

**Proceedings of the meeting held on 20-08-2020 - Visit of Sh. Rakesh Pathania, Hon'ble Forest Minister H.P. to JICA Headquarter Office, Potters' Hill, Summer Hill, Shimla-5 on 20<sup>th</sup> August, 2020.**

**Following were present in the meeting:-**

1. Sh. Sanjay Gupta, Addl. Chief Secretary (Forests)
2. Sh. Ajay Kumar, Pr. Chief Conservator of Forests (HoFF)
3. Sh. Nagesh Guleria, Chief Project Director (JICA-PIHPFEM&L)
4. Dr. Harsh Mittar (Director-Jadi Butti Cell)
5. Smt. Meera Sharma, Project Director (JICA-PIHPFEM&L) via WEBEX
6. Sh. Raman Sharma, Project Director (JICA-PIHPFEM&L)
7. Sh. Anish Sharma, Divisional Forest Officer (Publicity)
8. Sh. Arvind Kumar, Addl. Project Director (JICA-PIHPFEM&L) via WEBEX
9. Sh. Girish Bhardwaj, Project Management Consultant (JICA-PIHPFEM&L)
10. JICA PMU Team

At the outset, Sh. Nagesh Guleria CPD (JICA-PIHPFEM&L) welcomed the Hon'ble Forest Minister Sh. Rakesh Pathania and Sh. Sanjay Gupta, Addl. Chief Secretary (Forests), Pr.CCF(HoFF) and thereafter made the detailed power point presentation about activities being carried out in the Project.

**In the meeting following points were discussed, deliberated and decided:**

1. Hon'ble Forest Minister desired that Kangra District being the biggest district in the State in terms of population should be included in the project area. By making this inclusion the Project will be in a position to extend its benefits to a larger community. At this stage, the CPD apprised the Hon'ble Forest Minister that he had a preliminary discussion with the Chief Development Specialist (JICA, India) who told that they are not averse to funding an exclusive project for Kangra District in Himachal Pradesh on the similar outline of SWAN Project<sup>that</sup> was implemented in Una District of Himachal Pradesh and is now completed. The Chief Development Specialist (JICA, India) also suggested that a Concept Note may be sent through MoEFCC and DEA to JICA India Office for its further processing. At this Hon'ble Forest Minister desired that a formal request to incorporate Kangra District in the present JICA assisted PIHPFEM&L be sent from HPFD/GoHP to MoEFCC and JICA India Office.
2. The Hon'ble Forest Minister was apprised that the Project has strengthened the HPFD offices at DFO and Range level by providing IT equipment such as Computers, Printers, Laptops, and Photocopiers etc. till the lowest level field functionaries. At this, the Hon'ble Forest Minister directed the ACS (Forests) and Pr. CCF (HoFF) to further explore the scope of utilizing Project funds under IT into the already existing HPFD IT infrastructure and explore further possibilities, and apprise him about the same at an early date.
3. It was apprised that under the JICA Project, 61 nurseries have been strengthened by extending the area of different nurseries of HPFD, providing road connectivity, water facility, fencing and modernized techniques such as vermi-compost, greenhouses, agro-netting, root trainers etc. By doing that the capacity of the HPFD for raising the plants has been enhanced by approximately 35 Lac plants in the above nurseries. The Hon'ble Forest Minister appreciated the same and directed to use a part of the nurseries for raising Horticulture/fruit plants for the

benefit of communities. In addition to that, the Hon'ble Forest Minister directed to create Navgrah Vatikas at VFDS level from the Project fund.

4. With regards to Hydroponics Fodder Cultivation Pilot Project to supplement the fodder requirements for stall fed cattle and better milk production, the Hon'ble Forest Minister directed the Project to take inputs from the agriculture department who are already practicing hydroponic techniques for agricultural crops and vegetables.
5. Pressing issue of Soil Water Conservation and Recharge of Ground Water Table was discussed at length during the meeting. Due to torrential and frequent rains in a small span of time, erosion of top soil in forest areas has thus, become a major problem. The Hon'ble Forest Minister directed that activities such as construction of small check dams will be encouraged to contain the issue of soil erosion that is a major cause of concern for local community members. Ponds will also be rejuvenated and new ponds will be constructed to raise the ground water level. It was further apprised that the Project has already floated the Request for Proposal (RfP) for effective Soil Water Conservation and Land Slide Control Measures. However, the Hon'ble Forest Minister desired that its scope should be extended to include recharge of ground water and spring rejuvenation of the area. To that effect, one Soil Water Conservation & Irrigation Expert will be engaged in the JICA Project to give the expert services in the matter.
6. While discussing the SATOYAMA Concept in Biodiversity Conservation Component of the Project, the Hon'ble Forest Minister desired that to promote local culture and traditions, the Eco-Tourism activities in the protected area be initiated immediately and an action plan in this regard be prepared at the earliest.
7. The Jadi-Butti Cell of the Project was appreciated for its mandate to promote scientific cultivation/harvesting, processing and marketing of the local medicinal plants, and creating a brand for the medicinal plants of the State. The Hon'ble Forest Minister directed that these standardized and scientific practices are required to be disseminated to the local community through meetings at Village level and the activities of the Project will be taken to the common people to make it People's Movement. The functions of the Jadi-Butti Cell and its action plan were discussed juxtaposed with the VAN SAMRIDHI JAN SAMRIDHI scheme of HPFD. Director Jadi-Butti Cell and CPD (JICA) along with ACS (Forests) and Pr. CCF (HoFF) have been directed to make a presentation on the blue print of the Jadi-Butti Cell, in the O/o Hon'ble Forest Minister.
8. The Hon'ble Forest Minister suggested that the convergence with all associate departments should be made to address the developmental priorities of community members. Funds from schemes such as MGNREGA can be utilized to meet these priorities. It was apprised that in the Project as part of the Micro Plan, a separate Convergence Plan is formulated that documents these convergence requirements. To that effect, the Hon'ble Forest Minister directed that conferences and meetings at District and Block level should be organized.
9. The Hon'ble Forest Minister was apprised that all the activities being done in the field pertaining to PIHPFEM&L are being put on the GIS platform by using DGPS Survey and High Resolution Satellite Data by creating benchmarks to monitor real time progress of project activities. This is going to help in comparing the change detection over time. The Hon'ble Forest Minister was also apprised that the website for the Project is under preparation and that these data of GIS

Platform will be uploaded as soon as the website is through, on day to day basis, and the customized web portal can be accessed by different users. At this, the Hon'ble Forest Minister desired that he would also like to see the progress on day to day basis from his Shimla & Dharamshala offices.

10. The Hon'ble Forest Minister directed that the school children in the project area should also be associated in the plantation activities and a 'pledge' to plant & protect forests and the environment be circulated and recited in the morning assembly.

11. The Hon'ble Forest Minister was apprised on the status of Micro Plan Preparation in batch 1 ranges/ wards and the Hon'ble Forest Minister directed that after 31<sup>st</sup> October, 2020, he would like to visit randomly some of the VFDS constituted under the Project to gauge their understanding about the project and their role amongst the local community, and the project progress in the field.

12. The Hon'ble Forest Minister was apprised about the shortage of staff in the Project wherein he was informed that currently the project is operating with only half of the strength of sanctioned staff. Further, he was also apprised that under the staff category of Accountants-cum-Computer Operators, HPNRM Society, Solan has deployed Data Entry Operators with no accounting expertise, which significantly hampers the accounting requirements of the Project. The Hon'ble Forest Minister took note of the same and assured that the matter regarding recruitment of staff will be resolved soon.

**\*\*The Meeting ended with the vote of thanks to the Chair\*\***

Submitted for kind approval please.

*[Signature]*  
21/8/2020

22.8.2020

~~PrCCN (HON) and  
CO-Chairman.~~

~~ACS (Forest)~~

~~CPD~~

RD. to please issue with copy to the PS to HONM.

*[Signature]*  
21/8/2020