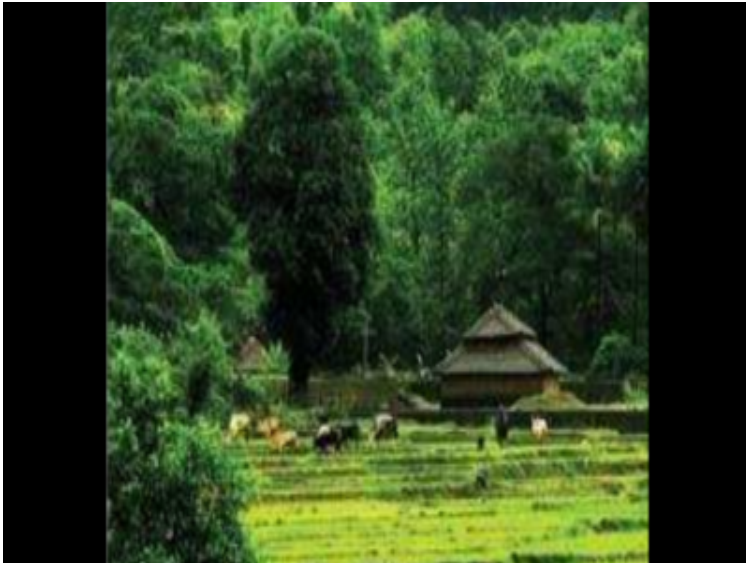


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**THE TIMES OF INDIA**

# Soon, a 5-year compensatory afforestation plan for Goa

TNN | May 12, 2022, 08.08 AM IST



PANAJI: Goa's forest officials will soon have to draw up a five-year plan, detailing utilisation of funds for compensatory afforestation.

At a review held by the executive committee of the national authority for Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA), it was felt that ad-hoc and tentative plans for compensatory afforestation do not bring the desired improvement in quality of forest cover and enhancement of biodiversity.

The five-year plan will help achieve qualitative and quantitative improvement in forest and tree cover, in addition to enhancing biodiversity, as per the new directives.

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The plan is to be drawn for use of funds that are collected from user agencies, which require diversion of forest for different projects. These funds are utilised for investment in compensatory afforestation to make up for the loss in green cover.

“Levy of NPV (on user agencies) aims for compensating loss of ecological services and environmental values from diversion of forests and it should therefore be utilised systematically and judiciously in activities for restoring forest landscapes and to improve quality of forest cover, enhance biodiversity richness, strengthen and optimise hydrological and other ecosystem functions,” the executive committee of the national authority stated.



As per the latest directives, Goa will also have to submit to the national authority internal as well as third party monitoring reports on how CAMPA funds were put to use.

The new orders on compensatory afforestation funds are to be 'scrupulously' followed, the national authority has said.

The national authority has clarified that while planning for use of CAMPA funds, stress should be on afforestation, soil and water conservation measures, and improvement of wildlife habitat 'on priority in areas adjacent to diverted forest lands for

compensating the loss of forest cover and ecological services’.

“State forest department to complete demarcation and digitisation of forest boundaries for protection of forests and plantation activities within six months,” the executive committee of CAMPA has said.

Goa will also have to create a state CAMPA website which should even provide a map of the plantations carried out and photographs of areas before and after the compensatory afforestation was carried out.

Goa has been told that suitable budgetary support should be made to be able to monitor activities carried out under CAMPA. Forest officials have also been told to carry out ground inspection of compensatory afforestation carried out.

“For improvement of wildlife habitat, CAMPA funds should be utilised only for raising of fodder and fruit-bearing trees, soil and moisture conservation, augmentation measures and invasive weed control,” Goa has been told.

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State CAMPA website to have photos of before and after compensatory afforestation, along with maps where compensatory plantations have been carried out.

CAMPA plan stress to be on afforestation, soil and water conservation measures and improvement of wildlife habitat

Areas to be taken up for compensatory afforestation on priority are those adjacent to areas where forest has been diverted for projects

Demarcation and digitization of forest boundaries and compensatory plantation activities to be completed within six months by state