

Monitoring and Mentoring System for the Schemes of National Medicinal Plants Board

National Medicinal Plants Board is implementing "Central Sector Scheme for Conservation, Development and Sustainable Management of Medicinal Plants" and "Centrally Sponsored Scheme of National Mission on Medicinal Plants" for overall development of Medicinal plants sector through implementation of the schemes for their conservation, cultivation, resource augmentation, sustainable collection, research, processing and marketing. Grants are largely sanctioned through Mission Directors and State Medicinal Plants Boards located in the states. Large numbers of projects have already been sanctioned under the schemes. Although monitoring arrangements are inbuilt under the pattern of schemes, a comprehensive mentoring and monitoring system is required for proper implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the programmes. This issue was deliberated and decided in the separate meeting of Standing Finance Committees (SFCs) for both the schemes held on 29th September, 2010 and 27th October, 2010. Accordingly, the Mentoring and Monitoring system to be implemented for NMPB's schemes has been detailed in the succeeding sections.

1. Web Based MIS for National Mission on Medicinal Plants

National Medicinal Plants Board may develop a web based enabling progress monitoring system like National Horticulture Mission, where all the State Mission and SMPB can provide their information by 5th of each month so that NMPB up-date information on the implementation of the scheme regularly. Further, the web based information would be in addition the monthly reporting in hard copy. It was also pointed out that the resources of Project Management Unit (PMU) should be fully utilized for monitoring.

2. Mentoring and Monitoring by the State Missions and SMPB

Since the project is actually being implemented by the State Missions and SMPB, it is advisable that the State Missions and SMPB may monitor all their activities at the

field level through their own set of experts and take corrective measures accordingly. State Missions and SMPB are granted 5% of the fund as management support funds. A part of the fund may be used by them for mentoring and monitoring. Therefore, field mentoring and monitoring of all their activities, including cultivation by individual farmers may be carried out by the State Mission and subsidies be linked to such monitoring systems. For this purpose the services of retired officers of Forest/Horticulture/Agriculture Departments, Scientists etc. may be hired by State Missions. In case of Central Sector Scheme, State Medicinal Plants Boards could be involved in place of State Mission.

State Mission may also set-up Committees at state/district/block level for monitoring and mentoring of the programme in respect of National Mission on Medicinal Plants.

3. Third party monitoring by National Mission

The Committee noted that the comprehensive third party monitoring is important for the success of any scheme being implemented at the national level. There could be two types of arrangements - either through the system of experts or hiring an agency. Hiring an agency is a better option as there would be uniformity in monitoring in all the States. NMPB has already experience of hiring Agricultural Finance Corporation for monitoring of Central Sector Scheme. There is need to further upgrade the monitoring and now the monitoring should be done by a National Level Agency with adequate manpower and infrastructure and get the information about the implementation of each activity under the scheme including the cultivation by individual farmers and the location and area data be picked up through the GPS system so that the same can be used in GIS based systems. The data in GIS based system would be used by the concerned company (selected through a tender process) as well as to be provided to NMPB for further temporal and spatial analysis.

It was also decided that same agency should monitor both schemes of NMPB. As hiring of the new agency would take approximate six months time, the services of

Agriculture Finance Corporation may be utilized for monitoring at the old rate for six months.

4. Monitoring through Remote Sensing and developing Centralized Spatial data on Medicinal Plants in GIS Domain

This will be a much higher level of monitoring which will not only cover the medicinal plant activities supported by NMPB but also the activities regarding medicinal plants being done by individual farmers, NGOs and entrepreneurs. An expert agency will be hired for developing country wide mosaic of high resolution satellite image (LISS IV, Cartosat) and overlaying polygons of areas, taken up for interventions under the Mission, to help develop a centralized spatial database in GIS domain. Even data of Central Sector Scheme on resource augmentation and conservation may be uploaded on the GIS platform.

5. Focused Monitoring & Mentoring

NMPB may develop a list of experts and nominate subject-wise/ species-wise expert as Chief Technical Adviser and identify the institutes as Centres of Excellence in different fields of medicinal plants. In consultation with State Missions, focused monitoring & mentoring visits may be organized once in six months. The visit of panels of experts required for the concerned State would help the State Missions through mentoring with respect to their important activities. It is also proposed that same team of experts shall monitor both schemes of National Medicinal Plants Board. The Facilitation Centres may also be further activated to serve the purpose of focused monitoring and mentoring.