



लद्दाख वन विभाग के हितधारकों के साथ वन मृदा स्वास्थ्य कार्ड से संबन्धित “प्री-रिलीज़ परामर्श बैठक” का आयोजन (23 मार्च, 2023)

FOREST SOIL HEALTH CARDS PRE-RELEASE STAKEHOLDER'S CONSULTATION MEET FOR LADAKH UT

Himalayan Forest Research Institute (HFRI), Shimla conducted an on-line Pre- release consultation meet with the stakeholders of Ladakh UT on dated 20-03-2023, in connection with the preparation of FOREST SOIL HEALTH CARDS (FSHC) of Leh and Kargil territorial forest divisions under Ladakh UT. The meeting was chaired by Sh. Jigmet Takpa, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF), Union territory of Ladakh. Besides, Sh. Sajjad Hussain Mufti, Chief Conservator of Forests, Sh.Pankaj Sharma, Wild-life Warden, Sh. Mohd. Ali, Divisional Forest Officer(DFO), Kargil, Sh. Deepak Rawat, Divisional Forest Officer(DFO) Leh, Forest Range officers, and other officials from the department of Forest, Ecology and Environment in LadakhUT, National Project Coordinator(NPC), Dr. Vijender Pal Panwar and Principal Investigators of the AICRP-22 from different institutes of ICFRE also participated in this meeting virtually.

At the outset, Dr. Sandeep Sharma, Director (I/C), HFRI extended a warm welcome to Sh. Jigmet Takpa, PCCF, other distinguished officers and participants of the meeting. After that, he briefly discussed about the All India Coordinated Research Project (AICRP-22) and said that (09) nine institutes of Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE) are participating in this project. He apprised that Dr. R.K. Verma, Scientist-G is heading the project at HFRI and Institute has prepared the FOREST SOIL HEALTH CARDS (FSHC) for LEH and Kargil Forest Divisions after collecting the soil samples from different locations and analysing the (12) twelve comprehensive parameters as per standard methodology. After this, the National Project Coordinator (NPC), Dr.Vijender Panwar, Scientist-F gave a presentation highlighting genesis, methodology and overall importance of this project in national perspective.

Dr. Panwar told that the characteristics of forest soils differ a lot from the agriculture soils. He stressed that forests and soils are interconnected ecosystems and healthy soils play key role in sustainable growth of forests and plantations. He added that research on assessment of forest soils health in our country is available only piecemeal form. The NPC further explained that an All Coordinated Research Project (AICRP-22) on “Preparation of Forest Soils Health Cards under Different Forest Vegetations in All the Forest Divisions of India” has been undertaken by ICFRE. In his presentation, NPC also

shared information that under this project different Forest Divisions of the country has been taken as a sampling unit and countrywide soil sampling points have been generated. He told that different layers i.e. Forest division boundaries, Forest Cover, Forest types, and other related geo-spatial data has been processed in GIS environment to select the sampling locations from different forest types and different classes of forests (VDF, MDF, OF, SF) as per Forest Survey of India (FSI). He emphasised that the project is first of its kind where uniform methodology and standard protocols have been followed for analysis of forest soil samples.

In continuation of this, Dr. R.K.Verma, Project Investigator (PI) from HFRI gave a detailed power point presentation explaining the various samplings locations of Ladakh UT, analytical procedures, etc. He showed the test and standard values of different parameters observed in the soils of Ladakh and also explained about the method adopted for drawing the standard values. While sharing the contents of cards, the PI talked about the organic and inorganic recommendations suggested in the cards for better management practices.

After these presentations, discussions and deliberations were held. Queries and observations were made by the stakeholders. The NPC and PI aptly answered all the queries. Sh. Jigmet Takpa, PCCF, Ladakh UT meticulously brought out the significance of Soil Research in regional, national and global context. He appreciated the efforts of HFRI team for preparation of the Forest Soils Health Cards of Leh and Kargil Forest Divisions. Raising his concern about the deficiency of nutrients in Ladakh soils, the chairman enquired about the standard value based recommendations in context with the unique soil ecosystem of cold-deserts where the even nutrient deficit soils sustain vegetation. The chairman also suggested to work out site- specific recommendations for Ladakh UT. The NPC appreciated the observation of the chairman and told that the reference ranges for various nutrients has been drawn from the soils of VDF and MDF forests and open forest, Scrub Forest (SF), Non- forest areas have been considered under degraded class. He assured the chairman to strengthen the cards as per the observations/suggestions. Continuing the discussion, Sh. Sajjad Hussain Mufi, Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF) doubted if the number of soil sampling carried out in Ladakh is sufficient. Again the NPC told that soil sampling locations in various states/ UT is based on grid approach and the methodology is statistically validated. Sh. Pankaj Sharma, Wild-life Warden Leh asked about the scope of this project in Protected Area Network (PAN) of Ladakh UT. The PI informed that as of now these cards have been prepared for territorial divisions only. Nevertheless, the scope of the work can be extended to protected areas. Sh. Mohd. Ali, Divisional Forest Officer (DFO), Kargil suggested for imparting training to the frontline staff so as to increase the usefulness of these cards in the field. The PI welcomed the suggestion and asserted that there is a provision of trainings and capacity building of

field staff under this project. Moreover, a user friendly web portal will be developed for the easy access of baseline data about the status of nutrients in the forest soils. Dr. Sandeep Sharma, Director (I/C) summed up all the discussions, welcomed the suggestions from the stakeholders and affirmed that HFRI will carry out research activities in close collaboration with Forest Department of Ladakh UT. At the end of the meeting, Dushyant Kumar, Sr. Technical Officer, HFRI proposed the vote of thanks.

