

Guidelines for implementing NREGA in the additional districts notified under NREGA with effect from April 1, 2008

1. NREGA: Objective

The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) was notified on September, 2005. The Act provides a legal Guarantee of 100 days of wage employment in a financial year to every rural household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work at the minimum wage rate notified for agricultural labour prescribed in the State or else an unemployment allowance. The objective of the Act is to supplement wage employment opportunities in rural areas and in the process also build up durable assets.

2. Coverage: The Government of India has decided to extend NREGA to all rural areas of all the remaining districts of the country. These remaining districts have been notified under NREGA with effect from April 1, 2008. A list of districts notified with effect from April 1, 2008 is annexed.

3. Preparatory Activities: A set of urgent critical tasks need to be taken up so that the new districts in the State may have the advantage of being fully prepared to meet the challenges of NREGA.

4. Transition from SGRY to NREGA:

i) The districts notified should start preparations to transit from SGRY to NREGA. It may be noted that these districts will not be getting any allocation under SGRY from the year 2008-09. All out efforts will be made by the implementing agencies at different levels in the district to ensure that all works undertaken under SGRY are completed by 31st March, 2008. This is absolutely necessary as the SGRY programme shall stand discontinued in the districts on starting of the NREG programme therein and the SGRY will

get merged in NREGS. The entire balance funds of SGRY as on 31st March, 2008 must be transferred immediately to a separate account created for NREGA works at the district level.

ii) The implementation of SGRY must start incorporating the features of NREGA processes to the extent possible, as directed by this Ministry's correspondence No.V-24011/34/2001-SGRY-I, dated 1st August, 2007 on the subject of Amendments of SGRY Guidelines.

5. Awareness generation through Information, Education and Communication (IEC)

Since NREGS is demand- based, awareness generation is critical to its implementation. For awareness generation every State Government will undertake an intensive Information Education Communication (IEC) exercise to publicise the key provisions of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) in local language to the likely beneficiaries in all areas. This IEC exercise will consist of the following activities:

- i) The concerned State Government will draw up **an IEC Plan** for the new districts
- ii) **Communication and publicity material on NREGA processes** must be prepared in simple local language. Existing IEC materials may be used.

iii) Information will be widely disseminated, specially in remote areas, SC/ST hamlets, through multi media forms. These will include the following processes:

iv) An intensive one day orientation of all Sarpanches at the Block level will be held

v) A Gram Sabha will be held in every village to acquaint the local people with the key provisions of the Act. It must be ensured that likely beneficiaries participate in the Gram Sabha

vi) Where ever possible, TV and radio may be used.

vii) Use of print media must include vernacular newspapers. Pamphlets and brochures in simple local language should be printed and distributed in adequate quantities at the village levels.

viii) Information on NREGA processes should be available and publicly displayed in each Gram Panchayat. Other local public offices/ buildings may also be identified for this purpose.

ix) A toll free Help Line should be set up to give information and answer queries on NREGA either at State or district head quarters.

x) Local cultural forms, like puppetry, folk theatre and music may be used at the village level

xi) Door to door survey and household contact campaigns may be undertaken

xii) Information counters may be set up in the local Market days to disseminate information on NREGA through audio-video material

xiii) NGOs may be enlisted to facilitate awareness generation

xv) Important aspects of NREGA that must be emphasized for communication are:

a) NREGA guarantees 100 days of employment to a local rural household if it demands it and is willing to do unskilled manual work

b) A Job Card is necessary for demanding employment under NREGA.

c) To get a Job Card a family must apply for it, in writing or orally to the local Gram Panchayat for registration under NREGS

d) A job card will be issued to a family that applies for registration within 15 days by the Gram Panchayat after verification.

e) To be eligible for a job card, a family must have local residence in the area of the GP.

f) NREGA is not confined to BPL families.

g) Job Cards with photographs are given to a family as a whole

h) Registration, Job Cards and Photographs are free of cost

- i) A job card holding family may demand employment according to its choice for a total number of 100 days.
- j) A written application by a Job Card holding family to the GP or Programme Officer is necessary for demanding employment
- k) Dated receipt of the application for employment must be given by the Gram Panchayat to the applicant.
- l) Unskilled manual Work is provided within 15 days of demand.
- m) All adult members whose names are on the Job Card can apply for employment. The entitlement of 100 days of employment in a financial year is for a household as an aggregate.
- m) Minimum wages for agricultural labour are to be paid according to the prevalent Schedule of rural rates
- n) If employment is not provided within fifteen days of application, unemployment allowance will be paid by the State Government
- o) The **State Government will be responsible for concurrent assessment** of the effectiveness of IEC activities, and removing any deficiencies that come to light.

6. The most important aspect of NREGA is ensuring that there are a sufficient number of works that are available to respond to the demand for employment within 15 days of demand.

i) The instrument for providing employment are works selected from the list of permissible works under Schedule I of the Act. **Permissible works** are as follows:

- Water Conservation
- Drought Proofing (including plantation and afforestation)
- Flood Protection
- Land Development
- Minor Irrigation, horticulture and land development on the land of SC/ST/ -BPL/IAY and Land reform beneficiaries
- Rural connectivity

ii) **60:40 ratio of wages and materials** has to be maintained and this may be maintained at the district level. It must be ensured that only such works are included in the plan that do not involve the use of contractors as contractors are strictly banned under NREGA. At least 50 % of works selected have to be executed by the Gram Panchayats. More than 50% may be taken up by Gram Panchayats. **Priority should be given to works that can be executed by the Gram Panchayat.** Only such works that involve more than one GP may be taken up at the Intermediate Panchayat level.

iii) The **Planning process** has to be initiated. The Act gives primacy to the recommendations of the Gram Sabha with a coordination and approval role to the PRIS. The State Government will ensure that the shelf of projects are formulated by following the process indicated below

- a) Gram Sabhas are convened to discuss and recommend list of permissible works to be taken up within a year. The number of works recommended should be adequate to meet estimated demand for employment for a year and a half
- b) Gram Panchayats consolidate the Gram Sabha recommendations into a village Plan and forward to the Block Programme Officer.
- c) At the Block level, all GP proposals are consolidated and approved by the Intermediate Panchayat. The Village Plan sent by the GP cannot be altered at this level and its priorities, if they are as per the Act must be maintained. Only such proposals that are inter GP may be included in the list of works.
- d) The Block Plan will be forwarded to the District Programme Coordinator
- e) The District Programme Coordinator will consolidate Block Proposals and proposals received from other implementing agencies for inclusion in the shelf of projects to be approved by the District Panchayat

The priorities of the Gram Sabha have to be maintained.

iv) Preparing a shelf of projects

- a) An annual shelf of Projects should be prepared by the Districts. The district administration will ensure that each village has a shelf of projects

adequate to meet the estimated demand for employment for 100 days in a year. NREGA is open to all households in a village. But experience has shown that mainly the poor households come for employment under NREGA. Therefore, the number of works that may be required in a year in a village may be estimated by taking the village average of BPL families and deriving the total person days that will be generated by providing 100 days of employment to all these families. The number of works to be taken up may be planned for twice that number of person days.

Each village must have an approved shelf of projects of at least five works with technical and financial estimates.

b) The plot numbers of the sites where works are to be executed should be mentioned, so that each work has a unique location code.

c) Outcomes expected from should indicate estimated benefits in terms of person days and physical improvement envisaged (land/water conservation etc) and what are the benefits to the community from it.

7.) Identifying key personnel for NREGA

The Act entrusts time bound activities to be discharged at the Gram Panchayat, Block and district levels. This necessitates placement/designation of key personnel for NREGA.

i) **The District Programme Coordinator(DPC)** has to be designated. The DPC may be the Collector, or the CEO or a senior officer of an equivalent level.

ii) **The Programme Officer (P.O.)** is a key functionary in the Scheme and the success of the programme will depend, to a large extent, on efficiency of the Programme Officer. A full time dedicated PO is necessary. The mode of recruitment of a PO may be deputation or contract. If taken on contract, proper advertising of the post and a transparent selection process based on merit must be followed. A PO must be an additional officer dedicated to this programme. Conjoining the PO with an existing post is not permitted. The supportive staff of the PO's office may be taken on deputation or contract. The supportive Staff may comprise an accounts trained person also trained on computers, combining the skills of a Data Entry Operator and an Accountant, and a person with engineering qualifications equivalent rank with an Assistant Engineer.

iii) **A Gram Rozgar Sewak has to be deployed at the GP level** to attend to the large number of tasks that a GP has to handle right from the beginning of notification viz:

a) Registration

b) Verification of registration applications

- c) Issue of Job Cards
- d) Receiving applications for employment
- e) Issue of dated receipts for employment applications
- f) Reporting Demand to the Programme Officer so that work may be allotted to the implementing agency
- g) Informing the applicants to report for work
- h) Ensuring payments are made on time to the workers.
- i) Reporting work progress and all other matters to the Programme Officer on a regular weekly basis.

These tasks cannot be performed unless a full time Gram Rozgar Sewak is put in place as early as possible.

iv) The full cost of the salaries and office operations of the supportive staff for NREGA at the district level, the Programme Officer and the Gram Rozgar Sewak are to be met through Central assistance subject to the permissible limit on administrative expenses

v) **It is suggested that the State Government may initiate the process of identification and deployment of key staff and to start training them so that they are ready for positioning as of April 1, 2008 from which date onward they would be eligible for remuneration under the permissible administrative expenses of NREGA from the date of their joining their positions,**

8) Training

State Government will be responsible for training PRIs, and officials on the provisions of the Act and their roles and responsibilities under the Act.

i) The target groups of training are:

- a) Gram Rozgar Sewak/Panchayat Secretary till a gram rozgar sewak is appointed
- b) Programme Officer/BDO till a Programme Officer is appointed
- c) Engineers at the Block and District
- d) IT Personnel at the Block and District levels
- e) Accounts Personnel at the Block and District levels
- f) PRIs, with GP Sarpanches and ward members to be given priority
- g) Vigilance Monitoring Committee members

ii) The State Government will draw up a training calendar

iii) For training purposes, the State may use existing materials developed by the State and by NIRD. **The training modules must be calibrated in content and process according to the different target groups of training and must be in local language**

iv) The National NREGA Guidelines, in Hindi and in English are on the NREGA web site, *nrega.nic.in* and they should be adapted in simple local language. **National NREGA Guidelines in local language must be available at the district/Block /GP levels**

v) Training should be structured on a cascading model. This will require training of trainers (TOT) at the District/ Block/GP level. State Government

will train a district resource group in each district by drawing upon the existing pool of resource persons . The district resource group will train the Block resource group that in turn will train resource persons at the GP levels

Exposure visits to existing NREGA districts may be considered.

vi) The State will undertake a concurrent assessment of the impact of the training programme to ensure that all key responsible agencies understand the provisions of the Act, their respective roles in it and have the skills to implement it.

9) Printing essential documents

The State Government will ensure the printing of the following vital documents on priority

i) Application forms for registration.

ii) Job Cards : The format of the Job card must capture at least the essential details of information indicated in the National Guidelines. Job Cards must have space for entering vital data that must be regularly entered that includes:

- Unique registration number
- Days of employment demanded
- Days worked
- Wage Amount paid
- Unemployment Allowance paid

Job Card will bear the photograph of all adult members of the household willing to work under NREGA. The Job Card with photograph is free of cost to the beneficiary. Its cost is to be borne on the programme cost.

iii) Form for Application for Employment by a job card holding family

iv) **Form for acknowledgement of application for employment and issue of a Dated Receipt**

v) Muster Rolls with unique number

vi) Registers as per NREGA Guidelines, specially for registration and issue of Job Cards, Demand and provision of employment, Assets register, finance and complaints.

All printed documents under NREGA will have the words National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, on top, followed by the name of the state

10) Establishing the MIS for NREGA

A computerized MIS for NREGA *www.nrega.nic.in* has been developed by the Ministry and is being used by the State Governments in the existing NREGA districts. This must be initialized in the new districts. This means :

i) Making hardware available at Block and District levels

ii) Installing the NREGA software

iii) Deploy technical personnel for operating it

iv) Printing formats prescribed for data collection, so that the manual collection of data at the village level is compatible with the electronic forms.

v) It is suggested that the State may consider outsourcing. The business provider must deploy a core dedicated personnel at the District and Block

levels. This personnel must be trained by NIC. The State may determine a standard format for outsourcing, but it must ensure that the district takes ownership of the MIS tasks and the business provider is accountable to the district. The process for operationalising MIS in the existing districts may be extended to the new ones to ensure uniformity.

vi) A detailed instruction with a format for capturing ICT infrastructure at the Block level has been shared by the Ministry with the State Governments and is available at www.nrega.nic.in. This exercise may also be undertaken for the newly notified districts

11) Monitoring Mechanisms

The State Government will establish a monitoring mechanism to ensure 100% verification of works at the Block level, 10 % at the District and 2% at the State level has to be ensured. For this Monitors for internal and external monitoring must be identified and trained at the State/ District and Block levels. Local vigilance and monitoring committees must be set up and trained

12) Fund Management Systems

i) The Central Share of assistance is as follows:

- a) 100% for unskilled wages
- b) 75% for material cost and wages of semi skilled and skilled workers

ii) The State Government will be responsible for ensuring a proper fund management system in the new districts. This includes:

- a) Dedicated NREGA accounts in a PSU Bank at district/Block/GP levels will be opened with the NREGA fund that will be released separately

b) DPC/PO and GP Secretary will be authorised to operate the account.

c) State share for new districts in the State EGS budget head will be provided

iii) NREGA funds will be given to implementing agencies as per demand and not be allocated on a 50-30-20 pattern to GP-IP-ZP as in SGRY.

13) Reporting Systems

The reporting of the physical and financial performance of the additional NREGA districts will be in the MPRs prescribed in the National NREGA Guidelines.

A Check-List is attached to these Guidelines that indicates critical activities on all basic parameters of NREGS implementation at the initial notification stage

Districts will have to certify and report the action taken by them on this Check List to confirm that they have taken all measures necessary to ensure that the implementation of NREGS in their districts conforms to the statutory processes of the Act.