



**DEPARTMENTALLY RELATED STANDING COMMITTEE
ON DEVELOPMENT (B) DEPARTMENTS
2024-2025**

FIFTEENTH

ASSAM LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Report on the Demand for the Grant No.51
for the year 2024-2025**

DEPARTMENT : SOIL CONSERVATION

TWENTY FIRST REPORT

Presented to the House on 21st February, 2024.

**ASSAM LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY SECRETARIAT
DISPUR :: GUWAHATI - 781006**

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(i)

**COMPOSITION OF THE DEPARTMENTALLY RELATED STANDING
COMMITTEE ON DEVELOPMENT (B) DEPARTMENTS, 2024-25**

CHAIRMAN : Shri Bhabendra Nath Bharali

MLA & Chairman

MEMBERS :

- | | | |
|-----|-------------------------------|--------------|
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| 2. | Shri Utpal Borah, | MLA & Member |
| 3. | Shri Sibumisra, | MLA & Member |
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| 20. | Hafiz Bashir Ahmed, | MLA & Member |
| 21. | Shri Aminul Islam (Senior), | MLA & Member |
| 22. | Shri Abdul Aziz, | MLA & Member |
| 23. | Shri Charan Boro, | MLA & Member |
| 24. | Shri Manoranjan Talukdar, | MLA & Member |

OFFICERS, ASSEMBLY SECRETARIAT

1. Shri Hemen Das, Principal Secretary,
2. Shri Dulal Pegu, Secretary,
3. Smti. Deergha Baruah, Deputy Secretary,
4. Shri Samir Das, Under Secretary,
5. Shri Dhanajit Talukdar, Special Officer,
6. Shri Madhab Chetri, Estate Officer,
7. Shri Mahen Ch. Doley, Superintendent Member's Hostel,
8. Shri Fakhar Uddin Chowdhury, Committee Officer,
9. Dr. Rosy Saikia, Language Officer,
10. Shri Baidurjya Bharali, Superintendent,
11. Shri Bhaskar Saikia, Librarian,
12. Shri Lakhi Nath Mardhi, Assistant Research Officer.

INTRODUCTION

1. I, as Chairman of the Departmentally Related Standing Committee on Development (B) Departments, Assam Legislative Assembly having been authorized by the Committee to submit the Report on their behalf, present this **TWENTY FIRST REPORT** on Demands for Grant No. 51 of the Soil Conservation for the financial year, **2024-25**.
2. Demands for Grant have been examined by the Committee under Rule 260 J (1) (a) of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Assam Legislative Assembly.
3. The Committee took evidence of the representatives of the **Soil Conservation Department** on **16th February, 2024**.
4. The Draft Report was considered and approved by the Committee in its meeting held on **19th February, 2024**.
5. The Committee expressed its thanks to the Officials of the **Soil Conservation Department** for placing before them the requisite materials and their considered views in connection with the subjects under consideration and also thanks to the Finance & Transformation & Development Department for their kind co-operation.
6. The Committee would also like to place on record it's deep sense of appreciation for the invaluable assistance rendered to the Committee by the Officials of Assam Legislative Assembly Secretariat attached thereto.

Dispur :
Dated 19th February, 2024

Shri Bhabendra Nath Bharali,
Chairman,
Departmentally Related Standing
Committee on Development (B) Departments,
Assam Legislative Assembly.

CHAPTER – I **REPORT**

Grant No. 51

Soil Conservation

The Departmentally Related Standing Committee on Development (B) Departments received the Preliminary Status Paper and Action Taken Report from Soil Conservation Department on Grant No. 51 where the Department elucidated significant information on Soil Conservation which is as follows-

Soil Conservation is one of the most vital sectors for the agriculture and allied sectors of Assam. The Land and Water resources together with flora and fauna as well as all forms of life create a favorable atmosphere for continuance of life forms and preservation of ecological balance. Soil Conservation Department is engaged for all Soil and Water Conservation measures with a view to manage all forms of erosion caused by a variety of aspects. Soil Conservation is the process of reducing loss of the top layer of the soil from erosion or diminished fertility for excessive use of soil, acidification, salinization or other chemical contamination.

Rapid industrialization and population explosion has taken a heavy toll on the ecological balance. Both land & water resources have been subjected to enormous pressure causing land degradation, floods, soil erosions, loss of fertility of agriculture land, air & water pollution etc. which is a matter of concern.

For survival of mankind, land & water resources must be managed scientifically for utilization of land on a sustainable basis for productive purposes. The Soil Conservation Department is working very actively in this direction and various schemes implemented by the Department aims at management of land & water resources on sustainable basis as well as, for generating income of rural people.

Chapter – II

Grant No 51 (SOIL CONSERVATION)

The Departmentally Related Standing Committee on Development (B) Departments took Grant No. 51 incorporated in the Budget which was presented to the House on 12th Feb, 2024 for the Financial Year, 2024-25 for consideration.

The Departmentally Related Standing Committee on Development (B) Departments has made this Report incorporating all the facts and data given in the Budget and Preliminary Status Paper including Action Taken Report furnished by the Soil Conservation Department which are briefly focused as follows-

- 1.1. While examining the papers and documents, as received from the concerned Department in respect of Grant No. 51 and the budget provision made thereto, the Departmentally Related Standing Committee on Development (B) Departments held the said meeting on 16th Feb, 2024 and took oral evidence from the Departmental representatives for discussing all the points raised by the Hon'ble Members of the Committee. At the same time, the Committee considered the Action Taken Report on the recommendation made in its **Twentieth Report** for the year, 2023-24.

The Budget provision made under Grant No 51 relating to Soil Conservation Department for the financial year 2024-25 is as given under:

	Revenue	Capital	Total (Rupees in Lakhs)
Voted	21383.53	6074.46	27457.99
Charged	00.0	00.0	00.0

**Under the following heads, an estimated Budget Allocation
has been fixed as shown below :**

HEAD OF ACCOUNTS		
2402	Soil & Water Conservation	20771.43
2415	Agricultural Research & Education	612.10
4402	Capital Account	6074.46
Total		27457.99

The amount, so allocated is presented before the House and is proposed to be spent in the Revenue Expenditure.

The Committee examined the Major Head of Grant No. 51 and took oral evidence from the Soil Conservation Departmental representatives. The Soil Conservation Department under Grant No. 51 comprises/incorporates various schemes taken by the Departments for the financial year 2024-25.

1.2 Thrust Areas of the Department:

The Departmentally Related Standing Committee on Development (B) Departments has noticed that the following thrust areas for implementation of various schemes have been identified by the Soil Conservation Department:-

- ❖ Protection of top fertile Agricultural land from all sorts of Erosion and Land Degradation.
- ❖ Improve productivity from Agricultural land by adopting Water Harvesting and Water Distribution Techniques.
- ❖ Reclamation of Cultivable Wastelands like Fallow land, Wasteland, Waterlogged areas, land affected by sand deposits due to floods etc. by suitable Soil Conservation measures.
- ❖ Taking up Soil and Water Conservation Works in degraded Jhum' land in order to control Shifting Cultivation in the two hill districts of Assam.
- ❖ Nature Conservation & Climate Change adaptation.

1.4 Nature of projects being implemented

Soil Conservation Department is engaged in implementation of projects for conservation of Soil & Water, the two most precious natural resources. Various types of works taken up by Soil Conservation Department are described below:-

- A. Gully Control Project
- B. Land Development Project
 - i. Field Bunding & Contour Bunding
 - ii. Bench Terracing
 - iii. Land Development By Drainage
- C. Protective Afforestation Works
- D. Water Harvesting
- E. Stream Bank Erosion Control Project
- F. Cash Crop Development
- G. Water Distribution Works
- H. Nature Conservation Works
- I. Wetland Development

WDC-PMKSY: WDC-PMKSY (Watershed Component) previously known as Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP) is implemented by the Department of Land Resources (DoLR) under the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD). The former WDC-PMKSY was closed in September/2020 and the new version of WDC-PMKSY 2.0 was launched in January, 2021 by the DoLR.

The objectives of Watershed Development Projects are:-

- To improve productive potential of rainfed / degraded land through integrated watershed management.
- To strengthen community based local institutions for promotion of livelihoods & watershed sustainability.
- At macro level, the project is to accelerate the economic growth rate of agriculture in the less endowed rainfed areas of the country.

- At watershed level, the development plan shall be guided by the need to achieve higher incomes for farmers, expanded livelihood option for landless, equity in distribution of benefits, community ownership and management, and ecologically sustainable action plan.

The expanded scope and expectations under the new generation watershed development programme, the project duration would be three to five years. The phases and duration of each project is shown in the table below:

Phase	Name	Duration	
I	Preparatory Phase	Upto 1	Years
II	Works Phase	2 to 3	Years
III	Consolidation and withdrawal Phase	Upto 1	Year

INFORMATION RELATING TO NEW SCHEME

As per minutes of the 8th meeting of the Appraisal Committee for implementation of Assam State Disaster Mitigation Fund held on 12th October, 2023, 6 (six) nos. of project under SDMF have been approved by Revenue & D.M. Department in the districts of Golaghat, Dhemaji and Sonitpur. The DPR preparations of the following projects are under process and once the DPR preparation & vetting are completed, the Department will submit to the Govt. for accord administrative approval.

Sl. No.	Name of Scheme	Districts	LAC	Amount (Rs. In Lakh)
1.	Dhabsiri River Bank Anti-Erosion Project at Dhansiripar Koborta No. 1 village.	Golaghat	Sarupathar	220.00
2.	Gelabill River Bank Anti-Erosion Project at Kanfola Bhokot.		Bokakhat	220.00
3.	Kohora River Bank Anti-Erosion Project near Sankordev Sishu Niketan.		Bokakhat	86.78
4.	Doigrung River Bank Anti-Erosion Project at Ponkial.		Sarupathar	200.00
5.	Redirection of Stream to its original course by excavating channel at Galighat pathar of Depi River.	Dhemaji	Jonai	78.732
6.	Ghahigaon Water Harvesting cum water distribution project by vegetative and engineering method.	Biswanath	Gohpur	190.00
Total				995.512

A BRIEF NOTE IN RESPECT OF GRANT NO.51

A brief note in respect of Grant No. 51 of Soil Conservation Department for both Capital and Revenue comprises with various schemes, were taken up by the Department. Besides, various development schemes under SOPD, WDC-PMKSY & RDIF were also undertaken by the Soil Conservation Department.

PROPOSED BUDGET / SECTORAL ALLOCATION FOR THE YEAR 2024-

25

(Rs in lakh)

Sl. No.	Head	Proposed Budget / Sectoral Allocation 2024-25	Remarks
1	FDR	7.48	Sectoral allocation has been received.
2	Nature Conservation	54.04	
3	Building & Approach Road	212.46	
4	Protection of Riverine Land	108.00	
5	Protective Afforestation	166.01	
6	Wetland Development	123.97	
7	Gully Control Project	460.00	
8	Land Development	30.00	
9	Land Reclamation & Water Distribution	180.03	
10	Disaster Risk Deduction	10.34	
Sub Total for SOPD-G		1352.33	
11	TSP	188.90	Sectoral allocation from WPT & BC Department under TSP & SCSP not yet received.
Sub Total for TSP		188.90	
12	SCSP (LR & WD)	132.69	
13	SCSP (GCP / Rain Water Harvesting)	313.70	
Sub Total for SCSP		446.39	
Total for SOPD		1987.62	
14	RIDF-SS	202.00	Sectoral allocation has been received.
15	RIDF-LS	3845.00	
Total for RDIF		4047.00	
16	WDC-PMKSY (State Share)	1388.8889	As per instruction in the sectoral allocation
17	WDC-PMKSY (Central Share)	12500.00	
Total for WDC-PMKSY		13888.8889	
Grand Total		19923.5089	

ACTION TAKEN REPORT
FURNISHED BY THE SOIL CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT ON THE
OBSERVATION
AND RECOMMENDATION CONTAINED LAST 20th REPORT OF THE DRSC ON
DEVELOPMENT (B)
DEPARTMENTS ON GRANT NO. 51 OF THE BUDGET, 2023-24

Sl. No.	Observation & Recommendation	Action Taken
1.	<p>The Departmentally Related Standing Committee (DRSC) on Development (B) Departments observed that the Soil Conservation Department has not executed the projects/schemes uniformly throughout the State as per requirement and feasibility and on the other hand the performance of the Watershed Committees are not found up to the mark and therefore, the schemes/projects are remained unimplemented in spite of having lots of scope for its execution.</p> <p>The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Soil Conservation Department should take up the schemes / projects in all of the LACs while finalizing the priority list for the financial year, 2023-24 & onwards, so that the need of the public will be fulfilled as per the feasibility of the implementation of projects / schemes. Consequent upon the negligence of the Department in some issues the committee felt its resentment and repeatedly recommends that the Department should come forward with full spirit to run the works of the Department as per the requirement, so that the pending works may be undertaken remarkably considering the sanctity of the public interest involved therein Departmental proceeding may also be drawn against those who are found defaulter/sluggish in their performance for implementation of any schemes remained pending.</p>	<p>During the financial year 2023-24, total 119 nos. of projects have been sanctioned by the Govt. under SOPD & RIDF scheme, i.e.</p> <p>i) Under SOPD, 40 nos. of projects amounting to Rs. 547.75 lakh covering 31 nos. LAC.</p> <p>ii) Under RIDF-XXVIII, 39 Nos. of projects amounting to Rs. 3149.45 lakh covering 26 nos. of LAC.</p> <p>iii) Under RIDF-XXIX, 40 nos. of projects amounting to Rs. 2497.85 lakh covering 32 nos. of LAC's of the entire state of Assam.</p> <p>However, it is to be mentioned here that, the budget allocation under SOPD is Rs. 1370.46 lakh for the current FY 2023-24 which is not sufficient to take up all the essential feasible projects covering all the LAC's. Therefore, as per the 20th DRSC recommendation point no. 7, a proposal of Supplementary Demand amounting to Rs. 51.30 Crore (Rupees Fifty One Crore Thirty Lakh) only is prepared for sending Finance (Bt) Deptt.. But the SD proposal have not been approved by the Finance (Bt) Deptt., since the provision of SD submission has not been made by the Finance Deptt. For the financial year 2023-24.</p>

Sl. No.	Observation & Recommendation	Action Taken
2.	<p>The Committee observed that the Department has followed the guideline of the WDC-PMKSY-2.0 in implementation of schemes of Gram Sabha with due approval and accordingly 29 Nos. of schemes were implemented except in the district of South Salmara, Karimganj, Kamrup (M) and Charaideo.</p> <p>The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Department should implement all the remaining schemes left unimplemented in the aforesaid districts and at the same time new schemes may also be taken up wherever necessary.</p>	<p>Under WOC-PMISSY-2.0, the Department of Land Resource (DOLF), Govt of India has approved 29 nos. of projects during 2021-22 covering 128574 ha and as per DRSC recommendation, the DOUR, Govt of India has sanctioned 2 Nos of Additional projects during 2022-23 in the district of Charaideo and Kamrup (Metro) Schemes will be taken in the left out Districts/IACS as and when approval is received from the Department of Land Resources, Govt of India.</p>
3.	<p>The Committee observed that Watershed Committees are formed under PMKSY 2.0 throughout the state where local MLAs are not consulted for its constitution and the ignorance of involvement of local MLA or other local representatives may cause a great barrier to implement the schemes undertaken.</p> <p>The Committee, therefore, strongly recommends that local MLAs should be involved in the Watershed Committees which are formed under WDC-PMKSY 2.0 throughout the state and when the Department undertakes any schemes / projects for its execution they should prefer to consult with the local MLA local representatives wherever necessary considering the public desire or interest entangled therein.</p>	<p>As per the recommendation, the Department instructed to the Divisional Officer cum Project Managers while constitution of Watershed Committee and selection of schemes in coordination with the Watershed Committees, it should be made in consultation with the local MLAs vide letter no. SLNA-23/2015/223, dtd. 08/02/2023.</p> <p>In this connection, after receiving reports from the DSCO's cum Project Manager, it is observed that, the Hon'ble local MLAs or his representatives were consulted during constitution / reconstitution of Watershed Committees, preparation of Action Plans. Selection of Beneficiaries for Livelihood and Production System etc. for implementation of projects under WDC-PMKSY 2.0.</p>

Sl. No.	Observation & Recommendation	Action Taken
4.	<p>The Committee astonishes when Departmental representatives has informed that the Divisional Officer South Bank did not recognize the locality of an area namely "Rajapani Chanda" under Kamrup (Metro) and no scheme has been undertaken. Hon'ble Chairman of the Committee has admitted that the area namely "Rajapani Chanda" under Kamrup (Metro) is located a Rani near BSF camp, Kamrup (Metro) with its glorious reputation and scheme has not yet been completed there.</p> <p>Therefore, the Committee strongly recommends that the Department should take necessary steps to implement the aforesaid scheme as early as possible.</p>	<p>As per the 20th DRSC recommendation, detail survey has been conducted by the Department and concept paper has been prepared for the project namely "Boulder Revetment and Water Distribution Project at Rajapani Chanda, Rani near BSF Camp, Kamrup (M) District" amounting to Rs. 103.22 Lakh. But, the budget allocation under SOPD during 2023-24 is not sufficient to take up the project even the Department could not meet up the earlier liabilities with the allocated fund during the FY 2023-24.</p>
5.	<p>The Committee observes that TSP & SCSP schemes are taken up by the Department particularly in BTC area whereas most of the SC/Tribal areas of other districts of the state are left out.</p> <p>The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Department should give equal importance to all constituencies of the state while selecting the schemes on feasibility and priority basis from the financial year, 2023-24 & onwards.</p>	<p>The budget allocation for the current Financial year, 2023-24 under TSP is Rs. 79.20 lakh and under SCSP is Rs.134.93 lakh which are not sufficient to give equal importance to all constituencies of the State while selecting the schemes. However, as per recommendation of DRSC, 5 nos. of projects under TSP and 1 No. of project under SCSP have been taken up for execution in the ST and SC dominated population under General constituencies i.e. g4 Sarupathar, Majuli, Dhemaji, Dhakuakhana Mahmora and Mangaldoi.</p>

Sl. No.	Observation & Recommendation	Action Taken
6.	<p>The Committee observed that the Soil Conservation Department has prepared Plan & Estimate amounting to Rs. 34.345 Lakh for taking up the schemes in the Durgasarubar area of Santipur Hills and Kamrup (Metro)</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the Department should take necessary initiatives to implement the aforesaid schemes as early as possible.</p>	<p>During FY 2023-24, the budget allocation is not sufficient in comparison to previous year liabilities under SOPD. Hence, the project could not be take up during this financial year. However, as per the 20th DRSC recommendation point no. 7, a proposal of Supplementary Demand amount to Rs. 51.30 Crore (Rupees Fifty One Crore Thirty Two lakh) only is prepared for sending to Finance (Bt.) Deptt.. But the SD proposal have not been approved by the Finance (Bt.) Deptt., since the provision of SD submission has not been made by the Finance Deptt. for the financial year 2023-24.</p>
7.	<p>While discussing with the Departmental representatives the Committee observed that Department will not be enable to implement various schemes to improve the productivity in agricultural land and contributing in climate change mitigation through soil conservation activities during this financial year 2022-23 because of less allotment of budget.</p> <p>Hence, the Committee recommends that budget provision should be increased for Soil Conservation Department by proposing Supplementary Demands for an amount of Rs. 40.00 Crores to meet the requirement of schemes already identified by the Department as well as the proposal received from MLAs & public representatives.</p>	<p>As per the DRSC recommendation, a proposal of Supplementary Demand amounting to Rs. 51.30 Crore (Rupees Fifty One Crore Thirty Two lakh) only is prepared for sending to Finance (Bt.) Deptt.. in different head of account like - Gully Control Project, Protection of Riverine Land, Land Reclamation & Water Distribution, Wetland Development, Nature Conservation, Building & Approach Road, TSP SCSP, LDP, Protective Afforestation and Flood Damage Restoration. But the SD proposal have not been approved by the Finance (Bt) Deptt., since the provision of SD submission has not been made by the Finance Deptt. for the financial year 2023-24.</p>

OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATION.

Grant no 51

After a great deal of careful consideration of the papers/documents submitted by the Soil Conservation Department and clarification made by the Departmental representatives during the course of tendering their oral evidence the Departmentally Related Standing Committee (DRSC) on Development (B) Departments has made the following Observations and Recommendations.

1. The Departmentally Related Standing Committee (DRSC) on Development (B) Departments observes that in the last meeting a recommendation was made about the Rajapani Chanda under Kamrup (M) but due to the insufficient budget allocation under SOPD during 2023-24, the project work couldn't be implemented by the respective Department.

The Committee, therefore, strongly recommends that the Soil Conservation Department should take necessary steps to implement the aforesaid scheme during 2024-25. Since the budget allocation is too low, additional budget proposal may be submitted for the purpose during the FY 2024-25.

2. The Committee observes that already the Soil Conservation Department couldn't implement the schemes in Durgasarubar Area of Santipur Hills, Kamrup (M) for the insufficient budget allocation during 2023-24.

The Committee, therefore, recommends strongly that the Department should take necessary steps to implement the aforesaid scheme during 2024-25. Since the budget allocation is too low, additional budget proposal should be submitted for the purpose during the FY 2024-25.

3. The Committee observes that there is a need of Boulder Pitching with Revetment for Erosions Protection work at Arikuchi Village under Borkhetri, LAC of Nalbari District.

So the Committee recommends that the work of Boulder Pitching with Revetment for Erosions Protection work at Arikuchi Village under Barkhetri, LAC of Nalbari District should be taken up in priority by the Department concerned.

4. The Committee observes that there is a need of prompt action from the Department to address the Water logging in various places in the State of Assam.

Therefore, the Committee recommends that the Department should take necessary measures to address the Water Logging issues to curb it completely, wherever necessary.

5. The Committee observes that during the FY 2023-24, the budget allocation in respect of the Department concerned is not sufficient in comparison to previous year liabilities under SOPD.

The Committee, therefore, strongly recommends that the Department should submit a proposal of Supplementary Demand during the year 2024-25 amounting to Rs 40.00 Crore (Rupees forty Crore) only including the following two nos projects – i) "Boulder Revetment and Water Distribution Project at Rajapani Chanda, Rani near BSF Camp, Kamrup (M) District" amounting to Rs 103.22 Lakhs.

ii) Mitigation of Flash Flood & to reduce sediment and water yield at Durgasarubar area Santipur Hills, Kamrup (M) amounting to Rs 34.345 Lakh.

With these observations and recommendations as mentioned aforesaid, the Committee recommends that the Budget provision amounting to Rs. 27457.99 Lakh during the financial year 2024-25 under the grant No. 51 be accepted.

The Action taken on the report may be submitted to the Committee within 90 (ninety) days from the date of presentation of the Report to the House.

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2024

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