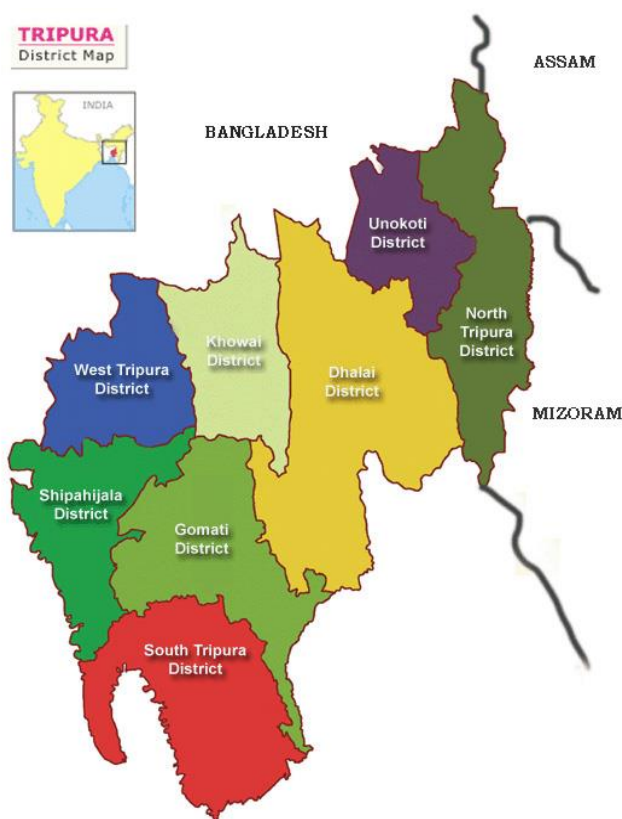


Village Development Planning and Implementation Committee Guideline



Indo-German Development Cooperation

**Climate Change Adaptation Programme in the Himalaya,
Component II: Tripura. Climate Resilience of Forest
Ecosystems, Biodiversity & Adaptive Capacities of Forest
Dependent Communities**

BMZ No.: 2015 67 650 (Grant) & 2015 67 643 (Loan)

**Tripura Forest Department
Government of Tripura**

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Abbreviations / Acronyms

ADC	Autonomous District Council
ANR	Aided/Augmented/Assisted Natural Regeneration
AWPB	Annual Work Plan Budget
ASHA	Accredited Social Health Activist
BPL	Below Poverty Line
CEPF	Community Engagement Planning Framework
CREFLAT	Climate Resilience of Forest Ecosystems, Biodiversity & Adaptive Capacities of Forest Dependent Communities
DPMA	District Project Management Authority
EPA	Entry Point Activity
ESMF	Environment and Social Management Framework
FPIC	Free, Prior and Informed Consent
GB	Governing Body
GP	Gram Panchayat
GRM	Grievance Redressal Mechanism
IGDC	Indo German Development Cooperation
JFM	Joint Forest Management
KfW	Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau
LRP	Livelihood Restoration Plan
LRPC	Livelihood Restoration Planning Committee or also Livelihood Improvement Planning Committee
MC	Monitoring Committee
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NRM	Natural Resource Management
PAP	Project Affected People
Para	<i>Hamlets in each Village</i>
PDS	Public Distribution System
PMA	Project Management Authority
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PVTG	Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups
TA	Technical Assistant
TFD	Tripura Forest Department
ToR	Terms of Reference
TTAADC	Tripura Tribal Autonomous Area Development Council
VC	Village Council/Committee
VCW	Village Community Workers
VDP	Village Development Plan
VDPIC	Village Development Planning and Implementation Committee

1 Introduction

1.1 Legal background

Para 2.1.10 of the **Separate Agreement** stated that at the village level the Village Development Plan Implementation Committee (VDPIC) will be the main institution involved in the planning processes, VDPIC will build linkages with the Village Committee (VC) and various other village-level committees and sub-committees such as the monitoring committee, Biodiversity Management Committee (BMC), Joint Forest Management Committee (JFMC), and others to ensure smooth delivery of the project activities at the grassroots level.

Para 2.1.11 further states that while the VDPICs have overall responsibility for project activities in the villages implemented on *private land, patta land, and other village common lands*, the JFMCs will be involved for implementation, monitoring and maintenance of project activities undertaken on *forest land*.

1.2 Definition of 'Village' in CREFLAT for VDPIC

A 'Village' in the Project: Climate Resilience of Forest Ecosystems, Biodiversity & Adaptive Capacities of Forest Dependent Communities (CREFLAT) for VDPIC means a Gram Panchayat (GP) or Village Committee (VC). GP or VC are composed of several *paras* or hamlets. Thus, a Village for this guideline would mean a group of paras with all the households therein forming the present-day Gram Panchayat or Village Committee/Council (tribal dominated villages within the ADC areas) as notified by the competent authority. The land would include all private land, patta land, other village common lands, Government Khas lands and also forests lands adjoining the village/para boundaries within which the village or para communities have been exercising their traditional rights of using and collecting forest produces.

2 Definition of VDPIC

VDPIC is an independent, formal, democratic, inclusive village-based community institution. Each village (GP/VC) for planning and implementation of project activities, comprising of paras, will form a VDPIC. Adult inhabitants, represented generally by the husband and wife, or eldest adult male and female from every household of every Para of the GP/VC will form the VDPIC. The VDPIC shall be registered with the District Project Director (DPD), CREFLAT Project.

VDPIC is the field-level or village-level project implementation authority. The VDPIC, with support from VCW/TA/TO at DPMA will be responsible for preparing the participatory Village Development Plan¹ (VDP), and implementation, monitoring and ensuring sustainability of project interventions at village level as contained in the VDP guideline. The VDPIC will sign an MoU with the DPD or representative at the level of Forest Range Officer (under which the VDPIC falls), indicating mutual obligations, rights and responsibilities under the project.

The **VDPIC** will be responsible for implementation of project activities in **private, patta and other village common lands**, while **JFMC** would be involved in the **implementation, monitoring and maintenance of project activities** in **forest land** in their village vicinity over which the village/para communities have been using for their sustenance. However, VDPIC being the main institution involved in planning, therefore, even the envisaged activities of JFMC in forest land (such as plantations, and SWC) would require to be reflected in the VDP of the VDPIC. The Entry Point Activity/ies (EPA) to be implemented by the VDPIC as per the approved guideline will also require to be reflected in the VDP.

¹As per approved Participatory Village Development Planning Guideline of CREFLAT.

3 Unique name of each VDPIC and Registration with DPD

- Every VDPIC will have a unique name as per the name of the GP/VC. The enrolment or the registration of the VDPIC with the DPD, IGDC CREFLAT shall be done carrying the unique name of each of the GP/VC.
- Area Beat Officer of TFD will facilitate in the enrolment of the VDPIC with DPD, of IGDC CREFLAT Project.

4 Process of Formation and Constitution of VDPIC

4.1 Preparatory Meeting

- Pre-requisite to Preparatory Meeting is the appointment of Village Community Worker (VCW) and the designated Forest Beat Officer, who had been already adequately trained on CREFLAT's project objectives, activities, and implementation processes including on VDPIC formation and constitution, and associated processes of social and environment safeguards (e.g., CEPF & ESMF).
- Under the overall supervision and guidance of the concerned DPMA, the designated VCW and Forest Beat Officer will take the lead to organize a first round of meetings with the community leaders / panchayat/VC members including members of the traditional community institutions where they exist to initiate a dialogue informally.
- Prior to this, the VCW and/or Beat Officer will meet community representative / traditional head / elected ward member of each Para -if applicable- of the Village to inform about the CREFLAT project, participatory process of formation of VDPIC through para representatives, and process of selection/election of para representative to the VDPIC executive committee. The VCW/Beat Officer will invite the heads of households from every para in the formal meeting to be held subsequently at the Panchayat office or any other designated place.
- At this informal stage, it would be helpful to walk around the paras/hamlets or settlement, and meet as many people as possible and convey the message, inviting adult members from every household besides their representatives. Walking around paras/hamlets should give also first ocular assessment of environmental issues.

4.2 Seeding of the concept of VDPIC in the General Meeting

- At the appointed day for formal meeting, the VCW and Beat Officer with support from the concerned Technical Assistant (TA) will make presentation or provide all necessary information about the CREFLAT project including the process of formation of VDPIC.
- Making aware on CREFLAT must include the programme concept, objectives, expected benefits, implementation approaches, various components, and phasing of information on other project villages / districts throughout using participatory process steps that stress on sustenance of social and environmental safeguards and inclusiveness. VDPIC should be well versed with the key aspects of Landscape-based VDP and how VDPs are also addressing overarching issues at scale of landscape (Adjoining village cluster).
- The VCW/Beat Officer/TA will trigger discussion regarding various development programmes that have been/are being implemented in the village, people's experiences with those, as well as the status of natural resources and their management, extent of food security, sources of vulnerability, and available community infrastructures such as drinking water, housing, toilets, connectivity, roads, school, anganwadi buildings, community meeting place, electricity, Public Distributed System (PDS), etc. VCW together with panchayat/VC members will ensure that any disadvantaged households are not left out for informing about the project and securing benefits through plantations (3-tier and/or agroforestry plantations) in private or patta land.
- The purpose of these discussions is to convey to the participants that the project will address issues they prioritise (in their Village Development Plan), and to get them thinking about the

issues they would like to be addressed. This may include resource management practices, low resource productivity, food insecurity, physical isolation from markets, public facilities, village sanitation, living conditions, drinking water problems, decreasing availability of NTFPs in forest and so on.

- The VCW/Beat Officer/TA will then explain the provisions of the project, including the modalities of its implementation, and the possibilities for developing their land, water resources, forest-based livelihoods, etc. with the help of the project or CREFLAT. They will also inform the communities about the Entry Point Activities and the implementation modalities.
- The VCW/Beat Officer/TA will also explain the Community Engagement Planning Framework (CEPF) processes and stages that the communities must establish by providing their agreement or consent to partner with the project as per the CEPF & Environment and Social Management Framework (ESFM) guidelines.
- A date for a second meeting will be set with the suggestion that the communities should discuss the project among themselves in their respective paras or hamlets, and identify the right women and men as potential members to represent their para in the VDPIIC, and activities of common interest including Entry Point Activity (EPA) they might want to take up even before full scale planning and implementation is done. The priority of EPA being equitable and free of environmental risks will need highlighting. Identified disadvantaged households must participate in the meeting (**See Annex 3**).
- If required, a follow-up training can be organised to capacitate VDPIIC and its sub-committees.
- Overall VDPIIC and its members must be made aware of voluntary type of contributions as well as which works will be paid. Moreover, specifications on transport costs for members from distant paras to participate in VDPIIC meetings need to be shared right in the beginning.
- The formation of Sub-committees with preferably 50% of women members and representation of PAPs, and their significance for smooth functioning of the VDPIIC, and for effective implementation of different program components must be highlighted earliest so that expectations are well understood (See Chapter 5).

4.3 Identification and selection of VDPIIC members (General Body and Executive or Office Bearers)

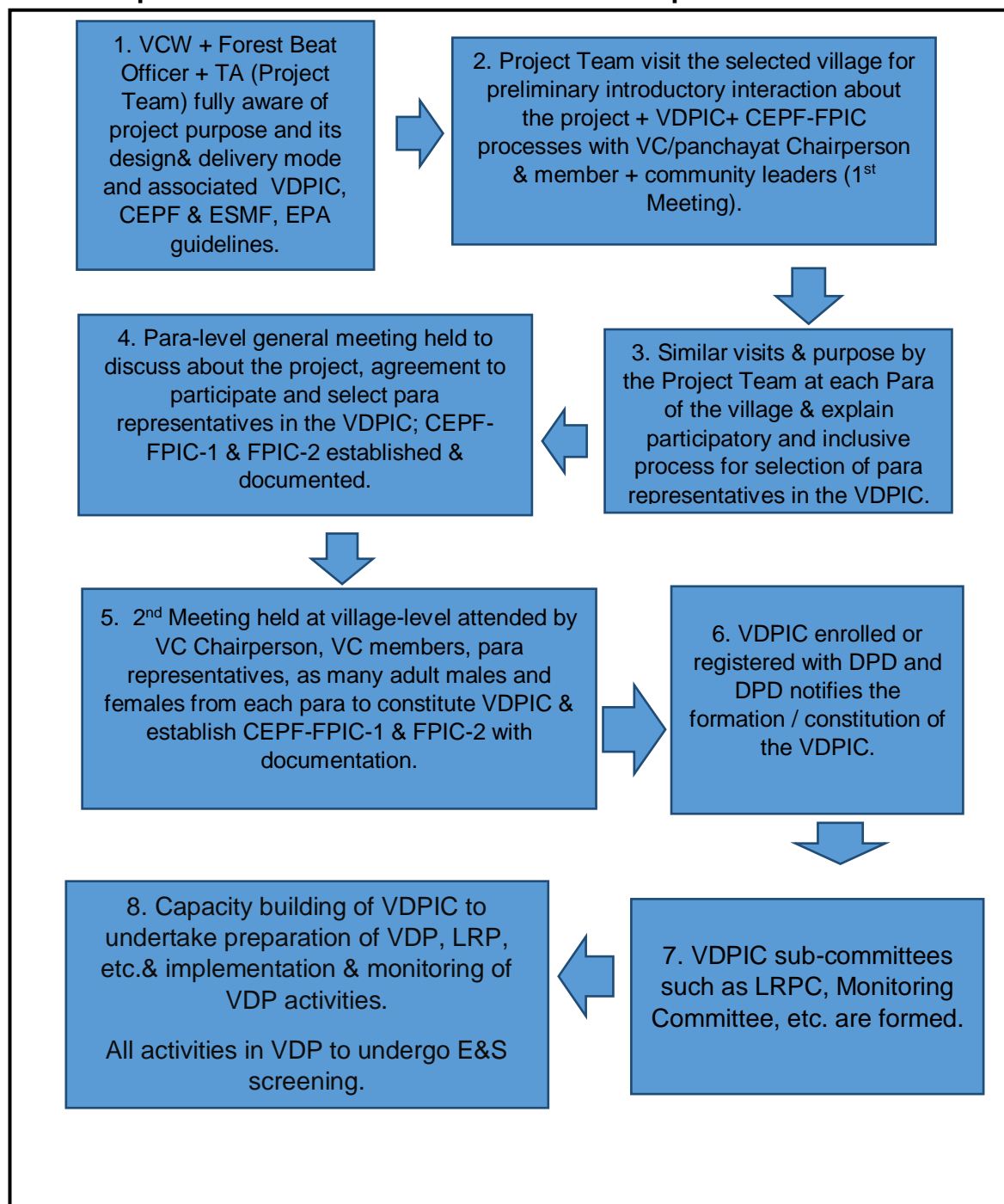
- Facilitated by VCW/Beat Officer/TA, **the second meeting** of the community representatives would be convened during which the VDPIIC members/executive body should be selected.
- ***However, prior to the second meeting, each of the paras of the village would have had their respective General Body meeting during which the para representatives to VDPIIC would have been selected and also the required CEPF-FPIC (First Prior Informed Consent: See Annex 4) processes would have been established for community agreement to cooperate with the project and the required documentation of CEPF-FPIC processes would have been done as per the CEPF & ESMF guidelines.***
- The second meeting should be attended by the following categories of people from the communities:
 - (a) A male and a female from as many households from every Para or hamlet of the GP/VC²;
 - (b) A male and a female identified by respective paras as their para representatives in the VDPIIC;
 - (c) Panchayat/VC Chairman, panchayat members/ward members;
 - (d) School teachers, village pastors, anganwadi workers, ASHA workers, any respective retired government staff from the community, and so on (as these categories of

²In practice it is unlikely that every household will be able to attend such meeting, nor it might be logistically feasible.

people from the village could be included in the VDPIC as co-opted or invited members);

- (e) Based on the early information on the presence of poor or vulnerable target groups in paras, these need to be motivated to participate in this meeting;
- This assemblage is proactively encouraged to ask questions and seek clarification about the project and its overall design, environment and social safeguards and delivery mechanism and VDPIC from the VCW/Beat Officer/TA.
 - Once there is reasonable level of understanding among the assemblage and doubts and concerns have been adequately addressed, the project team (VCW/Beat Officer/TA) will spell out the next steps of VDPIC formation and stress on the outreach to poor, vulnerable or any other disadvantaged target groups (e.g., women).
 - At this stage, CEPF processes for establishment of FPIC-1 and FPIC-2 should be explained to the assemblage and their agreement/consent established or obtained (***Documentation of Consent and related evidences to be recorded by VCW/Beat Officer/TA as per relevant section of the CEPF guidelines: See Annex 5***)
 - Following guiding principles may be followed in identification and selection of VDPIC members:
 - (a) At least 50% of VDPIC memberships in the General Body should be women.
 - (b) Every para will identify and select an adult female and a male, adequately knowledgeable about their para, able to read and write, and have adequately time for voluntary services for the good of the community.
 - (c) VDPIC membership in the General Body and/or Executive Member may be changed or terminated if they are found to be neglectful of their duties or left the village on medical grounds, or voluntarily no longer interested to be part of the project.
 - (d) Para representatives at the VDPIC Executive Body may be changed every two years or the same representatives may be re-selected as would be decided at the Para-level General Body meeting.
 - (e) The poor households in the village such as the BPL, PVTG households, households with differently able children or households with elderly people should be given priority or preference for any works or wage labour generated from the project subject to their physical ability and willingness to do the work. The identification of such target groups should be pro-actively sought through members representing paras and in association with VCW.

4.4 Simplified flow chart of the VDPIC formation processes



4.5 Membership categories of VDPIC

- VDPIC will have the following categories of membership:
 - (a) **General:** Two adult members from every household of every para of the village or GP/VC are eligible to become member of VDPIC that will constitute the General Body of the VDPIC. Ideally, the adult members would be husband and wife from every household or eldest male and eldest female from every household. All such general members from every household will have the voting rights.

- (b) **Nominated:** These members would be nominated by the Executive Committee of the VDPIC and endorsed by the General Body/Meeting of the VDPIC. Such members will not have voting rights. Such nominated members could be the village school teacher/s, ASHA worker, Anganwadi teacher/s, ADC or State Government officer/s from the village or working in the village, local faith-based leaders, and so on.
- (c) **Ex-Officio:** Elected representatives, ward members, local forest officials can be Ex-Officio members. Such members will not have any voting right.
- The General Body/houseor Meeting of the VDPIC can decide by majority vote to terminate any member of the VDPIC. On termination of the membership, the terminated member cannot have right of claim whatsoever or to any property of the VDPIC or any refunds from contribution to VDPIC corpus done.

4.6 Formation of VDPIC and Office Bearers

- Each project village will have a VDPIC, constituted through a General Body Meeting involving maximum possible number of adult villagers from all the constituent paras including the General, Nominated and Ex-Officio members.
- One male and one female person from each para who are active, unbiased, and motivated for the development of their para and the village will be selected by respective paras as their representatives in the respective VDPIC that will constitute the Executive Body (EB) of the VDPIC. The EB of the VDPIC will have the following positions:
 - (a) **Chairperson:** The Chairperson of the Panchayati raj institution in the village i.e., Village Council/Committee in case of the ADC village, will be the Chairperson of VDPIC. If the Chairman of the Village Council (VC) changes, newly elected Chairman will become the Chairman of the VDPIC and former Chairman of the VDPIC may be brought in as a Nominated Member in VDPIC, subject to his/her consent, to benefit from his/her experiences.
 - (b) **Vice-Chairperson:** One of the members of the VDPIC will be selected as the Vice-Chairperson by the villagers in the General Body meeting.
 - (c) **Member Secretary cum Treasurer:** The Beat Officer of the concerned Beat will act initially as Member Secretary cum Treasurer of VDPIC. *(Should there be any transfer and posting of the Beat Officer during the course of implementation, there will be adequate capacity building for the incumbent as well as there shall be proper handing over and taking over processes). Project will prepare VDPIC's capacity to manage the institution.*
 - (d) **Convener:** The concerned Village Community Worker (VCW) of IGDC project will act as the Convener of VDPIC.
 - (e) **Executive Members:** All para representatives of the village (See Executive body above).
- District Project Director (DPD) will notify the constitution of VDPIC within 15 days of its constitution.
- Each VDPIC will adopt a By-Law for its functioning in a VDPIC meeting with at least 50% of its members being present.

4.7 Power and functions of Office Bearers of VDPIC

- **The Chairperson**
 - The Chairman is the Chief person of the VDPIC; hence, smooth functioning of the VDPIC is the prime responsibility of the Chairman.

- He/she should conduct all the meetings on a regular basis preferably on commonly agreed date/s of the month,time and place, ensuring the participation of all members including female members and review the progress of the VDPIC.
 - He/she is the Official spokesperson of the VDPIC.
 - He/she may form specialized sub-committee, as required, to oversee specific activity and regularly assess their performance and initiate actions on any recommendations from such sub-committees.
- **The Vice-Chairperson**
 - The Vice- Chairperson will discharge all the duties and responsibilities of Chairman in the absence of the regular Chairman.
 - He/she will assist the Chairman in implementing the project.
- **The Member Secretary**
 - The Member Secretary will keep the minutes of the meetings.
 - He/she will be custodian of all office records and registers.
 - He/she will handle all correspondences of the VDPIC with the project authorities and other stakeholders.
 - He/she along with Chairman of VDPIC will jointly sign all the cheques for the VDPIC.
 - He/she will maintain financial records of the VDPIC and shall be the custodian of all financial records and vouchers.
 - He/she will present financial report of the VDPIC in the meeting.
 - He/she will prepare the action plan and annual budget of the VDPIC every year.
 - He/she will adjust the accounts of the monthly expenses with supporting bills, vouchers, muster rolls, etc. and shall submit to the DPMA.
- **The Convener**
 - He/she will convene the meetings of the VDPIC by issuing timely notice to all members.
 - He/she will record the minutes of the meetings of the VDPIC and assist the Member Secretary in circulating /distributing the minutes to all members of the committee.
 - He/she will function as Member-Secretary of all Sub- committee formed under the VDPIC.
- **VDPIC members**
 - The members will attend all the meetings of the VDPIC.
 - Since the members represent their respective paras, they need to disseminate the project related information and decisions taken by the VDPIC to the villagers/and their respective paras in particular.
 - The members will act as Chairperson/Member of various Sub-Committee as assigned by the VDPIC and discharge the duties as required.
 - The members will take other responsibilities as required from time to time for smooth functioning of the VDPIC.
 - All VDPIC members must be at same level of understanding of project design and safeguards it has to ensure.
- **The Village Community Worker (VCW)**
 - The VCW will be the frontline face of the project at the village level and he/she will be a VDPIC member.
 - In addition to his/her day-to-day works as per the ToR, he/she will discharge all the duties and take responsibilities as assigned to him by the VDPIC for its effective functioning.

- VCW will help the VDPIC in preparation of list of beneficiaries for undertaking project activities and various training programs.
- VCW will perform the intermediary role between the project authorities and the VDPIC.

4.8 Tenure of VDPIC and Office Bearers

- VDPICs under IGDC CREFLAT project will continue to be functional until project life or until extended period of the project or upon sanctioning of another phase of IGDC project in the same village. Thereafter, the VDPICs will become self-sustaining and if the Committee members wish to continue beyond the project period, may do so provided there would be no financial liability on the Government of Tripura and KfW. Further the local Beat Officer who was Member Secretary of VDPIC will cease to function after the project is over.
- VDPIC membership may be changed only if they are either found to be neglectful to their duties or left the village or on medical reason, or voluntarily resigned, which will be accepted in a General Body Meeting.

5 Formation of Sub-Committees of VDPIC

There will be at least the following two sub-committees of VDPIC. Sub-committees with preferably 50% of women members will be formed for smooth functioning of the VDPIC, and for effective implementation of different program components. Regular follow up with concerned functionaries of the department for various activities as mentioned and approved in VDP will be another objective of forming the sub-committee of VDPIC. It needs to be ensured that PAP representatives are included in such sub-committees.

- (a) Livelihood Restoration Plan Committee/Sub-Committee (LRPC)
- (b) Monitoring Committee/Sub-Committee (MC)

5.1 Livelihood Restoration Plan Committee or Sub-Committee (LRPC)

- **Formation:**
 - Vice-Chairman or Vice-Chairperson of VDPIC will be the Chairperson of the LRPC.
 - VDPIC will select at least 4-5 persons among the VDPIC members to be members of the LRPC/or as per each para's representation, if required.
 - One of the members who is knowledgeable, able to read and write well, motivated, dedicated, respected, either female or male, should be designated as the Member-Secretary of LRPC.
 - Any expenditure, if any, to be incurred by the LRPC will be directly done by the VDPIC, as LRPC will have no account of its own. However, LRPC are to be involved for planning in case of any livelihood activities. Further, the role of VDPIC/LRPC in respect of implementation of LRPC will be restricted outside the forest land/ area.
 - Wherever necessary LRPC can equally be valid on forest lands when PRA process has direct evidence of previous use by specific target groups in a village/para.
 - Participatory Planning guidelines to prepare VDP must be applied to prepare LRPC.
- **Roles and responsibilities:**
 - Oversee overall implementation of livelihoods and livelihoods restoration plan as reflected in the VDP or Livelihood Restoration Plan.
 - Receive all grievances against the project or about the implementation of the project from any member of the project community, PAPs in particular, and then forward the same to VDPIC and/or Block or Range Level Committee for Grievance Redressal Mechanism (GRM).

- Will keep all records relating to activities of the sub-committee, and share information in the VDPIC meetings.

5.2 Monitoring Committee or Sub-Committee (MC)

- VDPIC will form a Monitoring Sub-Committee from among the members (with 50% women members).
- VDPIC can also co-opt nominated members in the MC.
- The MC should also have a member from the JFMC/BMC for better integration
- MC will undertake regular monitoring of the activities undertaken in the village as per the participatory Village Development Plan prepared through PRA and keeping safeguards and other project implementation modalities as basis.
- VDPIC MC is also responsible for monitoring the activities of all sub-committees formed in the village, like JFMC, BMC, Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), and their activities funded by the project.
- MC will inform the VDPIC any progress or need of course correction etc. otherwise noticed in the implementation of planned activities. Such reporting will be done during the regular meeting of the VDPIC.

5.3 Other Sub-Committees related to different project components

- VDPIC may form any other sub-committees if required for different project components.
- The members of such sub-committee will be responsible to implement the activities under a particular sub-committee.
- The Sub-Committees will provide regular guidance to the villagers and report to the VDPIC periodically.
- Examples of such sub-committees are: monitoring of Land management activities including nursery, plantation and check dam, biodiversity conservation, value-addition, capacity building, etc.
- Normally the sub-committee will report their activities in the meeting of their VDPIC.

6 Opening of Bank Account of VDPIC

- The Beat Officer/VCW/TA will facilitate in the opening of a bank account for CREFLAT Fund in the nearest scheduled bank from the Village, or as would be decided by Beat Officer in consultation with the VDPIC.
- Name of the Bank Account would be as per the Registration name of the VDPIC.
- Two Office Bearers of VDPIC would be co-signatories, namely, Chairperson, and Secretary (In CREFLAT project, the Beat Officer is the Secretary cum Treasurer of VDPIC. (In future, say after 2 years of VDPIC formation, it is envisaged that the VDPIC after establishment would be entirely managed by the communities, in which case, later decision-making powers may change. For now, however, the bank signatories would be two, viz, the President, and Secretary cum Treasurer of VDPIC).
- VDPIC will follow the General Financial Rules and Regulations of CREFLAT or as may be specifically framed for VDPIC by CREFLAT.
- All financial transactions should be done with complete transparency and accountability by periodic presentation of the financial / accounting matters in the General Body Meeting of VDPIC.

7 Periodicity of Meeting of VDPIC

- In the first two years, the VDPIC will meet on monthly basis. The VCW/Beat Officer should facilitate such meeting.
- The Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson will chair all meetings.
- All such meetings will review progress, resolve problems if any, and plan actions when needed.
- All meetings should be recorded and Proceeding or Minutes of the meeting be prepared within 7 days of the conduct of the meeting; the Beat Officer/VCW will help in the preparation of the Minutes of the Meetings where/when needed.
- Meeting Minutes should be shared as and when DPMA inspects the VDPIC; the Minutes should be shown to any stakeholders who attended the meeting.
- Minutes of meeting must reflect on actions/decisions pertaining to disadvantaged groups or status on project's outreach to them.

8 Quorum of VDPIC Meetings

- The Quorum of VDPIC Executive Committee meetings shall be at least 50% of members of the regular members for any resolution to be passed.
- The Quorum of the VDPIC General Body meeting will be a minimum of 10% of the para representatives.
- However, VDPIC will take necessary steps to make sufficient awareness generation so that adult members from each household could attend the meeting; adequate initiative should be taken for participation of more numbers of women including the youth in the general body meeting and/or Executive Body meeting.
- The Secretary, in consultation with the VDPIC Chairperson, shall call a meeting on three days' notice; in case of emergency, a 24-hr notice may be given in convening such meeting.
- In the event of there being no quorum in General Body meeting, the same shall stand adjourned to a future date, of which notice shall be given in the prescribed manner and no quorum shall be necessary for any such adjournment of meeting.
- The entire process and outcomes of the meeting is to be documented.

9 Terms of Reference of VDPIC / Roles & Responsibilities of VDPIC

- Chairman of VDPIC will sign an MoU with CREFLAT Project represented by the concerned Range Officer within which the VDPIC is located that governs roles and responsibilities of each institution during planning and implementation of the project (**Annex 2**).
- VDPIC will lead the communities on all matters relating to CEPF and ESMF including the FPIC processes as required in CREFLAT project.
- **Participatory Village Development Plan:** VDPIC will lead in the preparation of Participatory Village Development Plan (VDP); the VDP will be prepared through the PRA processes for which adequate training will be provided.
- Management of implementation of VDP.
- Efficient and transparent management of any fund released to VDPIC.
- To organize the inputs supply, if or when needed for any village level construction activities such as soil and water conservation, etc.

- Helping CREFLAT in improving delivery of the planned activities including any other convergence programme of the government of any other department being implemented in the village.
- Ensuring that the majority of benefits accrue to the marginalized groups and resource poor households in the paras and village.
- Involving all sections of the community particularly the women in formulating and developing VDP, Livelihood Restoration Plan, etc.
- Establishing and practicing transparent management and accounting procedures open to inspection by the village community.
- To the extent possible, the VDPIC members in particular will contribute voluntary labour to the implementation of development activities. They will also encourage others to do so.
- Operation and maintenance of community assets created under the project including the entry point activities.
- VDPIC will form/constitute the sub-committees such as the LRPC, MC, etc.; VDPIC will supervise and support in the works of the sub-committees.
- VDPIC will convene its regular General Body and Executive Body meetings; prepare the Minutes of the meetings (preferably in local language) and disseminate.
- VDPIC will lead, facilitate and/or seek for the convergence programme within the GP/VC for which it will work closely with the GP/VC.
- VDPIC will affect the rotational leadership and membership as per the bylaws of the VDPIC.
- Development and passing of VDPIC bylaws.
- VDPIC will form the ground level platform of GRM

10 Bylaw of the VDPIC

- Under the overall guidance of the Beat Officer, the VDPIC will develop its own bylaws.
- The bylaws will be approved by the DPMA.
- A model bylaw is given as **Annex 1** for reference.

11 Annual Work Plan and Budget of VDPIC

- Under the overall guidance of the VCW/Beat Officer, each year, prior to the beginning of the financial year, or as may be directed by CREFLAT PMA / DPMA, the VDPIC will prepare its Annual Work Plan Budget (AWPB) based on the VDP and submit to DPMA after approval of the General Body of the VDPIC.
- VDPIC will ensure timely submission of AWPB and implement the activities accordingly as approved by the DPMA/PMA.
- DPMA will issue the approval of the AWPB and sanction order of the financial amount involved in the AWPB.

12 Terms and conditions of fund release and utilization

- The CREFLAT PMA/DPMA will release the fund as per approved AWPB, either to the VDPIC or JFMC as the case may be who then would make the payment, in alignment with financial rules and regulations, and procurement guidelines of the Project.
- PMA/DPMA will monitor, verify, quality check and provide proper instructions on the works done.

- VDPIC will regularly intimate to DPMA/PMA on the progress of the works based on the Monitoring Sub-Committee report.
- All payment and financial transactions should be free from any type of corruption or misappropriation.

13 Accounting System of VDPIC

- Since the Secretary cum Treasurer of VDPIC is the Beat Officer of the area, the accounting system of VDPIC would be that of the financial rules and regulations of the Forest Department.
- VDPIC through its Secretary cum Treasurer will ensure that account of all activities and expenditure are maintained or recorded in printed cashbook and all vouchers are preserved for audit as per provision of PIM of CREFLAT or financial rules and regulations of CREFLAT.

14 Amendments of the Terms of Reference

- Amendments shall be made on the ToR of the VDPIC at General Body meeting convened for the purpose but with the presence of at least two-thirds of the members of the VDPIC.
- Any amendments should also be in conformity with the bylaws of VDPIC.

15 Monitoring, Reviews and Reporting by VDPIC

- VDPIC will regularly monitor and review the activities as per the approved AWPB, and will submit a monthly and/or quarterly report as per the bylaws and/or as per the instruction of the DPMA/PMA. Copy of Reports need to be archived both at VDPIC and DPMA levels (Digital copies can be explored).
- Templates of above reports need to be prepared and must capture participatory process adopted, inclusive decisions/actions taken and recommendations etc. made. Preferably these can reflect on project progress made.
- The VDPIC will closely work with the DPMA, both for reporting and seeking guidance on the project activities.
- All copies of the resolutions and minutes of the meetings must be kept properly and shared with the DPMA and PMA.
- All steps and outcomes of participatory process adopted need to be compiled and documented.
- For local level monitoring reports and reviews project can support to compile these in local language wherever necessary for wider and inclusive information sharing. However, for PMA and DPMA level such report could be facilitated in English language wherever necessary.

16 Disputes and Arbitration

- Any disputes between the VDPIC members shall be settled, in the first instance, through mutual and amicable consultation; if the dispute is not settled through such consultation, the matter shall be referred for arbitration to the DPMA and subsequently to PMA, if former is not able to resolve. However, Grievance Redressal Mechanism (GRM) and its design applies.
- Whenever a decision is put up before the General Body meeting to confirm it, and the General Body meeting decides the same, it shall be final and binding.

- Any dispute or difference arising during the execution of the project work, the matter shall be referred to the CEO and PD, after following due process, and whose decision would be final and binding.

17 Dissolution

In case of dissolution of the VDPIC, in accordance with the provision of the Registration Act, after meeting all the debts, the property and all assets of the VDPIC shall be given to the GP/VC or as may be decided by CREFLAT PMA or DPD/TFD/Government of Tripura.

Annexes

Annex 1 – Draft By-laws

THE DRAFT BY-LAWS

OF

The _____ VDPIC/Committee

Of CREFLAT PROJECT

NAME, ADDRESS AND AREA OF OPERATION

1. The Committee shall be called the _____ VDPIC/ Committee. It shall be referred to herein after as the Committee.
2. The registered address of the Committee shall be _____ Post Office _____ Tehsil/Block/ADC _____ District _____.
3. The area of operation of the Committee shall cover the following village/paras:

Definitions

4. In these by-laws, unless there is anything repugnant in the subject or context
 - i) "**Act**" means Indian Forest Act, 1927, (Act No.16 of 1927) as amended in its application to Tripura;
 - ii) FRA 2006
 - iii) "**Conflict Resolution Group**" means a group consisting of representatives of the concerned Gram Panchayats/VDPIC, a representative of the local non-government organizations or local community-based organizations, a representative from local community and the concerned DPD/DFO/Forest official;
 - iv) "**Common land**", "**family**", "**Gram Panchayat/Village Council**", "**Panch**", "**Pradhan**", "**Village**" and "**Ward**" shall have the meanings respectively assigned to them in the **Tripura Panchayat Act, 1993**;
 - v) "**Department**" means the TFD.
 - vi) "**District Forest Officer**" means the forest officer in-charge of a territorial or wildlife forest division of the Department;
 - vii) "**Forest Officer**" means a Forest Officer as defined under sub-section (2) of section 2 of the Act; or as defined in FRA 2006.
 - viii) "**Executive body**" means executive committee of Committee;
 - ix) "**General House**", means General House of the Committee;
 - x) "**Government**" means Government of Tripura;
 - xi) "**Jhumias**" means a group of persons, resident members or any other stakeholders that is practicing shifting cultivation in the selected forest area for meeting their livelihood needs;
 - xii) "**Village Development Plan**" means a holistic forest management and development plan of the area selected for participatory management;
 - xiii) "**JFM**" means management of Government Forest and other lands including common land managed Jointly by the Committee and by the Department;
 - xiv) "**Selected area**" means any Government Forest and Government land including common land selected for treatment;
 - xv) "**Self-help group**" means any organized group of persons, who collectively by mutual help are able to enhance their economic status through resource-based activities;

- xvi) **"Site specific plan"** means a sub component of the VDP which is a technically appropriate plan for the site;
- xvii) **"Committee"** means the enrolled/registered VDPIC with DPD;
- xviii) **"Sustainable forest management"** means management which is economically viable, environmentally benign and socially beneficial, and which balances present and future needs; and
- xix) **"User group"** means a group of persons dependent upon a common natural resource for sustaining its livelihood need.

OBJECTIVES

- 5. The objectives of the Committee shall be-
 - i) to arrange for the plantation, improvement, protection management of the forests /forest area through JFMC if it is Forest land or through VDPIC if it is Patta land, village community land and non-Forest land under the jurisdiction of the Committee, as mentioned in the VDP. This should be done with special reference to the prevention of degradation and erosion and to utilization of forest produce (Grass, water, fodder, medicinal plants etc.) to the best advantages of the members in terms of sustainable forest/natural resource-based livelihoods to supplement their income.
 - ii) to undertake measures/activities as approved in a VDP to restore degraded forests through adoption of project activities such as 3-Tier Plantation/ANR (for multiple production), bamboo enrichment and plantation of multiple tree species (for diversification to deal 'With climate threats), rehabilitation of spring catchments, protection of forests from fires and undertaking such individual or communal adaptation practices that are found to be effective to deal with the imminent threats from climate change, through JFMC if forest land and VDPIC if Non-Forest land.
 - iii) to undertake such other activities as are incidental to or conducive to the attainment of the above objectives.

QUALIFICATION

- (a) For the purpose of implementation of CREFLAT project and its activities, the VDPIC and Committee would be synonymous. Therefore, the Executive Committee of VDPIC would be synonymous with the Executive Committee of the Committee.
- (b) On dissolution of VDPIC following the completion of the implementation of the CREFLAT project activities as per Separate Agreement, the Committee too will stand dissolved. All requirements for statutory compliances on or before the dissolution of the Committee would be the responsibility of the Member Secretary cum Treasurer of the VDPIC/Committee, namely, the Beat Officer.

MEMBERSHIP

- 6. Subject to the provisions of by-law 7, any individual shall be eligible for admission as a member of the Committee, if he is:
 - i) One adult female and one adult male from every household of the para or GP/VC over 18 years in age and of sound mind (should there be unfortunately demise of any current member of any particularly household, he/she would be replaced by the next senior most adult member of the household)
 - ii) Bona fide resident in the area of operation of the Committee, which is the current GP/VC boundary (in the unlikely event of delimitation of the GP/VC within the project life, the operational area of the Committee would be automatically re-drawn and the GB constitution too would accordingly be re-visited);
 - iii) of good character; and

- iv) right holder (including landless right holders) according to revenue record
7. No individual shall be eligible for admission as a member of the Committee, if: -
- i) He/she has applied bankruptcy, or
 - ii) He/she has been declared as insolvent, or
 - iii) He/she has been sentenced for any offence involving dishonesty or moral turpitude within 5 years preceding the date of his admission as a member.
8. A member may be expelled for one or more of the following reasons: -
- i) Ceasing to reside in the area of operation of Committee;
 - ii) Conviction of a criminal offence involving dishonesty or moral turpitude;
 - iii) Application for bankruptcy;
 - iv) An action, which may be held by the general body to be dishonest or contrary to the interest, reputation and stated objects of the Committee.
9. A person shall cease to be member of the Committee in one or more of the following circumstances: -
- i) Death;
 - ii) Withdrawal after six months' notice to the Secretary of the Committee;
 - iii) Permanent insanity;
 - iv) Declaration of bankruptcy;
 - v) Ceasing to be a right holder in the Forest.

GENERAL BODY

10. All the members of the Committee on a given date shall constitute the General Body of the Committee, which will be one adult male and adult female from every household. New members shall get their names registered in the Membership Register, with the Secretary. New members generally would mean any newly married couples, as recognized by the communities, within the paras/GP/VC who establish a new household and settled within the para/GP/VC, or any migrated household legally settled in any para of the GP/VC and accepted/recognized by the communities as such.
11. The General Body of members of the Committee shall meet once in six months. The Secretary of the Committee shall convene a meeting of the General Body.
12. In case of an emergent situation, if 20% of the total members submit a requisition/application to the President, Vice-President or any member of the executive Committee, a meeting of the General Body shall have to be called within 7 days of such requisition / application.
13. The Secretary shall verbally or in written inform all the members at least 7 days in advance, specifying the date, place and time and agenda of the general meeting. The written information / notice of a general shall be affixed on the walls at least two conspicuous places, designated by the General Body itself.
14. The quorum of the meeting shall be two- third of the total number of members, out of which 50% should mandatorily be female members.
15. The decisions in these meetings will be subject to the will of the majority. The issues for discussion/decision shall be raised either verbally by the members in the meeting or by conveying the same in written to the Secretary. In the latter case, the Secretary shall raise the issue and if desired so, the name of the member conveying the issue shall not be disclosed.
16. The Chairperson or, in his absence, the Vice-Chair shall preside over meetings of the General body. When both of them are absent, the members present shall nominate a Chairperson for the meeting.
17. Every member of the General Body shall have one vote. Voting by proxies shall not be allowed at the general body. Unless otherwise provided in these by-laws, all questions shall be decided by a

- majority of votes of the members present. When the votes are equal, the Chairperson of the General Body shall have a casting vote.
18. Unless otherwise provided in these by-laws the ultimate authority in all matters relating to the administrations of the Committee shall vest in the General Body.
 19. Without prejudice to the general provisions of the preceding by-law, the General Body shall have the following powers and duties:
 - i) to approve of the VDP prepared by the joint forest management Committee for the management of forests under its jurisdiction, implementation of the project activities and sharing of the usufructs/benefits.
 - ii) to approve the amendments in by-laws framed for the Committee.
 - iii) the election, suspension, and removal and of the elected members of the Executive Committee.
 - iv) Amendments in the VDP. However, such amendments shall be valid subject to the approval by the concerned Divisional Forest Officer.
 - v) Transaction of any other business with the permission of the Chairperson of the general body;
 20. Each member present at general meeting shall be entitled to exercise one vote only. The President shall have a casting vote.
 21. All business discussed or decided at a general meeting shall be recorded in a proceeding register by the Secretary, which shall be signed by all the members at the end of the meeting.
 22. A copy of the proceedings of the meeting shall be submitted to the DPMA, through the concerned Forest Guard/range Officer. Another copy shall be sent to the Gram Sabha/General House.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

23. Executive Committee, shall consist of 7 to 13 members (depending upon the population/para numbers). The constitution of Executive Committee of the Committee shall be as follows as per the Tripura JFM Rules:
 - i) **Chairperson** to be elected by the GB
 - ii) **Vice-Chair** to be elected by General House
 - iii) **Member Secretary cum Treasurer** Beat Officer
 - iv) **Convener** VCW
 - v) **Other Members** to be elected by General House;
 - vi) **Joint Secretary (woman)** do
 - vii) **Ward Panch / Member** Ex-officio member
 - viii) **President** Mahila Mandal as ex-officio
 - ix) **Representative** Local women/SHG group as ex-officio
 - x) **Three Members** to be co-opted from the village level committees constituted by other departments of the Government, societies register under the Societies Registration Act, 1860, (Act No.21 of 1860); forest/resource-based user groups, self-help group and grazier group;
 - xi) **Local Forest Guard(s)** shall also be the co-opted members.
 - xii) Other co-opted members would be the village teacher/s, pastor/s, prominent social worker/s, retired Govt/Non-Govt staff of the village whose experience could be valuable for the VDPIC.
24. The elections of the Executive Committee shall be held every two years. The elected members of the Executive Committee shall hold office for a period of two years from the date of assumption of office.
25. The election shall be conducted through casting single ballot by the members of the General Body or by means of General Consensus amongst the members.
26. The members of the Executive Committee shall meet once every month.
27. The information regarding the meeting shall be given to the members by the Secretary well in time.

28. In emergent circumstances, the meeting of the Executive Committee shall be called on the verbal/written requisition of at least 3 members of this committee. Such meeting shall be called within 3 days of submission of such requisition to the Chairperson /Secretary of the Committee.
29. The quorum of the meeting shall have to be two-third of the total number of members Of the Executive Committee; only then the decisions taken in the meeting shall stand valid.
30. If the Chairperson of the meeting is a male, the vice-chairperson should be a female and vice-versa.
31. Executive Committee shall have the following powers and duties:
 - i) To prepare a schedule for the activities enlisted in the VDP, to be implemented by the Committee. The schedule shall include the specific distribution of funds and labour activity wise and the provision for monitoring and of the progress. The beneficiaries of a particular activity shall have to contribute ii' terms of labour. If the same is not possible, they shall be delegated the responsibility to supervise the progress of the ongoing works.
 - ii) To prepare a list of activities to be carried out and the corresponding budget every six months, and to get the same approved by the General House.
 - iii) Members of the Executive Committee shall carry out the inspection of the areas in question once in a month and shall impart necessary directions or take proper action in case any drawback/irregularity is found.
 - iv) To take appropriate action under the relevant Act/Rules against an individual who violates any of the rules mentioned in the micro plans. The Executive shall summon such offender either in its meeting or in the General Body and shall initiate action against him/her as per the recorded procedure, in case the reply is not found satisfactory.
 - v) The Executive Committee shall not initiate any legal action against an individual without affording him/her an opportunity to be heard. Executive Committee shall not carry out any change in the VDP on its own.
 - vi) The Executive Committee shall employ any person for a work/activity, mentioned in the schedule and shall disburse honorarium as per prescribed project norms or agreed government norms for such work. The Executive Committee shall decide the terms and conditions for the same.
32. All business discussed or decided at a meeting of the Executive Committee shall be recorded in a proceeding register by the Secretary, which shall be signed by all the members at the end of the meeting.

USUFRUCT SHARING

33. Committee shall be entitled to the following benefits for the members of JFMC, namely:
 - i) to collect the yield such as fallen twigs, branches, lopping, grass, fruits, flowers, seeds, leaf fodder and non-timber forests products in free of cost through individual or collective arrangements as decided by the Committee;
 - ii) to the sale proceeds of all intermediate harvest, subject to protection of forest and plantations for at least 5 years from the date of agreement;
 - iii) to organize and promote vocational activities related to forest produce and land; and other activities such as promotion of self-help groups, which may provide direct benefits, including micro-lending to women. None of the activities so promoted shall affect the legal status of the forest land;
 - iv) recorded rights over the forest shall not be affected by these benefits;
 - v) after 5 years, the Committee may expand the area, on the basis of a fresh agreement deed, by inclusion of adjoining or nearby areas;
 - vi) to utilize at least 40 percent of the sale proceeds. If any, on forest regeneration activities including soil and water conservation.

Provided that for the purpose of usufruct, the usufruct sharing family shall be one unit.

34. That all the assets and resources created in tandem with forest department shall be properly recorded and the sharing of usufructs shall be legally binding on both parties as per the agreement executed between them in the beginning itself. Forest department shall also aim at creating alternative sources of income (in form of fire protection works/forest plantations/nursery raising/soil and water conservation/any revenue from harvesting of planted commercial forests and other resources).

FUNDS AND MAINTENANCE OF ACCOUNTS

35. Funds shall be generated by the Committee through contribution by members and sale of usufructs under these regulations. All funds, including those received from the Government, Gram Panchayats/Village Councils and non-government sources shall be utilized through the micro-planning process.
36. The sum received by the Committee shall be deposited in the name of the concerned Committee in a nationalized bank or scheduled bank or co-operative bank or post office and the account shall be operated under the signatures of the Chair/Chairperson/Vice Chair, Member-Secretary cum Treasurer of the Committee.
37. The Member Secretary cum Treasurer shall maintain the account of Revenue and Expenditure of the Committee in a proper Account/Cash Book. The account so maintained shall be placed before the Executive Committee as well as the general body. The funds from all sources shall be utilised only on activities enlisted in the VDP. The withdrawal of funds from the Bank account shall be effected through signing cheques only.
38. The Committee shall elect an Audit & accounts Committee comprising of 3 members. This committee shall carry out the inspection of the works done and the accounts maintained by the Executive Committee and if it comes across any discrepancy/irregularity, the same shall be intimated to the General Body.
39. The Committee shall seek the advice of certain experts on important matters. No honorarium shall be payable for such service, although the travelling expenses can be disbursed to such experts.
40. Treasurer shall be entitled to keep an amount of Rupees 1000/-only, for expenditure in case of an emergent situation. In case of any additional income, he/ she shall get the amount deposited in the bank, within 3 days of its receipt.
41. The Treasurer shall be entitled to spend an amount of Rupees 1000/- only in case of an emergency, with the prior permission of the President of the Executive Committee.
42. The accounts of the Committee shall be audited by a Government-recognized Auditor on an annual basis, and shall be shared with forest department. The fee for auditor can be met from earned incomes/member contributions.
43. As the project progresses and empowerment of local VDPIC improves, fund management and maintenance of accounts can be solely trusted to VDPIC Chairman and local members of the institution.

CHAIRPERSON

44. The Chair/Chairperson has the following responsibilities:
- i) To provide leadership to the VDPIC/ Committee. For undertaking different responsibilities, he/she shall seek the help of the other members of the Executive Committee
 - ii) To preside over the meetings of the Executive Committee and General Body
 - iii) To facilitate decision-making in Executive Committee on all matters
 - iv) To sign and authenticate all documents on behalf of the VDPIC/ Committee
 - v) To sign the MOU with any department/agency (after due approval from Executive Committee) on behalf of the VDPIC/ Committee
 - vi) To prepare plan and arrange for the implementation of the VDP with the agreement and cooperation of other members Of the Executive Committee
 - vii) To sign cheques (Banks) on account of expenditure duly approved by the Executive Committee

- viii) To coordinate with other departments/agencies/non-government agencies
- ix) To carry out regular inspection of the project works such plantations, stream rejuvenation, weed eradication, grass improvement, livelihood development, fire prevention and control etc. And to take steps for the improvement of forest and natural resources
- x) To assist and facilitate working of the forest department project authorities especially with respect to detection and investigation of forest offences
- xi) To supervise the working of the Executive Committee and to give necessary directions from time to time
- xii) To operate GRM at the village level

MEMBER SECRETARY

45. The Member secretary has the following responsibilities:

- i) To organize the meetings of Executive Meeting, General Body and other meeting of the Executive Committee, General Body and meetings with forest department, project authorities and other agencies and record in proceeding registers.
- ii) To affix relevant information pertaining to Committee, Forest and Project works on notice boards for general awareness and to transmit relevant and necessary information to all the members of the Committee especially pertaining to the decisions, plans, budgetary provision, institutional rules and regulations etc.
- iii) To assist the president in fulfilling his duties and responsibilities.
- iv) Responsible for necessary regulatory requirements for registration of VDPIC as Committee, as well as attending to all regulatory compliances as Committee.

TREASURER

46. The Treasurer has the following responsibilities:

- i) To maintain the cash/accounts books and registers, other related record pertaining to Committee. He/she shall also look after the records and files pertaining to the Committee and keep them with proper care.
- ii) To operate the Bank Account on behalf of the Committee account with President of the Executive Committee.
- iii) To maintain all records pertaining to revenue and expenditure, profit and loss, demands, resolutions for new expenditures, bills and vouchers etc. related to Committee
- iv) To assist the Executive Committee in preparation of Budget every six month.
- v) To issue receipts pertaining to revenue and expenditure and to ensure spending of money the works for which the money has been duly approved by the Executive Committee
- vi) To ensure regular audit of the accounts of the Committee from the Government-recognized auditors and to supply the audit report to the Forest Department with signature of the president and Member Secretary and Treasurer himself/herself.
- vii) To carry out correspondence regarding project with other departments agencies, project authorities

MISCELLANEOUS

47. **Grant-in-Aid.** Forest department shall release Grant-In-Aid to the Committee under the Grant-In-Aid Rules approved under the CREFLAT Project subject to the availability of funds and satisfactory performance of functions by the Committee.

48. **Coordination meetings:** There shall be quarterly of the executive committee of the VDPIC/ Committee with Divisional Forest Office: wherein there will be review and feedback on the various project/forest related matters. The meeting will also be used to discuss, plan and coordinate various matters pertaining to the managemc.tt and protection of forest areas and other related matters with respect adaptation and resilience to climate change.

49. Settlement of dispute.

- i) In case of any dispute/grievance in relation to project specific matters, VDPIIC will take initiative to settle it together with VCW/TA/Beat Officer. In case the dispute/grievance is not resolved, the Deputy Ranger shall refer the dispute, along with his report to the Ranger Officer concerned of the Department. The Range Officer, after hearing the complainants, shall resolve the dispute/grievance within 30 days from the date of receipt of report of the **Beat officer**. Should this not be resolved then the GRM and its decision making at higher levels will need to be applied.
 - ii) In case of any dispute between two villages or between the Committee and the Forest Department, an application shall be submitted to the Conflict Resolution Committee for settlement of the same. The Committee shall resolve the dispute within 15 days of such application.
50. **Appeal.** An appeal shall lie from the decision of the Range Officer the Conflict Resolution Group to be filed within 30 days from the date of decision, who shall decide the same within 30 days from the date of filing of appeal, after affording an opportunity of hearing the conflict parties. Decision of the Conflict Resolution Group shall be final and binding on the parties. The Conflict Resolution Group shall send a copy of the decision to the Committee and the Divisional Forest Officer concerned free of cost.

POWERS OF THE GOVERNMENT

51. Notwithstanding anything contained in these regulations, the Government shall have the powers to issue directions to the Committee on participatory forest management processes, micro-planning, coordination, monitoring, Grant-in-Aid and implementation mechanisms.

DISSOLUTION OF THE COMMITTEE

52. The Committee will be dissolved with the dissolution of the VDPIIC at the successful completion of the CREFLAT project as per Separate Agreement as well as Section 17 of VDPIIC guideline.

Annex 2 – Model Memorandum of Understanding

CREFLAT

Memorandum of Understanding

Between

The _____ Village Development Planning and Implementation
Committee/Committee

and

the IGDC CREFLAT at DPD Level

Whereas

The _____ VDPIC (hereinafter called “Committee”) has been constituted as per procedure described for JFMC Guidelines for registration with DPD. The _____ VDPIC under the _____ Beat Office of _____ Range Office in Dhalai District / North Tripura District of Tripura (strike off whichever is not applicable) has an elected Executive Committee (hereinafter called “EC”); as part of the German KfW supported “CREFLAT Project” (hereinafter called “Project”) to the VDP for Forest Management and Village Resource Development (hereinafter called “Plan”) for protection, rehabilitation and management of the specified forest areas that has been prepared by the Committee and the _____ Forest Division; the Plan contains details of programmes for protection, management and development of forest areas and also description of equitable distribution of products and services obtained from allocated forest areas and public resources of the village; the Plan has been approved by the DPD at DPMA/CEO&PD at PMA (hereinafter called “Project”) on behalf of Government of Tripura;

Now herewith

The _____ DPD and the VDPIC have mutually agreed on this MoU, and consequently, this MoU is executed with the following articles:

1. Purpose of the Memorandum of Understanding

This Memorandum of Understanding (hereinafter called “MoU”) details the responsibilities of the Committee regarding management and protection of forest area(s) and village(s) resource development, in the manner specified in the Plan and for equitable distribution of benefits amongst its members /working groups in the manner specified in the Plan. It further entails payments and support to be provided by the project and other associated conditions.

2. Responsibilities of the VDPIC Committee

- i) With regard to its Constitution, working, powers, duties and benefits, the Committee agrees to act in accordance with the JFM Rules/Regulations of Tripura (with bylaws for VDPICs under KfW project in Dhalai and North Tripura) and other relevant Government orders and instructions.
- ii) The Committee agrees to provide all necessary assistance to the Forest Officer in selection of intervention area(s) to be allotted to it for forest management so that there is no dispute regarding areas of common use of nearby villages.

- iii) The Committee agrees to identify Entry Point Activities (EPAs) in conformity with the EPA guidelines, decide on these through a consultative process and implement them according to the relevant standards as applicable.
- iv) The Committee agrees to carry out works laid out in the VDP for the forest/NRM area as per the approved schedule of rates of work and labour and in doing so, follow the principles of management of forest and wildlife specified therein, also taking into account the guidelines of the Government, prevalent legal provisions and technical principles. The Committee will ensure that no existing acts/rules of forest/wildlife management are being violated.
- v) The Committee agrees to contribute to the cost of works proposed through in-kind contribution of total Green Investment (1%), to be ensured by the VDPIC from its members / User Groups and deposited in the VDPIC Bank account to be opened separately for the purpose. The amount of contribution so deposited by the VDPIC will be returned along with interest accrued to the VDPIC at the end of the project period and the VDPIC will be free to spend the amount as jointly decided by them. This community contribution is to be made within 6 (six) months of the commencement of the Plan.
- vi) The Committee agrees, after completion of the related works, to protect the forest area from fire, illicit grazing, illicit felling, illicit transport, illicit mining, encroachments and poaching and shall help the forest department in this regard.
- vii) The Committee agrees to pass the information regarding person(s) engaged in harming the wild animals and forests or those engaged in illegal activities on to the Forest Department. The Committee agrees to help forest employees in apprehending such person(s) and provide all possible assistance in protecting any seized produce etc.
- viii) The Committee agrees to rectify any shortcomings found during review of its works by the Forest Officer / monitoring agency.
- ix) The Committee agrees to keep accounts of income and expenditure of the funds from various sources and to get regular annual audits done by the agency assigned by the Forest Officer.
- x) The Committee agrees to maintain the records specified by the project regularly and in prescribed formats.
- xi) The Committee agrees that the distribution of products and services generated as a result of implementation of the Plan among its members / User Groups is done in an equitable manner. If the Forest Officer points out any mismanagement or irregularity in the equitable distribution of such products and services, then the Committee agrees to implement the necessary corrections/improvements suggested by the Forest Officer.
- xii) The Committee agrees to ensure that there is no misuse of funds allocated from the Forest Department for implementation of the activities under this project.

3. Responsibilities of the IGDC CREFLAT Project/DPD

- i) IGDC CREFLAT Project will provide to the Committee the related input materials required to carry out the works specified in the Plan, such as quality saplings and demanded species, fencing materials, etc. in a timely manner.
- ii) IGDC CREFLAT Project will provide the payments specified in the Plan to the Committee for implementation of works carried out in the forest area on the basis of the Plan in a timely manner. Subsequent to approval of the Plan, a 6-month (Activity & Budget) Plan will be developed by the VDPIC and if required also LRPC etc. and approved by the General House. After acceptance of this 6-month plan, the DPD will transfer the budgeted amount into the general account of the VDPIC prior to commencement of works.
- iii) Funds from other department's schemes as the Panchayat may be able to converge/ garner, may also be used for activities that help meet the project's objectives.

- iv) IGDC CREFLAT Project shall provide the necessary advice and guidance to the Committee for implementation of works carried out in the forest area on the basis of the Plan.
- v) IGDC CREFLAT Project shall NOT be responsible for any loss in any of the works related to implementation of the Plan and no claim of any sort can be presented against Forest Department.
- vi) In the event of any misutilisation of the funds in the level of the VDPIC, IGDC CREFLAT Project shall initiate proper legal actions against the former.

4. Support by the Project

- i) The DPMA will provide funds for Entry Point Activities (EPAs) identified by the Committee and in conformity with the approved EPA guidelines, which will be implemented by the Committee. These funds will be deposited into the general account of the VDPIC prior to commencement of the EPA works.
- ii) The DPMA will provide to the Committee the related input materials required to carry out the works specified in the Plan, such as saplings, fencing materials, etc. in the required qualities and quantities. For the saplings provided, the DPMA will obtain as receipt from the Member Secretary or Chairperson of the VDPIC on the form specified in the M&E guidelines.
- iii) The DPMA will provide to the Committee the payments specified in the Plan for implementation of works carried out in the forest area on the basis of the Plan (see Article 2.4.).
- iv) The Project will provide to the Committee members training and other capacity building measures, as well as support for income generating activities as specified in the Plan.
- v) The funds earmarked for plantations, fencing etc. will be credited into the general bank account with the VDPIC as per accepted 6-month plans derived from the VDP. The maintenance funds will be credited into a separate Maintenance Account of the VDPIC from the second year onwards.
- vi) Payment and receipt of project funds will be strictly by means of bank transfers to the account of the Committee. All disbursements by the Committee to VDPIC members will also be executed through bank transfers or as cheques, if bank accounts are not available.

5. Rights and Benefit Sharing

- i) The **Rights** of right holders as admitted in the Forest Settlement will remain unaffected due to constitution of the Committee and will continue to be exercised as such.
- ii) The **Benefits** which Committee members and their user groups will be entitled to after closure of plots / patches in the forest for various project interventions are as follows:
 - a) Group members responsible for protection and maintenance of different closed patches will harvest and share usufructs from those patches;
 - b) Group members responsible for nurturing and protecting plantations, soil and water conservation (SWC) measures etc. raised by them will be entitled to collect all types of usufructs from these lots and share it amongst themselves equitably;
 - c) Grass and hay production areas will be harvested and shared amongst the groups / villagers as decided by the VDPIC or in rotation;
- iii) The Committee will be entitled to their share of payments from intermediate and final felling within the applied sustainable forest management criteria whenever they take place in this forest, as laid out in the JFM Regulations of Tripura.

6. Monitoring & Evaluation

- i) Monitoring and Evaluation of project activities will be done at different levels, including by the Executive body or participatory monitoring committee designated by VDPIC.
- ii) The executive body or any of its members will monitor progress and quality of work during execution of various works. The Member Secretary will record the date, places and names of members who checked the work(s) and whether works were satisfactory and any instructions given.
- iii) A participatory monitoring committee made up of members of the Committee, a member from the Panchayat as well as a representative from the Forest Department (e.g., Deputy RO) will on quarterly basis review objectives, inputs and work progress and report to the whole Committee. Their reports will then be sent to the Forest Officer for information.
- iv) Where Committee Groups have carried out or are responsible for different activities or assets created, annual monitoring will be carried out by VDPIC jointly with forest department.
- v) Settlement of Disputes and grievances: Any complaint or grievance need to be settled at VDPIC level and only if that has not satisfied the complainant the GRM can be used to interface with project authorities.

7. Memorandum of Understanding

We are aware that the benefits mentioned in this agreement shall be available to the Committee only when it discharges its duties, responsibilities and works in a satisfactory manner as certified by the Forest Officer every year. However, if the Forest Officer fails to fulfil conditions mentioned in paragraphs 3 and 4 of this agreement and there is a cause for the Committee not able to discharge its responsibilities and works, the same will be kept in mind while evaluating the works of the Committee every year.

I _____, Chairperson, _____ VDPIC, declare on behalf of the Committee, that I am committed to follow all the conditions mentioned in this MoU and am signing this memo after reading/understanding all conditions mentioned herein, literally and in their original meaning.

(Name, Seal and Signature of the President)

On behalf of _____ VDPIC /

Witnesses:

- 1.
- 2.

I, _____, _____ [position] undertake, on behalf of _____ IGDC CREFLAT Project, to implement all duties/responsibilities of the IGDC CREFLAT Project in this memorandum.

(Name, Seal and Signature of the Divisional Forest Officer)

On behalf of _____ DPD-CREFLAT

Annex -3 Gist of EPA

- a) To create awareness among the communities about the project as well as to gain their confidence.
- b) To mobilize and solicit them for effective participatory project planning and implementation.
- c) To enable them early exposure and skill enhancement in the community-based participatory planning, implementation and management of small common asset/s.
- d) To endow tangible assets to target communities about which they have immediate sense of utility and benefits.
- e) To provide short-term financial benefit and incentives by way of labour wages for the EPA.

Guiding Principles of EPA

General guiding principles for EPA

As CREFLAT project villages are located in challenging landscapes with diverse communities, the EPA guideline can only generalize common principles. Moreover, the 'village' in CREFLAT means the entire Gram Panchayat (GP) or Village Committee (VC as in ADC areas) consisting of several *paras* or hamlets (average of 4-8 paras) under each GP/VC. The EPA identified, therefore, should not raise any conflict at village level or between the *paras*, but should cater to the need of common people of the village. Also, it is suggested that EPA should be of low-cost investment and should give benefit to larger number of people within the communities. Some of the general principles of EPA for CREFLAT are as follows:

- EPA may be a bundle of different activities across the paras in each village (VC/GP), and not necessarily a single activity in a particular para.
- EPA should not be capital incentive, rather low-cost activities which can be achieved through community mobilization and linkages/convergence with other schemes / programme / departments.
- No EPA should be taken up that will likely or have potential to disrupt the communal harmony or inter-para goodwill of the village.
- Identify and implement those EPA that will encourage maximum physical and financial contribution from the community.
- Emphasis on EPA that will provide optimum community benefits and contribute to enhancing natural resource resilience or reducing dependency on natural resources or that enhance climate resilience of communities (such as on issues relating to water).
- EPA process should involve maximum participation of community members at the planning and implementation stages.
- The identified activity or activities undertaken under the EPA shall have prior approval of the general body of the VDPIIC.
- EPA should be part of the Village Development Plan or VDP.
- All EPA supported by CREFLAT will have to have a clear link to the overall objective of the project (reduced forest degradation and increased incomes) and the project outcome (increased climate resilience of forest landscapes), and will have to make a proven contribution to their achievement through systematic monitoring and evaluation.

What activities will qualify or be included for EPA?

- Works based on urgent needs of the local communities such as rehabilitation of drinking water facilities, water harvesting, repair of local market-sheds, rehabilitation of locally-valued common bio-cultural site/place including community shrine, community playground, supply of

solar lantern, supply/procurement of MGNREGS implements, small farming tools or implements, etc.

- Activities relating to health, sanitation, drinking water, nutrition-focused needs may be given preference above all other activities.
- Activities that address the drudgery reduction particularly targeting the women such as creation or repair of assets for common use such as drinking water facilities, washing and bathing platform, platforms for drying of crops/NTFPs, etc.
- Locally-valued unique activities which may not fit in other project components of the project may also be considered.

What activities are to be avoided under EPA

- Activities which will disrupt communal harmony, or have the potential to raise conflicts, and/or goodwill and fellow-feeling among the *paras* within the village (GP/VC).
- Activities which will not contribute to livelihood enhancement and/or drudgery reduction of common people.
- Activities that will not contribute to overall project objectives and outcome of CREFLAT.

Pre-requisite for the Implementation of EPA in a CREFLAT village

- The community has provided their consent using the standard FPIC format to engage with CREFLAT.
- The VDPIC has been formed and they have been adequately introduced about the project.
- VCW has been appointed for the village and had been trained in CEPF/ESMF.
- The VDPIC members have been trained on CEPF/ESMF and participatory village development planning preparation processes.
- EPA has been identified by the VDPIC and the same has been adequately discussed, presented and agreed in the general body meeting of community (as reflected in the Meeting Minutes of the VDPIC).
- VDP has been prepared and the EPA and/or EPA implementation action plan has been included as part of the VDP.
- The VDPIC has opened a bank account.
- The VDPIC members have received training on CREFLAT financial management and record keeping requirements.

Annex –4 Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) Process Guideline

The FPIC process guideline is a major component of the CEPF chapter. It describes the process of involving the target communities and reaching agreements with the target group and with PAPs including users from other paras using community lands of target communities. FPIC will be applied to all participating communities (Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, IPLC) disregarding their ethnicity and will have a strong focus on the most vulnerable and affected people;

FPIC is often misunderstood as one-time action, during which the community leadership signs a pre-meditated form, declaring the agreement of the community with project activities. This is usually done in form of a MoU based on the intent of the project before the start of project activities. In the case of CREFLAT, which needs to comply with international standards of FPIC, this is not accepted as sufficient. FPIC process in case of CREFLAT is outlined in the following. The word “prior” should not mislead the project to believe that all actions of FPIC have to be implemented before start of the project. The important point is that the process of community consultation must be started before the project and activities are implemented based on consent of the beneficiaries / PAPs.

FPIC is an on-going process, beginning with the first encounter with a community until the completion and evaluation of activities. Throughout planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation the FPIC process is used to decide upon activities, including reconsideration and modification of some decisions or corrective actions in response to insights and adaptive learning, prompted by implementation experiences and monitoring and evaluation. FPIC must therefore be continuously affirmed at various points in planning, as illustrated in the figure below.

The target of the FPIC process is to involve all directly and indirectly affected persons in local communities from start to end of the project according to the principles of FPIC. It applies to all land-based and livelihood investment activities. It is to be noted that the FPIC process is not only limited to allocated forestlands e.g., “*patta*” lands, but to all lands on which project activities are implemented including forest land. In addition, the involvement of women / women groups and vulnerable community members is crucial. This also includes users from other paras using community lands of target communities.

The FPIC process includes several steps where communities, specific community groups and especially affected persons are informed and after internal deliberations can agree to cooperate with the project and to implement the selected project activities. All agreements steps need to be documented, including potential individual dissenting opinions. The main/central FPIC agreement that should be signed by the communities is about the implementation of the VDPs (selected measures of the VDPs). It is thus not done in the beginning of the project, but before physical implementation. This agreement needs to be in local language and comprise all necessary information on the selected activities including the budget, time frame, their potential benefits and negative impacts as well as how these will be mitigated. It will also include the measures of the Livelihood Restoration Plans (LRP) if applicable. The discussion / decision-making process and its results need to be documented (including pro- and contra views).

The FPIC process will be led by the technical staff and the Village Community Workers (VCW) employed by DPMA. Additional trainings will need to be organized so that they can implement the process and include all provisions of the CEPF incl. FPIC process, LRP development integrated into VDP, GRM etc.

FPIC 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing FPIC Team / Contracting VCW • Initial information and consultation with community leaders • Information dissemination about the project and possible implications
FPIC 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community deliberation and decision taking regarding all project activities (also plantations and SWC) • Agreement to cooperate, if voluntary use/access restrictions these are to be documented)
FPIC 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participatory Planning (PRA) with village groups • Involving women groups and vulnerable people (ST, SC) • Identification, consultation with communities and implementation of Entry Point Activities (EPA)
FPIC 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of VDPs for conservation and landscape planning • Assessment of impacts together with affected groups • Specific consultation with different beneficiary groups and PAPs, Inclusion of LRP elements into VDPs
FPIC 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting up of agreements with Communities and PAPs • Consultation and information process on landscape conservation and livelihood measures
FPIC 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in Implementation of selected measures from VDPs • Information on appropriate E&S mitigation measures (see ESMF) • Participatory Monitoring & Evaluation
Throughout project (from step 2 to 6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management of grievances and complaints (GRM) • Feed-back from communities to the PMA & reporting • Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) Implementation

FPIC Equivalence of first activities before Consultant On-boarding

Planting and SWC activities were partly carried out on state owned forestlands (Forest Department Lands) during 2021-22, before the required safeguards were in place. In the villages visited, during the site visit no complaints / grievances and no economic displacement was discovered and communities had been informed in prior and activities implemented by JFMCs with contributions of village residents. However, the assessment could not be made for all villages and especially in (former) Jhum areas, plantations may have led to livelihood losses of former users. The suggested table would cover the following topics, which may also be addressed during VDP preparation:

- Name of village / para (incl. differentiating if several JFMCs exist per village)
- Population data (No. of persons and HH), Ethnic Groups (which?), mixed/homogenous village
- Statement if continued Phase 1 or new Phase 2 village
- Activities undertaken (2021/2022), differentiated in plantation works, SWC works (check-dams) other?
- Differentiation if activities were done at new sites or at existing sites of phase 1 (rehabilitation works)

- Assessment if land-use by people was present in the areas of works (e.g. plantation sites) and specification which activities and by whom?
- Livelihood priorities identified by communities (men/women)
- Village institutions that were already formed VDPIC
- FPIC process => which consultations, information sessions, agreements were done
- Names of responsible Forest officers, Village Level Workers and VDPIC members

This table will help to assess the status quo and if additional, specific livelihood restoration activities will be required in these villages to be included in VDPs.

Women involvement / Gender aspects:

The involvement of women / gender mainstreaming in the project is planned in the following way.

There are clear-cut provisions of gender mainstreaming in the constitution of JFMCs (50%) as well as VDPICs (50%) which are primarily involved in implementation of most of the land-based activities. In other project activities also(including staffing), fair representation of both genders is being taken care of:

- 1) 50% women representation in each JFMC
- 2) 50% women representation in each VDPIC
- 3) Minimum 33% women representation in each Monitoring sub-committee
- 4) About 40% women representation in engagement of VCW
- 5) 50% beneficiaries to be women for all beneficiary-oriented project activities

The importance of representation of women in public discussions and in decision making about project activities will be further emphasized in VDP and FPIC trainings. Wherever possible, vulnerable/disadvantage group representative need to be included in appropriate committees.

Avoiding Elite Capture and Control:

Elite capture and control as well as manipulation and intimidation will be avoided in the FPIC process ("hijacking" by certain interest groups) as much as possible. In a strongly hierarchical context within the village, this aspect deserves a good strategy. This is proposed to be done via several steps in the process: The first step is awareness raising during trainings of VCWs who have the role of FPIC facilitators in the communities. The objective of support to vulnerable PAPs and inclusion of women are clear goals that are theoretically shared by all stakeholders, including the Village Leadership. In this context, facilitators receive respective trainings before entering the field and throughout the FPIC process (step 1-6) and are monitored by the project team (IC). Secondly, a focus on activities through which the entire community / all participating households can benefit is recommended. Thirdly, a focus on community solidarity activities can be introduced, whereby the community is asked to suggest livelihood activities that particularly focus on vulnerable community members. Whilst the Village Community Workers (VCW) may not be totally considered a neutral party in the process, they are supportive of the community and play a vital role as bridge between the TFD and the communities.

Livelihood Restoration Plans (LRP)

The objective of the LRP is to support PAPs, who lose means of their subsistence as well as income generation opportunities through the project with appropriate measures to enable them to recover these losses in an alternative, more sustainable way. This is particularly relevant for all vulnerable affected households. Livelihood Restoration Plans (LRP) are viewed as the appropriate project tool to compensate affected persons' losses through alternative livelihood means.

The tool of LRP is proposed to identify these persons and understand if they are eligible and what they are entitled to receive in compensation of lost assets and how they can be involved in re-developing their livelihoods in a sustainable way.

A general Process Framework (PF) for the project was developed during the Feasibility Study. Rationale for the PF is that the project may require some land acquisition to implement community livelihood activities or infrastructure development and/or induce use- or access restrictions of current users of forest plantation areas or other project work sites e.g., for Soil and Water Conservation Measures. Susceptible activities could be the demarcation of new biodiversity corridors, forest rehabilitation areas and insect fields (or the expansion and enforcement of existing ones), natural resources, and services (e.g. medicinal plants, fodder, firewood or other forest and non-timber forest products). The rationale for the PF was that at the time of the FS it was assumed that access and use restrictions would fall on PAPs involuntarily. However, the new understanding is that PAP would have to agree on these restrictions voluntarily and if they do not agree project activities would have to be changed. This triggers a CEPF including LRP provisions and not a PF any more.

LRP provisions will be included into the VDPs and take into account the priorities of the affected households. This means that the project will have to include additional livelihood measures (land-based or non-land based) for households who are negatively affected by project activities (e.g. use and access restrictions) and eligible to receive the benefits of LRPs. LRPs should focus on PAP and most vulnerable groups, including corresponding success indicators for implementation Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation (MRE).

There could be a range of livelihood activities, from which affected households can chose. The livelihood activities shall then be monitored if successful. The project will need to identify and monitor all project sites (villages / paras) where people's land-use activities will be affected by project activities. This will need to be documented and appropriate compensation measures / alternative livelihood measures included in the LRP section of VDPs.

Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM)

The Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) is the project specific tool to get to know about problems in the project and potential complaints of community members or other stakeholders; and to register, respond, and solve the underlying problems, conflicts etc. The GRM also includes documentation of the process of complaint resolution. Conflicts may appear first at community level and be solved by the traditional arbitration and mediation process in each village, which involves the village committee at settlement or Gram Panchayat level. However, if a problem persists and/or cannot be solved by the village leadership, the project needs to know about it and be able to respond and solve the problem in a coordinated way.

At the village and "para"-level the complaints will be collected by the Livelihood Restoration Planning Committee (LRPC), which is a sub-committee of the VDPIIC. The complaint will be reviewed at the village level itself, and if possible, resolved within the village itself. This process will be supported by the VCW and TA, who will also support with the documentation process required for the grievance management. In case, the complainant is not satisfied with the resolution, then the complaint will be sent to the Block level, which is the identified Block Level Grievance Level Committee, headed by the Ranger. Any complaint not resolved at this level is then to be sent to the DFO for a resolution. Above this, at the District Level is the DPMA, who have a GRM officer, who is designated and accessible (can be joined by phone) to handle complaints still not resolved and to document the grievance redress procedure. This GRM officer shall also periodically collect the grievances that may appear in the villages and makes sure that the issues are properly addressed, including an initial response within a week and who pushes forward the resolution process to reach a solution with the aggrieved person(s).

Annex 5 - Snapshot of Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF)

This ESMF supports the assessment of the risks and potential impacts that may occur during implementation of Project activities. It sets out the principles, guidelines, and procedures to assess environmental and social risks, and proposes measures to reduce, mitigate, and/or offset potential adverse environmental and social impacts and enhance positive impacts and opportunities of the Project and its activities.

The purpose of this ESMF is to provide guidance to project implementation staff, to authorities and local communities as well as to contractors and any other stakeholders participating in planning and implementation of the Project. The ESMF supports the management of potential Environmental and Social impacts of project activities in planning, construction and operation through appropriate management tools.

The ESMF incorporates procedures, measures and general plans for:

- Environmental and social impact screening and –risk categorization, impact assessment and management, and monitoring of interventions planned under the project
- Arrangements for the implementation of the provisions of the ESMF, including E&S risk screening, assessment of impacts, implementation of E&S management measures, monitoring and reporting
- Capacity building measures for ESMF implementation for different stakeholders, depending on the respective responsibilities, tasks and existing capacities
- Supporting material / E&S tools for adequate ESMF implementation

The ESMF takes up the elements and replaces the existing ESMF developed during the Feasibility Phase (UNIQUE/GFA, 2019) and harmonizes the approach and measures with the other E&S frameworks and tools e.g., CEPF, LRP, GRM and SEP, in order to avoid duplication and incoherence.

The ESMF required for the Project is designed to be based on the overall program approach to the maximum extent possible. Its objectives and shall be integrated / interwoven with the Project Work Plan.