

Government to Promote Drone use in Agriculture – Financial Support Being Extended Under ‘Sub-Mission on Agriculture Mechanization’

Agriculture Ministry to provide grant up to Rs. 10 lakhs to agricultural institutes for purchase of drones

Custom Hiring Centers set up by Cooperative Society of Farmers, FPOs and Rural entrepreneurs to also get financial assistance for purchase of drones

Subsidized purchase would make drones more accessible to the common man and will encourage domestic drone production

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In a major boost to promote precision farming in India, the Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare has issued guidelines to make drone technology affordable to the stakeholders of this sector. The guidelines of “Sub-Mission on Agricultural Mechanization” (SMAM) have been amended which envisages granting upto 100% of the cost of agriculture drone or Rs. 10 lakhs, whichever is less, as grant for purchase of drones by the Farm Machinery Training & Testing Institutes, ICAR institutes, Krishi Vigyan Kendras and State Agriculture Universities for taking up large scale demonstrations of this technology on the farmers’ fields.

The Farmers Producers Organizations (FPOs) would be eligible to receive grant up to 75% of the cost of agriculture drone for its demonstrations on the farmers' fields.

A contingency expenditure of Rs.6000 per hectare would be provided to implementing agencies that do not want to purchase drones but will hire drones for demonstrations from Custom Hiring Centres, Hi-tech Hubs, Drone Manufacturers and Start-Ups. The contingent expenditure to implementing agencies that purchase drones for drone demonstrations would be limited to Rs.3000 per hectare. The financial assistance and grants would be available until March 31, 2023.

In order to provide agricultural services through drone application, 40% of the basic cost of drone and its attachments or Rs.4 lakhs, whichever less would be available as financial assistance for drone purchase by existing Custom Hiring Centers which are set up by Cooperative Society of Farmers, FPOs and Rural entrepreneurs. The new CHCs or the Hi-tech Hubs that will be established by the Cooperative Societies of Farmers, FPOs and Rural entrepreneurs with financial assistance from SMAM, RKVY or any other Schemes can also include Drone as one of the machines along with other agricultural machines in the projects of CHCs/Hi-tech Hubs.

Agriculture graduates establishing Custom Hiring Centers would be eligible to receive 50% of the basic cost of drone and its attachments or up to Rs.5 lakhs in grant support for drone purchases. Rural entrepreneurs should have passed class tenth examination or its equivalent from a recognized Board; and should have remote pilot license from Institute specified by the Director General of Civil Aviation(DGCA) or from any authorized remote pilot training organization.

The subsidized purchase of agriculture drones for CHCs/Hi-tech Hubs will make the technology affordable, resulting in their widespread adoption. This would make drones more accessible to the common man in India and will also significantly encourage domestic drone production.

The drone operations are being permitted by Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) and Director General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) through the conditional exemption route. MoCA has published 'Drone Rules 2021' vide GSR No. 589(E) dated 25th August 2021 to regulate the use and operation of Drones in India. The Department of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare has also brought out Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for use of Drone application with pesticides for crop protection in agricultural, forestry, non-cropped areas, etc. and for Drone Application in Spraying for Soil and Crop Nutrients. The demonstrating institutions and all the providers of agricultural services through drone application have to comply with these rules/regulations and SOPs

[Click Here for SOP for Use of Drone Application](#)

APS/JK

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