

PRESS RELEASE:

RURAL TRANSFORMATION PROJECT TO ENHANCE ASSAM AGRIBUSINESS

Digital Empowerment Foundation along with the Sub consultant, Fair climate Fund India Private Limited is implementing services for financial education and counseling under the Assam Agribusiness and Rural Transformation Project (APART).

New Delhi, , 2022 - APART was launched in April 2022 with the main objective to add value and improve resilience of selected agriculture value chains focusing on smallholder farmers and agro-entrepreneurs in targeted districts of Assam with the help of funding from Assam Rural Infrastructure and Agricultural Services Society ([ARIAS](#)), an autonomous body of the [government of Assam](#) which has received loan from World Bank through Government of India.

Climate change has laid emphasis on the need to have a resilient agriculture production that usually proves to be a challenging task to small and medium scale farmers. In this direction, the focus of APART has been on value addition in the production and post-harvest segments; facilitate agribusiness investments through inclusive business models that provide opportunities to small farmers as well as stimulate the establishment of new small & medium agribusiness enterprises. The strategy adopted to achieve this is to have clusters that would promote vertical and horizontal links between local agricultural enterprises. Such a strategy encourages participants to develop competitive and innovative products that meet current market demands.

The project is aimed to benefit producers, farmer producer companies and agro entrepreneurs from agri and horticulture value chain (96,500), livestock value chain (57,000), fishery (29500), silk and handloom textiles (11000) and dairy (56,000) sectors that is expected to reach five lakh farmers with services a or assets provided over seven years.

The project interventions are being taken up in 24 priority districts of Assam namely Kokrajhar, Barpeta, Nalbari, Darrang, Sonitpur, Goalpara, Nagaon, Cachar, Karbi Anglong, Golaghat, Dhubri, Marigaon, Jorhat, Sivasagar, Hojai, Biswanath Chariali, West Karbi Anglong, Kamrup(M), Kamrup(R), Mankachar, Charaideo, Majuli, Lakhimpur and Hailakandi.

The activities undertaken under APART include promoting investments in agri-enterprises reducing the business and transaction costs, facilitating access to finance for agribusiness entrepreneurs, and, where appropriate, push for process, regulatory and/or policy change, supporting the development of a modern agri supply chain; improved information communication technologies (ICT) based farm information and intelligence services, and alternative marketing channels; and improving producers' access to knowledge, technologies and

infrastructure so that they are better able to respond to market opportunities and climate variability.

The main objective of APART is to develop and implement an ICT-based FEC program for target beneficiaries to contribute to enhancing their financial inclusion, defined as their access to and prudent use of appropriate financial services which is conceptualized under four main components: (i) Enabling Agri Enterprise Development; (ii) Facilitating Agro Cluster Development; (iii) Fostering Market Led Production and Resilience Enhancement; and (iv) Project Management, Monitoring and Learning

The project is estimated to be implemented in two phases. Phase 1 emphasizes on designing and developing a robust FEC solution, pilot testing the ICT-based FEC solution and revised FEC solution, implementation plan, and M&E arrangements. Phase 2 oversees rolling out extensively to target beneficiaries and monitoring and oversight.

The desired outcome of the project is to expect that beneficiaries receiving these services have improved understanding of financial services that they have access to and have strengthened capability to, better access these services and use these services responsibly.

For further information, please contact:

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NOTES

Assam rural Infrastructure and Agricultural Services (ARIAS)

Assam rural Infrastructure and Agricultural Services (ARIAS) Society, as an autonomous body, headed by the Chief Secretary, Assam, as its President (Project Guidance Council) and the Agriculture Production Commissioner, Assam as the Chairman (Governing Body) is the coordinating and monitoring agency for the project. The key mandate of the Society is to manage, coordinate, implement World Bank aided projects and any other externally funded projects as authorized by the State Government, and to monitor the implementation performance of the line departments of the projects. Details at <http://www.arias.in/index.html>

Digital Empowerment Foundation

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