

No.J-11019/2/208-NREGA
Government of India
Ministry of Rural Development
Department of Rural Development
(NREGA Division)

Krishi Bhavan, New Delhi 110114

29th May 2009

To

The Principal Secretary/Secretary (RD)
Government of

Subject:- Guidelines for Convergence between NREGA and Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP) of Department of Land Resources (DOLR) and for initiating the convergence process in pilot districts – Reg.

Sir/Madam,

In recent years, substantial public investments are being made for strengthening of the rural economy and the livelihood base of the poor, especially the marginalized sections like SC/STs and women. To maximize outcome of these investments and effectively address the issue of poverty alleviation, there is need to optimize efforts through inter-sectoral approaches.

2. Keeping the inter-sectorality of NREGA, the commonality of target area, beneficiaries, processes of most of the schemes and implementing agencies at the grass root level in view, the Ministry of Rural Development had constituted a Task Force to explore effective modalities of convergence with NREGA. The Task Force comprised representatives from Ministries of Water Resources, Environment and Forests, Agriculture, Human Resources, Women & Child Development and Department of Land Resources. The Task Force recommended that a beginning of convergence may be made on pilot basis with select programmes of select Ministries.

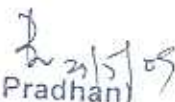
3. The IWMP of the Department of Land Resources was identified as an important scheme for convergence with NREGA, as more than 50% of NREGA works relate to soil & water conservation. Apart from the Task Force, a series of meetings held between Department of Rural Development and Department of Land Resources, in which the scope for convergence between NREGA and IWMP were discussed. Based on the discussions, convergence areas and modalities for convergence were identified. Accordingly, detailed guidelines for convergence between NREGA and IWMP have been developed and enclosed as Annexure-A. These guidelines are meant to optimize synergies between NREGA and IWMP. They are suggestive in nature and should be used to encourage innovative convergence projects at the district levels.

4. Keeping the above in view, we would request you to convene a meeting of the officers of the concerned Departments in the State to discuss these guidelines. This should be by joint meeting of the Districts Officers in charge of the NREGA and IWMP. The District Officers meeting should aim at firming up processes for operationalising the convergence guidelines in a time bound manner. Further, we request that necessary instructions may be issued to the concerned officials for implementing convergence between NREGA and IWMP and maximize outcome of the investments under these programs.

Yours faithfully,



(Amita Sharma)
Joint Secretary
Department of Rural Development



(B Pradhan)
Joint Secretary
Department of Land Resources



Joint Convergence Guidelines

**National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA)
(Department of Rural Development)**

&

**Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP)
(Department of Land Resources)**

NREGA: Introduction:

1.1 The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA), notified on September 7, 2005, marked a paradigm shift from the previous wage employment programmes with its rights-based approach that makes the Government legally accountable for providing employment to those who demand it. The Act aims at enhancing livelihood security of households in rural areas of the country by providing at least one hundred days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work.

1.2 The primary objective of the Act is augmenting wage employment. Its auxiliary objective is strengthening natural resource management through works that address causes of chronic poverty like drought and so encourage sustainable development. Further, NREGA by encouraging works on water harvesting, soil conservation, irrigation, flood protection, afforestation and plantation, helps to insulate local community from adverse effects of climate change. The process outcomes include strengthening grass root processes of democracy and infusing transparency and accountability in governance.

1.3 Under NREGA large sums of public investments are made. Leveraging these investments towards sustainable livelihood requires inter-sectoral convergence. Since NREGA planning is decentralized and funds transferred are untied, works can be planned/ structured and executed as per local specific requirements. NREGA thus becomes a significant entry point for convergence with other development programmes.

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1.4 Such inter sectoral convergence becomes instrumental towards

- ❖ Establishing synergy among different government programmes in planning & implementation to optimize use of public investments
- ❖ Enhancing economic Opportunities
- ❖ Strengthening Democratic Processes
- ❖ Mitigating the effects of Climate Change
- ❖ Creating conditions for sustainable Development.

1.5 One of the significant areas for convergence is the watershed management programme of the Dept of Land Resources (DoLR) in the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD).

1.6 Created as Department of Wasteland Development in the Ministry of Rural Development and Poverty Alleviation in 1992, the Department of Land Resources (DoLR) received its current name in April 1999. The DoLR has been implementing three area development programmes namely Drought- Prone Area Programme (DPAP), Desert Development Programme (DDP) and Integrated Wastelands Development Programme (IWDP) on watershed basis since 1995. From April, 2008, these three programmes have been integrated into one comprehensive scheme which is based on the Common Guidelines, 2008 framed by National Rainfed Area Authority (NRAA) for all watershed programmes of the country. The modified scheme is known as Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP). The main aims of the IWMP are to restore the ecological balance by harnessing, conserving and developing degraded natural resources such as soil, vegetative cover and water. The outcomes are prevention of soil run-off, regeneration of natural vegetation, rain water harvesting and the recharging of the ground water table. This enables multi-cropping and the introduction of diverse agro-based activities, which help to provide sustainable livelihoods to the people residing in the watershed area.

2. Convergence:

2.1 Convergence is an evolving process and while broad principles can be laid out at the Centre, the actual contours of convergence will be determined by the resources at the Central, State, District and the project level. Also, to fully identify the possibilities of convergence, it may be necessary to make a beginning with select programmes, so that the experience of implementation may further inform and refine strategies for convergence.

2.2 With this perspective, a Task force on convergence with NREGA was set up with representatives from different Ministries and Departments, implementing programmes with complementarities with NREGA. The Task Force recommended beginning with select programmes of select Ministries. Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), Ministry of Water Resources (MoWR), DoLR, and Rain fed Authority which was represented on the Task force were identified as important partners to NREGA, as more than 50% of NREGA works relate to water conservation/ watershed development. Possibilities of convergence between NREGA and the Watershed programmes of DoLR were discussed between the two Departments. Based on these discussions, convergence areas and modalities were identified and the following guidelines for convergence of watershed works being taken up under NREGA and under the watershed programmes of the DoLR are being issued.

3. Convergence between NREGA and Watershed Programmes:

Under NREGA almost all the activities required for watershed development are permitted. Convergence between NREGA and Watershed Programmes of DoLR will be mutually beneficial for rainfed areas.

4. Parameters of Convergence:

4.1 Works identified under NREGA for convergence will be planned and executed within the parameters of NREGA i.e.

- a) The cost of material component of projects including the wages of the skilled and semi-skilled workers taken up under the scheme shall not exceed forty percent of the total project costs.
- b) As far as practicable, a task funded under the scheme shall be performed by using manual labour and not machines.
- c) No Contractors shall be engaged in execution of the works.
- d) Where convergence between NREGA and a watershed programme funded by DoLR is envisaged, the tasks/ structures/ activities to be undertaken by NREGA will be identified by the Programme Implementation Agency (PIA) preparing the DPR for the watershed programme.

5. Modalities for Convergence:

In operational terms, convergence of Watershed activities with NREGS will require coordination between these programmes at the levels of

5.1 Management

5.2 Planning

5.3 Works

5.1 Management

5.1.1 The activities/ structures/ tasks identified in the DPR for execution by the PIA of the watershed funded by DoLR will be processed as laid down in the Common Guidelines, 2008. The activities/ structures/

tasks identified in the DPR for convergence with NREGA will follow the procedure given below.

5.1.2 The Project Implementing Agency (PIA) will prepare the DPR of the watershed project and get the approval of Gram Sabha (GS)/ Gram Panchayat (GP) before submitting to the Watershed Cell in the DRDA/ZP which, in turn, will submit to the District Planning Committee (DPC) for approval.

5.1.3 The work plan for NREGA in the watershed area will be prepared following prescribed procedure already laid down in the NREGA Guidelines. The work plan will be placed before the DPC by the District Programme Coordinator, NREGA to ensure convergence between the plan submitted by the PIA for watershed work and work plan of NREGA in watershed area.

5.1.4 The District Resource Group (DRG) will be created at the district level with representatives from the Watershed Department i.e. the representative of the Watershed Cell in the DRDA, Agriculture Department, Water Resource Department, the Department of Rural Development (NREGA and SGSY) and Panchayati Raj.

5.1.5 The group will facilitate

- a. **Knowledge sharing.** Familiarization of all the members of the group on guidelines of Watershed programmes and NREGA. This will clarify the programme parameters for what can be converged and what cannot.
- b. **Planning.** The Planning will be done as per the Common Guidelines and will be reflected in the DPR prepared by the PIA of the watershed programme. Regarding the activities

proposed for NREGA the group can chalk out processes, milestones and time-frames.

- c. **Communication.** Since both programmes aim at participatory processes, effective IEC with the local community, Watershed Committee, User Groups, workers, will have to be planned and implemented.
- d. **Training:** Training of personnel/agencies responsible for NREGS must be planned and implemented.
- e. **Technical support:** Selection of works that are to be undertaken by NREGA within the watershed area will be done in consultation with the PIA implementing that watershed programme for better coordination. However, NREGA will be responsible for the technical quality of the works undertaken by it.
- f. **Resource Pooling:**
 - i) **Human:** Under NREGA dedicated personnel is to be deployed. The responsibility of training of such personnel will lie with NREGS. The WDT may supplement such training programmes wherever feasible.
 - ii) **Financial:** Sharing of information on financial resources available and expected to be made available in the ensuing years. This will determine the quantum of works/activities that can be taken up and indicate where activity convergence will enable gap-filling or augmentation in scale/value, and which activity is to be funded under which programme.
 - iii) **Informational:** DoLR already has its own MIS in place for monitoring watershed programmes funded by the Department. The data on activities/structures/tasks to be undertaken by NREGS may be collected directly by NREGS and shared with the PIA/ Watershed Cell in the DRDA/ZP, SLNA and DoLR.

- g. Monitoring and Evaluation.** Joint monitoring and supervision of activities/structures/tasks undertaken by NREGA within the watershed funded by DoLR should be planned. Baseline assessment, Concurrent appraisal, documentation and evaluation of impact of such activities/structures/tasks undertaken by NREGA within the watershed funded by DoLR on a set of indicators for ground water recharge, increase in cultivable area, cropped area, change in cropping pattern and productivity etc. could be initiated. Quantification of benefits of works undertaken by NREGA could also be taken up jointly.

5.2 Planning

5.2.1 Guidelines of NREGS stipulate the formulation of perspective plan to facilitate advance planning and to provide a development perspective for the District. The aim is to identify the types of NREGA works that should be encouraged in the District and the potential linkages between these works and long term employment generation and sustained development. The NREGS perspective plans identify the needs and gaps in the District in all sectors, not just related to works permissible under NREGA. Thus, the activities/structures/tasks identified for being undertaken under NREGS, within the watershed projects, need to be reflected in the DPR prepared by the PIA executing the project on behalf of DoLR. The project period for IWMP as per Common Guidelines is between 4 to 7 years. Thus, activities/structures/tasks identified for execution under NREGA may, in turn, be reflected year-wise in the annual perspective plans of NREGA after following procedures required, by NREGA.

5.2.2 The Annual work plan (AWP) of NREGA lists the shelf of projects recommended by the Gram Sabha and finalised by the Gram

Panchayat/IP/ZP. If the perspective plan has been made then the AWP will be broadly based on the perspective plan but must be endorsed by the Gram Sabha/ PRIs as per the Act. The NREGA plan will be based on the permissible works under schedule one, NREGA.

5.2.3 The WDT of the PIA has the necessary technical expertise to interact with the Gram Sabha and potential beneficiaries for preparing the village-wise watershed plan. The latter will also contain the activities/structures/tasks to be undertaken under NREGS so that convergence takes place in a complementary manner and the activities are dovetailed into a well-linked programme.

5.2.4 The institutional platform for such dovetailing will be :

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|------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. At project/ village level | Gram Sabha, Gram Panchayat, Watershed Committee and PIA |
| 2. At District level | DRG, Watershed Cell in DRDA and District Planning Committee |
| 3. At State level | SLNA and Nodal Department for NREGA |
| 4. At Central level | Combined monitoring body of DoRD & DoLR |

NREGS will take up only those activities which are permitted under the relevant laws/ guidelines applicable to it.

5.2.5 The Detailed Project Report under watershed development programme is prepared by the Watershed Development Team for integrated development of the watershed area with active participation of the watershed committee.

5.2.6 As per guidelines of watershed development projects, the DPR for the watershed has to be in tune with the District Perspective Plan. The permissible work relating to soil and moisture conservation under NREGS, BRGF, and Artificial Ground Water Recharge must complement the micro watershed programme.

5.2.7 The WDT/PIA will submit the DPR of the Watershed Development Project to Gram Sabah for approval, which will also contain a description of the activities/structures/tasks proposed for NREGS. NREGS will prepare its Perspective Plan and Annual Work Plan from among these activities/structures/tasks and submit it simultaneously with the DPR to the Gram Sabah, so that proper convergence of the programmes is ensured.

5.3 Works/Areas for convergence:

5.3.1 Works/Areas where watershed programmes are under Implementation: Areas where watershed programmes are already under implementation, but there appears to be need for additional works, over and above the existing watershed plan/ detailed project reports (DPR), in such areas, NREGS may undertake such works under the supervision and guidance of PRIs and after going through its necessary procedures, since the WDT/PIA will withdraw from the watershed area upon completion of its project.

5.3.2 Areas where new watersheds are proposed: In areas proposed for coverage under Watershed programme in the coming months, the procedure to be followed for preparation of DPR of watershed project and of the Annual work plan under NREGS will be as described in para 5.1.

6. Guiding Principles:

The selection, planning, preparation of DPR and implementation of watershed projects funded by DoLR will be in accordance with the provisions of the Common Guidelines, 2008.

7. Cost Norms:

Under NREGA, there is neither cost norm for the unit area as in Watershed Development Project nor unit cost for work / activity. Therefore, the unit cost for works/ activity in the watershed project area will be as per IWMP cost norms.

8. Execution:

8.1 The activities/structures/tasks identified in the DPR for being undertaken by NREGS will be executed as per NREGA/ Guidelines under supervision of PRIs. Here a display board for NREGA shall be put up for transparency.

8.2 The activities/ structures/ tasks identified in the DPR for being undertaken by WDT/PIA of IWMP will be executed as per the Common Guidelines, 2008. Here a display board for IWMP shall be put up for transparency.

9. Monitoring, Evaluation & Review:

9.1 IWMP projects will be monitored, evaluated and reviewed as per the Common Guidelines, 2008.

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9.2 The activities/structures/tasks identified in the DPR for being undertaken by NREGS will be reviewed jointly at the following levels:

1. At project/ village level Gram Sabha, Gram Panchayat, Watershed Committee, WDT and PIA
2. At District level District Programme Coordinator and Watershed Cell in DRDA/ZP
3. At State level SLNA and Nodal Department for NREGA
4. At Central level Combined monitoring body of DoRD & DoLR

10. Post Project Management:

10.1 In the case of IWMP completed works will be taken care of as per provisions of Common Guidelines.

10.2 In case of works completed under NREGS on completion the watershed works should be handed over to the PRIs for maintenance.

11. Non -Negotiables for works executed under NREGS:

- a. Only Job Card holders to be employed for NREGA component.
- b. Muster rolls to be maintained on work site, with copies in the gram panchayat and to be electronically maintained on nrega.nic.in
- c. Social Audits to be done through gram sabhas.
- d. Wage payments will be through no-frills accounts in banks/post offices

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