

Press Release from NABARD-Gangtok

NABARD Sikkim RO conducts Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) Meeting for Agriculture and Rural Development

Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) Meeting for Agriculture and Rural Development was conducted by NABARD, Sikkim Regional Office at Gangtok on 19th September 2025, under the Chairmanship of Shri Ajay Kumar Sinha, GM/OiC, NABARD Sikkim RO. The meeting was attended by Shri Pulkit, IAS, SDM, Gyalshing (representing Land Revenue and Disaster Management Department GoS); Dr S. P. Das, Director, ICAR-NRC Orchid; Dr. Ashok Kumar, Head, ICAR-Research Complex for NEH; Dr. Rajesh Joshi, Centre Head, G.B. Pant NIHE. Shri Subash Dhakal, Dy Director, Land Revenue and Disaster Management Department, Pakyong, GoS, Prof Ajay Kumar Vashisht, Department of IDE, CAEPHT, Ranipool and Prof Amlanjyoti Kar, Former Regional Director, CGWB, Ministry of Jal Shakti, GoI attended the meeting as Resource Persons. Other participants of the meeting as committee members included Shri I. P. Shivakoti, In-Charge, KVK Namthang; Mr Tshering Norbu Bhutia, Addl. Director, Agriculture Department, GoS; Shri Anit Lamichaney, LDM, SBI; Shri Kallol Bhattacharya, LDM, SBI; Shri Rinchen D. Kaleon, AGM, SISCO Bank; Shri Sailesh Lepcha, Dy. PM, SRLM and Smt. Divya, Researcher, Centre for Himalayan Sustainability.

The meeting commenced with a cordial welcome extended by Shri Anil Kumar Yadav, Deputy General Manager, NABARD, who articulated the objectives of the meeting and set the context by underscoring the importance of collaborative efforts on the theme of today's meeting – "Springshed-Based Watershed Management in Sikkim.

Shri Ajay Kumar Sinha, GM/OiC, in his keynote address, emphasized the critical role of springs as the lifeline for the people of Sikkim. He called for focused and collaborative efforts from all stakeholders to revive these vital water sources. Shri Sinha highlighted NABARD's interventions across districts under the Springshed-based Watershed Development initiative and acknowledged the Government of Sikkim's pioneering Dhara Vikas programme. He also stressed upon the importance of participatory water governance and alignment with national and state-level initiatives to achieve sustainable spring rejuvenation.

A brief presentation was then made by Shri Subhasis Sarkar, AM, NABARD on the aspects like objectives of RAC meeting, Scope of the meeting and Springshed based WDF interventions being carried out by NABARD in Sikkim.

Shri Subash Dhakal, Prof. Amlanjyoti Kar, and Prof. Ajay Kumar Vashisht made detailed presentations on various dimensions of springshed management. Their insights covered hydrological and geological aspects of springs, the necessity for scientific and integrated approaches, the impact of climate change on spring discharge behavior, and the delineation of spring potential zones and recharge areas using field-based and geo-spatial methodologies. All committee members actively engaged in the open discussion, sharing valuable insights on the challenges and opportunities in implementing Springshed-based Watershed Development in Sikkim. The dialogue reflected a strong collective commitment to addressing ground-level issues, enhancing inter-departmental coordination, and exploring innovative approaches for sustainable spring rejuvenation across the region.