

## Karnataka Tree Cover Enhancement Policy 2016

### PREAMBLE

Whereas, in order to optimally benefit from the natural environment, the National Forest Policy 1988 mandates to enhance the forest and tree cover in the country to a third of the geographical area. Recognizing that according to the State of Forest Report 2015 published by the Forest Survey of India, the extent of forest and tree cover in Karnataka is 36,421 km<sup>2</sup> and 5,552 km<sup>2</sup> respectively, which adds to about 21.88% of the geographical area of the state.

Whereas the Government of India in the ministry of Road Transport and highways have promulgated a policy for "Green Highways" in 2015, which provides for growing of trees in the National Highway corridors. And further, the Ministry of Railways also has a program to plant the railway-line corridors and other lands owned by them with trees. National Highway and railway-line corridors pass through the state of Karnataka also and will be planted.

Whereas the Karnataka Preservation of Trees (KPT) Act 1976 had recognized that growing pace of urbanization, industrialization and increasing population resulted in indiscriminate felling of trees, which required to be regulated in order to benefit from the ecological and environmental services trees provide. It accordingly restricts felling of trees without prior permission from Tree Officer and establishes a Tree Authority for preservation and planting of trees.

Noting that under *Aranya Krishi Protsaha Yojane* seedlings are provided to farmers at concessional rate and Rupees 10, 15 and 20 are provided for each surviving seedling at the end of first, second and third year to incentivize growing of trees in the state.

Recognizing that trees not only grant sustainability to agriculture and are particularly useful during drought years, but also help in adaptation to climate change by supporting livelihoods of communities, mitigation of climate change through carbon sequestration, moderate the climatic extremes including warming, and generally enhance the resilience of human and environmental systems.

Accordingly, Karnataka Tree Cover Enhancement (KTCE) Policy intends to promote and incentivize growing of trees in other than notified and deemed forest areas in the lands suitable for planting and owned or under occupancy by government departments, government and non-government institutions, private layouts, individuals including farm lands, or any other suitable lands in the state of Karnataka.

**1. POLICY OBJECTIVES:** The major objectives of the KTCE Policy are following.

- a) To enhance the tree cover and thereby enhance the total forest and tree cover to meet the National Forest Policy target of 33% of the geographical area in the state.

- b) To boost growing of trees by involvement of farmers, individuals, institutions and all other stakeholders, outside notified forest areas, in the lands that can be spared and are suitable for the purpose.
- c) To promote such growing of trees by providing appropriate monetary and other incentives to farmers and individuals.
- d) To motivate non-individual stakeholders, particularly the government departments, to provide for and earmark a part of the project cost towards growing of trees.

## **2. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION:**

**2.1 Areas for growing trees:** Planting is to be carried out in appropriate densities and keeping in mind the main use of an area on road sides, railway lines, canal banks, farm lands, tank foreshore areas, village common lands, urban areas, residential and other layouts, institutional lands, homesteads, private lands, and any other suitable lands available.

**2.2 Raising seedlings:** Seedlings of pre-decided species would be raised in the forest department nurseries at Taluk level as per the survey conducted during the preceding year with the assistance of the local area non-government organizations.

**2.3 Incentivizing growing of trees:** Seedlings would be transported to each Gram Panchayat by the forest department and provided free of cost to farmers for planting in their farm lands and homesteads through Gram Panchayat by involving local area non-government organization. To others, seedlings would be provided free of cost up to 5 seedlings and at a concessional rate beyond it. Suitable monetary incentive will be paid for each surviving seedling to farmers and others. Such monetary incentive irrespective of number of seedlings planted and surviving would make good for the opportunity cost of the land spared for growing of trees and help meet the National Policy forest and tree cover target. Incentivizing would therefore be at two stages; one by providing seedling free of charge or at concessional rate, and two by providing monetary incentive for surviving seedlings.

**2.4 Mechanism for planting:** The Forest Department or the concerned agency themselves or through an agency experienced in afforestation works and having proved reputation can carry out and maintain planting works. In case such work is taken up an agency other than government, a security deposit equal to 10% of the estimated cost of the plantation work will be made to the fund created for this purpose. The security deposit so made would be refunded in proportion to and after the trees planted have successfully established.

**2.5 Funding of growing of trees:** The monies received towards growing of trees from government/other than government agencies would be credited into a special fund to be created for this purpose. Such fund, which may be called as "Tree cover Enhancement Fund", could be a fund like CAMPA fund or PADF under practice in the state. The agencies that do not intend to carry out planting work for lack of expertise or otherwise, would deposit monies towards planting

in the Fund. An appropriate percentage of project costs by the government departments and other agencies would be prescribed for this purpose. In case of private agencies/persons money towards planting would be recovered at the time of sanction of plan of construction. The concerned sanctioning authority will give the mandatory approval after verifying that the money towards growing of trees is remitted by an applicant to the prescribed fund.

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