



Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser  
to the Government of India



# RICH COMMUNIQUE

October-December 2023

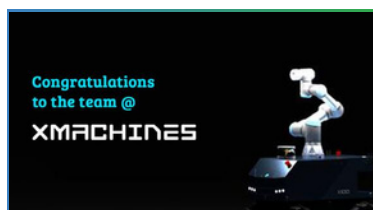


## COVER STORY

**Workshop on  
Geospatial Technology  
Applications & Opportunities for  
Agtech Start-ups,  
in collaboration with  
MNCFC-DAFW**



**SAMARTHan@RICH  
Series Launched**



**Start-up success stories**



**RICH recognized at IKMC  
2023**



### Workshop on Geospatial Technology Applications & Opportunities for Agtech Start-ups, in collaboration with MNCFC-DAFW

Digitalization efforts by the government and emergence of Various technological innovations have slowly but surely begun the transformation of the agriculture sector. Recognizing the role of agritech start-ups in driving such transformation, and the need for access to quality and reliable data, Research and Innovation Circle of Hyderabad (RICH), together with the Mahalanobis National Crop Forecast Centre (MNCFC), organised an awareness-cum-training workshop for the AgriTech Start-ups on Geospatial technologies on 04-05 October, 2023 at T-Hub, Hyderabad.

In recent years, there has been a surge in the number of agritech start-ups in the country, spurred on by the innovation ecosystem developed by various government initiatives. Agriculture sector requires novel digital solutions to address the various challenges facing it, and data remains the critical component in building reliable technology models. Geospatial technologies such as remote sensing, GIS and others collated from various sources such as satellites, drones, automated weather stations, smartphones and field instruments and run on artificial intelligence (AI)/machine learning (ML) platform can provide a lot of data insights for such models.

The challenge however is a lack of standardised protocols for data collection and data exchange, and access to reliable datasets. Although the importance of geospatial technologies in transforming the agriculture sector in India has been recognised, their implementation can be enhanced considerably.

Elaborating on this, the Director of MNCFC, Dr CS Murthy said, "Geospatial technologies generate huge amounts of data and allow rapid and efficient data collection and analyses. Unfortunately, the majority of AgriTech start-ups are not aware of how to access this data".

Recognising these obstacles, RICH and MNCFC organized the workshop for agritech start-ups and industry players to build awareness on data sources and analysis tools, and various initiatives from the Government of India such as Krishi Decision Support System, AgriStack, Digital Crop Survey etc.

The inaugural session was chaired by Dr Pramod Kumar Meherda, IAS, Additional Secretary (Farmers Welfare/Digital Agriculture/CEO (PM KISAN), Department of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare (DAFW), Government of India who emphasized the pivotal importance of establishing a digital public infrastructure for agriculture, emphasizing its open-source, open-standard, and interoperable essence.





The session also had Shri Ashish Kumar Srivastava, IFoS, Joint Secretary (RKVY), DAFW; Shri M Raghunandan Rao, IAS, Agriculture Production Commissioner and Secretary to Government (Agriculture & Cooperation), Government of Telangana; Dr CS Murthy, Director of MNCFC; and Ajit Rangnekar, Director General of RICH talk about the growth of agtech start-ups, and interventions at national & state level.

Technical sessions covered recent digital agriculture initiatives, geospatial solutions in crop insurance, exploration of geospatial technology's potential in agritech, and featured an immersive hands-on sessions using datasets provided by MNCFC. These sessions not only enriched knowledge but also fostered invaluable networking opportunities among start-ups and industry stalwarts, sparking innovation and collaboration within the agtech ecosystem.

"Geospatial technology is unlocking the potential of digital agriculture, and this workshop is a step towards a more innovative and inclusive future for Agtech start-ups.", said Rashmi Pimpale, CEO, RICH.

The workshop had 84 participants representing 50 start-ups, 13 research organizations, 14 industry and 3 ecosystem partners from across India.



**Dr. Pramod Meherda IAS**  
Additional Secretary (Farmers Welfare/  
Digital Agriculture/CEO(PM-KISAN),  
DAFW, Government of India



**M. Raghunandan Rao IAS**  
Agriculture Production Commissioner  
and Secretary to Government  
(Agriculture & Cooperation),  
Government of Telangana



## **MoU between RICH and MNCFC-DACFW**

*To foster the growth of agritech start-ups working on innovative agribusiness models in the geospatial technologies*

## Insightful sessions and discussions led by our speakers



**AK. Srivastava JS**  
IFoS Joint Secretary  
(RKVY), DAFW



**Dr. CS Murthy**  
Director,  
MNCFC



**Dr. Sunil Dubey**  
Deputy Director,  
MNCFC



**Karan Choudhary**  
Deputy Director,  
MNCFC



**Ruchika Gupta**  
Advisor, DA Division,  
DAFW



**MK. Poddar**  
Former CMD, AIC of  
India



**Dr. CBS Dutt**  
Fmr Deputy Director, Scientist-H,  
National Remote Sensing Center of  
ISRO



**Dr. Rama Nemani**  
Founder, Niruthi  
Climate & Ecosystems  
Pvt Ltd



**Venu Panjarla**  
Consultant to Government  
of Telangana



**Geospatial for  
Agtech Start-ups**

Scan this QR code to join the  
RICH-MNCFC Geospatial Group



## Are you a Health/MedTech Startup looking for guidance to scale your solution?

Enroll for our monthly support series starting from October

# SAMARTHan@RICH

Capacity Building for Competency

### Idea Validation

For wannapreneur seeking validation of their idea

### Regulatory

For the startups needing specific guidance on regulatory (TBA)

### Clinical Validation

For the startups needing specific guidance on clinical study strategy/access

## SAMARTHan@RICH – Launched!

*A bi-monthly support series for MedTech innovators/startups.*

This series addresses challenges such as idea validation, regulatory roadmap, and clinical validation faced by startups in the MedTech sector. Participants will have the opportunity to meet experts from CDSCO Hyderabad Zonal Office and clinicians from RICH's network. The series is divided into three tracks: Idea Validation, Regulatory Guidance, and Clinical Validation. RICH believes in the power of mentorship to drive innovation in healthcare and aims to empower startups to navigate regulations and bring life-changing solutions to patients. RICH, a Telangana Government initiative, facilitates research-to-market processes and fosters collaboration among industry stakeholders, entrepreneurs, start-ups, and academic institutions. The first session concluded in October 2023 with experts from CDSCO and Excell Hospitals.



## START-UP SUCCESS STORIES



### xMachines

Secured seed funding from Dare Ventures, the venture capital arm of Coromandel International Limited, part of the Murugappa Group. With this investment and partnership with Coromandel, xMachines is poised for exponential growth and is set to revolutionize the industry. Congrats team xMachines. Onwards and upwards!

### ONWARD HEALTH

Selected for Google's esteemed India Accelerator Programme. This is a testament to their groundbreaking work in leveraging AI to improve cancer outcomes. Kudos to team Onward Health!



### LIQSURE

Liqsure's technology has received substantial orders from farmers and food processors, underscoring its effectiveness in detecting contaminants in crops accurately and quickly, ensuring a safer food supply. In addition, Liqsure's solution has unveiled new use cases, such as identifying crop varieties and grades, empowering farmers with better quality control and fairer pricing opportunities. Well done, team Liqsure!

## NEW PARTNERSHIPS



**IFPRI/HARVESTPLUS**, a program of the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), is dedicated to improving nutrition and public health. IFPRI is a CGIAR Research Center.

*Our collaboration aims to develop transformative initiatives to reshape agricultural and food innovation practices that can advance nutrition outcomes in Telangana, India.*



**UNITED WAY OF HYDERABAD (UWH)** is a not-for-profit organisation focused on delivering social services directly to communities in need.

*Our partnership aims to support interventions targeting holistic development of underserved and disadvantaged communities in Telangana, promote entrepreneurship and social impact causes that contribute to long-term social change.*



## KEY MOMENTS



### Ecosystem recognition

*RICH was recognized by IKP for its pivotal role in enabling the Hyderabad start-up ecosystem at IKMC 2023 held during 30–31 October 2023.*



### TCS-DISQ & Sahyadri Farms

As part of our ongoing discussions, RICH team visited Nashik, Maharashtra to meet the team at TCS-DISQ and Sahyadri Farms to explore collaborations to support our agtech start-up services.

We had very engaging discussions with TCS-DISQ team on how the platform has evolved over the years, and their plans for the journey ahead in revolutionizing agri-scenario in Maharashtra.

The meeting at Sahyadri Farms was also very productive. We visited the farms to see the various technology development activities initiated by the group, and other facilities set up by the farmer groups.



### IMSP 2.0

We hosted the second Investor Meeting and Start-up Pitch (IMSP) for IIMR- Nutrihub as part of the International Nutri Cereal Convention. IMSP had 13 millet start-ups pitching to investors and corporate partners for funding and business lead generation.

### Sessions with Hyderabad ecosystem partners

We were invited to speak on agribusiness start-up opportunities and innovation ecosystem development in the training programs organized by NIRD-PR, MANAGE and AgHub of PJTSAU.



The session at NIRD-PR was on the topic of governance and leadership strategies for CBOs, for officials from Maharashtra SMART project. The session at MANAGE was on ecosystem building for a delegation from Africa, supported by the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (iTEC) program. It was exciting to be part of the Design Thinking workshop organized for final year students of PJTSAU.

## 10th PRMC MEETING



We hosted the PRMC members for the Hyderabad Science & Technology Cluster review meeting on the 24 November 2023. The meeting was chaired by Dr. Swati Basu, Former Scientific Secretary, Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser (O/o PSA) to the Government of India (GoI) along with Dr. Arun Bhardwaj (Scientist F, O/o PSA, GoI), Dr. Kalpana Balakrishnan, Dr. Dinakar Kanjilal, Dr. Anand Nayak, Prof. V Ramgopal Rao, Vivek Kumar, and Yasir Khan.

## Programme Announcement

### IMPACT REPORT 2023

#### Scholarship and Mentorship Programme for Women in STEM Education and Careers

By Research and Innovation Circle of Hyderabad (RICH)



### Let's empower women in STEM together. Applications open for 2<sup>nd</sup> Cohort.

Are you studying at a Tier 2 or Tier 3 institution with a background in STEM?

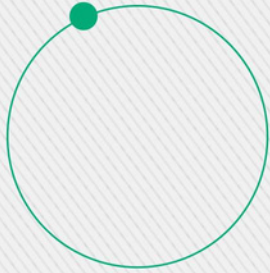
Join the Women in STEM programme today and unlock exciting opportunities to enhance your skills and knowledge in the fields of Science, technology, Engineering, and Mathematics.

If you want to join the Women in STEM programme or know someone who would benefit from this incredible initiative, contact us now!

For more information and to apply, click below

[Women in STEM](#)





It was a busy final quarter of 2023 for us at RICH. Hosting esteemed officials from the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare, Government of India marked a pivotal moment as we unveiled our groundbreaking initiative on data for agtech development in collaboration with the Mahalanobis National Crop Forecast Centre.

Collaborations are vital for our work. We forged new strategic partnerships with national and international agencies to design holistic, sustainable food basket projects in our efforts to address malnutrition, and expanding our network with TCS-DISQ in Nashik.

Other highlights of the quarter were showcasing RICH at ThinkAg Annual Summit, Global Bio India 2023 of DBT-BIRAC, IKP-IKMC 2023, and leading sessions in training programs on agribusiness start-up opportunities and innovation ecosystem development at NIRD-PR and MANAGE. We extend heartfelt gratitude to our partners and ecosystem collaborators for their support for our activities.

In Q1 of 2024, we have planned for agtech-FPO technology showcase, and entrepreneurship development workshops and skill building programs for rural youth. We look forward to engage with agencies interested in collaborating with us on these initiatives.

**JONATHAN PHILROY**

Director of Food & Agriculture

