

APEDA's Initiatives in the International Year of Millets 2023 for Export Promotion of Millets And its Value-Added Products in the Global Market

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SUMMARY

APEDA led India's initiatives during the International Year of Millets (IYoM) 2023. Efforts aligned with UN SDGs promoting health, sustainability, and economic growth. Over 19 international exhibitions showcased millet-based value-added products. MoUs were signed with Lulu Group to promote millet exports across GCC and Egypt. Indian embassies globally promoted millet products through food festivals and fairs. World Food India 2023 featured 200+ exhibitors and 1000 global buyers. Millet Experience Zones were set up at major G20 events across India. APEDA organized 25+ training programs for startups, FPOs, and women entrepreneurs. A Millet-specific web portal was launched with export data and exporter directories. Value-added millet exports began to countries like Australia and Nepal. Millet galleries were created across APEDA offices to boost awareness. APEDA also collaborated with ICAR-IIMR to develop new millet-based technologies.

INTRODUCTION

The Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) has been pivotal in promoting Indian millets globally. In 2023, India celebrated the International Year of Millets (IYoM) to highlight their nutritional and economic value. This initiative aimed to enhance global recognition of "Shree Anna," symbolizing sustainable food security. APEDA aligned its programs with six key UN Sustainable Development Goals. Its strategy focused on capacity building, innovation, and market expansion. Through global trade fairs, India showcased millet-based food innovations. Collaborations with Indian embassies and international retail chains expanded visibility. Women entrepreneurs and startups received significant promotion and support. The creation of Millet Experience Zones introduced global audiences to Indian superfoods. Digital advancements, such as a dedicated millet web portal, improved export facilitation. Flag-off events marked India's first value-added millet exports to several nations. Collectively, these efforts strengthened India's position as a global leader in millet production and trade.

APEDA's Initiatives in the International Year of Millets (IYoM) 2023

India led the G-20 theme "*Recover Together, Recover Stronger*" during IYoM 2023, emphasizing millets' role in global nutrition and sustainability. Millets (Shree Anna) contribute significantly to six UN Sustainable Development Goals — Zero Hunger, Good Health and Well-being, Decent Work and Economic Growth, Responsible Consumption and Production, Climate Action, and Life on Land.

Export Promotion and International Participation

APEDA organized participation in over **19 international trade fairs** such as BIOFACH (Germany), Gulfood (Dubai), SIAL (Canada), Natural Products Expo West (USA), and Seoul Food & Hotel (Korea). These events facilitated direct interactions between Indian exporters and global buyers, helping them understand international quality standards and expand export markets for value-added millet products.

MoUs and International Collaborations

A significant MoU was signed with **Lulu Group International** during Gulfood 2024 to promote Indian millet products across 247 supermarkets and 25 malls in GCC, Southeast Asian countries, and Egypt.

Promotions through Indian Embassies

APEDA collaborated with Indian Missions abroad to promote millets in more than 25 countries, including Qatar, Italy, Malaysia, Japan, and Canada. Millet-based products from Indian startups were showcased during Republic Day and IYoM celebrations, accompanied by food sampling and tasting campaigns.

World Food India 2023

During the 2nd edition of World Food India (3–5 November 2023) at Pragati Maidan, New Delhi, APEDA hosted over 200 exhibitors and 1,000 international buyers from 80 countries. Around 30 women entrepreneurs and startups showcased millet-based value-added products in specially designed Buyer-Seller Meets.

Millet Experience Zones and Awareness Programs

Millet Experience Zones were set up in four G20 TWIG Conferences (Bangalore, Mumbai, Kevadia, and Jaipur) in collaboration with the Tea, Coffee, and Spice Boards. APEDA also organized over 25 awareness and training programs across India for FPOs, exporters, startups, and women entrepreneurs. As a result, about 200 startups began producing millet-based products, with 50 starting exports.

Web Portal and Flag-off Initiatives

A Millet-specific web portal was launched to provide comprehensive information on health benefits, production data, and exporters' directories.

Flag-off events included:

- Export of millet-based products from **Bangalore to Australia** under the India–Australia ECTA.
- Export of the first **millet milk consignment to Nepal**.
- Export of **millet flour from Bhubaneswar to Dubai**, sourced from an all-women FPO.

Millet Galleries and International Exhibitions

Millet Galleries were established in APEDA's regional offices to showcase export potential. APEDA also represented India in WTO Geneva (Sept 2023), exhibiting value-added millet products to international delegates.

Research and Development with ICAR-IIMR

APEDA supported a project titled "*Refinement of Millet Value Chain for Export Markets*" with ICAR-IIMR. This led to the identification of 110 millet cultivars and development of **10 novel millet-based technologies** such as pancake mixes, millet shakes, noodles, vermicelli, and plant-based milk and ice cream. About 20 startups were facilitated for APEDA registration and international participation.

Basmati Export Development Foundation (BEDF)

BEDF conducted **53 training programs** across northern India to promote pesticide residue-free Basmati production. Two MoUs were signed between FPOs and export houses, leading to the export of Basmati rice to Lebanon. Over **1,300 quintals of high-quality Basmati seed** were distributed among 1,274 farmers and 15 FPOs.

Regulatory and Trade Facilitation

Under DGFT's Public Notice (Nov 2022), APEDA allocated export quotas for sugar exports to the EU (5,841 MT) and USA (8,606 MTRV). In collaboration with China's GACC, 94 applications were processed for exporter registration, with 19 approved by Chinese authorities.

CONCLUSIONS

APEDA's proactive initiatives during the International Year of Millets 2023 significantly strengthened India's global presence in millet exports. Through international exhibitions, MoUs, and collaborations, millet-based products gained international recognition. Capacity-building programs empowered startups, women entrepreneurs, and FPOs to enter export markets. Research partnerships with ICAR-IIMR advanced innovation in value-added millet products. Digital platforms and global promotions showcased India's leadership in sustainable agri-exports. Overall, APEDA's efforts have paved the way for long-term growth of India's millet sector in the global market.

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