

2ND FCN-LCF COALITION - 6 MONTH ACTIVITY REPORT

Period: 1st July 2011 to 29th February 2012

A. 4 PARTICIPANT NGOS LEARN TO ACCESS LARGE CARBON RESOURCES

A.1. Attending Coalition Meetings

Regular coalition meetings are being organized, where the leaders of the Participant NGOs and the LCF team have been meeting regularly at the ADATS campus, Bagepalli. The meetings have been centred around revisiting the key objectives, concepts and framework of LCF following detailed discussions on:

- (i) The ongoing evolution of LCF
- (ii) Critical self-analysis of the progress of LCF i.e. the promotion of Sustainable agriculture practice and GHG labs
- (iii) review of LCF processes based on experience from 1FCN-LCF coalition
- (iv) Planning future strategies
- (v) Revision of activity processes
- (vi) Developing understanding on climate change mitigation, adaptation, carbon offset, carbon sequestration and soil carbon etc.
- (vii) understanding the operationalization and structure of carbon markets

A.2. Appointing LCF Team at each Participant NGO

The LCF facilitator has been assisting each of the Participant NGOs in realising the Pilot Phase targets by developing Action Plans. Monthly review meetings are undertaken at each Participant NGO to monitor the completion of set targets and revisit timelines.

Since LCF overarches all sustainable farming practices being promoted by the NGOs, senior staff persons were appointed as LCF Coordinators. Likewise, longstanding and experienced SA staff were assigned additional responsibilities of LCF implementation. For conducting demographic data collection and plot delineation, existing cadre and village level workers were deployed.

There have been new appointments of person involved in computer data entry. There are 2 GHG Labs in the second coalition at WASSAN and GRAM. Earlier, in the 1st FCN-LCF Coalition, for the GHG Lab in-charge position, qualification was emphasised. However, experience suggested that the GHG Lab in-charges have to perform repetitive and monotonous tasks. Therefore now it has been decided to identify and select committed persons who would work with passion and diligence, even if less qualified. Local people who can learn the rote steps and continue working on GHG sampling for next 4-5 years.

The 3 wings of LCF – data collection, developing/extending SA practices and GHG Labs – have been clearly demarcated. Roles and responsibilities of all secondary stakeholders, including LCF Expert, LCF Facilitators and LCF Teams have been demarcated accordingly.

A.3. Identifying Village Volunteers

Village volunteers have been involved in demographic data collection and delineation of discrete plots. The best and most interested/involved amongst them will be absorbed in forming, formalising and strengthening Farmer-User Groups, maintaining and monitoring

Farmer Diaries etc. At Timbaktu, GRAM and IIMF, 12, 12 and 8 Volunteers, respectively, have been absorbed in SA extension activities. At WASSAN, a resource pool of 90 village level volunteers has been built by providing them training on baseline surveys/GPS reading etc. From this pool, 16 have been shortlisted for permanent absorption. The remaining are kept in reserve for other SA activities.

In the budget, there is provision for only 10 volunteers per NGO for a period of 4 months. Stipends of most village level teams are uncovered. The NGOs absorb these costs themselves from other sources. This is a learning for 2 matters: Budget making should be more realistic, and its also an indicator of the seriousness with which the Participant NGOs undertake LCF.

A.4. Training & Orienting of LCF Teams

Several awareness sessions on Climate Change and Low Carbon Farming were imparted to LCF Staff and Village Volunteers. These were conducted by the LCF Facilitator during her field visits to Participant NGOs. At Bagepalli, week long training on demographic surveys, plot delineation, baseline surveys, data entry and server administration for the LCF solution was given to each of 4 batches of Field Staff & Village Volunteers.

Even after training on the software solution, LCF staff faced initial difficulties with data entry and downloading GPS reading. But dogged pursuance and team effort overcome these teething problems. The Tristle Trainer was on phone contact with each Participant several times every single day, for 2-3 months.

Theoretical orientation has been given to LCF Teams to develop a business sense by changing their mind-set and not perceiving LCF in the conventional project mode, but as a long haul sustainable agriculture effort. This needs far more concerted effort since an internalisation has to take place at all levels – NGO leadership to village Volunteers.

It has been impressed on the LCF Teams that they much strengthen their intimacy with Participating Farmers. A sense of ownership must be created. This can be done only by being totally transparent and sharing all knowledge, bottlenecks, progress and evolution of LCF.

Participant NGOs have increased awareness through training material, puppet shows and meeting small farmer groups. Of these, one-to-one contact and intimate discussions are the most effective in getting the message across. This has to continue well after this short Pilot Phase gets over.

A.5. Procuring Hardware & Software

Software:

All the 4 Participant NGOs have procured license for the LCF Monitoring solutions, with 5 modules as customized by Tristle.

NGO	Villages	Participating Farmers	Total Holdings	Total Acres	Discrete Plots	% of Holdings	Discrete Acres	% of Total
GRAM	47	1,833	6,264	6,071	285	5%	274	5%
OOMF	11	466	1,252	2,248	79	6%	200	9%
RC	35	1,036	2,295	5,962	947	41%	2,912	49%
WASSAN	53	488	801	1,492	-	--	-	-
	146	3,823	10,612	15,773	1,311	12%	3,386	21%

Hardware:

4 Computer Servers, 20 VXL TC 3241 Thin Client (Windows XE) Terminals with monitor and keyboard/mouse purchased @ 5 VXL TC 3251/ NGOs were bought, o/s installed and transported to the NGO headquarters. In addition, 4 Two KV UPS were procured to maintain the power backups. Two AC (1.5 tonne) were procured for Timbaktu and GRAM. For taking GPS reading 40 Handheld E-Trek Instruments and for collecting photo of all the participating farmers 40 digital cameras have been bought @10 per NGO.

A.6. Conducting Demographic & Land holding Surveys

The status of the demographic surveys and discrete plots for each of the Participant NGO until 29th February 2012 is as follows. It is to be noted that 100% of the first year demographic targets set up by 2nd FCN-LCF Coalition have been met.

As just mentioned, demographic surveys were taken up by Village Volunteers. Most NGOs have already exceeded or very close to their committed targets in this regard. However, these targets were set just to indicate how many the Participant NGOs would have to do in order to acquire skills.

The real target is to collect demographic information on each and every family that the NGO works with, over a period of 3-4 years.

GPS readings of the corners of only 12% of the plots recorded (21% of the acreage) have been taken thus far. Again as earlier mentioned, there were teething problems and LCF Teams and Village Volunteers initially found it a bit difficult to follow the strict rigour that was demanded. Now that they have got the hang of it, things will speed up. Once again, this must be viewed as a learning exercise for the NGO.

All Participant NGOs are committed to take the readings of every single plot of land that the farmers own, whether or not they immediately consent to participate in LCF or not.

Both these are firm decisions taken by the NGO leadership of the 1st and 2nd Coalitions on 8th February 2012.

B. FARMER ORGANISATIONS FORMED AS INSTRUMENTALITY TO AGGREGATE CARBON CREDITS AND TAKE LCF FORWARD

B.1. Formalizing user groups into village/ Mandal level federation of CBOs

There are existing farmer groups with Timbaktu and they are focusing on strengthening these to promote LCF. As they are already working on dry land groundnut for several years, they are able to reach farmers through a build-in social capital.

GRAM and IIMF are finding it difficult to tap their core strength of strong village Sanghams and intimate relationship with farmer women. In their review meeting of the 2nd FCN-LCF Coalition on 12th and 13th March at Bagepalli, they were able to pinpoint why.

Their Sanghams comprise small and marginal farmer families and, especially, women within these families. These women have achieved marvellous results. But now, due to a wrong understanding of LCF, they were excluded. None of their Sangham families in Adilabad district own wet lands. In Nizamabad district, only half of them own wet lands. Yet, they thought that LCF was all about paddy and paddy alone. As a result, most of the 2,300 families they have surveyed are not at all Sangham families.

This tragic misunderstanding was set right in the Coalition meeting, much to the relief of the 2 LCF Teams from GRAM and IIMF.

At Rangareddy district, the problem was slightly different. WASSAN has begun to directly implement field programmes just a few years back. They started with watersheds, where rich and poor all participated. With the advent of LCF, they chose only the 500 richer families who cultivated paddy. The vast number of small and marginal farmers who grew millets, pulses, etc. were left out. Richer farmers have a particular attitude towards NGO efforts that is not as cooperative as that of poorer farmers.

The clarification that Low Carbon Farming was to measure *all emission reductions from all Main Crop(s)* came as a huge relief to WASSAN. In fact, this 2nd FCN-LCF Coalition went so far as to state that they would not work with paddy at all since, for many years, they have been propagating that scarce groundwater in their regions should not be used to cultivate paddy and sugarcane. LCF should not, they asserted, go against their core strengths and contradict their core messages.

This 2nd FCN-LCF Coalition, in their 2 sub AEZs, will measure emissions only from the main crops that their clientele, small and marginal farmers, grow. EDF is requested to set up their 2 GHG Labs for this purpose.

B.2. Training on institutionalisation

There has been theoretical discussion on the development of the business model for the implementation of LCF. There has been much internal learning and appreciation of whole agenda of LCF by sharing knowledge within and between the 3 FCN-LCF Coalitions. As a case in hand, through the pilot phase of LCF implementation WASSAN has been able to understand the internal dynamics needed for transformation from the NGO supporting mode to implementation mode. Still, the NGO organisation is in the learning and evolving mode and they may need to invest more time for transforming their organizational set up.

B.3. LCF team and village youth to develop community based monitoring systems

Common SA PoP's:

All the Participant NGOs are in the first stage of developing tools for community monitoring system. The NGOs are in the process of developing Package of Practice (PoP) for Sustainable Agriculture, covering major crop(s) (excluding paddy) grown by Participating Farmers in their respective regions. The LCF Facilitator will try to put these PoP's into a common format, based on minimal, for each sub AEZ. We have agreed on minimal practices since they have to be proven and implementable in each region by each Participant NGO.

Plot Diaries:

Participant NGOs will then design Plot Diaries that reflect these common SA PoP's for their region.

Village level workers will monitor these various POP's practiced/not practiced on each discrete plot, and enter into the Plot Diaries. LCF Staff at each NGO will select the discrete Plots for the particular year and cropping season, and will also record the SA PoP that the Participating Farmer will follow on that Discrete Plot. It is being planned to digitize the SA PoP and through the Tristle LCF Monitoring solution.

B.4. Agreements between Participant NGOs and CBO (user groups/ federation/ farmers)

It will be taken up after the plot commitment.

B.5. Training for business principles, climate change and business aspects of LCF

The foundation for training the NGOs on developing the business the model has been laid and the idea has been conceptualised by all the Participant NGOs. There have been

reflections on how farmer organization will be taken up further in Coalition meetings. There have been good discussions on capitalising on economic drivers to proliferate Sustainable Agriculture, building financing models, exploring possibilities of venture capital etc.

C. ALL PARTICIPATING FARMERS CHANGE TO SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

C.1. Incentivising Adoption of LCF with Carbon Resources

Carbon Revenues are expected in the second phase, after implementing SA Practices (following PoP's) and recording Plot Diaries. However, the lesson learnt in the 1st FCN-LCF Coalition is that Carbon Revenues alone should be taken as the sole factor to incentivise small and marginal farmers to get into or stay on in Sustainable Agriculture.

This 2nd FCN-LCF Coalition has decided to focus on 3 economic drivers besides Carbon Revenue:

- Increased Yield
- Decreased Input Costs
- Improved price for SA Pproduce

C.2. Identification of major Crop(s) to concentrate on Low Carbon Farming

It has been realised that 'scientific compulsions' of expected higher emission reduction from paddy has led to a restriction Crop (s) selection. Thus the real Main Crop(s) that small and marginal farmers grow have not been focused upon. SA has, inadvertently, been diminished to a pseudoselection of paddy. Participant NGOs have not been able to tap their strength and maximum capability due to this limitation.

Therefore, it has now been decided to focus on dry land millets and cereals to take LCF to its full potential.

C.3. Providing Technical Support

Participant NGOs are now equipped with skills, capabilities, hardware and software to develop comprehensive database as a proof chain to scale up their Sustainable Agriculture activities.

Besides this technical support, another form of service is being provided by the FCN to Participant NGOs. This is in the form of guidance to build up their staff capacity, institutional capacity, community participation and community level monitoring. We term these as NGO Dynamics.

D. 2 FIELD LABORATORIES SET UP TO MEASURE GHG EMISSIONS

D.1. Carrying out Scenario Development for each Participant NGO area of operation

Scenario development tasks will be taken up by LCF experts, under the guidance of EDF scientists, before the next cropping season. This has tentatively been scheduled for May 2012.

D.2. Undertaking Soil & Manure Sampling/Analysis

Soil and manure sampling will be taken up by LCF experts soon after scenario development is done.

D.3. Studying current Sustainable Agriculture (package of) Practices

Each Participant NGO wants to have greater role in deciding upon the Package of Practices they will implement in their working areas. This is very good since we will not go into non achievable tangents. However, we need to keep in mind both, emission reductions as well as economic drivers that will take it forward. Therefore the LCF Facilitator has to do some major balancing work.

D.4. Orienting key Participant NGO/CBO staff/functionaries on Emission Reduction Science

GHG Lab staff will be trained on technical and scientific aspects at Accion Fraterna by EDF scientists and the LCF Expert.

D.5. Procuring Equipment to set up 2 GHG Laboratories in as many NGOs

Firm orders with Thermofisher for 2 Gas Chromatographs (GC) for GHG Labs at WASSAN and GRAM had to be put on hold due to calibration, protocol and procedural problems that were identified in the 4 Labs of the 1st FCN-LCF Coalition. Once these issues are resolved with Thermofisher, we will release payment in the 2nd half of May 2012.

In the meantime, infrastructure for the 2 GHG Labs are being set up at WASSAN and GRAM. They will be ready to receive the equipment, as planned, in June 2012.

D.6. Selecting & Training Laboratory In-charge Personnel

WASSAN and GRAM will be selecting 3-4 highly motivated (even though less qualified) persons to work as Lab Workers. EDF will select 2 persons from this shortlist and train them at Accion Fraterna.

E. GHG EMISSION REDUCTIONS CALCULATED

E.1. Selecting 18 Reference Plots at each Participant NGO area of operation for Mainstream & SA Agricultural Practice

Learning from lessons in the 1st FCN-LCF Coalition, Participant NGOs will now play a responsible role in the selection of SA and MA Reference Plots. They will avoid SA Plots where there is a danger of either historic residues or contamination from mainstream. NGO leaders are committed to use their rapport with farmer families to identify the right persons.

E.2. Developing Plot Diaries

Plot Diaries will be developed based on the PoP's. Once again, key areas of difficulties in monitoring these Diaries have been identified from the experience of the 1st FCN-LCF Coalition. These lessons will be used to simplify the Plot Diaries. The designing, printing and distribution of farmer diaries will be taken up in the 2nd quarter of this, after finalising PoP's and selecting Committed Plots.

E.3. Training Reference Plot Farmers on rigour and procedures

A Village Volunteer will be chosen for every 20-30 Participating Farmers. They will be trained by the LCF Staff and Facilitator in meticulously maintaining the Plot Diaries.