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Government of India  
Ministry of Rural Development  
Department of Rural Development  
Rural Housing

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Krishi Bhawan, New Delhi  
Dated 14<sup>th</sup> December, 2017

**Subject: Minutes of the meeting of Empowered Committee held on 27.11.2017 - reg.**

The meeting of Empowered Committee under the Chairmanship of **Secretary (RD), Ministry of Rural Development** was held on 27.11.2017 at Krishi Bhawan, New Delhi to consider the proposals received from Governments of Maharashtra, Gujarat and West Bengal for declaration of the difficult areas under PMAY-G.

2. A copy of the minutes of the above meeting is enclosed for information & necessary action.

  
(Gaya Prasad)  
Director (RH)

Tel: 011-23384399

1. Principal Secretaries/Secretaries (RD), Govt. of Maharashtra, Gujarat, West Bengal.
2. Financial Adviser, MoRD
3. Adviser, RD, NITI Aayog, New Delhi
4. The Managing Director, HUDCO, HUDCO Bhawan, Core 7A, IHC, Lodhi Road, New Delhi.
5. Ms. Zeenat Niazi, Development Alternatives, B-32, Tara Crescent, Qutub Institutional Area, New Delhi
6. Sh. Manu Gupta, Executive Director, SEEDS, 15/A, Institutional Area, Sector-4, R.K. Puram, New Delhi.

Copy to:-

1. PPS to Secretary, RD
2. PPS to JS(RH)

**Minutes of the Meeting of Empowered Committee (EC) under Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana- Gramin (PMAY-G) held on 27th November, 2017**

The Empowered Committee (EC) under PMAY-G was convened on 27<sup>th</sup> November, 2017 under the Chairmanship of Shri Amarjeet Sinha, Secretary (RD) to consider the proposal for declaring Blocks/GPs identified by the State Governments of West Bengal, Gujarat and Maharashtra as 'difficult areas' for the purpose of releasing enhanced assistance under PMAY-G. The list of participants is annexed (Annex-I).

2. At the outset, Chairman welcomed members of the EC and requested JS(RH) to brief the salient features of the proposal of the States. JS (RH) explained the 'difficult areas' under PMAY-G and as per the Framework for Implementation (FFI) of PMAY-G, higher unit assistance of Rs. 1.30 lakh (instead of Rs. 1.20 lakh in plain areas) and 95 person days of unskilled labor wage under MGNREGA (instead of 90 person days) was provisioned for beneficiaries belonging to 'difficult areas'. FFI further provides that only those areas could be designated as 'difficult areas' where cost of construction was significantly higher due to reasons such as poor availability of materials, poor connectivity, adverse geomorphological and climatic conditions. Therefore, the proposals of the States could be viewed from this perspective.

3 (a). The State of West Bengal presented their proposal to declare 27 Blocks as 'difficult areas' as the cost of construction in these 27 Blocks falling under three regions viz. Darjeeling Hills, North and South 24 Parganas was substantially higher due to difficult terrain, inaccessibility and poor connectivity. They elaborated that 8 of the proposed blocks falling under Darjeeling hills, governed by the Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA), had similar terrain and socio economic characteristics as the hilly state of Sikkim. They further submitted that the remaining 19 blocks; 6 belonging to North 24 Parganas and 13 to South 24 Parganas fell under extended areas of Sunderbans, which were independently identified by the Sunderban Development Board.

3 (b). AS&FA wanted to know whether the State had recognized the need for higher rates in the identified Blocks by incorporating the same into the Schedule of Rates (SoR)? The State confirmed that higher cost of inputs had been recognized and accordingly incorporated into the Schedule of Rates (SOR) and the State provided a copy of the supporting documents to the Committee. The State also

added that the financial implication of providing enhanced assistance in these 27 Blocks would be in the range of Rs 21-25 crores for the Centre. The EC agreed to the contention of the State Government and recommended the proposal of West Bengal Government for sending it to the Department of Expenditure along with supporting documents for their endorsement for extending benefit of 'difficult areas' in the proposed 27 blocks of West Bengal.

4(a). State of Gujarat in their presentation gave three reasons for declaration of certain regions as difficult areas, viz., poor connectivity, susceptibility to cyclones and earthquakes. The State has identified 18 villages in 2 districts of Dang and Banaskantha to be affected by poor connectivity. 1,515 villages in 8 Districts of Amreli, Bhavnagar, Devbhumi, Dwarka, Gir Somnath, Jamnagar, Junagarh & Kutch had been identified as cyclone prone, i.e. experiencing peak gust velocity of greater than 45 m/s. Kutch district which falls in Seismic Zone V is most vulnerable to earthquakes.

4(b). It was pointed out that susceptibility to natural hazards may not necessarily translate into increased cost of construction. Secondly, the State could consider adopting house design typologies proposed for various earthquake and cyclone prone zones in 'PAHAL' as in the designs compiled by the State themselves, which would be disaster resilient and would increase the cost of construction nominally. Shri Manu Gupta, Director, SEEDS emphasized that many districts in India fell under Seismic Zone IV and V and recommending such a proposal could open a Pandora's box if not substantiated by other facts reflecting higher cost of construction. It was decided that the proposal of the State Government could be considered once the State Government had itself recognized the proposed areas as 'difficult areas' by provisioning for the same in the SoR. The State would inform whether higher costs of construction in those areas were reflected in the SoR of the State or not?

5 (a). The State of Maharashtra has submitted a proposal to consider 73 Blocks (Completely Hilly) and 35 Blocks (Partially Hilly) as 'difficult areas'. In response to the last EC meeting, held on 04.08.2014, NITI Aayog/Planning Commission had informed that 63 talukas had been identified as difficult (Hilly Area) under the Western Ghat Development Programme (WGDP).

5(b). EC requested the State to cross check whether there was an overlap between the 108 Talukas identified in the proposal and the areas identified by the erstwhile Planning Commission under the Western Ghats Development Programme (WGDP). The State was also asked to confirm whether the Schedule of Rates