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# T.N. govt. asks banks to offer tree loans as part of its Green Mission

**Government plans to encourage farmers to take up tree plantation on their farmland, besides the cultivation of food crops, to augment wood production and their revenue**

January 08, 2023 09:36 pm | Updated 09:36 pm IST - CHENNAI

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The Tamil Nadu government has asked banks to offer tree loans to farmers as a part of its Green Mission aimed at increasing the State's green cover (areas including forest and the tree cover around it) to 33% from 23.71%.

Under the mission, the State plans to encourage farmers to take up tree plantation on their farmland, besides the cultivation of food crops, to augment wood production and their revenue. Agro forestry plays a crucial role in achieving the forest and green cover target and the State government has asked banks to consider financing plantation of agro forestry trees.

The previous Tamil Nadu Biodiversity Conservation and Greening Project, funded by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), had a tree cultivation on private land component. Under



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“Now, with the targets set under Green Mission, we want to encourage farmers to grow long-rotation crops like Red Sanders and sandalwood. They won’t sell them immediately, but after 20-25 years. This would ensure that the green cover is maintained,” he pointed out.

Mr. Srivastava noted that a farmer in Krishnagiri district had planted 1,000 sandalwood seedlings. He said farmers would go for long-rotation crops if they were offered loans to pay for seedlings, inputs and maintenance for 7-8 years. “The idea is to have 70% of timber- yielding plantation and 30% of short-rotation crops,” he said.

He said the proposal on the agro forestry tree model was discussed at the District Level Technical Committee and it would be taken up at the State Level Technical Committee. Thereafter, it would go to the State Level Bankers Committee. In a year, financing would be available. Tree loans would be one-of-a-kind initiative in the country, he said.

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