

APMAS action plan for Celebrating IYC 2025

The 2025 United Nations International Year of Cooperatives (IYC2025) theme will be **Cooperatives Build a Better World**, showcasing the enduring global impact cooperatives have everywhere. This theme puts a spotlight on how the cooperative model is an essential solution to overcome many global challenges and continues to play an important role in accelerating efforts to implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.

The year will be a celebration of the impact of cooperatives on society, and will include a number of actions to strengthen the cooperative movement.

Some of the key objectives for IYC2025 include:

- **Raising awareness:** Cooperatives will promote public awareness of their contributions to sustainable development.
- **Developing leaders:** Cooperatives will develop new leaders and leverage cooperation.
- **Creating an enabling environment:** Governments will create an enabling environment for cooperatives.
- **Promoting growth:** Institutions and development agencies will promote cooperatives through education, strengthening capacities, and facilitating international collaboration.
- **Inspiring young people:** Young people will be inspired to join the cooperative movement.

Keeping the in view of the above, APMAS plans to take up following year long activities:

1. **Autonomy & Independence of SHGs and SHG federations as self-reliant institutions of women:** India has almost 15 million SHGs with over 150 million women as members. There are more than 500,000 SHG federations in India. Most of these SHGs and SHG federations are supported by the Governments (National & State Level) in India. While the SHG movement has achieved phenomenal successes over the past three-decades, their ability to perform the role of demand-driven multi-service organizations is challenged as the SHG Institutions are seen as channels for the delivery of Government Services. There is a need to develop the SHG federations as perpetual autonomous & independent cooperative organizations. The SHG federations have to be supported to develop their long-term vision & strategy to serve the women members effectively. The functioning of the SHGs has become weaker over a period time as there is greater emphasis on the SHG federations. There is a need for an enabling ecosystem for the SHG federations to performing their role in an impactful manner. The Government Agencies needs to truly function as “sensitive support system” for the SHG movement to realize their full potential.

2. **Self-regulation of SHGs and SHG federations:** SHGs and their federations being predominantly financial organizations of the women, they need to have strong systems of accounting & accountability. SHGs and their federations require accounting & bookkeeping, financial management, audit, rating and training on financial management. APMAS has been promoting self-regulation among the SHGs and SHG federations over a period of 15 years through community-led SHG & federation audit, rating and financial management.

3. **Increase FPOs' visibility, especially WFPOs:**

- **Focus on Empowering FPOs:** Efforts to make FPOs the focal point of all agri related business aspects in the local villages by ensuring the FPOs get MSP Procurement licenses to run procurement centers and Input licenses to set up input shops. Efforts are underway to ensure all the FPOs/Federations have input dealerships so that they would not depend on local suppliers rather be in a position to supply to other FPOs in the near vicinity.
- **Organize** national and state-level workshops and conferences on FPOs to enhance farmers' income and productivity. Special focus would be on “Buyer-Seller Meets” by mobilizing various business partners and introducing our FPO eco system to them so that long lasting collaborations can be built. Another area of focus would be “Banking” whereas the State level workshops will be held to create a platform where bankers and FPOs would interact and try to build partnerships that take care of mutual interests.
- **Orient** government officials, bankers and the entire agri value chain eco system towards the FPOs so as to nurture key partnerships.

4. **Growth and Development of FPOs**

- **Strengthening FPOs & FPO Federations** by developing FPOs into sustainable business enterprises. While scaling up the existing businesses like input business, more emphasis will be laid on output marketing which would not only help FPOs financial sustainability but also make them progress towards achieving ‘Member Centrality’ by providing holistic services. APMAS will also work towards collaboration with other FPOs through the district level federations.
- **Introducing IT for FPOs:** Implementing marketing platforms, systems, member data tracking system and creditworthiness assessments so as to ensure that FPOs are ‘Technically Ready’ and also helping FPOs to do business with ease with the help of technological tools.
- **Capacity Building of Women Leaders and Staff:** Providing training on understanding the commodity value chains of important commodities thereby ensuring greater participation of women in the agri value chain particularly in the business aspects. Conducting Engendering workshops so as to sensitize the FPO stakeholders about the gender issues.

- **Organizing Joint Training Programs/Workshops & international courses:** Collaborating with NCUI, ICA, VAMNICOM, IRMA, and other institutions.

5. Creating an Enabling Environment

- **Advocating for FPO Recognition:** Securing allocation of MSP procurement centers to eligible FPOs, on par with PACS. Lobbying at the policy level so that the local Governments would recognize FPOs as potential partners for policy implementation.
- **Advocating for Regulatory Relief:** Seeking relaxation of taxes and simplification of legal compliance procedures.
- **Facilitating Infrastructure Access:** Assisting FPOs in accessing infrastructure support from government departments.
- **Advocating for FPO Financing:** Promoting FPO financing at state and national levels. Ensuring that FPOs improve their creditworthiness and pursuing PSBs/RRBs/NBFCs to finance FPOs.
- **Policy Engagement:** Collaborating with policymakers and secondary stakeholders to create a conducive environment for FPOs to thrive as business enterprises. Working together with like-minded POPIs, CBBOs and other NGOs to identify the policy vacuum and probable solutions and play an anchor role in taking the collective voice to the policy makers.
- **Promoting Self-Regulation:** Advocating for self-regulation of FPOs and their federations to foster sustainability and autonomy.

4. Inspire future members

- APMAS offer youth promotion programs such as Internships, creating a digital platform, IEC materials etc. Collaborations with premier institutes like IRMA, TISS, MANAGE Etc by hosting their students for rural immersion programs, offering internships and placements and thereby attracting the youth to work in the FPO domain.