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Government of India
Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change
Green India Mission

New Delhi-110003
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To
The Chief Secretaries of all States

Sub: Guidelines for convergence of MGNREGS with GIM of Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC)

Madam/Sir,

National Mission for a Green India (GIM) is one of the eight Missions under the National Action Plan on Climate Change. The Mission aims to increase and improve the quality of forest cover and contribute to enhance ecosystem services along with carbon sequestration as a co-benefit. It underlines on a landscape approach having contiguous areas of forest and non-forest land and emphasizes on inter-sectoral convergence. The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved GIM as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme in February 2014.

2. MGNREGS, a scheme administered by Ministry of Rural Development, also aims for efficient use of resources through inter-sectoral approach for bringing, *inter alia*, improvement of livelihoods through horticulture, sericulture, plantation and farm forestry. To strengthen this mandate, guidelines were issued under the joint signature of the Secretaries of Department of Rural Development and MoEF&CC on 19th January 2009.

3. Now, to further synergize these efforts and to collectively address the climate change concerns, convergence guidelines of GIM and MGNREGS have been framed based on consultations of MoEF&CC and MoRD. These guidelines outline the context of convergence and set out the approach to be adopted to strengthen the coordination at field level.

4. We trust that this integrated development approach with climate change adaptation and mitigation concerns will also benefit MNREGS leading to better quality planning and selection of works capable of generating sustainable employment.

5. An acknowledgement of this communication and intimation of the action initiated would be appreciated.

Yours faithfully,

(Ashok Lavasa)
Secretary
Government of India
Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change

(Jugal Kishore Mohapatra)
Secretary
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Convergence between Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MNREGS) and the National Mission for Green India (GIM)

These guidelines outline the modalities of convergence between the National Mission for Green India (GIM) and Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MNREGS) so as to achieve environmentally sound interventions to climate change and achieve a faster growth rate in the rural economy.

1. Background

GIM is one of the eight Missions under the National Action Plan on Climate Change envisaging a holistic view of greening and focuses on multiple ecosystem services, especially, biodiversity, water, biomass, preserving mangroves, wetlands, critical habitats etc. One of the key differences of this Mission with conventional afforestation program relates to Mission's emphasis on the landscape approach. Landscapes as large contiguous areas of forest and non-forest land provide unique opportunity to address the issues in a holistic manner. While the contiguous area of forests provides opportunity for improving the quality of the forest cover; the non-forest areas provide opportunity for increasing the forest cover. In order to address these issues effectively, GIM adopts an integrated approach using inter-sectoral convergence that treats forests and non-forest public lands as well as private lands simultaneously and seeks for convergence with related missions and schemes such as MNREGS, Compensatory Afforestation Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA), National Afforestation Program (NAP), National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM), Integrated Watershed Management Program (IWMP).

MNREGS provides guaranteed employment to rural households creating productive assets of prescribed quality and durability, thus addressing the economic security of the backward sections in the rural sector. It also emphasises on afforestation, tree plantation and horticulture in common and forest lands, road margins, canal bunds, tank foreshores and coastal belts, improvement of livelihoods through horticulture, sericulture, plantation and farm forestry, development of fallow or wastelands of households and water conservation through water harvesting structures, watershed management, de-silting of water bodies and irrigation works.

Convergence of GIM with MNREGS will bring co-ordination in developing forest and its fringe areas and community/private owned forests and will bring economic security of vulnerable sections in the rural sector in a holistic manner. This will provide additional resources and the benefits to the rural poor and would generate sustainable employment. Also such a convergence will optimize more efficient use of resources and avoid contrast activities which can disturb the balance in the ecosystem due to lack of coordination between different schemes.

Hence this convergence between GIM and the MNREGS in the manner laid down below:

2. Shared vision:

Both MGNREGA and GIM aim to increase the forest/tree cover to the extent of 5 million hectare (mha) and improving quality of forest/tree cover of another 5 mha of forest/non-forest lands, and increasing forest based livelihood income of about 3 million households. All lands including village common lands, community lands, revenue wastelands, shifting cultivation areas, wetlands and private agricultural lands will be eligible for afforestation under this convergence.

3. Interventions supported

- **Sub-Mission 1:** Enhancing quality of forest cover and improving ecosystem services (4.9 m ha)
- **Sub-Mission 2:** Ecosystem restoration and increase in forest cover (1.8 mha)
- **Sub-Mission 3:** Enhancing tree cover in Urban & Peri-urban areas (including institutional lands) (0.2 mha)
- **Sub-Mission 4:** Agro-Forestry and Social Forestry (increasing biomass & creating carbon sink) (3.0 mha)
- **Sub-Mission 5:** Restoration of Wetlands (0.1 mha)

GIM envisages strengthening of decentralized forest governance by relying on revamped State Forest Development Agency (SFDA) at the state level, revamped Forest Development Agencies (FDAs) at the District level and revamped Joint Forest Management Committees (JFMCs) and various other Committees set up by at the village level by Gram Panchayat/ Gram Sabha.

4. Planning

- a) The bottom up planning process in GIM allows micro plans at individual village level to define their priorities and actions to achieve the stated outcomes. Convergence at planning level is envisaged by getting representation of the concerned department including the Rural Development Departments (SRDD) of the States implementing the MGNREGS in the committees during the preparation of micro-plans.
- b) The list of activities in selected landscapes for an intensive afforestation programme in the coming year will be identified by the SFDA and communicated to SRDD before 31st March each year.
- c) The SRDD will take up an orientation of all the Programme Officers of MGNREGS and the Gram Panchayats falling in these landscapes on the need to take up afforestation on a mission mode in their villages. This would be done between June/July each year prior to the beginning of the planning exercise.
- d) The need-based interventions permissible under GIM guidelines and falling in the scope of converging partner (MGNREGS) (listed in Annexure), will be prioritized while preparing the Labour Budgets for the coming year by the Gram Panchayats which shall be completed by 15th August each year.
- e) The planning exercise will be conducted by the identified youth from the stakeholder households specially trained youth in PRA techniques.
- f) Remote sensing maps will be used in identifying the patches that require treatment. For this purpose, GIM will make arrangements for getting the required data from the

NRSA.

- g) Based on the planning exercise, each GP will project the category-wise quantum of plant material required for plantation for the coming year. It may be ensured that the local species would be identified for propagation. The Programme Officers (POs) would project the plant material required for each Block and submit the same to the District Programme Coordinator (DPC), who would send the same to the SRDD for advance planning on or before 30th September each year.
- h) SFDA will plan for production of plant material as per requirement projected by the Gram Panchayats by setting up decentralized nurseries at each Gram Panchayat before 30th October each year for the plantation in the coming year. The services of Women Self-help groups (SHGs) promoted under NRLM may be used for this purpose. The entire cost of production of plant material will however, be met from the GIM. The workers in the nursery could be job card holders under MGNREGS.
- i) In order to have convergence at the resource level of a planning/ functional unit landscape, the authority designated under MoEF&CC at the appropriate level will be authorized to make payments using the online electronic payment system as provided for the line departments under MGNREGS.

5. Implementation

- a) The following shall be undertaken under MGNREGA for the areas identified for intensive afforestation under this convergence:
 - i. **Pre-plantation** (March-June): These may include activities such as land preparation for plantation including site clearance; soil moisture conservation (SMC) works, works for water conservation/water harvesting on a watershed basis, continuous contour trenches in areas with high slope prone to sheet erosion, terrace farming in fertile steep sloping undulating lands; gully plugs at regular intervals in areas prone to gully formation to act as barriers to the rainwater flow; check dams on drainage lines and streams on a watershed approach starting from ridge to valley; de-siltation of water bodies; including the pit digging.
 - ii. **Plantation** (July): Pit digging, planting and watering (not later than 30th July, except in the north-east monsoon tracts)
 - iii. **Protection** (August-March): Fencing, plant support and protection activities throughout the year, watering during the summer months (January –March)
 - iv. **Maintenance**: Weeding, watering, beating up, mulching and manuring the plants as per the schedule.
 - v. Conduct of social audit of the scheme each year till the 5th year.
- b) The following activities will be done by the SFDA under GIM:
 - i. Technical advice on the species suitable for the area
 - ii. Raising of nurseries and delivering the required plant material to each Gram Panchayat before July each year meeting the cost from MGNREGS funds. However, where there is a shortage of funds under MGNREGS, it may be topped up from GIM funds.
 - iii. Providing material for fencing the areas where block plantation has been done; or tree guards where avenue plantation has been done.
 - iv. Provision of manures (organic) for the plantations to be delivered at the Gram Panchayats.
 - v. Building up Green volunteers (हरित स्वयंसेवक): training the youth from MGNREGA households in forest conservation, basic forestry operations and improved

livelihoods through horticulture, sericulture, farm forestry and promotion of livestock.

6. Sharing of usufruct:

The Para 4 (1) (I) (v) of the Schedule I of MGNREGA 2005 lays down that works for “afforestation, tree plantation and horticulture in common and forest lands, road margins, canal bunds, tank foreshores and coastal belts can be taken up **duly providing right to usufruct to the households covered in Paragraph 5**”. The Schedule thereupon lists down the vulnerable categories in Para 5 of Schedule I as under:

- (a) Scheduled Castes
- (b) Scheduled Tribes
- (c) nomadic tribes
- (d) de-notified tribes
- (e) other families below the poverty line
- (f) women-headed households
- (g) physically handicapped headed households
- (h) beneficiaries of land reforms
- (i) the beneficiaries under the Indira Awaas Yojana
- (j) beneficiaries under the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 (2 of 2007), and

and after exhausting the eligible beneficiaries under the above categories, on lands of the small or marginal farmers as defined in the Agriculture Debt Waiver and Debt Relief Scheme, 2008 subject to the condition that such households shall have a job card with at least one member willing to work on the project undertaken on their land or homestead.

In accordance with the provision of the MGNREG Act 2005, where plantation has been done in the community lands, the trees and the entire usufruct from them are to be assigned to the vulnerable sections identified by the Gram Sabha.

However, where the plantation has been done in the forest lands, a system of sharing of usufruct (not less than what is given under the Joint Forest Management system) would be extended to the households maintaining these plantations.

7. Time Schedule:

The following will be the guiding schedule for operationalising this convergence:

	Planning	Starting nurseries	Pre-plantation works	Plantation	Maintenance
Phase I	2015	2015	2016	2016	2016-1018
Phase II	2016	2016	2017	2017	2017-2019
Phase III	2017	2017	2018	2018	2018-2020
Phase IV	2018	2018	2019	2019	2019-2021

8. Targets for plantation:

The Mission targets 10 million hectare (mha) of forest/non-forest lands in ten years which includes qualitative improvement of 5 mha of forest cover/ecosystem and increase in forest cover on 5 mha. The Mission also targets improvement of forest- based livelihoods for about three million households living in and around forests. Targets for plantation shall be fixed in phase-wise manner.

9. Funding:

- a) Under MGNREGA, all the wages will be met as a 100% central grant and the material component will be shared on 75:25 ratios between the Centre and State Governments.
- b) GIM is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme with Central Share of 90% for NE and Special category States while 75% for rest of India.

Both the Rural Development and the Environment/Forest Ministries will ensure that adequate funds are made available at the field implementation levels so as to achieve the targets given.

10. Monitoring and Evaluation:

- a) The progress of plantation under this convergence would be monitored periodically using the **remote sensing data obtained by NRSA.**
- b) There will a continuous monitoring of the programme with the active involvement of different stakeholders including supervision by experts from similar schemes with which GIM has sought convergence, ground monitoring by local community, implementing organisation and forest department, field review by an external agency for randomly selected sites.
- c) The afforestation under this convergence shall be captured under NREGASoft MIS by defining them in a separate category.
- d) The photographic evidence shall be captured and uploaded in the MIS on a monthly basis.

List of works under MGNREGA under convergence

S. N.	Sub-Mission/ Intervention	Category	Activities which may be included in MGNREGS
1.	Sub Mission 1: Enhancing quality of forest cover and improving ecosystem services	a. Moderately dense forest cover, but showing degradation (<i>this is intended to have better protection from fire incidences, grazing, invasive species etc.</i>)	Soil & Moisture Conservation (SMC) works, improving hydrological regime through infiltration zone identification and protection
		b. Eco-restoration of degraded open forests	
		Type A with plenty of root stock, with little or no scope for planting	SMC works, gap plantation
		Type B with open blanks having limited root stock	through Aided Natural Regeneration (ANR)
		Type C largely open areas with sparse undergrowth	through Artificial regeneration
		c. Restoration of Grasslands: (<i>this is intended to have effective protection, SMC work, seeding/slip-planting of native grasses and legumes, and good management practices such as deferred/rotational grazing</i>)	SMC work and planting of fodder plants
2.	Sub Mission 2: Ecosystem restoration and increase in forest cover	a. Rehabilitation of Shifting Cultivation areas: (<i>This is intended to have fallow management within the overall framework of socio-culturally valued, fast-growing species managed by the community</i>)	Planting of fast-growing species which may be managed by the community
		b. Restoring Scrublands: (<i>this will do afforestation of areas through multipurpose native species with an aim of improvement in soil/moisture regime</i>)	Soil and Moisture Conservation work and Planting of multipurpose native species
		c. Restoring/Planting Sea-buckthorn	Afforestation of Sea-buckthorn in suitable areas
		d. Restoration of Mangroves: (<i>This may include planting of littoral</i>)	Planting of littoral species and mangrove associates to restore

		<p><i>species and mangrove associates to restore vegetation cover, development of artificial channels in uplifted areas to facilitate inundation by sea water and restore mangrove through planting of mangrove species of indigenous species)</i></p>	<p>vegetation cover, development of artificial channels and restore mangrove through planting of mangrove species of indigenous species</p>
		<p>e. Ravine Reclamation: <i>(through time-tested method of dor bandi, building big bund for water storage on revenue and forest land abutting the farmlands, stabilization of bunds through sowing/planting of a range of indigenous and useful grasses of high economic value such as Vetiver species; Asparagus, Giloy Guggal (Commiphora wightii); planting of indigenous species of Acacia, Dalbergia etc.</i></p>	<p>Ravine reclamation through <i>dor bandi</i> and gully plugging, building big bund at the tail end to serve as a percolation dam to extent, for water storage on revenue and forest land and planting of indigenous species etc.</p>
		<p>f. Restoration of abandoned mining areas</p>	<p>Planting in abandoned mines after filling and SMC works</p>
3.	<p>Sub Mission 3: Enhancing tree cover in Urban and Peri-Urban areas (including institutional lands)</p>	<p>This sub-mission will be carried out on the recorded/notified forest patches which are threatened by expanding urban/industrial development, open spaces/green spaces like parks/wood lots set up on municipal land, diffused planting such as on avenues and in households and institutional lands, especially lands belonging to or allotted to business/ industrial houses and educational institutions.</p>	<p>Planting in peri-urban (rural) category of land may be taken up under MGNREGS.</p>
4.	<p>Sub Mission 4: Agro-Forestry and Social Forestry (increasing biomass and</p>	<p>Multipurpose species for agro-forestry/social forestry which are preferred by farmers will be planted under this sub-mission.</p>	<p>Plantation and farm forestry, development of fallow or wastelands of households can be taken up under MGNREGS.</p>

	creating carbon sink)		
5.	Livelihood improvement activities	Technology for value-added products, certification and marketing of NTFP for sustainable NTFP management and improved marketing	Capital assets required for the Self-help groups can be taken up under MGNREGA.