

Community
Forestry
Manual

Field Operations Manual

Version 2

Haryana Community Forestry Project
Haryana Forest Department

Prepared by

Technical Assistance Team

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AWPB	Annual Work Plan and Budget
BDO	Block Development Officer
BDPO	Block Development & Panchayat Officer
CAP	Circle Action Plan
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CCA	Community Capability Assessment
CD	Community Development
CF	Conservator of Forests
CMMT	Community Microproject Monitoring Team
DCC	District Coordination Committee
DCF	Deputy Conservator of Forests
DFO	Divisional Forest Officer
DP	Development Partner
DRDA	District Rural Development Agency
EPA	Entry Point Activity
EU	European Union
GIS	Geographical Information System
GOH	Government of Haryana
HCFP	Haryana Community Forestry Project
HFD	Haryana Forest Department
IGA	Income Generating Activity
ITC	Information, Training & Communication
LFM	Logical Framework Matrix
MCSS	Multi-Criteria Selection System
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MIS	Management Information System
MJA	Microproject Joint Agreement
MMR	Microproject Mid-term Review
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
MP	Microproject
MTA	Microproject Tripartite Agreement
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
OVI	Objectively Verifiable Indicator
PA	Participatory Assessment
PCCF	Principal Chief Conservator of Forests
PD	Project Director
PDP	Panchayat Development Plan

PIA	Pre-Implementation Agreement			
PIM	Pre-Implementation Meeting			
PME	Participatory Monitoring & Evaluation			
PMU	Project Management Unit			
RA	Rapid Appraisal			
SDO	Sub-Divisional Officer			
SHG	Self-Help Group			
TA	Technical Assistance			
TGA	Tree Growers' Association			
VCT	Village Cluster Team			
VRMC	Village Resource Management Committee			
VRMS	Village	Resource	Management	Society

PREFACE

The Haryana Community Forestry Project is an experiment to involve the village community as prime movers and active stakeholders for sustainable management of village resources. The project's intervention areas are community and private lands, but a conscious attempt has been made to relate interventions to the livelihood and development needs of the villagers. The first year of the project intervention in any given village is geared to community capacity building, followed by an establishment phase and gradual taking over of the management responsibility by the village community in general, and their institutions in particular.

The very innovative nature of this interactive and participatory process requires development of operational procedures for the guidance of project field staff and the village institutions. By the very complex nature of the interaction between people and forestry staff several procedural details will only become clear over time.

This document attempts to evolve field operational procedures, from village selection up to community exit. It is the second version, based on almost two years of field experience. The procedures can be further modified as the project gains additional experience in the community capacity building and community forestry microproject establishment.

Prepared by the Technical Assistance Team

September 2001

1. INTRODUCTION

In rural Haryana, Panchayats own most of the land meant for common purposes. Much of this land has been, or is being, degraded due to overgrazing, population pressure and over exploitation. To rehabilitate and regenerate them is the best way of increasing green cover in Haryana.

Under the Social Forestry Project, the Haryana Forest Department has been able to convert a good proportion of Panchayat lands into village forests. The practice adopted was to obtain a resolution from the village Panchayat to the effect that a given extent of Panchayat land area would be handed over to the Forest Department for tree planting purposes, the right over land continuing to remain with the Panchayat. The Panchayats also had a share in the harvested wood. Though the Panchayats were to manage and protect the forests till maturity, most of them did not abide by this commitment. The reason probably was the low level of institution building and poor community participation.

This calls for strong efforts at institution building and community organisation, which is precisely the strategy of the Haryana Community Forestry Project. The project staff are to live and work with the people, prepare the community to take on increasing responsibilities, generate capabilities in them to plan, manage and monitor their own resource development plans. The staff needs to work as facilitators and catalysts and adopt the work culture of dedicated NGOs, rather than continue with an authoritarian and patronising mindset.

1.1 The Field Operations Manual

Such a departure from wonted practices requires new organisational and human resource development paradigms, building in new field procedures and job definitions and new extension and promotional methodologies. This Field Operations Manual is an attempt to meet these needs of the project. Project staff will fall back upon it as a guide for field operations.

1.2 Who will use the Manual?

This manual will be found useful by different levels of management and staff:

- The Project Management Unit (PMU) who will arrange training for Circle, Division and Sub-division staff in their job responsibilities

- The M & E Division for keeping track of project activities
- CFs at Circle level
- DCF/DFOs at Field Divisions
- SDOs and other field staff

1.3 How to use the Manual

Senior and middle management staff need to study the entire manual thoroughly. The Logical Framework and project processes and procedures to be adopted for completion of each stage of the process need to be thoroughly understood by them. For other field staff it would be sufficient to have a basic understanding of objectives, project processes, procedures to be followed for the processes and the relevant job responsibilities.

Full job descriptions are not part of this manual. Detailed terms of reference for most staff categories have been prepared and are issued as a separate volume. Project staff reading this manual are advised to revisit not only their own job descriptions, but also those of other relevant staff categories, for a full understanding of roles and responsibilities.

1.4 How the Manual was Developed

Developing field operational procedures manual for an innovative project such as the HCFP is a task that requires deep thinking, continuous discussion and exchange of ideas and study of existing procedures. Extensive discussions were held within the TA team and the PMU. Job descriptions were discussed in detail with CFs and DFOs in monthly staff meetings.

This second draft of the manual has undergone modifications based on experience gained over almost two years of project implementation and discussions with project staff. Additional changes may be incorporated through future interaction with a wide spectrum of field staff. It is hoped that, through this interactive and participatory process, the Haryana Community Forestry Project will be able to bring into being sound systems and procedures that will help in successful implementation of the project, taking into account needs and demands of diverse situations and multiple stakeholders.

2. OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITY FORESTRY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY IN HCFP

2.1 Development Philosophy

Development, to be sustainable, must be self-directed by the primary stakeholders who will be affected by the development process. Community Forestry is not just increasing the tree cover over land, but creating an enabling environment for people to manage their common and private forest and other natural resources in an environmentally sound and sustainable manner. This can best be accomplished by channelling the social, cultural and organisational resources of village communities for planning, managing, monitoring and evaluating projects suited to their needs, priorities and goals. For it is only where people are involved in the takeoff that they are likely to be concerned with the final landing as active participants. This is the underlying development philosophy of the Haryana Community Forestry Project. This chapter attempts to familiarise project staff with the development strategy of the project.

2.2 Problems Addressed by the Project

Land degradation is a major problem facing the people and economy of Haryana. Natural degradation processes are as follows:

- in the Kandi belt near the Shivaliks there are areas of sloping land with coarse textured soils subjected to soil erosion. In association with these areas are wide river beds subject to flash flooding;
- in the eastern Central Plains Belt there are flat areas with fertile, medium to fine textured soils where main problems are flooding from rivers, river bank erosion, waterlogging in depressed parts of the landscape, and saline and or sodic soils in some areas;
- in the western Central Plains belt are flat areas with coarse to medium textured soils. Many of the areas were formerly sand dunes, and have been reclaimed for irrigated agriculture. In places they are still subjected to wind erosion and loss of topsoil and in others waterlogging has resulted from poorly designed, constructed and managed irrigation networks;
- in the western and south-western sand dune belt the problems are shifting sands, burying of fertile topsoils and erosion of elevated sand plateau area;
- the Aravalli and Shivalik hills are severely eroded due to denudation of tree cover on hilltops and foothills.

The problem of land degradation is nowhere more severe than in the village common lands, which are vested in Panchayats. Apart from the decline in common land areas due to illegal occupation and land alienation, they are undergoing severe degradation owing to excessive pressure on them by a growing human and livestock population as well as non- scientific management. Tree cover on such areas is nowhere near the minimum environmental requirements for a healthy living.

The task of rehabilitating both common and private lands requires people's involvement and cooperation. In this context, the Haryana Forest Department has embarked upon a nine year Community Forestry Project, aided by the European Union. The project area covers 44 Community Development Blocks in 10 districts (Panchkula, Ambala, Yamunanagar, Kurukshetra, Hisar, Fatehabad, Sirsa, and parts of Bhiwani, Rewari and Mahendragarh).

2.3 Project Guiding Principles

The participatory approach of the project is clearly enunciated in the project's Appraisal Report and Financing Agreement through the following guiding principles:

- Empowerment of disadvantaged groups, especially women, scheduled castes, landless and resource poor farmers.
- Participation of rural communities in planning, managing and evaluating their own resources.
- Ensuring sustainability of project interventions.

2.4 Project Logical Framework

Logical framework of a project defines the interventions the project needs to make in the context of its goals and purposes. Its vertical logic specifies the hierarchy of goals in terms of wider objectives, purposes and results and also the activities that need to be performed and inputs that are to be provided. The vertical logic is the basic framework for project planning, in which project activities and flow of inputs are scheduled and budgeted to achieve each of the objectives in a time barred manner. The horizontal logic is represented by objectively verifiable indicators against each element in the vertical logic; their means of verification. It also underscores the assumptions under which a positive measurement of progress through use of the indicator can take place. Indicators are the performance standards for project interventions. The horizontal logic is the starting point for the monitoring and evaluation system of the project.

The Logical Framework Matrix (LFM) of the project was developed during preparation of the Overall Work Plan and is described in outline in section 2.5. Due to its crucial importance in project planning, monitoring and evaluation, senior and middle management staff of the project must fully understand the LFM.

2.5 Expected Project Objectives, Purposes, and Results

The **overall objective** of the project is to strengthen the capacity of rural communities

- to improve the natural environment;
- to maintain land fertility;
- to undertake sustainable management of natural resources.

Project purposes include:

- Improved capabilities of village communities to undertake a process of self directed community development through greater involvement and empowerment of disadvantaged groups, including women, in village decision making;
- Improved and sustainable management of common property resources that have been degraded by loss of bio-mass and topsoil and by moving sand;
- Increase in the number of forestry and agro-forestry interventions in farming systems;
- Increase in the number of market-led, environmental friendly and energy efficient technologies introduced into the villages.

The **key results** of project activities would be:

- Disadvantaged groups are empowered and better equipped to be involved in village decision making and have enhanced capabilities to sustain development activities unassisted;
- Village organisations, such as Village Resource Management Committees, are developed with capabilities in sustainable management of village forest/rural resources;
- Arid and semi arid areas affected by sand dunes and wind erosion are rehabilitated and become productive again;

- Panchayat and institutional lands are rehabilitated with vegetative cover and become productive again;
- Micro-watersheds in the foothills of the Shivaliks are managed to provide water supplies to various users;
- Wastelands within villages are converted into community tree groves for amenity purposes;
- Multi-species agro-forestry cropping systems are introduced on marginal and small farms;
- Poplar plantations are established on prime land;
- Households maintain improved homestead plots/ kitchen gardens;
- Income generating micro-enterprises are undertaken by disadvantaged groups;
- Energy efficient cooking stoves are introduced in villages;
- Energy efficient crematoria are introduced in rural towns and their hinterlands.

The participatory approach of the project seeks to strengthen the capacity of the community for collaborative action. People will be involved in village level planning of microprojects, their implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Ownership and management of the afforested area and their usufruct sharing will continue to be with the village communities. The project staff will work as facilitators with the village community through participatory resource assessment and microplanning techniques and by providing technical advice.

2.6 The HCFP Community Forestry Sustainable Development Process

The Nine Stage Process

A process approach is useful for the planning and implementation of the project. The process approach allows management, staff and communities to proceed in a logical fashion in undertaking various activities, allowing room for flexibility to incorporate changes benefiting from experiences in the field over a period of time.

A nine-stage project process has been developed by the PMU for the Haryana Community Forestry Project. All project staff should understand and assimilate these process stages to successfully perform their responsibilities (see Figures 2.1 & 2.2).

1. The process starts with the selection of the village communities from the project area, ensuring no external consideration, other than the village's ability to participate actively in the development process and potential to meet most of the project goals.
2. The second stage is community entry in which the project staff, "the outsider", attempts to get the confidence and trust of the community and prepares the ground for a long term partnership with the village community.
3. At the third stage, the village community and the project staff undertake a learning exercise, termed for convenience as participatory appraisal. Village resource degradation and other related problems are analysed with the perspective of searching for alternatives and community action. Community level and specific stakeholder level consultations take place, village leadership and resource persons (link workers) are identified, and a general consensus develops for a long-term association with the project.
4. The fourth stage is the institution building stage. It will be the responsibility of these institutions to plan, formulate, implement and monitor resource development plans, initially aided and supported by project staff.
5. The fifth stage takes up the preparation of strategic village resource planning with the community and its institutions, link workers and project staff collaborating to define goals for village resource development. The plan includes mapping of a short-term resource management action plan and a list of priority resource management microprojects, some of which will be suggested to HCFP for implementation.
6. The sixth stage is the preparation of Microproject Proposals by the community for implementation together with HCFP, outlining the actions to take place during implementation, budget, direct beneficiaries, etc.
7. At the seventh stage, the community takes on itself the lead role in implementing the microproject, including monitoring of microproject progress.

8. At the eighth stage, the community is able to complete the microproject, with the proviso that the community is capable of fully taking over and sustainably managing the microproject with no or limited external assistance.

9. At the ninth stage, the community is considered fully capable of planning, establishing, maintaining, and effectively sharing benefits from all their microprojects. At this stage the community is considered fully mature, and the HCFP can effectively withdraw from the community.

A standard time schedule for implementation of Stages 1 - 6 above in newly selected villages is shown on the next page.

STANDARD TIME SCHEDULE FOR STAGES 1 – 6 OF THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS
IN NEW VILLAGES EACH YEAR

Activity	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	March
Rapid Appraisal, Village Selection	←————→											
Village Entry						←————→						
Entry Point Activities							←————→					
Participatory Assessment							←————→					
VRMC Formation, Link Worker Selection							←————→					
Microplanning								←————→				
Microproject Formulation										←————→		

The Three Phase of the Process

The nine stages can be grouped to form three phases:

- The Planning and Capacity Building Phase which includes Stages 1 through to 6 [lasting 6 months to one year].
- The Microproject Establishment Phase where HCFP and the Community are joint partners in implementation of several microprojects, including Stages 7 and 8 [for a maximum of three years].
- The Maintenance and Benefit Sharing Phase where the community manages the project with minimal external assistance, during which Stage 9 is achieved. The full duration of the microprojects as envisaged in the various Microproject Proposals will vary considerably, e.g. eight years in the case of village woodlots, 20 years in the case of sand dune stabilisation, or one year in the case of a rope making income generating project with women.

It is expected that at the end of the third year of project presence in the village, the community would have generated enough maturity and self-confidence in order:

- to protect and manage the assets created;
- to plan and implement new resource management microprojects through their own initiatives;
- for the HCFP to partially or fully withdraw from the village.

The process chart in Figure 2.3 outlines the three phases mentioned above, and relates the phases to three models of microproject management:

- Joint Management through a partnership between the HCFP and the community in Phases 1 and 2, followed by Phase 3 where HCFP withdraws from direct involvement in the specified microproject, but provides an advisory and monitoring role e.g. in the case of a village woodlot.
- Assisted Management Model where the community is the leader in implementing the project with some external support e.g. in the case of an income generating project where the project provides a consultant to facilitate the microproject's design and implementation with other partners such as financial institutions for credit.
- Unassisted Management Model which is where there is minimal or no external support e.g. some entry point activities where the role of the HCFP is

encouragement and moral support with maybe a limited financial input.

Both the community and the project staff will regularly monitor the level of community self-confidence and capacity, and if it is found that the community is rated as good on indicators of these attributes, the HCFP can exit from the community. This is the final stage, signalling the arrival of the sustainable community forestry process. However, the conditions of such withdrawal will be adequately discussed and negotiated with the community so that the phase-out is not hurried or unplanned.

3. COMMUNITY IDENTIFICATION, ENTRY AND PARTICIPATORY RESOURCE ASSESSMENT [Process Stages 1 to 3]

3.1 About the Chapter

This chapter deals with procedures for the first three stages of the project's community forestry development process:

- Stage 1: Identification of villages for project interventions.
- Stage 2: Community entry stage, wherein steps are initiated for obtaining the confidence of the community and initiating the process of participatory village resource development.
- Stage 3: Participatory (Resource) Assessment wherein the community identifies its main natural resources, outlines main resource management problems, and suggests village goals for solving the resource problems, focusing on village forest systems, but also taking note of other resource issues related to water, soil, land and the general environment.

3.2 Aims of the Chapter

This chapter aims to:

1. Explain the adopted process for identifying the villages for selection under the HCFP. The right identification of the potential village communities is of crucial importance, as it will obviate the need for premature withdrawal from the community on account of it not having the required facilitating conditions for project success. This is more so because the project has to make the selection from a large number of villages with divergent social and economic structures and needs spread over a fairly large geographical canvas.
2. Identify the key stakeholders and their responsibilities for village selection, entering the community, and completing the Community Resources Assessment (also known as Participatory Assessment because of the direct involvement of the community in the process).
3. Explain the purpose of the village/ community entry process. Much of the project's success in creating a strong partnership with the communities for self managed development will also depend on the level of rapport built and confidence generated during the stage of Village Entry.

4. Describe the various steps to be taken in the Community Resources Assessment (PA process). This is detailed in another Working Paper related to carrying out a Community Resource Assessment through using Participatory Assessment techniques.

3.3 HCFP Approach

Stage 1: Village Selection

The project has to select 300 villages from over 3000 villages in the identified project area. All the villages in the project area may not have the necessary and facilitating conditions for meeting project goals and purposes. For example, the report of the study on Common Lands in Haryana, brought out by the Indian Institute of Rural Management, Jaipur in January 2000 by commission of HCFP, has indicated that only 20% of all villages have wasteland in excess of 20 ha for implementation of village woodlots.

It is useful to have an objective, key indicator-based system to select potential villages, rather than to go by the system of pick and choose which may allow external factors to influence selection. To generate primary data for each village for this purpose is a gigantic task.

HCFP has adopted a two-stage approach for selecting project villages. The first step is a computerised shortlisting of villages on the basis of secondary databases that are available for all villages. These include Census data, BDO records, Survey of India maps, digitised maps (e.g. HARSAC maps on Wastelands) etc. The indicators chosen should be sensitive to the potential for achieving project objectives and purposes (as a general rule, not less than 20 ha of common land available for afforestation), as well as socio-economic development status of the villages (not less than 10% scheduled caste population), as well as their potential to be in manageable clusters. The shortlist is usually three times the number of required villages. This step is followed by Rapid Appraisal visits of the shortlisted villages by the DCF/DFO and his team to confirm whether the villages have the congenial conditions for the success of project interventions.

Guidelines for selecting suitable villages for project intervention have been prepared

by the PMU and circulated to all Divisions. Project villages for the first years were selected by using these guidelines. The guidelines may be further revised and modified to incorporate insights and experiences gained during the selection process, so as to make the system as objective and need based as possible.

The selection system has two steps:

The first part is the initial computerised short listing of potential villages through a multi-criteria selection system (MCSS). The criteria include parameters such as:

- land degradation (hectares of active sand dunes);
- need and potential for water harvesting structures;
- availability of community land;
- size of the village in terms of number of households (proxy for ease of community mobilization potential);
- proportion of scheduled caste population and proportion of landless population to total population of the village (proxy for socio-economic deprivation); and
- physical planning criteria (possibility of the project villages being in manageable clusters).

The information for this purpose is obtained from official statistics like census reports for all villages in the selected community development blocks, which are transferred to block spreadsheets. The villages are scored and ranked by assigning weights and scores to each parameter. The potential village clusters that emerge after this are marked out on Census maps showing village boundaries for the concerned blocks.

The second step is to verify the information for the short-listed villages, finding out the attitude of the community towards participatory resource management, and assessing the possibility of the village to meet some of the project targets. This is done through conducting Rapid Appraisals (RA) in village clusters selected by the MCSS.

Community Forestry Working Paper 1¹ explains this selection model through elaborating the selection parameters and their scoring and weighting procedures.

Village selection, comprising both MCSS and RA, ***is the primary responsibility of the Deputy Conservator of Forests/Divisional Forest Officer of each division.***

¹ Billing, David & Viruthiyel, Joseph: Multi-Criteria Village Selection System & Rapid Appraisal Methods.

S/he will have to ensure proper entry of village secondary data into the MCSS spreadsheet, map out the clusters, conduct RA and prepare the RA report. His subordinates like SDOs, Foresters and Forest Guards will accompany him during rapid appraisal visits and support him in this task. The villages selected through this process must be approved by the PMU prior to Community Entry taking place.

The RA guidelines have emphasized the need for collecting all relevant secondary information about the RA villages before proceeding to the first actual village meeting. These include the latest information on:

- Panchayat lands from the Revenue Patwari and the Block Development and Panchayat Officer (particularly with regard to area leased out, areas encroached upon or in dispute, and areas under existing forest plantations plus age of plantations);
- rural banking sector service area profiles and village plans prepared by the Service Area Bank covering the selected villages;
- information on households Below Poverty Line (BPL);
- Survey of India maps at 1:50,000 scale for the area, if available;
- wasteland maps for all districts prepared by HARSAC in Hisar;
- copy of the Sajra (village map on cloth) from the Patwari.

Sending advance information to the Panchayat regarding the date and purpose of the RA visit is advisable. The villagers should be prepared for the visit in order to enable participation of a cross section of the village population in the meetings e.g. people belonging to various social groups such as the landless, poor farmers, other farmers, women, scheduled castes.

No assurances or raising the expectation level of the villagers to an unrealisable extent should be given, since the purpose of RA is to select or reject the village. It should be explicitly made clear that this is only a screening exercise meant to select the right villages and that the visit may not necessarily lead to the selection of the given village for purposes of project interventions. In some difficult CD Blocks during 1999 the rejection rate was as high as 50% of villages subjected to RA.

The village selection process should be taken up when the staff are relatively free of work load and should be completed by the month of June each year, so that Village

Entry can commence just after the end of each year's plantation season. The reports of the Rapid Appraisal of villages should reach the PMU, through the Circle CF, latest by 15th of June. Before submitting the reports to the PMU, the Circle CF will verify that the reports are complete in every respect. The PMU will communicate the approval of the selection of villages for project intervention. Thereafter the Division can go ahead with the next stage, namely, village entry.

Stage 2: Village Entry

Stage 2 of the project process is community entry. This is a very important stage because it is at this stage that the project staff lays the foundation for a deep and lasting relationship with the community. Village entry activities will be carried out during September and October. Normally each village will have its own Forest Guard and a cluster consists of 3 to 4 contiguous villages. The workstation of the Forest Guard is the village that is assigned to him. The cluster team comprises the SDO (Team Leader), Forester, and Forest Guards assigned to the villages. While the Forest Guard assigned to a particular village will have the primary responsibility of organising the community for various activities including village entry, PA etc and for on-the-spot support to the village community, the other Forest Guards in the cluster under the leadership of the SDO will provide support to him. Thus Village Entry, PA etc will be the joint undertaking of the entire cluster team. Documentation will be initiated and supervised by the SDO. The Link Workers would eventually join the village cluster team after the conclusion of the Community Resource Assessment (PA) exercise.

The tasks that need to be accomplished at the Village Entry stage are:

- Collection of secondary data on the community to confirm and augment information collected at the earlier stage;
- Rapport building with the community, and learning about the community and its social dynamics;
- Community forestry awareness generation and explanation of project purposes and the participatory approach adopted in the project;
- Identification, and if possible, execution of at least one Entry Point activity;
- Ascertaining availability of sufficient common land for afforestation;
- Obtaining community commitment in continuing the participatory process.

Collection of Secondary Data

Some basic information about the village has already been collected during MCSS and Rapid Appraisal. The Rapid Appraisal information, being a quick exercise, may have inaccuracies and impressionistic accounts. These need to be cross-checked from

official sources like Block Development and Panchayat Officer, Revenue Department etc. This is especially relevant for community land data. Other data that need to be collected are information on cropping pattern, land holdings, occupations, Panchayat leadership, Panchayat resources, Panchayat plans, village institutional infrastructure. These data will eventually be incorporated into the Community Resources Assessment Report, which form part of the Village Information System.

The collection of secondary data should be done a few days before a village wide meeting is organised. Collecting data for all villages in the cluster at the same time would save time for both the village entry team and the agencies providing information. Analysis of data for the cluster villages by the team as a group exercise would enable them to develop a site-specific strategy to be adopted in each village.

Rapport Building, Awareness Generation and Project Publicity

One of the most important aims of the community entry stage is to create rapport with the villagers and generate confidence in them in the intentions of the team and the project in the shortest time possible. The task has to be accomplished in a time of one to two weeks.

The village cluster team, at this stage, is virtually an “outsider” entity for the community. The job of the team is to learn from the community the “insider” perspective as much as possible. This can be done by observing and recording the village social system, livelihood and cropping patterns, leadership patterns etc., and by interacting with a cross section of the community.

To get into the “insider core,” the team will have to overcome the mindset of the community regarding the aims and motives of the team or the expectations from it. These may range from curiosity, suspicion, fear, getting doles and handouts, indifference or even animosity. The team may be considered as officials having a job to do and being paid for it, or as well meaning people having no practical understanding of village problems and priorities or even as those with the motive to take away people’s right in community land. These perceptions will be coloured by the previous experiences the people had with “outsiders”. This problem has to be addressed through the actions and behaviour of the team in such a way that people start looking at the team in a positive frame of mind.

At the same time the team members themselves will have to undergo a change in their

attitudes. Though the right attitude is developed through experience of working with the people, a few hints in this regard are given below:

- give up any air of superiority;
- respect the indigenous knowledge and values of the community;
- adopt a dress code that is acceptable to the community;
- seek to understand the problems of the community from the women, men, youth and children of the village;
- seek their suggestions and solutions to those problems.

The first step towards rapport building is to take the village leadership into confidence. These include leaders of informal groups like caste groups and also the leadership of formal institutions like Panchayats and village cooperatives, youth clubs, farmers' associations. School teachers, social workers, *anganwadi* worker, *mahila mandal* officials are also key persons in the village. The team should meet them individually, appraise them of the purpose of visit and request their active collaboration.

This sets the stage for holding a general meeting of the village. Request all adults, both men and women, in the village to assemble at the Panchayat Ghar, school or any other convenient place and time. The announcement should be through Panchayat leaders. If space is not sufficient, hold the meeting in an open space, using tents if necessary. If required special seating arrangement should be made for women at a prominent place in the meeting ground.

The meeting may begin by a folk, patriotic or devotional song (preferably sung by school children or members of the *mahila mandal*). Thereafter each team member should introduce himself/herself. This is followed by self-introduction by the village people. Mutual introduction helps to overcome shyness and prepares the ground for meaningful interaction during the meeting.

After the introductions, the team leader explains the purpose of the visit. Use may be made of simple audio-visual aids and material provided by Information, Training and Communication Division of the project. Encourage the gathering, especially women, to ask questions. Answer the questions as frankly and transparently as possible. Also tell the villagers the strategy adopted by the project – helping the community to help itself. Tell them what they need to do for this strategy to be successful, what benefits will accrue to different sections of the community. Discretely observe the reactions of the gathering at large, different interest groups, women and youth. Conclude the

meeting by declaring the intention of the team to stay for a long duration in the community. Enquire if there is a place for the team to stay – a *dharmashala*, school or hired building.

From the second day onwards group meetings may be organized – streetwise, castewise, occupational groupwise, genderwise. Choose a time convenient to the villagers – mornings, evenings, any time they are free from their daily chores and are in a relaxed mood. *Chaupals, chabutaras, mahila mandals* etc may be ideal places for the focused group meetings. The focus of the discussions should be use patterns of community land, group specific needs etc. The team should always be ready to clear doubts. The team members may take a walk across community land, a cross section of agricultural fields, problem sites, work sites etc to gain an insight into various facets of community dynamics.

Awareness creation is one of the tasks that can be accomplished at this stage. For example, ask the villagers about the predominant fuel they use for cooking and the possibility of using improved cooking stoves.

Another job that needs to be accomplished at entry stage is to publicise project objectives and strategies. Use traditional media like folk songs, puppet theatre, street plays etc. Organise competitions for school students and youth. Utilise the services of village youth clubs, *Yuvati Mandals* and *Mahila Mandals*. The ITC Division of the project should actively collaborate with the village cluster team at this stage.

Entry Point Activities [EPA]

One of the methods to gain confidence of the community is to identify and execute entry point activities.

Entry point activities are rapid response, low investment activities that can be implemented in the village by mobilising village self-help and establishing linkages with concerned line departments of the Government.

Entry point activities may be taken up at any point during the Planning Phase (Stages

2 to 6) as a confidence building measure with the community whilst waiting for the chosen microprojects to be implemented during the three-year Establishment Phase (Stage 7).

EPAs should be chosen on the basis of the felt and expressly stated needs of the people, ratified by the community. An entry point activity format has been devised for recording the nature of the activity and the investment needed – locally mobilized as well as contributed by the village through labour, cash or material. This format has to be presented to the DCF/DFO by the cluster team and duly approved by him. There is provision of Rs. 15,000 per village for entry point activities. A few examples of entry point activities are given below:

1. *Point out to a group of villagers the pools of water collecting in the streets. Explain how this can lead to endemic and epidemic diseases and how proper drainage can improve village habitat and environment. Suggest building a drain for wastewater. Try if some local resources and labour can be mobilized for the purpose. Supplement them with project budget for entry point activities. Participate in the actual physical labour. Watch how quickly the attitude towards project staff changes for the better.*

2. *In some villages, drinking water is a major problem. Ground water level may be too deep and the water brackish. There may be an existing water line installed under the Rural Water supply and sanitation programme (through BDO), but the lines may be choked or water supply may be at low pressure. Women, who shoulder the primary responsibility of fetching water, would be the most aggrieved and interested party. Take some village representative to the BDO or other concerned agency and appraise them about the problem. Offer a small contribution from the project to remedy the problem, if that is the missing link. Watch the reaction of the people, especially women, and how they have become favourably disposed towards the team, even if the effort is not fully successful. It is not the outcome but the effort that really matters.*

Execution of Entry Point Activities

Some EPA may not entail any financial resources, only pooling of community labour, Examples are cleaning of choked drains, repairing footpaths. These can be executed during the village entry stage itself.

Others may require financial outlay. The total amount available for this purpose is Rs.

15,000 per village. Any additional cost should be met from the community itself or other line agencies. The procedure for availing the financial support is as follows:

Step 1: The village Panchayat and Forest Guard of the village jointly prepare an estimate of material and labour required and the time schedule for executing the proposed EPA. The requested support from HCFP should not exceed Rs 15,000.

Step 2: The Panchayat submits estimate and request for fund to SDO (see Form EPA 1 overleaf).

Step 3: SDO examines estimate and request. If needed, he makes an on the spot assessment. If satisfied, the SDO recommends to DCF/DFO approval of the EPA and release of EPA fund to the community.

Step 4: The DCF/DFO releases the amount through crossed cheque (through the SDO), to the Village Panchayat, with the condition that the work is completed as per time schedule committed by the community and approved by the SDO.

Step 5: The Panchayat along with the Forest Guard executes the EPA in the scheduled time.

Step 6: On completion of the EPA the sarpanch sends an EPA utilisation certificate, endorsed by the Forest Guard to the SDO. The SDO examines the work and sends a report to DCF/DFO stating that the work has been completed as per plan.

Note: Involving the Panchayat at this stage is a kind of testing the waters to see if the Panchayat leadership can be relied upon in future to take up an increasingly more responsible role in village resource management activities.

EPA Form 1

Format for Requesting Assistance from HCFP for Implementing Entry Point Activities

To: DCF/DFO

'X' Community Forestry Division

HCFP, Government of Haryana

Through: SDO

'Y' Sub-Division

HCFP, Government of Haryana

Dear Sir,

During the Village Entry Process under HCFP in our village the village community has identified the EPA to be implemented by our village as per the following details. Kindly approve the plan and release Rs. 15,000 by check to our account number ‘ _____ ’ in ‘ _____ ’ Bank. We undertake to execute the EPA as per plan outlined below.

Yours faithfully,

Sarpanch
_____ Panchayat

Name of Village: _____ EPA Identified: _____ Description: _____
 Justification: _____ Time Frame: Start date: _____ End Date: _____

Costs:

Item	Unit	Unit Cost	Total Cost
Material (specify)			
Labour			
Other			
TOTAL			

Source of funds:
 Voluntary Labour _____ Voluntary Cash Contribution _____ Panchayat fund _____ HCFP EPA fund _____

- Enclosed: Drawing/plan/map of proposed work
- Enclosed: Village Entry Report

Obtaining Commitment from the Community

A long-term participatory approach is possible only if there is a consensus in the village community for project interventions and they agree to perform the responsibilities expected of them. During a week of intensive work in the village, the village community and the project team would have had time to assess each other's motives. The village community in general would be aware of the benefits and costs that would accrue to them and also about alternative ways of utilising and managing resources. This general consensus would have to be given a formal shape through an extraordinary general meeting of the Gram Sabha, convened on the last day of the village entry stage. The different interest groups may be given an opportunity to present their understanding of the participatory development process and the level of cooperation they can extend to the project. During the general meeting the Gram Sabha will pass a resolution either (a) formally inviting the Haryana Community Forestry Project to commence activities in the village; or (b) expressing their inability to continue the process. The team leader will obtain a copy of the resolution for onward transmission to the DCF.

Village Entry Report

A day before the completion of the village entry process, the team will assemble together along with the village representatives and prepare the Village Entry Report. This report will contain the following:

- information collected from secondary sources as well as from key persons, general meetings and focus group discussions on the major information items in the RA report. If this information does not confirm RA findings, the DCF/DFO should be informed after 1-2 days of completion of Village Entry process. This will help in avoiding wastage of time and resources in the event of rejection of the village being necessitated;
- a report on the publicity and awareness generation exercises conducted during village entry;
- a description of major village problems, ranked in order of priority as perceived by the villagers (include the entry point activity ranking matrix);
- description of the entry point activity proposed by the villagers from the above list, including cost, village contribution etc.;

- a statement of whether the villagers want to collaborate with the HCFP in establishing the village resource management committees and in various community forestry interventions;
- a description of entry point activities that may have been implemented during VE.

This report (in Hindi) must be read in the general meeting on the next day and approved by the community. After the meeting, the report can be translated into English. The Hindi copy should be given to the village Panchayat and the SDO for safekeeping in a Village Information System or Village File. One copy each of the English version should be sent to the DCF/DFO, CF and PMU within three days of completing the community entry process.

Cost of Materials for Village Entry

There is a provision of Rs. 5,000 per village for materials required for Village Entry, Participatory Assessment, Microplanning and Microproject Formulation. These may be: mapping paper, metacards, flannel boards, colouring materials, paper for producing reports, photographs, refreshments served during village meetings etc. The Forest Guard of the concerned village will be the person responsible for obtaining the materials from the SDO and making them available in time for the use of team members. He will ensure their safe custody and get proper records of their consumption.

Time Frame

The community entry stage may span one to two weeks, depending on the response from the community.

Community Entry Guidelines

Detailed guidelines for the Village Entry stage have been prepared ² and operations staff have undergone training in conducting village entry.

² Community Forestry Working Paper 2: Village Entry.

Responsibilities

Village entry is the responsibility of the Village Cluster Team, headed by the SDO. The cluster team consists of the Forest Guards assigned to each village in the cluster, the Forester/Deputy Ranger and the SDO. In addition, the project may make available additional human resources when needed.

The SDO will ensure that all his cluster team members are conversant with the guidelines and refresh their knowledge. He should also facilitate the village entry process through his inspired leadership and make available various inputs in time.

The SDO should plan and schedule the village entry process in such a way that all the human resources available for the cluster jointly undertake the task in a phased manner.

Each evening of the village entry process should be spent by the SDO for discussing and exchanging notes with his team members.

In the initial meetings there should be a high-level project presence in the village, including the presence of SDO, DCF/DFO and, maybe, even the CF. The SDO will also ensure that the required materials and supplies are available in adequate quantity.

It is advisable that the DCF/DFO is present in the Gram Sabha meeting in which the Village Entry report is presented and discussed.

Role of ITC Division

The efforts of the cluster team should be supported by the Information, Training and Communication Division by providing enough publicity materials, including cultural resources (songs, village plays) and media materials (leaflets, videos, wall paintings, posters, stickers, etc).

Stage 3: Participatory Assessment

When sufficient rapport between the project staff and the village community has been created through the village entry process, the next stage, namely, Community

Resource Assessment (also known as PA or Participatory Assessment) can begin. This stage is the joint responsibility of the village community and the village cluster team of the project, comprising SDO, Forester and Forest Guards.

The Tasks

Participatory appraisal is a necessary ingredient of the community development component of the project. Its objective is to take forward the participatory process, which was set in motion during the village entry stage. The village people, with assistance of project staff, do this by:

- analysing the resource management problems that they face and examining whether the alternatives envisaged by the project are relevant to solving those problems;
- preparing a community baseline on social, economic and resource management conditions of the village;
- analysing the baseline information in a manner that is useful for village goal setting;
- identifying stakeholders in improved management of resources; and
- identifying potential community leaders, link workers and resource persons.

The outputs of PA will be:

- a community baseline on social, economic and resource management conditions of the village, this may be called the **Community Resource Assessment for Village 'X'**;
- a list of potential leaders representing different stakeholders/social groups in the village;
- a list of potential resource persons who can serve as link workers and community monitoring and evaluation teams.

The outcomes of PA will be:

- a learning atmosphere in the village with community capabilities for acquiring and analysing information and increased accessibility to information to different groups in the community;
- a learning atmosphere within the project organisation wherein the community is viewed and respected as a storehouse of authentic information;

- mobilisation of the community for resource management institution formation and resource planning;
- achieving a convergence between community goals and project goals.

Time Frame

From the nature of outcomes to be accomplished it is apparent that PA cannot be hurried or certain elements of it skipped over. A minimum of three weeks time in each village is required for accomplishment of all the tasks at this stage.

Manual on Rapid Diagnostic Tools

A set of Rapid Diagnostic Tools and step by step instructions to undertake PA are contained in a Participatory Assessment Manual prepared by HCFP³. Field staff need to utilise this manual to successfully complete the PA exercise in each village.

PA Enumerator Costs

There is a provision of Rs. 5,000 per village for enumerators to assist HCFP village cluster teams during Participatory Assessment. Enumerators recruited from the village will canvass the Demographic and Socio-Economic Matrix and the Farm Information Matrix. The procedure for utilising this amount is described in the section on Village Entry.

Costs for Women Extension Workers

With an all-male field staff, there is a need to use female extension workers, during Village Entry, PA and Microplanning, so as to reach village women more satisfactorily. Such workers can be recruited on a day-to-day basis, from local NGOs and from amongst vocal and literate female Link Workers, who could give services also to new project villages in the vicinity before these villages get their own Link Workers. The cost for women extension workers will be met from either the material cost or the enumerator cost budget provision, whichever provision is not likely to be fully utilised.

³ Community Forestry Working Paper 3: Participatory Assessment

Draft PA Report

Attempt should be made to prepare the analysis and narrative description of PA tools used at the end of the day the tool was used. All community participants who were instrumental in using the tools should be actively involved, though the cluster team can take the lead. This will help in consolidating the PA report at the end of the process.

A contents list for the PA report is available in the PA Manual and should be used for writing the report, with suitable modifications.

SUGGESTED OUTLINE FOR A PA REPORT

1. Our Village

- 1.1 Location and Geography
- 1.2 History
 - 1.2.1 Village history
 - 1.2.2 History of common property resources
 - 1.2.3 Village development history
- 1.3 Institutions
 - 1.3.1 Institution-gram
- 1.4 Infrastructure/Amenities
 - 1.4.1 Roads and village *phirni*
 - 1.4.2 Water
 - 1.4.3 Sanitary condition
 - 1.4.4 Electricity

2. Our People

- 2.1. Summary of Social and Economic Groups

- 2.2 Demographic cum Socio-Economic Matrix
- 2.3 Social Map
- 2.4. Socio-gram
- 2.5 Gender Analysis (Summary of matrix)
- 2.6 Inter-group Relations
 - Conflicts/disputes
 - Unifying factors

3. Our Resources

- 3.1 Transect Walk (incl. condition of naturally occurring herbs and shrubs)
- 3.2 Village Resource and Tenure Map
- 3.3 Common Land Map
- 3.4 Common Land User Matrix
- 3.5 Farm Information Matrix
- 3.6 Seasonality of Resources
- 3.7 Environmental Pressure – State – Response
- 3.8 Community Problem Identification

4. Our Opportunities

- 4.1 Regarding Common Property Resources
- 4.2 Regarding HCFP Plantation Models
- 4.3 Regarding Livelihood/Human Resources
- 4.4 Regarding Energy Use/Environment
- 4.5 Regarding Infrastructure/Amenities

5. We and the Community Forestry Project

- 5.1 Our VRMC/VRMS
 - 5.1.1 Process of forming the VRMC/VRMS

- 5.1.2 Constitution and Membership
- 5.1.3 Bye-laws of the VRMC/VRMS
- 5.1.4 Goals and Objectives of the VRMC/VRMS
- 5.2 Responsibilities
 - 5.2.1 VRMC/VRMS
 - 5.2.2 Link Workers (refer to their ToR)
 - 5.2.3 Community/ Individuals
 - 5.2.4 HCFP

Presentation of the Draft Report to the Gram Sabha

It is very important that this report (in local language) should be presented to the village community at the final PA general meeting. The report has to be discussed threadbare in the meeting. The community may suggest minor or significant changes to the report and these should be incorporated in the final report.

One of the important agenda of this final meeting is to approve the finalisation of the members and office bearers of the VRMC/VRMS and the names of Link Workers.

This final general meeting should take the form of an extra-ordinary general meeting of the Gram Sabha. Adequate prior information should be given to the village community so that there is maximum participation. The meeting will adopt resolutions ratifying the PA report and approving the names of VRMC/VRMS members and Link Workers.

Final PA Report

After incorporating the changes suggested in the Gram Sabha meeting, the report will be finalised in Hindi. This should be done within one week of completing PA in any given village. One copy will be placed in the Village Information system file (to be later handed over to the legally constituted VRMC), one will be kept in the Subdivision Village File and one copy sent to DCF/DFO. DCF/DFO will cause translation of the report into English, two copies of which should be sent to CF. The CF will retain one copy in the Circle file and send one copy to the PMU. The PMU should get the report within one month of completion of the PA process in the village.

Responsibilities

Team Leader:	SDO
Team Members:	Forest Guards and Forester/Deputy Ranger in the cluster
Preparation of Daily Summary:	Village representatives and Forest Guards
Preparation of Draft Report:	Village representatives and Forest Guards and SDO
Translation of Hindi report to English:	DCF/DFO office
Intermittent support and guidance:	DCF/DFO and CF

The DCF/DFO should be present in the first and final PA meeting and guide the team as and when needed. Whenever required, the PMU may be approached for technical support and guidance.

4. FORMATION OF VILLAGE INSTITUTION [Process Stage 4]

4.1 About the Chapter

This chapter describes the village institution formation and strengthening process of the Haryana Community Forestry Project. It seeks to clarify the different steps involved and procedures to be adopted in forming and strengthening the institutions.

The development strategy of the Haryana Community Forestry Project, as evident from the project's logical framework matrix, is self-directed and self-managed development. One of the main reasons for the failure of several development experiments in the past was that people's institutions were not involved in the projects from the planning stage itself. As a result, the goals set for the projects did not match with the needs, perceptions, resource base and social dynamics of the communities. The people, the prime stakeholders, were passive recipients of benefits, creating a dependency mentality with the responsibility for project management and success assigned to outside experts and officials.

Therefore, the Haryana Community Forestry project conceives institution building as an integral component of the community organisation strategy of the project. One of the parameters for the first stage, village selection, was the potential of the village to harness its institutional structures for planning resource development activities, implement the planned activities and manage the projects. The objectives of the training, extension and publicity components of the project strategy are geared to facilitate community capacity building for planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, all which are management functions.

4.2 Aims of the Chapter

This chapter aims to explain the following:

1. That there are three types of institutions that could be promoted for village resource management and that the village community is free to choose the one that is most appropriate to their resource status and availability;
2. Explain the procedures to be adopted in constituting the VRMC;

3. Explain the procedures to be adopted in managing the VRMC;
4. Explain the procedures to be adopted in transferring project resources to the VRMC;
5. Describe the record maintenance and reporting requirements.

4.3 Types of Village Institutions under HCFP

Three types of institutions are being promoted under Haryana Community Forestry Project. The institutional types that can be promoted are the following:

i. Village Resource Management Committee under the Panchayat Raj System

In villages where the major intervention component of the project is rehabilitation of common lands, the strategy is to strengthen the existing institutions to perform the additional jobs under the project. The institution, which has the statutory responsibility for managing and developing community land, in this case, is the village Panchayat. The control of such lands is vested in village Panchayats under the Haryana Common Land Act and the Panchayati Raj Act. In such cases an attempt has to be made to work out arrangements for the Panchayats to take up the management responsibilities. If the village community so desires, and the Village Panchayat is agreeable, the village institution for natural resource management can be a Society Registered under Societies Registration Act. But the community and the Panchayat should be aware of the advantages and disadvantages of both the systems. Utmost transparency should be maintained in this sphere. If the community opts for a Society, the Panchayat should be willing to allow the society to manage the natural resources of the village area on its behalf and a proper agreement entered into between the Panchayat, Society and the Forest Department. The concurrence of the Panchayat Department of Government of Haryana must be taken for this purpose.

ii. Village Resource Management Society under Societies Registration Act, 1860

In those areas where the objective is to involve people in management of resources vested with the Government or other local bodies, such as creation of structures to protect micro-watersheds along foothills adjacent to Government forests, the institutional arrangement could be a registered society under Societies Registration Act. Even where panchayat land is involved, a Society could be entrusted the task of

natural resource management, if the community and the panchayat are willing, as explained above.

iii. Tree Growers Associations

In the case of Farm Forestry, the project will promote Tree Growers Associations, registered with the Haryana Community Forestry Project. However, as these associations have no legal status and exist in those villages where the VRMCs or VRMSs will be operating, the flow of project inputs to these associations will be through VRMCs or VRMSs.

The village community will have the freedom to adopt the type that is most suited to their resource status and conditions. However, it is not possible to have both VRMC and VRMS in the same village, while it is possible to have the Tree Growers' Association co-existing with either of these.

4.4 Village Resource Management Committee

The VRMC shall be a sub-committee of the Panchayat under Section 22 (v) of the Act. All adult members of the village, who are eligible to be members of the Gram Sabha and eligible to vote in Panchayat elections, shall form the general council. The VRMC shall be constituted from this membership.

The formation and functioning of subcommittees of village Panchayats are governed by the Haryana Panchayati Raj Act, according to which Gram Panchayats are empowered to constitute the following sub-committees:

- Production sub-committee for performing functions relating to agriculture

production, animal husbandry, rural industries and poverty alleviation programmes {22 (i)};

- Social justice sub-committee {22 (ii)};
- Amenities sub-committee in respect of education, public health, public works and other functions {22 (iii)};
- Local committee, where a Gram Panchayat is constituted of more than one village {22 (iv)};
- Any other committee the Gram Panchayat may deem fit to constitute {22 (v)}.

Each sub-committee and local committee shall consist of not less than 5 members, including Sarpanch or Upsarpanch. The Sarpanch shall be the ex-officio member and chairman of the production committee and amenities committee. The Upsarpanch shall be the ex-officio member and chairman of the social justice committee. According to Rule 27 (2) of the Haryana Panchayat Raj Rules, 1995, Gram Sachiv shall be ex-officio secretary of each committee constituted by the Gram Panchayat. As per rule 27 (3), members of the committees have to be appointed by a resolution in writing by the Panchayat.

Composition of the VRMC

The VRMC shall comprise 9 to 13 members. In addition there will be three ex-officio members – the Sarpanch, the Gram Sachiv and the Forest Guard (Community Forestry), assigned to the village. However, with the general approval of Director, Panchayats, Government of Haryana (to be obtained by PMU), the community can have its own representative as the secretary of the VRMC, as this will ensure ease of logistics and better community participation.

The ex-officio members will have no voting rights. At least one third of the members shall be women and one third shall be scheduled castes (including scheduled caste woman member, if any) and other backward castes.

Office bearers

The office bearers of the VRMC shall be the following:

- Chairperson
- Vice Chairperson
- Secretary
- Cashier

Usually all officers, except Secretary will be selected by the community during PA. If the Director Panchayat agrees, the requirement of Gram Sachiv being the ex-officio secretary will be waived and the community will have the right to select the Secretary. If the Chairperson is male, the Vice-Chairperson will be female and vice versa.

Term of Office

The VRMC members are elected for a period of two years. The retiring member shall be eligible for re-election for a maximum of three terms consecutively.

Procedure for Constituting the VRMC

The procedure for selection of members and constituting the VRMC shall be the following:

- i) During PA, explain to the villagers the need to develop a village institution that will be responsible for planning and implementing Community Forestry Project of their village. Explain advantages and disadvantages of each type of institution.
- ii) Ask them which type of institution they would like to develop – a sub-committee of the Panchayat, a Society or an association.
- iii) If they opt for VRMC, explain its constitution and byelaws (Refer VRMC Management Training Manual).

- iv) Explain in detail the functions and powers of the VRMC. Explain that the Panchayat has to delegate some of its powers to the VRMC. These include:
- assisting the community to plan for development of natural resources of the community including common land;
 - entering into an agreement with the HCFP to reserve specified areas of the common land for eco-development for the duration of the project model selected;
 - execute and manage the microprojects, receive membership fees and annual subscriptions from households in the village;
 - receive and utilise funds from HCFP and other sources;
 - enforce rules framed for protection of microprojects etc. (for details refer Attachment 1 and VRMC Management Training Manual).
- v) Ask the community to identify potential members of the institution. Emphasise that the members should be willing to work in a voluntary capacity for the resource management project of the village, willing to devote their time for the purpose, and have had proven honesty and experience in community service.
- vi) During the Final PA meeting, which shall be an extraordinary general meeting of the Gram Sabha, pass a resolution nominating the VRMC members and requesting the Panchayat to formally constitute the VRMC/Society and delegate its powers and responsibilities.
- vii) Soon after this meeting the Panchayat convenes a meeting to act on the resolution and passes its own resolution, formally constituting the VRMC, approving its byelaws and delegating its powers and responsibilities. The Panchayat sends a copy of this resolution to the Block Development and Panchayat Officer, and the DCF/DFO, Community Forestry through the SDO, Community Forestry (Attachment 1: Model Resolution).
- viii) On receiving the resolution, the DCF/DFO acknowledges receipt of the resolution and requests the Panchayat and VRMC to sign the tripartite agreement and open a Bank Account in the name of the VRMC.
- ix) After signing the tripartite agreement (see Attachment 2: Form for Tripartite Agreement) and opening the bank account, the VRMC collects membership fee from the village households. The VRMC may fix the rate of membership fee as per the paying capacity of the community. The membership fee is duly receipted and the amount deposited into the bank account.
- x) The DCF/DFO arranges training of VRMC members in Village Resource Management and Money Management.

Procedure for Opening and Operating VRMC Bank Account

- i) The VRMC passes a resolution authorising the opening of a Saving Bank Account with the nearest branch of a Scheduled Commercial/Cooperative/Regional Bank (Model Resolution for Opening of Bank Account, Attachment 3). The resolution has to specify the persons who can operate the account.
- ii) The authorised signatories are Chairman, Secretary, Cashier and SDO (CFP) concerned.
- iii) For operating withdrawals up to Rs. 1,000 signature of Chairman and Cashier or Secretary and Cashier shall be sufficient. However, for withdrawals above Rs. 1,000 the signature of SDO shall be required additionally.
- iv) All withdrawals from the account shall be within the limits of expenditure and purposes sanctioned by the VRMC executive body for every quarter.

Procedure for Obtaining Financial Contributions from the Project

- i) The funds that the project will make available to the VRMC/VRMS are:
 - a) Village Woodlot maintenance and management fund to be utilised by the VRMC after an establishment phase of 3 years for managing the village woodlot microproject and other plantations on common land;
 - b) incentives for survival of trees in the 2nd and 3rd years of establishment of the woodlot and farm forestry plantations (excluding poplar);
 - c) contributions for payment of honoraria to two Link Workers, one male and one female, during three years.
- ii) After at least 50% of the households have paid their membership fee, the VRMC requests the DCF/DFO to pay to it the seed money of Rs. 30,000 for the Resource Management Fund. DCF/DFO confirms from the bank passbook of the VRMC that membership fee has been collected from at least 50% of the households and releases the amount to the VRMC in the shape of an interest bearing term deposit/bond. On maturity of the term deposit, the proceeds will revert to the SB account of the VRMC to enable it meet the genuine management needs of the Village Woodlot microproject.
- iii) The survival bonus will be released to the VRMC's SB account under proper receipt on certification of survival percentage by the microproject monitoring

team, duly confirmed by project monitoring team.

Meetings

The VRMC will meet at least once in a month and at least 50% of the members should suffice for a quorum. The meetings will be chaired by the Chairperson, and in his/her absence, by the Vice-Chairperson. The following meetings are mandatory after the constitution of the VRMC:

- i) Pre-microplanning meeting of the Gram Sabha, in which the goals of the Village Resource Development plan are discussed and approved.
- ii) Microplan finalisation meeting of the Gram Sabha after the VRMC has prepared the Microplan document. During this meeting the general council considers the Microplan document and, if found suitable, gives its approval.
- iii) Pre-microproject formulation meeting (involving stakeholders of different microprojects, e.g. Women Self-Help Group in the case of income generating projects).
- iv) Post-microproject formulation meeting of the Gram Sabha for approving the microproject proposal document.
- v) Pre-implementation meeting of the Gram Sabha to approve the management plan prepared for each microproject.
- vi) Six-monthly review meetings (the Sawani and Hari meetings of the Gram Sabha).

For general council meeting, presence of at least one third of the members shall form the quorum.

Record Maintenance

The VRMC/VRMS shall maintain the following records:

1. Membership Register containing the details of the names of the households, number of members from each household (by gender), social group, and details of fee, subscription, donation etc. paid.
2. VRMC/VRMS executive meeting register, with dates of meeting, members present, members absent (with reasons), agenda and minutes/resolution.
3. Cash Book with daily entry of receipts, expenditure, cash in hand, cash at bank, balance carried forward etc.
4. Subsidiary Registers for Household Payment of Membership Fee and for Payment of Link Workers.
5. Receipt Book.
6. Annual Balance Sheet.
7. Village Microplan.
8. Microproject Proposals.
9. Microproject Record Book (“Log Book”), containing Request Profile Sheets, Input Tracking Sheets and Output/Benefit Tracking Sheets for microprojects under the various plantation models of the project.
10. Community Capability Tracking Sheet (for self-evaluation of the VRMC/S).

Sharing Information

- i) The VRMC/VRMS will share information with the village community in the meetings described above. If any member wants to pursue the records, this will be permitted on payment of Rs. 10/- per record per occasion.
- ii) The VRMC will share information with the Panchayat as per statutory requirements (usually at Hari and Savani meetings of the Gram Sabha).

- iii) VRMC will share information with the project field team on a weekly basis during the establishment phase (first three years of microproject implementation). This means that the field team will have access to the records so that they can build up the capacity of the VRMC to maintain proper records.
- iv) The VRMC will share information with the CFP Division and Monitoring Division in the form and frequency suggested in the MIS.

Funds of the VRMC/VRMS

Type/Source	How to mobilise	How to use
Membership fee	One time amount payable by each household; amount to be fixed by the community on the basis of land ownership/ economic status	Create a corpus
Voluntary contributions/donations	From any willing person/institution	Purpose specified by donor
Grants from Government	As per availability	Purpose specified by donor
Resource Management Fund of Rs. 30,000 by HCFP	Will be paid only to VRMCs with woodlots or common land sand dune plantations taken up. HCFP will pay the amount in the shape of an interest bearing fixed deposit after the VRMC has collected membership fee from at least 50% of the households	To meet resource management expenses after community woodlot microproject hand-over to the community. The amount will be kept in a fixed deposit account/bond with a financial institution for a period of 3 years
Contribution by HCFP for honorarium to Link Workers	HCFP will pay advance of the expense for each quarter; all advances, except the first, will be paid on submission of utilisation certificate for the preceding advance	Payment of honorarium to Link Worker
Woodlot survival bonus from HCFP @ Rs. 300/ha	HCFP will pay the amount on receipt of survival monitoring	For operation and maintenance expenses or for social

in 2 nd year & Rs. 400/ha in 3 rd year, for ≥80% survival	report from cluster & project monitoring team	infrastructure benefiting the entire community
Farm forestry (excl. poplar) survival bonus @ Rs. 2 per surviving tree in 2 nd year & Rs. 4 in 3 rd year	HCFP will pay the amount on receipt of survival monitoring report from cluster & project monitoring team	For payment to farmers concerned, either directly or through Tree Growers Association
From intermediate products like grass/seeds/fruit/leaf/dead wood etc from CPR developed under microproject	To be collected by VRMC from the users under proper receipt as per norms decided	For works benefiting the entire community

Selection of Village Link Workers

As explained in Section 3.3, two Link Workers are to be selected by the village community to work as links between the community and the HCFP and assist in different tasks specified during the microproject implementation stage. The Link Workers will be accountable to the VRMC/VRMS. They will assist the VRMC for three years and get a monthly honorarium of Rs. 600. HCFP will provide financial support to the VRMC to enable it to meet this expenditure for the initial three years. If the VRMC continues to avail the services of Link Workers after three years, it will defray the expenses from its own resources. Terms of reference of Link Workers are appended at Attachment 4.

Responsibilities

- Selection of VRMC members: Gram Sabha in the extra ordinary General Meeting of the Gram Sabha
- Formal letter constituting the VRMC: Village Panchayat
- Intimating VRMC constitution to BDPO, with a copy to DCF/DFO: Village Panchayat
- Convening VRMC meetings: Secretary of the VRMC
- Presiding over VRMC meetings: Chairperson of the VRMC
- Maintenance of cash and bank accounts: Cashier, in consultation with the VRMC
- Maintenance of minutes of meetings: Secretary

- Microplanning and microproject formulation: VRMC, with support from Village Cluster Team
- Implementation of microprojects: VRMC, with involvement of the village community and with the support of Forest Guard and SDO
- Monitoring and evaluation of microproject implementation: VRMC and its Monitoring Team with the support of project staff.

Specific responsibilities of Forest Guard:

- i) aid the community to select its VRMC members through consensus;
- ii) arrange training of the VRMC members in general management of the VRMC, money management, planning, monitoring and implementation;
- iii) use his good offices to ensure that meetings are convened at required intervals, minutes and records are maintained properly, finances are mobilised internally and from the project and microprojects are prepared and implemented efficiently;
- iv) use his good offices to ensure that the Village Monitoring Team functions effectively, and that microprojects are managed well;
- v) ensure that inputs from the project reach the village in time and are put to proper use.

Specific responsibilities of SDO:

- i) ensure that the VRMC constitution is promptly communicated to BDPO and his concurrence is promptly obtained;
- ii) give prompt intimation to DCF/DFO about constitution and quarterly reporting to DCF/DFO about its functioning;
- iii) ensure prompt flow of inputs and funds for implementation of VRMC microprojects subject to satisfactory fulfilment of conditions;
- iv) make quarterly visits to VRMCs and make verification of records to ensure their proper maintenance;

- v) arrange capacity building of VRMC members and village people in successful management of microprojects.

Attachment 1: Resolution to be passed by the Panchayat

This resolution, made this _____ day of _____ (month) of _____ year) by the Panchayat of _____ (village), hereinafter called the Panchayat, witnesses as follows:

1. That the Panchayat is aware that it is responsible for managing common lands vested in it and for promoting social and farm forestry, minor forest produce, fuel and fodder plantations in the Sabha area.
2. That it has received a report from the community on Participatory Assessment exercise, which shows that the community is desirous of inviting the Haryana Community Forestry Project (hereinafter called the Project) to initiate a Resource Management Project in the Sabha area.
3. That in pursuance of this desire, the Panchayat seeks the assistance of the Project in developing its community land as per the annexed schedule.
4. That the Panchayat will permit the Divisional Forest Officer _____(Forest Division) and his subordinates and collaborating institutions to survey and demarcate such land and set it apart for forestry purposes for a period equivalent to the rotation period of the microprojects to be prepared under the Project.
5. That the Panchayat appoints a subcommittee, named Village Resource Management Committee (VRMC), under section 22 (v) of the Haryana Panchayati Raj Act, 1994, for planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of forestry and other associated village development activities.
6. That the subcommittee shall consist of the following persons, as recommended in the PA report:

Sl.No.	Name and Address	Position	Occupation	Sex	Social Group
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					

7
8
9
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13

7. That the powers and responsibilities of the Resource Management Committee shall be the following:

(a) To organise the community to plan for the development of natural resources in the Panchayat area, including community land, degraded farm land, village ponds and tanks, village institutional land, other Govt. owned lands and river bank land;

(b) to survey and demarcate common land vested in the Panchayat under Punjab Common Land Act, 1961;

(c) to decide on the area that is to be brought under tree plantation under Community Forestry Project;

(d) to undertake village level planning, formulate microprojects and manage the microprojects which include forestry projects, as well as support of income generation and energy saving projects;

(e) to plant, protect and enrich tree plantations on common lands;

(f) to enter into an agreement with the Haryana Forest Department reserving specified areas of community land and public places for afforestation and eco-development activities for a period equivalent to the rotation period of microprojects to be prepared, the management of which shall be undertaken jointly with the Forest Department for the first three years and thereafter by the VRMC. The agreement shall also specify the management plan for the said period, arrangement for equitable sharing of benefits within the village community and reinvesting part of the benefits for future afforestation activities within the village;

(g) to accept financial support from the Forest Department;

- (h) to open a separate VRMC bank account to be jointly operated by the Chairperson, Secretary, Cashier and SDO. For withdrawals from the account up to Rs. 1,000 only any two of the authorised signatories need to sign, i.e. the Chairman and Cashier or Secretary and Cashier, but for withdrawals above Rs. 1,000, the SDO has to sign additionally;
- (i) to maintain separate books of accounts for the funds received from Haryana Forest Department under the Community Forestry Project, undertake internal audit thereof as well as facilitate external audit by the Project;
- (j) to supply the Panchayat with copies of plans, projects and accounts for presentation in its *Sawani* and *Hari* meetings;
- (k) to frame rules for managing and protecting areas planted under forests and levy fines from villagers violating such rules;
- (l) to collect membership fees, donations and other contributions from households of the village for managing and protecting planted areas;
- (m) to accept donations and other contributions from any other agency for augmenting resource management funds;
- (n) to harvest and distribute forest produce equitably as per the management plan prepared during microplanning process;
- (o) to receive Resource Management Fund from the Forest Department after framing rules for its utilisation and replenishment (Attachment 5: Rules for Utilising Resource Management Fund);
- (p) to implement, monitor and evaluate the various village development projects formulated during microplanning.

Attachment 2: Form for Tripartite Agreement

AGREEMENT BETWEEN PANCHAYAT, VILLAGE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE/SOCIETY AND THE HARYANA COMMUNITY FORESTRY PROJECT (HCFP)

FOR RAISING COMMUNITY WOODLOTS/ TREE GROVES/ SAND DUNE FIXING TREES ON VILLAGE PANCHAYAT LAND

This agreement made this day of year 2000 (two thousand) between the Divisional Forest Officer, _____ Division Haryana Community Forestry Project (on behalf of the Haryana Community Forestry Project, Government of Haryana) on the first part and _____ (Village) Panchayat of _____ Community Development Block of _____ District on the second part and the _____ (Village) Resources Management Committee/Society (hereinafter called VRMC/VRMS) on the third part, witnesses as follows:

1. That the VRMC/VRMS is authorised to execute any works concerning establishing and maintaining the Community Woodlot/Tree Groves/Sand Dune Fixation Microprojects on behalf of the _____ Panchayat, _____ Block, _____ District.
2. That the VRMC/VRMS and the Haryana Community Forestry Project confirm that the Panchayat has the absolute title to the land described in the attached schedule and map.
3. That specifically the Panchayat agrees to:
 - Release, within 15 days of signing this agreement, hectares of common land for Village Woodlot, hectares of common land for Tree Groves and hectares of common land for Sand Dune Fixation models as per the Microproject Proposals prepared by the VRMC/VRMS and the schedule and map of the area, herewith attached.
 - Cooperate with the VRMC/VRMS and the DCF/DFO in implementing the Resource Development Microplan of the village prepared by the VRMC/VRMS.
4. That the VRMC/VRMS shall specifically carry out the following:

- ❑ Implement the Microproject Proposals approved by the village community and by the DCF/DFO in every respect, subject to modifications that may be necessitated in future, and ratified by the DCF/DFO.
- ❑ Appoint a Community Monitoring Team of the VRMC/VRMS, to keep regular tracking of the implementation of the Microprojects.
- ❑ Mobilise resource management funds for the microprojects including membership fees, VRMC/VRMS management fund from HCFP and tree survival bonuses from the HCFP, and donations and grants from other sources.
- ❑ Open bank account for its moneys and keep proper accounts of the moneys and submit the accounts for audit by the HCFP.
- ❑ Make a fixed deposit of three years from the Resource Management Fund of Rs. 30,000 to be received from the DCF/DFO and use the money for genuine resource management needs after Microproject hand-over at the end of the establishment phase.
- ❑ Maintain and manage the plantations during and after the establishment phase of three years.
- ❑ Refrain from using the land for any other purposes than specified in the benefit sharing plan in the Microproject Proposal.
- ❑ Execute the forestry extension advice rendered by the forest department with regard to protection, maintenance, management and harvesting of the plantations.
- ❑ Allow landless labourers and marginal and small farmers to remove fruit, flowers, dead wood, leaf fodder and grass fodder for bona fide personal use, provided the DCF/DFO or the VRMC/VRMS may put periodic restrictions on such extractions in view of the health of the plantation.
- ❑ Undertake thinning as per the management plan contained in microproject proposals and allow poor households to carry headloads of the thinnings free of cost after recording in the logbook.
- ❑ Undertake final felling at the rotation age as per management plan, subject to the advice of the DCF/DFO in the best interest of ecological balance of the village. The VRMC/VRMS shall sell the produce after assessment of its value by DCF/DFO (HCFP). 30% of the proceeds will be deposited in the VRMC/VRMS fund for undertaking replanting of the same site and/or fresh planting of new sites. 70% of the proceeds will be allocated to the panchayat to undertake general development activities indicated in the village microplan.

5. That the DCF/DFO, on behalf of the Haryana Community Forestry Project, shall carry out the following:
 - ❑ Train the villagers, labourers and the VRMC/VRMS, including the community monitoring team, in techniques for raising and maintaining nurseries and plantations.
 - ❑ Raise the seedlings required for various plantation microprojects either in a permanent central nursery or in a temporary cluster nursery.
 - ❑ Contribute Rs. 30,000 to the VRMC/VRMS as Resource Management Fund, after at least 50% of the membership fee is collected by the VRMC/VRMS from the households in the village.
 - ❑ Undertake, jointly with the VRMC/VRMS, earthwork, planting, watering and other operations during the establishment phase of three years.
 - ❑ Monitor, along with the community monitoring team, the seedling survival rate and pay the seedling survival bonus for village woodlots to the VRMC/VRMS in the second and third year of planting out, as per rates fixed by HCFP.
 - ❑ Undertake periodic review of Microproject implementation to minimise factors that hinder the successful outcome of the Microproject.
 - ❑ When participatory monitoring and evaluation confirms that the community is fully capable of managing the Microprojects independently and establish conflict free benefit sharing arrangements, turn over the Microproject to the community through its VRMC/VRMS.
6. That the DCF/DFO (HCFP) shall continue to issue directions and render technical advice and assistance to the VRMC/VRMS regarding maintenance, management and protection of plantation throughout the rotation and such directions shall be binding on the VRMC/VRMS.
7. That if the VRMC/VRMS/Panchayat fails to carry out any of the directions issued by the DCF/DFO (HCFP) under this agreement or any of its obligations which it is bound to discharge, the DCF/DFO (HCFP) shall carry out at his discretion any or all the works regarding protection, maintenance and management of plantations at the cost of the VRMC/VRMS/Panchayat, provided a notice of 15 days is issued to the parties.
8. That Project Director, Haryana Community Forestry Project shall arbitrate all

disputes with regard to the operation of this agreement. His decision shall be binding on all the parties concerned.

9. In witness whereof, the three parties to this agreement have set and subscribed their hand seal on the dates hereinafter mentioned respectively.

Signed, sealed and delivered by the said parties on the _____ day of _____ (month), 200— (year).

DCF/DFO	Sarpanch	Chairperson
Haryana Comm. For. Proj.	Gram Panchayat	VRMC/VRMS
_____ Division	Village _____	Village _____
	Block _____	Block _____
	District _____	District _____

ANNEXURE 1: SCHEDULE OF LAND

Name of Panchayat	Block	Tehsil	District	Khasra & Murabba nos.

ANNEXURE 2: MAP OF PROPOSED PLANTATION SITES

Attachment 3: Model Resolution for Opening of Bank Account of VRMC/VRMS

Resolution No.:

Resolution passed at the meeting of the Village Resource Management Committee/Society held on..... (date).

Resolved that a Savings Bank Account of the VRMC/VRMS be opened with Branch of Bank. The persons who are authorised to operate the Account are:

<u>Name and Address</u>	<u>Designation</u>
1. Shri/Smt	Chairperson
2. Shri/Smt	Cashier
3. Shri/Smt	Secretary
4. Shri/Smt	SDO-HCFP, Subdivision, Haryana Forest Department

Further resolved that for withdrawals up to Rs. 1,000 the signature of the Chairperson and the Cashier or the Secretary and the Cashier will suffice and for withdrawals above Rs. 1,000 the signature of the SDO shall be required additionally.

Further resolved that a copy of this resolution be given to Branch of Bank for their record.

Signed

Chairperson Secretary Cashier Other members present

Seal

for Village Resource Management Committee/Society

Documents required for opening the Bank Account

1. Application with specimen signature of authorised signatories.
2. 3 Photographs of each authorised signatory.
3. Bye-laws and certificate of incorporation/formation.
4. Minimum cash deposit as required by the bank.

Attachment 4:

Terms of Reference

LINK WORKERS

Qualifications:

A minimum educational standard of Matriculation is expected.

Training:

In the first year of her/his induction in the project, s/he would be given theoretical and hands-on training related to Project Induction/ Role in the Project, Participatory Assessment, Microplanning & Microproject Formulation, Participatory Monitoring & Evaluation and Management of village level institutions.

Function and Area of Operation:

Each project village will be serviced by two Link Workers, one male and one female, hailing from the same village they are to work with. They will be the field level interfaces between the community and the project, forming a link between villagers and project staff. Their assignment is part-time for a period of three years.

Responsibilities:

- i) Assist the village level institution (VRMC, VRMS, Tree Growers' Association) in their work;**
- ii) Extend knowledge to the villagers in all matters related to natural resource development;
- iii) Participate in Microplanning and Microproject Formulation and take the lead in follow-up activities;

- iv) Assist in arranging village meetings and participate in all meetings of the village level institution;
- v) Assist the community in maintaining records;
- vi) Aid the community and the project in Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation;
- vii) Participate in local training activities and campaigns arranged by the project;
- viii) Alert the project on remedial action required whenever problems arise.

Attachment 5: Rules for Utilising Resource Management Fund

There is a project budget allocation to provide one-time financial assistance of Rs. 30,000 as HCFP's contribution to the Resource Management Fund of each VRMC/VRMS. Conditions for payment are that woodlots or sizeable areas of common land sand dune plantations are established in the village and that at least half of the village households have paid their VRMC/VRMS membership fee. The amount is given in the form of an interest bearing term deposit in a commercial bank for a term of three years. At the end of the term, the maturity amount will be transferred to the saving bank account of the VRMC and will become available for maintenance and upkeep of the Village Woodlot(s), common land sand dune plantations, tree groves and institutional land plantations.

The reason behind allowing VRMCs access to the Resource Management Fund only after three years is the fact that the project will for three years be meeting the costs of raising and maintaining the plantations, training, Link Workers, stationery for monitoring and record keeping etc and the VRMCs do not incur any costs on this account. Further, at the project turnover phase the VRMCs will be in need of funds for maintenance of common property resources as no further funding will be available from the project.

In effect, during the joint management phase of the initial three years of project implementation, the VRMCs will have to generate internal resources for meeting their overhead costs in the form of meeting costs, travel, office maintenance, additional stationery etc. Further, they will have to apply the principles of sound financial management to ensure that they have enough funds with them to manage their resource management microprojects from the fourth year onwards.

As it is very important for any self reliant organisation to generate internal funds, VRMCs/VRMSs should mobilise financial resources through membership fees, annual subscriptions, grants from other departments, donations etc. This should be emphasized during VRMC training programmes.

The following norms are being laid down for the use of the Resource Management Fund:

1. The funds may be used for the following purposes:
 - All operations related to maintenance of plantations on common land, including pruning;
 - Payment of Link Workers, if the VRMC feels that their continued services are required;

- Maintenance of the Chetna Kendra;
 - Any other expenditure related to the commons as approved by the VRMC executive body.
2. Any income from intermediate products from common land plantations (e.g. sale of grass, loppings, fruits, castor seeds, etc) will be ploughed back into the Resource Management Fund.
 3. Out of the profits from the first harvest and subsequent coppices, if any, from common land plantations, one third will, subject to approval of the Panchayat, be put into the Resource Management Fund of the VRMC and the rest be ploughed into the Panchayat's common fund, under proper intimation to the Panchayat, BDPO and the Divisional Forest Officer.
 4. Any withdrawal from the Resource Management Fund must be properly authorised by a resolution of the executive body of the VRMC.
 5. The joint signature of the Chairman and Cashier or Secretary and Cashier would be required for any withdrawal from the account, up to Rs. 1,000.
 6. Cash in hand should not exceed Rs. 1,000 on any given day unless authorised by the executive body in case of exigencies.
 7. At the end of each transaction day, all cash in hand should be counted, placed in the cash box and sealed by the Cashier in the presence of at least one member of the executive body authorised for the purpose.
 8. The accounts of the VRMC will be checked and verified by the VRMC executive body on a monthly basis.
 9. Half-yearly and annual accounts will be presented to the Gram Sabha in its Hari and Sawani meetings for its approval.

5. MICROPLANNING [Process Stage 5]

5.1 About the Chapter

This chapter describes the process for planning village resource development by the village community through its VRMC.

Microplanning in the context of community forestry interventions means *village-wide strategic planning for sustainable village resources management* by the village community. It focuses on preparing short-term plans (3-4 years) which fit in with the Microproject Establishment Phase under the HCFP.

During Participatory Assessment, the community has identified its main resources and the main problems concerning resources management. During microplanning, it classifies the problems, attempts to find out their root causes, sets its goals and decides what needs to be done to achieve these goals.

5.2 Aims of the Chapter

The chapter attempts to:

1. Explain the difference between microplan and microproject formulation.
2. Explain the key components of the microplan and how to prepare the microplans.
3. Explain the procedures for obtaining community approval of the microplan.
4. Explain how the microplan will be reviewed at the Division and Circle levels.
5. Explain how the microplan fits into the annual Circle Action Plan and the Annual Work Plan and Budget.

5.3 Difference between Microplan and Microproject Plan Formulation

A Plan is a document that lays down the broad goals and objectives for development in a particular sector. A Project, on the other hand, is a charter for action for meeting some or all of the objectives, with clear cut start and end dates, time and resource budgets, and listing of expected outputs, outcomes and impacts through indicators of achievement.

In the context of HCFP, a Microplan is defined as follows:

--

The village Microplan, in most cases covering an area ranging from 500 to 2000 ha, will include goals related to all village resources, including forest, soil, land, water, human habitat and the general environment. However, special emphasis will be placed on developing village forest systems on community lands and on private lands. For this, a list of proposed community forestry microprojects will be attached together with a brief description and justification of each microproject, a list of direct beneficiaries, and where possible a schedule of works and a preliminary budget (see Community Forestry Working Paper 4).

5.4 Steps in Microplanning

As mentioned in Chapter 3, Participatory Assessment ends by presenting the PA report in an extra-ordinary general meeting of the Gram Sabha. In this meeting it should also be explained that the VRMC/VRMS members and Link Workers, who have been selected during the meeting, will now proceed to prepare a “Strategic Village Resources Management Microplan” together with project staff.

The involvement of all HCFP field staff in a given village cluster of three or more villages is necessary in all steps in the Microplanning process. All exercises should be facilitated by the SDO with the assistance of the Forester and Forest Guards attached to the cluster. There will be between 20 and 30 Microplans per Sub-division during the course of the intervention by HCFP.

However, the Microplan is essentially the outcome of a participatory process, in which the villagers are the key participants. It follows that Microplanning, like PA, cannot be hurried with certain elements skipped over. It could be tempting for project staff, who know how to make a microplan, to prepare it on their own in just a few days, without time-consuming participation of the village community. Such shortcuts will not be accepted. **As the Microplan document is the basis for all project implementation, it becomes imperative that the village community is not only consulted, but is actively involved throughout in its preparation.**

The participatory microplanning process will take around two weeks to complete. Although individual planning tools may require only a couple of hours, it is in most

cases necessary to repeat them for different focus or interest groups (like men/women, farmers/landless, etc.). It is also important to find suitable times (preferably evenings), when a maximum number of villagers are able to attend, which means that not too many exercises can be squeezed into a single day.

The Microplanning process begins with a two-day training of all VRMC/VRMS members and Link Workers, conducted by the Training Division, during which all steps and planning tools are explained to them.

Step 1: Community Problem Analysis

The community problem analysis exercise has been described in Community Forestry Working Paper 4. The nature, cause and solution of each problem brought up will be analysed. The analysis will include problems that can be solved through:

- The village's own resources, including Panchayat resources.
- Assistance from other line departments, financial institutions, NGO etc.
- Support from the HCFP.

Step 2: Community Visioning

After making a thorough analysis of the nature, extent and causes of problems, the community goes on to set a vision for itself to solve these problems. The purpose is to look at the various options available. The two tools to be used in this exercise – the Community Options Matrix and Scoring and Ranking of Tree Species – are described in Community Forestry Working Paper 4.

Step 3: Community Goal Setting

In the light of the analysis of problems and the community visioning exercise, the community sets its own goals and strategies for solving its main resource management problems. Again refer to Working Paper 4 for the planning tool.

Step 4: Community SWOT Analysis

This tool identifies the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats within the particular village with regard to solving the problems previously identified. Again details of this planning tool are found in Community Forestry Working Paper 4.

Step 5: Village Resource Planning

This step is the preparation of the action plan for sustainable management of village resources with focus on forest resource systems on community, institutional and private lands. Various rapid planning tools for carrying this out are found in Community Forestry Working Paper 4.

Step 6: Preparing the Microplan Document

It is now time for the VRMC/VRMS, assisted by HCFP field staff (Foresters, Forest Guards and the SDO), to prepare the draft Microplan in Hindi for presentation to a final General Council Meeting of the village. A suggested outline for the Microplan document is given below:

SUGGESTED TABLE OF CONTENTS FOR THE MICROPLAN

1. Problem Analysis

- a) General Development Problems
- b) Resource Management Problems

2. Community SWOT Analysis

- a) General Development Problems
- b) Resource Management Problems

3. Goal and Objective Setting/ Community Options Matrix

4. Village Resource Development Plan

- a) Land Resources - Land Resources Development Plan
- b) General Plan for Human Resources Development (IGAs, energy, etc.)

LIST OF MICROPLAN ANNEXURES (Include Plantation Models as Applicable)

- I Community SWOT Analysis
- II Community Options Matrix
- III Time Scheduling of Resource Development Plan
(Activity Coverage Site Wise)
- IV Species Wise Summary of Trees for 5-Year Plan (based on Ranking)
- V General Plan - Community/ Human Resource Development

- VI General Plan - Other Community Resource Development
- VII Details of Community Land for Forestry under Village Woodlot Model (with Sketch Map showing Locations)
- VIII Details of Community Land for Forestry under Sand Dune Fixation Model (with Sketch Map showing Locations)
- IX Details of Sites/Community Land for Tree Groves (with Sketch Map showing Locations)
- X List of Farmers under Sand Dune Fixation Model (Private land), with details of Land and Tree Species and Sketch Map showing Locations
- XI List of Farmers under Multi-Species Farm Forestry Model, with details of Land and Tree Species
- XII List of Farmers under Poplar Plantation Model, with details of Land and Clones
- XIII List of Households willing to go for Kitchen Garden Development, with details of Tree Species/ Vegetable Seeds
- XIV List of Households interested in Income Generating Activities (IGA)
- XV List of Households interested in Energy Saving Devices
- XVI *List of Farmers willing to go for Grass Sowing***

Step 7: Approval of the Microplan by the VRMC General Council

The Microplan is presented to the General Council for their ratification, and once approved is signed by the VRMC/VRMS Chairperson & Secretary and the Forest Guard attached to the village. **It is important that a copy of the approved Microplan (in Hindi) is retained in the village by the VRMC.** A copy of the report should be made available to the Panchayat. Copies may also be given to the BDPO and the District Collector, so that action could be initiated in tackling the General Development Plan for the village.

Step 8: Submission of Microplan to Division and Circle Management

The SDO examines the Microplan as per the following check list:

- Is there a resource problem analysis?

- Is there a clear statement of village goals?
- Is there a non-forestry sector (general village development) plan for activities outside the scope of the Forestry Department, but which can be facilitated by the VRMC/VRMS and HCFP staff, e.g. human habitat (water and sanitation, health, pollution control etc.)?
- Is there a village Resource Development Plan for support by HCFP, focusing on village forest systems?
- Is there a list of desired community forestry microprojects together with a start and end date for implementation?
- Is there a detailed list of possible beneficiaries for each proposed community forestry microproject, with an indication of the social and economic groups from which they come, together with requested inputs (type and quantity)?
- Does the Microplan fit the objectives outlined in the Logical Framework Matrix of the Overall Work Plan for the project?

The DCF/DFO arranges for an English translation of the Microplan (including annexures I - VI, but not the other annexures), retains one copy and provides a copy each of both the Hindi and the English version to the CF and the PMU.

Step 9: Approval of Microprojects in order to initiate the preparation of detailed Microproject Proposals

Once the DCF/DFO and CF have approved the list of microprojects in the Microplan, a detailed Microproject Proposal (Action Plan) should be prepared for each microproject by the SDO together with the community (see Chapter 6). In order to monitor the outputs and impact of all the HCFP interventions, it is important that each type of microproject is properly planned through preparation of a Microproject Proposal. It must be remembered that each community forestry microproject has different beneficiaries, different time frames, different inputs, and different indicators of achievement, and deserves to be planned properly.

The aggregation of all village Microplans and their microprojects in a Circle forms the basis for the Circle Action Plan for the subsequent year. The Annual Work Plan, in turn, is based on the Circle Actions Plans. It is thus possible to make realistic Annual Work Plans based on the aggregate of all Microplans. However, to enable this it is imperative that all Microplans for newly selected villages are completed by the end of December each year.

Remember

- The microplan is a charter of action prepared by the community, for the community and of the community.
- It should always be prepared with the full participation of all sections of the people in the village.
- It should be available with the VRMC/VRMS and be accessible to all villagers for reference and discussion.
- It has a section for village development in general, which the community intends to pursue through its Panchayat with or without the help of various other departments of the government, and a resource management section, which will be supported by HCFP for the first three years and be carried out by the community thereafter.
- The goals and targets set forth in the document should reflect the actual village situation, so that they appear as realistically achievable objectives and not as desirable wishes.
- The responsibility for achievement of the targets set forth in the plan rests with the village community, its VRMC/VRMS and its Panchayat. However, project staff are responsible for providing agreed inputs in time and sufficient measure.
- Responsibilities for non-performance of departmental staff, which hampers implementation of the microplan, should be shared by the cluster, sub-divisional and divisional teams and not be restricted to any one section of staff specifically.
- Project staff should ensure that the village community through its VRMC/VRMS reviews the implementation of the plan during its monthly meetings, including the discharge of responsibilities assigned to itself and the department.

6. MICROPROJECT IDENTIFICATION, FORMULATION & APPROVAL [Process Stage 6]

6.1 Aims of the Chapter

This chapter describes the process of identification of strategic microprojects by the village community, specifically related to natural resource development as well as other components that can be financed by HCFP. The latter forms the core of HCFP interventions effected in a participatory manner. It also describes how to formulate microproject proposals and the process of scrutinising and approving the proposals by HCFP authorities.

This stage of the community development process requires that the village community, through its resource management institution, has formulated a community resources management Microplan for the village.

6.2 The HCFP Approach

The tasks that need to be performed at this stage are fivefold and are described below:

Step 1: Conducting Microproject Preparation Meeting

This is a consultative meeting between the members of the VRMC/VRMS executive body and as many villagers as possible, on the one hand, and the village cluster team on the other. The meeting will review the village resources management Microplan already prepared and decide on the components that can be implemented through financial and technical support from HCFP. The HCFP team will clarify any doubts that the people may still have. The meeting will deliberate on the microprojects that need to be selected for further fine-tuning into Microproject Proposals and also identify the potential target participants.

Step 2: Preparation of Microproject Proposal

For each selected microproject a proposal has to be prepared, comprising its justification, detailed implementation plan, monitoring indicators and monitoring arrangements. Each proposal will contain the following:

- A Microproject Rationale Matrix showing the justification of the project, what are its expected positive impact and potential negative effects and what will be the

implication of not pursuing the proposal.

- A Microproject Scheduling Matrix including its objectives, activities that will have to be undertaken, time schedule and apportioning of responsibilities to stakeholders involved.
- A Microproject Input Matrix, which identifies its resource needs, budget and responsible stakeholders.
- A Microproject Proposal Proforma, which contains, besides the above, socio-economic information of the primary stakeholders, key development indicators, marketing plan etc.
- A list of the direct beneficiaries of the microproject and expected sharing of Microproject outputs.

These microproject formulation tools are discussed in detail in Community Forestry Working Paper 4, which should serve as a reference material to project staff, VRMC/VRMS members and other stakeholders.

The microproject proposal making exercise should result in a document named e.g. **“Haripur Village Community Woodlot Microproject Proposal under Haryana Community Forestry Project”**. It is preferable to include all the proposals for the village in one document or one village folder, and the document/ folder can be revised every year as part of the village’s annual action plan.

Step 3: Approval of the Proposals by the Village Community

Vet the microproject proposal documents in a meeting of the General Council of the VRMC/VRMS. Encourage the village community to give its opinion and suggestions. The documents should be formally approved by the General Council through a resolution to the effect that the meeting approves the microproject proposals for implementation in the village with financial and technical support of the Forest Department and that the VRMC/S may forward the proposals to the DCF/DFO for approval and further action.

Step 4: Forwarding Proposal Document to DCF/DFO

Forward the microproject proposal documents, ratified by the village community, to the DCF/DFO. Attach with the documents **the resolution and a certificate to the**

effect that the microproject proposals have the mandate of the village community and that the primary stakeholders identified for each proposal are residents of the village and are genuinely interested in the microproject. Also enclose the prescribed Microproject Joint Agreement (MJA) duly signed by all parties thereto (Model MJA attached).

The DCF/DFO will, in turn, verify that the proposals relate to activities permissible under HCFP, conform to the approved Annual Work Plan and budget for the division and have no negative environmental or social effects, and promote the objectives of sustainable resource management. If no change is required, the DCF/DFO will forward the proposals to his Circle head. Otherwise, the DCF/DFO will inform the VRMC/VRMS within one week of receipt of the proposal. The VRMC/VRMS reformulates the proposal and sends it back to the DCF/DFO with suitable amendments.

Step 5: Review at Circle Level

The Conservator of Forests (Circle) causes review of the proposal document. If it is complete in all respects he accords his sanction within one week of the receipt of the proposal. Otherwise it is sent back to the VRMC/VRMS through the DCF/DFO for incorporating necessary modifications.

Step 6: Information Storage

- i) The Circle in charge places the approved microproject proposal document, along with the signed MJA, in his MIS and also informs PMU and its MIS;
- ii) The DCF/DFO places it in his MIS and notifies the District Coordination Committee;
- iii) The village cluster team incorporates the document in its Village File and notifies the BDPO;
- iv) The VRMC/VRMS incorporates the document in its MIS. A copy of the document should be made available to the Panchayat. The document should be accessible at all times to the villagers and the Microproject Monitoring Team.

Model Microproject Joint Agreement – An Example

Name of microproject: Rampur Village Farm Forestry Project

Parties to the agreement:

1st Party: 35 Farmers as per list, details and signatures hereunder

2nd Party: Rampur Village Resource Management Committee

3rd Party: Haryana Forest Department

This agreement, made on this ----- day of 2001 witnesses as follows:

1. That the 35 farmers who are party to this agreement on the 1st part are desirous of planting trees on their farms as per details below:

<u>Farmer name</u>	<u>Area of land to be planted</u>	<u>Number of trees by species</u>
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That the 1st party will make every effort to maintain and protect the trees planted under this agreement to its full rotation period;

That in case of damage to the plants due to wilful negligence, the 1st party will refund to the Forest Department the full cost of the seedlings and incidental costs;

That on reaching full rotation, the farmers would be free to dispose of the trees in the manner they deem fit;

That the 1st party will pay to the 2nd party 1% of the sale proceeds as service cost to enable it to undertake resource management activities for the common good of the village community.

2. That the 2nd party will keep track of the quality and quantity of the seedlings supplied, of the problems faced by the farmers in the proper maintenance and growth of the plantations and also intimate the Forest Department about the need for any technical support or advice required by the 1st party.
3. That the 3rd party will:

- provide quality planting material in the quantity specified in the schedule above at the onset of the monsoon/planting season;
- provide survival bonus in the 2nd and 3rd years as per norms approved by the department from time to time;
- provide technical advice to the farmers for proper maintenance and ensuring adequate growth of the trees.

In witness of the above the parties to the agreement have signed below:

1st Party:

Name and address

Signature/Thumb Impression

2nd Party (for and on behalf of Rampur VRMC):

Name and Designation

Signature

3rd Party (for and on behalf of the Forest Department):

Name and Designation (SDO)

Signature

7. FRAMEWORK FOR MICROPROJECT IMPLEMENTATION [Process Stage 7]

7.1 About the Chapter

This chapter describes the roles and responsibilities of HCFP and its development partners during the implementation of community-based and strategic microprojects.

Project implementation is the joint responsibility of HCFP staff, Village Resource Management Committees, direct beneficiaries of community forestry microprojects, and other development partners. The success of each microproject will depend on the ability of the various partners to implement an agreed plan. Close coordination and cooperation between parties is required during planning, implementation and progress monitoring to ensure that planned activities are followed and corrective action taken when necessary. Monitoring microproject progress is envisaged as an integral function of all concerned microproject parties. In cases where the community is considered mature and capable to implement the microproject with minimal support from the HCFP, the management model is Assisted Community Management rather than Joint Management (see Flowcharts at 7.5).

Physical and financial progress reporting is an essential ingredient of microproject implementation. It is closely related to the needs of the user. The degree of detail required and the frequency of reporting varies according to the level of management using the information. Detailed information concerning day to day operations is gathered and reported more frequently at the field level. Information required at the PMU level concerning HCF Project-wide achievements tend to be summarised and reported less frequently.

7.2 Aims of the Chapter

This chapter aims to:

1. Describe activities undertaken during the Pre-Implementation Meeting (PIM) between partners to the microproject agreement;
2. Describe the process of Community Microproject Monitoring Team (CMMT) formulation and team responsibilities;
3. Describe the roles of microproject partners at each stage of microproject implementation;
4. Describe how to conduct a Microproject Mid-Term Review (MMR) and the steps required to terminate or transfer a microproject to other interested parties; and

5. Describe the role and responsibilities of different parties in progress monitoring (field operations staff, the community, and the M&E Division staff)

7.3 The HCFP Project Approach

Step 1: Pre-Implementation Meeting

After the Microproject proposal is approved, a Pre-Implementation Meeting (PIM) is conducted, attended by the VRMC members, the direct beneficiaries of the microproject, staff from the Village Cluster Team/Sub-Division, other development partners, and Division and/or Circle technical staff. Microproject implementation strategies, roles and responsibilities and a timetable of activities are reviewed and agreed. A work schedule is drawn up in terms of:

- activities to be undertaken by week or month
- inputs required (materials, labour, training, consultancy services), their type and quality and acquisition sources;
- individuals, groups or development partners responsible for implementation

A Project Implementation Agreement (PIA) or a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that states the roles and responsibilities is agreed and signed by all concerned parties during the meeting. The MOA stipulates the general roles and responsibilities of all the development partners in the implementation of the Microproject. The PIA, on the other hand, provides a more detailed breakdown of specific roles and responsibilities of development partners, the contributions of each party, the activities to be undertaken by each participant, and the extent of collaboration.

In addition, for purposes of project termination or transfer to other interested parties (should the need arise), the MOA/PIA should include a clause that gives the project the right to reclaim inputs delivered through the project. See Step 4 below for more details.

Step 2: Formation of the Community Microproject Monitoring Team

This step consists in forming a Community Microproject Monitoring Team (CMMT). In the case of community-based microprojects it will consist of at least three elected members of the VRMC. In the case of farm forestry association or IGA group it will be composed of at least three beneficiaries of such association or group. The CMMT will be formed during the Microproject Plan Formulation Meeting or the Pre-Implementation Meeting.

Beneficiaries determine the composition of the CMM Team, identify the monitoring indicators and decide the frequency of monitoring. They schedule meetings between beneficiaries, CMMT, Village Cluster Team/Sub-division staff, and Division staff to discuss matters relating to project implementation.

CMMT members will undergo training on how to monitor their microproject and how to record outputs and benefits. The responsibility of the CMMT is to monitor the implementation of the microproject. The CMM Team also reports microproject progress to the Village Cluster Team/Sub-Division, Division staff, VRMC and other development partners.

Note: No community-based Microproject may be implemented without the formation of a CMMT to monitor the Microproject.

Step 3: Implementation of the Microproject Plan

The next step consists of the following:

- procurement of materials and inputs
- stock control
- technical assistance
- training
- mobilisation of counterpart labour and resources to implement the project
- monitoring and recording the microproject progress by the CMM Team.

Preparation for release of funds against budget

Once the microproject is approved, the project is in a position to release funds against the detailed budget for that microproject.

Notes:

1. Expenditure can only be made against an approved Microproject.
2. Expenditure against an approved Microproject can be authorised only if it is in accordance with the scope and nature of the development assistance as specified in the Microproject proposal sheet; it is in accordance with the budget specified in the Microproject; all supporting documentation has been prepared and approved.

3. Any change in the HCFP commitment value that exceeds 10% must be authorised by the PMU.

Procurement of materials, inputs and services

To procure materials and inputs or services itemised in the approved Microproject detailed budget, the field staff will follow the Government rules and regulations.

VRMCs and other beneficiary groups who manage revolving funds for this purpose will follow their own regulations

Stock control

An inventory of materials and equipment (Form -7 and Form -16) must be kept by those involved in procurement.

Technical assistance

Before microproject implementation gains momentum, technical training will be conducted with the project participants to orient them towards the tasks and activities to be carried out, and to provide them with the technical skills required to adequately implement the microproject. The type and timing of the training will vary depending on the type of project being implemented and its schedule of activities.

Training for specific skills or activities is identified in the approved Microproject Proposal and should be conducted when planned.

Technical assistance can also be provided by the Village Cluster Team members, as well as staff of Sub-Divisions, Divisions and Circles, if it is requested by the beneficiaries. Special technical assistance may be provided for specific microprojects (e.g. small business training for IGA) through direct support from the PMU.

Mobilisation of counterpart labour and resources to implement the project

Once inputs and materials have been procured, delivered and accepted at the microproject site and the training has been conducted, the onus of implementing the microproject is placed on the beneficiaries in the case of assisted management of microprojects. In the case of joint management of microprojects, the HCFP have a

partnership role in making sure the microproject succeeds.

It is the role of the CMMT to organise and manage the contribution of the counterpart labour and delivery of local resources. In the case of rural infrastructure projects (such as Chetna Kendra), counterpart labour may be used to undertake the construction work with some materials being supplied by HCFP (e.g. cement, bricks, steel rods, timber), and other materials such as sand and gravel, for example, may be sourced by the community.

In the case of microprojects based on common property resources available from common land, it is the role of the VRMC and the appointed CMMT to ensure that the community contributes the required common land, a sound community management team and other local resources for implementing microprojects such as village woodlots, sand dune fixation, vegetative stabilisation of river banks or tree groves. The HCFP will provide funds for plantation labour, seedlings, and essential other inputs, including seedling survival bonuses and seed money for a microproject maintenance fund for the post-establishment phase.

In the case of microprojects based on individual families formed together into an association or a self-help group, the beneficiaries will contribute their own labour and other local resources necessary for implementing microprojects (e.g. farm forestry or other income generating activities) with the HCFP providing: tree seedlings, survival bonuses or seed money for IGA through the CMMT and the VRMC Resource Management Fund

Notes:

1. It is the responsibility of the CMMT to ensure that the community counterpart resources, as agreed in the MOA and PIA, are contributed in full.
2. It is the responsibility of the Village Cluster Teams and the Sub-Divisional Technical staff to ensure that inputs and materials provided by the HCF Project are used in accordance with the approved proposal. Random internal audits should be conducted by the Division Finance staff to check that materials and supplies intended for beneficiaries arrived in good order and are used according to the Microproject plan

Monitoring and recording of microproject progress by the CMMT

Training of the VRMC (for managing and monitoring microprojects) in simple book keeping is undertaken before the full phase of implementation. The VRMC and CMMT are provided with appropriate record books. Records maintained provide the HCF Project staff with the main sources of progress monitoring and evaluation information and include:

- An inventory of materials and inputs received from HCFP and other development partners. All acknowledged slips or receipts must be filed and records regularly maintained concerning the use of materials and the quantity kept in store.
- A record kept of all counterpart contribution including labour provided by individual households and local materials
- A record of summarised data that can be used to measure microproject progress: Physical Progress Indicators, Project Impact Indicators, other self-selected indicators (by Division staff or the community). Examples include: area of village wood-lots planted, number of improved cooking stoves introduced, number of tonnes of grass fodder collected in third year of woodlot establishment. This information must be recorded to assist with project monitoring and evaluation. For farm forestry, kitchen gardens and IGA where microprojects are individually owned, each beneficiary is responsible for maintaining her/his records. The CMMT for that microproject then gathers and records data from all the beneficiaries, in some cases assisted by the Village Link Workers.
- A record is kept of activities and transactions in the VRMC Resource Maintenance Fund or any revolving schemes developed by the VRMC.

Step 4: Conducting a Microproject Mid-Term Review (MMR)

A MMR can be arranged during project implementation. The timing of the review may be decided during the PIM, but can be organised at the request of the beneficiaries or the Village Cluster Team. Its purpose is to:

- review whether the microproject is addressing the goals identified in the Community Resources Microplan;
- assess whether the microproject is being implemented according to the Microproject plan;
- address any serious problems arising during implementation.

The review provides an opportunity for the beneficiaries to identify whether there is a need for a follow up Microproject to strengthen the microproject, for example,

additional training may be needed or the implementation of a complementary microproject. Where serious problems exist which cannot be remedied (e.g. poor community commitment, serious conflicts over common lands, dissolved or ineffective CMMT or VRMC, missing equipment or stocks, destruction of plantations by miscreants or cattle herders) the HCFP together with the beneficiaries can use the MMR to decide if the microproject should be terminated or transferred.

Steps required to terminate or transfer a microproject are described below:

Microproject Termination

1. Carry out a Microproject Mid-Term Review. If this decides that a microproject has irretrievably failed, the causes should be stated.
2. During a special meeting with the beneficiaries, draft an agreement duly signed with the beneficiaries to terminate the microproject
3. Acquire approval from the Circle CF and the HCF Project Director to terminate the microproject.
4. Serve a formal notice on the beneficiaries.
5. Remove from site all moveable HCF Project assets.
6. Submit a status report to the Circle and PMU offices. Attach the report to the microproject proposal (or any new proposal that may transfer the project to other interested beneficiaries) including all relevant details.

Step 5: Monitoring Microproject Physical and Financial Progress

Financial monitoring can be defined as tracking the disbursement and expenditure of funds allocated for the planned Microproject activities.

Expenditure on a microproject are recorded and monitored by the designated Finance Section headed by Superintendents and Deputy Superintendents at Division, Circle and PMU levels, using account codes for expenditure and village. Information recorded on the Financial Database (FIND) for each microproject must be updated when the expenditure against a microproject occurs. A computerised accounts system enables up-to-date tracking of each microproject by the use of cost and village codes.

Physical progress monitoring can be defined as “monitoring the delivery of inputs, materials, training and other services and checking the progress of activities to implement the microproject against the Microproject Plan”.

What is monitored and reported concerning the physical progress of a microproject is related to the information needed by the users. Report users, report types and report uses are summarised below:

Table 7.1 Report users, report types and report uses

Report User	Report Type	Report Uses
Sub-Division & Division Staff	<u>Microproject Activity Tracking Reports</u> prepared by the Microproject Monitoring Teams, Village Cluster Teams and Sub-Division and Division technical staff	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reports written based on simple matrix format (may be computerised) 2. Close relationship to weekly/monthly work plans 3. Information requires urgent decision making
Circle and PMU staff	<u>Internal Reports</u> prepared by the Circle MIS or the M&E Division at the PMU; and by the Circle and PMU Finance Sections	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reports use summarised or aggregated computer data 2. Information is used for short term management decisions, planning and policy making 3. Comparison between planned and actual activities and HCFP progress against the overall Logframe
PSC and EU Delegation	External Reports prepared by the M&E Division and Finance Section at PMU	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reports are summarised and or aggregated computer data 2. Reports are narrative in nature, summarising HCFP results and current HCF Project status 3. Related to Annual Work and Financing Plans and the overall Project Logframe

Microproject activity tracking

Tracking activities for each microproject includes informal and formal reporting:

1. Informal verbal reporting includes:

- verbal reporting on day-to-day management activities through **regular staff meetings** of Sub-Division and Division staff;
- **monthly site meetings** in specific CD Blocks can be arranged to discuss microprojects in village clusters attended by Circle Management staff and the Block Development Officer (BDO) together with the Village Cluster Team, Link Workers and other Division staff;
- **monthly staff meetings** can be held at Circle Offices in rotation in order to coordinate microproject implementation and assess general HCF Project issues arising, and attended by Sub-Division, Division, Circle and PMU management staff. These meetings can assess: difficulties encountered, actions needed, any revisions to budgets, field accomplishments against planned targets.

From this information, Circle management can prioritise issues requiring immediate action and highlight successes and constraints.

2. Formal written reports

Village Cluster Teams (comprising Forester, Forest Guard, Link Workers and CMMT members) are responsible for sending progress reports to the Division Office through the Division's Management Information System (MIS), documenting physical progress made on all community based microprojects under their management.

The two Circle Offices (Field Operations) are responsible for filing written monthly reports through the Circle MIS, concerning progress with strategic microprojects (e.g. office buildings, improved central nurseries, central poplar clonal nurseries and cluster nurseries if managed only by the HCFP staff).

The one Circle Office for (IT&C and M&E) should file written monthly reports concerning their development activities that contribute to the success of the project, including training, staff deployment, extension leaflets prepared, publicity campaigns, studies carried out.

The types of information reported will include:

- a narrative of physical progress made during the month and any specific results
- a summary of the community or other development partner contribution (financial or in kind) to the microproject. HCFP financial contribution is recorded directly by the HCFP Finance Sections.
- the percentage of physical accomplishment as determined by the project milestones detailed in the Microproject Proposal Form
- any changes in the actual number of project beneficiaries or the Physical Progress Indicators for the microproject (e.g. number of seedlings delivered, number of hectares planted etc.).

The Circle MIS is responsible for using these reports to update the Microproject Database for each on-going microproject (both community-based and strategic), and for preparing location maps of the target villages and microprojects in each Division.

Once the Microproject Database is fully updated and financial data are downloaded from the Financial Database, the Circle Office sends Circle data on diskette to the M&E Division at the PMU, where the central Microproject Database (part of the Community Forestry Information System) is updated.

Internal progress reports can be generated from data recorded on the Microproject Database. The database can be used to produce regular physical and financial progress reports on microprojects for use by the PMU. Reports can be generated to show:

- project implementation and financial expenditure
- planning activities and coordination of staff and HCFP resources
- progress against Annual Work Plans and the HCF Project Logframe

External progress reports are required on a half-yearly basis for the Project Steering Committee, the EU Delegation and the Haryana Forestry Department. The formats and frequency of reporting differ depending on the report user. All annual work plans, half-year and annual reports submitted to the EU Delegation should follow formats advocated in the Project Cycle Manual as produced by the EU in Brussels. The format of other reports generated depends on the needs of the user.

The M&E Division is responsible for producing external reports using data summarised from the central Microproject Database and the qualitative reports sent

by the Circle Offices.

Deadlines for producing and submitting reports are as follows:

Table 7.2 Deadlines for submission of internal and external reports

Written Report	Deadline
<p><i>Internal Reports</i></p> <p>Sub-division Report to Division MIS From Division Finance Section to Division MIS From Division MIS to Circle MIS From Circle MIS to M&E Division at PMU From Circle Finance Section to PMU Finance Section IT&C Report to M&E Division at PMU Establishment Section to M&E Division at PMU</p>	<p>Last Friday of each month 5th of the succeeding month 7th of succeeding month 9th of succeeding month 9th of succeeding month 9th of succeeding month 9th of succeeding month</p>
<p><i>External Reports</i></p> <p>Monthly highlights to PCCF at HFD (HFD format) Quarterly accomplishment report (GoH format) Half year report (EU format) Annual progress report (EU format) Annual public report (HCFP format)</p>	<p>One week after the end of the month 3rd week after preceding quarter 3rd week of October 2nd week of May of the following year 1st week of June of the following year</p>

7.4 Roles and Responsibilities of Key Persons in Microproject Implementation

Key Persons	Microproject Preparation	Microproject Implementation	Microproject Progress Tracking
Community (VRMC or User Group in some cases)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure that the MOA/PIA is followed in full To ensure that any land needed for microproject implementation is available on time To appoint Microproject Monitoring teams for each Microproject To provide a custodian to receive, record and inspect all materials supplied by the project and used by the beneficiaries in implementing the Microproject 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure that the community counterpart resources (labour, materials) are contributed in full To advise the community forestry Team regarding the quality and quantity of inputs to be provided For each microproject. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure that Community Microproject Monitoring Teams (CMMT) collect microproject progress data regularly To ensure that a Community Information System is established under the VRMC where community records are kept in Village Files
Sub-division technical staff (includes village Link Workers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To assist the community in drawing up the MOA or PIA and other planning activities To assist in the formulation and training of the CMMT To assist in planning microproject implementation scheduling in each village cluster during PIM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide technical assistance and training to beneficiaries when required To raise requests for materials and supplies and to ensure that inputs and materials provided by the HCFP arrive in good order and are used in accordance with the approved Microproject Proposal To provide a resident Forest Guard in each village to provide the community with community forestry extension, support to the running of the VRMC etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To prepare monthly Microproject Tracking Sheets for all microprojects under their jurisdiction To prepare Quarterly Progress Reports which summarise information from all microprojects in their area to the Division management staff through the Division MIS To inform the Division technical staff and Division management staff if any of the microprojects needs changes in the scope or nature of assistance to be provided or in the budget commitment value
Development partners (in case of certain Income Generating microprojects)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To assist in planning the implementation schedules of the of the microproject, especially in the case of IGA projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide their counterpart as agreed in the MOA or PIA to implement the project e.g. training, technical consultancy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To prepare monthly Microproject Tracking Sheets for all microprojects under their jurisdiction for submission to the SDO
Division technical staff (DCF/DFO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure that local ancillary personnel for microprojects are covered by the appropriate contract for services and are in accordance with the microproject budget (e.g. local trainers, Link Workers, local enumerators for participatory monitoring) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure that the Microprojects are implemented in accordance with the Microproject Proposal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure that data from SDO monthly progress reports are received on time and entered into the Division MIS To ensure that the CF is informed when there is a change in other development partners' contributions
Division financial staff (Superintendent)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure that funds are available for each Microproject on time, and are accessible when needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure that all payments are in accordance with the finance and accounting procedures and are supported by the relevant documentation To record the actual expenditure and inform the Circle management staff when any payment would exceed the commitment value To procure the materials & services required for individual microprojects in accordance with the procurement and stores guidelines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To produce a monthly report showing the financial position of each individual microproject (both community-based and strategic) To conduct sample internal audits on the use of materials delivered to sites for microprojects To ensure that no expenditure is authorised in excess of the approved Microproject commitment value

7.4 Roles and Responsibilities of Key Persons in Microproject Implementation [continued]

Key Persons	Microproject Preparation	Microproject Implementation	Microproject Progress Tracking
Circle staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To request the approval of the Project Director for any community desired changes in the scope and nature of Microprojects after Microplanning • To approve any increase in the HCFP contribution to a Microproject by up to 10% of the approved HCFP commitment and to forward any requests for increases in excess of 10% to the Project Director • To ensure that all support documentation is prepared and approved according to project procedures • To ensure that all payments are in accordance with project procedures as supported by relevant documentation and guidelines 		
M&E Sub-division	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To train VRMC members and each CMM Team in participatory monitoring and evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To make regular spot checks to Microprojects to assess progress • To make regular spot checks to VRMC to assess progress in community capability to manage resources sustainably • To collect data related to project input, result and impact indicators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To compile Microproject Tracking Sheets for all microprojects in their village clusters on a regular basis, and submit summaries/extracts from the same to M&E Division MIS staff • To compile VRMC Tracking Sheets in their village clusters on a regular basis, and submit same to M&E Division MIS staff
M&E Division MIS			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To enter relevant monitoring data into the main MIS/GIS, analyse data and prepare summary assessments of progress
PMU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide guidance to Circle and Division Heads as to the overall direction and policies of HCFP and how these might affect Microprojects • To approve all proposals for changes in the scope and design of Microprojects and other community forestry development activities (e.g. studies, consultancies) • To approve any increase of the HCFP contribution to a Microproject over 10% of the HCFP commitment 		

Roles and Responsibilities of Key Stakeholders in Microproject Implementation

The role of the Beneficiaries (VRMC/VRMS or Self-Help Group)

- To provide a custodian to receive, record and inspect all materials supplied by the project and used by the beneficiaries in implementing the Microproject
- To ensure that the community counterpart resources are contributed in full
- To ensure that the MOA/PIA is followed in full

The role of the Village Cluster Teams (Forest Guards x 3; Link Workers x 6)

- To assist the community in drawing up the MOA or PIA and planning activities
- To ensure that the inputs and materials provided by the project arrive in good order and are used in accordance with the approved proposal
- To prepare monthly progress reports for each individual microproject for submission to the Division management staff through the Division MIS
- To inform the Division technical staff and Division management staff if the microproject needs changes in the scope or nature of assistance to be provided or in the commitment value
- To provide technical assistance and training to beneficiaries when required

The role of the Sub-Division Technical Staff (SDO; Deputy Ranger; Forester x 2; Forest Guard-Training x 2)

- To assist in the formulation and training of the CMMT
- To assist the Village Cluster Teams in planning microproject activities during PIM
- To raise requests for materials and supplies and to ensure that inputs and materials provided by the project arrive in good order and are used in accordance with the approved Microproject Proposal
- To prepare monthly progress reports for each individual microprojects for submission to the Division management through the Division MIS
- To inform the Division management when the microproject needs changes in the scope or nature of assistance and/or the commitment value
- To provide technical assistance and training to the beneficiaries and Village Cluster Team when required

The role of the Division Staff (DCF; Data Entry Operator; Deputy Superintendent)

- To ensure that data from monthly progress reports are received on time and entered

into the Division MIS

- To ensure that all payments are in accordance with the finance and accounting procedures and are supported by the relevant documentation
- To record the actual expenditure and inform the Circle management staff when any payment would exceed the commitment value
- To produce a monthly report showing the financial position of each individual microproject (both community-based and strategic)
- To procure the materials and services required for individual microprojects in accordance with the project procurement and stores guidelines
- To ensure that ancillary personnel, local consultants and local trainers for microprojects are covered by the appropriate contract for services and are in accordance with the microproject budget
- To conduct sample internal audits on the use of materials delivered to sites for microprojects

The role of the Circle Staff (CF; Superintendent; Deputy Superintendent; Draftsman; Assistant Land Registrar; Surveyor)

- To ensure that the Microprojects are implemented in accordance with the Microproject Proposal
- To ensure that the CF is informed when there is a change in other development partners contributions
- To request the approval of the Project Director for changes in the scope and nature of project assistance
- To approve any increase in the HCFP contribution to a Microproject by up to 10% of the approved HCFP commitment and to forward any requests for increases in excess of 10% to the Project Director
- To ensure that all support documentation is prepared and approved according to project procedures. This means that:
 - ancillary contractual staff, local consultants and trainers for microprojects may only be approved through an approved contract of service
 - goods may only be procured through an approved purchase order
 - services may only be rendered through an approved services contract
 - construction may only be undertaken through an approved works order
- To ensure that all payments are in accordance with project procedures as supported by relevant documentation and guidelines
- To ensure that all payments are in accordance with the approved Microproject Proposal
- To ensure that no expenditure is authorised in excess of the approved Microproject

commitment value

- To ensure that physical and financial completion reports are carried out when HCFP's planning contribution to the establishment phase of a Microproject is finished

The role of the Project Director and the PMU

- To provide guidance to Circle CF, Division DCF and other Section Heads as to the overall direction and policies of HCFP and how these might be translated into Microprojects
- To approve all proposals for changes in the scope and nature of work of Microprojects and other community forestry development activities (e.g. studies, consultancies) that may be suggested by Circle and Division management and other sections
- To approve any increase of the HCFP contribution to a Microproject over 10% of the HCFP commitment
- To have monthly review meetings with CFs and DCF/DFOs.

The role of Other Development Partners

- To assist in the formulation of Microproject Proposals
- To provide their counterpart as agreed in the MOA or PIA to implement the project
- To ensure that the process of community forestry development is sustained after project completion

8. FRAMEWORK FOR COMPLETION OF MICROPROJECT ESTABLISHMENT PHASE

8.1 About the Chapter

This section describes the procedure to be followed by the HCFP staff and other development partners to complete the establishment phase of Microprojects. Project completion is a significant milestone in the Microproject cycle, since the Microproject is turned over to the various stakeholders for them to operate, maintain and share benefits, by and large unassisted by the HCFP. It is conducted when the agreed contribution of HCFP and any other development partners has been fulfilled.

The Microproject has been completed both financially and physically up to establishment of the Microproject, and the next phase of maintenance and benefit sharing is the sole responsibility of the community. When all planned inputs for the establishment phase have been delivered as agreed and no further expense is envisaged by HCFP, the Microproject can be completed financially through closing the project account. The project is physically completed through carrying out a Microproject review, the timing of which will depend on the type of microproject. A completion report documents findings and lessons learned during the establishment phase. It also provides feedback to the various levels of HCFP management.

After completion of the establishment phase, the concerned community stakeholders will sign a certificate of transfer. This may be the VRMC/VRMS in the case of Microprojects based on community resources, or user groups/individuals in the case of Microprojects based on private resources.

8.2 Aims of the Chapter

The aims of the chapter are:

1. To describe how to physically complete a Microproject at the end of the establishment phase.
2. To describe how to complete a Microproject financially and close the project account.
3. To describe the process of turnover of the Microproject to the concerned community stakeholders.

8.3 HCFP Approach

Step 1: Microproject Physical Completion

A review is conducted to physically complete every Microproject. The timing of the review will depend on the type of Microproject and the planned implementation schedule detailed in the Microproject Proposal. Some Microprojects may be physically complete when the structure is completed (e.g. a Chetna Kendra). Others may be complete when the survival of planted tree seedlings has been assured (e.g.

village woodlots, sand dune fixation areas and farm forestry plantations) or when all means of production are in place for rural resource-based income generating activities.

Close monitoring of Microproject Milestones detailed in the work plan and timetable in the Microproject Proposal will give an indication of when the Microproject can be completed. The final activity in every Microproject is the carrying out of a physical completion review. The project is completed when the pre-defined penultimate milestone has been achieved. The concerned community stakeholders or individual user groups, the SDO in charge of village cluster forestry extension teams and the Division technical staff will confirm completion of the community based Microprojects on site.

The community Microproject review is undertaken through the conduct of a group discussion involving concerned stakeholders. It assesses whether the Microproject objectives, implementation plan and activities have been achieved. The output from the process is a Microproject physical completion report, which is prepared by the concerned SDO and the Village Cluster Forestry Extension staff. It is noted by a representative of the stakeholders, and reviewed by the DCF/DFO in charge of the concerned Division, and approved by the CF at the Circle level. For community Microproject reviews, completion reports are prepared by the DCF/DFO of the concerned Division, concurred by the CF at Circle level, and approved by the PD at the PMU.

Physical completion reports are consolidated at the M&E Sub-division Offices, and extracts are stored in the MIS at the M&E Division attached to the PMU, in order to provide appropriate feedback to the PMU for consideration in the process of future Microproject approvals.

Signed copies of the document are kept in the Village file, the Sub-Division file, the Division MIS file, the Circle MIS file, the M&E Sub-division MIS file. The original copy is placed in the M&E Division MIS file at the PMU.

Step 2: Financial Completion and Closing of Microproject Accounts

Microproject accounts are closed when all the required inputs, materials and services have been procured and provided by HCFP to the beneficiaries, including any lump sum grants to community resources revolving funds.

The concerned field technical staff and the Division's Deputy Superintendent prepare the financial completion report, which is reviewed by the DCF/DFO in charge of the concerned Division, and approved by the Superintendent and CF at Circle level. The report details the budget and actual expenditures of HCFP, the Community and any other development partners.

Signed copies are kept in the Village file, the Sub-division file, the Division MIS file and the Division Finance file. The original copy is placed in the M&E Division file at the PMU.

Timing of physical and financial completion:

In most cases Microproject financial and physical completion activities are undertaken at the same time. However, physical completion may precede financial completion and vice-versa.

Step 3: Microproject Turnover

Turnover of the Microproject to the community is undertaken after the Microproject has been physically and financially completed. Any expenditures in the subsequent maintenance and benefit sharing phase of the Microproject will be the responsibility of the concerned community stakeholders, although the plan may have envisaged the establishment of a resource management or maintenance fund during the establishment phase with contributions from the HCFP.

A Certificate of Transfer Acceptance is prepared by the concerned Division staff and is signed by representatives of the community (VRMC/VRMS officials) in the case of community resource-based Microprojects; by representatives of the user group in the case of Microprojects based on private resources (e.g. poplar growers group or multi-species farm forestry group).

8.4 Roles and Responsibilities of Key Persons in Microproject Completion

Key Persons	MP Physical Completion	MP Financial Completion	Turn-over to Community
Community (VRMC or User Group in some cases)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in Microproject Review Receive a copy of the MP Physical Completion Report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receive copy of MP Financial Completion Report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sign Certificate of Transfer Acceptance indicating that community will take over full responsibility for future operation and maintenance and ensure equitable benefit sharing
Sub-Division technical staff (includes village Link Workers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in Microproject Review Prepare Physical Completion Report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep a copy of approved MP Financial Completion Report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in Microproject turn-over
Development partners (in case of certain Income Generating microprojects)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in Microproject Review & keep copy of Physical Completion Report 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend Microproject turn-over
Division technical staff (DCF/DFO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review Microproject Completion Report Up-date Division's Microproject database 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare the MP Financial Completion report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepares the Certificate of Transfer Acceptance
Division financial staff (Superintendent)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Together with concerned technical staff, prepare MP Financial Completion Report Up-date the Finance database 	
Circle staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approves MP Physical Completion Report Up-dates Circle MIS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approves MP Financial Completion Report Up-dates Circle MIS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attends Microproject turn-over on an ad hoc basis to maintain good public relations in all CD Blocks
M&E Sub-division	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participates in Microproject Review Reviews and Submits MP Physical Completion Report to M&E Division at PMU Up-dates Microproject database 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receives and submits the approved original copy of the MP Financial Completion Report to M&E Division at PMU Up-dates Microproject database 	
M&E Division MIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receives the approved original copy of the MP Physical Completion report Up-dates the MIS at the PMU Analyses data gathered from MP Physical Completion Reports, and provides feedback to PMU and Circle staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receives the approved original copy of the MP Financial Completion Report Up-dates the MIS at PMU (including links with the Finance database) 	
PMU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adjusts policy and planning based on feedback from analysis of Physical Completion Reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adjusts policy and planning based on feedback from analysis of Physical Completion Reports 	

9. POST MICROPROJECT COMPLETION

9.1 About the Chapter

This chapter concerns the roles and responsibilities of HCFP and any development partners (e.g. VRMC, VRMS) after each Microproject has been physically and financially completed and turned over to the beneficiaries.

Although the Microproject has been turned over, the obligation of HCFP has not finished. The HCFP must continue to monitor progress through regular contact with the VRMC/VRMS et al and the Microproject beneficiaries, and provide technical assistance when required.

Community Forestry Microprojects may fail to be sustained after completion if project staff pay more attention to implementation of new Microprojects in preference to consolidating existing completed Microprojects. The village cluster approach means that Foresters, Forest Guards and Link Workers will always be in close contact with each village throughout the project period of nine years.

A Microproject evaluation is carried out after a sufficient time has transpired after the physical and financial completion of the Microproject.

After the Microproject evaluation, Microproject outputs are tracked through the use of pre-defined Project-wide Impact Indicators and Division or Community selected Impact Indicators. Data collected will assist the community and the HCFP in assessing the degree of impact of each Microproject. HCFP can assess the progress in achieving the Logframe targets through the aggregation of data collected for selected Objectively Verifiable Indicators (OVI).

Subject to specific criteria, a Community Capability Assessment (CCA) is conducted to assess whether the community feels it is sufficiently capable or mature enough to implement its own Village Resources Management Microplan and new Microprojects without the assistance of HCFP. This will be through a workshop that will allow a post-evaluation of each Microproject already implemented in the community, as well as identification of other community needs that should be addressed by HCFP and other development partners.

For those communities considered capable of following a community-led resources development process, a community exit strategy is defined and executed by the concerned agencies.

Members of VRMC/VRMSs and Groups implementing microprojects are encouraged to participate in training workshops in order to strengthen their capabilities.

9.2 Aims of the Chapter

1. To describe how to carry out a Microproject evaluation.
2. To describe how to track outputs from completed Microprojects.
3. To describe how to identify technical assistance needed to sustain Microprojects and VRMC/VRMSs.
4. To describe the criteria to be used in order to determine when HCFP should turn over each Microproject to development partners (VRMC/VRMS, Tree Growers Association or Income Generating Enterprise Group etc.).
5. To describe how to carry out the Community Capability Assessment (forming the Community Maturity Index).
6. To describe how to plan the Community Exit Strategy.
7. To describe the process by which HCFP phases out or exits from the community.

9.3 HCFP Approach

Step 1: Microproject Evaluation

Although Microprojects are physically and financially completed at the end of the establishment phase, insufficient time will have elapsed to allow a full impact of the Microproject to be known. Therefore, subject to the type of Microproject to be implemented, an evaluation is conducted after a suitable time period together with the VRMC/VRMS and the groups involved in implementing the Microprojects.

An evaluation team consisting of the M&E Sub-division staff, concerned Division technical staff, and one member from the Sub-division village cluster forestry extension staff, visits the Microproject site and gathers information through a Focus Group Meeting with the relevant stakeholders. The evaluation covers an assessment of the relevance, efficiency, impact, economic and financial sustainability of the Microproject. Impact indicators are measured through the use of records maintained by the VRMC/VRMS through the Microproject Monitoring Teams.

The Team will give guidance to the beneficiaries in their role in monitoring Microprojects and in providing feedback in tracking Microproject outputs.

An evaluation report is written by the evaluation team and submitted to the Division and Circle management staff. Evaluation reports are collated by the M&E Sub-divisions, and are analysed and stored at the M&E Division. MIS staff update the main Microproject database. Findings are used to provide feedback to PMU and Circle management staff on each of the common Microproject types.

Step 2: Tracking Outputs of Completed Microprojects

Regular monitoring of completed Microprojects by the community allows beneficiaries to learn lessons and improve overall management of their Microprojects. This is the *participatory monitoring and evaluation process*.

Through training in appropriate record keeping and provision of suitable record keeping formats, VRMC/VRMSs and Microproject Monitoring Teams will maintain important records to assist in the monitoring and evaluation of each Microproject.

Regular monitoring of Microprojects after completion of the establishment phase is also necessary. Such monitoring is carried out by the HCFP Village Cluster Teams, which comprise forestry staff under the SDO, community Link Workers and M&E staff from the concerned M&E Sub-division. This ensures that the Microprojects remain sustainable during the Maintenance and Benefit-sharing Phase that follows the Establishment Phase.

In addition, further technical assistance could be arranged by the Village Cluster Teams e.g. in silvi-cultural techniques, harvesting procedures, marketing linkages and training for technology skills up-grading. The capabilities of the VRMC/VRMS, Tree Growers Association and IGA Groups may also require special training in organisation and management of institutions.

Village Cluster Teams compile data on Project-wide Impact Indicators and any other chosen Community or Division specific Impact Indicators and report these to both their concerned Division and to the M&E Sub-division staff responsible for consolidating data for input into the M&E Division's main MIS.

The timing and frequency of collection depends on the type of Microproject and the indicators to be measured. The M&E Sub-division, Village Cluster Team staff

(Foresters, Forest Guards, Link Workers), the VRMC/VRMS and the community's Microproject Monitoring Team will jointly monitor Microprojects that have completed the Establishment Phase.

The MIS staff are responsible for updating the Microproject database, and for reporting impacts achieved by the different types of community forestry model/ Microproject to Circle and PMU management staff.

From a carefully selected sample of Microprojects of the same type, ***thematic evaluation studies*** are conducted, using defined criteria to assess the impact of that type of community forestry model/ Microproject. The evaluation team will comprise community forestry staff from different disciplines, headed by a short-term international or national consultant provided by the PMU.

Consolidated Microproject impact information from all Divisions, together with evaluation findings from special thematic studies for different microproject types will enable the M&E Division to produce special evaluation reports concerning the impact of common types of microprojects throughout the project area. These evaluation reports will be used by the PMU to direct future policy and guide decisions made by the Circle management staff when reviewing future Microproject proposals.

Step 3: Progress Monitoring of Village Resource Management Committees

To ensure sustainability, Community Based Organisations (CBO) such as VRMC/VRMSs, Tree Growers' Associations and IGA Self-Help Groups that have evolved through the Community Forestry Development Process, and particularly those strengthened by HCFP (e.g. VRMCs), are monitored regularly.

Reporting of key financial or organisational development indicators is undertaken on a regular basis with the timing depending on the type of indicator. The VRMC/VRMS is especially encouraged to maintain sufficient financial records and to support Community Microproject Monitoring Teams.

The Village Cluster Teams compile reports on CBO development, which are sent to the Division and Circle MIS staff. The M&E Sub-division consolidates the data collected by each field operations Division, and submits the data on a computer diskette to the main MIS at the M&E Division. The main MIS analyses the data and

the M&E Division provides the PMU and the Circle management staff with an indication on the overall progress made in: community capacity building for improved resource management, empowerment of disadvantaged groups, sustainability of community institutions, utilisation of the revolving fund, IGA enterprise development.

Step 4: Criteria to determine when to initiate the process of HCFP phased turnover of development activities to development partners

Criteria used by HCFP to determine when and how it should exit from the community are given below:

Community Exit Criteria:

- Maximum three years after approval of the first community or farm forestry Microproject.
- At least 60% of the village households have participated in or benefited from two or more community forestry-based Microprojects (excludes EPAs and Chetna Kendra).
- The community has indicated that it can sustain its own community resources development (based on indicators of capability derived from the participatory capability assessments carried out by VRMC/VRMS members).

When one of the above criteria has been achieved, it is time to conduct a Community Capability Assessment in order to assess the maturity of the community.

Step 5: Community Capability Assessment (CCA)

An independent community capability assessment is undertaken when one of the above criteria has been achieved. The CCA is designed to facilitate full community participation, thus providing a forum for the community to freely discuss their own progress towards implementing the Village Resources Microplan and individual Microprojects.

Through the use of pre-designed matrices, Village Cluster Team members (Foresters, Forest Guards, Link Workers), M&E Sub-division staff, and Division technical staff facilitate and document outputs from the CCA workshop (see Rapid Monitoring Tool for Participatory Community Capability Assessment in PME Guidelines).

The M&E Sub-division is responsible for consolidating the findings from all village

CCA workshops, and for submitting them to the M&E Division's MIS staff. The M&E Division staff and its MIS/GIS Cell analyse the data and report the findings to the PMU and Circle management staff, who will use the information to adjust policy and Microproject implementation strategies. Progress achieved with community capabilities in each village is recorded in the Community Assessment database by staff at the M&E Sub-division and MIS/GIS Cell levels.

During the CCA workshop, the community assesses its own capability to continue its development without HCFP. However, HCFP also assesses the capability of the community to continue its own community resources development. HCFP should not rely solely on the community's self-assessment.

Step 6: Plan Community Exit Strategies

Through a separate planning meeting with the VRMC/VRMS and other concerned stakeholders or during the Community Capability Assessment, strategies for how the HCFP will exit from the community is determined with concerned stakeholders.

A Community Exit Strategy may include the following activities:

1. Identification of non-HCFP funds that can be accessed for new microprojects.
2. Improved Panchayat and VRMC/VRMS capability to generate revenue.
3. Continued HCFP support for community capability strengthening, together with an increasing use of financial and physical resources (including manpower) from Panchayat and other local agencies.
4. Replication of successful community and farm forestry technologies using previous beneficiaries as resource persons to train new adopting families.
5. Further institutional strengthening of concerned community organisations, e.g. VRMC, VRMS, TGA, and SHGs.
6. Planning for new resource management models, not included in the HCFP so far, e.g. reclamation of waterlogged areas, amelioration of saline and sodic lands.

As part of the exit strategy, HCFP must assess the capacity of local government

agencies and other partners to take over the HCFP role in community forestry development. The assessment will enable HCFP to determine the kind of support required, facilitating turnover of HCFP responsibilities to the community.

Step 7: Gradual Phase-out and Final Exit from the Community

Various elements of gradual phase-out and hand over of HCFP responsibilities are as follows:

1. *Financial and operational management of community-based Microprojects becomes the responsibility of the community.*

Indicators of this are:

- An effective community organisation (e.g. VRMC) capable of preparing Microproject Proposals based on a village Microplan and managing future microproject activities.
 - Successful savings/revolving fund schemes that enable the community to maintain and protect community forestry Microprojects, to provide credit for income generating activities with disadvantaged groups, and to assist the private sector in promoting farm forestry.
 - Presence of well defined market linkages for sale of harvested outputs from the various community forestry Microprojects.
 - Increasing number of households with skills in nursery and plantation establishment of a wide range of economically viable community and farm forestry models.
2. *Transfer of responsibility from Village Cluster Teams under HCFP to Foresters and Forest Guards under a newly constituted Community Forestry Wing of the HFD at an appropriate point during the Maintenance and Benefit-sharing Phase.*

Here there is an assumption that the HCFP becomes institutionalised within the Haryana Forest Department.

Indicators of this are:

- Foresters and Forest Guards in concerned CD Blocks take on responsibility for technical training of VRMC members and other community forestry and farm forestry beneficiaries.
- Foresters and Forest Guards assist in providing market information for sale of harvested products from community forests, farm forests and IGA Microprojects.
- Foresters and Forest Guards assist communities in accessing funding for further Microprojects.

- Foresters and Forest Guards facilitate institutional support for community forestry activities from the HFD, DRDA, BDPO, et al.
3. *Transfer of different responsibilities of Village Cluster Teams under HCFP to the concerned Community Based Organization(s) (e.g. the VRMC under the Village Panchayat for general village resources management, the Resource Management Society for water resource management, the Tree Growers' Association for tree management on-farm, the Self-Help Group for managing rural enterprises).*
- The VRMC/VRMS is responsible for coordinating all village resource development activities, starting with forest resources and progressing to water, soil and atmospheric resources as the capabilities of the community expand.
 - The VRMC/VRMS is capable of planning village resource management on behalf of the community and has strong links to the Village Panchayat, other local government agencies present in the village and NGOs.
 - The VRMC/VRMS is capable of and is generating revenue for all its activities from various sources.
 - The VRMC/VRMS has started to plan, implement and sustain its own Microprojects.
4. *HCFP Exits from the Community.*

The HCFP exits from the community in an orderly fashion, and preferably when it can transfer the whole community forestry development process to a special wing set up in the Haryana Forest Department.

9.4 Roles and Responsibilities of Key Persons in Microproject Completion

Key Persons	Tracking of MP Outputs	Community Capability Assessment of “Mature” Communities	Community Exit Strategy and Hand-over	Skills Enhancement Training	Institutional Strengthening (VRMC Development)
Community (VRMC or individual User Groups in some cases, includes village Link Workers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VRMC and Microproject Monitoring Teams regularly monitor and record outputs from their microprojects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively participates to give feedback to the HCFP regarding the impact so far Regularly reviews the Village Microplan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determines what activities are still required to strengthen community capabilities Makes plans for the village’s future after HCFP exits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participates in training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community leaders coordinate planning with other local government units, NGO and the private sector Participates in Panchayat strengthening workshops
Sub-division technical staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report microproject outputs using physical progress and impact indicators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate the community capability assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist in determining strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct VRMC strengthening workshops and User Group training
Division technical staff (DCF/DFO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide technical assistance when required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist in facilitation of the community capability assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approve the strategy for inclusion in the Circle Action Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Act as resource persons in training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist in the coordination of the planning and execution of VRMC workshops
M&E Sub-division	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compiles indicator records in MP database 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participates in the community capability assessment Up-dates community capabilities in Community Resources database 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acts as resource persons in PME training
M&E Division and MIS Cell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyses MP database to provide outline of HCFP impact in the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyses Community Resources database to outline trends in Community Maturity Writes the Community Assessment Report 			
Circle management staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use indicators to track progress against targets set in the Circle Action Plan and Logframe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the findings to improve the Circle Action Plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist in planning activities 		
PMU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses findings to improve direction of the overall project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inputs findings into Annual Work Plan and Budget 			

