



Proposal Finalisation Workshop for the TAP-RISE Platform

A Proposal finalisation workshop for the Technology Acceleration Platform for Rural Innovation and Social Entrepreneurship (TAP-RISE) platform was virtually conducted on 7 August 2020 to co-create the platform with incubators, accelerators, and government agencies.

While welcoming each participant on behalf of the Department of Science and Technology (DST) SEED Division, Dr Sunil Agarwal indicated the importance of co-designing the TAP-RISE platform with diverse stakeholders. The purpose and need to build a platform like TAP-RISE is twofold, to connect science and technology-based organisations who work on developing solutions to address social needs, and to facilitate a network of such organisations and R&D institutions for implementing development programmes and schemes.

The workshop began with the Department of Science & Technology's Expert Committee members Dr Sunil K Khare (IIT Delhi) and Dr R Jagdale (S&T Park) who talked about the evolution of the platform over the past three years. With Dr Debapriya Dutta's call (DST) towards reimagining the TAP-RISE platform for a post-COVID world, members of the workshop agreed on the urgency to start the programme in a phased manner.

Once Dr Jagdale set the context for the workshop, Dr Yogesh Kulkarni (Director - Vigyan Ashram) presented the TAP-RISE platform. He took the members through the SWOT analysis of Core Support Groups (CSGs), and highlighted the aim of the platform and briefly shared the evolution of the platform since 2016. Dr Kulkarni explained the drivers for acceleration for the platform while Kanika Verma (Programme Director, Development Alternatives) emphasised the potential of building connections between these drivers.

The team then explained the landscape of the platform, how it would respond to the workflow of CSGs along with details of the phase-wise rollout plan. On explaining the success indicators of the platform, the multiplication approach of the platform was highlighted to accelerate the impact and the role of innovators and incubators was briefly discussed. Ms Verma indicated that through collaborative effort and convergence of ideas and resources, a platform such as TAP-RISE could unleash entrepreneurship at scale.

Dr Arun Kumar (President, Development Alternatives) thanked everyone for their inputs and added how some of the CSGs have been able to reach the impact scale which can be leveraged for the platform. He highlighted three immediate implications for the platform, leveraging the interconnectedness and digital function to enhance the impact, pooling our existing resources of all relevant agencies and exploring higher levels of collaboration across stakeholders.

Dr Krishnan Srinivasaraghavan, (UNDP Accelerator Labs), offered to provide assistance for connecting with their global network to transfer technologies and knowledge of CSGs. IIT Roorkee and Chennai offered a reciprocal flow of assistance to the platform: identification of needs of local communities and becoming an implementation partner, for piloting and scaling technologies in their areas. Dr Vipin Kumar (National Innovation Foundation) volunteered to assist in business acceleration and support with a pool of innovations. Rubab Sood (FICCI) indicated to provide convergence with private corporations. Dr Manisha Achary (Indigram Labs Foundation) extended support to pilot scalable technologies that enable entrepreneurship.

It was concluded by Dr Dutta that TAP-RISE will be implemented in a phased manner, starting with a pilot and demonstration. Services of premium regional organisations would be leveraged by the platform to assist the adoption of rural technologies at scale. The S&T Park and IRMA could provide support for digital/IT components and physical services to build an open-source platform. For forward linkages, alignment was proposed with organisations such as FICCI whereas the backward linkages would be supported by Indigram Labs Foundation and IITs such as IIT Kanpur and IIT Roorkee. Experience of such IITs will serve as a building block for the platform as their technological competence could be readily complemented with social competence and local strengths of CSGs. To scale the platform and its success globally, the network of UNDP could also be leveraged.

TAP-RISE is envisioned to be an open innovation platform that builds on success stories and addresses the on-ground needs of the communities across India by connecting with advancements in the field of science. Dialogue at the local community level will ensure strengthened cooperation and collaboration of local institutes/agencies - since science alone cannot address social concerns; equity and inclusion need to be firmly rooted in the design of the platform. Hence, TAP-RISE needs to evolve as a futuristic platform that can provide experiential learning through digital means like assisted reality and reach large numbers of people without requiring physical presence.

The workshop had active participation from agencies from across the country. There was a unanimous consensus to start working towards initiating a development and pilot phase, given the urgency of the COVID-19 pandemic. The workshop was organised by Sudhir Sah, Mayank Nautiyal, Saubhagya Raizada, and Upma Singh from Development Alternatives and Sachin Punekar from Vigyan Ashram. Moving ahead, the team will explore the potential of collaborating with incubator and accelerator agencies for the platform and revise the proposal accordingly for submission to the DST.