



Karnataka institute to prepare forest working plans

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Panaji: The state cabinet recently granted approval to the Bengaluru-based Institute of Wood Science and Technology (IWST) to prepare a working plan for North and South Goa forest divisions. The plan will help evaluate the status of forests and biodiversity resources within a forest division, assess the impact of past management practices and help decide about suitable management intervention for future.

Periodical updating and revision of a working plan is essential to keep pace with the trends emerging out of forest-people interface and to address national and international obligations. Therefore, the Union environment ministry has adopted a uniform code — the National Working Plan Code in 2014 for the purpose.

The working plan for South Goa forest division expired in March 2021 and an extension for two years — from 2021-2022 to 2022-2023 — was granted by the Union environment ministry. Further, the working plan of North Goa forest division is valid up to March 2022, following extension. Hence, the revision of working plans of both the divisions is to be taken up immediately, the cabinet note said.

Although the preliminary working plan report (PWPR) of the South Goa division has been approved by the standing consultative committee (SCC), the revision in the plan slowed down due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Another factor that affected the work is that the staff of the working plan division and both the territorial divisions are fully engaged in review of the private forest as per NGT directive and extensive field verification is being undertaken in a time-bound manner.

“In view of intensive involvement of both the territorial divisions and working plan divisions in review of private forests in Goa, it was considered to seek technical assistance for the revision of working plan of South Goa division and North Goa division from reputed external agencies with expertise and technical experience in forest management,” the cabinet note said.

A senior officer said that IWST was requested to send the technical and financial proposals to take up the preparation of the working plans of the forest divisions of Goa.

On August 12, the IWST consented to provide technical assistance and submitted detailed technical and financial proposals as per the National Working Plan Code 2014, for both the territorial divisions with a total financial outlay of Rs 35 lakh.

As per the proposal, the IWST will take up all the field works like survey, field data collection, data analysis, geospatial analysis and mapping and writing a draft working plan.

The institute will also support development of a preliminary working plan report (PWPR) in parallel to the sampling exercise for all the divisions in consultation with the working plan officer and facilitate submission of the PWPR to the regional office, environment ministry, Bengaluru, for approval.

The timeline for the entire work proposed by the agency is 10 months from the stage of inception of the workshop to incorporation of feedback and comments and finalisation of the working plan.

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