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Email: [mediarelations@ishafoundation.org](mailto:mediarelations@ishafoundation.org)

## **Rs. 415 crore project approved by Maharashtra Cabinet for Rally for Rivers**

*Pilot project to revitalize Waghari River in Yavatmal*

**5 March 2019, Mumbai:** The Maharashtra cabinet approved the pilot project for revitalization of Waghari River in Yavatmal on 5 March 2019. The Agriculture Department has earmarked Rs 415 crore for project implementation. The cabinet approval also includes formation of a Special Purpose Vehicle for the project, which will have representation from members of Rally for Rivers and other technical experts.

In response to the Cabinet's decision, Sadhguru tweeted: "Maharashtra cabinet nod to Rally for Rivers Waghari revitalization project is a landmark step which will create a model & an example for the nation that ecology & economy can indeed work together."

The government subsequently released a Government Resolution which formalizes the project. Rally for Rivers, spearhead by Sadhguru, Founder, Isha Foundation, will work with Government of Maharashtra towards revitalization of Waghari River in Yavatmal district. The project will take a holistic approach to revitalize Waghari, improve soil fertility and enhance farmers' income. The project will facilitate local farmers to shift from crop-based agriculture to chemical-free farming to improve soil fertility; promote increased horticulture (fruit tree) cultivation and medicinal tree-based agriculture in the region; and introduce micro-irrigation methods and afforestation on government land through large-scale public participation. The project will also create infrastructure and support systems through public-private partnership, to attract better prices for farmers' produce.

Sadhguru and the Rally for Rivers expert team made a detailed presentation of the project plan to the Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and Forest Minister Sudhir Munghantiwar on 7 August 2018 in Mumbai pursuant to which a Detailed Project Report for revitalization of Waghari was submitted in November 2019. Project execution will be supported by 'Nadi Veeras' – full-time Rally for Rivers volunteers – who will assist the state government and other stakeholders in implementing the project on ground.

Speaking on the Government approval of the project, Sadhguru said, "It's heartening to see the speed and commitment with which Government of Maharashtra has approved the Detailed Project Report for revitalization of Waghari River in Yavatmal which is the epicenter of India's painful farmer suicide story. The project will not only support the river & biodiversity around the river but also boost farmers' income manifold, thereby enhancing rural economy. We want to establish this as a model for the nation and the world for sustainable agriculture leading to robust economic progress and river revitalization."

## **Rally for Rivers**

Sadhguru launched one of the world's biggest environmental campaigns, Rally for Rivers in 2017 in which he personally drove across 16 Indian states in a month's time. The campaign saw an unprecedented coming together of political leaders, farmers, industrialists, businessmen, students, professionals, media, culminating in the handing over of the draft policy recommendation to Hon'ble Prime Minister, Narendra Modi. The initiative enlarged into a large-scale people's movement with the participation, in various modes, of over 162 million people, across all walks of life. Subsequently, the PMO formed an executive committee spearheaded by NITI Aayog. On 6 June 2018, NITI Aayog issued an advisory to all 29 States and Union Territories recommending implementation of the River Revitalization policy. In March 2019, Maharashtra became the first state to formally approve Rally for Rivers' pilot project for revitalization of Waghari River in Yavatmal district.

**Sadhguru - Founder, Isha Foundation**

Ranked amongst the fifty most influential people in India, Sadhguru is a yogi, mystic, visionary and a New York Times bestselling author. Sadhguru was conferred the "Padma Vibhushan" by the Government of India in 2017, the highest annual civilian award, accorded for exceptional and distinguished service.

Three decades ago, Sadhguru founded Isha Foundation, a non-profit human-service organization, with human well-being as its core commitment. Sadhguru has initiated powerful yoga programs for human transformation as well as various outreach projects to uplift under-served communities in rural India.

### **Isha Foundation**

Isha Foundation, founded by Sadhguru, is a volunteer-run, international non-profit, human service organisation dedicated to cultivating human potential. Isha Foundation is operated by over 9 million volunteers from more than 250 city-based centers spread worldwide. The Foundation is headquartered at Isha Yoga Center, set at the base of the Velliangiri Mountains in southern India, and at the Isha Institute of Inner Sciences on the spectacular Cumberland Plateau in middle Tennessee, USA.

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