

Minutes of Video Conference held under the Chairmanship of Joint Secretary (NHM) on 15th July, 2010.

A Video Conference was held under the Chairmanship of Shri Sanjeev Chopra, Joint Secretary & Mission Director (NHM) on 15th July, 2010 to review the progress in the States of Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala and Maharashtra. The following officers from Department of Agriculture & Cooperation (DAC) were also present:

1. Shri Shailender Kumar, Director (NHM)
2. Dr. B.S. Negi, Deputy Commissioner(NHM)
3. Sh. D.R.K. Rao, Under Secretary (NHM)
4. Shri S.K. Kaul, Assistant Director (NHM)
5. Shri Rakesh Vardhan, Senior Technical Director (NIC)
6. Shri D.V. Singh, Senior System Analyzer (NIC)
7. Dr. Jose C. Samuel, Chief Consultant (NHM)

The following Officers participated for the States:-

1. Shri S.R. Chaudhary, Director of Agriculture & MD, SHM, Gujarat, Gandhinagar
2. Shri Jayprakash, Ex Director, SHM, Karnataka, Bangalore.
3. Dr. K. Prathapan, Mission Director SHM, Kerala, Thiruvanthapuram
4. Shri A.K Haral, Managing Director, Maharashtra State Horticulture & Medicinal Plants Board, Pune, Maharashtra.

At the outset, JS (NHM) welcomed the participants to the Video Conference. He thereafter, mentioned that for achieving the goals and objective of the National Horticulture Mission (NHM) it was necessary to ensure convergence of other schemes and programmes like MNREGA and RKVY in a effective manner. It was requested to ensure availability of adequate quality planting material of horticultural crops to the farmers and needs to be monitored closely by the State Horticulture Mission (SHM). He requested the Mission Directors to throw light on the action being taken on these issues pertaining to preparation in Kharif and ensuing planting season while giving details about the progress achieved. He also requested the States to highlight the issues which needs the attention of DAC.

Director (NHM) supplemented that SHM need to provide the comments about the MIS Software which was developed by NIC Hyderabad and demonstrated to the SHMs during the review meeting held in February, 2010. The other issues, which needs attention of all the States include posting of physical & financial progress on NHM website by 5th of every month, utilize the existing software for district level monitoring, status of projects approved to be posted on NHM website and submission of new projects for approval of EC/EMC and reconciliation of financial progress reported on NHM website with that of audited accounts and correspondingly physical progress. He also pointed out that the SHMs need to furnish the action taken report on the observation made by the Joint Inspection Team, which visited the States.

Moreover, the Annual Report and Success Stories on implementation of NHM Scheme need to be furnished.

During the discussion held, thereafter, the following points emerged:

Maharashtra

Shri A. K. Haral, MD, SHM mentioned that they have incurred an expenditure of Rs. 470 lakh by the end June, 2010. An amount of Rs. 4500 lakh has been received towards first installment, which they are planning to spend as early as possible. He, further, added that they would need more funds for creation of water resources for which there is a huge demand in the State. On this it was decided that SHM Maharashtra should explore the avenues for tapping MNREGA funds for executing earth work related activities. Moreover, their demand could be considered after reviewing the performance after nine months, viz. by December, 2010. It was informed to the SHM that another Rs. 1148 lakh has been released to Maharashtra on 15.8.2010. Besides, the SHM was requested to take immediate action in the following.

1. Annual Report for 2009-10 need to be submitted by end of August, 2010.
2. Success stories with photograph needs to be submitted in a week's time.
3. Low productivity of horticultural crops, particularly mango and citrus is a matter of concern. This issue needs to be addressed by focusing on productivity improvement programmes rather than area expansion.
4. Progress under setting up of markets in the State is very slow, which needs to be accelerated.
5. There is a wide difference between the audited figures of expenditure till 2009-10 with the figures posted on the web site. This should be reconciled as early as possible. SHM should send a person dealing with account matters.

Shri Haral raised issue regarding delegation of powers to the SLEC for sanctioning project based proposals in view of the revised NHM guidelines. He was informed that DAC is ceased of the matter and a decision will be communicated soon.

Kerala

Dr. K. Prathapan, MD, SHM mentioned that they have received the approval for Annual Action Plan 2010-11 with an outlay of Rs. 83.88 crore. They are in the process of implementing the programmes, and a expenditure of Rs. 1639.15 lakh has been incurred till the end of June, 2010. They have an unspent balance to the tune of about Rs. 4 crore which will be exhausted by July, 2010. He request for early release of funds. He added that some difficulty was experienced in posting the progress on the NHM web site. On this, it was clarified that the format has been revised to facilitate posting of progress in respect of new plantation under both perennial fruits and non perennial fruits out of unspent balance. Since the SHM has posted progress on this under innovative component during 2010-11, this should be corrected. Apart from the above, the following points emerged in respect of Kerala:-

1. SHM will submit a proposal, requesting for released of funds along with a copy of physical and financial progress, in a day or two.

2. SHM will furnish a report indicating the status of the progress under allied infrastructure created at the Centre for Perishable Cargo at CIAL, Kochi.
3. SHM will furnish a report on the funds earmarked for horticulture related activities under MNREGA and RKVY during 2009-10 and 2010-11.
4. Annual Report for 2009-10 will be furnished by the end of August, 2010.
5. Success Stories along with photographs will be furnished by 22.8.2010.
6. The project based proposals received from Kerala are being examined and will be considered by EMC soon.

Gujarat

Shri S. R. Choudhary, Mission Director, SHM Gujarat mentioned that they have received approval for the Annual Action Plan 2010-11 with an outlay of Rs. 74.00 crore. An amount of Rs. 2350.00 lakh has been received towards first installment. He mentioned that project based proposals amounting to about Rs. 25.00 crore have been submitted to the DAC for approval. He added that more funds, will be needed for protected cultivation.

Based on the discussions, the following points emerged:

1. Since the new cold storages are to be set up as per the stipulated standards, which has been circulated by NHB and uploaded on the NHM web site, SHM will have to certify that the cold storages proposed to be established are in accordance with the new standards.
2. The projects should be supplemented with a techno-economic feasibility report.
3. SHM will submit the reconciled report on physical & financial progress for community tanks/ponds as there is mismatch in the physical & financial achievement.
4. The outlay for protected cultivation will be increased to the level of Rs. 1400 lakh (from current 659 lakh) by reducing the target under area expansion. Proposal to this effect will be submitted by SHM for revising the AAP, 2010-11.
5. Convergence with MNREGA will be ensured after finalizing the Schedule of Rate (SOR).
6. Annual Report for 2009-10 will be furnished by 15.8.2010 and the Success Stories, along with photos by 22.7.2010.
7. Comments on the MIS software will be furnished in a week's time.
8. 'In Principle' approval was accorded for establishing a Modern Wholesale Market at Jamnagar during 2007-08. No Action has been taken by the SHM thereafter. SHM will send a formal requesting to drop the project or identify an alternate agency.
9. SHM will upload the status of projects sanctioned so far, on the NHM web site and furnish a copy to DAC by 31st July, 2010.

Karnataka

JS (NHM) enquired about the functioning of the Safal National Exchange (SNE) project at Bangalore. On this Shri Jayaprakash, ED, SHM, Karnataka informed that the project is functioning well with 250-500 tonnes of fruits & vegetables being sold daily through 10 cash & carry outlets in Bangalore. Based on the discussion, the following points emerged:-

1. It was pointed out that the revised AAP 2010-11 was received only on 15.7.2010. The SHM need to expedite the pace of implementation of the NHM Scheme.

2. Since the State is not having any mechanism to ensure the quality of planting material, they should undertake accreditation of nurseries funded through NHM at the earliest.
3. Annual Report for 2009-10 and Success Stories along with photos will be submitted by 31.8.2010.
4. Status of projects approved by DAC so far, will be uploaded on the NHM web site and a copy furnished to DAC by 31.7.2010.
5. Comments of MIS software will be finished in a week's time.
6. SHM will furnish a certificate that the land for setting up of 4 Wholesale Markets approved 'in principle', has been procured.
7. SHM will furnish a note on functioning of SNE, Bangalore.

In his concluding remarks, JS (NHM) reiterated the need for ensuring convergence with NREGA and other Schemes. For this purpose a Consultant could be engaged at the District level in each district under Mission Management, who will facilitate coordination between NHM, MNREGA & RKVY activities through the District Collector.

During the discussion with the Officer of Horticulture Division, JS (NHM) expressed his concern regarding the high level of pesticide residue in fresh fruits and vegetables being sold in the metros. He desired that a strategy need to be developed to promote Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) for fruits and vegetables. It was decided to identify some of the districts/ blocks where large production of fruits and vegetables is taking place so that the farmers of such block / district could be trained in GAP.

The meeting ended with a vote of thanks to the Chair.