

Shivraj launches PRAGATI to empower agri-entrepreneurs

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Union Minister of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Tuesday launched PRAGATI, a landmark multi-stakeholder initiative that aims to empower 20,000 agri-entrepreneurs and directly support 20 lakh smallholder farmers across India.

The initiative brings together PepsiCo Foundation, SBI Foundation (SBIF), Gates Foundation, IDH, Heifer International, Environmental Defense Fund (EDF), Global Agri Entrepreneurship Academy, Sustainable Agriculture Foundation International Association (SAFIA), Agri Entrepreneur Growth Foundation (AEGF), and Transform Rural India Foundation (TRIF) to build a nationwide ecosystem of agri-entrepreneurs.

Built on a network of over 26,000 agri-entrepreneurs supporting 2.6 million farmers, PRAGATI will add 20,000 new agri-entrepreneurs across Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Assam, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Maharashtra and Rajasthan. The initiative will promote regenerative agriculture through advisory services, mechanisation, soil health, finance, insurance, market linkages and 20,000 entrepreneur-led kiosks,



targeting a 30 per cent increase in farmer incomes, 15–20 per cent higher crop yields, adoption of regenerative agriculture by 20 per cent of participating farmers, and financial inclusion for 50 per cent of associated farmers. Speaking at the launch, Chouhan said the vision of Viksit Bharat cannot be achieved without a developed agricultural sector and prosperous villages. "Our focus is not only on increasing production but also on reducing cultivation costs, enhancing farmers' incomes, promoting crop diversification and making agriculture more profitable," he said.

Monica Bauer, Senior Vice President, Global Social Impact, PepsiCo, and President, PepsiCo Foundation, said farmers are at the heart of our business, and strengthening their livelihoods is key to building resilient food systems. "Through PRAGATI, we aim to expand farmers' access to the tools and knowledge needed for more sustainable agriculture," he added. Swapan Dhan, MD & CEO, SBI Foundation, said, "PRAGATI brings together institutions with diverse expertise to empower local change-makers who will drive farmer prosperity, climate resilience and financial inclusion across India." Hisham Mundol, Chief Advisor – India, Environmental Defense Fund, was also present on the occasion.