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Centre of Excellence for Farmer Producer Organizations

Trimonthly E-Newsletter

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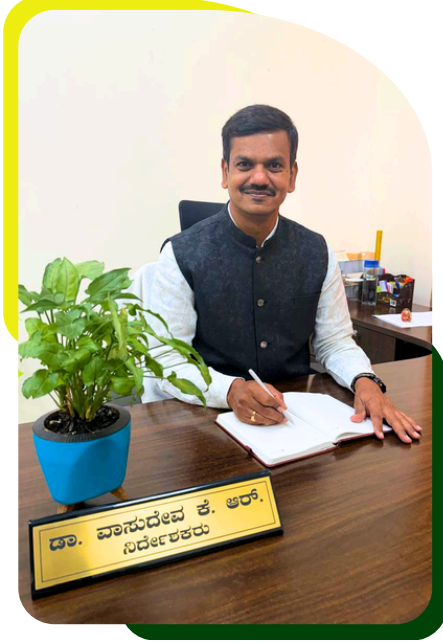
KARUNADA FPO SAMACHARA



From the Director's Desk

Dear Esteemed Stakeholders, Partners, and Members of the FPO Ecosystem, Warm greetings to all.

The first quarter of 2026 has been a period of purposeful action and fulfilment of commitments. At the close of the previous quarter, we had outlined a clear direction for our work: to strengthen the leadership capacities of Farmer Producer Organizations through the rollout of NRLM MKPC Module 2 trainings, advance the maturity of Amruth FPOs through higher-level capacity building interventions, and deepen collaborations that would expand opportunities for producer institutions across Karnataka. I am pleased to share that, together, we have translated these commitments into meaningful progress.



A defining feature of this quarter has been our focus on institutional strengthening through continuous learning and leadership development. In total, 31 structured training programmes were conducted, benefiting 1,311 participants, including Boards of Directors, CEOs, FPO leaders, government officials, and ecosystem stakeholders. These programmes addressed diverse themes such as enterprise management, governance, financial compliance, natural farming, certification, market integration, convergence of government schemes, and strategic planning. One of our key priorities was the rollout of the NRLM MKPC Capacity Building Programme – Module 2, envisioned as a shift from foundational orientation to enterprise ownership. I am happy to note that this initiative was implemented successfully through 15 batches across the state, reaching 502 Board members and CEOs. Beyond enhancing technical knowledge, these programmes encouraged participants to become more confident, independent, and accountable in leading their producer enterprises. The enthusiasm and commitment demonstrated by the participants reaffirm our belief that strong leadership is central to building resilient institutions. We also delivered on our commitment to strengthen the next generation of Amruth FPOs. Moving beyond basic orientation, we organised Level 2 and Level 3 capacity building programmes for Watershed Development Department and Horticulture Department supported FPOs, benefiting 206 participants across multiple districts. These advanced interventions focused on business expansion, financial management, governance, and market readiness, enabling FPOs to progress towards higher levels of organisational maturity and sustainability.

The quarter also highlighted the importance of preparing FPOs for emerging opportunities and evolving market demands. Workshops on natural farming and PGS certification, value addition and compliance, government scheme convergence, and integrated horticulture development equipped participants with practical insights to

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strengthen both their enterprises and their engagement with farmers. The Regional Seminar on Natural and Organic Farming further underscored the growing relevance of sustainable agriculture and its potential to create differentiated market opportunities for producer collectives.

Learning from successful models remained an important pillar of our work. Exposure visits to institutions such as Sahyadri Farms, Nashik, Maharashtra enabled participants to witness the transformative potential of professionally managed producer enterprises. Interactions with students, researchers, and international experts, including the team from Wageningen University & Research, Netherlands, fostered valuable exchanges of ideas and perspectives. In parallel, field visits undertaken by the Centre's leadership to FPOs and cooperative institutions across Karnataka strengthened our understanding of grassroots realities and reinforced our commitment to responsive and need-based support.

Our efforts this quarter were further strengthened through strategic partnerships and collaborations. We entered into new engagements with organisations including ECO365, IISc BeST Cluster, SELCO Foundation, Dvara Research, and the Karnataka State Federation of Farmer Producer Companies and Cooperatives. These partnerships reflect our conviction that the future of FPO development lies in convergence, bringing together institutions working in technology, sustainability, research, finance, and market development to create a stronger ecosystem of support for producer organisations.

Recognising that institutional sustainability is built on sound governance and accountability, we also conducted two large-scale online programmes on financial year closure, statutory compliance, governance, and strategy implementation, engaging 456 participants. The overwhelming response to these initiatives is encouraging and indicative of the growing commitment among FPO leaders to adopt professional standards and strengthen organisational effectiveness.

As we look ahead, our focus will be on converting institutional capacities into enterprise outcomes. We will work closely with FPOs to strengthen business planning, facilitate market linkages, promote value addition, and support the adoption of innovative and sustainable solutions. Greater emphasis will be placed on helping producer institutions leverage partnerships, access emerging opportunities in climate-resilient agriculture, and build enterprises that are both profitable and inclusive.

The progress achieved during this quarter is a reflection of our shared vision and collective efforts. It is made possible by the dedication of our teams, the trust of our partners, and the commitment of FPO leaders who continue to inspire us through their determination to create better opportunities for farming communities.

I extend my sincere appreciation to all our stakeholders for their continued support and collaboration. Let us carry this momentum forward and continue working together to build resilient, self-reliant, and market-responsive Farmer Producer Organizations that can serve as engines of rural prosperity and inclusive growth.

Dr. Vasudeva K. R.

Director,

Centre of Excellence for Farmer Producer Organizations, Bengaluru

CoE-FPO's ACTIVITIES GALLERY



Workshop on Natural Farming and PGS Certification, 5-7 January 2026s



Capacity Building Training Programme for BODs and CEOs of WDD and KSDH Supported Amruth FPOs of Hassan District, 06 January 2026



Capacity Building Training for FPOs organized by ASCI, 7-8 January 2026



Study-cum-Exposure Visit for Horticulture Officials to Sahyadri Farms, Nashik, 05-07 January 2026



Capacity Building Training Programme for BODs and CEOs of MKPCs (Module 2) – Batch 1 for Bengaluru Rural and Tumakuru Districts, 08-10 January 2026



Capacity Building training for BODs and CEOs of MKPCs (Module 2)- Batch 2- Tumkuru and Dakshina Kannada Districts, 16-18 January 2026



Capacity Building training for BODs and CEOs of MKPCs (Module 2)- Batch 3- Mandya and Hasana Districts, 19-21 January 2026



ABM Student visit from UAS, Bengaluru, 20 January 2026



MoU with IISc BeST Cluster, 20 January 2026



Visit by Wageningen University & Research Team, 20 January 2026



Capacity Building training for BODs and CEOs of MKPCs (Module 2)- Batch 4- Mysore District, 22-24 January 2026



Visit by CEO, ASCI , 23 January 2026



Review Meeting with VC, UHSB, 27 January 2026



Capacity Building Training for FPOs organized by ASCI, 28-29 January 2026



2nd workshop on Government Schemes by Digital Green Trust, 29-30 January 2026



Capacity Building Training Programme for BODs and CEOs of WDD supported Amruth FPOs of Haveri District, 29-30 January 2026



Capacity Building training for BODs and CEOs of MKPCs (Module 2)- Batch 5- Chamarajanagara and Kodagu Districts, 02-04 February 2026



Capacity Building Training for FPOs organized by ASCI, 02-04 February 2026



Training Program on Convergence of Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH) Activities with the Watershed Project Activities for Doubling Farmers Income, 02-06 February 2026



Capacity Building training for BODs and CEOs of MKPCs (Module 2)- Batch 6- Chitradurga District, 05-07 February 2026



Capacity Building training for BODs and CEOs of MKPCs (Module 2)- Batch 7- Chikkamagaluru and Shivamogga Districts 9-11 February 2026



Capacity Building training for BODs and CEOs of MKPCs (Module 2)- Batch 8- Davanagere District, 12-14 February 2026



Visit to Technology Deployment Sites in Chikkaballapura District for Demonstration of C-CAMP and Capsber Agriscience Innovations in Potato and Onion Crops, 17 February 2026



Workshop on Value addition, Compliance & Market Integration for FPOs , 18-20 February 2026



Capacity Building training for BODs and CEOs of MKPCs (Module 2)- Batch 9- Bengaluru South and Kolar Districts, 19-21 February 2026



Delegation visit by the DD, COEFPO to Sri Veerapayya Thatha FPO, Gundur, Koppal District, 23 February 2026



Delegation visit by the DD, COEFPO to Sri Basaveshwara FPO, Kesarahatti, Koppal District, 23 February 2026



Delegation visit by the DD, COEFPO to Sri Gavishri FPO, Yelaburaga, 23 February 2026



Delegation visit by the DD, COEFPO to Sri Basaveshwara FPO, Hoahalli, Gadag, 23 February 2026



Level- 2 Capacity Building Training Programme for BODs and CEOs of WDD and KSDH supported Amruth FPOs of Gadag District, 23-24 February 2026



Capacity Building training for BODs and CEOs of MKPCs (Module 2)- Batch 10- Udupi and Kolar Districts, 23- 25 February 2026



Delegation visit by the DD, COEFPO to Almel Taluka FPO, Vijayapura, 24 February 2026



Delegation visit by the DD, COEFPO to Sri Basaveshwara FPO, Basavana Bagewadi, Vijayapura, 24 February 2026



Delegation visit by the DD, COEFPO to Sri Renuka FPO, Bagalkote, 24 February 2026



Delegation visit by the DD, COEFPO to Krishnapura PACCS, Dharwad, 25 February 2026



Delegation visit by the DD, COEFPO to Noolvi PACCS, Dharwad, 25 February 2026



Level-2 Capacity Building Training Programme for BODs and CEOs of WDD supported Amruth FPOs of Mandya District, 26-27 February 2026



Capacity Building training for BODs and CEOs of MKPCs (Module 2)- Batch 11- Bagalkote District, 26-28 February 2026



Delegation visit by DD, COEFPO to Sagara Farmer Producer Cooperative Society Limited, Sagara, Shivamogga, 03 March 2026



Delegation visit by DD, COEFPO to Agraganya FPCSL, Nanikatta, Uttara Kannada, 03 March 2026



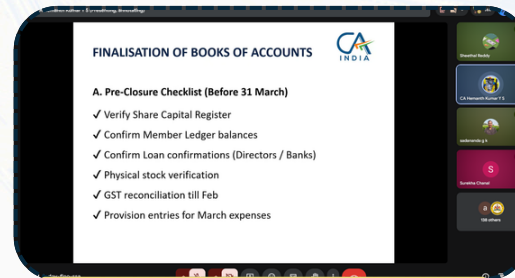
Delegation visit by DD, COEFPO to Sri Sangameshwara FPCL, Churchugindi, Shivamogga, 03 March 2026



Delegation visit by DD, COEFPO to Gadigeshwara FPCL, N R pura Taluk, Chikkamagalur District, 03 March 2026



Capacity Building training for BODs and CEOs of MKPCs (Module 2)- Batch 12- Koppal District, 05-07 March 2026



Annual Online Training 2026-27 on Financial Year Closure & Statutory Compliance for FPOs, 06 March 2026



Inauguration of KSFPOCOS office at COEFPO and Signing of MoU between KSFPOCOS and COEFPO, Bengaluru, 07 March 2026



Level-3 Capacity Building Training Programme for BODs and CEOs of WDD and KSDH supported Amruth FPOs of Davanagere District, 09-10 March 2026



Capacity Building training for BODs and CEOs of MKPCs (Module 2)- Batch 13- Bidar and Kalaburagi Districts, 09-11 March 2026



Regional Seminar on Natural and Organic Farming, 12 March 2026



Signing of MoU with SELCO Foundation, 13 March 2026



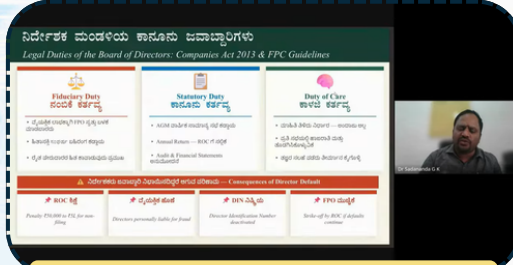
Capacity Building training for BODs and CEOs of MKPCs (Module 2)- Batch 14- Yadagiri and Kalaburagi Districts, 12-14 March 2026



Level- 3 Capacity Building Training Programme for BODs and CEOs of WDD and KSDH supported Amruth FPOs of Dakshina Kannada and Udupi Districts, 16 March 2026



Participation in Roundtable on Strengthening of Farmer Producer Organization (FPO) Training Ecosystem, 23 March 2026



Annual Online Training on Governance and Strategy Implementation for 2026-27, 27 March 2026



Signing of MoU with Dvara Research, 28 March 2026



Capacity Building Training for Board of Directors and CEOs of MKPC Institutions of Gadag and Dharwad Districts (Module 2) - Batch 15, 30 March – 01 April 2026



Milestone MoUs Shaping the Future

ECO 365



This strategic alliance marks a significant step towards enhancing post-harvest efficiency among FPOs across the state. By promoting scientific packaging practices and strengthening market readiness, the partnership aims to create new opportunities for farmers and FPOs to improve the value and competitiveness of their agricultural produce.

Under the partnership, **ECO365**, through its **Frexa** division, will conduct field demonstrations and capacity-building programmes for FPO Directors and staff. The initiative will provide technical support to reduce post-harvest losses, extend product shelf life through scientific storage practices, and help FPOs secure better value in domestic and international markets.

Entirely non-commercial and community-focused, the collaboration is dedicated to farmer welfare and sustainable agricultural development. Through the exchange of technology and knowledge, it seeks to strengthen FPO enterprises, improve farmers' incomes, and serve as a replicable model for the sector.



Milestone MoUs Shaping the Future



BEST CLUSTER



The Centre of Excellence for Farmer Producer Organizations (CoE-FPO), Bengaluru, and the **Bengaluru Science and Technology Cluster (BeST)**, an initiative of the Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India, have signed a significant partnership to promote technology-driven development among FPOs in the state. This strategic collaboration will create new opportunities for FPOs to adopt modern, data-driven value chain systems through joint efforts in research, innovation, digitalization, and capacity building. The partnership will focus on the adoption of digital platforms and emerging technologies in agriculture, with an emphasis on improving productivity and efficiency through precision farming practices. It will also strengthen post-harvest management systems, enhance quality management and transparency, and build the technical and institutional capacities of FPO stakeholders through targeted training programmes.

By bringing together scientific expertise and grassroots institutional networks, the collaboration is expected to serve as a model for accelerating technology adoption and strengthening the FPO ecosystem.

KSFPOCOS



The Centre of Excellence for Farmer Producer Organizations (CoE-FPO), Bengaluru, and the **Karnataka State Farmer Producer Organisations Cooperative Society Ltd. (KSFPOCOS)** have entered into a strategic partnership to strengthen the institutional capacity and commercial growth of FPOs across the state. Under this collaboration, CoE-FPO will provide strategic advisory services, technical guidance, and implementation support to facilitate the sustainable growth of KSFPOCOS.

A key focus of this partnership is the promotion of FPO products under the unified **“Raitha Siri”** brand. This state-level branding initiative aims to expand market access, enhance consumer trust, and improve the visibility of FPO products, enabling farmer collectives to access organized markets and secure better returns for their produce.

The collaboration is expected to lay a strong foundation for building resilient FPO enterprises, strengthening market linkages, enhancing value chains, and fostering the growth of sustainable farmer-led businesses across Karnataka.





Milestone MoUs Shaping the Future



SELCO FOUNDATION



The Centre of Excellence for Farmer Producer Organizations (CoE-FPO), Bengaluru, and **SELCO Foundation** have signed a significant non-financial partnership aimed at strengthening farmer collectives and promoting sustainable rural livelihoods. The collaboration brings together two organizations that share a common vision of empowering farmers through collective action and innovative solutions.

The partnership seeks to build resilient Farmer Producer Organizations, encourage innovation within the agricultural ecosystem, and create sustainable and climate-resilient livelihood opportunities in rural areas. Through joint efforts, the collaboration will support the growth of farmer-led enterprises and strengthen their long-term sustainability.

Beyond programme implementation, the partnership emphasizes knowledge sharing, the creation of new opportunities, and the development of sustainable systems capable of delivering lasting positive change. It is expected to contribute significantly to the advancement of the agricultural sector and the growth of strong farmer-owned institutions.

DVARA RESEARCH



The Centre of Excellence for Farmer Producer Organizations (CoE-FPO), Bengaluru, has taken an important step towards promoting the sustainable growth of farmer institutions by signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the renowned research organization, **Dvara Research Foundation**.

This strategic partnership focuses on fostering knowledge exchange and strengthening the institutional and operational understanding of FPOs. It aims to support evidence-based insights for informed decision-making and explore innovative approaches to improving efficiency, governance, and overall organizational performance. These efforts will help FPOs grow as self-reliant, resilient, and sustainable enterprises over the long term.

By combining scientific research with grassroots institutional experience, the collaboration is expected to contribute significantly to building a more transparent, efficient, and sustainable agricultural enterprise ecosystem.

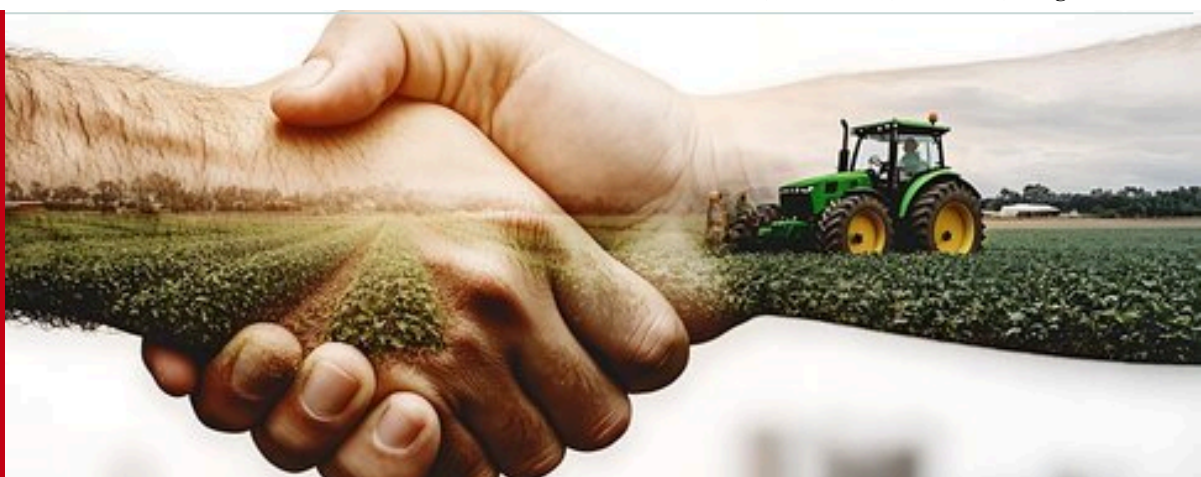


WALKING INTO THE ROOM READY:

WHAT EVERY FPO SHOULD KNOW BEFORE MEETING A BUYER

-Rithesh. G. K., Consultant, COEFPO, Bengaluru

A field guide to preparation, cost negotiation, and closing the deal with confidence.



Getting a long-term corporate contract is a massive turning point for any Farmer Producer Company. It means you can finally step away from the unpredictable local mandi and build a steady, reliable business.

But big buyers like major brands, processors, and exporters, think differently. They care about the numbers, getting the exact same quality every time, and avoiding any risks.

These days, you can't just walk into a meeting with a great sample of your crop and expect to get a deal. To actually negotiate and win the contract, your FPC needs to show up as a highly organized, professional business, not just an informal group of farmers. Here is exactly how you need to prepare, what you need to know, and how to negotiate so you can walk out of that room with a signed agreement.

1. Know Your Own Organisation

Before you try to sell anything, you need to know your own business inside and out. Be ready to share your basic registration details. Most importantly, know if the person attending the meeting is actually allowed to sign a contract. Buyers will ask you straight up: "Can we close this deal today?" If you don't have the power to say yes, just be honest. Don't make excuses or stall.

You also need to have all your basic numbers memorised: member count, total area under cultivation, crops grown and their varieties, crop production quantities, villages you cover, and your track record.



Lastly, talk about your past work. Even sharing just one successful past deal explaining exactly what you sold, the quantity, and the price builds much more trust than fancy talk. Buyers love real facts.

2. Know Your Product

Buyers will want to know the exact details of your crop like its specific variety, size, and quality grade. If you don't know how to talk about these details, the meeting will likely end early. Always bring any lab test reports you have. Even showing just one clear report that checks for moisture levels or chemicals proves that you treat your farming like a serious business. Make sure all your important paperwork is ready and on hand. This means things like your FSSAI license, organic certificates, or any other

required registrations. Most importantly, double-check the validity period before you go in. If a buyer notices your license expired three months ago, they will walk away immediately.

The biggest thing farmer groups forget to prepare is a supply schedule. Buyers don't just want to hear, "We have onions or maize ready for the season." They need exact promises. They want to know, "Can you guarantee delivery of five tons every single week for the next two months?" You must know exactly how much you can supply, and for how long, before they even ask the question.

3. Think Like the Buyer

This is where many farmer groups make a mistake. They prepare to give a presentation, but they forget the buyer is actively testing them.

The buyer sitting across from you has probably been disappointed by other suppliers before, maybe through late deliveries, bad quality, or people who just stopped answering their phones. They aren't necessarily suspicious of you personally, but they remember those bad experiences.

During the first 30 minutes of the meeting, the buyer is really just trying to figure out one thing: "Will this group actually do what they promise?"

Because of this, being honest about what you cannot do builds much more trust than just saying "yes" to everything. For example, telling them, "We don't have our own cold storage, but we rent one a few kilometers away," is much better than pretending you have everything figured out. Buyers deal with people every day, and they can easily tell when someone is exaggerating.

4. Carry the Right Papers

What to Bring in Your File (Never walk in empty-handed!) Make sure you carry a neat folder with the following items:

- **Basic ID Papers:** Your FPO's registration certificate, PAN card, and GST details.
- **Licenses:** Your FSSAI food safety license and any organic or quality certificates you have.
- **Bank & Permission Details:** Your bank account details



- **Lab Tests:** Any recent lab reports showing the quality or safety of your crop.
- **A One-Page Summary:** A single sheet of paper explaining who you are, what you grow, and how many farmers are in your group.
- **A Delivery Schedule:** A simple calendar showing exactly how much of each crop you can supply and when.
- **Good Photos:** Clear pictures of your farms, where you sort the produce, and where you store it.
- **A Real Sample:** A neatly packed and labelled sample of your actual crop. Touching and seeing the real thing builds more trust than any fancy brochure!



5. Do Your Homework on the Buyer

Many farmer groups make the mistake of not researching the buyer before they meet, and buyers can easily tell. You need to know exactly who you are dealing with because different businesses want different things:

- A factory or processor just wants a large, steady supply.
- An exporter cares deeply about strict rules and clean lab tests.
- A supermarket or retailer cares most about good packaging and how long the produce stays fresh.

Also, always check today's local mandi price before you step into the room. Sometimes, a buyer will offer a very low price just to test if you actually know what your crop is currently worth. If you haven't done your homework, you might agree to a losing deal without even knowing it.



6. How to Negotiate the "Hidden" Costs

This is where FPOs often leave money on the table. When a buyer asks for your price, you need to remember that "price" isn't just one number. It includes the cost of growing the crop plus all the extra expenses to deliver it.

Know your exact cost of production, processing, and aggregation. That is your lowest limit never sell below that number. But when the buyer pushes back and asks for a discount, do not just lower your per-kilo rate. Instead, bargain on the extra hidden costs:

Transportation: If they want a cheaper price, tell them they must send their own truck to pick up the crop from your warehouse, instead of you paying to deliver it to their factory.

Packaging: Good quality gunny bags and boxes cost a lot of money. If the buyer wants a lower price, tell them: "We can give you that price, but you have to provide the packaging bags."

Loading and Unloading: Make it very clear who is paying the workers to load the truck at your farm, and who pays to unload it at their factory.

Payment Terms: If a buyer asks for "30 days credit," it means you give them the crop today but wait a whole month to get the money. Can your farmers afford to wait that long? If the buyer insists on paying late, ask for a 20% advance payment upfront so you have cash to pay your farmers right away.

By making smart trades like giving a small discount on the crop but making the buyer pay for the truck you protect your profit and prove to the buyer that you are a smart business partner.

7. Bargain Smartly and Ask the Hard Questions

When you start talking about price, ask for a little more than you actually want. This gives you room to lower the price later and still be happy. If the buyer makes you a good offer, do not say "yes" immediately. Take a small pause and say you need a moment to think about it. If you do agree to lower your price, make sure you get something in return like faster payment or a longer contract. Never give away a discount for free!

Always ask what happens if they reject your crop. If they say the quality isn't good enough and send the truck back, who pays for the transport? You must agree on this before you sign, or you will end up fighting about it later. Be very clear about what you promise. Saying, "We can deliver five tons every week for two months," is much better than saying, "We will send produce when you need it." Finally, right before you walk out the door, repeat the final deal: the price, the amount, the delivery plan, and how you will be paid. This prevents any misunderstandings and shows the buyer you are a true professional.



8. The Small Things That Matter

When you go to the meeting, choose one person to do most of the talking. If too many people speak at once or contradict each other, the buyer will lose trust quickly. Always arrive early and leave a printed copy of your company profile on their desk.

Never promise more than you can actually supply. It is always better to promise a little less, and then surprise them by delivering extra! Finally, send a quick message the very next day. Thank them for their time, repeat the next steps you agreed on, and ask for a backup phone number just in case. Hardly anyone does this, so it is the easiest way to make your group stand out from the rest.

The One Thing That Closes Every Deal

Forget about all the fancy paperwork, pricing tricks, and negotiation tactics for a second. At the end of the day, deals are closed on one simple thing: the buyer has to believe you will actually do what you promised.

Corporate buyers do not expect you to be perfect. They just want a supplier who is honest, delivers on time, and actually answers the phone when they call. If you can look a buyer in the eye and say, "Here is exactly what we can give you, here is the proof, and here is my direct number," you will beat out bigger, richer competitors every single time.

Do your homework. Tell the truth. Know your numbers.

This is the ultimate secret to winning the deal...

LEARNING FROM EXCELLENCE: GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS EXPLORE THE SAHYADRI MODEL TO STRENGTHEN KARNATAKA'S FPO ECOSYSTEM



Farmer Producer Organizations have emerged as one of the most transformative institutional mechanisms for empowering small and marginal farmers in India. By facilitating aggregation of produce, enhancing bargaining power, improving access to technology, and strengthening market linkages, FPOs have the potential to transform agriculture from a subsistence activity into a profitable enterprise. However, realizing this potential requires not only strong farmer institutions but also a robust support ecosystem led by well-trained government officials who can guide, promote, and facilitate FPO development.

Recognizing this need, the Centre of Excellence for Farmer Producer Organizations (CoE-FPO), Bengaluru, in collaboration with the Department of Horticulture, Government of Karnataka, organized a three-day Study Tour and Capacity Building Training Programme for officials of the Karnataka State Department of Horticulture from January 5 to 7, 2026, at Sahyadri Farms, Mohadi, Nashik. The programme was attended by 30 officials representing various administrative and operational levels of the Karnataka State Department of Horticulture. Participants included leadership from the state headquarters as well as district- and taluk-level officers from across Karnataka.



Witnessing an Integrated Farm-to-Market Ecosystem

One of the most enriching aspects of the exposure visit was the opportunity to observe Sahyadri's integrated "seed-to-plate" ecosystem in operation.

Officials visited modern post-harvest facilities and witnessed firsthand how horticultural produce moves seamlessly through various stages of the value chain. They observed grape packhouses equipped with sophisticated grading, sorting, and packaging systems designed to meet international export standards. The facilities demonstrated how pre-cooling and cold chain management preserve quality and extend shelf life, enabling exports to demanding

Why Sahyadri Farms?

What began as an initiative by a small group of grape growers has evolved into one of the country's largest farmer-owned agribusiness enterprises. Today, Sahyadri works with more than 21,000 farmers through 61 FPOs, integrating production, aggregation, processing, branding, retailing, and exports within a professionally managed institutional framework.

The organization's journey demonstrates that farmer-owned enterprises can compete successfully in global markets when supported by visionary leadership, professional management, modern infrastructure, and a strong commitment to quality and innovation.

For Karnataka, where substantial efforts are being made to promote FPOs under various state and central government initiatives, Sahyadri offered a living example of how collective action can be translated into sustainable business success.





markets across Europe and the Gulf countries. The exposure highlighted the importance of investing in post-harvest infrastructure as a means of reducing losses, improving quality, and enhancing price realization for farmers. Participants also gained insights into Sahyadri's comprehensive value chain approach, which extends far beyond aggregation to encompass processing, branding, retailing, and exports. This integrated model ensures that farmers benefit from value addition at multiple stages rather than remaining confined to primary production alone.

Value Addition: Creating Wealth Beyond the Farm Gate

The visit offered compelling evidence of how value addition can significantly enhance farmer incomes while minimizing wastage. Participants toured processing facilities involved in the production of a diverse range of products, including tomato puree and paste, mango aseptic pulp, frozen fruits, freeze-dried products, fruit powders, and ready-to-use ingredients. They observed how commodities that often suffer from price crashes during peak production seasons could be transformed into stable, high-value products catering to domestic and international markets.

Equally impressive was Sahyadri's commitment to resource optimization. Waste generated during processing was converted into valuable by-products such as pectin, seed oils, animal feed ingredients, and energy through biogas systems. These initiatives illustrated how circular economy principles can contribute simultaneously to profitability and environmental sustainability. For the visiting officials, these examples underscored the need to encourage FPOs in Karnataka to move beyond primary aggregation and actively explore opportunities in processing and product diversification.

The Role of Science in Farmer Prosperity

Another significant learning from the programme was the central role of scientific interventions in improving productivity and quality.

Officials visited Sahyadri's Farmer Facility Centre and soil testing laboratories, where they observed the delivery of services such as soil and water testing, crop advisory, petiole analysis, nutrient recommendations, and irrigation support. Scientific recommendations were translated into farmer-friendly formats to facilitate adoption at the field level.

The sessions demonstrated how precision agriculture practices could improve resource use efficiency while ensuring that produce meets the stringent quality standards required by modern markets.

Participants appreciated that successful market integration begins much before harvest. Quality produce destined for premium markets is the outcome of informed decisions taken throughout the production cycle.

The integration of advisory services, testing facilities, and market requirements highlighted the importance of creating end-to-end support systems for farmers rather than fragmented interventions.





Technology as an Enabler of Growth

The exposure programme also showcased how technology has become an indispensable component of modern agribusiness operations. Participants learned about Sahyadri's use of digital tools for traceability, operational planning, inventory management, procurement, sales, and reporting. The demonstration of ERP-based systems illustrated how technology can streamline complex business processes while enhancing transparency and accountability.

Blockchain-enabled traceability systems and sensor-based monitoring further demonstrated how digital innovations can strengthen consumer trust and improve market access, particularly in export-oriented businesses where compliance and transparency are critical. The sessions highlighted that future-ready FPOs must embrace digital transformation to improve efficiency, support data-driven decision-making, and remain competitive in evolving markets.

Good Governance, Innovation, and Market Linkages

The programme highlighted the distinct roles of the Board of Directors and the management team in ensuring transparency, statutory compliance, and accountability within FPOs. Participants gained a clear understanding of the difference between governance and management functions, emphasizing how effective leadership and operational management complement each other. The importance of proper record-keeping, regular conduct of meetings, and timely fulfillment of legal and statutory obligations was underscored as critical for maintaining institutional credibility and long-term sustainability.

Officials were introduced to the five key pillars of successful FPO development: markets, capital, infrastructure, technology, and human capital. Discussions also focused on the need to understand the dynamics of agribusiness markets, consumer behavior, and evolving market trends to enable FPOs to remain competitive and responsive to changing demands.

Drawing from the experiences of Sahyadri Farms, participants studied business models that effectively balance fresh produce marketing, processing, private labels, institutional sales, exports, and retail operations. They gained valuable insights into how strategies such as branding, customer relationship management, product diversification, and value addition can help reduce market risks while enhancing revenue generation and long-term business sustainability.



Reflections for Karnataka's FPO Journey

The Sahyadri exposure visit was more than a study tour; it was an opportunity to rethink conventional approaches to FPO promotion.

Participants recognized that successful farmer institutions cannot be built solely through project-driven activities or short-term interventions. Instead, they require a clear business vision, professional leadership, market orientation, continuous innovation, and strong support systems.

The learnings acquired during the programme are expected to strengthen the capacity of horticulture officials to mentor and guide FPOs across Karnataka. By adapting relevant practices to local contexts, officials can play a critical role in fostering farmer enterprises that are economically viable, institutionally robust, and socially inclusive.

The Way Forward

The visit reaffirmed a powerful lesson for the future of Indian agriculture: farmer prosperity lies not merely in increasing production, but in creating institutions that enable aggregation, value addition, innovation, market integration, and professional management.

Sahyadri Farms stands as a testament to this vision. For the officials who participated in this programme, the experience offered not only technical knowledge but also inspiration, a reminder that with the right ecosystem, India's smallholder farmers can become globally competitive entrepreneurs while remaining firmly rooted in the principles of collective ownership and shared prosperity.





ADVANCING SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE THROUGH NATURAL AND ORGANIC FARMING

Regional Seminar Promotes Sustainable Farming Practices and Strengthens FPO Ecosystem

In a significant initiative aimed at promoting environmentally sustainable and economically viable agricultural practices, the **Regional Centre for Organic and Natural Farming (RCNOF), Bengaluru**, in collaboration with the **Centre of Excellence for Farmer Producer Organizations (CoE-FPO)**, Department of Horticulture, Government of Karnataka, and the University of Horticultural Sciences, Bagalkot, organized a Regional Seminar on Natural and Organic Farming on **12 March 2026** at the CoE-FPO Auditorium, Bengaluru.

The seminar was conceived as a platform to promote sustainable, climate-resilient, and eco-friendly horticultural practices while strengthening the role of Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) in advancing natural and organic farming across Karnataka. Bringing together policymakers, technical experts, market stakeholders, progressive farmers, and FPO representatives, the programme facilitated meaningful discussions on the opportunities, challenges, and scalable models for wider adoption of natural and organic farming practices.

Dignitaries Emphasize the Importance of Sustainable Agriculture

The seminar was inaugurated by **Shri Girish R., IAS, Secretary to Government, Department of Horticulture, Government of Karnataka**, who attended the programme as the Chief Guest. In his inaugural address, he emphasized the growing significance of natural and organic farming in Karnataka and highlighted its potential to enhance farmers' incomes while preserving soil health and ecological balance. He noted that the adoption of environmentally responsible farming practices is essential for ensuring long-term agricultural sustainability and resilience in the face of changing climatic conditions.

The programme commenced with a welcome address by **Dr. Sadananda G. K., Deputy Director, CoE-FPO**, who outlined the objectives of the seminar and emphasized the importance of collaborative efforts among institutions, government agencies, and farming communities in promoting sustainable agriculture.





Addressing the gathering, **Dr. P. M. Sobarad, Additional Director of Horticulture, Lalbagh**, highlighted the need to create greater awareness among farmers regarding natural farming practices and encouraged wider adoption of sustainable cultivation methods. **Dr. V. K. Verma, Regional Director, RCNOF, Bengaluru**, elaborated on the various initiatives being undertaken by RCNOF to promote natural and organic farming through training, awareness generation, and capacity-building programmes. **Smt. Hema H. N., Joint Director of Horticulture**, shared her views on strengthening institutional support systems for farmers and underscored the importance of integrating natural farming principles into mainstream agricultural development efforts.

Presiding over the programme, **Dr. Seetharamu G. K., Director, CoE-FPO**, emphasized the critical role of Farmer Producer Organizations in scaling up natural farming initiatives. He highlighted that FPOs can serve as effective vehicles for aggregation, certification, value addition, and market access, thereby enabling larger numbers of farmers to adopt sustainable agricultural practices and benefit from emerging market opportunities.

Expert Sessions Provide Valuable Technical Insights

The seminar featured a series of technical sessions designed to provide participants with practical knowledge on both production and market-oriented aspects of natural and organic farming.

The first technical session was delivered by **Dr. Manjunath Ramanna, Assistant Professor, College of Horticulture, Bengaluru**, on the topic “Four Pillars of Natural Farming, its Benefits and Major Challenges.” He provided a comprehensive overview of the fundamental principles of natural farming and explained how these practices contribute to improved soil fertility, enhanced biodiversity, reduced cultivation costs, and sustainable agricultural production. He also discussed the practical challenges associated with adoption and strategies to overcome them.



The second session was led by **Shri Siddhartha Shantagiri, Consultant**, who spoke on “Procurement Regulations: Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), Quality Standards and Building Consumer Trust.” His presentation focused on the importance of maintaining quality standards at the farm level, implementing Good Agricultural Practices, and establishing transparent systems that strengthen consumer confidence in natural and organic produce.

The final technical session was delivered by **Shri Narasimha Nakshatri, Consultant**, who discussed “Market Linkages including Certification, Product Traceability and Domestic & Export Opportunities.” The session highlighted the importance of certification systems, traceability mechanisms, and collective marketing through FPOs. Participants gained valuable insights into emerging opportunities in domestic and export markets and the role of organized farmer institutions in accessing premium markets for natural and organic products.

Interactive Discussions Foster Knowledge Exchange

The programme also featured an interactive discussion and question-and-answer session involving progressive farmers, resource persons, and participants. Coordinated by the Director, CoE-FPO, the session provided an opportunity for farmers to share field experiences, discuss implementation challenges, and seek expert guidance on issues related to production, certification, market access, and value realization.

The exchange of practical experiences and expert perspectives contributed significantly to the learning outcomes of the seminar and encouraged participants to explore sustainable agricultural practices within their own farming systems.



Recognizing Champions of Sustainable Farming

A major highlight of the seminar was the felicitation of ten progressive farmers from different districts of Karnataka who have successfully adopted natural and organic farming practices. These farmers were recognized for their outstanding contributions to sustainable agriculture and for demonstrating innovative approaches that can be replicated by farming communities across the state.

The felicitated farmers represented diverse agro-climatic regions and cultivated a wide range of crops including banana, coconut, paddy, spices, fruits, vegetables, floriculture crops, and plantation crops using natural and organic farming methods. Their success stories showcased the practical viability of sustainable farming systems and served as a source of inspiration for fellow farmers and FPO members.



Way Forward

The Regional Seminar on Natural and Organic Farming witnessed the participation of more than 120 farmers, experts, FPO representatives, and government officials from various districts of Karnataka. The programme successfully brought together diverse stakeholders to deliberate on sustainable agriculture, market opportunities, and institutional support mechanisms required for scaling up natural and organic farming.

The seminar reinforced the importance of collaborative efforts among government departments, research institutions, Farmer Producer Organizations, and farming communities in promoting environmentally sustainable agricultural practices. By integrating scientific knowledge, policy support, farmer experiences, and market-oriented strategies, such initiatives contribute significantly towards enhancing farmer incomes, improving soil health, conserving natural resources, and ensuring safe and residue-free food production.

As Karnataka continues to promote sustainable agricultural development, programmes such as this seminar play a crucial role in empowering farmers, strengthening FPOs, and building resilient agricultural systems capable of meeting future economic and environmental challenges.



BRIDGING THE GAP:

FLAGSHIP TRAINING SPARKS INTER-DEPARTMENTAL CONVERGENCE TO DOUBLE FARMERS' INCOME IN RAINFED REGIONS



In a major push toward building agricultural resilience and optimizing natural resources, a five-day national-level capacity-building training programme was successfully hosted at the Centre of Excellence for Farmer Producer Organizations (COE-FPO), UHS Campus, GKVK, Bengaluru.

Running from **February 2 to February 6, 2026**, the milestone initiative focused on the **“Convergence of Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH) Activities with Watershed Project Activities for Doubling Farmer’s Income.”**

Sponsored by the **National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR)** alongside the Department of Land Resources, Government of India, the high-impact event brought together 30 key administrative and technical officials from across Karnataka.

The core objective was clear: shatter the silos dividing different government sectors and equip field-level functionaries with the modern tools necessary to merge resource conservation with lucrative, climate-resilient horticultural activities.

A Dignified Commencing: Top Leaders Call for Seamless Synergy

The initiative kicked off with a high-profile inaugural ceremony aimed at setting a collaborative agenda for agricultural reform. **Dr. Sadananda G. K., Deputy Director of COE-FPO, Bengaluru**, delivered the welcome address, outlining the strategic outcomes expected from the intensive workshop.

The programme was formally inaugurated by two prominent administrative heads: **Sri. Ibrahim Maigur, IAS, Director of the Department of Horticulture, Government of Karnataka**, and **Sri. M. P. Banthanal, Director of the Watershed Development Department, Government of Karnataka**. Both dignitaries heavily emphasized that while standard soil and water conservation measures are foundational, they must seamlessly merge with livelihood-oriented horticultural systems to genuinely maximize economic returns for rainfed farmers.

Additionally, **Dr. Surjit Vikraman, Head of the Centre of Agrarian Studies at NIRDPR, Hyderabad**, oriented the trainees by steering the initial programme introduction and baseline assessments.



From the Classroom to the Field: Leading Voices Share Technical Blueprints



Mrs. Geeta Halli (Deputy Director, Watershed Development Department, Government of Karnataka) unravelled the transition toward science-backed watershed models under the World Bank-assisted REWARD programme, noting its extensive approximately 600 crore deployment across 25 districts in Karnataka.

Dr. A. Natarajan (World Bank Consultant) educated attendees on navigating the delicate Water-Energy-Food and Ecosystem Nexus to safeguard agricultural terrain from volatile climate risks.

Dr. Praveenkumar B. Naikodi (Associate Professor & Head, UHS Bagalkot) demonstrated how Land Resource Inventory (LRI) data acts as a scientific blueprint for precise crop planning and soil-nutrient management.

- **Sri Srinivas Reddy G. V. (Senior Assistant Director of Horticulture)** provided explicit roadmaps for accessing scheme finances, nurseries, and area expansion setups under the MIDH banner.
- **Dr. Premanand Dashwant (Associate Professor, UAS Bengaluru)** detailed physical structural engineering choices that support integrated farming models.
- **Dr. Thimmegowda M. N. (Professor and Head, UAS Bengaluru)** focused heavily on Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) tailored for changing agro-meteorological landscapes.
- **Sri Prasad B. M. (Joint Director, Watershed Development Department)** generated significant interest with a unique session showcasing cactus cultivation as an ultra-resilient, dryland "wealth-generating" commodity.



- **Dr. Suryanarayana Satish (Social Development Specialist for ADB and AIIB)** illuminated how modernizing Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and Water User Associations promotes localized wealth.
- **Dr. K. R. Vasudeva (Professor and Head, College of Horticulture)** and **Dr. D. V. Sudhakar Rao (Principal Scientist, ICAR-IIHR)** broke down the infrastructure requirements of modern cold chains, packhouses, and sorting systems to prevent distress selling.
- **Dr. M. J. Chandre Gowda (Principal Scientist, ICAR-ATARI)** and **Dr. Siddayya (Professor & Head, Institute of Agribusiness Management)** discussed agritech dissemination and institutional case studies detailing how Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) drastically scale up collective market leverage.

Ground Reality Check: The Hodekalu Experience

Theory transitioned into tangible field reality on the third day, as the entire batch departed for an intensive field exposure visit to the **Maidalakeri Sub-Watershed (Micro-watershed: Hodekalu)** located in Haladamaradapalya, Tumakuru district.

Facilitated expertly by **Sri Diwakar, Assistant Director of Agriculture, Tumakuru**, the field visit gave participants a firsthand look at science-based watershed structures in action.

Trainees walked the terrain to examine farm ponds, soil bunding, and specialized horticultural treatments driven entirely by Land Resource Inventory data. Interacting with localized agrarian communities gave the visiting officers practical insights into grassroots implementation obstacles and community-led water maintenance.

Collaborative Blueprints for Sustainable Livelihoods

Shifting away from standard passive learning, the latter part of the workshop pushed the 30 delegates into action-oriented group workshops. Guided by **Sri Manjunatha M. (Senior Consultant, REWARD)**, the participants co-authored tailored performance monitoring systems, identifying clear Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to track regional project success.

The program culminated in district-specific action plan presentations where officials collaborated across departmental lines. They designed integrated roadmaps to introduce climate-smart horticulture into dryland watershed belts upon returning to their home stations. Representing 16 diverse districts, spanning from Bidar and Bagalkot to Mysuru and Kolar, this localized strategic planning ensures the benefits of the training will immediately translate into targeted grassroots action.

As certificates were distributed at the valedictory conclusion, it was universally clear that the event succeeded in creating an interconnected network of progressive field leaders. Armed with cutting-edge agro-spatial concepts, strong inter-departmental alignments, and value-chain insight, these officials are well-positioned to drive agricultural resilience and sustainable income growth across rural India.



TRANSFORMING AGGREGATION INTO ENTERPRISE: STRATEGIC WORKSHOP EMPOWERS KARNATAKA FPOS WITH VALUE ADDITION AND MARKET INTEGRATION



In a decisive move to transition rural agricultural cooperatives from basic field aggregators into high-yielding commercial enterprises, an intensive three-day capacity-building workshop was successfully executed at the Centre of Excellence for Farmer Producer Organizations (CoE-FPO), UHS Campus, GKVK, Bengaluru. Running from **February 18 to February 20, 2026**, the high-level program was structured around **"Value Addition, Compliance & Market Integration for FPOs."**

Organized by the **Karnataka State Department of Agriculture (KSDA)** under the flagship **"Karnataka Raitha Samruddhi Yojane" (KRSY)** initiative, the program worked in close collaboration with the CoE-FPO. The workshop addressed a critical bottleneck in the agricultural ecosystem: while Farmer Producer Organizations have successfully achieved scale in primary crop aggregation, a widespread lack of processing infrastructure, quality certifications, and market-ready compliance models has historically restricted smallholder farmers from capturing higher-margin retail segments.

Technical Leadership Drives Strategic Agribusiness Visions



The workshop commenced with a prestigious inaugural ceremony that set a highly collaborative agenda for regional agribusiness development. **Dr. Ramachandra Naik K., Dean of the College of Horticulture, Bengaluru**, served as the chief inaugurator and challenged the attending executives to inject corporate thinking into collective farming models. He highlighted that branding, processing, and direct market integration are the only sustainable paths to shield small marginal farmers from volatile market price drops.



Joining him as Guest of Honour, **Dr. Vasudeva K. R., Professor and University Head of the Department of Postharvest Management, UHS, Bagalkot**, discussed the economic mechanics of processing, underscoring how simple postharvest interventions can significantly reduce losses and expand shelf life. The program's overarching framework was managed by **Dr. Sadananda G. K., Deputy Director, CoE-FPO, Bengaluru**, who aligned the daily milestones to convert high-level conceptual ideas into immediate operational protocols.

A Masterclass in Food Compliance, Logistics, and Digital Value Chains

1. Navigating Food Safety and Regulatory Compliance

- **Dr. Vasudeva K. R. (Professor and Head, Department of Postharvest Management, College of Horticulture, Bengaluru)** opened the technical series with an orientation on why FPOs must invest in value addition to drive product diversification and curb market risks.





- **Dr. Sadananda G. K. (Deputy Director, CoE-FPO, Bengaluru)** provided practical metrics on identifying raw material advantages, calculating investment feasibility, and building demand-driven enterprise plans.
- **Mr. Riyaz Ahmad (FoSTaC Trainer, Swasthya Food Consulting)** conducted practical training on Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) principles tailored specifically for small-scale plants. He also demystified Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) licensing, detailing the packaging norms, registration categories, and strict documentation required to gain entry into organized supermarket chains.
- **Dr. C. T. Ramachandra (Professor and Head, Department of Processing and Food Engineering, COAE, UAS, Bengaluru)** analyzed Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP), illustrating how spatial factory layout, workflow hygiene, and strict sanitation setups preserve product consistency.

2. Branding, Packaging Innovations, and Market Pitches

- **Mr. Lingaraju (Associate Professor, Indian Institute of Packaging, Bengaluru)** demonstrated how adopting cost-effective, eco-friendly, and eye-catching packaging completely changes a consumer's price perception and maximizes shelf life.
- **Mr. Ranjith P. C. (Research Officer, NIAM, Jaipur)** joined via an interactive virtual module to train FPO leaders in agribusiness forecasting, revenue modeling, and building professional investor pitches to secure commercial capital.



3. Traceability, Technology, and Global Channels

- **Mr. Raghunandan (CEO & Co-Founder, Bhoomee Digital Agri Platform)** highlighted the intersection of technology and agriculture, demonstrating how QR codes, digital platform tracking, and blockchain ledger integration build modern consumer trust through complete transparency.
- **Ms. Pooja B. K. (Assistant Manager, APEDA Regional Office, Bengaluru)** outlined global export market readiness, explaining phytosanitary standards, customs procedures, and APEDA support systems for FPOs aiming for international trade.



Deep Dive: Real-World Processing and Packaging Inspections

To bridge the gap between classroom theory and real-world execution, the second day was dedicated to an experiential exposure visit across two primary industrial nodes: **BeST-HORT (ICAR-IIHR), Hesaraghatta** and the **Indian Institute of Packaging (IIP)** in Dabaspete. ◀◀

At BeST-HORT, participants stood directly on the facility floor to observe grading lines, commercial sorting systems, and mechanized postharvest equipment optimized for delicate horticultural crops. ◀◀

The batch then transitioned to the testing laboratories at the Indian Institute of Packaging, where engineering experts demonstrated structural stress testing, shelf-life assessment methods, and modern sealing technologies. This hands-on tour gave directors a clear understanding of the exact machinery, capital layout, and laboratory tracking needed to establish successful value-added processing plants.



Actionable Outcomes and Valedictory Conclusion

The program culminated in an open reflection and action-planning session facilitated by the CoE-FPO team, where corporate ideas were integrated into localized business models. FPO leaders engaged in peer learning, exchanging regional commodity profiles to sketch out actionable market proposals.

During the valedictory conclusion, **Mrs. Anuroopa, Deputy Director of the Karnataka State Department of Agriculture (KSDA)**, presented completion certificates to the 45 participants. The group included 19 Board Directors, 13 Chief Executive Officers, 5 operational FPO functionaries, and 8 advanced agribusiness observers from the College of Horticulture.

Representing a diverse geographical footprint that spans from Belagavi, Gadag, and Bagalkot to Kalaburagi, Mysuru, and Kolar, this newly upskilled cohort of cooperative leaders returns to their districts ready to apply these learnings. Equipped with practical business methodologies, compliance insights, and a strong professional network, these leaders are prepared to transform primary farming clusters into highly competitive, market-linked agribusiness enterprises across Karnataka. ▶▶





FROM WASTE TO WEALTH: SCALING BIO-DIGESTERS THROUGH FARMER PRODUCER ORGANIZATIONS IN KARNATAKA

– Shreekanth Bhat, Senior Project Manager, TechnoServe



Project Srushti: A Revolutionary Initiative for Sustainable and Regenerative Agriculture in Karnataka

Agriculture in Karnataka is increasingly challenged by rising input costs, declining soil health, and climate variability. Smallholder farmers cultivating maize, finger millet, pulses, and plantation crops are particularly affected by the growing dependence on synthetic fertilizers and pesticides, which increase production costs while reducing long-term soil productivity. To address these challenges, **Project Srushti**, implemented by **TechnoServe**, is promoting regenerative agriculture through the decentralized production of biological inputs using Bio-Digester technology.

The initiative currently engages more than **14,000 farming households** across seven blocks in Karnataka, including Athani, Harapanahalli, Davanagere, Jagalur, Rattihalli, Ranebennur, and Chitradurga. The project focuses on improving farmer profitability, restoring soil biological health, reducing dependence on external inputs, and creating sustainable rural enterprises through Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs).

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At the heart of this intervention is the use of High-Density Polyethylene (HDPE) Bio-Digesters that convert locally available resources such as cow dung, cow urine, bio-culture, rice wash water, vegetable waste, and jaggery into Jeevamrutha. Unlike conventional Jeevamrutha preparation, which requires daily stirring, batch-wise preparation and filtration before application, the Bio-Digester operates as a continuous-flow anaerobic fermentation system. Once established, the microbial ecosystem remains active and continuously produces liquid bio-inputs without requiring complete replacement of the fermentation medium.

The technology offers significant operational advantages. It eliminates the daily labour associated with stirring and batch preparation, reduces maintenance requirements, and produces a liquid formulation with low suspended solids that can be directly applied through drip irrigation, venturi systems, and fertigation units without clogging irrigation infrastructure. A standard 1,500-litre Bio-Digester requires an initial fermentation period of approximately 45 days and thereafter produces around 40 litres of liquid bio-input daily, equivalent to about 1,200 litres per month and nearly 14,600 litres annually.

After accounting for annual operating expenses, farmers can realize a net economic benefit of nearly ₹89,500 annually.

The economic viability of the Bio-Digester is particularly attractive for smallholder farmers. Installation of a 1,500-litre unit requires an investment of approximately ₹20,000, while the annual operational expenditure, primarily for jaggery and other inputs, is estimated at ₹36,500. With an annual production capacity of about 14,600 litres and an estimated market value of ₹10 per litre, the system can generate biological inputs worth approximately ₹1.46 lakh per year.

FPOs and Technology Convergence: Empowering Rural Agribusiness Through Project Srushti

Recognizing that technology adoption requires strong institutional support, Project Srishti has integrated Farmer Producer Organizations into the Bio-Digester ecosystem. Ten FPOs across the project geography have been engaged as business enablers to support technology dissemination, input supply, service delivery, and enterprise development. These FPOs facilitate farmer awareness programs, demonstrations, and adoption campaigns while also acting as local distribution centers for Bio-Digesters and associated organic inputs. By coordinating installation, maintenance, and technical support through trained service providers, FPOs are creating a sustainable business ecosystem around regenerative agriculture technologies. Additional revenue opportunities arise through equipment sales, service commissions, and the marketing of biological formulations.



The initiative also aligns closely with the objectives of the National Mission on Natural Farming, particularly through the promotion of decentralized Bio Resource Centers. Under this model, Women Self-Help Groups, Krishi Sakhis, and rural entrepreneurs can establish village-level production units for Jeevamrutha and other biological formulations. This approach not only improves access to regenerative agriculture inputs but also creates local employment and income-generation opportunities. The availability of ready-to-use biological inputs at the village level is expected to accelerate the adoption of natural and regenerative farming practices among smallholder farmers. To ensure long-term sustainability, Project Srishti has established an Agri Tech Service Provider network consisting of trained rural entrepreneurs who provide installation, preventive maintenance, repair services, farmer training, and technical troubleshooting. Currently, ten ATSPs are operational across the project area. Their integration into FPO business models ensures timely technical support while creating a rural service economy around regenerative agriculture technologies.

The transformative potential of this model is demonstrated by the experience of Mr. Chandru from Turuvanuru village in Chitradurga district. Managing five acres under maize, finger millet, and arecanut cultivation, he adopted a 1,500-litre Bio-Digester under Project Srishti and integrated Bio-Digester-produced Jeevamrutha into his farming system. Positive results in crop productivity and soil health encouraged him to expand his enterprise by installing a 5,000-litre Bio-Digester. Today, he supplies Jeevamrutha to farmers across Karnataka and neighbouring Andhra Pradesh and has sold nearly 25,000 litres of Bio-Digester-produced Jeevamrutha. His farm has evolved into a demonstration and learning centre, contributing significantly to the rapid adoption of Bio-Digesters in the Chitradurga region.

Regenerative Agriculture Revolution: Revitalizing Soil Health and Rural Livelihoods

Project Srishti has successfully demonstrated the technical feasibility, economic viability, and institutional sustainability of Bio-Digester-based regenerative agriculture. More than 250 Bio-Digesters have already been installed, supported by over 14,000 participating farmers, 10 FPOs, and 10 trained ATSPs. Bio-Digesters have also been installed at Taralabalu Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Davanagere, to create awareness and serve as demonstration units for farmers. The JDAs (Joint Directors of Agriculture) from Davanagere and Chitradurga have appreciated the efforts undertaken to promote Bio-Digester-based Jeevamrutha production in the districts. Building on these achievements, the project aims to facilitate the installation of 1,000 Bio-Digesters over the next year through FPO-led business models, Community Bio Resource Centers, demonstration farms, exposure visits, and farmer-to-farmer extension approaches.



The Bio-Digester initiative illustrates how regenerative agriculture can simultaneously address soil degradation, rising input costs, and rural livelihood challenges. By transforming locally available organic waste into high-value biological inputs, farmers are reducing production costs, restoring soil health, and creating new income opportunities. The convergence of Bio-Digester technology, Farmer Producer Organizations, Agri Tech Service Providers, and women-led Bio Resource Centers presents a scalable and replicable model for sustainable agricultural transformation and rural entrepreneurship across India.





FROM COLLECTIVE STRENGTH TO COLLECTIVE PROSPERITY

THE INSPIRING JOURNEY OF ANEKAL HORTICULTURE PRODUCER COMPANY LIMITED

A Vision Rooted in Farmers' Aspirations

Agriculture has always been the backbone of livelihoods for rural communities in Anekal Taluk of Bengaluru Urban District. However, for many years, horticulture farmers cultivating tomato, beans, coloured capsicum, carrot, cucumber, and other vegetables faced persistent challenges. Agricultural inputs were largely available only through private dealers, who sold fertilizers and pesticides at high prices. At the same time, market access remained uncertain and fragmented. Farmers had limited bargaining power, inadequate access to scientific advisory services, and very few opportunities for value addition to their produce.

Recognizing that these challenges could only be addressed through collective action, a group of progressive farmers came together to establish Anekal Horticulture Producer Company Limited on 8 March 2016. What began as a farmer-led initiative has today evolved into one of Karnataka's most successful Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs). The company now serves nearly 1,000 farmer members across 39 villages, covering approximately 2,800 acres under horticultural cultivation.



Building a Farmer-Owned Enterprise

From its inception, the Farmer Producer Organization has worked with a clear objective of improving the economic well-being of its members by providing agricultural inputs at affordable prices, strengthening market access, promoting scientific farming practices, and creating sustainable business opportunities. The organization brings together farmers cultivating a diverse range of horticultural crops, including several varieties of vegetables. By aggregating both the produce and input requirements of its members, the FPO has successfully harnessed the benefits of economies of scale, generating substantial savings and advantages for both producers and consumers.

More importantly, the organization has fostered a strong sense of ownership among its members. Farmers no longer view themselves as isolated producers; instead, they regard the FPO as their own enterprise, an institution dedicated to advancing their collective growth, prosperity, and long-term sustainability.



Transforming Agriculture Through Farmer-Centric Services

Over the years, Anekal Horticulture Producer Company Limited has evolved into a comprehensive service provider organization that caters to the diverse needs of its members.

One of its most notable interventions has been the establishment of an agricultural input business. It supplies fertilizers, pesticides, seeds, micronutrients, and other essential inputs at competitive prices. By directly engaging with manufacturers and wholesale suppliers, the FPO has reduced farmers' dependence on private dealers and ensured the timely availability of quality inputs throughout the cropping season.

The organization has also developed strong market linkages by directly connecting farmers with traders, buyers, and wholesale markets. This has enabled members to obtain better prices for their produce and reduced exploitation by intermediaries.

To further support agricultural activities, the FPO provides farm machinery rental services. This allows farmers to access agricultural machinery and equipment at affordable rates. Such services have helped reduce cultivation costs and improve operational efficiency, proving particularly beneficial for small and marginal farmers.



Scientific Farming for Enhanced Productivity

The establishment of soil testing and water testing laboratories has enabled farmers to make informed decisions regarding nutrient management and crop planning.

To encourage the adoption of improved production practices, the organization regularly conducts awareness programmes, demonstrations, and field-level advisory services. Through collaborations with the Indian Institute of Horticultural Research (IIHR), horticultural universities, GIZ Germany, and other development organizations, members have gained knowledge and awareness about modern agricultural technologies, sustainable farming practices, and emerging market opportunities.

Field visits and exposure programmes have further strengthened farmers' knowledge and confidence, enabling them to undertake commercial horticulture in a more systematic and profitable manner.



Empowering Farmers Through Infrastructure Development

Recognizing that infrastructure is critical for reducing post-harvest losses and improving profitability, the organization has invested in several farmer-centric facilities.

The organization has established a retail outlet for agricultural inputs, which serves as a reliable source of farm inputs and technical guidance. A specialized cold storage unit with a capacity of 5 metric tonnes helps farmers safely store their produce and avoid distress sales during periods of low market prices.

Creating Value Beyond Production

Anekal FPO understands that higher incomes cannot be achieved through production alone; value addition and market diversification are equally important.

The organization actively promotes grading, sorting, branding, and improved post-harvest management practices to enhance product quality and shelf life.

A major step in this direction has been the development of the "Raitha Trupty" brand, which aims to deliver quality agricultural products directly to consumers.

The organization has also promoted food processing activities among women farmer groups, creating new opportunities for local entrepreneurship and income generation beyond primary production.



Growth Reflected in Business Performance

The agricultural input business turnover, which stood at ₹82 lakh in 2016–17, expanded steadily over the years. The organization has recorded a cumulative input business turnover of ₹46.78 crore during this period. In addition, while maintaining profitability and strengthening services for member farmers, the organization has also achieved a cumulative agricultural produce business turnover of ₹368.27 lakh. More importantly, the trust it has earned within farming communities has been immense. The growing demand for membership from non-member farmers is a strong indicator of the FPO's credibility, effectiveness, and impact.

Recognition for Excellence

The outstanding contribution of Anekal Horticulture Producer Company Limited has received recognition at the state level. On 8 May 2022, the Watershed Development Department, Government of Karnataka, honoured the organization with the prestigious "Best FPO of Karnataka" Award. This recognition reflects the dedication and collective efforts of its Board of Directors, management team, staff, and most importantly, the farmer members who have transformed the organization into a model Farmer Producer Organization.



The story of Anekal Horticulture Producer Company Limited demonstrates how collective action, visionary leadership, and farmer-centric business models can transform rural livelihoods. From addressing the basic challenge of access to affordable agricultural inputs to developing infrastructure, promoting value addition, empowering women, and creating market opportunities, the FPO has emerged as a beacon of rural enterprise development.

Today, Anekal FPO is much more than a producer company. It stands as a symbol of what farmers can achieve when they unite around a shared vision. As it continues its journey towards innovation, sustainability, and value creation, the organization serves as an inspiring example for Farmer Producer Organizations.





FROM A REMOTE VILLAGE TO A THRIVING FARMER ENTERPRISE: THE JOURNEY OF SHRI GURU MAHANT FARMER PRODUCER COMPANY

Nestled in Govanakoppa, one of the last villages of Bailhongal Taluk in Belagavi district, farmers faced years of isolation from mainstream development. Limited access to agricultural inputs, machinery, markets, and support services constrained their growth and profitability. Farmers often had to travel long distances to purchase agricultural inputs and lacked access to affordable farm mechanization and organized marketing channels.

Recognizing these challenges, a group of farmers came together in 2021 to establish Shri Guru Mahant Farmer Producer Company Limited (FPCL). What began as a small collective of just 10 members has steadily evolved into a vibrant farmer-owned enterprise serving nearly 1,500 farmer members across 20 villages.

Addressing Farmers' Most Pressing Challenges

From its inception, the FPO focused on solving practical problems faced by local farmers. The collective identified three priority areas:

- Ensuring timely local availability of agricultural inputs.
- Providing farm machinery to small and marginal farmers on a rental basis.
- Creating direct procurement systems to improve market access and farmer returns.

By addressing these fundamental needs, the FPO quickly gained the trust of farming communities and expanded its membership base across the region.

Building Services That Matter

Over the years, Shri Guru Mahant FPCL has developed a range of farmer-centric services that have strengthened agricultural productivity and reduced production costs.

The FPO established a reliable system for supplying agricultural inputs locally, eliminating the need for farmers to travel to distant towns. To promote mechanization, it also set up a Custom Hiring Centre, enabling farmers to access agricultural machinery on a rental basis at affordable rates.

Further expanding its service portfolio, the FPO established a Common Service Centre (CSC) that provides various digital and

government-related services to farmers and their families. These initiatives have transformed the FPO into a one-stop support platform for rural communities.

Strengthening Market Linkages and Value Addition

A major milestone in the FPO's journey has been its efforts to improve market access and create additional value for members' produce.

The organization established a direct procurement centre under the Minimum Support Price (MSP) scheme, enabling farmers to sell their produce directly and receive fair prices. During 2025–26 alone, the FPO facilitated direct procurement of Bengal gram worth approximately ₹1.75 crore, significantly improving market



opportunities for member farmers. The FPO has also encouraged the cultivation of safflower and ventured into value addition through the production of cold-pressed safflower oil, creating new income opportunities beyond primary production.

Partnerships Driving Growth

Recognizing the importance of technical support and innovation, Shri Guru Mahant FPCL has actively collaborated with research institutions, government departments, and private sector partners.

The FPO partnered with the University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad for seed production activities, creating opportunities for farmers to participate in quality seed production. It has also organized field demonstrations, farmer meetings, natural farming training programmes, drone spraying demonstrations, and crop-specific awareness events in collaboration with various stakeholders. These initiatives have enhanced farmers' access to modern technologies, improved farming practices, and strengthened community engagement.

A Growing Enterprise with Expanding Reach

Since its establishment in July 2021, the FPO has steadily expanded its business operations. Starting with input trading, the company gradually diversified into output marketing, procurement, and value-added products.

The FPO has actively participated in agricultural exhibitions and trade events, showcasing its products and connecting with wider markets. Its presence at exhibitions in Bengaluru and other locations has helped build visibility for both the organization and the products of its member farmers.



Preparing for the Next Phase of Growth

One of the most significant achievements for Shri Guru Mahant FPCL has been its selection under the REWARD Programme, which is supporting the establishment of a pulse processing unit. Once operational, the facility will enable value addition for various pulse crops grown in the region and benefit farmers from surrounding villages through better processing and marketing opportunities.

This investment marks an important transition from input supply and aggregation to processing and enterprise development, paving the way for higher farmer incomes and greater market competitiveness.

A Model of Community-Led Transformation

The story of Shri Guru Mahant Farmer Producer Company Limited demonstrates how collective action can transform rural livelihoods. In just a few years, the FPO has evolved from a small farmer initiative into a dynamic enterprise that provides agricultural services, facilitates market access, promotes value addition, and drives technology adoption.

Today, Shri Guru Mahant FPCL stands as a powerful example of how farmer-owned institutions can bridge rural service gaps, create economic opportunities, and build resilient agricultural communities. With a strong membership base, expanding business activities, and ambitious plans for processing and value addition, the FPO is well-positioned to become a catalyst for sustainable agricultural growth in the region.



FPO SUCCESS STORIES

KALALAKONDA SPURTHI FPO: A RAPID GROWTH JOURNEY TO CRORE-RUPEE TURNOVER



Spoorthi Farmer Producer Company was established on 12-02-2022 in Kalalakonda village under the 'Amruth' Scheme of the Department of Agriculture, with the support of SCODWES, Sirsi, the Resource Institution, and under the leadership of 10 Directors. Functioning in accordance with the standards prescribed for Farmer Producer Companies, the organization succeeded in enrolling 500 members within just three months and a total of 1,000 members within six months. As per the company's bylaws, a total share capital of ₹10 lakh was mobilized from these 1,000 members, and the company successfully completed its ROC filing.

In the first year, for undertaking input business activities, the company obtained licenses for the sale of seeds, chemical fertilizers, and pesticides as per the regulations of the Department of Agriculture. By supplying these inputs to the company's shareholder farmers at concessional rates, a business turnover of ₹20 lakh was achieved. Subsequently, for undertaking produce trading activities, the company obtained an APMC license and directly procured maize and soybean from farmers, generating a business turnover of ₹60 lakh during 2023. In the same year, the Resource Institution continuously provided training to shareholders on the importance of share capital mobilization and dividend distribution, and organized exposure visits for enhancing the knowledge of Directors and shareholders. Thereafter, the Board of Directors of Spurthi Farmer Producer Company underwent advanced training at the Centre of Excellence for Farmer Producer Organizations, Bengaluru. Following the departmental guidelines, the company achieved an outstanding performance by recording a total business turnover of ₹1.50 crore in its second year.



Looking at the functioning of the company, under a World Bank-assisted project, the Commissioner, Watershed Development Department selected the organization for the establishment of an oil extraction unit and a millet processing unit as per the project guidelines. Since these units were successfully implemented, shareholder farmers have been able to access pure edible oil and processed millets. In this process, E&Y Company continuously trained the Directors of the organization and facilitated the successful implementation of several initiatives. With the support of the World Bank, the company received a substantial grant of ₹29,28,167, which enabled it to purchase, install, and inaugurate modern machinery and equipment, thereby strengthening its operations and achieving success in its field of activity. Further, during the 2024-25 financial year, considering the performance of the company, Outreach, Bengaluru, selected Spurthi Farmer Producer Company and implemented a special programme in collaboration with the organization. During the Kharif sowing season, under the "Long Staple Cotton Project," free seeds were distributed to 557 shareholder farmers. In addition, through the joint efforts of agriculture and marketing experts, project assistant coordinators, and extension officers, Farmer Field Schools and training programmes were organized to create awareness among farmers regarding the importance of organic farming, balanced fertilizer management, intercropping practices, and pest and disease management.



Continuous guidance was provided to the farmers. As a result, farmers were able to reduce their cultivation costs and double their income, enabling the company to earn a special and lasting place in the hearts of its shareholder farmers. On another front, Good Textile Foundation, Dibella, and Guarantee Regenerative Organic Private Limited selected 500 farmers from among the company's total 1,000 shareholders. A 10-year agreement has been entered into with these farmers to transform them into fully organic cultivators under the National Programme for Organic Production (NPOP). To ensure the success of this initiative, continuous training is being provided in villages and on farmers' fields through verbal guidance and practical demonstrations. Training programmes and study tours are also being organized at agricultural universities. In addition, Krishi Kalpa Foundation, Dharwad, with the objective of doubling farmers' income, has been providing continuous online training four times every month to 1,500 shareholders and Directors of Spurthi Farmer Producer Company. Through subject matter experts, the foundation has been sharing information to strengthen market linkages across Karnataka and has created a major platform for business development. Furthermore, it has been continuously supporting the company by organizing study tours and field visits to help expand business activities and gain exposure to large-scale industries and emerging market opportunities.

FPO COMPLIANCE AND STATUTORY CALENDER

DATE	APRIL- 2026	DATE	MAY- 2025	DATE	JUNE- 2026
07	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deposit of Tax Collected at Source (TCS) for Mar 2026 Deposit of equalization levy for Mar 2026 	07	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deposit of withholding tax (TDS/TCS) for Apr 2026 Deposit of equalization levy for Apr 2026 	07	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deposit of withholding tax (TDS/TCS) for May 2026 Deposit of equalization levy for May 2026
11	Filing of Monthly GSTR 1 (Outward Supply Return) for Mar 2026	11	Filing of Monthly GSTR 1 (Outward Supply Return) for Apr 2026	11	Filing of Monthly GSTR 1 (Outward Supply Return) for May 2026
13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Filing of Monthly GSTR 6 (ISD Return) for Mar 2026 Filing of Quarterly GSTR 1 (Outward Supply Return) for Jan-Mar 2026 	13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Filing of Monthly GSTR 6 (ISD Return) for Apr 2026 Filing of Monthly IFF (For QRMP taxpayers) for Apr 2026 	13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Filing of Monthly GSTR 6 (ISD Return) for May 2026 Filing of Monthly IFF (For QRMP taxpayers) for May 2026
15	Deposit of PF & ESI contribution for Mar 2026	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deposit of PF & ESI contribution for Apr 2026 Filing of Quarterly statement of TCS deposited for Jan-Mar 2025 	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deposit of PF & ESI contribution for May 2026 Deposit of 15% of Advance Tax for FY 2025-26 Issue of TDS certificate for quarter Jan-Mar 2026 (non-salary) & annual TDS certificate in Form 16 (salary) for FY 2025-26
20	Filing of GSTR3B (Summary return) by taxpayers having aggregate turnover > Rs. 5 crores in the previous FY for Mar 2026	20	Filing of GSTR3B (Summary return) by taxpayers having aggregate turnover > Rs. 5 crores in the previous FY for Apr 2026	20	Filing of GSTR3B (Summary return) by taxpayers having aggregate turnover > Rs. 5 crores in the previous FY for May 2026
22	Filing of GSTR 3B (Summary return) by taxpayers having aggregate turnover ≤ Rs. 5 crores in the previous FY and registered in prescribed 14 States / UT for Jan-Mar 2026	25	GST challan payment (PMT-06) by taxpayers having aggregate turnover ≤ Rs. 5 crores in the previous FY if no sufficient ITC available for Apr 2026	25	GST challan payment (PMT-06) by taxpayers having aggregate turnover ≤ Rs. 5 crores in the previous FY if no sufficient ITC available for May 2026
24	Filing of GSTR 3B (Summary return) by taxpayers having aggregate turnover ≤ Rs. 5 crores in the previous FY and registered in prescribed 22 States / UT for Jan-Mar 2026	30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Filing of Annual Return in Form 11 for FY 2025-26 by LLPs Filing of Annual Return in Form FC-4 for FY 2025-26 by Liaison / Branch / Project office in India Form 49C for FY 2025-26 for Foreign Companies having Liaison Office in India Issue of TCS certificate for Jan-Mar 2026 	30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Furnishing of Form-1 (Equalization Levy Statement) for FY 2025-26 Filing of return of deposits / exempted deposits in form DPT-3 for FY 2025-26 Modification of Importer-Exporter Code (IEC) details with Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) for FY 2025-26
25	Filing of ITC-04 (Half-Yearly) for Oct-Mar 2026	31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Filing of Quarterly statement of TDS deposited for Jan-Mar 2026 Filing of Form 61A (Statement of Financial Transactions) for FY 2024-26 		
30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deposit of withholding tax (TDS) for Mar 2026 Filing of GSTR-4 (Annually for Composition Dealers) for FY 2025-26 				

Annual General Meeting (AGM) compliances as per the Companies Act, 2013:

1. Last date for Annual General Meeting – 30 September 2025
2. Filing of Form AOC-4 with Registrar of Companies (annual report including balance sheet and profit and loss statement): Within 30 days of Annual General Meeting. Filing of Form MGT-7 with Registrar of Companies (annual return): Within 60 days of the Annual General Meeting

Disclaimer: The above information are some key compliances under the Income Tax Act, 1961, the GST Act, the Companies Act, the Provident Fund Act, the ESI Act, etc. The information contained in this document have been compiled from published sources believed to be reliable. The information is only for general guidance and is not meant to be a substitute for professional, technical or legal advice in any manner.

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