

No. L-13060/11/2020-RE-VII (e-372522)

Government of India
Ministry of Rural Development
Department of Rural Development
(Mahatma Gandhi NREGA Division)

Krishi Bhawan, New Delhi
Dated the 05th January, 2021

SUB:- Joint guidelines for convergence with Department of Agriculture, Cooperation & Farmers Welfare (DoAC&FW) and Department of Rural Development (DoRD), Government of India to promote horticulture under Mahatma Gandhi NREG Scheme.

Background:

1. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme aims at assuring unskilled wage employment upto 100 days to rural families through creation of durable and productive assets both at the community level as also for selected category of individual beneficiaries.
 2. Many horticultural activities are permitted under Mahatma Gandhi NREGA, and these are taken up as per the approved Annual Action Plan under the Act. The horticultural activities enable the beneficiaries to improve nutrition and at the same time increase their incomes and livelihoods. However, on a standalone basis there are constraints in realizing full benefit of the program viz. deficit of technical knowledge and availability of good quality of saplings (plants).
 3. Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana- National Rural Livelihood Mission (DAY-NRLM) is a programme of MoRD aimed at mobilising rural women from poor families in form of collectives at community, village and cluster levels as Self Help Group (SHG), Village Organization (VO) and Cluster Level Federation (CLF) for their empowerment through social mobilization and inclusion, financial inclusion and bank linkage and livelihood development. The programme has developed many community level Resource Persons (CRPs) to assist the groups in these tasks. For their livelihood activities, the programme aims at upgrading the skills, provide technical support, assist in procurement of inputs and extend marketing support.
2. The launch of National Horticulture Mission and various centrally sponsored schemes relating to development of horticulture under Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH), Horticulture Division, DoAC&FW have spurred the production and productivity of horticulture crops.

3. There are about 35 centers of excellence imparting training in this field under Horticulture Division of DoAC&FW. It is felt that these institutions of excellence can impart trainings to CRPs under NRLM, who could train the SHG members. These institutions can become mentor institutions for horticultural activities in different districts across States/UTs.

4. Therefore, in the interest of promoting horticulture across country, bridge the gap of technical expertise, ensure availability of good quality plants and training support, this convergence guideline is being issued.

5. Provisions under Mahatma Gandhi NREGA:

(I) Mahatma Gandhi NREGA is a demand driven programme with bottom up approach. The Gram Panchayat is responsible for identification of projects, in the Gram Panchayat, to be taken up under the scheme as per recommendations of the Gram Sabha, and for executing and supervising such works.

(II) As per Para 4. (1) of the Schedule – I of the Act, the focus of the Scheme for horticulture is summarised as below: -

- a. Category A: Public Works Relating to Natural Resources Management – Horticulture in common and forest lands, road margins, canal bunds, tank foreshores and coastal belts duly providing right to usufruct to the households covered in Paragraph 5;
- b. Category B: (Community assets or individual assets) For vulnerable sections (only for households in Paragraph 5 of Schedule-I of Mahatma Gandhi NREGA) – Improving livelihoods through horticulture.

(II) Raising nurseries are permitted for individual and communities and can be gainfully used to propagate horticulture.

(IV) Para 7.6.16 of the Annual Master Circular 2020-21 mention that:

For durability and productivity of plantation, it is necessary that month wise schedule of activities for tree plantation and responsibility of stake holders is worked out by the States, which will vary from State to State.

(V) Para 7.1.1 of the Annual Master Circular 2020-21 mention that:

For enhanced participation of women in Mahatma Gandhi NREGA implementation, efforts should be made to progressively engage Federations of Women Self-help Groups as Project Implementing Agencies (PIA) at the Gram Panchayat/Block/District level.

(VI) Para 6.7.2 of Annual Master Circular 2020-21 mentions that:

The Cluster Level Federations (CLFs) constituted under the Mission could also act as the Programme Implementing Agencies (PIAs). This could be especially helpful for livelihood enhancing Category B (individual) assets.

6. Role of Horticulture Division, Department of Agriculture, Cooperation & Farmers Welfare (DoAC&FW):

6.1 Horticulture Division, through National Horticulture Mission (NHM) and various centrally sponsored schemes relating to development of horticulture under Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH), will arrange training and orientation of horticulture activities to officials, CRPs under NRLM in the institutions of excellence. These CRPs would in turn train CLF/VOs teams, SHG members for promotion of horticulture activities. State Horticulture Missions (SHMs) should include training & orientation programmes in their Annual Action Plan.

6.2 State Horticulture Missions (SHMs) should include in their Annual Action Plans assistance in arranging good quality, sturdy, climatically suitable and disease free saplings and other inputs through empanelment, participation in price fixation, inspection etc.

6.3 DoAC&FW may include in its Annual Action Plan (AAP) convergence with MoRD indicating activities and quantum and sources of funding for convergence, assisting the State RD Departments in formulation of their own same AAP for horticulture related activities among other things. Under the existing provisions of MIDH, the convergence can be considered under the following components:

- (i) Area expansion of fruits/spices/plantation crops
- (ii) Rejuvenation work
- (iii) Creation of water resources
- (iv) Setting up of nurseries
- (v) Training in Horticulture related activities

6.4 Through NRLM network providing advice to the plantation beneficiaries about the inter-cropping activities that could be taken up to generate additional streams of income, which sustains the interest of beneficiaries till plantations start bearing fruit.

7. Role of NRLM/SRLMs:

7.1 Identify CLFs for implementation of individual beneficiary oriented works under Mahatma Gandhi NREGA as Project Implementing Agency (PIA).

7.2 Identifying CRPs, CLFs, SHG members for training on promotion of horticulture activities. Providing handholding support CLF, SHGs and individual beneficiaries in implementation of horticulture activities.

7.3 Forward linkages for sale of horticulture produce in the market.

7.4 Providing advice to the plantation beneficiaries about the inter-cropping activities that could be taken up to generate additional streams of income, which sustains the interest of beneficiaries till plantations start bearing fruit.

7.5 To set up a communications network for advisories and support for disease and growth monitoring.

8. It should be ensured that only permissible works under Mahatma Gandhi NREGA are taken up after following due process. Therefore, following points need to be adhered:

8.1 All non-negotiable under Mahatma Gandhi NREGA will be followed while taking up activities for promotion of horticulture plants.

8.2 The cost of material component including the wages of the skilled and semi-skilled workers shall not exceed forty percent at the District level.

8.3 The relevant provisions mentioned in Paragraph-5 of the Schedule – I of the Act need to adhere to in selection and prioritizing individual beneficiaries.

8.4 At State level, the monitoring of horticulture activities should be done at the already existing State Level Coordination Committee (SLCC) for convergence, headed by the Chief Secretary. Secretary dealing with Horticulture Mission may also be made member of the Committee.

8.5 At District level, the monitoring of horticulture activities should be done by the already existing District Level Coordination Committee (DLCC) for convergence, headed by the Collector/DPC.

8.6 An Annual Action Plans are finalized by Gram Sabha, SRLM may place the proposal of SHG members in the Gram Sabha. The decision of Gram Sabha will be final. However, the Line Department (Horticulture) may put up their proposal at Block level to the Programme Officer under Mahatma Gandhi NREGS.

9. Joint awareness meeting should be held in the GPs by NRLM/SRLM for the horticulture plantation chosen under convergence and inform them about benefits available to them under Mahatma Gandhi NREGA, MIDH and DAY-NRLM among others besides other provision for convergence inputs.

The States/UTs are requested to promote horticulture activities after following due process in accordance with guidelines of Schemes.

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