

**GOVERNMENT OF MEGHALAYA  
FOREST & ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT**

**NOTIFICATION**

NO. FOR.64/99/186

Dated Shillong, the 9<sup>th</sup> September 2003.

**JOINT FOREST MANAGEMENT (JFM) IN MEGHALAYA**

Whereas the Government of Meghalaya is concerned about the degradation of forests and forest eco systems in the State due to unsustainable biotic pressure;

And whereas, the State Government aims to halt the degradation of forests in the State and improve these by protecting the existing forests and undertaking forest based resource development programmes and re-stocking the degraded forests;

And whereas the State Government feels that active participation and involvement of the people is essential for protection of existing forests and successful implementation of afforestation and aided regeneration schemes and forest based resource development programmes;

And whereas the management of forests and wild biodiversity areas needs to be improved;

Now, therefore, the Governor of Meghalaya, in consultation with the Jaintia Hills Autonomous District Council, Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council and Garo Hills Autonomous District Council, is pleased to announce the implementation of 'Joint Forest Management' (JFM) in the State as per the following directives :

**1. OBJECTIVES OF JOINT FOREST MANAGEMENT (JFM) :**

- i. To elicit the active participation of local communities for regeneration of degraded forests in their neighbourhood by undertaking afforestation, aided natural regeneration and conservation of wild bio-diversity.
- ii. To involve local communities in improving the environment in the State and the Country.
- iii. To elicit and ensure the co-operation of local population to halt declining trend in the forest cover and degradation of eco-systems.
- iv. To ensure proper synergy between the technical expertise & infrastructure of the Forest & Environment Department and traditional knowledge and untapped human resource of local tribal communities to ensure conservation of wild bio-diverse resources as well as to expand forest cover in the State by undertaking afforestation / regeneration programme on barren and degraded lands.

**2. AREAS TO BE COVERED UNDER JOINT FOREST MANAGEMENT :**

- i. Degraded forest areas including those owned by communities, clans and individuals.
- ii. Any other land which has ecological significance or which needs management intervention on ecological / environmental considerations.

**3. TYPES OF WORK PROPOSED TO BE EXECUTED THROUGH JOINT FOREST MANAGEMENT :**

- i. Artificial regeneration to be undertaken on barren lands existing in the State.
- ii. Aided natural regeneration measures to be undertaken for restocking of degraded forests.
- iii. Forest & wildlife protection.
- iv. Various entry point activities to elicit and ensure continued co-operation between local communities and Forest & Environment Department / Autonomous District Councils. Such activities may include creation of community assets like roads and culverts, water harvesting structures, sheds for schools and community halls etc and the total expenditure on these shall not exceed the norms prescribed in the scheme / work concerned.
- v. Any other work including that related to protection of environment and management of eco-systems, which may be assigned by Forest Authorities of the State Government and the Autonomous District Councils.

**4. CONSTITUTION OF JOINT FOREST MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES (JFMC) :**

- i. A Joint Forest Management Committee (JFMC) shall be constituted in a village or group of villages where a JFM Project or Scheme is to be undertaken, by the Divisional Forest Officer / Autonomous District Council concerned.
- ii. The JFMC shall consist of the following-
  - (a) General Body (GB):

Consisting of one adult member, from each household. The GB shall elect a Chairman and a Vice-Chairman from amongst its members
  - (b) Executive Committee (EC):

The Executive Committee shall consist of a Chairman, a Vice Chairman and 7 (seven) other members, 5 (five) of whom shall be elected by the General Body from amongst its members. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the GB shall function as Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the EC also. One more member shall be nominated by the Autonomous District Council concerned who shall be the ex-officio Joint Secretary. Another member to the Executive Committee shall be nominated by the State Forest Department, of a rank not below a Forester, who shall act as the Member Secretary of the Executive Committee as well as the Secretary of the GB. The Member Secretary, EC shall maintain financial records of the JFMC.

Provided further that every effort shall be made to ensure adequate representation of women in the General Body as well as the Executive committee.
- iii. The term of office of the Chairman and other elected members shall be for a period of 2 (two) years subject to satisfactory performance.

Any elected member including Chairman and Vice Chairman may be removed from their office by passing a resolution by a simple majority by the members of the General Body. The vacancy so caused shall be filled up by fresh elections from the General Body.
- iv. The JFMC for a village shall be named after the village of its origin e.g. JFMC constituted for the village Nartiang shall be named as the JFMC - Nartiang. However, if due to small size of villages or for any other reason it is more convenient to constitute a single JFMC for two or more villages, it may be so constituted, provided there is a general consensus among the villagers concerned. In such a case its name shall bear the names of all such villages or some other suitable name, as may be decided by the General Body.
- v. A savings bank account shall be opened in the name of each Committee. Such account shall be operated jointly by the Chairman and the Member-Secretary of the Executive Committee. All amounts provided to the JFMC shall be deposited into such account. Also other receipts in connection with JFM shall be deposited into this account.
- vi. The Chairman and the Member Secretary of the Executive Committee shall be jointly responsible for disbursement of any sum drawn from the account in respect of approved projects being implemented in the Village. The Member Secretary shall

maintain records of such transactions made as per standard procedures of accounts and book keeping.

**5. JURISDICTION OF THE JOINT FOREST MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE :**

The Territorial Jurisdiction of the Joint Forest Management Committee of a Village shall be limited to the territorial limits of the village(s) for which it has been constituted.

Once a JFMC is constituted for a particular village or a group of villages, all subsequent Joint Forest Management work within that village or group of villages, as the case may be, shall be undertaken by that JFMC only, unless directed otherwise by the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests.

**6. DUTIES AND FUNCTIONS OF THE GENERAL BODY, JOINT FOREST MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE :**

- i. To help select specific plot(s) / tract(s) of land for undertaking afforestation work, aided natural regeneration and biodiversity conservation activities under the JFM.
- ii. To suggest appropriate entry point activities to be taken up in the area under the JFM.
- iii. To suggest the kind of species to be planted in plantations proposed to be raised in forestry schemes for the village(s).
- iv. To offer suggestions in preparation of the Working Plan / Working Scheme to be prepared for the JFM areas by the Forest & Environment Department or Autonomous District Councils.
- v. To protect the afforestation / regeneration and conservation efforts in ecologically / environmentally sensitive regions in the JFM areas from fire, grazing, illegal and unauthorised exploitation etc.
- vi. To fix the rate and extent of fines / punishment, which may be imposed by the Executive Committee under any law for the time being in force, on any person, who has committed any offence in the JFM areas.
- vii. To elect the Chairman and the Members of the Executive Committee, JFMC.
- viii. To remove the Chairman or any other elected Member of the Executive Committee whose performance is found to be unsatisfactory.
- ix. To discuss and approve the formula and procedure to be adopted for sharing of usufructs amongst the Members of the JFMC as authorised share from the returns from the JFM area.
- x. To authorize the Chairman, Executive Committee to execute legal agreements in connection with the JFM activities.

- xi. To terminate membership of any person who is found to have committed a prohibited act in connection with the JFM activities, by passing a resolution in this regard by a simple majority of the Members present and voting.
- xii. To admit new Members to the General Body to take care of the increase in the number of households in the village due to partition of joint families, migration from outside or any other reason.

#### **7. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, JOINT FOREST MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE :**

- i. To represent the Joint Forest Management Committee and enter into agreement with the Forest & Environment Department / Autonomous District Councils or other bodies.
- ii. To ensure proper and up-to-date maintenance of various records, registers etc., as prescribed under these guidelines.
- iii. To assign fire protection as well as other protection duties to the Members of the JFMC from time to time to ensure protection of the JFM area.
- iv. To arrange and oversee the distribution of usufructs harvested from the JFM area among members of the JFMC as per the usufruct sharing mechanism specified by the General Body.
- v. To pass orders imposing penalty / fine on any member(s) of the JFMC, under any law for the time being in force, who is found to have committed a prohibited act in connection with the JFM activities.
- vi. To initiate measures to terminate membership of any member of the GB, JFMC who is found to have committed a prohibited act of grave nature in connection with the JFM activities. This may be done by the Chairman, Executive Committee by moving a resolution in the General Body.
- vii. To execute work / activities entrusted to the JFMC.

#### **8. RECORDS / REGISTERS TO BE MAINTAINED :**

- i. Register of Membership for the General Body.
- ii. Minute books, separately for the General Body and the Executive Committee.
- iii. Cash Book.
- iv. Register of the usufructs shared between members.
- v. Register of the fine(s) / penalty imposed on the members and collected.
- vi. Register of the plot(s) / tract(s) of land under the JFM.
- vii. Register of other activities undertaken by / through the JFMC
- viii. Any other record prescribed and relevant to the project.

Maintaining and updating of these registers and records, shall be the duty of the Member Secretary, EC, JFMC. These registers shall be kept in the custody of the

Member Secretary, Executive Committee JFMC. During any meeting of the General Body or the Executive Committee these Registers / Records shall be made available to the members for inspection / scrutiny. However on other days also these Registers / Records can be inspected by any member of the Committee at the office of the Member Secretary.

**9. PROCEDURE GOVERNING MEETINGS OF GENERAL BODY AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE JFMC :**

(A) Frequency of Meetings

- i. The General Body shall meet atleast once in a year.
- ii. Extraordinary meeting(s) of the General Body may be convened if not less than 15 members or one-fourth of the members of the General Body, whichever is less, give an advance written notice of at-least 30 days to the Chairman, Executive Committee to convene such meeting to decide upon urgent matter(s).
- iii. Notice to convene a meeting of the General Body, giving date and venue of the meeting shall be issued by the Secretary, GB with the prior approval of the Chairman. Such notice shall be issued at-least 15 days before the proposed date of the meeting.
- iv. The Executive Committee, JFMC shall meet atleast once in every quarter.
- v. Extraordinary meeting(s) of the Executive Committee may be convened if not less than one-third of the total number of members of the Executive Committee, give an advance written notice of at-least 15 days to the Chairman, EC to convene such meeting to discuss some urgent matter(s).
- vi. Notice to convene a meeting of the Executive Committee giving the date and the venue of the meeting shall be issued by the Member Secretary, EC after taking prior approval of the Chairman. Such notice shall be issued atleast 15 days before the proposed date of the meeting.

(B) Quorum for a meeting

- i. The quorum for a meeting of the General Body shall be not less than one-third of the total membership.
- ii. In case any meeting of the General Body cannot take place on grounds of lack of quorum a fresh meeting shall be convened within 15 days, for which there shall be a quorum of 15 (fifteen).
- iii. The quorum for a meeting of the Executive Committee shall be 4 (four) including the Chairman but excluding the Member Secretary and the Joint Secretary. If both the Chairman and Vice Chairman are absent, one of the elected member would chair the meeting.
- iv. In case any meeting of the Executive Committee cannot take place on grounds of lack of quorum, a fresh meeting shall be convened within 7 (seven) days. There shall be no quorum for such meeting, but shall have the presence of the Member Secretary

and at least two elected members. In case both the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman are absent, one of the elected members shall chair the meeting.

(C) Minutes of the Meeting

- i. Proceedings of each meeting of the General Body / Executive Committee shall be recorded in the Minutes Book and shall be signed by the person chairing the meeting and the Secretary / Member Secretary.
- ii. Separate minutes books in the form of bound registers shall be maintained for the meeting of the General Body and the Executive Committee.

**10. DISSOLUTION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, JOINT FOREST MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (JFMC) :**

- i. If the Divisional Forest Officer concerned feels that the Executive Committee of a Joint Forest Management Committee, constituted within his jurisdiction, is not functioning properly and continued existence of such Committee is not in the interest of the Community, State or the Country or the concept of JFM, he may move a proposal for its dissolution, to the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Meghalaya, through the concerned Conservator of Forests and the Chief Conservator of Forests, giving detailed reasons for the dissolution of such Committee. The Conservator of Forests and the Chief Conservator of Forests would give their opinion on the Divisional Forest officer's comments before forwarding it to the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests.
- ii. The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests shall examine the proposal moved by the Divisional Forest Officer along with the remarks of the concerned Conservator of Forests and Chief Conservator of Forests and pass an order dissolving the Executive Committee, JFMC, after giving an opportunity to the JFMC to show cause.
- iii. Within a period of 1 (one) month from passing of an order dissolving an Executive Committee, JFMC, any Member of the Executive Committee may make a petition to the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests to review such order. Such petition for review should be made through the concerned Divisional Forest Officer.
- iv. The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests may pass an appropriate order on the review petition within a period of 1 (one) month from the date of receipt of such petition.

**11. SHARING OF USUFRUCTS :**

- i. The usufructs available and allowed to be shared from a scheme under JFM as per the approved Working Plan / Working Scheme or other Rules shall be shared between the JFMC, the Forest & Environment Department and the Autonomous District Council under whose jurisdiction the JFM area falls.

- ii. The allowable usufructs shall be, among other things, in accordance with the objectives of the afforestation / regeneration / conservation programme of the scheme implemented. These shall be determined by the Government in accordance with the objectives of the Scheme and shall be incorporated in an agreement to be signed by the JFM Committee in this regard. These shall be subject to the statutory payment to the District Council concerned and the State Government.

**12. MISCELLANEOUS :**

- i. Notwithstanding anything contained elsewhere and irrespective of any usufruct sharing arrangement, any offence committed in respect of any afforestation / regeneration created or protection / conservation activity under JFM, shall be treated as an offence committed under relevant Acts & Rules relating to Forests, Environment & Wildlife.
- ii. The State Government may make rules, in consultation with the Autonomous District Councils, consistent with these directives, by notifying in the Gazette or issue directions in order to achieve the objectives of the JFM in the State.
- iii. In case of any dispute as to the interpretation of these Directives, the decision of the State Government shall be final.

Commissioner & Secretary to the Govt. of Meghalaya,  
Forest & Environment Department



Memo No. FOR.64/99/186-A,  
Copy to :

Dated Shillong, the 9<sup>th</sup> Sept. 2003

- 1 P.S. to the Chief Minister for information of the Chief Minister.
- 2 P.S. to the Minister, Forest & Environment for information of the Minister
- 3 Secretary to the Government of India, Ministry of Environment & Forests, Paryavaran Bhavan, C.G.O. Complex, Lodhi Road, New Delhi – 110 003
- 4 Director General of Forests, Government of India, Ministry of Environment & Forests, Paryavaran Bhavan, C.G.O. Complex, Lodhi Road, New Delhi 110003
- 5 P.S. to the Chief Secretary for information of the Chief Secretary
- 6 P.S. to the Additional. Chief Secretary, Forests & Environment Department for information of the Additional Chief Secretary
- 7 All Administrative Departments of Government of Meghalaya
- 8 Inspector General of Forests, Government of India, Ministry of Environment & Forests, National Afforestation & Eco-Development Board, Paryavaran Bhawan, C.G.O. Complex, Lodi Road, New Delhi – 110 003
- 9 Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Meghalaya, Shillong
- 10 All Chief Conservators of Forests, Meghalaya, Shillong
- 11 Director of Printing & Stationery for publication of the Notification in the Meghalaya Gazette with a request to supply two hundred copies to the Department

By Order,

Commissioner & Secretary to the Govt. of Meghalaya,  
Forest & Environment Department