

10

*convert all such erstwhile forest villages, unrecorded settlements and old habitations into revenue villages with a sense of urgency in a time bound manner. The conversion would include the actual land-use of the village in its entirety, including lands required for current or future community uses, like, schools, health facilities, public spaces etc. Records of the forest villages maintained by the Forest Department may thereafter be suitably updated on recognition of this right."*

Pursuant to the above, this Ministry is issuing the present Guidelines to provide for the procedure for settlement and conversion into revenue villages.

**Suggested Procedure for Settlement and Conversion into revenue villages:**

The following procedure may be followed for the settlement and conversion of forest villages, old habitations and other settlements on forest land into revenue villages:

1. All villages/settlements on forest land should be identified with the help of District Statistical Handbooks and Census Village Directories. All settlements with zero revenue land should be presumed to be forest villages in order to be converted into revenue villages under the Act. In addition, public suggestions and inputs should be invited through a public notice in all panchayat offices, forest offices and market places informing the public of this right and requesting villages on forest land to submit claims or to contact the concerned officials for assistance. The Collector of each district shall be responsible for getting lists of such villages prepared.
2. The Sub-Divisional Officers of the Sub Divisional Level Committee shall consolidate the lists of hamlets and habitations which at present are not part of any village but which fall within the definition of 'forest villages' under Section 3(1)(h) of the Act, and shall forward the same to the Collector.
3. Collector shall be responsible for ensuring that residents of such villages/old habitations are enabled to claim their conversion/settlement.
4. In each such village / habitation a notice should be posted stating that such a claim can be filed, giving the procedure for doing so (as per this order), and inviting the filing of a claim.
5. The list as prepared in each district, with updates of new additions where applicable, shall be communicated to the State Level Monitoring Committee, which should maintain a consolidated state-wide list of forest villages and old habitations and the status of their conversion. A progress report, with the district-wise list of forest villages and the status of their conversion, should be communicated to the Ministry every three months.
6. For the purposes of the Act, the assembly of all adult residents of each such village/habitation is recognized as the Gram Sabha, as per Section 2(p)(iii) of the Act, and shall elect its own Forest Rights Committee (FRC).
7. In cases where the number of adult residents of an old habitation or an unsurveyed village are less than the number specified for a forest rights committee, they may form a smaller FRC. If such small habitations are in the vicinity of a revenue village, they may pass a unanimous resolution if they so desire, that they will be included in the larger village after conversion.
8. A claim for the conversion of forest villages, old habitations, unsurveyed villages