

**Terms of Reference
for
Assessment of outcome and impact of Community Biodiversity
Conservation in North Eastern Region Community Resource
Management Project for Upland Areas (NERCORMP)**

Objective: To undertake an assessment of the development and change, particularly outcomes and impacts of the Community based Biodiversity Conservation intervention by NERCORMP in its programme villages in six districts in three States in North Eastern Region (NER), particularly changes in the situation as regards in the natural resource assets of the communities. [Often the scope and meaning of biodiversity conservation may be synonymous with community forests management for most of the communities].

Project area: [a] Meghalaya covering 2 districts, viz. West Khasi Hills (Hq Nongstoin) and West Garo Hills (Hq Tura); [b] Assam covering 2 districts, viz. Karbi Anglong (Hq Hamrem) and North Cachar Hills (Hq Haflong); and [c] Manipur covering 2 districts, viz. Senapati (Hq Senapati) and Ukhul (Hq Ukhul).

Estimated Duration: 60 working days from the date of awarding the contract

Starting Date: As soon as possible

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 General

North Eastern Region Community Resource Management Project for Upland Areas (NERCORMP) was a jointly funded project of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and North Eastern Council, Ministry of DoNER, Government of India during the period 1999-2008. NERCORMP, as a livelihood and rural development project, aimed at transforming the lives of the rural poor, particularly the shifting cultivators, men and women, and, thereby, at eventually demonstrating a Developmental Model for the upland areas in the region. Since the closure of IFAD funding, the NERCORMP is now solely funded by the Government of India, North Eastern Council.

NERCORMP operates in three states, viz. Assam, Manipur and Meghalaya, covering two districts in each state. In Assam, the project is operating in Karbi Anglong and North Cachar Hills, in Manipur it is operating in Senapati and Ukhul districts and in Meghalaya it is operating in West Khasi Hills and West Garo Hills. Currently, NERCORMP works in 860 villages in all these districts and states. The overall objective of NERCORMP is *“To improve the livelihoods of vulnerable groups in a sustainable manner through improved management of their resource base in a way that contributes to preservation and restoration of the environment.”*

The programme interventions of NERCORMP include the followings:

- (a) Social empowerment and community institution building, viz. formation of the communities into Natural Resource Management Groups (NaRMGs), Self Help

Groups (SHGs) and their associations and federations; capacity building of these institutions, as well as capacity building local traditional village institutions and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

- (b) Social sector development, viz. provision of drinking water supply, low cost toilets, community health care, etc.
- (c) Village infrastructures development, viz. construction of inter-village connecting roads, bridges/culverts, community halls, storage godowns, school buildings, etc.
- (d) Economic livelihoods development, viz. promotion of income generating activities, both farm-based and non-farm based, as well as development of terraces, minor irrigation, development of agriculture, horticulture, fishery, livestock, NTFPs, jhum development, kitchen gardens or home gardens, etc.; farming practices were particularly integrated with promotion of vermicomposts and biocompost to address the land productivity on sustainable basis.
- (e) Natural resource management, viz. promotion of community based biodiversity conservation.

These interventions were dovetailed with various other crosscutting issues and sub-sectors such as promotion of microfinance for microcredit, business development and marketing, gender mainstreaming, documentation and communication of successful case stories and lessons learned, monitoring and evaluation and, above all, systematic financial and programme management both at the Programme Support Unit (PSU) in the Hq and the Development Support Teams (DST) at the district levels.

1.2 Community Based Biodiversity Conservation in NERCORMP

As part of the overall natural resource management, NERCORMP promoted community biodiversity conservation activities in about 70% of the programme villages covering an area of about 1860 sq km. Many of these areas were fallow land under shifting cultivation as well as traditional community forests which became degraded and denuded due to competing extraction of resources from these forests. Also known as community forests, the ideas were not just conservation but also securing equitable economic benefits, as well as securing legal rights along with customary rights under the existing formal laws (such as district council forest laws in Garo Hills). Facilitating formulation of community based rules and regulations for management of community biodiversity conservation areas were also one of the interventions initiated by NERCORMP. These rules and regulations are usually in the forms of "Do's and Don'ts", with awareness creation on making good practice rules and regulations that are preventive, prohibitive, punitive, facilitative and remunerative besides addressing equity in the access of resources by every household of the communities and gender sensitivity.

While for many of the villages, the biodiversity conservation is synonymous with community forest management, the range of biodiversity conservation activities included promotion of any of the following activities as per the needs and context of the communities differently in different districts. Some of these most common assigned nomenclatures are:

- Village Biodiversity Reserves
- Village / Community Wildlife Reserves (eg. Python Reserves, Bird Sanctuary, Elephant Corridor Reserves)
- Freshwater / Riverine Fish Pool Reserves
- Wild Gooseberry Reserves
- Community forest reserves
- Village reserved forests
- Village Bamboo / Broom / Thatch reserves
- Village NTFP and Germplasm reserves

- Village Water Catchment Reserves
- Community fuel and timber reserves

2. SCOPE OF THE ASSIGNMENT

2.1 Purpose

To make an assessment of the development and change --- outcomes and impacts --- following NERCORMP's promotion of community based biodiversity conservation in programme villages, particularly changes in the situations in the natural resources of the programme villages. Often the scope and meaning of biodiversity conservation may be synonymous to community forests management for many of the communities. However, the efficiency and results of the community conservation process are to be studied in the interests of replication of the model.

2.2 Scope of the work

The scope of the work will be broadly as follows considering the key diverse issues and thematic areas outlined in the background note above, but not limited to the note alone. The consultant is expected to identify and highlight new areas and opportunities based on field interactions, field observations and lessons learned.

- (a) Assessment of the changes in the conditions of overall biodiversity conservation situations and practices of programme villages, including changes in the variations in the typologies of 'community conserved areas' under broad spectrum of biodiversity conservation.
- (b) Assessment of the level of appreciation, awareness and valuing of biodiversity conservation among the communities, particularly amongst the members of the NaRMGs and SHGs as well as among the traditional village institutions.
- (c) Assessment of outcomes and impacts of biodiversity conservation particularly impacts on the followings:
 - (i) Initiation of new rules and regulations and/or strengthening of existing rules and regulations for management of biodiversity or community forests;
 - (ii) Changes and improvement in forest based livelihoods;
 - (iii) Impacts on areas (possibly decreasing areas) under shifting cultivation or jhum due to enhanced interest for forest conservation;
 - (iv) Impacts on the women and the poorest households particularly on the easy availability and accessibility of firewood, wild edible plants and small construction materials;
 - (v) Overall impacts on the local environmental conditions; and
 - (vi) Impacts on alternative sources of income/ alternative income generating activities.
- (d) Assessment of opportunities for linking the current programme of community biodiversity conservation activities with the existing government programmes (such as under forestry, wildlife, rural development, etc.).
- (e) Assessment and identification of further opportunities as to how NERCORMP can strengthen this intervention as also how the communities could enhance their benefits from the biodiversity conservation activities.
- (f) The work/study/consultancy should contain a synthesis of clear assessment of the lessons learned and recommendations.

3. METHODOLOGY

- ◆ Desk review of secondary literature on the subject matter, mainly the reports and publications of NERCORMP.
- ◆ Interactions/consultations/meetings with key stakeholders of NERCORMP and the communities including government and non-governmental organizations, academics and research institutions involved with NERCORMP.
- ◆ Field visits to all the programme districts, viz. West Khasi Hills and West Garo Hills districts in Meghalaya; Senapati and Ukhrul districts in Manipur; and Karbi Anglong and North Cachar Hills in Assam; interactions with DSTs, partner NGOs and line agencies; visit of selected villages and interactions with the communities (NaRMGs, SHGs and traditional village institutions).

4. ANTICIPATED DELIVERABLES / Contents of Assessment Report

- ◆ Detailed Assessment and Analytical Report that will contain, inter alia, as described in para 2.2 above (scope of work).
- ◆ Executive Summary of the report.
- ◆ All the relevant literature referred to as references.
- ◆ All final deliverables both in soft copies (2 copies) and hard copies (five copies).
- ◆ Analysis of the replicability of the model and the conditions thereof.

5. FORMAT OF REPORT

- ◆ The proposed format of the report / contents of the assessment report will be presented by the consultant and to be reviewed by NERCORMP prior to the writing of the final report.
- ◆ The final report should be presented in Arial 11 font, single spacing.
- ◆ All abbreviations or acronyms used have to be expanded.
- ◆ All units of weights and measures should follow standard Indian system.

6. VERIFICATION OF REPORT

The first drafts of the REPORT should be submitted to NERCORMP in hardcopy and in electronic form through email within the specified time frame. NERCORMP reserves the right to get the Draft Report reviewed by experts as may be identified or deemed appropriate by NERCORMP.

Final versions of the REPORT responding to and where necessary incorporating comments and feedback received from NERCORMP should be submitted to NERCORMP within 5 working days after receipt of the feedback from NERCORMP.

7. TIMEFRAME

It is estimated that the assignment will need 60 working days or person days to be accomplished

8. TOTAL BUDGET & PAYMENTS

- ◆ The budget should include consultancy/professional fee, local travel and logistic cost, including that for preparation of the report.

- ◆ 40% of payments of total contract amount will be released on signing of the contract; 20% would be released on receipt of the first draft by NERCORMP; and the remaining 40% will be released on final acceptance of the report.

9. COORDINATION OF THE ASSESSMENT

The assessment study, including the field visits, will be coordinated and facilitated by NERCORMP with its Hq in Shillong and by its District Hq located in all six districts as mentioned above (on the first page of this ToR). The focal point within NERCORMP for this study will be the Monitoring & Evaluation Officer. However, the costs of such field visits are to be borne by the Consultant/ awardee of the contract.

10. COPY RIGHTS

NERCORMP will be the sole owner and copy right holder of the report generated by this consultancy. The consultant or the organization to which he/she may be affiliated cannot publish the report in whole or to any substantial extent without the prior permission of NERCORMP. However, information or data can be quoted in parts in any scientific and non-profit publication with due acknowledgement to NERCORMP or the source. Any reproduction of any portion of more than 500 words of the report would require the permission of NERCORMP.

11. OTHER ISSUE: Expected and desirable qualifications of the consultant(s)

- ◆ An advanced degree in related fields and/or equivalent work experiences.
- ◆ Proven real experience, of at least 10 years, in the subject area.
- ◆ Good understanding of biodiversity issues as well as sustainable development issues.
- ◆ Policy and institutional knowledge in the subject matter.
- ◆ Experience in, and a thorough understanding of, national and/or international best practices in the subject areas.
- ◆ Solid analytical and conceptual skills and the ability to think creatively.
- ◆ Good knowledge of local context (culture, politics, and geography); familiarity with the situations in Northeast India will be added asset.
- ◆ Pro-active, independent and responsible personality.
- ◆ Excellent oral and written communication skills in English.

HOW TO APPLY

PART A

- Interested individual Consultant or Consulting Firm/ Agency/ Organization may submit their proposal, separately for Technical and Financial bid under sealed cover, latest by February 1st, 2010 [up to 1200 hours noon] addressed to **PCDS, NERCORMP, Sympli Building (Near Shillong Law College), First Floor, Dhankheti, Shillong 793 001.**
- The technical proposal, may ideally contain (a) plan / design of work for analysis, (b) probable structure of the report; (c) short CVs of the consultants and (c) evidences of experiences and capabilities in undertaking the task, inter alia.
- Financial proposal must provide details of the cost of experts and survey staff, travel, accommodation and subsistence, report production and any other associated cost.
- If required, only short listed offers/ bids will be invited to interact with the Project Authorities / Committee constituted for this proposal; they may also be required to

give a presentation (oral and / or Power Point) if the Project Authorities/ Appropriate Committee desires so at the time of interaction.

- If Interaction is required for the purpose, the same will be held in the project office at Shillong in the above mentioned address. All consultants/firms attending the interaction session will however do so at their own cost.
- Ceteris paribus, knowledge and familiarity with the region, structure and philosophy of similar project and project areas will be added advantage.

PART B

- A separate MoU will be signed between the Project and Consultant/ Consulting Firm/ Agency being awarded the contract.