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Deshpande Foundation to build 1 lakh farm ponds to help farmers in rain-fed regions

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NABARD, State Bank of India, and HDFC Bank are supporting the foundation in scaling up the farm pond initiative



Gururaj Deshpande, co-founder, Deshpande Foundation, at the Agriculture Day event in Bengaluru on Tuesday | Photo Credit: supplied

Hubbali-based Deshpande Foundation has announced a mega initiative to construct one lakh farm ponds as part of its “Greening India” initiative, helping farmers store rainwater for irrigation in the rain-fed regions of the country.

The announcement was made by Gururaj Deshpande, co-founder, Deshpande Foundation, at the ‘Agriculture Day’ event organised in collaboration with NABARD in Bengaluru on Tuesday. NABARD, State Bank of India, and HDFC Bank are supporting the foundation in scaling up the farm pond initiative.

Deshpande Foundation has already built 8,000 successful farm ponds in North Karnataka and Telangana over the past few years. “While expanding the initiative further in Karnataka and Telangana, we are also looking at entering new States such as Maharashtra and Rajasthan,” Deshpande said.

Boosting sustainability

“It has been our mission to boost sustainable development through innovative use of technology and scaling socio-economic growth through entrepreneurship. We have launched several initiatives such as setting up India’s largest startup incubator in Hubbali. The agriculture sector is crucial to India’s continuous growth and food security, and that’s why Deshpande Foundation is working closely with key stakeholders to support the sector,” he said.

Farm ponds will have no plastic lining and will be built using the satellite mapping of surface water flows. Being built on the farmers’ land, who will collectively benefit from the project, these ponds will ensure that most of the run-off water during the monsoon season is collected and stored in them. While farmers are expected to chip in with about 20 per cent of the cost, the Foundation will facilitate the finance linkage through SBI and HDFC Bank.

The Agriculture Day event served as a platform for impactful discussions and knowledge sharing on future of agriculture in India, and how technology is going to be a key in overcoming the challenges faced by farmers. Infosys Founder NR Narayana Murthy spoke about the path that needs to be adopted for tech-driven agriculture development in India. The event served as a platform to discuss subjects such as efficient production systems, agri-value chains, and the market connection of agri-products.

APEDA chairman, M Angamuthu; Jaishree Deshapande, co-founder Deshpande Foundation; GR Chintala, former chairman, NABARD, graced the event.