

BEST PRACTICES SERIES No. 1



The Key Steps in Establishing Participatory Forest Management

A field manual to guide practitioners in Ethiopia

Compiled by:

FARM-Africa / SOS Sahel Ethiopia

Oromiya Bureau of Agriculture and Rural Development

Southern Nations and Nationalities Peoples' Region Bureau
of Agriculture and Rural Development



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This manual has been put together as the result of ten years' practical experience of FARM-Africa and SOS Sahel Ethiopia. Both organisations have worked together since 2002 in the EU funded FARM-Africa – SOS Sahel Participatory Forest Management Programme (PFMP).

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Foreword

Participatory Forest Management (PFM) development in Ethiopia has been taking place since the mid 1990s. In 1995 the Oromiya Regional State Government took the lead in working with FARM-Africa to establish PFM at the Chilimo forest site. The Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region (SNNP Regions) followed this early initiative with the establishment of the Bonga PFM project in 1996, again working with FARM-Africa. Some years later in 1999, the Oromiya Regional State Government and SOS Sahel set up the Borana Collaborative Forest Management Project.

Establishing PFM involves a considerable amount of work, since introducing a new approach to forest management in a country or region is not an easy undertaking. However, with gradual progress and a commitment to learning, foresters and communities alike have taken up the practices of PFM, leading to positive change in the seemingly unstoppable wave of forest degradation. We all agree that there is still a long way to go, but with the support of the government, communities are now sustainably managing forest areas, under legal use rights agreements.

This PFM manual is an important output of the Governments of Oromiya and SNNP Regions and the FARM-Africa / SOS Sahel Ethiopia PFM programme. It is a useful addition to the growing body of literature concerning PFM in Ethiopia, documenting the PFM system as it develops. But most importantly, the manual will serve, both now and in the future, as a practical field guide for forestry students, forestry professionals and even forest managing communities, as they strive to further promote PFM within the forests of Ethiopia.

To the readers of this manual; use this manual as a learning tool and a practical guide. Use it to continue the important work of PFM. We wish you good luck and continuous support.



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Acronyms

FD	Forest Department
FMA	Forest Management Agreement
FMG	Forest Management Group
FMP	Forest Management Plan
FUG	Forest User Group
NRM	Natural Resource Management
PFM	Participatory Forest Management
PFMP	Participatory Forest Management Programme
PFRA	Participatory Forest Resource Assessment

The purpose of this field manual – an explanatory note

This manual describes the key elements of Participatory Forest Management (PFM). The methods were developed and adapted for the Ethiopian context during a ten-year period of learning. Various approaches were used to ensure full participation by all stakeholders. PFM systems are now being established on the ground in the forests of Ethiopia.

The manual is set out as sequential Guide Sheets so that the user can make easy and quick reference to specific steps and topics in the PFM process. Each Guide Sheet is illustrated to give a visual representation of each step in the process. Diagrams and drawings have also been included to illustrate the processes.

Some Guide Sheets give a number of method options and examples. For example, various approaches for identifying a Forest Management Group are discussed in Guide Sheet 2. This is a reflection of the different experiences of the organisations involved in developing PFM and the varying circumstances that exist in different parts of the country. The options described will allow any user of the manual to select the appropriate methods to work with. Selection of a method should be made after conducting an assessment of the specific environment, technical capacity and socio-economic context where the PFM work is to be carried out.

This manual can be used as a training manual and field guide. It is aimed at both community forest managers and forestry professionals.

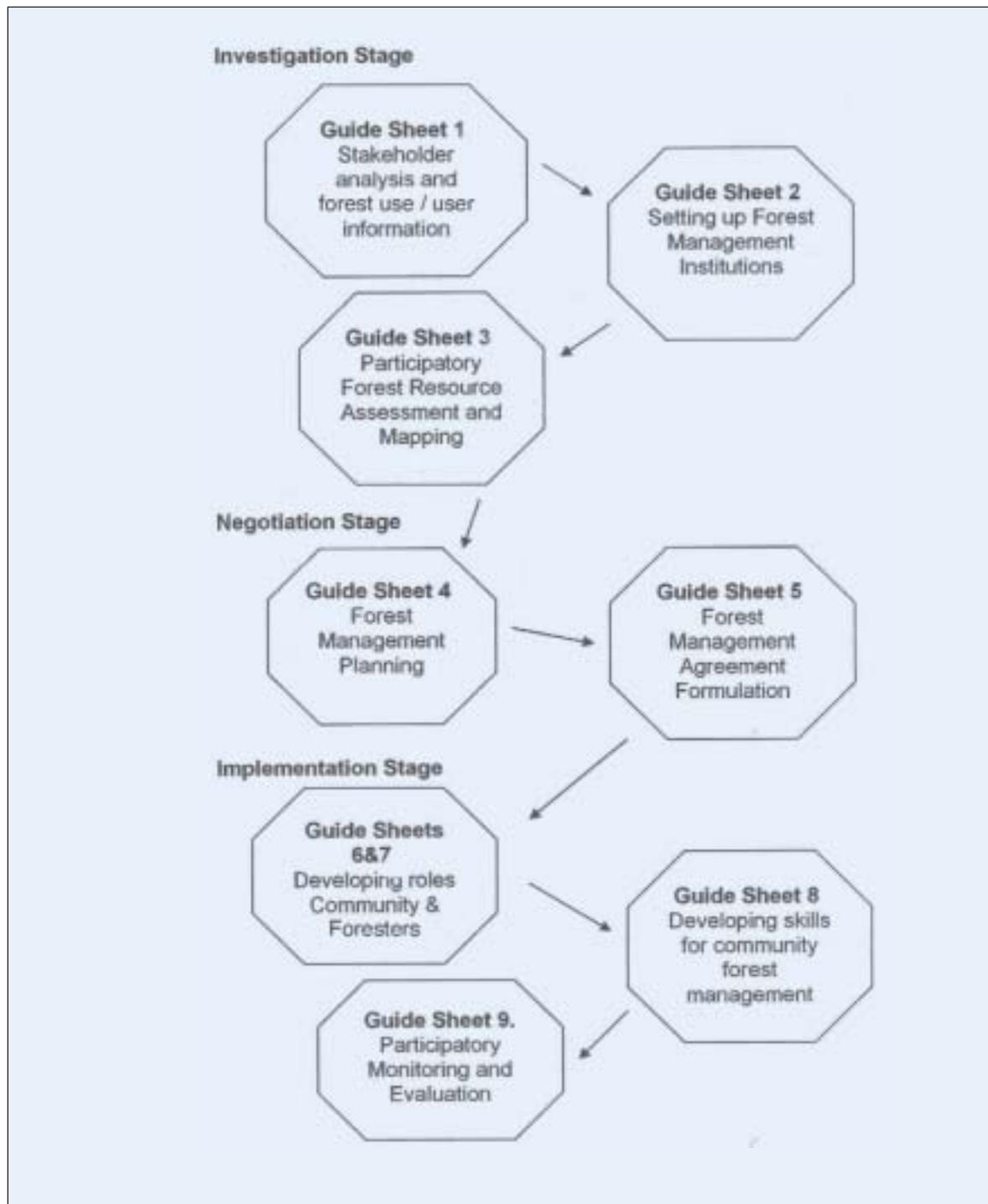
It contains the following information.

- A clear guide to the steps of PFM
- Advice and assistance in the recognition of relevant stakeholders
- Options for forest management institutions, their establishment and support
- Options for technical field methods involved in the three key stages of PFM: Investigation; Negotiation; Implementation
- Templates for key documents in PFM including the PFRA data forms and report format, the Forest Management Plan and the Forest Management Agreement.



Wide involvement of all sectors of the community is essential for successful Participatory Forest Management.

The steps to establish Participatory Forest Management



Overview of Participatory Forest Management

Participatory Forest Management (PFM) is used to describe systems in which communities (forest users and managers) and government services (forest department) work together to define rights of forest resource use, identify and develop forest management responsibilities, and agree on how forest benefits will be shared.

PFM is a forest management system. It may be based on traditional systems of community-based Natural Resource Management (NRM). Using traditional systems recognises the importance of well established roles and rights of different members of the community. In the absence of traditional systems, PFM may be developed as a new system of resource management. If building on traditional NRM systems, it is important to recognise that present day contexts often require the system to be modernised so that the traditional system can function in present day realities. For example it is likely that the system will have to address issues of gender inequality.

A key challenge to establishing PFM is to put in place a system of management that works in the present day context of increasing resource demand and land use competition.

It is critical that any PFM system is developed by an appropriate community group, working together with government services (forest department). The community group and government foresters need to develop a clear understanding of *who* the forest users are and *how* they use the forest. They need to jointly carry out a forest resource assessment and develop sustainable forest management plans and agreements. Once these key steps have been carried out, the community group will put the forest management plans and agreements into action. In order to do this effectively they will need the support, technical advice and legal backing of government forest services.

To establish PFM systems the process is broken into three distinct stages.

I. Investigating PFM – the gathering of information about the resources in the forest; the development of an understanding about the forest users and other stakeholders; the establishment of an appropriate forest management group; the assessment and mapping of forest resources.

II. Negotiating PFM – the negotiation and signing of forest management plans (detailing forest management activities); the negotiation and signing of forest management agreements (specifying roles, responsibilities and rules).

III. Implementing PFM – the implementation of the forest management plan, and adherence to the forest management agreement by the community forest management group, supported by government; joint plan and agreement reviews and revision as part of monitoring and evaluation systems.



Once the PFM process is complete, the system is legalised within an official signed Forest Management Agreement.

On the establishment of PFM, the community forest management group is legally enabled to sustainably manage forest resources. PFM involves the legal transfer of forest resources (use rights) from the government forest services to a community management group. This transfer is enabled by, and dependent upon, a negotiated and documented Forest Management Agreement (FMA).

The Forest Management Agreement clearly details:

- the negotiated and agreed rights and responsibilities of both parties; and
- the negotiated and agreed rules and regulations for the sustainable management of the forest resources.

The FMA is a legally binding contract between a defined community-based institution (Forest Management Group) and the government (represented by the Forest Services). Practical forest management actions are set out in The Forest Management Plan (FMP) which sets out the management objectives. These objectives may range from the conservation of the forest and its environment to the sustainable use of forest resources for economic returns.

The Forest Management Plan has four thematic sections. These are:

1. forest development
2. forest use
3. forest protection
4. forest monitoring.

The FMP also contains important information gathered through the Participatory Forest Resource Assessment (PFRA), which forms the basis for periodic monitoring and review of the forest resources and the FMP.

Gender mainstreaming – introductory note

Mainstreaming gender issues in PFM practice is aimed at achieving gender balanced development. It promotes and practices development initiatives (in this case PFM) that have equal involvement and roles for, and impact on, both men and women.

In nearly all development circumstances gender is imbalanced, in terms of both involvement, roles and impact. Gender imbalance refers to the unequal number of men and women involved in, and/or benefiting from, an activity. Roles and responsibilities are also very important and related to power issues. Male dominance, power and benefit is the norm. In order to address this often sensitive issue it is necessary to clearly explain to the community that the Government of Ethiopia and/or NGO believes gender imbalance to be both a cause and effect of under development. And that the Government of Ethiopia / NGO promotes gender balance (equal involvement, power and benefit of men / women) within the work they support the community to do.

When supporting the establishment of PFM, there are a number of practical exercises that you can do in order to promote gender balance, some examples of which are given below.

- Development professionals / Foresters need gender awareness and skills: this often means they need gender training
- Make sure both men and women in the community are aware that they should be equally involved in PFM (women may not be used to being involved in development meetings and activities)
- Hold gender differentiated (men's group / women's group) meetings
- Arrange meetings and activities at appropriate times to suit different gender groups, based on their livelihood roles.
- As PFM is introduced, track new roles and technology uptake to ensure that new roles are not taken up by one gender group, at the expense of the other.

Investigating PFM Guide Sheet One – Forest stakeholders, forest users and forest uses

Forest stakeholders

It is essential to understand the different interest groups and resource user groups who should be involved in sustainable forest management. These groups are referred to as stakeholders. The principle of inclusive management depends on an understanding of the different stakeholders and the institutions that they represent. There is a need to clearly understand who could gain or lose by changes in resource management systems. Identifying how people perceive their own rights and responsibilities, as well as those of others, is a crucial starting point in initiating discussions over who should have which rights and responsibilities in the management system.

Therefore, a crucial part of the first stage in establishing PFM is to undertake a review of stakeholders and carry out a stakeholder analysis. The immediate objective of a stakeholder analysis is to identify and analyse the different stakeholders in terms of direct and indirect resource uses. This information is then used to begin to assess appropriate rights and responsibilities for the various interests among the different groups.



The key stakeholders in PFM are local communities – forest users.

Stakeholders can be divided into primary and secondary stakeholders, if there is a need to differentiate between levels of rights to the forest resources. For example primary and secondary stakeholders may be differentiated by proximity of their settlement to the forest.

The stakeholder analysis can also reveal the different relationships among resource users. In this way potential and actual risks and conflicts between groups can be identified.



The Government Forest Department is the other key stakeholder.

Formal methods should be used to undertake the analysis in order to record and document the details and dynamics of the various stakeholders. The analysis should involve group exercises and discussions to identify forest stakeholders, and should involve as many actual stakeholders as possible. The process allows local government foresters and local communities to crosscheck stakeholder involvement, to develop a better understanding of each other, and the different perceptions

and concerns of the various stakeholders involved. Specific questions that the stakeholder analysis ought to answer focus on four elements of forest use and management.

- Who has what rights to use the forest? (Rights)
- Who takes what actions in terms of forest management? (Responsibilities)
- How do the different stakeholders relate to each other? (Relationships)
- Who benefits from the forest? (Revenues)

In order to gather information concerning stakeholders, a 4Rs (Rights, Responsibilities, Relationships and Revenues) matrix can be constructed.¹ Working with community groups, information can then be compiled (see Table 1) about different stakeholders, under defined headings.

Stakeholder name	Rights	Responsibilities	Relationships	Revenues
Stakeholder 1 Forest Gatherers	– To collect firewood – To hang beehives – To collect medicinal plants	– To guard against fire – To stop tree cutting – To stop agriculture	With grazers – mutual support With forest service – conflict With timber cutters – conflict	Firewood sales Honey sales Medicine sales
Stakeholder 2 Forest grazers	– To graze livestock – To cut grass – To harvest tree seeds	– To guard against fire – To stop tree cutting – To stop agriculture	With forest gatherers – mutual support With forest service – conflict With timber cutters – conflict	Livestock income and products Seed sales
Stakeholder 2 Timber cutters	– To demand right to cut timber	N/A	With forest gatherers – conflict With forest service – conflict With forest grazers – conflict	High income from timber sales

The end result of a stakeholder analysis is a clear understanding of who is doing what concerning the forest. The information provides the basis for community discussions of who should be involved in the new forest management system.

Forest users and forest uses

Other forest use and forest user information is also gathered at the investigation stage. Baseline and background information can be collected. A clear understanding of forest resources and uses can be developed by carrying out participatory forest investigation exercises.

Examples of tools for gathering forest information include forest area mapping, forest species use matrix, forest condition historical trend analysis and forest use seasonal calendars.

Tools for gathering forest information: forest area mapping

Forest mapping is a participatory field tool by which the field worker helps a community group to draw a map of the forest area. The map displays important information, such as forest boundaries, physical features (such as rivers, roads, paths), and key forest resources. Information on different forest stands and conditions can be laid out on the map. Forest use and product areas can also be recorded on the map. Community drawn forest maps can be related to topographic maps fairly easily. A community drawn forest map is the basis for developing a forest map to be included in the forest management plan (see Guide Sheet 3 for an example map).

1. See: IIED's Forestry Participation Series, especially No. 11 Capacity to Manage Role Changes in Forestry: Introducing the '4Rs' framework – Olivier Dubois (1998)

Tools for gathering forest information: forest species use matrix

A species use matrix is a participatory field tool that enables the identification of forest tree species and the specific uses of those species. The basic information is laid out in a matrix table (as shown in the illustration). Tree species are laid out along one axis and tree uses are laid out along the other axis. Then ranking and scoring can be carried out in order to determine which tree species and their uses are considered the most valuable. The information gathered provides an understanding of the most important species, in terms of their use, in the forest. This information will later be useful in the development of the forest management plan. Knowing which tree species are of the most use value enables forest managers to plant and protect those particular species.



Local communities mapping forest information in a matrix table.

Tools for gathering forest information: forest condition historical trend analysis

Forest condition historical trend analysis is a field tool used to focus on changes over time. The tool can be applied to assessing forest condition or forest product abundance, demonstrating what has happened to the resources over time. The basic information is laid out in a matrix table (as shown below), with time periods along one axis and forest products along the other. Then ranking and scoring can be carried out in order to determine the status of forest products over time. Once the information has been laid out, the field worker can generate discussion and develop understanding of the reasons and consequences of the changes. Again this general information can later be useful to the Forest Management Plan. For example, knowing which forest products are in short supply enables forest managers to take the appropriate actions in order to improve the supply of those products.

Table 2. Forest products

	Haile Selassie	Derg Regime	EPRDF
Firewood	* * * *	* * *	* * * * * *
Wild Honey	* * *	* *	*
Hive Honey	*	* *	* * * * * *
Timber	* * *	*	* * * * * *
Medicinal Plants	* * * * *	* * * * *	* *

As is shown in Table 2, forest products are scored in terms of use value. In this matrix we can see how firewood use and wild honey collection is decreasing, hive honey production and timber trade are increasing and medicinal plant use is decreasing. Discussions with the community will reveal the reasons behind these changes. Again such information is useful for the Forest Management Plan.

Tools for gathering forest information: forest use seasonal calendars

Forest use seasonal calendars are another example of a tool that can be used to analyse the annual cycles in forest use. The different seasons are set along one axis and forest products along the other. Ranking and scoring are then carried out in order to determine the use level of a product during a specific period. Varying forest product demand can be identified, i.e. high firewood demand in the rainy season or high forest product sales during the dry season. Again, this generates important information for forest management planning, providing critical detail of how Non Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) are used seasonally.

There are two additional objectives of gathering forest user and use information using participatory field exercises. First it demonstrates the considerable knowledge that the community have concerning forest resources. This is often contrary to the expectations of professional foresters and is a key point in their learning and re-orientation. Second through undertaking the exercises, the community and foresters begin to get to know each other. This trust building is essential as the two parties develop both a new respect for each other and a new working relationship.

Gender mainstreaming – forest stakeholders, forest users and forest uses

Gender balance within PFM systems is essential and needs to start as soon as the work begins. When investigating forest users and uses, it is important to understand distinct gender roles and interests in forest use.

Men and women will use different forest products and therefore have specific knowledge and information concerning those products. For example, women are usually the ones responsible for fuelwood collection, while men are usually the ones involved in timber cutting and sale.

In order to ensure that different gender roles and responsibilities are captured and understood, it is recommended that different gender group meetings are carried out (men's groups / women's groups). This allows the views of each group to come out clearly. Results from different groups' activities can be used to inform and guide forest management planning at a later stage.

Investigating PFM Guide Sheet Two – Setting up forest management institutions

The existence and establishment of functional community-based forest management institutions is at the centre of successful PFM. If the community does not have the capacity to organise itself as members within a management group, PFM will not work. The strength of the community-level forest management institution is critical. Adequate time and investment must be given to build management skills and capacity since the forest management institution is the body or group that takes on the roles and responsibilities of community-based forest management.

Identification of a suitable institution should be undertaken at the investigation stage of the PFM process. Different types of institutions will exist at the community level. Generally, if institutions already involved in the management of natural resources exist, then these are the most appropriate institutions to work with. However, existing institutions should not be assumed to be functionally effective, gender balanced and/or pro-poor.

An example of where such community NRM institutions exist in Ethiopia is in pastoralist areas, for example the *Gada* systems of Oromo pastoralists.

If working with an existing community-based NRM institution, getting legal recognition is a critical challenge. This is due to the limited legal recognition of community-based institutions under Ethiopian law (discussed in more detail below).

In the absence of existing suitable institutions, the community will need to form a new forest management group.



The Gada, an Oromo traditional institution, lead the PFM process in Borana.

As mentioned above, a key issue that requires attention is the legal status of the forest management group. In order to enter into a legal agreement with a government body, a community body should have legal status. Ethiopian law recognises legally certain types of organisation at the community level. Communities can form NGOs, cooperatives, and private enterprises.

Given this context, the formation of a forest management cooperative is the most appropriate form of community-based, legally registered institution.

Forest management cooperatives can be formed at different scales. In our experience, village level (single village) cooperatives and grouped village (several villages) cooperatives have both been formed. The groups have to conform to the cooperative law and its rules and regulations of operation. The Government Cooperatives Bureau is responsible for building community capacity in order for new groups to function effectively as a cooperative.

The main purpose and objective of a Forest Management Cooperative is the sustainable management of forest resources. The cooperative consists of an executive committee and a number of subcommittees which are responsible for specific areas/aspects of forest management: for example, a forest development subcommittee, a forest utilisation subcommittee or a forest protection subcommittee.

It is necessary to call a series of community meetings to actually set up a new forest management institution (or when working with an existing institution) and to negotiate forest management roles. During these meetings, the options for forest management institutions should be thoroughly discussed. It is very important that the community review their options and then decide themselves what type of institution they want to set up.



Ongoing support to community-based forest management institutions is essential. They will need many skills in order to take on the challenges of forest management. If the group has formed a forest management cooperative, there are the challenges of business management and economic viability. The cooperative will need a manager and an accountant. These skills need to be carefully built.

Forest management groups are often newly set up community institutions.

The role of the forest management group is defined in the Forest Management Plan and Agreement. Central to the role of the management group is the ability to both make decisions and take action to implement those decisions. Good decision making will determine the success of the overall forest management systems. Therefore capacity building focused on appropriate decision making for forest management is crucial.

Linked to the legality of the Forest Management Group is the critical issue of law enforcement. The Forest Management Group must be a legal entity in order to bring offenders to the appropriate law bodies, the police or the court. The Forest Management Group needs to build recognition and understanding of itself and its institutional status regarding the other institutions with which it will work.

Gender mainstreaming – setting up forest management institutions

In nearly all development circumstances, Community-Based Institutions (CBIs) suffer from gender imbalance. This imbalance is in terms of both group management (power), roles and group membership. In this case, gender imbalance means the unequal number of men and women managers/members within the CBI. Male dominance is the norm and this is based around power relationships in the community.

When supporting the establishment of community-based institutions, it is important to discuss the issues of gender and power balance. There are a number of practical exercises that can be used with the community to promote gender discussion, understanding and analysis.

A gender balance within a community-based institution would represent, by rule of thumb, 50:50 male/female involvement, with equal roles and levels of participation. In our experience we have negotiated progressive targets in order to introduce and/or increase female involvement and roles, working towards a greater gender balance.

Investigating PFM Guide Sheet Three – Participatory Forest Resource Assessment

This guide sheet is designed to provide broad information on how to conduct a Participatory Forest Resource Assessment (PFRA) and how to use the information generated for forest management planning and for forest monitoring purposes.

The detailed PFRA methodology is documented in *Participatory Forest Monitoring System for Community Managed Forests, Participatory Forest Resource Assessment Methodology Report*, April 2004.² The full methodology document is available from the FARM-Africa–SOS Sahel Participatory Forest Management Unit in Addis Ababa.

PFRA is the formal forest monitoring method required by the Government of Ethiopia before handover of forest areas to communities. The PFRA undertaken at the outset of community forest management can be repeated at appropriate intervals (say every five years) in order to compare results and monitor forest condition.

There are three stages in the PFRA process.

1. Initial planning of the PFRA, including forest block boundary mapping
2. Carrying out the PFRA
3. Production of the PFRA report.

The PFRA involves technical mapping of the forest block boundaries and then the physical assessment of the forest resources within those boundaries. The PFRA enables the government and community to produce a technical baseline of the forest resources. PFRA data is important for both the government and the community and is used for forest management planning and for monitoring forest conditions. The PFRA must be carried out by a joint government and community (Forest Management Group) team.

PFRA data can be used to determine any changes in the resources over time. This is done by repeating the assessment and comparing the resulting PFRA reports to determine what changes have occurred to the forest resources.

Both positive planned and unplanned changes, such as reduced damage due to control and protection and unexpected species regeneration, will occur in the forest. Equally negative impacts and changes can also occur; such as accidental fire, wind damage or tree disease outbreaks. Detailed understanding of changes in forest condition can be identified and determined by comparing the results of the initial PFRA and subsequent PFRA. It is important that relevant forest management activities, as set out in the Forest Management Plan, are also related to the forest condition at the time of assessment.



Government foresters and community members carry out the Participatory Forest Resource Assessment (PFRA).

² Consultancy report written by Dr G. Jordan, available on the PFMP website: www.pfmp-farmsos.org/Docs/part-monit-sus-pfmp.pdf. This report presents the full PFRA methodology.

The PFRA provides the Community Forest Management Group with forest resource data. This data can then be used to develop and support the appropriate management of the resources. PFRA information about the resources is used to decide appropriate management actions and to develop a relevant Forest Management Plan (see Guide Sheet 4). The PFRA reporting structure has been designed to assist forest management planning.

Ownership of the PFRA report should be joint – i.e. both the community and the government Forest Department services should agree on the content of the report and maintain a copy for their records. The report should be available in the appropriate local language.

The PFRA report is part of the key documentation for PFM that enables communities to take up the legal management of the resources. The community should be supported to use the PFRA exercises and PFRA report as key forest management tools.

The PFRA data recording sheet (Form 1 & 1a), the PFRA report format (Form 2), and the Forest Management Prescriptions (Form 3) are provided hereafter:

Gender mainstreaming – Participatory Forest Resource Assessment (PFRA)

This is a participatory field tool carried out by the community forest management group and the government's Forest Department personnel. The community forest management group selects members to be involved in the PFRA. Selected members should demonstrate a balance of both male and female members, for example two men and two women making up the PFRA team of four. The involvement of female/male forestry staff PFRA teams is equally desirable and important. Involvement of a mixed gender team will allow the knowledge, understanding and perceptions of both groups to come out.

When gathering the PFRA data, the rapporteur should note gender specific knowledge and information.

PFRA data recording sheets

Form I: Participatory forest plot assessment form

Note: It is essential that the guidance notes for completing this form are read in detail before filling it in (see footnote 2, p 11).

Forest/Compartment name:				
Plot number:			Date:	
Plot: Fixed Point Sample (Ocular and Basal Area)				
1. Basal area: (No. of trees through relascope)				
2. Fire evidence:		Yes: (comment)		No:
3. Soil exposure: (High, Medium, Low)				
4. Felling intensity, and comments:				
5. Grazing intensity: (Class as high, medium or low, based on evidence of grazing paths, tracks, browsing etc., and discussion with the PFRA community team.)				
6. Crown cover: (For both upper and lower canopy if appropriate)		Closed	Moderate (<70%)	Open (<30%)
		Upper		
		Lower		
7. Natural regeneration: (Below 2m height)		Species	Plentiful	Moderate
			Scarce	None
8. Description of natural regeneration: (Taller than 2m) (Describe size/age and condition of natural regeneration).				
9. Main important species: (Commercial, community, fodder, NTFPs)				
10. Dominant species: (For both upper and lower canopy if appropriate)				
11. Quality of the forest: (High, medium, low, with government and community perspectives)				
12. Forest/land class: (Description of forest and size class structure. Brief description of the plot, including any important features. A description of the size-class, including saplings, pole stage, mature and over-mature. Does the plot have young, mature or over-mature trees?)				
13. Main uses of the forest: (Mainly by the community within the area of the plot)				
14. Problems and issues with the resource: (Mainly by the community within the area of the plot)				

PFRA data recording sheets

Form 1a: Participatory forest sub-plot assessment form

Note: It is essential that the guidance notes (see footnote 2, p11) for completing this form are read in detail before filling it in. This form is only to be completed for assessment in extensive forest management (forest areas >500ha) where a 1km sample grid is to be used, with sub-plots at 500m between main plots.

Forest/Compartment name:	
Plot number: (Note – should refer to main plot number)	Date:
Plot: Fixed Point Sample (Ocular and Basal Area)	
1. Basal area: (No. of trees through relascope)	
2. General description of sub-plot and comments: (Include species description, use of forest, quality of forest)	
3. Management implications: (Mainly from community)	
4. Other comments:	

Form 3: Forest management prescriptions

[Name] Forest
Site Description (Geographic description from section I of assessment report)
Special Management Considerations (Implications of management from assessment report)
Forest Protection (From community discussions)
Forest Utilisation (From community discussions)
Forest Development (From community discussions)
Forest Monitoring (From community discussions)

Negotiating PFM Guide Sheet Four – Forest management planning

Forest management planning produces a Forest Management Plan (FMP) that is part of the key documentation for PFM. The Forest Management Plan is approved when the Forest Management Agreement (Guide Sheet 5) is signed.

An outline for the Forest Management Plan has been developed to provide an easy format to follow. There are seven sections to the Plan.

1. Introduction
2. Description of the forest
3. Objective of the Forest Management Plan
4. Forest management actions
5. Monitoring and evaluation
6. Revision of the plan
7. Approval of the plan

The PFRA report helps both the community and the government services develop meaningful, realistic forest management activities based on detailed information about actual forest resource conditions. The PFRA provides the basic information for formulating the main sections of the forest management plan (see Guide Sheet 3. Form 2. Questions 1-10 – *Implications for management*).

When collating PFRA, the forest management implications of actual forest resource conditions are noted in the PFRA report. These are collected at each sample plot for each of the 14 questions in Form 1.

This management information is then collated to develop Forest Management Prescriptions (Form 3) which are presented to the community forest managers for them to use during forest management planning and from which to develop forest management activities.



Forest management planning uses the results of the PFRA as the basis for decision making in forest management planning.

Section 4: *Forest Management Actions* is the key section of the Forest Management Plan. It is here that the actual forest management actions are listed. The section is organised under four main themes.

1. Forest protection
2. Forest utilisation
3. Forest development
4. Forest monitoring.

Forest management activities should be developed through discussions with the community and then documented in the plan. This should be done in a series of participatory forest management planning meetings held between the community and the Government Forest Department. Negotiation between the Forest Department and the Community Forest Management group may be needed during these meetings.

For example, when deciding upon levels of forest product use, the forest product harvest potential is limited by the sustainable productivity of the resource. The Forest Department needs to be able to estimate what the sustainable harvest levels of different products are and agree with the community a harvestable level below that level.

Say a community decides that it wants to take (harvest) 300 donkey loads of firewood each month from a specific forest area (x hectares). It is possible to work out the annual offtake from the forest area in cubic metres by calculating the average weight of a donkey load of firewood, multiplied by 300 (loads) multiplied by 12 (months).

The total annual offtake can then be compared with the estimated annual production of the forest type. The Ethiopian Forestry Action Programme (EFAP) 1994 contains definitions of forest type. This document is available from the Ethiopian Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.

Plans should be kept relatively simple and brief, and should be reviewed on a regular basis. As the management activities are carried out, it is important to test their effectiveness and impacts. Skills and knowledge need to be built through practical experience and operation of the management plan.

The most important thing to remember is that the Forest Management Plan must be made by the community and include their decisions of how to manage the resources. Foresters must resist the urge to impose rules and regulations; this simply takes us back to the traditional top-down approach.

Issues of sustainability must not be compromised in the Forest Management Plan. Measures of sustainable harvesting of timber and non-timber forest products must be contained in the Forest Management Plan. Often this data is not readily available. If this is the case then gathering of required data and experimentation with harvesting levels should become part of the action plan. This work can be an important technical role of professional foresters in support of community managers (see Guide Sheet 7).

The Forest Management Plan is a vital document for PFM and both parties should hold a copy of it. It should also be available in the local language.



The Forest Management Plan documents forest management operations. Copies of the plan should be kept by both the community forest managers and Government Forestry Department office. The plan should be prepared in the appropriate language.

Gender mainstreaming – forest management planning

Gender balanced involvement of the community is essential in the negotiation of forest management plans. This is particularly relevant to the specific forest use activities carried out by men and women within the forest resource. For example, if it is women who are predominantly involved in fuelwood collection/cutting, then the rules regulating this activity should be predominantly negotiated with, and determined by, the women users. Likewise, if wild honey collection is the activity of men, then the rules regulating this activity should be predominantly negotiated with, and determined by, the men users.

It is likely that women and men will have different management roles in relation to their different activities and interests. Different gender roles can be identified under the forest development, forest utilisation, forest protection and forest monitoring sections of the management plan.

Negotiating PFM Guide Sheet Five – The Forest Management Agreement

Formulation of the Forest Management Agreement requires further meetings, discussions and negotiations between the Government Forestry Department and Community Management Groups. Once signed, the Forest Management Agreement becomes the legally binding contract document for PFM. The signatories are the Woreda Administration and/or the Natural Resources Department, on behalf of the Government, and the Chairperson and executive committee of the forest management group, on behalf of the community.

An outline for the Forest Management Agreement has been developed in order to provide an easy format to follow. There are 8 sections and 7 Articles to the Agreement:

1. Introduction
2. Article 1. Definitions
3. Article 2. Objectives of the agreement
4. Article 3. Location and condition of the forest
5. Article 4. Description of agreeing parties
6. Article 5. Benefits of the agreeing parties
7. Article 6. Rights and responsibilities of the agreeing parties
8. Article 7. Condition, legality and duration of the agreement

The first four sections of the Forest Management Agreement include an introduction of general background information (same as/similar to the Forest Management Plan), the definition of key terms, the objectives of the agreement (same as/similar to the Forest Management Plan), and the condition and location of the forest (same as/similar to the Forest Management Plan).

Section 5 contains detailed information about the agreeing parties. On the government side this will include which offices are involved in the agreement. On the community side, this includes the listing of forest management group executive committee members and group members.

Section 6 of the Forest Management Agreement describes benefit-sharing arrangements. For example, if the community is intending to sell forest products or is managing a former government plantation area, the Agreement should state the revenue benefit share from any sales. This may be tax payments to government on product sales or an actual shared revenue. For example, in the case of the Chilimo Forest, the benefit share from the sale of plantation products was set at 70:30. That is, 70 per cent revenue to the community and 30 per cent revenue to the government.

Section 7 of the Forest Management Agreement is the clear specification



The community forest management group, woreda government authorities and Forestry Department office sign the Forest Management Agreement.

of the rights and responsibilities of the two parties. Rights and responsibilities should be developed through discussion with, and between, the government and the community. Rights and responsibilities are directly related to the rules and regulations that have been agreed concerning the forest, for example who can do what in the forest.

Decisions concerning rights, responsibilities, rules and regulations need to be negotiated. Decisions need to relate to the objectives of sustainable forest management. Agreement formulation meetings need to be held between the community and the woreda Forestry Department services. Once rights and responsibilities, and rules are decided and agreed, they are written into the Forest Management Agreement.

The final section of the Forest Management Agreement stipulates the legal conditions of the agreement. This includes the procedures to be followed in the event of a disagreement between the two parties, a default of contract by one of the parties, or the termination of contract.

The duration of the Forest Management Agreement, in most cases 99 years, is stated. Other legal terms, conditions and/or requirements are also noted.

The Forest Management Agreement is a vital document for PFM which should be held by both parties. The Agreement should be available in the appropriate local language.

Gender mainstreaming – Forest Management Agreement

Gender balanced involvement of the community in the negotiation of Forest Management Agreements is essential. This is particularly relevant to the specific forest rules and regulations related to the specific use activities carried out by men and women.

Further, it is important to make sure that the collective roles and responsibilities of the community should not undermine gender roles within the community.

Implementing PFM Guide Sheet Six – The roles of the community as forest managers

PFM is a partnership between the Forest Department and a community Forest Management Group. It is a working partnership where each party is dependent on the other. This requires changes in the activities and roles for both community forest managers and forestry professionals (Guide Sheet 7). These changing roles are given attention in this guide because of the importance of the changes that need to occur. If people do not change their roles and behaviour, it is unlikely that PFM can work.

This guide sheet (6) highlights the roles of communities who are managing forest resources.



The Forest Management Group discusses the sale of plantation timber.

The new activities that the community undertakes are critical in determining the success of PFM. In the implementation of PFM, it is very important to understand the various activities that will now be carried out by the community in their new roles as forest managers. Their relationship with professional foresters and the forest resources will change significantly.

The box below gives some examples of the new roles and activities for the community. The list of actions is not exhaustive.

- Information providers of forest users and uses
- Legal forest resource managers and forest resource users
- Assessors of forest resources through the Participatory Forest Resource Assessment (PFRA)
- Managers of forest management group / cooperative
- Resolvers of conflict and competition between and within Forest Management Groups (FMGs)
- Decision makers of forest rules and regulations
- Implementers of Forest Management Plans
- Protectors and controllers of forest resources
- Evaluators of new ideas and technologies
- Silvicultural experimenters and actors
- Communicators of own knowledge and findings to others
- Monitoring and evaluators of participatory forest management systems and practice
- Selectors of tree species for nursery production and plantation
- Planters of trees for forest enrichment and improvement
- Marketers of timber and NTFPs

Activities evolve as the community Forest Management Groups understand and develop their management operations and skills. This is done through learning and practical experience.

The community may have been carrying out some of these roles previously, but informally without recognition. Other activities will be new.

An important point is the recognition of new roles and actions. It is important that the community take up the new roles and that this is recognised by the professional foresters. Forest Departments must be able to see community members as new forest resource managers and partners. This recognition is the basis of the new natural resource management relationship between government foresters and community forest managers.



Forest Management Groups run their own tree nurseries.

In order to successfully manage PFM, taking up these new roles requires new skills as community forest managers. This implies considerable investment in skills development, learning by doing, experimentation and training.

What is also implied is that building skills is a critical support role for government in general and professional foresters specifically. Community forest managers will need ongoing support from the Government Forest Department. Clarifying the new roles of forestry professionals in PFM is also very important (see Guide Sheet 7).

As the communities manage forest resources, other new roles will arise, such as new livelihood opportunities. The sale of NTFPs is a good example of this. As such opportunities arise, the community groups will need support in their commercial organisation, product processing and development, and marketing of products.



The legal sale of NTFPs is an exciting new income opportunity for community forest managers

Gender mainstreaming – roles of the community as forest managers

The new roles of community forest managers have gender implications. In line with the listed new roles, there will be joint gender roles and distinct gender roles. Certain activities and roles will be directly relevant to certain groups. Recognising women as resource managers, rather than just resource users, is likely to be a new challenge for men.

Support to the community to take up new management roles will require specific and specialist training to develop and perfect those roles. For example, it is likely that women in new management roles will need specific skills training and support.

Implementing PFM Guide Sheet Seven – Changing roles for professional foresters

PFM is a partnership between the Forest Department and any local community Forest Management Group. It is a working partnership where each party is dependent on the other. The new approach requires changes in the activities and roles for both forestry professionals and community forest managers.

When implementing PFM, it is important to understand the different activities that will now be carried out by professional foresters. Changing roles is given particular attention in these guide sheets because of their importance.

This guide sheet highlights the new roles of professional foresters.

Changing the roles of professional foresters is key to determining the success of PFM. The role of the professional forester in PFM is radically different to the roles and tasks of the traditional professional forester.

The box below identifies the new roles and activities for forestry professionals. The list of actions is not exhaustive. Forestry professionals themselves will develop and understand their roles through learning and practical experience.

In addition to the specific skills above, new rural development technical capacity is also essential. Particularly skills in participatory development are useful. Participatory Planning, Participatory Technology Development (PTD), Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) and Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PM&E).



Government foresters are now supporters and promoters of community-based forest management.

- Investigators of local forest uses and users – rights and responsibilities
- Identifiers of local forest management systems – rules and regulations
- Actors in Participatory Forest Resource Assessment
- Facilitators of forest based problem-solution analysis
- Moderators of different interests and of conflict and competition over resources
- Negotiators of forest management rules and regulations
- Monitors of PTM processes and of forest management agreements
- Advisors to Forest Management Groups (FMG) and silviculture experimenters
- Facilitators of FMG to FMG learning, communication and exchange
- Trainers in community forest management skills and practice
- Analysts of forest management problems
- Generators of new technologies and innovations
- Providers of information to complement FMG knowledge
- Documenters/analysts of methods of PFM/disseminators of PFM results

Other new skills implied in the new roles include conflict management skills, facilitation and negotiation skills, community institutions skills and forest product processing and marketing skills. All these skills are new in terms of what forestry professionals usually do.

Ultimately, what is being asked for is a new commitment from professional foresters to support new systems of community managed forests. If foresters are to rise to the challenge, then new PFM curricula and professional training will need to be put in place. This is perhaps a long term change. In the short term, forestry professionals should request and seek out specialist training.



New facilitation and development skills for foresters are essential for the successful promotion of PFM.

Gender mainstreaming – changing roles of professional foresters

The new role of professional foresters, with gender issues in mind, is that of a basic awareness and promotion of gender issues. The professional forester needs to recognise and support gender-distinct forest management roles and activities. They also need to organise, facilitate and support different gender groups as required.

Professional foresters have the responsibility to continuously work towards deepening gender awareness among communities. Further, they have the responsibility to ensure that both women and men within the community have the skills and support they need in order to fulfil their new forest management roles.

Implementing PFM Guide Sheet Eight – New silviculture

Hand-in-hand with the new roles for community forest managers and forestry professionals is the need to develop new forestry/silviculture practices for foresters and community forest managers. The aim is for both parties to work together to develop, adapt and share technical forestry knowledge, skills and practices.

Developing new silviculture through a practical working partnership is essential for the success and maximum effectiveness of PFM. Communities should not be left to get on with managing forests alone. They need the support, skills and technical know-how of professional foresters. Working together as partners requires a new relationship. A relationship based on common goals, mutual respect and collaboration. The common goal is optimum sustainable forest management.



Developing new skills in community Forest Management Groups is an opportunity for improving management and incomes from the forest.

The management of a specific forest area is determined by the specific conditions of the forest and the uses required of it. An area of undisturbed good natural forest will require different management skills and practices to those required for an area of highly disturbed forest. A moist tropical forest will require different management skills and practices to those required for a dryland forest or woodland.

Management skills and practices need to be developed for the sustainable use of the various forest products – for example, managing NTFPs, such as forest coffee, spices, honey, medicinal plants, bamboo, and edible plants. All these products require specific practices in order to maintain sustainable harvesting levels. Maximising potentials and minimising negative impacts on the forest is the optimum management strategy. How to do that will take community forest managers and foresters time to learn.

Foresters have technical forestry skills. Communities have indigenous technical knowledge and practices. In a working partnership, foresters and community members can combine these skills to achieve the greatest effect.

Using participatory and experimental approaches to develop new community silviculture practice is one way forward. Participatory Technology Development (PTD) can be used in order to develop and test appropriate forest-based trials, such as where the management plan aims to rehabilitate a forest area and encourage the growth of specific high value tree species. The community members, supported by the forester, can set up a number of forest area based experiments in order to determine the best species to plant and the most appropriate silvicultural practice.



Involving women within a community Forest Management Group and actions is part and parcel of new community skills development.

In addition to technical skills, new skills for forest planning, management, monitoring and evaluation need to be developed. These skills are best learnt on the job while the community is managing the forest, supported by the forester. Days for reflecting on and assessing the skills acquired and their impact on development can be organised in order to identify, share and fortify new skills as they are learnt.

Specialist skills, such as conflict management and/or product certification and marketing also need to be developed. Specialist skills will often require specialist inputs from external experts. Such skills should be brought in as part of capacity building programmes.

Managing forests for sustainable harvests and for profit is not easy. Legalisation, labelling and local level certification are new areas for forestry in Ethiopia.

FARM-Africa Ethiopia and SOS Sahel Ethiopia hope to continue supporting and building skills and knowledge in these areas. Experience from other African countries will be very useful in developing Ethiopian experience yet further.

Focusing on developing the skills and practices of new silviculture is a key area for further work and innovation within the continuing development and promotion of PFM systems.

Gender mainstreaming – new silviculture

Gender defined forest action research groups will work to develop new silvicultural practices based on their specific interests and needs. This is linked to the specific roles and activities undertaken in the forest.

For example, a group of men within the forest want to improve the timber quality of the forest or develop a plantation forest. Working with the Forestry Department, the group will be supported to develop the silvicultural techniques to achieve their aims.

Similarly, a women's group that decides to grow fuelwood, will organise themselves and work in the same way.

Implementing PFM Guide Sheet Nine – Monitoring & evaluation of Forest Management Plans

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) can be looked at from two sides. From one side there is the traditional view, as seen by the government, that M&E is part of their regulatory role. As the overall owners of the forest, they have been responsible for monitoring forest condition. In keeping with this view, monitoring forests under community management has been a critical debating point in PFM development in Ethiopia. The government has requested formal systems of forest monitoring with which they can check on the condition of forests under community management.

The other view of M&E is in the context of community management systems. If communities are going to take up forest resource management roles, then they need to develop their own M&E systems within that management context.

Monitoring and evaluation of community forest management plans is a critical part of the overall management of the forest by communities. It is important to understand the need for different types of M&E, and the need for M&E systems that go beyond a (government) checking mechanism over community forest managers. Therefore, in this guide sheet, it is suggested that both government and community M&E systems are developed.



Boundary marking is a key activity within forest monitoring systems.

Monitoring and evaluation in PFM needs to be recognised as part of PFM management practice. Enabling the community to carry out monitoring and evaluation of their forest management practices is, therefore, a key area of capacity building, in order to improve and develop community management skills and systems.

Distinguishing between monitoring as an activity and evaluation as an event is a useful starting point.

Monitoring is the on-going process of collecting data in order to measure progress, and/or conditions, of an activity. For example, if seedlings have been planted, the forest manager will monitor (collect information on) their survival rate and/or growth rate.

Evaluation is the periodic review of all the data and information gathered through the monitoring system. Evaluations should be events for joint learning and review, undertaken at a six monthly or annual intervals.

In PFM there are two key monitoring and evaluation methods.

- M&E as part of the Forest Management Plan
- The Participatory Forest Resource Assessment method.

M&E as part of the Forest Management Plan

Monitoring the Forest Management Plan means monitoring all the activities that the forest management group is undertaking. The Forest Management Plan is designed in such a way as to break up management activities into four action themes. The fourth theme is *forest monitoring* and entails the monitoring of all the actions undertaken under the other three themes (*forest development, forest utilisation and forest protection*).

Critical to monitoring is the systematic collection and collation of data (information). Data should be simple, collectable and relevant. The identification of measurable indicators by the community is central to the activity. For example, if the community wants to monitor firewood collection off take, they need to devise an accurate system of calculating or counting the number of firewood bundles being collected from the forest area over time and compare that with an estimate of availability and production of fuelwood.

The professional forester has an important role here, helping the community devise accurate systems of counting and sharing information of how to estimate resource availability and area production.

Collected data sets need to be analysed and reviewed and results concluded. Data should be stored and, when needed, shared and/or presented to other stakeholders, for example in an evaluation meeting.

This collection and use of data presents a key challenge to community Forest Management Groups, particularly to non-literate groups. They are unlikely to have formal systems of data collection, although they will have their own systems and methods for monitoring their other resources, for example their livestock herd or their crops. These local systems of monitoring can be developed and adapted to help monitor forest management activities.

Examples of community-based forest monitoring systems emerging from our PFM experience include:

- monitoring of farm land in the forest;
- forest boundary monitoring;
- regular patrolling by the forest management group members; and,
- either written or verbal reporting.

Regeneration counting to develop data concerning seedling regeneration from year to year is also being carried out. Regular woreda level PFM working group meetings to bring key government and community PFM actors together to discuss issues arising and resolve problems have also emerged as a useful M&E mechanism.

The Participatory Forest Resource Assessment (PFRA) method

In order to develop baseline information about the forest condition, a Participatory Forest Resource Assessment (PFRA) methodology has been developed and carried out as part of the Investigation Stage of PFM (see detail in Guide Sheet 3).

The PFRA is used as the basis for assessing changes in forest resources when monitoring is carried out. This is achieved by repeating the PFRA after a set period of three to five years. The PFRA report from the first and subsequent PFRA exercise can then be compared, and changes in forest condition noted.

M&E in the PFM context is about learning

M&E encompasses tools for learning. In a new discipline, like PFM, it is essential that M&E is used positively to improve the PFM system. This is especially important in this early period as PFM is established, developed and expanded.

Gender mainstreaming – monitoring and evaluation of Forest Management Plans

Based on the distinction of roles and forest management activities, it is also important to understand who should be monitoring and evaluating what forest management activities. Much of this work should be joint and gender balanced.

However some monitoring and evaluation activities will be gender specific, in relation to who is doing what in the forest. M&E design needs to be gender sensitive. For example, if a community is participating in an external evaluation of PFM, male and female groups should be consulted separately and on specific issues, roles and activities.

The issue of gender equality, balance and impact are often M&E indicators that are measured in relation to development project's stated objectives to improve gender balance and relations.

This Best Practices manual provides a practical field guide for practitioners working in the context of Participatory Forest Management (PFM). It provides a detailed introduction to PFM and clear step-by-step guidelines to each of the key stages required to implement the PFM approach successfully. It includes implications for gender and is accompanied by a series of delightful illustrations, providing a must-read document for practitioners working in the forestry sector in Ethiopia and beyond.

This manual draws on the experiences of the Participatory Forest Management Programme (PFMP) – a collaborative programme managed by FARM-Africa Ethiopia and SOS Sahel Ethiopia. The programme aims to conserve remaining forests and ensure better management of existing forest resources in Ethiopia and Tanzania.

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