

GOVERNMENT OF PUDUCHERRY
DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

Minutes of the 5th Meeting of State Level Steering Committee for Preparation of Union Territory of Puducherry Action Plan on Climate Change held on 19.02.2019 at 03.30 PM in the Chamber of the Chief Secretary for reviewing the progress of the project “Integrated Surface Water Management through Rejuvenation of 25 Tanks and 32 Village Ponds for Climate Change Adaptation in Puducherry”

The 5th meeting of the State Level Steering Committee was chaired by the Chief Secretary to the Government of Puducherry. The list of Officials who attended the meeting is enclosed as Annexure.

Agenda Item No. 1: Review of the progress of the project “Integrated Surface Water Management through Rejuvenation of 25 Tanks and 32 Village Ponds for Climate Change Adaptation in Puducherry”

1. The Director, DST&E informed the Committee that the revised DPR was submitted to MoEF&CC with changes that were within the already sanctioned budget and it was approved by the Ministry. Subsequently PWD and LAD had called for tenders and sanctioned work orders.
2. During the review, the Committee observed that the executing agencies are not adhering to the project timelines and are running beyond schedule which is a matter of concern. Chief Engineer, PWD informed that the works could not be taken up now due to water stagnation. He however assured that all the works will be expedited once the water recedes and completed by June 2019 end.
3. During the review the Committee noted that present desilting is generally quite shallow. In order to have higher water holding capacity and recharge, it is better that ponds are deepened.
4. The Chairman observed that a major part of the cost of works meant for recharge wells. He suggested that it needs to be examined technically whether proposed recharge wells will really be more beneficial option in raising the water table and enhancing the water holding capacity at the pond sites when compared with the option of more deeper desilting. He therefore suggested that instead of using money on recharge wells, the extent of desilting could be increased to go for deeper ponds which will lead to enhanced ground water recharge and water holding capacity.
5. The Committee decided the following:
 - (i) PWD and respective Commune Panchayats under LAD were advised to expedite and complete the implementation of the project by June 2019 as assured and furnish timelines accordingly. The LAD may monitor the works executed by Commune Panchayats closely.

(Action: PWD / LAD / Commune Panchayats)



- (ii) PWD and LAD shall put in place a monitoring mechanism so that the desilting done by the public free of cost to the government does not get mixed with the project work.

(Action: PWD / LAD)

- (iii) Before executing recharge wells, the PWD should investigate technically and quantitatively the issue of the recharge wells for each site and confirm as which option between recharge well and deeper desilting is better and cost effective with regard to the objective of recharging and water holding. Money would rather be better spent in deeper desilting/excavation as compared with recharge wells.

(Action: PWD / LAD)

- (iv) PWD shall carry out the tree plantation work on the bunds to provide stability.

(Action: PWD)

- (v) The Committee noted that L-1 in respect of some tenders is quite low and this may hint about possible compromise on quality and quantity of work by the Contractors. Therefore monitoring mechanism has to be effective, and social audit of the works may be conducted during the course of execution. Also, the estimate be made more realistic. If it is possible, say, to execute the work of quality even with low quoted tender, it implies the rates used for preparing the estimates are out of sync with market and are perhaps inflated. Further, the committee observed that the works should be executed through open, transparent and competitive bidding. As regards the opposition from Tank User Association, it could be a result of their concern for quality or it could also be due to their commercial interest in the matter. The Association cannot expect the department to serve their profit motives by giving them work on nomination basis. However, if their opposition emanates from their concern for quality, it should be addressed by involving them in concurrent social audit during the execution.

Agenda Item No. 2: Release of 2nd Instalment for execution of the NAFCC Project.

1. DST&E informed that out of the total amount of Rs. 3.83 Crores sanctioned in First Instalment Rs. 2.70 Crores has been already utilized and another 50 Lakhs has been transferred to the Commune Panchayats. Only 0.63 Crores is available with DST&E now which will not be sufficient to complete the project within the timeline. The Committee therefore approved the proposal of the DST&E for making a request to NABARD for release of second instalment funds. The Committee made it clear that works should be completed well before monsoon. Accountability gets diluted if the work is delayed into monsoon.

(Action: DST&E)

2. The Committee suggested that NABARD should also make field assessment of the works at their own level.



(Action: NABARD)

Agenda Item No. 3: Community Investment Fund for Tank Users Association for the 25 Tanks in Puducherry under the NAFCC project.

The Team Leader of M/s. DHAN Foundation – Capacity Building partner of the project made a presentation on the various activities proposed by them to revive and strengthen the Tank User Associations (TUA). The contribution of M/s DHAN Foundation as mentioned in their presentation seemed to superficial. The existing allocation of fund should be utilized properly and the Foundation should help the department in getting a clear picture as to how Community and TUAs may be leveraged for better and effective spending. Proposal to create community investment fund needs to be fleshed out first, particularly by demonstrating as to how TUVs will be used for executing the works within norms of financial propriety which mandate tendering. PWD and DST&E may examine the matter in consultation with the stakeholders and bring before the Committee.

(Action:PWD/ DST&E)

The meeting ended with thanks to the Chair.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'm' followed by a horizontal line and a small upward stroke.

ANNEXURE

List of Participants

Members of the Steering Committee

1. The Development Commissioner-cum-Secretary to Government (Education, Agriculture, Animal Husbandry), Puducherry.
2. The Commissioner-cum-Secretary to Government (Forests & Wildlife, Health, Planning & Research), Puducherry.
3. The Commissioner-cum-Secretary to Government (Power), Puducherry.
4. The Secretary to Government (Local Administration), Puducherry.
5. The Secretary to Government (Industries & Commerce, Transport), Puducherry.
6. The Secretary to Government (Public Works, Revenue & Disaster Management), Puducherry.
7. The Secretary to Government (Science, Technology & Environment, Fisheries), Puducherry.
8. The Chief General Manager, NABARD, Chennai represented by, Asst. General Manager, NABARD, Chennai
9. The Director, Department of Science, Technology and Environment, Puducherry

Officials from line Departments and other invitees:

1. The Chief Engineer, Public Works Department, Puducherry.
2. The Superintending Engineer – II, PWD, Puducherry.
3. The Executive Engineer, Irrigation Division, PWD, Puducherry.
4. The Executive Engineer, LAD, Puducherry.
5. The Dy. Director, Agriculture Department, Puducherry.
6. Shri. R. Prakash, Team Leader, DHAN Foundation