



IARI towards World-Class Higher Education Institution

- A Way Forward



Foreword

The ICAR-Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI), New Delhi, with a legacy spanning more than 120 years, has been a national asset for advancing agricultural research, education, and extension in the country. As the seat of the Green Revolution and India's leading institution in agricultural sciences, IARI has made outstanding contributions towards food and nutritional security, human resources development and technological advancements.

In the emerging global higher education landscape and as envisioned in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, there is a growing emphasis on multidisciplinary education, academic flexibility, internationalization, innovation, and institutional excellence. While IARI continues to maintain its premier national ranking, the need exists to systematically align its academic structure, governance mechanisms, infrastructure, and global engagement with internationally known institutions for joint academic activities of strategic importance.

In this context, the IARI Alumni Association, in collaboration with ICAR-IARI, organized a National Seminar on "*IARI Towards World-Class Higher Education Institution*" on September 29-30, 2025. The seminar facilitated structured deliberations among eminent scientists, policymakers, academicians, industry representatives, alumni, and young researchers, resulting in identification of priority actions and reform pathways.

This document presents a consolidated "A Way Forward" outlining the key institutional reforms, strengthened alumni engagement, and enabling policy support required from ICAR/DARE. The recommendations are intended to support evidence-based decision-making and strategic interventions to enable IARI to evolve as a globally recognized multidisciplinary education research and extension university, while continuing to serve emerging national needs.



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PREAMBLE

The famous ICAR-Indian Agricultural Research Institute New Delhi, now 120 years old, is today country's pioneering land-grant institution known for its integrated multidisciplinary teaching, research, and extension achievements. Globally known as the seat of Green Revolution of India, IARI has acclaimed recognition both nationally and internationally as an institution for its contributions towards household food and nutrition security. It is also known to have produced best human resource recognised at the global level. Since 1923, the alumni of IARI have excelled in providing leadership and contributed immensely towards the growth of Indian agriculture.

In view of its excellence in research-education-extension, IARI is being ranked by Govt of India (NIRF rankings) as number one in the field of agriculture and allied disciplines. Despite these achievements, the Institute does not find its place in the global rankings, which indeed is a matter for concern. IARI has also to align now with

the new National Education Policy (NEP), which requires urgent action for global integration to make it geographically and culturally inclusive. In this context, international rankings are important for higher education institutions (HEIs) as they not only enhance the reputation, but attract global talent and funding, besides new opportunities for higher institutional growth. On the contrary, IARI has all the attributes required to be ranked globally. What is needed now is to reorient the on-going efforts to align with global requirements and branding needed critically for the world rankings framework.

In view of the above, the IARI Alumni Association (IAA) in collaboration with ICAR-Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI), organized a two days National Seminar to deliberate on "*IARI Towards World-class Higher Education Institution*" on September 29-30, 2025 at the NASC Complex, New Delhi. The seminar participants (around 100) included distinguished scientists, policymakers, academicians, industry



leaders, and young researchers, reflecting diverse view and perspectives. The aim of the seminar was to have 'A Way Forward' towards becoming a globally ranked center of higher education, research, and innovation. An important objective of the seminar was to align the institute's ongoing programs with that of the new National Education Policy (NEP 2020) and transform it truly a multidisciplinary education and research university (MERU). Such a transformation aims at becoming a global institution of higher ranking at least one among the top 100.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on detailed discussion regarding strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis, lead presentations by eminent speakers, the following key recommendations had emerged as the way forward.

I. Needed Institutional reforms from within

1. IARI by now has completed 120 years of glorious journey. Most of its buildings have become old. It now requires urgently a new State-of-Art world class infrastructure that is efficient and impressive commensurate with its national status of fame. The new building plan for the entire institutional requirement be get constructed on priority. All needed clearances and approvals

for its construction be obtained on priority.

2. IARI must apply for its recognition on priority as an Institute of Eminence by the Ministry of Education as per specified norms and conditions and get qualified to receive a grant of Rs.100 crores under the existing scheme.
3. It is high time that its Academic Council and the institute management revisit the current academic structure and the programs, especially the divisional structure and the broad thematic interdisciplinary schools. The School system requires a critical relook as to how these could functionally be recognized, integrated, effective and inclusive. Such reorganization is urgently needed to ensure academic flexibility and inter-disciplinary interactions to address emerging challenges of national significance for which it has a niche.

4. Faculty development should also be given high priority to build a global level ecosystem. For this, attention is required towards faculty and student exchanges with the best institutions of global ranking abroad. IARI alumni association be tasked to have a global IARI ambassadors program for much needed industry linkages, international partnerships, fund raising and branding.



5. The proposed new infrastructure be such that it attracts international faculty, students (at least double the current number in next 5 years), postdoctoral researchers, and visiting professors. Towards this, a vibrant research and innovation ecosystem is to be created to attract the best talents both from public and private sectors. Therefore, it is critical now to strategically invest in modern laboratories, innovation centers of excellence, technology parks for collaborative research with private sector and digital learning platforms that help in building both advance teaching and research programs.
6. It should develop an inclusive culture of research that integrates students at all levels into inquiry-based learning, encouraging curiosity-driven and mission-oriented research, avoiding duplication of what has already been addressed in the past. IARI must aim to establish the Centers of Excellence in emerging areas such as Artificial Intelligence; Digital Agriculture; Regenerative Agriculture; Nanotechnology; Post Harvest Management; to name a few.
7. Institutional governance and administrative reforms are urgently need that are outcome, accountability and incentive based. Towards this, IARI must articulate a distinctive capability statement and value proposition. It needs to adopt a transparent performance evaluation system around academic monitoring and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). It should internalize global ranking metrics into it's strategic planning and re-channelize activities with emphasis on internationalization, inter-disciplinarity, flexibility and accountability. Organically embed innovation entrepreneurship, industry linkages, skilling and re-skilling of the faculty: aligning the performance indicators with global university ranking frameworks (ARWU/QS/ THE), required ideal faculty-student ratio, research, output and citations, internationalization and industry linkage be the goals to be achieved.
8. It would be highly desirable for have an external review of IARI by eminent expert to assess its academics activities and suggest needed reforms to align with the NEP-2020 and ensure greater academic flexibility and compliance with international standards and accreditation norms.
9. Branding, visibility and alumni engagement be ensured by having a uniform and singular nomenclature of IARI in its publications; digital infrastructure though redevelopment of unified ".edu.in" web domain of institute etc. It should also develop an institutional communication strategy to showcase achievements

and success stories globally through digital platforms, social media and alumni networks.

10. There is a need for self-sustenance policy through diversification of financial resources; a MERU-model IARI must operate under a financially hybrid model balancing public support with self-generated resources. For this, IARI should establish a Global endowment fund to attract contributions from alumni, philanthropists and industries under CSR funding support.
11. It is imperative that IARI introduces foundational course on entrepreneurship at postgraduate and doctoral levels as compulsory course, integrating innovation management, agribusiness planning, and venture creation, experiential learning, industry immersion, and start-up internships, institutionalize motivational lectures and interactive sessions with successful entrepreneurs to inspire students; create awards and recognitions to incentivize innovation and successful project completion.
12. It is desirable for institute to apply for recognition through the International Accreditation Organization (IAO).

II. IARI Alumni engagement

One of the core attributes of world class universities, as also emphasized

under the NEP 2020, is strong alumni networks and its engagement towards institute development and branding efforts.

1. IARI must institutionalize and establish strong alumni engagement into the institute's academic and development strategy. Alumni Association hence be an integral wing to pro-actively contribute towards fostering international linkages through its network, mobilizing additional resources, and projecting IARI's achievements globally.
2. Structured initiatives by the Alumni Association such as alumni awards, endowments, faculty exchanges, CSR funds mobilization seeking help of alumni entrepreneurs, regular interface with eminent alumni abroad be put in place soon and support can strengthen the institute's ongoing activities.
3. The institute's image could be globally enhanced by leveraging global alumni network and facilitating global alumni engagement as mentors, visiting faculty and funding partners, being an important requirement for global ranking canvas.

III. Policy support needed from Council/DARE

With its unparalleled legacy, exceptional faculty, and strong academic

foundation, the institute possesses the intrinsic strengths to emerge as a world-class university in agricultural sciences provided the policy support from the Council in the following areas is catalyzed on priority:

1. IARI's Rs. 4000 crores redevelopment plan, under consideration presently on no cost basis be given the highest priority for its approval by the ICAR, and the Government.
2. Empower IARI to take independent academic, faculty development and partnership decisions within the overall ICAR framework. Also needed freedom to hire globally competent faculty and develop its own interdisciplinary course curricula would be critical to ensure academic excellence in future.
3. Recruit no more than 50% alumni as faculty to avoid inbreeding and KPI based assessment of teachers/researchers/extension specialists. Also the students' admissions be purely based on merit though IARI's own national level entrance examination.
4. Scientists once posted in IARI as per its requirement be not transferred to ensure sustainability of education and innovation programs-so critical for global excellence.
5. For scientists assigned with responsibilities such as Professors of disciplines, associate deans and similar others, there should be incentives created for their career progressions like those for Heads of Divisions selected through ASRB.
6. Help IARI in fostering strategic partnerships for long term collaboration with leading agricultural universities abroad such as: University of Wageningen, UC Davis, University of Cornell, UWA, etc. for joint research projects, dual-degree programs and need based faculty exchange.
7. IARI to have the functional freedom to ink and implement joint work plans/ MOAs with overseas institutions under agreed MoUs with ICAR.
8. IARI and other deemed universities, state institutions of higher learning and research excellence be henceforth governed and linked directly for administrative control of Secretary, DARE through DARE for smooth and efficient functioning. DARE could also consider renaming all four DUs as Indian National Agricultural Universities - critical to become global institutions of higher ranking.

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