

No. FFE-A(B)2-7/2023
Government of Himachal Pradesh
Department of Forest (A-Section)

From

The Secretary (Forest) to the
Government of Himachal Pradesh, Shimla-2

To

The Principal Chief Conservator of Forest (HoFF)
Himachal Pradesh Talland, Shimla-1

Dated: Shimla-2, the

18 OCT 2023

Subject:- Regarding engagement of "Van Mitra" in Forest Department of Himachal Pradesh.

Sir,

I am directed to refer to your letter No. Ft. HB (15)62/2023 (E-III) dated 08.09.2023 on the subject cited above and to say that the above proposal alongwith scheme thereof was placed before Hon'ble CMM who have approved the proposal for engagement of 2061 Van Mitra alongwith scheme in Forest Department with the following modification:-

"Approved with modification in eligibility criteria to include residents of neighbouring Gram Panchayat also and evaluation criteria as follows:-

Sr. No.	Purpose for which marks to be awarded	Maximum Marks to be awarded
1.	Percentage of Marks in 10+2 subject to a maximum of 75	75
2.	Additional marks for EWS/BPL family	02
3.	Additional marks for a SC/ST/OBC category	02
4.	Certificate holders in NCC/NSS/Bharat Scout & Guide; Medal winner in National level sports competitions - (subject to Maximum of 5 marks) Bharat Scouts & Guide Certificate - 2 Marks NSS-One Year Certificate / NCC Certificate A- 2 Marks NSS Two Years Certificate/NCC Certificate B- 3 Marks National Level Sports Medal Winner / 5 Marks NCC Certificate-C-	05
5.	Widow/divorced/destitute/single Woman	03
6.	Single daughter/Orphan	03
7.	Personal Interview	10
	Total Marks	100

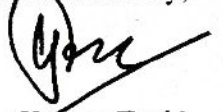
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A copy of the scheme incorporating therein the modification as approved by CMM is enclosed.

In view of above, I am directed to convey the approval of Government for engagement of 2061 "Van Mitra" in the Forest Department strictly in accordance with the scheme attached.

You are, requested to take further necessary action in the matter accordingly under intimation to this Department.

Yours faithfully,



(Parveen Kumar Taak)
Joint Secretary (Forest) to the
Government of Himachal Pradesh
Phone No. 0177-2622686

Scheme for engagement of 'Van Mitra' in Himachal Pradesh Forest Department

A. Background:


Forest, one of our most important natural resources are under immense pressure due to rapidly increasing population, urbanization and industrialization and are being severely affected due to increasing demand for all around development. The massive soil erosion of hilly areas, frequent forest fires, diversion of forest lands for various developmental activities, encroachments, deforestation, continuous un-managed extraction of Non-Timber Forest Products and several other factors related to livelihood of the forest community dependent on forest for timber, fuel, fodder etc. has been continually reducing the forest wealth. The forest cover and tree cover of mountainous regions are required to be protected and slopes are required to be stabilized, surface run-off is required to be reduced, curtailing soil erosion and forestry practices are to be implemented as per approved Working Plans. For this, along with the efforts of Forest Department, local communities are required to be involved for fulfilling the goals of National Forest Policy.

B. Proposal and Justification:

The idea of community-driven Forest Management and Planning, where communities and Government agencies share responsibilities for sustainably managing the natural resources is not new. The role of communities in management of forest resources is important because it is the communities who use these resources. Therefore, a need is felt for creation of a formal institution at the interface of Government and community for more active involvement of local communities in protection and sustainable management of forest resources and forest ecosystem functions.

The engagement of 'Van Mitra' a person from amongst the local community, would address this need and ensure better participation of communities in management of the Forest Resources, while at the same time provide local livelihood opportunities and open avenues for future employment. This will also ensure better appreciation of challenges being faced in the management of natural resources at local level and fulfilling the aspirations of the communities. The 'Van Mitra' would be associated with all forestry operations of the Forest Department throughout the year including protection and developmental activities like Fire Protection, Plantation works, Resin Tapping and Salvage operations etc. as and when required.

The proposal is to engage, in a phased manner, 1 (one) 'Van Mitra' per Forest Beat as per the details at Annexure-I to strengthen the participation of local communities in protection, conservation, and development of forest areas by involving grass root level institutions. The 'Van Mitra' will create awareness for forests and environment conservation and sensitize the local communities towards sustainable Forest Management.



C. Eligibility criteria:

Following shall be the eligibility criteria for engagement of 'Van Mitra':

C.1. General:

1. Normal/ neighbouring residents of the Gram Panchayat (GP)/Urban Local Body (ULB)/ falling in the jurisdiction of the Forest Beat concerned. In case only a part of the GP/ULB falls in the jurisdiction of Forest Beat, such candidate will also be considered eligible to apply for engagement as 'Van Mitra' for that Forest Beat.
2. Able bodied, physically fit and having a sound mind.
3. Has never been involved in any act of criminal nature.
4. Knowledge of customs, manners and dialects of Himachal Pradesh is desirable.
5. Preference will be given to candidates belonging to IRDP/BPL/ EWS families.

C.2. Educational Qualifications:

The candidate should possess a minimum educational qualification of Matriculation and 10+2 pass from any School/Institution situated within Himachal Pradesh. Provided this condition of School/Institution being situated within Himachal Pradesh shall not apply to bonafide Himachalis.

C.3. Age Criteria:

The candidate should be not less than 18 years & not more than 25 years of age as on the last date of receipt of applications.

C.4. Physical Standard:

MEN:

- (i) Height : 165 cm (minimum).
- (ii) Chest :Minimum 79 cm. without expansion & 84 cm. after expansion


WOMEN:

- (i) Height : 150 cm (minimum).
- (ii) Chest :Minimum 74 cm without expansion & 79 after expansion.
(Physical standard in respect of Schedule Tribes candidates will be relaxed up to 5 cm. in height and 4 cm. each in respect of chest without and with expansion).

C.5. Physical Efficiency Test:

MEN: Qualifying 5000 meters Race in 30 minutes.

WOMEN: Qualifying 1500 meters Race in 10 minutes.



The concerned circle Chief Conservator of Forest /Conservator of Forests, will be responsible for carrying out the process of assessing the physical standards and conducting the Physical Efficiency Test of the applicants.

Physical Efficiency Test will be followed by check for Physical Standards.

D. Notification for inviting applications from desirous candidates:

Notification for inviting applications from the desirous candidates will be issued by the Member Secretary of the Van Mitra Engagement Committee i.e., Range Forest Officer concerned, based on the approval of the Government of Himachal Pradesh through HP Forest Department. Wide publicity for the process of inviting applications shall be ensured by placing the notification on the website of HP Forest Department/local radio/ social media channel and publication in the local daily newspaper etc. A copy of the notification will be sent to the office of concerned Deputy Commissioner/SDM/CF/CCF/DFO/ Zila Parishad/ Panchayat Samiti/ Gram Panchayat for display on their notice board. The Employment Exchange need not be notified for the purpose.

E. Applications:

The candidate will apply for engagement as 'Van Mitra' on the application form as per **Annexure-II**, along with self-attested photocopies of:

- I. Proof of Age
- II. Proof of Educational qualification(s)
- III. Proof Residence status of local /neighbouring Gram Panchyat/ village/GP/ULB.

These documents along with other Certificates as claimed shall be verified with the original at the time of Personal interview prior to engagement. The candidate will have to paste a passport size photograph on the Application Form.

F. Selection & Engagement:

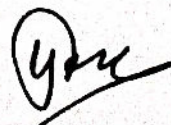
F.1. Composition of Van Mitra Engagement Committee:

The 'Van Mitra' shall be engaged by a Van Mitra Engagement Committee as under:

SDO (C) concerned : Chairperson
DFO/ACF concerned: Member
RO concerned : Member Secretary

F.2. Procedure to be followed by the Van Mitra Engagement Committee:

- I. The Van Mitra Engagement Committee shall judge the suitability of the candidates purely on merit basis.



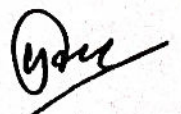
II. **Evaluation criteria:** Evaluation shall be based purely on merit out of the total marks of 100. Marks will be awarded as follows:

Sr. No.	Purpose for which marks to be awarded	Maximum Marks to be awarded
1.	Percentage of Marks in 10+2 subject to a maximum of 75 {For this purpose, percentage of marks in 10+2 shall be multiplied by 0.75. For example, a candidate scoring 50% marks in 10+2 will be awarded $50 * 0.75 = 37.5$ marks.}	75
2.	Additional marks for a candidate belonging to EWS/BPL family having family income as prescribed from time to time	2
3.	Additional marks for a candidate belonging to SC/ST/OBC category	2
4.	Certificate holders in NCC/NSS/Bharat Scout & Guide; Medal winner in National level sports competitions (subject to Maximum of 5 marks) Bharat Scouts & Guide Certificate – 2 Marks NSS - One Year Certificate (120 hrs. Social Service)/ NCC Certificate A – 2 Marks NSS Two Years Certificate (240 hrs. Social Service)/ NCC Certificate B - 3 Marks National Level Sports Medal Winner /NCC Certificate-C 5 Marks	5
5.	Widow/divorced/destitute/single Woman	3
6.	Single daughter/Orphan	3
7.	Personal Interview	10
	Total Marks	100

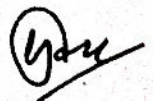
- III. Chairperson of Van Mitra Engagement Committee shall convey the complete list of eligible candidates for conducting the Physical Efficiency Test and Physical Standards to the concerned circle Chief Conservator of Forests/ Conservator of Forests who after carrying out the process will convey the result back to the Chairperson of Van Mitra Engagement Committee.
- IV. The evaluation of candidates as per Evaluation criteria will be done only for candidates who qualify the Physical Efficiency Test and meet the Physical Standards.
- V. Based on the procedure prescribed above, the Van Mitra Engagement Committee will prepare a panel of three candidates for engagement of 'Van Mitra', including 2 (two) waitlisted candidates *in order of merit*, who will be called for verification of original documents at the time of **Personal Interview**.
- VI. In the event of a tie in marks scored, the candidate who is older in age will be placed above the candidate younger in age.
- VII. At the date and time appointed for **Personal Interview** by the Van Mitra Engagement Committee, the three candidates shortlisted in the panel, will have to submit their original documents for verification by the Van Mitra Engagement Committee. Based on the verification of the original documents the Van Mitra Engagement Committee may recommend engagement of candidate highest in merit. In case candidate highest in merit fails to furnish the original documents to the satisfaction of Van Mitra Engagement Committee, the Van Mitra Engagement Committee may recommend a candidate from the waitlist strictly in order of merit, for being engaged as 'Van Mitra'.
- VIII. The panel of shortlisted candidates will remain valid for a period of 1 year from the date of declaration of result. In case a selected candidate fails to join the assignment within a period of 15 days, or is found medically unfit, or dis-engages himself within one year, or his engagement is nullified during this period, the Van Mitra Engagement Committee may recommend the candidate next in order of merit for the assignment. No extension in time shall be granted for joining as Van Mitra.
- IX. The complete record of the entire process shall be preserved by the Van Mitra Engagement Committee and record of deliberations of the Committee shall be duly signed by all the members of the Committee. Member Secretary of the Committee will keep safe custody of the record.

G. Terms & Conditions of Engagement and Roles/Responsibilities of Van Mitras:

- I. **Engaging Authority:** Based on the recommendations of the Van Mitra Engagement Committee, the Van Mitra will be engaged by the Member Secretary of the Van Mitra Engagement Committee i.e the concerned RO.
- II. The recommended 'Van Mitra' will be required to furnish a Medical Certificate signed by concerned Civil Surgeon/Block Medical Officer/ Government Medical Officer as per the prescribed form at **Annexure III** prior to joining the assignment. The joining report will not be accepted in the event of failure to submit the requisite Medical certificate. In case, the selected 'Van Mitra' is found medically unfit, his/her engagement is liable to be nullified.



- III. The 'Van Mitra' would be engaged in their respective Home /neighbouring Forest Beat and would remain only in their place of engagement and their engagement will be non-transferable.
- IV. The 'Van Mitra' will be required to work for 6 Hours per day.
- V. **Emoluments:** The engaged 'Van Mitra' will be paid a fixed emolument of Rs. 10000/- per month.
- VI. **Admissibility of Leave:** The 'Van Mitra' will be entitled to one day leave after putting in one month service with a total leave admissibility of maximum 12 days in a year. Apart from this, 'Van Mitra' will be entitled to Gazetted Holidays including holiday on Sunday. Un-availed leave will not be carried forward for the next Calendar year. Female 'Van Mitra' with less than two surviving children will also be entitled to 180 days maternity leave & 45 days maternity leave in case of miscarriage including abortion (irrespective of number of number of surviving children). No other kind of Leave will be admissible. No amount will be paid against absentee period. Continuous unauthorized absence beyond a week shall lead to nullification of engagement without any payment. The leave sanctioning authority will be the concerned ACF/RO.
- VII. **Monitoring:** A quarterly self-reporting format (to be devised by the Forest Department) would be filled by the 'Van Mitra' and submitted to the Range Forest Officer (RFO) through Block Officer and Forest Guard concerned, who will further submit the report to Divisional Forest Officer concerned along with his/her recommendations. Based on this, at the end of every financial year, a consolidated report would be placed for certification of satisfactory work and conduct of 'Van Mitra'. At the beginning of each financial year, a consolidated report for each Circle shall be prepared by the respective Chief Conservator of Forests/ Conservator of Forests analyzing in detail the performance Van Mitras and the Van Mitra Scheme in general in application to their Circles along with suggestions for improvement if any. A consolidated report based on the feedback received from the Circles would be prepared by HP Forest Department and shared with the Government of HP.
- VIII. **Notice for Disengagement:** A 'Van Mitra' may, at any time and for any reason, submit a notice for dis-engagement in writing to the Engaging Authority i.e. concerned RO by giving a notice of 1 (one) month. The same will be accepted with the prior approval of the concerned DFO.
- IX. **Dis-continuance of Engagement:** The engagement of a 'Van Mitra' may be discontinued at any time by the concerned ACF/RO on grounds of Misconduct/Misbehavior/Unsatisfactory performance. The concerned Range Forest Officer (RFO) would have to put down in writing the reasons for such discontinuance and this would be countersigned by the concerned Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) based on record. An opportunity of hearing shall be afforded to the concerned 'Van Mitra' prior to the discontinuance of engagement.
- X. **Record to be maintained by "Van Mitra":** The 'Van Mitra' shall maintain a daily diary and record all the activities performed by him during the day in it and the same would be certified on a monthly basis by concerned Block Forest Officer and a copy would be submitted to Range Forest Office for record.



XI. Rights to claim Regular appointment: Any candidate engaged as 'Van Mitra' shall have no right to claim regularization/ absorption/appointment as regular Government employee of the State Government.

XII. Roles and Responsibilities of 'Van Mitra':

The concerned Block Officer shall be the supervisory officer of "Van Mitra", while the concerned Forest Guard will be his immediate controlling officer. His/her responsibilities would include:

- a) To associate with various forest protection and development works including fire protection, plantation works (including MGNREGA), resin extraction, salvage operations etc. assigned to him/her from time to time.
- b) To aid in involvement of grass root level institutions such as Gram Panchayats, Mahila-Mandals, Yuvak-Mandals, Ex-Servicemen's bodies, Village Forest Development Societies (VFDSs), other Community Based Organizations (CBOs), educational institutions and NGOs for sustainable management of forest resources.
- c) To take steps to create awareness, provide information to the community and seek their inputs on various forestry practices such as afforestation programs, nursery development, forest protection etc.
- d) To sensitize and motivate the local community towards Forest Protection, Afforestation /Enrichment drives, combating Forest Fires, creating awareness for resolving Man-Animal Conflict and guiding Self Help Groups in enhancement of social, physical and financial capital of the participating communities for poverty reduction.
- e) To escort/accompany forest officers during tours and perform other works as and when assigned to him for forestry intervention and forest resource development.
- f) Such other work as the Forest Department may assign from time to time.

H. Right of Amendments/Power to relax/Removal of any difficulties:

The Government of Himachal Pradesh shall have the right to amend any of the provisions of the scheme in public interest. Any of the terms and conditions/provisions mentioned above may be relaxed by the Government of Himachal Pradesh in public interest. The Government of Himachal Pradesh also reserves the right to issue instructions/clarifications etc. for the purpose of removing any difficulties in the implementation/ operation of this scheme.



• Annexure-I

Sr. No.	Name of Circle	No. of Beats
1.	Bilaspur	124
2.	Chamba	198
3.	Dharamshala	209
4.	Hamirpur	194
5.	Kullu	140
6.	Mandi	309
7.	Nahan	216
8.	Rampur	164
9.	Shimla	240
10.	Solan	108
10.	WL (North) Dharamshala	30
11.	WL (South) Shimla	77
12.	GHNP. Shamshi	52
	Total	2061



Application Form for engagement as 'Van Mitra'

1. Name:	----- -----	Paste a passport size photograph
2. Father's name:	----- -----	
3. Permanent Address: (Attach a self-attested photocopy of certificate issued by competent authority)	----- ----- ----- -----	
4. Date of Birth: (Attach a self-attested photocopy of certificate issued by competent authority)	_____ _____	
5. Percentage of marks obtained in Class 12 th (10+2): (Attach an attested photocopy of detailed marksheet issued by the competent authority)	_____	
6. Category: SC/ST/OBC/General (Attach a self-attested photocopy of certificate issued by competent authority)	_____ _____	
7. Whether belong to EWS, BPL family: (Attach a self-attested photocopy of certificate issued by competent authority)	Yes/No	
8. Whether holder of Certificate in NCC/NSS (at least 1 year)/ Bharat Scout and Guide; Medal winner in National level sports competitions: (Attach a self-attested photocopy of certificate(s) issued by competent authority)	Yes/No	
9. Whether the candidate is a Widow/divorced/destitute/single Woman: (Attach a self-attested photocopy of certificate issued by concerned Gram Panchayat)	Yes/No	



10. Whether the candidate is a Single daughter/Orphan: (Attach a self-attested photocopy of certificate issued by concerned Gram Panchayat)	Yes/No	
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Place:

Date:

Signature of candidate

Name of candidate

Declaration: I hereby declare that the contents of the application form above have been filled by me and are true to the best of knowledge and belief and is based on official record. If at any stage, any information/ statement is found to be false or any document tampered with or forged, I am liable to be proceeded against in a court of law beside my engagement as 'Van Mitra' being nullified/ discontinued without any further notice.

Signature of the Candidate

Name of the Candidate

Place:

Date:



Form of the Medical Certificate

I/We do hereby certify that I/we have examined a candidate for engagement as Van Mitra in the Forest Department and cannot discover that he/she has any disease (communicable or otherwise) constitutional weakness or bodily infirmity except

I/We do not consider this a disqualification for engagement as Van Mitra in the Forest Department

Condition of:

1. Circulatory System:

Blood Pressure:

Systolic:

.....mmHg

Diastolic:

.....mm Hg.

2. Respiratory System:

.....

3. Digestive System:

.....

4. Genito Urinary System:

Urine Examination:

Reaction:

.....

Specific gravity:

.....

Albumen:

.....

Sugar:

.....

5. Nervous System:

.....

6. Special Senses including remarks on correction of visual defects, if any:

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.....

His/Her age is, according to his/her own statement..... years and by appearance about years.

He/She has been successfully vaccinated.

(Signature of the candidate)

Station.....

Date.....

(Signature and Designation of
(examining Medical Authority)

