

GOVERNMENT OF KERALA

Abstract

Forest and Wildlife Department—Implementation of National Afforestation Programme (NAP), Samanvit Gram Vanikaran Samirddhi Yojana (SGVSY) and creation of Forest Development Agency in the State-Guidelines Approval and Constitution of State Co-ordination Committee for the purpose-Sanctioned-Orders issued.

=====

FOREST AND WILDLIFE (E) DEPARTMENT

G.O (Rt) No. 223/02/F&WLD.

Dated, Thiruvananthapuram, 17/7/2002.

=====

Read:- 1. Letter No. PFM/FDA-1/2001 dated, 23..5..02 from the Chief Conservator of Forests (E&TW), Thiruvananthapuram
2. D.O. No. 25.1.1/99-B.III dated, 31..5..02 from the Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India.

ORDER

The Chief Conservator of Forests (Eco-development and Tribal Welfare) Vide his letter read first paper above has forwarded proposals and draft guidelines for adoption in the formation of the Forest Development Agency System in the State, for effective conservation of forest through integrated forest development and rural employment generation. The Secretary, Government of India, Ministry of Environment and Forests as per his letter read as second paper above has also forwarded details and various aspects of schemes to be implemented through the Forest Development Agency System.

2. Government have examined the draft proposal in detail and are pleased to approve guidelines as appended for adoption in the formation of Forest Development Agency System in this State.

3. Government are also pleased to constitute a State Co-ordination Committee to monitor and evaluate the functioning of Forest Development Agencies as detailed in the guidelines with the following members:-

- | | | | |
|----|---|---|----------|
| 1. | Chief Secretary | - | Chairman |
| 2. | Secretary Forest & Wildlife Department | - | Convenor |
| 3. | Principal Chief Conservator of Forests | - | |
| 4. | Concerned Secretaries of line departments | | |
| 5. | Chief Conservator of Forests (Eco-development and Tribal Welfare) | | |

The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Eco-development and Tribal Welfare) is empowered to monitor and present report of progress before the high-level co-ordination committee.

(By Order of the Government)

M.S.SANTHI

Deputy Secretary to Government.

To

The Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India (with C.L)
The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (General), Thiruvananthapuram.
The Chief Conservator of Forests (E&TW), Thiruvananthapuram.
The Joint Secretary to Chief Secretary
The Accountant General (Audit/A&E), Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram.
C.A to Secretary (Forest and Wildlife Dept.), Stock File, Office copy

Forwarded/ By Order

Section Officer.

GUIDELINES FOR FORMATION OF FOREST DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (FDA)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 One of the major factors impacting on the effective conservation of forest is the helpless dependence of rural communities on the forest Biomass Resources for meeting their fuel, fuel-wood, small timber and other livelihood needs. The traditional rural development schemes, some how, could not address this problem effectively and reduce the dependence of the rural people on forest resources. Therefore, it has not been possible to establish linkages between rural development, assured rural employment generation and forest conservation.
- 1.2 There have been a variety of Government of India programmes and schemes, in addition to the afforestation/regeneration components of on-going State Plan Forestry Schemes, including Externally Aided Integrated Forestry Projects aimed at afforestation and biomass regeneration, which again have not been able to reverse the trend of degradation of forest resources. It is imperative, therefore, that a close linkage is permanently established between rural development and forest conservation through an integrated forestry development and rural employment generation scheme, which would also help in the creation of durable community assets in the target villages. The scheme for Integrated Village Afforestation and Eco-development (Samanvit Gram Vanikaran Samirdhi Yojana), which was later renamed as National Afforestation Programme (NAP), was launched by the Ministry of Environment & Forests, Government of India, to closely inter-link the approaches of integrated forest development and rural employment generation into a single umbrella scheme. The State Forests & Wildlife Department subscribe to the findings of the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India and decide to accept the above approaches for forest dependent villages.

The community asset creation component of the NAP is not intended to be a substitute for on-going activities of DRDAs. This will be an additionality to supplement the efforts of FDAs, particularly in so far as the rural development activities are concerned. The on-going activities under various self-employment programmes now restructured into the Swarnajayanthi Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY), the Wage Employment and Infrastructure Development Scheme etc. will continue to be implemented to provide a synergetic impact on forests and village eco-development.

2. GOAL

To closely inter-link the two approaches of integrated forest development and rural employment generation into a single umbrella scheme, for effective forest conservation.

3. OBJECTIVES

3.1 The objectives of the scheme are:

- To arrest and reverse the trend of forest degradation due to the unsustainable removal of forest products by dependent communities by making the community responsible for monitoring removals from the forest.
- To provide sustainable and assured employment opportunities to the tribal and other weaker sections of the rural populations in such areas all around the year:

- To create durable community assets for such populations, which would contribute to overall village-development within the limits sustainability of natural resources.
- To involve the forest dependent community in the execution of the programme and make the functioning fully participatory.
- To create a funnel mechanism through which assistance under various schemes of the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India and from other sources would flow.
- To create an effective mechanism in order to ensure that this medium is used to reach the beneficiaries by other government departments also.
- To liaison with other Government Departments and Agencies to develop and implement eco-friendly village-development programme.

4. SALIENT FEATURES

4.1 The FDA will aim at providing (i) employment to the local forest dependent communities through afforestation & conservation programmes, thereby creating valuable forestry assets for the forest dependent communities and (ii) other durable community assets for overall eco-development of the target communities/villages.

4.2 The programmes will be implemented in phased manner in all the Territorial Forest/Wildlife Divisions in the State. All VSSs/EDCs of forest dependent communities/villages will come under the FDA on the condition that such units shall not exceed 50 under a single FDA. If the area of the forest divisions falls in more than one revenue districts, separate FDAs shall be formed on the basis of Revenue Districts. In selecting the VSS/EDC for FDA the criteria shall be: -

- a) Preponderance of SC/ST population,
- b) Extent of degraded forestland,
- c) Degree of dependence on biomass resources, etc.

4.3 The requirement of funds will be based on an integrated project prepared through Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) and micro plan. The project would seek to establish a link between the level of dependence of the VSS/EDC/Communities/Villages on forests, the absence of sustainable livelihood opportunities, the need for creation of community assets and the requirement of ecological regeneration to be undertaken in and around the *forest* areas.

4.4 The FDA will be registered as Federation of VSS/EDC under the Societies Registration Act. Each FDA shall be headed by the respective Territorial/Wildlife Conservator of Forests (as Chairman) with the respective Territorial/Wildlife DFO as its Member-Secretary-cum-Chief Executive Officer.

4.4.1 Project Funds received by the FDA shall be joint bank accounts maintained by the Chairperson and the Chief Executive Officer of the FDA.

4.4.2 The General Accounts of the FDA shall be maintained by the Chief Executive Officer. The Chief Executive Officer may open and maintain a separate Bank Account for meeting the Administrative expenses of FDA.

4.5 Constitution of the FDA

4.5.1.0 General Body

- (a) Chair persons of all VSS/EDC
- (b) One designated woman member nominated by each VSS/EDC

- (c) Member Secretary of all VSS/EDC (Ex-officio)
- (d) All Forest Range Officers, ACFs holding jurisdiction within the FDA area (Ex-officio)
- (e) Other ex-officio members in the Executive Body.

The Member Secretary shall convene the General Body meeting every six months, to review the activities of the FDA. The quorum for the General Body shall be not less than 50% of representatives from VSSs/EDCs.

4.5.1.1 **Duties and Responsibilities**

- (a) Create massive peoples' movement through involvement of VSSs/EDCs for the protection, regeneration and development of degraded forests and land with other government agencies and communities.
- (b) Identify and prioritize critical issues influencing the forest management and develop plans to address them.
- (c) Create Village Development fund by contributions from communities and develop an effective system for maintenance of accounts and utilization.
- (d) Formation of VSS/EDC wherever they are not in existence following the guidelines and report to executive body.
- (e) Selection of nominees from the VSS/EDC to be included in executive body, which shall not exceed more than half the number of VSS/EDC, and ensure minimum 50% women representation.
- (f) Make sure that contractors, middlemen, intermediate agencies are not permitted to be engaged for execution of any of the works under the scheme so that full benefit of the wages reach the members of VSS/EDC.

4.5.2.0 **Executive Body**

- (a) Conservator of Forests -Chair person
- (b) Divisional Forest Officer/Wildlife Warden. - Member Secretary cum Chief Executive Officer (Convener) (Ex-officio)
- (c) Nominees from the General Body (members with voting rights). One from each VSS/EDC and at least 50% of them shall be women. The other members will be nominated by the General Body.
- (d) Ex-officio Members- Revenue Divisional Officer, District Planning Officer, District level Officers of Excise, Agriculture, Animal husbandry, Soil Conservation, Tribal Welfare, Industries, Panchayat, Health, Minor Irrigation, Fisheries, Co-operation, DRDA, Education and a representative of the lead bank of that area.
- (e) Technical experts in relevant fields nominated by the General Body (Special invitee).

The Member Secretary shall convene the Executive Body meeting once in 3 months and the quorum for the meeting shall be 2/3 of members.

4.5.2.1 **Duties and Responsibilities**

The Executive body shall be responsible for guidance, co-operation, supervision, periodical reporting, monitoring, documentation and dissemination of the project by their constituent VSS/EDC and maintain a record of all assets created under the project.

- (a) Ensure the registration of VSS/EDC as per procedure and FDA under Societies Registration Act, 1860 to provide them with legal backup.

- (b) Approval of activities, relating to forestry as well as non-forestry outside forest areas and non-forestry activities inside forest areas mentioned in the micro plans for VSS/EDC.
- (c) Recommend the changes required in Working Plan/Management Plan for incorporating micro plans of VSS/EDC into Working Plans/Management Plans.
- (d) Request initial fund for project preparation, prepare project for five years through PRA/PAMIA in the prescribed format and submit certificates of non-diversion, non-embezzlement and fulfillment of conditions laid down in guidelines and sanction order, along with the request for further release of grants.
- (e) Develop mechanism for co-ordination and channeling the funds from other department, agencies and NGOs operating in the area and receive funds from other sources including various centrally sponsored schemes as mutually agreed upon by the Central and State Government.
- (f) Review the working of VSS/EDC and recommend changes if any.
- (g) Define requirements and modalities of recruitment of contract staff and place before the State Level Co-Ordination Committee.
- (h) Identify training needs and decide on appropriate institutions for imparting training/study tours.
- (i) Develop eligibility criteria for incentives and rewards to VSS/EDC and provide incentives.
- (j) Release the amount earmarked for all VSS/EDC promptly as prescribed by the funding agency.
- (k) Oversee that the VSS/EDC deposit the funds received will be deposited as prescribed by the funding agency in separate Operational fund account in a nationalized bank/co-operative bank/post office, which would be singly operated by member secretary of the respective VSS/EDC.
- (l) Monitor prompt submission of monthly statement of accounts and progress of each VSS/EDC.
- (m) Submission of comprehensive quarterly report and annual report on progress of works utilization of funds in respect of VSS/EDC to the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, and to the funding agency.
- (n) Oversee that the micro plans are implemented with site specificity.
- (o) Report the interest amount accrued on the deposits of these funds to the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and to the funding agency, along with the request for further funds so as to adjust it towards further installments of the grants.
- (p) Get the accounts of FDA audited by the Accountant General/CAG's panel/ or as required by the funding agency, and forward the audit report to the funding agency.
- (q) Oversee that the project is completed within the project period and copies of final report submitted to the funding agency through the State Co-ordination Committee.
- (r) Ensure that no diversion of fund from one VSS/EDC to another is made save in exceptional circumstances with prior approval of the funding agency.
- (s) Constitute technical teams for processing and recommending on technical matters

4.5.3.0 State Co-ordination Committee

1. Chief Secretary- Chairman
2. Secretary, Forest & Wildlife Department- Convener
3. Principal Chief Conservator of Forests
4. Concerned Secretary of the line departments
5. Chief Conservator of Forests (E&TW)

The State Level Co-ordination Committee shall meet at least once in a year

4.5.3.1 Duties and Responsibilities

- (a) Approval of modalities for recruitment of contract staff.
- (b) Develop eligibility criteria for incentives and rewards, and selection of FDA for rewards.
- (c) Monitoring and evaluation of FDA and submitting report to the funding agency.
- (d) Recommend corrective steps for improving the performances of FDAs so that the grants to FDAs are not terminated by the funding agency due to non-utilization of funds as prescribed or lack of adequate progress in implementing the schemes.
- (e) Recommend to the funding agency, extension of time for completion of projects by FDAs.
- (f) Constitution of Monitoring Committee as required by the funding agency

5. PROJECT PREPARATIONS, SUBMISSION AND APPROVAL

- 5.1 Each FDA shall prepare an integrated project, as per the guidelines prescribed by the funding agency.
- 5.2 The activities incorporated in the micro plan should fit into the range of eligible items of work as decided by the funding agency. The project proposal shall co-relate the planned activities to the respective schemes to facilitate its processing and approval by the funding agency.
- 5.3 The Forest Department shall provide the necessary technical assistance for preparation of the project proposal. If needed, other relevant line Departments shall assist the VSS/EDC in the micro planning process.
- 5.4 The projects shall be submitted to the funding agency in time.
- 5.5 One of the most important components of the project shall be the mutual obligations and responsibilities of the major stakeholders, namely the FDA, the VSSs/EDCs, and the Forest Department. These obligations/responsibilities will have to be clearly spelt out in the project document. It should be ensured that the village communities participate fully in the planning process and accept the obligations/responsibilities.
- 5.6 The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests shall submit the project proposal to the funding agency.

6. FUNDING PATTERN AND FINANCIAL PROCEDURE.

- 6.1 The eligible items of activities would broadly cover afforestation/tree planting, village eco-development, pasture development etc; as decided by the funding agency. The Chief Executive Officer of each FDA shall submit the audited report, utilization certificate and progress of work for the previous year to the funding agency as prescribed.

7. IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- 7.1 No new infrastructure should be set up for the FDA. The existing infrastructure of the Chairman (Conservator) and Chief Executive Officer (DFO/WLW) should be used for co-ordinating the implementation of the FDA. Additional staff, which may be required under the project, shall only be in the nature of **project contract staff** and their costs met out of the overall project budget. There will be no additional posts under the FDA. The FDA shall give all assistance to the funding agencies for physical verification and evaluation of projects.
