

GOVERNMENT OF KERALA

Abstract

Forest and Wild Life Department of Participatory Forest Management- Guidelines for implementation- Revised- Orders-issued.

FOREST & WILDLIFE (E) DEPARTMENT

G.O.(Ms) 26/06/F&WLD

Dated, Thiruvananthapuram, 20.07.2006

Read:- (1) G.O. M.s. No. 8/98/F&WLD, dated 16.01.98
(2) Letter No. Co-ord III/7-163/2002-03/87/81 dated 22-7-2002
(3) Letter No PFM – Gdl/2004 dated 28.09.04 Principal Chief Conservator of Forests
(4) Letter No. E&TW-431/05 dated 4.03.06 from Chief Conservator of Forests (E&TW)

ORDER

As per the read above G.O Government have issued Guidelines for the implementation of the Participatory Forest Management (PFM) in Kerala. But in the process of implementation, several feed back from the field pointed towards the inadequacy of certain provisions in the Guidelines. As per letter read as 2nd paper above he Accountant General (A&E) has requested to revised the guidelines to ensure financial discipline and to confirm the existing financial rules in order to ensure smooth implementation of the Project. Accordingly the Chief Conservator of Forests (E&TW) has submitted a revised guidelines for the implementation of Participatory Forest Management as per letter read as 3rd paper above.

Government have examined the matter in detail and are pleased to issue revised guidelines, for the implementation of Participatory Forest Management in Kerala

The revised guidelines is appended to the Government order.

(BY ORDER OF THE GOVERNOR)
D. CHANDRIKA DEVI
Deputy Secretary.

To

The Secretary to Government of India, The Ministry of Environment and Forest,
Government of India, Parayavaran Bhavan, Lodhi Road, New Delhi.
The Accountant General(A&E/Audit), Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram
The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Thiruvananthapuram
The Chief Conservator of Forests (E&TW)
Finance Department vide U.O (F) No. 22547/AW-B1/06/ Fin. Dated 4.7.06
Stock File, Office Copy

Forwarded by Order

Section Officer

**PARTICIPATORY FOREST MANAGEMENT
GUIDELINES 2006**

**GOVERNMENT OF KERALA
FOREST AND WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT**

1. INTRODUCTION

The National Forest Policy, 1988 envisages people's involvement in the development, protection and management of forests. It is also increasingly being felt that forest management programmes need to be reoriented to respond to the needs of the rural people living in and around forest areas and that the forest produce like fuel wood, Non Timber Forest Produce (NTFP), timber etc. are made available to the forest dependent villagers preferentially so that village communities are motivated to help in the development and protection of Forests. Accordingly, Government of India, Ministry of Environment and Forests, in their letter dated 1-6-1990 had issued guidelines for involving village communities and voluntary agencies in regeneration of degraded forest lands. The State Governments were also requested to take appropriate action along the suggested lines. The guidelines suggested by the Government of India envisage the formulation of a Participatory Forest Management Scheme charged with the responsibilities of preparing plans (micro plans) for participation and managing the same as per the approved plan.

Increasing pressure of population on forests and the resultant forest degradation, the fragility of the ecosystem, conservation of biodiversity and maintenance of ecological balance of the area, are major concerns of the State. The fact that policing the forest resources alone is not enough to protect the forest from degradation and that the participatory management experience from all over the country bears testimony to the participatory approach in dealing with anthropogenic factors in forest protection, justifies the development of Participatory Forest Management (PFM) approach for protection of forests in Kerala where these factors have contributed to degradation to a sizable extent. Having realized the necessity of ensuring people's participation in effective protection and management of the forest resources in Kerala, it is decided to develop PFM programme in the State. Kerala being socio-politically different from other States in India, the PFM programme envisaged in the State was developed through a number of pilot studies in selected areas designed to address different forest management problems. With a view to evolve the modalities and the related strategies in implementing this programme, detailed workshops, seminars and discussions were also held with various stakeholder groups. Study tours by forest officers were also conducted to other states where PFM is being practiced.

Guidelines for the implementation of PFM in Kerala were issued by the Government vide GO (MS) 8/98/F&WLD dated, 16..1..1998. As PFM was new to Kerala, initially it was taken up in selected sites only. Pilot studies were carried out in selected sites. The strategy adopted was "learning by doing". Apart from the periodical reviews, there were State level reviews of the whole process annually. The field experience generated from five years of the implementation has necessitated modifications in the PFM guidelines for the State. These guidelines are the modified versions intended to replace the earlier guidelines.

2. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the PFM programme in the State are two fold:

1. To develop appropriate participatory approaches to forest management in different forestry and socio-economic contexts.
2. To introduce and sustain it in all such areas inside as well as outside forests.

3. SCOPE OF THE PROGRAMME

One of the major causes of forest degradation in Kerala is the human pressure on forests. High density of human population, low per capita forest area and dependence of people on forests for subsistence and income generation activities, justify the development of approaches involving people living in and around forests. Moreover, the realization of PFM as a thrust area for Central assistance from 10th Plan onwards encourage us to develop PFM for protection, development and management of forests.

Major factors contributing to forest degradation related to people-forest interaction in Kerala are the following:

- Forest fires
- Grazing
- Unsustainable harvesting of NTFPs such as green manure, firewood, medicinal herbs and poles.
- Human-animal conflicts
- Forest encroachments
- Timber smuggling
- Illicit collection of forest produce
- Gunja cultivation
- Illicit brewing
- Poaching of wild animals
- Environmental degradation etc.

The PFM programme is designed to assess the potential of participatory approach to address these critical forestry problems under different socio-economic context through strategies for:

- Management of fires to reduce forest degradation
- Introduction of sustainable NTFP harvesting practices to reverse the declining trend of growth of valuable NTFPs.
- Application of indigenous knowledge of local communities on forests and biodiversity management.
- Promotion of biodiversity related intellectual property rights and harnessing this strength for forest management.
- Promotion of non-invasive eco-tourism in forest areas
- Stopping illicit collection of forest produce
- Stopping illicit activities in forests
- Stopping further encroachment into forest areas.
- Reversing localized environmental degradation such as seasonal water shortages and soil erosion resulting from deforestation in watersheds/catchments

4. AREAS TO BE SELECTED FOR PFM

4.1 General

All reserved/vested forests/Ecological fragile areas taken over by the Government where stakeholder groups depend for subsistence and livelihood income generation.

Areas outside reserved/vested forests, facing threats from ecological degradation. In all cases, participation under agreement by the landowner/custodian is mandatory.

Implementation of suitable PFM model in any of these areas is to be regulated by specific guidelines.

4.2 PFM management unit

The selection of the PFM management unit shall be done on a watershed basis. **The geographical area (functional forest along with adjacent non-forest area) shall be a cluster of neighbouring mini-watersheds in full or part.** The distance from the edge of the forest to the outer boundary of the geographical area shall be less than 2kms straight line or the outer limit of the Grama Panchayat Wards adjoining the forest, whichever is minimum. If the ward boundaries are located beyond 2kms from the edge of the forest, a permanent physical landmark (line mark) at an optimum distance of 2kms from the edge of the forests shall be identified as the limit of VSS geographical area. However, the Divisional Forest Officer can decide based on local condition, the limit of VSS geographical area in line of the above guidelines.

PFM management unit within the geographical limits of a VSS shall be the forests most frequented by the stakeholders in the VSS. It shall be surveyed and demarcated in the field.

5. PROCEDURE FOR DEVELOPING PARTICIPATORY FOREST MANAGEMENT (PFM)

Under PFM the agreed forest management activities will be planned, implemented, maintained and monitored by the village institutions-Vana Samrakshana Samithi (VSS) constituted for the purpose with the help of suitable facilitators and the KFD. Participatory process first of all requires creating a good rapport, trust and partnership between the KFD field staff and the local people. The process of PFM involves the following phases: Preparatory phase, Planning phase and Implementation & Monitoring phase. Activities involved in each of these phases will be as follows:

i. Preparatory Phase

1. Site Identification
2. MOA & Bye-law Drafting
3. VSS Registration
4. Opening of Core Fund & Operational Fund Accounts (Operational Fund is Project related and hence is relevant where there is flow of funds from external sources)

The intended outcome of the phase are:

- Identification of the problems to be addressed through PFM
- Formation of VSS and VSS Executive Committee (VSSEC)
- Finalization of bylaw of VSS.

ii. Planning Phase

- 1 PRA
- 2 Micro Plan approval by VSS General Body
- 3 Micro Plan approval by Conservator of Forests

The intended outcomes of this phase will be:

- The formulation of a detailed micro plan in consultation with the local community addressing all aspects of resource management of that particular locality.

iii. Implementation & Monitoring Phase.

1. MOU Signing
2. Release of Credibility fund
3. Annual Action Plan preparation
4. Annual Action Plan Approval
5. Field Implementation followed by review and monitoring

The intended outcomes of this phase will be;

- The actual execution of the micro plan prescriptions
- Definition of the roles and responsibilities of KFD and VSS
- Monitoring

The KFD officials should actively involve in each of the above phase. The initial meeting with the villagers may be facilitated through local NGOs and Panchayats.

6. CONSTITUTION OF THE VANA SAMRAKSHANA SAMITHI (VSS)

Range Officer will convene the village community meeting on the appointed date after giving due publicity for the same in the locality and explain PFM. The doubts of the local communities would be heard and cleared. The roles and responsibilities of the partners in the programme will be elaborately discussed. Subsequently on the prescribed date, the Memorandum of Association and Bye-law of VSS will be drafted and approved at the level of the village community, leading ultimately to the Constitution of Vana Samrakshana Samithi (VSS). On getting application from the VSS, it will be registered by the DFO after going through due procedure. The DFO shall issue a Registration Certificate to each VSS, bearing Registration Number with date of approval.

The approval of the DFO is mandatory for the VSS.

6.1 Membership

Every household in the selected ward/hamlet/user-groups will have the option of participating in the Samithi. Any two adult members of a household can represent the household/family. Out of the two, one shall be a woman if there are adult women members in the household/family. They shall register their names with the Executive Committee on a payment of a minimum sum of Rs.5/- per household, which shall be credited to the Core Fund of the VSS. The SC/ST members may be exempted from the payment of registration fee. For the purpose of sharing the benefits as per clause 9, each household/family will be considered as a single unit.

Maximum households in a VSS shall be 365.

6.2 Eligibility for Membership in VSS

The inhabitants in the geographical area, directly or indirectly dependent on the forests located in the geographical area are eligible for membership.

The dependence on the forest will be categorized as follows:

i. Primary/Direct livelihood dependence

- (a) Those who go to the micro plan forest area for collecting forest produce primarily for own consumption.
- (b) Those who go to the micro plan forest area for collection of forest produce for sale outside

6.2.2 Secondary/Indirect dependence

- (b) Those who do not go to the forest for collecting forest produce but nevertheless get the produce in the course of exchange with primary dependent communities and live in the geographical area of VSS.
- (c) The above dependence but residing outside the geographical area of VSS.
(This category will not be eligible for membership)

6.2.3 Traditionally Nomadic Communities

The persons in this category may have regular/periodical livelihood dependence on the micro plan area. In the case of traditionally nomadic communities, short term and seasonal dependence is the norm. The short term and seasonal dependence of the nomadic communities can be accommodated within local rules of the VSS. The VSS will furnish the following information to the Dy. Ranger/Forester (1) the name of the community and individuals (2) the items of collection and quantity (3) season (in weeks) (4) code of conduct related to method of collection imposed by VSS on the nomadic group.

The VSS will incorporate these procedures while updating the micro plan.

These categories will be explained to the villagers in the village community meeting for VSS formation, by the R.O concerned. Ad-hoc Executive Committee will be constituted from the assembled, based on this categorization. Regular membership can be given during micro planning stage where the population will be divided into stakeholder groups. This process of membership will be completed by the completion of micro plan. The final membership list will be presented in the General Body for micro plan presentation and got approved and displayed in public.

For all subsequent meetings of the VSS, the member secretary of the VSSEC shall be the Convenor.

6.3 Enlisting new members in existing VSS

New members can be admitted to VSS only once in a year on the basis of recommendation to this effect by VSSEC to the DFO as per the following procedure:

If a person wants to become member of an existing VSS, he/she may request the Secretary of VSS for membership, explaining the nature of dependence/stakeholder ship. The Secretary shall entrust the Grievance Redress Cell (consisting of the President of VSS, Executive Secretary, one Executive Committee member and two members of VSS nominated for the purpose by the General Body) of the VSS for verification of facts. After detailed enquiries the report of the Cell shall specifically observe (1) whether dependence as claimed by the person is real or not and (2) reasons for non-inclusion/rejection (as member) previously, if any. The executive committee will examine the report in the presence of the applicant and will recommend inclusion as member if dependence is found to be real and the request as genuine. This shall be presented for the consideration of the General Body.

The General Body will deliberate on the list of persons for inclusion/rejection and approve or modify the list. The General Body shall critically examine the list and check if any eligible request has been rejected. The eligibility criteria are as above. The General Body shall examine the requests purely on the basis of the above eligibility criteria and modify the list only for inclusion of eligible requests from among the rejections/non-inclusions.

In case of rejection of request by the General Body, the executive shall inform the persons concerned explaining the absence of proof with regard to livelihood dependence on the forest area covered by the VSS micro plan. The aggrieved individuals may produce proof if any for consideration of the General Body. If the General Body is satisfied with the proof

rendered by the individual, favourable recommendation shall be forwarded for inclusion as member of VSS.

No new membership shall be given within one month preceding the date of the next election to VSSEC.

7. STRUCTURE OF VSS

7.1 General Body -Duties and Responsibilities

A General Body Meeting (GBM) of the VSS shall be held once in every six months to review the actions taken in pursuance to the approved micro plan, status of forest protection and functioning of the VSSEC. Under special circumstances, the GBM of the VSS may be convened on request of not less than 1/3rd of the VSS members to the Convenor of the GBM. Quorum for GBM will be 1/3rd of the total members.

The Secretary of the VSSEC shall be the Convenor of the GBM of the VSS and shall maintain the minutes of the meeting.

The members of VSS individually and collectively shall be responsible for

- e) ensuring protection of the PFM areas from encroachment, grazing, fires, illicit felling, poaching, thefts etc.
- f) ensuring execution of the activities in accordance with the approved micro plan through the executive committee.
- g) making other Villagers are of the importance of nature conservation and forest protection.
- h) ensuring protection of neighbouring forest areas not covered under PFM
- i) helping Forest Department in protection of other forest areas not covered under PFM

Members of VSS shall have the power to:

- apprehend the forest offenders and hand them over to the forest officers for taking action under the provision of the relevant Acts and Rules. Where forest offenders have been handed over to the concerned forest officers, the concerned officer shall be responsible to report back to the VSSEC the action taken by him.

The member-families in the VSS shall contribute free of charge a minimum of one day's effort or the equivalent in cash (in local wage rate) in a year for forest protection and monitoring. The rules for obtaining the contributions from its members shall be decided by the General Body. The contributions shall be credited and entered in register. Action against members in the event of non-contribution shall be prescribed as part of the local rules.

7.2 Formation and functioning of Sub-groups for Specific Tasks

The General Body of VSS will constitute sub-groups with members from various stakeholder groups. These sub-groups will be assigned specific tasks, related to forests or otherwise useful to community, and report to the General Body. They will meet at least once a month. The leaders of the sub-groups will interact with the executive once in three months.

The nominated members from stakeholder groups will be given the responsibility for the functioning of the sub-groups.

7.3 Executive Committee

7.3.1 Structure of Executive Committee

After formation of the VSS as explained above, VSSEC shall be constituted from the members of VSS to carry out the approved PFM plan, *the micro plan*. The VSSEC shall consist of the following members.

- | | | |
|-------|--|------------------------------|
| vi. | Nine elected representatives from the VSS (of the 9 members; at least 3 shall be women. There shall also be proportional representations from SC/ST communities (rounded off to the higher number. | Member |
| vii. | Grama Panchayat member of the concerned Panchayat ward. | Ex-officio member |
| viii. | A nominee from the Tribal Development Department (only in the case of VSS in which tribal members exceed 1/3 of the total membership) | Ex-officio member |
| ix. | Forester/Forest Guard having jurisdiction over the area. | Ex-officio Member Secretary. |

7.3.2 Duties and Responsibilities

- vii. The VSSEC shall meet at least once in every month.
- viii. The member Secretary shall be responsible for sending the minutes of the meeting of the VSSEC to the RO for information and advice. In case the Forest Range Officer finds that the decisions of the VSSEC are contrary to the approved micro plan or to the relevant Acts and Rules, he shall report the matter in writing to the DFO & the Conservator of Forests (CF) immediately and also inform the committee. The decision of the DFO on this will be binding on the committee.
- ix. If any member of the VSS is found to indulge in acts against the various forest laws and rules and becomes an accused in a forest offence or acts against the approved micro plan, he shall be debarred from the VSS by the VSSEC.
- x. The VSSEC along with the Member Secretary shall be responsible for preparation and execution of the micro plan.
- xi. The VSSEC shall be responsible for ensuring the general protection of forests.
- xii. The VSSEC shall be responsible for maintaining the **VSS Core Fund** and **VSS Operations Fund** (wherever provided) and for keeping proper accounts of income and expenditure in the prescribed formats.

7.3.3 Eligibility to become Executive Committee Member

Since VSS is an integrated body of different types of stakeholders (dependent communities) on the forest area protected and managed by them with the support of Forest Department, the Executive Committee shall necessarily have members representing all types of stakeholder groups in the VSS.

Out of the nine-elected Executive Committee Members, 6.2.2(a) category members shall be limited to two and representing two different families. One among the two shall be a woman. The remaining seven members shall represent different 6.2.1(a) and 1(b) categories of stakeholders. The tribal representation shall be proportional to their population in the VSS. Women representation shall be a minimum of three.

The eligibility to become an Executive Committee Member is minimum 2 years of active participation in PFM on behalf of the VSS. This eligibility criterion is not applicable during the first two years of formation of VSS, but is intended to be binding on members in the case of subsequent executive committees. Executive Committee Membership cannot be borne by anyone for more than two **consecutive** terms. Return to EC membership is possible only after a gap of four years from the last term of membership.

The Committee shall elect the President from the elected members. The term of President shall be co-terminus with that of the committee. The President of the VSSEC will be the ex-officio President of the VSS also. Only the elected members shall have voting rights. **50% of the Executive Committee Members (ie; 5 out of 9) shall constitute the quorum of the VSSEC.** The term of the committee shall be two years.

The Committee shall elect a Vice President. If the President is a male, the Vice President shall be a female and vice-versa.

One executive member shall be elected by the committee as Treasurer.

The Ex-officio member Secretary shall call the meeting of the VSSEC in consultation with the President and shall record and maintain the minutes of the meeting.

The RO shall be the returning officer for the election of members of VSSEC in the GBM of the VSS.

The approval of the DFO is mandatory for the VSSEC.

7.3.4 Election to the Executive Committee

The procedure for election to VSSEC should be outlined in the by-law of VSS. There it should be ensured that there is proper representation from each stakeholder groups in the VSSEC.

The election procedure of the Executive Committee should be completed before the end of the term of office of the incumbent Executive. The General Body for electing the new office bearers should be convened and the election procedure completed by the Range Officer during the last 30 days of the normal term of office (two years) and the list of the future office bearers should be kept ready. The new team of office bearers shall take charge at the end of the normal term of incumbent office. The Range Officer shall report the fact to the DFO (with a copy for information to the Conservator of Forests).

In case the Range Officer does not take timely action to convene the General Body Meeting for the election within the last 30 days as prescribed above, the President of the VSS shall officially request in writing to the Divisional Forest Officer (by registered post or in person) before the end of the 30 days period, with a copy to the Conservator of Forests. The Divisional Forest Officer shall ensure that the election is completed within 30 days from the last day of the normal term of office of the incumbent Executive Body and the new team of office bearers are in position by the 31st day, and report to CF about timely elections and transfer of power in all VSS in the Division. The CF will review to see that the above action is taken in time.

The normal term of office of the new Executive Body shall be two years from the date of assuming office. The previous Executive Body will function as the caretaker until the new Executive Body is in position. However, the authority of the caretaker EC will be limited to activities leading to election as well as overseeing timely operations dealing with forestry and forest protection. Expenditure, if any, during this interim period should get the approval of the General Body. The General Body convened for the purpose of election to the Executive shall settle the above expenditure before the election process begins.

7.4. Termination of VSS/ VSSEC

The DFO for sufficient reasons on record shall have powers to dissolve the VSSEC and/or the VSS after conducting due enquiry. The VSSEC shall be given an opportunity to

appeal against such orders to the CF within one month. The order of the CF in the matter shall be final.

In case the registration of a particular VSS is cancelled, the respective DFO or the R.O designated by him shall function as the Administrator to have control over the assets of the VSS. As soon as the new VSS is constituted for managing the same area, or inclusive of the same area managed by the previous one, these assets shall be transferred to the new VSS and utilized as funds for future management by it.

8. KERALA FOREST DEPARTMENT - Duties And Responsibilities

- ix) KFD shall provide technical assistance in the formulation and implementation of the micro plan.
- x) KFD shall make all efforts to get the finances for the implementation of the annual activities specified in the micro plan. For activities outside the micro plan, the KFD shall facilitate in procuring sufficient funds from other departments.
- xi) If the DFO is convinced that the VSS has carried out their duties satisfactorily in the protection of forest from encroachment, theft, illicit felling, fire, grazing etc, and for the activities specified in the micro plan, the amount earmarked for these works will be credited to the VSS. The fund, barring the amount to be compulsorily deposited as per KFD directions, can be utilized by the VSS for the implementation of various development programmes after approval of the general body.
- xii) The DFO or his nominated officer shall be responsible for the review of the activities of the VSS. The monthly review shall be conducted by the RO. The CF will review the programme every three months. The shortcomings and the observations noted during the review, shall be acted upon by the VSS.
- xiii) If the DFO finds that the funds provided for the activities in the micro plan are not utilized according to the plan or agreed conditions, he shall stop the implementation of the micro plan.
- xiv) The KFD will arrange for providing necessary training to VSS members in various forestry activities like raising nursery, planting, sustainable resource use and rural development etc. and organizational matters.
- xv) The VSS shall be trained to maintain the accounts books and registers.
- xvi) Forest officials shall educate the VSS and explain the provisions of Forest Acts and Rules. They shall exchange details of forest offenders in order to get the necessary timely assistance in detection of offences and successful prosecution.
- xvii) The Forest Department officials shall see that provisions in the micro plan are in consistent with the provisions of approved Working Plan. In any contradiction, the prescription of Working Plan will prevail.
- xviii) The Forest Department officials shall consult the respective VSS before any departmental management intervention, contrary to the PFM micro plan, becomes unavoidable in the management area of VSS as, may happen in some exceptional situations.
- xix) Providing Credibility Fund to VSS--This is given as a grant to the VSS as a gesture of good will for establishing the credibility of the Forest Department and also for establishing the basic infrastructure such as office, records and seed money for initiating various activities identified by the VSS.
- xx) Channeling financial support to VSS through Operational Fund for activities under PFM.
- xxi) Timely revisit of micro plans.
- xxii) The functional areas of VSSs and the essential PFM prescriptions along with other relevant/important information shall be added in an appropriate section in the working plan of the forest division, where working plans are in vogue. In other locations the prescriptions shall be entered in the land use prescriptions of the area.

9. SHARING OF BENEFITS.

On satisfactory achievement of the aims of VSS in terms of protection of forests and implementation of the activities in the micro plan, the VSS will be entitled to the benefits given below. The benefits will be sanctioned only on the recommendations of the VSSEC. Harvesting of all the forest produce in PFM area will be as per the silvicultural principles.

1. The VSS shall be entitled to collect the specified quantities and items of NTFP from the PFM areas as per the prescriptions in the micro plan.
2. The VSS shall be entitled to collect the specified quantities of fodder, fuel-wood, green manure or such other produce from PFM area for bonafide use of its members as per the prescriptions in the micro plan.
3. The VSS shall be entitled to collect specified quantities of bamboo and reeds for the bonafide use of its members from the VSS management area as per the prescriptions in the micro plan and at seigniorage rates or at any other concessional rate fixed by the Forest Department. Traditional Bamboo workers in the VSS are exempted from payment of value for bamboo/reeds vide G.O (MS) No. 12/2001/F&WLD dated 2.2.2001.
4. The VSS shall be entitled to 10% of the net revenue of the harvested forest produce from the plantation raised and protected by VSS under PFM, the VSS will also be entitled to 100% of the net revenue from the NTFPs from the forests and services rendered within the PFM area. The amount so received shall be credited to the VSS Core Fund. 75% of this amount shall be utilized (as Village Development Fund) for the village development activities, and the balance 25% will be kept under a separate head as Reserve Fund for Sustainable Forest Management.

10. MICRO PLAN

10.1 Description

The VSSEC shall prepare a micro plan for a period of 10 years in consultation with the local stakeholders, NGOs and the KFD. The micro plan shall be prepared through Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) involving all stakeholder particularly women and SC/ST user-groups.

- The plan shall include the prescriptions for the management of forests and village resource under the control of the VSS.
- The plan shall contain the details on production of fuel-wood, timber, fodder and other forest produce and annual harvestable quantities.
- The plan shall prescribe measures for the control of excessive biotic pressure on forests, for protection and restoration of forests to ensure sustainable flow of goods and services.
- The plan shall provide sustainable management prescriptions for the area by detailing harvesting practices, areas to be tackled and the yield. It shall also contain stakeholder-wise utilization plan for all forest benefits.
- The plan shall be prepared by judiciously integrating traditional/indigenous knowledge with modern scientific knowledge.
- The plan shall include other development programmes required by the communities, which will help in reducing dependency on the forests.
- The plan shall specify the activities to be supported by the KFD. Activities shall be monitored. The plan can be amended/re-visited when that becomes unavoidable for attaining the basic objectives.
- The plan shall essentially cover various aspects related to sustainable resource management and development such as:

- i. **Forest Protection** (i.e, demarcation of areas, prevention of fire/ unauthorized entry/ grazing/felling of trees/green manure collection/harvesting of forest produce etc.)
- ii. **Forest maintenance** (i.e., silvi-cultural practices, regeneration, rehabilitation, soil and water conservation etc.)
- iii. **NTFP Development** (i.e, planting and maintenance of fuel, fodder, medicinal plants, pasture, green manure and other activities promoting sustainable harvesting and improved marketing of NTFP by value addition)
- iv. **Resource Management on Non-Forest Lands** (i.e, soil and water conservation measures in the fringe villages).
- v. **Other activities** – Community development requirements of the village.

The micro plan, thus prepared shall be presented in the GBM of the VSS for its approval. It shall be then sent to the DFO who in turn shall forward it to the CF with his comments and modifications, if any. The CF will have the authority for effecting amendments in the plan, if need be. All activities covered under any other approved plan/Project for the area selected for PFM, shall be included in the micro plan. But no non-forestry activity or any activity contrary to the existing Acts and Rules and to Working Plan prescriptions shall be undertaken in the forest areas.

The approved micro plan will be implemented through the VSSEC.

The Conservator of Forests shall ensure that the micro plan is revised and the new plan is ready for implementation by the end of the 10th year of the currency of a plan.

10.2 Re-visiting Micro Plans

Whenever the VSS and Forest Department feel that the existing micro plan is too insufficient to address the emerging real life situation there, such micro plan may be subjected to revision, with the approval of the General Body. The steps for revising the micro plan shall be the same as that for preparing a new one. The expenditure for such revisions within the period covered by the existing micro plan (10 years) shall be borne by the VSS.

11. MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU)

A memorandum of understanding in the following format shall be signed between the Executive Committee of the VSS and the Range Officer (on behalf of Forest Department) before the starting of the implementation of the Microplan.

FORMAT OF MOU

We, the President and Secretary of the Executive Committee of the VSS ofVillage of.....Forest Range (on behalf of the VSS) do hereby undertake individually and collectively to perform the duties and shoulder the responsibility as detailed in Government Order No.....dated.....for proper management, planning and protection of the forest areas as per the Appendix given below.

APPENDIX

1. Name of the VSS :
 2. Registration No. of VSS :
 3. Forest Division :
 4. Forest Range :
 5. District :
 6. Taluk :
 7. Village :
 8. PFM Forest area (Surveyed sketch should be signed by both the parities) :
 9. Legal status of the PFM forest area :
 10. Extent of PFM forest area (in ha.) :
 11. Boundaries of the PFM forest area :
- North—
South—
East—
West—

We understand that the usufructory benefits as detailed in the aforesaid GO shall be allowed only upon satisfactory observance of rules by this Executive Committee and by members of the VSS as per the aforesaid GO. A copy of the aforesaid GO is annexed herewith duly signed on every page in evidence of our having understood the same in letter and spirit. It is hereby agreed that this MOU will come into effect from

President of the Executive Committee	:	Signature
		Name and Address
Secretary of Executive Committee	:	Signature
		Name and Address
Forest Range Officer (on behalf of KFD)	:	Signature
		Name and Address
Witness	1.	Signature
		me and Address
	2.	Signature.....
		Name and Address

Place:

Date

12. VSS OPERATIONAL FUND

1. The VSS operational fund is the fund received as an advance from the funding agency to carry out forest development and protection activities. Each funding agency may have its own stipulations regarding maintenance of separate Operational Fund account.
2. All the forest development and protection activities would be funded through this fund in accordance with the provisions built in the micro plan. Outflows from this fund would be
 - Cost of planting and other forestry investments in accordance with the provisions of the micro plan.
 - Share of benefits to the VSS/member of VSS as agreed and set down in the guidelines.
 - Funds for entry point activities and other development activities.

The VSS operational fund shall be operated by the VSS President and the Secretary subject to decision of Executive Committee.

13. CORE FUND

13.1 Description

Core Fund is the asset of VSS consisting of various contributions and savings. This is sub-divided into **(1) Reserve Fund for Sustainable Management of Forests (2) Village Development Fund.**

VSS will initiate the Core Fund by depositing the membership fee collected. Benefits received by the VSS by way of implementation of the micro plan and from other sources shall also be deposited in this fund. This fund will be utilized as (1) Reserve Fund for Sustainable Management of Forests and (2) Village Development Fund.

The VSS Core Fund shall be jointly operated by Secretary of VSS and at least 2 members (one female) of the Executive Committee, chosen for the term for Executive Committee.

13.2 Reserve Fund for Sustainable Forest Management

The funds set apart as ***Reserve Fund for Sustainable Forest Management*** shall be utilized for forest management in the PFM area based on approved micro plan. The transaction and expenditure for management shall be controlled by Forest Department. The expenditure so incurred shall be audited by the internal audit system to be developed for the purpose by the DFO.

It is expected that after some time the VSS would be able to attain self-reliance and the funds at its command would be sufficient to meet the requirement. The fixed deposit kept in reserve for this purpose should be sufficiently large by then, so that the Government assistance could be withdrawn safely. A target of 10 years, ie the original micro plan period, should be taken as the normal duration to attain this level of self-reliance. Hence the VSS should be empowered to utilize the reserve fund from the 11th year onwards of formation.

The funds shall be kept as fixed deposit in Nationalized or Co-operative banks. The Secretary and President of VSS shall be joint signatories for maintaining the fixed deposit.

13.3 Village Development Fund

VSS shall prepare a budget for the Village Development Fund and utilize it after getting approval of the General Body. The implementation and expenditure will be monitored by the VSS and reported duly in the periodical review.

13.4 Auditing

The VSS has to follow the general procedure outlined below:

The auditing should be done half yearly and yearly. The half yearly auditing is to be done during January by two members of the General Body (not Executive Committee members) chosen for this purpose

Annual auditing is to be done during July by the above two members along with the representative of the Divisional Forest Officer appointed by him for the purpose.

The above audit reports should be presented in the ensuing GB and submitted to the Divisional Forest Officer through the Range Officer.

14. REVIEW OF PFM

The VSS Executive will evaluate the VSS performance for the pervious month and submit to the section Forester/Deputy Ranger who will in-turn review and record specific remarks. This will be submitted to the Range Officer who will review PFM every month and report VSS wise to DFO. The DFO will consolidate the inputs from the Range Officer for Conservators review every quarter. The Conservator will submit quarterly report on PFM and submit consolidated report to Regional CCF. The Regional CCF will review the report and submit consolidated report to Principal Chief Conservator of Forests. Principal Chief Conservator of Forests will submit half-yearly report to the Government.

15. INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENT FOR TRAINING, MONITORING, REVIEW AND EVALUATION

The staff of KFD and members of VSS will be given adequate training in PFM. Government will appoint a forest officer not below the rank of a CCF as State Level Co-ordinator.

A PFM Cell for the State will be constituted to explore possibilities of PFM to suit various forestry situations. The PFM Cell will help in developing such models, test and modify them in the field, provide training in various aspects of participatory approaches to forest management, conduct internal assessment and studies. The PFM Cell will be headed by the State Level PFM Co-ordinator.

Evaluation of the performance of PFM will be done by the Forest Department through an independent agency as and when it is required.

GOVERNMENT OF KERALA

Abstract

Forest & Wildlife Department-Implementation of Participatory Habitat Management-outside designated forest areas-Guidelines-Approved Orders issued.

FOREST & WILDLIFE (E) DEPARTMENT

G.O (MS) No. 32/06/F&WLD

Dated, Thiruvananthapuram, 30/9/06

- Read: (1) G.O (MS) No. 26/06/F&WLD dated, 20..07..2006
(2) Letter No. E&TW-431/05 dated, 2..6..06 from the Chief Conservator of Forests (E&TW)

ORDER

As per the GO read above, Government have issued Revised Guidelines for the implementation of the Participatory Forest Management (PHM) in Kerala. As per the letter read as 2nd paper above the Chief Conservator of Forests (E&TW) has forwarded the Guidelines for implementing the Participatory Habitat Forest Management outside designated forest areas for approval.

Government has examined the matter in detail and are pleased to approve the Guidelines for implementation of Habitat Forest Management outside designated forest areas.

The revised guidelines is appeneded to this order.

(BY ORDER OF THE GOVERNOR)

CHANDRIKA DEVI
Deputy Secretary

To

The Secretary to Government of India
The Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India,
Paryavaran Bhavan, Lodhi Road, New Delhi
The Accountant General (A&E/Audit) Kerala
Thiruvananthapuram.
The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests
Thiruvananthapuram
The Chief Conservator of Forests (E&TW)
Finance Department vide U.O(F) No. 61708/AW-B1/06/Fin dated, 30/8/06
Stock file, Office Copy

GOVERNMENT OF KERALA
FOREST AND WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT
PARTICIPATORY HABITAT MANAGEMENT
OUTSIDE DESIGNATED FOREST AREAS
GUIDELINES—2006
(Vide Provisions under item-4.1 of Guidelines 2006 for
Participatory Forest Management)

INTRODUCTION

Our National Forest Policy envisages that one third of the land should be under Forest cover. In a State like Kerala, we cannot find wastelands or open, unused lands for afforestation works. The only option left is to have more areas under tree cover. This can be done only by encouraging people to plant more trees in public places and in their homesteads by ensuring participation of the people. Planting trees in public places is a routine ever since we started 'Vanamahotsava' in 1952. Our experience so far is that most of the seedlings thus planted failed to establish chiefly due to poor after care, which in farm is due to paucity of fund and manpower. Involving local people in affecting public places is the only solution. Thus, to organize people as local units and to make them more tree conscious, local level institutions have to be made, called **Haritha Samithy**, which will oversee all the afforestation activities in that ward. This will ensure peoples participation and make the activities more transparent. This has been tested in the Reserved Forests by the Territorial Wing by forming V.S.S and found to be a success. The Central Government agencies funding the various afforestation programmes now insist that funds will be given only if the projects are undertaken with peoples participation. Thus, for implementing such schemes also, 'Haritha Samithies' are to be formed.

The Social Forestry Wing of the Kerala Forest Department is in a transition stage. The wing has to reorient its activities with a wider goal of environmental protection and biodiversity conservation. Production and management of forestry resources outside forests also should be taken care of. The wing was established during 1982. From 1983-1993 the wing implemented world bank aided Social Forestry programme. During the second phase of the activities ie., from 1993 onwards, the Social Forestry has been entrusted with the Compensatory Afforestation programme within the Reserved Forests. Since that scheme also is about to over, now the services of the wing has to be fully utilized in the afforestation programmes outside the Reserved Forests. The Bio-diversity has to be protected and the soil and moisture conservation works have to be ensured. Moreover we cannot depend on our natural forests for all our timber needs. Timber is now imported from other countries and much scarcity is felt with the prices soaring high day by day. We have to encourage the common man to meet his timber needs from his homestead which will be cheaper to him and by doing this more trees will be planted thereby protecting our environment.

The Government have now, as per G.O.(Rt). No.221/05/F&WLD dated 6.04.2005, sanctioned Territorial Jurisdiction to the Assistant Conservators of Forests (Social Forestry) in each district for the purpose of implementing Social Forestry Programmes and to avail Government of India funds. Hence guidelines have to be issued based on which various activities should be taken up ensuring the smooth functioning of the local institutions, called Haritha Samithies.

Item 4.1 of Participatory Forest Management Guidelines 2004 provides for implementation of suitable PFM model in areas outside reserved/vested forests, facing threats from ecological degradation. These guidelines are meant for implementation of such PFM models in areas outside reserved/vested forests under the auspices of Social Forestry Wing.

2. NAME

(1) The generic name for the process of participatory afforestation outside forest areas will be Participatory Habitat Management (PHM).

(2) Abbreviations

PHM	-	Participatory Habitat Management
GHS	-	Grama Haritha Samithy
PHS	-	Panchayath Haritha Samithy
BHS	-	Block Haritha Samithy
SHG	-	Self Help Groups
VSS	-	Vana Samrakshana Samithy
EDC	-	Eco Development Committee

3. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the PHM programme are:

1. To undertake environment protection and conservation outside forests through the local level **peoples participation**.
2. To establish local level institutions known as 'Haritha samithies' for afforestation of areas outside the Reserve Forests.
3. To formulate rules for the afforestation of areas outside the Forest and to implement it with the people's participation, through 'Haritha samithy'.
4. To encourage private forestry among land owners and
5. To assist stakeholders in marketing the products.

4. SCOPE OF THE PROGRAMME

One of the major causes of biodiversity degradation in Kerala is the excessive anthropogenic pressure on natural resources. Biodiversity has to be protected. Our forests alone cannot meet our growing timber needs. At the same time we cannot sacrifice the rich biodiversity. The common man has to be encouraged to meet his timber needs from his own homestead or from public land outside nature reserves. More over, the realization of PFM as a thrust area for financial assistance from various sources for afforestation and conservation programmes encourage us to develop PFM for protection, development and management of natural resources outside designated forest areas also.

5. AREAS TO BE SELECTED FOR PHM

- i. Ecologically fragile areas (Seashore, Inland water bodies and shores, wetlands, water courses etc. These are Public Trust properties with open and limited access areas)
- ii. Biodiversity rich habitats (sacred groves, bird habitats etc..)
- iii. Institutional lands (Land available with public and private institutions)
- iv. Public lands (Land available with various Public Departments)
- v. Plantations (Own/lease lands with private individuals and companies)
- vi. Homesteads
- vii. Any other land found suitable for PHM by the appropriate authority.

6. PROCEDURE FOR DEVELOPING PARTICIPATORY HABITAT MANAGEMENT (PHM) OUTSIDE DESIGNATED FOREST AREAS

Under PHM the agreed management activities will be planned, implemented, maintained and monitored by the institutions created for the purpose, viz; Grama Haritha Samithy, Panchayat Haritha Samithy, Block Haritha Samithy and District Level Haritha Co-ordination Committee. These will be constituted with the help of suitable facilitators and the Kerala Forest Department (KFD). Participatory process first requires creating a good rapport, trust and partnership between the KFD and the local people.

7. THE INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISM

7.1 Grama Hartiha Samithy (GHS)

This will be a ward level association of people actively interested in afforestation and nature conservation. The association will be open to all residents of the ward and there shall be only one such association in each ward. The Ex-officio Secretary, (Forester/Forest Guard) will explain the programme and those who are willing to come together for the cause for afforestation and environmental conservation will form an association called the Grama Hairtha Samithy (GHS) with a well defined Memorandum of Association (MOA). Each GHS will nominate four representatives, two men and two women who will represent the GHS in the Panchayat Haritha Samithy (PHS). The GHS will be affiliated with the PHS along with the MOA. The PHS will award an affiliation number to the GHS.

The GHS will work with the people in the ward and prepare micro plans for afforestation and environmental conservation in the ward and adjoining natural habitats. The nominated representatives will provide effective leadership for this as well as subsequent activities.

7.2 Panchayat Haritha Samithy (PHS)

PHS will have members from two sources:

(i) Members

The nominee representatives of GHS @ 4 members from each Panchayat Ward, of which 50% should be women.

(ii) Ex-officio Members

Forester having jurisdiction of the area,
Grama Panchayat Ward members,
Panchayat Secretary,
Panchayat level Government executives,

Representatives of four registered NGOs (maximum 4 members) nominated by the representatives of GHSs.

7.2.1 General Body of PHS

The combined strength of (i) & (ii) in 7.2.1 above will constitute the General Body. The Ex-officio Secretary of the PHS shall be the Secretary of PHS. The Forester having jurisdiction over the Panchayath shall be the ex-officio Secretary of the PHS and he/she shall convene the meeting.

7.2.2 President of PHS

The President of the PHS will be elected from the nominee representatives of GHSs by the members of the PHS

7.2.3 Duties and Responsibilities of General Body

A General Body Meeting (GBM) of the PHS shall be held once in every three months to review the actions taken in pursuance to the approved micro plan of the GHS. Under special circumstances, the General Body Meeting of the PHS may be convened on request of not less than 1/3rd of the PHS members to the Convener of the General Body Meeting. Quorum for General Body Meeting will be 1/3rd of the PHS members.

The members of PHS individually and collectively shall be responsible for

- (a) ensuring execution of the activities in accordance with the approved microplan.
- (b) making villagers aware of the importance of afforestation and environmental conservation

7.2.4 The Executive Committee

An executive committee of the PHS shall be constituted with the following members:

- | | | |
|------|---|------------------------|
| i. | One representative each (from among the 4 in the GB) from the constituent GHSs. | Members
Ex-officio |
| ii. | All Grama Panchayat Ward members | Ex-officio |
| iii. | An elected representative of an active local NGO | Ex-officio |
| iv. | Panchayat level Government executives | Ex-officio |
| v. | Forester having jurisdiction over the area. | Secretary (Ex-officio) |

The term of President shall be co-terminus with that of the PHS. Only the members of PHS shall have voting rights. In case of equality of votes the ex-officio member secretary shall cast his vote. 1/3rd of the members of the PHS executive committee shall constitute the quorum. The term of the committee shall be two years.

- vi) The Ex-officio member secretary shall convene the meeting of the Executive Committee in consultation with the president and shall record and maintain the minutes of the meeting.
- vii) The RO shall be the returning officer for the election of members of Executive Committee in the General Body Meeting of the PHS.

7.2.5 Duties and Responsibilities of Executive Committee (EC)

- i. The EC shall meet at least twice in a year
- ii. The member secretary shall be responsible for sending the minutes of the meeting of the EC for information and advice.
- iv. If any member of the PHS is found to indulge in acts contrary to the aims and objectives of the PHS or indulges in criminal offences, he/she shall be debarred from the PHS by the General Body.
- v. The PHS will open a Savings Bank Account known as the Core Fund of PHS
- vi. The EC shall be responsible for implementing the PHS Operations Fund and Core Fund and for maintaining proper accounts of the expenditure incurred, in the prescribed formats and procedure.

7.3 Block Haritha Samithy (BHS)

7.3.1 General Body of BHS

Chairman - Assistant Conservator of Forests having jurisdiction of the area (Ex-officio)

Member Secretary - Range Officer having jurisdiction of the area (Ex-officio)

- (i) Chairpersons of all PHS
- (j) One woman member nominated by each PHS
- (k) Member Secretaries of all PHS (Ex-officio)
- (l) Other Range Officers having jurisdiction of the area (Ex-officio)
- (m) Other ex-officio Members- Block Development Officer, Block level Officers of Agriculture, Animal husbandry, Soil Conservation, SC/ST Welfare, Industries, Panchayat, Health, PWD, Irrigation, Fisheries, Co-operation, DRDA, Education and other land development officers and representative of the lead bank of that area.
- (n) Representative of a reputed NGO with proven track record in environmental conservation and related fields. The NGO shall be nominated by the ACF.

Technical experts

Note: Technical experts in relevant fields can be special invitees to the General Body.

The Member Secretary shall convene the General Body meeting every six months, to review the activities of the BHS. The quorum for the General Body shall be not less than 30% of representatives from PHS. The fund received from external sources by the BHS will be maintained in a nationalized bank/co-operative bank as a joint current account of the Chairman and the Ex-officio Member Secretary of BHS and released to the PHS's Operations Fund as per the decision of BHS Executive Committee.

7.3.2 Duties and Responsibilities of BHS

- a) Create massive peoples' movement through involvement of PHS and GHS for afforestation and environmental conservation outside designated forest areas.
- b) Identify and prioritize critical issues and develop plans to address them.
- c) Create *Afforestation and Environmental Conservation Fund* by contributions from various sources and develop an effective system for maintenance of accounts and utilization.
- d) Formation of PHS and GHS wherever they are not in existence following the guidelines and report to the executive body.
- e) Selection of nominees from the BHS to be included in the executive body, which shall not exceed more than half the number of PHS and ensure minimum 50% women representation.
- f) Make sure that contractors, middlemen, intermediate agencies are not permitted to be engaged for execution of any of the works under the scheme. The works will be executed through GHS, Self-Help Groups (SHG) associated with Panchayats/VSS/EDCs or specific user association registered with the PHS and the custodian of the land on which the stakeholder people under the user association depend for natural resources.
- g) Identify and Nominate technical experts to be included as Ex-officio members in the Executive Body, for helping in project formulation and implementation wherever necessary.
- h) Constitute technical teams to evaluate the PHS level micro plans.
- i) Consider the PHS level micro plans and take necessary decisions based on the evaluation presented by the technical teams.

7.3.3 Executive Body:

There shall be an Executive Committee of the BHS with the following members

- (a) Assistant Conservator of Forests -Chairperson
- (b) Range Officer - Member Secretary cum Chief Executive Officer (Ex-officio) (Convenor)
- (c) Nominees from the General Body. One from each PHS and at least 50% of them shall be women. The other members will be nominated by the General Body.
- (d) Other ex-officio Members- Block Development Officer, Block level Officers of Agriculture, Animal husbandry, Soil Conservation, SC/ST Welfare, Industries, Panchayat, Health, PWD, Irrigation, Fisheries, Co-operation, DRDA, Education Land development officers and representative of the lead bank of that area.
- (e) Technical experts in relevant fields nominated by the General Body (Special invitees). They will not have voting rights.

The Member Secretary shall convene the Executive Body meeting once in three months and the quorum for the meeting shall be 1/3rd of members.

7.3.4 Duties and Responsibilities

The Executive body shall be responsible for guidance, co-operation, supervision, periodical reporting, monitoring, documentation and dissemination of activities by their constituent PHS and maintain a record of all assets created through the activities.

- a) Ensure proper registration of PHS in the BHS as per prescribed MOU and the registration of BHS under the Societies Registration Act, 1860.
- b) Ensure that the approved PHS level micro plans are communicated to the concerned PHS.
- c) Request initial fund for preparing project wise plan, in the prescribed format and submit certificates of non-diversion, non-embezzlement and fulfillment of conditions laid down in funding guidelines and sanction order, along with the request for further release of grants.
- d) Develop mechanism for co-ordination and channeling the funds from other departments, agencies and NGOs operating in the area and receive funds from other sources including various centrally sponsored schemes on mutually agreed terms.
- e) Review the working of PHS and recommend changes if any.
- f) Define requirements and modalities of recruitment of contract staff and place before the District Level Co-ordination Committee.
- g) Develop eligibility criteria for incentives and rewards to PHS and GHS, Self Help Groups/User Associations and also provide incentives based on performance.
- h) Ensure that the PHS deposits funds in separate operational accounts in Nationalized/Co-operative bank and release the amount earmarked for all PHS promptly as prescribed by the funding agency.
- i) Oversee that the project is completed within the project period and copies of final report submitted to the funding agency through the District Co-ordination Committee.
- j) Ensure that no diversion of fund from one PHS to another is made save in exceptional circumstances with prior approval of the funding agency.
- k) Ensure that the decisions of the General Body are implemented promptly.

7.4 District Co-ordination Committee:

There shall be a District Co-ordination Committee with the following members:

- | | | |
|----------|---|---|
| Chairman | - | President, District Panchayat |
| Convener | - | Assistant Conservator of Forests, Social Forestry |
- (a) District Collector or his nominee
 - (b) Secretary, District Panchayat
 - (c) District Planning Officer
 - (d) District level officers of development departments
 - (e) Member Secretaries of BHS
 - (f) One non-official nominee from each BHS
 - (g) Representative of a reputed NGO with proven track record in nature conservation and related fields

7.4.1 Duties and Responsibilities

- a) Approval of modalities for recruitment of contract staff.
- b) Develop eligibility criteria for incentives and rewards, and selection of BHS for rewards.

- c) Monitoring and evaluation of performance of BHSs and submitting reports to the funding agency.
- d) Recommend corrective steps for improving the performances of BHS so that the grants to BHS are not terminated by the funding agency due to non-utilization of funds as prescribed or lack of adequate progress in implementing the schemes.
- e) Recommend to the funding agency or the concerned authority, extension of time for completion of projects by BHS.
- f) To ensure that the afforestation and conservation activities are in harmony with various other district level activities and action plans.
- g) Identify the appropriate funding agencies for activities to be taken up under Participatory Habitat Management (PHM) and submission of proposals through proper channel for funds.
- h) Recommend and support institutional arrangements for marketing timber and other products created through the activities.
- i) Constitute provisions for setting apart adequate share of such benefits to the PHS for future Habitat Management by the constituent user groups/stakeholder groups.
- j) Constitution of Monitoring Committee as required by funding agency.

7.5 The State Level Co-ordination Committee for NAP monitoring shall monitor the activities under PHM also.

8. SHARING OF BENEFITS

PHM is implemented in lands outside forest areas and the owners/custodians are private people, State Government departments or other agencies. Since the ownership of the land is divided among so many different types of legal persons, the sharing of benefits will have to be worked out independently for each situation. The landowner and the corresponding stakeholders if any will have to be identified and they should enter into Memorandum of Understanding specifying responsibilities and mutual obligations. The benefit sharing will be agreed upon by both parties as part of responsibilities and mutual obligations and these will be legally binding.

9. MICRO PLAN

The PHS shall prepare ward wise micro plans for a period of 10 years in consultation with the stakeholder groups/user-groups and the custodian of the land. The micro plan shall be prepared through a process of detailed field work. The plan shall,

- include the prescriptions for the management of the natural habitats and forestry/tree resources in the PHS area.
- prescribe measures for the management of the resources to ensure sustainable flow of goods and services.
- provide sustainable management prescriptions for the area by detailing the harvesting practices suggested if any.
- specify the activities to be undertaken, activities to be monitored and prescribe mechanisms for amending the plan whenever necessary.
- essentially cover various aspects related to natural resource management.

The micro plan, prepared ward wise shall be presented before the Grama Sabha convened specifically for the purpose. This will be discussed thread bare and modified before finalizing the micro plan. The micro plan will be then presented in the General Body Meeting of the PHS for its approval. It shall be then sent to the Block Haritha Samithy (BHS) which in turn shall technically and financially evaluate the proposals through technical committees and approve the PHS wise Projects.

10. PHS OPERATIONS FUND

- (o) The PHS will open savings bank account, known as operations fund, in a convenient nationalized/scheduled/co-operative bank. This will be maintained as a joint/singly operated account as prescribed by the funding agency.
- (p) The cost of investments for PHM will be put in the PHS operations fund.
- (q) All the development activities would be funded through this fund in accordance with the provisions built in the approved micro plan.
- (r) In the beginning, an advance limited to the requirement of three months will be given to the PHS for undertaking the activities as per the requirement of the Annual Action Plan based on the approved micro plan. On successful execution of the works, the PHS will forward the vouchers to the member secretary BHS. The BHS will scrutinize the vouchers and the member secretary BHS will pass them. The amount passed by the BHS will be communicated to the PHS and the amount will be transferred to the Core fund of PHS.

11. CORE FUND

A core fund shall be constituted by the PHS to deposit the membership fees collected from the GHSs. This will be an account jointly maintained by the member secretary PHS and a member nominated by the PHS (to be designated as the treasurer of PHS), for maintaining the account. This shall be deposited in a convenient nationalized/scheduled/co-operative bank. This fund will be utilized for facilitating the micro planning and meeting the expenditure incurred on account of development works. This will be supplemented by way of payment received for implementation of the micro plan. The PHS can utilize this fund, for various activities for furthering the objectives of the PHM.

12. MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

The PHS, the stakeholders/user groups and the custodian of the land in which the micro plans are to be implemented will enter into Memorandum of Understanding for furthering the objectives of the PHM in the appended format.

A memorandum of understanding in the following format shall be signed among the PHS, stakeholder group/user group and the custodian of the land as a pre-requisite for starting the implementation of the Micro plan.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

We, the President and Secretary of the PHS ofGrama Panchyat, ofTaluk.....District, the representatives ofstakeholder group.....user group and the custodian of the land described in the attached schedule do hereby undertake individually and collectively to perform the duties and shoulder the responsibility as detailed in Government Order No.....dated.....for proper planning, management and sustainable utilization of the resources as per the Appendix given below.

APPENDIX

1. *Name of the stakeholder group/user group* :
2. *District* :
3. *Block* :
4. *Grama Panchayat* :
5. *Ward* :
6. *Village and Survey Nos.* :
7. *Extent of Site Specific Plan Area* :
8. *Social Forestry Division* :
9. *Social Forestry Range* :
10. *PHM Area (Surveyed sketch signed by the three parities)* :
11. *Extent of Site Specific Plan Area* :
12. *Legal status of the Site Specific Plan Area* :
13. *Boundaries of the Site Specific Plan Area* :

North—

South—

East—

West—

We understand that the usufructory benefits as detailed in the aforesaid GO shall be allowed only on satisfactory observance of the responsibilities and obligations of the stakeholder group/user group as per the aforesaid GO. A copy of the aforesaid GO is annexed herewith duly signed on every page in evidence of our having understood the same in letter and spirit. It is hereby agreed that this MOU will come into effect from

President of the PHS

*Signature.....
Name and Address*

Secretary of PHS

*Signature
Name and Address*

Custodian of the land

*Signature
Name and Address*

Representatives of user group

*Signature
Name and Address*

*Witness 1. Signature.....
Name and Address*

*2 Signature.....
Name and Address.*

Place:

Date: