

**NATIONAL COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION  
LINAC, GURUGRAM**

No. NCDC: IC/2-3/22-ICA

Dated: 24.03.2022

**Minutes of the 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the Advisory Body for Sahakar Pragya Centre on Good Practices**

1. The 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Advisory Body for Sahakar Pragya Centre on Good Practices (SPCGP) was held in hybrid mode, under Chairmanship of Shri J. P. Meena, Former Secretary to the Govt of India, on 3 February 2022 (Thursday) at 11.30 A.M. in Training Hall - Bharati, Laxmanrao Inamdar National Academy for Cooperative Research and Development, Gurugram. List of the participants is annexed.
2. At the outset, Shri Robert H. Touthang, Deputy Director, LINAC provided a brief introduction of all esteemed members of the Advisory Body and welcomed them to the meeting.
3. Lt. Col. (Dr.) Baljit Singh, Chief Director, LINAC outlined the objectives of the meeting and the actions already taken by the NCDC for operationalising the SPCGP. He explained the following agenda points for consideration of the Advisor Body:
  - To deliberate upon operational mechanism and suggest road map for SPCGP;
  - To deliberate upon and suggest mechanism for governance of the NCDC funded SPCGP;
  - To deliberate upon and suggest a mechanism for revitalization of cooperative movement through the SPCGP

CD LINAC also suggested that the SPCGP may initially take up its research in five sectors viz (i) Fisheries; (ii) Rural Credit and Insurance; (iii) Women in Cooperatives; (iv) Skill Development and Technology; (v) Climate Change and Cooperatives.

4. **Shri Sanjay Pachpor, National Organizing Secretary, Sahakar Bharati** shared his observations from his visits to 27 states of the country, noting that co-operative practices had become outdated over time where that both operations and governance of cooperatives needed to be revitalised to ensure they develop into viable business enterprises. This will require the diligent review of cooperative governance principles and following these principles in their letter and spirit. Current day circumstances have brought new challenges but have also opened vast opportunities to develop and expand cooperatives in hitherto ignored areas, including services, labour, MSME, etc. There is a lack of awareness among people on the variety of support that is provided by the government for the rightful development of cooperatives and greater awareness on these initiatives are needed. In establishing a Ministry of Cooperation, the government has initiated renewed focus on cooperatives and on revitalising the cooperative movement. The established and successful cooperatives, like AMUL and IFFCO, have amassed great experience and also need to take responsibility to support efforts to promote, develop and empower other cooperatives. Normally this does not happen as large cooperatives tend to subsume or constrain smaller cooperative initiatives. However, SPCGP should provide an opportunity for greater collaboration between cooperatives, large and small and across sectors.
5. **Amb Ruchi Ghanashyam, Former Secretary MEA** informed that from the perspective of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, cooperative societies in India can contribute to fulfilling these objectives and can also help plug the gaps. Cooperative societies can play a major role in helping the country in meeting these global objectives and place India in the correct global perspective. There is a need to make cooperatives successful business models. Only cooperatives that can sustain themselves as economically viable entities can survive. While being economically successful, it is important that there



should be transparency in governance. There are many role models, even in India. It would be useful to compile these best practices of the co-operative movement in India, and to spread these practices within other cooperatives in India itself. Simultaneously it is important to continue to identify and work with International best practices and learn from their experiences. We should learn from the successful Cooperative movements both in India and abroad.

6. **Shri Balasubramanian Iyer, Regional Director ICA-AP** informed that ICA, an international organisation of 315 member institutions across countries - headquartered in Brussels, Belgium, and operating through regional offices - represents close to 3 million cooperatives with 1 billion individual members and has exposure to vibrant business models of cooperative sector world over. He underlined that ICA has expertise in research, women cooperatives, and youth cooperatives. ICA was established in 1895 and thereafter, has expanded its scope, dimension and mandate, currently serving the entire of Asia Pacific. Its primary aim is to protect the identity of cooperatives and advocate for their growth in all dimensions. ICA is also working as a knowledge centre for capacity building of the cooperatives across countries.

He emphasized on strengthening the cooperatives by putting more efforts to address their problems and bring them to the notice of policy makers at the right time. He appreciated the efforts of NCCD for creating the SPCGP at LINAC Academy by upgrading its available infrastructure with good amenities like workstation, high speed internet access, round table conference facility, portable projector and placement of officer to start the Centre in a very short span of time.

7. **Capt./ Prof Pawanexh Kohli, Former CEO NCCD & ex-Chief Advisor, DAC&FW** noted that the primary purpose of this meeting is to deliberate on the operational mechanism for the SPCGP, as per recommendations arising from the brainstorming at the Chintan Shibir of 17-Nov-2021. He recalled certain direction setting suggestions made at the Chintan Shibir, in line with which an MOA between LINAC and ICA-AP was entered. Further, LINAC had also prepared a dedicated office space for the SPCGP. Since the Centre is a joint effort of LINAC with the ICA, he requested that both organisations inform this Advisory Body of any other resources they intend to make available, before further deliberating on the steps that can be taken to operationalize the Centre.

LINAC updated that it had already designated an officer-in-charge for coordination for SPCGP, and it had initiated the process to hire suitable external resources as per need. He then suggested that ICA-AP also assign a person to coordinate, and to confirm any other ICA resources or contributions that can help the Centre to discharge its expected functions. ICA-AP informed that they would revert at a later date after internal discussions. Commending the action taken so far, he suggested the following to operationalize the Centre:

- i. To assign a single point of contact (SPOC) between LINAC and ICA-AP to coordinate the pre launch operations of the centre. The SPOCs may hold regular meetings to coordinate their actions and inform of bottlenecks, if any. The frequency of meetings may be decided by heads of both the organisations.
- ii. Tentatively, the SPCGP may be headed by an officer of rank of Director / Chief Director (dual charge), initially assisted by the Centre Coordinator with a dedicated team of research analysts.
- iii. The role and responsibility of the SPCGP staff to be assigned – for eg., desk review and collation of the existing data; extracting relevant good practices in standardised format; undertake first-hand research of good practices in other cooperatives; to manage translations and website; dissemination operations, etc. The common administrative functions can be supported by LINAC.
- iv. An annual action plan for the centre will need to be prepared by the SPCGP team for which a tentative budgetary/resource allocation for the Centre by both partnering organisations may be planned.



- v. The organisational structure of the SPCGP can be further redefined after HR contributions and support of both partnering organisations can be confirmed.
  - vi. The sourcing of existing good practices may be commenced as soon as manpower is ready, initially limited to the five priority areas. This can be expanded into other domains and topics after operations of the centre get established.
  - vii. Translation of compilations into regional vernacular must be planned for and resources identified.
  - viii. Obtain a domain name, design and launch a website for the Centre.
  - ix. After launch of website, various other modes of dissemination as discussed in Chintan Shibir, can be planned to revitalise the movement, basis resources made available by both partnering organisations.
8. **Dr Bijayani Mishra, Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, Maitreyi College, Delhi University** informed that there is a need to undertake research for the development of co-operatives on basis of good practices in India and abroad, stressing on technology adoption to strengthen cooperatives. She also suggested that the good practices of successful tribal cooperatives of the Maharashtra State should also be taken into consideration. She emphasized upon the development of the tribal cooperatives based on the good practices of the cooperative governance. The tribal way of cooperative life may also teach good practices of sharing resources and developing cooperative structures which are people centric. The Centre needs to focus research on such aspects also.

The majority of stakeholders in the tribal areas are only fluent in their local language. However, in most cases all the knowledge documents are submitted in English language which creates hurdles for such communities. Language is one of the most influential factors when engaging with the larger section of the tribal communities involved in various cooperatives. For their wholesome inclusiveness it will be necessary to understand and address the issue of language.

9. **Shri J. P. Meena, Former Secretary to Gol and Chairman of the Advisory Body**, while summing up of the discussion, appreciated the efforts of NCDG for creating the SPCGP at LINAC in partnership with ICA. Both NCDG and ICA have the common objectives of developing cooperatives as a viable business enterprises. The joint initiative by both these organisations to set up SPCGP is an important step in the right direction and also the need of the hour. Various benefits can accrue from this joint effort to document, validate and disseminate the good practices of cooperative governance both in India and abroad. He said that the SPCGP should become a knowledge hub for cooperative sector, as a lighthouse to guide its future development, and to meet the challenges of an emerging economic order in the country and abroad. The Centre will need to be equipped with experienced researchers to take forward the mandate envisaged for it in the Chintan Shibir. This would require very dedicated and consistent research work by the experts and the coordinated dissemination of their work throughout the country. He expressed sincere thanks to the members of the Advisory Body for their valuable suggestions on the various aspects of the functioning of SPCGP.

10. The actionable points recommended by the Advisory Body are:

**Short-term:**

- i. ICA-AP may complete internal discussions and inform the type of resources ICA can dedicate or contribute to the Centre.
- ii. ICA-AP to assign a nodal officer to engage with the coordinating officer assigned by LINAC. Initially, both can undertake fortnightly meetings to synchronize the pre launch activities of the SPCGP. This schedule can subsequently be revised in consultation with heads of both organisations.
- iii. LINAC to complete the process to engage some experienced researchers for the SPCGP. These experts will be required to review and research the good practices of cooperatives governance, to



- document, revalidate and disseminate the findings for benefit of the cooperative sector. The hiring of manpower can be staggered to suit available resources and actual needs.
- iv. The role of the Centre can be adopted from what is outlined in the Chintan Shibir document.
  - v. ICA-AP will assist the Centre in identifying and undertaking research on good practices in cooperative governance abroad.
  - vi. The Centre will focus on five areas initially, viz (i) Fisheries; (ii) Rural Credit and Insurance; (iii) Women in Cooperatives; (iv) Skill Development & Technology; (v) Climate Change & Cooperatives
  - vii. The sourcing and review of available data on good practices to be commenced as soon as experts are appointed, who can initially prioritise the suggested five areas.
  - viii. The Centre may have its webpage on NCDC main website where suitable knowledge dissemination to the cooperatives and other stakeholders can be done.
  - ix. An initial budgetary allocation for the SPCGP may be decided by both partnering organisations.
  - x. An annual action plan be prepared.
  - xi. It was decided that meetings of the Advisory Body may be held on quarterly basis.

**Mid / Long-term:**

- i. A feedback system to regularly review impact can be developed. Learnings from the research on good practices can be incorporated in ongoing training and capacity building programmes of LINAC.
  - ii. Translation of researched compilations into regional languages be planned and resources be identified for the same. Training and literature will be given to BoDs and members of cooperative societies in local languages for their capacity building.
  - iii. Undertake first-hand research of cooperatives and expand into other topics besides initial five areas. This can cover various upcoming and ignored sectors that can benefit from co-operative movement, as may be permitted after the initial operations of the centre get streamlined.
  - iv. Besides online repository (website), other modes of outreach, such as, publications, debates, people exchange, etc. can be taken up with purpose to revitalise the co-operative movement. Social media interactions and portal for uploading films/success stories of cooperatives can be considered.
  - v. The partnering organisations may consider to enhance the staff or empanel external researchers to strengthen the SPCGP and to accordingly scale up its operational capabilities.
11. Shri S. K. Tucker, Advisor presented a vote of thanks.
12. The meeting ended with a vote of thanks to the Chair.



Lt. Col. (Dr.) Baljit Singh  
Chief Director, LINAC

**Circulation:** All members and participants

**List of the participants at the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Advisory Body for SPCGP**

1. Shri J. P. Meena, Former Secretary MoFPI (*Chairperson*)
2. Shri Sanjay Pachpor, National Organizing Secretary, Sahakar Bharati (*member*)
3. Amb Ruchi Ghanashyam, Former Secretary MEA (*member*)
4. Shri Balasubramanian Iyer, Regional Director, ICA-AP (*member*)
5. Capt./ Prof. Pawanexh Kohli, Former CEO NCCD / ex-Chief Advisor, DAC&FW, Gol (*member*)
6. Dr. Bijayani Mishra, Assistant Professor, Dept of Sociology, Maitreyi College, Delhi University (*member*)
7. Lt. Col. (Dr) Baljit Singh, Chief Director, LINAC (*convener*)
8. Shri S. K. Tucker, Advisor, LINAC
9. Shri Robert H. Touthang, Dy. Director, LINAC
10. Shri Vikas Dhirai, SPS; LINAC
11. Shri Neeshank Mahajan, PO, LINAC