

**JICA assisted Project for Improvement of Himachal Pradesh Forest Ecosystems Management & Livelihoods (PIHPFEM&L)**

**Milestones Achieved  
FY 2018-19  
&  
Activities for FY 2019-20**

**Himachal Pradesh Forest Department**

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## **List of Abbreviations**

BMC	Biodiversity Management Committee
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CIG	Common Interest Group
DMU	Divisional Management Unit
FCCU	Forest Circle Coordination Unit
FTU	Field Technical Unit
GB	Governing Body
GeM	Government e-Marketplace
GIS	Geographic Information System
GoHP	Government of Himachal Pradesh
HPC	High Powered Committee
HPFD	Himachal Pradesh Forest Department
IT	Information Technology
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
MIS	Management Information System
NTFP	Non Timber Forest Produce
PFM	Participatory Forest Management
PMC	Project Management Consultants
PMU	Project Management Unit
REOI	Request for Expression of Interest
RFP	Request for Proposal
SHG	Self Help Group
TR	Territorial
VFDS	Village Forest Development Society
WL	Wildlife

## **Introduction**

The Project for Improvement of Himachal Pradesh Forest Ecosystems Management & Livelihoods (PIHPFEM&L) is being implemented as part of the Indo-Japan Cooperation under an ODA Loan Agreement between Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) & Government of India. The Rs.800 Cr ODA loan agreement was signed on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2018

and is being implemented in 6 District - Bilaspur, Shimla, Mandi, Kullu, Kinnaur, and Lahaul & Spiti.

Overall Goal: Ecosystems services from forest areas are improved for sustainable socio-economic development in the state of Himachal Pradesh.

Objective: Ecosystems of forests in the project areas are sustainably managed and enhanced by the project interventions.

To that effect, the Project aims to manage and enhance forest area ecosystems while contributing to environmental and sustainable socio-economic development in the project area. It strives to contribute to biodiversity conservation and improvement of ecosystem services with specific focus on water resource conservation, prevention of soil erosion, and necessary support to establish sustainable alternative livelihoods of local residents.

All envisaged activities will be implemented by the Himachal Pradesh Forest Department in two modes viz. 1) Departmental Mode; 2) Participatory Forest Management (PFM) Mode.

Key components of the Project are:

Component 1: Sustainable Forest Ecosystems Management

Component 2: Biodiversity Conservation

Component 3: Livelihood Improvement Support

Component 4: Institutional Capacity Strengthening [This is the first JICA assisted Project in Himachal Pradesh that specifically focuses on enhancement and management of forest ecosystem services while contributing towards environmental and socio-economic development of the forest fringe and dependent communities.](#)

### *Project Cost*

Entire estimated cost of the Project is Rs.800 Cr of which 80 per cent i.e. Rs.640 Cr is to be covered by the Japanese ODA loan for the project and 20 per cent i.e. Rs. 160 Cr is to be provided by Government of Himachal Pradesh (GoHP). Out of the abovementioned Rs.640 Cr, 90 per cent loan will be borne by the Government of India, and is extended as a grant to GoHP.

### **Project Duration**

The 10-years Project (1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 –31<sup>st</sup> March 2028) will be implemented in 3 phases - Preparatory Phase (1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 –31<sup>st</sup> March 2020), Implementation Phase (1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026), and Consolidation/Phase-Out (1<sup>st</sup> April 2026 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2028).

### *Project Coverage*

- 6 Districts - Bilaspur, Shimla, Mandi, Kullu, Kinnaur, and Lahaul & Spiti
- 7 Forest Circles (5 Territorial; 2 Wildlife)
- 18 Forest Divisions (16 Territorial; 2 Wildlife)
- 61 Forest Ranges (56 Territorial; 5 Wildlife)
- 400 Village Forest Development Societies (VFDS); 60 Biodiversity Management Sub-Committees; 920 Self-Help Groups (SHGs)/ Common Interest Groups (CIGs)

## **Four Components**

Component 1: Sustainable Forest Ecosystem Management

The Project will focus on plantation activities where in through development of model nurseries at forest circle and range levels, high-quality seedlings of local/ regional species will be provided for different activities such as – Improvement of Moderately Dense Forests/ Open & Scrub Forest; Eradication of Invasive Species (lantana), Improvement of Pastures and other forestry activities outside forest area. Under this component, 10,984 ha will be covered through different forestry activities.

All major activities to be planned, executed, and monitored in accordance with ‘*Micro Plans*’ that will be prepared through participatory and collaborative approach between the local communities and the Project staff.

### **Component 2: Biodiversity Conservation**

*The Project aims to strengthen Rapid Response Teams to address emergency cases of Human-Wildlife Conflict. In close consultation with HPFD Wildlife wing, the project will work on other path-breaking studies such as Pilot Project on Biodiversity Corridor, Designing of Biodiversity Assessment, in addition to plantation activities in and around protected areas.*

### **Component 3: Livelihood Improvement Support**

*The Project supports both NTFP and non-NTFP based alternative livelihood activities. Under NTFP-based livelihood interventions, a “Jadi-Buti Cell” will be established that will be responsible for Standardisation of Protocols for Sustainable Cultivation & Harvesting of NTFPs including medicinal plants, Formation & Strengthening of Cluster level “HIMJadi-Buti Cooperative Societies”, and Creating a Brand for medicinal plants produce in Himachal Pradesh and in the country. Further, it will work in in synergy with the GoHP’s Van Samridhi Jan Samridhi Yojana to regulate the NTFP extraction, Standardise the ex-situ Propagation of certain Identified Species, Value Addition, and Streamlining Marketing Channels.*

### **Component 4: Institutional Capacity Strengthening**

*For effective implementation of the Project, it is essential to strengthen the institutional capacity of HPFD, Community Based Organisations (CBOs), and PMU Staff. Through this component, the project will support enhancement of human resources capacities & capabilities, research & knowledge base, effective usage or improvement of support systems and monitoring mechanisms through MIS/GIS for both Forest Management and Biodiversity Conservation. Information technology will play a critical role in planning, implementation, and monitoring of all activities in the project with integrated use of GIS data, Remote Sensing techniques, and latest GIS software (ArcGIS).*

## ***Activities in FY 2018-19***

FY 2018-19 was the first year of Preparatory Phase where the focus was on setting and Strengthening Institutional Arrangements, Deployment of Requisite Staff, Formulation of Guidelines & Manuals, and Establishing overall Strategic Vision and Plan for the Project across the four components. The Project will continue to consolidate these activities in FY 2019-20, which is the second year of Preparatory Phase and prepare the project for subsequent six years of implementation.

### ***Financial Outlay FY 2018-19***

<b>Component No.</b>	<b>Component Name</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>'Total Expenditure 2018-19 (in Rs.)</b>
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1.	Sustainable Forest Ecosystem Management	Nursery Improvement/ Raising	6,54,64,000
		<b>Total (a)</b>	<b>6,54,64,000</b>
4.	Institutional Capacity Strengthening	OE/ IT Related (Equipment Support)	1,19,13,995
		Rent, Rate & Taxes	24,56,000
		Communication & Publicity	1,85,700
		Office Furnishing	63,55,997
		Remuneration of Outsourced Staff / Workshops etc.	89,99,965
		Office Maintenance	65,05,596
		Motor Vehicle	41,45,019
		<b>Total (b)</b>	<b>4,05,62,232</b>
	Administrative Expenses	Salary	93,12,432
		TA	84,107
		ME	4,58,117
		<b>Total (c)</b>	<b>98,54,656</b>
	<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>11,58,80,888</b>

### Status of Reimbursement Claims FY 2018-19

Reimbursement Claim filed for the Month	Reimbursement Claims Filed (in Rs.)	Disbursement by JICA in the Month	Reimbursement Claim- Approval Received (in Rs.)
June-Oct 2018	57,22,997	December 2018	57,22,997
November 2018	11,40,735	January 2019	11,40,735
December 2018	13,32,757	January 2019	13,32,757
January 2019	64,04,648	January 2019	64,04,648
February 2019	91,40,440	March 2019	91,40,440
March 2019	7,53,25,849	May 2019	7,53,25,849
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,90,67,426</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>9,90,67,426</b>

### Highlights of FY 2018-19

#### July 2018

- Registration of Society for Improvement of Forest Ecosystems Management & Livelihoods in H.P. under Society's Registration Act,

2006

- Project Launch Workshop Chaired by Hon'ble Chief Minister, Himachal Pradesh

### **August 2018**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting of High Powered Committee Chaired by Chief Secretary
- 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting of Governing Body Chaired by ACS (Forests)
- Initiated Staff Deployment from HPNRM Society, Solan
- Procurement of Furnishing from Godrej through HPFDC for PMU office
- Awareness Workshop in Kullu, Rampur

### **September 2018**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting of Executive Committee Chaired by Chief Project Director
- Awareness Workshops in Rampur, Shimla
- Notification of Roles & Responsibilities of Various Offices under the Project

### **October 2018**

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of Executive Committee
- Initiated Disbursement of APOs to FCCU/DMU office for tasks such as Nursery Development and Raising, Procurement of IT/Furnishings, Office Maintenance to be undertaken in FY 2018-19 (on-going activity)
- Awareness Workshops in Shimla

### **November 2018**

- Approval of VFDS Bylaws by the Government of Himachal Pradesh

### **December 2018**

- 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of Executive Committee

### **January 2019**

- Launch of Operation Manual by Hon'ble Forest Minister
- PAN and TAN Allotment for the Society
- Awareness Workshop at CPRI, Shimla

## **February 2019**

- Contract Negotiations with SOFRECO-JPS Associates, Project Management Consultants (PMC) post due completion of REOI (Request for Expression of Interest), RFP (Request for Proposal), and Evaluation of Technical & Financial Bids
- 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of Executive Committee
- Initiated Staff Deployment from NRTC, Parwanoo

## **March 2019**

- 5<sup>th</sup> Meeting of Executive Committee
- GeM set-up for Procurement of IT related Equipment
- Awareness Workshops at FTI Sundernagar and FTI Chail

## **Details on Achievements of FY 2018-19**

### **Actions taken by the High Powered Committee (HPC) and the Governing Body (GB) in FY 2018-19**

- Operation Plan for the Project was discussed and approved by the HPC, along with the expenditure projection for FY 2018-19 in the first meeting of HPC held on 01.08.2018. The meeting was chaired by the Chief Secretary of GoHP and attended by ACS (Finance), ACS (Forests), PCCF (HoFF), Pr. Secretary (Ayurveda), Special Secretary (RD& PR), PCCF (Finance), Director (Horticulture), Director-cum-Warden (Fisheries), Joint Director (Agriculture), HP State PCB (Shimla), President, Rishi Environment Protect Group, Chairperson Zila Parishad Kullu, Chief Project Director JICA PIHPFEM&L, Project Director (M&E), Kullu, Project Director (Admin & Finance), Shimla.
- The First Meeting of Governing Body held on 06.08.2018 was chaired by ACS (Forests) and attended by PCCF (HoFF), PCCF (Admin), PCCF (Mgt.), PCCF-cum-CPD (Solan), PCCF (WL & CAMPA), APCCF (R&T), APCCF (Working Plan), CCF Shimla, M.D. HPSFDC, MS, HIMCOSTE, Chief Project Director (FPP), SMS (IDP), GM & Convener SLBC (HP), Chief Manager, SLBC (UCO Bank), Chief Project Director JICA PIHPFEM&L, Project Director (M&E), Kullu, Project Director (Admin & Finance), Shimla, Dy Project Director (Rampur), and DFO (Publicity). The following actions were approved/ratified:
  - Permission to the Society (PMU HQ Shimla) and FCCU offices (7) , DMU offices(18) to open zero balance accounts to enable project funds to be transferred to their accounts.
  - Qualifications and Emoluments for the Outsourced to be engaged in the

Project were approved.

- The terms of reference pertaining to Jadi-Buti cell under the component of Livelihood Improvement Support were discussed. The PMU was directed to seek approval from the Government for any additional staff to be recruited for the Jadi-Buti cell.
- Territorial responsibility to Kullu, Shimla and Rampur offices in addition to the functional responsibilities was also directed to be given.

The HPC and the GB paved the way for PMU offices at Shimla, Kullu and Rampur to plan activities that are to be undertaken during the first year of the project's Preparatory Phase. During the course of periodic five Executive Committee meetings and on-going Strategic Reviews & Workshops, concrete decisions and actions were taken for the project to lay a strong foundation for the rest of the Project duration.

### Concrete Actions by the Project Management Unit (PMU), PIHPFEM&L

#### Finalisation of Fund Flow Mechanism

In the initial months of Preparatory Phase incessant focus was laid on streamlining the fund flow mechanism for the Project. After internal deliberations amongst the Executive Committee members and valid inputs from the field offices, the following mechanism was finalised, which is directed to be used during the entire course of project preparation, implementation, and phase-out stages.

The DMU/FCCU Offices while raising demand (based on actual expenditure in field/offices) to the FCCU offices, will send a direct copy of the same to PMU Office Shimla so as to initiate the action regarding making payments. The FCCU will recommend the transferring of the funds to the Societies' account of the concerned FCCU/DMU office on the format prescribed by the PMU Office Shimla. On the receipt of the above, the amount will be transferred to the Society's Account of the concerned DMU/FCCU offices directly as per their requisition. Since for the purpose of reimbursement claims to be filed to JICA, the detailed information, of the bills against which the requisition (demand) has been sent by DMU/FCCU, is mandatory. Therefore, if the information is not given in the prescribed format, no payment would be released by the PMU.

**Figure 1: Fund Flow Mechanism, PIHPFEM&L**

*Source: PMU, Shimla*

#### Engagement of HPNRM Society (Solan) and NRTC (Parwanoo) for Staff Deployment

Success of any project is contingent to the presence of requisite strength of qualified staff members. In this first year of the Preparatory Phase, all efforts were made to timely engage and deploy staff on the 156 posts sanctioned by the GoHP, which included 16 HPFD Officers and 140 Outsourced Staff. To meet the latter requirement, the HPNRM Society (Solan) and NRTC (Parwanoo) were engaged to deploy outsourced staff to the JICA assisted PIHPFEM&L. In FY 2018-19, starting from August 2018, 65 personnel including FTU Coordinators and Computer Operator-cum-Accountants were deployed by HPNRM Society (Solan) till the end of financial year. Further, another 13 personnel were engaged through NRTC, Parwanoo that included Programme Managers, Subject Matter Specialists, Accounts Manager, and Office Manager. By the end of FY 2018-19, a total staff of 92 personnel was engaged in the Project.

Nursery Development and Raising



Nursery Development and Raising remained a key focus area of FY 2018-19.

Out of the total expenditure, Rs.11.59 Cr for FY 2018-19, almost 56 per cent i.e. Rs.6.54 Cr were spent on Nursery Improvement works and Seedling Production. Development works were carried out in 41 Nurseries (including both Circle level and Range level nurseries). Approx. 8,35,000 seedlings were raised (~1.5 years plant species) for both PFM and Departmental mode to be carried out by Batch 1 of VFDS/BMC sub-committees in 16 Ranges (15 TR and 1 WL), in FY 2020-21.

#### Institutional Capacity Strengthening

In FY 2018-19, dedicated teams were created at the PMU, FCCU, DMU and FTU levels with regular and contractual/ outsourced staff, and due emphasis was laid on strengthening of these teams.

#### IT Infrastructure:

IT is bound to play a critical role in planning, implementation, and monitoring of all activities in the project. To that effect, the IT infrastructure requirements of the PMU, FCCUs, DMUs, and FTUs were assessed and requisite funds were released for procurement of IT equipment/Office Automation/Gadgets to strengthen effective and faster mode of communication. In FY 2018-19, Rs. 1.19 Cr. were spent through Government e-Marketing Portal (GeM) for procurement of such equipment by PMU (Shimla), Regional Offices (Kullu & Rampur), 3 FCCU offices, 8 DMU Offices, and 27 FTU offices.

#### Mobility:

Since there is a restriction on purchase of new vehicles (4-wheel drive), the Project supported the hiring of vehicles at PMU, FCCU, and DMU level in FY 2018-19. Rs. 41.45 lacs were spent on hiring of 23 vehicles to undertake field operations/supervisions and regular office functioning for Project activities only.

#### Trainings & Workshops

In FY 2018-19, incessant focus was on Capacity Building of HPFD officers, Project Officials, and other key stakeholders. In that regard, a series of Trainings & Workshops were organised by the PMU and the Regional Offices (Kullu and Rampur) to expedite an understanding on Orientation on Project Objectives, introduction to the Four Project Components, Proposed Activities & Interventions, Activities, Implementation Schedule and Institutional Arrangement & Framework.

During the course of these workshops the roles and responsibilities of the Governing Body, Executive Committee, PMU, FCCU, DMU, and FTU offices, VFDS and BMC Sub-committees were categorically elaborated and discussed in detail.

The project also organised the first Stakeholders Meet at CPRI, Shimla involve and integrate community members right from the Preparatory Phase of the Projects. Their valuable inputs and insights on pressing issues that can be addressed through the JICA funded Forestry Project were duly noted and incorporated in to the on-going planning for subsequent years.

Overall, the following Events/Meetings/Workshops were held in FY 2018-19:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting of High Powered Committee
- 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting of Governing Body
- 5 Meetings of Executive Committee
- Eight (8) Orientation workshops conducted at Circle level and FTI Sunder Nagar & FTIChail, Shimla

## **Action Plan for FY 2019-20**

In the Second year of the Preparatory Phase i.e. FY 2019-20, the following priorities will be addressed through on-going and new activities:

- Continued impetus to strengthen existing institutional arrangements set up in FY 2018-19 through Information & Technology Infrastructure, Mobility Support, and Office Assistance to PMU, 2 Regional Offices (Kullu & Rampur), 7 FCCUs, 18 DMUs and 61 FTU Offices.
- Deployment of remaining staff from HPNRM Society, Solan and NRTC Parwanoo
- Identification and Selection of Batch I, II, III of 400 VFDS (75,150,175) and Batch I and II of 60 BMC Sub-committees (12, 48) to be formed under the Project as a basic implementation unit.
- Formulation of Micro Plans for Batch 1 of VFDS and BMC Sub-committees, which will be prepared through Participatory and Collaborative approach between the local communities and the project staff.
- Contract Signing with the Project Management Consultants (PMC) to begin work on the 3 year assignment.
- Continue with the on-going Nursery Development works in Circle and Range level nurseries covered in FY 2018-19, and initiate improvement activities in those that were not covered.
- Raising of Nurseries for Batch II and Batch III of VFDS/ BMC Sub-committees of potential major species ~2.5 years and ~3.5 years, respectively.
- Advance works such as pit digging, clearing of area, fencing works etc. for Plantation to be carried out in PFM and Departmental Mode of Batch 1 of VFDS and BMC Sub-committees
- Establishment of a specialised Jadi-Buti Cell, comprising of Director, Manager (Marketing), Manager (Enterprise Development), and MIS Associate, at the PMU level for standardisation of protocols for sustainable cultivation & harvesting of NTFPs including medicinal plants, formation and strengthening of cluster level “Him Jadi-Buti Cooperative Societies”, and creating a Brand for medicinal plants produce in Himachal Pradesh and in the country.
- Formulation of Monitoring & Evaluation Framework and Plan

- Trainings, Workshops, and Exposure Visits for HPFD Staff and Project Officials
- Statutory Financial Audits at PMU and DMU levels
- Outsourced Studies/ Works/ Research Studies on
  - GIS-based Surveying & Mapping of Intervention Areas (VFDS/ BMC);
  - Baseline Surveys – Socio-economic/Gender/ Physical;
  - Pilot Project on Hydro Cultural Fodder Production;
  - Monitoring Data Accumulation for Effective Pasture Management;
  - Introduction of Rotational Grazing Reserve Concept (Study);
  - Species/Area specific Human wildlife conflict mitigation/ management (Baseline Survey);
  - Recovery Program for Endangered Wildlife (Baseline survey to clarify the current status of conservation breeding efforts and activities)
  - Pilot Project on Biodiversity Corridor (Baseline Survey)
  - Basic study for designing Biodiversity Assessment
- Publications of different Information, Education, and Communication materials such as Project Newsletters; Guidelines and Manuals; Formats etc. for internal and external distribution.

## **The Year in Pictures**

### **FY 2018-19**