

National Afforestation & Eco-Development Board

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Grants-In-Aid Scheme for Voluntary Agencies

Guidelines for Financial Assistance during 10th Plan period

In tune with the philosophy of eliciting and nurturing people's participation, the National Afforestation & Eco-Development Board (NAEB) provides financial assistance to Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)/ Voluntary Agencies (VAs) for afforestation, tree planting and eco-development activities under a Central Sector (100%) Grants-in-Aid scheme.

Type of Agencies that can be Supported:

1. The project proposals for financial assistance under the Grants-in-aid Scheme of the National Afforestation & Eco-Development Board (NAEB), hereinafter referred to as the Board, shall be entertained from voluntary agencies and non-governmental organizations, hereinafter referred to as Agency, of the following categories:

- Registered Non-profit Organisations;
- Registered Societies, Cooperatives, Companies or Trusts; and,
- Recognised Schools, Colleges, and Universities.

2. Those Agencies which have worked in the field of environment or related social service sectors at least for three years (duly supported by audited statements of accounts for last three years) will be considered for funding under the Scheme.

3. The Agency should have a properly constituted Managing Body with its powers, duties and responsibilities clearly defined and laid down in a written constitution/ by-laws.

4. The financial position of the Agency should be sound for the type of project to be taken up. It should not be run for profit of any individual or body of individuals. It should have the facilities, resources, experience and personnel for successful implementation of the proposed project.

Peoples' Participation:

5. The proposal should have the full involvement of the beneficiaries. The Agency may work as a catalyst and motivator to facilitate peoples' participation in the programme.

6. The beneficiaries under the programme should preferably be chosen in consultation with the Village Panchayat/ Gram Sabha/ JFMC/ Local Body concerned. The species for planting on project land and mechanism for sharing of usufruct and benefits from plantation should be decided in consultation with the Village Panchayat/ Gram Sabha/ JFMC/ Local Body concerned.

Activities Considered for Support:

7. The activities qualifying for grant of financial assistance under the scheme would broadly be as under:

- Raising of seedlings;
- Planting;
- Soil and moisture conservation works;
- Awareness, training and extension;

- Grass and fodder development including silvi-pasture; and,
- Regeneration of degraded forests in the context of the guidelines issued by the Ministry of Environment and Forests on 1st June 1990.

Assistance may also be considered for small water harvesting works/ structures including wells etc., depending on the site conditions provided adequate justification is provided by the agency for proposing such works.

8. Preference will be given to those projects where the established NGOs take on the role of facilitators, innovators and/or motivators rather than implementers of projects with NAEB assistance. Thus NGOs are expected to motivate people to form into groups at the grass-roots level (such as Yuvak Dals, Mahila Mandals, Joint Forest Management Committees, Eco-development Committees, etc.), help them to formulate technically sound and viable plantation/ wastelands development proposals, assist in periodically monitoring and reporting on their performance to the NAEB. Normally in every project upto 10% of the nursery, planting and soil and moisture conservation costs admissible may be provided for overheads, and upto 5% may be sanctioned for awareness raising activities. In case of such projects, this budget will be made available to the promoting NGO for project formulation, technical guidance, motivation/ facilitation and implementation of the project at the grass-roots level including the costs involved in setting up of peoples' groups. It is expected that the projects will provide for some contribution from the proponents towards the project cost. This contribution could be financial or in the form of voluntary labour by the beneficiaries.

Identification of Project Land:

9. The land on which activities are proposed should be properly and fully identified. Details of the land such as survey numbers, area, and names of owners should be given location-wise along with totals for the project. These details should be verified and authenticated by the concerned landowner or land owning body/ authority.

10. Project land identified should be suitable for the tree plantation activity and could be located anywhere. While selecting the project area, preference may be given to lands adjacent to forest areas.

Proportion of Species:

11. For planting, the type (species) of plants and their proportion should be carefully decided in consultation with the beneficiaries and local representatives or persons who have knowledge about the subject. The number of plants per hectare will depend on the growing space required for each type of plant and should be decided in consultation with persons who have technical knowledge of the subject. Species covered under planting / afforestation should include fuelwood, fodder, small timber, fruit, and other species, which provide food and income to the local people while also improving the status of the land, e.g. agave, arjun, mulberry, etc.

Project Size and Plan:

12. The project should be location specific. Projects should normally not be spread over a large area covering several Districts.

13. The agency should plan out the physical and financial targets for each activity and the time schedule for the various operations included in the project for which financial support is required.

14. Microplan should be prepared for the project area in consultation with the local community/ beneficiaries as far as possible. Microplan should include:

- Site demarcation and management map preparation;
- The planting programme;
- Site Preparation;
- Choice of species and method of establishment; the techniques for raising seedlings and planting, maintenance etc. should be explicitly given;
- Harvesting of fodder, fuelwood etc;
- Protection; the village community should work out a mechanism best suited to the local conditions;

- Benefit sharing mechanism.

The micro-plans are not required to be submitted to the NAEB, but may be available to the evaluator by the Agency.

Documentation:

15. The following documents shall be submitted with the application form (Details may be seen in the enclosed Checklist of documents):

- (i) Attested copy of registration certificate and articles and memorandum of association of the agency.
- (ii) Attested copies of audited statements of accounts for last three successive years.
- (iii) A note on past activities, especially those related to forestry or related social service sectors development.
- (iv) A list of beneficiaries giving details of land for nursery raising/tree planting viz. survey/khasra numbers, area in ha. and names of owners, village-wise.
- (v) Written consent of owners of land that they have no objection to nursery/ afforestation activities being taken up on their lands. In case of private lands, the details at (iv) above will suffice. These details should be verified and authenticated by the concerned Revenue officials/ Village Councils (for N.E. region) and countersigned by the Member-Secretary of the concerned JFMC/ EDC or the concerned Forester/ Block Forest Officer. However, the Agency will have to certify on the list of beneficiaries that the Agency has obtained the consent of the beneficiaries concerned for nursery, planting and maintenance/ after care activities and the same is available in the Agency's office for verification.
- (vi) A certificate from the agency that at least 50% of the beneficiaries are SC/ST or from disadvantaged sections of society. This may not be insisted upon where the SC/ST population is not sufficient to fulfill this stipulation. However, at least 50% of the total beneficiaries should be women. This should be countersigned by the concerned village panchayat/ village council/ local body.
- (vii) A detailed note on the Agency's plan for nursery raising as well as tree planting and also the details of its organisational structure to implement the project at the field level.

16. Projects for raising of seedlings and their distribution need to be accompanied by documents clearly identifying the land proposed for nursery activity and consent of the concerned landowner(s) for nursery activity.

Quantum of Grant:

17. Assistance for nursery costs will be limited to Rs. 1.40 per surviving seedling including 20% extra seedlings for casualty replacement. This includes cost of polythene bags, site development, weeding, watering, fertilizer, wages, etc.

18. Assistance for planting (including land development, pit digging, planting, weeding, fertilizer, wages etc.) and maintenance over a period of 3 years (including casualty replacement) will not exceed Rs. 9,120 per hectare or Rs. 5.70 per plant, whichever is less. This is for a maximum planting density of 1600 plants per hectare. If an agency proposes to take up planting at a higher density (which must be technically feasible), the assistance for nursery and planting will be restricted to the above norms.

19. Assistance towards the administrative costs of the project (including operation of vehicles and staff salaries) essential for the project will not exceed 10% of the nursery, planting and soil and moisture conservation costs admissible.

20. For awareness raising activities essential for the project, the cost will not exceed 5% of the nursery, planting and soil and moisture conservation costs admissible.

21. The Board will not normally support the use of barbed wire fencing for protection of plantations. However, it may consider requests for other methods of protection such as cattle proof

trench-cum-mound, live fencing, local watchmen/guards, etc. Assistance for this purpose, if sanctioned, will be limited to Rs. 1100 per hectare (over a period of 3 years) subject to the agency furnishing adequate details of and justification for the items and costs involved and verification thereof.

22. Supplementary efforts to include soil and moisture conservation measures and/or watering may be considered. In case of soil conservation measures, such as contour bunding, contour trenching, gully plugging etc. and/or arrangements for watering, an additional amount of Rs. 1800 per hectare or Rs. 1.15 per plant, whichever is less, over the project duration may be allowed subject to the agency furnishing sufficient justification and details about the items of expenditure and associated costs.

23. For afforestation projects in the hills and desert areas, transportation assistance limited to Rs.200 per hectare, may be allowed subject to the agency furnishing adequate justification.

24. The above norms will apply to afforestation projects on public lands, i.e. panchayat lands and government lands. In case of projects covering private lands, the Board's assistance, subject to the above specifications, will be restricted to:

- (i) Nursery costs as above;
- (ii) Advance work, planting and maintenance over a period of 3 years subject to a limit of Rs. 5,360 per hectare or Rs. 3.35 per plant, whichever is less;
- (iii) Soil and moisture conservation measures subject to limit of Rs. 900 per hectare or Rs. 0.56 per plant, whichever is less;
- (iv) Administrative costs of the project subject to a limit of 10% of the nursery, planting and soil and moisture conservation costs admissible.
- (v) Cost of awareness-raising activities, subject to a limit of 5% of the nursery, planting and soil and moisture conservation costs admissible; and,
- (vi) Transportation costs as given above.

25. In case of agro-forestry projects or projects for longitudinal planting along the boundaries of farms, road sides, canal sides, river sides, urban areas, etc. or where the area to be planted has not been clearly and properly stated, area in hectares for purposes of working out the quantum of overheads and protection assistance will be calculated nominally by using a conversion factor of 1600 plants to one hectare.

26. Activities like grass and fodder development can also be undertaken in combination with afforestation activities (Silvipasture) within the norms of assistance.

27. The Board's assistance for projects involving activities to promote training and extension in isolation shall not be considered.

28. The consideration of the proposal for sanction and quantum of grant for financial assistance will depend upon the strength of the proposal, its pre-appraisal, capability of the Agency, regional distribution and the priority assigned to the proposal by State Forest Department and the Board.

Application for Grants-In-Aid:

29. The project proposal, complete in all respects, should be submitted in duplicate in the prescribed format directly to the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests of the concerned State Government/ UT Administration. The completed proposals as per the scheme guidelines shall be received by the State/ UT Forest Departments from 1st July to 31st August of each calendar year. **The NAEB shall not receive/ entertain any proposal under the scheme sent directly by the Agency.**

Scrutiny of Applications:

30. The proposals received by the PCCFs shall be screened and scrutinized for their suitability, technical feasibility and credibility of information/ documents pertaining to the proposals before recommending 10-15 proposals in order of merit to the NAEB for further consideration along with their pre-appraisal report in the prescribed format. The respective PCCFs may decide on the modality/

mechanism for screening and scrutiny of the proposals. The following criteria may be adopted for selection of projects for recommendation to the Board:

- To ensure appropriate regional distribution across the State.
- Projects tackling high proportion of community/government revenue lands may be given preference.
- Status of Project area in terms of:
 - land degradation, soil erosion, drought conditions, human development indices, availability of waste lands, extension of forest/ tree cover.
- Past performance and credibility of the Agency including their financial soundness and non-involvement in the anti-social or anti-national activities.

31. While forwarding the recommendations, the PCCFs should also give a summary of the total proposals received and considered for recommendation to the Board. The recommendations received from the PCCF in respect of prioritized proposals shall be valid for the relevant financial year only and shall not be carried forward to the next financial year automatically.

Sanction of Projects:

32. On receipt of the recommendations from the respective PCCFs, the Board shall consider them for further processing for sanction. The following shall be the determinant factors for sanction of new projects in the 10th Plan period under the scheme:

- distributional equity across the country,
- availability of funds under the Scheme,
- relative priorities based on national perspective/ contingencies,
- any other criterion adopted by the Board.

Evaluation of Projects:

33. The Board will arrange for periodic monitoring and evaluation of the projects supported by it through its officials, State Forest Departments, Regional Centres of NAEB and/or independent consultants as and when required.

Terms and Conditions:

34. The grantee should execute a bond under the General Financial Rules in the prescribed format and submit it to the Board with a copy to the respective PCCF before the release of grant once the proposal is approved by the NAEB for grant of financial assistance under the Scheme.

35. The grantee will be required to submit detailed half-yearly reports on the expenditure incurred and progress achieved to the NAEB with a copy to the respective PCCF.

36. An utilisation certificate to the effect that the grant has been actually spent for the purpose for which it has been sanctioned should be sent to the Board annually with a copy to the respective PCCF.

37. The grantee shall also send annual report to the Board along with audited statement of accounts.

38. Mid-term appraisal/ final evaluation of the projects shall be caused to be carried out by the Board.

39. The accounts of the grantee organisation will be open to test check by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India.

40. The unspent balance, if any, out of the grant released along with accrued interest will be refunded to the Board.

41. After completion of the project, a duly audited accounts report for the total expenditure will also be submitted to the Board with a copy to the respective PCCF.

42. In case, as a result of assessment/evaluation of the work of a voluntary agency it is found that the financial assistance or any part thereof released by the Board has not been utilised for the purpose for which it was sanctioned, the agency will be required to refund such amount of principal together with the interest accrued thereon in one lump sum.

43. On the conclusion of the project, the Agency shall ensure that the assets created are handed over to the concerned land owner/ land owning authority for further maintenance. This should be incorporated in the final progress report by the Agency to the Board.

44. All the proposals pending with NAEB for consideration under the scheme as on 01.4.2002 shall be referred back to the respective PCCFs for their consideration.