

Concept Note for Thematic Session at WSDS 2020

Pilot Implementation of India's Forestry NAMA in Assam

By

GIZ and TERI

More than 200 million people are extracting fuelwood from forests annually in India (FSI 2011). This makes unsustainable fuelwood extraction a key driver of deforestation and forest degradation in the country. Taking cognizance of this, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC), Government of India in collaboration with GIZ, has developed India's first Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Action (NAMA) in the forestry sector on 'Reducing Forest Degradation and Deforestation in Assam through Sustainable Fuelwood Management' under the ambit of Indo-German bilateral cooperation project titled 'Development and Management of NAMAs in India'. The state of Assam was chosen as the first state to develop and implement this NAMA, where more than 72% of the population is dependent on fuelwood for meeting their cooking energy requirements.

A full fledged Forest NAMA concept was developed focussing on addressing the foremost unplanned driver of forest degradation in the country and the state of Assam – unsustainable fuelwood extraction. The Energy & Resources Institute (TERI) and GIZ are jointly implementing the project by addressing knowledge, planning, financing and communication gaps towards:

- Enhancing forest carbon stock through conservation and plantation;
- Reducing fuelwood demand by promoting fuelwood saving technologies. These will cover a wide range of technologies including successful models of Improved Cook Stoves (ICS), driers, LPG, biogas, electricity etc.

Assam State Forest Department (AFD), Assam Branch of Indian Tea Association (ABITA), and Assam Energy Development Authority (AEDA) are the main state level partners for the Pilot NAMA project on Sustainable Fuelwood Management along with many other stakeholders such as educational institutions and community based organisations.

The project is being deployed in six forest divisions of Assam, namely – Sonitpur (West), Sonitpur (East), Nagaon, Nagaon (South), Cachar and Dibrugarh. The overall goal of this phase is to achieve total emission reductions of 84,000 tCO₂e, ensure adoption of clean cooking technologies in more than 15000 HHs and develop a proposal for accessing climate finance until the end of August 2020.

The project will lead to:

- Adoption of efficient and clean fuelwood saving technologies;
- Enhancement in co-benefits for local communities;
- Enhancement in carbon stock through supporting plantation and agroforestry;
- Capacity building of forest department staff;
- Capacity building of communities for adoption of alternative fuel technologies and for alternative livelihoods.

The initiative will bring about positive changes for the global community by mitigating climate change through supporting afforestation activities and reducing deforestation. It will provide alternative to polluting cooking activity through deployment of fuelwood saving technologies and enhance income generating opportunities for communities through training for income generating activities. The initiative will also contribute to India's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) by enhancing its carbon sink and reducing emission intensity.

Implementation of the NAMA activities has showcased the methodology to estimate the forest carbon for all six forest divisions in Assam and during the process has built the capacities of more than 150 front line staff for forest carbon assessment. A detailed baseline survey on socio-economic status and dependence on fuelwood has been done in all the six divisions. There has been deployment of Improved Cooking Technologies such as Improved Cooking Stove and LPG through Ujjwala to Tea Gardens in selected forest divisions, forest villages as well as forest fringe villages covering over 7000 households and work is going on to deploy technology to remaining 8000 households.

The thematic session on Pilot Implementation of India's Forestry NAMA in Assam would discuss experiences of implementation of various activities and its relevance in reducing the use of fuelwood on the ground. It would also discuss the future priorities in order to upscale the pilot project to cover more forest divisions and households. It would reduce the fuelwood demand and also facilitate plantation activities and would contribute to India's forestry NDCs.