

PRESS BRIEF

REPORT OF THE COMPTROLLER AND AUDITOR GENERAL OF INDIA ON ECONOMIC SECTOR FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2018 GOVERNMENT OF RAJASTHAN

The Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India for the year ended 31 March 2018 on Economic Sector Departments of the Government of Rajasthan has been placed on the table of *Vidhan Sabha* on 06/03/2020. The Report brings out the issues discussed in two Performance Audits *i.e.* “Contract Management of Road Works in Public Works Department” and “Protection of Forest and Wildlife in Rajasthan” and a theme based compliance audit on Implementation of Rajasthan Farmers Participation in Management of Irrigation Systems Act, 2000. The cases relating to Non-utilization of eco-development surcharges, Non-recovery of cost of forest produce, Non-recovery of cost of compensatory afforestation, Irregular expenditure due to not using steel sourced from primary producers, Lack of proper planning led to incomplete road work and Excess payment due to negligence of the department were also noticed. Some of the important points brought out in the Report are indicated in the succeeding paragraphs.

Public Works Department

Contract Management of Road Works in Public Works Department

There was absence of systematic and comprehensive planning of road construction in the Public Works Department as the proposals of road construction by the State Government were generally sanctioned on the basis of recommendations of representatives of people, local groups of people, etc. Prioritization of roads was not carried out in majority of cases to support project proposals. The department also did not have an updated data base of roads to facilitate systematic and objective planning.

(Paragraph 2.1.7.1)

The existing Public Works Department Manual is not updated and most of its provisions have become redundant, the Department does not have a consolidated document available at present which contains all the government and departmental instructions relating to public works for guidance and uniform application by the responsible authorities.

(Paragraph 2.1.8.3)

Divisions were not maintaining the important records such as Works Abstract, Register of Works and Contractors’ Ledger.

(Paragraph 2.1.9.2)

Enlistment of contractors is governed by Public Works Financial & Accounts Rules (PWF&AR) and Public Works Department Manual. Audit found cases where provisional enlistment period was extended beyond stipulated two-year period; the Department did not institute a system to review the performance of the existing contractors so as to safeguard the interest of the Government through debarment and/or de-registration of the persistent defaulters. Contractor enlistment register was not maintained in prescribed format; confidential register of contractors was not maintained.

(Paragraph 2.1.10.1 to 2.1.10.3)

Instances of irregularities in preparation and sanction of estimates were noticed such as non-preparation of preliminary estimates of roads, non-availability of road history and road register, traffic census not being carried out as per IRC specifications, estimates prepared without assessing California Bearing Ratio (CBR) value of soil and Benkelman Beam Deflection Technique (BBDT). Technical sanctions were accorded for estimates having excess/ deficient/ wrong provisions and in cases where exact percentage of components of price variation were not approved which led to avoidable/ unauthorised/ excess/ short/irregular expenditure.

(Paragraph 2.1.11.1 to 2.1.11.3)

Deficiencies in tendering system such as tenders invited before issue of technical sanction, Notice Inviting Tenders (NITs) issued before administrative sanction, irregularities in issuing corrigendum in NITs and inadequate time for submission of bids were noticed.

(Paragraph 2.1.12.1 to 2.1.12.5)

Cases like award of work without additional performance guarantee for unbalanced bid and agreement not signed/ provided by the contractor were noticed.

(Paragraph 2.1.13.1 to 2.1.13.2)

Execution of contracts suffered from deficiencies such as non-submission of work programme, non-deployment of technical staff by the contractor, bank guarantee not renewed after expiry of validity date, insurance cover not provided by the contractor, Non-registration of labour under Workmen's Compensation Act, non-recovery/levy of compensation and delay in payment of final bill.

(Paragraph 2.1.14.1 to 2.1.14.7)

Cases of irregular sanction of time-extension, sanction of extra/excess item in deviation from Central Road Fund guidelines, irregular award of work as additional/remaining/balance work against the savings in original work and excess payment of price variation were noticed.

(Paragraph 2.1.15.1 to 2.1.15.4)

Quality control testing in the road works was not being carried out properly in many divisions. Payments to the contractors were made without ensuring receipt of quality control test reports.

(Paragraph 2.1.16.2)

Forest Department

Protection of Forest and Wildlife in Rajasthan

The 10-years working plans (WPs) for the forest divisions were approved by Government of India, but the WPs were not being implemented in letter and spirit due to non-provisioning of adequate budget.

(Paragraph 2.2.11.1)

Eco Sensitive Zones (ESZs) could not be notified due to incomplete proposals being sent by the Department; resultantly, the activities in ESZs could not be regulated.

(Paragraph 2.2.11.2)

State Level Inter-Agency Coordination Committee and Wildlife Crime Control Units to combat wildlife crime were not established in the state despite the fact that maximum crimes related to environment in the country were committed in Rajasthan.

(Paragraph 2.2.11.3)

Though State Government issued (November 2011) Gazette Notification under section 35 of Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972, declaring government's intention of establishing the Kumbhalgarh National Park for protection of leopard and other species but the final notification for the said Park was not issued (March 2018).

(Paragraph 2.2.11.4)

Tiger Conservation Plan (TCP) for the Ranthambore Tiger Reserve (RTR) submitted in 2013 was still to be approved by the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) and the corridor between RTR-I and RTR-II was not yet completed. Local Advisory Committee (LAC) was not formed in RTR and Sariska Tiger Reserve (STR). In the absence of LAC, the tourist activities in the parks could not be regulated which caused disturbance to wild animals. Contrary to the directions of NTCA, zone number six to ten of the RTR, core areas of the park were not closed in monsoon season.

(Paragraph 2.2.12 to 2.2.12.6)

The site selected for construction of Abhera Biological Park at Kota was not conducive due to adjoining garbage dumping yard, industrial areas, firing range of Indian Army, existence of unauthorized kachchi basti, etc. in nearby area.

(Paragraph 2.2.14)

The Department received 28.17 sq. km of non-forest land in lieu of forest land diverted for non-forest activity during 2013-18, however notification for the same is still to be completed. Further out of 5974.54 sq. km of forest land pending for mutation as of April 1999, only 1218.71 sq. km (20.40 per cent) forest land was mutated in 19 years. 7145.43 sq. km of mutated land was still pending to be demarcated on revenue maps as of March 2018. 1,72,701 pillars for demarcation of forest land are yet to be erected.

(Paragraph 2.2.15.3 and 2.2.15.4)

As of March 2018, 6,369 cases involving encroachment on 81.91 sq. km of land, 7,879 cases relating to illegal mining and 4,446 cases of illegal grazing were pending for disposal.

(Paragraph 2.2.16.1 to 2.2.16.3)

The Department did not recover Additional Compensatory Afforestation (ACA) amount of ₹ 26.52 crore in lieu of diversion of forest land for non-forest purpose.

(Paragraph 2.2.16.6)

Water Resources Department

Implementation of Rajasthan Farmers Participation in Management of Irrigation Systems Act, 2000

Apex Committee for laying down the policies for implementation of the Rajasthan Farmers Participation in Management of Irrigation Systems Act has not been constituted. In selected 18 divisions, against the target of 867 Water Users Associations (WUAs), only 519 WUAs were formed in 16 divisions while WUAs were not formed in two divisions. There were significant shortfalls in formation of Distributary Committees and Project Committees for various projects.

Out of 16 divisions where WUAs were constituted, WUAs in 11 divisions were not performing its mandated functions. The functioning of WUAs was unsatisfactory in the test-checked four divisions as only 26.26 per cent of total demand of the water charges were collected from farmers during 2015-16 to

2017-18. Financial Management and accounting systems in WUAs were poor as prescribed guidelines were not followed.

Elections were not conducted after the expiry of regular tenure of five years. Monitoring system at the Departmental level was non-existent. The cell to monitor the activities relating to PIM was not constituted and Performance Measurement Criteria were not adopted to evaluate the functioning of the WUAs.

(Paragraph 3.1)

Non-approval of the proposed eco-development project led to non-utilization of the eco-development surcharge amounting to ₹ 16.12 crore recovered from tourists visiting the Keoladeo National Park.

(Paragraph 3.2)

Wrong costing of excavated forest produce (stones) resulted in non-recovery of ₹ 0.83 crore from the user agency.

(Paragraph 3.3)

In violation of the condition stipulated by the Ministry of Environment and Forest (MoEF), Government of India, only 419.70 hectares of revenue land was transferred in favour of Forest Department against 2380 hectares required to be transferred. Further, payment for the compensatory afforestation amounting to ₹ 34.26 crore is still to be received from Urban Improvement Trust, Kota.

(Paragraph 3.4)

In violation of the departmental directions stipulating use of steel sourced from primary producers only, steel was procured from local manufacturers for construction of buildings, which resulted in irregular expenditure of ₹ 1.24 crore. Besides, there was a possibility of lack of quality in the construction works.

(Paragraph 3.5)

Non-adherence to the provisions of Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana and PWF&AR for ensuring availability of land before taking up proposed road works led to non-achievement of objective of providing road connectivity to the end point habitation despite incurring an expenditure of ₹ 2.07 crore on incomplete roads.

(Paragraph 3.6)

Due to negligence of the concerned authorities the appeal against the arbitration award was filed at the wrong legal forum which resulted in delay and the appeal became time-barred and the Department could not contest the matter effectively. The Department prolonged the matter which finally resulted in excess payment of ₹ 15.01 crore to the contractor.

(Paragraph 3.7)