

FGLG-India

Progress report 2012



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Forest Governance Learning Group – India
Narrative Report for the Period: January – December, 2012

Submitted to
IIED

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Forest Governance Learning Group- India

Narrative Report

January – December, 2012

1. Introduction:

The overall objective of the Social Justice in Forestry project in India is 'improving and strengthening forest governance in India through promotion of local rights - especially community rights - benefits and control over forest resources'. Keeping in mind the larger objective of FGLG, FGLG-India, in this second phase, chalked out a definite action plan with clear targets. Four broad themes were selected, which partake of the most crucial aspects of Forest Governance in India, see *Box 1 below*.

Box 1- FGLG-India Outputs for the Second Phase

Output 1: Forest rights and small forest enterprise

1A: Forest Rights Act – Status of implementation, institutions and processes

1B: Strengthening Community Forest Management through recognition of rights

1C: Strengthening community-based institutions to run NTFP enterprises

Output 2: Legitimate forest products

2A: Investment in forestry: tackling the contradiction of huge imports despite large scale plantations

Output 3: Pro-poor climate change mitigation and adaptation through forestry

3A: REDD: India's REDD readiness/ preparedness

Output 4: Trans-national learning and preparedness.

Each selected theme and activities are being carried out by the team as per the Work plan. (See Annex-1) The section below describes the activities planned and progress so far.

2. Progress on Individual Themes

Output 1: Forest rights and small forest enterprise

1A: Forest Rights Act - implementation, institutions and processes:

Nodal Person: Sanjay Upadhyay, Sanjoy Patnaik and other team members as per their request.

Progress:

1.1. FRA Implementation Challenges :

The enactment of the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 (Forest Rights Act) (FRA) and Rules 2007, is an important watershed in the history of tribal empowerment in India especially relating to tenure security on forests and forest land. The culmination of the Forest Rights Act in 2006 and its actual enforcement after the formulation of the Rules and Notification on January 1, 2008 marked a historic journey to recognize and vest Forest Rights to the marginalised and vulnerable tribals who are dependent on forests for their sustenance and their existence.

Prior to the FRA, the tribal community has been dependent on the welfare schemes, privileges and concessions granted by the state without adequate security of tenure of lands which they have been traditionally occupying since time immemorial. While the enactment has been considered to be a process of undoing historic injustice, the implementation of the law has been a real challenge. The reasons range from incorrect interpretations to lack of initiatives and also due to different perspectives of different line ministries regarding the appropriateness of the implementation concerns. This has resulted in numerous States also clarifying and justifying their actions and have been asking numerous questions in various forms including formal requests for clarifications from the Ministry of Tribal Affairs.

1.2. Key issues and potential steps for redressal :

1. An analysis of FRA clarifications issued by the MoTA

The MoTA has been issuing clarifications from time to time on the implementation on FRA. SU compiled the same and also is helping the MoTA in preparing a compendium on FRA. Further, giving inputs on whether such clarifactory letters are in accordance with forest and other laws or not. (Document available on request)

2. Inputs in the Drafting of FRA Rules, 2012-

At the request of the MoTA, Sanjay Upadhyay (SU) not only oriented the new Joint Secretary and Secretary on FRA but also actively participated in drafting of FR Rules along with Shri NC Saxena, Member of the National Advisory Council. The new Rules took into account the comments that were received from public at large and more importantly the concepts and lessons that were learnt during the past FGLG experiences as well. The first few days were supported by FGLG India and subsequently, UNDP has decided to support a technical assistance project, to handhold FRA.

Similar processes to provide inputs to the amendment of the FR rules were also done at the state level. In Odisha, Sanjoy Patnaik (SP) supported the ST&SC Development Department, Government of Odisha to prepare the state inputs to the preparation of the changes introduced to the FRA Rules, 2007. The support included drafting the note, state consultations and discussions with resource persons.

3. Hand holding FRA- Resource Person and leveraged UNDP support for handholding FRA and new Amendment Rules, 2012

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs has requested SU to be the resource person for all hand holding regional workshops where the Amendment Rules, the Guidelines and clarifications on the same are being given in such workshops. SU has leveraged UNDP support to cover his time in this regard. Brief guidance note has been prepared along with key issues being raised in such workshops. (Available on request).

Government of Odisha invited SP to present the civil society perspectives on FRA implementation and suggestions on the new rules in the Regional Consultation on the Implementation of FRA jointly organized by MoTA and UNDP at Bhubaneswar, Odisha. Besides, SP was actively engaged as a resource person across the state and in national consultations on FRA. These consultation included public hearings organised by IGSSS and German Agro-Action, Conferences organised by IIPA and state government, training of government officers in charge of implementing FRA like the Sub-Collectors (on request of state government), and a number of state level NGOs and forestry forums, etc.

SP supports state government in the orientation of district administration in the orientation of the new FRA Rules in selected tribal dominated districts in November and December, 2012. SP worked as resource person for forestry federations, NGOs and CSOs from Odisha, Chattisgarh and Jharkhand on Forest Rights Act and PESA organised by RCDC and Oxfam India on the 22nd December, Bhubaneswar.

SP is currently working with the Odisha Tribal Empowerment and Livelihoods Programme (OTELP), an externally aided state government programme, on improving implementation of FRA in 1000 villages using a local youth, known as Community Resource Person (CRP) to identify all those eligible claimants who have not filed claims under FRA even though occupying forestland. SP is engaged in designing the training curriculum and project implementation plan that would be implemented by government.

Prior to this SP has designed a similar model of using local youth (CRP) to provide additional capacity to the revenue officials for land allocation and settlement for state government that would be implemented in close to 18000 villages and is expected to touch about 1.2 million tribal households. Through this initiative close to half a million tribal families would get homestead and farm land. This process of identification would be used for forest land settlement also under FRA.

1.3. Forest governance developments

Apart from minor clarifications and certain interpretations in the past, the current year of 2012 has specifically seen a new energy in giving impetus to the implementation of FRA by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs. The comprehensive guidelines, the letters of encouragement and new vision and direction by the Hon'ble Minister and most recently a comprehensive amendment Rules under FRA based on wide consultations, comments and efforts in understanding the impediments to the implementation has been significant achievements in Ministry of Tribal Affairs.

Government of Odisha very recently has taken a decision to prioritise revenue and forest land settlement and scale the model of using CRPs using state budget. As stated earlier, the intervention would take place in close to 18000 villages in the tribal sub-plan (where tribal population is more than 50%) areas. It would first take up revenue land settlement followed by completing the claim process of FRA. The MoTA has decided to identify this as an Innovative Land Settlement Model to be replicated in other states.

1.3.1. Comprehensive guidelines Issued to facilitate implementation of FRA

In July 2012 comprehensive guidelines were issued regarding the implementation of FRA which highlights the problems thus impeding the implementation of the Act and this ranged from convening of Gram Sabha, inclusion of similarly reputation transit problem for MFPs, lack of recommendation of community rights, non delineation of community forest resources among others. Then there are issues of harassment, threats of eviction, rejection of claims, nature of evidence, lack of orientation of implementing officials among others. In light of the above, a comprehensive set of guidelines were issued which dealt with among other things; process of recommendation of rights, minor forest produce and related issues, recommendation of community rights, rights over community forest resource, protection against eviction, diversion of forest land and various relocation, awareness raising monitoring and grievance redressal among others. This was followed up with the enactment of the amendment Rules on September 6, 2012.

1.3.2. Comprehensive Rules Drafted

1.3.3.

September 6th 2012 may be considered another important land mark in the ongoing efforts to implement the FRA Rules. A number of crucial implementation issues have been dealt with under the said Rules. Thus, for example, the issue of bonafide livelihood needs have been further clarified, the concept of community rights have been made more explicit, the manner of disposal of minor forest produce and the transit permit regime has been simplified, the inclusion of those hamlets which are not part of any existing revenue or forest village record has been added, the role of the committee and development of a conservation and management plan has been added, the formal recognition of right over community forest resource and a titled to that effect, the delineation of community forest resource and their

mapping process, further clarification on process of recognition of rights, the need for speaking and reasoned order, the appellate procedure and clarifications on grounds for rejections have also been added. Further, the particularly vulnerable tribal groups and their rights have also been emphasized and onus has been put on the district level committee to ensure that their rights are recorded and vested. Another significant provision relates to the post claim support and hand holding to the holders of the forest rights. Last but not the least a more rigorous monitoring process at the state level has been put in place including a mandatory, prescribed reporting system to maintain constant vigil and connect between the nodal ministry and the respective state governments.

1.4. Impacts

The latest amendments to the Rules under FRA and the handholding regional workshops and new opportunities to work in different states on FRA would certainly result in increasing more community rights titles under FRA. It is also hope that delineation of community forest resource and a new impetus on post claim strategies would be seen around the country. Further, participatory forestry may receive a new thrust under FRA where conservation and management plans have been given legal colour and this will strengthen the conservation regime of the areas under FRA claims.

1.5. Lessons

The regional workshops and the drafting process threw up some strong challenges and learnings in the process. The tussle between political head and the bureaucratic head, the balancing of political compulsions and executive pragmatism and negotiating through this maze while drafting was an immense challenge. Further, the strains of turf control are still largely present between the two ministries of Tribal Affairs and Environment and Forests. The reluctance in handing over control, hiding behind technical reasons are still seen as obvious hindrance to the implementation of the FRA. Surprisingly there is a new leadership in MoTA which is positive, women led and very receptive to taking the implementation of the law forward. The minister himself being a tribal and educated apart from being a seasoned politician has taken an initiative single handedly.

1.6. Implications for the work ahead

The above learning in following up closely the FRA development and being closely involved at the highest decision making level has opened new avenues for not only spreading the message but also helping communities around the country in securing their rights and resolving their difficulties on FRA implementation. Several initiatives and opportunities have emerged in the last 4-5 months which is described below:

1.6.1. FRA Implementation- Advice and Referral Service

ELDF led by SU has set up an informal advice and referral service on FRA implementation issues along with a para legal where several queries are being answered on a periodic basis on various aspects of FRA, its implementation and interpretations.

1.6.2. FRA-PESA Training to 23 Tribal Leaders working with Econet, in Pune in Maharashtra

Several non government organization have also sought held to train their partners and field workers on FRA and scheduled area governance. One recently concluded such session was in Pune held during 12-13 October, 2012 under the aegis of Econet where 23 partners and tribal leaders were trained on FRA and scheduled area governance connect.

1.6.3. FRA-PESA Training to 54 Tribal Leaders and NGO heads working with Astha, Udaipur in Rajasthan

Astha, a well known CSO working on tribal rights also invited SU to be the resource person for two day session during 11-12 October, 2012 on FRA where 53 tribal leaders, FRA claimants, NGO heads were given training including problem solving methods on FRA.

- 1.6.4. Invited as a resource persons from India at the Community Forestry Champions meeting jointly held by Rights and Resource Initiative and RECOFTC during 15-20 October, 2012
- 1.6.5. Invited as a resource person to a workshop of leading thinkers on tenure rights titled 'Legal options to secure community property rights' Held in Batangas in Philippine between 23-25 October, 2012 under the aegis of RRI and Atenuo School of Government, the Graduate School of Leadership and Public Service, Philippines.

Both the above events helped in spreading message on tenure security and FRA experience in India to larger world community first at Asian level and secondly on a Global level.

1B: Strengthening Community Forest Management through recognition of rights

1.7. Progress with activities

Massive campaign on the use of FRA in building a case for CFM has been taken up in Odisha. This includes series of discussions and multi-stakeholders' consultations in the state capital and in district headquarters with active support of forestry support groups and forestry forums. The major issues taken up are;

- Campaign organised for enhancing the number of CFR claim settlement through rigorous interface with state and district administrations. This includes interface with Forestry Secretary and Tribal Secretary to hold a joint meeting for clarifying multiple perspectives on CFR that have mostly retarded the speed of CFR claim settlement. Besides, massive training programmes organised to understand the strength of FRA to further the cause of community forest management in Odisha and elsewhere.
- On experiment basis, bamboo trading has been done by forest protection groups in certain districts like Kalahandi on the basis of clarifications provided by Ministry of Rural Development and MoTA on bamboo being a grass therefore did not attract the provisions of IFA 1927. Similar campaigns have been done for Kendu leaf.
- Massive advocacy was done with the state government to reduce the role of forest department in the JFM committee that forced the government to withdraw the Forester becoming the member-secretary of the JFMCs. The JFMCs are now completely managed by villagers.

1.8. Forest governance developments

- The state government has developed a CFR document and has submitted to MoTA for concurrence largely with inputs from civil society organisations.

1.9. Impacts

- Perceived bigger role of CFM groups in the CFR process and the records maintained earlier is being used to delineate CFR.

1.10. Lessons

- FRA could be a good tool to further the campaign on CFM.

1.11. Implications for the work ahead

- Primary focus would be on delineation of CFR with active participation of community members and increased claims of CFR.
- Use the Gram Sabha powers in FRA to declare all nationalised items as free items and stop selling to government through Gram Sabha declarations.

1C: Strengthening community-based institutions to run NTFP enterprises

1.1 Objectives of governance: As a part of the theme the focus of the activity was to review the national scenario of NTFP post FRA that would include reflection on proposed MFP Commission, Minimum Support Price, etc. The other objective was to support MOEF for NTFP Division, provide capacity assets to state governments in sustainable harvesting and marketing and scoping of NTFP based enterprise.

1.2 Progress of activities:

The following sections (1.2.1 and 1.2.2) report on activities carried out through PB's membership of a Planning Commission sub-group on NTFPs.

1.2.1 After consultation and through review of literature 21 products identified from different part of India which has got potential for large scale enterprise development opportunities.

Northern Himalayan Zone (Tejpatta, Jatamanshi, Tulsi, Jhula, Kutki, Texus, Chirata, Reetha, Moss grass, Pine resin, Picrorhiza Kurrooa (kutki)

Northern-Eastern Zone (Broom grass (Thysanolyne maxima), Bamboo, Phyrnium leaf, Tejpatta, Orchids, Acqularia sp. (agar), Ashoka Bark, Cinchona, Taxus baccata, Swertia chirata, litsea glutinosa, Andrographis paniculata (kalmeg), Cane (Calamus spp.), Parkia Sepcisoa (tree bean).

Central Indian Zone (Tendu leaf, sal leaves, chironji, lac, tamarind, sabai grass, kalmegh, mahua seed and flower, sal seeds, siali leaves, anola, kullu gum, hill broom grass, salai gum litsea glutinosa (maida bark), arrowroot (Curcuma angustifolia), Rawvolifa serpentia, honey, tassar bamboo).

Southern Indian Zone (Cinnamon bark, mahagli (decalepisis spp.), karanj seeds, tamarind, Bauhinia vahilii (siali leaf or mahul patta), sandal oil (santalum album), Garcinia indica (kokam), Asparagus racemosus (satawar).

Western Indian Zone (Tendu leaf, bael, Buchanania lanzan (Chronji), Boswellia serata gum, guggal gum (Commiphora wightii), bahera, harra, chrota seed(Cassia tora), mahua flower, seed oil).

1.2.2 Theme leader of group Prof. Prodyut Bhattacharya was involve as key member for sub-group on NTFP under the Planning Commission Working Group on Natural Resource Management developed detailed planning to address the issues, challenges, potential, and scope in developing the NTFP sector in the country and recommended the following strategies to be adopted for this purpose with a total budgeted amount of Rs.6590 cores for the 12th Plan:

Prioritizing potentials NTFPs (for Enterprise Development)

• **Resource management** through conservation and development of sustainable harvesting protocols; resource augmentation and development; zone wise inventory of NTFPs; zone wise prioritization/ selection of species for conservation, development and harvesting (CDH); pilot initiatives followed by a cluster based approach for further development of NTFPs; and SFM including revision of Working Plan Code, Certification and CBNRM. Total budgeted amount: Rs.2500 cores

- **Better opportunities in marketing** through Minimum Support Price (MSP) ; mechanism for market intelligence and information system; efficient Certification system for improved trade; revolving fund for primary collectors and their institutions; value chain development by aggregation; primary processing, grading, branding and certification; eco- services of NTFP such as Herbal ecotourism and local enterprise development; and encouraging corporate sector involvement- contract farming, infrastructure development, resource augmentation. Total budgeted amount: Rs.3000 crores

- **Capacity building** through formation and strengthening of local institutions; special training of front line staff and ToT; strengthening & restructuring existing institutions; modular training for primary collector, grower, entrepreneurs and traders; exposure visits of relevant stakeholders; and user friendly IEC materials. Total budgeted amount: Rs.250crores

- **Expediting Research & Development activities** through strengthening existing potential National/State R&D institutions; undertaking state of art research on NTFPs; prime focus on developing new/alternate marketability for single market NTFPs, low value high volume NTFPs, silviculture and conservation biology of NTFPs; tapping the concept of Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES); and study on impact of non anthropogenic factors like climate change. Total budgeted amount: Rs.290 crores

- **Ensuring an enabling policy environment** through formulation of a national level comprehensive policy; convergence of schemes implemented by different Ministries; establishment of an apex body such as NTFP Development Board and similar state level bodies; empowerment and strengthening of local institutions; ensuring better Access and Benefit sharing mechanism with legal provision; facilitating a compatible and uniform tax structure & transit rule; exemption of VAT; special compensatory support for NTFP crop failure; and introducing new schemes for NE region, mountain areas and Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected states. Total budgeted amount: Rs.550 crores. For the whole country the above efforts are expected to generate approximately 10 crore workdays in the 12th plan and about 2 crore workdays per annum thereafter in a sustainable manner, helping promote a green GDP, and contributing to the fulfillment of Millennium Development Goals.

1.3 **Other key policy events and programmes:**

- i) A detail presentation made on scope of NTFP enterprise and certification potential of NTFP sector in the International conference on “Non-wood Forest produce for sustained livelihood” during 17-19 December, 2011, Bhopal organized by Madhya Pradesh Forest Department, M.P. federation Ltd. and IIFM, Bhopal.
- ii) “Integration of MADPs/NTFPs in National working plan code, govt. of India” detailed working paper presented during 23 and 24 April, 2012, Raipur in the National Brainstorming Workshop for Developing Clear Guidelines for the Conservation Management of MAPs to be included in National working plan code organized by Chhatisgarh State Medicinal Plants Board and UNDP.

1.4 **Lessons:** NTFP are still considered major source of livelihood for more than 70% of poorest forest districts of India. Indian Government also seriously considering the linkages of NTFP based rural development in various part of India. For the first time, in 12th Five Year Plan allocation under Planning Commission given in the NTFP sector such a major commitment looking to potential to provide livelihood opportunities and financial cash flow to rural women and youth of India for next five years with the linkages through state government initiative and through FRA, even for JFM+ concept to initiate.

2. **Output 2A: Legitimate Forest Products- Study on Experience of Tree Plantations in India**

2.1. **Governance Objective**

India has invested heavily in tree plantations – on both forest and non-forest lands – over the past few decades. These plantations should be able to meet bulk of the demand for wood and several other forest products, thereby relieving pressure on natural forests, which should be primarily managed for ecosystem services and for meeting livelihood needs of the local communities in a sustainable manner. These plantations should also be able to limit imports of forest products, very few of which are from certified forests/plantations.

However, this is evidently not the case due to large-scale imports on one hand and continuing pressure on natural forests on the other. The governance objective of the study on sources of wood supply and role of tree plantations is to understand the current status of tree plantations and to explore ways to enhance their contribution as a source of legitimate forest products in the country.

2.2. Outputs

A draft paper titled “Tree Plantations in India: A Source of Legitimate Forest Products?” was prepared and circulated among FGLG members for their comments.

2.3. Outcomes

The draft paper is being used as an input for a strategy for sustainable forest/ecosystem management being currently prepared by SS as part of the Forest PLUS program. The learning from this component will directly feed into two pilots that SS will be designing in collaboration with State Forest Departments for easing marketing and permitting (harvest and transit) restrictions.

2.4 Other Forest Governance Related Activities

Apart from the above study on legitimate forest products, during the reporting period SS was involved in two other important forest governance related activities:

1. *Conservation Across Landscapes*: SS, along with other colleagues, co-authored a book on biodiversity governance models in India (*Conservation Across Landscapes*) which was published by UNDP India and released by the India’s Environment & Forest Minister during the recently concluded Conference of Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity. The book can be seen/downloaded from the UNDP website:

http://www.in.undp.org/content/india/en/home/library/environment_energy/conservation-across-landscapes/

Some news coverage about the book:

<http://news.outlookindia.com/items.aspx?artid=778534>

2. SS, along with other colleagues, carried out a field study in Odisha, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu on outcomes of community development initiatives undertaken in large forestry projects. The study will be an important input into the new forest sector support policy of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), which is the largest external funding agency for India’s forestry sector.

SS has recently joined the USAID-Government of India Forest PLUS project as Institutional Development/Governance Advisor. This provides a good opportunity to him to directly feed FGLG learning into an important national initiative focussing on sustainable landscapes and REDD+.

3. OUTPUT 3A : Dialogue with CFM stakeholders on Forestry & Climate Change (including REDD/REDD+)- Progress Report- D. Suryakumari

Presented below is the progress accomplished with regard to Output 3A of the FGLG India work plan for the period from December 2011 to June 2012 as the previous report covered the period from July to November 2011. [full report to December to 2012 to be completed]

3.1 Progress with activities

The National Consultation titled “REDD+ and Perspectives of Community Forestry Stakeholders in India” was conducted on 28th December 2011. Participants include – the Convenor of National REDD Cell from MOEF; NGOs from Delhi (TERI & WInrockindia); NGOs from other states (FES of Gujarat, SPWD of Rajasthan, RCDC of Odisha, GRASP of Maharashtra, Mawphlang welfare society and Bethany society of Meghalaya; Forest officials, NGOs and community representatives who participated in the field level workshops; Additional PCCFs from APFD; Academic (Andhra University) and Research Institutions (CESS) and NABARD. In all 51 participants actively deliberated on the questions given for discussion and came up with recommendations. The proceedings were documented and disseminated to all the participants. A policy brief titled “REDD+ and Perspectives of Community Forestry Stakeholders in India – Highlights from the dialogues at different levels and the National Consultation” has been brought out and disseminated widely including the e- networks. Recommendations include – revamping of JFMCs and revision of JFM guidelines to bring in uniformity in benefit sharing across the states (preferably AP CFM GO), networking of community based institutions (like Vanasamakhyas of AP), legal framework for JFMCs, Landscape approach in selecting the project locations, People centric REDD+ policy and National strategy and mechanisms for safeguarding the rights of the communities during natural calamities etc and so on.

- 11 field level consultations completed (Resource Material developed in 2011 titled “Community Guide to Climate Change and REDD+ - Communication material to create awareness among community forestry stakeholders” was used)
- In all, reached out to 771 people from - community, local NGOs, Forest officials and academics in creating awareness
- National Consultation involving key stakeholders of community forestry completed
- Policy Brief titled “REDD+ and Perspectives of Community Forestry Stakeholders in India – Highlights from the dialogues at different levels and National Consultation” developed and disseminated
- Develop understanding of the Government of India’s Climate Change Action Plan so as to align the FGLG’s strategy
- Interacted with Dr. Ravindranath and Dr. Mark Poffenberger. Learnt from the field experiences of Meghalaya project team. Note to be prepared and shared
- Field guide (on REDD+ and participatory Carbon Stock Estimation) developed in English and will be translated into Telugu by the end of this month.

3.1.1 REDD+ Pilot project – CFI

CPF shared the policy brief and the resource material developed with Community Forestry International which has been facilitating an Asia REDD Working Group. CPF has been invited to be part of some early REDD pilot activities planned by CFI. CPF proposed to involve three local Vanasamakhyas of Medak district who are in charge of around 11,000ha of Forest in this pilot activity. The proposal has been approved by CFI and work will commence from end of September 2012. The project will be registered with “Plan Vivo” following their standards.

3.1.2 Presentation on REDD+ - Engineering Staff College of India

Dr.Suryakumari made a presentation on REDD+ - few case studies to the participants of a training workshop organized by Engineering Staff College of India. Participants included officials from MOEF, State FDs and from NABARD. Currently there is one REDD+ project from Khasi Hills of Meghalaya for which the PDD (Project Design Document) has been registered with Plan Vivo. CPF is the project developer for this project. Another project being facilitated by Dr.Ravindranath is for Government of Meghalaya along with Wild Life Trust of India. PDD preparation is underway for this project.

- 3.1.3 A Community Guide to Climate Change and REDD+ - Communication Material to Create Awareness among Community Forestry Stakeholders (English and Telugu)
- 3.1.4 Policy brief titled “ REDD+ and Perspectives of Community Forestry Stakeholders in India – Highlights from the dialogues at different levels and National Consultation” “ REDD+ and Perspectives of Community Forestry Stakeholders in India – Highlights from the dialogues at different levels and National Consultation” (English) and
- 3.1.5 Field guide on REDD+ and Participatory Carbon Stock Estimation (English and Telugu) for use by local communities, NGOs and field level forest officials (methodology of UNFCCC and our team were guided by Dr. Ravindranath & his team in practically doing it in five VSSs, one case is described as example in the current field guide)
- 3.1.6 MOEF – Forest Plus

As referred to in section 2.3 above - it has been learnt that USAID has been extending financial support to MOEF to pilot REDD+ in few select locations. The project is named as Forest PLUS (partnerships in Land Use Science) and is to the tune of \$15 million over a five year period. The project is expected to commence from 1st October 2012.

Dr. Suryakumari has been making efforts to influence the APFD to approach MOEF for selecting one project location from AP as the CFM experiences and presence of Vanasamakhya and CPF provide good opportunities to contribute to the process.

3.2 Forest Governance Developments

CPF proposed to organize a State level consultation on the status of implementation of FRA especially the collective rights and Community Forest Resources on 22nd and 23rd August 2012. Tribal welfare department, Forest Department, NGOs and community representatives are the expected participants. CPF has been planning to project its experience from all its project locations including 100 Bamboo VSSs, 96 Chenchu habitations in the tiger reserve. In all around 260 villages from different districts will be represented.

The new guidelines and draft amendment for Rules of FRA will also be discussed.

3.3 Future Plans

- To bring out brief and simple communication material in Telugu (local language) on REDD+ and carbon stock estimation for use by communities, it will first be used in the CPF-CFI pilot project location.
- Carrying out activities of the pilot project and document the process and learnings.
- Have engagement with the Forest Plus project and the MOEF and contribute to the National REDD+ strategy development in an appropriate way
- After the State level consultation, pursue the work related to facilitation of CFRe claims in all CPF project locations and taking up advocacy as appropriate.

4. Other Key Policy Events and Programs:

4.1. Committee to look into forestry on private land and non forest land under the control of the government :

FGLG India members Arun Bansal, BMS Rathore and Sanjay Upadhyay are now part of the Committee to look into forestry on private land and non forest land under the control of the government. Inputs to the committee report has been given by SU. (available on request)

4.2. “Forest Governance and Institutional Reforms in India: Urgent and now”

A paper was circulated which was for comments and subsequently it has been converted in to a publishable document, which shall be published soon. (available on request)

4.3. JFM Plus in Chhattisgarh- the way forward:

The Government of Chattisgarh and the JFM Head, Dr Arvind Boaz (Addl PCCF) has requested SU to draft a note on JFM Plus of how the Forest Department has to realign itself in light of new developments such as FRA and PESA and most importantly the new Rules under FRA. A Brief note has been prepared and submitted accordingly. (**Available on request**)

4.4. FRA Hand holding in Jharkhand

SU has been trying to convince Govt. of Jharkhand to carry out a hand holding process on FRA which has now received approval of the tribal minister and a formal communication is awaited to start the process.