

INDIAN COUNCIL OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH (ICAR)



**MINUTES OF THE REVIEW INTERACTIVE MEET OF AS&FA,
DARE/ICAR WITH THE FINANCE HEADS OF ICAR INSTITUTES OF
WEST ZONE**

**VENUE: NATIONAL BUREAU FOR SOIL SURVEY & LAND USE
PLANNING (NBSS&LUP), NAGPUR.**

DATE: 14TH OCTOBER 2016.

TIME: 1000 HRS

**INDIAN COUNCIL OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH
KRISHI BHAVAN: NEW DELHI**

F. No. 22/26/2012/CDN (A&A)

Dated: 19th October 2016

**MINUTES OF THE 3RD INTERACTIVE MEET OF THE AS&FA, DARE/ICAR WITH
FINANCE OFFICERS OF ICAR INSTITUTES OF WEST ZONE HELD ON 14TH
OCTOBER 2016, 1000 HRS AT NBSS&LUP, NAGPUR.**

The 3rd Interactive meeting of the AS&FA, DARE/ICAR with the Finance Heads of ICAR units of West Zone was held as per schedule at NBSS&LUP, Nagpur, on 14th October 2016 at 10.00 a.m. At the outset Director, NBSS&LUP, Nagpur welcomed the AS&FA, DARE/ICAR and other officers from ICAR Headquarters. He also welcomed the Finance Officers of the participating ICAR institutes of West Zone. A brief presentation on the Bhoomi Geo-portal- a gateway to the soil geospatial database was also made. Thereafter the Agenda items of the Review Meeting were taken up for discussion and this is minuted below:

AGENDA: I: OPENING REMARKS BY THE AS&FA, DARE/ICAR

In his opening remarks the AS&FA, DARE/ICAR outlined the objective of such Interactive Meetings which, he said, is a powerful tool to enforce financial discipline in ICAR institutes located across the nation. The constitution of sovereign nations provides for audit of all expenses met out of state exchequer and in India this is audited by the C&AG. It is indeed an achievement that ICAR being such a big organization does not have any PAC para which is an honour for any Ministry/Department. Even institutions of excellence and eminence such as the ISI have PAC para and having no such PAC para is an acknowledgement of the fact that the financial system of ICAR is based on sound principles of propriety and transparency. He exhorted the participants to maintain this track record in future for which it is very important that the finance officers work with the same sincerity and dedication and continue to advise their Director appropriately on financial issues so as to ensure that decisions are based on rules and there is no room for any discretion. He informed that wherever any shortcoming is observed in any parameters of financial discipline viz unsettled old audit paras or advances or items remaining unidentified in bank reconciliation statement, the Directors of the institutes are promptly called to address such shortcomings on priority.

Emphasizing on the outcome of Interactive Meeting, the AS&FA, DARE/ICAR observed that ICAR institutes located in certain Zones have performed better compared to other Zones, which is reflective of the financial discipline observed in such States where these institutes are located. Further delving on the matter he pointed out that while at macro level the Southern States have performed well on parameters of financial propriety this is reflected at the micro level in ICAR institutes located in South Zone which have performed far better compared to ICAR institutes located in the North and East Zone institutes, where the performance of State at the macro level

is not very satisfying. ICAR institutes located in North and East Zone needs to improve upon their performances- the AS&FA, DARE/ICAR asserted.

With regard to the implementation of the recommendations of 7th Pay Commission in ICAR, the AS&FA, DARE/ICAR informed that the Expenditure Management Commission has worked out the additional financial liability that the Government will have to bear for its implementation in over 650 Central Autonomous Bodies and have therefore stressed upon the need for higher internal revenue resource generation by these Central Autonomous Bodies to partially off-set part of this burden. The AS&FA, DARE/ICAR observed that low internal revenue resource generation by ICAR institutes have been a major impediment in implementation of the recommendations of 7th Pay Commission in ICAR.

The AS&FA, DARE/ICAR further informed the participants that from next financial year onward there would be no distinction of funds as Plan or Non-Plan. Institutes would receive funds under three major heads namely- Grant-in-aid Salary, Grant-in-aid General and Grant-in-aid Capital and it will be the responsibility of the institutes to allot this fund under these heads in such a manner that all committed liabilities such as Pension followed by Salary and other committed liabilities are provisioned for before making provision for secondary and tertiary activities.

The AS&FA, DARE/ICAR also expressed his deep concern at low utilization of funds despite providing the funds as early as in April 2016. Expenditure in West Zone was to the tune of 35.35% only which was quite poor-he observed. The AS&FA, DARE/ICAR thereafter directed the ADG (PIM) to take up Agenda VII related to utilization of Plan funds prior to other items on agenda.

AGENDA: VII: BUDGET, RELEASE OF FUNDS AND UTILIZATION OF FUNDS:

The utilization of funds under Non-Plan during the year 2016-2017 in respect to the participating units was found satisfactory.

The utilization of Plan funds in respect to West Zone institutes barring NIBSM Raipur (10.67%), NBSS&LUP Nagpur (41.75%), CICR Nagpur (61.67%), AICRP on Groundnut, Directorate of Groundnut Research Junagarh (74.16%), CAZRI Jodhpur (57.86%), NIASM Baramati (69.49%) and CRP on FM&PE and CRP (Energy) executed at CIAE Bhopal (65.30% & 60.44% respectively), was found unsatisfactory.

ADG (PIM) sought information for low utilization from the participants of these institutes. After discussion the following action points emerged:

1. F. &A.O., CAZRI Jodhpur informed that the low utilization was due to higher allocation under Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) which the institute was unable to utilize due to the norms of utilization of this earmarked beneficiary scheme. He was advised to inform the SMD which

may take necessary action for re-allocation of funds to some other institute within the SMD which may be in a position to utilize the same.

-Action: Director, CAZRI, Jodhpur/NRM SMD.

2. It was decided that institutes which did not spend 75% of the released Plan funds by September 2016 will have their allocation cut at the R.E. stage in proportion to actual utilization.

-Action: ASG (PIM).

After the discussion on utilization of Plan Funds during 2016-2017 was over, the AS&FA, DARE/ICAR directed Director (Finance) to take up other agenda items.

AGENDA: II: ACTION TAKEN NOTE ON WEST ZONE INTERACTIVE MEETING HELD AT CIFE, MUMBAI ON 6TH MAY 2016.

The Action Taken on the West Zone Interactive Meeting was noted and adopted. Director (Finance) observed that large many of these issues would be discussed during the discussion on related agenda; the same shall also be reviewed in the present meeting.

AGENDAS: III: POSITION OF OUTSTANDING AUDIT PARAS

At the West Zone Interactive Meeting held on 6th May 2016, a total of 105 audit paras were reported pending by the 23 participating units. Out of this 36 were reported settled in the intervening period. Some of the institutes reported settlement of some audit paras, in addition to those already tabulated for the present interactive meeting. Institutes which reported settlement of additional audit paras were CAZRI Jodhpur (9), NRC-SS Ajmer (8), CSWRI Avikanagar (6), CIAH Bikaner (4), NISHAD Bhopal (4), CIRCOT Mumbai (2), DoGR Junagarh (2), CCRI Nagpur (1), and CIAE Bhopal (1). **Thus out of a total of 105 audit paras, 73 were reported settled. The achievement was thus 69.52%.** All these institutes were directed to forward the communication received from the audit office to the Council for updating the status. 47 fresh audit paras have been added to this backlog after conduct of audit for the current year. Thus the total numbers of audit paras as on 30th September 2016 stands at 79.

DMAPR, Anand (100%) and CCARI, Goa (90.91%) made excellent progress in settlement of outstanding audit paras. The position of outstanding audit paras in each of the institutes was discussed in detail and reasons for their non-settlement was examined and the institutes were also advised on the same wherever needed. Director (Finance) informed the participants that if needed, they may seek the advice of Council in drafting appropriate reply for settlement of audit paras. He further insisted upon the need for regular conduct of meeting of Director of the Institute along with the Administrative and Finance Head for regular monitoring of the progress of not only pending audit paras but all other financial issues.

AGENDA: IV: POSITION OF OUTSTANDING ADVANCES AND ISSUES IN THEIR SETTLEMENT

A detailed institute-wise review of the outstanding advances was carried out. Some of the institutes such as CIAH Bikaner (advances of 2010-11 to 2012-13 settled), NRC (Pomegranate) Solapur (advances from 2005-06 to 2011-12 settled), CIRCOT Mumbai (advances from 2006-07 to 2011-12 settled), CAZRI Jodhpur (advances from 2006-07 to 2012-13 barring 4.53 lakhs in 2011-12 settled) reported settlement of long pending advances.

The AS&FA, DARE/ICAR expressed his concern at long pending advances in some of the institutes such as Directorate of Groundnut Research, Junagarh, (items pending since 1995-96), CCRI Nagpur (pending since 2003-04), NRC (Grapes) Pune (pending since 2010-11), NBSS&LUP Nagpur (pending since 2000-2001), IISR Indore (pending since 2004-05), DMAPR Anand (pending since 2007-08) and IISS Bhopal (pending since 2007-08). The participating units were advised to settle departmental advances particularly old advances in time bound manner.

After discussion following action point emerged:

1. Directorate of Groundnut Research, Junagarh was advised to take up the matter with CBI for providing the details of the bills for Rs. 4.94 lakhs related to the procurement of equipment for settlement of advances since the original file was seized by the CBI as reported by the institute.
-Action: Director, DoGR, Junagarh.
2. CCARI, Goa informed about less provision of funds under Non-Plan "Repair & Maintenance" head resulting in non-settlement of advances paid to the CPWD. He was directed to seek additional funds in Non-Plan at the R.E. stage under the appropriate sub-head for releasing the same to CPWD and settling the account.
-Action: Director, CCARI, Goa.
3. NBSS&LUP, Nagpur was advised to pursue the matter with CPWD for settlement of old advances. It was also advised to settle departmental advances lying unadjusted beyond the stipulated time-frame for settlement of such advances, along with penal interest.
-Action: Director, NBSS&LUP, Nagpur.
4. All the units were advised to settle departmental advances such as Contingency/TA/LTC expeditiously and in a time bound manner and within the stipulated time limit prescribed in the Rules failing which the recovery may be made along with penal interest as per rule.
-Action: Director/DDO/F. &A.O. of all units.

AGENDA: V: BANK RECONCILIATION RELATED ISSUES

The position of Bank Reconciliation Statement for the month ending September 2016 was reviewed. Review of the Bank Reconciliation Statement revealed that no amount was pending for over three months in the statement submitted by 9 institutes namely CCRI, Nagpur, NRC-Grapes Pune, CIRCOT Mumbai, Directorate of Aromatic and Medicinal Plants Anand, Directorate of Floriculture Pune, NRC-Camel Bikaner, NIHSAD Bhopal, CSWRI Avikanagar and NRC-SS Ajmer. During the discussion, NBSS&LUP Nagpur, CIAE Bhopal and ATARI Jodhpur reported that items shown in the statement of September 2016 has since then been settled. Thus of the 23 units whose position was reviewed in the present meeting, 12 institutes do not have any amount pending in their Bank Reconciliation Statement for over 3 months. The overall achievement was 52.00%.

AGENDA: VI: ISSUES IN IMPLEMENTATION OF FMS-MIS

No issue related to implementation of FMS-MIS was raised by participants of any of the 23 participating institutes.

AGENDA: VIII: ISSUES RELATED TO PENSION AND RETIREMENT BENEFITS INCLUDING NEW PENSION SCHEME

During the Interactive Meeting, following issues related to pension and other retirement benefits were raised by participants:

1. A.F.&A.O, CIRCOT, Mumbai raised the issue of shifting the pension authorizing unit from CIRCOT to some other institute in Mumbai in absence of regular Finance & Accounts Officer. He was informed that the Pension unit will not be shifted to other unit, rather posting of a regular F. &A.O. was noted.
-Action: Deputy Secretary (Admn.)
2. DoGR, Junagarh informed that pension cases of some of the Technical employees could not be settled since there was a stay order from Court on recovery of excess payment made to these Technical employees on account of Advance increment. He sought to know the authority which can allow provisional pension in such cases beyond 6 months. Deputy Director (Finance-II) informed that in litigation cases such as these, the provisional pension can be paid even beyond the stipulated six months under Rule 69 of the CCS (Pension) Rules, 1972.
-Action: Director, DoGR, Junagarh.
3. A. F. &A.O, CIRCOT, Mumbai informed about the difficulty in identifying direct debits made by bank for payment of pension. He was advised to write to Bank to provide information with a copy to Deputy Director (F-II) in order to take up the matter with Bank if the issue is not resolved.
-Action: A. F. &A.O., CIRCOT, Mumbai.

AGENDA: IX: INTERNAL FINANCE RELATED ISSUES: DIFFERENCE OF OPINION BETWEEN DIRECTOR OF INSTITUTE AND THE FINANCE HEAD

The information on Difference of Opinion for the Half-yearly period ending June 2016 was reviewed. Institutes which did not submit the Half Yearly Statement were directed to submit the same at an earliest.

AGENDA: X: ANY OTHER ISSUE WITH THE PERMISSION OF THE CHAIR

After the discussion on agenda items was over, the AS&FA, DARE/ICAR invited observation from participants on general matters. The following matters were discussed:

1. The issue of timely DPC of officers of Finance cadres at various level viz F. &A.O. /Sr. F. &A.O. was raised by a number of participants. It was observed that promotion in Administration Cadre is not effective from the date of vacancy and hence delay in conduct of DPC robs them of an early career progression. Some of the participants also observed that the DPC should also prepare a panel of officers eligible for promotion so that in case an officer declines promotion the officer next below can be benefitted. It was decided to refer the matter to Council administration to take note of the concern for needful in this regard.
-Action: Deputy Secretary (Admn.)
2. The issue of vacant positions of Finance officers at various levels resulting in acute position in some of the institutes, especially Pension Authorizing Units, was raised by a number of participants. The AS&FA, DARE/ICAR assured that officers will be posted once new recruited officers are posted and DPC are completed. **-Action: Deputy Secretary (Admn.)**
3. The issue of pay parity of JAO&/AF&AO vis-à-vis the Assistant and AAO was raised by the participants. They were assured that matter has already been taken up at the appropriate level.
4. A number of participants raised the issue of poor competition post introduction of e-tendering. A number of participants held this the prime reason for low utilization of Plan funds. The AS&FA, DARE/ICAR observed that e-procurement are mandatory requirement which cannot be done away with. He however directed the institute to sensitize the prospective suppliers prior to e-tendering in order to get better response. If still response is not received the Institute need to check whether the specifications are generic in nature. If despite all effort the competition remains low, the institute may forward such cases where there is a single responsive bid, along with all documents and check-list duly filled, for examination at Council level through the respective SMD.
5. F. &A.O., CCARI, Goa raised the issue of e-marketing and pointed out that in absence of endorsement of the related instructions of MoF, the institutes are unable to go ahead in this

regard. The AS&FA, DARE/ICAR informed that the instructions of the MoF on e-marketing would be endorsed.

-Action: Deputy Director (Finance-I)/CDN (A&A) Section.

CONCLUDING REMARKS OF AS&FA, DARE/ICAR

In his concluding remarks the AS&FA, DARE/ICAR expressed his satisfaction at the progress made by West Zone institutes which, he found, was not bad, compared to North and East Zones. The AS&FA, DARE/ICAR once again reminded the participants of their responsibilities as the Finance Head of ICAR institute and the role they play in ushering in financial discipline in institute. The finance officers are required to follow the rules scrupulously and ensure that cases are disposed off without delay. Pace of expenditure needs to be maintained so that there is no cut at the Revised Estimate stage. In case of any bottlenecks in expediting the expenditure the matter may be brought to the notice of Council through the SMD so that such issues can be addressed effectively. He further observed that despite all effort by the finance officers, institutes where the Director and the Administration has provided the pro-active support to the finance officers, the performance have been better whereas institutes where the finance officers have not received this support, the performance was not satisfactory. This is indicative of the fact that improving the financial discipline in institute is a team work that needs to be addressed by all these three important functionaries of institute on top priority. Since this is an essential pre-requisite for an institutions to acclaim as an institution of excellence and eminence, the issue of financial discipline can be ignored by the Director only at his own peril and at the peril of the institution he heads- the AS&FA, DARE/ICAR concluded.

The meeting ended with a vote of thanks to the Chair.

— R. Sahay
20/10/2016
(R. Sahay)
Sr. F. &A.O.

Distribution:

1. Assistant/Senior/Finance & Accounts Officer of participating Units.
 2. Director, ICAR Institutes of participating ICAR Units.
 3. Deputy Director (Finance) I/II, ICAR Hqrs.
 4. Sr. F. &A.O. I/II/III, ICAR Hqrs.
 5. F&A.O. I/II/III/IV/V/VI, ICAR Hqrs.
 6. HOD/PI-FMS-MIS, IASRI, New Delhi.
 7. PPS to AS&FA, DARE/ICAR.
 8. PA to ADG (PIM)
 9. PA to Director (Finance), ICAR.
 10. PA to DS (Admn.), ICAR.
- ✓ H. Media Unit, Krishi Bhavan, New Delhi.