

Source Book

On

*SOCIAL*

*AND*

*INSTITUTIONAL ASPECTS*

June 2003

Foundation for Ecological Security

Anand

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## Preface...

In its pursuit of addressing the problems of ecological degradation and securing efficient and sustainable management of village ecosystems, FES focuses on two essential processes at the village level. **One**, a process of physical restoration that encompasses a detailed analysis of the resource condition and a realistic plan of what could be done to not only arrest the pace of depletion but also to help communities to maintain their natural resource base on a sustained basis. **Two**, a course of village institution building and strengthening that carefully ensures that all the facets of local-self governance are put in place before our association with the community formally ends and the community takes over charge. In the actual way of our working, these two processes play a complementary role to each other and follow a sequence in converging at different levels of project implementation. The contents of this document would focus only on the processes of institution building and strengthening by FES in its project villages. The document has four sections dealing with the following:

1. **"The Final Image"** outlines the desired situation where we would like to see the community at the end of our association.
2. **"Structural, Functional and Normative steps to arrive at the final image"** is an index of meaningful components that need to be addressed in order to achieve the final image. The *structural aspects* define the design of the institution. These basically deal with the fundamental constituents of a community institution which determines the geographical as well as social frontiers within which certain specific governance mechanisms are evolved to maintain and manage the natural resources. The

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*functional aspects* define the operational mechanisms that are essential to support the structural layout of the resource managing institution. This enlists a number of functional responsibilities of the institution and thereby ensures that adherence to these functions may bring about a desired institutional arrangement at the community level to pursue a continuous process of resource development and conservation. The *normative aspects* define the principles, rules and norms that guide the structure and functions of the community institution.

3. **“The Structural, Functional and Normative Aspects”** deal with each of the components given in the index to arrive at the final image. It includes a brief definition of the term and its relevance, the processes and action steps to work on it, verifiable measures and means of verification – all of these are seen as effective ways to reach the final image.
4. **“Village level Instruments”** are a set of tools that help in establishing a strong foundation for a healthy village institution over a period of time. The various instruments outlined in this section could be further classified into three parts. The first instrument refers to the collection and compilation of baseline information that not only helps in understanding the village reality and subsequently drawing up a more realistic development plan with the villagers but also provides continuous scope of maintaining a database for future reference. The second set of instruments are village level documents pertaining to planning and norm / rule making which are considered essential tools for putting in place a democratic local governance process. The third set of instrument

outlines several prerequisites in the form of a checklist, which are critical in guiding the project by defining various activities in terms of "*when to do what*" (refers to time and nature of activity to be performed) and "*what should follow what and when*" (refers to the sequence and stages of activities).

## **Annexure I**

**"Simplifying terms / Find your own connections"** is a glossary (which is not complete at this stage) that attempts to show how a particular term, as used by all of us in our daily work, is related to several other words and, might help us in understanding the various contexts in which such a term is often used.

This document is of dynamic nature. We plan to develop and fine tune it further. This would be discussed elaborately across teams so that the principles and guidelines laid down are properly internalized. Given the many complexities and dynamics in the context of community based natural resource management, we understand that the work on building and strengthening village institutions is a continuous process. Therefore, care has been taken to format this document in a manner so that it is open to reviews and revisions by each team and act as a source book to accommodate their experiential and incremental knowledge and understanding of this complex process of supporting community institution building.

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### The final image...

1. Community organizes itself into a collective to discuss and manage the resource on a long-term basis.
2. Community has the ability to consolidate rules through a process of agreement, acceptance by fellow members and its applicability in different situations.
3. Community is taking responsibility to include women, poor, weaker, disadvantaged and build in spaces where they can transact and try to negotiate.
4. Community institution has a General Body that includes all as members and functional committee(s) represented by different sections on rotational or renewal basis.
5. Community is able to plan, develop, protect, manage and use the resource through self-designed mechanisms.
6. Community is arriving at collective decisions on the basis of debate on views and concerns expressed by all in a larger forum that ensures the participation of all.
7. Community is not looking at NRM in isolation, rather is able to view it with other spheres of village development.
8. Community is capable of collaborating with its neighbours and other GO / NGOs on issues of strategic importance.
9. Community has ability to visualize developments in the outside world, internalize the positive elements and strategize to deal with negative elements.
10. Community is able to negotiate and resolve differences through mutual agreements and appropriate sanctions.
11. Community institution has social and legal recognition.

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**STRUCTURAL ASPECTS****Defining the design of the institution****1. CLEARLY DEFINED BOUNDARY OF THE INSTITUTION**

Defining boundary of CPR and defining those authorized to use it can be thought of as a first step in organizing for collective action. Individuals and households who have right to withdraw resource unit from the CPR must be clearly defined, as must the boundary of CPR itself. So long as the boundary of the resource and the specific individuals who can use the resource remain uncertain, no one knows what is being managed and for whom. Clearly defined boundary of the institution implies the physical boundary of the resource as well as the membership boundary. The governance mechanism of the institution would apply to both resource and members.

**1.1 Relevance**

- 1.1.1 Acts as a determinant for legal and local recognition.
- 1.1.2 Becomes instrumental in defining the area of governance.
- 1.1.3 Resource boundary could consist of RWL, grazing land, forestland, and other commons including water bodies, etc.
- 1.1.4 Allows membership boundary to be based on revenue village, hamlet, habitation, user group, Panchayat, etc. or combination of any of these.
- 1.1.5 Forms a basis of formulation of operational as well as collective choice rule.
- 1.1.6 Sets ground for collaboration and negotiation in case of contestation, complexities, and multiplicity in user situations.

**1.2 Processes and Action Steps**

- 1.2.1 Commons and scope of membership are commonly understood.
- 1.2.2 Social and legal implications of resource boundary are clear within as well as at inter-community level.
- 1.2.3 Community prepares and acquires necessary documents (legal and social) to establish the boundary in favour of them.
- 1.2.4 Village specific byelaws specify the institution boundary.
- 1.2.5 Governance mechanisms (rules, procedures and functional mechanisms of the institution) apply over these boundaries.
- 1.2.6 Inclusion of concerns and issues in the planning process.

**1.3 Verifiable measures**

- 1.3.1 Instances of boundary related conflicts and its nature.
- 1.3.2 Access to resource by members.
- 1.3.3 The boundary of the resource has been physically demarcated and commonly understood and agreed upon.
- 1.3.4 Evidence of informing others on the jurisdiction of the institution.
- 1.3.5 Management plan has addressed the issues concerning the institutional boundary.

**1.4 Means of Verification**

- 1.4.1 Notice
- 1.4.2 Govt. letter

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- 1.4.3 Maps
- 1.4.4 Resolutions
- 1.4.5 Visit to the neighboring village
- 1.4.6 Natural resource management perspective plan
- 1.4.7 Demarcation
- 1.4.8 Physical verification

## **2. UNIVERSAL MEMBERSHIP**

In a democratic system of governance the most important structural aspect is the membership. Membership also defines the process of inclusion and exclusion. Who could be a member and what membership offers are two decisive factors in this regard. Equally important is the principle of universal membership that means all adults within institutional boundary are the members. Membership is perceived as de facto like citizenship in a democratic nation. Universal membership provides the best possible arrangement for working on commons. It also helps in recognizing the rights of all individuals and means a major step towards ensuring gender equity.

### **2.1 Relevance**

- 2.1.1 Universal membership provides equal opportunity to all in the institution, decision making, selection and election process. It is based on the principle of inclusion providing space to all including weaker sections and women who are generally left out, especially in other forms of membership.
- 2.1.2 It offers scope for informed membership.
- 2.1.3 It is not necessarily linked to benefits and contributions.

**2.2 Process and Action steps**

- 2.2.1 A system of enlisting membership approved by the General body.
- 2.2.2 Provision for universal membership in village specific byelaw.
- 2.2.3 There is a space for members to involve and participate in the institutional process.
- 2.2.4 Mechanisms for information sharing are in place.
- 2.2.5 Discussions in specific sub-groups that are excluded or groups which might influence and exclude others.
- 2.2.6 Legal recognition of universal membership.
- 2.2.7 Process of membership enrolment is ongoing to accommodate increasing age groups as well as the late comers.

**2.3. Verifiable measures**

- 2.3.1 Mandatory provision in byelaw regarding universal membership.
- 2.3.2 Byelaw has been ratified by all.
- 2.3.3 Membership document is maintained.
- 2.3.4 Membership has increased.
- 2.3.5 No restriction for inclusion has been imposed.
- 2.3.6 Number of members involved in the various functions of the institution.

**2.4 Verification**

- 2.4.1 Byelaw makes
- 2.4.2 Membership Register
- 2.4.3 Resolution book

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### **3. SUPREMACY OF THE GENERAL BODY**

Supremacy of GB is an instrument to broad base decision making processes and value the principles of rule by majority. General Body as the apex institution has legislative, executive and judiciary power within the institutional boundary. It has also the responsibility of delegation of power through functional groups.

#### **3.1 Relevance**

- 3.1.1 GB provides space for frequent expression of opinions by members.
- 3.1.2 It acts as an appropriate forum for addressal and redressal of concerns of members.
- 3.1.3 Provides opportunity for direct control by members over the collective decisions.
- 3.1.4 It acts as a platform for ensuring transparency and accountability.

#### **3.2 Process and Action steps**

- 3.2.1 Provision in byelaw declaring the GB as the apex body.
- 3.2.2 Important matters are discussed and decided in the GB.
- 3.2.3 Provisions for frequent GB meetings.
- 3.2.4 Mechanisms to ensure participation of all members in decision-making.
- 3.2.5 Mechanisms for delegation of responsibility by GB on regular basis.
- 3.2.6 Provisions for appropriate quorum in GB.

#### **3.3 Verifiable measures**

- 3.3.1 Statutory provision in the byelaw declaring the GB as the supreme body.

- 3.3.2 Number of functional groups / sub-committees formed by the GB.
- 3.3.3 Appropriate resolutions taken in different meetings that emphasizes the supremacy of the GB.
- 3.3.4 Frequency at which GB meetings are held.
- 3.3.5 Attendance in the GB meetings including the representation from all sections.
- 3.3.6 Number of times quorum has been achieved.

### **3.4 Verification**

- 3.4.1 Byelaws
- 3.4.2 GB Resolution Book
- 3.4.3 Meeting Book
- 3.4.4 Agenda/Notice

## **4. PROPER REPRESENTATION**

Proper representation means at least proportional representation, but focusing more on the representation from the disadvantaged and weaker sections including women, marginalised groups, to different layers of the institution. The representatives ensure that the interests of the people they represent are protected.

### **4.1 Relevance**

- 4.1.1 Ensure representation of various interests and concerns of multiple sections of the community.
- 4.1.2 Space for systematic review of who is representing and who are getting excluded.
- 4.1.3 Provision for explicit reservation from specific interest and socio-economic groups.
- 4.1.4 Scope for rotation of representatives in different layers of the institution, which is a healthy sign for democratic institution.

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### **4.2 Process and Action steps**

- 4.2.1 Provisions and mechanisms for selection and elections to ensure proper representation in place.
- 4.2.2 Structural space to accommodate representatives at different layers of the institution.
- 4.2.3 Provision for reservation and proper representation.
- 4.2.4 The composition of the quorum representing the diverse interests of the community is decided.
- 4.2.5 Tenure of the functional committee / executive bodies is defined.
- 4.2.6 Tenure of the representatives in the functional bodies, depending upon specific situations, is fixed.

### **4.3 Verifiable measures**

- 4.3.1 Composition of the functional committee.
- 4.3.2 Provision of representation in the byelaw.
- 4.3.3 Provision of selection and election in the byelaw.
- 4.3.4 Number of members who are represented in the different layers of the institution.
- 4.3.5 Resolutions passed on the issue of representation.
- 4.3.6 Number of times different committees have either been constituted or reconstituted.

### **4.4 Means of Verification**

- 4.4.1 Membership profile of various committees

## **5. DEMOCRATIC AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE**

Democratic and local Governance ensures equality of members by meeting the needs of a variety of people and accommodates sub-group interests as well as context specific

concerns. It also relies upon open debate, persuasion, compromise and thereby guarantee basic freedom to its members. Further, it allows periodic renewal of the institution in terms of its composition and rules.

## **5.1 Relevance**

- 5.1.1 Facilitate fair election and selection procedures.
- 5.1.2 Broad base the decision-making processes.
- 5.1.3 Strengthen institutional boundary with respect to governance.
- 5.1.4 Set ground for sensitive and informed decisions in favour of the disadvantaged and weaker sections.
- 5.1.5 Provides scope for different layers of governance and inter-linkages between them.
- 5.1.6 Acts as an appropriate platform to ensure the members' right to information.
- 5.1.7 Helps in ensuring transparency.
- 5.1.8 Helps in building leadership quality of members from the cross-section of the society.

## **5.2 Process and Action steps**

- 5.2.1 Building on existing systems of institution and norms.
- 5.2.2 Discussions on various elements of democratic and local governance such as selection, election, representation, decision making processes, etc.
- 5.2.3 Decisions in large forums that include majority members.
- 5.2.4 Mechanisms in place to generate and disseminate information to all.
- 5.2.5 Multi-layered arrangements within the institutional structure and inter-linkages among them are spelt out clearly.

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### **5.3 Verifiable measures**

- 5.3.1 Laid down procedures for selection and election.
- 5.3.2 Established provision for universal membership.
- 5.3.3 Functional committees formed within the larger institution.
- 5.3.4 Number of GB and functional committees meetings held.
- 5.3.5 Proper maintenance of books of accounts and other relevant documents as well as their presentation in the GB on a regular basis.

### **5.4 Means of Verification**

- 5.4.1 Byelaws - Rules and Regulations
- 5.4.2 Proceeding Register
- 5.4.3 Membership Register
- 5.4.4 Resolution Register
- 5.4.5 Village Records
- 5.4.6 Election file
- 5.4.7 Social observation book

## **6. DECENTRALIZED STRUCTURE UNDER THE UMBRELLA OF GENERAL BODY**

General Body forms different functional committees, delegate responsibility and functional authority, monitors their functioning receives recommendations and make these committees accountable for better functioning of the institution. It becomes instrumental in effective decentralization and allows for processing decisions.

### **6.1. Relevance**

- 6.1.1 Functional committees implement the decisions taken by the General body.

6.1.2 Provides for delegation of functional authority to the functional committees by the GB and thereby enhances institutional effectiveness.

6.1.3 Allows regular review and monitoring of the functions of these committees by GB and make them accountable.

6.1.4 Empowers GB to override the decisions of the functional committees, if necessary.

## **6.2 Process and Action step**

6.2.1 Functional committees operate within the larger institution.

6.2.2 Mechanisms for interaction between and among these functional committees and with the GB.

6.2.3 Monitoring and review mechanisms in place.

6.2.4 Provision to ensure supremacy of the GB.

6.2.5 Discussion within the community on the importance of supremacy of GB.

## **6.3 Verifiable measures**

6.3.1 Number of functional committees formed.

6.3.2 Laid down rules and procedures for monitoring and review.

6.3.3 Instances of deviations and actions taken by GB.

6.3.4 Instances of collaboration and conflict.

## **6.4 Means of Verification**

6.4.1 Byelaw Rules & Regulations

6.4.2 Resolution book

6.4.3 Reference in natural resource management plan and annual plan

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## FUNCTIONAL ASPECTS

### Defining functional / operational mechanisms of the institution

#### **1. EFFICIENT MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF INSTITUTION AND RESOURCE**

It implies planning, implementation, monitoring and review mechanisms for the creation, development and maintenance of resource as well as the institution. It also encompasses the mechanisms for efficient use of resource by the community.

##### **1.1 Relevance**

1.1.1 Planning becomes village and context specific.

1.1.2 Planning encompasses institutional, social, economic, livelihood and resource development aspects and helps in maintaining a sustained flow of ecological services.

1.1.3 Planning is process oriented and futuristic.

1.3.4 Plan gives priority to the concerns and interests of poor and marginalised sections.

1.3.5 It ensures coherence between plan and implementation thereby minimising margin of errors.

1.3.6 Plan is implemented through delegation of responsibilities to functional committees.

1.3.6 Planning and implementation by the community is a process of gaining confidence and sense of ownership to take up future responsibilities.

1.3.8 Implementation is cost effective and quality driven.

1.3.9 These functions of the institution help in analysing

whether the evolution of the institution is in the right direction or not.

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### **1.2 Process / Action steps**

- 1.2.1 Functions of the institution are in consonance with the norms and rules of the institution and the resource.
- 1.2.2 Plan evolved through discussion placing community needs and opportunities in a perspective.
- 1.2.3 Plan is finalised and approved in the Gram Sabha.
- 1.2.4 Mechanisms to include views of all in the process of planning and implementation.
- 1.2.5 Implementation through delegation of responsibilities to functional committees.
- 1.2.6 Provision for periodic assessment and interim rectification.
- 1.2.7 Mechanisms for regular monitoring and reacting immediately to discrepancies.
- 1.2.8 Balance between evolution of institution and growth of the resource.
- 1.2.9 Building resilience mechanism

### **1.3 Verifiable measures**

- 1.3.1 Operational rules have evolved and are put into practice.
- 1.3.2 Plan documents exist and referred to.
- 1.3.3 Frequency and composition of planing and review meetings.
- 1.3.4 Practices adopted keeping in mind the growth of the institution and the resource, like protection, payment and benefit sharing mechanisms.
- 1.3.5 Systematic maintenance of records and other documents.

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- 1.3.6 System of sharing information openly.
- 1.3.7 Presence of functional groups/ individuals with specific assignment
- 1.3.8 Ongoing reporting systems within the institutional structure.
- 1.3.9 Annual plan is in consonance with perspective plan.
- 1.3.10 Budget vs. and actual expenditure.
- 1.3.11 Instances of conflict resolution
- 1.3.12 Amendments in byelaw

### **1.4 Means of Verification**

- 1.4.1 Resolution Book
- 1.4.2 Plan documents – Perspective plan, Land development plan
- 1.4.3 Byelaw
- 1.4.4 Social observation book
- 1.4.5 Data review document
- 1.4.6 MIS
- 1.4.7 Case studies
- 1.4.8 Evaluation report
- 1.4.9 Audit report
- 1.4.10 Unit cost analysis

## **2. HANDLING ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL MATTERS**

One of the important functions of the institution is effective execution of the functional authority over its members and functional committees in their day to day functions and streamlining the financial transactions of the institution which are simple and easily understood by members. At the same

time the institution is capable of enabling its members to handle the matter responsibly.

## **2.1 Relevance**

- 2.1.1 Results in systematic and simple day to day functioning of the institution.
- 2.1.2 Ensures transparency and accountability.
- 2.1.3 Minimizes risks by removing ambiguity and apprehensions of the members.
- 2.1.4 Creates a base for functional autonomy of the institution, i.e., ability to function independently.

## **2.2 Process and Action steps**

- 2.2.1 Proper maintenance of records and books of accounts.
- 2.2.2 Develop a system of auditing.
- 2.2.3 Streamlining financial transaction mechanisms such as release of advances, operation of bank accounts, payment and utilization of funds, etc.
- 2.2.4 Mechanisms of financial transparency.
- 2.2.5 Capacity building of the community.
- 2.2.6 Administrative procedures in place.
- 2.2.7 System of prior information and notice to members.

## **2.3 Verifiable measures**

- 2.3.1 Records and books of account properly maintained.
- 2.3.2 Prevailing tools for information sharing.
- 2.3.3 Provision for accessing relevant information / records by members.
- 2.3.4 Payment made at a place and in a way acceptable to all.

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2.3.5 System of prior information and notice exist.

### **2.4 Means of Verification**

2.4.1 Set of records

2.4.2 Audit reports

2.4.3 Resolution book

2.4.4 Social observation

## **3. GUARANTEE TO PROTECT THE CONCERNS AND INTERESTS OF ALL**

The institution has appropriate systems to accommodate concerns of community members and protect their interests by respecting all the existing diversities and make concentrated efforts to include all.

### **3.1 Relevance**

3.1.1 Addresses sub-group interests and avoids conflicts.

3.1.2 Screening of mechanisms, procedures, decisions, etc. to see whether they are better for the poor or detrimental to them.

3.1.3 Acts as a basis for building resilience within the institution.

3.1.4 Enhances the sense of belongingness and ownership in the community.

3.1.5 Poor, powerless, disadvantaged and women get fair share in spars of institutional process.

3.1.6 Decisions are broad based and need driven.

3.1.7 Addresses livelihood concerns and opens opportunities.

### **3.2 Process and Action steps**

3.2.1 Mechanisms through which community members

can express their concerns and institution take steps for redressal.

- 3.2.2 Emphasizes on universal membership.
- 3.2.3 Conscious efforts to provide equal opportunities to all.

### **3.3 Verifiable measures**

- 3.3.1 Nature of concerns expressed: concerns / issues pertaining to resources and institution, concerns expressed by individuals and sub-groups, repetition of concerns and trend in emergence of new concerns.
- 3.3.2 Response mechanism of the institution.
- 3.3.3 Process followed for addressal of concerns / issues.
- 3.3.4 Time taken to resolve the concerns.
- 3.3.5 List of concerns / issues discussed in the GB, EC and other forums.
- 3.3.6 Instance of delegation of responsibility.
- 3.3.7 Constitution and reconstitution of functional committees.
- 3.3.8 Prevailing mechanisms for access and appropriation of resource.

### **3.4 Means of Verification**

- 3.4.1 Resolution Book
- 3.4.2 Bye Laws
- 3.4.3 Social observations Book
- 3.4.5 Plan document
- 3.4.6 Sets of records

## NOTES

### **4. COLLABORATION AND INTERACTION WITHIN AND OUTSIDE THE INSTITUTION BOUNDARY**

In order to ensure that the local institution does not evolve into creating isolated islands, it needs to open up channels of communication with similar institutions. The resource managing institutions need to collaborate on strategic matters with each other. However, the level at which this collaboration happens could vary based on immediate factors of collaboration. This collaboration addresses issues that are relevant throughout the institutional processes focusing on the need to develop partnership within and outside the institutional boundary in order to confront complex issues.

#### **4.1 Relevance**

- 4.1.1 Stimulates collective action.
- 4.1.2 Enables the institution to react to different situations and helps it in anticipating issues and problems.
- 4.1.3 Clarifies doubts and ensures better governance.
- 4.1.4 Act as a determinant for inter-community recognition to institutional boundary.
- 4.1.5 Acts as a support system in case of need.

#### **4.2 Process and Action steps**

- 4.2.1 Regular meetings / discussions and other formal and informal means of interaction.
- 4.2.2 Systems for recording minutes and documenting processes.
- 4.2.3 Outcome of informal interactions placed in the formal decision making processes.
- 4.2.4 Facilitate interaction of institutions with other communities on important strategic issues.

- 4.2.5 Arrive at collective choice rules at different levels of interaction (with neighbouring villages, panchayat, block level).
- 4.2.6 Organizing issue based workshops and trainings to facilitate interaction.
- 4.2.7 Support development of forums of communities to come together on important strategic issues.
- 4.2.8 Understand already established patterns of communication – who talks in whose presence and does not feel comfortable.

### **4.3 Verifiable measures**

- 4.3.1 Instances where the community has interacted to 1) influence and discuss policy matters, 2) discuss protection and management arrangements, 3) decide upon resource use and sharing, and 4) discuss and resolve conflicting issues.
- 4.3.2 Instances of interaction independent of external agencies.
- 4.3.3 Instances of replication of good practices.
- 4.3.4 Number of persons aware of the issues.
- 4.3.5 Attendance in meetings.
- 4.3.6 Membership in forums and institutions outside the village.
- 4.3.7 Number of workshops, exposure visits and training organized.
- 4.3.8 More and more people representing in these forums and opportunity to new members to represent in these forums.

### **4.4 Means of Verification**

- 4.4.1 Social observation book

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4.4.2 Proceedings Book

4.4.3 Meeting Book

4.4.4 Resolution Register

4.4.5 Survey report

## **5. DEALING WITH POLICY SITUATIONS**

The community institutions governing natural resources operate in a dynamic policy environment. These institutions need to deal with this policy environment either to assert existing favourable policy provisions or press for necessary policy changes or advocate for formulating new policies in their favour. At the outset, legal recognition to community institutions remains one of the most important aspects.

### **5.1 Relevance**

5.1.1 Leads to community access and rights over the resource developed and managed by them.

5.1.2 Recognition by the State and at inter-community level.

5.1.3 Act as a safety net to deal with negative externalities.

### **5.2 Process and Action steps**

5.2.1 Ability to generate information, analyze and present views at policy level.

5.2.2 Acquire and share information on policy matters.

5.2.3 of village rules taking into consideration the various provisions of existing policies.

5.2.4 Establishing channels of communication between community and policy makers.

5.2.5 Building forums of collaboration for advocating policy changes.

**5.3 Verifiable measures**

- 5.3.1 Keeping of policy documents in a systematic manner.
- 5.3.2 Natural resources database.
- 5.3.3 Views and outcomes of discussions are documented.
- 5.3.4 Discussions on new policies to find suitability.
- 5.3.6 Number of meetings or other attempts made to appraise the concern officials.
- 5.3.7 Representation, memorandum, letters, applications, recommendations sent to government and other agencies.
- 5.3.8 Legal documents supporting the institution and its activities have been acquired.
- 5.3.9 Review and amendment in the byelaws in the light of policy changes.
- 5.3.10 Existence of forums of collaboration.

**5.4 Means of Verification**

- 5.4.1 Resolution Book
- 5.4.2 Legal File
- 5.4.3 NR Data base
- 5.4.4 Plan documents
- 5.4.5 Document & registers of federating body.
- 5.4.6 Media reports
- 5.4.7 Leased order

**6. WORK ORIENTED TOWARDS CONSERVATION**

Institution needs to internalize the approach of conservation that supports the subsistence needs of the community on a sustained manner. In the context of intervention by FES

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there is little scope for commercialization of the surplus. Commercialization connotes supply of produce to the market with an objective of maximization of profits. The occasional sharing of produce with certain nominal costs in the locality is not coming under the purview of commercialization.

### **6.1 Relevance**

- 6.1.1 Leads to long-term sustainability of resource.
- 6.1.2 Facilitates evolution of mechanisms that gives priority to local needs.
- 6.1.3 Builds community approach to support subsistence needs.

### **6.2 Process and Action steps**

- 6.2.1 Selection of tree species based on needs, not on market demands.
- 6.2.2 Natural resource development plan on the basis of local and ecological need of the area.
- 6.2.3 Assessment of biomass requirement.
- 6.2.4 Develop plan based on biomass requirement and desired limit of extraction.
- 6.2.5 Developing mechanisms for distribution of available resources.
- 6.2.6 Creating awareness on ecosystem perspective – inter linkages between various components like agriculture, forest, pasture, geo-hydrology.

### **6.3 Verifiable measures**

- 6.3.1 Appropriate species mix.
- 6.3.2 Extent to which needs are being addressed.
- 6.3.3 Study on biomass requirement of the community.
- 6.3.4 Provisions of resource distribution.

6.3.5 Focus on conservation in the perspective plan.

6.3.6 Instances of institutions not succumbing to market forces.

#### **6.4 Means of Verification**

6.4.1 Plantation register

6.4.2 Resolution book

6.4.3 Byelaw

## **NOTES**

**NORMATIVE ASPECTS****Defining norms and rules that guide the structure and functions of the institution****1. PROTECTION, MANAGEMENT, ACCESS AND APPROPRIATION NORMS PUT IN PLACE**

Norms and rules are essential instruments to institutionalize various systems and mechanisms concerning development and management of resources. This includes mechanisms pertaining to protection, management, access and appropriation of resource. Once institutionalized this facilitates evolution of mechanisms for assigning responsibilities to members and ensure accountability to this effect. These norms help establish linkages between the resource and the members by regulating their behavior vis-a- vis resource.

**1.1 Relevance**

- 1.1.1 Clarifies the objectives of resource management.
- 1.1.2 Set grounds for appropriate resource management system.
- 1.1.3 Varying needs of the community get addressed.
- 1.1.4 Promotes fair and just benefit sharing mechanism.
- 1.1.5 Ensures long term conservation need. However, conservation is not independent of human role and need.

**1.2 Process / Action step**

- 1.2.1 Assessment of various needs pertaining to resource management.

- 1.2.1 Formation of protection and management rules in appropriate forums of the institution.
- 1.2.2 Formation of appropriate rules pertaining to management and use based on community needs.
- 1.2.3 Framing of rules taking into consideration the agreed norms and rules of the community.
- 1.2.4 Rules are formulated to strike a balance between traditional practices and modes of management.
- 1.2.5 Framing rules that are pro-poor and in favour of marginalised sections.
- 1.2.6 Rules oriented towards local subsistence needs and discourage commercialization.
- 1.2.7 Rules addressing livelihood issues.

### **1.3 Verifiable measures**

- 1.3.1 Rules are finalised and approved in GB.
- 1.3.2 Rules are dynamic in nature and have been modified based on the changing context.
- 1.3.3 Provision for amendment in the byelaws.
- 1.3.4 Operational rules have been framed from time to time based on norms.
- 1.3.5 Accepted and agreed norms and rules on protection management access and appropriation are in practice.
- 1.3.6 Provision for priority to the poor in providing opportunities.

### **1.4 Means of Verification**

- 1.4.1 Bye laws
- 1.4.2 Resolution book
- 1.4.3 Plan document
- 1.4.4 Receipt book

## **2. SELF GOVERNING RULES OF THE INSTITUTION**

For community-based resource management there is a need to bring in certain degree of social cohesion that permits people to work together effectively. To ensure this it is required that institution facilitates a process of rule making where every member of the institution has right to participate in framing rules to govern oneself, the fellow members, the outsiders and the resource. These members are also responsible for modification and enforcement of the rules.

### **2.1 Relevance**

- 2.1.1 Guides the institution to achieve its goals.
- 2.1.2 Maintains discipline to function objectively.
- 2.1.3 The self-governing rules provide opportunity for the institution to adapt to the changing situation.
- 2.1.4 This rule system provides direction for evolution of institution vis-à-vis growth of resource.

### **2.2. Process and Action steps**

- 2.2.1 Building on norms and rules already existing in the village.
- 2.2.2 Formation of rules pertaining to selection, election, ratification and revision in the structural and functional aspect of the institution.
- 2.2.3 Rules for financial transaction in place.

### **2.3 Verifiable measures**

- 2.3.1 Emergence of operational rules.
- 2.3.2 Provision (s) in the byelaw.
- 2.3.3 Laid down selection and election mechanism.
- 2.3.4 Instances of structural changes.

2.3.5 Emergency meeting on issues of importance (to judge responsive mechanism of the institution).

2.3.6 Number of review meeting held.

2.3.7 Audit observation.

## **2.4 Means of Verification**

2.4.1 Byelaw

2.4.2 Resolution book

2.4.3 Social observation book

2.4.4 Election file

2.4.4 Audit report

## **3. NORMS TO DEAL WITH CONFLICTING SITUATION**

Conflict resolution mechanisms are embedded in the structural and normative arrangements of the resource managing institution. Although the presence of conflict resolution mechanism does not guarantee that the members would be able to maintain enduring institution, it is difficult to imagine how any complex system of rules could be maintained over time without such mechanisms. If individuals are going to follow rules over a long period of time, there must be some mechanisms and norms for discussing and resolving what constitutes an infraction.

Conflict could be seen as a positive element so long as it does not completely disintegrate the institutional arrangement and become a factor for resource destruction. Appropriate norms could guide the institution to overcome conflicting situation and lead towards desired goal.

### **3.1 Relevance**

3.1.1 Develops resilience to deal with conflicting situation.

## **NOTES**

3.1.2 Provides valuable insights and helps in making strategic decisions.

3.1.3 Detects errors and correct in ways that involve underlined norms policies and objective of the institution.

### **3.2 Process and Action steps**

3.2.1 Continuous analysis of the root cause of the conflict.

3.2.2 Promoting formal and informal mechanism to deal with conflict.

3.2.3 Review and analyze the norms and rules pertaining to system/mechanism/procedure/arrangement/structure/function and effect necessary modifications, if need be.

3.2.4 Develop rules and procedures for quick redressal of conflicts.

3.2.5 Promote graduated sanctions to counteract violation of norms and rules.

### **3.3 Verifiable measures**

3.3.1 Number of cases registered and resolved.

3.3.2 Time taken for conflict resolution.

3.3.3 Provision in the rulebook.

### **3.4 Means of Verification**

3.4.1 Instances of acceptance of village decision

## **4. VALUES OF EQUALITY AND EQUITY**

### **4.1 Relevance**

4.1.1 It helps in ensuring quality of representation

4.1.2 It helps in ensuring quality of participation

4.1.3 It helps to ensures fair share/ equal share.

4.1.4 It helps in sensitizing the members of the institution to formulate norms and rules that safeguard the interest of the marginalised sections.

4.1.5 It helps at arriving at situation where possibly the conflicts are reduced.

#### **4.2 Process / Action steps**

4.2.1 Laid down norms on reservation, representation, membership, etc.

4.2.2 Reaching out to the last person in the village

4.2.3 Norms to address specific livelihood dependency on natural resources and to regulate extraction

4.2.4 Norms for quorum based on various sections

#### **4.3 Verifiable measures**

4.3.1 Provision in Byelaw

4.3.2 Provision for improvement in poverty status quo

4.3.3 Provision for disadvantaged people coming to representative bodies

4.3.4 Specifies rules for the quorum

#### **4.4 Means of Verification**

4.4.1 Resolution Book

4.4.2 Bye-laws

4.4.3 Social observation book

**I ORGANIZING WORK IN VILLAGE  
(ORGANIZED VILLAGE)**

**1. Why do we organize work?**

***purpose and objective***

- 1.1. Implement the project activities
- 1.2. Build and strengthen village institution
- 1.3. Get into extensive planning
- 1.4. Begin financial transaction

**2. What do we do to organize work?**

***process and component***

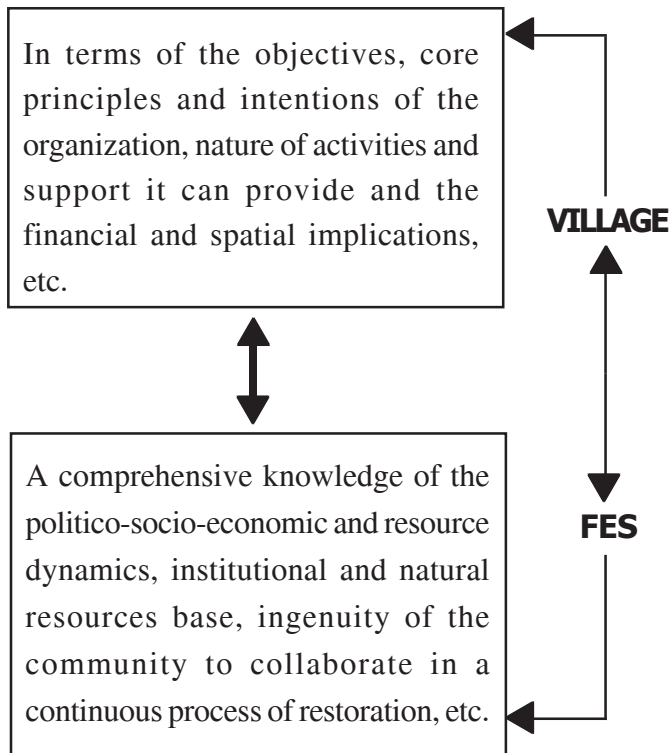
- 2.1. Discussion on norms / rules (written and unwritten)
- 2.2. Reemphasizing and bringing out existing rules/ norms
- 2.3. Mutual acceptance of intentions of getting into partnership
- 2.4. Assessing village need and scope of work based on mandate and capacity of FES

**3. When do we term our work as organized?**

***broad definition***

- 3.1. Readiness of the village to participate in a continuous process of ecological restoration through management of local natural ecosystems and strengthening mechanisms of local governance.
- 3.2. Readiness of FES to enter into an extensive phase of supporting processes of planning and implementation, at the village community level, for ecological restoration and strengthening of local governance institutions.

## NOTES



- 3.2.3 Both the village and FES have mutually understood each other and have confidence to enter into a long-term partnership:

#### **4. How do we term our work organized?** *specific criteria*

##### **4.1. Status of rapport**

- 4.1.1. FES has successfully communicated to the villagers, at the individual, group and Gram Sabha level, its purpose and nature of involvement in the ecological restoration work.

##### **4.2. Process of institution building**

- 4.2.1. Decision on the type of community institution based on the available land and their classification.
- 4.2.2. Completion of the formation of an appropriate village institution or formal acceptance of an existing village institution, as the case may be.

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### 4.3. Norms and rules

- 4.3.1. The process of developing a Village Specific Byelaw has been initiated and the core principles are agreed upon.<sup>1</sup>

### 4.4. Information, assessment and planning status

- 4.4.1. Village and household baseline information formats have been filled up and data analyzed to feed into the planning process.
- 4.4.2. Specific information on the poor and women has been analyzed and a fairly good idea on their needs and concerns has been obtained.
- 4.4.3. Physical verification of the resource is complete.
- 4.4.4. Village and resource maps have been obtained.
- 4.4.5. Need analysis has been done and the broad contours of the intervention are clear.

### 4.5. Legal requirements

- 4.5.1. Legal status of the land and the corresponding community institution has been ascertained.
- 4.5.2. The concerned government agencies including Panchayats, as the case may be, have been informed and necessary permissions issued.

### 4.6. Consent level

- 4.6.1. A draft Terms of Reference between the village and FES has been formulated, discussed and finalized with the villagers.
- 4.6.2. A Gram Sabha resolution approving the FES-village partnership is ready.

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<sup>1</sup> In certain cases the completion of the byelaw and its ratification in the General Body may go beyond the period of village organization.

**5. Thumb Rules in organizing work in a village**

***Guiding Values***

- 5.1. We are organizing work in the village and not the village.
- 5.2. Decision to work in the village based on secondary data, preliminary interaction, and initial assessment.
- 5.3. Considerable work on core principles has been done and there is agreement on them.
- 5.4. Village would have a perspective of its own development needs. We have to feed into it rather than doing it the other way round.
- 5.5. It's not our money. Rather, we are custodians of their money.
- 5.6. We partner with the village to address a larger mandate (ecological security/ conservation) where village and FES are partners to work towards it.
- 5.7. Each village is unique and offers different challenges.

**NOTES**

## NOTES

## II FORMAT FOR COLLECTION OF VILLAGE BASELINE INFORMATION

### 1. Administrative Details

- 1.1. Village:
- 1.2. Taluka/Block:
- 1.3. Tehsil:
- 1.4. Panchayat:
- 1.5. Forest Range:
- 1.6. Forest Division:
- 1.7. District:

### 2. Socio-demographic Details

- 2.1. Total Households:
- 2.2. Total Population:
- 2.3. Number of households and population as per the following:
  - 2.3.1. Land holding:
  - 2.3.2. Caste / Ethnic Groups:
  - 2.3.3. Wealth Ranks:

### 3. Institutional Aspects

- 3.1. Existing Village Institutions:
- 3.2. Since when (year):
- 3.3. Does the village have any of the following (in some form or other)?
  - 3.3.1. Village Rule Book:
  - 3.3.2. Village Meeting Book:
  - 3.3.3. Previously prepared village Plan/s:
  - 3.3.4. Accounts Book:

3.4. Is the village a member of any outside institution (federation, etc.)? Give details:

**4. Village economy and Livelihoods**

4.1. Occupational pattern:

4.1.1. Primary:

4.1.2. Secondary:

4.1.3. Others:

4.2. Sources of income and their Seasonality:

4.3. Contribution / share of different occupations / sources of income to the total income:

4.4. Sources / heads of expenditure and seasonality:

4.5. Share of different heads of expenditure in the total expenditure:

4.6. Economic / livelihood stress periods (seasonality) and coping methods:

4.7. Out migration:

4.7.1. Number of households:

4.7.2. Number of Persons:

4.7.3. Who migrates?

4.7.3.1. Caste and Economic group:

4.7.3.2. Male: Female:

**Village Resources and Assets**

**5. Land Details**

5.1. Total physical area of the village:

5.2. Total Forest:

5.3. Total RWL:

5.4. Total Grazing:

## **NOTES**

- 5.5. Total private land:
- 5.6. Other Common land:
- 5.7. Present land use of each land category:
- 5.8. Record any previous intervention made on these lands and their details:

### **6. Agriculture**

- 6.1. Total agriculture land:
- 6.2. Area under cultivation:
- 6.3. Variety / number of crops sown:
- 6.4. Total area under irrigation:
- 6.5. Sources of irrigation:
- 6.6. Total rain fed area:
- 6.7. Frequency of cultivation (1 - 2 - 3 crops):
- 6.8. Type of crop shown:
  - 6.8.1. Subsistence / Cash:
  - 6.8.2. Water intensive / otherwise:
- 6.9. Crop wise productivity and Total yield:
- 6.10. Area under fodder cultivation

### **7. Forests**

- 7.1. Total forest area:
- 7.2. Type of forest:
- 7.3. Legal status of forests:
- 7.4. Crown cover:
- 7.5. Ground cover:
- 7.6. Dominant species:
  - 7.6.1. Tree species:

7.6.2. Shrubs species:

7.6.3. Herb species:

7.7. Status and scope of regeneration

7.8. Type of forest Produces:

7.8.1. Wood based:

7.8.2. Non-wood based:

7.9. Forest operations undertaken by villagers (details):

7.10. Prevalent systems of forest protection and management:

7.11. Record any previous intervention on the forestland and its details:

## **8. Vegetation and Biomass**

### **8.1. Fodder from common land**

8.1.1. Type of fodder species available:

8.1.2. Number of livestock who depend on it:

8.1.3. Total number of days of dependence / total grazing days in common land:

8.1.4. Estimate the total fodder production from the common land:

8.1.5. Which categories of HHs depend on the common land for fodder:

### **8.2. Fodder from cultivation**

8.2.1. Area under green fodder cultivation:

8.2.2. Per unit production of green fodder:

8.2.3. Total production of green fodder:

8.2.4. Duration during which such fodder is available / used:

8.2.5. Who are cultivating green fodder (groups of HHs):

## **NOTES**

8.2.6. Acre-inch / volume of water required or available for cultivation:

8.2.7. Market price:

8.2.8. Seasonality of fodder availability and contribution of cultivated fodder to the fodder cycle:

### **8.3. Fodder from crop residue**

8.3.1. Total quantity of crop fodder produced:

8.3.2. Total number of days it is available:

8.3.3. Seasonality of fodder available and their sources:

8.3.4. Quantity of fodder available from each source:

8.3.5. Market price:

8.3.6. Seasonality of fodder availability and contribution of crop residue to the fodder cycle:

### **8.4. Support to HHS from fodder (from each source)**

8.4.1. Number of HHs who use:

8.4.2. Number of days these HHs use this fodder:

8.4.3. Who benefits – categories / groups of HHs in the village:

### **8.5. Support to Livestock from fodder**

8.5.1. Number of livestock supported:

8.5.2. Number of small and big, milch and draught animals supported:

8.5.3. Number of days such animals are supported:

### **8.6. Firewood**

8.6.1. Sources of firewood:

8.6.2. Species used as firewood:

- 8.6.3. Seasonality (sources, availability and species):
- 8.6.4. Sources of fuel energy and contribution of firewood:
- 8.6.5. Firewood stress period and coping mechanism:

**9. Livestock / Animal husbandry**

**9.1. Total population of livestock:**

9.1.1. Type

- Cow: Buffalo:
- Goat: Sheep:
- Others:

9.1.2. Size

- Small: Big:

9.1.3. Breed

- Local: Others:

9.2. Unit and nature of livestock holding:

9.3. Total milk yield in the village and per household:

9.4. Livestock Migration:

9.4.1. How many and which HHs:

9.4.2. How many livestock:

9.4.3. Which direction:

9.4.4. How many days:

9.5. Livestock and Animal Husbandry related stress and coping mechanism:

**10. Geohydrology**

**10.1. Surface water**

10.1.1. Type and number of surface water structures:

10.1.2. Quantity of water available:

## **NOTES**

10.1.3. Duration of water availability:

10.1.4. Nature and seasonality of use (agriculture, cattle drinking, others, etc.):

10.1.5. Other factors to be considered include total rainy days, rainfall data, intensity of rain, etc.

### **10.2. Ground water**

10.2.1. Type and numbers of ground water structures:

10.2.2. Depth of water table in different sources - pre and post monsoon:

10.2.3. Nature and seasonality of use (drinking, irrigation, cattle drinking, etc.):

10.2.4. Other factors to be considered include total rainy days, rainfall data, intensity of rain, etc.

### **10.3. Soil**

10.3.1. Soil Depth

10.3.2. Physical Texture of Soil eg. Clayey, Loamy, Sandy etc.

10.3.3. Ph of Soil

**11. What other developmental programmes are being implemented in the village?**

**12. Which other agencies are working in the village?**

**13. Contact persons / resource persons in the village:**

**14. General Observation**

**Name and Signature of SHT Member:**

**Date:**

### **III VILLAGE PERSPECTIVE PLAN**

### **NOTES**

#### **1. What is Village Perspective Planning?**

##### ***Broad definition***

FES's approach to development is based on ecosystem perspective, wherein we are working on three of the four basic components i.e. land, water and living things. Though our primary focus is on common lands, it is important to draw relationships with all other components in the social, economic and ecological systems of the village. Perspective Planning in our view, by and large, is a/an:

- 1.1. Holistic management model where the entire web of resources and relationships are considered and the villagers prepare a comprehensive development plan of their village.
- 1.2. Process oriented approach wherein the village plans keeping in mind the existing resources and the interconnections reflecting long term needs.
- 1.3. Ideal process that opens the entire gamut of possibilities wherein the thoughts are systematized and the direction becomes clear.
- 1.4. Exercise that helps in enlisting and developing understanding of the different development needs of the community without doing a detailed planning.

#### **2. Why do we go for Village Perspective Plan?**

##### ***Purpose and objective***

Ecosystems are comprised of four basic components: water, land (rock and soils), air and living things (plants and animals including humans). In any given ecosystem, the various elements of these basic components are linked to each other either directly or otherwise. Consequently, anything

## NOTES

that occurs in one of these basic components has an effect on the other three.

An ecosystem-based approach is a key to achieving sustainability because it places equal emphasis on concerns related to the environment, the economy and the community. In this regard, a Perspective Planning exercise helps the communities to put the project in the right perspective and to relate the cyclic linkages, social angles, different development agenda and objectives, conservation and livelihood needs helping in the replication of processes in other spheres, in a long run.

Perspective planning exercise also helps the villagers realize their needs, prioritize them and either seek assistance or generate own funds to achieve them.

*An example to this effect can be taken from some of the initiatives taken up by villagers of Jhadabandha, Orissa.*

- ✓ *Use of village funds towards development of the ponds and subsequently their irrigation system.*
- ✓ *Use of funds received for road construction towards deepening of a pond and using the soil extracted for road construction. An innovative thought, which otherwise would have been done by extraction of soil from the roadside resulting in holes here and there and probably gullies along the road.*

Once the priorities are set and the vision is clear, the villagers can approach various agencies for fulfilling their needs in their own terms and conditions rather than others approaching them. Such an overall perspective plan could also be integrated into the Panchayat or district development plans. FES can also play a role in helping the village develop a network with various agencies to accomplish their plans. The basic purpose of developing village specific perspective plan is:

- 2.1. It might be important to develop an understanding of various other aspects besides NRM as FES will be associated with the village on a long-term basis, and our presence might trigger other spin-offs.
- 2.2. Understand the village viewpoint - different spheres including NRM - along with the villagers.
- 2.3. Analyze the issues related to NRM and arriving at different alternatives.
- 2.4. Better understanding of village reality and its linkages in terms of natural resources around them.
- 2.5. Other aspects are important to include because project implementation by FES does not happen in isolation. It is important to develop an understanding of other aspects of village life so that the necessary elements could be addressed during the planning and implementation processes.

### **3. When do we go for Village Perspective Plan?**

#### ***Timing and sequence***

The village communities are repositories of traditional wisdom and experiences. To build on this, and also to make development interventions relevant to the community, it becomes necessary that the village people identify the socio- economic and ecological requirements at the beginning of designing an intervention. Therefore, it is essential to go for this exercise at the organization phase only so that the project could be placed in the perspective of the community.

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### 4. What are the elements of Village Perspective Plan?

#### *Components*

- 4.1. Administrative details
- 4.2. Demographic details
- 4.3. Institutional aspects
- 4.4. Physical aspects
- 4.5. Village livelihood - agriculture, animal husbandry, other occupation, migration
- 4.6. Village assets and resources
- 4.7. CPRs
- 4.8. Photographs / Maps

### 5. What do we do to arrive at Village Perspective Plan?

#### *Process*

The process of the development of perspective plan calls for a better understanding of the village, its resources, the perceived threats and the opportunities there in. The most important aspect is that the community is able to visualize the specific needs and develop clear strategies. Therefore the need analysis by the community with a wider debate on the ecology, economy and the institutional process becomes imperative. The felt needs of the specific sub-groups with the larger community, such as poor, women and other disadvantageous groups, as well as the whole village in general requires a prioritization that would further help in setting the immediate and long term strategic plans. Some of the specific steps include:

- 5.1. Enlist and develop an understanding of the different development needs of the community but will not

- include detail planning.
- 5.2. Analyze the issues and arriving at different alternatives, with a focus on NRM.
  - 5.3. SWOT analysis of the village (institution and the physical features)
  - 5.4. This document is built upon the historical perspective and current realities of the village. In this process discussion will not exclude other spheres. It will include the benchline survey details and other related information regarding the village.
  - 5.5. Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) exercises involving social mapping, resource mapping, time line, wealth ranking, seasonality analysis, problem tree analysis, venn diagram, transact, etc.
  - 5.6. Village meetings, group discussion, observations
  - 5.7. Secondary data collection & analysis

## **6. When do we call Village Perspective Plan as final?**

### ***Broad definition***

- 6.1. This document is prepared after initial understanding of the village and the stage is set after partnership building.
- 6.2. When the important development needs of the village have been identified and prioritized and there is a common understanding between the village and FES about what specific aspects related to NRM could be addressed through the project activities.

## NOTES

### 7. Thumb Rules

#### *Guiding values*

- 7.1. Although it is prepared in the beginning, the village perspective plan is not a one-time document but will have the space for review and planning.
- 7.2. Though the village perspective plan document will enlist different spheres of community needs, it will also make clear the role of the FES Project and the activities that could be undertaken by it in relation to the development of natural resources of the village.
- 7.3. The village perspective plan must be prepared in consultation with the various sections of the village like poor, landless, women, etc., and be discussed, finalised and approved in the General Body Meeting.
- 7.4. It is necessary to maintain the village perspective plan as a specific and separate document in the village rather than making it a part of the village resolution register or meeting book.
- 7.5. Perspective plan is village specific.
- 7.6. There should be space for the review and continuous monitoring of the village perspective plan.

## **IV TERMS OF REFERENCE BETWEEN PROJECT VILLAGE AND FES**

## **NOTES**

### **1. What is Terms of References?**

#### ***Broad definition***

Terms of Reference is a mutually agreed document between the community institution and FES that defines what we expect from the community and what the community expects from us in the execution of the project. (In the case of Karnataka, between three parties namely Gram Sabha sub-committee, Panchayat and FES) The Terms of Reference includes agreed –

- 1.1 Expectations between the partners.
- 1.2 Roles and responsibilities of village and FES.
- 1.3 Administrative and financial procedures.
- 1.4 Nature and scope of work.

### **2. Why Terms of References?**

#### ***Purpose and objective***

- 2.1. Keeping confusions at bay through clear role and responsibility of partners.
- 2.2. Disagreements and conflicts based on principle, ideology and norm may surface leading to suspension of work. However, such a situation resulting from procedural shortfall may be avoided.
- 2.3. Process of project implementation and work in the village become systematic, transparent and effective.

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### 3. What do we do to finalize the Terms of References?

#### *Process and component*

#### **3.1. Administrative : Expected from Villages**

- 3.1.1. Mutual agreement to enter into partnership.
- 3.1.2. Inclusion of every adult.
- 3.1.3. Ensure participation of all.
- 3.1.4. Ensure representation from deprived groups and women.
- 3.1.5. Delegation of functional authority to working committees.
- 3.1.6. Preparing village perspective plan in GB.
- 3.1.7. Protection mechanism system in place.
- 3.1.8. Framing of set of rules (byelaws).
- 3.1.9. Devise check and balances mechanisms
- 3.1.10. Sanctions for violation of rules.
- 3.1.11. Conflict resolution mechanism set in place.
- 3.1.12. Maintenance of set of records.
- 3.1.13. Provide information (regarding trees regenerated, employment generated & other financial details) to FES/ government agencies as asked.

#### **Expected from FES**

- 3.1.14. Building rapport and trust with the communities.
- 3.1.15. Respect partnership
- 3.1.16. Facilitate in framing byelaws, village perspective plan
- 3.1.17. Devise check and balances mechanisms.
- 3.1.18. Providing information on policies/ amendments.

**3.2 Institutional : Expected from Villages**

- 3.2.1. Democratic governance
- 3.2.2. Accommodate concerns of weaker sections and women.
- 3.2.3. Monitoring and review of works delegated to the working committees.
- 3.2.4. Ensure transparency in all decisions.
- 3.2.5. Provisions for amendments
- 3.2.6. Timely and regular meetings.
- 3.2.7. All resolutions to be recorded.
- 3.2.8. Federating / networking with the neighbouring villages.

**Expected from FES**

- 3.2.9. Encourage collective decision process
- 3.2.10 Sensitize community to take decisions in favour poor, weaker sections and women.
- 3.2.11. Monitoring whether the communities are monitoring their work or not.
- 3.2.12. Providing required training and exposure.

**3.3. Technical : Expected from Villages**

- 3.3.1. Responsibility of evolving technical plan.
- 3.3.2. Blending of modern and local technologies.

**Expected from FES**

- 3.3.3. Providing required training and exposure.
- 3.3.4. Respect in traditional knowledge and skills.
- 3.3.5. TOR is not a static document but appropriate amendments could be made in mutual agreement.

## NOTES

### 3.4. Financial : Expected from Villages

- 3.4.1. Procedure for transaction funds from FES to village & bank to village.
- 3.4.2. Opening bank account and authorized persons to operate account.
- 3.4.3. Budget and requisition as per perspective plan.
- 3.4.4. Expenses approved by GB4.
- 3.4.5. Proper maintenance of books of account.
- 3.4.6. Statutory audit of project fund.
- 3.4.7. Norms to use village fund.
- 3.4.8. Mechanism for financial transparency/ information & access to all.
- 3.4.9. Financial integrity: Checks and control for misappropriation

### Expected from FES

- 3.4.10 Critical financial support.
- 3.3.11. Ensure proper use of funds. Financial integrity: Checks and control for misappropriation

## 4. Thumb Rules

### *Guiding Values*

- 5.1. TOR is not just defining responsibilities of community but also of FES.
- 5.2. TOR is not a legal document between the community institution and FES, but it is a document of faith between the two.
- 5.3. TOR is a reference document for further negotiations and simplification of work; it is not designed to be used against the community institution.

5.4. TOR is not a static document but appropriate amendments could be made in mutual agreement.

## **6. Model Terms of Reference**

### **6.1. General procedures**

6.1.1. The project would continue its support for a period of..... years from the time of initiation, as per the provisions of the approved village specific microplan and budget.

6.1.2. However, based on the emerging trends and various future needs a further extension in the Project period may be mutually decided after completion of the initially fixed period of intervention.

### **6.2. Planning procedures**

6.2.1. An extensive process of interaction and understanding of the village in its social, economic, political, resource and ecological context would be undertaken by the entire village with the help of FES, if necessary.

6.2.2. FES shall also undertake a systematic process of organizing work with the community before initiation of planning and implementation including funding.

6.2.3. The community institution shall prepare comprehensive plans with detailed budget, both for long-term as well as short-term periods, with support and facilitation from FES in the following order:

6.2.3a. Village perspective plan (comprehensive development plan for the village).

6.2.3b. Village microplan and budget (for a period of not exceeding 7 years initially) covering specific aspects that FES would collaborate with the village to

## NOTES

intervene. This shall be audited by the auditors and approved by the Gram Sabha.

6.3.3c. Annual plans and annual budget shall be prepared for specific intervention to be made during the year. This shall be ratified by the Gram Sabha and audited by the auditors.

6.2.4. Terms of References, outlining the arrangement of partnership and responsibilities of each party during the course of Project implementation, shall be mutually finalized and signed.

6.2.5. A Gram Sabha resolution approving the plans, budgets and the beginning of physical implementation work shall be necessary.

### **7. Financial matters**

7.1. Financial support to the process of ecological restoration in the village, as per mutually agreed and approved plans, shall be the responsibility of FES.

7.2. FES shall provide financial assistance to the village institution for a period not exceeding ..... years initially, subject to fresh decisions on extension after the initially fixed duration ends.

7.3. All expenditures to be incurred during the course of Project implementation shall be based on the provisions of the approved annual budget and workplan.

7.4. A bank account shall be opened in the name of the village institution where the Secretary and President / a nominated member shall act as joint signatories.

7.5. FES shall release money to the village institution on a monthly advance basis after receiving a formal

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- resolution from the Executive Council and utilization of the previous advance.
- 7.6. The village institution shall have the responsibility to settle the advance within one month from the date of its release. In no situation shall the amount of cash in hand exceed Rs 100/- above a period of seven days.
  - 7.7. FES shall provide a fund release certificate to the village institution with every release of advance, which would be tallied with the receipt and utilization records maintained by the village institution.
  - 7.8. The village institution shall follow standard procedures of maintaining financial and other records in a systematic manner through ledger, cash book, receipt book, payment register, attendance register, vouchers, etc. These documents shall be open and available for scrutiny through auditing from time to time.
  - 7.9. All monetary transactions by the village institution, including receipts and expenditures, shall be endorsed through money receipts and recorded in the books of account.
  - 7.10. The books of account of the village institution shall be audited by the internal auditors from time to time and by the chartered accounts / legal auditors on annual basis.
  - 7.11. The books of accounts of the village institution shall be open to all members for scrutiny.
  - 7.12. FES shall have the responsibility of monitoring the financial transactions made by the village institution from time to time either through its own staff or officially appointed auditors.

## **NOTES**

- 7.13. FES shall arrange to expose the village institution to sound financial practices and procedures through trainings and other methods.
- 7.14. The overall responsibility of monitoring and securing financial soundness in its functioning shall rest with the village institution / Gram Sabha.
- 7.15. In case of any financial malpractice or irregularities caused either by the villager/s or FES staff/s resulting in a conflict, the matter shall be discussed and resolved in the meeting of the Gram Sabha.
- 7.16. Considering that the involvement of FES in villages is facilitated by funding from various sources on project basis, the overall financial transactions including the flow of funds to the village shall also remain subjected to the fluctuations in the availability of funds to FES operations.

### **8. Matters pertaining to institution building and management**

- 8.1. A suitable village institution shall be the key to the success of Project implementation and prolongation of the results on a continuous basis by the village community, even after the Project period ends.
- 8.2. FES shall propose and participate in supporting the formation of a suitable village institution, based on the classification of available land, legal requirements and the specific context of the village. This shall also have the concurrence of the Gram Sabha.
- 8.3. The structural, functional and normative arrangements of the village institution shall be based on the principles of democratic governance and shall imbibe the core values of equity, equality and social justice.

## NOTES

- 8.3.1. Supremacy of the Gram Sabha
- 8.3.2. Universal membership
- 8.3.3. Principles of inclusion with focus on poor and marginalized sections
- 8.4. Appropriate appropriation and distribution mechanisms to suit specific needs of the various groups in the village.
- 8.5. The Gram Sabha shall act as the apex body of decision making and shall be responsible for the entire process of ecological restoration / Project implementation.
- 8.6. The Executive Council of the village institution shall act as the functional body and shall be responsible for operationalizing the decisions taken in the Gram Sabha.
- 8.7. The village institution shall formulate norms and rules to govern the management of common natural resources in the village, regulate the behaviours of the members in exercising their rights and put in place mechanisms to ensure financial lucidity in all its transactions.
- 8.8. In this context, both the village and FES shall work together on suitable arrangements for payment mechanism, consensus based decision-making, equity based (fair) benefit sharing / distribution systems, and similar mechanisms.
- 8.9. A village specific byelaw defining the principles and norms of governance of common natural resources in the village shall be developed by the village institution and FES shall provide facilitative support in the process of its preparation.

## NOTES

- 8.10. The village institutions shall keep proper records of its deliberations and decision through maintenance of meeting books, resolution books, etc. both for Gram Sabha and the Executive Council.
- 8.11. The village shall make efforts to facilitate and ensure meaningful participation and involvement of all in the process of ecological restoration.
- 8.12. FES shall hold in esteem the norms, rules and regulations of the village and respect the dignity of the village institution. It shall also abide by the decisions of the Gram Sabha as well as the Executive Council in the normal course of Project implementation. However, in situations where the interests of the Project is impeded by certain decisions of the village, FES shall have the right to defend the interests of the Project and, if there be a necessity, make representations to the Village Council and present its own independent views and opinions.

### **9. Implementation procedures**

The village institution shall have the responsibility of protection, management and maintenance, including future repairs of damages, of the common natural resources as well as resources created during the course of Project implementation. FES shall not provide any financial assistance in such matters.

### **10. Other matters involving difference between FES and the Village**

FES would provide technical, legal and financial support to the village institution for planning and implementation of the Project. However, the overall responsibility of implementation of the Project shall rest with the village institution.

- 10.1. FES shall arrange exposure and training for the members of the village institution on subjects pertaining to organizational development processes, natural resource management, sustainable use of resources, etc. FES shall also provide technical know how, information and methods on these areas from time to time. FES shall also provide information on relevant development programmes, policies and rules of the Government and other institutional processes elsewhere from time to time.
- 10.2. FES or any of its employees shall have no claims whatsoever on the common natural resources of the village or income therefrom or any assets created under the Project. Nor shall any employee of FES be a member of the village institution or hold positions in it.
- 10.3. Village shall not have any say in the running of the FES teams such as transfer of staff, etc.
- 10.4. In case of differences between the village and FES:
  - a) FES reserves its right to hold three Gram Sabhas and differ.
  - b) The village can convene meetings three times with the team and reserves its rights to dissociate with the work of the team.

## **11. Duration of collaboration**

The village and FES shall collaborate on the process of ecological restoration and strengthening of local governance institutions for a period of — years. However, based on the emerging trends and various future needs a further extension in the Project period may be mutually decided after completion of the initially fixed period of intervention.

## NOTES

14. **On behalf of the village,** the President / Secretary of the village institution shall be authorized to take all Project related decisions in consultation with the Gram Sabha and the Executive Council.
15. **On behalf of FES,** the Team Leader shall be authorized to take all Project related decision.

## V VILLAGE SPECIFIC BYELAW

## NOTES

### 1. What is Village Specific Byelaw?

#### ***Broad definition***

A byelaw is a set of basic principles and guidelines by which an institution governs itself. Every village institution has its set of principles, norms, rules and regulations, be they written or unwritten. This knowledge is generally transmitted from generation to generation from the knowledge bank existing in the groups. Most communities, however resource rich they may be or otherwise, have attempted to manage their own resources and have framed their own rules and regulations regarding the same. Institutions, with an ability to change when required and adapt to the immediate needs, survive the pressure. The byelaw covers principally two major aspects:

- 1.1. Principles and rules regarding institutional framework / functioning of the institution.
- 1.2. Principles and rules regarding use of the resources they control.

### 2. Why do we go for VSB?

#### ***Purpose and objective***

#### 2.1. ***The basic purpose of developing village specific byelaws is to:***

- 2.1.1. Bring in place a set of principles, norms and operational guidelines within the village, which are free from personal biases and preferences.
- 2.1.2. Help in reducing confusions and conflicts among the members of the village institution.
- 2.1.3. Discuss and establish mechanisms to ensure socially just mechanisms like universal membership, proper representation, transparent fund management, etc.

## NOTES

- 2.1.4. Bring in awareness on the roles and responsibilities of the members of the village institution.
- 2.1.5. Encourage the practice of the principles of transparency, accountability, honesty, etc. by the members of the community and apply them in the day to day functioning of the village institution.
- 2.1.6. Provide space for evolution of operational rules where the laid down principles and norms act as basic foundation.
- 2.2. ***Some of the specific objectives of developing a village specific byelaw include:***
  - 2.2.1 Proper and enduring management of the village institution and the resource.
  - 2.2.2. Set of accepted norms by the community to govern themselves as well as the resource.
  - 2.2.3. Reduce the possibility of personal biases and preferences thereby increasing preferences for common good.
  - 2.2.4. Reduce possibilities of confusions and conflicts concerning the resource access and use.
  - 2.2.5. Provide space to ensure fair and just transactions in the institution.
  - 2.2.6. Make members more accountable.
  - 2.2.7. Enable members to relate themselves to the village norms and regulations which ensure enhanced applicability and adherence.
  - 2.2.8. Yardstick to monitor deviations.
  - 2.2.9. Helps in brining clarity to build up a perspective.
  - 2.2.10. Helps in projecting nature and image of the institution.

### **3. What are the elements of VSB?**

### **NOTES**

#### ***Components***

- 3.1. Name and address of the institution
- 3.2. Objective / long term perspective
- 3.3. Area of operation
- 3.4. Membership
  - 3.4.1. Eligibility
  - 3.4.2. Procedure
  - 3.4.3. Roles and responsibilities
  - 3.4.4. Right
- 3.5. Authority structure
  - 3.5.1. Structure - Gram sabha, Executive body
  - 3.5.2. Scope for others layers to evolve
- 3.6. Representative body
  - 3.6.1. Selection / Election
  - 3.6.2. Roles, responsibilities and functions.
  - 3.6.3. Functional authority
  - 3.6.4. Term
  - 3.6.5. Reservation
  - 3.6.6. Meetings - Frequency, quorum
- 3.7. Representatives
  - 3.7.1. Eligibility
  - 3.7.2. Roles and responsibilities
  - 3.7.3. Functional authority
  - 3.7.4. Term
  - 3.7.5. Quality of leadership

## NOTES

- 3.8. General Body
  - 3.8.1. Power
  - 3.8.2. Functions: Review and monitoring, Addressal and redressal mechanism
  - 3.8.3. Meeting - frequency, quorum
- 3.9. Office bearers
  - 3.9.1. Function, duties
  - 3.9.2. Responsibilities
  - 3.9.3. Eligibility
- 3.10. Provision and Appropriation rules
  - 3.10.1. Sharing mechanism
- 3.11. Book keeping and accounting procedures
  - 3.11.1. Audit
- 3.12. Amendments
- 3.13. Graduated sanctions
- 3.14. Mobilization and management of fund
- 3.15. Procedure for changing / making amendments in the byelaw

#### 4. What do we do to arrive at VSB?

#### NOTES

##### *Process<sup>1</sup>*

Periodic review and necessary amendments by the village



Place it in the gram sabha for validation



Compilation



Validate it with different sections of the village



List the concerns and possible suggestions for  
alternate

rules from these groups



Finding out the relevance of these rules to the specific  
groups such

as disadvantaged section, women, Shepard etc.



Analyzing these rules based on certain democratic principle



Enlisting the existing norms / rules

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<sup>1</sup> This process is not accomplished in one gram sabha but a series of such meetings and interactions are organized till the time a consensus is reached at by majority villagers.

## NOTES

### 5. When do we call VSB as final?<sup>2</sup>

#### *Broad definition*

- 5.1. The community has adequately discussed amongst its members and reached an agreement on the principles, norms and operational guidelines concerning natural resource management as well as larger village development and management.
- 5.2. The byelaw has been properly documented in a written format and received the ratification of the village general body.

### 6. Thumb Rules

#### *Guiding Values*

- 6.1. Byelaws are village specific.
- 6.2. Look at it as a process rather than perceiving it as an activity.
- 6.3. Make it dynamic to encompass the current concerns and foresee the future trends rather than a static document.
- 6.4. Ensure participation in the evolution process of the byelaws.
- 6.5. Our role is to raise issues (pertaining to institution and resource), facilitate discussions and not impose.
- 6.6. Look out for elements that may fall outside the framework rather than confining to the design framework.
- 6.7. The framework is not rigid, it is only indicative.

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<sup>2</sup> Byelaw is not a static document and remains open for scrutiny and revision from time to time depending on the changing priorities of the community and the specific context.

- 6.8. Build on what already exists in the village rather than reinventing the wheel.
- 6.9. Make sure that the byelaws are not be restricted to the management of the forest resources / NRM only. It should also encompass issues of village development and management.
- 6.10. Byelaw should reflect all existing rules and provisions in the village.
- 6.11. It needs to be revisited periodically.

## **7. Facilitators' Checklist**

### **7.1. Membership in the village committee:**

- 7.1.1. Are all the villagers the de facto members?
- 7.1.2. Are there any criteria for memberships (age, sex, caste etc)?
- 7.1.3. Is membership on basis of the number of chullahs / families who give donations for village festivals etc.?
- 7.1.4. Is there any sort of exclusion? Why? Any rules / circumstances?
- 7.1.5. Should there be any membership fee?
- 7.1.6. Does it include all the hamlets and groups?

### **7.2. Membership in the Executive Committee**

- 7.2.1. Who are the managing committee members?
- 7.2.2. How are they elected or selected? Any criteria?
- 7.2.3. What are the methods?
- 7.2.4. How is the representation from the village: Caste wise? Hamlet wise? Women?
- 7.2.5. Can there be any reservations?
- 7.2.6. What should be the period of office?

## NOTES

7.2.7. What are the minimum requisites for becoming a MC member?

7.2.8. What are the powers of this committee?

7.2.9. What are the functions of the committee?

7.2.10. Whom does this committee report to?

7.2.11. What is the frequency of meeting?

7.2.12. How are meetings conducted in special/ urgent cases?

7.2.13. What makes a quorum?

7.2.14. Who calls the meeting?

### **7.3. General Body / Gram Sabha:**

7.3.1 What constitutes a general body?

7.3.2 What forms the quorum to take decisions/important decisions?

7.3.3 Who can call the gram sabha? Specific procedures for calling a gram sabha?

7.3.4 Frequency of holding a gram sabha?

7.3.5 What are the powers of the gram sabha?

7.3.6 What is the relationship with the managing committee?

7.3.7 Are women allowed in the gram sabha?

### **7.4. Chairman / Village President:**

7.4.1. How is he / she selected /elected?

7.4.2. What are the criteria to become a president?

7.4.3. What are the duties and powers assigned to him?

7.4.4. How can he be removed from his office?

### **7.5. Vice Chairman / Vice President: (if any)**

## NOTES

- 7.5.1. How is he / she selected /elected?
- 7.5.2. What are the criteria to become a president?
- 7.5.3. What are the duties and powers assigned to him?
- 7.5.4. How can he be removed from his office?

### **7.6. Secretary / treasurer: (if any)**

- 7.6.1. How is the secretary selected / appointed?
- 7.6.2. What are the criteria to be a secretary?
- 7.6.3. What are the duties / responsibilities of the secretary?
- 7.6.4. How can he be removed from his office? under what circumstances?

### **7.7. Accounting Mechanisms**

- 7.7.1. What are the books to be maintained?
- 7.7.2. Who would maintain? Procedures for effective maintenance of accounts? (local auditor, presentation in meetings)
- 7.7.3. Where should they maintain their accounts (banks, post office, cash in hand)?

## NOTES

## VI FUNDING PREREQUISITES

### When do we say that the prerequisites have been fulfilled?

#### *Specific criteria*

- 1 The process of organizing work in the village is complete.
- 2 Process of formation and finalization of the Village Institution is complete.
- 3 Legal status of the village institution defined / Registration complete.
- 4 Village baseline information have been collected and compiled.
- 5 Legal status of the land ascertained and necessary permissions obtained -Land lease / plantation permission / working permission / adhikar Patra / Similar.
- 6 Village perspective document, natural resource perspective plan and micro plan for the village are prepared and approved by the Gram Sabha.
- 7 Long-term budget projections - not exceeding 7 years - made, audited and the total amount reserved for the village.
- 8 The annual plan and annual budget for the village prepared, ratified in the Gram Sabha, audited by the internal auditor and approved by FES board.
- 9 Terms of References between the village and FES finalized, ratified by the Gram Sabha and signed.
- 10 Village Specific Byelaws is in process, but the core principles of resource management have been agreed to.
- 11 Social and technical observation book in place.
- 12 Gram Sabha resolution approving the beginning of physical work.

