

Compensatory Afforestation Fund released to Haryana: RTI reply shows discrepancy in amount received, spent

16 July 2020



Compensatory Afforestation Fund is released to a state against forest land diverted for development activities (non-forest purposes) such as industries, mining and infrastructure, in order to mitigate the impact of deforestation.

WHILE 'COMPENSATORY Afforestation Fund' worth Rs 419.15 crore were released to the Haryana forest and wildlife department in the past decade by the Compensatory Afforestation Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA), the state spent 77 per cent of the funds (Rs 393.12 crore) on plantation activities between January 2009 and December 2019.

The Indian Express received this information in response to an RTI query.

The reply suggests that while 77 per cent of received CAMPA funds were spent on plantation, the remaining 23 per cent was spent on other activities such as purchase of machinery and vehicles (Rs 9.96 crore), soil and moisture conservation works (Rs 25.39 crore), habitat improvement of wildlife wing (Rs 14.85 crore), besides publicity and development wing (Rs 12.01 crore).

Compensatory Afforestation Fund is released to a state against forest land diverted for development activities (non-forest purposes) such as industries, mining and infrastructure, in order to mitigate the impact of deforestation. The compensatory afforestation money is supposed to be collected from the user agency (which wants to divert forest land for non-forest purposes) by the government of the state in which the project is located, and deposited with the central government.

The information procured under the RTI shows a huge difference between the received amount and expenditure every year. In certain years, the expenditure amount is far lesser than the received CAMPA funds, and vice versa in other years.

The information states, "In 2011-12, not a single penny of CAMPA fund was received but expenditure of Rs 17.10 crore was shown. In 2009-10, Rs 19.11 crore CAMPA fund was received and

expenditure in the same year was zero. Similarly, in 2011-12, no CAMPA fund was received but expenditure was of Rs 17.10 crore.”

The RTI application was filed seeking information about the total amount of CAMPA funds received and the expenditure on various activities between January 2009 and December 31, 2019.

The reply states, “Maximum CAMPA fund, Rs 144.20 crore out of Rs 419.15 crore, was released to Haryana in 2018-19. The least was received in 2012-13 when merely Rs 16.45 crore was released by the central government. The maximum CAMPA funds were spent in 2018-19 — Rs 115.25 crore.”

Haryana is divided into north, south, west and central circles in view of forests. The information was supplied by the office of Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forest (APCCF)-cum-CEO (CAMPA), Haryana, Vineet Garg.

Funds carried forward, says PCCF

Principal Chief Conservator of Forest (PCCF), Haryana, Amarinder Kaur, said, “Usually, we cannot spend the funds received from the central government after the end of the financial year, during which the specific funds were received. But we are allowed to carry forward the CAMPA funds as per requirements. That is the reason behind the difference between the received funds and expenditure. We also receive interest over the CAMPA funds deposited in the bank and we are allowed to spend the interest in other activities related to our department. We can spend CAMPA funds for various things apart from the plantation. These include purchase of machinery, fencing, construction of houses etc.”

Haryana diverted most forest land in North India in last 4 yrs

According to the Forest Survey of India’s latest report of 2019, Haryana diverted the most forest land for non-forest activities in the last four years in Northern India. The state diverted 15.29 sq km (1,529 hectares) out of its 1,584 sq km forest area between January 2015 and February 2019. In 2019, Haryana witnessed merely a 1 per cent increase in its total forest area.

Source: <https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/chandigarh/compensatory-afforestation-fund-released-to-haryana-rti-reply-shows-discrepancy-in-amount-received-spent-6507621/>