

**RURAL ACCELERATOR PROGRAM 2026 TO CELEBRATE GOA'S
EMERGING RURAL ENTREPRENEURS**

**CHIEF MINISTER DR. PRAMOD SAWANT TO FELICITATE
PARTICIPANTS DRIVING SUSTAINABLE TOURISM, INNOVATION AND
COMMUNITY-LED DEVELOPMENT ACROSS GOA**

Panaji: July 03, 2026

Recognizing the spirit of entrepreneurship and innovation in Goa's hinterland, the Felicitation Ceremony of the Rural Accelerator Program 2026 will be held on July 4, 2026, at 4:00 PM at Kala Academy, Panaji. Supported by Airbnb and implemented by the Forum for Integrated Development & Research (FIDR) in collaboration with the Goa Livelihoods Forum (GLF), the programme will honour participants who have successfully completed the State's first-of-its-kind rural entrepreneurship and capacity-building initiative.

Pioneering a first-of-its-kind initiative in Goa, the Rural Accelerator Program combines destination management, waste management and community-led tourism. As part of the initiative, a three-day residential accelerator programme was organized from May 29 to 31, 2026, at NV Eco Farm, Dharbandora. The programme brought together 27 participants from across all talukas of the State, including homestay hosts, tourism entrepreneurs, experiential tourism operators and waste management advocates. Supported by the Government of Goa, the initiative encourages Goan youth to develop innovative ventures, promote responsible tourism and create livelihood opportunities in rural areas.

Building pathways for self-employment and business growth, participants received training in business planning, destination management, marketing, financial management and sustainability. They subsequently developed business plans which were evaluated by a panel of experts and government representatives. Based on innovation, feasibility and impact, the top five ventures were selected for grant support, with each entrepreneur receiving ₹2.5 lakh as seed funding.

Aligned with Goa's vision of inclusive and balanced development, the initiative complements the State's Homestay Policy by promoting tourism beyond traditional destinations and creating additional income opportunities for rural households. It also encourages innovation in tourism and waste management while supporting environmentally responsible growth.

The ceremony will be attended by Chief Minister Dr. Pramod Sawant as Chief Guest, Minister for Tourism Shri Rohan A. Khaunte, Tourism Secretary Shri Sandip Jacquis, Director of Tourism Shri Kedar Naik, Head of Public Policy, India & South Asia at Airbnb Ms. Asmita Joshi, Co-founder of Goa Livelihoods Forum Ms. Asha Vernekar, Advisor to the Hon'ble Chief Minister on Social Impact Investments Shri Charudutta Panigrahi, along with entrepreneurs, tourism stakeholders, development partners and representatives from participating organizations.

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