



Cabinet approves Grants-in-aid of Rs. 25 crore to Agro-Economic Research Centres and Agro-Economic Research Units beyond 2016-17

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The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved to extend the grants-in-aid support to the existing network of 12 Agro-Economic Research Centres (AERCs) and three Agro-Economic Research Units (AERUs) for one more year that is up to 2017-18.

An amount of Rs.25 crore will be required to continue the grants-in-aid to the existing 15 AERCs/AERUs. The employees of 12 AERCs and three AERUs situated in different states will be benefited. This would provide policy oriented Agro Economic Research inputs through field studies and reviewing / monitoring of Flagship programmes of the agriculture and allied sector. This would lead to better agricultural development policy and programmes which in turn would raise employment potential in both Farm and Non-Farm areas.

It will be reviewed after one year for taking the final decision on the recommendations of the Review Committee, chaired by Dr. S.M. Jharwal, Chancellor, India Gandhi National Tribal University. This Committee was set up by the Department of Agriculture, Cooperation & Farmers Welfare (DACFW) to review the functioning of AERCs/AERUs. The Review Committee has recommended that the AERCs/AERUs must be retained and strengthened and that the present pattern of grant-in-aid to these grass-root research institutions must be continued. The Committee has also made recommendations regarding functioning and improving governance of the AERCs/AERUs.

Background:

The Agro-Economic Research (AER) Scheme is an on-going scheme initiated in 1954-55 for undertaking research studies on agro-economic problems of the country. Department of Agriculture & Cooperation has set up 15 AERCs/AERUs in different Universities/Institutes with a view to conduct policy oriented research/evaluation studies on topics of interest. The scheme is staff oriented and fully funded by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare through grants-in-aid (Central Sector Plan Funds). Currently, these AERCs/AERUs are being funded under the 'Integrated Scheme on Agriculture Census, Economic and Statistics', central sector scheme of Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.

The three AER Units namely, ADRT, Bangalore, CMA, Ahmedabad and AER Unit, Delhi are functioning under the Institute for Social and Economic Change, Bangalore, India Institute of Management, Ahmedabad and Institute of Economic Growth, Delhi respectively. AERC, Pune is functioning under the Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics (a deemed University). The remaining 11 centres are functioning under different Universities. Out of which AERCs at Jorhat, Ludhiana and Jabalpur are under Agricultural Universities, AERCs at Allahabad, Delhi and Visva-Bharati, Shantiniketan are under Central Universities. The rest of five Centres at Bhagalpur, Chennai, Shimla Vallabh Vidyanagar and Waltair are functioning under the respective State Universities.

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