

Payment of Second Instalment to the Community Members under the Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) Pilot Project for Restoration of Ganol Catchment

by the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Meghalaya,

1st September 2023, Tura

Background Note

A pilot project for restoration of catchment area of Ganol river using the Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) approach was launched by the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Meghalaya on 2nd April, 2022. Apart from the ecosystem improvement, one of the main objectives of the Pilot Project was to evolve a framework for PES for eco-restoration activities in the State. Twenty villages located in the West Garo Hills District (including 1 from EGH) which fall in the catchment of Ganol river have been selected for the first ever pilot project on PES. A framework for implementing the PES scheme was prepared with the primary objective of restoring catchment areas of Ganol for enhancing water flow in the river by involving communities through PES Scheme. Awareness about the concept of PES scheme, its various components along with the implementation details was launched by organising series of meetings in the selected villages. Following the framework, PES Field Associates (PFAs) were selected from amongst the suitable youths from the village communities. With the involvement of PFAs mobilisation at the village level was further strengthened. The PFAs became the extension workers of the PES Scheme. Village PES Committees (VPCs) were formed in each of the twenty villages. There has been intense engagement with the villagers in the selected villages through the PFAs and VPCs. The community mobilisation efforts have resulted in the communities' acceptance of the scheme and they have willingly identified the activities to be taken up on their lands from the five catchment area restoration activities defined in the framework viz conservation of natural forests, transition from shifting cultivation to improved agriculture practices, afforestation, reforestation and soil & water conservation measures. Subsequently, the villagers along with the Village PES Committees (VPCs) identified the lands. After identification of the sites, the PFAs have done the boundary mapping of each land with the help of GPS and have determined area of the land parcels. Maps showing the identified lands with satellite image in the background have been composed for each village.

The community members participating in the Scheme were disbursed the first instalment through the respective VPCs (in the Bank Accounts) on 17th October, 2022. They were also given the management prescriptions outlining steps for implementing different activities. In the last 10 months, the community members have implemented forest conservation and other catchment restoration activities on their lands.

To ensure performance-based payments to the community members in the subsequent instalments, a Measurement, Reporting & Verification (MRV) Protocol has been developed for verification of the activities implemented by the communities in a scientific manner. The protocol also outlines methods for assessing improvement in the ecosystems in a cyclic period of time (5 years).

Activities implemented by the community members in the last one year have been evaluated using the methods given in the MRV Protocol and accordingly the quantum

of payment in the second instalment has been determined. It is envisaged that the MRV Protocol will be uniformly followed in the PES Scheme in the whole State including the GREEN (PES) Scheme. Training Programmes for the Field Associates on MRV methods are being conducted.

In the programme being held on 1st September 2023 at Tura, the Hon'ble CM of Meghalaya will handover cheques of 2nd instalment of the PES Scheme for the restoration of Ganol Catchment to 18 VPCs. Through the VPCs the amount will be disbursed to 103 community members (families). Cheques worth INR 64.82 lakh would be presented to the community members. The Abstract of payment is given in the annexure.

**PAYMENT FOR ECOSYSTEM SERVICES (PES) PILOT PROJECT FOR RESTORATION OF GANOL
CATCHMENT**

Summary of Activities for PES Payment in the 2nd Instalment

- 103 community members from 18 villages have participated in the PES Scheme. The total area covered under the PES Scheme for Ecological restoration is 740.33 ha

- The category of activities undertaken in the pilot project are:
 - Sustainable Management of Community Forests
 - Reforestation
 - Afforestation
 - Soil & Water Conservation
 - Transition from Jhum to Improved Agriculture

- 31 communities from 17 villages have opted for **Sustainable Management of Community Forests** covering a total area of **576.7 ha**.
 - Under Sustainable Management of Community Forests, 26 forests covering a total area of 565.94 ha are community forests and 5 forests measuring 10.77 ha are private forests.
 - Activities included in Sustainable Management of Community Forests are to prevent unauthorised felling of trees, encroachment, forest fire, grazing, creation of nursery, assisted natural regeneration, gap planting, conservation of biodiversity.

- 7 community members belonging to 4 villages have participated in the **Reforestation** activity. The total area covered is **10.55 ha**
 - The activities included in Reforestation are prevention of grazing by creation of barriers, tree planting of native species, assisted natural regeneration, prevention of forest fire.
 - All the 7 beneficiaries have taken up tree plantation in their respective land since the inception of the scheme.

- 36 community members from 9 villages have carried out **Afforestation** on their lands which covered a total area of **93.87 ha**
 - This component of PES included planting of tree saplings, fire protection measures and weeding.
 - The total number of surviving saplings in the area covered has been found to be 39724 with an average of 423 surviving saplings per ha.
 - The average cost of raising tree plantation was estimated to be Rs. 7876.00 per ha.

- The number of community members that took up **Soil and Water Conservation** are 27 in a total area of **56.74 ha**.
 - The main task included here is the creation and maintenance of contour trenches on the slopy lands.
 - The total length of the contour trenches created is 1801 m with an average length of 31.7 m per ha

- Two community members have opted to undertake activities under **Transition from Jhum to Improved Agriculture** in a total area of **2.46 ha.**
 - Both beneficiaries have stopped the practice of slash and burn on the land, created tree plantation and implemented Improved agriculture practices like Sloping Agricultural Land Technology (SALT), organic farming, use of vermi-compost.

Sl. No.	Activities	No. of Activities	Communities				
			0%	70%	80%	90%	100%
1	Sustainable Management of Community Forests	31			1	18	12
2	Reforestation	7	2	1	2	2	
3	Afforestation	36	2	26	1	4	3
4	Soil & Water Conservation	27	3	4	6	9	5
5	Transition from Jhum to Improved Agriculture	2					2
TOTAL			7	31	10	33	22

A summary of the payment is given in the following table:

Sl. No.	Activities	No. of Activities	Total Area (ha)	1 st Instalment (INR)	2 nd Instalment (INR)
1	Sustainable Management of Community Forests	31	576.71	11,48,120.00	54,22,804.00
2	Reforestation	7	10.55	21,100.00	71,700.00
3	Afforestation	36	93.87	1,84,800.00	7,39,320.00
4	Soil & Water Conservation	27	56.74	1,10,560.00	2,13,770.00
5	Transition from Jhum to Improved Agriculture	2	2.46	4,920.00	34,440.00
TOTAL		103	740.33	14,69,500.00	64,82,034.00