Himachal Pradesh Forest Ecosystem Services (HP-FES)

Situation

Forests, home to 80% of the world's terrestrial biodiversity, are essential for life on Earth as we find it today. The Indian forests play a vital role in harbouring more than 45,000 floral and 81,000 faunal species, many of which are endemic. Mountain forests are crucial not only for the people residing in the mountains, but also for the large population of the adjacent plains. They provide a number of ecosystem services like the water and climate regulation, soil conservation, provision of resources critical for local livelihoods, and abundant recreational values. By understanding the significance of forest ecosystems, their values for humans, and the planet at large, communities have the potential to play a significant role in mainstreaming biodiversity conservation into developmental planning.

This Forest Ecosystem Services (FES) approach is expected to result in improved biodiversity, as well as enhanced flow of forest ecosystem services. It provides a long term development potential for the rural population. Himachal Pradesh (HP) is one of the mountain states of India. With around 3,300 plant species and more than 5,700 animal species, the state is rich in biodiversity, which is a key to the important services that the state's forests provide.

Objective

The project aims to enable the Forest Department of Himachal Pradesh to introduce the Forest Ecosystem Services approach in the state's forest management in order to reach improved living conditions for the communities

in the project areas in Himachal Pradesh that are reached by the new FES methods. In a second step, other Western Himalayan states shall test and use Himachal Pradesh's implementation experiences on FES.

Approach

To introduce the FES approach in the state's forest management, the project first sensitises the Forest Department and local communities in the pilot areas on the FES approach. For the integration of the FES approach into the forest management of Himachal Pradesh, the project is working in three core areas:

- Preparation of one FES based Forest Working Plan

- Establishment and implementation of FES Forest Management Plans in selected demonstration sites addressing the core ecosystem services provided by forests in Himachal Pradesh

- Development and institutionalisation of a Long Term Ecological Monitoring (LTEM) that allows the monitoring of the forest biodiversity and ecosystem services provided by forests on state level.

The development of Micro plans will enable **15 communities** to manage the ecosystem services from their forests more sustainable and **diversify** their **livelihoods**

Forest Department officials will be supported via **tools and trainings** to manage forests for ecosystem services

Progress

- Trainings on the FES concepts and approach have been conducted for senior forest officials and ground staff.

- A forest division for the development of an FES working plan has been selected and got approved by the Forest Department of Himachal Pradesh.

- For the development of the Long Term Ecological Monitoring (LTEM) system, an International Workshop was conducted in 2017 to define the requirements of such a system as well as the overall aim and design. An international expert is contracted in 2018 to set up the system.

- An international workshop on "Integration Forest Ecosystem Services in Forest Management" was held in November. The contact with the forest administrations of the neighbouring states has been established since. As a following step, the Forest Ecosystem Services approach was conceived and defined in February 2018 in collaboration with the Forestry Authority so that it can be integrated into official work plans and guidelines.

- The baseline survey in the project areas has been completed. Based on this, the micro-plans of the pilot areas are being developed.

Contribution to 2030 Agenda

The HP-FES project directly contributes to the SDG 15 Life on Land. It promotes the sustainable management of forests (target 15.2), ensures the conservation of mountain ecosystems (target 15.4) and integrates ecosystem and biodiversity values into state and local planning, (target 15.9).

A **long term monitoring** system will provide **information** on the development of ecosystem services and hence strengthen **decision making** in forest management

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Lead Implementing Agency	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
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QR Code Website What We Do – HP FES