

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

**Green-Ag: Transforming Indian Agriculture for Global Environmental Benefits
and the Conservation of Critical Biodiversity and Forest Landscapes**

**Strategy Paper
On
Constitution
of
Village Implementation Committees
(VICs)**

Formation of Village Implementation Committees

Introduction:

The Green-Ag project is funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) through its sixth funding cycle. The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) is the GEF Operational Focal Point and coordinates all GEF projects in the country. For this project, the Department of Agriculture, Cooperation, and Farmers' Welfare (DAC&FW), Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare is the National Executing Agency; and Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is the GEF Implementing Agency. The project duration is 6 years.

The Green-Ag project is being implemented in five landscapes, which are a mix of conservation and production areas. They are:

- i. Chambal Landscape, Madhya Pradesh;
- ii. Dampa Landscape, Mizoram;
- iii. Similipal Landscape, Odisha;
- iv. Corbett-Rajaji landscape, Uttarakhand; and
- v. Desert Landscape, Rajasthan.

Purpose:

The Green-Ag project emphasizes on participatory grassroots' management of project landscapes through preparation of Green Landscape Management Plans (GLMPs), a critical project intervention. These plans are based on the landscape approach, which warrants continuous collaboration between different key stakeholders in the project landscapes. Such a consultative process builds a sense of ownership and empowers them for effective management of their landscapes.

As a first step, the project will facilitate the formation of multi-sectoral committees at village level in the project landscapes. Membership of the committees should include representatives of key stakeholders and field functionaries of various Govt. Departments to ensure synergy among ongoing activities and minimizes trade-offs, if any. We may have to establish a new institution or expand mandate of existing institutions to ensure their alignment with sustainable landscape management and adequate representation of relevant stakeholders. In this regard, VICs will be innovative institutions that will strive to surface competing demands and find solutions, wherein the core concerns of various stakeholders aren't compromised, for effective landscape level planning and management, in the best interests of everyone.

Formation of Village Implementation Committees:

The VICs will draw representation from various key active stakeholders -- field functionaries of different line Departments, vibrant community institutions, farmer collectives, etc. They will be instrumental in planning, implementing and monitoring of Green Landscape Management Plans (GLMPs) at the village level. These Villages Implementation Committees will federate at the Gram Panchayat/Village Council level into Gram Panchayat Support Units/Village Council Support Units. The formation of Village Implementation Committees (VICs) will be completed in six steps, as described in the section below.

Step 1: Stakeholder Mapping:

During the landscape assessment, the Green Landscape Implementation Unit (GLIU) team will map various institutions, important social groups including indigenous communities residing in the village/landscape and government organizations operating in the village and present their findings to the Technical Support Group (TSG).

Step 2: Discussion on formation of VICs in TSG meetings:

The Green Landscape Implementation Unit (GLIU) team leader should request the Technical Support Group (TSG) to add to their meeting agenda a “discussion on the constitution of VICs”, with a special focus on villages with high priority areas identified for project interventions. The discussion on the agenda item, i.e. discussion on the constitution of VICs”, should progress as follows:

- Discuss relevance and usefulness of the VICs in planning, implementation and monitoring of project activities.
- Share information on the institutions, government departments and other stakeholders working in the priority villages as ascertained during landscape assessment.
- Discuss steps in the formation of VICs
- Decision on formation of new VICs or continuation of existing bodies, if any, actively engaged in similar nature of work with representation of various stakeholders and in-line with project’s objectives [Please refer to Annexure 4].
- Issuance of official circulars with specific instructions from the Chairman of TSG to all the District Heads of the Government and Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) [Please refer to **Annexure - 1**]

Documentation: Minutes of this discussion should be documented in the TSG minutes book, to be maintained by the GLIU representative for all the TSG meetings. These minutes will serve as future reference and means of verification.

Budget:

- The time of the team leader and others members of GLIU involved in the meeting should be charged to the GEF Budget Line ‘5570 Consultant’ under the budgetary sub-head ‘GL Team Leader/NRM Expert’ and the other sub-heads pertaining to involved members of GLIU.

- The GLIU team members' travel should be booked to the GEF Budget '5900 Travel' under the budgetary sub-head 'Local travel'
- The TSG members' time should be charged to Co-financing budget committed by the State

Step 3: Consultations between the GLIU Team Leader and the Heads of Government Departments at the district level

The GLIU team leader should request the time of the District Heads of the relevant Govt. Depts. and PRIs currently operational in the project districts and give a brief overview of the Green-Ag project. The discussion should progress as follows:

- Brief orientation to the District Heads by the GLIU team leader on the following:
 - About Green-Ag project and its aim [Please refer to **Annexure 4**]
 - Green Landscape Management Plans (GLMPs) and process of their preparation [Please refer to **Annexure 5**]
 - Role of VIC in planning, implementation, and monitoring of GLMPs [Please refer to **Annexure 6**]
 - Indicative list of members of VIC [Please refer to **Annexure 7**]
 - Provisional structure of VIC [Please refer to **Annexure 8**]
- GLIU Team Leader to request District Heads to issue official circulars with specific instructions to the field functionaries and Sarpanch or Panch/ Chairman, VC for their participation in the constitution of VICs. [Please refer to **Annexure 2** and **Annexure 3** for instructions]

Step 4: Copy of Instructions to be shared with the CRPs

The GLIU Team Leader should provide the CRPs with the following documents to initiate the process for the constitution of new VICs or reconstitution of any existing committee, in accordance with the decision of the TSG.

- Copy of circular issued by the TSG Chairman to District Heads of all concerned Government departments and PRIs.
- Copy of circular issued by the District Heads to their respective field functionaries and Sarpanch or Panch/ Chairman, VC

Step 5: Consultations between the Community Resource Persons and the Sarpanch/Panch/ Chairman of VC

The CRP should request the time of the Sarpanch/Panch/ Chairman of VC to discuss about the procedure for constitution of VICs. He/she should provide the copy of the circular issued by the Deputy Commissioner (also the chairman of TSG) for constitution of VIC or reconstitution of any existing committee in a given district. The discussion should progress as follows:

- Brief orientation to Sarpanch/Panch/ Chairman of VC the by the CRP on the following:
 - About Green-Ag project and its aim [Please refer to **Annexure 4**]
 - Green Landscape Management Plans (GLMPs) and the process of their preparation [Please refer to **Annexure 5**]
 - Role of VIC in planning, implementation, and monitoring of GLMPs [Please refer to **Annexure 6**].
 - Indicative list of members in VIC [Please refer to **Annexure7**]. (Please note that the Sarpanch/Panch/ Chairman of VC may add anyone deemed relevant or modify the list based on the local circumstances)
 - Provisional structure of VIC [Please refer to **Annexure 8**]
- Request placed to the Sarpanch/Panch/ Chairman of VC to call the for a meeting to constitute VIC
- Approval of the meeting agenda (prepared by the CRP) from Sarpanch/Panch/ Chairman of VC pertaining to VIC constitution
- Meeting invites sent to the concerned individuals for participation in the VIC constitution meeting on behalf of Sarpanch/Panch/ Chairman of VC by the CRPs and ensuring their receipt from the intended receivers.
- Approval of meeting notice (prepared by CRP) by Sarpanch/Panch/ Chairman of VC and its wider dissemination among the villagers

Step 6: VIC Constitution Meeting

The CRPs will take lead in convening the meeting at a time and place selected by the Sarpanch/Panch/ Chairman of VC. In this meeting, the CRPs should share:

- About Green-Ag project and its aim [Please refer to **Annexure 4**]
- Green Landscape Management Plans (GLMPs) and the process of their preparation [Please refer to **Annexure 5**]
- Role of VIC in planning, implementation, and monitoring of GLMPs [Please refer to **Annexure 6**].

- Indicative list of members in VIC [Please refer to **Annexure 7**]. (Please note that the Sarpanch/Panch/ Chairman of VC may add anyone deemed relevant or modify the list based on the local circumstances)
- Provisional structure of VIC [Please refer to **Annexure 8**]

Further, Sarpanch/Panch/ Chairman, VC will take over and inform the villagers about the potential benefits of the Green-Ag project and request their support for constitution and effective functioning of VICs.

Documentation:

- The signature of all the meeting attendees shall be taken in the meeting register by the CRPs.
- The minutes of the meeting including the decisions taken, duly signed by the Sarpanch/Panch/ Chairman, VC shall be recorded by the CRP in the same register and a copy of it is made public at a prominent place in the village.
- A copy of the meeting minutes along with the name of members of the newly constituted VIC, with the signature Sarpanch/Chairman, VC shall be sent to GLIU. These minutes will serve as future reference and means of verification.

Budget: The expenditure incurred for the constitution of Village Implementation Committee should be booked as follows:

- The CRPs time on this activity should be charged to the GEF Budget line '5570 Consultants' under the budgetary sub-head 'GLIU – Community Resource Persons'
- The CRPs travel should be charged to the GEF Budget line '5900 Travel' under the budgetary sub-head 'Local Travel'
- Expenses incurred for the conduct of VIC constitution meetings should be charged to the GEF budget line "5023 Training" under the budgetary sub-head "Village Implementation Committee Meetings"
- The participation costs of VIC constitution meeting's participants should be charged to the charged to Co-financing budget committed by the State

Monitoring/Reporting:

- The activity Village Implementation Committee Meetings is implemented under the Project **Component 2: Improved agricultural and conservation practices demonstrating sustainable**

production, livelihood advancements, habitat improvements and delivery of tangible BD, LD, CCM and SFM benefits.

- This will contribute to realization of **Output 2.1:** Institutional frameworks, mechanisms and capacities at District and Village levels to support decision-making and stakeholder participation in Green Landscape planning and management strengthened with Green Landscape Management Plans.
- Results Indicators that will be used to **monitor the progress of formation and conduct of VIC meetings** against the set targets, are in **Annexure 9**. This will be part of the larger Project Monitoring System, updated monthly, and reviewed by the GLIU team leader and the Project Manager, NPMU.

Annexures

Annexure 1:

The Annexure 1 provides details on the indicative set of instructions in the official circulars to be issued by the TSG Chairman to the District Heads of different Govt. Depts. and Panchayati Raj institutions

Instructions in the Official Circulars

(Please note that this is an indicative list of instructions and may actually vary based on local circumstances)

- Issuance of official circulars by the District Heads to the field functionaries of their respective depts. and Sarpanch or Panch/Chairman, VC for their active participation and support in the project
- Regular follow-ups by the District Heads with their respective field functionaries and Sarpanch/ Panch regarding the status of project implementation in their specific domain areas or respective villages
- Periodic review meetings to be held by the District Heads with their respective field functionaries and Sarpanch/ Panch to discuss the progress of the project, obstacles if any and remedial actions. GLIU representatives may be invited for these meetings
- Progress updates to be given by the District Heads in every TSG meeting with respect to their domain areas and village areas and offer suggestive steps for course correction in the project implementation

Annexure 2:

Instructions in the Official Circulars

The Annexure 2 provides details on the indicative set of instructions in the official circulars to be issued by the District Heads of different Govt. Depts. to their respective field functionaries.

Instructions in the Official Circulars

(Please note that this is an indicative list of instructions and may actually vary based on local circumstances)

- Mandatory participation of the field functionaries in the VIC constitution meetings to be organized by the Sarpanch/Panch/ Chairman of VC of the village.
- Necessary details on the ongoing programmes and schemes in their respective Departments to be provided by the field functionaries in the VIC constitution meetings
- Active participation of the field functionaries in planning, implementation, and monitoring of GLMPs
- Effective implementation of the ongoing programmes and schemes of their respective Departments by the field functionaries in accordance with the objectives of GLMP of a particular village
- Any identified resource gaps in the ongoing programmes and schemes that impede implementation of planned activities under any GLMP, to be notified by the field functionaries to their respective District Heads who would in turn flag it in the TSG meetings.
- Periodic updates to be given to by the field functionaries to their District Heads on the project's progress in their respective domain areas.

Annexure 3:

The Annexure 3 provides details on the indicative set of instructions in the official circulars to be issued by the District Heads of Panchayati Raj Institutions to the respective Sarpanch or Panch/ Chairman, VC

Instructions in the Official Circulars

(Please note that this is an indicative list of instructions and may actually vary based on local circumstances)

- Initiate the procedure for convening a meeting for VIC constitution and finalize on the venue, date and time
- Approval of the meeting agenda (prepared by the CRPs) for VIC constitution
- Meeting invites sent to the concerned individuals for participation in the VIC constitution meeting and ensuring the receipt of the same from the intended receivers.
- Approval of meeting notice (prepared by CRP) by Sarpanch/Panch/ Chairman of VC and its wider dissemination among the villagers
- Ensure smooth conduct of the meeting leading to constitution of VICs
- Signature on the minutes of the meetings containing the list of members of the newly constituted VIC and a copy to be shared to GLIU
- Ensure monthly conduct of VIC meetings with full participation of all the members for preparation, implementation, and monitoring of Green Landscape Management Plans (GLMPs)
- Ensure that the concerns of marginalized social groups such as women, indigenous communities are represented and discussed in the meetings.
- Periodic review of the GLMPs and appraisal to GLIU of any resource gaps in the ongoing schemes for project activities, which would be eventually flagged in TSG for resolution.
- Periodic updates to be given by the Sarpanch or Panch/ Chairman, VC to their District Heads on the project's progress in their respective villages.

Annexure 4: Green-Ag Project and objectives

1. Background:

- The Green-Ag project is funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF).
- This project is of Government of India. At the National Level, the Department of Agriculture and Farmer's Welfare (DAC&FW), Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare (MoA&FW) is the National Executing Agency. Food and Agriculture Organization of United Nations (FAO) is implementing this project under an agreement with DAC&FW, Govt. of India .
- The project is being implemented in five states namely Mizoram, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan, and Uttarakhand.
- In Mizoram, the Department of Agriculture (Crop Husbandry), Government of Mizoram is the lead executing partner.
- The Green-Ag project was designed in a participatory manner. During the project design, several consultations—with government, people's representatives, and civil society—were held at all levels—national, state, district, and sub-district levels. The district administration and state government finalized the project sites and villages.

2. Significance of the Project Site :

- Mizoram is a land of never-ending natural beauty with rolling hills and mountains with deep valleys. It is home to several beautiful streams, rivers, and waterfalls.
- The project will work in a landscape that falls within two districts: Lunglei, and Mamit and includes two protected areas Dampa Tiger Reserve and Thorangtlang Wildlife Sanctuary. The Dampa Tiger Reserve is the biggest sanctuary in the State.
- The project landscape encompasses thick forests and harbors large number of endemic species of plants and animals. The floral diversity includes varieties of trees like Himalayan Maple tree, Sal, Teak, Bamboo, Canes, Timber Trees, Orchids and many other medicinal plants. In terms of faunal diversity, the landscape includes several species of global importance like Clouded leopard, Fishing cat, Guar and Dhol, Western Hoolock Gibbon, Sambar, Barking Deer, Gaur etc. It also has numerous species of birds like Brown Fish Owl, CH Myna, Crested Serpent, etc.
- Major agri-horticultural crops grown in the State are cereals (Rice, Maize, Sorghum,); pulses (Field Pea, Cow Pea, Lentil, Bengal Gram, Black gram); oil seeds (Sesame, Soya bean, Mustard and Cotton), cash crops (Ginger, Turmeric, Bird's eye Chilli, Tapioca, Sugarcane); cash crop plantation (Rubber, Broom, Tea, Coffee, Oil Pam, Anchiri); vegetable crops (Cabbage, Broccoli, French Bean, Tomato, Ridge gourd, Bitter gourd,

Bottle gourd, Cauliflower, Yam, etc.); Fruits (Banana, Mandarin Orange, Lemon, Passion fruit, Pineapple, Jackfruit)

3. Key Issues and Threats to Global Environmental Values

(Note: If the user of this project brief wants to facilitate in a detailed manner on the key issues and threats to the landscape and emphasize on how the Green-Ag project will strive to bring a transformative change in the landscape with the support of local communities and their active participation, please refer to the content below. In case the user wants to summarize on the same, please refer to Annexure 4.1, which is available in the current document, towards the end).

a) Importance of forest ecosystems for local communities

- “Forests play an important role in our daily lives, more than we can imagine. They provide clean air, shelter, livelihoods, water, food, and fuel security and serve as habitats to diverse plants and animal species”. Can you please tell us how your community benefits from the forests?

Few Examples

- edible fruits, flowers, tubers, roots, and leaves for food and medicines;
- materials for agricultural implements, house construction, and fencing;
- fodder (grass and leaf) for livestock and grazing of livestock in the forests; and
- collection of a range of marketable non-timber forest products
- forests also protect watersheds and reduce or slow down the amount of soil erosion and help regulate rainfall and stabilize the climate

- “Forests play such an important role in your day to day life. They are still disappearing at an alarming rate. Can you please tell us why are forests diminishing at such a rapid pace?

Few Examples

- Deforestation due to unsustainable jhum practices owing to increasing population with fallow periods less than 5 years
- Uncontrolled forest fires
- Overexploitation and unsustainable extraction of forest resources - excessive harvesting of orchids and medicinal plants, excessive timber harvesting
- Illegal logging for fuelwood and fodder
- Overgrazing by animals
- Development activities such as construction of infrastructure, establishment of industries and commercial areas

- When forests diminish, it is not just the trees that go. The entire ecosystem begins to fall apart, with dire consequences for all of us. Did you witness any such incidents in this landscape?

Few examples

- Predation of wild animals on crops
- Human-Wildlife Conflict
- Unseasonal rains and flash floods
- Landslides
- Long dry spells affecting crops and fodder availability for livestock
- Soil and water erosion
- Water shortage

b) Water – In abundance back then, is a critical resource now in the State

- What are the various sources of drinking water in the village? Are the springs drying up frequently, with villagers facing acute water shortages despite heavy rainfall? Can you please tell us the main drivers for depleting water reserves?

Few examples

- Increasing deforestation decreases ground water recharge and leads to surface run-off
- Lack of effective water harvesting structures
- Increased temperature and rainfall variations due to climate change
- Reduction in the temporal spread and a marked decline in winter rain
- Steep slopy terrains facilitate easy run-off of water

- Can you please tell us the implications of acute water scarcity for day-to-day activities?

Few examples

- Availability of water is far away from habitations – More time spent on fetching water therefore, less time for other things – Increased drudgery for women
- Less availability of water leads to low agriculture productivity – Locals incur economic losses
- Low water retention leads to less soil moisture – Grasses dry up early leading to fodder shortage for cattle/animals
- Less drinking water and fodder for animals/ cattle makes them venture into forests
-

Leads to clashes with forest officials, higher chances of transmission of animal diseases (from domestic to wild and vice-versa)

- Increased expenditure for locals in procurement of feed for their cattle

c) Increased dependence on hybrids and exotic breeds undermines ecosystems

- Traditional cultivation practices like Jhum in Mizoram protect agrobiodiversity and promotes the cultivation of a variety of local landraces of crops without chemical fertilizers. However, it is observed that many agricultural species, varieties, and breeds that have played an important role in the human diet and traditional cultures have disappeared. Can you please explain to us the reasons behind this from your own experience and observations?

Few examples

- Significant area under cash crops and plantations, especially rubber and oil palm, leading to monoculture and loss of native crops and their local landraces and varieties.
- Permanent farming systems being increasingly preferred over traditional jhum cultivation by farmers
- Extensive use of high yielding varieties of seeds and rearing of exotic breeds of cattle and piggery for quick economic returns

- The project landscape is inherently a biodiversity-rich area. Lately, we see large-scale oil palm plantations across the region. Can you please tell us the changes you see because of this?

Few examples

- An extremely water-intensive crop that impacts groundwater availability
- The use of chemical fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides, etc. increases the cost of production, affects soil health and human health
- Lowest forest bird species richness, as compared to both teak plantations and jhum cultivation
- Replaces diverse forest growth
- Increases drudgery for women due to labor-intensive tasks in artisanal palm oil livelihoods like pounding fruitlets all-day
- Exacerbates gender inequalities due to formal land titles, as women are bereft of ownership rights and land-use decision-making.
- Erosion of traditional culture around jhum practices

- Fishery and piggery rearing play a very important part in the economic development of farmers in the State. Recent trends show farmers' preference for exotic breeds, over low-producing indigenous breeds. However, this practice is not viable in the long run and poses a major threat to local ecosystems. Can you please tell us why rearing indigenous breeds is advantageous over exotic breeds?

Few examples

- Can adapt to local conditions
- Resistant to diseases
- Provides tastier and nutritious meat
- Can survive in adverse conditions such as a limited supply of feed and water
- Can be sold at higher prices

- With an abundance of benefits that indigenous varieties of crops and breeds bestow on farmers, it is high time we get back to our roots for resilient livelihoods.

d) Mizoram is a net importer of many agriculture products despite its high potential for agriculture

Although rice being the staple food and the most important crop occupying the largest share in terms of area and production, Mizoram is still not self-sufficient in rice production. The total paddy production till today can hardly meet the total consumption requirement of rice for a year. Likewise, the state is a net importer of livestock and its by-products, although there is potential for livestock activities. Can you please let us know the reasons for this scenario?

Few examples

- Lack of development of irrigation
- Higher inputs costs
- Improper use of package of practices
- Inadequate access to agricultural extension and remunerative markets.
- Rough terrain impedes the transportation of the produce to markets

e) Lack of congruity between Different Government Departments' schemes and programmes

- The programmes and schemes of different Government Departments in the project landscape are designed without any prior consultations with the villagers, undermining each other's efforts with negative implications on local communities and their environment.

f) Need for a transformative change in the current practices

- The project landscape encompasses rich natural resources which cater to our day-to-day needs. Unfortunately, these natural resources are being subject to over-exploitation by various stakeholders without due consideration to the needs and well-being of us, the locals, who often bear the brunt of such indiscriminate practices and are alienated from the fruits of the mainstream development process.
- It's high time we protect our degrading forests, endangered wildlife on the verge of extinction, revive our lost local landraces and conserve our natural resources. As locals, who understand our landscape better, we are better placed to manage and strengthen the resilience of our landscape to meet present and future needs and to offer multiple benefits and land uses over time.
- "But how can we do this? Can we do this individually or collectively?"
- If collectively, how? All of us come together in planning and decision-making, devising strategies, implementation methods, monitoring and review processes of various land-use activities, alternative livelihood options and sustainable natural resource management practices that can be undertaken to restore our degraded landscape into a greener and a healthier landscape.
- For long-term stability of our landscape, we may have to get back to our roots and identify our age old practices that are environment-friendly and drive our efforts towards reviving them. One such example is cultivation of indigenous varieties of crops or rearing indigenous breeds of livestock in place of hybrid/ exotic crop varieties or animal breeds. Don't you think this practice has positive implications on our people and the ecosystem we live in? With limited inputs, indigenous varieties/breeds can thrive and easily adapt to local conditions and are tastier and nutritious, when compared to hybrid varieties or exotic breeds. With better planning throughout the crop cycle and life cycle of animals, periodic monitoring and course-corrections in case of deviations, we can ensure quality produce of crops and livestock. While production is one aspect, we should bear in mind that our shift from modern varieties/exotic

breeds to traditional varieties/breeds should not result in loss of our incomes and instead enhance the incomes of our farmers.

- Likewise, we all depend on our forests for our basic needs. To ensure our own sustenance, we must do our bit by supporting the ongoing efforts of the Government in restoration and conservation of our forests and wildlife. We can do this by reflecting on all our actions that have a negative impact on forests and realigning our activities in such a way that we strike a delicate balance between development and the conservation activities for improved landscape management.
- Do you all agree that such collaborative process with all of us involved will bring a transformative change in our landscape and help us create healthy landscapes for our own sustainability and as well as for our future generations? This is what Green-Agriculture project is all about!



- The project will:
 - Help you spearhead the transformational change from current unsustainable practices towards more climate-resilient practices for enhanced incomes.
 - Empower all of you to become decision-makers of your landscape through participatory processes. All of you will be involved in identifying, planning, implementing and monitoring of various interventions as a part of

landscape planning and management. These interventions will include livelihood development in agriculture and allied sectors with a focus on indigenous varieties of crops and breeds of animals, creation of sustainable alternative livelihoods, sustainable natural resource management practices, conservation activities in the landscape.

- Improve your incomes and nutritional security through creation of sustainable value chains for select-set of indigenous varieties of crops and livestock breeds based on production and economic feasibility in the landscape
 - Provide you with package of practices and advisories on how to grow identified crop varieties and animal breeds, throughout the crop cycle/life cycle of the animal for improved quality and better price realization
 - Provide you with improved access to markets
 - Closely work with all of you to improve ongoing efforts to conserve forests and wildlife in your vicinity which will in turn be beneficial to all of you
- The decision-making power to decide what works best for the landscape, entirely vests with you and not with anyone else. Through these project interventions, you will be able to manage your landscape in an efficient and effective manner.
 - For collaborative planning, implementation and monitoring of activities in the landscape, we need a common platform that allows all of us to meet regularly and discuss the progress of planned activities, corrective actions and a road map for future strategies. To this effect, we intend to constitute a Village Implementation Committee (VIC) at the village level, which will provide an opportunity to voice your interests and concerns through your representatives. All of your interests and concerns will be considered and accommodated during landscape planning and management.
 - In this regard, we request your support and participation in the constitution of this committee.
 - We truly feel that you are the best custodians of your lands and forests. Your traditional knowledge and wisdom and age-old practices will be helpful in our efforts to improve the health of your landscape. We understand that your territories and lands are not only limited to enhancing your economic livelihoods but are also a rich source of your spiritual, cultural, and social identities. As locals residing in this landscape, you are better placed to take collective action in the best interests and welfare of your communities' members. Hence, we need your utmost support and cooperation in this project''

Annexure 4.1: Summary of Key Issues and Threats to Global Environmental Values

(Note: If the user of the document intends to provide a brief summary of the key issues and threats to the landscape and emphasize on how the Green-Ag project will strive to bring a transformative change in the landscape with the support of local communities and their active participation, please refer to the following content).

a) Importance of forest ecosystems for local communities:

- Forests play an important role in our daily lives, more than we can imagine. They provide clean air, shelter, livelihoods, water, food, and fuel security and serve as habitats to diverse plants and animal species.
- Lately, we all see that forests are declining at an alarming rate. When forests diminish, it is not just the trees that go. The entire ecosystem begins to fall apart, with dire consequences for all of us.

b) Water – In abundance back then, is a critical resource now in the State

- Mizoram receives abundant rainfall, yet it faces acute water-shortage during lean season.
- Springs are an important source of water for rural communities. With increasing anthropogenic pressures and lack of effective water harvesting structures, these water reserves are drying up
- Water scarcity has serious implications on day-to-day activities of the locals.

c) Increased dependence on hybrids and exotic breeds undermines ecosystems

- Traditional cultivation practices like Jhum in Mizoram protect agrobiodiversity and promote the cultivation of a variety of local landraces of crops without chemical fertilizers.
- However, it is observed that many agricultural species, varieties, and breeds that have played an important role in the human diet and traditional cultures have disappeared. Lately, we see large-scale oil palm plantations across the region undermining the agrobiodiversity of the region
- Fishery and piggery rearing play a very important part in the economic development of farmers in the State. Recent trends show farmers' preference for exotic breeds, over low-producing indigenous breeds. However, this practice is not viable in the long run and poses a major threat to local ecosystems.

d) Mizoram is a net importer of many agriculture products despite its high potential for agriculture

Although rice being the staple food and the most important crop occupying the largest share in terms of area and production, Mizoram is still not self-sufficient in rice production. The total paddy production till today can hardly meet the total consumption requirement of rice for a year. Likewise, the state is a net importer of livestock and its by-products, although there is potential for livestock activities.

e) Lack of congruity between Different Government Departments' schemes and programmes

The programmes and schemes of different Government Departments in the project landscape are designed without any prior consultations with the villagers, undermining each other's efforts with negative implications on local communities and their environment.

f) Need for a transformative change in the current practices

- Collective action with involvement of all stakeholders, especially the local communities in the landscape is imperative for restoration of degraded landscapes to healthier, resilient and greener landscapes.
- But how do this collectively? The Green-Ag project will facilitate this process. Through this project we will:
 - Actively engage with all of you in planning and decision making regarding various land-use options, alternative livelihoods and sustainable natural resource management initiatives, devising their implementation methods, monitoring and review processes.
 - Improve your incomes and nutritional security through creation of sustainable value chains for select-set of indigenous varieties of crops and livestock breeds based on production and economic feasibility in the landscape
 - Provide you with package of practices and advisories on how to grow identified crop varieties and animal breeds, throughout the crop cycle/life cycle of the animal for improved quality and better price realization
 - Provide you with improved access to markets
 - Closely work with all of you to improve ongoing efforts to conserve forests and wildlife in your vicinity which will inturn be beneficial to all of you
- For collaborative planning, implementation and monitoring of activities in the landscape, we need a common platform that allows all of us to meet regularly and discuss the progress, corrective-actions and a road map for future strategies. To this effect, we intend to constitute a Village Implementation Committee (VIC), which will provide an opportunity to voice your

interests and concerns through your representatives. All of your interests and concerns will be considered and accommodated during landscape planning and management. In this regard, we request your support and participation in the constitution of this committee

(Annexures 5 to be finalized)

Annexure – 5: Green Landscape Management Plans (GLMPs) and the process of their preparation

Annexure 6: Role of VIC in Planning, Implementation, and Monitoring of GLMPs

Landscape Planning and Management

Based on the findings of the Landscape Assessment, the VIC will

- **Understand and discuss landscape ecosystem** – the interdependence and interactions between different species, and interplay between different livelihoods and their impacts on the landscape ecosystem.
- **Deliberate and debate on the following aspects in detail:**
 - **Available resources** – Different resources available in the landscape, such as land area, forest types and area, soil types and quality, water resources etc.
 - **Demands on the landscape** – such as population of humans, livestock, wildlife, etc. within the landscape; and livelihood activities in the landscape such as agriculture, tourism, mining, industries, etc. Assess the types and extent of resources these competing demands (populations of different species and livelihoods) require for their sustenance.
 - **Threats to the landscape** – such as: fragmentation of wildlife corridors resulting into human-wildlife conflict, intensification of agriculture with greater greenhouse gas emissions, infrastructure and development activities resulting in loss of rich forests and biodiversity and ecosystem services, etc.
 - **Strengths and Opportunities in the landscape**
 - **Various land-use activities/interventions to be undertaken** – Conservation measures to be undertaken to protect threatened species, strategies and actions to minimize adverse impact of various activities on the ecosystem, potential mechanisms to reduce human-wildlife conflicts, sustainable natural resource management interventions, livelihood activities etc.
- **Develop a village level plan** – Based on the discussion on different aspects mentioned above, the VIC will develop a plan that will include -- list of interventions/land-use activities to be undertaken, areas of intervention, resources (financial and human), roles and responsibilities of relevant stakeholders
- **Implement and monitor** – Review the progress, identify challenges, review and recognize deviations on a monthly basis & design strategy to overcome these challenges
- **Document the learning, best-practices, lessons learnt and challenges** if any, during implementation of the village plan
- **Share the progress and documented lessons with Gram Panchayat Support Unit (GPSU)** members every month

- **Prepare new plans for subsequent years** based on implementation, evaluation, and learnings of preceding plans

Identification of Livelihoods and Value Chains

Based on the findings of the Value Chain Analysis, the VIC will

- **Deliberate different livelihood interventions** - primarily around the farm livelihoods (agriculture, livestock, and NTFP) through sustainable commodity value chains and non-farm livelihoods
- **Indicate preferences** to the agriculture/livestock/NTFP commodities to be promoted, based on their economic viability and production feasibility in the village.
- **Identify indigenous traditional knowledge** on these livelihoods.
- **Identify supportive mechanisms** to promote these livelihoods in the village
- **Guesstimate** the proportion of farm/livestock/NTFP produce **for self-consumption and marketable surplus**, if any in the village for the identified commodities
- **Discuss and reach a consensus on actions and strategies** to achieve optimum results in terms of production, productivity, alternative livelihoods, and mitigation of threats in the village
- **Identify progressive farmers/livestock keepers** for planned livelihood interventions.
- **Monitor the Quality and Quantity of Agriculture/Livestock Produce** – Fortnightly assessments of crops and livestock breeds throughout the cropping season/lifecycle of the livestock to assess the growth, identify deficiencies, and facilitate support from KVKs

Annexure – 7: Indicative list of members in VIC

- Chairman:
 - Sarpanch or Panch/ Chairman, Village Council or
 - Any member of VC who is resident of a particular village and acceptable to Sarpanch/ Chairman, Village Council;
- Representatives from:
 - Biodiversity Management Committees (BMCs)
 - Eco-development committee (EDC)
 - Joint Forest Management Committee (JFM)
 - Watershed Management Committees (WMC)
 - Self Help Groups (SHG) and Federations
 - Farmers Collectives and Co-operatives
 - Field level functionaries of different line departments -ex-officio members
 - Representative of SHGs working in the village
 - Representative of Indigenous communities living in the village
 - Representative from landless people living in the village
 - Representative of CSOs/NGOs working in the village, if any

Note: This list is only indicative and may vary as per local conditions and circumstances. In addition, one person may also represent two interest groups. For example, a person may represent an indigenous community and also landless class of individuals.

Annexure – 8: Provisional Structure of VIC

Please find below a provisional structure of VIC, subject to modifications based on the inputs of the Sarpanch or Panch/ Chairman, Village Council, and other local representatives

- The Sarpanch or Panch/ Chairman, Village Council, or any member of the village council with the concurrence of Sarpanch/ Chairman, VC shall be the Chairman of a VIC
- Various other committees working in the village shall nominate their representatives for a VIC in a written form
- The Community Resource Person shall be the Member Secretary of a VIC.
- All the Government officials from different line departments having jurisdiction of that village shall be Ex-officio members of a VIC.
- At least one-third of the members of a VIC shall be women.
- Adequate representation shall be given to the indigenous communities and at least two members shall be from these communities
- At least one member of the landless class of the village shall be a member
- A VIC shall meet as and when required but at least once in a month.
- If the chairman is absent due to any reason, the members may nominate any one among them to preside over the meeting on that particular day

Annexure – 9: Monitoring Plan for VIC constitution

Steps in VIC Constitution	Monitoring Indicators
Step 1: Stakeholder Mapping	List of VIC members mapped by GLIU
Step 2: Discussions on formation of VICs in TSG Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A meeting agenda for TSG meeting with an agenda item on constitution of VIC. • Minutes of the meeting documenting the approval of TSG for constitution of VICs. • Official letter issued by the Chairman of TSG to all the District Heads of the Government and Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) on VIC constitution with the contents provided in the VIC strategy paper (Annexure-1).
Step 3: Consultations between the GLIU Team Leader and the Heads of Government Departments at the district level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of meetings held with representatives of different Govt. Departments • Official circulars by District Heads of Govt. Departments to field functionaries and Sarpanch or Panch/ Chairman, VC for their participation in the constitution of VICs. The contents for letter provided in the VIC strategy paper (Annexure-2). • Documented proceedings of the consultations
Step 4: Copy of Instructions to be shared with the CRPs to initiate the process of VIC constitution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signed receipt from CRP having copy of circular issued by the TSG Chairman to District Heads of all concerned Government departments and PRIs • Signed receipt from CRP having copy of circular issued by the District Heads to their respective field functionaries and Sarpanch or Panch/ Chairman, VC
Step 5: Consultations between the Community Resource Persons and the Sarpanch/Panch/ Chairman of VC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of meetings held with Sarpanch/Panch/ Chairman of VC in meeting register of VIC • Meeting agenda finalized for village level meeting to constitute VIC and agenda item recorded in VIC register under the signature of Sarpanch/Panch/ Chairman of VC. • Meeting notice issued under signature of Sarpanch/Panch/ Chairman of VC

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receipt of letter of meeting from the members of VIC in Dak Book of VIC
Step 6: VIC Constitution Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signatures of meeting attendees to record their participation • Minutes of the meeting documenting the decisions taken during the meeting, duly signed by Sarpanch/Panch/ Chairman, VC • Copy of minutes shared with all members of VIC, SPMU and NPMU with their acknowledgement for having received it.

