

Department of Agriculture, Cooperation & Farmers Welfare (National Rainfed Area Authority)

As per decision of Cabinet Committee of Economic Affairs, Government of India constituted a National Rainfed Area Authority (NRAA) – an attached office of Department of Agriculture & Cooperation, Ministry of Agriculture on 3rd November, 2006 to address various issues of rainfed areas of the country. This authority is established as an Advisory Body for policy and programme formulation and monitoring of schemes / programmes relating degraded land development for Horticulture and integrated development in rainfed areas. The authority has two tier structures constituting a Governing Body (GB) headed by Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare and Executive Committee (EC) headed by Chief Executive Officer (CEO), NRAA in the rank of Secretary to the Government of India. The major mandate of the NRAA are :-

- a) To evolve common guidelines for all schemes of different Ministries including Externally Aided Projects (EAPs) for development of Rainfed / Dryland Farming System;
- b) To coordinate and bring convergence within and among agricultural and wasteland development programmes being implemented in rainfed areas of the country;
- c) To identify rainfed areas in different States which need priority attention and prepare watershed development in consultation with States, focusing on multidimensional crop, livestock, horticulture, agri-pasture integrated system and programmes for landless farming communities;
- d) To identify gaps in input supply, credit availability, dissemination of appropriate technology and other requirements relevant for development of rainfed areas;
- e) To guide the implementing agencies on priority setting and monitor the specific interventions required;
- f) To develop plans / programmes for capacity building of Centre / State Government functionaries in rainfed areas;

- g) To suggest modalities to strengthen National and State Level Institution concerned with Rainfed/Dryland areas, and establish institution linkage with prioritized watersheds;
- h) To monitor disbursement of rural credit / insurance cover / safety net programme developed for rainfed areas;
- i) To set the research agenda including a critical appraisal of on-going programmes and diffusion of required knowledge for integrated farming in rainfed areas to district and lower level authorities; and
- j) To evaluate on-going programmes.

2. In due course of time NRAA was also assigned the task of preparation of perspective plan and guidelines for various Watershed Development Programme with special focus on rainfed area being addressed by various Central Ministries and accordingly it was attached to Planning Commission in May, 2009. During 2014-15 Planning Commission was renamed as NITI Aayog and while re-structuring the Aayog, Prime Minister Office transferred NRAA from erstwhile Planning Commission (NITI Aayog) to Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers Welfare (DA,C & FW), Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare on 1st April, 2015.

3. NRAA is headed by CEO in the rank of Secretary to the Government of India and supported by 5 Technical Experts in the rank of Joint Secretary and 5 Directors and also by 5 Senior Technical Assistance. At the time of transfer of NRAA to DA,C&FW almost all the posts sanctioned in their authority were vacant. With approval of Hon'ble Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Shri R B Sinha, Joint Secretary (NRM & RFS) has been given additional charge of the post of Chief Executive Officer, NRAA w.e.f. 27th April, 2015 and all technical and administrative matters of NRAA has been entrusted to Shri C. M. Pandey, Additional Commissioner (NRM), Natural Resource Management Division.

4. Cabinet Committee of Economic Affairs in its meeting held on 1st July, 2015, chaired by Hon'ble Prime Minister of India approved the implementation of Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY) for harnessing rain water through 'Jal Sanchay' and 'Jal Sinchan' to ensure 'Per drop-More crop'. The CCA has also approved the involvement of NRAA in providing technical inputs in policy planning, implementation and monitoring of PMKSY especially in the areas of rain water conservation / watershed development and its management including other agricultural and allied sectors. In view of these revised mandates of NRAA, Recruitment Rules (RRs) for the post of CEO and five Technical Experts in the area of Agriculture & Horticulture, Water Management, Watershed Development, Animal Husbandry & Dairy, Forestry have been formulated and approved by Secretary (AC&FW) as well as Hon'ble Union Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare.

5. Besides all five posts of Directors sanctioned for NRAA have been advertised for filling on deputation basis. Present efforts are to complete all pending studies / formulation of technical manual etc. on priority basis, besides NRAA is supporting organisation of training for All India Services (IAS) / Indian Forest Services (IFS) Officers of working in various States across the country for formulation of District Irrigation Plan (DIP) for implementation of PMKSY.

6. The Recruitment Rules for the post of Chief Executive Officer (NRAA), Technical Experts has been approved by DoPT and process of finalisation of RR is under active consideration, whereas Recruitment Rule for Senior Technical Assistance(STA) for various disciplines have been approved by DoPT and UPSC and refer to Ministry of Legal for their vetting.