भारत सरकार
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
मत्स्यपालन विभाग
Department of Fisheries

Fisheries-StartUp and Aquapreneurship Stakeholders Meet

Connect. Collaborate. Catalyse

January 23, 2026

Business Incubation Centre, KUFOS, Kochi

MANAGE Fisheries Innovation and Startup Hub (MANAGE - FISHub)
(A National Fisheries Incubation Centre Supported by the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Govt. of India)
National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management (MANAGE)
(An Autonomous Organization of Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Govt. of India)
Rajendranagar, Hyderabad – 500 030, Telangana, India
https://www.manage.gov.in/managefishub/

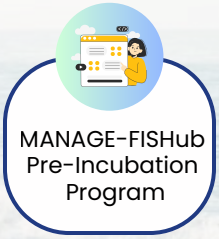
MANAGE

The National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management **(MANAGE),** an autonomous organisation under the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Government of India is an apex body for Agricultural Extension Management in India. MANAGE offers services like Capacity building, Management Education, Piloting and Implementing Flagship National Schemes, Consultancy, Research, Knowledge Management and Policy Advocacy in Agricultural Extension Management (https://www.manage.gov.in).

MANAGE-FISHub

MANAGE-Fisheries Innovation and Startup Hub **(MANAGE-FISHub)** is a national- level incubation and innovation platform established at the National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management (MANAGE), Hyderabad, in 2025 with the support of the Department of Fisheries (DoF), Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying (MoFAHD), Government of India. MANAGE-FISHub aims to transform India's fisheries and aquaculture sector through innovation, entrepreneurship, and ecosystem development by mentoring and promoting fisheries startups, creating employment and entrepreneurial opportunities aligned with national priorities, and enabling the rapid commercialization of technologies emerging from research, academia, and individual innovators. (https://www.manage.gov.in/managefishub/)

Our Programs



MANAGE-FISHub Pre-Incubation Program

MANAGE-FISHub Incubation Program

MANAGE Aqua Eureka Program

MANAGE-FISHub Fortnightly Friday (F3) Webinars

MANAGE-FISHub Internship Program

MANAGE-FISHub AquaReach

Fisheries-Startup & Aquapreneurship Stakeholders Meet

Kerala University of Fisheries and Ocean Studies (KUFOS)

Kerala University of Fisheries and Ocean Studies (KUFOS) is India's first dedicated university for fisheries and ocean sciences, established in 2010 under the Government of Kerala. Headquartered at Panangad, Kochi, KUFOS serves as the state's premier institution for education, research, policy support, and capacity building in fisheries, aquaculture, marine sciences, and allied disciplines. The University offers a comprehensive range of undergraduate, postgraduate, and doctoral programs focused on fisheries science, aquaculture, marine biology, fish processing technology, aquatic animal health, and ocean technology. Recognized by the University Grants Commission (UGC) and accredited by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), KUFOS functions as a knowledge hub for advancing sustainable fisheries, blue economy initiatives, and climate-resilient aquaculture.

Objectives

01. To produce professionally and technically competent manpower in fisheries and ocean studies.

02. Develop entrepreneurship among the fisheries graduates by imparting hands-on training and give opportunities to develop management skills.

03. Undertake research and extension activities in the field of fisheries and ocean studies by undertaking research in frontier areas.

04. Provide employment opportunities, especially for fishers by imparting trainings on modern techniques of fishing, primary handing.

05. Provide consultancy services so as to put into practice the technologies developed among the entrepreneurs and generate income for the institution.

06. Develop infrastructure facilities and inter-institutional co-operative programs to make the campus the nucleus of the fisheries and ocean studies in the world.

About the Program

The Fisheries-StartUp and Aquapreneurship Stakeholders Meet aims to bring together all key stakeholders of India's fisheries and aquaculture ecosystem on a single collaborative platform and bridge the information gap, by facilitating a seamless exchange of knowledge, resources, and partnership opportunities among them.

The program aims to strengthen the fisheries entrepreneurship landscape by fostering innovation, collaboration, and value-chain integration. It provides startups with opportunities to showcase innovations, connect with partners, and learn from successful ventures. By facilitating dialogue and partnerships, the program seeks to build an inclusive ecosystem that accelerates sustainable growth, technological adoption, and blue economy development.

Who Can Attend?

- Fisheries Startups & Aquapreneurs
- Aspiring Aquapreneurs
- Fisheries Incubators, Accelerators & Innovation Hubs
- Fishers & Fish Farmers
- Fisheries Students & Researchers
- Financial & Funding Organisations
- Academic & Research Institutes
- Fisheries & Allied Industries
- FFPOs, Cooperatives & SHG's
- Policy Makers
- NGO's & Extension Functionaries
- Other Stakeholders in the Fisheries Startup Ecosystem

Objectives

- **Connect in Single Platform:** Bring all fisheries startup stakeholders together to enable seamless interaction, access, and engagement on one unified platform
- **Build Networks:** Facilitate connections between aquapreneurs, researchers, and industry stakeholders to strengthen the fisheries innovation ecosystem.
- **Promote Collaboration :** Encourage partnerships between academia and industry to address real-world challenges and explore new opportunities in fisheries.
- **Share Knowledge :** Provide a platform for exchanging insights, strategies, and technological advancements relevant to fisheries start-ups and innovations.
- **Bridge Information Gap:** Ensure timely and easy access to relevant information, policies, funding, and market trends to support informed decision-making

Key Takeaways

Build Networks

Meet individuals who can potentially become business partners, clients, mentors, or collaborators.

Gain Visibility

Showcase your products and technologies to the relevant audience, increasing your visibility within the local business community.

Learning & Exposure

Gain insights from Fisheries-Startup Stakeholders through Networking, Talks and Discussions

Forge New Partnerships

Facilitate collaborations and discover opportunities for joint ventures, partnerships, or projects that align with your objectives.

Discover New Opportunities

Engage with innovators, experts, and institutions to explore emerging trends and startup opportunities in the fisheries sector.

Program Background

MANAGE proposed a collaboration with Kerala University of Fisheries and Ocean Studies (KUFOS), Kochi, to conduct the first edition of the Fisheries Startup & Aquapreneurship Stakeholders Meet in Kerala. Following acceptance from the university authorities, the program was scheduled and successfully conducted on 23rd January 2026 at the Kerala University of Fisheries and Ocean Studies, Kochi.

The organizing team for the program comprised members from both institutions. From MANAGE, the team included Dr. Saravanan Raj, Director (Agricultural Extension), MANAGE, and Ms Vrinda P Sunil, Business Executive, MANAGE-FISHub. From KUFOS, Kochi, the organising team included Prof. (Dr) Radhika Rajasree S. R. Dean, Faculty of Ocean Science and Technology & Coordinator, Business Incubation Centre, KUFOS, and Prof. Dr. K Dinesh Registrar Kerala University of Fisheries and Ocean Studies (KUFOS), Kochi.

A list of proposed stakeholders from the fisheries startup ecosystem of Kerala was prepared, and invitation mails were sent to fisheries startups, aquapreneurs, fishers, fish farmers, producer organizations, research institutions, industry players, service providers, and fisheries colleges and allied institutes. The registration link for the program was circulated through MANAGE-FISHub and institutional social media platforms.

The program schedule was designed to include an inaugural session, followed by technical sessions comprising startup experience sharing, technology demonstrations, startup pitching, exhibition and networking, and concluding with a valedictory session.

A total of 313 participants registered for the program, including startups, students, FFPOs, faculty members, and other professionals. Confirmation mails were sent to all registered participants, and they were requested to join a WhatsApp group created for further communication and coordination.

Among the startups that expressed interest in pitching and exhibition, a screening process was undertaken, following which 15 startups/students/FFPOs were shortlisted for the pitching session and 7 startups were shortlisted for the exhibition.

The program, conducted at the Kerala University of Fisheries and Ocean Studies, Kochi, was attended by 261 participants, including 10 dignitaries who graced the dais, 21 representatives from fisheries startups and aquapreneurial ventures across Kerala, 148 students from various fisheries colleges in and around Kerala, 67 FFPOs and 15 professionals, including faculty members, officials from state fisheries and allied departments, consultants, managers, engineers, and technicians.

Inaugural Session

Prof. (Dr) Radhika Rajasree
Dean, Faculty of Ocean Science and Technology & Coordinator, Business Incubation Centre, KUFOS

Prof. (Dr.) Radhika Rajasree S. R., Dean, Faculty of Ocean Science and Technology & Coordinator, Business Incubation Centre, KUFOS, welcomed the participants to the One-Day Fisheries–Startup and Aquapreneurship Stakeholders Meet, jointly organized with MANAGE, Hyderabad. She stated that the programme aimed to create a common platform for students, innovators, entrepreneurs, researchers, and stakeholders to promote fisheries entrepreneurship through innovation, collaboration, and value-chain integration.

She acknowledged the key support of MANAGE, Hyderabad, particularly Dr. Saravanan Raj, Director (Agricultural Extension), and extended a warm welcome to all dignitaries, resource persons, startup aspirants, faculty, students, and media representatives. He emphasized that such initiatives help bridge research, innovation, and entrepreneurship, enabling ideas to be transformed into viable fisheries enterprises.

"This program bridges fisheries knowledge with innovation, entrepreneurship, and sustainable enterprise development."

-Prof. (Dr) Radhika Rajasree

Inaugural Session

Dr. Saravanan Raj delivered a comprehensive session on **"About the Programme and Activities of MANAGE-FISHub",** outlining the objectives, structure, and expected outcomes of the program. He emphasized that the initiative was designed to strengthen linkages among research, extension, entrepreneurship, and policy, with particular relevance to agriculture and allied sectors, especially fisheries and aquaculture.

He also highlighted the program aims to build capacity among innovators and early-stage entrepreneurs through structured access to mentorship, incubation support, funding opportunities, and market linkages, which are essential for developing sustainable and scalable enterprises. He also introduced MANAGE-FISHub, a national-level fisheries innovation and startup hub launched in 2025 under the Department of Fisheries, Government of India and hosted at MANAGE, envisioned as a catalyst for fisheries entrepreneurship and ecosystem development.

He concluded by reiterating that the program's success would be measured by its ability to generate sustainable enterprises, foster scalable innovations, and build long-term institutional collaborations, thereby contributing to the growth and resilience of the fisheries and aquaculture sector.

Dr. Saravanan Raj
Director (Agricultural Extension, MANAGE &
CEO, MANAGE-FISHub

"Bringing all stakeholders on a common platform to provide innovators, startups, and students with the support needed to advance fisheries innovation and benefit the farming community."

-Dr. Saravanan Raj

Inaugural Session

Mr. Jinesh Mathew
Lead- Incubation
Kerala Startup Mission

Mr Jinesh Mathew, delivered the inaugural address on **"Incubation and Innovation Support Systems for Early-Stage Startups".** He highlighted the importance of adaptability, innovation, and entrepreneurial thinking in addressing challenges and converting them into opportunities. Drawing from his extensive experience in MSME mentoring and startup promotion, he emphasized the strength of India's startup ecosystem and the role of institutional support in nurturing entrepreneurs.

He appreciated the proactive role of KUFOS Kochi, and MANAGE in promoting fisheries entrepreneurship and noted that while India is a leading fish producer, value addition and GDP contribution from fisheries remain low. He stressed the need to focus on processing, waste utilization, and technology-driven innovations.

The address underscored the vast untapped potential of the fisheries and blue economy sectors and encouraged participants to plan strategically, leverage available schemes, and transform challenges into sustainable enterprises contributing to national growth.

"Failure in startups is rarely about the idea itself; it is more often the result of gaps in structure, strategy, and implementation."

Mr. Jinesh Mathew

Inaugural Session

Shri. Baby Sheeja Kohur delivered a focused address on the theme **"Government Support Systems and Opportunities for Emerging Aquapreneurs in Kerala."** The speaker highlighted the significance of India's evolving startup ecosystem, emphasizing policy support that enables students and innovators to launch enterprises alongside academic pursuits. She emphasized the importance of FFPOs and fisheries societies in building a strong and sustainable fisheries sector, and highlighted the PMMSY initiative on Climate-Resilient Coastal Fishing Villages, under which six projects from Kerala have been approved.

She stressed that although the Fisheries Department is implementing innovative farming practices, there are still significant gaps in ensuring that schemes effectively reach the fishing community.

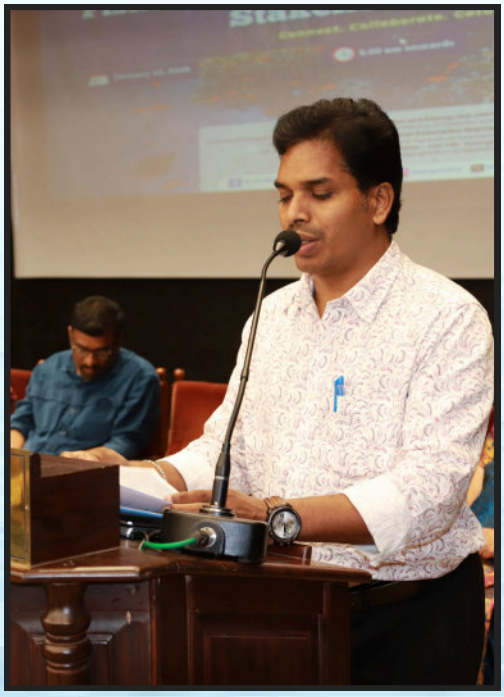
The address underscored fisheries as a high-potential sector for innovation and entrepreneurship, particularly in value addition and enterprise development. She appreciated the innovation initiatives at KUFOS and MANAGE and encouraged students and entrepreneurs to transform viable ideas into scalable ventures.

Smt. Baby Sheeja Kohur
Joint Director of Fisheries (Inland)
Department of Fisheries, Kerala

"Believe in your ideas, sell them with conviction, and shape the world the way you envision it."

–Smt. Sheeja Kohur

Inaugural Session



Mr. E. Manoj

District Manager Matsyafed
Kozhikode

Mr E. Manoj delivered the inaugural session on the theme **"Institutional Support Systems for Sustainable Fisheries Growth."**

Mr. E. Manoj delivered the inaugural session on the theme "Institutional Support Systems for Sustainable Fisheries Growth." He highlighted that before starting any enterprise, a proper market study is crucial to assess whether the idea has the potential to succeed. He emphasized that Kerala has a strong ecosystem to support startups, including the Kerala Startup Mission and other institutions that provide financial and technical assistance to new enterprises. Over the years, significant public funding has been allocated to strengthen micro-enterprises and innovation-driven ventures across the state.

However, he pointed out a key challenge: despite the availability of funding and institutional support, only a few startups manage to sustain operations and grow successfully. This indicates that beyond funding, factors like market understanding, execution capability, business structuring, and long-term planning are critical for a startup to thrive.

Additionally, he stressed the need for partnerships with research institutions, industry players, and farmer collectives to strengthen product validation and market access.

"Funding is not the biggest challenge in building a startup—mindset and attitude are."

-Mr. E. Manoj

Inaugural Session

Mr Rajesh.K shared his insights on the theme **"Rebuilding the Strategy from Shore to Shelf: A purpose-Led Roadmap for Vikasit Bharat's Global Fisheries Sector Dominance".** He highlighted the growing importance of digital integration and smart packaging in the fisheries and food value chain. He highlighted how QR codes on product packaging can enhance transparency by providing consumers with information on product origin, quality standards, certifications, and traceability, thereby building trust and brand credibility.

Referring to industry success stories such as Licious, he illustrated how strong branding, technology-driven operations, and customer-centric business models have enabled companies to achieve significant scale, citing their ability to generate monthly revenues in the range of hundreds of crores. He pointed out that the fisheries sector in India benefits from the presence of numerous institutions, research bodies, and support agencies working toward development and innovation. However, he identified a major gap in coordination, noting that often the work and initiatives of one institution are not effectively communicated or aligned with others. This lack of integration, he explained, leads to duplication of efforts and missed opportunities for collective impact. Concluding his address, he stressed the need for stronger inter-institutional collaboration and shared digital platforms to ensure that knowledge, resources, and innovations flow seamlessly across the ecosystem.

Mr. Rajesh.K
Co-Founder
Mariterro Food Solutions

"In today's market, a QR code is more than a label—it is a bridge of trust between the producer and the consumer."

-Mr. Rajesh.K

Inaugural Session

Shri. Manoj Sreekanta

Founder & Director – Ashtree Group
&
Co-founder & CEO- Epicure Innovative

Shri. Manoj Sreekanta Founder & Director – Ashtree Group & Co-founder & CEO- Epicure Innovative, shared his insights on the theme **"What Investors Look for in Fisheries and Food Startups".**

Shri. Manoj Sreekanta explained the four key steps in understanding what investors look for in fisheries and food startups. He highlighted that investors evaluate not only the idea or product, but also the people behind the venture. According to him, the first and most important factor an investor considers is who is doing it—the passion, commitment, and enthusiasm of the entrepreneur.

He emphasized that entrepreneurship is not an easy journey and often takes several years before a startup becomes profitable, requiring persistence and long-term vision.

He also spoke about the importance of branding in building successful enterprises, outlining different approaches such as product branding, geographical branding, and investor branding. Strong branding helps startups gain market recognition, customer trust, and investor confidence, which are essential for growth in the competitive fisheries and food sectors.

Overall, he stressed that a successful startup is built on a combination of the right mindset, strong branding, market understanding, and the determination to sustain through challenges until profitability is achieved.

"A true startup learns to stand on its own feet—profitability should come before investors, not after.".

-Shri. Manoj Sreekanta

Inaugural Session

Shri. Ajeesh Balu shared his insights on the theme **"Startup, MSME, and Support Ecosystem in the Fisheries Sector".** He highlighted its continued efforts in working closely with farmers through collectivization and the promotion of FPOs and FFPOs. They informed us that NABARD currently supports three directly promoted FFPO companies, strengthening institutional frameworks for farmer-led enterprises.

He also explained the role of NABARD in strengthening the farm credit delivery mechanism, ensuring that financial support reaches grassroots-level producers effectively. In 2024, NABARD extended financial assistance of nearly ₹14 crores to the fisheries sector across India. However, they pointed out that Kerala received only about ₹1 lakh, indicating the need for stronger project proposals and greater participation from the state to access available financial resources.

This highlights the importance of awareness, capacity building, and institutional strengthening to enable fisheries stakeholders in Kerala to better utilize national-level financial support mechanisms.

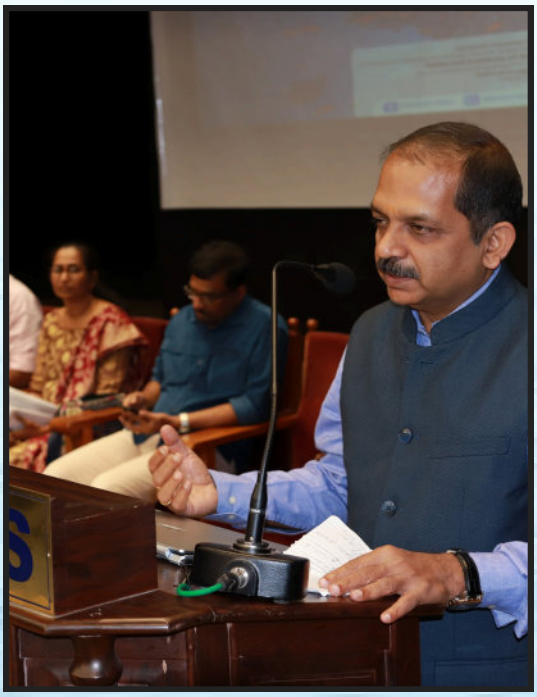
Shri. Ajeesh Balu

DDM
NABARD

"Farmers grow stronger when they grow together—FFPOs are the key to sustainable fisheries development."

-Shri. Ajeesh Balu

Inaugural Session



Shri. H. Manoj
Chief General Manager
NABARD

Shri. H. Manoj, Chief General Manager, NABARD, explained that there is a strong difference in thinking between generations. He noted that older generations often follow a more conventional or monotonous approach, whereas young people bring fresh ideas and innovative solutions that are urgently needed to address the current challenges in the fisheries sector.

He stressed that nurturing these ideas requires a supportive ecosystem. In this context, he highlighted the importance of incubation centres in transforming innovative concepts into viable enterprises. He also pointed out the role of NABARD in supporting such initiatives, particularly through the NABARD Infrastructure Development Fund (NIDA).

Furthermore, Manoj emphasized the need for active engagement with the State Government to strengthen institutional support and create enabling infrastructure for startups and entrepreneurs in the fisheries and allied sectors.

Overall, his message underlined that youth-driven innovation, backed by incubation, institutional funding, and government collaboration, is essential for sustainable development of the fisheries sector.

"When young ideas meet institutional support, sustainable fisheries enterprises are born."

-Shri. H. Manoj

Inaugural Session

The Presidential Address was delivered by **Dr. Dinesh, Registrar of Kerala University of Fisheries and Ocean Studies (KUFOS)**. In his address, he highlighted the importance of academic institutions in supporting innovation and entrepreneurship in the fisheries sector.

He emphasized that universities play a vital role in bridging knowledge, research, and industry needs, and in nurturing young entrepreneurs through training, incubation, and institutional guidance.

Dr. Dinesh also underscored the need for collaboration between educational institutions, government agencies, and industry stakeholders to build a strong ecosystem for sustainable fisheries development. His address set the tone for the programme by encouraging participants to adopt innovation-driven approaches and make effective use of institutional support available for fisheries-based enterprises.

Prof. Dr. K Dinesh
Registrar
KUFOS

"Academic institutions play a key role in transforming research into real-world fisheries enterprises."

–Prof. Dr. K Dinesh

Inaugural Session

Ms. Vrinda P Sunil
Business Executive
MANAGE - FISHub

The Vote of Thanks in the inaugural session was delivered by **Ms. Vrinda P. Sunil, Business Executive, MANAGE.** She highlighted the importance of such stakeholder-driven programs in strengthening collaboration between institutions, startups, farmers, and industry, and in creating meaningful platforms for knowledge exchange and ecosystem building within the fisheries and aquaculture sector.

She expressed sincere gratitude to all dignitaries and speakers for their valuable insights and guidance, and acknowledged the active participation of farmers, startups, researchers, and students, whose engagement added depth and relevance to the discussions. Ms. Vrinda also conveyed special appreciation to the coordinators and organizing teams from KUFOS and MANAGE for their dedicated efforts in planning and executing the program seamlessly. She concluded by reaffirming MANAGE's commitment to continuing collaborative initiatives that support innovation, entrepreneurship, and sustainable development across the fisheries ecosystem.

"When stakeholders come together with a shared vision, innovation becomes inclusive and impact becomes scalable."

-Ms. Vrinda P Sunil

Startups Exhibition and Networking

Following the Inaugural Session, a Startup Exhibition was held at the venue, where selected fisheries and allied-sector startups showcased their innovative products, technologies, and business models. The exhibition was actively visited by dignitaries, speakers, officials, experts and participants present at the program.

The startups presented a wide range of innovations, including IoT in fisheries, post-harvest value-added solutions, products developed using feeds, sustainable packaging solutions, and technology driven supply chain that support fisheries operations and sustainability.

During the exhibition, dignitaries and stakeholders engaged directly with startup founders, appreciated their innovations and offered valuable feedback and suggestions for further refinement and scaling.

The exhibition functioned as an effective platform for startups to demonstrate their solutions, gain visibility, and explore collaboration and partnership opportunities, while promoting knowledge exchange and networking among fisheries ecosystem stakeholders.

Experience Sharing Session

Mr. Purushothaman
Farmer

The farmer highlighted that while interest and potential in the fisheries sector are growing, individual farmers often struggle to begin and sustain operations on their own. The major challenges include high initial investment for cages, seed pearls, and water infrastructure, limited technical guidance on scientific cultivation practices, and lack of reliable market linkages to sell pearls at fair and transparent prices. Access to credit and working capital remains a critical barrier, as many farmers are unable to meet formal lending requirements without collective backup fund.

The farmer emphasized the importance of collective platforms such as FFPOs in bridging these gaps. With institutional support, farmers can access shared infrastructure, structured training, quality seed supply, and organized marketing channels. Support from FFPOs and government or incubation agencies can also facilitate access to finance, certification, and branding, enabling pearl cultivators to move from small, isolated efforts to a sustainable, scalable, and market-oriented enterprise.

"With the right support system, our small beginnings in pearl cultivation can grow into a strong, trusted market."

-Mr. Purushothaman

Startup Pitching Session and Experience Sharing

Mr. Shias Hyder

Founder and CEO
Epicure Innovative LLP

Problem: The modern food and culinary industry faces multiple challenges, including the lack of access to innovative, healthy, and convenient food solutions for consumers, coupled with gaps in sustainable food production and supply chain inefficiencies. Small and medium-scale food entrepreneurs often struggle to scale their operations due to limited resources, technology adoption, and market visibility.

Solution: Epicure Innovative LLP addresses these challenges by providing innovative food products and culinary solutions that combine convenience, health, and taste. By leveraging modern food technology and research-driven approaches, the company delivers ready-to-use, high-quality ingredients, meal solutions, and culinary experiences that cater to both individual consumers and food businesses.

Innovation: The company has developed proprietary methods for ingredient preparation, flavor enhancement, and sustainable packaging, allowing consumers and businesses to enjoy premium culinary products with minimal effort. The integration of innovation in product design, processing, and distribution ensures that quality and sustainability remain at the forefront.

Business Model: It offers scalable ingredient solutions, culinary support, and co-branded product options. For consumers, it markets ready-to-use meal kits and innovative culinary products through retail and online platforms.

Challenges: These include navigating regulatory compliance for food safety, managing logistics and cold chain requirements, responding to dynamic consumer preferences, and scaling operations without compromising quality.

"Our goal is to make good food simple—where innovation meets nutrition, convenience, and sustainability in every bite."

-Mr. Shias Hyder

Startup Pitching Session and Experience Sharing

Problem:

Dry shrimp is widely consumed in Kerala and other regions, but the process of manually removing the head and shell is time-consuming, labor-intensive, and often causes discomfort. This makes consumers hesitant to purchase dry shrimp and discourages small entrepreneurs from entering this sector. Traditional processing leading to low productivity, loss of time, and reduced profitability.

Solution:

A Dry Shrimp Processing Machine mechanizes head and shell removal, saving time, improving safety, and enabling faster production for both commercial and domestic use.

Mr. Joseph Peechanatt
Aspiring Entrepreneur

Innovation:

The innovation lies in designing a specialized mechanical chamber that separates shrimp head and body through controlled rotation and pressure, a solution that had not previously existed for dry shrimp processing. The machine integrates traditional processing knowledge with modern engineering, offering both commercial-scale and domestic-scale versions.

Business Model:

The business model is centered on producing and marketing value-added dry shrimp products such as shrimp roast and shrimp chutney using the processing machine. Revenue can be generated through the sale of processed and packaged shrimp products, as well as by manufacturing and supplying the machine itself to entrepreneurs and small industries.

Challenges:

Key challenges include the cost of manufacturing and maintaining the machine, creating awareness and acceptance among traditional processors, and ensuring standardization of product quality and hygiene.

"Innovation that saves time, protects workers, and adds value to dry shrimp processing."

-Mr. Joseph Peechanatt

Startup Pitching Session

Mr. Venugopalan
FFPO
Thrissur

Problem: Velur Anappra Inland FDWCS faced challenges related to limited income opportunities for inland fish farmers who were largely dependent on the sale of fresh fish alone. The lack of direct market access, value addition, and attractive infrastructure also reduced profitability and visibility of fisheries-based activities, making it difficult to sustain community enterprises.

Solution: The society addressed these challenges by integrating fish farming with a floating restaurant model, thereby creating a direct connection between production and consumption. This approach generated additional income avenues for members while promoting local fish consumption and strengthening cooperative participation in enterprise development.

Innovation: The innovation of this initiative lies in combining aquaculture with hospitality through a floating restaurant operated by a cooperative society. This model transforms a traditional fish farming activity into an experiential and tourism-oriented enterprise, enhancing community engagement and showcasing inland fisheries as a viable business opportunity.

Business Model: The enterprise generates revenue through the sale of freshly harvested fish and through food services provided by the floating restaurant. Operated as a cooperative society venture, the model ensures shared benefits among members and focuses on direct marketing, customer experience, and sustainability of operations.

Challenges: The initiative faces challenges in managing the operational and maintenance costs of floating infrastructure and ensuring consistent hygiene and quality standards in food services. Seasonal variations, weather conditions, and fluctuations in fish production also affect stability. In addition, attracting regular customers and building long-term market visibility remain key concerns for the enterprise.

"It's not always about the money, but about how you choose to build and believe in your journey."

-Mr. Venugopalan

Startup Pitching Session

Problem: The presentation highlighted key challenges in conventional aquaculture, including rising input costs, environmental degradation, disease outbreaks, poor water quality management, and inconsistent productivity. Farmers often face dependence on chemicals and antibiotics, leading to sustainability concerns, regulatory issues, and reduced consumer confidence.

Solution: The startup focuses on promoting eco-friendly and sustainable aquaculture practices that improve pond health, water quality, and animal performance. Emphasis is placed on natural inputs, scientific farm management, and farmer capacity building to reduce dependency on harmful chemicals and improve long-term farm viability.

Innovation: The innovation lies in integrating green aquaculture principles with science-based inputs and management practices that enhance biosecurity, improve feed efficiency, and support disease prevention. The approach promotes environmentally responsible production while maintaining productivity and economic viability.

Mr. Prasul Prasanthan

Founder & CEO
Dolphin Aquaculture

Business Model: It is centered on providing sustainable aquaculture solutions and advisory support to farmers, including eco-friendly inputs, technical guidance, and best management practices. Revenue is generated through product sales, services, and partnerships, with scalability driven by farmer adoption and regional expansion.

Challenges: It includes changing farmer mindsets from conventional to sustainable practices, demonstrating consistent field-level results, scaling adoption across diverse farming systems, and balancing affordability with quality while navigating regulatory and market acceptance barriers.

"Sustainable aquaculture is the only way forward for healthy ponds and profitable farmers".

-Mr. Prasul Prasanthan

Startup Pitching Session

Mr. Nik Mulakkal

Founder and CEO
Zewa Feeds

Problem:

Unsustainable protein sources: Traditional feed ingredients (soy, fishmeal) require large amounts of land and water, and cause deforestation, making them environmentally costly. Waste & resource inefficiency: Organic waste (food waste, kitchen scraps) is a disposal challenge and a lost resource for protein production.

Solution:

Zewa's solution is built around insect-based protein — especially Black Soldier Fly (BSF) larvae — to produce sustainable, high-digestibility feed for fish and other animals.
It utilizes insect farming to convert organic waste into nutrient-rich protein, forming a sustainable base for fish feeds and other animal feeds.
It also produces specialized feed formulations with high protein content and enhanced nutrition (e.g., for ornamental fish like guppies, bettas, tetras). These formulations are designed for better digestibility, immunity support, vibrant colour, and clean water performance in aquaculture

Innovation:

Zewa Feeds innovates by using Black Soldier Fly (BSF) larvae to convert organic waste into high-protein, sustainable fish and animal feed. Their approach integrates circular economy principles, providing eco-friendly, nutrient-rich feed that improves digestibility, supports ornamental and aquaculture species, and reduces reliance on traditional protein sources like soy and fishmeal.

Business Model:

"Zewa Feeds follows a sustainable, circular business model by producing insect-based fish and animal feed from organic waste. The company generates revenue through the sale of value-added, eco-friendly feed products to aquaculture farmers and ornamental fish markets, while integrating innovation, research, and scalable production to expand market reach.

Challenges:

Key challenges faced by Zewa Feeds include creating awareness and acceptance of insect-based feed among farmers, ensuring regulatory compliance and quality standardization, scaling up production sustainably, and competing with established conventional feed brands in a price-sensitive market.

Behind every successful startup lies countless unseen hours of effort, experimentation, and relentless problem-solving.".

-Mr. Nik Mulakkal

Startup Pitching Session

Problem: Limited availability of value-added seafood products like fish pickle and ready-to-cook items in the market.
Small-scale fish producers and processors often face challenges in hygiene, quality, and product diversification, limiting consumer reach.
Low market penetration of processed seafood products, especially in urban and semi-urban areas.

Produces ready-to-consume and ready-to-cook seafood products, including fish pickles, that are hygienically processed and safe for consumers. Focuses on product diversification to offer multiple options, enhancing appeal and market accessibility. Supports small-scale fisheries by adding value to their catch, increasing profitability.

Smt. Laisa Sathar
Founder
S A Hajila Foods

Innovation: Introduces value addition and hygienic processing techniques to traditional seafood products. Combines ready-to-eat and ready-to-cook formats for convenience, expanding seafood consumption beyond conventional markets. Implements quality-focused and diversified product lines to differentiate from standard fish products.

Business Model: Revenue is generated through the sale of processed seafood products like fish pickles and ready-to-cook items. Focus on quality, hygiene, and diversification to cater to urban, retail, and niche markets. Builds brand recognition through consistent product quality and market presence, while leveraging value addition to improve profitability in the fisheries sector.

Challenges: Market awareness and acceptance of processed seafood products among consumers accustomed to fresh fish. Scaling production while maintaining hygiene and quality standards.

"Turning fresh catch into convenient, value-added seafood products that reach more plates with quality and care."

-Smt. Laisa Sathar

Startup Pitching Session

Mr. Noby Sebastian
Technical Lead
Cyrustech Innovations Pvt. Ltd

Problem: Agricultural producers and farmer collectives face major difficulties in drying perishable produce such as spices, jackfruit, seaweed, and herbs. Conventional dryers consume high amounts of energy, leading to increased operational costs and carbon footprint. At the same time, uncontrolled drying results in uneven moisture levels, and loss of aroma, color, and nutritional value, making the products unsuitable for premium and export markets.

Solution: Cyrustech Innovations has developed a hybrid heat pump and infrared-based agricultural dryer that ensures efficient, low-temperature, and uniform drying of agricultural produce. The system operates on equilibrium moisture content (EMC) principles using real-time weight and humidity sensing to control the drying process precisely.

Innovation: The core innovation lies in combining heat pump dehumidification with infrared drying and weight-based EMC control in a single intelligent system. The integrated mist eliminator prevents moisture recirculation and enhances drying efficiency and equipment life. The weight-based EMC control continuously measures moisture loss and automatically adjusts heat input, preventing over-drying and preserving product quality.

Business Model: It follows a scalable business model combining direct equipment sales with subscription and rental-based access enabled through IoT connectivity. This approach lowers the entry barrier for farmers, FPOs, and small agribusinesses who cannot afford high upfront investments.

Challenges: The major challenges include adoption resistance due to unfamiliarity with advanced drying technologies among farmers and small processors. Initial investment, even with rental models, may still be a concern for marginal farmers.

"Drying is not just about removing moisture, but about preserving value."

-Mr. Noby Sebastian

Startup Pitching Session

Problem: Fishing communities in Chaliyam primarily depend on the sale of fresh fish, which is highly vulnerable to price fluctuations, spoilage, and seasonal oversupply. Limited cold storage and processing facilities often lead to post-harvest losses and reduced income for fishermen and allied workers.

Solution: The Chaliyam Town FDWCS Dry Fish Unit establishes a community-led, hygienic processing and value-addition facility that transforms fresh fish into high-demand dried fish products. By leveraging its proximity to the fish landing center, in-house auction system, and trained SHG groups, the society ensures steady raw material supply, cost efficiency, and quality-controlled processing.

Innovation: The project introduces a cooperative-based, integrated processing model that combines direct sourcing, community labor, and organized market access within a single ecosystem. The innovation lies in converting a traditionally informal and scattered drying practice into a standardized, hygienic, and market-oriented enterprise.

Smt. Sheeja A T
FFPO
Kozhikode

Business Model: The Dry Fish Unit operates under a society-owned, community enterprise model. Revenue is generated through the sale of processed dried fish to local markets, supermarkets, and bulk buyers. The society benefits from reduced raw material costs through its own auction system and internal procurement network.

Challenges: Maintaining consistent quality and hygiene standards, managing weather dependency in drying operations, ensuring year-round raw material availability, and building strong market linkages with organized retail buyers.

"When communities add value to what the sea provides, they don't just grow products — they grow livelihoods, dignity, and sustainable futures."

-Smt. Sheeja A T

Startup Pitching Session

Problem: Coastal households under the Puthiyangadi Fishermen Development Welfare Cooperative Society face limited and unstable income due to heavy dependence on the sale of fresh fish, which is highly vulnerable to price volatility, spoilage, and seasonal supply fluctuations. Women in fishing communities have restricted access to structured livelihood opportunities, despite playing a critical role in post-harvest activities.

Solution: The Dry Fish Unit at Puthiyangadi establishes a community-based, hygienic, and organized processing enterprise that converts fresh fish and prawns into high-quality dried and ready-to-eat products. Located close to local harbors to ensure affordable and timely access to raw materials, the unit follows Good Manufacturing Practices

Smt. Shibilie
FFPO
Kozhikode

Innovation: The initiative transforms a traditionally informal, household-based drying practice into a structured micro-enterprise model that integrates training, standardized hygiene, and market-oriented branding. By combining women-led SHGs with cooperative ownership and formal quality assurance systems, the project introduces traceability, consistency, and institutional credibility into the dried fish value chain.

Business Model: The unit operates under a cooperative-owned, community enterprise model supported by government grants, subsidies, and institutional financing. Revenue is generated through the sale of dried fish and ready-to-eat prawn products in Kozhikode, Wayanad, and surrounding markets. Raw materials are procured directly from nearby harbors at competitive prices, while processing and packaging are managed by trained local members. Profits are reinvested into operations, member welfare, and capacity building, ensuring financial sustainability and community impact.

Challenges: Maintaining consistent product quality and hygiene standards across production cycles, managing weather dependency in drying operations, and ensuring year-round availability of raw materials.

"When coastal communities turn tradition into enterprise, every harvest becomes a pathway to dignity, resilience, and shared prosperity."

-Smt. Shibilie

Valedictory Session

In the valedictory session, **the Director of the Central Institute of Fisheries Technology (CIFT), Dr. George Ninan,** expressed sincere appreciation to MANAGE and KUFOS for their collaborative efforts in organizing the program and for creating a strong platform that connects farmers, startups, researchers, and institutional stakeholders. The Director highlighted the importance of Kerala's well-established fisheries and startup support ecosystem, emphasizing how coordinated efforts between academic institutions, government agencies, cooperatives, and innovation hubs are enabling sustainable growth and entrepreneurship in the sector.

The address also outlined CIFT's ongoing and upcoming programs aimed at strengthening fisheries-based enterprises, including technical training, technology transfer, quality assurance support, and capacity-building initiatives for startups and farmer collectives. The Director reaffirmed CIFT's commitment to working closely with FPOs, FFPOs, and emerging entrepreneurs by providing scientific guidance, access to pilot facilities, and advisory support to help them scale their innovations. Concluding the session, the director assured continued institutional backing and collaboration to ensure that promising ideas and grassroots enterprises receive the technical and ecosystem support needed to succeed in competitive markets.

Dr. George Ninan
Director
ICAR- CIFT

"When academia, government, and entrepreneurs work together, ideas move beyond laboratories and classrooms to create real impact in communities."

-Dr. George Ninan

Valedictory Session

Prof. Dr. K Dinesh

Registrar
KUFOS

In the concluding address, **Prof. Dr. K Dinesh, Registrar KUFOS,** expressed heartfelt gratitude to Dr. Saravan Raj and the MANAGE team for their leadership and dedication in conceptualizing and successfully organizing the Fisheries Startup & Aquapreneurship Stakeholders Meet.

He acknowledged the valuable contributions of all dignitaries, speakers, and institutional partners whose insights and participation enriched the program and strengthened the collaborative spirit of the event.

Dr. Dinesh also appreciated the enthusiastic engagement of farmers, startups, researchers, students, and industry representatives, noting that their active participation reflected the growing momentum of innovation and entrepreneurship within the fisheries and aquaculture ecosystem. He reaffirmed KUFOS's commitment to continuing partnerships with MANAGE and allied institutions to support capacity building, technology adoption, and sustainable enterprise development across the sector. The address concluded with a call for sustained collaboration and collective action to translate discussions and ideas from the platform into impactful, field-level outcomes.

"Our collective strength lies in partnership—where knowledge, innovation, and commitment converge to shape a sustainable future for fisheries."

–Prof. Dr. K Dinesh

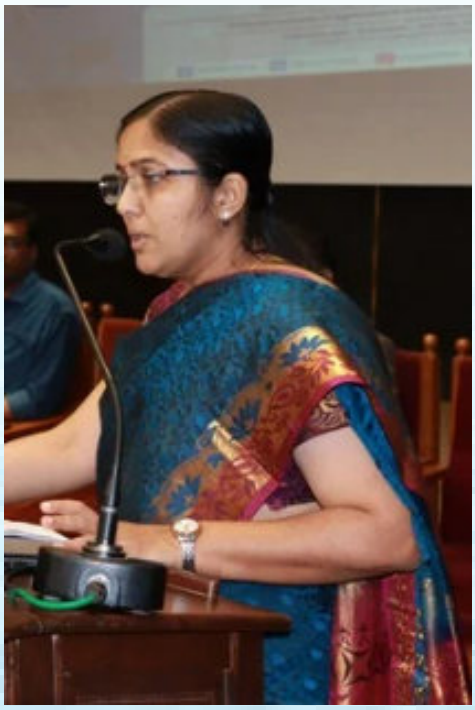
Valedictory Session

Prof. (Dr) Radhika Rajasree S. R. Dean, Faculty of Ocean Science and Technology & Coordinator, Business Incubation Centre, KUFOS, delivered the Valedictory Address, expressing gratitude to the Director, MANAGE, Hyderabad, dignitaries, speakers, participants and organizers for making the programme meaningful and impactful.

She stated that such short, focused programmes help bring together multiple stakeholders and effectively disseminate key messages on innovation and entrepreneurship across the fisheries and agriculture sectors.

She noted that while bank loans are difficult, startups today have wide access to grants, incubation support, government schemes, and private funding, making innovation and experimentation easier for UG and PG students.

She urged students to solve real field-level problems by engaging with stakeholders.



Prof. (Dr) Radhika Rajasree

Dean, Faculty of Ocean Science and Technology & Coordinator, Business Incubation Centre
KUFOS

"By working hand in hand across academia, government, and enterprise, we turn today's dialogue into tomorrow's development."

–Prof. (Dr) Radhika Rajasree

Valedictory Session

Ms Vrinda P Sunil proposed the Vote of Thanks at the Valedictory Session of the Fisheries–Startup & Aquapreneurship Stakeholders Meet, expressing sincere gratitude to the leadership and dignitaries for their guidance and valuable contributions.

Ms. Vrinda P Sunil
Business Executive
MANAGE-FISHub

She acknowledged t Prof. (Dr) Radhika Rajasree S. R. Dean, Faculty of Ocean Science and Technology & Coordinator, Business Incubation Centre, KUFOS for her vision and support, the Programme Coordinator for effective planning and academic leadership, and the valedictory and concluding speakers for their insightful policy- and extension-oriented perspectives.

She conveyed that the insights shared by policymakers, extension professionals, scientists, and industry experts highlighted the importance of extension-led innovation, institutional support, and stakeholder convergence in building a robust ecosystem for fisheries startups and aquapreneurs. She also noted that the active participation of fisherfolk, startups, and entrepreneurs reinforced the relevance of the discussions to real-world challenges.

"Every idea has the potential to become an enterprise when guided by the right mindset and support system."

–Ms. Vrinda P Sunil

List of Startups Participated in the Program

S.No	Startup	Founder Name	Descrpition
1.	**Stem Systems Pvt Ltd**	**Dr. Arun Das**	Stem Systems Pvt Ltd, founded in 2022 and based in Kochi, Kerala, is an aquaculture innovation company specializing in sustainable, high density mud crab farming and RAS. They offer expert consultation, training for farmers, and a B2B/B2C marketplace
2.	**Epicure Innovative LLP**	**Shias Hyder**	Epicure Innovative LLP is a Kerala based, award winning food technology startup focused on revolutionizing seafood retail through Vacuum Skin Packaging Technology. Founded in 2022 and incubated in CIFT, they provide chemical free, cleaned, and hygienic fresh fish and meet with extended shelf life.

S.No	Startup	Founder Name	Descrpition
3.	SINCERE FARM PRODUCTS	VENUGOPALAN	Sincere Farm Products is an enterprise engaged in pearl culture and seafood processing, focusing on sustainable production practices, value addition, and the development of market-oriented fisheries products. The enterprise aims to enhance income opportunities through diversification while promoting innovation and entrepreneurship within the fisheries sector.
4.	Agrowtein Labs	Oneismos K K	Agrowtein Labs is a pioneering tech startup specializing in agricultural and fisheries automation. Their focus is on delivering cutting-edge solutions for businesses and individuals keen on advancing technological innovations within the agricultural sector. Offering a comprehensive array of services and products, they assist clients in realizing their goals through custom design and fabrication, engineering analysis, project management, and more.

S.No	Startup	Founder Name	Descrpition
5.	**Cyrustech Innovations Pvt. Ltd**	**Mr. Noby Sebastian**	Their product is an improved version of existing heat-pump-based dehumidification dryer. Our advanced model features IoT connectivity for remote diagnostics, predictive, and preventive maintenance, ensuring optimal uptime and efficient operation. It also includes an inverter compressor for enhanced energy efficiency and supports photovoltaic integration for sustainable power use.
6.	**Dolphin Aquaculture**	**Prasul Prasanthan**	Dolphin Aquaculture in Kerala is a specialised aquaculture unit focusing on the breeding, rearing and sale of quality fish. They offer a range of products, including ornamental fish, and provide services such as safe packaging for customers.

S.No	Startup	Founder Name	Descrpition
7.	Zewa Feeds	Nik Mulakkal	Zewa Feeds specializes in converting organic waste into sustainable protein feed for livestock and ornamental fish. They utilize black soldier fly farming to produce high-quality protein feed, which is then used to create nutritious organic manure for gardens. Their products include Zewa fish feed, Zewa poultry feed, and 100% organic fertiliser. The company aims to reduce food waste by converting it into high-quality sustainable animal and fish feed, and nutritious organic manure for kitchen gardens. Zewa's eco-friendly technology is particularly beneficial for small-scale farmers, households, and poultry farms, and it works best for managing global food waste.
8.	S A Hajla Foods	Laisa Sathar	S. A. Hajila Foods is a fisheries-based enterprise engaged in seafood processing, with a focus on value-added products such as fish pickle and other ready-to-consume and ready-to-cook seafood items. The enterprise emphasizes hygienic processing practices, product quality, and diversification to enhance market reach.

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