affecting the groundwater level and agronomic practices of the region. This requires a larger discussion with all stakeholders.

The above concerns are meant for feedback to the stakeholders, including those in the Government and the Programme Secretariat.



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