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NOTIFICATION

No.B.12011/13/99-FST, the 27th May, 2019: Whereas hunting, illegal felling of trees and trade of plants, timber and wildlife is a growing transnational criminal activity that imperils the continued viability of thousands of plant and animal species worldwide, threatens global security, and harms legitimate businesses, destabilizing communities that depend on wildlife for biodiversity and ecotourism revenues and has adverse economic impacts and also undermines conservation efforts and continues to push some endangered species to the brink of extinction.

And whereas paying financial rewards to person who provide information that leads to arrests, criminal convictions, civil penalties, or property forfeitures for violations of the forest and wildlife laws is an important tool for detection and apprehension of the offenders and could also serve as a deterrent to forest and wildlife crimes.

And whereas it is also felt necessary to pay financial rewards to person who, by spending own resources, renders service or assistance in the detection of offence, seizure of wildlife article and illegally collected forest produce as well as arms, weapons, tools, equipment, vehicles, etc used in commission of offences and/or in the apprehension of offenders.

Now, therefore, in view of the above and in exercise of the powers conferred by Section 64 read with section 60A & 60B of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and section 42 of the Mizoram (Forest) Act, 1955, the Governor of Mizoram is pleased to make the following scheme for payment of financial rewards to a person who provides information that leads to seizures, arrests, criminal convictions, civil penalties, or property confiscations for violations of forest and wildlife laws as well as to a person who renders service or assistance in detection, arrest and seizure for committing forest and wildlife crimes.

1. Short title, extent and commencement:

- (1) This scheme may be called the Mizoram Rewards for Detection of Forest and Wildlife Offence Scheme, 2019.
- (2) It shall extend to the whole of Mizoram.
- (3) It shall come into force with effect from the date of their publication in the Mizoram Gazette.

2. Definitions:

In this scheme, unless the context otherwise requires,

- (a) "CF" means the Conservator of Forests, Government of Mizoram;
- (b) "CWLW" means the Chief Wildlife Warden, Government of Mizoram;

- (c) "DFO" means Divisional Forest Officer/Deputy Conservator of Forests of territorial/wildlife division and includes Field Director of Dampa Tiger Reserve under the Government of Mizoram;
- (d) "Forest produce" means a forest produce as defined in the Mizoram (Forest) Act, 1955;
- (e) "Offence" means an offence or crime punishable under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, the Mizoram (Forest) Act, 1955 and the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980;
- (f) "Offender" means a person who committed an offence punishable under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, the Mizoram (Forest) Act, 1955 and the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980;
- (g) "PCCF" means the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Government of Mizoram.
- (h) "Person" includes an individual, group of individuals, a body, a non-government organization (NGO) or a society;
- (i) "RFO" means Range Forest Officer or Range Officer of the Environment, Forest & Climate Change Department, Government of Mizoram;
- (i) "Wild animal" means all such species of wild animals other than vermin listed in Schedule V of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972;

3. Persons eligible for reward:

- (1) Any person who provides actionable first hand information that leads to an arrest, criminal conviction, penalty, seizure and/or confiscation of forest produce, wildlife article and/or property, tools, weapons used for commission of the offence (hereinafter referred to as informant or informer) shall be eligible to get rewards under this scheme.
- (2) Any person who renders service or assistance in detection of an offence, in apprehension of offender or in the seizure of forest produce or wildlife article as well as arms, weapons, tools, equipment, vehicle, etc used in committing the offence shall also be eligible to get rewards under this scheme provided that the offender or seized articles are brought to book.
- (3) Priority shall be given to cases where the offenders are brought to book.

4. Persons not eligible for reward:

- (1) Any person who furnishes information or renders service or assistance in the detection of offence or seizure or arrest but is involved in the commission of the offence is ineligible for such reward under this scheme.
- (2) Any officer or employee of the Government of Mizoram who furnishes information or renders service or assistance in the performance of his official duties is ineligible for payment of reward under this scheme.

5. Furnishing of information about occurrence of forest and wildlife crime/offence:

- (1) Any person who detects or comes across an offence being committed or already committed may, in the interest of forest and wildlife conservation, report or furnish information with supporting evidence and photographs, if any, about the occurrence of an offence in writing or through whatsapp message or email to the officials of the Forest Department under whose jurisdiction the offence was committed.
- (2) To facilitate reporting of such offence cases, the Forest Department will furnish the name, contact number and email id of the concerned officials in the official website and to the President of the concerned Village Councils and YMA Branches.

6. Follow-up action on the report of occurrence of the offence:

- (1) The DFO/Range Forest Officer, on receipt of the lead/report/ information about occurrence of the offence, will immediately take follow-up action and it will be the duty of the DFO / RFO concerned to ensure that the offence case, if found genuine, is taken up and brought to book as per relevant laws in force within the shortest possible time.

(2) In case the occurrence of the offence was already reported by any other person earlier and the required follow-up action already initiated, the DFO/RFO will inform the same to the informant.

(3) The DFO/RFO shall keep record about the particulars of the informant and details about the offence/offenders/seizures to facilitate follow-up action and verification when the claim for reward is received at a later date.

7. Application for claim of reward:

(1) An eligible person who, in the interest of forest and wildlife conservation, furnished actionable first hand information about occurrence of an offence may submit application in plain paper for claim of reward to the DFO/RFO concerned giving the following details within 30 (thirty) days of furnishing the information to the DFO/RFO -

- (i) Nature/type and details of offence detected;
- (ii) Time of detection of the offence;
- (iii) Location or place of occurrence/detection of the offence;
- (iv) Name of offender(s), if known;
- (v) Time and mode of furnishing information to forest official and name and designation of forest official to whom information was furnished;
- (vi) Name, contact number and address of witness, if any;
- (vii) Supporting documents/evidence/photographs,
- (viii) Name, address, contact number and bank account number of the claimant.

(2) An eligible person who, in the interest of forest and wildlife conservation, renders service in apprehending the offenders, seizure of forest produce/wildlife article and any property used in the commission of such offence may submit application in plain paper for claim of reward to the DFO/RFO concerned giving the following details within 30 (thirty) days of such seizure or apprehension of the offender-

- (i) Nature/type and details of offence detected;
- (ii) Time of detection of the offence;
- (iii) Location or place of occurrence/detection of the offence;
- (iv) Name, father's name and address of offenders apprehended, if any;
- (v) List and details of articles/properties seized, if any;
- (vi) Date and place of handing over the offenders and seized articles to forest official, and name and designation of forest official to whom the offenders/seized articles were handed over;
- (vii) Name & address of persons/officials who made the seizure/arrest;
- (viii) Expenditure incurred for detection/seizure/arrest with supporting vouchers/documents;
- (ix) Supporting documents/evidence/photographs.
- (x) Name, address, contact number and bank account number of the claimant.

8. Procedure for processing the claim for reward:

(1) On receipt of claim for the reward, the RFO shall examine and verify about the genuineness of the claim with his record. If the claim is found genuine, he will forward the application/claim with his report indicating the action taken by him in column 3 of Annexure to the DFO within 10 days of receipt of the claim.

(2) The DFO will then examine the matter and forward the claim with his comments/remarks including the action taken by him on the offence case in column 4 of Annexure to the CF concerned for his decision in case of forest offence case and/or to the CWLW for his decision in case of wildlife offence case within 10 days of receipt of the report.

(3) The CWLW or the CF, as the case may be, on receipt of the claim for the reward with the report/

comments from the RFO/DFO, shall examine the case and convey his decision/sanction to the DFO concerned and his decision shall be final.

(4) On receipt of sanction for the reward from the CWLW or CF concerned, the concerned DFO will make payment of the sanctioned amount to the successful claimant through account payee cheque/ electronic transfer.

(5) Name of the informant shall be kept confidential.

9. Fund provision:

(1) A budgetary provision of up to Rs. 10.00 lakh per annum may be allocated for the scheme in the regular budget at the beginning of financial year.

10. Admissible rate of reward:

(1) Reward to the eligible person/claimant shall be sanctioned at the rates given below subject to availability of funds @ Rs.1000/- to Rs. 10,000/- for minor cases and Rs. 10,000/- to Rs.20,000/- for major cases.

Ajai Saxena,
Principal Secretary to the Govt. of Mizoram,
Environment, Forests & Climate Change Department.

VERIFICATION REPORT ON CLAIM OF REWARD BY FOREST & WILDLIFE WHISTLEBLOWERS

Sn	Particulars	To be filled in by Range Forest Officer	Comments/remarks by the DFO
1	2 Name & address of informant who claims reward for furnishing first hand information	3	4
2	Nature and type of offence		
3	Location/place of occurrence of offence and status of forest/land where the incident took place (with GPS readings)		
4	Name & designation of official who received the information with date & time		
5	Name & designation of official who visited the site with date of visit		
6	PI state whether the information furnished by the informant was correct and if so, give details of action taken by the Department on receipt of the information indicating whether the case was compounded or filed in court, whether offenders are known/arrested, etc.		
7	Name & address of person who claims reward for rendering service/assistance in detection, seizure, arrest, etc, if any, and details of service/assistance rendered		
8	Details of forest produce/wildlife article/other properties seized with approximate value		
9	Name & address of offender, if known		
10	Any other relevant information		
		Signature of RFO: Name: Seal of RFO:	Signature of DFO: Name: Seal of DFO:

Note: DFO may indicate amount of fine, compounding fee, sale proceed, etc on the seized properties/articles.