



## IMEDF Participation in 'Implementation of Cluster under SFURTI Scheme' workshop by MoMSME

IMEDF\* participated in an interactive multi-stakeholder workshop organised by the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MoMSME) on 'Implementation of Cluster under SFURTI Scheme' on 9-10 March 2021. The workshop was designed to enable the participant organisations to share key highlights on the development and operationalisation of new and innovative clusters in the past year, especially since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

On its first day, the workshop was inaugurated by honourable Minister Shri Nitin Gadkari, wherein he emphasised the contribution of MSMEs in the growth of the Indian economy and he highlighted the need to create more such clusters at the micro level to enable diverse livelihood opportunities for farmers and artisans. This was followed by an overview presentation by the new Project Management Unit (PMU) of the Ministry that presented the revised 6-month timeline for implementation of newly approved and upcoming clusters.

Four Nodal agencies including IMEDF presented highlights on their progress in terms of setting up new clusters in the past year especially since the imposition of the nationwide lockdown due to COVID-19. Col Raman Thapar, General Manager, IMEDF shared a presentation on the progress of three clusters i.e. Churanchdpur Aromatic Cluster; Manipur, Mohanpur Magic Millet cluster; Odisha and Udala Palmarosa cluster; Odisha. He focused on the journey of these clusters during the lockdown period and how they modified their operations to accustom to the changing external environment. He also talked about the challenges faced by the nodal agencies and clusters during the lockdown, and at the same time highlighted opportunities that were utilised to keep the work in progress.

On the second day, the participants were segregated into groups based on the following sectors - Khadi and Handloom, Handicrafts and Bamboo, Agro Business, Food Processing, and Honey; to discuss social, technical and marketing challenges faced in these sectors along with possible solutions and

opportunities that can be explored for generating innovative livelihoods. This was followed by a panel discussion facilitated by a set of experts in the respective three sectors from the National Bamboo Mission and National Bee Board.

Key suggestions from the IMEDF Team like provision of solar panels for ongoing clusters and certification costs to be part of project cost were accepted by the Ministry, following which proposals by the clusters have been sought. IMEDF partners including implementing and technical agencies, 'Foundation for MSME Clusters (FMC), KIIT Technology Business Incubator (KIIT-TBI), Indian Institute of Natural Resources Management (IINREM), Centre for Indian Bamboo Resource and Technology (CIBART), Urmul Trust, Desert Resource Center (DRC), Barefoot International also presented their work at the workshop.

*\*IMEDF is a special purpose vehicle of the Development Alternatives Group that accelerates the development of micro-enterprises at scale. It is also the nodal agency of the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, Government of India for the development of clusters under SFURTI (Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries).*