

**Operational Guidelines
for
MANAGEMENT SUPPORT GROUP
FOR
National Vegetable Initiative for Urban Clusters**

SMALL FARMERS' AGRIBUSINESS CONSORTIUM
Department of Agriculture & Cooperation

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. As a follow-up to the budget speech of the Hon'ble Finance Minister, Dept. of Agriculture and cooperation (DAC) has already issued guidelines for a programme under Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojna (RKVY) for implementation of "The Vegetable Initiative for Urban Clusters" during 2011-12 with an outlay of Rs. 300 crore. The task of management, including end-to-end solutions to plan, monitor, support and report on the programme, has been entrusted to Small Farmers' Agribusiness Consortium (SFAC), a specialized agency promoted by the Department of Agriculture and Cooperation, Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India. The agency will address all concerns related to both the demand and supply side of the vegetable sector in one city of each states, which is either the state capital or any other city with a population of over one million and enhance vegetable production and productivity, nutritional security and income support to vegetable farmers.

1.2. SFAC will work closely in support of DAC and the State Governments through selected specialized partners to achieve detailed work plans for each State, identify training and capacity building needs at all levels, assist in the roll out various components of the work plan, create and run a comprehensive Management Information System (MIS) and provide linkages to markets, technology and investments.

1.3. These goals are sought to be achieved through the State Horticulture Mission (SHM)/ Directorate of Horticulture/State Govt. and National level Agencies (NLA) to address all the issues relating to vegetable development, covering organization of farmers group, identify/select aggregators and enable tie-up Farmers Association/Groups with production, post harvest management and marketing.

1.4. SFAC proposes to deliver a range of technical and management services through the creation of a **Management Support Group (MSG)**, comprising experienced professionals with expertise in project management, agronomy, monitoring and evaluation and statistics to support the NHM Division in DAC in the roll out and monitoring of the programme. The MSG will be mobilized by SFAC by selecting a suitably qualified consultancy organization through an open bidding process. The selected partner organization will be expected to provide the technical manpower in the formation proposed below, besides overall coordination, supervision, technical backstopping and reporting inputs. A detailed profile of the MSG and terms of reference are provided later in this proposal.

1. BROAD OBJECTIVE

The programme aims at enhancing production, productivity and profitability of vegetables in the country through off-season production under protected cultivation for generating income round the year and offering at competitive price to the consumers.

2. CRITERIA FOR SELECTION OF CITIES

The scheme "**The Vegetables Initiative for Urban Clusters**" is proposed to cover one city in each state, which is either the state capital or any other city with a population

of over one million. In case, in any state there is no city which satisfy this criteria, then other urban cluster closer to one million population will be selected for the purpose.

There are 29 States and 6 Union Territories in India. As per 2010 estimates, there are 43 cities with population more than 1 million in 16 States and 1 Union Territory (Chandigarh), of which there are six metro cities. The cities with the highest population in the concerned state/ union territory have been included for implementation of the project. The list of the 17 cities with the corresponding population is indicated below:

Table 1: List of Metro cities and other cities with population above 1 million

Sl. No.	State/UT	City	Population (2010 estimates)
Metro Cities			
1	Maharashtra	Mumbai	13,830,884
2	Tamil Nadu	Chennai	4,616,639
3	Delhi	New Delhi	12,565,901
4	West Bengal	Kolkata	5,138,208
5	Andhra Pradesh	Hyderabad	4,068,611
6	Karnataka	Bangalore	5,438,065
Other cities with population > 1 million			
1	Assam	Guwahati	1,022,606
2	Bihar	Patna	1,875,572
3	Gujarat	Ahmedabad	3,959,432
4	Haryana	Faridabad	1,521,605
5	Jammu and Kashmir	Srinagar	1,081,562
6	Jharkhand	Ranchi	1,073,466
7	Madhya Pradesh	Indore	1,854,930
8	Punjab	Ludhiana	1,740,247
9	Rajasthan	Jaipur	3,210,570
10	Uttar Pradesh	Kanpur	3,221,435
11	Chandigarh	Chandigarh	1,064,711

In addition, the State/ UT capital cities of the remaining 18 States and Union Territories not meeting the requirement of having population of more than 1 million, have been considered, the list of which is given below.

Table 2: List of other state capital cities

Sl. No.	State/ UT	City
1	Kerala	Thiruvananthapuram
2	Manipur	Imphal
3	Mizoram	Aizawl
4	Orissa	Bhubaneswar
5	Chhattisgarh	Raipur
6	Uttarakhand	Dehradun
7	Arunachal Pradesh	Itanagar
8	Goa	Goa
9	Himachal pradesh	Shimla
10	Meghalaya	Shillong

11	Nagaland	Kohima
12	Sikkim	Gangtok
13	Tripura	Agartala
14	Pondicherry	Ozhukarai
15	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	Portblair
16	D & N Haveli	Silvassa
17	Daman & Diu	Daman
18	Lakshadweep	Kavaratti

3. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The terms of reference of the Management Support Group (MSG) are as follows:

- i) To work as the Technical Support Group by providing guidelines and advisories to identify suitable areas, conduct baseline survey and preparation of detailed action plan for production of vegetables for urban clusters.
- ii) Appraise the project proposal submitted by the implementing agencies and the states for its approval
- iii) Coordinate with the research institutions for availability/ multiplication of quality vegetables seeds/ seedlings of improved varieties and related innovative technologies.
- iv) Provide necessary guidelines for building farmer producers organizations, establishment of market linkages including farmers markets and to support urban local bodies to promote Controlled Atmosphere to facilitate marketing.
- v) Capacity building at all levels by organizing training and workshops for taking up all the activities of the programme including establishment of an efficient supply chain, implementation of the concepts and practices of GAP, IPM, INM and, organic production and practices.
- vi) Perform all the management functions, including end-to-end solutions to plan, monitor, support, and report on the programme, on behalf of Small Farmers' Agribusiness Consortium (SFAC).
- vii) To work closely in support of DAC and the State Governments through selected specialized partners to achieve detailed work plans for each city, identify training and capacity building needs at all levels, assist in roll-out various components of the work plan, and provide linkages to markets, technology and investments.
- viii) To work as the single point support system of DAC to implement the vegetable programme in the target states for overall improving the production and productivity of vegetables in the country by offering a complete package of activities resulting in increase in income and availability of vegetable at competitive price by the urban consumers.

4. STRUCTURE OF MSG

4.1. REQUIREMENT OF MANPOWER

There are wide variation not only in the population of the cities/state capitals from very small urban clusters in the Union Territories like D & N Haveli, Daman & Diu, and Lakshadweep; to the mega cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata and Chennai; but also in their requirements. The issues required to be addressed include not only assured availability of safe and good quality vegetables at affordable prices, but also need for concerted action on several fronts, viz., production, logistics including post harvest handling, storage, transportation, marketing, distribution and necessary policy backstopping.

SI No.	State	No. of Project Units
1	Metro cities	1
2	Other cities	1
3	Other states/ UT capitals	1
	Grand Total	3

Each of the three project units will be headed by a Project Manager with sufficient experience in project management, backstopped by a multi-specialist team including Community Organizer, Vegetable Specialist and Plan Protection Specialist. The team will be headed by a Programme Manager of considerable rich experience of management of a large project of multi-disciplinary in nature. There will be two supporting staff to assist the unit, however, the functioning of the MSG constituted for the implementation of pulse project and for implementation of vegetable project would be complementary. The diagrammatic presentation of MSG is indicated in Fig 1.

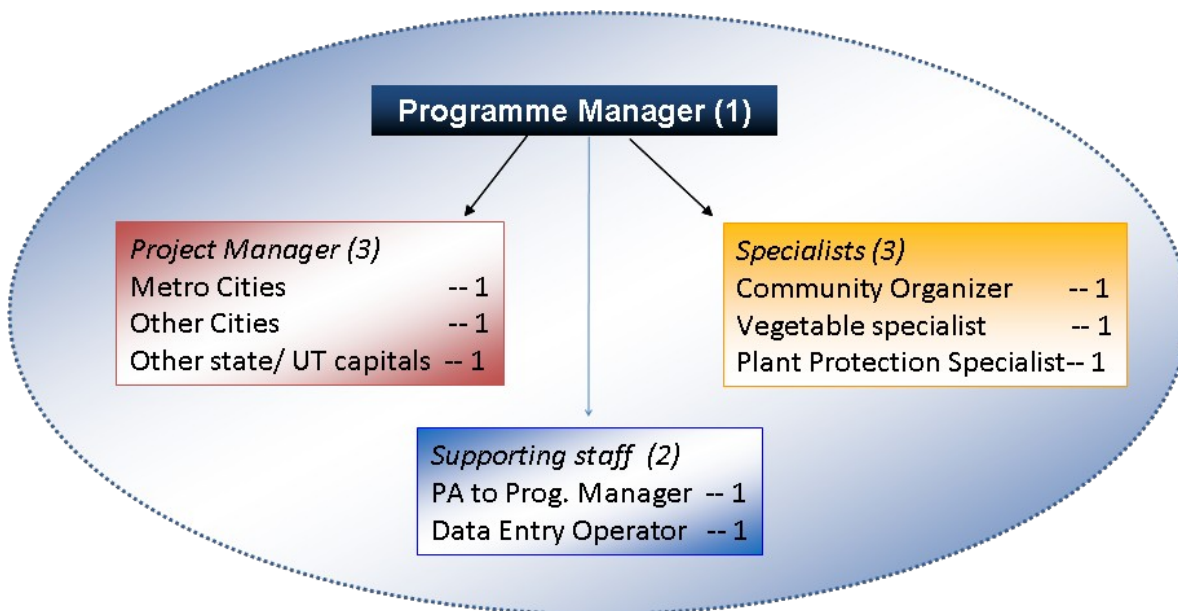


Fig. 1: Diagrammatic presentation of MSG

4.2. FUNCTIONS OF MSG

The broad tasks of the MSG will be as follows:

i) Work as the single point support system of DAC to implement the vegetable programme in targeted cities

MSG will function as the single point support system within the frame work and overall policy guidelines of DAC for entire management of the programme ‘The Vegetable Initiative for Urban Clusters’ in all the 35 States / UTs by carrying out all the activities involved in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the programme in addressing all concerns related to both the demand and supply side of the vegetable sector in targeted cities.

ii) Assist the State Governments by organizing training and workshops and act as a Technical Support Group to explain the objectives and goals of the vegetable programme

MSG will assist the State Governments in setting up goals and objectives of the programme including the projected output, outcome and impact in a frame work of timeline through conducting trainings and workshops in all the states/ UTs with the active participation of each of the concerned State Department, members of the gram panchayats and other related agencies.

The MSG will also facilitate during the workshops an operational process by analyzing each component including strength, weakness and opportunity in availability of

vegetables, seasonality of availability, existing supply chain including the intermediaries and possibilities of improving its effectiveness, technology dissemination mechanism for enhancing production and productivity, details of entire value chain from pre-production to the consumers table and further possibilities of employment generation specially the unemployed youths in the targeted cities with series of brainstorming sessions and finally to come up with appropriate strategy for development within the framework of The Vegetable Initiatives in Urban Clusters.

iii) Capacity building at all levels through both trainers and farmers training programme

The areas of capacity building will include methodology of baseline survey to assess the extant vegetable supply chain including both the bottlenecks and potentials for growing vegetables in clusters. There is need for capacity building in knowledge and skills of improved cultivars, production technology using precision farming techniques, protected cultivation and microirrigation. The areas of value chain will include primary processing, sorting, grading, washing, packaging and value addition. Other important areas will include steps of preparation of detailed action plan, formation of farmers associations/cooperatives for seed/seedling production, INM/IPM, organic farming, GAP etc.

iv) Preparation of detailed action plan for 2011 to 2012 covering all the states and Union Territories

The action plan for ‘The Vegetable Initiative for Urban Clusters’ will begin with an overview emphasizing the significance of increased production and productivity of vegetable in addressing the concerns related to both production and supply in the targeted cities. The basic components of an Action Plan are as follows:

- a. A statement of what must be achieved
- b. Steps that have to be followed to reach this objective
- c. Time schedule for when each step must take place and how long it is likely to take (when)
- d. A clarification of who will be responsible for making sure that each step is successfully completed (who)
- e. A clarification of the inputs/resources that are needed
- f. Methodology of monitoring and evaluation of the programme

Essentially, the action plan would include a general goal with macro and micro directives in a specific time frame involving a package of investments, policy measures and institutional and other actions to achieve these objectives both long and short-term in limited or comprehensive with single or multi sector perspective.

v) Appraise the projects submitted by the implementing agencies for approval by DAC

The project appraisal essentially refers to the process of analyzing the technical feasibility and economic viability of a project. The basic steps of project appraisal would include the followings:

- Process followed in identification of process
- Project need analysis
- Problem formulation and Statement of the Problem
- Project Planning including logical linkages among various element of projects
- Availability of technology included and feasibility of their performance
- Clarity of the assumptions for project budgeting
- Technical and managerial competence of the institutions and other stakeholders involved
- Monitoring processes, and finally
- Project evaluation including goal-based evaluation, process evaluation, impact evaluation and cost-benefit analysis

vi) Facilitate technology backstopping to the implementing agencies

The expertise of Indian Institute of Vegetable Research (IIVR), Varanasi and the State Agricultural Universities (SAUs) are to be considered. Overall, IIVR should take the lead for providing technological backstopping through the specialists engaged in the All India Coordinated Research Projects (AICRP) on the specific vegetable crop in the respective State Agricultural Universities. The MSG and IIVR will organize a specially designed workshop to sensitize both the implement agencies and the specialists engaged in the AICRPs for their specific role to play for the vegetable crops to be taken up under the programme in the country.

vii) Increase availability of quality seeds and Seedlings

Seed is the most important input which determines the production and productivity of any crop. In order to provide quality seeds to implementing agencies, MSG will develop an institutional arrangement with Indian Council of Agricultural Research and State Agricultural Universities (SAU) for availability of breeder seeds and related innovative technologies.

In order to facilitate the multiplication of seeds/ seedlings, the MSG needs to identify suitable institutions, farmers associations, cooperatives, public and private sector, with the development of seed infrastructure for handling, processing, packaing and storage.

IIVR, Varanasi will develop a master plan for the production of breeder seed under which specific institutions would be identified for production of crop wise, variety wise, institution wise production targets fixed will be made public and seed producing agencies will be required to place the indents for supply of breeder seed.

For the supply of breeder seeds of vegetables, the seed producing agencies will be required to place the indent for supply of Breeder seed to seed division of Department of Agriculture and Cooperation (DAC) of Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India (GOI) and a copy to IIVR. However, before placing the seed indent to seed division the same should be submitted to seed committee who will examine and approve it. DAC in consultation with IIVR will allocate the breeder seed and the concerned agency would lift the breeder seeds as per the allocation made on payment basis.

viii) Support for promotion of Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and Organic Farming

Food safety being an emerging key issue, there is need to follow Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), in order to meet strict quality measures. The MSG will sensitize State Governments and Stakeholders for enhanced implementation of GAP through organizing workshops and develop awareness about the standard guidelines of organic farming to attain a good share with better price realisation in health conscious segment of niche market in the respective cities.

The MSG will provide necessary guidelines for organic production procedure including pre-production, production and post-production in the line of the guidelines of National Programme of Organic Farming (NPOP), developed by APEDA, Ministry of Commerce, GoI. The MSG will provide appropriate institutional arrangements for certification of organic vegetable produce. The MSG would also facilitate for organizing training on production of various organic inputs including vermicompost.

ix) Support for Protected Cultivation

Protected cultivation of vegetables offers distinct advantages of quality, productivity and favourable market price to the growers. The vegetable growers not only can substantially increase their income from the cultivation of vegetables in off-season but also ensure the availability of vegetables all the year round at an affordable price. Over the years various systems of protected cultivation have been developed including green house structure, naturally ventilated system, and shed net house.

The guidelines will include standardization of the cost structure based on not only the type of protected cultivation but also the materials to be used in the structure and commensurate financial assistance in the form of both credit and subsidy. In addition, financial assistance combining both credit and back-ended subsidy will be provided to meet the cost of planting material for growing high value vegetables.

x) Provide necessary guidelines for organizing Vegetable Grower Association/Group

Under the Scheme, provision will be made for supporting Cooperatives and other such organizations which may be involved in organizing vegetable growers into Farmers Association/ Group and to identify/select Aggregators and to tie-up with financial institutions.

In order to facilitate the efforts of the Vegetable Grower Association, the MSG will formulate appropriate guidelines regarding the optimum size of Group, quantum of financial support including tie up with financial institutions and aggregators.

xi) Provide support Post Harvest Management

The major constraints of all the year round availability of vegetables in affordable prices are due to lack of minimal processing facility, inappropriate packaging, slow transport systems and inadequate storage facilities. In order to streamline, the support system for post harvest management will include minimal processing units, provision of pack house, pre-cooling unit including mobile pre-cooling unit, cold storage facilities, refrigerated vans and containers, preservation unit, and different form of crop specific and energy saving cool chambers. The MSG will issue necessary guidelines for different post-harvest facilities including the capacity of each unit, assistance towards capital cost, differential rate for general areas vis-à-vis difficult and scheduled areas, and mechanism of linking with credit and back-ended subsidy.

xii) Provide marketing infrastructure support

Keeping in view the basic objective of the programme for enhanced availability of affordable, safe and good quality vegetables to the selected cities in the country, organized support for marketing infrastructure will be provided. An appropriate positioning of Direct Markets in the form of Rural Markets at the primary level, followed by Outlets/ Retail Markets (possibly environmentally controlled) will link effectively the vegetable growers and supply chain in the cities. The functioning of this mechanism will be further streamlined through establishment of collection/ aggregation centre at the production clusters and static/ mobile vending cart/ platform with cool chamber, and availability of motorized vending cart.

xiii) Addressing overall management of the programme including its implementation and monitoring of physical and financial components on real time basis through establishment of an ICT enabled monitoring system to with ground truthing both on-farm and off-farm

The unique feature of the programme “The Vegetable Initiative for Urban Clusters” is its implementation by providing advisory services based on real time crop conditions. Such services will include weather forecasting, weather and crop advisory; SMS based services; solution to farmers’ problems through call center; cropped area, crop conditions and yield assessment; market information on quality, price and quantity of arrivals, minimum support price and day to day market rates, availability of agricultural inputs and their prices; and forecast on expected arrivals of vegetables in mandis.

Further, ICT based monitoring will be done through real time cropped area and crop growth providing much needed flexibility for appropriate advisory services and even redesigning the format and procedure based on the change in situations on real time basis.

Overall, the management system will involve inter-sectoral, inter-organizational and interpersonal communications coupled with consensus-building, negotiation, networking and multidisciplinary capacity building in a multi-cultural settings.

xiv) **Provide guidelines for qualitative measures of data management and results analysis to get output, outcome and impact of the programme**

In addition to the first hand information through various formal reports, project schedule chart, project financial status report and other such periodical report, there will be concurrent evaluation of the programme in the form of output, outcome and impact. While the output describes the concrete and tangible products as a result of the development activities undertaken under the programme, the outcome describes the changes that occur among the beneficiaries, the impact describes the overall changes that occur among the beneficiaries in terms of transformation of the target groups.

The output, outcome and impact would be assessed to begin with, early evaluation followed by various concurrent evaluation while monitoring the programme and finally terminal evaluation.

5. COST NORMS

The details of components/ interventions and corresponding cost norms along with the pattern of assistance will be included in the detailed project proposal document on The Vegetable Initiative for Urban Clusters.

6. MONITORING

The programme will be continuously monitored through ICT enabled monitoring system to be specially designed for the purpose. Besides entries related to the individual beneficiaries, reports of the periodical field visits of the Programme Manager, Project Managers and the Specialist, and the proceedings of the workshop, review meetings at various levels will be considered. Special evaluation studies will be commissioned to access the output, outcome and impact of the programme including its geographical and spatial distribution.

Overall, the project ‘The Vegetable Initiative for Urban Clusters’ will promote, develop and disseminate technologies for enhancing production and productivity of vegetables in peri-urban areas of the major cities of the country. The project will help in establishment of an efficient supply chain thereby leading to employment opportunities and incomes for intermediate service providers, and safe, good quality, fresh as well as processed agri produce at competitive price for the urban consumers. Besides, it will assist the states in addressing the entire value chain, right from the stage of pre-production to the consumers table through appropriate interventions.