

Minutes of the 9th Meeting of the Executive Committee of the
Assam Project of Forestry & Biodiversity Conservation Society
18th April 2017

The 9th Meeting of the Executive Committee of the APFBC Society was held on 18th April 2017 at 3.00 pm under the Chairmanship of Principal Secretary to the Government Of Assam, Environment & Forests Department, at the Assam Secretariat, D-Block, Dispur.

A list of members and invitees present in the Meeting is at **Annexure-1**

At the outset the Chairman welcomed everyone present in the Meeting and there after a round of introduction was made.

The Agenda-wise proceedings of the Meeting are as under:

Agenda-1: The minutes of the 8th Meeting of the Executive Committee were confirmed.

Agenda-2: The Action Taken report.

1. The Committee was informed that the Project has been granted extension up to May, 2017 and an advance disbursement of Euro 15 million has been agreed in three instalments of Euro 5 million each, for allowing the Project to complete ongoing activities until May, 2018. Of these, the first instalment of Euro 5 m has been availed. It was also informed that a scoping for Phase-II of the Project will be undertaken through an international consultant team.
2. The Physical and Financial progress was placed before the Committee as contained in the Agenda Note circulated (**Annexure-2**)

Agenda-3: Regarding the status of reimbursement of funds by the French Development Agency it was informed that so far an amount of Rs, 79.12 Cr. has been reimbursed.

Agenda-4: Regarding the ongoing / planned activities it was informed that:

1. Maintenance of plantations created under the Project, including special plantations, Sal coppice and indigenous species nurseries will be continued.

2. Under the Second Stage, 35 JFMCs and 25 EDCs have been taken up for Micro-planning and Livelihood improvement through COMPELO (a consortium comprising of Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship + Rashtriya Gramin Vikas Nidhi).
3. In the next stage about 57 JFMCs and a minimum of 5 EDCs will be taken up.
4. Livelihood improvement in the remaining JFMCs / EDCs and establishment of market linkages for all the JFMCs and EDCs will be taken up.
5. Establishment of a Central Van Bazar at Guwahati, Regional Van Bazars at appropriate locations and utilizing existing Bamboo Bazar outlets wherever feasible.
6. Social Forestry Parks renovation and developing self-sustaining models for maintenance.
7. Developing some pilot eco-tourism spots.
8. Consultancy for the developing Assam Biodiversity Portal has been commissioned,

Agenda-5: matters discussed and approved by the Committee:

1. The proposal under Component-2 for ICT integration into the functioning of Forest Department was discussed. It was stressed that this effort shall be aimed at reducing the drudgery of the frontline staff in filing various kinds of reports manually. Secondly, it should bring transparency and efficiency in day to day functioning of the department. After detailed discussions the proposal presented under component-2 at an overall cost of Rs. 13 cr. was approved.
2. It was agreed to release funds for Entry Point Activities to all the JFMCs and EDCs that have already been taken up for Micro-planning. An advance of 5-10 lakh may be made to each JFMC, subject to satisfaction of readiness to implement the scheme by JFMC and utilization of fund already released to be assessed by the Project Director, APFBC Society, besides estimate-based releases for EPAs elucidated in the Micro-plans. For EDCs the funds to the extent of Rs 25 lakh may be released subject to same condition.

3. It was suggested that a commercial model be developed for marketing of Banaj-Assam products. A Mobile-Van for display and sale of Banaj-products at various exhibitions may be developed.
4. The proposal for implementation of renovation of 10 Social Forestry Parks including the one at Dharamtul was approved.
5. Proposal for taking up Eco-tourism activities on pilot basis at a few select sites was approved.
6. The proposal for collaboration with the Forest Survey of India, Dehradun for the following assignments was approved:
 - a. bringing out Status of Forest Report-Assam, and
 - b. Forest Types reassessment
7. The proposal for developing a common facility for awareness generation and for producing quality planting material at suitable locations was agreed to.
8. Approval was accorded to organize two more exposure visits, one to ONF International, Paris and the other to University of British Columbia, Vancouver.
9. It was agreed to procure 2(two) additional vehicles (Innova) one each for PCCFs (Wildlife) and PCCF (LAZ).
10. 2 (two) Veterinary Ambulance may also be procured.
11. Remuneration of the contractual staff in PMU was agreed to be re-fixed with a 20% hike, subject to their satisfactory performance.

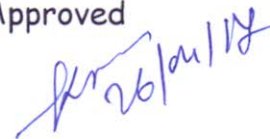
Agenda-6: Any other Issue with the permission of the Chair: In addition to the listed Agenda for the Meeting, the EC made following recommendations:

1. There shall be focus on reducing desk work of frontline staff through modern technology, so that their services may be utilised for more productive forestry activities.
2. There shall be an attempt to build capacities of the JFMCs and EDCs for producing raw material for the medicinal plants and other herbs based industries (such as *Patanjali*) in the State. Necessary arrangements may be made for signing of agreements for production and buying back between the communities (JFMCs and EDCs), the Department and the industries.
3. For awareness building, visit of the members of JFMCs and EDCs to Kaziranga National Park and other Protected Areas may be organised.

4. In various nurseries there shall be emphasis on quality of the planting material and not merely on quantity. The sprinkler system for irrigation may be adopted in all the nurseries. Emphasis to be given on proper planting and survival of plants.
5. Bio-fencing of suitable species (thorny citrus varieties) may be taken up to mitigate elephant depredation with additional benefits of product market.
6. Some Floating Camps shall be considered to be provided to the Protected areas and other Divisions on need basis, particularly, for Kaziranga 6th Addition.
7. Special emphasis shall be laid on developing wildlife habitat by planting suitable fruit/ Fodder species for wildlife and to reduce crops depredation.
8. The highlands that are being taken up must also be planted with suitable species both for stabilising the highlands and for providing fodder to wildlife during flood period.
9. A compilation of success stories of the forest department shall be compiled with the help of publicity wings of the department.
10. Physical verification of works in the field is to intensified by the Project Director, APFBC Society.
11. In respect of aforementioned decision of EC, approval of Governing Body be taken wherever necessary.

The meeting ended with thanks from the Chair to everyone present.

Approved



(P. K. Borthakur, IAS)

Principal secretary (E&F)

Chairman Executive Committee-APFBC Society.