

CHAPTER 3

Compensatory Afforestation

3.1 Compensatory Afforestation

- (i) Compensatory afforestation is **one of the most important conditions** stipulated by the Central Government while approving proposals for de-reservation or diversion of forest land for non-forest uses. **It is essential that with all such proposals, a comprehensive scheme for compensatory afforestation is formulated and submitted to the Central Government.**
- (ii) The comprehensive scheme shall include the details of non-forest/degraded forest area identified for compensatory afforestation, map of areas to be taken up for compensatory afforestation, year-wise phased forestry operations, details of species to be planted and a suitability certificate from afforestation/management point of view alongwith the cost structure of various operations.
- (iii) Sometimes the compensatory afforestation schemes are being submitted at such a cost structure, which is at variance with the cost norms for the same area. The compensatory afforestation schemes no doubt has to be site specific and thus per hectare rate will vary according to species, type of forest and site. In this regard, it has been decided that henceforth the compensatory afforestation schemes which are being submitted alongwith the proposals for forestry clearance, must have technical and administrative approvals from the competent authority and should be in conformity with cost norms based on species, type of forest and site.

3.2 Land for Compensatory Afforestation

- (i) Compensatory afforestation shall be done over equivalent area of non-forest land.

Clarification:- As a matter of pragmatism, the revenue lands/zudpi jungle/chhote/bade jhar ka jungle/jungle-jhari land/civil-soyam lands and all other such categories of lands, on which the provisions of Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 are applicable, shall be considered for the purpose of compensatory afforestation provided such lands on which compensatory afforestation is proposed shall be notified as RF under the Indian Forest Act, 1927.

- ✓ (ii) As far as possible, the non-forest land for compensatory afforestation should be identified contiguous to or in the proximity of Reserved Forest or Protected Forest to enable the Forest Department to effectively manage the newly planted area.
- ✓ (iii) In the event that non-forest land of compensatory afforestation is not available in the same district, non-forest land for compensatory afforestation may be identified anywhere else in the State/UT as near as possible to the site of diversion, so as to minimise adverse impact on the micro-ecology of the area.
- (iv) Where non-forest lands are not available or non-forest land is available in less extent to the forest area being diverted, compensatory afforestation may be carried out over degraded forest twice in extent to the area being diverted or to the difference between forest land being diverted and available non-forest land, as the case may be.
- (v) The non-availability of suitable non-forest land for compensatory afforestation in the entire State/UT would be accepted by the Central Government only on the Certificate from the Chief Secretary to the State/UT Government to that effect.

- (vi) As an exception to 3.2(i) above, compensatory afforestation may be raised over degraded forest land twice in extent of the forest area being diverted/dereserved in respect of following types of proposals:
- For extraction of minor minerals from the river beds. (However, if forest area to be diverted is above 500 hectares, compensatory afforestation over equivalent area of degraded forest shall be required to be done instead of twice the area being diverted subject to a minimum of 1000 hectare compensatory afforestation).
 - ✓ For construction of link roads, small water works, minor irrigation works, school building, dispensaries, hospital, tiny rural industrial sheds of the Government or any other similar work excluding mining and encroachment cases, which directly benefit the people of the area - in hill districts and in other districts having forest area not exceeding 50% of the total geographical area, provided diversion of forest area does not exceed 20 hectares.
 - For laying of transmission lines upto 220 KV.
 - For mulberry plantation undertaken for silk-worm rearing without any felling of existing trees.
 - For diversion of linear or 'strip' plantation declared as protected forest along the road/rail/canal sides for widening or expansion of road/rail/canal.
 - For laying of telephone/optical fibre lines
- (vii) **The field firing ranges**, which are used temporarily by the defence establishments for arms practice, comprises of safety zone encompassing the field firing range and danger area/impact zone. Keeping in view that the impact area is only a small portion of the entire firing range and as an exception to 3.2(i) above, compensatory afforestation may be raised over equivalent degraded forest land of the forest area being diverted for impact zone of the field firing range.
- (viii) No compensatory afforestation shall be insisted upon in respect of the following :-
- For clearing of naturally grown trees in forest land or in portion thereof for the purpose of using it for reforestation.
 - Proposals involving diversion of forest land up to **one hectare**. (However, in such cases, plantation of ten times the number of trees likely to be felled will have to be carried out by way of compensatory afforestation or any number of trees specified in the order)
 - For underground mining in forest land below 3 metres. (However, in respect of forest area required for surface right, compensatory afforestation shall be required as per relevant provisions).
 - Cases of renewal of mining lease, for the forest area already broken/used for mining, dumping or overburden, construction of roads, ropeways, buildings, etc. For the balance area, compensatory afforestation shall be required to be done as stipulated, provided that no compensatory afforestation had been stipulated and done in respect of this area at the time of grant/ renewal of lease earlier.
- (ix) **Special provisions for Central Government/Central Government Undertaking Projects.**
- Compensatory afforestation may be raised on degraded forest land twice in extent of forest area being diverted. Certificate of Chief Secretary regarding non-availability of non-forest land for compensatory afforestation will not be insisted.
 - The user agency will deposit the amount for compensatory afforestation with the concerned State Govt. on receiving the demand and the actual transfer/use of forest land will be effected only after the receipt of the demanded amount.
 - The State Governments will identify 'blank forest' or degraded forest lands for compensatory afforestation. The State Governments of Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan will identify such degraded forest land in their States for compensatory afforestation of

- Central projects in their respective States as indicated by the Chief Secretaries of these two States in the meeting of Committee of Secretaries held on 15-11-1996.
- (d) The pool of degraded forest land in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan will also be available for the Central Government projects of other States if the concerned State Government fail to identify the requisite land, as mentioned at (a) above, for compensatory afforestation in its own territory within one month of the submission of the proposal to the State Government
 - (e) While identifying the pool of degraded forest land, blank forest lands in reserved forests in compact /sizeable blocks should be identified as first priority as "plantation bank". An appropriate treatment plan with choice of species should be prepared by the beneficiary States. Only when such areas are not available, the choice of compensatory afforestation will fall on protected, unprotected forests and unclassified forests in declining order of priority.
 - (f) The Nodal Officer (Forest Conservation), State Forest Department will identify the pool of such degraded forest lands in consultation with concerned Chief Conservator of Forests (C), Regional Offices of the MOEF.

Clarification : The provisions of the above guideline would be applicable to only Central Sector projects and not on State Sector projects which are being undertaken by Central PSUs on turnkey basis. In such cases, Compensatory Afforestation on equivalent non-forest land/a certificate of Chief Secretary regarding non-availability of equivalent non-forest land anywhere in the State shall be insisted upon.

3.3 Elements of Schemes for Compensatory Afforestation

- The scheme for compensatory afforestation should contain the following details :-
- (i) The scheme for compensatory afforestation should contain the following details :-
 - (a) Details of equivalent non-forest or degraded forest land identified for raising compensatory afforestation.
 - (b) Delineation of proposed area on suitable map.
 - (c) Agency responsible for afforestation.
 - (d) Details of work schedule proposed for compensatory afforestation
 - (e) Cost structure of plantation, provision of funds and the mechanism to ensure that the funds will be utilized for raising afforestation.
 - (f) Details of proposed monitoring mechanism.

3.4 Lands identified for Compensatory Afforestation to be Transferred to the Forest Department:

- (i) Equivalent non-forest land identified for the purpose are to be transferred to the ownership of the State Forest Department and declared as reserved/protected forests, so that the **plantation raised can be maintained permanently**. The transfer must take prior to the commencement of the project.
- (ii) The compensatory afforestation should clearly be an additional plantation activity and not a diversion of part of the annual plantation programme.
- (iii) In each case where the afforestation target is over 500 hectares in plains, and 200 hectares in hills, a Monitoring Committee shall be established with a nominee of the Central Government to oversee that the stipulations, including those pertaining to compensatory plantation are carried out.