

## **ICAR-IARI Hosts SAMARTH 2026 to Empower the Incubators**

Pusa Krishi, ICAR–Indian Agricultural Research Institute (ICAR–IARI), successfully hosted SAMARTH 2026 – Empowering the Incubators during 19–20 March 2026 at the NASC Complex, New Delhi. The two-day national workshop brought together 31 incubators from across the country under the RKVY-RAFTAAR initiative of the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Government of India, providing a vibrant platform for collaboration, knowledge exchange, and strengthening the agri-startup ecosystem.

During his welcome remarks, Dr. Ch. Srinivasa Rao, Director, ICAR–IARI, emphasized that incubators play a crucial role in bridging the gap between scientific research and field-level implementation. He noted that in the face of climate variability and evolving market demands, incubators are essential for translating innovations into scalable, farmer-centric solutions.

Dr Rao further highlighted that a strong incubation ecosystem will accelerate technology commercialization, promote agri-startups, and contribute to sustainable agricultural development, thereby supporting farmers and rural livelihoods.

The inaugural session was graced by Shri Nabin Kumar Roy, Chief General Manager, NABARD, who highlighted the transformative role of Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) as sustainable agri-enterprises driving rural development. He emphasized NABARD’s support through capacity building, credit facilitation, market linkages, and value chain development, and also underscored key initiatives such as NABVENTURES and the AgriSURE Fund in promoting agri-startups and rural innovation.

The workshop featured a series of technical sessions, expert talks, and experience-sharing interactions by Knowledge Partners (KPs) and RKVY-RAFTAAR Agribusiness Incubators (RABIs). Important themes discussed included startup equity and valuation, innovation support mechanisms, incubation strategies, and the role of pilot projects in de-risking agri-innovations. Sessions also focused on the human dimensions of innovation, highlighting leadership, team building, and organizational culture in successful incubation ecosystems, along with the importance of structured mentorship, ecosystem linkages, and strategic support for startups.

Participants actively engaged in discussions on best practices, challenges, and success stories in incubation, fostering peer learning and cross-institutional collaboration. The workshop provided valuable insights into strengthening incubation programmes and enhancing the overall effectiveness of the agri-startup support system in the country.

SAMARTH 2026 concluded successfully, reflecting its vision of “Empowering the Incubators.” The workshop strengthened institutional networks and equipped participants with the knowledge, tools, and perspectives needed to nurture a dynamic and resilient agri-startup ecosystem in India.



**Day 1: Inaugural Day Focuses on Strengthening Incubators and Agri-Startup Ecosystem**



