

**Proceedings of the local consultation on REDD+ in Gardarwa Village Forest,  
Reenukoot Forest Divison, Sonbhadra District, UP on 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 2012.**

Concept of REDD+ originated in United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 2007 in Bali where all countries committed to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by reducing deforestation and degradation (REDD) to mitigate climate change. This approach was further put forward as “compensated conservation approach” by India which is conceptualized as reducing emissions from deforestation and degradation and enhancing the forest carbon stocks (REDD+). REDD+ is a policy instrument for Sustainable Management of Forests (SMF), conserving biodiversity on one hand and improving livelihoods on the other hand by incentivizing the conservation approach. In Indian context, additionality of carbon is a co-benefit which could be achieved by sustainable management of forest, conserving biodiversity and improving livelihoods of forest dependent communities.

The workshop was jointly organized by The Energy and Resources Institute, New Delhi (TERI) and Uttar Pradesh State Forest Department in Duddhi range of Sonbhadra district on 2nd March 2012. The major objective of the consultation was to apprise and aware forest staffs and local communities about the REDD plus and its relevance at the local level and also spread awareness among the local villager to reduce deforestation and forest degradation and simultaneously managing forests and its resources sustainably for the future livelihood needs of the villagers.

Dr. J V Sharma, Mr. Suresh Chauhan, Dr. Syed Arif Wali and Ms. Priyanka Kohli from TERI, New Delhi participated in the workshop, while Mr. Ashish Tiwari,

DFO Renukoot, Mr. J P Singh, Range Officer, Duddhi Range from the state forest department were also presented in the workshop. Other participants were Mr. Ravi Kumar, Pradeep Kesari and Rekha Kesari from the PNGO and members from the Forest User Group (FUG) of Gardarwa village forest. The workshop was attended by more than hundred local people of Gardarwa village.

The workshop was chaired by Dr. Raghini of Vanwasi Sewa Ashram in Duddhi. Mr. Ashish Tiwari, DFO, Reenukoot welcomed all the participants of the workshop and explained about the climate change and its implication on the forest in a very simple manner. He stated that emission of GHGs especially carbon is due to various anthropogenic activities, which creates warming of the earth and results disturbance of the climate. This can be reduced by the conservation, afforestation and sustainable management of the forests in day to days practice. He further elaborates that the village forest communities can obtain long term benefits by conserving their forest through sustainable manner rather than cutting trees beyond the carrying capacity and for selling purpose, which would yield only short term benefits.

Dr. JV Sharma, Senior Fellow from TERI further explained about reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from deforestation and forest degradation by conserving the forest. He stated that each ton of CO<sub>2</sub> reduced by the joint efforts of the NGOs and the communities will be incentivized as per the present rates of the CO<sub>2</sub> emission in the national and international market. Dr. Sharma explained villagers, why TERI has selected “Gardarwa village forest” as one of the potential pilot site under the REDD+ project, which is funded by the Norwegian Government. He briefed that the area has people’s dependency on the forest and its resources are high are some of the reasons to take this site as a pilot project. He further stated that the REDD+ project is in the initial stage and TERI with the help of the state forest department

is developing a methodology by selecting five different sites within the country, of which Gardarwa is one of them.

Mr. Suresh Chauhan , Fellow from TERI emphasized on the benefits that will be given to the communities for the forest protection and conservation and elaborates how carbon will be assessed and traded in the national and international markets. He further explained that the price of one ton of CO<sub>2</sub> ranges between 3 to 6 US Dollars in the international market. The assessment of carbon should be carried out through the two different sets of the satellite imageries. Carbon stock in the baseline year and carbon stock in the present year can be assessed through ground truthing and interpretation in the satellite imageries. Increase or decrease in the carbon stock of the project will be assessed and on the basis of it, compensation would be provided to the communities owing the forests.

Dr. Ragini from Vanwasi Sewa Ashram emphasized on the importance of conserving, protecting and sustainable managing of the forests. She explained the villagers about the benefits of the sustainable harvesting of the forest and its resources. She also focused on the livelihood and employment generation at the local level and elaborates on the work that her organization is working with the local villagers. She also focused more on the employment generation and poverty alleviation at the local level.

Finally, Sushant Sharma ,DFO Kamur, Mr. J P Singh, Range Officer and Mr. Devakar Dubey from Tussar Department enlightened the village community about the importance of medicinal plants, NTFPs, Cocoon processing and other Minor Forest Produce from the forest through which the local people can enhance their source of livelihood.

The local villagers emphasized about the Gardarwa village forest. They explain that the Gardarwa village forest has 77 hectares area inhabited by the 120 Forest

User Groups (FUGs) comprised of Scheduled tribes (tribal groups namely Gond, Baiga and Chero) and Other Backward class (Kurmi) dependent on the forests and its resources for their livelihood needs. The rights under Forest Rights Act, 2006 are yet to be settled in Gardarwa Village. The Gardarwa Village forest has a Joint Forest Management Committee (JFMC) which comprise President from village community, Secretary (member of the forest department), and the Partner NGO. The Gardarwa village forest is rich in Minor Forest Produces such as Van tushi, Cheeronji, Mahua, Bhabar grass, Sal seeds, *Boswania serrata* (gum), Salai and Tendu patta (*Diospyros melanoxylon*) etc. They informed that they collect fuel wood, fodder, MFPs from this forest for their sustenance and livelihood. They also informed that due to unsustainable harvest of fuel wood, forest is degrading.

The identified drivers of deforestation and degradation as per their intensity to extract biomass are pollarding, illegal harvesting of fuel wood for sale, grazing, fire and unsustainable extraction of Minor Forest Produce. The current employment opportunities in the Village forest are JICA afforestation project, MNREGA, Tussar cultivation, Nursery development and plantation, Forest watcher and Self Help Groups (SHGs). The villagers agreed to cooperate in the preparation of project document on REDD+.

Ms. Priyanka Kohli researchers from TERI University, New Delhi also conducted the socio-economic household survey and Focused Group Discussion in the Gardarwa Village forest to assess the socio-economic profile of the forest dependent communities, to estimate the dependence of the individuals and communities on forest land and resources, to know about the existing forest management programs and institutions and to know the status of Forest Rights Act 2006 Implementation in the region.