

## Minutes of AFD's Appraisal Mission

(Guwahati, 3-8 October 2018)

### 1. Context

AFD has financed a project in Assam aiming at promoting participatory conservation of forest and biodiversity all across the State and at strengthening the Forest department to better fulfill its missions. The implementation of this project started in February 2012 and is due to last until end of May 2019. The overall amount disbursed has been of 251,5 Cr INR among which 218,6 Cr INR has been provided by AFD financing (booked for 30,2 M€ in AFD accounts) and the rest by Assam State budget.

An evaluation is undergoing (final report to be delivered mid-December), but intermediate report shows (i) broadly satisfactory results except on component 2 (strategic planning) (ii) positive impacts on Forest Department (improved self-esteem, improved mobility and accommodation, better relationship with communities) and (iii) positive results on Communities (improved relationship with Forest Department, increased opportunities for training and supplementary income). It is too early to appreciate mid-term impacts and sustainability of changes. Despite its difficult launch (mainly for procurement reasons), the project has performed quite well since mid-2015, with a pace of disbursement of almost 10M€ per year.

A retrospective outlook shows that Assam has improved indicators concerning forests<sup>1</sup> and biodiversity (increasing populations for most of the big mammals, diminution of poaching, publication of an Action plan for Biodiversity). Those encouraging results are obviously neither directly nor fully attributable to the project, but mainly to the Forest Department which the project is supporting.

It shall be reminded that AFD committed itself worldwide to have projects that have significant impact on climate change, on biodiversity, on gender and on social cohesion among populations. And the Assam project is cumulating clear favorable effects on all and every of these dimensions.

Taking stock of those first achievements and following requests of the State of Assam, AFD initiated the instruction of a second phase for this project (see April 2018 Aide Memoire). AFD is intending to submit to its Board a decision of financing for a second phase of the project for the conservation of forest and biodiversity in the State of Assam. The total amount of phase II is encompassed at 50 M€ (400 Cr INR), among which 40 M€ (320 Cr INR) shall be provided by AFD and 10 M€ (80 Cr INR) by Assam State budget, mainly through miscellaneous work, wages of involved Civil Servants and taxes.



<sup>1</sup>According to the *India State of Forest 2017*, the forest cover has increased by 560 sq km in Assam, reflecting a change in the historical trend. <http://fsi.nic.in/isfr2017/isfr-forest-cover-2017.pdf>

**PCCF & HoFF, Assam**

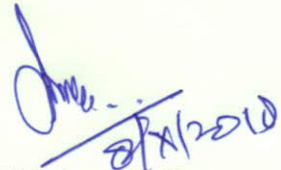
The AfD Supervision Mission in Assam from 2<sup>nd</sup> Oct, 2018 till today, i.e., 8<sup>th</sup> Oct, 2018. They have had discussed with the Evaluation Consultant (Agri Finance Cooperation Ltd.), the COMPELO, the OKD Institute, and the officers in Assam Forest Department, State Government (Shri. Alok Kumar, IAS Chief Secretary, Assam cum Chairman, GB, APFBC & Shri. Ravi Capoor, IAS, Additional Chief Secretary, Department of Environment & Forests cum Chairman, EC, APFBC).

The Mission also had interaction with the Hon'ble Minister, Environment & Forests.

The Member of AfD Supervision Mission also made field visit to interact with JFMCs, EDCs and to see some works undertaken in the project.

Towards the end of the Mission the AfD team has prepared a draft of Aide-Memoir, which is also discussed today, i.e., 8<sup>th</sup> Oct, 201, along with the Senior Officers.

This Aide Memoir is placed at **Flag-A** which may kindly be approved for signing jointly by the AfD and the Assam Forest Department.



(A. K. Johari, IFS)  
Spl. PCCF (B&CC) cum  
Project Director, PMU, APFBC

**PCCF & HoFF, Assam**

S. K. Sunston  
8/10/2018

AFD (Project Manager/France AFD Office)



E. FOURMANN  
8/10/2018

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