

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, COOPERATION AND FARMERS WELFARE

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 499
TO BE ANSWERED ON THE 23/07/2021

PRIVACY CONCERNS WITH AGRISTACK

499. SHRI DEREK O' BRIEN:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:

- (a) the basis on which the private companies were selected for building AgriStack, the details thereof;
- (b) the reasons for signing Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with private companies before consultation process could take place the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Ministry has planned any steps to protect the data relating to farmers, if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and
- (d) the manner in which Ministry plan to make the project accessible to all farmers, given the huge digital divide in India, the details thereof?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE

(SHRI NARENDRA SINGH TOMAR)

(a) & (b): The Department has commenced the work for creating Agristack in the country. In order to create Agristack, the department is in the process of finalising “India Digital Ecosystem of Agriculture (IDEA)” which will lay down a framework for Agristack. Accordingly, a Task Force has been constituted and in furtherance, a concept paper on IDEA has been prepared and comments were invited from subject experts, farmers, Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) and general public. Once finalized, this can serve as a foundation to build innovative agri-focused solutions leveraging technologies to contribute effectively towards increasing the income of farmers and improve farm efficiency/efficiency of the Agriculture sector in the country with an overall goal of Doubling of Farmers’ Incomes. A federated farmers’ database is being built by the Department and once completed, this would serve as the core of the Agristack.

No private sector companies are involved in building the Agristack. However, leading Technology/Agri-tech/StartUp companies were identified and invited to collaborate with the Government of India and develop Proof of Concepts (PoC) based on the federated Farmers' database. A public call through the Department's website was also issued inviting proposals for MoU. Companies were invited to sign MoU on purely pro bono basis for a period of one year and develop PoCs. The PoCs will help in understanding solutions that can be built using available data and some of them, if found beneficial to the farmers will be scaled up at National level. There is no connection between the MoUs and the IDEA Consultation Paper for which comments were sought from various stakeholders in the country. The details of MoUs entered by this Department are given at Annexure.

(c) As of now, the federated farmers' database is being built by taking the publicly available data as existing in various data silos in Government and linking them with the digitised land records. However, no private data of the farmers is shared with any private organisation. This Department in consultation with the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology is in the process of bringing out a data policy for the agriculture sector.

(d) Once developed and implemented, the services will be available for all the farmers across the country.

Details of MoU entered by the Depart of agriculture and Farmers Welfare with leading Technology/Agri-tech/StartUp companies to develop Proof of Concepts (PoCs):

- a. Microsoft India Pvt. Ltd. - for consolidating agri ecosystem across the value chain (farm to fork) to empower the farmer using Data Analytics. In this regard, 100 villages have been selected and a pilot is being carried out by Microsoft.
- b. ESRI India Technologies Limited - for Establishment & Launch of “Nation Agriculture Geo Hub”.
- c. Amazon Web Services India - for digital services across the agri value chain and creating an innovation ecosystem around digital agriculture.
- d. Star Agribazaar Technology Private limited - for collaborating with Department of Agriculture for a pilot project in 3 states to promote digital agriculture.
- e. Patanjali Organic Research Institute private Limited - for farm management and farmers service in 03 districts.
