

Van Mitra

[Haryana Government scheme for plantation by community on non-forest land]

Executive Summary

The Van Mitra scheme is an initiative by the government to encourage community participation in tree plantation activities on non-forest lands. Recognizing the critical role of green cover for a healthy environment and the shortfall in forest areas in Haryana, this scheme aims to involve local communities directly in enhancing tree cover across the state. By leveraging the support of 7500 local volunteers from economically weaker sections, the scheme envisions fostering a culture of environmental guardianship and personal commitment towards tree planting and care.

Introduction

Environmental sustainability depends on the extent of green cover on the land. In forest-deficit states like Haryana, the need is to increase tree cover outside designated forest areas for the restoration of ecological balance and ambient environment for the citizens. The Van Mitra scheme represents a strategic intervention aimed at mobilizing community resources and inculcating enthusiasm for tree plantation and aftercare of plantations.

Scheme Overview

Objective: To promote community participation in tree plantation, ensuring increased survival rates of plantations and enhancing tree cover on non-forest land for a healthier living environment.

Operational Procedure

1. **Public Awareness:** The scheme will be given large publicity through print and visual media and the website of the forest department.
2. **Identification of Eligible Families:** The eligible families/persons having an annual income of less than 1.8 lakh will be identified from data of Parivar Pehchan Patra (PPP) maintained by the Citizens Resources Information Department (CRID) and intimation of eligibility for participation in the scheme will be given to the families through various measures. Through this message, the stakeholders will be made aware of the process of registration on the Van Mitra portal/ mobile app. of the scheme.
3. **Registration:** The eligible families will register one eligible member (age between 18 to 60 years) of the family on Van Mitra mobile app. The information on the number of saplings to be planted subject to a maximum of 1000 saplings will be given at the time of registration by the family member. Amongst the registered applicants, priority will be given to the family having a lower income and the applicants of younger age.
4. **Land Identification:** The Van Mitra will arrange the land for plantation.

5. **Training:** Van Mitras will be provided basic training on plantation techniques and protection measures. They will also be provided hands-on training on the Van Mitra mobile app.

Implementation Timeline and Activities

1st Year

- **February/March:** Registration, selection and training.
- **By June 10th:** Completion of pit digging for plantation.
- **July 1st to August 15th:** Plantation period.
- **By August 31st:** Completion of plantation verification and geo-tagging.
- **September to April:** Maintenance and protection of plantation.

2nd , 3rd and 4th Year

- Maintenance and protection of plantation.

Honorarium

1st Year

- **Last Week of June:** Rs. 20 per dug-up pit on geo-tagging and uploading of photographs of the pits by Van Mitra on the mobile app.
- **Last week of July and August:** Rs. 30 per planted sapling after geo-tagging of planted sapling by the Van Mitra.
- **Last week of Months from September onwards:** Rs. 10 per surviving sapling for maintenance and protection of plantation.

2nd Year

- Rs. 8 per surviving sapling in the last week of every month.

3rd Year

- Rs. 5 per surviving sapling in the last week of every month.

4th Year

- Rs. 3 per surviving sapling in the last week of every month.

Technology Integration

- **Van Mitra App:** For registration, geo-tagging and assessment of survival of plantations.

- Payment of honorarium to Van Mitras will be made directly into their accounts, adhering to the government's Direct Transfer Benefit (DBT) policy of Government.

Basic implementation guidelines of Scheme

- The saplings to be planted under the scheme will not be the short rotation species like eucalyptus and poplar planted under agro-forestry. Further, only saplings of tree species will be planted.
- The minimum plant-to-plant distance will be eight meters.
- The Van Mitra will select the non-forest land for plantation anywhere in the village, town or city of his residence. In case the plantation is done on land not belonging to Van Mitra, he will hand over the plants to the owner of the land after completion of four years of plantation to the owner of the land and the owner will then take care of the plant as his property. An honorarium of Rs. 25 per handed-over plant will be given to the Van Mitra. In case the planted tree is on the land of Van Mitra himself, he will be deemed to be the owner of the tree and further incentives hereinafter will be admissible to him as the owner of the tree. An agreement will be signed between Van Mitra and the owner of the land to the effect that the owner will not fell the tree for at least 10 years. In case the owner of the tree retains the tree till the tree attains the age of 75 years, the Government may consider giving an honorarium of an amount equivalent to the basic rate of Rs. 100 in the year 2024. Also, such trees will be recognized under the State Government Scheme of Pran Vayu Devta and the custodians will get honorarium admissible under the scheme of Pran Vayu Devta for taking care of the tree.

Role and responsibility of Van Mitra

- To identify and arrange land required for plantation. In case the land identified for the plantation is not in the ownership of the Van Mitra, he will obtain permission from the owner in writing.
- To dig pits required for plantations and further carry out plantations in the pit and take their care as per specifications contained in the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).
- To ensure good survival of plantations.

Role and responsibility of the Forest Department

- To provide healthy saplings for the plantation to Van Mitra.
- To impart basic training to Van Mitra on techniques of plantation and its maintenance/ protection and preparation of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) like requirements of weeding-hoeing, irrigation, measures for protection of plants from frost etc.
- The forest guards, foresters and range officers will provide advice concerning plantation to Van Mitras within their area of jurisdiction as and when required by them.
- Documentation of assessment of survival percentage of plantation done by Van Mitra.