

Empowering Innovation: MANAGE-CIA Agri-Startup Incubation Program RKVY-RAFTAAR Cohort 12

Leveraging the extensive experience gained from previous 11 cohorts, which supported 466 incubatees and funded 174 startups, National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management- Centre for Innovation and Agripreneurship (MANAGE-CIA) successfully executed its 12th cohort from February 7 to March 7, 2025. Out of 229 applications received, 86 startups were shortlisted for the preliminary screening, out of them 41 startups which include 10 from seed stage (SAIP- Startup Agri-business Incubation Program), 21 from pre-seed stage (AOP- Agripreneurship Orientation Program), and 10 from student startups (SOP- Student Orientation Program) were selected for undergoing the training program.




Cohort-12 Incubatees with Dr. Saravanan Raj, CEO, MANAGE-CIA & Director (Agricultural Extension)

Cohort 12 Online Training Program: Nurturing the Innovators

From February 7th, 2025 to March 1st, 2025 MANAGE-CIA conducted the Cohort 12 Online Training Program on the Webex platform for 23 days. On an average 30 startups attended the online sessions daily. The 23-day online training program featured 20 insightful sessions led by mentors in their respective fields. Over the course of three weeks, the comprehensive online training program covered a wide range of topics, including foundation and ideation, product development and marketing, and operations and growth strategy. Inspiring sessions featuring success stories from various startup founders were also included. The sessions aimed to empower participants with a deeper understanding of the startup journey, the nuances of the agri-startup ecosystem, and the incubation process, ultimately enriching their knowledge and expertise.

Week 1: Foundation and Ideation

Incubation: Session on ‘Overview of Cohorts under RKVY- RAFTAAR’ discussed on the incubation program offered by MANAGE-CIA under RKVY-RAFTAAR (Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana- Remunerative Approaches for Agriculture and Allied Sectors Rejuvenation), current status, the selection criteria for startups, and the journey towards grant-in-aid funding including, online and physical training, CIC (Centre of Excellence Incubation Committee), and SIC (Startup Selection and Investment Committee). Also explained other programs organised by MANAGE-CIA in benefit of entrepreneurs and startups.



Market Research: Session on ‘Harvesting Opportunities: The Role of Market Research and Marketing Plans in Agri Startups’ discussed the crucial role of market research in the success of agri-startups in India by helping them make data-driven decisions, minimize risks, and identify opportunities in the highly dynamic agricultural sector. Also expanded on identifying market needs and gaps, and understanding competition and industry trends.

Idea Validation: Session on ‘Idea Generation and Validation’ discussed ideation techniques, competition analysis, problem-identification fit, problem-solution fit, and product-market fit.

RKVY-RAFTAAR: The session on ‘RKVY-RAFTAAR Selection Criteria: What You Need to Know’ discussed the guidelines and do’s and don’ts of grant-in-aid funding under RKVY-RAFTAAR. Explained the aspects on company registration, MoA (Memorandum of Agreement), legal status, DPIIT (Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade) certification, IPR (Intellectual Property Rights), milestones, progress reports, grant utilisation, and other funding opportunities.

Business Model Canvas (BMC): Session on ‘Startup Success Blueprint: Evaluating Your Business Model Canvas’ discussed the role of BMC in bringing clarity, confidence, efficiency and effectiveness of the startup business model. Expanded on the 9 elements of BMC including Customer Segments, Value Propositions, Channels, Customer Relationships, Revenue Streams, Key Activities, Key Resources, Key Partnerships, and Cost Structure.

Business Plan: Session on ‘Transforming Your Idea into a Solid Business Plan: One-on-One Support’ discussed on executive summary, company description, goals and milestones, target market, competitors, legal structure, team details, pricing strategies, and revenue projections.

Legal Compliances: Session on ‘Regulatory Compliance for Startups: GST and Beyond’ discussed on GST (Goods & Services Tax) registration procedure, GSTN (Goods & Services Tax Network), Indirect Taxes, CGST (Central Goods and Services Tax), SGST (State Goods and Services Tax), IGST (Integrated Goods and Services Tax), Professional Tax, TDS (Tax Deduction at Source), and Goods and Services Tax Return 3B (GSTR-3B) filing.


Startup Success Story: Session on ‘Commercial Landscaping – Success story of startup’ discussed the startup journey of Vruksha Kuteeram Landscape LLP. Shared the need of building collaborations, importance of customising own standards and optimising the financial management in running of the business.

Week 2: Product Development and Marketing

Prototyping: Session on ‘Product Development and Prototyping’ discussed the stages of desirability, feasibility and visibility in product development. Expanded on product life cycle stages including ideation, validation, prototyping, go-to-market strategy and minimum viable product. Also explained different validation methods including user testing, beta testing, market testing and pilot testing.

Product-Process Balance: Session on ‘Product vs. Process: Striking the Right Balance in Business Growth’ discussed on good product, good process and striking the balance between them by focusing on priorities, accepting imperfections, starting as small, and testing continuously. Expanded on MVP (Minimum Viable Product), MVS (Minimum Viable Segment), USP (Unique Selling Proposition), Freemium, and Push-ups including update, upgrade and upsell.





Agri-Value Chain: Session on ‘Agricultural Value Chains: A Startup Perspective on Inclusion and Sustainability’ discussed the importance of usability and prolonged shelf life in agricultural product value chain. Expanded on actors in agricultural supply/value chain, and three levels of processing. And also explained different value chains using relatable examples.

Building Brand: Session on ‘Building a Strong Brand Identity: Branding Strategies for Food and Agri Startups’ discussed on what, why and how to brand, effective naming strategies, packaging designs, and common pitfalls to avoid in branding.

Digital Marketing: Session on ‘Agri Startup Digital Dominance: Hacks for Online Marketing Success’ discussed four pillars of digital marketing including SEO, SEM, SMO, and SMM. Expanded on maintaining startup website, different social media platforms, and explained the golden rules in handling the social media pages.

Financial Management: Session on ‘Financial Management for Startups: Mastering Financial Statements and Ratio Analysis’ discussed on types of business models, tools of financial planning including income statement, cash-flow forecast, and balance sheet. Expanded on the accounting process, assets, liability, equity, and key concepts and ratios.

Week 3: Operations and Growth Strategy

Revenue Strategies: Session on ‘Agri Startup Revenue Growth: Effective Strategies for Success’ discussed the cases of highly revenue generated agri-startups, and failed startups. Expanded on opportunity cost of startup, growth trajectory, pricing methods, challenges in pricing, and struggles in scaling up.


Diversification Strategies: Session on ‘Diversification Strategies for Agri-Startups: Expanding Product Lines and Markets’ discussed on product diversification (concentric, horizontal, conglomerate), market diversification (geographical, customer), and other diversifications (technological, operational, financial, industry). Shared the win and failure cases of different startups that have explored diversification.

Go-to-market (GTM) Strategy: Session on ‘Breaking into the Market: Strategic Marketing for New Products/Services’ discussed the need of a GTM strategy for the startups, GTM funnel approach, critical parts of a GTM strategy, and steps in building a GTM strategy.

Team Building: Session on ‘The Power of Teamwork: Driving Agri-Startup Innovation and Success’ discussed the importance of synergy, shared responsibility, improved communication, trust building and ensuring safety among a team. Also highlighted the benefits of hiring like-minded individuals who share the founder's vision and goals.

Startup Challenges and Resilience: Session on ‘Entrepreneurial Mind-set & Resilience: Overcoming Challenges and Failures in Start-ups’ discussed on the startup journey of ‘Earthy companions services Pvt Ltd’, shared insightful experiences, including the problems tackled, innovative solutions developed, challenges overcome, and effective growth strategies employed.

Startup Success Story: Session on ‘Integrating farmers with international market- Success story’ discussed the startup journey of ‘Green Gurukulam LLP’ with the stages involved in the business including harvest planning and protocol training, quality recheck, preventive measures for quality harvest, and retail sales strategies. Additionally, shared valuable insights on the challenges overcome and opportunities seized within the horticultural industry.



Cohort 12 Physical Training Program: Innovators Meet Mentors

From March 3rd, 2025 to March 7th, 2025 MANAGE-CIA was conducted the Cohort 12 Physical Training Program for 5 days, which covered sessions on Pitch deck, DPIIT certification and IPR, Mock presentations, CIC, and SIC. A total of 29 startups including 06 from seed stage (SAIP), 14 from pre-seed stage (AOP), and 09 from student startups (SOP) were attended the physical training program



Inaugural Session of Cohort 12 Physical Training Program and Introduction of Startups

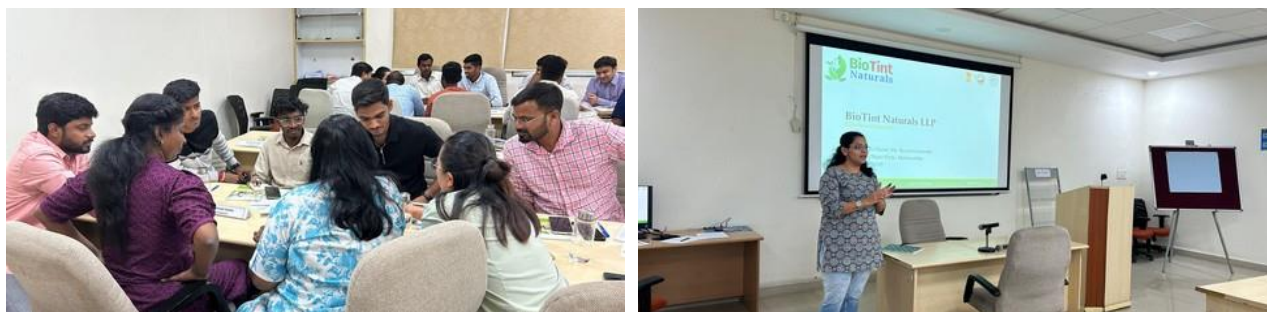
Week 4: Pitching and Networking

Pitch Deck: Session on ‘Pitch Perfect: Developing a Winning Pitch Deck for Your Business’ discussed about the key points to consider while pitching including knowing the audience, engaging them, confident delivery, highlighting key metrics, being open to feedback and criticism, and clear conclusion. Explained about the contents of pitch presentation, also conducted pitching activity for the participants.

DPIIT Certification: Session on ‘DPIIT Certification for Startups: Eligibility, Benefits, and Process’ discussed the defining criteria for a startup, process of DPIIT registration, and the benefits availed by startups with the DPIIT Certification.

Intellectual Property Rights: Session on ‘Protecting Your Innovation: Intellectual Property Rights for Startups & Understanding Legal Forms and Company Structures’ discussed the various aspects of patentability, registered and unregistered trade mark, copyright license, industrial design, protection of plant varieties, geographical indications, and trade secrets. Expanded on each IPRs with relatable examples and several cases of legal violations.

Mock Presentations: A mock pitching session was conducted, where SAIP, AOP, and SOP startups presented their products/ideas to a panel of evaluators. This simulated experience helped the startups to prepare for their final pitches, feedback and suggestions from the evaluation team helped to refine their presentations.





Pitching session, Mock presentations, CIC presentations, and SIC presentations of Cohort 12 Startups

Centre of Excellence Incubation Committee (CIC): A total of 32 startups including six SAIP, 14 AOP and nine SOP startups from Cohort 12 and two SAIP and one AOP from Cohort 11 presented their products/ideas to CIC committee members. Following a rigorous selection process, 12 startups including four SAIP, four AOP, and four SOP were shortlisted for the next round.

Startup Selection and Investment Committee (SIC): A total of 18 startups including three SAIP, four AOP and four SOP startups from Cohort 12 and three SAIP and four AOP from Cohort 11 presented their products/ideas to SIC committee members. Following the thorough deliberations, 18 startups including four SAIP (25 Lakhs), 10 AOP (5 Lakhs), and four SOP (4 lakhs) were successfully selected for the RKVY-RAFTAAR grant-in-aid funding.

Valedictory: The 29 startups successfully completed their one month mentoring under SAIP, AOP and SOP of RKVY-RAFTAAR Cohort 12 conducted by MANAGE, Hyderabad and received their certificates. Participants also shared their valuable insights and feedback on the training program, providing constructive suggestions for future improvement.

With the successful completion of Cohort 12 training program, MANAGE-CIA is now poised to onboard 18 innovative startups selected for grant-in-aid funding under RKVY-RAFTAAR and provide them with dedicated mentoring to propel their journey towards startup success.



Valedictory session and Certificate distribution

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