

CONCEPT NOTE

Rural Innovators & Startup Conclave – 2018 (RISC-2018)

30 – 31 August, 2018

Background

Rural India is facing many complex problems and challenges. The governments, both at the union and state levels have implemented a wide-range of developmental programmes to address these problems and improve the quality of life of people living across the country. The initiatives that successfully address the rural challenges are often based on effective application of science and technology.

Globally innovation is considered to be the master-key or linchpin to creatively address rural challenges. The announcement of the “Make in India” campaign by Hon’ble Prime Minister has given a tremendous impetus to creating an ecosystem for innovations and technology diffusion in the sphere of rural development. There are many institutions working to promote innovation and startup culture across the country - government, private, voluntary, autonomous bodies etc. Some of them focus on covering the entire spectrum of requirements needed by an entrepreneur such as starting from incubation to market support, to mentoring and so on. There are others who work exclusive domains such as financing, design development etc.

However, the initiatives for accelerating the startup culture are yet to gain momentum among the rural youth of India due to lack of support and mentoring. Encouraging innovations from the grassroots, to address the day to day rural problems has huge potential for transforming both the on-farm and off-farm sectors. Often, the practical innovations developed by people in rural areas do not reach full-scale development due to lack of appropriate support. Therefore, there is a compelling need to create an eco-system which can provide critical support for design and fabrication, facility for linking with mentors, angel investors and incubators, financial guidance, marketing linkages to enable the innovation and focussed on the needs of rural areas more profitable and sustainable.

Innovation and entrepreneurship in rural areas is necessary for providing livelihood and overall economic growth. They help in successful diffusion of technologies and benefit society at large. Candid discussions with the innovators reveal their disenchantment due to constraints of inadequate incubation and design support, uncertain financing, problems of connectivity, and cumbersome certification mechanism.

NIRDPR's Role in Promoting Innovation and Entrepreneurship

NIRD&PR has been striving to create an ecosystem which can effectively promote innovations and entrepreneurship in rural areas as part of its livelihood and entrepreneurship initiatives. We identify rural innovators and entrepreneurs, provide them space for pitching their ideas, assist to improve the design and packaging, link with mentors and network with venture capitalists and angel investors. Our understanding of the rural ecosystem places us in an advantageous position to play this facilitating role.

NIRD&PR organised India's first Rural Innovators Startup Conclave – 2017 on 23rd and 24th March, 2017 at NIRD&PR, Hyderabad to encourage and promote rural innovations. The event is being organised in the memory of late Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam, who championed harnessing technology for development. We have made this an annual event and the overarching purpose of this conclave is to play the role of a connector, which provides a vibrant platform that can connect the dots among Innovators, Startups, Angel investors, Venture capitalists, MFIs, Incubation support Centres, research students, and other creative minds. This annual conclave is the first of its kind aimed at promoting rural innovation in the country.

Rural Innovators Startup Conclave - 2018

Rural Innovators Startup Conclave - 2018 (RISC 2018) is going to be held on 30-31st August, 2018 at NIRDPR, Hyderabad. It will provide a platform to a wide array of innovators and entrepreneurs to showcase their products, pitch and talk about their innovation and get an opportunity to network and source funding. This event will be attended by representatives from Industries, Academia, Government, Non-Government organizations, and most

importantly Entrepreneurs, Venture capitalists, Angel investors and others. The event will have a dynamic jury to screen the best innovations and startups for incubation and acceleration.

As part of the RISC 2018, a new platform called “**Rural Innovation and Design challenge (RiDe)**” will be organized for school children, college students and the general public. The purpose of this initiative is to find potential solutions to critical day to day problems faced by the rural people. The participants from the above three categories will display posters on the possible solutions to critical problems identified by them in each one of the seven themes of RISC 2018.

Objectives of RISC 2018

- (i) Provide a platform for innovators and startups working on rural problems to transform their pilot scale initiatives into impactful ventures for the benefit of rural economy.
- (ii) Creating collaborative and consortium partnerships for promoting rural innovations and entrepreneurship.
- (iii) Extend initial support or tie-ups to innovators and startups to scale up their innovations.
- (iv) Create innovation labs/design labs for India on the caption “Design for India” in various institutions with the support of various funding institutions.
- (v) Provide all the support system for mentoring rural innovators in association with a range of enabling institutions.

Thematic Domains

The thematic domains of the proposed conclave are :

- (a) Agriculture and allied activity
- (b) Green energy solutions (Solar, wind, biogas, hybrid etc.)
- (c) Drinking water and sanitation,
- (d) Waste to wealth (liquid, solid and recycling),
- (e) Sustainable housing,
- (f) Sustainable livelihood,
- (g) Health and elderly care.

The innovators, startups from these fields, will be identified and invited through social media, websites of NIRD&PR, Ministry of Rural development, various institutions and the internet.

This conclave will facilitate the interface amongst the Innovators/ Technologists/ Entrepreneurs; Appropriate Ministries, Departments of the Government; Private Foundations and CSR initiatives that support innovative technologies in various ways; Bankers who can offer financial support; companies who can commercialize and scale up small scale ventures; and marketers who can reach out to the clientele and so on.

During the event, pavilions for demonstration and display of innovative products and posters prepared by innovators, startups and other participants will be erected for enabling exchange of ideas and discussions. In addition, there will be lectures by eminent personalities, presentations by participants to pitch their ideas, panel discussions on important themes that are useful to innovators and startups, networking and exchange of ideas.

The topics for panel discussions this year will be on the topics such as; present status of rural innovators and startups, strategies for scaling up; product/tool designing, intellectual property rights, packaging and marketing; schemes and support systems available for rural innovators and start-ups.

Expected Outcomes

The expected outcomes of the conclave are as follows:

1. The CIAT-RTP of NIRDPR proposes to play the role of a facilitator/connector help the innovators to overcome the hurdles faced by them.
2. Identify and promote innovations that are eco-friendly, energy efficient, cost effective, reduce drudgery and improve productivity.
3. Extend incubation and scaling up support.
4. Facilitate linkages with different enabling institutions for up-scaling selected innovations and startups.

Proposed Partners

The conclave is proposed to be organised in partnership with prominent institutions that play a key role in the space of innovations, design and entrepreneurship such as Department of Science & Technology, State Councils of Science & Technology and Environment, State Rural Livelihood Missions (SRLMs), Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Indian National Academy of Engineering (INAE), National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India (EDII), ICAR Institution, RuTAG, MANAGE, NAARM, Autodesk, TIE, ILFS, Mudra, Various Banks, IITs, CSIR labs, Ashoka Foundation, Aspen Network and Development Entrepreneurs, NASSCOM, Sangham EC, Syngenta Foundation, Sehgal Foundation, TATA Foundation, Yes Foundation, T-hub, National Institute of Design (NID), Indian Institute of Packaging (IIP), National Small Industries Corporation Ltd. (NSIC), Kerala State Council for Science, Technology and Environment (KSCSTE), MS Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF), Ernst & Young etc.
