

Sagri is the first startup to enter India through Japan India Startup Hub

Japan India Startup Hub is a joint initiative of India and Japan to promote start-up enterprises and innovations in both the countries. This online platform, which was conceptualized in May 2018, has supported many Japanese start-up enterprises to enter the Indian market. SAgri Co., Ltd. is the first Japanese start-up to foray into Indian market with the support of Japan India Startup Hub. SAgri Co., Ltd., which provides technological solutions to Japanese farmers, set up its subsidiary Sagri Bengaluru Private Limited in Bengaluru in September 2019. Since then the company has helped around 200 Indian farmers access microfinance through its innovative model.

In an interview to MVIRDC World Trade Center Mumbai, Mr. Satoshi Nagata, Chief Strategy Officer, Sagri Bengaluru Private Limited shares information about how this start-up firm supports Indian farmers.

Excerpts of the interview:

Q1. SAgri is an agritech startup of Japan. When did your company enter the Indian market and explain us the service you offer to Indian farmers?

Japan's external trade promotion agency JETRO and India's Startup India jointly established the online platform India-Japan Startup Hub in Bengaluru to promote start-up enterprises and innovation between both the countries. SAgri, which is the agriculture technology focused start-up in Japan is the first organization to enter into India using this online platform. We set up Sagri Bengaluru Pvt Ltd in September 2019.

So far, we have raised more than Rs. 2 crore from Japan for our India operation. Our Indian operation has a team of seven staffs. We help farmers by improving their access to microfinance. Presently, we lend directly from our books. We would, very soon in the future, will also be partnering with other financial institutions to lend through our online platform for reaching out to as many farmers as possible. So, we lend through our "SAgri Finance Platform" and it is also open to others to use the platform to lend to farmers.

Sagri, the parent organization of Sagri Bengaluru Pvt Ltd, also provides pre-harvest and post-harvest technology solutions to farmers in Japan. Currently, we are checking whether our solutions will work in the Indian agriculture condition as the agro-climatic pattern in India is completely different from that in Japan.

Q2. How does your organisation help farmers access microfinance? How many farmers in India have benefitted so far from your solution?

So far, Sagri Bengaluru Pvt Ltd has disbursed loan to 200 farmers across Jaipur, Manipur and Karnataka. In order to reach these farmers, we have tied up with agri-value chain companies such as Freshokartz in Jaipur, Freshiesfresh in Manipur and EasyKrishi in Bengaluru. We have also tied up with farmer producer

organization NAFPO in Delhi to reach out to farmers. Farmers repay our loans through these partner organizations.

As mentioned earlier, we are working with the Jaipur based online fruits and vegetables delivery company Freshokartz to enhance micro credit delivery to farmers. Freshokartz is an Agritech company in Jaipur, founded in 2016. They are very strong at connecting farmers and consumers(including enterprises like food processing companies and individuals) by operating 50 collection centers in Rajasthan area. They have sound expertise in agriculture supply-chain and ground management by machine learning and knowing farmers' life.

We are trying to solve two main problems for farmers in terms of microfinance. One is the credit creation for farmers and the other is repayment of the loans from farmers. To deal with these problems, we are experimenting with leveraging the working methodologies of microfinance and our Farmer Credit Scoring techniques powered by technologies such as satellite imagery, soil sampling and testing.

Farmer Credit Scoring technologies use satellite imagery, soil sampling and testing. It is a combination of the farmers' farmland productivity and fertility. This is done via soil testing, and satellite imagery. We use satellite imagery to calculate the NDVI (Normalized Difference Vegetation Index) of the farmland over a period of time. NDVI is a measure to calculate farm production and productivity.

This is further helped by additional data such as area of farmland, distance of the farmland from the main road, water supply and weather or climate within that region. Finally, we also verify whether the farmer or her family members already have existing credit history from institutional banks, etc.

Q3. What is the future business growth plan of your organisation in India?

As mentioned earlier, currently Sagri Bengaluru Pvt Ltd operates across three states: Karnataka, Manipur, Rajasthan, but soon we will expand operation all over the India market. To do so, we are looking for partners that are working closely with farmers at the ground level. For example, we have formed alliance with Freshokartz, Jaipur since this January. Freshokartz is very strong at connecting farmers and consumers. This alliance will leverage Freshokartz's accumulated data and a network of farmers in India. In addition, we are partnering with EasyKrishi in the initial stage, they are supporting our connection with farmers.

We are open to partnering with more interesting Startups and farmer groups. Our Partnership Application details are at <https://sagri.co/sagri-finance/>

Notifications

Press Information Bureau, Government of India

Union Ministry of MSME working on agro MSME policy

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1620966>

Daily Bulletin on COVID 19

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1620974>

Update on COVID 19

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1620962>

DGFT

Clarification on 'Stock Lot' with respect to import of paper

<https://dgft.gov.in/sites/default/files/TN8-Stock-Lot.pdf>