A. PROJECT IDENTIFICATION

a) Title: Pre-Project on “Sustainable and Multi purpose forestry to settle the Tribal shifting cultivators of Tripura State in India by providing viable economic activities”

b) Serial number: PPD 111/05 Rev.1 (F)

c) Executing Agency: Tripura Forest Development and Plantation Corporation Limited, Abhoynagar, Agartala, Pin-799 005, Tripura, India

d) Host Government: Government of Tripura, India.

e) Starting date: 1st June, 2007

f) Actual Duration (months): Six Months.

g) Actual Project Costs: US$ 54,897.00
PART - 1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROJECT:

   The Project proposal submitted by The Managing Director, Tripura Forest Development & Plantation Corporation Limited (A Government of Tripura Undertaking), Abhoynagar, Agartala on behalf of Government of Tripura titled “Sustainable and Multi purpose forestry to settle the Tribal shifting cultivators of Tripura State in India by providing viable economic activities” [PD 111/05 Rev.1(F) – Pre Project] to the International Tropical Timber Organization through the Ministry of Environment & Forest, Government of India was approved for funding by the International Tropical Timber Council to the tune of US$48,114 (US Dollars Forty Eight Thousand One Hundred and Fourteen only) at 41st Session of ITTC held at Yokohama, Japan from 6-11 November, 2006.

   The pre-project was intended to assess the nature and seriousness of the problem of shifting cultivation in the Tripura State, identify priority areas for undertaking remedial measures, primarily land rehabilitation measures (in the form of raising and managing rubber plantations, either as pure or in mixture with hardwood species and rattan, through community participation for their multiple products), supplemented by activities (such as NWFP development, bio-diversity conservation, eco-tourism, income earning activities from women etc) to support sustainable forestry in surrounding areas, conduct studies to gather relevant information on social, economic, demographic and cultural issues about the forest dwelling tribal communities, consult with and sensitize the stakeholders about the importance of rationalizing shifting cultivation, explore planners and decision makers with similar initiatives elsewhere in Asia and to prepare a full-fledged project proposal for submission to ITTO.

WORK PLAN: - It comprised of the following-

1. FIELD SURVEY: - Collection of Field data and preparation of field survey report covering the socio-economic situation of the tribal shifting cultivators communities including their traditional rights, tenurial issues and current legal position and nature and extent of shifting cultivation along with information on recent trends of forestry development in Tripura State.

2. NATIONAL CONSULTANT: - Dr. Ram Prasad, Ex. Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Madhya Pradesh and former Director, Indian Institute of Forest Management (IIFM), Bhopal worked as National Consultant for development of the full fledged project. Dr Ram Prasad has had experience in preparation and handling ITTO projects.
3. **STUDY TOUR:** Minister in-charge of Forest, Tripura, and The Managing Director Tripura Forest Development & Plantation Corporation Limited (The Project Leader), undertook a two-week tour to tropical China and Japan learning the experiences of processing of bamboo for value-added products. The state of Tripura in North-Eastern India where the pre-project was implemented has lot of bamboo resources and its processing and value addition can provide economic engagement to shifting cultivators and this may help them to leave the current practice of shifting cultivation. The team visited the Bamboo Research and Training Institute and other processing facilities in China.

4. **STAKEHOLDERS MEETING:** In the 1st phase at 6 places focused group discussions were held with shifting cultivators and other local stakeholders to ascertain their views on the impact of shifting cultivation practices and how to wean out the shifting cultivators from practicing the present form of forest clearance for subsistence agriculture to lead a settled life based on agriculture and other land-based activities and also to supplement this from processing and value addition of Non Timber Forest Products.

In addition, two days state level consultation meeting was also organized to obtain the views of all stakeholders and from experts and policy makers (supported by local resources persons and presentation materials). This was necessary to get inputs for preparation of detailed project proposal to be submitted to ITFC.

5. **PREPARATION OF DETAILED PROJECT REPORT:** Detailed project has been prepared in consultation with National Consultant.

Project Planned duration: 6 months
(from 1st June 2007 to 31st December 2007)

Planned overall cost: $58,675

2. **PROJECT ACHIEVEMENT**

**Outputs achieved**

1. **Collection of basic data from field**

The Department of Tribal Welfare, Govt. of Tripura had undertaken a survey on the Jhumias (shifting cultivators) of Tripura in 1987. An estimated 55,049 households with a population of 2,88,390 practice shifting cultivation in Tripura. Out of these 21,677 households are fully dependent on shifting cultivation and the other 33,372 households are only partially dependent on it. Though Jhum (shifting) cultivation was a common practice among the tribal
population in the past, now about 50% of them have turned to settled
cultivation. Most the Jhum cultivators in the state belong Tripuri community
followed by the people of the Reang community. Among the 19 tribal
communities only two - Bhuttias and Chaimals do not practice shifting
cultivation. Interestingly, the tribes originating from the main land – Santhal,
Munda, etc. have also adopted shifting cultivation.

The State Forest Department undertook a survey of the Jhumias all over and it
is seen that the maximum number of shifting cultivators concentrate in Dhalai
district. The Tripuri and the Reang community are the largest of the shifting
cultivators and it is also seen that some non tribal in the West Tripura district
have adopted shifting cultivation as a means of livelihood. Maximum
concentrations are seen in the Damboornagar and Dasda Rural Development
blocks. The latest survey carried out by forest department puts the figure of
practicing shifting cultivators to 27530 households which are distributed in
Dhalai, North, South and West districts of Tripura. These households are
reportedly dependent on shifting cultivations as there is no other alternative
economic activity available for their livelihood. In order to ensure sustainable
forest management therefore, it is essential to engage them in economic
activities such as rubber plantation which has shown maximum acceptance
among these communities. Tripura Government has been trying with different
rehabilitation models for settlement of shifting cultivators with varying degree
of success. Tripura Forest Development and Plantation Corporation Limited
have so far raised about 11,000 ha of rubber plantation on degraded forest
lands till August 2006.

2. Focused group discussion were held in the field at many places namely
Champaknagar, Baramura, Warangbari under West Tripura District, Garifa,
Kathalchari, South Vijoypur in South Tripura District and Jeolcherra, Ambassa
and Puberai Para under Dhalai District, to ascertain the views of shifting
cultivators and others for weaning out the communities from current
destructive practices to settled life with economic package such as settled
agriculture, fisheries, bamboo processing and value addition and processing of
other NWFP.

3. Study tour to China

The Chinese visit was a very useful experience for the Indian delegation as to
how a big country with a population of more than 1.3 billion people can take
up the task of nation building. The social infrastructure of Roads, Railways,
Civil Aviation, Electricity, Water, Medical and Health Care, Markets and
Industry etc are all world class and creating economical boom and triggering a
growth of more than 10% annually. The results of this were also seen in Social
development and reduction in Poverty. The results were also visible from the
point of view of Forestry as between the year 1990 and 2000, China recorded
an annual 1.2 percent expansion rate or 1.8 million ha of forests, while elsewhere in the world forest were shrinking by 0.2 percent a year.

The visit to China has opened up opportunities of bilateral cooperation between Tripura Government/Entrepreneurs and Chinese Bamboo industries. At Nanjing the Indian delegation held substantial talks with the academicians, University administration and senior scientists of Bamboo Engineering Research Center regarding the possible parameters of cooperation between Tripura and Chinese entrepreneurs.

A team of scientists lead by Prof. Zhang Qisheng, President, Bamboo Engineering Research Centre of Nanjing Forestry University visited Tripura and interacted with the stakeholders for value addition and promotion of Bamboo in the state and signed a MoU for sharing of technology etc.

The ITTO pre-project consultant was requested to include, apart from Rubber, Bamboo as a source of livelihood for the tribal shifting cultivators and a model project be included in the ITTO project report. The project should have a transfer of technology component and a demonstration project as part of the development of a model for settlement of tribal Jhumias and sustainable forest management.

The Center for excellence under the JBIC Project should be involved in the process of development of Bamboo sector with Chinese technology and BERC should be included as training and collaborating institute for training the Indian entrepreneurs/officers and for transfer of Bamboo industrial technology.

4. State level consultation meeting
Detail report enclosed in annexure I

5. Development of full fledged project
A detailed project report in the field of Reforestation and forest management, sustainable forest management, rehabilitation of shifting cultivation has been prepared and submitted to ITTO.

3. TARGET BENEFICIARY’S INVOLVEMENT

The pre-project involved shifting cultivators covering most tribal groups, other line departments, NGOs, and academics. This was done by organizing field tours and consultation workshops. Their views were taken in formulating a full fledged project which has now been submitted to Govt. of India for submission to ITTO.

During field visits the national consultant and other stake holders visited the shifting cultivators households and also had forest transect walk to
participatory learning about the ecological impacts of current shifting cultivation practices and how to improve the situation towards sustainable forestry development by providing alternative economic incentives to shifting cultivators based on processing of NWFP and bamboo.

The rehabilitation package has also been evolved through consultation with beneficiaries. Rubber plantation, wherever feasible, has been providing good economic support to shifting cultivators. They are willing to engage in this form of alternative income generation. The shifting cultivators who are generally in the category of 'dollar a day' income are getting on an average $250 per month through rubber plantation. Till rubber matures for harvesting of latex the intermediate crops of bamboo, medicinal herbs, and other agro forestry crops can support the beneficiaries. This model has been advocated by all the shifting cultivators involved in discussion through the implementation of pre-project. This rehabilitation model is the basic framework included in the main project which has been submitted to Govt. of India for submission to ITTO.

The study tour particularly to China helped in understanding how bamboo resources of the state particularly in shifting cultivation areas can be profitably used to provide sustained economic benefit to the beneficiaries when they shift from shifting cultivation to settled agriculture. The Chinese Institutions agreed to transfer of technology and capacity building of the shifting cultivators in setting up of processing centres in state.

In addition to above practices the shifting cultivators also expressed their desire to lead a settled life through agriculture and allied activities at suitable places without destroying further forest areas. State Government had earlier provided surplus agricultural land to such beneficiaries at appropriate places. State Govt. is also committed to sustainable forestry development and therefore the income from rubber plantation is all to be passed on to the beneficiaries.

Capacity building of beneficiaries and front line field foresters in project implementation was also done through short term training.

A detailed project has been prepared incorporating the above pre-project learning.

4. LESSONS LEARNED (THIS IS NOT REQUIRED)

5. RECOMMENDATION

A Project Proposal on "Sustainable and Multipurpose forestry to settle the tribal shifting cultivators of Tripura State in North-Eastern India by providing viable economic activities' has been prepared based on studies made during this Pre-project.
PART -III CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

A full fledge project on “Sustainable and Multipurpose forestry to settle the tribal shifting cultivators of Tripura State in North-Eastern India by providing viable economic activities” has been prepared based on studies made during this project.

The purpose of this project is to operationalize, through actual implementation on pilot scale an appropriate package of practices for eco restoration of shifting cultivation areas in the form of raising and managing Rubber plantations, either as pure or in mixture with hard wood species and bamboo through community participation for their multiple products. This to be coupled with activities such as NWFP development, biodiversity conservation, agro forestry and other income generating activities for the practicing shifting cultivators so as to encourage them to adopt settled and sustainable forest based economic activities and thus contribute to sustainable forest development in the state of Tripura. These models of practices are to be implemented at four pilot sites in different parts of Tripura. In addition four common facility centres are proposed to be set up for processing of different forest products so as to provide sustained income to shifting cultivators. These models having being implemented, refined and adapted in the state of Tripura could then be replicated in other north-eastern states of India affected by shifting cultivation.

The factors leading to shifting cultivations and unsustainable forest management in India and in the state of Tripura as evidenced in the loss of forest cover and forest degradation are the weaknesses and failures in the strict implementation of sustainable forest management practices. These failures in turn are caused due to several constraints and socio economic conditions which are not properly identified (even though they can be seen reflected in several indicators) or adequately addressed.

The specific objectives of the project, therefore, are:
1. To develop and operationalize a multipurpose forestry and other land based package and practices with community participation for restoration of shifting cultivation areas.
2. To establish an institutional capacity for forest based sustainable livelihood support activities through the establishment primary processing facility in the vicinity of villages and secondary and tertiary processing facilities at other appropriate locations.

These specific objectives will be achieved through the project outputs namely; An ecologically and socio economically feasible rehabilitation model in selected locations representing forest types and communities; a ten year rehabilitation plan for state of Tripura; manuals / guidelines for implementing the rehabilitation package for application in Tripura and other places; setting up four pilot sites of 100 ha each covering 100 house holds at each sites for
implementation of model; development of functional and expert rehabilitation information system; four pilot common facility centres; increased commitment at the national level for rehabilitation of shifting cultivation areas; competent human resource development; strengthen institutional structure; organized and functioning participatory arrangement for rehabilitation of shifting cultivation and settlement of jhumias so as to lead to SFM/SFD; development of an adequate system for forest valuation; an operational plan for rehabilitation related research and technology development; a system for monitoring and evaluation of implementation of rehabilitation of shifting cultivation and settlement of jhumias.

Shifting cultivators are proposed to be provided food and health security through the different schemes of the Tripura Govt. on behalf of executing agency. This would sustain them particularly during next 3-4 years of plantation. After about four years the plantations of Bamboo and Rubber would start giving return to affected communities. The state government is committed to provide reasonable educational facility in the new settlement so that the shifting cultivators could volunteer to move to settled agriculture from shifting cultivation. However, the project is not likely to enforce any law to move them to a new place. The entire process is proposed to be participatory and with full involvement of local communities, government and NGOs. This has been endorsed by workshop participants who included the Honorable Forest Minister on behalf of Govt. of Tripura as well as senior administrative officer of the state. The experience of state govt. so far has been very encouraging and with all the new facilities proposed to be created during project period is bound to get their (shifting cultivators) participation in full measure.

Thus, The project will be characterized by serious capacity building efforts and effective dissemination of information on developing package of practices for eco-restoration of shifting cultivation areas and sustained economic engagement of Jhumias (shifting cultivators) so as to encourage them to participate in sustainable forest management practices in the state of Tripura and elsewhere through demonstration effects.

Responsible for the Report

Name: Sri A.K. Sinha
Position held: Chairman and Managing Director
Date:
State level consulting meeting

The Corporation has been sanctioned an international Project titled" Sustainable and Multi purpose forestry to settle the Tribal shifting cultivators of Tripura State in India by providing viable economic activities" [PD 111/05 Rev.1(F) - Pre Project] by the International Tropical Timber Organization. The Project is being implemented by the Corporation with the help of National Consultant Research staff of Women’s College under the leadership of Dr. V.K. Bahuguna, Managing Director, TFDPC Ltd who is the Project Director of the Project.

For finalizing the project a workshop was organized by the Corporation. Intellectuals and stake holders have been invited for getting their views for successful preparation and implementation of ITTO Project. The workshop have been attended by Hon’ble Forest Minister Sri Jitendra Chowdhury, Sri S.K.Panda, Principal Secretary, Govt. of Tripura, Sri R.P. Tangwan, PCCF, Govt. of Tripura, Dr. Ram Prasad, National Consultant, ITTO Project, Dr. V.K. Bahuguna, Addl. PCCF & Managing Director, TFDPC Ltd, Prof. Aparajita Mukherjee, Visva Bharati University, Faculty members of Tripura University, Government officials, NGO’s and Practicing Jhumias. Feedback received from the workshop was found effective and will be incorporated in the draft project report.

Proceedings of the workshop of the International Tropical Timber Organization pre-Project on Sustainable and multipurpose forestry to settle the tribal shifting cultivators of Tripura with viable Economic activities” organized at Pragna Bhavan Pt. Nehru Complex, Agartala on the 23rd November,07.

The Tripura Forest Development & Plantation Corporation Ltd. has organized a one day workshop at Pragna Bhavan, Pt. Nehru Complex, Agartala on the 23 November,07 to chart out the course for development of sustainable and multiple forestry to settle the tribal shifting cultivator families of Tripura with
viable economic activities with financial assistance from the International Tropical Timber Organization. The hon’ble Minister for Forests was the Chief Guest of the programme who inaugurated the workshop by lighting the lamp.

The keynote address was delivered by Dr. V K Bahuguna, Managing Director of the Corporation, who is also the Project Director of the Tripura ITTO pre-project. In his keynote address, Dr. Bahuguna dwelt upon the functioning of the Corporation, the background of the project, the genesis, its relevance and necessity. Dr. Bahuguna through power point presentation gave an account on the quantum of damage done to the forests due to the deleterious practice of shifting cultivation by the people in the hills of the state. It has been concisely explained by him as to how the reduced shifting cultivation (jhum) cycle has impoverished not only the economy of the tribal families but also rendered the topsoil of the land infertile, due to loss of soil nutrients going with the surface runoff and this has adversely affected the site productivity. He summed up his address by outlining the aim of the workshop which he said was intended to visualize the appropriate package of practices to be adopted in the project for eco-restoration of the ravaged shifting cultivation areas. These include raising and managing rubber plantations, either in pure form or in mixture with other hard wood species and bamboo through community participation. He impressed upon the stakeholders present in the workshop to actively participate in the discussion to help evolve a roadmap for eco-restoration of shifting cultivation areas of the state through economically viable option for the resettlement of tribal population and thus ensure sustainable forest management and sustainable livelihood.

Mr S K Panda, Principal Secretary, Planning Department, Govt. of
Tripura also addressed the workshop participants and observed that the govt. of Tripura has been attempting to settle the tribal shifting cultivators for a long period of time but it has fallen short of expectations. He further observed that gainful settlement of the shifting cultivators through a holistic project conceived by the TFDPC to be posed to International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) would definitely yield result. He further observed that judicious mix of latest and relevant technology would make the project successful.

Mr R P Tangwan, PCCF, Tripura in his address mentioned about various schemes that the Forest Department had executed in the past and efforts taken since independence to settle the tribal shifting cultivators. The tribal economy is stagnating because of unviable agricultural practices. The honeycomb pattern of living in the forests has aggravated the problem further. He considered that the concept of Re-grouping of the forest villages with endeavor to improve the social infrastructure of the villages is considered to be successful. Already the programme is being implemented in 21 such sites. The ITTO project may consider this approach and it may be integrated with the project.

Dr. Ram Prasad was the Special guest and National consultant for assistance in the development of a full fledged project for submission to ITTO through Govt of India.
a detailed account on the background and functioning of the ITTO. He explained that the ITTO Pre-project aims to develop and operationalize a multipurpose forestry and other land based package and practices with community participation for restoration of shifting cultivation areas. And also to establish an institutional mechanism for forest based sustainable livelihood support activities through the establishment of primary processing facility in the vicinity of villages, secondary and tertiary processing facilities at other appropriate locations.

The Hon'ble Minister for Forests Mr. Jitendra Chaudhury in his address appreciated the consideration of ITTO for selecting the state for implementation of the Project. He expressed that the reduction and management of shifting cultivation practice is prerequisite for improving the quality of the forest resources, its cover and productivity so that finally people of the state are benefited through their socio economic development. He also explained that no timeline is attached with the Endeavour nor it would be forced on any body but through participatory implementation of the project an environment would be created when people themselves would realize the futility of such faulty and unwholesome agriculture practices. He urged upon the Project sanctioning authority to arrange for issue of green signal so that the project may take off at the earliest.

**Technical Session I**

The Hon'ble Minister for Forests had chaired the session for the reasons that there was high spontaneous response from the members of the stakeholders. The Project Director, Tripura ITTO project Dr. Bahuguna and the Special Guest speaker Dr. Ram Prasad had explained in clear terms about the modalities of the Project and how it would help in mitigating the adverse impacts of the fire ravaged forest areas of the state. It was agreed that turmeric and ginger and other similar cash crops whose growth would not be impaired because of canopy closure of the rubber trees would be encouraged in the initial years of the Project. This would also entail financial return to the growers.
This session was chaired by Dr. V K Bahuguna, MD of TFDPC Ltd. After elaborate discussion it was decided to form two groups from amongst the participants/stake holders to discuss, finalize and come out with recommendations of the practices to be integrated with the Project. The two Groups so formed were provided with the following topics for their recommendations:

1. Socio-economic aspect to be included in the project.
2. Plantation model - Eco -restoration of the shifting cultivation sites

After detailed deliberations the following recommendations emerged in the Technical session
1. The choice of the people in selecting the species to be ensured.
2. The concept of JFM and SHG would be the core of the Project.
3. The economic activities shall have to be tied up with the Banks.
4. The local demand of the produces shall have to be met first.
5. The local inherent skill shall be harnessed and integrated with the project.
6. The Bamboo and craft bazaar shall be the nucleus of the Project.
7. Pisci-culture and fish processing/preservation to be given weight age.
8. Culture of education to be imparted.
9. Propagation of Bamboo/Medicinal Plants/Orchids to be encouraged.
10. Agarbatti stick making in the model lizzat papad may be considered.
11. Plantation of judicious mix of high value indigenous trees to be created.
12. Market tie up for value addition shall have to be ensured.
13. The project shall consist of the component of health care, nutrition and education to address the overall needs of the shifting cultivator families.

The valedictory Session
The valedictory address was given by Sri. Nirbhajoy Tripura of Chhamanu, Longthorai Valley, a tribal shifting cultivator himself, appreciated the different elements proposed to be integrated in the project and wanted Rubber based package along with Gandaki (Alocassia odorata), a tuber available in the forests having medicinal value for the project.
The roadmap for integrated development of the crucial sector of sustainable and multipurpose forestry to settle the tribal shifting cultivators as per the choice of the people have thus emerged in the workshop. The project proposal presented by the national consultant was broadly endorsed by one and all present in the workshop. It was agreed that the project after appropriate incorporation may be submitted to Govt of India to be forwarded to ITTO for funding support. The day long deliberation ended with a vote of thanks to chair and by lauding the efforts of TFD&PC in making a bold initiative on reconciling the issue of eco-restoration of Shifting cultivation and sustained livelihood of poor shifting cultivators.