

**DRAFT Joint Guidelines on
Accredited Agent for Health and Extension of Livestock Production
(A-HELP)**

1. Background

In order to leverage SHG (self-help groups) platform for rural economic growth through convergence between Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying (DAHD) and National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM), Department of Rural Development (DoRD), GoI has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on September 1st 2021 and as per that, the selected members of SHGs will act as Livestock Resource Persons and Primary Service Providers through a new accredited model named “A-HELP” **(Accredited Agent for Health and Extension of Livestock Production)**. This model will be implemented across the Country.

Currently in every Village/ Panchayat/Block there is a Veterinary Dispensary (VD)/ Hospital or Artificial Insemination center. In a Village Dispensary there is provision for one Veterinary doctor, Veterinary Livestock Inspector/ Assistant and one attendant. Whenever, there is some specific activity drives or campaigns the Livestock Inspector/assistant gets engaged in these duties leaving behind other routine animal health related duties.

Further, the local Veterinary institutions are engaged in organizing supplementary scheme implementation programs and other support activities of Animal Husbandry sector of that area. The very nature of their job responsibilities does not allow them to take up the responsibility of a primary service provider and extension agent. **Thus a new band of community based functionaries, named as Accredited Agent for Health and Extension of Livestock Production (A-HELP) is proposed to fill this void.**

A-HELP worker will be the first port of call for any health-related demands of livestock population of that village, especially those who find it difficult to access the Veterinary health services.

It has been envisaged that States/UTs will have flexibility to adapt these Guidelines keeping their local situation in view.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

2.1 A-HELP

- A-HELP will act as “Livestock Resource Person” (LRP) for the designated area/village. The unit of operation for A-HELP may preferably be village or a group of villages but with high livestock/ poultry population density, an area/ village may have more than one A-HELP.
- The selected person will serve as a last mile extension worker providing 24*7 services at the doorstep of farmers and act as a connecting link with Department of Animal husbandry. The fulfilment of all roles by A-HELP is envisaged through continuous training and up- gradation of her skills, as and when required
- A-HELP will keep record of all livestock and poultry in the area/ village and share it with block level veterinarians for easy co-ordination of activities.
- A-HELP will sensitize the livestock owners on the importance of unique identification of animals and ensure that the animals are ear-tagged and registered on INAPH. She will help in the data entry on INAPH.
- They will take steps to create awareness and provide information to the animal owners/community on scientific health management of Livestock, basic sanitation & hygienic practices which will keep both animal owner and the animal healthy, other information on existing Veterinary health services in their area of operation.
- She will counsel the first-time farmer/livestock entrepreneur by providing all the sources of information to avail the loan or benefits from different departments/organizations and will help to apply for loan applications/filling/uploading or tracking the progress of their applications.
- A-HELP will share their telephone numbers with Mobile Veterinary Units/ Clinics (MVUs), if any, active in their area, so that they can coordinate with the call center, as and when required.
- She will support the animal owner in getting their animal insured as per the Guidelines of Animal Husbandry Department.

- She will promote and shall be the part of activities like Vaccination, Ear-tagging and Artificial Insemination, after proper training. She will keep information such as animal details, calf birth, details of AI etc and will share to the Veterinary authorities on request.
- She will help the farmers for Ration Balancing Programme and also support animal owners in conservation of feed. For this Adequate training will be provided by DAHD.
- A-HELP will provide primary medical care/first aid for minor ailments such as wound, diarrhoea, and for minor injuries. (A “First Aid Kit” will be provided to each A-HELP. Contents of the kit will be based on the recommendations of the expert/technical advisory group set up by the Government of India.)
- She will promote fodder cultivation in farmers’ land.
- She can act as enumerator, in case of sample surveys and other census activities.

2.2 Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying (DAHD)

- At the National level DAHD will issue directives to the State/UTs Animal Husbandry Departments (AHDs)
- The State AH departments and State Rural Livelihood Mission (SRLM) will co-ordinate all the activities
- The State/UT AHDs will issue all the directions and materials related to the approved activities and services through its existing system of district, block and village/institutional administrative system
- The publicity and extension materials /modules of DAHD/State AHDs will be provided to the SRLM
- The technical works like AI, Vaccination, Tagging etc. will be random monitored by the concerned Veterinary officer of the area.
- A- HELP will be given basic training in Artificial Insemination as per the SOPs prescribed by the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying. Assistance or equipment grants as admissible under RGM will also be made available to A-HELP. Activities of A-HELP undertaking AI programme will be monitored by local veterinarian as in case of MAITRIs.

2.3 National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM)

- The common Guidelines and directives at National level will be communicated to NRLM
- NRLM has set up dedicated sensitive support units at the National, State, district and sub-district levels, to catalyse social mobilization, build institutions, capacities and skills, facilitate financial inclusion and access to financial services, support livelihoods and to promote convergence and partnerships with various programmes and stakeholders. These systems with the same channels would be utilized for the A-HELP model also.

2.4 National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) will be the nodal agency for imparting capacity building of A-HELPS. They will coordinate with State Animal Husbandry Departments and State Rural Livelihoods Mission in respective State/UTs.

3. Selection Process

- The selection of A-HELPS will be done through the existing set up of NRLM.
- State Governments may modify the Guidelines without deviating from the basic criteria of A-HELP.
- The norm of coverage of A-HELP would be such that she is assured of reasonable compensation for her time and effort. The SCSCs could lay down norms for the same. Separate norms could be laid for tribal, hilly, desert, or difficult areas.
- The States will also need to work out the district and block wise coverage/phasing for selection of A-HELP.

3.1 Criteria for Selection

- A-HELP must be primarily a women member of DAY-NRLM self-help groups (SHGs)
- A-HELP should have effective communication skills, leadership qualities and be able to reach out to community. She should be a literate woman with a minimum formal education of class eight (8). This may be relaxed only if no suitable person with this qualification is available.

- State may relax minimum educational qualification criteria for selection of AI workers (from A-HELPS) in consultation with the experts in the field, in the absence of proper candidates.
- Adequate representation from disadvantaged population groups should be ensured to /serve such groups better.
- Ideally, the primary selection would be from Pashu-sakhis who have already established a good record of her work in her area of activity and enjoys confidence of the community.
- Among the members of SHGs, priority may be given to the women MAITRIs/AI workers/ Pashusakhis.
- A-HELP should have digital literacy. If needed, they can be imparted half-day training of the same.

4. Institutional Arrangements

The success of A-HELP scheme will depend on how well the scheme is implemented and monitored. It will also depend crucially on the motivational level of various functionaries and the quality of all the processes involved in implementing the scheme. It is, therefore, necessary that well defined and yet flexible and participatory institutional structures are put into place at all levels from State to Village level.

4.1 National Co-ordination

- Joint National Level Steering Committee (JNLSC) will be formed comprising of Secretaries of Departments, Addl/Joint Secretary (LH), Addl/Joint Secretary (RL-1), Addl/Joint Secretary (C&DD), Assistant Commissioner, CE&P Division, and 2 Secretaries of State Departments of States by rotation.
- If needed, JNLSC can form a Joint Implementation Task Force (JITF) to support the implementation at State level. Registrar of Concerned State Veterinary Council of India, DDG (Extn.) from ICAR, nominated member from GoI, Central/State Training Institutions representatives may also be co-opted as the member of JITF.

Currently, to implement in the pilot States (Madhya Pradesh/ Karnataka/ Bihar/ Jharkhand) the following JNLSC is constituted.

1.	Secretary, DAHD	Chairman
2.	Secretary, MoRD	Member
3.	Additional Secretary, (C&DD)	Member
4.	Additional Secretary, (RL-1)	Member
5.	Joint Secretary, (LH&DC)	Member
6.	Principal Secretary, Animal Husbandry Department, Madhya Pradesh	Member
7.	Principal Secretary, Animal Husbandry Department, Karnataka	Member
8.	Principal Secretary, Rural Development Department, Bihar	Member
9.	Principal Secretary, Rural Development Department, Jharkhand	Member
10.	Assistant Commissioner, CE&P Division	Member Secretary

Similar State/District Coordination and Synergy Committees (SCSC) would be established at the State/district level (DCSC) to ensure that the projects are made as per local requirements and are dovetailed with the National level schemes in a seamless manner.

4.2 Working Arrangements

A-HELP will have her work organized in following manner.

She will have a flexible work schedule and her workload would be limited to putting in only about two-three hours per day, on about four days per week, except during some mass mobilization events and training programmes.

- i. At VD/AI center: She will be attending the VD/AI center for collecting Vaccines, Deworming agents etc., The detailed or necessary arrangements will be made in consultation with State AHDs.
- ii. For performing AIs or where A-HELPS are acting as AI workers necessary Guidelines will be issued by the State/District AHDs. Similarly, she will follow Guidelines for coordinating with MVUs.

- iii. In the Panchayat level, she will arrange animal health camps or awareness camps in consultation with the dairy co-operatives or other NGOs with support of DAHD.
- iv. At home: She will be available at her home so as to work as depot holder for distribution of supplies like de-wormers, nutritional supplements etc. to needy people or for any assistance required in terms of first aid/advise/application filling etc.. State AHD will support in management of depot by managing the supply of necessary inputs as per the Guidelines.
- v. In the Community: She will attend meetings of village Agriculture/Animal Husbandry working committees as required and designated.
- vi. She will also help in implementation of State specific Animal Husbandry policy and will be eligible for remuneration in accordance with the respective Guidelines.
- vii. Each state will develop an action plan for involving them in animal husbandry and dairying practices and present the plan to National Steering Committee.

5. Monitoring Mechanism

- i. At the **National level**- Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) with the technical and financial support of DAHD will provide technical and professional support to the States
- ii. At the **State** level, the State Co-ordination, and Synergy Committee (SCSC) would oversee the implementation. They will have the power to modify the Guidelines as per the local needs and resources within the ambit of National MoU signed. Director, State AHD will be the Convener of the SCSC.
- iii. At the **District** level, the District Co-ordination, and Synergy Committee (DCSC) would oversee the implementation. They would be facilitating as a support unit for field structures
- iv. In the block level **Block Mission** Management Unit (BMMU) of SRLM, led by the Block Mission Manager (BMM) would be responsible for the co-ordination of block level A-HELPS.

- v. For technical programmes like Vaccination, Ear-tagging, AI etc.. A-HELPS will be monitored by the Village level Veterinary Officer/Doctor.
- vi. For technical control, the existing NRLM system will suffice. The MIS system developed under the DAHD will also serve as an important tool for monitoring the A-HELP.

6. Training

Capacity building of A-HELP is critical in enhancing her effectiveness. Post selection, the A-HELP will be provided additional training like Artificial Insemination, vaccination, ear tagging etc. as per the need by DAHD. A-HELP worker will also be provided skill enhancement training from time to time or as per requirement. Training and awareness materials will be provided to the NRLM and SRLMs from the DAHD and respective State/UTs AHDs.

- The A-HELP training will be taken up with a 'consortium' approach with DAHD, NRLM and NDDB on board.
- NDDB will conduct training of trainers (TOT) deputed by the respective State AHD for empanelled faculty for A-HELP.
- NDDB will facilitate with State AHD for launching the programme in each pilot state
- NDDB will also facilitate, monitor and document 16 days A-HELP training with the collaboration of state AHD and SRLM.
- The trainees will be assessed for their skill before the accreditation. The assessment of all participants at the end of the training will be done by NDDB being training partner and State AHD. Final participation certificate will be provided at the end of 16 days training.
- NDDB will document the entire training processes such as registration, attendance, report, feedback, assessment etc in OTT platform to keep record.
- Social media group of each State A-HELP may be developed to share their experiences and share field learning and exposure.

- For the training purpose, the training infrastructure of district level RSETIs/State AHD will be utilized. Besides this, the block level community training centres shall also be utilized in the absence/non-availability of district training centres.
- NDDB shall prepare a training calendar and expenditure proposal for all the pilot States (for launching event, TOT and A-HELP Training) and will submit before September of each year.
- Capacity Building for A-HELP will be as per the pre-requisites developed by NDDB.

*The Pre-requisites for A-HELP training programme is annexed.

6.1 Training Strategy

- There will be 2 type of training, Basic training as per the NRLM – Pashusakhi syllabus validated by State Animal Husbandry Department. After that, based on the requirement of the State Government adequate technical (practical included) training will be provided by Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying.
- 16 days additional practical training (after the 42 days training programme of existing curriculum of the PashuSakhis) to be provided for accreditation of the PashuSakhis as A-HELP.
- A-HELP will be further strengthened as AI workers based on the requirement by providing 30 days training for Artificial Insemination (AI).
- 42 days induction training will be provided by NRLM
- 16 + 30 DAYS training will be provided by DAHD

6.2 Certification and Accreditation of A-HELP-

- Certification and Accreditation of A-HELP will be done through third party assessment mechanism.

- For this, the proposal for Third Party Assessment and Certification from National Academy of RUDSETI (NAR) is accepted.
- The agency must involve veterinarians as assessors for accreditation of the A-HELP.
- NAR will charge 1000/- per applicant for assessment and certification process that will be directly paid by Training provider.
- The above assessment cost will be borne by DAHD and will channelize through NDDB, being the training partner & coordinator.
- Once the A-HELPS successfully completed 16 days training, NDDB and SAHD will issue the Course Completion Certificate. Those candidates are eligible to apply for accreditation from NAR of RUDSETI.

7. Compensation to A-HELP

- A-HELP would be an **honorary Agent** and would not receive any salary or honorarium. Her work would be so tailored that it does not interfere with her normal livelihood.
- However, A-HELP would be compensated for her time in the following situations:
 - a) For the duration of her training both in terms of TA and Stipend. (so that her loss of livelihood for those days is partly compensated)
 - b) Fixation of stipend during A-HELP training period- As per the decision of GoI, the existing norms of such stipend followed under DAY-NRLM for pashusakhi training, would be applicable to 16 days A-HELP training also.
 - c) For the 16 days A-HELP training TA will be paid by the SRLM based on actual.
 - d) Stipend will be paid by DAHD as mentioned in 7(b) above. The amount of Stipend will be channelized through NDDB.
 - e) Wherever compensation has been provided under different National or State programmes for undertaking specific livestock/ "One health" sector

programmes with measurable outputs like vaccination, de-worming, INAPH entry etc..Such tasks should be assigned to A-HELPS on priority (i.e. before it is offered to other village Agents) wherever they are in position.

- f) Other than the above specific programmes, programs like village level surveys, enumeration works etc., will also be performed by A-HELPS for which she would be compensated as applicable.
- g) A-HELP will be eligible for compensation for the animals insured as per the program Guidelines. A-HELP worker will also be eligible for compensation for supporting beneficiaries in loan applications/filling/uploading or tracking the progress of his/her applications as per DAHD norms.
- h) A-HELP would be eligible to levy service charge for her services, the rates whereof could be decided by the SRLMs in consultation with the SAHDs.
- i) Further, activities like Group recognition/Awards, Non-monetary incentives like Exposure visit, Annual Conventions etc can be considered to motivate A-HELPS.

8. Fund-Flow Mechanism

- 8.1 The funds for making the payments to A-HELP will flow from SAHD to the SRLMs after drawing State and central shares and SRLMs in turn will make payments through their channels.
- 8.2 The compensation to A-HELP based on measurable outputs would be given under the overall supervision of DAY-NRLM, BMMU and concerned Veterinary authority based on the respective Guidelines.
- 8.3 The whole expenditure for 16 days training of A-HELP will be borne by DAHD. For this, NDDDB will submit a consolidated proposal year wise and will coordinate the training programme in each State.

9. Monitoring and Evaluation of A-HELP model

An MIS will be developed and maintained to monitor the progress of various activities undertaken by A-HELPS.

Appropriate process and outcome indicators will be set up by Government of India in consultation with NDDDB.

10. Branding of A-HELP:

A-HELP will be provided sleeveless lab coat & cap (have A-HELP Logo), which they can wear during field visits. In addition to this they may also be provided measuring tap, spring balance of 5 kg & 25 kg, applicator for ear tagging, etc and bag to keep all tools. Funding provisions for the same will be available.

Newspaper and social media coverage during or at the end of A-HELP programme.

*Annexure

Pre-Requisites for conducting the A-HELP training programme

Guidelines for conducting the A-HELP training programme:

- A-HELP training programme will be for 16 days
- Participants of A-HELP will be member of DAY-NRLM self-help groups (SHGs).
- Priority may be given to existing Pashusakhis (who undergone 42 days training organised by SRLMs).
- The programme will be conducted preferably at nominated or selected training centres of AHD/RSETI
- The programme will be conducted in vernacular language.
- 2000 Pashusakhis may be trained in each state within the project period.
- The expected number of participants in each batch will be a maximum of 25.
- The minimum number of participants for the programme should not be below 50% of the expected batch size.
- The programme will be cancelled if the batch does not meet the minimum number of participants.
- The programme's methodology should contain interaction, presentation, field visit, and audio and visual mode.
- All the participants are expected to reach the training venue by the evening before the day of commencement of training. In case of any emergency, arrival latest till 1100 hrs on the first training day may be considered; failing which, the participant will not be registered for the programme.

Criteria for selection of training centre:

- The nominated or selected training centre should meet the requirements for conducting a 16-day A-HELP programme. Expected requirements at the training centre are,
- One training hall has to be allocated for the entire training duration at the selected/nominated training centre
- The training hall should have a seating capacity of 25 to 30 participants.
- Lodging & boarding facilities for participants for the entire training duration.
- Sufficient number of tables and chairs for participants.
- Functional LCD projector with screen.
- Full time audio system to be connected with the projector.
- Possibly training centre has to be enabled with wifi connectivity and access has to be provided to participants.
- In case if there the training centre has no wifi connectivity, then internet connectivity with sufficient speed for conducting online interaction and sessions to be arranged.

- A laptop or desktop for training delivery.
- A whiteboard and sufficient number of whiteboard markers.
- Continuous supply of electricity, in case of any failure, back up facility like a generator to be arranged
- Minimum 2 dozen chart papers and five sets of sketch pens for participants.
- Possibly, lodging and boarding for Master Trainers at training centres can be arranged.

Role of Master Trainers:

- Finalization of the training centre with the nodal officer appointed by State AHD
- Preparation of programme schedule in consultation with State AHD nodal officer, other Master Trainers and NDDB.
- Finalized programme schedule to be shared with State AHD nodal officer and NDDB. Preferably three day before the training programme commencement date.
- Identifying field visits and finalizing in consultation with training in-charge/manager.
- Plan and reach the training venue one day before the programme to finalize the arrangements.
- Ensuring the arrival of participants with the training in-charge/manager.
- Master Trainers have to carry all required items for conducting the scheduled sessions like pen drive, session-based ppts and videos, energizer games (if possible), pamphlets, handouts, etc.,
- Contact training centre in-charge/manager for any requirements related to training programmes.
- Ensuring hard copy of all training documents like,
 - *Registration form*
 - *Attendance sheet*
 - *Pre programme test (at the starting day of the programme)*
 - *Post programme test (at the ending day of the programme)*
 - *Assessment test sheet (on the day of the assessment)*
 - *Feedback form*
 - *Final assessment sheet*
- Ensure to start the session by 9:30 AM and end at 6:00 PM
- Ensuring selected participants fall under the criteria set by DAHD & MoRD. Failure to meet the criteria to be intimated to nodal officer.
- Continuously engage the participants in the classroom and field visits.
- At the end of each day of the programme or the beginning of the next day's programme, Master Trainers have to clarify the doubts of the participants of their previous day's sessions.
- Day wise attendance to be captured before starting the day's session.
- Ensuring participants to continue the training till the last day of the programme.
- At the end of training Master Trainers has to certify the attendance sheet, accordingly stipend will be provided to participants.
- Addressing queries and clarifying participant's doubts through WhatsApp group.
- Master Trainers must ensure the necessary documents are ready at the training centre to document the programme.
- Master Trainers have to engage the participants on Sundays by providing them

with specific homework and assignments that can be evaluated the following Monday.

- Conducting pre/post, field assessment and final assessment
- Ensuring video documentation of participant's feedback during the programme.
- Guiding the participants to prepare their action plan for next 6 months.
- Identifying champion candidates for acknowledging their contribution.
- Ensuring video documentation of participant's feedback at the final day of the programme.
- Necessary writeup for newspaper advertisement-if required
- Post programme report in consultation with training in-charge/manager

Role of Training in-charge/Manager:

- Engage in holistic learning of the individual for self and aligning it to vision, mission and objective of the institution.
- Summing up learning of each session and linking it with overall training objectives.
- The training centre in-charge or manager shall arrange all the essential requirements for training like,
 - Gathering information regarding participant's arrival
 - Ensuring participants arrive one day before the commencement of the programme
 - Arranging accommodation and boarding facilities for participants, upon their confirmation
 - Training hall arrangement like tables, chairs, LCD projector, projector screen, laptop or desktop, whiteboard, whiteboard marker, chart papers, sketch pens, printers, registration form, day-wise attendance form, pre & post-test, feedback form and internet connectivity.
 - Collaborating with Master Trainers to arrange lodging & boarding for the Master Trainer
 - Any requirements specified by the master trainers for conducting the training programme and smoothly delivering sessions.
- The training Manager has to complete the registration form in hard copy and Online Training Tracker (OTT) platform with the consultation of Master Trainers.
- Before the sessions' commencement, participants must be briefed about the rules and regulations of the programme.
- All needed requirements to be arranged at training hall for welcome and closing session, in case any special guests are invited.
- The training Manager has to document the entire 16 days of the training programme; documentation includes
 - Completion of the Registration form and pre-programme test to be completed after the welcome session.
 - Completion of Post programme test, feedback and assessment test before the valedictory function of 16 days programme.
 - Arrange the requirements for assessors to assess the participants in the field and classroom.
 - Reminding or arranging the facilitators for upcoming sessions in advance.
 - Video documenting the previous day's learnings and participants' action plan on the programme's last day.
 - A group photo is arranged, and a hard copy of the photographs has to be

- provided to participants. Group photos shall be arranged alongwith gusts.
 - A signed hard copy of the certificates will be arranged one day before the programme's closing date.
- The training centre in-charge or manager has to collaborate with Master Trainers to identify field visits.
- As per requirement and programme schedule, vehicles must be arranged for field visits.

Role of Nodal officer-AHD:

- Finalizing dates for the Master Trainers programme in consultation with NDDB.
- Finalizing and arranging Veterinary officers for 06 days Master Trainers programme at NDDB, Anand.
- Sharing the participants' details and their travel plans to NDDB.
- Intimating the participants to reach NDDB one day before the programme's commencement date.
- Training planner to be developed in consultation with NDDB and state SRLM for pashusakhis on the A-HELP training programme. The training planner includes the following,
 - Finalization of training centres for conducting 16 days training programme on A-HELP.
 - Finalization of participants for attending training programmes close to the training centre.
 - Finalization of training in-charge/Manager for conducting & coordinating the A-HELP programme.
- Pooling Master Trainers as per the finalized training centres and intimating them for conducting A-HELP training.
- Sharing the training centre-wise master trainer list with SRLM and NDDB for the further training process.

Expectations from SRLM:

- Finalizing dates for Master Trainers programme with nodal officer-AHD.
- Identifying and selecting suitable candidates for the Master Trainers programme at NDDB, Anand.
- Sharing the participants' details and travel plan with NDDB and nodal officer-AHD.
- In case of Training of trainer's programme intimating the participants to reach NDDB one day before the programme commencement date and ensuring it.
- Identifying training centres for conducting 16 days A-HELP training programmes. Identified training centres should meet the requirement mentioned in the criteria for the training centre.
- Finalizing training in-charge/manager for conducting & coordinating the programme and sharing the contact information with nodal officer-AHD.
- Identifying and arranging pashusakhis (who have completed 42 days training modules) for the A-HELP training programme
- Sharing and certifying the list and details of participants (pashusakhis) participating in the A-HELP (based on selection criteria) programme with nodal officer-AHD and NDDB.
- Sharing the travel plan of participants (pashusakhis) and ensuring their arrival

- one day before the commencement of the programme.
- Sharing the departure plan with the training centre in charge at least two days before the commencement of the programme.