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Guidelines for Strengthening the Joint Forest Management Programme, 2002

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No.22-8/2000-JFM (FPD)
Government of India
Ministry of Environment and Forests
(JFM Cell)

Paryavaran Bhawan, CGO Complex,
Lodi Road
New Delhi.

Dated: 24th December, 2002

To:

All the Secretaries
Forest Departments (for all the States/UTs)

All the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests
(for all the States/UTs)

Subject: Strengthening of Joint Forest Management (JFM) Programme.

Sir,

Attention is invited to the guidelines issued by the Central Government on JFM to the States vide No.22-8/2000-JFM (FPD) dated 21st February, 2000. The Government of India has received considerable feedback from the States on various issues contained in these guidelines. To incorporate these suggestions, following guidelines are issued to further strengthen the JFM programme in the field.

1. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

To ensure smooth working relationship between the forest department and the JFM Committees and also to bring in a sense of empowerment and accountability, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) should be signed between the forest department and the JFM committees outlining the short term and long term roles and responsibilities, implementation of work programme, pattern of sharing of usufructs and conflict resolution. In the MOU, JFM Committees should form the basic Forest Management Units to provide them a feeling of empowerment and enable them to effectively protect and conserve the forest resources. The MOU for each committee shall have location specific work programme based on site- vegetation profile and mutual understanding. The MOU should reflect the consumption and livelihood needs of the forest dependent communities, plan for restoration of vegetation and clearly spell out the roles, responsibilities and powers. The MOU should define the procedure for necessary transparent accounting of all types of forest produce (seasonal, annual and periodical) accrued from the forests as per the working plans and micro plan prescriptions, financial accountability and distribution of

sharing mechanism including ploughing back of revenue for the regeneration in terms of Government of India letter No.22-8/2000-JFM (FPD) dated 21st February, 2000. All JFM Committees should be assigned specific roles for boundary demarcation, fire prevention and control of grazing, encroachments and illicit felling as well as ensure sustainable non-destructive harvesting of NTFPs including medicinal plants and for this, the Committees should be given authority to act, monetary and other incentives as genuine stakeholders. A provision to assist the JFM Committees has been made under the Centrally Sponsored Plan Scheme 'Integrated Forest Protection Scheme'. Similar provisions should also be made in other State sector schemes. A GIS based map of the JFM area of the States along with village boundaries may be prepared every two years to monitor the performance and to ascertain the status of vegetation. Similarly, the socio-economic changes brought about by JFM should also be monitored by obtaining regular feedback from the committee members. The action programme should also be linked with the State Forestry Plan activities in order to make JFM integral to the overall forestry activities including afforestation on all types of lands. The MOU should also include planning and development of grasslands, other common lands, agro-forestry and water bodies as a reflection of peoples voluntary action for holistic land use planning and management. Agroforestry models developed in various states under different conditions should be studied and adopted. A case in points is the agro-forestry model developed by Nagaland under the Indo-Canadian Environment Project to control shifting cultivation.

2. Relationship with Panchayats:

The relationship between Panchayats and JFM Committees should be such that the JFM Committees take advantage of the administrative and financial position and organisational capacity of the Panchayats for the management of the forest resources. However, the unique and separate non-political identity of the JFM Committees as 'guardian of forests' should be maintained and ensured. The benefits accrued from NTFP sales should be shared with all the members of the gaon sabha including the JFM committees.

In order to achieve a better coordination with Panchayat raj institutions, a committee may be constituted at the district level under the chairmanship of President, Zila Parishad and under Collector in those districts where the Zila Parishad is non-functional for the time being with the DFO acting as Convener and other district level officers as members.

3. Capacity building for the management of Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs):

The success of JFM in good forest areas would depend upon the sustainable development and harvesting of Non-Timber Forest Products. The sustainability of

JFM would also depend upon the remunerative prices for the gatherers of NTFPs. This requires a well organised setup and plan of action for the collection, transportation, storage, processing and marketing of Non-Timber Forest Products. For better return to the gatherer and the Committees, State Governments may initiate non-destructive harvesting (in accordance and within the overall prescriptions of the working plans), equity in sharing, institutional reforms and also strengthen the set up of NTFP management based on the experience in different States. The guiding principles should be to first ensure sustainability of the resources and then maximum benefit to the gatherers and value addition. Panchayats and State Forest Corporations should assist the JFM Committees for developing skills for handling the NTFP collection, storage, marketing etc.

This issues with the approval of the Minister for Environment and Forests.

Yours faithfully,

(M.K. Sharma)

Director General of Forests & Special Secretary

Copy for information and necessary action to:

1. Chief Secretary, All States/UTs.
2. Addl. Secretary, National Afforestation and Eco-development Board, Ministry of Environment and Forests, New Delhi.
3. Secretary, National Wasteland Development Board, Ministry of Rural Development, New Delhi.
4. Secretary, Department of Rural Development, New Delhi.
5. Secretary, Planning Commission, Government of India, New Delhi.
6. Secretary, Department of Tribal Welfare, Government of India, New Delhi.
7. Chief Conservator of Forests (Central) of all Regional Offices located at Bhubaneshwar, Bangalore, Bhopal, Shillong, Lucknow, Chandigarh.
8. Director General, Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education, Dehra Dun.
9. Director, Indian Institute of Forest Management, Bhopal.
10. Director, Indira Gandhi National Forest Academy, Dehra Dun.

11. Director, Forest Survey of India, Dehra Dun.
12. Director, Forest Education, Dehra Dun.
13. Director, Wildlife Institute of India, Dehra Dun.
14. All officers of the Ministry of Environment and Forests,
Government of India.

(Dr. V.K. Bahuguna)
Inspector General of Forests