

Operational Guidelines for implementation of Soil Health Card (SHC) and Soil Health Management (SHM) during 2019-20

Various meetings, brainstorming sessions with state representatives and stakeholders were held in DAC&FW on 8th October, 2018 & 14th March, 2019 and the National Conference on Kharif Campaign 2019 on 25-26 April, 2019. Most of the States have opined for soil sample collection from individual farmer holding with farmer's participation along with emphasis on technology dissemination, awareness generation among farmers. This will result in acceptance of SHC by farmers.

2. The financial year 2019-20 is the last year of 14 Finance Commission period and it is not possible to complete a two year cycle in one year. In view of above, it has been decided that in place of 3rd two year cycle, a pilot project 'Development of Model Villages' is to be taken up where soil samples collection will be from individual farmer holding with farmer's participation. This will help in roll out of soil sampling in individual holdings across the country, if proposed, in the next Plan (starting 2020-21).

3. Under the pilot project, one village per block is to be adopted for holding based soil testing, to organize up to a maximum number of 100 demonstrations (1 ha each) for each adopted village, setting up STLs in Non-STLs Districts / Blocks and organization of farmer melas for awareness creation. Involvement of volunteers, agriculture graduates, RAWE students for awareness generation is proposed.

4. The following criteria for selection of villages may be adopted by the states:

- (i) Villages that were found deficient in soil nutrients (in particular micro-nutrients & sulphur) during cycle-I and cycle-II or villages having problematic soils may be selected.
- (ii) The selected villages should be approachable for visit by the farmers of other villages to see and gain knowledge from the demonstrations organized on SHC recommendation.
- (iii) The average yield of major cropping system in village is less than the block / district average yield.
- (iv) Villages in which farmer's have inadequate awareness on significance / utility of soil health card.

5. There will be no change in the existing cost norms, i.e. Rs 300/- per soil sample for soil health component, Rs 2500/- per demonstration of 1 Ha given for the component of assistance for package of nutrient recommendations and Rs 1.00 lakh per farmer

mela. If a farmer is involved in bringing the sample to lab, then the share of Rs 40/- allocated for sample collection needs to be provided to the farmer.

6. It will be mandatory to provide farmer's Aadhar number, Mobile number, Khasra number and farmer field's GPS position for registration of soil sample. The new format of soil health card is to be used by states for providing recommendation to farmers. The new format will be made available by NIC on the National Portal. GPS / co-ordinates of sample site to be mentioned on portal.

7. It is to clarify that the assistance under demonstrations is meant also for fertilizers and organic manures apart from soil ameliorants, bio-fertilizers and micro-nutrients, the assistance should not exceed Rs 2500/- per Ha.

8. The farmer mela / campaign are to be organized at various stages of crop growth to show the demonstrations to the farmers of nearby villages to create awareness of nutrients application as per SHC recommendation.

9. Presently financial assistance under SHM scheme for the component of strengthening Soil Testing Labs (STLs) is Rs 40 lakh per lab. Some of the states propose to strengthen their labs with Inductively Coupled Spectrophotometer (ICP) which cost about Rs 60 lakh. Such proposals may be submitted by the states under RKVY scheme, which will be supported by INM Division while examining at DAC&FW.

10. Initially the state proposals for the four components mentioned in the para 3 above will be considered in DAC&FW. In case assistance is required by states for any other component they may be taken up later on.

11. Monitoring committees will be formed at DAC&FW for making field visits in selected villages and monitoring of pilot project.
