

Govt launches LiDAR survey reports to augment water in forest areas

25 June 2021



Union Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar Friday released LiDAR-based reports mapping out the water requirement within forest areas in 10 states. These reports will be used to augment groundwater in forest areas so that animals don't venture out in search of water, Javadekar said.

The LiDAR (light detection and ranging) technology was used to create 3-D images of the project areas to recommend soil and water conservation structures. The surveys were carried out at forest areas in Assam, Bihar, Chhatisgarh, Goa, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Nagaland, and Tripura.

Javadekar said that the project, awarded to WAPCOS, a PSU under the Jal Shakti Ministry, is "a first of its kind and a unique experiment using LiDAR technology which will help augment water and fodder in jungles areas thereby reducing human-animal conflict".

"The survey will help us in identifying areas which need groundwater recharge which will in turn help local communities. We have partnered with 26 states to pilot this project," he said.

Four more states will submit their surveys by July 15th, while the rest will submit their reports by September, said Ministry officials.

The soil and water conservation structures will help in catching rainwater and prevent stream runoff, which will help in recharging groundwater, said officials.

The project was awarded to WAPCOS in July 2020 at a cost of over Rs18 crore for implementation in 26 states over 261897 hectares.

WAPCOS with the participation of State Forest Departments identified one major ridge inside a forest block in these states with average area of 10,000 ha selected in each State for preparation of

Detailed Project Reports for planning and identifying locations and structures for construction of appropriate and feasible micro soil and water conservation structures consistent with site specific geography, topography and soil characteristics.

States/UTs identified one major ridge inside a forest block with the criteria that area selected should have average rainfall of the state, and the area requires assisted natural generation which means the density of forests should be less than 0.4 or below, but should have reasonable potential to regenerate with the ANR interventions.

“The sites that have been selected are ones which are slightly degraded, and the states have identified these so that water and fodder augmentation projects, as well as afforestation, can be carried out in the identified site,” said an official adding that the LiDAR technology has been found to have 90 percent accuracy.

“We will provide states with CAMPA funds by which this project can be undertaken and they can enhance water resources within the forests to meet the needs of flora and fauna, as well as fodder augmentation. These projects should be in place by next monsoon, and we should start seeing the results soon,” said Javadekar.

Source: <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/govt-launches-lidar-survey-reports-to-augment-water-in-forest-areas-7376100/>