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**Government of Himachal Pradesh
Department of Forests**

No. FFE-B-F(5)-4/2018

Dated: Shimla-2, the

22-02-2020

NOTIFICATION

The Governor of Himachal Pradesh is pleased to promulgate the following rules regulating payment of Grant-in Aid to the Community User Groups under the *Van Smaridhi Jan Smaridhi* (VSJS) Scheme operative in Himachal Pradesh:-

1. Short Title and Extent:

- i. These Rules may be called "Rules Regulating the Grant-in-Aid to the Community User Groups under the Van Smaridhi Jan Smaridhi scheme in Himachal Pradesh.
- ii. These Rules shall come into force immediately.

2. Definitions:

In these Rules, unless there is any thing repugnant in the subject or context:

- i. 'Department' means the Himachal Pradesh Forest Department.
- ii. 'Govt.' means the Government of Himachal Pradesh.
- iii. 'Secretary' means the Secretary to the Govt. of Himachal Pradesh in the Himachal Pradesh Forest Department.
- iv. 'PCCF (HoFF)' means the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Head of Forest Force) in the Himachal Pradesh Forest Department.
- v. 'HPSFDCL' means the HP State Forest Development Corporation Ltd; which shall be the Nodal Agency for procurement of NTFPs under the Scheme?
- vi. 'State Nodal Officer' means the Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Research & training), who shall be the Nodal Officer for implementation of the VSJS Scheme Himachal Pradesh Forest Department.
- vii. 'CF' means the Conservator of Forests of the Circle concerned.
- viii. 'DFO' means the Divisional Forest Officer of the Division concerned.
- ix. 'NTFP' means the Non timber Forest produce as applicable to Department.
- x. 'Revenue' means the revenue administered by Himachal Pradesh Govt.

- xi. 'VSJS' means Van Smaridhi Jan Smaridhi Scheme.
- xii. 'BMC' means the Biodiversity Management Committee constituted under the ambit of HP State Biodiversity Board under Biological Diversity Act, 2002.
- xiii. 'CUG' mean the Community User Groups formed under the Van Smaridhi Jan Smaridhi (VSJS) Scheme.
- xiv. 'Cluster' means the group of CUGs formed under the Van Smaridhi Jan Smaridhi (VSJS) Scheme.
- xv. 'Forest Guard' means the Beat incharge who shall also be the Secretary of BMC.
- xvi. 'Head' means the member of CUG elected so by CUG who shall also jointly operate the Bank account of CUG as envisaged in VSJS Scheme.
- xvii. 'Treasurer' means the member of CUG elected so by CUG who shall also jointly operate the Bank account of CUG as envisaged in VSJS Scheme.
- xviii. 'APO' means the Annual Plan of Operation under VSJS Scheme.

3. Purpose of the Grant in Aid:

The purpose of Grant-in-aid is for the furtherance of objectives of Van Smaridhi Jan Smaridhi Scheme (VSJS) and its implementation through the Community User Groups formed under BMCs. The assistance in the shape of Grant-in-Aid would be meant for expenditure on *Creation & organizing of CUGs; Seed Money to CUGs to meet miscellaneous expenses for carrying out Plantation and their maintenance; Creation of Revolving Fund for procurement by HPSFDCL; Seed money for private entrepreneurs, NGOs/Societies for procurement and Branding; Subsidy for setting up of Processing units; Training and workshops and Miscellaneous Expenses etc.* to the availability of funds, and based on such norms, and for such other purposes, as may be decided by the Govt. from time to time. All Grant-in- Aid disbursement will be guided by transparent norms, framed in advance, to govern not merely the unit of cost of different activities, but to also specify maximum costing for amounts for different activities that individual Groups would be entitled to.

4. Mode of Payment:

The concerned DFO will prepare Annual Plan of operation (APO) along with requirement of funds for each year in consultation with respective BMC/Community User Group and will submit it to the State Nodal Officer-cum-Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Research & Training) through concerned Conservator of Forests who shall further submit it to the Pr.CCF (HoFF) for the sanction of Budget for a Financial Year. The proposal for a financial year will be submitted by the end of December of previous year so that appropriate budget provisions are made in advance for the Scheme in its budgetary projections. The Pr.CCF (HoFF) will convey the approved APO and allocation of budget to the concerned Conservators/DFOs. The budget shall be spent by the DFOs as per the approved APO. Preferably, the members of CUG shall be engaged by the department for carrying out various activities such as setting up of nurseries under the scheme. The budget such as seed money meant for the CUG as per the approved APO will be released by the concerned DFO and deposited into the account of concerned CUG in the shape of Grant -in-Aid. The Bank account of the CUG will be operated with joint signatures of the Head of CUG and Treasurer. The CUG will get the works of plantation and maintenance executed at its level preferably by the willing members of the CUG or engaging other labour. The plantation and maintenance in the allocated land banks will be monitored by concerned Forest Guard who is Secretary of the BMC. CUG shall initially maintain the seed money of Rs. 10,000 as its revolving fund and it will be enhanced gradually to an amount of Rs. 50,000 from subsequent grant from the department, sale amount of NTFPs & medicinal plants. Based on performance of CUGs and proper utilization of seed money, the department shall consider release of grant upto Rs.10,000 each year from second year onwards till it reaches Rs. 50,000. The CUG will submit a completion report and utilization Certificate (UC) for the funds received as Grant -in-Aid to DFO concerned for record.

5. Conditions for Grant-in-Aid:

The sanction of the Grant -in-Aid shall be subject to following conditions:

- i. That the DFO shall have right to check the accounts of the BMCs/CUGs, to satisfy himself that the Grant-in-Aid has been spent for the purpose for which it has been sanctioned. In case it is found that the Grant-in-Aid has been mis-utilized, it will be open to the DFO to recover the aid from the BMCs/CUGs, and to stop further payment.
- ii. The assets acquired wholly or substantially out of Govt. grants would not, without the prior sanction of the Govt., be disposed of, encumbered or utilized for purposes other than those for which grants are sanctioned. The BMCs/CUGs shall maintain a register in respect of the permanent and semi-permanent assets acquired wholly or mainly out of Govt. grant. This register should be maintained by the BMCs/CUGs separately in respect of each sanctioning authority to whom a copy thereof will be furnished annually for permanent record. The assets would be taken to means all immovable and movable property of capital nature where the value exceeds Rs. 10000/-. Library books and articles of furniture will not, however, be included in it.

6. Maintenance of Accounts:

1. The CUGs shall maintain its accounts and records and the same will be open to inspection by the nominee(s) so deputed by the Government.
2. An un-audited utilization certificate will be furnished by the CUGs in respect of Grant-in-Aid released to the CUGs during a particular year by 15th April of next year to the sanctioning authority, who will furnish the same to the Accountant General HP. The account in respect of the Grant-in-Aid released

to the CUGs for various activities under APO during a particular year, under VSJS Scheme, will be furnished by the DFO to the Accountant General (Audit) H.P. by the end of September of the next/ following year of sanction of Grant in-Aid. The VSJS account of the CUGs will be audited by a qualified Accountant, or any other agency approved by the Government, before December next, in order to ensure proper utilization of the amount of the Grant-in-Aid released by the Department to the CUGs. Thereafter the CUGs will submit one copy of the audited utilization certificate in respect of each activity to the DFO. The installment in respect of the Grant-in-Aid for a particular year will be released by the DFO on the basis of audited utilization certificate furnished by the CUGs.

7. Miscellaneous:

In order to ascertain the utilization of funds released to CUGs by DFOs under various activities, the Conservators shall furnish a Progress report to the Addl. PCCF (R&T) who is State Nodal officer under the VSJS Scheme and who shall submit it further to PCCF (HoFF) H.P. and/or Secretary (Forests) to the H.P. Govt., as and when desired by him.

8. Head of Account

The expenditure on account of payment of Grant-in-Aid is to be charged under Head 2406-01-800-10-SOON and Major Head 2406-01-796-35-SOON Van Samridhi Jan Samridhi or any other Budget Head under which funds provided to the beneficiaries for the purpose.

By order

Ram Subhag Singh
Additional Chief Secretary (Forests) to the
Government of Himachal Pradesh.

Endst. No. FFE-B-F(5)-4/2018

Dated: Shimla-2, the

22-02-2020

Copy forwarded to the following for information to:-

1. The Under Secretary (Finance) to the Govt. of H.P. w.r.t. his file No. FIN (C) - B(15)-5/2020 dated 01-02-2020.
2. The Pr. Chief Conservator of Forests (HoFF), Talland, H.P. Shimla-171001 w.r.t. his letter No. Ft.15-634/2019(D) GIA Rules dated 27-12-2019. He is requested to circulate this Notification to all the concerned CCFs/CFs/DFOs in H.P.
3. The Pr. Chief Conservator of Forests (Wild Life), H.P. Shimla-171001.
4. The Additional Pr. Chief Conservator of Forests (R&T)-cum-State Nodal Officer of the scheme- Van Samridhi Jan Samridhi, O/o the Pr. CCF (HoFF), H.P., Talland, Shimla-171001.
5. The Managing Director, H.P. State Forest Development Corporation Ltd., Kasumpti, Shimla-171009.
6. The Controller, Printing & Stationery, Himachal Pradesh, Shimla-5 for publication in the Rajpatra, Himachal Pradesh, Shimla
7. The CCF, IT, O/o the Pr. CCF (HoFF), H.P. He is requested to upload the above notification on the Departmental website.
8. Guard file.



(Sat Pal Dhiman)

22-2-2020

Joint Secretary (Forests) to the
Government of Himachal Pradesh.
Ph. No. (O)-0177-2621874

Endst. No. Ft.15-634/2019(D)GIA Rules

Dated **15** MAR 2020

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

- i) Pr. CCF (WL) H.P.
- ii) APCCF(R&T) Sundernagar
- iii) All CCFs/CFs(T&WL) Shimla
- iv) CCF(IT)/MIS/GIS. Please upload these rules on departmental website.
- v) Registrar (Budget), O/o Pr. CCF(HoFF) HP

Addl. Pr. Chief Conservator of Forests (Fin.),
O/o Pr. CCF(HoFF) HP