

No. H-11014/6/2010-MGNREGA
Government of India
M/O Rural Development
(Mahatma Gandhi NREGA Division)

Dated, the 7th February, 2011

To,
Principal Secretary/Secretary (RD)
All States/UTs

Subject: Launching an afforestation drive along National Highways in the country to increase the green cover.

Sir/Madam,

Suggestions have been received by the Government to take action for plantation of trees on a large scale on the sides of National Highways through out the country. The issue has also been raised by Members of Parliament during debates in the Lok Sabha. As India has vast tracts of land along the National Highways throughout the country, this land can be utilized for planting trees of varying utility including minor economic uses, minor forest produces as well as for providing shelter against the scorching heat during the summer season. Afforestation and reafforestation can also be used to improve the quality of human life by soaking up pollution and dust from the air, re-building natural habitats and ecosystem, mitigate global warming and more particularly to get rain.

Afforestation and tree plantation is a permissible activity under Mahatma Gandhi NREGA. Operational Guidelines for MGNREGA provide for convergence of other rural development programmes with MGNREGA within the parameters of the Act. Guidelines for convergence of rural development programmes of Ministry of Environment & Forests (MoE&F) with MGNREGA have already been issued. These guidelines provide for convergence of MGNREGA activities with similar works under National Afforestation Programmes (NAP) of MoE&F. Reforestation and tree plantation such as Avenue plantation, Shelter belt plantation and road, rail, canal and boundary plantation etc. are permissible activities under NAP. Therefore, the State Governments may consider the suggestion regarding launching an afforestation drive along the National Highways in the country. However, this should mandatorily be within the norms and processes of Mahatma Gandhi NREGA.

Yours faithfully,

Sharma
7/2
(Indu Sharma)
Director(MGNREGA)