

Agricultural Technology Management Agency (ATMA) Scheme was launched during 2005-06.



It aims at making extension system farmer driven and farmer accountable by way of new institutional arrangements for technology dissemination in the form of an Agricultural Technology Management Agency (ATMA) at district level to operationalize the extension reforms. ATMA has active participation of farmers/farmer-groups, NGOs, Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs), Panchayati Raj Institutions and other stakeholders operating at district level and below. Release of funds under ATMA scheme is based on State Extension Work Plans (SEWPs) prepared by the State Governments. Allocation of resources for activities related to extension is linked to number of farm households and Blocks. At present, the Scheme is under implementation in 614 districts in 28 States and 3 UTs in the country.

In order to promote key reforms under the Scheme, ATMA Cafeteria, 2010 continues to support activities in line with the following policy parameters:

- Multi-agency Extension Strategies :At least, 10% of allocation on recurring activities at district level is to be used through non-governmental sector viz. NGOs, Farmers Organization (FOs), Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), Para-Extension workers, Agri-preneurs, Input Suppliers, Corporate Sector, etc.
- Farming System Approach : The activities specified in the cafeteria are broad enough to promote extension delivery consistent with farming systems approach and extension needs emerging through Strategic Research and Extension Plan (SREP).
- Farmer Centric Extension Services : The Cafeteria provides for group-based extension and it has necessary allocation for activities related to organizing and supporting farmer groups. In order to supplement these efforts, a provision for rewards and incentives to the best organized farmer groups has also been provided.
- Convergence: The SREP and SEWP are mechanisms for ensuring convergence of all activities in extension. At present, resources for extension activities are being provided under different Schemes of the Central/State Governments. It is mandated that the SEWP to be submitted by the State Governments shall specify the activities to be supported from the resources of other ongoing Schemes as well as from this Scheme. Convergence between Research & Extension is being established in the field as per a joint circular issued by DAC & ICAR.
- Mainstreaming Gender Concerns :Gender Budgeting enunciates that at least 30% of resources on programmes and activities are utilized for women farmers.
- Sustainability of Extension Services :At least, 10% contribution should be realized from beneficiaries with respect to beneficiary oriented activities.

The important features of the Revised cafeteria include

- Support for specialists and functionaries at State, District and Block Level
- Innovative support through a 'Farmer Friend' at Village Level @ 1 Farmer Friend per two villages
- Farmers Advisory Committees at State, District and Block levels
- Farm Schools in the field of outstanding farmers being promoted at Block/ Gram Panchayat level by integrating the Progressive farmers into Agricultural Extension System (AES) (3-5 Farm Schools/ block).
- Farmer-to-farmer extension support at the village level to be promoted through Farmers' Group.
- Farmers' Awards instituted at Block, District and State levels.
- Community Radio Stations (CRS) set up by KVKs/SAUs are being promoted under the Programme.
- For Non-Governmental implementing agencies, States have been given the flexibility of having Extension Work Plans prepared and approved at the State level. Minimum 10 per cent of outlay of the Programme is to be utilized through them. Non-governmental implementing agencies (excluding the corporate sector) are also eligible for service charge up to a maximum of 10 percent of the cost of the extension activities implemented through them. Apart from other NGOs, financial assistance is also available for implementation of extension activities through agripreneurs.,
- Public extension functionaries being made more effective through trainings and exposure visits. National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management (MANAGE), Hyderabad is offering PG Diploma in Agriculture Extension Management for public extension functionaries which is fully funded under the ATMA Programme.