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# All about the central government scheme to promote natural farming

The National Mission on Natural Farming, launched on Monday, aims to shift away the dependence on fertilisers and chemical inputs in a mission mode

Written by [Harikishan Sharma](#) [Follow](#)

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Women labourers engaged in natural farming work at the research field at PAU in Ludhiana. (Express Photo by Gurmeet Singh)

The Union Cabinet on Monday (November 25) approved the launch of the National Mission on Natural Farming (NMNF) as a standalone Centrally Sponsored Scheme under the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare. The NMNF aims to promote natural farming in mission mode across the country.

### What is natural farming?

The Agriculture Ministry defines natural farming as a “chemical-free” farming system that only uses inputs produced using livestock and plant resources. The ministry plans to implement this first across the districts with high fertiliser consumption.

### Is the NMNF a new initiative?

No. The proposed NMNF is an improvement of the [Bhartiya Prakritik Krishi Paddhti \(BPKP\)](#) launched by the NDA government in its second term (2019-24). The initiative was launched under an umbrella scheme of Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojna (PKVY). The Centre also promoted natural farming in a five-kilometre belt along the Ganga River under the Namami Gange scheme in the financial year 2022-23.

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The NDA's return to power in June after the Lok Sabha elections saw a renewed focus on promoting natural farming, with the government launching the NMNF in the first 100 days. The government decided to upscale the experience gained from the BPKP into a mission mode through the NMNF.

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In her [Budget](#) Speech on July 23, Finance Minister [Nirmala Sitharaman](#) announced a plan to initiate one crore farmers countrywide into natural farming in the next two years. "In the next two years, 1 crore farmers across the country will be initiated into natural farming supported by certification and branding. Implementation will be through scientific institutions and willing gram panchayats. 10,000 need-based bio-input resource centres will be established," she announced.

In his Independence Day speech, Prime Minister [Narendra Modi](#) expressed his gratitude to the farmers who had embraced natural farming for taking on "the responsibility of environmental conservation."

**How much area has been covered under natural farming so far?**

An overall area of 22 lakh hectares has been brought under natural farming to date, with 34 lakh farmers engaged in the practice. This includes 4 lakh hectares under

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The NMNF mission aims to bring an additional 7.5 lakh hectares of area under natural farming. According to the statement, “In the next two years, NMNF will be implemented in 15,000 clusters in Gram Panchayats, which are willing, & reach 1 crore farmers and initiate Natural Farming (NF) in 7.5 lakh Ha area. Preference will be given to areas having prevalence of practising NF farmers, SRLM / PACS / FPOs, etc. Further, need-based 10,000 Bio-input Resource Centres (BRCs) will be set-up to provide easy availability and accessibility to ready-to-use NF inputs for farmers.

### How is the mission different from the earlier interventions?

The natural farming mission is different from the earlier initiatives in several ways. First, it has a higher budgetary outlay. Second, it targets over one crore farmers. Moreover, it aims to create an ecosystem for sustainable natural farming in the country. It also aims to establish “scientifically supported common standards and easy farmer friendly certification procedures for naturally grown chemical free produce.” It also envisages a single national brand for naturally grown chemical-free produce.

According to an official statement, the scheme has a total outlay of Rs. 2,481 crore of which the central government will contribute Rs.1584 crore and the states Rs.897 crore) till the 15th Finance Commission (2025-26).

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and shall be supported by experienced and trained Farmer Master Trainers willing farmers will be trained in Model Demonstration Farms on the NF practices, preparation of NF inputs, etc. near their villages in KVKs, AUs and practising NF farmers' fields. 18.75 lakh trained willing farmers will prepare inputs like Jeevamrit, Beejamrit, etc. by using their livestock or procure from BRCs. 30,000 Krishi Sakhis/ CRPs will be deployed for awareness generation, mobilisation and handholding of willing farmers in the clusters," it said.

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### Why a mission on natural farming?

The mission to promote natural farming aims to combat the excessive use of fertilisers.

According to sources, the Agriculture Ministry has identified 228 districts across 16 states—[Andhra Pradesh](#), Bihar, [Chhattisgarh](#), Gujarat, Haryana, [Karnataka](#), [Madhya Pradesh](#), [Maharashtra](#), [Odisha](#), Punjab, [Rajasthan](#), [Tamil Nadu](#), [Telangana](#), [Uttar Pradesh](#), Uttarakhand and [West Bengal](#)— with input (fertiliser) sales above the all-India average (138 kg/hectare) during 2022-23. In contrast, the number of farmers practising natural farming was minimal in these districts. Thus, the ministry will focus on districts with high chemical fertiliser sales (above 200 kg/ hectares), apart from the Namami Gange region (5 kg area) along the main stem of river Ganga.

According to the official statement, "Natural Farming practices will help farmers to reduce input cost of cultivation and dependency on externally purchased inputs while rejuvenating soil health, fertility & quality and building resilience to climate risks like waterlogging, flood, drought, etc."



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