

Centre warns states on inadequate plantation data

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Nagpur: The Union ministry of environment, forest and climate change (MoEFCC) has asked the states and union territories to update correct information regarding compensatory afforestation (CA) on its e-Green Watch portal, failing which their forest land diversion proposals will not be cleared.

The e-Green Watch scheme of MoEFCC is being implemented by the states in consultation with the Forest Survey of India (FSI) since 2012. This initiative was conceived with a view to ensure automation, streamlining and effective management of processes related to the utilization of CAMPA and all other funds earmarked by states under various Central or state government schemes for plantation and other forestry-related works.

“The success of the above endeavour is based on correct uploading of data on e-Green Watch portal by state forest departments. One of the most critical data is in the form of the digital polygon of the place where work has been undertaken,” MoEFCC officials say.

As per the environment ministry, 70% of the data available with it in respect of CA is incorrect, indicating that either it is not being implemented properly or the staff is not trained to upload data.

MoEFCC in communication to states on November 20, 2020, has said that non-compliance of its guidelines of Integrated Concurrent Monitoring and Evaluation System (i-CCMES) or e-Green Watch would lead to non-performance and hence annual plan of operations (APOs) and forest diversion proposals will be withheld after January 1, 2021.

As reported by TOI, on August 10, 2020, all states were requested to improve the precision of information hosted on e-Green Watch by robust scrutiny of polygons, setting up of an e-green watch cell headed by APCCF (CAMPA), and skill development of field functionaries.

However, MoEFCC observed that despite repeated requests from the FSI, a significant percentage of data being uploaded,

particularly the polygons, was either incorrect or incomplete. Only 30% of the uploaded polygons were found to be correct.

MoEFCC says deficiencies lead to mismatch with topographic features. States are furnishing incomplete quantitative and qualitative detail of plantations and there is non-uniformity of data related to diversion and CA on the portal and also Parivesh (online submission of proposals for clearances).

The state CAMPA heads have been asked to review the working of e-Green Watch cell on a weekly basis and also by the executive committee of the state authority of CAMPA in its meetings.

MoEFCC robust scrutiny of polygons before these are uploaded could be done by the GIS cell at the headquarters or by the cells established in each forest working plan division by training field functionaries.

“Henceforth, no APO/diversion proposals, in respect of particular forest division will be approved without ensuring credibility and correctness of information on various plantation undertaken in forest division is uploaded on e-Green Watch portal,” said officials.