

TV(1) 22331/14

Directorate of Agriculture
Thiruvananthapuram
28.05.2014

CIRCULAR

Sub:- Annual Plan 2014-15- Scheme on "Establishment of Agro Service Centres under Agro Service Centre and Service Delivery" – Administrative Sanction accorded- Working instruction issued- reg.

Ref:- 1. G.O (Rt) No. 1548/12/AD dt: 30.07.2012, TVM
2. Order No. TP(2) 15014/14 (C) dt: 14.05.2014 of Director of Agriculture

As per the reference cited above, administrative sanction has been accorded for the scheme "Agro Service Centre" for improving the service delivery of Department of Agriculture in 2012-13 and 35 Agro Service Centres were established at block level. As per the reference 2nd cited above, administrative sanction is accorded for "Establishment of 15 nos. of Agro Service Centres and Service Delivery for an amount of Rs.480 lakhs utilising the provisions available under the H/A 4401-00-113-83 plan of current years budget provision.

Lack of skilled and unskilled farm labourers and high wages are the major problems faced by the farmers in taking up of farming. Moreover, non availability of labourers at the peak periods of cultivation is also another issue. This leads to high cost of cultivation and less return from agriculture which tempts farmers to move away from agriculture profession. A solution to this problem is mechanisation and making available required machineries to farmers at reasonable rates along with other services for cultural operations at the right time. 35 Agro Service Centre were established under the Department of Agriculture in 2012-13 with this objective.

Agro Service Centres (ASC) were established at block level to facilitate integration of services like mechanisation, ATMA based extension, credit support, weather advisory services, soil testing support and technology based services. In order to render full fledged service to the farmers at a single point it is necessary that the various requirements of farmers such as agricultural inputs, farm related information like credit etc. are brought under a common service centre. The

Panchayath Raj Institutions are expected to provide additional infrastructure support to Agro Service Centres. These centres act as technology and information disseminating centres with facilitating role in field visit. A mobile farm clinic is also established at block level to provide solution to field problems equipped with audio visual and online support. The farmer service centres proposed at the block level under the co-operative department will be linked with Agro Service Centres for input delivery. The Agro Service Centres should function as one stop shop for all the requirements of farmers .

Activities proposed for implementation through Agro Service Centres

1. Labour support for the farmers through modern equipments and machineries
2. Production and distribution of seeds and planting materials, fertiliser and micronutrients
3. Setting up of Bio-pharmacy for the supply of biocontrol agents, pheromone traps, biofertilizers, organic manures etc.
4. Developing a pest surveillance and crop health management team focusing on plant protection operations
5. Setting up of a repair and service unit for the repair of equipments and machineries and agricultural implements.

All the existing Agro Service Centres should take up distribution of required inputs for farmers. The following activities are proposed in the second stage which are more technical in nature (Including the existing Agro Service Centre also).

1. Lay out of micro irrigation structures like sprinkler and drip irrigation system in farmers field
2. Construction of rain shelters and poly houses for farmers
3. Construction of modern cattle shed, poultry and goat shed, fish ponds with fish rearing advice etc
4. Establishment of soil testing laboratories, managed by the centres
5. Technology mediator and facilitator. The centres are expected to help farmers in purchase of machineries, technology etc. available in other states / district identified through the ATMA exposure visit in consultation with technical officers of the Department of Agriculture and allied sectors.

Even though the activities are listed in two phases depending on the potential the second phase activities could also be taken up along with first phase. Additional activities like supporting services in agriculture could be taken up depending on potential and local requirement. The technology adoption facilitation role should be taken up with the support of technical officers. These centre should function to support extension activities where service supports are required for increasing technology adoption, increasing productivity and income reducing cost etc.

Technical programme – Establishment of Agro Service Centre

New Agro Service Centres will be established at block level in 15 blocks to facilitate integration of services like mechanisation, ATMA based extension, credit support, soil testing support, marketing support etc. The mobile agro clinic established at block level will help to improve the mobility of field staff for better extension activities and to take up activities.

The Agro Service Centre is established to initiate a farm mechanisation project on self supporting basis. The main components suggested in the setting up of Agro Service Centre at block level are as follows

1. Purchase of machineries

The selection of machineries should be done based on the actual demand and requirement of the locality with reference to crops cultivated, labour shortage (eg. Coconut climbers) and funds available. The outlay proposed for the purchase of machinery for Agro Service Centre is Rs. 25 lakhs. Local bodies can contribute as many machinery as they can. Machineries such as power tiller, reaper, thresher, power sprayer, bush cutter, portable pump sets, tractor, coconut climber, copra drier, combined harvester etc. will be made available.

2. Maintenance fund

A maintenance grant of Rs. 3 lakhs is provided in the scheme for the maintenance or running of the service station at crucial points for intervention.

3. Office Infrastructure

An amount of Rs. 2 lakhs is earmarked for operational expenses which could be used for purchasing small transportation vehicles, for hiring skilled labour, appointing staffs for the centres,

meeting the hiring charges etc. An office set up is to be made to keep the machineries and for proper management which can be with block panchayath office or any other place identified suitable by the local bodies. If the Agro Service Centre is taken up by any service cooperative society, they may set up the office with all facilities such as phone, furniture, computer etc. An amount of Rs. 2 lakhs is also provided for the infrastructure facilities mentioned above.

4. Man power

Agro Service Centre should have an office set up with adequate computer literacy to manage the Agro Service Centre. The Secretary and working group members (vary from 10- 15) should be given adequate training. The candidates for training in Agro Service will be selected only from the specified block area by a selection process through newspaper advertisement. Five members will be ITI/ITC holders and 5 VHSE holders and 5 SSLC.

1. ITI/ITC holders – Group for repair and service unit and training core
2. VHSE holders - Group for diagnostic and clinical field core
3. SSLC holders - Group for service delivery core

Office secretary / facilitator:

The office secretary must be selected specially from among the retired Agricultural Officer with high leadership quality capable of assisting the Assistant Director of Agriculture to run the Agro Service Centre in a successful manner. Office secretary will be the chief officer of the Agro Service Centre and shall be paid initially for one year from scheme and thereafter from the business of Agro Service Centre. He will keep records of day to day activities of the Agro Service Centre, accounts, bank operations and assets and prepare operational calendar of Agro Service Centre.

Governing set up and custodianship

(a) Constitution of an Agro Service Centre

Agro Service Centre will be registered in each block under Charitable society's act 1955 with atleast 7 members preferably who got training from any institution regarding the agricultural operations, agricultural machinery, operation / repair and maintenance, plant protection operation, nursery management etc. The registered members will elect president, secretary, treasurer etc. The Agro Service Centre will function as per the directions of the high power committee constituted for the management and supervision of the Agro Service Centre and work group formed under this.

The day to day functioning of the Agro Service Centre will be over seen by a management committee. The management committee comprises

- President & Secretary of the registered society of Agro Service Centre
- President / member, a nominated member of the Service Co-operative Bank linking with Agro Service Centre
- The Assistant Director of Agriculture of the concerned block
- Agricultural Officers of the concerned block

The management committee will be convened in every month and deliberate day to day functioning of the center and make suitable decisions in the day to day business as per decisions taken in high power committee and alos as per guidelines issued by governing body / government.

The service personnels may be organised into groups for the discharge of a particular type of work. The service calender may be prepared in advance and assigned to service groups.

All the service personnels will hold account in the bank. The service charges will be collected and remitted to the bank and service personnels will be given their remuneration on weekly basis. A portion of the service remuneration may be deposited in welfare fund of the member. A matching contribution will be given out of the profit generated by the Agro Service Centre.

An Agricultural Officer preferably a retired person form the Department of Agriculture (facilitator) can be appointed by the Agro Service Center to keep all the assets and record the day to day transactions of the service centre. They shall be paid as decided by the management committee.

Since almost all the components envisaged in the programme is provided by the state government, the custodianship should rest with any of the co-operative bank/agency. A leading Co-operative Society identified by the Co-operative Department in this selected block will be linked for support for farm mechanisation and input delivery. Purchase of machinery will be done by a committee with Block Panchayat President as chairman and Assistant Executive Engineer as convener. Assistant Director of Agriculture will be the member. The machinery will be handed over to the agency on agreement. Inorder to promote private entrepreneurship in Agro Service Centres

persons who have undergone training in Agro clinics and Agro Service centres by NABARD n. also be given preference. In that case an MOU should be signed with the Agriculture Department regarding custodianship and to assure that the machinery should not be under private ownership.

Constitution of high power committee

In order to guide and control the activities of the Agro Service Centre and the working force constituted under this, a high power committee will be constituted as follows

1. President of the concerned block panchayat (chairman)
2. Assistant Director of Agriculture of concerned block (Convener)
3. The block panchayat member of the division in which the Agro Service Centre is located (member)
4. Panchayat president of the concerned block (member)
5. President of Agro Service Centre (Member)
6. Secretary of Agro Service Centre (Member)
7. Agricultural Officers of the krishi bhavans of the blocks (Members)
8. Conveners of padasekhara samithis / crop cluster and other crop samithis (Members)
9. Representatives of the banks of the concerned block (Member)

The high power committee shall meet atleast once in 6 months and deliberate effective functioning of Agro Service Centre. The meeting shall be convened by the Assistant Director of Agriculture chaired by block panchayat president. The service charges for each service and remuneration charges to service persons of Agro Service Centre will be approved by high power committee. Mode of functioning of the unit will be decided in the high power committee adhering to the guidelines issued by Government from time to time.

Guidelines to be followed for the functioning of the centres

1. In all the centres 2 ITI certificate holders & 2 VHSE certificate holders should be ensured in all Agro Service Centres
2. The Management Committee should be met on monthly basis
3. The Agricultural Officer of the Krishibhavan where the centre is located should be the nodal officer for the centre to support the Assistant Director of Agriculture
4. Each Agricultural Officer in the Management Committee under the block should be given a

target for achieving two activities in their Krishibhavan through the Agro Service Centres. In the monthly meetings the target should be fixed and reviewed. This will increase the work of centres as well as help to increase the income of the centre. The activities identified by each Krishibhavan will be reviewed by PD ATMA and PAO on monthly basis.

5. Assistant Director of Agriculture and Agricultural Officers may identify suitable schemes for linking with the activities of the Agro Service Centre.
6. PD ATMA may facilitate the preparation of action plan to be taken up through the Agro Service Centres linking with implementation of ATMA, ATMA Plus, LEADS and other extension programmes. Some of the suggested activities are distribution of MTAs, plant protection activities based on MTAs and requirement activities linked to allied sectors etc.
7. ATMA may organise the required training programme for those working in the Agro Service Centres including technical training. The support of ARS Mannuthy as well as other centres could be used for training. The technical training should be organised depending on the requirement.
8. All the centres should prepare a monthly work plan depending on the potential and possibilities of the block with the support of all Agricultural Officers of the block
9. Additional financial support may be mobilised from the PRI for the infrastructure and other requirements. Effort should be taken to get more ownership from local bodies for different activities
10. All the management issues will be solved at the monthly meeting and the required agreements should be obtained from those engaged in the centres. Wherever vacancies arise necessary action should be taken to fill these vacancies in time. Those who are not reporting for their consecutive works in a month may be required to give an explanation and if it is not satisfactorily substituted may be posted from list with the approval of committee. Action should be taken to change those who are not interested to work or those whose outputs are very poor. A committee may be constituted at block level to assess the performance of the members of the group.
11. The activities of Karshaka Karma Sena established at Panchayath level should be linked with Agro Service Centre for increasing output
12. Assistant Director of Agriculture and Agricultural Officer should support the innovative activities taken up by the Agro Service Centres. All centres to be encouraged to take up innovative activities to augment income, support local services as well as for the long term sustainability of the centre.

13. PD ATMA should review activities of Agro Service Centre on monthly basis.
14. Adequate notices should be kept in all KBs and panchayaths under the block regarding the services provided by ASC.
15. The centres will collect weather data from the near by source for preparing advisory services including crop health management.
16. The functioning of the centres will be ranked in 2014-15 and suitable incentives will be provided for those centres with innovative activities and are outstanding in performance.
17. No financial support / incentive will be provided to centers which are poor in performance.
18. Contact number and services provided by Agro Service Centres should be published in all MTAs and newsletters for increasing awareness about the activities of the centres.
19. Monthly Progress Report about the centers should be collected by the PD ATMA and the consolidated report should be send to DA.
20. CMD will be asked to include the activities of Agro Service Centres also as one of the items of external monitoring as part of monitoring of extension activities. The report will be esend to PD ATMA by CMD.

Selection of blocks for establishing Agro Service Centres (ASCs)

The agency who are willing to provide a front office and machinery yard to holf farm machinery to run the ASC will be given preference for establishing Agro Service Centres. A minimum space of 20 sq. m. is required for the office and 200 sq. m. to hold farm machinery. The facilitator and ASC officials (Secretary / president) can be seated in the office to receive the customers. Computer with internet facility and mobile call center will be set up. PD ATMA will identify minimum four such locations in the district and furnish the list by 20/06/2014.

The component wise financial break up of the programme is detailed in Annexure I.

Monitoring

At the district level, the scheme will be monitored and implemented by PD ATMA in co-ordination with the Assistant Executive Engineer (Agri.) under the overall supervision of PAO.

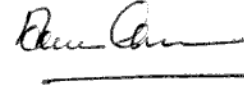
At the state level Additional Director of Agriculture (Extension) will monitor the scheme with the co-ordination of SAE.

The monthly progress report should be submitted by PD ATMA in the name cover of Sri. K.K. Chandran, Additional Director of Agriculture (Extension) before 5th of every month.

The expenditure for the scheme will be met from the budget provision of Rs. 480 lakhs set apart for "Agro Service Centres and Service Delivery" under the H/A 4401-00-113-98 plan.

Sd/-

Director of Agriculture



To

All Principal Agricultural Officers

All PD ATMA

Copy to

Assistant Executive Engineer (Agri.)

CA to DA

CA to Additional DAs

CA to SAE

CA to all JDA's of Head Quarters

CA to SFO

TG section

IT cell - is requested to upload the WI in the website of DA

PIO, FIB

TP Section / TV Section / Stock file / Spare

Joint Director of Agriculture (AR & T)
Director of Agriculture,
Vikas Bhawan, Patna, Bihar

ANNEXURE I

Financial outlay of "Establishment of 15 Agro Service Centres"

H/A 4401-00-113-83 plan

Sl. No.	Item	Per unit (Rs. In lakhs)	Total (Rs. In lakhs)
	Establishment of 15ASC		
a)	Machineries	25	375
b)	Maintenance fund	3	45
c)	Setting up of office	2	30
d)	Operational expenses	2	30
	TOTAL	32	480

Sd/-

Director of Agriculture



Joint Director of Agriculture (AR & T)
Directorate of Agriculture,
Vikas Bhavan, Thiruvananthapuram

Plan of action to establish ASC

Select suitable blocks and panchayat. Inform selected block before 13.06.2014. Block level ADA and Assistant Executive Engineer notify the requirements of working group by giving wide publicity as detailed below

1. Invite applications from VHSE holders
2. Invite Applications from ITC / ITI qualified hands
3. From SSLC dropouts / persons with capacity to read and writ below the age of 50 years and engaged in agricultural activities
4. From retired agricultural officers / teachers for the post of office secretary / facilitators @ 1 per ASC.

The working group will have 15 members. VHSE holders, ITC / ITI holders have to be recruited @ not less than 5 numbers per ASC from each category.

If more number of applications are received than the actual requirement, an eligibility test (half an hour) can be conducted for screening and finalization of selection of numbers under each category. Application should be called for adhering to the block level jurisdiction.

Time Schedule

1. Selection of blocks and finalisation - 13.06.2014
2. Notification for inviting applications - 01.07.2014
3. Last date of submitting application - 31.07.2014

The ASC should be registered as per the bylaw before 31.08.2014. List of services done by the ASC, service charges to be fixed, machineries to be purchased etc. will be finalized by ASC before 30.09.2014.

Sd/-

Director of Agriculture

