

15 -ാം കേരള നിയമസഭ

14 -ാം സമ്മേളനം

നക്ഷത്ര ചിഹ്നം ഇല്ലാത്ത ചോദ്യം നം. 1713

29-09-2025 - ൽ മറുപടിയ്ക്ക്

കേര പദ്ധതി

ചോദ്യം		ഉത്തരം	
ശ്രീ. തിരുവഞ്ചൂർ രാധാകൃഷ്ണൻ		ശ്രീ. പി. പ്രസാദ് (കൃഷി വകുപ്പ് മന്ത്രി)	
(എ)	കേര പദ്ധതിയുമായി ബന്ധപ്പെട്ട് ലോകബാങ്കുമായി നാളിതുവരെ നടത്തിയ ആശയവിനിമയങ്ങളുടെ പകർപ്പ് ലഭ്യമാക്കാമോ;	(എ)	കേര പദ്ധതിയുമായി ബന്ധപ്പെട്ട് ലോകബാങ്കിൽ നിന്നും സർക്കാരിലേയ്ക്ക് ലഭ്യമായ കത്തുകളുടെ പകർപ്പ് അനുബന്ധമായി ചേർക്കുന്നു.
(ബി)	പ്രസ്തുത പദ്ധതിയുമായി ബന്ധപ്പെട്ട വാർത്ത ചോർന്നതിൽ കൃഷിവകുപ്പ് നടത്തിയ അന്വേഷണ റിപ്പോർട്ടിന്റെ പകർപ്പ് ലഭ്യമാക്കാമോ?	(ബി)	ലോകബാങ്ക് 27.04.2025-ൽ അയച്ച ഇമെയിൽ ചോർച്ച സംബന്ധിച്ച്, 08.08.2025 തീയതിയിലെ GO(Rt) 807/2025/Agri നമ്പർ ഉത്തരവ് പ്രകാരമുള്ള അന്വേഷണ റിപ്പോർട്ട് നിലവിൽ വിശദമായ പരിശോധനയിലാണ്.

സെക്ഷൻ ഓഫീസർ

അനുബന്ധം

Sl no.	Subject	Letter date
1	Draft response to comments from DARE	04.05.2022
2.	Project Identification Mission	15.11.2022
3	Details of WB officials	18.11.2022
3	Mission Schedule	28.11.2022
4	Project Identification Mission	17.02.2023
5	Project Invitation for negotiation	29.01.2024
6	Pre- Negotiation meeting	12.03.2024
7	Comments on Project Appraisal Document	14.03.2024
8	Project Board Approval Letter	05.11.2024
9	Change of Task team Leader	13.01.2025
10	Declaration of Effectiveness of Project	03.02.2025
11	Project Implementation Support Mission	07.04.2025
12	Project Implementation Support Mission	04.06.2025
13	Project Implementation Support Mission	11.08.2025

635/pw. Secy & APChor

Email

Ishita Roy IAS

KERA PPR: Draft Response for DARE comments.docx

From : vghatate@worldbank.org

Subject : KERA PPR: Draft Response for DARE comments.docx

To : Ishita Roy IAS <apc.agn@kerala.gov.in>

Cc : wtocellkerala@gmail.com, subhashtv@gmail.com, agoodland@worldbank.org, afissha@worldbank.org, paramveer jeevika <paramveer.jeevika@gmail.com>, sthomas10@worldbank.org

Wed, May 04, 2022 04:22 PM

1 attachment



Dear Ishita ma'am,

Please find attached draft response to the comments from DARE on the KERA PPR for your kind perusal and in finalizing the response.

Please let us know if you have any further queries or concerns and we will be happy to discuss this further with you.

Kind regards

Vinayak

Updated Response for DARE comments.docx
19 KB

DRAFT RESPONSE FOR DARE

The Department of Agriculture Development and Farmers' Welfare sincerely appreciates the valuable comments and feedback received on the PPR submitted for the proposed KERA project. We fully acknowledge the need for greater detail on various aspects of the proposed project. However, given the limitations associated with the format, the submitted PPR (ID-11565) focuses on highlighting critical investment areas to be supported under the proposed project.

As is the norm at PPR stage, the proposed KERA project is now at a concept stage wherein long-term vision, broad investment areas, and envisaged outcomes have been clearly defined and outlined in the PPR. Once the project concept as outlined in the PPR is approved for full scale preparation, Kerala Agriculture Department will anchor development of the detailed project reports and associated analytics for KERA. Please see below the response to the comments on the PPR draft for your review and further guidance.

A. TECHNOLOGICAL INTERVENTIONS

The proposed project envisages large scale of climate resilient farming systems that are well aligned to agroecological characteristics and micro-climates at the local level. Kerala government has notified 5 Agro-ecological zones (AEZ) and 23 agro-ecological units, and the Kerala Agriculture University is developing a repository of cropping combinations and agronomic best practices for each of the zones. The proposed project will enable wide scale adoption of agro-ecologically suitable and climate resilient farming systems through

- i) **AEZ based farming systems:** Technical Assistance to Department of Agriculture for revamping agriculture support and farmer incentive schemes to provide tailored support for AEZ specific best practices. It is expected that through the project support, at least 1 million farmers across the state will access revamped agriculture support programs.
- ii) **Modernizing Krishi Bhawans:** Strengthening the agriculture extension system by developing ICT driven Krishi Bhawans that will deliver a wide range of information and advisory services. More than 1,000 Krishi Bhawans will be upgraded to provide technology driven agro-advisory, weather and market intelligence services.
- iii) **Climate Resilient Inputs:** Improving the supply chain for productivity enhancing climate resilient inputs and technologies such as seeds through promotion of best practising seed groups. At least 10,000 farmer seed groups will be developed to improved supply of AEZ specific seed varieties. Over 1,000 new and existing CHCs will be strengthened to improve access to small-holder mechanization services. Linkages between KVKs, engineering colleges and local CHCs will be strengthened to foster innovations in mechanization.
- iv) **Improved Mechanization:** Facilitating improved access to smallholder mechanization services by universalizing access to custom hiring centres (CHCs) and strengthening linkages between farmer groups, KVKs, engineering colleges and local CHCs.
- v) **Improved micro-irrigation coverage:** The project will also promote increased adoption of micro-rigation in combination with precision agriculture approaches for efficient input use and improved productivity. This will be implemented through a combination of farmer led irrigation

development models and partnership with local self-governments. It is envisaged that at least 10,000 ha of additional land will have enhanced access to irrigation through project investments.

- vi) **Adoption of energy efficient technologies:** The project will promote wide scale adoption of green and energy efficient technologies including adoption of solar powered equipment, integrated farming models that support judicious use of inputs and carbon neutral production practices.
- vii) **Improved inter-departmental coordination:** Finally, the project will support improved coordination between key stakeholder departments such as Department of water resources and Department of Local Self Government to ensure integrated planning especially in the areas of local agriculture infrastructure investments, crop calendar-based irrigation planning and management, and river-basin management for improved flood control.

B. IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISM

Considering the multi-sectoral nature of the proposed project, it is envisaged that a multi-departmental steering committee will be constituted, to be chaired by the Chief Minister and to include senior stakeholders from key departments including but not limited to Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Animal Husbandry, Fisheries, Industries, Cooperation, Local Self-Government, and Rural Development. The department of agriculture is exploring the potential for setting up a special implementation unit housed internally but comprising of a combination of technical professionals hired from open market and human resource seconded from stakeholder departments. The project will institute real time data and information sharing mechanisms and will institutionalize regular review meetings to bolster convergence. This is expected to bring in higher synergy in implementation of farmer centric programs being implemented by different departments and improve the intensity of investments at farm level. Furthermore, the inter-departmental coordination will also inform identification of new and existing MSMEs to be supported in clusters where complementary interventions are to be rolled out at production and postproduction levels. For example, interventions around replantation of senile coconut palms and root wilt management at production level will be accompanied by support to MSMEs within the cluster working on aggregation and value-added products within the coconut value chain. At the cutting edge, upgraded Krishi Bhawans will deliver a range of services through a single window approach utilizing mobile and web based applications that will support two-way information flow. Farmers will be supported to get on board the newly developed ICT platforms and utilize a wide range of information and access support services to make informed cultivation and marketing choices.

C. OVERALL IMPACT

In terms of overall impact of the proposed project, it is envisaged that there will be three major outcome areas viz. Improved Productivity, Resilience and Profitability.

- i) The project will boost productivity across several value chains through a combination of AEZ specific high yielding varieties, improved irrigation, improved agro-weather advisory, access to mechanization services, and reduced post-harvest losses. The project will support delivery of tailored inputs and extension suited to soil health and agro-ecology. The project is targeting 30-50% increase in productivity of selected crop value chains and

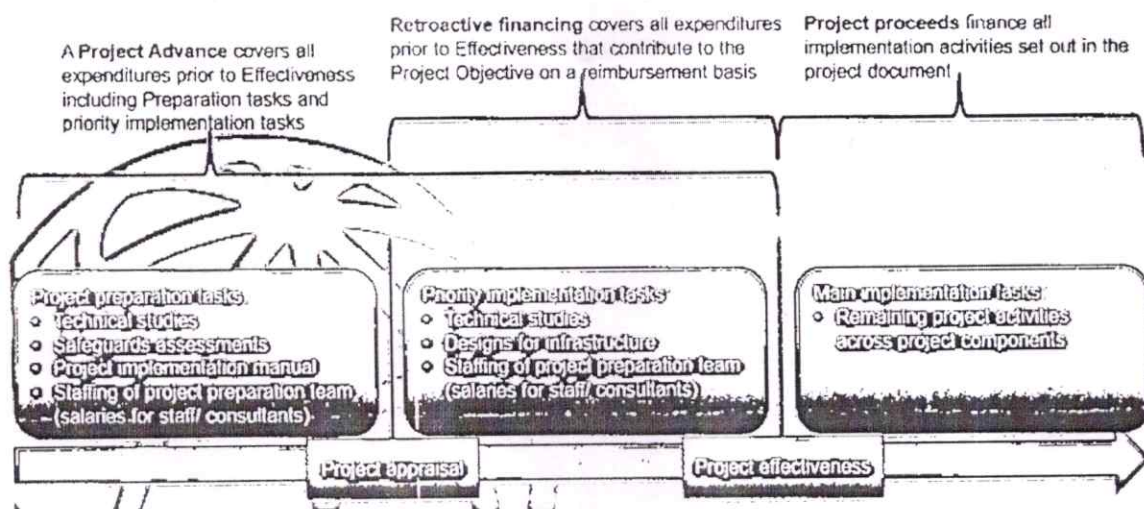
- will benefit nearly 1 million farmers through direct outreach and another 2 million farmers through systemic impact.
- ii) The project will support improved resilience for farmers in Kerala by increasing their adaptation and mitigation capacity. On adaptation front, the project's emphasis on agro-ecology based cropping decision coupled with climate resilient inputs will boost resilience. It is envisaged that over a million farmers will adopt climate smart agriculture practices through direct and indirect project interventions. The project will also support a range of mitigation options including improved weather-based risk insurance products, energy efficient irrigation systems and cold chain infrastructure. The project will also boost economic resilience for Kerala farmers by enabling access to more diverse national and international markets, increased value addition to improved realized value, and creation of new employment opportunities in downstream value chain activities.
 - iii) The project will support improved profitability for small-farmers through a range of interventions supporting cost efficient production systems, weather and market information services, and value addition. The focus of project support would be to enable availability of critical information for farmers to make informed, remunerative decisions in production and marketing. The project will also support direct farmer-consumer linkages through a combination of local market development and support to aggregation focused MSMEs.

D. PRIVATE SECTOR ENGAGEMENT

The project will intensively engage with private sector stakeholders under the project including but not limited to agri-business focused MSMEs, export-oriented food value chain businesses, cold chain logistics providers, and agri-tech entrepreneurs. KERA will adopt the productive alliance approach enabling symbiotic partnerships between farmer organizations, private sector stakeholders and government departments. The nature of the partnership and roles for each stakeholder will depend on the value chain and the agro-ecological unit. The project will support bringing in private sector capacity and investment in four key areas viz. Productivity enhancing technologies, Agri-tech services, aggregation and value addition, and branding. In terms of support to private sector stakeholders, the Government of Kerala, through the project as well as ongoing programs will build capacity of small MSMEs to leverage finance and technical assistance for starting up and expanding agri-business operations. At an individual or firm level, financing would focus on leveraging resources available under key schemes such as PMFME, the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund, and PM Kisan Sampada among others. The project aims to leverage at least USD 100 million in private sector financing and community contributions to emerging agri-business clusters. It is envisaged that the project will not only support private sector engagement but also contribute to overall expansion of the agri-business sector.

The Department of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Government of Kerala sincerely thanks the Department of Agriculture, Research, and Extension and Indian Council of Agriculture Research (ICAR) for the valuable inputs and feedback on the PPR. We sincerely look forward to receiving your concurrence on the project outline so that detailed project documentation and analytics can be initiated at the earliest.

Figure 2 Options for Financing Project Preparation



Annex A: Mission Itinerary

KERA Mission – Visit of the World Bank Team 30th November – 15th December 2022

Date and Time	Name and Designation of Government of Kerala officials	Venue
Wednesday 30th November 2022		
2.00pm - 3.00pm	Dr. B. Ashok IAS, Secretary (Agriculture) + SAPB Chairman + Director (Agri)	Executive Lounge, Hotel Mascot
3.00pm – 4.00pm	Challenges/Issues /Problems to be addressed in KERA	Executive Lounge, Hotel Mascot
4.00pm – 4.15pm	Tea	Executive Lounge, Hotel Mascot
4.15pm – 5.30pm	Interaction with Select FPOs	
6.30pm – 7.30pm	Mr. P. Prasad, Hon'ble Minister of Agriculture	Hotel Mascot
7.30pm onwards	Dinner	Hotel Mascot
Thursday 1st December 2022		
10.30am – 11.30am	Mr. Suman Billa IAS, Principal Secretary, Industry/ MSME Sri Harikishore IAS	Chamber, 2nd Floor North Block
12.00pm – 1.00pm	Vice Chairman & Member, State Planning Board	State Planning Board
2.30pm – 3.30pm	Mr. Biswanath Sinha IAS, ACS Finance and CEO, RKI	Chamber
3.30pm – 4.40pm	Mr. Mohammed Y. Safirulla IAS, Secretary, Finance and Deputy CEO, RKI	Chamber
6.00pm – 6.30pm	Dr. K.M. Abraham IAS, CPS to Chief Minister	Chamber
Friday 2nd December 2022		

Date and Time	Name and Designation of Government of Kerala officials	Venue
10.30am – 11.30am	Ms. Ishita Roy IAS, Agricultural Production Commissioner (APC) & Dr. B. Ashok IAS, Secretary, Agriculture	Hotel Mascot- Harmony Hall
11.00am – 11.30am	Presentation on the Agri Sector in the State	Director of Agriculture
Saturday 10th December 2022		
8.30am – 11.00am	Aluva Farm – join CM and MoA for official functioning	State Seed Farm, Aluva
11.00am – 1.00pm	Visit Krishi Bhavan Choomikkara	Choomikkara
1.00pm – 2.00pm	Proceed to KAU Thrissur	
2.00pm – 3.00pm	Discussions with the FPO Members of Athirappally Tribal Valley Project	Chalakkudy Rest House
3.00pm – 6.00pm	Visit to Agri business incubator and VA units and Banana & Honey Park	Kannara District
6.00pm onwards	Stay at KAU Guest house	KAU Vellankkara
Sunday 11th December 2022		
8.00am – 3.00pm	Proceed to Palakkad (full day field visit in Palakkad)	KB Alathur
3.00pm onwards	Proceed to Vettilappara; stay at guest house at Plantation Valley Resort	Vettilappara, Thrissur
Monday 12th December 2022		
8.00am – 2.00pm	Proceed to Alappuzha and visit the Kuttanad Paddy fields, KCPM	R-Block, Kuttanad rice fields
2.00pm – 3.00pm	Lunch and discussion with officials	
18.00 onwards	Return journey to Thiruvananthapuram	
Tuesday 13th December 2022		
10.00am – 5.30pm	Technical workshop Day 1	State Agriculture Management and Training Institute
Wednesday 14th December 2022		
10.00am – 2.00pm	Technical workshop Day 2	State Agriculture Management and Training Institute
7.30pm – 10.00pm	Dinner with Secretary, Agriculture	Taj Kovalam Hotel
Thursday 15th December 2022		
1.30pm – 2.30pm	Mission wrap-up with Dr. B. Ashok IAS, Secretary (Agriculture)	Room 406, Secretariat Annex - II

ⁱ In fact, AgGDP fell by 1.4% per annum between 2011/12 and 2018/19

ⁱⁱ Kerala ranks first among composition indicators of human capital; see for instance Mehra, K., Dogga, S., & Kuruva, M. B. (2022). The state of human capital for Indian states: An empirical evidence from health and education performance. *International Journal of Health Sciences*, 6(S7), 2210–2223.

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://theprint.in/economy/keralas-14-15-bn-2019-remittances-could-see-2-bn-drop-this-year-world-bank-expert/455922/>

^{iv} The latest data (2021/22) from the Reserve Bank of India reveals the daily wage rate for male agricultural laborers in Kerala to be Rs727 compared with Rs288 in UP and Rs395 in Haryana, for instance.

^v The formal response confirming Bank support for the proposed project was issued on November 24, 2022..

- ^{vi} <https://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/country-climate-development-reports>
- ^{vii} "Paris Alignment" refers to the commitment by the World Bank Group (WBG) to financial flows with the goals of the Paris Agreement of COP21 (from December, 2015) to further mainstream climate into our development activities.
- ^{viii} This reform was supported under the Resilient Kerala P4R operation.
- ^{ix} Information and communication technology.
- ^x The existing manual of packages of practices is not yet calibrated by AEZ/ AEU.
- ^{xi} As well as KAU, Kerala hosts the Central Plantation Crops Research Institute (CPCRI: located I Kasaragod covering coconut, arecanut and cocoa), the Central Tuber Crops Research Institute (CTCRI: Trivandrum: tuber crops), the Indian Institute of Spices Research (IISR: Calicut; spices) and the Rubber Research Institute of India (RRII: Kottayam; rubber). All except the RRII are part of the India Council of Agricultural Research. KAU has 6 agricultural research stations, 18 research stations, 7 centers of excellent and supports research in 8 additional colleges.
- ^{xii} The mission participated in the event led by the Chief Minister announcing declaring that the Government's seed farm as Aluva is the country's first carbon neutral farm.
- ^{xiii} <https://www.ecostat.kerala.gov.in/storage/publications/1.pdf>
- ^{xiv} <https://www.fao.org/giahs/giahsaroundtheworld/designated-sites/asia-and-the-pacific/kuttanad-below-sea-level-farming-system/en/>
- ^{xv} This more sustainable approach is being pioneered in other low-lying regions/ countries including the Netherlands.
- ^{xvi} <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/kerala/rubber-plantations-in-crisis-with-prices-in-a-free-fall/article65874675.ece>
- ^{xvii} <https://invest.kerala.gov.in/?sector=rubber>
- ^{xviii} <https://coffeebi.com/2020/03/12/indian-coffee-production-an-overview-of-five-decades-of-transformation/>
- ^{xix} After Tamil Nadu and excluding Union Territories (Delhi, Chandigarh and Pondicherry) and the small states of Goa and Mizoram (with populations of less than 1.5 million) – data from the 2011 Census https://cdn.ihf.com/www/blog/india_map_and_urbanization_rates.pdf
- ^{xx} Total revenue from tourism in 2019 converted at annual average US\$ exchange rate of Rs70.4059. Data from https://www.keralatourism.org/tourismstatistics/tourist_statistics_202120220530122636.pdf
- ^{xxi} There are around 4 million Keralites outside India of which many are in the Middle East. Kerala is also estimated to have around 5 million interstate migrant workers from elsewhere in India (2020).
- ^{xxii} https://www.dnb.com/business-directory/company-information/other_food_manufacturing_in_kerala.html
- ^{xxiii} Annual Survey of Industries, 2018/19 <https://www.ecostat.kerala.gov.in/storage/publications/627.pdf>
- ^{xxiv} The traditional population pyramid for Kerala shows a 'bulge' in the 10 – 14 years old group; since this is data from the 2011 census, this group are now young adults agitating for employment.
- ^{xxv} <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/28418/economics-wp213.pdf>
- ^{xxvi} This includes an allocation of US\$19 billion from GoI for food processing MSMEs as part of their CoVID recovery program.
- ^{xxvii} For example, the Prime Minister's Formalization of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PM-FME) Scheme under the MoFPI.
- ^{xxviii} <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2017/09/22/world-bank-study-entrepreneur-training-focused-on-mindset-proves-more-effective-than-traditional-business-skills-in-west-africa>
- ^{xxix} These include food processing parks in Kakkancherry and Adoor, a small industries park in Mazhavanoor, a sea food park in Aror, the mega food park in Palakkad and the special economic zone that includes agro-food processing also in Kakkancherry.
- ^{xxx} Geographical Information System.
- ^{xxxi} As covered under the World Bank Operation Policy 8.00 on Rapid Response to Crises and Emergencies.
- ^{xxxii} Co-financing is provided by the Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and the *Agence Française de Développement* (AFD). <https://www.aiib.org/en/projects/details/2021/approved/India-Resilient-Kerala-Program-for-Results.html>
- ^{xxxiii} Integrated river basin management plan is developed for Pamba Basin and implementation commenced.
- ^{xxxiv} Disaster risk financing and insurance capacity of GoK and vulnerable households in Kerala are improved.
- ^{xxxv} The Bank is currently preparing an additional financing (AF) for this operation which would augment the overall resource envelope and extend the program by two years. It would not impact DLI 8 but would add some additional aspects of coastal zone management.
- ^{xxxvi} In particular, the twelve-month time period and the 20% limit of total project proceeds.

18/11/2022, 17:03

Email

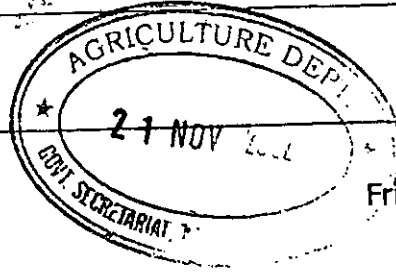
646/Secy/Agri/22

657

Email

Dr B ASHOK IAS

Draft schedule of KERA Mission



Fri, Nov 18, 2022 01:10 PM

From : sthomas10@worldbank.org

Subject : Draft schedule of KERA Mission

To : Dr B ASHOK IAS <secy.agri@kerala.gov.in>, vc vetuny
<vc.vetuny@gmail.com>

Cc : cjackson1@worldbank.org, afissha@worldbank.org,
yghatate@worldbank.org, Isrinivas@worldbank.org

Dear Dr. Ashok,

PFA the draft mission schedule. Please feel free to add more meetings in the gaps.
As discussed, the CM's meeting will be arranged by you.

Thanks and regards,

Sony

KERA Mission 30th Nov. to 2nd Dec.

Schedule of Meetings

Date & Time	Name and Designation Of the GOK Officials	Remarks
30 th Nov, 2022		
1.30pm to 6pm	Dr. B. Ashok, Secretary Agriculture	Confirmed Department level meeting with HODs and senior officers
6.30pm	Mr. P. Prasad, Hon'ble Minister of Agriculture	Confirmed Introductory meeting
1 st Dec, 2022		
10 am.	Mr. Suman Billa, Pri. Secretary, Industry/MSME	TBC
11am.		
12am.		
2.30pm	Mr. Biswanath Sinha, ACS Finance and CEO RKI Mr. Mohammed Y. Safirulla, Secy. Finance and Depty. CEO, RKI	Confirmed
3.30pm		
6pm	Dr. KM Abraham, CPS to Chief Minister	Confirmed
2 nd Dec, 2022		
10.30am	Ms. Ishita Roy, Agriculture Production Commissioner (APC)	Confirmed
4pm	Dr. VP Joy, Chief Secretary	Confirmed At CS' Conference Hall

Discussion with
 Dept officials
 continue through out
 s/t to MS team
 Commenced
 19/4/2022
 As per



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PPM cell
THE WORLD BANK
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November 15, 2022

PPM
4:00
Ms. Ishita Roy
Agriculture Production Commissioner
Room 102, Secretariat Annex - II
Thiruvananthapuram
Kerala - 695001



Dear Ms. Roy

INDIA: Proposed Kerala Climate Resilient Agri-Value Chain Modernization (KERA) Project
Second Project Identification Mission
November 30th – December 15th, 2022

A second Identification Mission for the proposed Kerala Climate Resilient Agri-Value Chain Modernization (KERA) Project is scheduled from November 30th – December 15th, 2022. The formal request letter [No. 4/2/2011 - World Bank (I & R)] dated November 14, 2022, was received by the Bank and a response confirming same has been issued.

The mission team would be comprised of Messrs./Mmes. Chris Jackson (Task Team Leader & Sr. Agricultural Economist), Azeb Fissaha (Co-Task Team Leader & Sr. Agricultural Specialist), Vinayak Ghatate (Co-Task Team Leader & Sr. Rural Development Specialist) and Sony Thomas (World Bank Consultant, State Partnership Advisor).

The mission will be organized in two phases:

- Phase 1 will take place from 30th November – 2nd December and will focus on high-level discussions of the proposed project within the context of the newly-approved sector strategy as set out in the Value Added in Agriculture Mission (VAAM) of the Government of Kerala. The mission is expected to brief senior officials of the Government of Kerala.
- Phase 2 will take place from around 7th December – 15th December and will focus on the technical level to discuss specific interventions the project may support – based on past dialogue between the World Bank and the Government of Kerala. This will include a field visit. The mission will also apprise the counterpart team on the project processing steps and the requirements on the client side leading to the Bank's formal Appraisal of the proposed project.

India Country Office, 70 Lodi Estate, New Delhi 110 003, India
P.O. Box 416, Phone: +911141479301 / +911149247601

The expected outputs of the mission will be the following:

- Confirmation from the Government of Kerala of a core counterpart team including a senior official as the primary counterpart plus additional technical staff covering the main key areas (including procurement, financial management and safeguards);
- An aide memoire summarizing the key recommendations for the proposed project development objective(s) and main elements; and
- An agreed indicative timeline for project preparation, including key tasks/ studies to be commissioned and to be completed prior to Appraisal.

The Mission would like to request a wrap-up meeting with the Chief Secretary, along with the Principal Secretaries, and the Directors of the participating line departments, on 15th December 2022.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Jackson", is placed over a dark rectangular background.

Chris Jackson
Senior Agricultural Economist and Task Team Leader

Ms. Ishita Roy

-3-

November 15, 2022

cc:

Government of Kerala

Dr. K M Abraham, Chief Principal Secretary to CM
Mr. Biswanath Sinha, Addl Chief Secretary, Finance and RKI
Ms. Sarada G Muraleedharan, Addl. Chief Secretary, LSGD
Mr. Suman Billa, Principal Secretary, Industries
Dr. B. Ashok, Secretary Agriculture
Mr. T V Subhash, Director, Agriculture
Mr. V R Vinod, Commissioner, Food Safety

18/11/2022, 17:17

Email

Email

Dr B ASHOK IAS

Short bios as suggested

From : sthomas10@worldbank.org

Subject : Short bios as suggested

To : Dr B ASHOK IAS <secy.agri@kerala.gov.in>

Cc : vc vetuny <vc.vetuny@gmail>



Nov 18, 2022 12:08 PM

1 attachment

Sir,

As suggested by you, PFA the short bios of the visiting team who will be meeting the CM.

Best,

Sony

Short profiles.docx
15 KB

Handwritten notes and signatures: "PPM u//", "in use & fine", "US (Phy)", and a large signature "Al/Phy" with a checkmark.

15

Chris Jackson, Lead Agriculture Economist, Task Team Leader (TTL)

Chris Jackson is a senior agricultural economist with the World Bank. Having joined the World Bank in 2004, Chris has worked extensively in South Asia, East Asia and Africa. He is a seasoned Task Team Leader with extensive experience of preparing large projects in the agriculture and food sector. Examples include a commercial agriculture project in Ghana, a multi-sector project in the coffee and rice sectors in Vietnam, and the watershed development project in Himachal Pradesh. He has also been TTL to many projects under implementation in the fields of agricultural value chain development, rural finance, the plantation sector, and rural agribusiness. He has also contributed or led many pieces of analytical work including poverty assessments, sector studies (including for example an assessment of Sri Lanka's tea estates), country strategies for economic growth and public expenditure reviews. Currently based in Washington DC, Chris has spent more than half his career in country offices with field assignments in Nepal, Ghana and Vietnam. Prior to joining the World Bank in 2004, Chris was an economist in the UK Government with the UK's Department for International Development. Chris is from the UK and has a PhD in Economics from the University of Nottingham.

Ms. Azeb Fissaha Mekonnen, Senior Agriculture Specialist and Co-TTL

Azeb Fissaha Mekonnen is a Senior Agriculture Specialist with the World Bank based in New Delhi. She has 15 years of extensive experience in World Bank operations in various countries in Africa and Asia. Azeb's operational experience include a range of projects that assist countries to improve agriculture research and development institutions; access to finance for agriculture and rural livelihoods; promotion of climate smart agriculture technologies, disaster recovery and rebuilding in the rural space and policy/institutional reform initiatives. In addition to her operational experience, Azeb has experience promoting partnerships and convening knowledge exchanges among key stakeholders in the agriculture and rural development arena. Prior to joining the World Bank New Delhi office in 2021, Azeb was based in the World Bank Headquarters in Washington DC. Azeb has an MA from the Georgetown University in International Business and Policy and Masters of Public Policy from the Central European University.

Sony Thomas, World Bank Consultant, State Partnership Advisor

Sony Thomas is a senior public affairs specialist and consultant with the World Bank. He is currently supporting Bank's task team as the State Partnership Advisor. He has more than 25 years of global experience in public affairs, governance, political economy, communication and outreach. Sony started his career as a news reporter with Turner Broadcasting System, and later, a war correspondent with CNN International. He has also worked with United Nations Foundation as communication and global outreach specialist. Over the past 30 years he has worked in 34 countries across five continents. Sony has an MBA and PG Diploma in journalism from NTU Singapore. He is currently based in Trivandrum. He can be contacted @ 91-9745500455 | Email: sthomas10@worldbank.org

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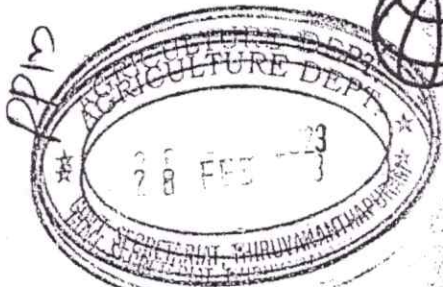
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Pr. Secretary, Agri

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February 17, 2023

by WB KERA file
PPM w/

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Dr. V-P-Joy
Chief Secretary
Government of Kerala
Secretariat
Thiruvananthapuram - 695001

Chief Secretary

Dear Dr. Joy:

***Proposed Kerala Climate Resilient Agri- Value Chain Modernization (KERA) Project
Second Project Identification Mission, November 30 – December 15, 2022***

Thank you for supporting the above-mentioned mission. The attached Aide Memoire summarizes the mission's main findings and agreements.

The mission confirmed the relevance of the proposed project to the state-level policy priorities of the Government of Kerala, with the objective of reinforcing Kerala's structural transformation by strengthening value addition and climate resilience in priority agricultural value chains and districts.

I request your leadership in staffing the counterpart project preparation team as soon as possible to expedite the project preparation.

The Bank values the partnership with you. Please do not hesitate to contact Messrs. Chris Jackson, Senior Agriculture Economist (cjackson1@worldbank.org) and Laurent Gonnet, Lead Financial Sector Specialist (lgonnet@worldbank.org) for further information or clarification.

Yours sincerely,

Auguste Tano Kouame
Country Director, India

Encl. Aide Memoire

Dr. V.P. Joy

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February 17, 2023

cc:

Mr. Rajesh Khullar, Executive Director (India), The World Bank

Mr. Rajeev Topno, Senior Advisor to Executive Director (India), The World Bank

Government of India

Mr. K. Manicka Raj, Joint Secretary, DEA, Ministry of Finance

Government of Kerala

Dr. K M Abraham, Chief Principal Secretary to Chief Minister

Mr. Biswanath Sinha, Addl Chief Secretary, Finance and RKI

Dr. B. Ashok, Agriculture Production Commissioner and Principal Secretary, Agriculture

Ms. Sarada G Muralcedharan, Addl. Chief Secretary, LSGD

Mr. Suman Billa, Principal Secretary, Industries and Commerce

Ms. K S Anju, Director, Agriculture

Mr. V R Vinod, Commissioner, Food Safety

Mr. Mohammed Y Safirulla, Deputy CEO, RKI

**INDIA: Proposed Kerala Climate Resilient Agri- Value Chain Modernization
(KERA) Project Second Project Identification Mission
November 30th – December 15th, 2022**

Aide Memoire

I. INTRODUCTION

1. A World Bank Team¹ conducted the second identification mission for the provisionally-titled Kerala Resilient Agri-Value Chain Modernization (KERA) project from November 30 – December 15, 2022. As per the Mission Announcement Letter dated November 15, 2022, the objectives of the mission were:
 - Confirmation from the Government of Kerala (GoK) of a core counterpart team including a senior official as the primary counterpart plus additional technical staff covering the main key areas (including procurement, financial management and safeguards);
 - An aide memoire summarizing the key recommendations for the proposed project development objective(s) and main elements; and
 - An agreed indicative timeline for project preparation, including key tasks/ studies to be commissioned and to be completed prior to Appraisal.
2. The mission was held in two phases: phase 1 concentrated on a series of high-level meetings with senior GoK officials. Phase 2 involved more technical discussions and a four-day field visit to join the Honorable Chief Minister and Minister of Agriculture formally declare the Aluva Seed Farm a carbon neutral enterprise, followed by visits to Thirssur, Alappuzha, Kottayam and Pathanamthitta districts. The mission itinerary is attached at **Annex A**.
3. The mission met with representatives of the Department of Agriculture (DoA), Department of Food Processing Industries (DoFPI), Department of Industries and Commerce (DoIC), representatives of: Kerala Agriculture University (KAU), Kerala Bureau of Industrial Promotion (KBIP), the State Level Banker's Committee (SLBC), Agricultural technology Management Agency (ATMA), National Bank for Agriculture and Rural development (NABARD), National Bureau of Soil Survey and Land Use Planning (NBSS & LUP), Kerala Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation (KINFRA), Integrated Rural Technology Center (IRTC), State Horticulture Mission (SHM), Department of Soil Survey & Soil Conservation (DSSC), Small Farmers Agri Business Consortium (SFAC), The Kerala Development and Innovation Strategy Council, (K-DISC), United Planters' Association of Southern India (UPASI), the Kerala Agro-Business Company (KABCO),

¹ Messrs./Mmes. Chris Jackson (Task Team Leader & Sr. Agricultural Economist), Azeb Fissah (Co-Task Team Leader & Sr. Agricultural Specialist), Vinayak Ghatate (Co-Task Team Leader & Sr. Rural Development Specialist) and Sony Thomas (World Bank Consultant, State Partnership Advisor).

Association of Planters of Kerala (APK) and managers of several plantation companies as well as farmers and other stakeholders.

4. The mission is grateful to the GoK, agencies and other stakeholders for all courtesies afforded.

II. PROJECT BACKGROUND

5. Kerala is at the leading edge of India's structural transformation. The state's economy is driven largely by services (66%) with agriculture accounting for around 12% of GDP. Value added in agriculture is at best stagnatingⁱ although the sector continues to employ over 22% of the population. Kerala's diversity of agro-ecological conditions are an opportunity and a challenge. It has a well-educated labor force and past investments in human capital,ⁱⁱ reflecting its historical political orientation, have delivered strong labor productivity growth at home and a large, diaspora with remittances averaging US\$14 - US\$15 billion prior to CoVID.ⁱⁱⁱ Consequently daily wage rates are the highest in India,^{iv} which – together with the extremely fragmented land holdings and the smallest average land size in India (the average landholding is 0.13ha) – severely undermines agricultural competitiveness and renders gross margins insufficient to provide a livelihood. There is considerable land left fallow, with absentee landowners unwilling or unable to maintain security of tenure while allowing others to bring their land into production. Remaining farmers are aging, with a majority of Kerala's farmers being 55 years old or more.
6. Consequently, Kerala is at a crossroads. Maintaining the status would involve GoK seeking to continue traditional agricultural production systems motivated by self-sufficiency in food production at the state level, and the continuation of existing cropping patterns based on small-holder multi-cropping production systems. Food imports from neighboring states would be seen with suspicion, with the focus of attention productivity and production, little attention to value addition and processing and heavy state investment in the wider agriculture and food economy. This is likely to be costly and ultimately futile with demographic change and the risk that its leading role in showcasing structural transformation to the rest of the India is lost as other States overtake Kerala.
7. An alternative would be to embrace these challenges, build on success and pivot the State's agricultural strategy to one focused on value addition and processing, in a mutually beneficial partnership between the public and private sector, in which the agriculture and food economy can meet higher wage demands because the labor productivity is commensurately high. This will require efforts to generate economies of scale at the production level, reducing risk and uncertainty among the private sector agribusiness to leverage private investment in value addition and processing. To be sustainable, these systems need to be adapted to climate change, and contributing to India's mitigation agenda where possible. The VAAM is a step in this direction – although there is a legacy of policies and programs that could be reoriented in support of this vision.

Developments since the Previous Identification Mission

8. This second identification mission follows a previous virtual identification mission conducted during February – March 2022. Several developments have taken place since then, including the launch of the Value Added in Agriculture Mission (VAAM) as well as major global events including the war in Ukraine, the re-opening of national and international economies following the CoVID, and the COP27. Moreover, the Preliminary Project Report (PPR) was approved on October 28, 2022, and the formal posing letter submitted by the Government of India (GoI) to the World Bank on November 14, 2022.^v
9. On the World Bank side, ongoing work on India's Country Climate and Development Report (CCDR)^{vi} and progress on Paris Alignment^{vii} has attached greater emphasis in operations supporting national commitments to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and support climate change (CC) resilience. The mission held discussions with the GOK authorities to reaffirm the strategic climate change focused objectives initially proposed for the project as well as its core areas of intervention.

Updated Project Rationale

10. The overall strategic logic for the project remains extremely relevant. The importance of the project in supporting GoK's overall agenda for agriculture and related sectors was emphasized to the mission by the Chief Secretary, adviser to the Chief Minister, and the Minister of Agriculture.
11. The mission reinforced that the project will be inclusive insofar as it will facilitate opportunities for remunerative value chains for a wide range of potential beneficiaries as possible, including those with extremely limited land holdings. However, it should be noted that it is not a safety-net project: some poor rural households will remain unable to realize these pathways out of poverty and will require alternative instruments such as transfers and social safety-net interventions from GoK.

III. POTENTIAL PROJECT FOCUS

12. Building upon the previous dialogue, this mission held detailed technical and policy-focused discussion with a wide range of interlocutors including academics, officials and farmers. Based on these deliberations, a series of problem statements were hypothesized and, from that, technical entry points to tackle the problems were identified. These have been subsequently organized and structured under a series of 'focus areas' which, if endorsed, would easily translate to project components/ sub-components in a structure amenable to a discrete and well specified project development objective (PDO) and associated results framework (RF).
13. The mission did not engage in detailed discussion on the theory of change (ToT) for the project, nor did it discuss at length specific PDO or potential indicators. The teams will continue to work on these areas as a priority moving forward.

14. To help refine these initial ideas, the mission confirmed a series of virtual seminars covering a number of key themes. The Bank team will prepare short presentations of global experience to share with the GoK over the forthcoming weeks.

Focus Area 1: Resilience and Mitigation in Agriculture

15. Kerala has made important strides in orienting its agricultural system to promote Climate Change resilience. The innovative reform of the planning system based on its agro-ecological zones (AEZs) and 23 agro-ecological units (AEUs)^{viii} is a robust foundation for identifying and delivering more tailored extension packages promoting climate smart agriculture (CSA) across Kerala. There are several technologies and packages of practices developed and promoted in the state led by state-level agricultural research institutions. The major challenge, therefore, is two-fold: (i) to identify, tailor and align the CSA practices to the AEU and farmer preferences; and (ii) to deploy extension services and facilitate access to inputs (seeds, fertilizer) necessary to foster adoption of these practices at the field-level. Existing institutional arrangements such as the Krishibhavana and the district-level offices of the Kerala Center for Pest Management support the devolution of service delivery functions and could be scaled up with greater use of ICT.^{ix}
16. Additional research is needed to understand likely uptake of CSA packages (and constraints to adoption) which requires the strengthening of existing collaboration between the research institutions and the extension service.^x In addition to varietal selection, research on the changing environment of pests and diseases will be important. Currently, the agricultural research system is 'projectized' with the Kerala Agricultural University (KAU) and other research institutions^{xi} essentially bidding for individual research proposals. This leads to a fragmented approach to climate resilience research; given the long-term dynamics of CC it is preferable to develop longer-term (but flexible) research programs that better correspond to the long-term and uncertain nature of climate impacts.
17. While there is considerable attention to resilience and adaptation pathways, relatively little attention has been paid this far to potential mitigating measures. Existing analysis has argued that agriculture is in fact already carbon neutral;^{xii} nevertheless there is an important public good role for agriculture in mitigating GHG emissions where possible. Major sources of emissions are: (i) methane emissions associated with flood irrigation from paddy production; and (ii) emissions from livestock associated with enteric fermentation. Although Kerala is not a major rice producing state (rice is produced on around 205,000 Ha producing about 634,000 mt in 2020/21)^{xiii} there are several large, cultivated areas of irrigated paddy that could be amenable to improved production systems that would increase reduce emissions through alternative wet and dry (AWD) and simultaneously increase profitability. Farmers should receive the value of ecosystem services for mitigation efforts. Experts are of the view that the required water management infrastructure for AWD is largely in place (some improvements may be necessary; along with land levelling) and the major challenge is the necessary collective action within individual command areas. The mission visited rice growing areas at Palakkad and Kuttanad – the latter has additional cultural value as a globally important agricultural heritage system (GIAHS)^{xiv} but is facing major climate-related threats from sea level rises, saline intrusion, and financial viability from high costs of draining below-sea-level paddy fields. The mission noted the similarities

with the challenges facing the paddy systems of the Mekong Delta in Vietnam (where the traditional approach of 'keeping the water out' is being replaced with strategies of 'working with the water').^{xv} The mission proposed a learning exchange with relevant authorities in Vietnam to learn from their approach.

18. Finally, while CSA can address mitigation and adaptation opportunities, it cannot completely remove risks. Therefore, there is a need to improve risk management strategies including agromet services that provide the necessary resolution to effectively inform decisions at the AEU-level. In parallel, the Government requested that the project help to improve the functioning (efficiency/effectiveness) of the existing agri-insurance instruments in the State.
19. Accordingly, the project could include the following activities under this focus area:
 - Activities to support the adoption of CSA practices including strengthened advisory/extension services (including pest management) at the AEU level based on the wide-spread application of ICT and a program of adaptive research on CSA technology that effectively partners the extension system with the existing research capabilities;
 - A focused effort to promote AWD alongside more sustainable land and water management in selected irrigated paddy-growing areas, including Kuttanad, including support for a (pilot, proof-of-concept) mechanism whereby farmers are remunerated for their mitigation efforts, as a precursor for securing climate finance under relevant international mechanisms; and
 - Support to increase the resolution of the agromet system as the AEU level and technical assistance to improve the functioning of agri-insurance systems.

Focus Area 2: Enhancing small-holder commercialization for value addition

20. A key tenet of the VAAM is the profitable participation of small-holder farmers in remunerative value chains. Given the extensive mixed farming systems of Kerala's farmers, and their extremely small plot size, efforts are required across a range of individual value chains to support commercialization and sustained impacts. Reflecting the market-oriented approach, and the equal importance of an inclusive business model, greater emphasis is needed beyond the production system to support marketing and value addition.
21. Plantation crops – rubber, oil palm, cardamon, coffee and coconut – are important products for Kerala. Production systems differ: Kerala accounts for 85% of India's production of natural rubber and is based on a combination of plantations and around 1.2 million small-holder producers^{xvi} with around 900 individual rubber manufacturing units.^{xvii} Oil palm, on the other hand is largely a plantation crop accounting for three-quarters of the area under production. Horticulture and vegetable production is almost entirely a smallholder cropping system, albeit with value chains of varying degrees of sophistication depending on the destination market. Many plantations are state owned enterprises (SOEs). Individual value chains face different constraints: rubber and oil palm require immediate processing close to the areas producing liquid latex and fresh fruit bunches (FFBs). Kerala accounts

for around one-quarter of India's gross production (mostly robusta)^{xviii} although most is transported as beans and processed across the border in Tamil Nadu with little value addition within Kerala itself. Fruits and vegetables have varying degrees of perishability requiring careful handling and/ or cold storage to mitigate post-harvest losses. The tree-crops sector faces specific issues associated with high sunk-costs associated with establishment/ replanting and the particular importance of the widespread availability of quality planting material – especially of varieties that can cope with medium-term (~30 years) of projected climate change. Existing age profile of plantations and small-holder tree stocks indicates a considerable decline in productivity and production absent a concerted effort to replant existing land holdings.

22. There is a plethora of general and crop-specific policies that ostensibly support producers. However, evidence suggests in many cases these are counter-productive, not effective, and/ or costly. International experience suggests alternative instruments could provide similar levels of support at lower cost with a bigger impact while simultaneously removing the disincentives for market deepening that discourage private sector investment. Directed lending distorts the efficient allocation of capital and discourages new lending products better suited to the specific financing needs of individual crops/ value chains.
23. Kerala has achieved notable success in spurring innovation in post-harvest technology through the existing support for both new technology development and incubation of associated businesses. The model, housed within Kerala Agriculture University (KAU) has demonstrated the dynamism of the state's entrepreneurs. However, two issues have emerged that need to be addressed if the full benefits of these schemes are to be realized:
 - First, while support for start-ups is there, continued after-care for MSMEs after this initial phase is absent. This is a common phenomenon faced by MSMEs that are seeking to develop and grow beyond their initial establishment, and can be readily addressed with additional hand-holding etc; and
 - Second, while there are examples of processing infrastructure being developed there are few examples of its wide-spread roll-out across sectors. The mission learned that this is due to a combination of: follow-on support beyond the initial innovation stage and issues around scale (small production volumes require down-scaled equipment). Moreover, the program focus on processing excludes support for production-based innovations whereas the high cost of labor and the small farm size in Kerala demands scale-relevant mechanization solutions that could result from a reformed technology incubator program.
24. Finally, Kerala has an issue of exceedingly small farm size insufficient to generate adequate incomes to sustain a family. Aggregating holdings as consolidated farming blocks is the only solution in the long-term – consistent with the ongoing structural transformation of the state. Aggregating farming systems can take many forms: At one level, it is simply collective decision-making within existing ownership systems that facilitates aggregation in inputs (agro-chemicals, machinery and labor) that allows the generation of economies of scale. On the other hand, it could incorporate the scaling up of holdings to enhance economies of scale through land leasing etc. especially of fallow land owned by absentee

farmers. There are many examples – Vietnam, China, South Korea – that have found solutions to this challenge while respecting customary formal and informal land tenure systems and their specific political priorities.

25. Based on this diagnostic and extensive discussions with stakeholders, potential interventions by the project under this focus area could include the following:

- Targeted support channeled through agribusinesses and other value chain actors to incentivize them to reach backwards to small-holder producers throughout -grower schemes and similar arrangements that connect producers with markets;
- The tree crops sector requires a package of support for the long-term financing of rejuvenation and the availability of certified quality planting material, and the project could provide technical and financial support (including risk sharing instruments), via the banking system to facilitate a comprehensive replanting program among select tree crop sectors;
- Land consolidation would be an essential element of VAAM and the project would identify and facilitate a range of interventions – policy and legislative reform to permit leasing, for instance – and capacity building measures to encourage sound and fair land aggregation efforts that respected existing tenure systems and the legacy of previous land reforms; and
- Incremental efforts building on the existing incubation programs of technology innovation in agro-processing and in agri-based start-ups that addressed the emerging gaps in the continuum of hand-holding.

Focus Area 3: Agribusiness and the food system

26. With high incomes, the second highest urbanization rate among large Indian states,^{xix} a burgeoning hospitality and tourism sector worth US\$64 billion before the CoVID shut-down (2019)^{xx} – accounting for around one-tenth of the state's economy – and an established export sector based in part on established diaspora especially in the Middle East,^{xxi} Kerala already enjoys an apparent comparative advantage in processed food products. The agri-business sector is characterized by several multinational companies engaged in commodity exports as well as around 6,000 food manufacturing companies.^{xxii} One-fifth of all factories in the state manufacture food items employing almost one-third of all factory labor.^{xxiii} Given the high labor costs in the state, urbanization rates, demographic trends^{xxiv} and the aspirations of youth, higher-productivity jobs in the formal sector in Kerala are an imperative moving forward.

27. Consistent with the overall context of India, Kerala has a bifurcated enterprise sector with a large number of MSMEs and a small number of large firms. (Across India, 84% of employment by firms is in micro- and small firms; 5.5% within medium-sized firms and 10.5% among large firms).^{xxv} Existing diagnostics of the constraints to private sector highlight challenges of access to finance, high up-front investment costs for 'last mile' infrastructure to agriculture-based enterprises located in organization challenges of

graduating from micro- to small and from small to medium-sized and, subsequently, the disincentives to subsequently formalize and continue to grow. While the GoK and GoI has several programs to support MSMEs,^{xxvi} including schemes targeted at the food sector,^{xxvii} they fail to fully meet their needs: support for start-ups does not continue with handholding as firm evolve and the instruments are almost exclusively financial (grants or subsidized credit) whereas increasingly the evidence points to the importance of strengthening personal initiative as a key element of entrepreneurship training.^{xxviii} The use of credit schemes may have retarded the development of more tailored lending products and other financial instruments by the financial sector that have proven internationally to be more effective than cheap credit alone. Programs such as the one district one product (ODOP) initiative could also support specific MSMEs in priority food-related subsectors. These challenges have been recognized by GoI and the World Bank's Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance (RAMP) project. While the RAMP project supports a range of interventions to support MSMEs, the mission noted it is not tailored to specific sectors, and that food and agriculture MSMEs face particular challenges. Therefore, there is a need to supplement the approach of RAMP with additional support.

28. The promotion of agro-based industrial parks is an existing priority of GoK and is reinforced in the VAAM. The state, under the Kerala Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation (KINFRA) already has 31 operational industrial parks in 19 locations, including 6 food parks^{xxix} that provide either ready-to-use plots or standard design factor (SDF) buildings, with existing connectivity to water, transport and power services and other services such as single-window clearances etc. In addition, DoA has established a number of agri-parks to promote processing and value addition: the mission visited a newly constructed banana and honey park in Kannara, Thrissur district. More are envisaged under the VAAM. The mission observed that the identification of the location, purpose and design specification of the Kannara park and other recent examples did not appear consistent with international best practice and risks costly 'inefficient' projects that do not meet private sector requirements.
29. Given the importance of jobs for the future growth and shared prosperity of the state, the mission identified the following set of potential interventions:
 - Support for agri-parks: this could focus on recent investments in agri-parks by DoA by providing technical assistance in the commissioning of newly constructed parks, outreach to potential tenants/ operators and professional management of the facilities to maximize their uptake by MSMEs as well as possibly a large investment in a new agri-industrial innovation park in partnership with KINFRA and collaboration with research institutions in food science etc;
 - A program building on, and consistent with, RAMP that (i) provides more specific additional support for nascent MSMEs in the food and agriculture space, including ancillary industries; and (ii) leverages the plethora of existing schemes including ODOP under MoFPI, programs of the MoIC amongst others to streamline aggregate support (in keeping with the principles of RAMP project, it would not target start-ups); and

- Given the (over-) reliance on credit schemes including directed lending and subsidized finance to support agribusiness broadly, there is a need to support a holistic approach to agri-finance including for food-sector MSMEs, in close collaboration with the banking system, to support new product development (including loans as well as other products) and increase the availability of appropriate-term funding from banks and other financial institutions.

Cross Cutting Themes

30. There are several key themes that would be mainstreamed throughout the project (but that would not warrant specific (sub-)components. Key amongst those are:

- Utilization of, and capacity building for, farmer groups given their primacy as institutional solutions to the small-holder farmer problem and their importance within the Government's existing policy priorities;
- Focus on markets and support the continued transition toward inclusive market-based approaches with institutional support to strengthen the public sector's role as regulator and facilitator; and
- Use of technology and support for IT in all aspects of the project, such as on-line tools for lowering the cost of service delivery functions; App-based access of extension services and price discovery tools etc; web-based transparency and accountability of the project including the use of GIS^{xxx}-based tools.

Zero allocation for Contingent Emergency Response Component

31. In countries subject to climatic disasters or other natural catastrophes, it is often prudent to include a contingent emergency response component (CERC) within the structure of a standard IPF that can expedite World Bank financing to support disaster response.^{xxxi} The Mission proposed to include such a component in the project, with a zero budgetary allocation at Appraisal, but which could be utilized under a project restructuring should the need arise. The triggering event of the CERC and resulting interventions to be supported under this component would have to remain consistent with the PDO; given its likely focus on climate resilient agriculture this would seem to be a strong candidate. This option will be assessed in more detail during project preparation.

Sectoral and Geographic Coverage

32. The project cannot and should not seek to address *every* challenge in *all* sectors across the *entire* State but rather should focus on priority areas to deliver a combination of sizeable impact and proof-of-concept that together reflects the scale advantage of the World Bank finance and the Lighthouse India concept of supporting innovation. The mission did not discuss selectivity criteria for the project locations, and this will be an important consideration for immediate attention.

Fostering Convergence

33. A key theme raised in the mission is the notion of convergence: using the project to improve the impact of existing GoI and GoK programs through alignment and coordination. (This is imperative in contexts where the magnitude of project finance is small relative to the utilization of own resources – as is demonstrably the case in India.) A key element of this is the need to review current practices to identify potential areas for improvement.
34. In this regard, the Bank team noted the prevalence of schemes to provide subsidized credit to a range of beneficiaries to tackle a wide variety of constraints – many of which, at first sight, did not demonstrate the typical credit market failures for which subsidized loans were the optimal solution. Nevertheless, such solutions are favored by GoK, perhaps for their ease of implementation, despite their likely cost. The Bank team recommended a study be undertaken to (i) document all the relevant GoI and GoK schemes currently being deployed in Kerala; and (ii) seek to quantify the disbursements and key parameters of these schemes.

Lending Instrument

35. The mission confirmed the presumption that investment project financing (IPF) remains the most appropriate lending instrument although consideration will be given to performance-based financing (PBF) elements within the IPF where this may be more appropriate. A program for results (P4R) instrument was rejected given the ongoing implementation of the Resilient Kerala (P174778)^{xxxii} PfR project, and the nature of the interventions under this project. Similarly, while there are important policy issues that the project could support, the request from GoK and the nature of the proposed interventions suggest that a development policy operation (DPO) would not be the best fit.

Synergies with other Bank Operations

36. The major related Bank-funded operation in Kerala is the Resilient Kerala which is a P4R operation that includes three outcome indicators pertaining to agriculture one of which constitutes a disbursement linked indicator (DLI) against which results-based finance is disbursed (DLI 8) and one DLI relating to river basin management (DLI 7^{xxxiii}). In addition, DLI 3^{xxxiv} impacts the operation of the state's agri-insurance system. The mission met with the leadership of the Resilient Kerala and continued close collaboration between the two teams (on the GoK and the Bank side) will be important, especially as the additional financing (AF) is being processed.^{xxxv}
37. Elements of the project are likely to be similar – or contrasting in systematic ways – with other Bank-financed operations across India. There are, therefore, likely to be opportunities for knowledge exchanges and lesson sharing both through staff exchanges and commissioned studies. The Bank team will prepare a table of potential areas for knowledge exchanges based on the current portfolio of operations with similar elements and share with the GoK team.

Private Sector Participation and the Role of IFC

38. The goal and proposed modalities of VAAM is to facilitate the private sector playing a larger role in the successful development of agriculture in Kerala. Therefore, there is a pressing need to understand their perspectives of the constraints and proposed solutions, and to ground-truth the proposed interventions under the project with them to validate their relevance and feasibility. Understandably, this mission concentrated on discussions within public sector agencies of GoK. There is an urgent need, therefore,
39. Given the importance of the role of the private sector in VAAM and the proposed support for agri-financing through the banking system, it would be important to investigate the potential role of IFC support alongside the project. The mission suggested to convene a joint discussion with IFC colleagues to review potential areas – if any – for collaboration.

Institutional Arrangements for Project Preparation and Implementation

40. It was agreed that the design of the implementation arrangements should be an output of the project preparation process and that the modalities for the preparation team should not prejudice the eventual PIU. Therefore, the GoK will identify a project preparation team (PPT) that will include: (i) description of the roles and responsibilities of the key functions; (ii) designated in-house staff; and (iii) additional required short-term external consultants. GoK will also confirm that office space has been assigned to the PPT and that sufficient resources have been allocated for this stage of the project.
41. The mission also confirmed that as part of their support, the Institute for Sustainability, Employment and Growth (ISEG) will provide support for two tasks:
- An organizational assessment to identify the optimal institutional arrangement for the project implementation unit (PIU) based on the goals and objectives of the project, proposed interventions/ activities and the preferences of GoK in terms of synergies with overarching agenda including the VAAM – this will be provided *pro bono*.
 - A organizational/ institutional review to be undertaken during project implementation that makes recommendations for the recalibration of the role of the public sector to strengthen regulatory and facilitatory functions and the delivery of core public goods while simultaneously reducing its more direct role elsewhere (akin with Morocco under the *Plan Maroc Vert* referenced above), as part of the projects' efforts to deliver a sustained impact that is continued by GoK after project closure – this could be provided with modest contribution from the project funds.
42. The initial VAAM concept proposed a new entity established under the Companies Act (to be known as K-BIZAGRO Limited) to support implementation of the program. The mission received drafts of the Memorandum of Association and other legal documents, with a request to review them for compliance with Bank rules pertaining to eligible implementing agencies – to anticipate this being one possible solution. In any case K-

BIZAGRO is anticipated to be an important institutional player in the implementation of VAAM.

Possible Donor Coordination Issues

43. The VAAM agenda is considerable and institutionally demanding, while the available financing from the World Bank is modest. There are benefits from harmonizing and aligning the support of interested development partners (DPs) in a coordinated manner, should other DPs be interested in providing complementary support in this space. (The mission noted that this is well demonstrated in the Resilient Kerala P4R project, with co-financing provided by AIIB and AfD.) Even if formal joint financing is not appropriate, the design of the implementation arrangements for this project should consider the potential for streamlining other PIUs into the same organizational architecture. The DoA shared a note on existing International Cooperation that serves as a mapping of current engagements in related areas.

Project Preparation – Tasks and Responsibilities

44. The mission presented the project cycle for Bank IPFs as per **Error! Reference source not found.** to inform GoK of the procedural steps towards Board approval and to differentiate those activities/ steps done jointly (highlighted in red) and those internal bureaucratic procedures of the Bank. GoK have their own approval procedures – in particular, the preparation and approval of the Detailed Project Report. GoK will share these steps with the Bank team to facilitate efficient processing and the utilization of joint documentation moving forward. Once this is received, a detailed preparation timeline can be prepared (through to Negotiations) along with key Milestones.
45. The GoK and Bank teams confirmed that a comprehensive Preparation Mission would be held, likely in mid-March. This would include safeguards and fiduciary specialists, as well as the technical team and would refine the proposed project components and activities. The exact dates will be confirmed shortly.

Financing Project Preparation

46. The mission presented options for the GoK in financing the preparatory tasks associated with project preparation, up to Appraisal stage, summarized in Figure 1, below. The GoK indicated they would likely not request a project advance; however, they were interested in seeking retroactive financing. The mission shared the formal requirements for retroactive financing as per paragraph 15 of the Bank's Directive on IPF. GoK noted that contrary to Figure 2, they would likely request retroactive financing for preparatory tasks prior to the Project Appraisal, while remaining within existing parameters of paragraph 15.^{xxxvi} The mission will provide confirmation on this question.

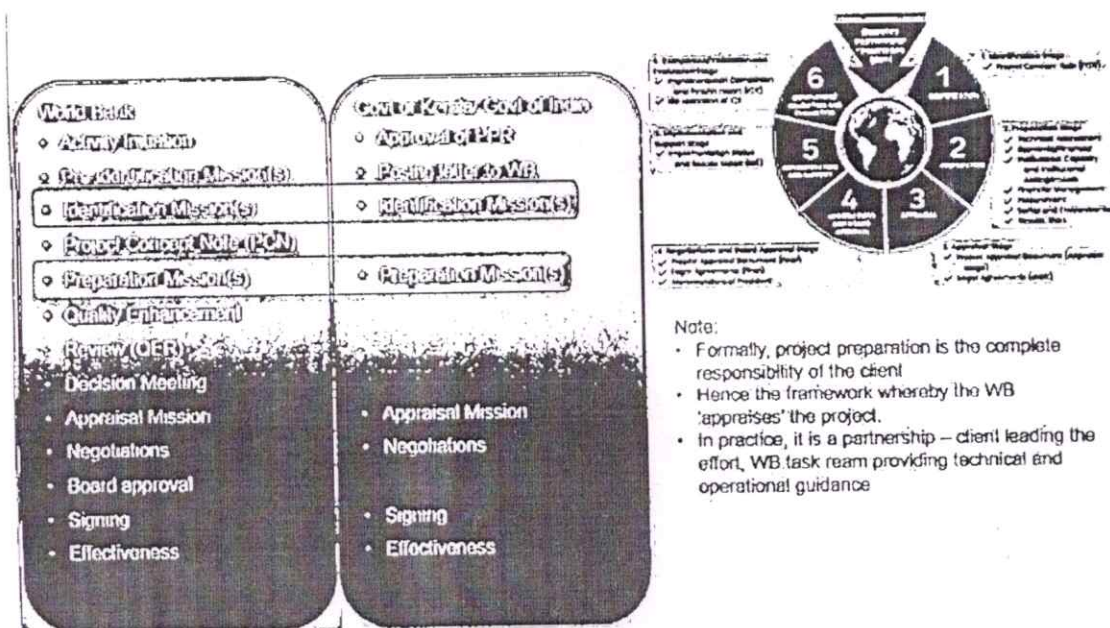
IV. Agreed Next Steps

47. The following table summarizes action points agreed in the Mission, with responsibility attributed and expected timeframe for completion.

Table 1 Table of Agreed Actions

No.	Action	Responsibility	Timeline
1	Feedback on Proposed Project Focus Areas	DoA/ GoK	February 17 th
2	Finalize positions and staffing of key positions of PPT	DoA/ GoK	February 17 th
3	Confirm office space and resources for PPT	DoA/ GoK	February 17 th
4	Review status of K-Bizagro as potential implementing agency	World Bank	February 24 th
5	Prepare draft ToRs for design of implementation arrangements	World Bank	February 17 th
6	Draft proposal for a knowledge exchange on Mekong Delta	World Bank	February 28 th
7	Confirm parameters for potential request for retroactive financing	World Bank	February 17 th
8	Share detailed processing/ approval procedures within GoK/ GoI through to Negotiations	GoK	February 17 th
9	Preparation of project preparation roadmap and associated milestones	GoK/ World Bank	March 18 th
10	Draft terms of reference for review of subsidized credit programs	GoK	February 28 th
11	Finalize schedule for full Preparation Mission for March	GoK/ World Bank	February 17 th
12	Scoping meeting with IFC	World Bank	February 28 th
13	Compilation of list of relevant Bank operations in other States for potential knowledge exchanges.	World Bank	February 28 th
14	Confirm schedule for a series of technical seminars on key themes	World Bank	February 28 th

Figure 1 Project Processing





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January 29, 2024

Mr. Vikas Sheel
Additional Secretary (FB, ADB & Japan)
Department of Economic Affairs
Ministry of Finance
Government of India
North Block
New Delhi – 110 001

Dr. V. Venu
Chief Secretary
Government of Kerala
Secretariat
Thiruvananthapuram – 695 001

Dear Mr. Sheel and Dr. Venu:

***Proposed Kerala Climate Resilient Agri- Value Chain Modernization (KERA) Project
Invitation to Negotiate***

I am pleased to invite India (Borrower) to nominate and send a delegation to the World Bank's Country Office in New Delhi to negotiate the proposed International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD or World Bank) loan in the amount of US\$200 million for the proposed Kerala Climate Resilient Agri- Value Chain Modernization (KERA) Project. I propose that the negotiations be held at a mutually convenient date and time.

The objective of the proposed project is 'to promote the resilience and commercialization of Kerala's food and agriculture sector'.

As part of the negotiations, the following draft documents will be discussed:

- Draft Legal Agreements – draft Loan Agreement and draft Project Agreement
- Draft Project Appraisal Document (PAD)
- Draft Disbursement and Financial Information Letter
- Draft Environment and Social Commitment Plan
- Draft Procurement Plan

The World Bank's Board of Executive Directors adopted the World Bank Policy on Access to Information on July 1, 2010 (subsequently revised in July 2013 and July 2015). Pursuant to this, after the Board approves a project for Bank financing, the World Bank makes public the PAD, and the related legal agreements, including any supplemental letters. The World Bank may also

Mr. Vikas Sheel and Dr. Venu

-2-

January 29, 2024

publicly release the PAD upon distribution to the World Bank's Board if the Borrower agrees. Before releasing the PAD, the World Bank will consider your delegation's comments in finalizing the document.

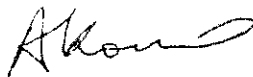
Therefore, your delegation to the forthcoming negotiations should be authorized to indicate any text or data in the PAD that may be confidential or sensitive, or that may adversely affect the relations between the World Bank and India and to clear changes to the wording of the PAD that may resolve any problems related to its release.

Your delegation should also be authorized to indicate whether India agrees to disclose the PAD upon distribution to the World Bank's Board of Executive Directors. If India so agrees, such agreement will be reflected in the Minutes of Negotiations.

The results of the negotiations will be recorded in the agreed Minutes of Negotiations, and the head of each delegation of the parties to the legal agreements will be requested to sign these Minutes, indicating their respective approval of the negotiated documents.

I look forward to agreeing on the date for the start of negotiations and receiving the composition of the delegation.

Yours sincerely,



Auguste Tano Kouame
Country Director, India

Encl.

1. Draft Legal Agreements -- Draft Loan Agreement & Draft Project Agreement
2. Draft Project Appraisal Document
3. Draft Disbursement & Financial Information Letter
4. Environmental & Social Commitment Plan
5. Draft Procurement Plan

Mr. Vikas Sheel and Dr. Venu

-2-

January 29, 2024

cc:

Mr. Parameswaran Iyer, Executive Director (India), World Bank

Mr. Rajeev Topno, Senior Advisor to Executive Director (India), World Bank

Government of India

Mr. Rajesh Kumar, Deputy Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance

Mr. Rajesh Pant, Deputy Controller of Aid Accounts and Audit Division, Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance

Dr. Punit Kumar, Joint Director, Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance

Government of Kerala

Dr. B. Ashok, Agriculture Production Commissioner and Principal Secretary, Department of Agriculture Development and Farmer's Welfare

Mr. Suman Billa, Principal Secretary, Industries and Commerce

Dr. K. M. Abraham, Chief Principal Secretary to CM

Mr. Rabindra Kumar Agarwal, Principal Secretary Finance

Prof. V. K. Ramchandran, Vice Chairperson, State Planning Board

Ms. K. S. Anju, Director, Agriculture Development and Farmers' Welfare Department

Re: Meeting on 12th March, 2024: Kerala Climate Resilient Agri -Value Chain Modernization (KERA) Project-reg.

From: Mahendra Kumar Meena (meena.mahendra@gov.in)
 To: agrippmcell@yahoo.com; chandni.raina@nic.in
 Cc: ritika.bansal@gov.in; dharmendra.kumar83@nic.in; pradyut.pyne@nic.in; aishwarya.menon@gov.in; punit.kumar@gov.in; ram.meena88@nic.in; kumar.anil90@gov.in; fundbank8-dea@gov.in
 Date: Tuesday, March 12, 2024 at 12:58 PM GMT+5:30

Sir/Madam,

Please find below the web link for today's meeting.

<https://Desktop.vc.nic.in/flex.html?roomdirect.html&key=y1YLBva9ho>
 Password - 38032

2. It is requested to kindly convey the confirmation of participation in the meeting through email please.

with regards
 Mahendra Meena, ASO
 World Bank (Infra & Rural) Section,
 FB & ADB Division,
 Department of Economic Affairs,
 Ministry of Finance, New Delhi
 Tel: 011-2309-5144

From: "Mahendra Kumar Meena" <meena.mahendra@gov.in>
To: agrippmcell@yahoo.com, "Ms. Chandni Raina" <chandni.raina@nic.in>
Cc: "Ritika Bansal" <ritika.bansal@gov.in>, "Dharmendra Kumar" <dharmendra.kumar83@nic.in>, "Pradyut Kumar Pyne" <pradyut.pyne@nic.in>, "aishwarya menon" <aishwarya.menon@gov.in>, "PunitKumar DEA" <punit.kumar@gov.in>, "Ram Hans Meena" <ram.meena88@nic.in>, "Shri Anil Kumar" <kumar.anil90@gov.in>, "Fund Bank-8" <fundbank8-dea@gov.in>
Sent: Monday, March 11, 2024 5:29:35 PM
Subject: Meeting on 12th March, 2024: Kerala Climate Resilient Agri -Value Chain Modernization (KERA) Project-reg.

Sir/Ma'am,

This is regarding the Kerala Climate Resilient Agri -Value Chain Modernization (KERA) Project. In this regard, I am directed to convey that a **pre-negotiations meeting with Government of Kerala and CCFU, DEA is scheduled to be held on 12th March, 2024 at 4:00 PM.**

2. In this context, it is requested to kindly attend the above meeting.

3. Web link for the meeting will be sent shortly

with regards
 Mahendra Meena, ASO
 World Bank (Infra & Rural) Section,
 FB & ADB Division,
 Department of Economic Affairs,
 Ministry of Finance, New Delhi
 Tel: 011-2309-5144

Sent: Tuesday, January 30, 2024 9:27:45 AM

Subject: Invitation to Negotiate-India: Kerala Climate Resilient Agri-Value Chain Modernization Project (KERA) (P178254)

Sent on behalf of Mr. Chris Jackson & Ms. Azeb Fissha, TTL's

Dear Mr. Sheel & Dr Venu:

Kindly find attached the Draft Negotiation package for Kerala Resilient Agri-Value Chain Modernization Project (KERA)- (P178254). The package includes the following documents:

- Invitation to Negotiate.
- Draft Project Appraisal Document (PAD).
- Draft Loan Agreement.
- Draft Project Agreement.
- Draft Disbursement and Financial Information Letter (DFIL).
- Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP).
- Draft Procurement Plan.

With kind regards

Geeta Alex
Administrative & Client Support
Agriculture
The World Bank
Hindustan Times House
18-20, K G Marg
New Delhi -110 001
T +91 (11) 49247 717
E galex2@worldbank.org



verKERA Draft PAD .docx
614.5kB

Fwd: Kerala Climate Resilient Agri -Value Chain Modernization (KERA) Project-reg.

From: Dr B Ashok , IAS (apc.agri@kerala.gov.in)

To: kabcoamd@gmail.com; agrippmcell@gmail.com; agrippmcell@yahoo.com

Date: Thursday, March 14, 2024 at 10:46 AM GMT+5:30

From: "aishwarya menon" <aishwarya.menon@gov.in>

To: galex2@worldbank.org

Cc: "Dr B Ashok , IAS" <apc.agri@kerala.gov.in>, "Principal Secretary Industries" <prlsecy.ind@kerala.gov.in>, cjackson1@worldbank.org, afissha@worldbank.org, "Saju K S" <saju.ks@nic.in>, "PunitKumar DEA" <punit.kumar@gov.in>, "Dharmendra Kumar" <dharmaendrakumar83@nic.in>

Sent: Wednesday, March 13, 2024 7:41:14 PM

Subject: Fwd: Kerala Climate Resilient Agri -Value Chain Modernization (KERA) Project-reg.

Dear Ms. Geeta Alex,

World Bank is requested to update the PAD wrt comments of CCFU of DEA (as per trail mail and as per track change doc shared by CCFU). The updated document incorporating these changes may be shared with us at the earliest so that we may proceed with negotiations.

Regards,

Aishwarya Menon (IES)

Deputy Director, Fund Bank Division,

Department of Economic Affairs,

Ministry of Finance

011-23095060

From: "Ritika Bansal" <ritika.bansal@gov.in>

To: "Shri Anil Kumar" <kumar.anil90@gov.in>

Cc: "Ms. Chandni Raina" <chandni.raina@nic.in>, "Dharmendra Kumar" <dharmaendrakumar83@nic.in>, "Pradyut Kumar Pyne" <pradyut.pyne@nic.in>, "Amit Kumar Kesarwani" <amit.kesarwani@gov.in>, "PunitKumar DEA" <punit.kumar@gov.in>, "aishwarya menon" <aishwarya.menon@gov.in>, "Ram Hans Meena" <ram.meena88@nic.in>, "Mahendra Kumar Meena" <meena.mahendra@gov.in>

Sent: Monday, March 11, 2024 12:14:16 PM

Subject: Fwd: Kerala Climate Resilient Agri -Value Chain Modernization (KERA) Project-reg.

25(25)/Ec.Dn./2024

Department of Economic Affairs

Economic Division

(Climate Change Finance Unit)

North Block, New Delhi

Dated 11.03.2024

OFFICE MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Kerala Climate Resilient Agri -Value Chain Modernization (KERA) Project-

reg.

This has reference to your email dated 06.03.2024 requesting for comments on Draft Project Appraisal Document (PAD) of a World Bank funded project - "Kerala Climate Resilient Agri - Value Chain Modernization (KERA)".

2. In this regard, the undersigned is directed to furnish comments as below:

- a. The understanding that the document is in line with the NAPCC and NDC is not correct as neither of these documents aims to reduce carbon emissions in agriculture. While such reduction may arise as co-benefits of an adaptation or sustainable agri practice, the focus is not on mitigation in agriculture.
- b. Climate smart agri practices need to be replaced with sustainable agriculture practices throughout the document.
- c. The project promotes emission reduction in the agricultural sector as one of the components, particularly Subcomponents 1.2 and 1.3, based on increased adoption of Climate-smart agri-practices and reduction of methane gas from paddy rice production using intermittent drying. India has not adopted sector-wise emission reduction in its NDC. Paras 7, 14, 19, 21, 23, and 49 stress emission reduction in the Kerala state's agriculture - by 40,000 metric tonnes per year from Nov 2023 to March 2029, as reflected in the Project Development Objective (PDO) Level Indicators in Section VII on page 21 of the document. India's NDC includes a reduction in the emission intensity of the economy. It seeks only adaptation action for agriculture.
- d. Further, it is submitted that the project document includes a proposal to prepare the state of Kerala for securing carbon credits (paras 19 and 23 (ii)) through studies and by establishing MRV protocols. At present the Carbon Credit Trading System is only for hard-to-abate sectors.
- e. Specific comments indicated in track change mode in the document. (attached herewith)
- f. Data on macroeconomic variables such as GDP growth rate not in line with the estimates given by NAS. This may be referred to the **Economic division for updating**.

3. This has the approval of the Competent Authority.

-sd/

Ritika Bansal
(Assistant Director)

To,
Anil Kumar, ASO
WB (Infra & Rural) Section

From: galex2@worldbank.org

To: "Mr Vikas Sheel" <sheelv@ias.nic.in>, "DR VENU V IAS" <chiefsecy@kerala.gov.in>
Cc: "Rajesh Kumar" <rajesh.kr64@nic.in>, "PunitKumar DEA" <punit.kumar@gov.in>, "Dr B Ashok , IAS" <apc.agri@kerala.gov.in>, "Principal Secretary Industries" <prlsecy.ind@kerala.gov.in>, "Dr K M Abraham" <chief.prsecy2cm@kerala.gov.in>, "RABINDRA KUMAR AGARWAL IAS" <acs.finance@kerala.gov.in>, "V K Ramachandran" <vkr@kerala.gov.in>, "Directorate of agriculture" <cru.agridir@kerala.gov.in>, "Controller of Aid Accounts and Audit" <controllercaaa-dea@nic.in>, cjackson1@worldbank.org, afissha@worldbank.org

3/25/2024, 12:35



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November 5, 2024

Ms. Manisha Sinha
Additional Secretary (OMI, Crypto and FB)
Department of Economic Affairs
Ministry of Finance
Government of India
North Block
New Delhi – 110 001

Ms. Sarada Muraleedharan
Chief Secretary
Government of Kerala
Secretariat
Thiruvananthapuram – 695 001

Dear Ms. Sinha and Ms. Muraleedharan,

India: Kerala Climate Resilient Agri- Value Chain Modernization (KERA) Project
(Loan No. 9727-IN)
Board Approval

I am pleased to notify you that the Board of Executive Directors of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development approved on October 31, 2024, a loan in the amount of US\$200 million for the above-mentioned project. Congratulations to all who have worked on the preparation of this project.

I look forward to an early signing and effectiveness of the legal agreements. Please refer to Loan No. 9727-IN in all future correspondence related to the project.

For any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact Mr. Christopher Jackson (cjackson1@worldbank.org) or Ms. Azeb Fissaha (afissaha@worldbank.org).

Yours sincerely,

Auguste Tano Kouame
Country Director, India

Ms. Sinha and Ms. Muralidharan

(2)

November 5, 2024

cc.

Mr. Panimeswaran Iyer, Executive Director (India), World Bank
 Mr. Hemang Jain, Senior Adviser to Executive Director (India), World Bank
 Mr. Anil Das, Adviser to Executive Director (India), World Bank

Government of India

Mr. Simrandeep Singh, Director, Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance
 Ms. Juhi Mukherjee, Joint Secretary (ADB), Controller of Aid Accounts and Audit Division,
 Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance

Government of Kerala

Dr. B. Ashok, Agriculture Production Commissioner and Principal Secretary, Department of
 Agriculture Development and Farmer's Welfare
 Mr. Suman Billa, Principal Secretary, Industries and Commerce
 Dr. K. M. Abraham, Chief Principal Secretary to CM
 Dr. A. Javadiyak, Additional Chief Secretary Finance
 Prof. A. K. Ramechanran, Vice Chairperson, State Planning Board
 Dr. Adeela Abdulla, Director of Agriculture



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January 13, 2025

Mr. B. Ashok
Agriculture Production Commissioner and Principal Secretary
Department of Agriculture Development and Farmer's Welfare
Government of Kerala
Thiruvananthapuram – 695 001

Dear Mr. Ashok,

Change of Task Team Leader for “Kerala Climate Resilient Agri- Value Chain Modernization” (KERA) Project (Loan No. 9727-IN)

This is to kindly inform you that with the immediate effect, Ms. Azeb Fisssha Mekonnen, Senior Agriculture Specialist will assume the role of Task Team Leader, replacing Mr. Chris Jackson for the “Kerala Climate Resilient Agri- Value Chain Modernization” (KERA).

Ms. Azeb Fisssha Mekonnen brings a wealth of experience and expertise to the project. You can reach her at afissha@worldbank.org or mobile +1 2022477890 or co-Task Team Leader Mr. Amadou Dem, Senior Economist at adem1@worldbank.org mobile +91 7042737414.

Please direct all future correspondence related to the project to Ms. Mekonnen and Mr. Dem.

Thank you for your continued partnership and support.

With regards,

Yours Sincerely,

Gayatri Acharya
Practice Manager, Agriculture and Food
South Asia Region

Mr. B. Ashok

-2

January 13, 2025

cc:

Ms. Manisha Sinha, Additional Secretary (OMI, Crypto & FB), Department of Economic Affairs,
Ministry of Finance
Mr. Simrandeep Singh, Director, Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance
Ms. Juhi Mukherjee, Joint Secretary (ADB), Controller of Aid Accounts and Audit Division,
Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance



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February 3, 2025

Ms. Manisha Sinha
Additional Secretary (OMI, Crypto and FB)
Department of Economic Affairs
Ministry of Finance
Government of India
North Block
New Delhi - 110 001

Ms. Sarada Muraleedharan
Chief Secretary
Government of Kerala
Secretariat
Thiruvananthapuram – 695 001

Dear Ms. Sinha and Ms. Muraleedharan:

*India: Kerala Climate Resilient Agri-Value Chain Modernization (KERA) Project
(Loan No. IBRD 9727)
Declaration of Effectiveness*

We refer to the Loan Agreement ("Loan Agreement") between India ("Borrower") and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development ("Bank") and to the Project Agreement ("Project Agreement") between the Bank and the State of Kerala ("Project Implementing Entity"), both dated December 16, 2024, for the Kerala Climate Resilient Agri-Value Chain Modernization (KERA) Project ("Project").

We are pleased to notify you that the Bank accepts the evidence furnished in fulfilment of the conditions precedent to the effectiveness of the Loan Agreement and the Project Agreement. Consequently, the Loan Agreement and Project Agreement become effective today, February 3, 2025.

Yours sincerely,

Auguste Tano Kouame
Country Director, India

India Country Office, 70 Lodi Estate, New Delhi 110 003, India
P.O. Box 416, Phone: +911141479301 / +911149247601

Ms. Sinha & Ms. Muraleedharan

-2-

February 3, 2025

cc: Mr. Parameswaran Iyer, Executive Director, World Bank
Mr. Hemang Jani, Senior Advisor to Executive Director, World Bank
Mr. Nikunj Kumar Srivastava, Senior Advisor to Executive Director, World Bank
Mr. Hrisheekesh Arvind Modak, Advisor to Executive Director, World Bank
Mr. Anil Das, Advisor to Executive Director, World Bank

Government of India

Mr. Alok Tiwari, Joint Secretary, DEA, Ministry of Finance
Mr. Simrandeep Singh, Director, DEA, Ministry of Finance
Dr. Punit Kumar, Joint Director, DEA, Ministry of Finance
Mr. Avanish Kumar Mishra, Controller of Aid Accounts & Audit, DEA, Ministry of Finance

Government of Kerala

Dr. B. Ashok, Agriculture Production Commissioner and Principal Secretary,
Department of Agriculture Development and Farmer's Welfare
Mr. A.P.M. Mohammed Hanish, Principal Secretary, Industries and Commerce
Dr. K.M. Abraham, Chief Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister
Dr. A. Jayathilak, Additional Chief Secretary, Finance
Mr. S.S. Nagesh, Chief of the Agriculture Division, State Planning Board
Dr. Sriram V., Director of Agriculture

**THE WORLD BANK**

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April 7, 2025

Mr. B. Ashok
Agriculture Production Commissioner and Principal Secretary
Department of Agriculture Development and Farmer's Welfare
Government of Kerala
Thiruvananthapuram
Kerala – 695 001

Dear Mr. Ashok,

Subject: Proposed first Implementation Support Mission from May 5 – 12, 2025: KERA Project (P178254)

We are pleased to announce the first implementation support mission for the Kerala Climate Resilient Agri-Value Chain Modernization (KERA) Project (P178254). This mission aims to provide technical assistance and support to ensure the successful implementation of the project, which focuses on enhancing climate resilience and modernizing agricultural value chains in Kerala. *The mission will take place from May 5 – 12, 2025* and will involve a series of technical workshops to KERA project implementation agencies, stakeholders and meetings with Government of Kerala officials.

The World Bank team will consist of experts from various fields, who will work closely with the project team to address any challenges and provide guidance on best practices. The WB team would comprise of Messrs./Mme. Azeb Fissaha Mekonnen (Task Team Leader for the project and Senior Agriculture Specialist), Amadou Dem (Senior Economist), Adarsh Kumar (Senior Agribusiness Specialist), Supriti Dua (Senior Financial Management Specialist), Charu Lata Sharma (Agriculture Analyst), Frank Hollinger (Senior Rural Finance Officer, FAO), Jim Hancock (Senior Natural Resources Management Officer, FAO), Balagopal Senapati (Senior Procurement Specialist), Shakil Ahmed Ferdausi (Senior Environmental Specialist), Venkat Bhargav Sreedhara (Financial Sector Specialist), Thuong Thuong Thi Nguyen (Low carbon rice and carbon finance expert, World Bank), Maria Florencia Tejada (Productive Alliance expert, World Bank), Vanitha Kommu (Consultant, World Bank), Sony Thomas (World Bank, Consultant) Varun Singh (Senior Social Development Specialist) and Shalini Agrawal (Program Associate).

We look forward to a productive mission and would greatly appreciate any assistance that you and your esteemed colleagues can provide to ensure the success of this mission. Please feel free to reach out to me for any questions or need further information.

Yours Sincerely,

Azeb Fissaha Mekonnen
Task Team Leader and Sr. Agriculture Specialist

Mr. B Ashok

-2-

April 7, 2025

cc:

Government of Kerala

Mr. Suman Billa, Principal Secretary, Industries and Commerce
Mr. S. S. Nagesh, Chief, Agriculture Division, State Planning Board
Ms. K S Anju, Director, Agriculture Development and Farmers' Welfare Department



THE WORLD BANK

INTERNATIONAL BANK FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT
WORLD BANK GROUP

June 4, 2025

Dr. A. Jayathilak
Chief Secretary
Government of Kerala
Secretariat
Thiruvananthapuram
Kerala - 695 001

Dear Dr. Jayathilak,

Kerala Climate Resilient Agri-Value Chain Modernization (KERA) Project
(Loan No. 9727-IN)
Implementation Support Mission, May 5 - 12, 2025

Thank you for supporting this mission. I was happy to learn that the technical project launch workshop was successfully conducted and attended by all project implementing agencies and their staff. It provided comprehensive orientation to key project personnel on the technical design of interventions, implementation arrangements, and defined roles and responsibilities.

We are pleased to note that the project implementation unit is operational, with key positions filled by personnel from the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Industries and Commerce. To further enhance the project's execution, we kindly request the appointment of an additional project director. This role is crucial for ensuring effective coordination among various departments, providing timely leadership support to the technical team to address bottlenecks, and facilitating the prompt execution of project activities. We appreciate your assistance in transferring the disbursed funds to the project account and kindly ask for your continued support in ensuring timely fund transfers in the future.

We look forward to our continued collaboration and the successful implementation of the project. Should you require further information or clarifications, please feel free to contact Ms. Azeh Mekonnen, Sr. Agriculture Specialist, at azeh.mekonnen@worldbank.org.

Yours sincerely,

Auguste Tano Kouame
Country Director, India

Dr. A. Jayathilak

-2-

June 4, 2025

cc:

Mr. Parameswaran Iyer, Executive Director, World Bank
Mr. Hemang Jani, Senior Advisor to Executive Director, World Bank
Mr. Nikunj Kumar Srivastava, Senior Advisor to Executive Director, World Bank
Mr. Hrisheekesh Arvind Modak, Advisor to Executive Director, World Bank
Mr. Anil Das, Advisor to Executive Director, World Bank

Government of India

Mr. Alok Tiwari, Joint Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance
Mr. Simrandeep Singh, Director, Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance

Government of Kerala

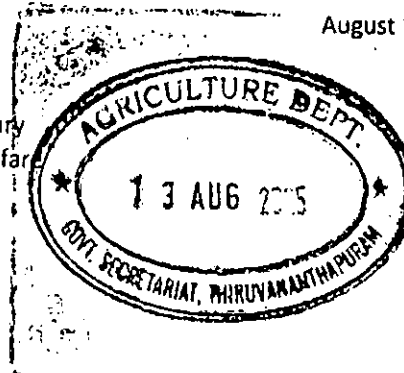
Dr. B. Ashok, Agriculture Production Commissioner and Principal Secretary, Department of Agriculture Development and Farmer's Welfare
Mr. A P M Mohammed Hanish, Principal Secretary, Industries and Commerce
Dr. K. M. Abraham, Chief Principal Secretary to CM
Prof. V. K. Ramchandran, Vice Chairperson, State Planning Board
Dr. Sriram V, Director of Agriculture


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August 11, 2025

Dr. B. Ashok
 Agriculture Production Commissioner and Principal Secretary
 Department of Agriculture Development and Farmer's Welfare
 Government of Kerala
 Thiruvananthapuram
 Kerala – 695 001



Dear Dr. Ashok,

Subject: Implementation Support Mission from September 24 – October 1, 2025 – KERA Project (P178254)

We are pleased to announce the World Bank implementation support mission for the Kerala Climate Resilient Agri-Value Chain Modernization (KERA) Project from September 24 – October 1, 2025. The objective of this mission is to review implementation progress, provide support to the project implementation unit to strengthen implementation across all project components, assess the status of procurement, disbursement, and institutional arrangements, identify and resolve implementation bottlenecks.

The World Bank team will consist of experts from various fields. The team would comprise of Messrs./Mme. Azeb Fissah Mekonnen (Task Team Leader for the project and Senior Agriculture Specialist), Amadou Dem (Senior Economist and Co- Task Team Leader), Chris Jackson (Senior Economist), Adarsh Kumar (Senior Agribusiness Specialist), Supriti Dua (Senior Financial Management Specialist), Charu Lata Sharma (Agriculture Analyst), Frank Hollinger (Senior Rural Finance Officer, FAO), Balagopal Senapati (Senior Procurement Specialist), Shakil Ahmed Ferdousi (Senior Environmental Specialist), Varun Singh (Senior Social Development Specialist), Venkat Bhargav Sreedhara (Financial Sector Specialist), and Shalini Agrawal (Program Associate).

We look forward to a productive mission and would greatly appreciate your support to ensure the success of the mission.

Yours Sincerely,

Azeb Mekonnen

Azeb Fissah Mekonnen
 Task Team Leader and Senior Agriculture Specialist

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August 11, 2025

cc:

Government of Kerala

Mr. A P M Mohammed Hanish, Principal Secretary, Industries and Commerce

Dr. K. M. Abraham, Chief Principal Secretary to CM

Prof. V. K. Ramchandran, Vice Chairperson, State Planning Board

Dr. Sriram V, Director of Agriculture

Mr. P. Vishnuraj, Director, Department of Industries and Additional Project Director KERA

Mr. V. Vigneshwari, Additional Secretary, Agriculture Department and Additional Project Director KERA