

Joint Declaration of the
Ministry of Agriculture of India and the United States Department of Agriculture
Regarding Support for a
United States-India Knowledge Initiative on Agricultural Education, Research, Service
and
Commercial Linkages

Preamble

Recalling the active participation of the United States Land Grant Universities in helping lay the foundation of an agricultural education and research system in India which dramatically improved productivity, including key food grain crops, India and the United States mutually resolve to initiate a new agricultural partnership that reflects their current relationship.

These parties believe that this tradition of collaboration in knowledge exchange helped launch India's Green Revolution, strengthen food security, and also enriched American campuses with international insights and networks.

The U.S. and India relationships have matured establishing more coequal partnership that helps us mutually achieve important goals and perhaps jointly assist others in need. Agriculture itself has become more global in its reach, more complex in trade and exchanges, more technologically grounded and ever more challenged with balancing sustainability, productivity and social responsiveness. To that end, the Ministry of Agriculture of India and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) hereby declare their desire to promote a new "U.S.-India Knowledge Initiative on Agricultural Education, Research, Service and Commercial Linkages."

Objective

The objective of the U.S.-India Knowledge Initiative on Agricultural Education, Research, Service and Commercial Linkages (the "Initiative") is to re-energize our partnership by promoting teaching, research, service and commercial linkages to address contemporary challenges. A key feature of this Initiative will be a public-private partnership where the private sector can help identify research areas that have the potential for rapid commercialization, with a view to develop new and commercially viable technologies for agricultural advancement in both countries.

In order to meet this objective, the Initiative should focus on the following areas:

Teaching: Examining new and existing mechanisms, including those facilitated by information technologies that strengthen curriculum design, course content and delivery. Traditional and innovative methods of degree attainment, including dual degrees, may be considered to internationalize student experience. Enhancing the structure and sustainability of agricultural programs at universities is an important goal.

Collaborative Research: Examining and prioritizing key collaborative research approaches, research topic areas of shared importance and best methods for assessing mutual impacts. Possible focus areas include improvements in biotechnology, bio-products, sustainable management of water and natural resources, pest management support systems, food safety systems, wastage free food storage, value added food products, modeling weather patterns and understanding of agricultural economies. The Initiative may consider private sector endowment of permanent chairs at Indian Universities, sponsored scholarships for Indian students to study at U.S. Land Grant Universities, and consideration of a fellowship program for post-doctorals in targeted fields who are early in their scientific careers.

The Initiative may consider areas for joint research using biotechnology for harnessing genetic potential of agriculturally important plant and animal species. The Joint Working Group on Agricultural Biotechnology, a USAID-supported effort, may coordinate with this Initiative to promote these objectives.

Information, education, communication technologies: Exploring ways to enhance farming community opportunities to access the latest technical information and know-how in usable form, to enhance efficiency and effectiveness of teaching and learning, exploring collaboration in information, communication and education technologies that will speed up agricultural research and get innovations to farmers at a faster pace.

Commercialization: Considering research that has a potential for rapid commercialization, which could develop new and commercially viable technologies for agricultural advancement in both countries.

Compliance with International Standards: Supporting ongoing joint efforts in grades and standards, by considering how teaching, research, service, and commercial linkages may help develop and align Indian agriculture more closely to international standards and certification in global markets for food grains, fruits, vegetables, cash crops, dairy, fisheries, meat and meat products. The Initiative may consider ways to evolve an important system of risk management in agriculture and allied sectors.

SPS and related areas: Considering ways in which agricultural teaching, research, service and commercial linkages may support ongoing work on international sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) standards and related areas including pest forecasting, surveillance and control, Information Technology applications for crop estimation, yield and coverage, and sound seed production systems.

Funding: Exploring ways to provide sustainable financial support for this Initiative, taking into consideration both public and private sectors sources of funding.

Knowledge Initiative Board

The Ministry of Agriculture of India and USDA will coordinate efforts to reach the objectives of the Initiative by bringing together and working with individuals possessing extensive experience in scoping innovative international partnerships and higher education

agricultural programming. Such individuals will represent a diversity of expertise in teaching, research, service and marketing drawn from throughout the stakeholder community, including the private sector.

For each of the focus areas listed above, individuals participating will be asked to use innovative thinking to identify and describe key priority areas of mutual benefit, suggest collaborative actions that respond to those priorities, and recommend means by which those actions may be funded or supported in the short and/or longer term.

The Ministry of Agriculture of India and USDA anticipate that this Initiative will be coordinated through group participation hereafter referred to as the "Knowledge Initiative Board" consisting of two Co-Chairs, and seven individuals selected by USDA, and seven selected by the Ministry of Agriculture. The Ministry of Agriculture of India and USDA also anticipate that the Board will develop its observations and findings in a report that will be delivered to both USDA and the Ministry of Agriculture of India in 2006. In order to accomplish this task, the Board will meet as it deems appropriate.

Mutual Undertaking

Neither this Declaration nor the Initiative is intended to effect or modify any existing understandings between the participants or to signify an intention to be legally bound under international law. The Initiative is a cooperative, voluntary undertaking and all activities are to be conducted subject to the mutual agreement of the Ministry of Agriculture of India and USDA.

Signed at New Delhi on the 12th day of November, 2005.



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