

Directorate of Agriculture Development and Farmers' Welfare

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No:ADFW/5428/2023/ATMA

Date:10-05-2023

CIRCULAR

Sub:- Annual Plan 2023-24 – Scheme on “Strengthening of Agricultural Extension”– component Support to LEADS (Lead Farmer Centered Extension Advisory and Delivery Services) - Administrative sanction accorded-Working Instructions - issued-reg

1)Annual Plan 2023-24

Ref:- 2)G.O.(Rt)No.383/2023/AGRI dated 25-04-2023

Vide reference 1 cited above, there is a Budget provision of Rs 3028.00 lakh for the scheme “Strengthening of Agricultural Extension ” under H /A 2401-00- 109-80 (P) during the year 2023-24. Vide reference 2 cited above, Government have accorded administrative sanction for the implementation of the scheme “Strengthening of Agricultural Extension ” for an amount of Rs 1065 lakh under the H /A 2401-00-109-80 (P). An amount of Rs 335.00 lakh has been set apart for the implementation of the component **Support to LEADS** (Lead Farmer Centered Extension Advisory and Delivery Services) under the scheme “Strengthening of Agricultural Extension” from the Head of Account 2401-00-109-80 (P) during 2023-24.

'LEADS' programme was introduced in 2010 as a new field visit oriented extension system with linkage to R&D institutions. It envisages the revitalization of the present agricultural extension system with the utilization of services of lead farmers for technology dissemination in the state. The concept is based on scientific delineation of the districts into Agro Ecological Zones (AEZ) and Agro Ecological Units (AEU). Visit schedule as well as technology advice for each month will be prepared Agro Ecological Unit wise. Regular field visit oriented extension system will be carried out. The crops suggested for implementation are paddy, coconut, vegetables and banana. The project was launched in Kollam, Palakkad and Kannur districts during 2011-12 and extended to Wayanad district during 2012-13.

Objectives :

1. To utilize the services of LEAD Farmers for transfer of technology.
2. To solve the field level problems through regular field visit by technical officers.
3. To introduce a regular and systematic field visit oriented extension system in the state, integrating ATMA.
4. To intervene and advise farmers through the preparation of Monthly Technology Advisory with the support of KVK , Research Stations and development specialists.

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5. Generation of location specific technologies through Participatory Technology Development (PTD).
6. Technology refinement through Front line Demonstrations (FLDs) and On Farm Trials (OFTs).
7. Facilitating expert level consultation through audio conferencing.
8. Constitution of multidisciplinary team in research institution for field visit on demand.
9. To enhance technical knowledge of field level technical officers.
10. To develop a farm network of extension teams, Lead farmers and farmer groups at district level.

Programme:

The various components under the programme are as follows:

1. Innovation Fund (Rs. 31.92 Lakh)

Three Lead farmers are to be selected under each Krishi Bhavan and a group of 10 farmers (termed as Satellite farmers) around lead farmers have to be selected for the implementation of the project. In each panchayat three Lead farmers and three satellite groups may be formed. Maximum number of groups should not exceed five in each panchayat. One farmer in each group could be designated as technology leader.

All beneficiaries of the Farm Plan Based Production Programme shall be included either as Lead farmer or Satellite farmers wherever possible. The groups of ATMA, VFPCCK, Vegetable, Paddy or Coconut scheme of the Department of Agriculture may also be considered. The existing groups if any near the Lead farmer could also be considered instead of constituting new groups.

The Lead farmers could be the best achievers in terms of yield or income from unit area and should be the success models. Farmers having effective communication skills and willing to spare time for group visit and technology transfer should be selected as Lead farmers.

Lead farmers and Satellite farmers may be changed if they are continuing for 3 years or if their activities are not satisfactory even if 3 years are not completed. Lead farmers/ satellite groups if not attending meeting/not co-operating/not found useful for technology dissemination can be changed. Depending upon the crop selected/Technology adopted etc, the lead farmer selected may be changed yearly also, if needed, with the approval of Panchayath Level Selection committee. Lead Farmers should be selected strictly as per the eligibility criteria which is will be developed and communicated to the field by the Director of Agriculture.

The nodal institutions of the district will prepare a document on Lead farmer. Good farmers will be covered under Kissan Visual media also.

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An Innovation Fund of Rs. 4,000/-per Lead Farmer will be provided, which can be used to meet the expenses of any new technology adopted by the Lead Farmer. A list of practices that can be adopted in the field for demonstration for innovation activities as provided by the Nodal/ Associating institutions shall be compiled by the Technology Manager and submitted to PD ATMA for approval. This list would be made available to field level officers for adoption based on AEU /Location specific needs. Care should be taken to ensure that repetition of technologies that have been already demonstrated in the Agro Ecological Unit (AEU) in the previous years should be avoided to the maximum extent possible.

A detailed report on the efficacy, field level adaptability, advantages, disadvantages of the Innovation technology demonstrated in the previous year will be prepared by the Technology Manager in consultation with Field Assistants and submitted to the District Project Directorate. Project Director (ATMA) would monitor and ensure the above report is prepared and the results would be documented properly.

An amount of **Rs 31.92 Lakh** is set apart for this sub-component.

2. Technology Dissemination support (Rs 23.94 Lakh)

798 Satellite Farmer Groups has to be formed (attached with the LEAD Farmers) at the rate of three groups per panchayat and each group comprising of 10 selected farmers for effective technology dissemination. *All beneficiaries of the Farm Plan Based Production Programme shall be included either as Lead farmer or Satellite farmers wherever possible*

An amount of Rs. 3,000/- per Satellite Farmer Group will be provided as technology dissemination support in order to meet the operational cost of communication and to meet expenses related to extension discussions/meetings etc. This amount can also be used to adopt innovative technology by the group.

An amount of **Rs. 23.94 Lakh** is set apart for this sub-component.

3. Preparation of MTA (Monthly Technology Advisory) (Rs. 4.00 lakh)

The Kerala Agricultural University will associate closely with the project and KVK Kollam, RARS Pattambi, KVK Kannur and KVK Ambalavayal will be the nodal institution for the project for preparing Monthly Technology Advisory, need based field visit through a Multi Disciplinary Team, expert consultation and technology refinement. The FSRS Kollam, KVK Palakkad, RARS (Northern Region) Pilicode, Kasaragode and RARS Wayanad will be the associating institutions.

Monthly Technology Advisory (MTA) will be prepared at the nodal institution with the support of the associating institution identified for the project, officials of the Department of Agriculture and allied departments. The MTA Advisory preparation shall be completed immediately after the MTA meeting conducted, wherein the suggestions for the succeeding month are also discussed. It is proposed to conduct the MTA meeting during the 3rd week of the month so that MTA should reach farmers and officials by the end of that month itself. MTA messages should reach the farmer without any delay. The funds set apart for MTA can be used for Pre MTA meetings also.

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The technology refinement part of the project will be implemented by the institutions under KAU. The FSRS Kollam, RARS Pattambi, RARS Pilicode and RARS Wayanad of KAU will implement the Participatory Technology Development (PTD) and KVK Kollam, KVK Palakkad, KVK Kannur and KVK Wayanad will implement the On Farm Trial (OFT) and Front Line Demonstration (FLD). OFT & FLD will be done as far as possible in the field of Lead Farmer / Satellite Farmer.

An amount of **Rs. 4.00 Lakh** is set apart for this sub-component.

4. Capacity Building Programmes (Rs. 4.00 lakh)

Capacity Building programmes are to be organized for training, review of workshops, preparation of materials and need based support etc at District / Block / Panchayat level. Periodic training is needed for the staff involved in the programme to update themselves and for effective transfer of technology to farmers. *Trainings and awareness classes in connection with the implementation of Farm Plan Based Production Programme can also be conducted.*

An amount of **Rs 4.00 lakh** is set apart for the conduct of Capacity Building training @ Rs. 1 lakh per district.

5. Management cost- (Honorarium to 99 Field Assistants (FA) and to 4 Technology Managers (TM) for districts and 1 Data Entry Operator at HQ) (Rs. 268.224 lakh)

Regular field visits will be done by Field Assistants (with qualification of VHSE (Agriculture)) engaged on contract basis. One Field Assistant (FA) will cover two Krishi Bhavans. Field Assistant will be in charge of visit of Lead Farmers and Satellite Farmers of two Panchayats. The field visit for a month proposed to be finalised by the 25th of the preceding month at Project Directorate of District and communicated to officers of the Blocks and Districts and *should necessarily cover the fields of all Farm Plan Beneficiaries at least once in a month.* Any issues faced in connection with the field level implementation of Farm Plan Based Production Programme should be brought to the notice of the Assistant Director of Agriculture.

The Field Assistants are proposed to be attached to the Assistant Director of Agriculture. In order to co-ordinate the visit schedule, preparation of Monthly Technology Advisory and other project activities, two Technology Managers with Masters Degree in Agriculture / B.Sc. (Agri) are engaged for each District and will be attached to the Project Director, ATMA. ICT support and mobility support to the Technology Managers are provided. *District Level details of Farm Plan Plots should be periodically collected from the Field Assistants and reported to the Directorate regularly.* The Agricultural Officer and Agricultural Assistant will conduct at least one visit per month to the field of Lead Farmer.

The services of two Technology Managers (TM) will be utilized in each District for organizing the visit schedule and capacity building programmes, selection of innovation activities as provided by the Nodal/ Associating institutions, covering all the Panchayaths. The FA and TM will be recruited by the Principal Agricultural Officer.

All the contract staff engaged under the scheme shall visit the fields of Farm

Plan Beneficiaries, provide them necessary guidance regarding implementation of the scheme whenever necessary, help create awareness among farmers on the benefits of farm plan based production approach, assist in the formation of Krishikootams, etc.

The Technology Managers and Assistant Directors of Agriculture will ensure that the visit schedule is strictly followed. An online monitoring and reporting system may be developed at HQ level.

The estimate for honorarium to be provided is given below :

Sl No	Designation	Number	Honorarium Rate/Month (Rs)	For 12 Months (Rs in lakh)
1	Field Assistants	99	20,065	238.37220
2	Technology Manager	4	30,995	14.87760
3	Data Entry Operator	1	21,175	2.54100
4	Other allowances			12.4332
	Total			268.224

6. Operational cost for monitoring, supervision, reviews etc (Rs. 1.916 lakh)

Operational cost/Miscellaneous expense including cost of printers, conducting review meetings, MTA report preparation, monitoring (physical /online), documentation etc. An amount of Rs. 1.916 Lakh is set apart for the sub-component.

7. Extension materials/ Diaries for FAs & TMs (Rs. 1.00 lakh)

Extension materials/ kits/field diaries will be provided to Field Assistants and Technology Managers for proper service delivery and recording observations and follow up activities.

Guidelines for the implementation of the programme:

The project should be implemented on the basis of Agro Ecological Unit concept. Visit schedule as well as technology advisory for each month should be prepared on Agro Ecological Unit-wise.

The crops suggested for implementation are paddy, coconut, vegetables and banana. A seasonal action plan for the important crops should be prepared by Project Director, ATMA and implemented.

The Project Director (ATMA) is the nodal officer of the project in the District and the Assistant Directors and Agricultural Officers should be closely involved in the project. The preparation of Monthly Technology Advisory (MTA) should be done at the nodal institution where the team led by Project Director, ATMA should have close interaction.

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The Assistant Soil Chemist and District Manager of VFPCCK should also participate in the monthly meeting at the nodal institutions. The project should be integrated with the ATMA framework to utilize the resources of ATMA. The possible linkage with the Extension plan prepared under the ATMA scheme should be worked out. Services of BLAKC expert committee should also be utilised for the successful implementation of the scheme.

Assistant Directors of Agriculture should compulsorily inspect the diary of Field Assistants and give a report to Project Director, ATMA.

Lead farmers and Satellite farmers may be changed if they are continuing for 3 years or if their activities are not satisfactory even if 3 years are not completed. Depending upon the crop selected and technology adopted, the lead farmer selected can be changed yearly also, if needed, with the approval of Panchayath Level selection committee

Quarterly meet of Satellite Farmers should be organized at Block level in association with the nodal institution identified in each District. The quarterly meet should be convened by the Assistant Director of Agriculture at block level. Panchayat level and District level workshop should be conducted.

The Monthly Technology Advisory (MTA) should be prepared at the nodal institution before the 25th of every month. Messages should reach the farmer through print and electronic media without any delay.

There should not be any change in the field visit schedule finalized for a month and the schedule should be finalized by the 25th of the preceding month and communicated to officers of the Blocks, Districts and Directorate of Agriculture. The Technology Manager will coordinate the preparation of MTA and visit schedule for each Agro Ecological Unit (AEU). Every visit should be recorded in the diary of Lead Farmer and Satellite Farmer Group.

The scheme should be implemented in convergence with ATMA. Lead farmer and Satellite farmer should be given preference under ATMA. Capacity building programmes should be conducted at District level /Block level.

The Project Director (ATMA) should ensure the involvement and active participation of Field Assistants and Technology Managers in the campaign of Njangalum Krishiyilekku Programme and *Farm Plan Based Production Approach Scheme of the State Government*. The contract staff shall be assigned duties separately to ensure that the objectives of the programmes are successfully fulfilled.

Financial Outlay :

Sl.No	Component	Cost (Rs. in lakh)	Remarks

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1	Innovation fund	31.92	@Rs.4,000/ per Lead Farmer for 798 Lead Farmers in 266 Panchayats.
2	Preparation of MTA	4.00	Rs. 1.0 lakh per District
3	Technology Dissemination support	23.94	@Rs.3000/SFG group for 798 groups
4	Capacity building	4.00	Rs.1.0 lakh per District
5	Management Cost [honorarium to 99 FAs and 4 TMs for districts and 1 Data Entry Operator at HQ]	268.224	Honorarium to FA @ Rs 20,065/ month including travel cost & Honorarium to TM @ Rs 30,995/- per month including travel cost and Honorarium to Data Entry Operator at HQ @ Rs.21,175/ month
6	Operational cost for monitoring, supervision, reviews etc	1.916	
7	Extension materials Diaries for FAs& TMs	1.00	Diaries & Extension kits to LFS & SCGs ,FAs & TMs to SAMETI
	Total	335.00	

IMPLEMENTATION:

The project is being implemented in 266 Panchayats of Kollam, Palakkad, Kannur and Wayanad districts. The details regarding the number of panchayats covered and the number of Lead Farmers and Satellite Farmer Groups to be benefited under the programme are given below.

DISTRICT	PANCHAYATS	LEAD FARMERS	SATELLITE FARMER GROUPS
Kollam	70	210	210
Palakkad	90	270	270
Kannur	81	243	243
Wayanad	25	75	75
TOTAL	266	798	798

Selection criteria for lead farmers /satellite farmers

The criteria for selection of lead farmers /satellite groups are as follows:

1. Farmers with diversified cropping pattern and allied activities having minimum 50 cent land under cultivation should be considered. He should be an occupant of the same Panchayat *and shall necessarily be a beneficiary of Farm Plan Based Production Programme wherever possible.*
2. Should have good communication skill, be socially acceptable and innovative.
3. Should devote time for interacting with satellite farmers.
4. Minimum 50% of the income should be from agriculture alone.
5. Should have the tendency of keeping records of yield, income etc.
6. Award winning farmers, best achievers in terms of maximum crop productivity or income from unit area, and those honoured during Chingam 1 (Karshakadhinam) celebrations etc can be identified as Lead Farmers.
7. Should adopt latest agricultural technology in his field and maintain his field as a technology demonstration plot.
8. Lead farmer should be preferably a member of existing groups like Padasekhara Samithi /Coconut clusters/VFPCK group etc and interested in group management
9. Farmers interested in group activity and sharing of experience and achievements with others may be brought to the Satellite Farmer Group.
10. The Satellite Farmers should be willing to adopt the new technologies.
11. The Satellite Farmer Group after one year may be registered as Commodity Interest Group (CIG) in Krishi Bhavan under ATMA /similar schemes.
12. All the Lead Farmers and satellite farmers selected must be registered in the

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AIMS portal.

13. The Agricultural Officers of the Krishi Bhavan should select the Lead Farmers of the Panchayat and get the approval of the committee consisting of the Standing Committee Chairman (Development), Assistant Director of Agriculture of the Block and the concerned Agricultural Officer.

A committee should be constituted for the selection of LEAD farmers /satellite farmers in all districts. The committee should consist of the following persons.

1. The Principal Agricultural Officer of the concerned district – Chairman
2. Project Director of ATMA of each district
3. Representatives of Kerala Agricultural University
4. Deputy Director (i/c) of Extension
5. Assistant Director of the concerned block - Convenor
6. Agricultural Officer of the Krishi Bhavans

The above committee should scrutinize and finalize the list of LEAD farmers/satellite farmers, after conducting field visit.

MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING:

1. At Block level, Assistant Director of Agriculture will monitor the scheme.

Agricultural Officers and Agricultural Assistants in charge of Leads at Krishi Bhavan will report details to Assistant Director of Agriculture.

2. At District level, Deputy Project Director (DPD) will be in charge of monitoring the scheme under the supervision of Project Director, ATMA.

3. The Additional Director of Agriculture (Extension) will monitor the scheme at

*State level.

The Project Director, ATMA shall submit the monthly progress report in the email id-nodalatmakerala@gmail.com to the Additional Director of Agriculture (Extension) of the Directorate of Agriculture before the 5th of every succeeding month.

The following General Conditions should be followed, wherever applicable :

- i. All rules, formalities and procedures shall be strictly followed for the implementation of the scheme. The norms of financial propriety shall be adhered to.

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- ii. The expenditure will be met only from the provision available under the appropriate head of account.
- iii. The fund release shall be based on actual requirement, and the fund released should not be parked in banks.
- iv. Store Purchase Rules shall be strictly adhered to for all kinds of purchases.
- v. Tender/e-tender and other stipulated formalities shall be followed wherever necessary.
- vi. Post creation and purchase of vehicles are not admissible under the scheme.
- vii. The implementing agencies/ Departments shall prepare an implementation schedule to complete the project in time and send regular progress reports on financial and physical progress on a quarterly basis.
- viii. It should also be ensured that the Utilization Certificates pertain to all schemes are submitted by the agencies in time.
- ix. AIMS portal registration for all the plan schemes and Digital Soil Health Card is mandatory.
- x. All schemes shall be implemented so as to integrate the same with the objective of the mass campaign 'Njangalum Krishiyilekk'.

The expenditure of this scheme shall be met from the budget provision of the scheme "Strengthening of Agricultural Extension" under the Head of Account 2401-00-109-80 Plan during 2023-24 and districtwise physical and financial targets are given in Annexure 1 .

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ANJU K S IAS
DIRECTOR

Director of Agriculture

Encl: Annexure 1

Joint Director of Agriculture (AR & V)
Directorate of Agriculture
Vikas Bhavan, Thiruvananthi

- 1) The Project Director, ATMA- Kollam , Kannur, Palakkad & Wayanad
- 2) The Principal Agricultural Officers - Kollam, Palakkad, Wayanad and Kannur districts
- To: 3) The Head, FSRS, Kollam
- 4) The Head, RARS, Pattambi, Pilicode and Ambalavayal

5) The Head, KVK, Kollam, Palakkad, Kannur, Ambalavayal

Copy to:

- 1)TA to Director of Agriculture
- 2)Director of Research, Kerala Agricultural University
- 3)Director of Extension, Kerala Agricultural University
- 4)The Director, SAMETI
- 5)CA to all Additional Directors of Agriculture
- 6)CA to all Joint Director of Agriculture at HQ Planning Section / Finance section/ SW Section
- 7) Deputy Director of Agriculture, IT Cell- for publishing in the website
- 8)TV(3)/ Stock file /Spare