

Guidelines for Chief Minister Water Conservator Award

Introduction

Tamil Nadu, located in the southernmost part of India, has a rich variety of water resources that are essential for its economy, agriculture, and culture. The state experiences distinct wet and dry seasons due to its tropical climate, making effective water management crucial for farming and drinking water supplies. The state is also known for its innovative irrigation systems, including ancient tanks and canals developed over centuries. The total surface water potential of the state is estimated at 24,160 million cubic meters (MCM), which includes:

- 39,000 tanks with a storage capacity of 347 TMC
- 79 reservoirs with a capacity of 243 TMC
- Contributions from other states: 261 TMC
- Other storages: 2 TMC

Water conservation practices, grounded in traditional knowledge and community involvement, are vital for addressing challenges like climate change and increasing water demand. Tamil Nadu's approach to water management combines historical methods with modern techniques, aiming for sustainable development and resilience in the face of growing pressures. As said in the Thirukkural, a sangam literature, "Even the wealth of the wide sea will be diminished, if the cloud that has drawn its waters up, not gives them back again" explains the importance of water cycle emphasizing its conservation.

Hence, the Hon'ble Minister for Environment and Climate Change announced on the floor of the assembly the "Hon'ble Chief Minister's Water Body Conservator Award" to recognize the exceptional contributions of individuals/NGOs/Civil society organisations in the protection and conservation of waterbodies in Tamil Nadu. It aims to inspire people across the state to engage in the sustainable development of water resources, playing a pivotal role in mitigating and adapting to the challenges of climate change-induced water stress.

Scope

Waterbody means any natural or manmade structure having accumulation of water, whether from a perennial or seasonal source of water which includes Rivers, Rivulets, Canals, Channels, Drains, surplus courses, Reservoirs, Tanks all appurtenant structures of water bodies, water course poramboke lands, water spread area at full tank level, buffer zones of water etc.,

Conservator refers an individual/NGOs/Civil society organizations dedicated to the protection and restoration/creation of water bodies such as canals, ponds and lakes etc.,

Activities to be eligible for award-enhancing storage capacity of water bodies or revitalizing rivers and streams through desilting, removing encroachments, controlling

invasive alien species in or around waterbody, and implementing pollution abatement measures. This will also include innovative approaches to sustainable water management

Selection Committee

The **District Level Selection Committee (DLSC)** will be constituted based on District Climate Change Mission Committee. It will consist of following members

1. District Collector, Chairman
2. Additional Collector/Project Director, DRDA, Member Secretary
3. District Forest Officer
4. District Revenue Officer
5. EE, Water Resources Department
6. RDMA/REE/Municipal Commissioner
7. Assistant Director, Town Panchayat

Criteria for Water Conservator Award

The DLSC shall nominate two/three applicants for awarding Hon'ble Chief Minister's Waterbody Conservator. Applicants shall be evaluated based on the criteria outlined below, with a maximum of 10 marks awarded for each category. Then the list of selected applicants will be recommended to the State Committee. The Committee will select the eligible applicant from the list recommended by the District level Committee for the award after careful examination.

The **State Level Committee** Comprises of

- 1) The Chief Mission Director, Tamil Nadu Climate Change Mission
- 2) The Assistant Mission Director, Tamil Nadu Climate Change Mission
- 3) The Chief Mission Director, Tamil Nadu Wetland Mission or his/her representative.
- 4) Director/Commissioner, Water Resources Department or his/her representative.
- 5) A member Nominated from Directorate of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj.

1. Area of Waterbody Restored

The extent of the water body, measured in acres or hectares, that has been rejuvenated or newly created will be evaluated. The applicant shall apply for this award only in the district in which the work has been carried out.

2. Source of Funding

The source of funding for the restoration or creation of waterbodies will be considered. Projects funded through personal contributions will receive the highest marks, those funded through community mechanisms like crowdfunding will receive average marks, and projects reliant on external sponsorships, such as CSR funds, will receive the lowest marks.

3. Water Use Efficiency

The project which demonstrate significant reductions in water wastage and improvements in water recycling and reuse strategies for better management will be allotted maximum marks. Evidence of declining water consumption patterns due to the above fact or a positive change in the region's overall water budget as a result of these efforts will be considered.

4. Creating Awareness for the Protection and Conservation of Water Bodies

Projects will be evaluated based on the efforts made to educate and involve the local community in the benefits of water body restoration and conservation, making community participation a grassroots mechanism for long-term success.

5. Promotion of Traditional Water Conservation Structures

The construction or restoration of traditional water conservation structures, such as Eri, Oorunis, or other indigenous methods, will be assessed. Efforts to revive traditional water management systems and integrate them with modern practices will be given higher marks.

6. Impact on Indigenous/Tribal Population

Projects that positively impact indigenous or tribal populations will be prioritized. This includes improvements in health, a reduction in disease burden, or the alleviation of drudgery, such as reducing the need for long-distance water collection.

7. Innovation

Innovative approaches to water conservation will be highly valued. This includes the use of new technologies, novel approaches, eco-engineering, or scientific methods for enhancements in water availability through practices such as aquifer recharge, improved irrigation techniques, or reclamation of water bodies

8. Environmental Impact

Projects will be assessed based on their positive impact on local ecology. This includes an increase in biodiversity, particularly the presence of birds, fish, amphibians, and other species, as well as the restoration of natural habitats and ecosystem services, such as flood control and groundwater recharge. Visible improvements in the health and growth of nearby vegetation will also be considered.

9. Participatory Water Governance

Projects must demonstrate a participatory approach to water governance, where local stakeholders have been actively involved in decision-making and long-term management of the water body.

Conditions

- The applicant, if individual, should have completed 18 years of age.
- The mode of application will be online through TN Awards Portal only.

- The applications received through post will be summarily rejected by the committee.
- The applicants details can be accessed by District Level Selection committee through the login id provided by DoE&CC.
- The individual can apply for awards under one District only.
- The Waterbody conservation works carried out after 2021 is only eligible for the award.
- The claims of the applicants will be verified on site by team lead by Tehsildar/Forest range officer/District Environment Engineer.
- The Committee has full discretion with respect to the selection for this award and shall be final and conclusive.

Annexure

Sl.No	Criteria	Marks awarded	Marks obtained
1	Area of the Restored Waterbody	10	
2	Source of Funding Whether CSR/Crowd Funding/Individual contributions	10	
3	Long term maintenance and Monitoring	10	
4	Spearheading the campaigns for Rainwater Harvesting and Efficient use of Water Resources.	10	
5	Awareness created for Conservation of Waterbodies	10	
6	Promotion of Traditional Water Conservation Structures	10	
7	Positive Impact on Beneficiaries for example: Increased Agricultural Productivity, Minimizing water scarcity and Improvement in Livelihood etc.,	10	
8	Innovative/Indigenous/ sustainable approach	10	
9	Environmental Impacts like Enhancement of biodiversity, Restoration of ecosystems, increased ecosystem services etc.,	10	
10	Public Participation in Waterbody Restoration	10	
	TOTAL	100	

P. SENTHILKUMAR
PRINCIPAL SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT

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A. Gurus
26/11/24

Section Officer