Skill India to train 2.82 lakh farmers in Maharashtra: Center and State Government join hands for the initiative

- **Farmers with small landholdings to be trained to create Farmer Producer Organizations and to be provided linkage to the market**
- **New course introduced - Group Farming Practitioner**

**New Delhi, January 9, 2019:** In a bid to raise farmers’ income and enhance their skills in getting best yield for their fields, the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE) has committed support to Maharashtra State Skill Development Society’s (MSSDS) project to train farmers with small landholdings to create Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) in Maharashtra. The project, being implemented by National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), under the Ministry’s flagship program, Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana’s (PMKVY), initiates Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) of farmers in the state.

To be covered in a period of 16 months, the project will target to train about 2.82 lakh farmers in a newly created job role, termed as ‘**Group Farming Practitioner**’. Under PMKVY’s RPL program, the farmers with prior practical knowledge and experience, will undergo a bridge course of 68 hours in the said job role. The orientation and assessment program will help farmers with small landholdings to improve their work skills and will benefit small scale farmers, young entrepreneurs and job seekers. Targeting 3-5 select markets, the project also includes identifying and implementing unique interventions (such as supporting skill-development and self-employment of aspiring entrepreneurs, identification and reinforcement of key agricultural value chains, and facilitation of enhanced market access to the farmers), which will foster investments and enhance the existing ecosystem.

**Commenting on the initiative, Rajesh Agrawal, Joint Secretary & CVO, Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship said,** “Our Ministry’s collaboration with the Maharashtra State Skill Development Society aims to fulfil the immediate need of creating Farmer Producer Organizations in Maharashtra. It is imperative that we bring convergence and coordination across all skill development initiatives ensuring common standards in training and development of our workforce. The intent of this Recognition of Prior Learning program is to increase performance potential of the farmers, thereby supporting their sustainable growth. The program ensures high standards in training relevant for current market demand, increased efficiency and productivity, which will contribute to the growth of the most important sector of the country.”
Training in this select job role will nurture and strengthen FPOs by ensuring active participation and involvement of community members. This will be done through participatory agriculture management projects. The training will help farmers in effectively generating, allocating and using human, material and financial resources. It will also benefit those trained in attaining knowledge and skills on modern farming practices, teaching them in better yielding, output and demand for their produce.

In line with the Hon’ble Prime Minister’s vision, the Government of Maharashtra has prioritized the Skill Development Mission and has set its target on training 45 million people with employable skills by 2022. The MSSDS RPL project is a significant step towards formal certification of the farmers that will help in increasing farmers’ income and achieve Government’s ambition of inclusive growth.

About Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE)

MSDE was formed on November 9, 2014 by the Government of India to focus on enhancing employability by bridging the gap between demand and supply of skilled workforce through skill development and expansion of youth entrepreneurship education and capacity. To stay relevant in ever-changing skill market, it aims to build the new skills and innovative thinking not only for existing jobs but also for jobs that are to be created. Till date, MSDE has been able to provide financial support of around Rs. 740.69 crores to the states through Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY 2016-2020), the flagship scheme of MSDE, is aimed at benefitting 1 crore youth. To promote entrepreneurship, Ministry is implementing Pradhan Mantri YUVA Yojana, aimed at providing entrepreneurship education/training and mentoring. Additionally, Ministry also recognizes exceptional entrepreneurs and ecosystem builders through National Entrepreneurship Awards with the objective of catalyzing a cultural shift in youth for entrepreneurship.

About Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

RPL is a certification program wherein individuals with prior learning experience or skills are assessed and certified. It is targeted at individuals with prior experience who have acquired skills informally or through hand-on-experience. RPL aims to align the competencies of the unregulated workforce of the country to the National Skill Qualification Framework (NSQF). Till date, over 9 Lakh individuals have been enrolled in the RPL program under PMKVY (2016-20) and more than 70% have been certified.