



CSIR-NIIST and BAIF Forge Strategic Partnership to Advance Sustainable Technologies and Climate-Resilient Rural Development

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The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research – National Institute for Interdisciplinary Science and Technology (CSIR-NIIST), Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, and BAIF (Bharatiya Agro Industries Foundation) Development Research Foundation, Pune, formalized a strategic partnership through the exchange of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) at BAIF's Central Research Station, Uruli Kanchan, Pune, on June 15, 2026.

The MoU was exchanged between Dr. Bharat Kakade, President and Managing Trustee, BAIF, and Dr. C. Anandharamakrishnan, Director, CSIR-NIIST, marking a significant step towards collaborative research, innovation, technology validation, and capacity building in areas critical to sustainable development.

A key focus of the partnership will be the advancement of agrivoltaics, an emerging field that integrates solar energy generation with agricultural production. CSIR-NIIST has been developing innovative agrivoltaic technologies to optimize solar energy generation while enhancing agricultural productivity through advanced solar panel configurations and light-management approaches. BAIF, among the early adopters of agrivoltaics in India, has undertaken field-scale studies on diverse agrivoltaic systems and their impact on crop productivity and farm sustainability. Together, the two organizations will collaborate on field validation, demonstration, and deployment of agrivoltaic technologies across diverse agro-climatic regions of the country.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. C. Anandharamakrishnan, said, *"This partnership with BAIF represents a convergence of scientific innovation and grassroots impact. By combining CSIR-NIIST's technological expertise with BAIF's extensive field network and experience in rural development, we aim to accelerate the adoption of sustainable technologies that support climate-resilient agriculture, renewable energy generation, and improved rural livelihoods."*

During his visit, Dr. Anandharamakrishnan toured BAIF's research facilities, field demonstrations, and laboratories. Discussions identified several additional areas for collaboration, including vegan leather technology, green technologies, wastewater treatment and reuse, agricultural waste management, biomass valorization, AI-enabled



drone technologies for soil, water, and crop management, and waste-to-wealth solutions such as biodegradable plastics, eco-friendly packaging materials, agricultural mulch, and biodegradable cutlery.

Established in 1967 by Dr. Manibhai Desai, a close associate of Mahatma Gandhi, BAIF is one of India's premier rural development organizations with a distinguished legacy in sustainable agriculture, livestock development, natural resource management, and livelihood enhancement. Its extensive grassroots presence and community-centered approach have made it a catalyst for rural transformation across the country.

The agreement was exchanged in the presence of senior scientists and officials from both organizations, including Dr. Jayant Khadse, Vice President – Livestock Development and Scientific Research, BAIF; Mr. Pramod Takawale, Programme Director – Agricultural Research, BAIF; Dr. Adersh Ashok, Senior Scientist, CSIR-NIIST; and scientists and research teams from both institutions.

The strategic partnership is expected to accelerate the development and deployment of scalable solutions in agrivoltaics, circular bioeconomy, sustainable agriculture, renewable energy, water management, and rural development, contributing significantly to India's sustainability, climate action, and rural prosperity goals.

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