

Community-Based Sustainable Forest Management for Water Resource Conservation in Manipur (COSFOM-KfW)

Water Resources Conservation Group Guideline

Version: 08/2019

András Darabant
Hrishikesh Singh Konthoujam

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1. Background..... 1**
- 2. Prerequisites of WRCG formation 1**
- 3. Flowchart of WRCG formation 2**
- 4. Introduce village to the concept of WRCG 2**
- 5. Screening of existing CBOs..... 4**
- 6. Formation of the WRCG..... 6**
 - 6.1 WRCG membership 6**
 - 6.2 Executive Group 6**
 - 6.3 Customization and approval of the WRCG bylaws 7**
 - 6.4 Official formation of the WRCG and approval of by-laws 8**
- 7. Sign Memorandum of Understanding between COSFOM and the WRCG 8**
- 8. WRCG templates 9**
 - 8.1 Water Resource Conservation Group By-Law template..... 9**
 - 8.2 WRCG – PEA MoU Template 13**

List of Figures

- Figure 1: Flowchart of livelihood related COSFOM activities, indicating in green the steps covered by the WRCG Guideline and their logical sequence in the process 1
- Figure 2: Flowchart of WRCG formation (serial numbers correspond to those in figure1)... 3
- Figure 3: Organizational chart of village institutions showing the institutions to be established by the Project in orange (direct link shown in full line, coordination link shown in dashed line 4

List of Tables

- Table 1: Example of CBO screening from Langang village 5
- Table 2: Options to customize the WRCG by-law template and guidance on customization 7

1. Background

The requirement of a community institution mandated to implement project activities in each pilot village was identified in several documents guiding the implementation of the COSFOM Project, including the Feasibility Study, the KfW Terms of Reference and the Technical Proposal. According to the guidance contained in these documents, these community institutions should be mandated to implement project activities, incl. decentralized community forest management and watershed restoration activities. In a first step, existing Community-Based Organizations are to be screened and assessed in terms of their institutional set-up, mandates and capacities to fill this mandate. In case CBOs are found in a village that are potentially in position to take over the mandate of implementing project activities, their capacities are to be built for this purpose. However, in case no adequate CBOs are found in a community, the establishment of a new institution should be facilitated. This community-based organization is called **Water Resources Conservation Group (WRCG)**.

2. Prerequisites of WRCG formation

Before the village level WRCG can be formed, certain project activities would have to be completed in the village:

1. The village would have had to be introduced to COSFOM following the standard awareness raising program on the project following due FPIC procedures.
2. Based on this a formal written consent would have to be obtained from the village expressing their interest in collaborating with COSFOM.

Once the two above stated prerequisites are in place, the work component on the formation of the local WRCG can start. The work component consists of three major steps, including i) the screening of existing CBOs, ii) the actual formation of the WRCG, and iii) the formal signing of an MoU between the Community Forestry and Water Conservation Society Manipur (CF&WCS-M) and the concerned village WRCG. The selecting and implementing Entry Point Activities (EPAs) and other steps can only be implemented once these steps have been completed. The logical sequence of the process is illustrated in Fehler! Verweisquelle konnte nicht gefunden werden..

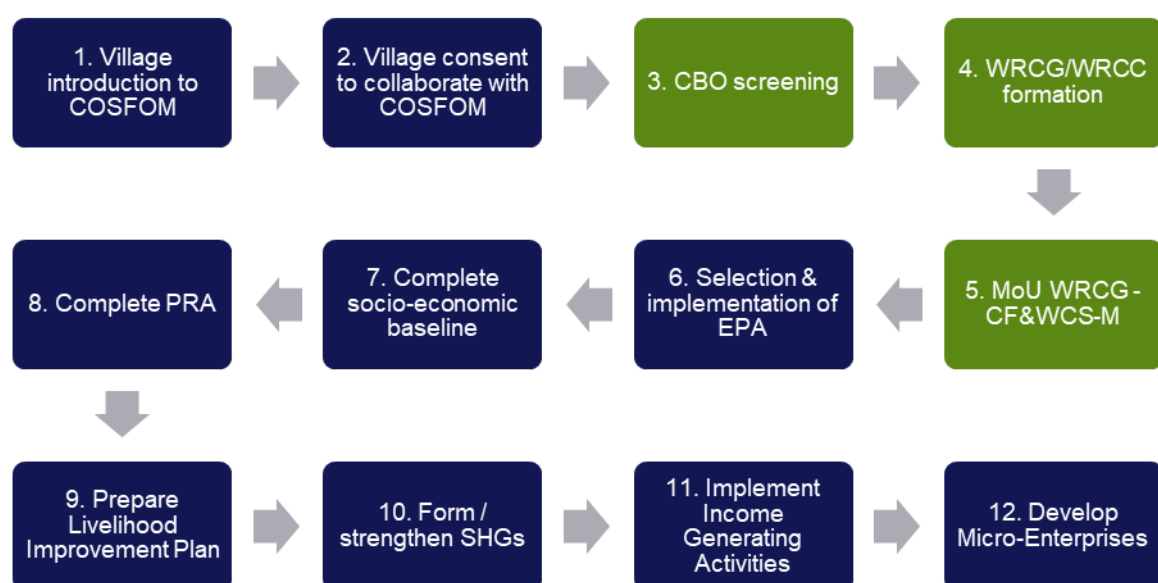


Figure 1: Flowchart of livelihood related COSFOM activities, indicating in green the steps covered by the WRCG Guideline and their logical sequence in the process

3. Flowchart of WRCG formation

Once the initiatory FPIC procedures have been completed and the Village Authority has provided a written statement about the village interest of collaborating with the Project, the formation of the WRCG can be initiated. The formation process consists of four major activities, which in turn consist of smaller steps each. First, the village community needs to be introduced to the concept of WRCGs and the process to be followed for its formation. Next, existing CBOs need to be screened for their mandates, organizational structure and capacities, followed by the actual formation of the WRCG. Finally, the process is concluded by signing a Memorandum of Understanding between the WRCG and the Community Forestry and Water Conservation Society, Manipur as the Project Executing Agency (Figure 2).

4. Introduce village to the concept of WRCG

Members of the Field Support Unit should establish contact with the Village Authority and agree on a suitable time to introduce the concept of the Water Resource Conservation Group to the community. In case no plenary community meeting can be organized, a meeting with the Village Authority and as many other community members as possible should be sought. The meeting should present the following information and clarify open questions through dialogue on:

- Objectives and mandate of the WRCG (refer to **Text box 1**)
- Institutional linkages of WRCG (refer to **Text box 2**)
- Principles of membership on the WRCG (refer to **Text box 2**)
- Process of forming the WRCG
- Expected costs and benefits arising from the WRCG

It is important to emphasize that the information should reach to as many community members as possible and that it is not sufficient to discuss the matter with the Village Authority. In case in the initial meeting only the Village Authority is present, a plenary village meeting should be insisted upon.

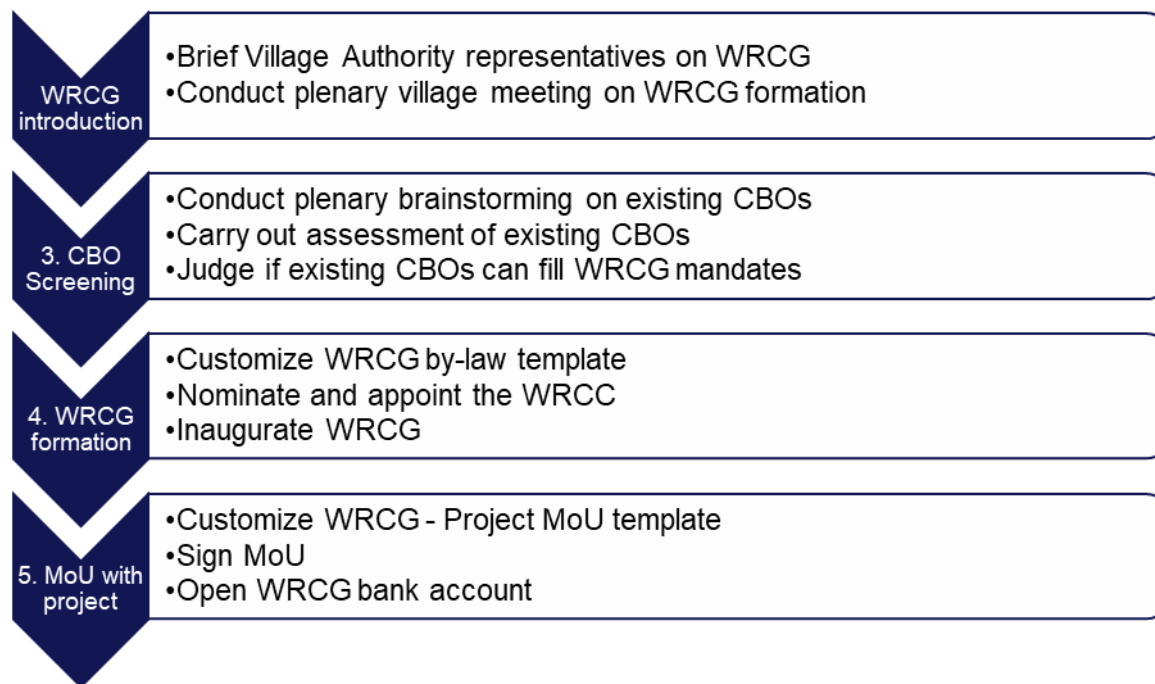


Figure 2: Flowchart of WRCG formation (serial numbers correspond to those in figure1)

Text box 1: Mandates of the Water Resource Conservation Group

Mandates of the Water Resource Conservation Group

On behalf of the Village Authority, the WRCG should plan and manage all watershed activities, including flood and torrent control, springshed rejuvenation, riparian protection, as well as community forest management and restoration within the village boundaries. In addition, the WRCG shall plan and implement COSFOM livelihood measures for the entire community. The provisions of the Feasibility Study were revised based on stakeholder consultations, according to which the WRCC should:

- Identify, plan, implement and monitor EPAs;
- Formulate the Village Micro Plan, including components of the Livelihood Improvement Plan, community forest, stream and riparian management and Participatory Land Use Plan and implement all these plans;
- Assign and supervise village water wardens and forest warden;
- Coordinate watershed related issues with WRCCs of other villages located in the same micro-watershed;
- Engage in forming associations with WRCCs of other villages located in the same micro-watershed called Water Resource Conservation Authority (WRCA);
- Prepare annual work and budget plans; and progress reports regarding the village’s collaborative activities with COSFOM;
- Participate in conducting participatory baseline and impact surveys;
- Participate in watershed engineering, afforestation and other contracted work;
- Assist in engineering surveys, and cost estimates for any structures to be built.
- Undertake participatory monitoring, undertaking physical verification and measurements of the work done;
- Facilitate the development of livelihood opportunities for people affected by restriction due to forest and stream conservation and restoration, as specified in the Livelihood Improvement Plan;
- Maintain (project) accounts and conduct financial management in compliance with by law, and government donor regulations for funds received;
- Arrange physical, financial and social audit of the work undertaken;
- Set up suitable arrangements for post-project operation, maintenance and future development of the assets created during the project period
- Participate in capacity development activities
- Form user groups as required for project activities (e.g. riparian management group)
- Closely collaborate with the NGOs contracted by the COSFOM Project for the purpose of implementing project activities.

Once the village community has been briefed about the objectives and mandates of the WRCG, the responsible FSU Team needs to provide them with an overview of the membership and governance arrangements as well as institutional linkages of the WRCG. The institutional hierarchy between the VA, WRCC and WRCG is presented in Figure 3 and details of the membership and governance arrangements are found in Text box 2.

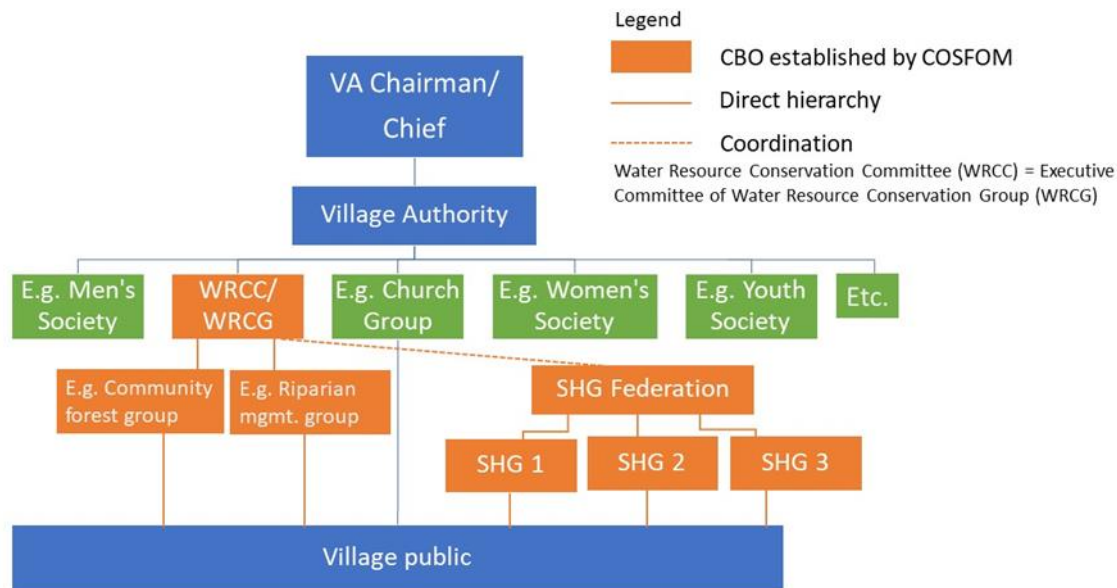


Figure 3: Organizational chart of village institutions showing the institutions to be established by the Project in orange (direct link shown in full line, coordination link shown in dashed line)

Text box 2: Membership, governance and institutional linkages of the WRCG

The WRCG should be a community-based organization with an inclusive representation of the entire village. The membership may be defined by household or by individuals but should capture everyone, who is potentially interested in the Project activities and associated livelihood benefits. The WRCG will have an Executive Committee, the Water Resource Conservation Committee (WRCC). In line with the GoM Notification, the WRCC's should be constituted as a sub-committee of the Village Authority (VA). This is particularly important to avoid creating potential institutional bottleneck by separating the authority in charge of decisions related to land use change (e.g. declaration of community forestry) from the implementer of project activities that are dependent on the approval of these changes in land use (e.g. implementation of community forestry).

The WRCG should be linked to the VA in a similar manner as other groups that operate under the suspension of the VA, incl. the Youth Club, the Women's Society, Men's Society (not applicable to all villages) and the Church Club. The WRCG should be a semi-autonomous institution that works based on the mandates defined above and customized in greater detail in the Memoranda of Understanding between COSFOM and each WRCG. The NRM-L Team feels that it is essential to ensure a high degree of autonomy of the WRCG from the VA. It needs to be ensured that the VA does not interfere into day-to-day matters of the WRCG and that the role of the VA's is reserved as a referral instance in the case of grievances that cannot be solved internally by the WRCG.

Once the community has been thoroughly briefed on the above key aspects and reconfirm their interest in continuing with the process of forming the WRCG, the next step in the process – the screening of existing CBOs – may be initiated.

5. Screening of existing CBOs

In each village targeted by the Project, an initial screening of existing CBOs needs to be completed. This screening should be done in a plenary meeting or with representation of all community-based groups and organizations in the village. Initially a list of all groups should be prepared and once the list is complete, the following information shall be collected in a semi-structured interview conducted with one to two representatives of each CBO:

- Name of the group
- Mandate of the group
- Number of members
- Governance arrangements (decision-making, benefit sharing, representation, executive group, etc.)
- Age of the Group

- Formal registration (if yes under what act)
- Bank linkage
- Activities
- Frequency of meetings
- Special capacities with regard to the mandate of the group
- Special interest in Project

Exemplary results of a village CBO screening process can be found in Table 1.

Table 1: Example of CBO screening from Langang village

Criterion	Administrative Bodies	Community-Based Organizations			
	Land Development Committee of the VA	Youth Club	Women's Society	Chingri SHG	Ngarantming SHG
Mandate	Support the VA regarding land dispute & land development, handles smaller cases alone, larger cases with VA	Support Village Authority on information to conflict management, Sports, Education	Conflicts management and Women rights under Village Authority	Livelihood promotion	Income generation and women's empowerment
Membership	n/a – represents all HH, consists of educated community members	200	Above 300	15, Women members	20, Women members
Governance	8-members elected by Village General Assembly, all male, generally educated, Chairman = Headman	President, Vice President, Secretary, Joint Secretary, Treasurer, Executive Committee Members	Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary, Joint Secretary, Treasurer, Executive Committee Members	Office bearers include the chairperson, secretary, and treasurer	Office bearers include the chairperson, secretary, and treasurer
Age	5-6 years old	Time immemorial	60 years	18 years	18 years
Registration	Mandated by law	Not registered	Not registered	Not Registered	Not Registered
Bank acct.	Yes, Chief's account	Bank account exists	No bank account	Bank account exists, No linkages	Bank account exists, Rs. 5,000/ deposit in bank
Activities	Implement development activities in the village, resolve local cases, maintain law and order, organize village activities	Sports, Education seminars	Women related conflict management	Revolving fund, Run rice mill	Piggery, seasonal vegetable, banana cultivation
Meetings	Once per month	Monthly	Yearly	Monthly	Fortnightly
Capacities	All educated, but no formal training	No training	No training	Trained under IFAD project	Trained twice under IFAD project
Interest in COSFOM	Bridge to connect to untapped forest resources	Contribution in terms of awareness generation	Liaison, Awareness generation, Marketing	Livelihood activities, Labour work, Nursery raising, Plantation, etc.	Fruits and vegetable farming, Green house, Fruits preservation

Once the screening has been completed, the existence of CBOs with a mandate that corresponds to the Project objectives is identified. In the villages visited by the NRM-L Team so far, only one village had an institution (Land Development Committee), which may potentially be suitable to take over the mandate of to implement project activities, whereas

in another village the Watershed Management Committee established through the Integrated Watershed Management Project was considered to be utilized for the purpose of COSFOM. The use of existing CBOs should be a higher priority over forming new ones, provided they have the right mandates and organizational setup and its members and executive group are willing to make changes necessary to accommodate COSFOM requirements.

However, it is likely that in most villages, no CBOs with potentially similar mandates can be found, necessitating the establishment of a dedicated community group, the WRCG.

6. Formation of the WRCG

As a next step, important aspects of the formation of the WRCG need to be discussed. These include

- Membership arrangements
- Executive Group membership and Office Bearers

6.1 WRCG membership

It is strongly advised that all community members, who currently reside in the village should become members of the WRCG. However, in case any community members opt not to participate or if the community decides that only resident members shall be able to participate, the decisions have to be respected by the Project. Female membership is also strongly encouraged and forms of membership that are restrictive to men (e.g. household heads only, etc.) should be avoided.

6.2 Executive Group

The Executive Group of the WRCG is to be called Water Resource Conservation Committee (WRCC) and its formation is guided by a Government of Manipur Notification in relation to COSFOM (for details refer to Fehler! Verweisquelle konnte nicht gefunden werden.). The WRCC shall be formed as a sub-committee of the Village Authority. The WRCC should contain an uneven number of members, as decisions should be taken based on a simple quorum (majority of votes). An even number of members may lead to a truce and thus lead to a bottleneck in decision-making. It is proposed the WRCC should have a minimum of 11 members. The membership of the WRCC should be based on traditional governance mechanisms that are culturally appropriate in the local context (e.g. representation by clans), augmented with features that ensure greater inclusivity, equity and take due account of democratic principles. In addition, it is proposed that one or more representatives of the VA, who may or may not include the VA Chairman/Chief should be members of the WRCC. Thus, the resulting membership of the WRCC may include:

- VA representative(s), possibly the VA Chairman/Chief – to be nominated by the VA

Text box 3: Guidance on the Water Resource Conservation Committee

The GoM Notification issued by the Additional Chief Secretary (Forests and Environment) on behalf of the Governor of Manipur on June 1st, 2018 mandates the establishment of Water Resource Conservation Committees (WRCCs). According to this notification and the KfW monitoring mission Minutes of Mission from May 2019, the WRCCs shall be:

- formed as a sub-committee under the Village Authority
- responsible for the formulation of Village Micro Plans and the implementation of project activities in their concerned localities
- inclusion of all social groups in the village, incl. women, youth, etc.
- registered under the Societies Act and upon registration they shall be called Water Resource Conservation Authority (WRCA)

- Elected representatives as per the decision of the plenary assembly of the WRCG (Water Resource Conservation Group) considering the following guiding principles:
 - Traditional representatives of the village (e.g. representation of clans, CBOs, etc.)
 - Strong personal commitment and ability to support the implementation of project activities
 - Reservation of 30% for females and additional 15% for representatives of disadvantaged groups, other than females on the membership of the WRCC
 - Adequate representation of disadvantaged socio-economic groups based on the results of a participatory social analysis
 - - Representatives of land use interest groups (e.g. Community Forest User Group) – to be added later when these groups have been established
 - - Representative of village-level SHG federation – to be added once SHG federation has been established

6.3 Customization and approval of the WRCG bylaws

Once the WRCG is ready to be formed and the membership of the WRCG and the Executive Committee (WRCC) has been discussed, the WRCG by-law template needs to be discussed and customized with participation of the entire community. In case no general body meeting is possible, the discussion and customization of WRCG by-laws may be conducted in a smaller group, but it needs to be re-discussed and re-confirmed in a plenary meeting the latest during the WRCG formation.

While the by-law template is fixed and cannot be changed for most of its contents, nine variable components were included that should be freely customized following the priorities expressed by the concerned community (Table 2).

Table 2: Options to customize the WRCG by-law template and guidance on customization

Customizable section	Guidance on customization
4. Additional objectives	Discuss, whether the WRCG shall only serve the purpose of project implementation or whether it should have additional objectives. Possible additional objectives may include the implementation of i) soil and water conservation, ii) livelihood improvement activities, etc.
5.i Membership	Membership may be defined by household or by female and male adult community members. Irrespective of what the community decides membership restricted to household heads should be avoided as this would mostly exclude females.
5.ii Membership fee	A membership fee may be freely decided. It is advisable to include a nominal membership fee symbolizing the annual re-confirmation of group membership; however this is not mandatory.
6.i WRCG General Body meeting frequency	The frequency of annual meetings should ideally be at least two. One of these meetings should serve the approval of the annual report and the other one the work planning and budgeting for the subsequent financial year. A higher frequency of meetings may be agreed on by the community.
6.ii WRCG General Body meeting quorum	The quorum should be no less than 1/3, preferably more. Ideally, there should be a minimum quorum for the presence of women that is higher than the general quorum.
7.i WRCC membership	The number of WRCC members may vary depending on the size of the village. For very small villages a minimum number of 9 may suffice. However, for larger villages the targeted membership may lie around 15. It is important to note that the number of members should be odd in order to ease decision making. Additionally, a minimum 30% membership reservation for women and a minimum 15% membership reservation for disadvantaged groups other than women shall be enforced.

Customizable section	Guidance on customization
7.ii WRCC Office Bearers' term	It is proposed that the WRCC Office Bearers' term is two years, however this may vary depending on the concerned community's choice. The term should be no longer than four years, which is the length of the first phase of the Project.
9 Sources of WRCC income	Community members may decide whether any income generated through COSFOM interventions should be ploughed back into the common fund maintained by WRCCG or whether beneficiaries shall keep all their earnings. Decision may already be taken at this stage on the percentage of plough back.
12. Operation of bank account	We propose that the Treasurer and the Chairperson act as joint signatories, while the Chairperson may authorize the Secretary to sign on his/her behalf in case of absence. However, some villages may decide on joint signatures of all three Office Bearers.

6.4 Official formation of the WRCCG and approval of by-laws

Once public agreement on the formation of the WRCCG has been reached and the by-laws have been customized, a General Body meeting of all future members of the WRCCG needs to be called. In this meeting, the previously discussed and agreed draft by-laws are read out paragraph after paragraph and community approval is voiced in unison, unless there are any disagreements. Disagreements shall be resolved on the spot if possible. Once the contents of the by-laws have been agreed to by everyone, all WRCCG members, as well as the WRCC members need to place their signatures on the document and take a public pledge, which is stated at the end of the by-laws. The event shall be organized as a festive occasion.

7. Sign Memorandum of Understanding between COSFOM and the WRCCG

Once the WRCCG has been formed, a Memorandum of Understanding needs to be signed between the WRCCG and the Community Forestry and Water Resources Conservation Society, Manipur as the Project Executing Agency of the COSFOM Project. The MoU Template to be used is attached in Chapter 8.2.

The signing of the MoU should be organized as a festive occasion with the dignitary invited as a Chief Guest. This may be the Project Director, but also the District Collector or someone similar.

Finally, the WRCCG would have to open a bank account in a bank located nearby. The signatories stated in the WRCCG by-laws would have to be available and support the process.

8. WRCG templates

The templates for the WRCG by-laws and the WRCG – CF&WSC-M are attached at the end of this document.

8.1 Water Resource Conservation Group By-Law template

Water Resource Conservation Group (WRCG) By-laws

1. **Headquarters:**,

2. **Purpose :** These by-laws pertain to the governance of the Water Resources Conservation Group (WRCG) and its Executive Committee, hereinafter called Water Resources Conservation Committee (WRCC), established with the purpose of implementing community based sustainable forest and watershed management and livelihood improvement interventions under the “Community-based Sustainable Forest Management for Water Resources Conservation (COSFOM)”, a joint Project of Manipur Forest Department and the German Development Bank (KfW).

3. **Area of operation:** The area of operation of the WRCG are within the boundaries of village, with all forests within the boundaries included.

4. **Objectives of the Society:** The WRCG will implement community-based watershed management activities, including community forestry, forest and riparian management, torrent control measures, spring rejuvenation, riparian protection, livelihood improvement activities, Entry Point Activities (EPA) and other COSFOM project activities.
 The specific objectives of WRCG shall include:
 - i) Community-forest management plan preparation and implementation
 - ii) Watershed management plan preparation and implementation, including riparian improvement, springshed improvement, torrent control measures
 - iii) Village Micro Plan preparation, including forest management plan, riparian improvement plan, livelihood improvement plan, EPA and the implementation of these plans
 - iv) Participation in capacity building activities
 - v) Formation of user groups as required for relevant project activities incl. community forestry, EPA, etc.
 - vi) Financial management of WRCG
 - vii) Record keeping and monitoring, reporting in the General Assembly meeting
 - viii) Active coordination and close collaboration with the NGOs contracted by the COSFOM Project for the purpose of implementing project activities

5. **Membership:**
 - i) **Composition:** The membership shall consist of and who, having understood the purpose of the Project and its mandates, are willing to participate in the Project.
 - ii) **Membership Register:** A list of the names of all members shall be maintained in the membership register that will be kept in the office of the WRCG. An annual membership fee of shall be contributed by the members to meet the administrative cost of the WRCG Office.
 - iii) **Cessation of Membership**
 - a) On death

- b) On written resignation
- c) On leaving permanent residence in the village
- iv) **Rights, responsibilities and privileges of the Members**
 - a) Right to vote (one vote per HH)
 - b) Right to enjoy benefits and participate in the activities of the WRCG
 - c) Responsibility to implement activities as resolved by the WRCG and to uphold financial integrity

6. General Body: WRCG

- i) Composition: The General Body includes all members of the WRCG.
- ii) Meetings and decisions of the WRCG:
 - a. It will be mandatory to hold at least meetings in a year. All members will be informed about the meeting along with the agenda, at least 7 (seven) clear days before the date of the meeting.
 - b. of the members present shall be the quorum of the General Assembly. Decisions will be taken by consensus to the extent possible. However, if circumstances demand, the General Assembly may adopt democratic means of decision making by secret ballot or raising of hands. Simple majority is required to arrive at a decision and no vote can be cast on behalf of an absent member. In the event of an equality of votes, the Chairman will have a second or casting vote.
 - c. Proper minutes of the proceedings and a record of all persons present at each meeting will be maintained. The minutes will be signed by the Chairperson.

7. Executive Committee: The Executive Committee of the WRCG shall be named Water Resources Conservation Committee (WRCC), the functions of which shall be governed as follows:

- i) **Composition:** The WRCC will have members, of whom will be women (minimum 30%) and will be representatives of disadvantaged HH (minimum 15%). 3 members will be Office Bearers (Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer) and the rest will be Executive Members. Representatives of user groups to be formed under the WRCG will be inducted later to ensure these groups' representation in the WRCC.
- ii) **Office Bearers:** include Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer.
 - a. Elections: The election of Office bearers shall follow a democratic Process and Office Bearers will be elected by the General Body of WRCG, which is convened specifically for the purpose.
 - b. Terms of office: Office Bearers will be elected for a term of years and they may be re-elected.
- iii) **Meetings, Notice and Quorum:**
 - a. Secretary will call the meeting with the consent from the Chairperson. The WRCC will have its meetings at least once per month, preferably on fixed date and place. Agenda will be announced prior to the meeting day. Ad-hoc agenda points may be admitted at the beginning of each meeting based on a request by any of the WRCC members as approved by a majority vote of the WRCC. In addition, the Secretary with the consent of Chairperson can convene WRCC meeting on receiving requests from the majority of members as and when required.
 - b. A quorum of at least 2/3 of members will be maintained for WRCC meeting. Decisions will be taken by consensus to the extent possible. However, if circumstances demand, the WRCC may adopt democratic means of decision making by secret ballot or raising

of hands. Decisions will be made through simple majority. In the event of an equality of votes the Chairperson will have a second or casting vote.

- c. Proper minutes of the proceedings and a record of all persons present at each meeting will be maintained. The minutes will be signed by the Chairperson.

iv) **Power of the Executive Committee:**

- a. Take decisions on the details of planning and implementing activities under the COSFOM Project. However, fundamental guiding decisions have to be taken by the General Body.
- b. Enforce the by-laws applying customary powers, including imposing of fines and penalties on those who break these by-laws (e.g. absence from meetings)
- c. Ensure the proper application of guidelines developed by the project

v) **Powers and duties of the office bearers:**

a. Chairperson

- i. Chair the Annual General Assembly Meeting of the WRCG and the meetings of the WRCC;
- ii. Approve the minutes of meetings of WRCC through signature;
- iii. Represent and sign all documents and agreements on behalf of the WRCG;
- iv. Coordinate and develop various governmental organisations, NGOs, etc. as a representative of the WRCG;
- v. Operate WRCG bank account jointly with the Treasurer and Secretary;
- vi. Provide leadership and governance to the WRCC;
- vii. Be responsible for the organisational management, administration and strategic planning together in WRCC and WRCG members;
- viii. Coordinate and lead the preparation of Village Micro Plans, Annual Work Plans and Budgets;
- ix. Coordinate and facilitate the preparation, planning and implementation of forest management plan, riparian improvement plan, EPA, livelihood plan and others;
- x. Work closely with other user groups and SHGs.

b. Secretary

- i. Convene the WRCC meetings and the WRCG Annual General Meetings. Keep minutes of meetings.
- ii. Carry out correspondence on behalf of the WRCG, including day to day Committee operation;
- iii. Lead and coordinate project monitoring at the village level;
- iv. Record keeping, plan implementation and progress follow up;
- v. Work with user group heads (e.g. Community Forest User Groups, etc.);
- vi. Lead the implementation of activities approved by the WRCC under supervision of the Chairman.
- vii. Operate WRCG bank account jointly with the Chairperson and Treasurer.

c. Treasurer

- i. Overall financial management of the WRCG with accounts maintenance, according to the requirements of the Manipur Forest Department as the implementer of COSFOM;
- ii. Preparation of financial statements on a monthly basis;
- iii. Operation of WRCG bank account jointly with the Chairperson and Secretary;
- iv. Responsibility for annual auditing of the WRCG accounts and presentation of the report for approval by the general body of the WRCG.

- vi) **No Confidence Motion** (applicable to WRCC):
 If a member violates the rules, then WRCC may ask for clarification, and subsequently, if required, may recommend the temporary or permanent suspension of the committee member after such proposal ratified by the General Body.
 Prior to recommending suspension, the WRCC should give full opportunity to the member to clarify their position about the issue of concern.
 Member may also be free to resign voluntarily from membership.

8. Amendment of the By-laws:

These By-laws need to be modified time to time or there is a need felt for new rules in by-laws or removing certain rules, then the general assembly, specifically convened for this purpose, on request of the WRCC, can make the required changes.

- 9. **Source of Income of the WRCG:** Membership fees, funds from COSFOM for implementation of project activities

- 10. **Financial Year:** The financial year for the purpose of this By-Laws shall be the period of “April – March” as followed in the Government.

- 11. **Audit of the Account:** The books and accounts of the WRCG shall be audited annually by a Chartered Accountant and the report shall be placed in the General Assembly by of the same year for approval and accepting.

- 12. **Operation of the Account:** The designated Bank account of the WRCG shall be opened in a Bank that has a branch near the Village. The account thus opened shall be operated jointly by

13. Dissolution:

The WRCG may be dissolved with the resolution of the General Body and the assets, if any, movable or immovable will go to the Village Authority.

Pledge:

(After the By-Laws approved unanimously or with the approval of the majority, to have a sense of ownership of these By-laws, WRCG members may take a pledge to this effect as below and then, as an agreement, all members need to sign under this pledge):

“We the residents of village, Block, district, Manipur have constituted the WRCG. We solemnly pledge that we will abide by these by-laws hereby adopted by us for a green village with improved forest, land and water, that is more resilient against climate change and that better supports the livelihoods of each household.”

Signatures of President and Secretary

(Signatures of all WRCG members to be appended)

8.2 WRCG – PEA MoU Template

**Memorandum of Understanding
Between**

**Community Forestry & Water Resources Conservation Society (CF&WCS)
&
..... Water Resources Conservation Group (WRCG)**

This Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is made on the day of the month of 2019 between

- i. the Project Director / Chairman of the **Community Forestry & Water Resources Conservation Society Manipur (CF&WCS-M)**, an autonomous body registered under the Society Registration Act, 1860 at Imphal, established to implement the **Community based Sustainable Forest Management for Water Resources Conservation in Manipur (COSFOM)** Project, and
- ii. the Chairperson of **Water Resources Conservation Group (WRCG)**, having its headquarters at, District, Manipur, **through which the COSFOM Project will be implemented at Village.**

Whereas,

- a. The Community based Sustainable Forest Management for Water Resources Conservation in Manipur (COSFOM) was designed as a development project of the Government of India (GoI) supported by the Federal Government of Germany through the KfW (German Development Bank) within the context of the Indo-German Program on Climate Change Adaptation in the Himalaya. The Project is executed by the Manipur Forest Department (MFD, the Project Executing Agency) and managed by the Community Forestry and Water Conservation Society-Manipur (CF&WCS-M, the Project Management Unit). The first phase of the project is designed for 7 years from 2018 to 2025.
- b. The project outcome is formulated as: ‘Climate resilience of upper watershed ecosystems is improved or sustainably restored, and the adaptive capacity of forest dependent communities is increased (through sustainable forest management and water resource conservation)’.
- c. The project works in three catchment areas—the Ukhrul Block of the Thoubal catchment in Ukhrul District, and the Imphal and Singda catchments in Kangpokpi District—and aims at delivering four results / outputs:
 - a. Participatory watershed planning, coordination and monitoring;
 - b. Restoration and sustainable management of upper watersheds;
 - c. Security and improvements of livelihoods;
 - d. Capacity building for community-based watershed management.
- d. The Project is funded by the Federal Government of Germany through KfW as soft loan and a counterpart fund is provided by Government of Manipur through the Manipur Forest Department (MFD).
- e. The Government of Manipur has decided to execute the Project through the Community Forestry and Water Conservation Society-Manipur (CF&WCS-M, the Project Executing Agency). Following due process of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), the public of Village has agreed to

participate in the Project and cause the democratically constituted WRCG to carry out such part of the Project with due diligence and efficiency in conformity with appropriate administrative and financial practices and provide or cause to be provided, promptly as needed, the required support to implement the Project Measures.

- f. With active support and facilitation of CF&WCS-M, the WRCG will implement community-based watershed management activities, including community forestry, forest and riparian management, torrent control measures, spring rejuvenation, riparian protection, livelihood improvement activities, Entry Point Activities (EPA), soil and water conservation measures, and other project activities.

**NOW, THEREFORE the Community Forestry and Water Conservation Society-Manipur and the
Water Resources Conservation Group hereby agree as follows:**

1. WORKING APPROACH AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The WRCG shall:

- a. ensure good governance upholding fair legal frameworks to enforce an impartial regulatory system for the full protection of stakeholders.
- b. shall, in all its operations, uphold transparency, responsiveness, consensus-oriented participatory and democratic decision-making promoting equity and inclusiveness
- c. shall endeavour to carry out project measures with effectiveness and efficiency, keeping in view the project objectives

The CF&WCS-M shall:

- a. provide handholding support to the WRCG along with the Consultant and an NGO yet to be identified, that, inter alia, shall include facilitation to make various plans and the execution thereof
- b. shall at all times work with empathy with the community respecting and upholding their traditional values and practices
- c. Treat the community as equal partners in discussions, negotiations, agreements, implementation and share due credit for the achievements

2. IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTIVITIES

The WRCG shall carry out the following with facilitation of the CF&WCS-M and in close coordination of the NGO service provider:

- i) Formation of user groups as required for relevant project activities incl. community forestry, EPA, etc.
- ii) Village Micro Plan preparation, including
 - a. Participatory Land Use Plan (PLUP)
 - b. Community Forest Management Plan
 - c. Riparian and Stream Management plan focusing of riparian improvement, springshed rejuvenation, torrent control, and soil and water conservation
 - d. Livelihood Improvement Plan (incl. Entry Point Activity Plan)), with a focus on disadvantaged groups, project affected people, women and youth
and the implementation of these plans
- iii) Participation in capacity building activities
- iv) Financial management of WRCG
- v) Record keeping and monitoring, reporting in the General Assembly meeting
- vi) Active coordination and close collaboration with the NGOs contracted by the COSFOM Project for the purpose of implementing project activities
- vii) Adherence to and enforcement of the rules and regulations on forest protection and management in letter and spirit
- viii) Work closely with the user groups and address their requirements to implement the plan

- ix) Follow the COSFOM manual and guidelines
- x) Follow the advice of COSFOM staff and advisors
- xi) Develop project related network proactively
- xii) Conduct participatory M&E based on the monitoring database as provided by COSFOM
- xiii) Other, mutually agreed activities.

3. PROCEDURES FOR SANCTIONING THE FUND

- (1) The WRCG shall prepare its annual work plan and annual budget in a participatory manner involving all sections of the WRCG and in accordance with the activities identified in the Village Micro Plan (VMP) and submit this to the CF&WCS-M through the FSU after the approval of the same by the General Body of the WRCG according to the time schedule prescribed by the CF&WCS-M and following the formats and Guidelines of the CF&WCS-M. The WRCG shall also submit quarterly fund requirements and physical targets.
- (2) A copy of the Annual Work Plan and Budget will also be submitted to the VA for information and coordination
- (3) Conditions for release of Funds:
 - I. The CF&WCS-M, after detailed examination of the annual work plan and budget documents of the WRCG, shall release the required funds first quarterly budget.
 - II. Subsequent quarterly fund instalments shall be released by the CF&WCS-M after judicious utilization of at least 75% of the fund received and the physical verification of the work completed in the previous quarter.
 - III. III. The fourth and final installment of funds of a particular year shall be released by the CF&WCS-M after receipt of actual expenditure statement and utilization of fund of the first two quarters and physical verification of the corresponding work completed, and on submission of satisfactory work progress of the 3rd Quarter and also keeping in view the activities to be taken up in the last quarter.
 - IV. IV. The same system of release of funds shall be followed in the subsequent years. All fund release shall be made only upon review of the project progress reports from the preceding fiscal year with a focus on consistency with the project objectives and timely submission of Request for Fund and upon the WRCG furnishing Utilization Certificates (GFR 19A) for the previous fiscal year's grants.

4. OBLIGATIONS OF THE WRCG

The WRCG shall:

- a. comply with the terms and conditions governing the release of funds by the CF&WCS-M;
- b. follow the guiding principles and procedures prescribed by the MFD (PEA), Government of Manipur for implementation of the Project in pursuance of the obligations set-forth in the Project Agreements with KfW;
- c. follow the procedures for the procurement of civil works, goods and equipment and consultancy services required for implementation of the project as set forth in the Project Procurement Guidelines;
- d. institute satisfactory arrangements for opening and operation of bank accounts and the flow of funds from the WRCG account to other User Groups and SHGs and other partners of the project according to acceptable financial management process;
- e. establish financial regulations providing in detail, among other things, for the purchase of goods and services, receipt, custody and accounting procedures for stores and delegation of power;
- f. maintain proper accounts and other relevant records, prepare annual accounts comprising receipts and payments, statements of assets and liabilities as may be required by the CF&WCS-M;

- g. the WRCG shall uphold the provisions and the objects of the by-laws of the WRCG which forms an integral part of this MoU (attached as Annex -1);
- h. Conduct participatory monitoring to track implementation, utilization and maintenance of investments carried out by COSFOM and regularly share the results of this monitoring with the WRCG and the CF&WCS-M through the concerned Field Support Unit.

5. OBLIGATIONS OF THE CF&WCS-M

The CF&WCS-M shall:

- a. make available to the WRCG requisite funds in a prompt and timely manner to enable the WRCG to undertake the activities against an approved Annual Work Plan in a smooth and orderly way;
- b. render or arrange to render such technical assistance and guidance as may be needed by the WRCG for an effective and efficient implementation of the Project;
- c. conduct regular monitoring and physical verification to track the progress of project implementation in line with the principles and provisions laid down in various COSFOM Guidelines;
- d. On account of COSFOM project interventions, the status of the land shall not be changed.

6. ACCOUNTING, FINANCING AND AUDIT ARRANGEMENTS

- (1) The WRCG shall keep funds of the Project received from the CF&WCS-M in a bank account and render annual books of account and utilization certificates for the funds released for the previous year;
- (2) The accounts of the WRCG shall be audited by an independent Chartered Accountant in accordance with the requirements of the Act under which it is registered. The audited accounts along with a copy of the audit report including Statement of Expenditure, Utilization Certificate, Audit Report and the Annual Report of the Project activities shall be furnished to the CF&WCS-M through the respective DPMU by the end of July every year.

7. REPORTING OBLIGATIONS

The WRCG shall submit to the CF&WCS-M reports and documents relating to progress of the Project Accounts, Audit, Procurement, Disbursement and Annual Work Plan as may be specified and at such frequency as may be agreed upon between the two parties.

8. GRIEVANCE REDRESSAL

Grievances at the local level shall be addressed to the Executive Committee of the WRCG, named Water Resources Conservation Committee (WRCC). The WRCC has to formally take note of the grievance and settle it in accordance with traditional law and following the provisions of the WRCG by-laws. In case the aggrieved party is not satisfied with the resolution, the WRCC is obliged to notify him/her on the possibility to refer the case to the CF&WCS-M. In case the aggrieved party decides to do so, the WRCC is obliged to refer the case to the CF&WCS-M for resolution.

9. INTERPRETATION

The decision of the Project Director, Community Forestry and Water Conservation Society (CF&WCS-M), in consultation with the Chairman, WRCG, in regard to interpretation of any clause in this MoU will be final and binding on both parties.

10. SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES between the Parties

The two parties in this MOU agree to act in good faith and in a spirit of mutual understanding and accommodation to facilitate the achievement of goals set under the Project and resolve any differences amicably.

11. APPENDIX

The following implementation plans/guidelines/manual, when finalized, shall form integral part of this MoU:

- i. WRCG by-laws
- ii. Village Micro Plan, including
 - a. Participatory Land Use Plan (PLUP)
 - b. Community forest management plan
 - c. Riparian and stream management plan focusing of riparian improvement, springshed rejuvenation, torrent control, and soil and water conservation
 - d. Livelihood Improvement Plan (incl. EPA plan) with a focus on disadvantaged groups, project affected people, women and youth
- iii. Seed collection, nursery operation, seedling production and plantation manual
- iv. SHG operational manual
- v. Others as mutually agreed and required.

In WITNESS WHEREOF the Parties herein have caused this MOU to be signed in their respective names as of the day and year first above written.

For and on behalf of CF&WCS-M	For and on behalf of WRCG
 Signature of Project Director	 Signature of WRCC Chairperson
 Witness	 Witness