



Igniting Innovation

Dr. Akriti Sharma,
CEO



PUSA KRISHI

An Agri-Innovation Hub

ZTM & BPD Unit, ICAR-IARI, New Delhi

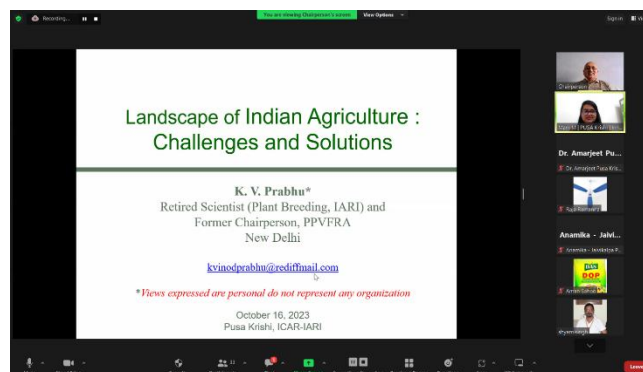
INTRODUCTION

SHITIJ is a flagship incubation program initiated by Pusa Krishi, ICAR-IARI, with a mission to improve innovation in agriculture and foster startup participation. In line with the legacy of ICAR-IARI, this initiative aims to transform agri-entrepreneurship by equipping early-stage startups with the knowledge, mentorship, and infrastructure they need to grow into sustainable businesses.

The program spans approximately one year and is structured in two key phases—an immersive 15-day capacity-building module followed by a full-year incubation that includes regular mentoring, access to labs, and ecosystem support.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVE

-  **Empower agri-startups:** to tackle real-world challenges in agriculture.
-  **Strengthen innovation:** by providing domain-specific mentorship.
-  **Create a positive socioeconomic impact:** by increasing agricultural income through technology-driven entrepreneurship.



PROGRAM FLOW

Outreach and Selection Overview

Category	Details
 Who Can Apply	Students, young professionals, researchers, and startups across India.
 Outreach Channels	• Social media campaigns • Newspaper advertisements • University outreach via emails and calls • WhatsApp & direct ICAR-IARI engagement
 Email Reach	Over 400,000 emails sent to targeted databases including SAUs, ICAR institutes, IARI alumni, Startup India & industry partners.
 Phase 1: Capacity Building & Mentorship	
Focus: Technical + Business Mentorship	

Feature	Details
 Basic Training	15 days – technical and business session by domain experts
 Startup Primer Sessions	2 days/month for 4 months
 Peer-to-Peer Learning	Interactive, collaborative environment
 Specialized Sessions	Customer acquisition, technology transfer, and pitching



Phase 2: Incubation Program

Focus: Learning + Technical Session

Feature	Details
 Knowledge Sharing	Innovation, startup visibility, IP, and finance
 Ongoing Incubation Support	8-month structured support cycle
 One-to-One Mentoring & Sessions	Personalized mentoring and expert-led sessions for individual startup growth

OFFERINGS UNDER SHITIJ

Startup Support Services Snapshot

Focus Area	Description
 Mentoring	Business & Financial Mentorship
 Lab Facilities	FAB Lab, PHT Lab, Biotech Lab, Bioinformatics Lab
 Ecosystem Connects	Industry & Investor Connects, Technical Validation Partners
 IP Support	Patent Drafting, Filing & Industrial Design Support

TRAINING & KNOWLEDGE MODULES

Participants in SHITIJ are trained through a blend of hands-on mentorship, technical sessions, and resource access. The initial 15-day training along with primer sessions offers intensive guidance from experts in technical innovation, business development, and agriculture-specific domains. Key topics include:

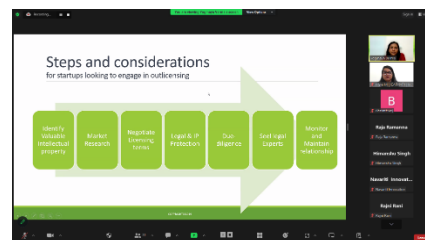
-  **Innovations at IARI and ICAR Knowledge Repositories:** Discover cutting-edge agri-tech innovations and leverage rich institutional knowledge for startup growth.
-  **Indian Agriculture Landscape:** Understand the evolving agri-sector, key trends, opportunities, and rural innovation potential across India.
-  **Primer on Startup Finances and Visibility:** Get equipped with essentials on managing finances, budgeting smartly, and building your brand presence in competitive markets.
-  **Government Schemes for Startups & MSMEs:** Explore vital schemes, incentives, and resources available to boost your startup journey under government programs.
-  **IPR, Tech Transfer & Commercialization:** Learn how to protect your innovation, understand licensing, and convert research into market-ready products.
-  **Effective Pitch Decks and Business Communication:** Craft impactful pitch decks and sharpen your storytelling to confidently present your business to investors and stakeholders.



IMPACT & BENEFITS FOR PARTICIPANTS

These benefits collectively enable participants to transform their ideas into viable, sustainable businesses, contributing to both personal success and sectoral progress.

-  **Skill Building:** Participants gain hands-on experience in business planning, market research, and financial modelling.
-  **Validation Support:** Access to high-end labs helps startups validate and refine their technologies.
-  **Resource Access:** Access to advanced lab facilities, industry connections, and investor networks accelerates startup growth.
-  **IP Creation:** Comprehensive support provided to protect innovations via patents and industrial design filings.
-  **Market Connects:** Through curated industry and investor engagements, startups build vital networks.
-  **Funding & Visibility:** Improved readiness for government grants, investor pitches, and funding opportunities.



KEY METRICS

The program fosters collaboration between startups, industry players, and investors, creating a robust network that drives agricultural advancements. SHITIJ's emphasis on sustainable business models ensures long-term contributions to national agricultural growth.

Cohort Start	Applications Received	Participants Selected & Incubated
31 Jan 2022	261	24
16 Jan 2023	113	20
16 Oct 2023	109	23
20 Aug 2024	107	21
Total	483	67

CONCLUSION

SHITIJ stands as a critical intervention to elevate the Indian agricultural startup ecosystem by integrating research excellence with entrepreneurial energy. Through comprehensive training, sustained incubation, and ecosystem facilitation, it fosters startups that contribute not only to innovation but also to national development goals.

SOME GLIMPSES OF THE PROGRAM

