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Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare
Department of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare
(RFS Division)

105, B-Wing, Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi
Dated: 1st February, 2024

Subject: Minutes of 9th National Project Monitoring Committee (NPMC) Meeting of Global Environment Facility (GEF) project "Green Agriculture: Transforming Indian Agriculture for Global Environmental Benefits and the Conservation of Critical Biodiversity and Forest Landscapes"- reg.

The 9th National Project Monitoring Committee Meeting of Global Environment Facility (GEF) project titled "Green Agriculture: Transforming Indian Agriculture for Global Environmental Benefits and the Conservation of Critical Biodiversity and Forest Landscapes" was held on **17th January, 2024 at Krishi Bhawan, New Delhi** under the Chairpersonship of Joint Secretary (RFS), Department of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare.

2. The Minutes of the meeting are enclosed for further necessary action.

Encl: as stated above.


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Distribution: -

1. Principal Secretary (Agri.) or his Representative not below the rank of Director from the States of Madhya Pradesh, Mizoram, Odisha, Rajasthan and Uttarakhand with request to present the status of the implementation of GEF project in their respective State.
2. Representative, NRAA, NASC Complex DPS Marg, Opposite Todapur Village, New Delhi.
3. Representative of Director General, PPV&FRA, NASC Complex DPS Marg, Opposite Todapur Village, New Delhi.
4. Representative of Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change, Jor Bagh, Lodhi Colony, New Delhi- 110003.
5. Inspector General of Forest (Wildlife), Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change, Indira Paryavaran Bhawan, Jor Bagh New Delhi
6. ADG (Soil/Agronomy), ICAR-Indian Agricultural Research Institute, Pusa Campus, New Delhi – 110012.
7. Director (AH), Ministry of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries, Krishi Bhawan, New Delhi.
8. FAO Representative, 55 Lodhi Estate, Max Mueller Marg, New Delhi- 110003.
9. Director (Agriculture), Directorate of Agriculture Government of Madhya Pradesh.
10. Director (Agriculture), Directorate of Agriculture, Government of Mizoram.
11. Director (IMAGE), Siripur, Bhubaneswar, Odisha.
12. Director Agriculture, Commissionerate of Agriculture, Government of Rajasthan, Pant Krishi Bhawan, Jaipur.
13. Project Director, Uttarakhand Decentralized Watershed Development Project Phase-II (GRAMYA), Watershed Management Directorate, Indira Nagar, Forest Colony, Dehradun.
14. Sh. R.B. Sinha, Project Director, GEF, FAO, 55 Lodhi Estate, Max Mueller Marg, New Delhi- 110003.
15. Dr. Konda Reddy FAO, 55 Lodhi Estate, Max Mueller Marg, New Delhi- 110003.

Copy to:

PS to JS (RFS)/ PS to ADC (NRM) PS to Director (RFS), Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Department of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Krishi Bhawan, New Delhi.

**Minutes of the 9th meeting of the National Project Monitoring Committee (NPMC),
Green-Ag Project held on 17th January at Krishi Bhawan, New Delhi**

9th meeting of the National Project Monitoring Committee (NPMC) of the GEF Funded project, "Green-Ag: Transforming Indian Agriculture for Global Environmental Benefits and the Conservation of Critical Biodiversity and Forest Landscapes" was held on January 17, 2024, under the Chairpersonship of Shri Franklin L Khobung, Joint Secretary (RFS), Department of Agriculture and Farmer's Welfare, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmer's Welfare (MoA&FW), Government of India (Gol). The main agenda of the meeting was to discuss the implementation progress of the project, and challenges of the Operational Partners (OPs) of the project in the States of Madhya Pradesh, Mizoram, Odisha, Rajasthan, and Uttarakhand. List of the participants is annexed.

2. At the onset, the Chairperson welcomed the participants and requested Shri R.B. Sinha, Project Director, Green-Ag, National Project Management Unit (NPMU), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to present the Compliance Report on the action points of the 8th NPMC meeting held on August 18, 2023.

3. Accordingly, the Project Director placed before the Committee a comprehensive Compliance Report as detailed below:

- **State's Work Plan:** All Operational Partners (OPs) have prepared and submitted their work plan to the NPMU with the plan to achieve the project targets. NPMU conducted a workshop on 21- 22 December 2023 to discuss the Annual Work Plan and Budget with all the States for the upcoming year 2024-25.
- **Monthly meetings to review the project progress by the OPs:** Monthly meetings are being conducted by all operational partners. In Mizoram, project progress is monthly reviewed by the Joint Director of Agriculture. In Odisha, the Director of Soil Conservation and Watershed Development reviews the project. In Uttarakhand and Madhya Pradesh, the State is reviewing the project as informed by the OP; however, NPMU is not aware of the meeting details. In Rajasthan, the Department of Agriculture is reviewing the project progress as informed by the OP.
- **Coordination between KVK Pauri Garhwal and OP Uttarakhand:** Green Landscape Implementation Unit (GLIU), Pauri Garhwal tried to reach out to KVK Pauri. However, they are yet to receive a response from the KVK.
- **Studies and Policy Dialogues:** The Project Director expressed concern that the policy dialogues are not progressing as expected and the progress of OPs is as under:

Madhya Pradesh: MP had shared the terms of reference (ToR) for the study on the human-wildlife conflict and it was cleared by Lead Technical Officers (LTO). The ToR for the study on ravine management is under revision, and the NPMU is redrafting the ToR at the OP team level. He further flagged the issues regarding the budget allocation of the studies. For the human-wildlife conflict study, the OP had approached the Indian Institute for Forest Management (IIFM) for conducting the study, however, they quoted

a higher budget, which exceeds the budget allotted for the study. A similar situation is being faced in almost all the states. In the case of MP, NPMU has informed OP to examine the surpluses in the budget from other activities and propose a case accordingly to increase the budget allocation for this study.

Mizoram: PD shared that the study on human-wildlife conflict is completed, and the report was also finalized by LTO, FAO. The study report for developing the background note on state policy dialogue in Natural Resource Management (NRM) submitted by the consultant is under review. Mizoram did not have an Agriculture Policy. Therefore, Agriculture Policy was taken as a second topic for Policy Dialogue. A draft policy paper has been prepared by the committee formed within the State Agriculture department and shared with various stakeholders for their input. The NPMU has also shared the draft policy with the LTO, FAO and the feedback was shared with OP. The state is close to finalizing the policy, expecting completion in the next two months.

Odisha: Two studies and two policy dialogues are going on by the State Biodiversity Board, Indian Institute of Water Management (IIWM) and OUAT. The ToRs for two more studies and two policy dialogues have been submitted to LTO, FAO for their review and inputs.

Uttarakhand: A study on Sustainable Energy Alternatives in the Uttarakhand Landscape is ongoing. Two policy dialogues on 'Agriculture Policy' and 'Fodder Policy' are proposed and scheduled for February-March of 2024.

Rajasthan: The operational partner reached out to the Director of Research at Agriculture University, Jodhpur, and the institute has agreed to undertake all five studies. They have committed for completing the tasks within 3-4 months of budget transfer. A consultation with line departments will be organized within a month to identify the topics for the policy dialogue.

4. State Steering Committee (SSC) and Technical Support Group (TSG) meetings: Project Director provided an update to the chair regarding the irregularities in State Steering Committee's (SSC) and Technical Support Group's (TSG) meetings across all States. In the current year, the NPMU meeting is being convened for the third time. However, the quarterly district-level meetings and biannual state-level meetings at the SPMU and GLIU levels are not taking place consistently. Due to state elections in Mizoram and Madhya Pradesh, meetings could not be held in time and there will be further delay due to upcoming national elections. However, in Madhya Pradesh, there is a significant concern as the SSC meeting has not occurred for over a year, despite repeated requests from NPMU. The NPMU had tried to reach out formally and informally to the State officials without any result. Furthermore, TSG meetings, although regular, exhibit irregularities, with only 3 in Sheopur and 2 in Morena District. In Uttarakhand, efforts are being made to ensure timely meetings. However, the State's directive for only two TSG meetings per year requires reconsideration. In Rajasthan, the

SSC meeting has been convened, but there is irregularity in TSG meetings. As on date only 4 meetings held and 2 proposed by the end of 2023-24.

5. Recruitment in Rajasthan: The Project Director expressed concerns during the meeting regarding the delay in recruitment in Rajasthan despite the assurance given in the last SSC and NPMC meeting. The state has deputed an ad-hoc team of 4 staff from the Watershed Directorate, all with backgrounds in Agricultural Engineering at the GLIU level. These individuals have been assigned additional responsibilities. The ad-hoc team, being in the advanced stages of their careers, may not adequately address the diverse needs of a project of this magnitude.

6. Inclusion of crop-wise technologies of National Innovation on Climate Resilient Agriculture (NICRA): The Project Director raised concerns about the lack of progress in adopting NICRA technology, as indicated during the last NPSC (National Project Steering Committee) meeting in March 2023. Despite Secretary's directive to adopt NICRA technology, there has been no significant development on this front. The Chair was informed that the Director of the Central Research Institute for Dryland Agriculture (CRIDA) had shared only a list of technologies without detailed information. On the KVK website also, there are no details about the NICRA technologies. Without detailed specifications, the list of technologies is not of much help and can't be promoted in the landscape. The PD emphasized the need for detailed information technology so that it can be associated with the problems they address or the specific agroecology for which they were developed for their scale-up in the landscapes. Despite raising concerns with the Director of CRIDA, no action has been taken on these matters over the last two months.

7. Linking the KVK websites with the GLIP: NPMU has prepared the operational guidelines for the Green Landscape Information Platform (GLIP) which will be established at the Gram Panchayat level in each landscape, wherein the KVK websites will be connected, allowing easy access to NICRA technologies and extension services of the KVK. OPs have not yet procured hardware for GLIP despite allocated funds.

8. Training of Rajasthan Staff: Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) from the tribal communities is essential in the GEF project before initiating field-level interventions. FPIC is pending in Rajasthan. Online training sessions for the 4 staff on deputation will be planned for next week. The Project Director expressed doubts about the effectiveness of the online training as the staff are in the advanced stage of their careers. In addition to this, the OP has assigned its Agriculture Expert to visit NPMU for collaborative planning. The NPMU is set to conduct the initial training on Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC), community consultation, and household surveys followed by training of trainers on other activities of the project.

Highlighting the recent FPIC activities, the Project Director shared with the Chair that the NPMU has received appreciation from FAO's Regional Office in Bangkok for the exceptional quality of the FPIC report.

9. MIS Updates: Madhya Pradesh has reported MIS is updated, Odisha has reported 90% completion for physical and 85% for financial MIS and Uttarakhand also reported completion of MIS updates. Mizoram has not completed the financial MIS which was expected to be completed by 31st December despite reminders and a commitment during the yearly review. It was also highlighted that vouchers amounting to approximately 40 lakhs have not been uploaded. It was noted that the OPs have not submitted physical information in the project's MIS system.

10. Sharing of Co-finance data through API: PD informed the Chair that in Rajasthan the physical MIS data for co-finance is being ported through API and similar efforts are being made with Odisha, where the NPMU has conducted the initial meeting with the IT wing of the Agriculture Department. PD requested the Chair that the API data porting for the government schemes should be initiated for all the landscapes to avoid duplicity of work and to easily capture the co-finance stakeholder's data.

11. DO letter from JS (RFS) to all JS in the Department for convergence: DO letter from JS to State Directors has been issued, however, NPMU has no update on the issuance of a letter to all JS in the department for convergence. NPMU has received DO for NRLM-DAY, RAD programs and Horticulture. JS confirmed that the letter has been issued to all concerned for convergence, however, reminder will be sent again for follow up.

12. Challenges Faced by NPMU: Following the Compliance Report, the Project Director shared challenges encountered by the NPMU in implementing the project. Firstly, the turnover of officers at the State level poses a significant hurdle, disrupting the continuity and efficiency of project operations. Secondly, accessibility to state officials becomes a notable challenge, potentially hindering effective coordination and communication within the project framework. Further, staff turnover within the NPMU itself presents a challenge, impacting institutional memory and project continuity. Lastly, there are issues with regard to capacities of State Project Management Units (SPMU) and Green Landscape Implementation Units (GLIU), particularly in terms of subject expertise, underscoring the importance of addressing capacity-building initiatives to enhance their effectiveness in project implementation.

13. After presentation by the PD, FAO, the Chairperson requested the States to present the project progress in their State and the challenges for which support from NPMC is required. Accordingly, representatives from the State Governments informed about the progress as follows :-

Madhya Pradesh: Shri Sujan Singh, the State Technical Coordinator (STC) of MP informed that State Steering Committee (SSC) two meetings of State Steering Committee (SSC), have been conducted since beginning of the project. The OP is implementing Farmer Field Schools (FFS) for Mustard crop and Cattle management. The OP has developed a draft GLMP which shall be

discussed with NPMU. The FFS has observed a 40% participation rate of women. Training on NICRA technology is being scheduled in Morena District with support from KVK Scientists. As regards the issues faced by them, he informed that due to low budget allocation in the project for studies, institutions are unable to take up the studies.

The chair observed that the progress in MP seems to be in the planning stage only, with no clear target timelines and limited on-ground progress. In response, the OP clarified that the reported progress has been achieved within the past year. The low progress is due to delay in recruitment of the Green Landscape Implementation Unit (GLIU) and State Project Management Unit (SPMU) staff. Chair advised the state to intensify the efforts and expedite implementation in the field.

Mizoram: Shri Kenny, STC, Mizoram presented the project update. He informed that development of the Green Value Chains is ongoing and is expected to be finalized in collaboration with FAO. On the matter of the MIS updates, OP acknowledged the concern raised by NPMU. He stated that the current 5mb file attachment limit poses challenges as the documents from the GLIU team often exceed this threshold. This issue had been brought to NPMU's attention, and they requested to increase the uploading limit for the supporting documents.

The Annual Work Plan Budget report's completion was also reported to NPMU. The State Project Coordinator (SPC) was commended for being proactive, scheduling monthly reviews with all Community Resource Persons (CRPs) in the coming month. He highlighted the financial constraints for conducting studies and requested for increased funding. Although OP has identified an organization in the older budget. OP also conducted an inception meeting with the institution for the study last week, which was attended by the NPMU Focal Point. Regarding the targets, he assured of adherence to the specified timeline. With respect to the State Steering Committee (SSC) meetings, he informed that 7 meetings have been conducted out of the 12 and another meeting has been planned in February, 2024.

Odisha: Shri Shailendra Naik, Joint Director, Directorate of Soil Conservation and Watershed Development, Govt. of Odisha shared a comprehensive update on the project landscape. Initial target of covering 66 villages, the intervention area has been expanded to include an additional 159 villages. The TSG meeting at the district level was successfully conducted. The women's participation has been minimal due to the limited number of households, which is expected to increase with the expansion in the area. There is 100% vaccination of cattle and goats in the landscape covering 66 villages, in the last year. Before project activities, there were no vaccinations of the livestock in the landscape. Additionally, artificial insemination for cattle is actively being carried out, using local indigenous breeds to improve the breed in tribal areas.

In terms of project management, the financial MIS is currently 85% updated, and the physical MIS is 90% complete. Convergence activities are ongoing across all departments, with certain corporate entities such as Reliance and Dabur investing in these initiatives. The Project Director highlighted the collaboration with the Odisha Millets Mission, and that the convergence with the private sector has been achieved in Odisha only. The Project Director suggested Chair to visit Odisha to review the field interventions.

The Chair suggested involving existing farmer cooperatives in the ongoing efforts, emphasizing the need for a collaborative approach to maximize the project's impact.

Rajasthan: Rajasthan's speaker Shri Arjun Lal provided a comprehensive update on the project landscape and shared the challenge faced by the team in terms of the shortage of manpower. He informed about the difficulties in securing a reliable HR agency due to the Government's process involved in engaging the agencies as well as the remoteness of the landscape. OP elaborated on the complexities arising from the inadequate agency support, emphasizing the critical need for a robust workforce to effectively implement the project at the ground level.

The Chair noted that the NPMC has discussed the staffing challenges several times and to date, the State team has not taken any substantial action. He advised the team to take immediate measures to address the manpower shortage. He also recommended utilizing the existing SHG network. The Chair requested the Director, DAC to send a DO letter to Rajasthan on this subject. PD requested the Chair to visit Rajasthan for a meeting to resolve these pending issues. The Chair agreed to visit Rajasthan and suggested this visit could be clubbed with other work visits to Rajasthan.

Uttarakhand: Shri Srivastava, Team Leader, GLIU, provided a comprehensive update on the project landscape and ongoing activities. OP highlighted a commendable 70% women participation in the project. OP informed that the initial project area was in four districts which is now being confined to just one district, however, the targets remain the same, which may be difficult to achieve.

PD apprised the Chair that despite the reduction in the number of Districts the project villages have increased. The project implementation is going on in only 99 villages and the team does not plan to increase the implementing villages. The Chair advised UK team implement the project in saturation mode so that the targets can be achieved.

14. After discussion on State specific issues, Shri Konda Chavva, AFAOR (Programs), FAOIN shared initial findings of the mid-term review. The review recognized progress in setting up structures in all states, highlighting positive signs like strong women participation and acceptance of Community Resource Persons (CRPs), except in Rajasthan. However, it pointed out the need for clear communication tools from the National Project Management Unit (NPMU). He further informed that, despite being midway, challenges due to the pandemic

and state priorities led to a project outlook like the first year. He requested for an extension of the project from the donor agency GEF due to underused funds and disruption caused due to COVID-19. The mid-term review urged focus on Green Landscape Management Plans (GLMPs), currently prepared for three states but lacking in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. Recommendations include improving these plans, adjusting the budget and staffing for better results, proposing incentives for CRPs, and aligning actions with department planning cycles. Besides, in terms of sustainability, he suggested to weave it into the Green Landscape Management Plan and ensure that it is part of the annual budget and work plan. Following further suggestions were made by him :-

- Improve communication tools from NPMU for better project understanding for officials so that the state officials have better clarity about the project.
- Extension of 18-24 months beyond the current project period to compensate for the delayed implementation.
- Regular orientation/ refreshers/ capacity building of all levels of implementers/ stakeholders to enable a mutual understanding of the project's outcomes to develop five unique but replicable models.
- Extensive handholding of CRPs and GLIUs for the next 12-18 months (about 1 and a half years) to enable them to function as agents of change.
- Strengthen Green Landscape Management Plans in all states
- Adjust budget and staffing for better results in the remaining project period.
- Consider incentives for CRPs in line with department planning cycles.
- Integrate sustainability into the Green Landscape Management Plan.
- Ensure sustainability is part of the annual budget and work plan.

15. In conclusion, the Chair again emphasized the OPs to fasten the speed of project implementation and work in saturation mode. The Chair, suggested leveraging existing structures like the Sakhi network present in villages for project sustainability. Regarding NICRA technology, the dissemination of information was identified as a key consideration. There is an inventory of Climate Resilient Agriculture (CRA) interventions which can be mapped with the Green-Ag project villages in the CRA framework developed by the Department. Regarding the mid-term review report, the Chair stated that the Government will look into various aspects once the final report of the mid-term review is received at their end.

After the progress updates from each State and detailed deliberations, the following action points have been identified:

- i. Increase the document upload limit for MIS completion from 5 MB. **(Action: NPMU).**
- ii. Develop Operational Information and Communication (OIC) materials. **(Action: NPMU/SPMU all states).**
- iii. Expedite the recruitment process for State Project Management Units and CRPs. **(Action: Rajasthan Team)**

- iv. MIS to be updated. **(Action: Mizoram in particular and all other OPs on an ongoing basis)**
- v. Letter from Secretary, Department of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Govt. of India to the Chief Secretary, Government of Rajasthan and visit of Chair to Rajasthan to resolve the pending issues including establishment of SPMU and GLIU. **(Action: RFS Division, MoA&FW and NPMU).**
- vi. Operational Partners to present the progress in future meetings along with the challenges faced by them and support requirements from NPMC. **(Action: All OPs)**
- vii. The DO letters issued by the ministry on the Green-Ag project must be shared with NPMU directly for their information and follow-up. **(Action: RFS Division, MoA&FW).**
- viii. Leverage the already existing structure like SHG with what is already being implemented in the fields. **(Action: All OPs).**
- ix. Leverage the human resources already present in the field in other Government schemes like the Sakhi network. **(Action: All OPs).**
- x. There is an inventory of CRA interventions which can be mapped with the Green-Ag project villages in the CRA framework. The project is to provide the list of villages in the landscapes to the Ministry. **(Action: OP and NPMU).**
- xi. Progress has to be made with a strategy to achieve the targets and address the concerns brought out in the final MTR report. **(Action: NPMU/SPMU and GLIU all states).**
- xii. Work in saturation mode for maximum field intervention. **(Action: Uttarakhand Team).**
- xiii. JS to visit Rajasthan and Orissa. **(Action: RFS Division, MoA&FW).**
- xiv. Technologies developed under the NICRA program to be made available to the project. Additionally, these technologies be put on the website of the concerned KVKs for easy access to all. **(Action: ADG (NRM & Agroforestry) ICAR)**
- xv. Reminder to be sent to all that States with reference to the earlier DO letter sent for convergence. **(Action : RFS Division)**

The meeting ended with Vote of Thanks to the Chair.

List of Participants

S. No.	Name	Designation/Office Address
1	Shri Franklin L. Khobung	Joint Secretary (RFS), DA&FW, MoA&FW, Govt. of India, New Delhi
2	Dr. Prashant Armoninar	Director, NRAA, DA&FW, Govt. of India, New Delhi
3	Shri R.A.S. Patel	Deputy Commissioner(RFS), DA&FW, MoA&FW, Govt. of India, New Delhi
4	Shri Mukesh Dutt Sharma	Assistant Director, M/o Animal Husbandry, Govt. of India, New Delhi
5	Ms. Sunita Bhardwaj	Senior Statistical Officer (RFS), DA&FW, MoA&FW, Govt. of India, New Delhi
6	Shri. N.K. Saroj	Senior Technical Assistant (RFS), DA&FW, MoA&FW, Govt. of India, New Delhi
7	Shri Omkar	Dy. Director, Deptt. Of Farmers' Welfare & Agriculture Development, Govt. of Madhya Pradesh
8	Dr. Sujan Singh Bimal,	State Technical Coordinator, SPMU, Govt. of Madhya Pradesh
9	Shri. S. C. Singadia	Addl. Director Agriculture, Deptt. Of Farmers' Welfare & Agriculture Development, Govt. of Madhya Pradesh
10	Shri Lalmalsawma	Joint Director, Agriculture cum State Project Coordinator Green-Ag, Govt. of Mizoram
11	Dr Keny Vanlalhriatpuia	State Technical Coordinator, SPMU, Govt. of Mizoram
12	Shri Sailendra Narayan Naik	Joint Director, Soil Conservation and Watershed Development, Govt. of Odisha
13	Shri J N Yadav	Agriculture Research Officer, Department of Agriculture, Govt. of Rajasthan
14	Shri Arjun Lal	Joint Director, Department of Agriculture, Govt. of Rajasthan
15	Dr S.S. Srivastava	Team Leader, GLIU, Govt. of Uttarakhand
16	Shri Konda Chavva	AFAOR, FAO, New Delhi
17	Ms. Athira Sobhana	Junior NRM Specialist, Green-Ag, NPMU, FAO
18	Ms. Devashree Nayak	Gender and Social Inclusion Specialist, Green-Ag, NPMU, FAO
19	Ms. Jasmeet Kaur	Program Assistant, NPMU, FAO
20	Shri R.B. Sinha	Project Director, Green-Ag Project, NPMU, FAO