

Arkema and its partners sign phase 2 commitment to 'Pragati', the world's first sustainable castor bean program

The founding members of the 'Pragati' project for sustainable castor crop – Arkema, BASF, Jayant Agro-Organics along with implementation partner Solidaridad – recently met to celebrate the successful results of phase 1 of the project and formally committed to phase 2, which will extend the program until July 31, 2022.

On January 18 to 21 in a three-day tour of the castor farms, demo plots, and local trading markets the member companies invited a select group of end-users to experience first-hand the impacts of the program in Gujarat, India – home to approximately 70% of the world's castor crop.

During the event, the founding members highlighted the achievements of phase 1 of the project (2016-2019) and also announced the **key goals for 'Pragati' phase 2** (2020 – 2022):

- Training and certifying an additional 4,000 farmers, thus bringing the total to 7,000
- Increasing involvement of women in the program
- Developing the awareness and involvement among key downstream end-users – specifically by inviting stakeholders to actively participate in the Sustainable Castor Association (www.castorsuccess.org)
- Continuing to improve crop yield, water conservation and basic chemical hygiene

After completing a 2016 baseline survey of more than 1,000 castor farmers in Gujarat, India, the 'Pragati' project was launched in May 2016 with the goal of enabling sustainable castor crop production by:

- Using good agricultural practices to increase yield and farmer income
- Efficiently using water resources and maintaining soil fertility
- Driving adoption of good waste management practices
- Enabling better health and safety practices and respecting human rights

Key achievements of phase 1 of project 'Pragati' to date are:

- More than 13,000 tons of certified castor beans have been cultivated
- More than 3,000 castor farmers have been audited and certified
- Approximately 5,200 hectares of castor beans have been farmed in accordance with the castor sustainability code (now called SuCCESS (Sustainable Castor Caring Environmental & Social Standards))
- More than 8,000 hours of classroom training have been completed;
- More than 3,000 safety kits and crop protection product storage boxes have been distributed
- Water consumption has dropped by approximately 25% in the demo plots
- Crop yield has improved by more than 50% compared to the 2016 baseline study

Arkema has chosen the location of Jurong Island in Singapore to build its new world-scale plant dedicated to the manufacture of the amino 11 monomer and its flagship Rilsan® polyamide 11 resins, high-performance polymers derived 100% from castor oil.

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