

Yuva Sehkar Kosh Scheme

Cooperation Department of Himachal Pradesh entrusted to perform developmental as well as regulatory functions for the cooperative societies registered in the State of Himachal Pradesh. Farm holding size of agriculturists of the State of Himachal Pradesh has reduced over the years due to which these farmers face challenges both in production and post-production stages in terms of access to production technology, credit linkages, value addition, processing and difficulty in assessing the market and realise remunerative prices for their produce. Further the participation of youth in Cooperative Movement is very less.

For doubling farmer's income, and for addressing the above constraints, collectivization of these farmers is being proposed to leverage economy of scale through formation of Farmer Producer Organization (FPO) which would be registered as Cooperative society, under the provisions of H.P. Cooperative Societies Act 1968. This will not only provide them institutional mechanism to reduce the cost of production and facilitate better market linkages, but, also will help in augmenting their income, improve rural economy and create job opportunities for the youth in the villages. Under Yuva Sehkar Kosh scheme there is a provision of financial assistance in the shape of grants for the proposed business project of the FPO.

Presently Govt of India's scheme for the formation and promotion of Farmer's producer organisation **PM Kisaan FPO Yojna** is being implemented by NCDC and NABARD in the State of Himachal Pradesh wherein financial assistance is being provided in the shape of formation and incubation cost, management cost, credit guarantee loan to the eligible FPOs. Most of the FPOs formed by NABARD are registered under Company's Act whereas NCDC has formed FPOs and registered them under H.P. Cooperative Societies Act 1968. Under these schemes only one product in the selected block is considered, whereas in the state of HP, farmers of one block produce varied crops like ginger, turmeric, garlic etc. hence there is every apprehension that these small farmers who produce different crops may be leftout from availing the benefits of this scheme.

Another scheme i.e **Mukhyamantri Krishi Kosh scheme** is being implemented by the Department of Agriculture H.P. wherein financial assistance in the shape of seed money (maximum 6 lakhs), collateral free loan upto Rs 7.5 lakhs, interest subvention on the loan is being provided to the eligible FPOs. Majority of the FPOs under this scheme are registered under Company's Act and moreover the quantum of grant available to FPO is not adequate for the development of infrastructural facilities.

Keeping in view of above and to support the working of FPOs, Department of Cooperation's Scheme **Yuva Sehkaar Kosh Scheme** will benefit those leftout small and marginal farmers who are cultivating crops other than the crops selected for the particular block under different schemes. Under this scheme all the FPOs shall be registered as cooperative societies thereby give more momentum to the cooperative movement of the state. This scheme will provide initial sustainability grant to them and to enable them to avail maximum opportunity of existing resources, especially the educated youth and their energy and using the latest technology available in the agriculture and its allied sectors. This is

sought to be done by facilitation of convergence in existing schemes of State and Central Government agencies.

Salient features of the Scheme are as follows:

1. Financial grant can be availed by the eligible Farmer's Producer Organizations (FPOs) for a viable project from the Yuva Sahkaar Kosh
 - a) Training and Community mobilisation support up to Rs 25000 would be provided for one FPO, subject to prior certification by Mentor.
 - b) FPO management cost: Rs 2 Lakhs in the first two years after the membership has reached 100; subject to prior certification by the Mentor and the concerned Assistant Registrar Cooperative Societies.
 - c) Seed-money equal to double of the Equity Grant : Seed-money equal to double the equity generated by the members for any project for day to day operational costs and for creating agricultural infrastructure including processing units, packaging houses, supply chain linkages etc. of the FPO. Provided that this amount will not be spent on payment of allowances/ salaries of the staff. Maximum Rs 15 Lakhs.
2. The Inspector Cooperative from the concerned area will act as mentor of the FPO. He will ensure early registration and then handhold the FPO for a certain period, make it sustainable and then exit.
3. Initially one FPO per development block is proposed.
4. Involvement of educated local youth in day to day management of the society by taking youth with defined qualifications, in the day to day implementation of decisions of the society. It will be mandatory that atleast 60% of the total seats of managing committee should be reserved for the members below the age of 45 years. In addition to this, managing body of the FPO shall co-opt atleast three local educated youth from the area of operation of the FPO, who should be graduates either in Law, Commerce, Marketing, IT or Food supply chain management.
5. An audit fee will be exempted if the FPO resolves and apply to the concerned ARCS for the audit of FPO by the Departmental officials.
6. Convergence with other existing schemes of GOI/ State government.

Yuva Sahkar Kosh Scheme and Model byelaws of the Scheme may be downloaded from the notification section of the web portal of the department. www.coophp.nic.in

For any query, interested persons/ cooperative societies may contact their respective block inspectors/ Assistant Registrar Cooperative Societies. Contact No. of the ARCS are displayed on the web portal of the Department.