

By Email

F. No. FP-8/8/2025-FP [E-261593]
Government of India
Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change
(Forest Policy Division)

Agni Wing, 5th Floor
Indira Paryavaran Bhawan,
Jor Bagh Road, Aliganj,
New Delhi - 110 003
Dated: June, 2025

To,

Chief Secretary of all States and UTs.
All State Governments / Union Territories

Subject: Model Rules for “Felling of Trees in Agricultural Land” – regarding.

Sir/Madam,

The Government of India has been consistently promoting agroforestry as a viable solution to address multiple national priorities, including doubling farmers' income, enhancing tree cover outside forests, mitigating climate change, minimizing import of timber, and ensuring sustainable land use. Agroforestry not only enhances ecosystem services but also plays a critical role in diversifying livelihoods, increasing agricultural resilience, and contributing to India's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement.

2. To unlock the full potential of the agroforestry sector, it is imperative to establish an enabling regulatory framework that provides predictability and ease of doing business for farmers, entrepreneurs and investors. A key barrier identified by stakeholders is the lack of clear, harmonized rules for felling of trees grown on agricultural land, which hampers both cultivation and marketing of agroforestry produce.

3. In light of this, the Ministry convened two rounds of consultations with States on 24th April 2025 and 19th May 2025, where detailed discussions were held to solicit views on proposed reforms, and the need to streamline procedures related to felling of trees under agroforestry. Based on the feedbacks received, model rules for felling of trees in agricultural land have been developed and are being shared with all States and UTs (**copy enclosed**).

4. States/UTs are requested to examine the model rules and consider their adoption and notification for felling of trees in agricultural land. The objective is to enhance the ease of doing business in agroforestry and incentivize farmers to integrate trees into their farming systems without facing undue procedural hurdles.

5. The Ministry will extend necessary technical support to the States/UTs for

adoption, implementation, and capacity building required for integration of agroforestry.

This issues with the approval of competent authority.

Yours sincerely,

Encl: As above

Digitally signed by
Amit Anand
Date: 18-06-2025
19:35:04

(**Amit Anand**)
Deputy Inspector General of Forests
Mob: +91-7870096733
Email: forestpolicy-moefcc@gov.in

Copy to:

1. The Principal Secretary / Secretary (Forest)
All State Governments / Union Territories

2. The PCCFs & HoFF
All State Governments/Union Territories

Copy for information to:

1. PSO to Secretary (EF&CC), MoEF&CC.
2. PSO to DGF&SS, MoEF&CC.
3. PPS to ADGF (WL), MoEF&CC.
4. PPS to IGF (RRP), MoEF&CC.

MODEL RULES FOR FELLING OF TREES IN AGRICULTURAL LANDS

WHEREAS the [Government of [Name of State]/[Name of UT] Administration], recognizes the critical role of agroforestry in promoting sustainable agricultural practices and balancing ecological needs with economic development.

AND WHEREAS agroforestry practices are instrumental in enhancing tree cover, mitigating climate change, improving soil fertility, conserving biodiversity, water conservation and generating livelihood opportunities for rural communities;

AND WHEREAS the promotion of agroforestry aligns with the objectives of the National Agroforestry Policy, 2014, and India's commitments under international frameworks such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change;

AND WHEREAS it is necessary to provide a streamlined regulatory framework for the promotion, maintenance, felling of trees and certification of timber produced from non-forest lands, thereby encouraging landowners, farmers, and stakeholders to adopt agroforestry practices while ensuring sustainable resource management;

AND WHEREAS effective market linkages are essential for creating economic opportunities and fostering sustainable agroforestry practices by connecting plantations with wood-based industries and consumers, thereby ensuring that the efforts of landowners and farmers result in tangible financial benefits;

AND WHEREAS agroforestry systems are identified as critical for addressing India's growing demand for timber, fuelwood, and fodder while reducing reliance on imports and alleviating pressure on natural forests.

AND WHEREAS agroforestry has the ability to enhance farmer incomes, improve soil organic carbon, conserve water resources, and significantly contribute to India's carbon sequestration goals, thereby promoting sustainable agricultural productivity and resilience.

AND WHEREAS the need is felt for the establishment of a streamlined regulatory framework to simplify procedures for tree felling, transit, and certification, thereby incentivizing private participation and creating opportunities for farmers and stakeholders to adopt agroforestry practices.

AND WHEREAS there is a need to promote high-value timber species, enabling India to achieve self-reliance in timber production and emerge as a global leader in sustainable timber markets.

NOW, THEREFORE, the following Rules are notified by the [Government of [Name of State]/[Name of UT] Administration] under section [relevant section] of [Name of State/UT act for regulating tree felling in non-Forest areas] and section [relevant section] of [Name of State/UT act for Forest areas] (in case of felling of trees of species protected under

the said act) to promote, and regulate agroforestry practices, including procedures for the registration of land for agroforestry, felling of trees under agroforestry and certification/transit of timber produced from agroforestry.

1. Short title, extent and commencement

- 1.1. These rules may be called “Rules for felling of trees in agricultural lands in [Name of State/UT], 2025”.
- 1.2. It extends to the whole of the [Name of the State/UT]
- 1.3. The rules shall come into force from the date of notification of these rules.
- 1.4. This rule suppresses all the provisions of extant rules applicable in the [Name of the State/UT] to the extent in conflict with this rule.

2. Definitions

- 2.1. “Agricultural land” means lands used for the purpose of agriculture as categorized by the State Government.
- 2.2. “Applicant” refers to any individual, institution, organisation owning agricultural lands seeking to register under this rule.
- 2.3. “Auditors” refers to individuals engaged by the Verifying Agencies having relevant qualifications and experience in forest management/ agroforestry.
- 2.4. “Authorised Department” refers to department(s) authorised by the State Government to monitor felling of trees and transportation of timber.
- 2.5. “Felling of trees” means cutting, girdling, pollarding, uprooting, application of arboricides, burning or damaging a tree in any manner OR actions defined under section [relevant section] of [Name of State/UT act for regulating tree felling in non-Forest areas]
- 2.6. "Felling Permit" means the authorization issued by the designated authority under the provisions of the [Name of existing tree-related legislation of the State/UT] for the felling of trees on agricultural lands, ensuring compliance with the prescribed conditions or permissions issued under section [relevant section] of [Name of State/UT act for regulating tree felling in non-Forest areas]
- 2.7. “Portal” refers to the National Timber Management System (NTMS).
- 2.8. “State-level Committee” means a committee identified under section 3 of this rule.
- 2.9. “Tree” includes palms, stumps, brush-wood and canes.
- 2.10. “Verification Report” means a report submitted by Verifying Bodies.
- 2.11. “Verifying Agencies” are agencies identified under section 5 of this rule.

3. State Level Committee (SLC)

3.1 The State Level Committee (SLC), constituted under the ‘Wood-Based Industries (Establishment and Regulation) Guidelines, 2016’, shall also act as the State Level Committee for the purposes of these Rules.

3.2 In addition to the existing members of the aforementioned committee, officers from the Revenue Department and the Agriculture Department shall be the additional members of the aforesaid committee.

4. Responsibilities of the State Level Committee

4.1. Notwithstanding any other law currently in force, the State Level Committee shall, in addition to the responsibilities assigned under the Wood-Based Industries (Establishment and Regulation) Guidelines, 2016, also undertake the following functions:

- 4.1.1. Advise on matters related to promotion of agroforestry in the State/UT.
- 4.1.2. Advise the State/ UT governments on enhancing timber production from agricultural lands through simplification of felling and transit regimes of commercially important timber species.
- 4.1.3. Prescribe the process and necessary qualification/experience for empanelment of Verifying agencies.
- 4.1.4. Empanelment of Verifying Agencies for verification of applications for felling and transit of timber from agricultural lands.
- 4.1.5. Promote the production of quality planting material through modern nurseries in the State/UT.
- 4.1.6. Facilitate use of technology for providing traceability of timber and its value-added products produced from agricultural lands.
- 4.1.7. Integrate the felling and transit modalities into the National Timber Management System (NTMS) for ease of doing business.

5. Registration of Plantation Area by the Applicant

5.1. Applicant(s) shall register in the National Timber Management System and submit the details including land ownership details and location of agricultural land.

6. Plantation Information and Record Keeping

- 6.1. The applicant shall provide initial plantation details, including the species-wise number of saplings planted, the month and year of planting, and the average height of the seedlings.
- 6.2. Applicant(s) shall update the details of the plantation periodically, as decided by the SLC.
- 6.3. Girth: The circumference of the tree trunk measured at a standard height (1.37 m above ground level).

- 6.4. Photo: A geotagged, KML file, image of each tree to ensure visual traceability and compliance.
- 6.5. Plantation information shall be monitored by the field functionaries of the Forest Department, Panchayat Raj Department, Agriculture Department.

7. Empanelment of Verifying Agencies

- 7.1. Verifying Agencies shall be empanelled by the SLC, which are agencies having expertise in forest management/ agroforestry operations.
- 7.2. The Verifying Agencies shall engage Auditors with relevant qualification and experience in forest management/agroforestry

8. Issuance of Felling Permit

- 8.1. For agricultural lands with more than 10 trees
 - 8.1.1. The Applicant seeking to fell trees from the registered plantations shall submit an online application in the National Timber Management System.
 - 8.1.2. The Applicant shall provide the details of the trees to be felled as prescribed in the National Timber Management System.
 - 8.1.3. The Verifying Agencies shall undertake field visits for issuance of felling permits.
 - 8.1.4. The Verifying Agencies in their Verification Report [Format attached in Annexure I] shall include details about the land and trees, along with the projection of the quantity of timber that can be harvested.
- 8.2. For agricultural lands with up to 10 trees
 - 8.2.1. The applicant seeking to fell trees from the registered plantations shall upload photos of their trees on the National Timber Management Portal.
 - 8.2.2. The portal shall have the capability to compute the circumference and height of trees, as well as estimate the potential yield and identify the species, to facilitate the data entry process in the application form.
 - 8.2.3. The applicant shall also be required to intimate the date of the felling of the above-mentioned trees.
 - 8.2.4. Post felling of trees the applicant is required to upload photos of the stumps on the National Timber Management Portal.
 - 8.2.5. The authorised department may also send an officer to the plantation site for physical verification.

9. Felling Permit

- 9.1. The Verifying Agency, upon issuance of the Verification Report shall generate a felling permit for agricultural lands with more than 10 trees, in a prescribed format.

- 9.2. A No Objection Certificate (NOC) for felling of trees shall be issued to the applicant automatically through the portal for agricultural lands with less than 10 trees.

10. Monitoring of Verifying Agencies

- 10.1. The Divisional Forest Officers (DFO) will monitor the functioning of the Verifying Bodies by periodic supervision and monitoring.
- 10.2. The DFO shall submit a quarterly report on the functioning of the Verifying Agencies to the SLC.

ANNEXURE I VERIFICATION REPORT FOR FELLING OF TREES IN AGRICULTURAL LANDS

1. Cover Page

- 1.1. Title of the report
- 1.2. Name of the third-party conducting the verification
- 1.3. Name of agency making request for verification along with contact details
- 1.4. Date of submission of verification report

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. Concise summary of the objectives of Verification Report and major findings
- 2.2. Summary of site and plantation along with projections of timber output
- 2.3. Conclusions and key recommendations

3. Table of Contents

- 3.1. A clear listing of the report's sections, including appendices and figures.

4. Introduction

- 4.1. Project Background: Brief description of the plantation and other information such as:
 - 4.1.1. State, District, Block, Village, Nearest Forest Area/Boundary
 - 4.1.2. Geographical features, slope, terrain, hydrological conditions, soil type etc.
 - 4.1.3. Geographical coordinates
 - 4.1.4. Map of the plantation site
- 4.2. Purpose of the verification process, including scope and intended outcomes.
- 4.3. Details of the independent third-party verifier(s) conducting verification

5. Methodology

- 5.1. Actions undertaken during the verification process, field surveys and stakeholder consultations, and desk-based reviews.
- 5.2. Criteria and methods employed for assessing surviving sapling and projecting timber output
- 5.3. Description of primary and secondary data collected, including geospatial data, field measurements, data from the National Timber Management System portal and remote sensing imagery.
- 5.4. Sampling Approach along with justification for the selection of methodology: Explanation of sample size and sampling methods for field surveys.

6. Site Assessment and Outcomes

- 6.1. Overview of the plantation site
- 6.2. Comprehensive assessment of the present state of plantation efforts inferred by field data and observations.
- 6.3. A detailed analysis of historical images available on platforms like google earth since the plantation to verification period.
- 6.4. Comparison of baseline and current status, emphasizing observed progress or identified setbacks.
- 6.5. Tree wise data sheet with assessment of timber expected to be produced against each tree.

7. Constraints and Limitations

- 7.1. Challenges faced during the verification process, such as access limitations and data deficiencies, along with external factors influencing outcomes, including climate variability and socio-economic constraints.

8. Conclusion

- 8.1. Summary of the verification's key findings, including the overall progress achieved and areas requiring additional attention.
- 8.2. Final assessment of the project's success, sustainability, and alignment with intended outcomes

9. Annexures

- 9.1. Supporting documents including:
 - 9.1.1. Geospatial maps and site photographs
 - 9.1.2. Field survey data and additional technical reports.
 - 9.1.3. References and other relevant materials.