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Government of Himachal Pradesh
Department of Forests.

No FFE-B-F(5)8/2018

Dated: Shimla-2, the

20th August, 2018

NOTIFICATION

The Governor, Himachal Pradesh is pleased to notify the Scheme i.e. Vidyarthi Van Mittar Yojna as per enclosed Annexure-A (Pages 1 to 7). This scheme shall be implemented with immediate effect.

By Order,

Tarun Kapoor
Addl. Chief Secretary (Forests) to the
Government of Himachal Pradesh.

Endst. No. As above Dated, Shimla-2, the

20-08-2018

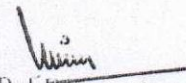
Copy forwarded to the following for information and necessary action:-

- 1) The Addl. Chief Secretary (Finance) to the GoHP, Shimla-2.
- 2) The Secretary (Education) to the GoHP, Shimla-2.
- 3) The Member Secretary, H.P. State Legal Services Authority, Shimla-9.
- 4) The Pr.CCF (HoFF) Shimla-1. He is requested to circulate this scheme to all the CCFs/CFs/DFOs in H.P.
- 5) The Pr.CCF (WL), H.P., Shimla-1.
- 6) The Director, Higher Education, Himachal Pradesh.
- 7) The Director, Elementary Education, Himachal Pradesh.
- 8) The Under Secretary (GAD) to the GoHP w.r.t. Cabinet Item No. 24 dated 09-08-2018.
- 9) The Controller, Printing & Stationary, H.P. Shimla-5 with the request to publish the Notification in the Rajpatra, H.P.
- 10) Guard File

JRZ
MKD
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APLUF (Fin)

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(Sat Pal Dhiman) 20-8-2018
Joint Secretary (Forests) to the
Government of Himachal Pradesh
Ph.No. 0177-2621874

HIMACHAL PRADESH FOREST DEPARTMENT

VIDYARTHI VAN MITTER YOJNA

(A scheme for creating awareness among school children about protection of forests & environment through their active participation in tree plantation and protection)

(Ref: Para 67 of Budget Speech, 2018)

1. Introduction

Rapidly increasing population, urbanization and industrialization has placed great stress on our natural resources. Forests being one of the important natural resources have also not been left unaffected from this pressure. In fact, forests are probably bearing the most brunt of this all round development and increased demands on our natural resources.

As per the National Forest Policy, one-third of the total land area of the country should be under forest and tree cover and in mountainous regions, two-third of the geographical area is required to be under such cover in order to prevent erosion and land degradation and to ensure the stability of the fragile eco-system. However, currently only 28.60 % of State's geographical area is under forest and tree cover. Thus, we are faced with the challenge of not only preserving our existing forest and tree cover but also to enhance the same as per the requirement of the National Forest Policy amidst the challenge of meeting ever increasing demands for forest land and forest resource due to increasing population.

A need is, therefore, increasingly being felt to involve all sections of society in management and protection of forest and wildlife and also to educate the masses to develop an understanding as to how natural resources are important, why we need to conserve these and how such awareness can be created. It is believed that once this understanding develops, people will start actively participating in programs of forest and environmental conservation. In this direction it is imperative that action oriented programs are launched aimed at different sections of the society.

A Scheme to strengthen participation of local communities in conservation and development of forests through plantation of useful plant species is already in the pipeline and likely to be launched soon. Students form a very important and crucial stakeholder group as the values about nature conservation they imbibe during their studies are likely to remain with them throughout their lives. It, thus, become important to sensitize this stakeholder group at young age so that they grow into environmentally sensitive and responsible citizens. Once sensitized, they are also likely to act as an important and effective source for spreading the message of forest and environmental conservation. A good beginning has already been made to involve students in plantation drive under the aegis of H.P. State Legal Services Authority, where under 11,11,656 number of plants have been got planted through school students over the past 4 years.

In this backdrop, the Government of Himachal has conceived a new Scheme titled "Vidyarthi Van Mitter Yojna" focused at school students, for actively involving them in forest conservation and development.

2. The Scheme - Goal & Objectives

Students can be the best ambassadors to put across and spread any useful message about the imperatives of Nature conservation to the society. The prime goal of this scheme is to take advantage of this fact by inculcating awareness among school children about the

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importance of forest and environmental conservation by actively involving them in raising and protection of forest plantations and thereafter motivating them to act as agents of change through dissemination of this awareness among people at large. The scheme will also help children in understanding various issues and problems concerning protection and management of forest through hands-on experience of raising and protecting plantations and make them think of solutions.

The major objectives of the scheme are as follows:-

- To educate and sensitize students about the importance of forests and their role in environmental conservation.
- To inculcate in students a sense of attachment towards nature conservation.
- To motivate students in sensitizing communities towards conservation and protection of forests.
- To enhance forest cover in the state through plantations.

3. Key Components of the Scheme

The Key Components of the Scheme are:

- Identification of participating schools in various parts of the State, preferably having an established and active eco-club.
- Identification of suitable open/ degraded forest areas around selected schools for development into forest.
- Developing the capacity of students in growing and protecting forests over the designated forest land.
- Planting of suitable indigenous tree species and their maintenance and protection by the students.
- Facilitating development of a sense of contribution & association among the students with the plantations raised and encouraging them to carry forward the message about importance of protection of forest and environment.

The students will not only plant trees in the area earmarked for their school but will also maintain this plantation area on a long term basis. As the plants grow, this association with the plantation will develop into a sense of achievement towards greening of the State among them. The students will also be able to cherish this experience of plants planted by them growing into trees and ultimately into forests.

4. Stakeholders

a) Forest Department

The Forest Department will be one of the main stakeholders providing funds, technical knowhow, identifying sites and preparing the site under this scheme.

b) HP State Legal Services Authority

HP State Legal Services Authority is already coordinating an afforestation campaign along with Forests and Education Departments since the year 2014-15 involving schools across the State and will continue to coordinate and extend support under the ambit of this scheme.

c) Judiciary

The Judicial Officers of lower courts (District and Sub-division level) will play a major role in coordinating the afforestation campaign under this scheme with active involvement of the Education and Forest Departments.

d) Education Department

The Education Department shall play a vital role in the active involvement of Government School students from Class VI onwards.

Apart from these WWF Himachal Chapter, and other civil society organizations will continue to be actively involved in implementation of the scheme.

5. Implementation Mechanism

The scheme shall be implemented as follows:

a) Nodal Officers in the Forest & Education Departments

i) State Level Nodal Officers

The Forest department will designate a Coordinating Officer at HPFD HQ level who should preferably be CCF/APCCF (Finance). Similarly, the Education Department will also designate a Coordinating Officer at Directorate level preferably the Additional Director. The Member Secretary, HP Legal Services Authority shall coordinate with these State Level Coordinating Officers for implementation and monitoring of the Scheme.

ii) District Level Nodal Officers

The Deputy Director, Higher Education and Deputy Director Elementary Education shall be designated as Nodal Officers at District Level in the Education Department and similarly the DFOs of concerned Forest Divisions in the Forest Department shall be designated as Nodal Officers at District level. The Divisional Forest Officers, will actively involve the schools in the implementation of the scheme under the guidance of the concerned Conservators of Forests. The Judicial Officers at District level shall coordinate the programme.

iii) School Level Nodal Officers

In the Education Department, a teacher will be declared as Nodal Officer by the School Headmaster/Principal in consultation with the concerned Deputy Director for the purpose of implementation of this Scheme.

b) Identification of participating Schools:

About 3100 Eco Clubs have been established in the Schools across the State under the National Green Corps (NGC- Eco Club) Programme started by the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, GOI aiming to build environmental consciousness in young minds. It would be advantageous to cover such schools under this Scheme in view of their readiness as these are already engaged in carrying out various activities concerning forest and environment protection and awareness. Also the funds received by these schools from GOI can also be used to supplement the afforestation activities. Therefore, this scheme will be implemented through Eco-Clubs established in most of the schools in the State. At the first instance, preference in selection will be given to those schools having Eco Clubs and which are already involved in the ongoing afforestation campaign coordinated by the HP State Legal Services Authority. However there will be no bar in selecting those schools where such clubs are not in existence but actively involved in ongoing afforestation campaign coordinated by the HP State Legal Services Authority. Involvement of such schools shall be done in a manner as described in the scheme. The DFOs concerned will contact the District level Nodal Officer(s) of Education Department and will finalize the list in consultation with them. The District level Nodal Officer(s) in the Education Department shall inform the concerned School Headmaster/Principal about inclusion of their School under this scheme. The list of participating schools will be sent by the DFOs through their Conservators of Forests to the Coordinating Officer in the HPFD

Headquarter. The Coordinating Officer in the HPFD, HQ will share this list with the Member Secretary, HP Legal Services Authority as well as the Coordinating Officer in the Education Directorate.

c) Identification of Scheme Sites:

The areas taken up and earmarked for planting under this scheme will preferably be blank areas nearby the selected school where 1100 plants per hectare can be planted. However, if suitable completely blank areas are not available in the vicinity of the school, degraded forest areas supporting thin density of tree cover may also be selected. In such areas, the no. of plants to be planted per hectare will also get reduced as per site requirement and cost will also get proportionately reduced. The concerned DFO through the Range Officer/Block Officer shall identify such sites having area ranging from 0.5 hectare to 2 hectares within a distance of maximum 25 kms from the School for the purpose of carrying out afforestation. Such sites may be situated either in one location or in multiple locations. Suitable areas owned by the School and available for afforestation shall also be covered under this scheme and be given preference.

d) Database of existing sites covered under Afforestation Campaign

Large number of sites have been already taken up for plantation under Afforestation Campaign in coordination with HP Legal Services Authority wherein the schools were involved for carrying out plantation activities. The database of all such sites will be prepared and maintained by the concerned DFOs. Three digit unique number shall be assigned to each site giving details of its location, area, species wise number of plants planted, survival percentage. Similar database shall be maintained for the new sites to be covered under this scheme. The department shall develop a computer based application (software) to enter the entire database and maintain it. The suggestive format given in the table below can be used to maintain the database.

Table

Site Unique ID 1.	Year 2.	Area in hectares 3.	Species 4.	No. of plants planted 5.
Survival %age 6.	Name of School 7.	Name of Nodal Teacher 8.	No of Student Participants 9.	Remarks 10.

e) Allocation of sites (land banks) to selected Schools:

Each selected school shall be allocated a site as close to the schools as possible by the concerned DFO through concerned Range Officer having area ranging from 0.5 hectare to 2 hectares. The sites shall be allocated to the schools in such a manner that each student entering Class-VI get about five seedlings for planting and he will maintain these seedlings over the next four to five years till he passes out of the School. A school may get allocation of site(s) at different locations or many schools may get allocation of site(s) at one location depending on the number of students enrolled in the School as well as availability of suitable sites in vicinity for plantation.

f) Allotment Period

The allotment of sites shall be for period of 10 to 15 years and these will be taken back by the department after the plantation is established.

g) Preparation of Site-Fencing

The Forest Department shall prepare the site for carrying out afforestation. Each of the identified sites (land banks) shall be (a) properly demarcated on ground, (b) fenced with

the fenced area shall be recorded and polygons prepared for satellite based monitoring and (c) handed over to the designated school for planting and maintenance.

h) Afforestation Plan for the selected site(s):

Before the start of the work, the school, through its Teacher declared as Nodal Officer will prepare a site specific technical plan for the selected site in consultation with concerned DFO through Range Officer. This plan will set out detailed work schedule of activities to be undertaken, species to be planted and the cost projections based on departmental norms i.e. applicable schedule of rates of Forest Department. Broadly the following activities shall be included in the plan.

- **Preparation of site & fencing**
- **Development and maintenance of nursery**
- **Pit digging and planting**
- **Maintenance of plantation**
- **Annual function**
- **Publicity & Awareness**

The activities such as pit digging, planting and maintenance will be carried out by the participating School students. The costs for these activities shall be built in this plan. No wages on this account shall be payable to the students. The admissible expenditure to be incurred by the participating Schools for carrying out these activities shall include cost of planting tools/equipments, transportation costs for students, if required, cost of local farm yard manure/vermicompost and light refreshment. The planting tools/equipments will be procured by the schools onetime and shall be properly stored and maintained. Replacement will be allowed only in case of those tools/equipments which are rendered unserviceable. No TA/DA will be charged in respect of any of the officers/officials of Education Department, Judiciary and Forest Department. Thus the costs for these activities shall be fixed in lump sum about Rs 30 per plant including maintenance over the next five years. Out of this, Rs 20 per plant can be incurred in the year of planting and the balance Rs 10 per plant shall be incurred for maintenance over the next five years on an average of Rs 2 per plant per annum as per the requirement in each year.

This technical plan will be approved by the concerned DFO and a MoU will be signed between the DFO and the school authorities. Plants for planting will be provided by the Forest department. However, schools will be encouraged to take up raising of small school nurseries by the students themselves at a later stage. The Schools shall be encouraged to establish their own Vermi Compost Units. The department shall augment the existing nurseries with the funds under this scheme and can also raise plants in nurseries under other existing schemes or under Externally Aided Projects to supplement the supplies of seedlings for planting by the schools, if funds are found inadequate for raising nurseries under this scheme.

The Forest Department will provide all necessary technical knowhow and guidance to the school in implementation of the scheme.

The planted area will be maintained by the school for which the school will undertake all activities like maintenance of fence, weeding, watering, hoeing, replacement of casualties etc. as set out in the technical plan. In addition to the tree species planted at the first instance, the schools will be encouraged to enrich the plantation area with species of medicinal/ NTFP importance to make the plantation a multi-layered forest in subsequent years.

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The cost structure and activities as listed in the technical plan will be in consonance with the corresponding plantation schemes of Forest Department. The costing of the plan will be based on the applicable schedule of labour rates of Forest Department as per the existing norms. At every increase in labour rates by the Government of Himachal Pradesh, the cost structure will be revised and funds will be incurred accordingly.

The Forest area and plantation will continue to be under the ownership and control of Forest Department as hither to before. If any local community has a right in the selected area, then the same shall continue to exist subject to regulations of Forest department. The department will take cognizance of forest offences, if any, detected the selected area.

The Forest Department Officers/Officials as well as the officers from Judiciary shall keep inspecting the plantation sites covered under this scheme. Shortcomings, if any shall be pointed out during the inspections and the concerned School shall be requested to address these shortcomings. The Forest Department shall provide necessary guidance.

i) Awareness Generation

The students shall be taken on exposure visits in the nearby areas. The Forest Department Officials shall give talks to the students about technical knowhow of planting techniques, ecological functions of the plants to generate awareness.

j) Technical Support

The department shall extend technical support for effective implementation of this scheme and shall earmark some funds in lump sum towards the expenses for the following activities:

- **Annual Function**

The department may organize an annual function to recognize the efforts made by the participating schools. The best schools can be awarded in this annual function.

- **Publicity Material**

The department shall develop publicity material for distribution amongst the participating schools. The Forest Department will print booklets, prepare audio-visual material to disseminate information amongst students.

- **Webportal**

A webportal shall also be developed by the department. The information along with pictorials about the participating schools, students, the areas covered by them under this scheme, success stories etc. shall be provided on this webportal. The database maintained by the department shall also be uploaded on this webportal so that public have access to the data base.

6. Scale of Implementation:

This scheme shall initially cover those schools having Eco Clubs and involved in the afforestation campaign during the first phase of five years. The scheme would be reviewed after five years and plan for involving more schools shall be worked out. Maintenance in areas already covered under afforestation campaign included areas will continue.

Those schools not having Eco Clubs but are keen and have already done some afforestation activities under the Afforestation Campaign shall be encouraged for formation of Eco Clubs to obtain grant from the MoEF& CC, GOI under the National Green Corps Programme so that they are able to demonstrate their participation and do better in afforestation activities.

7. Scheme Period

The period of this scheme will be for 10 years, starting from 2018-19. However, to build in the learning from the implementation of the scheme, the Scheme will be reviewed in the 5th year and necessary modifications, if any, would be incorporated.

8. Budgetary Outlay for the Scheme

For the year 2018-19 a provision of Rs. 1 Crore has been made. As the scheme progresses more schools will be brought within the ambit of the scheme. From 2nd to 5th year, Rs. 2 Crore will be earmarked each year for the scheme. After 5th year, no new areas will be taken up, hence the requirement of budget will be reduced from 6th year onwards as only maintenance cost of already raised plantations will have to be provided. The total likely outlay of the scheme, spread over 10 years, will be Rs. 11 Crore. However, as the Scheme will undergo a mid-term appraisal in the 5th year, the costing may undergo change based on decisions taken after this appraisal.

9. Fund Flow Mechanism

The detail of funds to be incurred by the concerned DFO and the concerned school authorities shall be provided in the technical plan for a particular year as per the approved cost structure. Out of the total outlay, the 50% of the budget shall be spent by department for the activities such as fencing, nursery raising, publicity, annual functions etc. The remaining 50% shall be spent by the schools under various admissible components as given in the scheme. The funds will be released to the school as Grant-in- Aid by the DFO and the school will be required to maintain separate account of this fund and submit utilization certificate for the funds so released each year. The funds will be released to the school in the beginning of the financial year. The school will open a separate account for the funds received under this scheme or can use the existing Eco Club account and will evolve its own procedures to operate these funds. The accounts of the school will be open to inspection and audit by such authority as decided by the State Government. Any savings made by the school out of the funds released to it, may be utilized on the other forest and environmental conservation and awareness activities of the school Eco-Club.

10. Benefits

The main objective of the scheme is to inculcate awareness about the importance of trees and forests in the young students so that they grow up to become part of an environmentally conscious society in the years to come. The scheme will help in sensitizing the young students about the importance of numerous Eco-System services which the mankind derives from the forests and they will be able to realize the importance of conserving forests in perpetuity for un-interrupted flow of these Eco-System services rather than looking at the forest as provider of material services like timber, fuel, fodder alone. Therefore, the scheme intends to associate young students without any expectation of material benefits. The schools covered under the scheme will be eligible to participate in the annual award scheme for best performance.

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