HIMACHAL PRADESH FOREST SECTOR REVIEW

MAIN REPORT

International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED)

in collaboration with

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1. Stakeholder analysis of village forest users in Himachal Pradesh. ORG Centre for Social Research.

2. Proceedings of workshop for a shared vision on sustainable management.

3. Proceedings of the policy dialogue on cross sectoral issues concerning the forest sector in Himachal Pradesh.

4. Land use policy issues. Land Use Focus Group.

5. Village level institutions, their mechanisms and interlinkages with the *Panchayati Raj* institutions. Village level institutions Focus Group.

6. Biodiversity, NTFPs and Ecotourism. Biodiversity, NTFPs and Eco-tourism Focus Group.

7. Economic valuation of forests in Himachal Pradesh. Dr Madhu Verma, Indian Institute of Forest Management.

8. Improving the legal framework for sustainable forest management in Himachal Pradesh. Jonathan Lindsay, FAO Development Law Service.

9. List of participants in workshops and presentations on the Forest Sector Review.

ACRONYMS

C&I	criteria and indicators
CBO	community based organisation
DFID	Department for International Development (of the UK)
EIA	environmental impact assessment
FIS	forest information system
FSR	Forest Sector Review
GEF	global environment facility
GIS	geographic information system
GoI	Government of India
GP	*Gram Panchayat*
GTZ	*Gesellschaft fur Technische Zusammenarbeit* (German technical assistance)
HP	Himachal Pradesh
HPFD	Himachal Pradesh Forest Department
HPSFC	Himachal Pradesh State Forest Corporation
HRD	human resources development
IGCP	Indo-German Changar Project
IGF	Inspector General of Forests
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
IIFM	Indian Institute of Forest Management
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources
IWDP	Integrated Watershed Development Project
JFM	Joint Forest Management
MFP	minor forest product
MIS	management information system
MLA	Member of Legislative Assembly
NGO	non governmental organisation
NTFP	non timber forest product
NWFP	non wood forest product
PFE	permanent forest estate
PFM	participatory forest management
PRI	*panchayati raj* institution
RaMIS	range management information system
SC	scheduled caste
ST	scheduled tribe
SFM	sustainable forest management
SLUWDB	State Land Use and Wasteland Development Board
SVS	*Sanjhi Van Samiti*
SVY	*Sanjhi Van Yojna*
TORs	terms of reference
TD	timber distribution
VDC	Village Development Committee
VEDC	Village Eco-Development Committee
VFDC	Village Forest Development Committee
VFDS	Village Forest Development Society

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"IIED would like to thank all those who contributed to the Forest Sector Review. The FSR was a consultative process carried out over one year; and it is not possible here to name all those who kindly contributed information, insights and ideas regarding Himachal Pradesh's forests. However, in particular, we should like to acknowledge the work of the Forest Department Core Team : S.K. Pande, Pankaj Khullar, Vinay Tandon, A.K. Gulati, R.K. Sood, H.S. Kingra, Surender Kumar and Vinod Tiwari. The Core Team guided the entire process, responded to research findings and facilitated practical arrangements. We also thank the focus groups and consultants who ably and efficiently completed the sub-study reports (which are reproduced in full in a separate volume); and the village representatives, NGOs, wider Forest Department staff and members of the public who offered their inputs to the process. The boundless energy and considerable experience of Senior Consultant V P Mohan ensured that the process was efficient, timely and inspiring to participants. The continuing support of the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, was much appreciated. Finally, the financial support of the Department for International Development – India, and their encouragement of a truly multi-stakeholder, participatory approach was a significant factor in the successful completion of the Forest Sector Review.

Stephen Bass and Elaine Morrison
International Institute for Environment and Development
London.

June 2000

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of the Forest Sector Review

Himachal Pradesh's forests, and the people dependent on them, are experiencing new types of change, at ever-increasing rates. Yet the policy and institutional framework has not changed to the same degree, with the result that systems for ensuring that all needs for forest goods and services are met are now inadequate. Recognising this, the Himachal Pradesh Forest Department (HPFD) called for a comprehensive Forest Sector Review (FSR). The Review aims to provide a basis of information and consensus on which to build the future policies and strategies of the HPFD and other key institutions, so that they meet the needs of key forest stakeholders and ensure sustainable management of forest resources, integrating forest sector planning with socio-economic development. The FSR looks at the whole *sector* from many stakeholders' perspectives – and not merely at forests from a foresters' perspective, or at the HPFD from an officer's perspective.

Hence the FSR looks forward to a sustainable future, and not merely backward at the impacts of previous policies. It points to the need for basic principles for the sector's future, for a strengthened and participatory institutional framework at state and local levels, and for shared new policy objectives.

The multi-stakeholder, multi-disciplinary process of preparing the FSR

The FSR has been based firmly on a twin-track approach of multi-stakeholder consultations and multi-disciplinary analysis. This has helped not only to get better information from key informants, but also to stimulate a strategic series of informed debates between these stakeholders on the policy and institutional issues affecting the forest sector.

Since the FSR serves as a 'bridge' between understanding the present and defining a future vision, it employed an analytical framework which can assess the current situation in relation to possible future, broader needs for sustainable forest management (SFM). The analysis has not been confined to strict 'forestry' concerns, but has given equal attention to cross-sectoral and livelihood-level issues.

The Review encompassed a range of stakeholder meetings, initially with HPFD and Himachal Pradesh State Forest Corporation (HPSFC) officers at all levels, then extending to include all other forest stakeholders. During the course of the FSR there were three major multi-stakeholder meetings; participants included village representatives, forest officers, NGOs, academics, Secretaries from the Government of HP, Forest Minister and the Chief Minister. The process of gradually broadening participation ensured accuracy of the FSR findings, practicality of recommendations, and wide 'ownership' of the vision.

The FSR process might continue on a regular basis - because consensus cannot be reached on all issues and options in one year, and experimental approaches will be needed, demanding subsequent review and adaptation by stakeholders. The FSR is a precursor to ongoing strategic planning, and is thought to be a leading example of such processes in India.

Stakeholder discussions revealed the need for particular analysis in several key areas, and specialist work was undertaken on:

- the diversity of local forest stakeholders and their values;
- the proliferation of, and links between, local (village-level) institutions;
- biodiversity conservation and use;
- economic valuation of forest goods and services;
- legal issues; and
- the status and adequacy of land use policy.

Top issues

The FSR analyses and discussions raise three groups of related issues:

- Participation in forest management for livelihood needs
- Increasing the goods and services available through improving forest management
- Governance, laws and policy coherence to achieve the above

These issues need to be resolved if we are to move to a sustainable forest sector which meets the needs of stakeholders. For each issue, the FSR attempts to assess the situation and identify major needs for change.

Participation in forest management for livelihood needs*:*

Most rural people in HP use significant quantities of forest goods and services, for some of which there is no available substitute, although few people are totally dependent on forest products. However, some local stakeholders are highly dependent upon forest products for much of their livelihood, currently at a subsistence level. In some places there is high potential for building forest-based enterprises in production of forest goods, tourism, etc. Furthermore, a shortage of forest environmental services – which provide critical support to hill farming systems as well as to domestic water supply – entrenches poverty.

The challenge is how to build a livelihood-first approach onto what has been an essentially forest-first institutional structure and operating procedure. This entails developing an enabling framework for participatory forest management on top of an existing regulatory framework which did not anticipate participation. There is a need for legal frameworks that provide meaningful and secure rights to benefit from and manage local forests, and that are flexible enough to allow real local choices that reflect local needs and aspirations.

Village communities' awareness of their stake in the protection and continuation of forest cover is increasing. This is evident from the village institutions that are slowly proliferating. There have been significant efforts to improve people's participation in recent years, notably the spread of nearly 360 Village Forest Development Societies under '*Sanjhi Van Yojna'*, HP's programme of Joint Forest Management (JFM). Although these and other forms of village forest institution are yet to mature, develop effective and accountable leadership, and become independent entities, their evolution is widely thought to have brought about an overall increased focus on forest issues.

However the FSR identified challenges within the community/ local-level organisations themselves, with relations between them, and with their relations with the HPFD. For example:

- There is a need for greater equity within village institutions, to overcome the tendency towards concentration of powerful groups.
- Given the proliferation of community organisations concerned with forestry (which was not reviewed in a comparative manner until the work of the FSR), there is a need for clarity and coordination concerning their respective rights, responsibilities and objectives, and their relations with each other and with other institutions.
- The sustainability of project-sponsored village forest institutions is under question, which emphasises the importance of local 'ownership' of the institution .
- There remains a clear need to efficiently delegate regulatory functions to village institutions.

The appropriate relationship between village forest institutions and local government in the form of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) has been a subject of debate since the start of JFM in India. FSR consultations and surveys indicate that in HP as well, opinions vary as to the extent to which the link between village forest institutions and PRIs should be formalised. PRIs emerge as a potential common point of intervention, due to their presence throughout HP and their constitutional nature, where the possibility of convergence of all local village level institutions including forest institutions is strongest. The HPFD has indicated its futuristic vision to integrate its

institutions with PRIs. However, it is important to ensure that there is a locally acceptable balance of rights and responsibilities.

Increasing the goods and services available through improving forest management:

The FSR economic valuation study points to the huge values of HP forests for – in descending order – watershed functions, timber growing stock, carbon storage, biodiversity and eco-tourism services. The key issue is how to realise these high values in practice, at what cost, and who shares the costs and benefits.

- Himachal Pradesh is one of the most important states in India for biodiversity. There are still virgin primary forests left; IUCN considers the region to be one of the world's priority conservation areas; and some of HP's species (notably pheasants) are of global importance. But there is a need for rationalising protected areas for more efficient coverage, and improved management and planning to integrate biodiversity conservation and management in production forests and village livelihood system forests.
- The role of HP forests as a major production centre for water supplies that extend beyond the state to serve the cities and agriculture of the Indo-Gangetic plain, is quite widely appreciated in HP. There is a need for specialised watershed management knowledge and financial incentives to pay for management.
- The gathering of non-timber forest products (NTFPs) can be an important activity for low-income groups in particular, yet there are strong differences of opinion about who should be able to access NTFPs. Essentially there is a need to determine where privatisation or community control is appropriate, and where nationalisation is justified.
- Cattle numbers in HP are roughly equivalent to the human population. Whilst unregulated grazing in some areas has far exceeded the carrying capacity, it is also accepted that in other areas, grazing is a good use of upland forest. There is aneed to encourage economically productive cattle to be zoned in the right kinds of forest.
- Himachal Pradesh attracts many tourists, both national and international, and one of the most significant 'unique selling points' of HP tourism is the forest asset. There is potential to build on this such that tourism is compatible with SFM and local livelihoods, and so that tourism revenue can be ploughed back into the HP forest sector in order to pay for conserving the forest landscape resource.
- Timber production involves some contentious issues: there is still debate as to whether the green felling ban should be lifted, which adds a significant element of uncertainty to planning future forest sector strategies. There may be scope for some degree of 'privatisation' of production to small farmers. Timber Distribution rights are also contentious: the rates are very low and there is general agreement that some modification is necessary; however the political challenges may outweigh the legal difficulties.
- Most forests should produce more than just one of these goods and services; thus there is a need to sustain all forest goods and services through integrated protection and management strategies. This requires:
  - keeping track of the values of forest land: better information on forest resources, forest stakeholders, economic and financial values of forest goods and services is needed within an integrated, strategic forest information system.
  - partnership approaches so that forests can produce multiple goods and services: this includes some redefinition of roles between state and village bodies, backed up by appropriate regulations and penalties, and 'zoning'.

Governance, laws and policy coherence to achieve the above*:*

Sustainable forest management requires legal and policy frameworks that reassure all those who invest their time, effort and money that the benefit of their efforts will not be lost due to illegal harvesting, exporting, clearing or other harmful and illicit activities. There is a need to strike an effective balance between the enabling and controlling functions of these instruments – as they can be mutually reinforcing.

- The lack of a land use policy in which the place of forests is clear and secure contributes to many of the clashes concerning the role of forests, forest removal and afforestation. Forest classification currently reflects neither actual forest cover nor livelihood uses, and there is poor demarcation even of important forests on the ground.
- Non-forest sector policies, institutions and markets can have significant forestry implications. Whilst there has, to date, been little coordination between different sectoral departments, forest policy can no longer be a narrow affair of forest authorities alone, and the FSR has attempted to actively open up to non-forest interests.
- Participatory governance is only just developing at both the local and the state level. At the state level, there are no regular consultation and review procedures for HP state forest policy – FSR is a first, and something of its type may need to be applied on a continuing basis. At local levels, the many JFM experiments offer good lessons.

Summary of recommendations

The FSR studies and consultations have revealed a convergence of opinion towards four principles for making the transition to SFM, and a system for achieving SFM based on ten related policy objectives.

Four key principles for SFM in HP

These may be adopted as a basis for defining policies and programmes towards sustainable forest management in HP:

- **Multiple forest values***:* Recognise the many forest values which sustain local livelihoods and economic growth, from energy, food and fibre production to cultural values and environmental services, and work towards realising these values to enable continuous flows of benefits for different stakeholders.
- **Multiple forest stakeholders***:* Recognise there are many stakeholders involved in the forest sector – from those dependent on forests for their subsistence needs, to state-level institutions charged with looking after HP's forests, to national and international stakeholders. Good policies and programmes will give them access to information and decision-making processes, and will emphasise participation in sharing the costs and benefits of forest use.
- **Changing conditions***:* Recognise that economic, environmental, social and institutional circumstances and needs are changing, increasingly rapidly, both within HP and outside. This means that policies and programmes need to be capable of regular review and adaptation, and should include a precautionary approach to protect important forest assets.
- **The need for a lead agency to coordinate the transition to SFM**: Recognise that all stakeholders expect the HPFD, as the recognised authority, to take up this role, which will therefore require considerable support. But also that this will need to be complemented by a regular, equitable participatory system through which stakeholders themselves can meet, debate strategic issues, consider optional solutions, and form partnerships – facilitated by the HPFD.

Ultimately, these principles imply a significant re-negotiation of forest stakeholder roles, that are both realistic and acceptable to all. This is already a recognised need. However, this cannot take place until there is a shared vision of SFM, based on a participatory policy process. This re-negotiation is likely to signal a significant institutional change process over the coming years

(which may even be the main outcome of the FSR). In other words, a process of decentralisation of forestry is needed to handle local complexities, which also needs to be centralised enough to ensure greater policy coherence within and outside the state.

The four key principles are amplified below in ten inter-related policy objectives:[1]

1. **Institute a multi-stakeholder HP Forest Consultative Forum**. The establishment of an HP Forest Consultative Forum would create a platform for continued discussion of issues such as those raised during the FSR. It is proposed that the Forum be positioned at a high level. It should include good representation of all the stakeholder groups, especially those at local level which are most dependent on forests, and sectors with a strong economic interest in forests e.g. tourism and water supply. It would benefit from being composed of progressive, expert, respected individuals rather than *ex officio* members. Such a Forum is required to enable both 'horizontal' coordination – strategic coherence between sectors, and 'vertical' coordination – linking villages to the centre in terms of improving both policy and its implementation. Thus a 'tiered' approach of local forest fora, building on village forest institutions and federations of them, would be one option for ensuring the state forum deals with real local interests. The Forum approach is central to most of the following other recommendations.

2. **Cross-sectoral coherence towards SFM, with an early emphasis on agreeing criteria and indicators (C&I) of SFM for Himachal Pradesh**. Economic development and rural livelihoods in forested areas are the concern of many departments, and not just the Forest Department. There is a need for greater inter-sectoral coherence and coordination between departments both at the state level and at the village level – and experiments in effective and workable mechanisms to support this. One option to develop, in a participatory manner, core principles, criteria and indicators for SFM, and to apply them to government, private and community forest operations and to environmental impact assessments of activities that might impact on forests.

3. **Strengthen village-level institutions.** The various types of village forest institution all hold great promise for fulfilling local needs from forests and – provided the regulations and incentives are right – for contributing to the production of state, national and global forest values as well. However there is need for:
   - harmonisation of the many types of local institutions, whilst allowing for local differences and innovation;
   - institutional arrangements to support coordination rather than conflict between neighbouring village forest institutions;
   - clarification of the roles and linkages between village forest institutions and PRIs, based on analysis of what has been working well;
   - mechanisms for monitoring and safeguarding the interests of marginalised groups within the village institution; and
   - wider scope to be given to villages in terms of the land use and forest management decisions they are empowered to make.

4. **Liberalise forestry off-reserve, i.e. plantation/ farm forestry on private lands.** The HPFD needs to undertake a technical support/ enabling role, encouraging a thriving private sector to produce forest goods efficiently[2]. Private sector codes of practice might be encouraged, based on C&I for SFM (above), and forms of independent certification that forests are actually managed to these C&I might ultimately be considered. However, certain controls are also needed as a complement to such a voluntary approach.

5. **Improve investment in the public benefits from fore sts.** In general, state forestry should focus on public benefits; a case could be made for the HPSFC to invest in improving the quantity and quality of public forest assets. This would mean ensuring HPSFC is a pioneer in

[1] These ten policy objectives are not in order of priority.
[2] 'Private sector' includes individual farmers, community groups, JFM groups, etc. as well as the corporate private sector.

best-practice forestry which includes environmental and social benefits. Thus HPSFC should be demonstrators of any new HP C&I for SFM.

6. **Undertake organisational change and capacity development in the HPFD to support other stakeholders, and especially village-level institutions, to take up sustainable forestry roles.** The HPFD will need continued support to be able to work in partnership with all the institutions which should be playing a part in SFM. Its roles may shift towards analysis, advice, facilitation and monitoring – rather than a heavy field enforcement presence. Capacity building will be needed to enable the HPFD to work in partnership with other institutions, as well as to ensure participation of all levels within the Department. **An HPFD Change Management Steering Committee** is suggested to help the HPFD through the process of change over the next few years. It should report to the HP Forest Consultative Forum, to ensure that changes reflect the principle of the HPFD supporting other stakeholders' needs.

7. **Develop a vision for balanced land use.** At the state level, the challenge is to establish what types of forest are needed to meet current and future needs for forest goods and services, where they are (whether state or other land), how to encourage their development if there is not enough, and what legal backing may be necessary for the different forest management categories of a 'permanent forest estate'. The HP State Land Use and Wasteland Development Board (SLUWDB) could be empowered to administer the necessary multi-disciplinary procedures (possibly as a wing of the State Planning Department).

   Balanced forest use at the *local level* could also be ensured through: documentation of local customary practices for integrated use, as well as C&I for SFM that are developed in light of this knowledge base; extension of JFM/ SVY to dense forests with rich sources of NTFPs; and participation of people in negotiated extraction from protected areas.

8. **Ensure biodiversity values are factored better into land use.** A better system of protected areas is called for, to meet the requirements of the Convention on Biodiversity and to capitalise upon tourism and scientific potentials; this would include certain area rationalisations and links between particular protected areas that have been identified in the FSR biodiversity study. However, biodiversity conservation outside protected areas also needs to be improved: this might include encouragement of traditional land husbandry practices, complemented by incentives where necessary. For HPFD, HPSFC and private operators who are involved in production forestry, there is a need for guidelines and training in the latest approaches to biodiversity conservation within forest management.

9. **Develop a transparent information system on forests, to inform stakeholders.** It is recommended that a basic **Forest Information System (FIS)** is established. It should be accessible to all stakeholders and ensure a flow of good, quality information reflecting the overall vision for HP's forest sector, whilst cutting back on unnecessary information. This could produce a regular 'state of the forests and forest stakeholders' report. An FIS should improve transparency; but for particularly contentious or pressing issues, a further option to consider might be to constitute an independent **Forest Watch Group** which would also make its information freely available. Ultimately, a broader land information system might be desirable.

10. **Greatly improve efforts to spread awareness of forest values, objectives, rights and responsibilities, increasing political commitment to SFM.** The findings and recommendations of this FSR need to be widely disseminated and feedback sought. Mechanisms for assuring public review and comment on major new plans for the forest sector would lead to greater public awareness and 'ownership' of new rules and laws, increasing acceptance and improving compliance. Improved political commitment and institutional changes are key needs, but will require a continued process to achieve them.

Next steps

Short-term actions, milestones and indicators of progress are suggested for each of the above objectives. The next major step is to draft a new forest policy and institutional development strategy, based on the FSR findings and recommendations, and on further stakeholder feedback on them. (For this reason, a feedback form is included in this document). It is recommended that the current FSR 'Core Team' be kept on, and augmented with other stakeholders, to manage this process. By 2001, it is hoped that the Forest Consultative Forum will be established in order to provide the 'centre' of a new participatory institutional system in HP: thus many of the next steps should be focused on setting this Forum up in an equitable and efficient manner.

1. THE PURPOSE OF THE FOREST SECTOR REVIEW (FSR)

1.1 RATIONALE FOR THE FOREST SECTOR REVIEW

The forests of Himachal Pradesh, and the people and businesses who depend upon them, are experiencing new types – and higher rates – of change. Yet the policy and institutional framework for forestry has changed rather little for many years. As a result, systems for ensuring all needs for forest goods and services are met, and for resolving differences between stakeholders, are inadequate for the 21st century.

Recognising this, the HP Forest Department (HPFD) called for a comprehensive Forest Sector Review (FSR). This Review aims to provide a basis of information and consensus on which to build the future policies and strategies of the HPFD and other key institutions – so that they meet the needs of key forest stakeholders and ensure sustainable management of forest resources, integrating forest sector planning with socio-economic development. It looks at the whole sector from many stakeholders' perspectives – and not merely at forests from a foresters' perspective, for example, or at the HPFD from an officer's perspective.

Hence the FSR looks forward, and not merely backward at the impacts of previous policies. It points to the need for basic principles for the sector's future, for a strengthened institutional framework at state and local levels, based on participation, and for new policy objectives.

1.2 MULTI-STAKEHOLDER APPROACH

Recognising that an up-to-date information base is not readily available, the FSR has been based firmly on a twin-track approach of multi-stakeholder consultations and multi-disciplinary analysis. This has helped not only to get better information from key informants, but also to stimulate a strategic series of informed debates between these stakeholders on the policy and institutional issues affecting the forest sector.

Although there was an early emphasis on getting the opinions of HPFD and HPSFC officers at all levels and forging common positions, other stakeholders were increasingly involved. This process of broadening participation ensured accuracy of the FSR findings, practicality of recommendations, and increasingly wide 'ownership' of the vision:

a. **Other HP government departments, NGOs, private sector organisations, professional associations and researchers** have been consulted through: key informant interviews, questionnaires, two multi-stakeholder policy dialogues and focus groups on specific themes. These revealed widespread hope that the FSR will lead to policies and institutional arrangements that call for more groups than just the HPFD/ HPSFC to play their part in forestry, and that improve cross-sectoral policy coherence in relation to forests.
b. **The Inspector General of Forests (IGF)** for India has shown personal involvement for similar reasons, notably the need to develop state policy and action plans which are acceptable to stakeholders and compatible with national policies and global obligations.
c. **The general public/ civil society** has been consulted through newspaper announcements eliciting feedback on issues and ideas.
d. **DFID-India** has supported the Review, viewing it as fundamental to the good design of any further forestry planning and capacity-building in HP. It was particularly concerned to assess the links between forest management and poverty alleviation. Both DFID-India and the IGF view the approach as a model for other states in India.
e. **Other donors** have expressed similar support.
f. Finally, and perhaps most importantly**, village-based groups** of people who are primarily dependent on forests have been consulted through a stratified field survey of local forest values, by a focus group examining the pros and cons of various forms of local institutions in relation to producing local forest benefits, and by a series of multi-stakeholder policy dialogues.

1.3 ANALYTICAL APPROACH

Since the FSR serves as a 'bridge' between understanding the present and defining a future vision, it has been necessary to devise an analytical framework which can assess the current situation in relation to possible future, broader needs for sustainable forest management (SFM). Thus an 8-part analytical framework was developed, based on both internationally-accepted sets of Criteria and Indicators (C&I) for SFM, and India's own 'Bhopal-India process' for C&I (the latter is given in Appendix 1). This was used as a checklist for the analysis. The analysis has not been confined to strict 'forestry' concerns, as so often happens with forestry reviews, but has given equal attention to cross-sectoral and livelihood-level issues.

Stakeholder discussions revealed the need for particular analysis in several key areas, and specialist work was undertaken through focus groups and commissioned studies:[3]

a. **Local forest stakeholders**: their livelihood systems, dependence on forests, and interactions
b. **Local institutions**: their roles and mandates regarding forests, and their links with *Panchayati Raj* institutions
c. **Biodiversity**: identifying its values and means of conservation in both protection and production forests
d. **The economic case**: valuation of forest goods and services in Himachal Pradesh
e. The legal case: legal adequacy in relation to forest/stakeholder needs, and the legal implications of the FSR's policy/ institutional recommendations for SFM
f. **Land use policy**: its status and adequacy in relation to forest/ stakeholder needs and SFM.

This FSR Main Report is intended to be reasonably brief, and attention is drawn to the other studies for more detail. This is especially the case for complex legal issues.

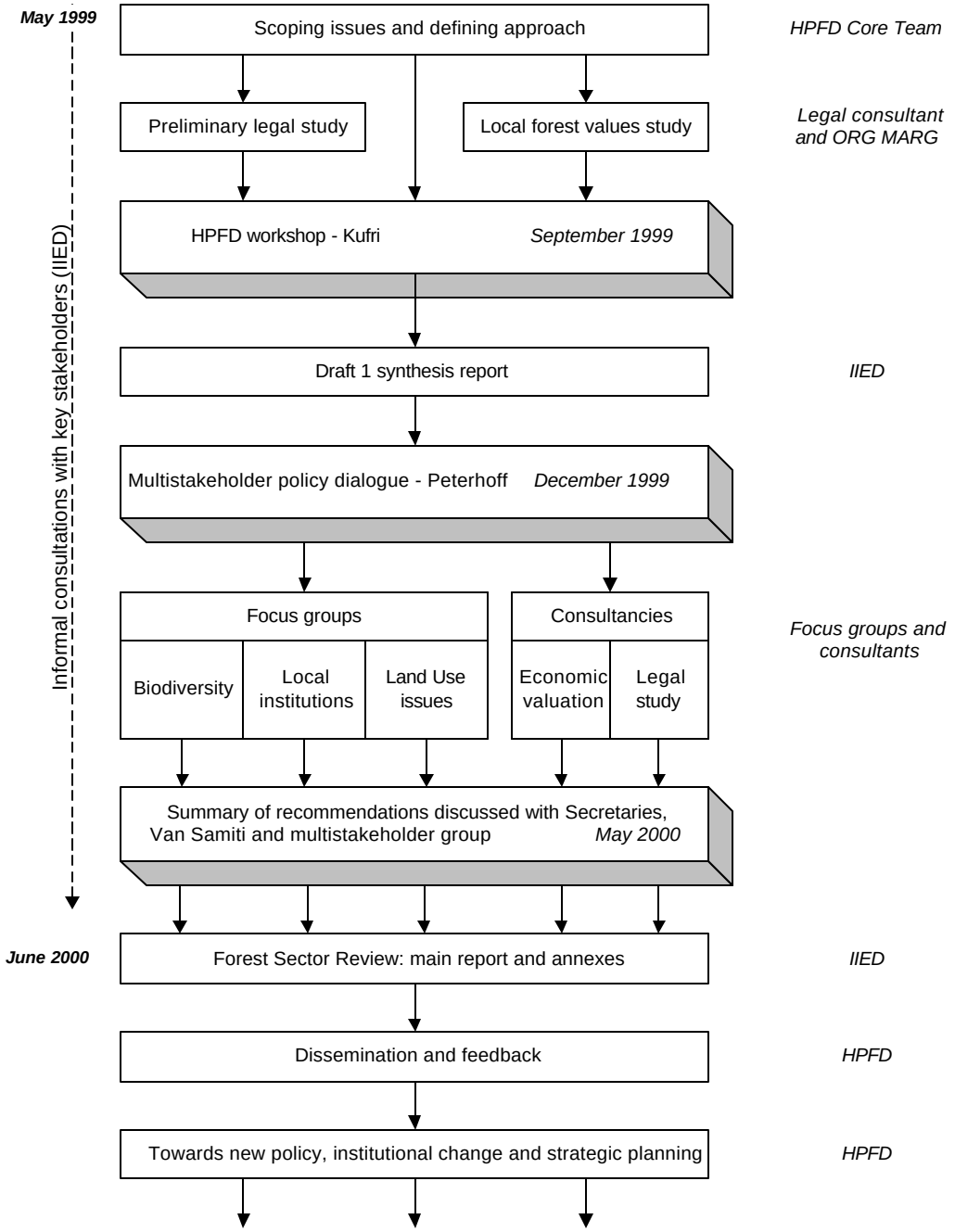
1.4 CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PROCESS

With all of its multi-stakeholder consultations and analyses, conducted over a period of one year, the FSR process has been management-intensive. Management has been shared between a Core Team (mainly from the HPFD) and IIED (an independent, international policy research organisation). The Core Team defined the scope and steered the process. IIED provided methodological input, and independent analysis and syntheses of the information that was produced through analysis and consultations. IIED's Shimla-based Senior Consultant, assisted by a Forestry Consultant, has facilitated and administered the process.

The full process and timetable is outlined in Appendix 3 and is summarised in Figure 1.1. The approach has involved progressive refinement of issues statements, debates on options, refinement of practical aspects of the options with relevant stakeholders, and 'testing' of the political aspects with 'policy-holders', towards the eventual preparation of findings and recommendations. Thus the FSR reflects wide support and commitment of the many people involved. Indeed, the FSR process might continue on a regular basis after its presentation to the Government of Himachal Pradesh. This is partly because consensus cannot be reached on all issues and options in one year, and experimental approaches will be needed– demanding subsequent review and adaptation by stakeholders. Thus the FSR is a precursor to a new policy and ongoing strategic planning for the whole forest sector, and is thought to be a leading example of such processes in India.

[3] The complete set of FSR reports is available (see appendix 2 for a full list), but key findings are integrated in this document.

Figure 1.1: Flowchart of Forest Sector Review activities and main responsibilities



2 DESCRIBING THE FOREST SECTOR – WHERE WE ARE NOW

2.1 THE STATE OF FORESTS

The forests of Himachal Pradesh play vital roles in preserving the fragile Himalayan ecosystem. All of HP's Himalayan area forms the upper watersheds of four major tributaries of the river Indus (the Chenab, Ravi, Beas and Sutlej) and of the Yamuna river, which feeds into the Ganges. Thus the management of HP's forests in these watersheds has impacts outside the state, in terms of downstream water supply. There is a wide range of altitudes and climatic conditions, with a rich and diversified flora. Major forest types include moist tropical, dry tropical, montane sub-tropical, montane temperate, sub-alpine and alpine scrub. Areas of forest land are described below and summarised in Figure 2.1.

- Of the total geographical area of HP (55,673km^2), 36,986km^2, or 66.43 per cent of the State, is legally defined as forest land.
- Of this, only 12,521km^2 (22.49 per cent of HP) is actually under tree cover (and of this, 9,560km^2 is dense forest, with a crown density above 40 per cent; 2,961km^2 is open forest, with a crown density between 10 and 40 per cent). In addition there is 1,825km^2 of scrub, with crown density below 10 per cent: this is not included in the area under tree cover.
- However, revenue records show only 10,561km^2 of forest land; thus 71 per cent of the legally classified forest area remains to be measured and entered into the revenue record. (The major part of the unmeasured area falls in the districts of Kinnaur, Kullu and Lahaul-Spiti).
- It should be noted that as much as 20,511km^2 of HP's land is both uncultivable and cannot sustain forests, comprising barren land, alpine pastures, snow covered peaks and areas above tree line – although such areas fall within the legally classified forest land.
- Thus only 16,475km^2 of cultivable forest land within the legal forest area can support tree cover, equivalent to 29.5 per cent of the total state area.
- However, the HPFD's estimate of forest area includes those uncultivable lands above the tree line, considering them to be an integral part of a larger forest ecosystem.

According to the existing records (Annual Administration Report 1996-7, HPFD), legally-defined forest land is divided into:

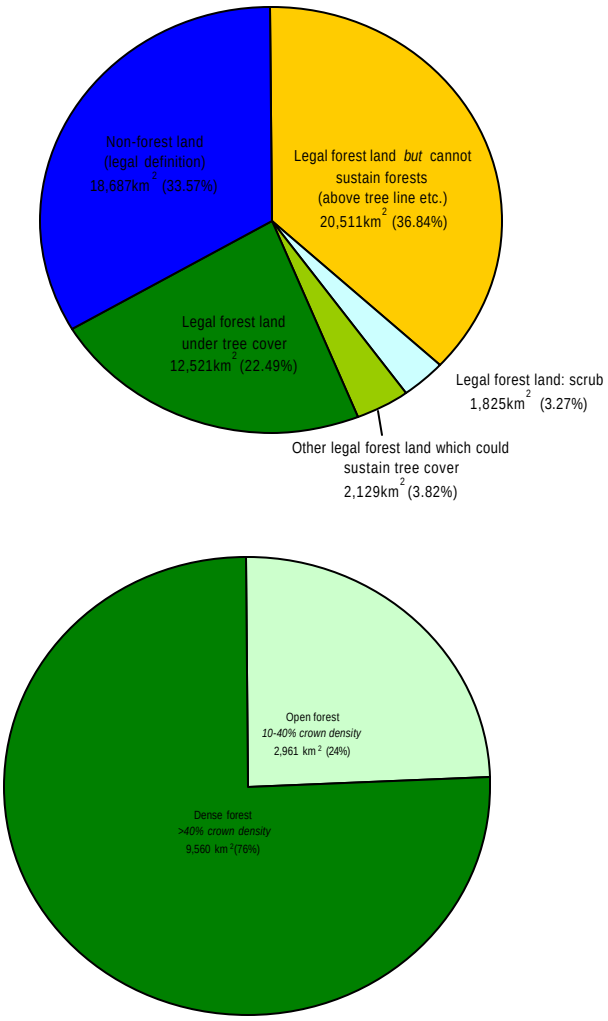
- Reserved Forests – 1,896km^2 (5.12 per cent of forest land)
- Demarcated Protected Forests - 11,401km^2 (30.82 per cent of forest land)
- Undemarcated Protected Forests - 21,593km^2 (58.38 per cent of forest land)
- Unclassified Forests - 930km^2 (2.51 per cent)
- Other Forests - 1,166km^2 (3.15 per cent).

Reserved and protected forests are under the management of the HP Forest Department. In reserved forests, few activities are allowed unless specifically permitted, whereas in protected forests, much is allowed unless specifically prohibited. The above figures suggest that there is more clarity about the legal classification of land than is often the case in reality. In many areas, it remains uncertain or disputed as to whether particular land has legally been designated forest land, and if so, what category it falls into. One consequence of this is confusion as to whether particular land comes under the jurisdiction of the Forest Department or Revenue Department.

Himachal Pradesh contains two national parks and thirty-two sanctuaries, covering 12 per cent of the total area. Thus HP maintains more than three times the minimum required for a protected area network according to national guidelines. Whilst there is some confusion over the exact quantity – in area terms – of forests under different legal categories, there is also very little information on the changing quality of those forests. In the absence of good information, the FSR has focused on what stakeholders *want* out of the forests – the values of the forests of Himachal Pradesh. These values are variously sought by stakeholders ranging from local communities, to the state as a whole, to neighbouring parts of India, and beyond. Over 90 per cent of HP's population live in rural areas and are dependent on natural resources for their livelihoods to some

Figure 2.1: Areas of legal forest land and tree cover

Top pie chart represents total geographical area of HP: 55,673km^2
Bottom pie chart represents forest land under tree cover: 12,521km^2 (= 22.49% of total geographical area).

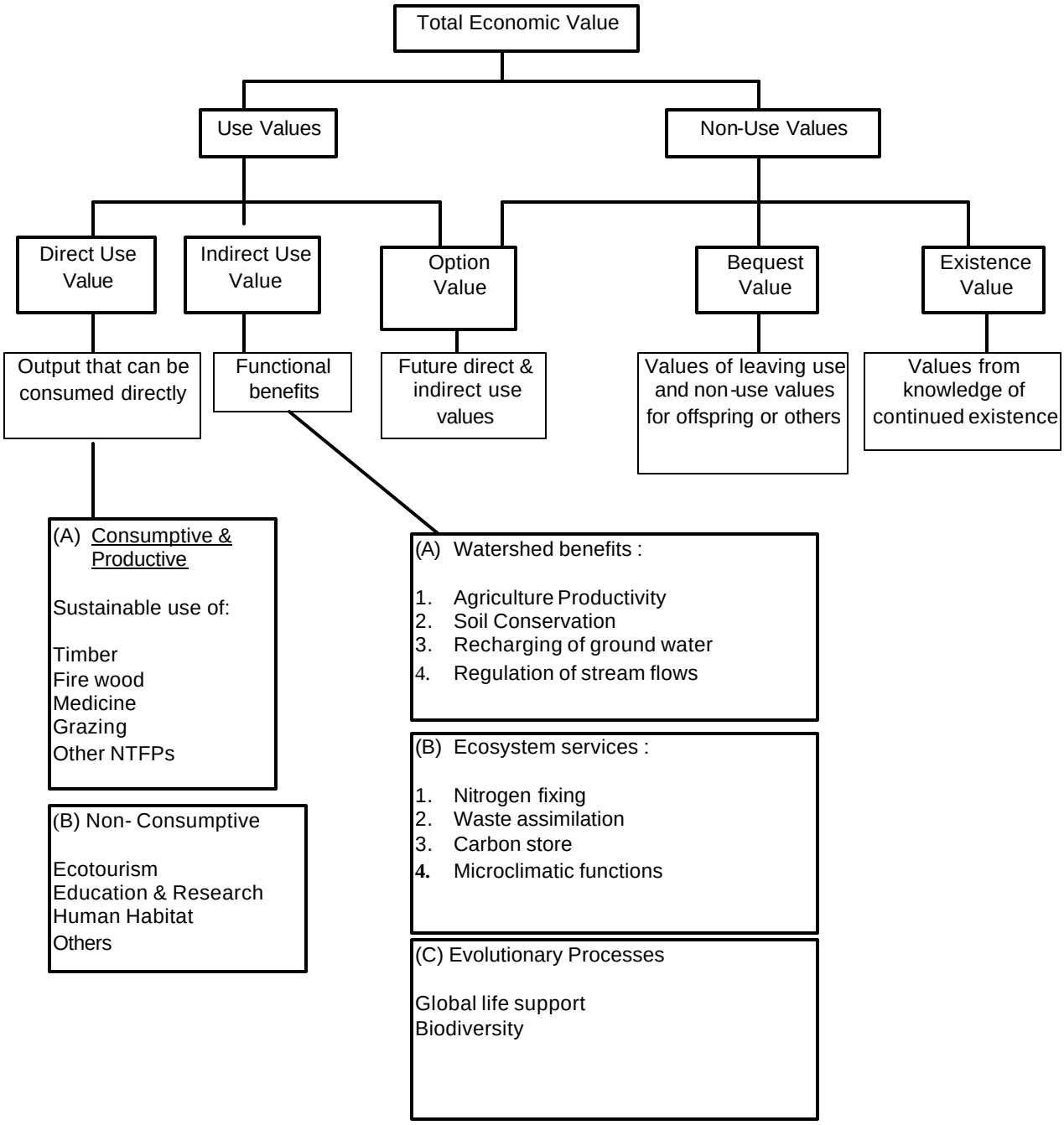


extent. Forest goods and services such as fuelwood, fodder, small timber, medicinal plants and other NTFPs, and grazing are particularly vital to local people. In addition, some rural people benefit from employment generated through forestry and soil conservation works, HP State Forest Corporation activities and tourism.

Both local people and the wider population of HP and beyond benefit from forests in terms of watershed protection. Furthermore, some values are acknowledged as important for livelihoods both within and outside the State: biodiversity, soil and water conservation, climatic amelioration, recreation and tourism, aesthetic, cultural, religious and historic values.

Some forest values can readily be realised in direct financial terms, since the forest goods or services in question enter the market place or have clear production costs. Those without financial value may be just as important, however. In order to relate these many values, which are identified with all kinds of needs and perceptions, the FSR has used accepted economic methodologies. This allows us to treat the many values together - comparing competitive, unlike goods and services from the forest e.g., timber and recreation, and helping to choose between alternatives/scenarios for forest investment, management and use. (Figure 2.2).

Figure 2.2: Total Economic Value of Forests



Sources:
Barbier, E. 1991. The economic value of ecosystems 2: Tropical Forests. Gatekeeper Series no. 91-01. IIED, London; Munasinghe, M. and Lutz, E. 1993. Environmental economics and valuation in development decision making. In: Munasinghe, M. (ed.). 1993. Environmental economics and natural resource management in developing countries. Committee o f International Development institutions on the Environment. World Bank, Washington DC.

2.2 THE STATE OF FOREST STAKEHOLDERS[4]

2.2.1 The primary stakeholders

Forest resources provide an important 'safety net' for a large segment of Himachal Pradesh's population. The primary stakeholders are those who are directly dependent on forests for their livelihoods. They include scheduled castes (SC), scheduled tribes (ST), *Rajputs* and *Brahmins*, and are described here according to their economic status. The local forest values survey observed that all primary stakeholders were essentially using the forest for individual benefits – for survival, livelihood or additional income.

- **Economically vulnerable groups** have a high dependence on forest resources for both survival and livelihoods. This group comprises the poorer scheduled castes and settled tribes, and the poorer members of other caste groups. Due to low economic status they exercise little control over the management of forests. Landholdings are small and pressures on forests for fuelwood and fodder are high. They have little ability to use alternative fuels or to stall-feed cattle. Timber Distribution (TD) rights[5] are drawn upon to provide timber for domestic use.[6] An alternative income is obtained from collection of NTFPs, but in the absence of marketing facilities and accessible markets, returns from NTFP collection are low.

- **Disadvantaged and migratory populations** have a very high dependence on forests for fodder, fuelwood and collection of NTFPs. Many are pastoralists and practice animal husbandry under seasonal migration. Large herds of cattle are grazed in forest lands all the year round (high hills during summer and low-lying pastures - mostly degraded forest lands - during the winter); hence their main dependence on forests is for fodder. The corridors of movement of these nomadic groups from higher to lower reaches have been clearly defined by the HPFD. However, due to an absence of boundary fencing of forest areas, these nomadic groups are thought by some to cause large-scale damage. The areas most vulnerable to this damage are the fresh plantations, which are established by the HPFD.

  Fuelwood requirements of semi-nomadic tribals, who mostly camp within the forest, are met entirely from forest lands, and consumption and usage is normally higher due to traditionally wasteful usage practices. Their involvement in NTFP collection for commercial purposes is relatively low compared to the economically deprived SC and ST households. However, they possess a vast knowledge of the resource endowment of the forests. Timber requirement is again relatively low compared to settled populations, though the entire need is fulfilled from the forests.

  Other members of this group have acquired land under *'Nautor'*[7] but, deprived of irrigation facilities, their lands are at best cropped only once per year. Lack of education and employment opportunities has contributed to extreme poverty and deprivation.

- **Economically privileged groups** may have some dependence on forests for fodder, fuelwood and timber. This group practises settled agriculture, horticulture, trade and commerce; and some are landowners. It comprises *Rajputs, Brahmins* and other economically advantaged groups owning more than 10 *bighas*[8] of land. These are the socially and economically dominant members of the community, and are influential, being the traditional decision-makers. This group sources fuelwood, fodder and timber requirements from both the forests and from

4 Much of this section is taken from the FSR's stakeholder analysis of village forest users, also referred to in this document as the 'local forest values study' (Annex Study No 1), and from the FSR focus group on village level institutions (Annex Study No. 5).

5 The form of Timber Distribution rights provided for in HP is unique, going beyond similar provisions in other states. Trees are granted to right-holders for periodic extraction for domestic purposes according to the Forest Settlement of 1886 valuable timber; about 95 per cent of the population has TD rights.

6 The local forest values survey found no evidence of these groups dealing in illicit timber.

7 Grant of Government land for agricultural purposes

8 12 bighas = 1 hectare

their private agricultural lands. Higher incomes bring alternative (i.e. non-forest) technologies such as LPG for cooking, and slates or asbestos for construction of houses, etc., within the reach of this group.

On the other hand, owing to their economic and political influence in management and control over resources, a significant proportion of forest resource exploitation and depletion is largely carried out by members of this group. The local forest values survey found this group's moral and ethical attachment to the forests to be low, primarily because of reduced interactions and dependency on forests. Some households among these economically powerful strata are actively involved in illicit felling and sale of timber and in forest land encroachment. They more generally acquire NTFP collection permits, while other sections do the collection and gathering of produce. Many of them work individually, rather than in organised groups.

?? Across all social groups, particular mention should be made of *gender issues* in forest use. Women belonging to all caste groups are intrinsically dependent on forests. They are the most important primary subsistence users of forest resources, since they are solely involved in actual collection of fuelwood, grazing, and collection of fodder on a day-to-day basis. In some areas women are also actively involved in the collection of NTFPs. Their potential importance to the management of forest resources is pronounced, as they maintain regular interactions with the forests. But they currently have little influence.

Analysis of the primary stakeholders reveals that they have both positive and negative impacts on the sustainability of forests. For example positive impacts include community awareness of encroachment and restriction of NTFP collection as a livelihood activity to a few economically vulnerable groups; negative impacts include creation of forest fires to improve fodder quality and malpractices in exercising TD rights.

Overall, the local forest values survey found that the association between primary stakeholders and forests has been mostly one-way – the enjoyment of rights and benefits. Concerned HPFD staff and other stakeholders now feel there is a greater need for local management rights in order to tackle evident local management problems leading to depleted tree cover.

Further linkages between forests and livelihoods in HP are summarised in Box 2.1. Clearly, the conditions that lead to both sustainable livelihoods for individuals, and SFM for wider economic and public benefits (the top-left quadrant) should be sought through improved policy and institutional action in HP.

BOX 2.1: EXAMPLES OF LINKAGES BETWEEN FORESTS AND LIVELIHOODS IN HIMACHAL PRADESH

+	***LIVELIHOODS***		-
FORESTS	***GOOD FORESTS - GOOD LIVELIHOODS*** ✍ Very well stocked and well managed forests ✍ Rights consistent with capacity of forests ✍ Improved livestock and stall feeding ✍ Improved agriculture practices, irrigation facilities ✍ Appropriate community institutions in position *Forces leading to current state* ✍ Environmental consciousn ess. Cultural and religious attachments ✍ Overall prosperity, good income due to agriculture and horticultural income ✍ Dependency on forests normal – enough for incentives to conserve forests, but not too high to cause uncontrolled forest use ✍ Inaccessibility of forests *Conditions required to improve* ✍ Facilitation and expertise from HPFD ✍ Improve forest management skills, and technical advice/extension ✍ Income increase or credit to allow improved investment	***GOOD FORESTS – POOR LIVELIHOODS*** ✍ Forests well stocked but local access denied or difficult ✍ Marginal agriculture and horticulture – mainly rainfed ✍ Climatic vagaries ✍ Inadequate employment opportunities ✍ Non-existent vocational trades ✍ Poor livestock management *Forces leading to current state* ✍ Ineffective village institutions and infrastructure ✍ Inadequate educational facilities ✍ Low productivity of agricultural fields *Conditions required to improve* ✍ Improved employment opportunities ✍ Community involvement in local institutions for employment generation works ✍ Extension services for agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry and forestry ✍ Improved irrigation facilities ✍ Community involvement in NTFPs collection and marketing	**FORESTS**
	POOR FORESTS – GOOD LIVELIHOODS ✍ Forests excessively burdened with TD rights ✍ Overgrazing – local and migratory herds ✍ Incipient encroachments ✍ Poor edaphic/site conditions to sustain good forests ✍ Soil erosion and degradation *Forces leading to current state* ✍ Comparatively well-off village communities ✍ Dependency on forest below nomal, due to alternative sources of livelihood ✍ Community participation lacking *Conditions required to improve* ✍ Institutionalise Village Forest Development Committee (VFDCs) ✍ Regulate TD rights ✍ Encourage stall feeding and improved livestock	***DEGRADED FORESTS – POOR LIVELIHOODS*** ✍ Impoverished and degraded forests ✍ Soil erosion and degradation, land slips ✍ Marginal rainfed agriculture, poor productivity ✍ Scrub cattle – open grazing and migratory graziers ✍ Very high population density ✍ Frequent fires ✍ Large scale encroachment and illicit felling with commercial motives ✍ Misuse of TD rights with commercial motives ✍ Excessive lopping *Forces leading to current state* ✍ Unregulated removals from forests, fuelwood, timber etc ✍ Very high incidence of open and unregulated grazing including migratory graziers ✍ Low education standards and poor employment opportunities *Conditions required to improve* ✍ Reduce demands on forests with alternative construction and energy saving innovations ✍ Package of good agriculture, horticulture with extension services ✍ Undertake rural development activities ✍ Enable community institutions to play a key role in the transition from impoverishment to prosperity ✍ Upgrade technological interventions in forest management	

These different groups' interactions with forests, and particularly their roles in forest management, are influenced by community institutions. In HP, there is currently a steady proliferation of institutions at the village level which are involved in the management of community resources (other than the traditional Gram *Panchayat*) – though not all are involved in forestry. Those community institutions with some role in the management of adjacent forests include the following:

?? **Forest-specific village-level institutions created under recent projects***:* The externally-supported projects and *Sanjhi Van Yojna* (SVY - a state-wide programme of participatory/ joint forest management, launched by the HPFD in 1998) encourage the direct involvement of the community in protection, conservation and maintenance of forests. Institutions set up under these projects include:

- ✍✍**Village Forest Development Committees (VFDCs**) developed under DFID HP Forestry Project;
- ✍✍**Village Development Committees (VDCs)** under the Indo-German Changar Project (IGCP) and the Integrated Watershed Development Project (IWDP);
- ✍✍**Village Eco-Development Committees (VEDCs**) under the Great Himalayan National Park;
- ✍✍**Village Forest Development Societies (VFDSs)** or *Sanjhi Van Samiti* (SVS) formed under *Sanjhi Van Yojna.*

Of these institutions, VFDSs are registered under the Societies Registration Act (1860); while VFDCs, VDCs and VEDCs are registered by the District Forest Officer. Except for IWDP, where a watershed is the unit for a VDC, a cluster of villages is generally the unit. VFDCs, VFDSs, VEDCs and VDCs all have a general 'house' membership and an executive.

All these village level institutions came into existence on an *ad hoc* basis with the projects, and were formed according to the different mandates and activities within each project. In the case of the VFDCs, although care was taken to ensure they represent all strata of the society, their formulation and functioning show limited flexibility and initiative to act on their own. The composition of VFDSs, meanwhile, has usually had an age or gender bias - which could not make them truly representative of the different social groups - and resource distribution or benefit-sharing does not seem to have been a priority for these groups. As the structural organisation of the various community institutions was primarily project-driven, there seems to be little uniformity across the state, and there is a lack of strategic thinking within the HPFD on their roles and relationships. However, all village forest institutions are somehow involved in forest protection, control of forest fires and grazing, TD rights, nursery plantations, etc.

Initially the Forest Guard was made the Member Secretary of these forest village-level institutions. This was to ensure effective management of funds, record-keeping and to equip community members to take over responsibilities. Through the experience of Phase-I of IGCP, however, most Member Secretaries of new VDCs are now from the communities themselves.

?? **Forest co-operatives**: these were first formed in 1941, and received grant-in-aid until 1971. They are registered under the Co-operatives Societies Act. It appears that whilst some cooperatives continue to look after plantations, they have no clear direction for the future. Interviews with co-operative members indicated little interest in forming linkages with other village forest institutions.

?? **Informal Jungle or Protection Committees**: these have, on occasion, emerged to respond to a specific crisis or sudden change in forest management which affects their livelihoods e.g., extreme degradation of nearby forests, lack or absence of response from HPFD in resolving conflicts or responding to community needs. These groups have often

not been formalised or acknowledged by HPFD, and remain passive except at times of crisis. However they have been effective in protecting and naturally regenerating forests, and are sometimes supported and encouraged only by front-line staff.

?? **The *Gram Panchayat* (GP)** has played a rather indecisive role in forest development and management. Although an organised and legally acceptable body, its functions and priorities are essentially for local self-governance. GPs actively participate in certifying TD applications of individual households, but their participation and 'ownership' in other Forest Departme nt initiatives is low. The GP members are elected and do not necessarily represent the marginalised populations. Thus, equality considerations cannot be expected from the institution. The local forest values survey found that most of the women members were generally from affluent families, with less exposure to the realities or survival in economically handicapped situations. Moreover, the GPs were elected for a limited period – as against the long-term nature of forestry activities. Besides being politically motivated, a single *Panchayat* for multiple villages reduces the reach and influence of the institutions in forest management.

?? **Non-forest local institutions***:* in addition to the forest-specific village institutions and *Gram Panchayats*, there are many other types of institutions, such as *Mahila Mandals*, Youth groups, *Devta* Committees, Village Education Committees, Self-Help Groups, Farmers' Clubs, Parent Teacher Associations, Mother Teacher Associations, Village Committees, and *Panchayati Raj Institutions* (PRIs). Many of these play forest roles. The FSR local institutions survey found that there were as many as 65 different village level institutions in the ten sample villages surveyed (an average of six institutions in every village, and up to twelve in some cases). An average villager is simultaneously a member of at least four or five executive committees, besides being a member of the general house of *all* institutions existing in the villages. The presence of so many institutions is adding to multiplicity and duplication of efforts, besides creating an environment of uncertainty at the grassroots. Those with some interest and involvement in forest issues include:

✍✍***Mahila Mandals***: In response to the steadily depleting fuelwood and fodder availability in some of the peripheral forest areas, and the long distances traversed to collect the same, women – already constituted into *Mahila Mandals* – have taken up the challenge to protect depleted or degraded woodlots in some communities*. Mahila Mandals*, registered under the 1860 Societies Registration Act, were in fact the first user groups to become organised, and to act on forest management issues affecting them. They have a critical role in managing forests and have been highly successful due to the mass mobilisation of the village women. They are involved in plantation establishment, protection of plantations and incorporation of fire protection measures. However, the groups are presently not well constituted and also lack effective leadership. Their activities are limited to protecting their own stakes – although they show much potential to be involved strategically in forestry and rural livelihood issues.

✍✍***Devta/ Mandir* committees***:* these committees are owners of forests in many villages and can wield much clout among the community. At present, many of the members are also formally part of the executive of forest village institutions and play important roles in decision making. There lies tremendous scope in effectively using them for extension work and protection of forests*. Devta/ mandir* committees have been registered under the 1860 Societies Registration Act since 1997.

✍✍**Village committees** exist throughout the state and were found to be present in all the villages visited during the local institutions survey. Usually unregistered, villagers are now starting to get these broad-scope institutions registered. Prior to the formation of forest-specific institutions, these committees used to address forest-related issues within their own villages informally (e.g. con trolling grazing and fire protection).

2.2.2 The secondary stakeholders

These are groups and individuals who are not necessarily dependent directly on forests for their livelihoods, but who may have officially designated functions. Secondary stakeholders include the following:

- **The Government of HP** sets policy and strategic direction for the forest sector, in line with state-wide priorities and national obligations. For example the current 'Vision 2020' exercise, being coordinated by the Government of HP, incorporates the HP Forest Department's 'Vision' and will contribute to the overall national 'Vision'.

- **HP Forest Department and State Forest Corporation (HPFD and HPSFC***)*: the HPFD has a role as forest protector and manager, and latterly, as an agent in the spread of participatory forest management. Within the HPFD, facing pressures from the Government of HP and donors alike, there is a growing appreciation of the need for changes in its role, and for better coordination with other sectors – and this has increased significantly throughout the FSR process itself. HPSFC has direct control over the trade of timber, fuelwood, charcoal, resin and finished goods from both government and private forests. At middle and higher levels, officers are interchangeable between the HPFD and HPSFC and transfers are frequently made.

- **The private sector** is not currently regarded as a major player in that part of HP's forest sector which is based on timber extraction from natural forests, partly given the green felling ban, and partly given that the timber extraction trade is nationalised. There are several thousand small sawmills in HP but these operate independently and are not part of an association. However, farm forestry may be on the increase and could form an increasingly important source of HP's wood requirements in future.

- **NGOs** with roles in the forest sector are relatively few in number in HP. This may be because welfare provision is relatively good, and because there is a strong government presence (often through HPFD staff) even in remote areas. NGOs' relationship with HPFD and donors is not close but also not adversarial. Again, the FSR process may have improved mutual understanding and relations.

- **Politicians** are responsive to public and media pressure, which is growing in relation to forest issues. Since the evolution of *Panchayati Raj*, there is greater potential for political influence at the village level.

- **Many other sectoral departments** have interests in the forest sector: for example the Animal Husbandry Department, the Planning Department, the Tourism Department, the Public Works Department and the Pollution Control Board. Interactions between these departments and the HPFD are limited, and in many cases concern applications to use forest land (currently conversion to non-forest use is restricted by the 1980 Forest Conservation Act) or concern matters for which sectoral responsibility is overlapping or unclear (e.g. grazing).

- **The forest *'mafia'*** – people who are involved in the illegal felling and sale of timber and some valuable NTFPs from state lands - tend to work only for large profits. These are *not* legitimate stakeholders in the sense that others do not recognise them as having rights to forest benefits, or as having any responsibility for managing fore sts.

2.2.3 The tertiary stakeholders

These include the following:

- **Government of India:** in terms of overall policy guidance and budgetary allocation to HP's forest sector, the national legal framework, and other means to encourage the production of forest benefits for the nation as a whole
- **General population** downstream from HP's watersheds, including residents of Delhi as users of HP's environmental services (water supply, hydro-electric power)
- **National and international tourists** who visit HP's national parks and sanctuaries, which largely fall in forest areas
- **The international community** through India's and thus HP's obligations to international environmental conventions, notably on biodiversity, protection of threatened species from trade, and minimising climate change by forest protection and planting.

3 ANALYSING THE SECTOR: THE KEY ISSUES

The FSR analyses and discussions raise three groups of related issues:

1. Participation in forest management for livelihood needs
2. Increasing the goods and services available through improving forest management
3. Governance, laws and policy coherence to achieve the above

These issues need to be resolved if we are to move to a sustainable forest sector which meets the needs of stakeholders. For each issue below, we attempt to assess the situation and identify the main needs for change.

3.1 PARTICIPATORY FOREST MANAGEMENT FOR LIVELIHOOD NEEDS

3.1.1 Meeting livelihood needs and poverty alleviation

Box 2.1 showed the basic relations between forest quality and livelihoods. These are complex and there is no substitute for specific local-level information and analysis. Whilst there is a generally positive relationship between good livelihoods and good forest quality, there are some tensions which need resolution, notably the short-term flexibility needed by people to change livelihood strategies in response to external changes, versus the long-term nature of SFM.

The FSR stakeholder analysis (section 2.2) has shown that most rural people in HP use significant quantities of forest goods and services, for some of which there is no available substitute, although few people are totally dependent on forest products. None-the-less, it is already clear that some local stakeholders are highly dependent upon forest products for much of their livelihood, currently at a subsistence level, but also (in some places) potentially for building forest-based enterprises in production of forest goods, tourism, etc. Furthermore, a shortage of forest environmental services – which provide critical support to hill farming systems as well as to domestic water supply – entrenches poverty for many. The introduction of JFM is an example of real leadership in recent years by the HPFD, with supportive donors and NGOs. It already presents potentials for people to earn good income from forest products - provided the institutional and market signals are positive. Until recently, JFM in HP was confined to donor-supported pilot activities (DFID, GTZ, World Bank), but the Government of HP has, since 1998, introduced its own JFM programme, Sanjhi Van Yojna. .

The draft participatory forest management (PFM) rules, the greater authority for forestry in PRIs[9], the spread of nearly 360 VFDSs under SVY and more than 150 specially-constituted VFDCs through the DFID project in Kullu and Mandi Circles are all indications of rapid spread, but JFM is still in the early stages and it is too early to determine the extent of benefits. However, the challenge is how to build a livelihood-first approach onto what has been an essentially forest-first institutional structure and operating procedures. This entails developing an enabling framework for broad-scale participatory forest management on top of an existing regulatory framework which did not anticipate participation. At present there is no legislative backing for JFM. There is a need for legal frameworks that provide meaningful and secure rights to benefit from and manage local forests, and that are flexible enough to allow real local choices that reflect local needs and aspirations. Further, the development of legislation that at least sets out the fundamental elements of participatory forestry would guard against JFM's vulnerability to shifting political agendas and inter-sectoral disputes.

More routine information collection is needed on the links between access to forest resources and poverty – so that we can establish a baseline against which to measure forestry improvements. Thus one of the problems is that we do not even know what supply and

[9] Following the 73rd amendment to the Constitution, the Government of HP enacted the HP Panchayati Raj Act, 1994, and in January 2000 issued a notification regarding forest committees within PRIs.

demand levels are. Sometimes demand for forest products is so great that it leads to forest degradation, and we need to reduce pressure on those forests. But, in other cases, the problem is because forest management systems are not adequately geared up for multiple uses, or because of a lack of rights and opportunities.

Finally, under some conditions it is still desirable to keep people out of forests e.g. for forest restoration in protected areas and for intensive timber production forest. We need to ensure that this does not take place in areas where it would cause livelihood problems - or, if this is unavoidable, develop compensation mechanisms. Key questions to be addressed over the next year therefore include:

- How can participatory forest management move towards being a programme designed to empower local people to make real choices and to enhance sustainable livelihoods in accordance with their own priorities?

- How can HPFD modify the available forest management and silvicultural systems from primarily timber focused forestry to multiple use forestry?

- Which HPFD staff incentives and procedures support a livelihoods-based approach, and what needs to change?

3.1.2 Village forest institutions

Although most village forest institutions are of comparatively recent origin, almost all those interviewed felt that they have brought about greater focus on forest issues – plantations on degraded forest land, fire protection, soil conservation and silvi-pasture activities have been given a boost, whilst illicit felling and smuggling had decreased – and that overall awareness of the need for protection and conservation of forests had increased. In addition it was felt that the work gets done faster through village forest institutions, avoiding the long procedural delays associated with the panchayat system. The formation of these institutions has involved processes of coalescence of people around tangible issues and, most importantly, participation in the work being done. However, some sections of communities still felt that since the land belonged to the HPFD and the major benefits (of commercial timber, resins, etc.) were the property of the State Forest Corporation, forestry remained the HPFD's prerogative.

There remain some challenges within the village forest institutions, which are yet to mature, develop effective leadership and become independent entities; for example they tend to be strongly influenced by traditionally powerful groups such as large and medium farmers as well as land and timber mafias operating for hotel and tourism industries. By virtue of their greater access and ownership of land, these groups are also the decision-makers with considerable influence among political leaders and any decision regarding development work in the villages necessarily needs their approval; they tend to have a prime stake in any external initiative. The rich and powerful are able to manipulate TD rights and freely access valuable timber, which is either wastefully used for construction or illegally siphoned off for sale to the booming tourist industry or private wood depots. The village institutions are neither sufficiently empowered, nor institutionally supported to counter large mafia operations, and malpractices remain unchecked.

Reservations, enabling individuals from under-privileged sections of the community to be committee members, have not led to empowerment, and the traditionally dominant sections of the society refuse to acknowledge any power vested with such individuals, for example, local organisations readily agreeing to plantation or forest protection closures at the cost of poorer groups who rely solely on open grazing or NTFP collection – which often makes them rule breakers later on, thus further isolating them from collective management initiatives. New settlers – also among the poorest – have no traditional rights and are thus deprived of benefits, compelling them to use the forest illegally. Village institutions have no role in curbing this. Many village forest institutions have emerged in low threat areas, i.e. forests with lower silvicultural

values, although in high threat areas, where powerful groups are more evident, a few village institutions have emerged to counter threats to their forest-based livelihoods.

Thus in spite of considerable recent progress in involving community organisations in forest management, there is still much to be sorted out regarding community/ local-level governance to achieve equitable and sustainable benefits from forests. In addition to the above, there are challenges within the community/ local-level organisations themselves, with relations between them, and with their relations with the HPFD:

- The proliferation of community organisations concerned with forestry was not reviewed in a comparative manner until the work of the FSR. Their respective roles, aims and objectives are not always clear or coordinated, neither are their relations with each other and with other rural development bodies. More indigenous organisations, such as *mahila mandals*, may be more effective than some of the 'designed' or externally imposed organisations. Furthermore, there is confusion over the multiplicity of names of all these institutions, and the financial and other benefits that accrue to them through different donor-supported projects.

- The sustainability of project-sponsored village forest institutions is under question. The survey indicated that whilst the institutions created under a new programme or project might initially be successful, their mandate, direction and perceived importance were unclear by the end of the programme. This emphasises the importance of local people's 'ownership' of the institution in its acceptance and sustainability. Project interventions have created new institutions rather than building on indigenous ones. Yet the FSR local institutions survey found that, although they are not registered in the majority of places, *Devta* committees, *mahila mandals* and village committees are the most sustainable, primarily because they emerged as a result of the felt needs of people, they were initiated and managed by themselves, and they are not dependent on external funding.

- *Panchayat* officers may not yet have an adequate understanding of forestry, nor the requisite transparency and means to dissociate themselves from vested interests. Furthermore, the elected representatives at the *Gram Panchayat* level tend to be constrained both by their own poverty and by the relative power of opinion leaders and hence have little influence in decision making. The *Gram Panchayat* has multiple functions and, in attempting to meet development programmes' targets, *Panchayat* officials tend to overlook social considerations, such that beneficiaries often do not include the under-privileged sections. Moreover, the administrative boundaries of some *Gram Panchayats* may not necessarily correlate to the "social boundaries" of the community or communities most interested in the use and management of a particular forest area. In some cases, the groups interested in access to a particular forest may comprise only one of several villages or hamlets within a *Panchayat* area; whereas in other cases, forests may be used by groups whose membership straddles the boundaries of adjoining *Panchayats.*

- Bureaucratic procedures with the HPFD are time-consuming – and there is still a clear need to efficiently delegate regulatory functions to village institutions. Furthermore, in places where the HPFD (Forest Guard) effectively leads forest management, with villagers responsible only for protection, the local incentives for participatory forest management are too weak . With the recent push for decentralisation to a three-tier *Panchayat* system (see 3.1.3), HPFD staff may not yet be used to undertaking the role of professional advisor (rather than wielding financial and regulatory power as at present).

- In general, primary stakeholders lack an institutional and legal framework to enable equitable participation in the processes of decision making concerning forest resources, both at village and state levels

The various trends towards decentralisation which need to be assessed in relation to specific functions e.g. planning, managing forests, produce benefit-sharing, conflict resolution.

Indigenous institutions may experience better local 'fit' and ownership. Forest user groups (as opposed to the whole community) might be the best unit of organisation in some places. *Gram Panchayats* might be better placed as coordinators of support and funding. NGOs might find roles as independent identifiers of stakeholders, trainers, and resolvers of conflict. PRIs will need to develop a better understanding of forestry and the roles of these other groups. Gradually, their relative roles should be clarified, coordinated and communicated. Key issues to be resolved are:

- How can indigenous village institutions take on more formal forestry roles, and what legal and institutional support is required?

- How may equity and sustainability best be ensured within village forest institutions?

- How can village forest institutions be empowered to counter illegal operations?

3.1.3 Relations between Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and village forest institutions

The appropriate relationship between village forest institutions and local government in the form of *Panchayati Raj* Institutions (PRIs) has been a subject of debate since the start of JFM. PRIs emerge as a potential common point of intervention, due to their presence throughout HP[10] and their constitutional nature, where the possibility of convergence of all local village level institutions including forest ones is strongest. However, to make this linkage happen, in a meaningful, effective and workable way, some very basic issues have to be addressed by the *Panchayati Raj* Department.

Opinions vary as to the extent to which the link between village forest institutions and PRIs should be formalised. The local institutions survey found that villagers regard PRIs as important institutions, but they were less forthcoming about the role of *panchayats* in supporting people's forest-related activities and overall development; in many cases the purpose of the *panchayat* was perceived to be for construction. In general, almost all felt that getting work done through the *panchayat* was quite a tedious process. The inadequate focus on development issues, procedural delays, busy schedule of *pradhans,* big size of *panchayats* and corresponding huge *gram sabhas* contributed towards making the *panchayats* less effective and confidence inspiring. Whilst in certain villages people thought the *panchayat* capable of taking over all village development responsibilities, in others the local village committee was considered more important as it was a stable institution, work was often achieved more quickly and representation was more equitable than the *panchayat.*

In January 2000, with a view to strengthening the role of PRIs in the management of local resources and promotion of participatory forest management, the HP Forest Department notified the constitution of *panchayat*, block and district level forest committees. The notification states the composition and functions of the forest committees at the different levels; they are to be in congruence with the three-tier standing committees – *Panchayat, Panchayat Samiti* and *Zila Parishad.*[11]

The draft Himachal Pradesh Participatory Forest Management Rules ('PFM Rules') (1999) and the notification of January 2000 have clearly reflected the futuristic vision of HPFD to integrate its institutions with PRIs. They include descriptions of the powers, responsibilities and duties of the VFDS, as well as the benefits due to them; and state that the role of the HPFD is to 'essentially provide a supportive role to facilitate the process of Joint Forest Planning and Management through VFDS' (through provision of technical guidance, training, and funds). As a first step towards providing organic linkages between the two, this may help the HPFD in defining active and meaningful participation in PRIs in forest-related activities, which at present

[10] There are 2922 Gram Panchayats, 72 Panchayat Samitis and 12 Zila Parishads in Himachal Pradesh.
[11] By mid-year 2000, none of the PRI forest committees had been established.

is almost non-existent. Whilst the draft PFM Rules currently apply only to VFDSs, it is envisaged (by the HPFD) that all committees created under projects like VFDC, VEDC and VDCs will ultimately get converted to VFDSs, such that the draft PFM rules, when notified, will also apply to these committees. However, care needs to be taken to ensure that the Rules provide sufficient flexibility for Government and communities to arrive at a locally acceptable balance of rights and responsibilities.

Since the evolution of '*Panchayati Raj'* there has been a certain degree of conflict of interest between secondary stakeholders – in the form of government officials (such as HPFD staff) - and the primary stakeholders. The *Panchayat* now has the power to scrutinise and if necessary, modify, all technical plans presented by district and block officials. Implementation funds now go directly to the *Panchayati Raj* system and technocrats remain 'technical consultants'. Transferring forest management responsibility to the local *panchayat* is currently regarded with apprehension by secondary stakeholders – yet some kind of devolution is necessary to empower primary stakeholders.

- How can appropriate links between village forest institutions and PRIs be formed, without putting undue constraints on village institutions?

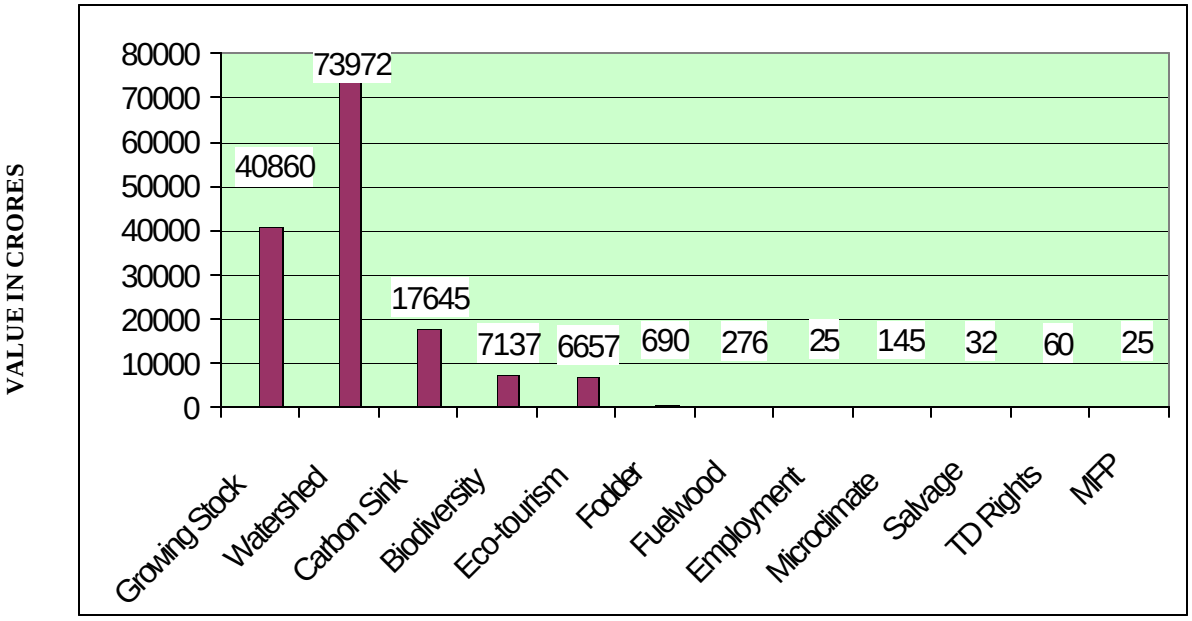
- What are the appropriate legal provisions for ensuring that the institutional mandates – and respective rights and responsibilities – of village forest institutions and PRIs are clear?

- How can implementation of the PFM Rules be monitored over time to ensure that they provide for an appropriate balance of rights and responsibilities?

3.2 INCREASING THE QUANTITY AND QUALITY OF FOREST BENEFITS

We have noted before that there is no routine system to keep track of the many values of HP's forests. The FSR commissioned a study by the Indian Institute of Forest Management to provide a first estimate of these values. Using methodologies that are accepted in India and internationally, and information obtained through the FSR on HP forests and their use, the various direct and indirect values were computed (Figure 3.1). Leaving aside the possible variance due to methodological and informational inconsistencies, the study points to the huge values of HP forests' watershed functions, timber growing stock, carbon storage, biodiversity and eco-tourism services.

Figure 3.1: The comparative economic values of forest goods and services in Himachal Pradesh (Rs crores)



Once these huge values are acknowledged, the issue then is: how to realise these values on an annual basis - through investment, management, marketing and distributing benefits.

Investment*:* Figures available for government investment are not very promising: the annual forestry budget (which covers operational costs as well as investment) amounts to less than 0.1 per cent of the total economic value of forests (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1: Forest Resource contribution vs. Investment	
Value of growing stock	Rs. 40,860 Crore
Total economic value of forests (minus growing stock)	Rs. 106,664 Crore
Total expenditure incurred in forest (annual budget)	Rs. 109 Crore
Revenue realised by Government from forests	Rs. 41 Crore

Management*:* Government foresters have many of the skills required for managing forests for multiple benefits, but at present lack the incentives and partnerships to do so. Some of these challenges are discussed in more detail at 3.2.7.

Marketing: Many of the environmental values are just not marketed at all, e.g. the case for states outside HP paying for watershed management, and mechanisms for the international community to pay for carbon and biodiversity values are barely being exploited. Beginnings have been made at marketing ecotourism, but more would be achieved through public-private partnerships and targeting high-revenue international and domestic tourist groups.

Distributing benefits*:* Distribution is largely an issue of governance, and is addressed at 3.3. Here, it is worth identifying the basic distribution of costs and benefits across broad stakeholder groups that is associated with each forest value (Table 3.2)

Table 3.2: Multiple Forest Values across multiple forest stakeholders - distribution of costs and benefits

Key: C = Cost, T = Threat, B = Benefits, X = Absence, ✍= Presence, - = Not used

	Total Economic Value											Policy influence*	Budget allocation
Multiple values	Direct Consumptive Benefits					Direct consumptive benefit	Indirect Benefits		Carbon sink	Biodiversity/ endangered spp	Employment generation		
Multiple stakeholders	Salvage (C) (B)	TDR (C) (B)	Fuelwood (C) (B)	Fodder (C) (B)	NTFPs (C) (B)	Eco-tourism (C) (B)	Watershed (C) (B)	Micro-climate (C) (B)	(C) (B)	(C) (B)	(C) (B)		
A. Primary s/holdrs													
(i) Economically vulnerable groups	x ✍	x ✍	x ✍	X ✍	x ✍	-	-	x ✍	✍ x	x x	x ✍	x	x
(ii) Disadvantaged and migratory popns	- -	- -	x ✍	X ✍	x ✍	T -	- -	x ✍	- -	T ✍	- -	x	x
(iii) Economically advantaged groups	x,T ✍	x,T ✍	x, ✍	X ✍	x ✍	x,T -	- -	x ✍	✍ x	x ✍	x ✍	x	x
(iv) Community based institutions	- -	✍ ✍	✍ ✍	✍ ✍	✍ ✍	x -	✍ -	x ✍	✍ x	✍ ✍	x ✍	✍	✍
B. Secondary s/hs													
(i) Govt of HP	- -	✍ x	- -	- -	- -	✍ ✍	✍ x	✍ x	✍ x	✍ ✍	✍ ✍	✍	✍
(ii) HPFD and HPSFC	✍ ✍	✍ ✍	✍ x	✍ x	✍ ✍	✍ ✍	✍ x	✍ x	✍ x	✍ x	✍ ✍	✍	✍
(iii) Private sector	- -	- -	- -	- -	x ✍	x ✍	- -	x ✍	- -	x ✍	- -	-	-
(iv) NGOs	- -	x ✍	- -	- -	x ✍	x ✍	- -	x ✍	✍ x	✍ ✍	- -	✍	-
(v) Politicians	- -	x ✍	- ✍	- ✍	- ✍	- ✍	- -	- -	- -	- ✍	- ✍	✍	
(vi) Sectoral departments	x x	x x	x ✍	X ✍	x ✍	x ✍	x ✍	x ✍	x,T ✍	x ✍	x ✍	✍	
(vii) Forest Mafia	x ✍	x,T ✍	- -	- -	x,T ✍	x,T x	x,T -	x ✍	x,T x	x,T ✍	- -	-	
C. Tertiary s/holdrs													
(i) GOI	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	✍ -	✍ -	- -	✍ -	✍ ✍	✍ -	✍	✍
(ii) Downstream popn	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	✍ ✍	- ✍	- -	x ✍	✍ ✍	- -	-	-
(iii) National and international tourists	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	✍ ✍	- -	✍ ✍	- ✍	✍ ✍	- -	-	-
(iv) International community, donor agencies/ convention	- -	- -	- -	- -	✍ ✍	✍ -	✍ -	- -	✍ ✍	✍ ✍	- -	-	✍

* e.g. ban on green felling

In the rest of this section, we examine the issues concerning each of these forest values in turn.

3.2.1 Biodiversity

Himachal Pradesh is one of the most important states in India for biodiversity: there are still virgin primary forests left; the Western Himalayan region is one of the world's priority conservation areas according to IUCN; and some of HP's species are of global importance, notably pheasants. But there are big gaps in protected area coverage: although the 32 wildlife sanctuaries, two national parks and the single biosphere reserve cover 12 per cent of HP's land (more than the national guideline), most protected areas are small and unrepresentative of all of HP's biodiversity (being concentrated in more remote and higher elevations, they cover fewer of the habitats and species typical of lower elevations). Furthermore, wildlife sanctuaries were established on the basis of individual species only, rather than taxonomic factors, habitats or ecosystems. And less than a third of the protected areas have management plans.

Moreover, there are also big gaps in information both on the kind of biodiversity that is valued at global level (rare species, endemism and other elements of 'bioquality'[12]) and on local people's knowledge of, and links with, biodiversity. There are also gaps in management and planning know-how in the HPFD, which so far has concentrated on a passive approach to protected areas, despite the fact that 67 per cent of the geographical area which it manages includes important habitats such as grasslands, alpine pastures and wetlands. There is a need to sort out the right mix of:

a. biodiversity conservation in those limited areas which can be protected from other land uses, with
b. biodiversity improvement and management in production forests (many of which are currently degraded from a biodiversity point of view as a result of timber exploiting practices), e.g. ecological landscape planning of reserves and management practices for individual stands, and
c. biodiversity management in village livelihood system forests and agroforestry (with an emphasis on conserving local biodiversity values, many of which will be of direct use e.g. for medicines).[13]

Finally, incentives for biodiversity conservation and management appear to be lacking. Key questions to be addressed include:

- How to assess and monitor biodiversity status in a cost-effective manner, e.g. linking it with broader forest assessment/ inventory?

- How to rationalise a system of protected areas, and encourage complementary biodiversity management in production forests, so that HP's biodiversity is conserved through a mix of strategies?

- How to access national and global funds to pay for HP's biodiversity conservation services?

- How to produce local incentives (for business and communities) to conserve biodiversity, e.g. NTFP harvesting and marketing, and with what checks and balances?

- How to create and manage protected areas in a manner that ensures respect for the rights, traditions and aspirations of local people?

[12] *'Bioquality'* reflects the attributes or particular characteristics of species which society values, whereas *biodiversity* describes the number (diversity) of species. Thus bioquality implies some weighting of species according to significance or value. For example a patch of forest with one species may have a higher bioquality than a more diverse forest, if that forest is the only site for that one species in the world.

[13] As many as 944 plant species are of livelihood and economic value in Himachal Pradesh.

3.2.2 Water management in the Himalayas

The role of HP's forests as a major production centre for water supplies that extend beyond HP, via numerous rivers of northern India, to serve the cities and agriculture of the Indo-Gangetic plain, is quite widely appreciated in HP. The watershed management capacity of forests is very much dependent on the other forest uses, and in some places is being severely reduced by overcutting and soil erosion. In spite of this critical role, there is neither specialised watershed management knowledge nor the financial incentive to develop and apply such knowledge to 'watershed-friendly' forest management. We need to know which watersheds are the most critical for water supplies, what vegetation cover is best for water production, where ameliorative work is required, and how water supply can be integrated into forest management and financial payments be made to those providing the service.

A case may need to be made for supporting a one-off knowledge/ capacity development programme, so that HPFD and partners are better equipped to include watershed management and monitoring in their work. Valuation of the water supplies to economic sectors in and out of the state has not yet been made, but has proven valuable in other parts of the world (e.g. Panama Canal forest valuation, Lesotho water export to South Africa).

Key questions to be addressed include:

- What is the best current knowledge on watershed management, particularly with regard to Himalayan environments? What are the threats?
- What is the true economic value of HP's watersheds to industry, agriculture, power generation, and domestic use both in and outside the State
- What sorts of incentive system might be applied to improve water supplies?

3.2.3 Non-timber forest products

With the green felling ban, and recent increased interest in medicinal plants, the NTFP potential of HP's forests has been given increased attention, although there is still inadequate information on their market potentials (domestic and export) and means to realise them. NTFP gathering is available to low-income (landless) groups, and so can have livelihood benefits. There is little information available on the optimum mix of NTFPs with other timber products. However, some community groups know more about local NTFPs and their management than anyone else. The HP *Panchayati Raj* (2nd Amendment) Act 1997 provides a legislative framework for *Panchayats* to own and exercise control of NTFPs in scheduled (tribal) areas. Yet there are strong differences of opinion about who should be able to access NTFPs – essentially this is a debate on the merits of nationalisation versus privatisation:

a. **Privatisation** would be justified for its efficiency gains and developmental benefits.[14] However, checks and balances would have to be in place, since NTFPs at present are often effectively an 'open access' resource with few real controls.
b. **Nationalisation** would be justified if it were the best way of conserving public benefits such as water supplies, or for protection of local NTFP-using businesses, such as resin processors. However, protection policies should be reviewed in relation to SFM and livelihood needs. We have a situation of banned export of NTFPs (for example, resin) which are not in short supply, in order to protect local industry, but also allowing foreign countries and other Indian states to export to HP.

[14] Here and elsewhere in this report, the 'private sector' is taken to include individual farmers and community groups, as well as commercial companies

Key questions to be addressed are thus:

✍✍What are the economic and livelihood potentials of NTFPs?

✍✍Under what conditions should NTFP management be privatised, and to whom?

✍✍Under what conditions should NTFP management be nationalised?

3.2.4 Grazing

Cattle numbers in HP are over the 5 million mark. There are indications that this is three times the average carrying capacity. However, whilst livestock is concentrated in some areas at many times the carrying capacity, in other areas it is not a problem. In addition, the lack of marketing means that many cattle are economically unproductive as well as environmentally damaging (although they play important social/ subsistence roles). Unregulated grazing has led to forest degradation. In contrast, it is also accepted that parts of HP forest are quite legitimately used for grazing, and that this can be a good use of upland forest. However, there is no policy and planning mechanism to integrate the activities of forestry and livestock, and little technical experience of silvipastoral systems. The issue is therefore how to encourage economically productive cattle (with productive off-take) to be zoned in the right kinds of forest. Questions to be addressed include:

✍✍What mix of regulations and incentives would optimise the use of forests' grazing potentials, but avoid overuse?

✍✍What institutions should be responsible?

✍✍How can JFM arrangements include grazing?

3.2.5 Tourism potentials

Himachal Pradesh attracts many tourists, both national and international. The present level of annual tourist inflow is about 4 million (of which only two per cent are international), which is expected to grow at 20 per cent per annum in the coming years. One of the most significant 'unique selling points' of HP tourism is the forest asset. The issue is how to invest in this asset, both so that tourism is compatible with sustainable forest management, and so that tourism revenue can be ploughed back into the HP forest sector in order to pay for conserving the forest landscape resource. Incremental losses of forest assets through poor tourism development, and incremental loss of tourism assets through inappropriate forestry/ clearance, need to be avoided. This will be possible provided HPFD staff understand tourism issues enough to participate in planning, development control and monitoring. Many countries with forest and landscape assets similar to HP (such as Nepal and Sri Lanka) have significant tourism industries, from which we could learn – involving e.g. 'green tourism' plans and codes of practice based on local environmental and social principles, and corporate-community partnerships where local communities participate in tourism enterprise planning and benefits. Key questions to be addressed include:

✍✍How to ensure that tourism and forestry development proceed in a coordinated manner?

✍✍How should the costs and benefits of forest-based tourism be shared between state departments, private enterprises and community groups?

3.2.6 Timber production

Three issues commanded most attention in FSR discussions: the green felling ban; timber distribution (TD) rights; and the role of plantations.

The lack of clarity over whether and when the green felling ban should be lifted is producing a great deal of uncertainty in the forest sector. This ban has not been fully effective: total removals before and after the ban are about the same; choice species are being removed through TD rights; and yet State revenue is down. This suggests that there are many factors of timber production that, in practice, are currently outside the influence of HPSFC or HPFD.

But this does not imply that all aspects of timber production should come under direct government management or control. Indeed, in almost every country in the world, private timber production is considered more efficient than nationalised production where market-based incentives (e.g. certification) or civil society enforcement (often by NGO/ community 'forest watch' organisations) can be assured. However, as yet there is inadequate experience of these market/ civil society approaches in HP, which has always emphasised regulation - eventually building layers of overlapping and increasingly conflicting laws. The nationalisation of timber sales has been justified on the grounds that it eliminates abuses by middlemen; some would argue that this prevents farmers from obtaining the highest possible returns, whilst others argue that private sales would leave farmers victim to poor market information. Government control is, of course, required when private production cannot otherwise guarantee the public benefits from forests – biodiversity, etc. – but even here this control can be 'privatised' to some degree.

The complex area of TD rights has been partially studied several times, but with no clear and conclusive policy resulting. Forest settlement has a long and complex history in Himachal Pradesh: the state is unusual within India for the significant rights that were recognised during various settlement efforts, most particularly in terms of the TD rights. It is generally acknowledged that the rates associated with TD rights are extremely low, and the value of existing rights, and the fact that they are held by individuals rather than communities, has complicated the task of identifying incentives that would encourage people to engage in participatory, community based forestry activities. There seems to be general agreement that the exercise of TD rights needs to be rationalised and modified. For many, this is based on the conviction that the current rate of TD timber extraction is unsustainable, though others may disagree. Some also argue that freezing the allocation of TD rights on the basis of very old settlements creates modern-day injustices. Whilst attempts to address the issue of TD rights continue, the political challenges of implementing changes may outweigh the more evident legal difficulties.

Timber production is not just a matter of better use of natural forests. Globally, it is becoming increasingly concentrated on intensively managed land, and especially plantations. This is leaving other land potentially 'free' for conservation and livelihood needs. It appears that a similar 'tripartite future' for forests may emerge in HP, necessitating that plantations are given more consideration in forest policy – building on assessments of plantations' full costs, including their social and environmental contributions and impacts. The potential roles of small farmers in high-quality timber production are significant, as they would meet both fibre and livelihood needs. This might call for a review of regulations of tree felling and marketing on private land, which is currently a disincentive to planting and productive management.

We therefore need a better idea of:

- How far do current laws, contracts, prices, and other 'signals' sent to formal/ informal timber producers encourage environmental sustainability, social equity, and economic efficiency?

- Where is nationalised production more sustainable, efficient and equitable; and where is privatised production to be preferred?

- How does government intervention in private forestry achieve policy objectives, and how may regulatory instruments be redesigned to support those objectives?

- How can timber production by communities be encouraged and sustained? How can communities be given adequate assurances that forest management decisions they take will not be over-ruled once the forests become commercially valuable?

✍✍How can new settlements of rights be designed such that they go hand in hand with the design or empowerment of community-based forest management arrangements?

3.2.7 Balancing all forest goods and services through integrated protection and management strategies

It is now accepted that most forests should be producing more than just one of the above goods and services (3.2.1 to 3.2.6) especially in forests which are important for multiple local livelihoods. There are four main issues here:

a. How can we keep better track of the values of forest land*?* Here, we need better physical information about the forest, stakeholders and the economics of forest use. But information is expensive, and so we need both to be cost-effective in getting it, and to ensure that it is put to productive use in policy and management processes:

- **Forest information**: Section 2 noted the many values of forests and the dependence of different stakeholders on them. Many staff associations and other stakeholders have called for better monitoring of specific forest resources, the state of forests, and 'forest degradation'. We have suggested different ways of keeping track of biodiversity, timber, water and other values (above).

- **Stakeholder information**: If we are serious about forestry serving livelihoods, the links – positive and negative – between forests and people need to be assessed and monitored, meaning that information on stakeholders needs to be integrated. We need to find the best baseline – through rural development organisations and front-line HPFD staff who have a better idea of complex local relations, as well as the village forest institutions themselves.

- **Economic information**: FSR participants have also suggested that this varied forest information is given a financial asset value, so that a case can be made for budgetary support to maintain the public ('intangible') values of forest, thus ensuring that forests are looked after better. For those forest goods and services with more direct financial values – timber and NTFPs – it is important to keep a track of resource flows into and out of the HP forest sector, in relation to the total stock size. This is ambitious, so a pilot approach to this might be tried. This would build on the rapid assessment done through the FSR economic valuation study.

- **Integrated information**: If we are to meet local livelihood needs and HP state economic needs better, we need to bring these assessments together in some kind of strategic forest information system that will help us to keep production of different benefits in balance. The key lies in communicating the value of forests in both economic terms and the social terms of different stakeholders. That communication can begin by fully accounting for the benefits from forests. Excluding indirect benefits has led, in the past, to a gross underestimate of forestry's contribution to HP.

- **Targets***:* Good information on the current situation can help to generate realistic targets e.g. for developing an area of permanent forest estate. Good information is also needed on how far we have progressed in achieving targets.

b. How to protect forests so that they retain the capacity to produce any goods and services, and who should protect them? Forest protection – in the face of continuing degradation by uncontrolled use - has preoccupied HPFD to date. HPFD has relied on enforcement of regulations by its own staff, but finds this increasingly difficult to resource. There is a growing feeling that village institutions should conduct more self-regulation, but here there is a problem of unclear roles and boundaries, and uneven representation, amongst the multiple village institutions. In essence, the solution is one of redefining roles between state and village bodies. This could come first, perhaps on experimental bases; only then would we need to work on the regulations and penalties that should underpin the proven new system. The economic valuation

study also clearly makes the case for integrating the environmental values of forest within market prices, and government allocations to HPFD where possible: users from other sectors must compensate forest producers for the environmental values received.

c. How to find the optimum production mix for any one forest that is sustainable, equitable and efficient? At present, there are no strong management strategies, zoning guidelines, or codes of practices which would encourage the right mix of uses in individual forests. Village forest microplans are a start, but some stakeholders believe these are too constrained and do not allow a broader look at land use. In practice, it is influential groups who tend to decide the broad patterns of land use

d. How to encourage the diversification of forest activities, given that single uses frequently lead to over-use? Other countries have been experimenting with a variety of policy instruments, for example: development taxes on major uses such as timber, in order to fund tourism development or water supplies, etc; bottom-up integration of community-level micro-plans into a continually-evolving state-wide forest strategy, which thereby influences the intentions and procedures of state forestry in servicing local plan development and delivery.

3.3 GOVERNANCE, LAWS AND POLICY COHERENCE

Issues 3.1 and 3.2 concern ways of dealing better with people and forests. Many of these have governance, legal, and policy implications. Dealing with these implications effectively will require a balance between two types of government interventions – those designed to "control" activities detrimental to forests, and those designed to "enable" more productive and beneficial involvement by all stakeholders. The "control" function has traditionally been the main focus of forestry governance, and it remains an important one. Sustainable forest management requires legal and policy frameworks that reassure all those who invest their time, effort and money that the benefit of their efforts will not be lost due to illegal harvesting, exporting, clearing or other harmful and illicit activities. But of increasing importance is the need to emphasise "enabling" instruments that provide incentives, opportunities and guidance for a wide range of public and private actions.

3.3.1 Land use policy

Many clashes over the role of forests – and over the costs and benefits of both forest removal and afforestation – are due to an absence of land use policy in which the place of forests is clear and secure. Many stakeholders have noted that a land use policy development process is required, within which forest policy would sit. Thirty-nine per cent of the State area remains unsurveyed. Surplus forest areas vested to the Government are not yet transferred to HPFD. Consequently, HPFD 'protects' forests without the guidance of a strategic plan which incorporates the case for forestry on given pieces of land. Occasionally, therefore, HPFD's work may be misplaced. Some deforestation is legitimate. In other words, what appears to foresters to be a negative phenomenon i.e. forest removal, can sometimes be positive in livelihood terms. People need to remove some forest for farming, settlement, or other livelihood assets. Conversely, HPFD often proposes the afforestation of 'bare areas', which is not always good e.g. for biodiversity reasons, or for local communities. Impossible targets such as putting fifty per cent of the State under forest cover reinforce this (as noted in Section 2, less than 30 per cent of HP is forest land which can actually support forests). The designation of inappropriate or unnecessary lands as forests can pose a number of problems: limited government resources are more thinly spread; and the land use options of local people may be limited.

Here, the question is: what land should be under forest; what constitutes a desirable forest on the ground; which bits of 'legal' forest are right for removal; and who should decide all of this? The answers have not been sought, so a 'top-down' judgement or procedure has been imposed when there should be a bottom-up element included. Existing legislation reinforces this.

A land use policy should indicate where any major change of forest use, including clearance, is legitimate. The issue is essentially: how much forest does HP need for specific purposes, taking account of all forest values and stakeholders, where should different forest types be sited, and how to send strong policy signals to this effect? Any forests that remain (or are created) should obviously be wanted by people – whether local villagers, the state, the nation or the world community – who are prepared to pay for them and look after them! This should constitute what in some countries is called the 'permanent forest estate' i.e. land under forest for solid reasons of biophysical potential and stakeholder demands. Other forest areas should be available for conversion, and policies/ laws adjusted to suit.[15]

A land use policy needs to reflect the multiple livelihood strategies of villagers i.e. few are dependent upon one land type alone such as permanent farm land or forest, but they need access to different sorts of land. This suggests the need for a forest classification that reflects livelihood uses, as opposed to just e.g. timber potential; in other words, it might include grazing, trees-on-farms and multiple use forests.

Thus a land use policy would assist in designing appropriate criteria for deciding what land should be maintained within the forest estate, and for what purposes. It should also aim to determine which land should fall under the jurisdiction of different government departments.

A land use policy also needs to ensure the greater coherence of other (extra-sectoral) policies and laws in relation to forests (3.3.2), although it is unlikely to be able to deal with e.g. trade and pricing policies. This means the need for powers to call for information and to control development. And it needs to be dynamic to take account of new information and needs – and to be more proactive than government agencies tend to be in looking at the future. A land use policy cannot be a one-off 'document' – perhaps it should be a 10-20 year strategy with a multi-stakeholder group to keep it under review every five years (3.3.3).

Finally, it does look as though there will be a strong need for demarcation of some important forests on the ground. Such fundamental work is important to the long-term security of the forest and of the livelihood activities and enterprises that would only be based on such forests if boundaries are secure. There is a need for systematic involvement of local people in the establishment of boundaries, so that there is local consensus as to where they are located. Revenue Department and Forest Department record-keeping should be more explicitly linked by law: the lack of clarity regarding legal status of land is exacerbated by the frequent failure to update each Department's records concurrently.

Key questions to be addressed therefore include:

✍✍Where is any change of forest use, and forest clearance, desirable, and where is it not?

✍✍How can the legal status of forests be meaningful and fully communicated to stakeholders?

✍✍What form should a land use policy take, and what process can help to produce it, learning from the FSR?

3.3.2 Non-forest sector policies

Some non-forest policies and markets have significant forestry implications: energy policy in relation to hydroelectric power and fuelwood demand; state/ national import policy in relation to reduction of local demand for forest resources under pressure; export policy in relation to incentives given to forest producers to meet export market demands. The failure of many forest policy reforms throughout the world is that they have only engaged with forestry institutions and policies, and not recognised these 'extra-sectoral' policies which are becoming increasingly

[15] For example the potential implications of the Forest Conservation Act should be assessed.

significant in deciding the fate of forests. Thus narrow forestry reforms are too weak to tackle these major forces; forest policy is not binding on the non-forest sectors.

Now, not only must these extra-sectoral policies be understood by foresters, but also the institutions behind these powerful influences need to understand their own interests in forests and their impacts on forests, so they can become more responsible and avoid long-term problems. Thus 'forest policy' can no longer be a narrow affair of forest authorities alone. It needs cross-sectoral collaboration mechanisms, in addition to the 'vertical' participation which we have stressed in relation to local groups. This is why the FSR has attempted to actively open up to non-forest interests. It has been a little constrained by the fact that there is no policy research capacity which has kept a track of the impacts of all sorts of policies on forests. Perhaps such a capacity needs to be developed for the future (the idea of a policy research cell attached to HPFD – or perhaps to the State Land Use Board - has been suggested). Multi-sector collaboration has also been constrained by the jurisdictional uncertainty over some lands and forests – notably between the HPFD and Revenue Department.

Key questions to be addressed include:

✍✍What are the key areas of overlap between sector policies in relation to forest issues?

✍✍How to keep track of non-forest policies?

✍✍How to influence non-forest policies?

3.3.3 Participatory governance at state level

There are two levels at which it appears that governance needs to become more participatory – the local level, where there has been so much recent progress (3.1.2 -3) and the state 'policy' level where less has been done (and yet where the FSR itself has attempted to show the way forward).

At the state level, we are facing increasing complexity – more forest types, more demands on forests, more stakeholders demonstrating the desire to get involved in forest use – and it is clear that we need more information and debate on what to do about this. There are two issues:

✍✍Participation - who should be involved and how?
✍✍Procedures - what issues should be addressed, and how often?

Other countries' experiences suggest that, whilst participation is essential to policy processes for SFM, in order to reflect stakeholders' information, assets, needs and commitments better, there are common failings which need to be avoided. Principal among these are the stakeholders' different expectations about the nature of participation which, unless aired, may lead to resentment or even reactions against participation. For example, community groups and local government can expect participation to lead directly to empowerment in decision-making; government foresters may see it as a way to reach SFM more efficiently by getting better information and commitment; and other government agencies may treat it as a way of saving resources by passing tasks to local levels. All stakeholders therefore see good reasons for participation, but are worried about the possible outcomes and how it will affect them. For instance, HPFD staff are not yet sure about how to act 'merely' as 'consultants' in forestry.

At present, there are no regular review procedures for HP state forest policy – FSR is a first, and something of its type may need to be applied on a continuing basis. Some sort of regular participatory forest forum, building on the approaches used in the FSR, might be the best way to advise the HPFD as the 'holders' of policy. There is certainly a need to air debate as issues arise, identify conflicts at an early stage, possibly resolve some conflicts, comment on options and government plans, and monitor progress, step-by-step. The FSR process has just been a start to this.

Thus, as we move towards further participation in policy, relevant questions to be addressed include:

- Which stakeholder groups need to be involved in strategic forestry decisions?
- What is the best system of representation of these stakeholder groups?
- What are their expectations about what 'participation in policy' means?
- How can the different groups work well with HPFD in contributing not only to ideas, but also to decisions?
- How often should HP's forest policy be reviewed, what for, and by whom?
- What is the best institutional mechanism for opening up the policy process to more stakeholders – state or local fora, standing conferences, focus groups, links to Panchayat system, etc?
- What kind of legal basis is needed for participation in forest policy and partnerships?

3.3.4 Renegotiating roles

Currently, we are at a stage where many forest stakeholders recognise that new roles and relationships are needed. But the old roles remain fossilised in formal mandates, legislation, procedures and attitudes. And emerging new roles are unclear or untested, or stakeholders are uncommitted to them. Several things appear to be needed.

A shared vision of SFM is necessary before stakeholders can renegotiate roles that are both realistic and acceptable to all. The participatory policy process (3.3.3) is essential for producing such a shared vision. Both have been missing to date in HP: hence groups feel that some of the new roles are 'dictated' by others.

Then there needs to be a process of redefining roles. Roles can be summarised as the 'rights, responsibilities, revenues/ rewards, and relationships' (4Rs). Participatory assessment of groups' own roles is a prerequisite to such negotiation.

There is likely to be a need for a significant institutional change process over the coming years. Indeed, this may be the main outcome of the FSR. In other words, a process of decentralisation of forestry to handle local complexities, which is also centralised enough to ensure greater policy coherence within and outside the state. This is a delicate balance which will take time to evolve, and which will need to be adapted through participatory evaluation and debate. Facilitators such as NGOs can be useful, but with the HPFD guiding and 'convening' the process: it is important for the HPFD to remain fully engaged. Indeed, it is a key role for HP government and donors to support HPFD in its leadership of institutional change in forestry. Section 4 introduces this approach. Key issues include:

- What process can be used for renegotiating roles – a forum, independent facilitators, etc?
- How to ensure that institutional change is not confined to the HPFD, but that this is coordinated with change in other key institutions – notably village forest institutions?

3.3.5 Capacity strengthening

A forestry human resources development strategy is currently being developed for HP, taking account of the evolving FSR, so full details will not be suggested here. Furthermore, there is a general HP public sector reform process under way to improve accountability and work culture. FSR work to date suggests that the main requirements will be in building capacities of:

a. Local/ community forest institutions - to plan, implement, report on, and share the costs and benefits of SFM
b. HPFD and GP bodies - to support the above and to control public benefits; this will require strengthening of skills and procedures in: participation, watershed management, tourism development, and biodiversity conservation
c. All institutions to improve their understanding of gender issues (women are often the primary users of forests, involved in fuelwood and fodder collection, but their particular insights and needs are not yet reflected in forest policy, planning, implementation or staffing).

Experience elsewhere shows that capacity development can be wasted unless it is already clear who should play what roles (3.3.4). Very often, these roles will include partnerships, and so capacity building is best developed by bringing the partners together for training, devising and conducting trials, participatory reviews of trials, and scaling up promising trials.

4 RECOMMENDATIONS – A FRAMEWORK FOR ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT

The many FSR studies, consultations and discussions, undertaken over the last year, show convergence of opinion towards four principles for making the transition to SFM, and a system for achieving SFM based on ten related policy objectives. –

4.1 *FOUR KEY PRINCIPLES FOR SFM IN HP*

Four key principles underlie many of the areas of agreement on future directions for HP's forest sector. These may be adopted as a basis for defining policies and programmes towards sustainable forest management in HP:

- **Multiple forest values***:* Recognise the many forest values which sustain local livelihoods and economic growth, from energy, food and fibre production to cultural values and environmental services (tourism, water supplies and biodiversity protection). Having identified these many values, the question then is how to realise – or 'capture' – them in practice, to enable continuous flows of benefits for different stakeholders, and to do so at reasonable cost. The mix of these values should be optimised where possible, and informed trade-offs made where integrated approaches are not possible.

- **Multiple forest stakeholders***:* Recognise there are many stakeholders involved in the forest sector – from those dependent on forests for their subsistence needs, to state-level institutions charged with looking after HP's forests, to national and international stakeholders. Good policies and programmes will give them access to information and decision-making processes, and will emphasise participation in sharing the costs and benefits of forest use.

- **Changing conditions***:* Recognise that economic, environmental, social and institutional circumstances and needs are changing, increasingly rapidly, both within HP and outside. This means that policies and programmes need to be capable of regular review and adaptation. Where information will often be incomplete, an experimental approach to forest management will be required (even after an intensive FSR, not all facts are known). Finally, some of the changes may not be desirable and it will be important to take a precautionary principle - to protect important forest assets e.g. key biodiversity, watersheds and forests that are critical to livelihoods. The question of 'how much, and what type, of forest do we need for the future?' needs to be addressed regularly.

- **The need for a lead agency to coordinate the transition to SFM***:* Recognise that all stakeholders expect the HPFD, as the recognised authority, to take up this role, which will therefore require considerable support. But also that there will need to be some kind of participatory system through which stakeholders themselves can meet and deal with strategic issues.

These principles suggest the need for a multi-stakeholder, adaptive *system* with a shared vision of SFM; with regulations, incentives and procedures for realising multiple and changing forest values; and supported by the HPFD. This system is illustrated in Figure 4.1.

4.2 POLICY OBJECTIVES FOR HP'S FOREST SECTOR

The four key principles are combined below in each of ten inter-related policy objectives:[16]

1. **Institute a multi-stakeholder HP Forest Consultative Forum**. The FSR process attempted an extensive range of consultations. This has revealed key information and insights about how the forest sector should evolve. It has brought stakeholders far closer together in terms of

[16] These ten policy objectives are not in order of priority.

common understanding and vision than has been the case for many years. We suggest it would be a priority to build on, strengthen and institutionalise the participatory process begun through the FSR – essentially to create a platform for continued discussion of issues such as those raised during the FSR. This is for three reasons. Firstly, the task of participation cannot be confined to one year – there was not sufficient time to discuss fully with all stakeholders, some stakeholders were initially resistant to a fully participatory process, and thus the FSR information is not fully complete and some recommendations may be developed further based on additional feedback. Secondly, new circumstances and events will always emerge, and will require multi-stakeholder debate to improve policies and approaches. Thirdly, growing experience of participation, and the development of new attitudes towards other stakeholders, should permit better participation in future. Thus the policy process should be a 'learning' process, integrating sectoral and 'hierarchical' perspectives.

Such a Forum is required to enable both 'horizontal' coordination – strategic coherence between sectors, and 'vertical' coordination– linking villages to the centre in terms of improving both policy and its implementation to reflect 'bottom-up' realities and needs. Horizontal coordination might be best achieved through high-level representation from departments, as well as NGO and private representation. Vertical coordination might be best achieved through a tiered approach, building from village institutions, to federations of village institutions – both of which require their own fora and own means and pace of consultation – to the state Forum. This should also be designed to 'filter' issues so that only strategic issues are dealt with at the state level forum.

It is suggested that an HP Forest Consultative Forum be positioned at a high level. It should include good representation of all the stakeholder groups, especially those at local level which are most dependent on forests such as the VFDSs, rural women and landless groups, and sectors with a strong economic interest in forests e.g. tourism and water supply.

The HP Forest Consultative Forum should meet every few months; ideally it would be supported with information from local levels in order to build a well-coordinated, coherent policy in a 'bottom up' way. It should consider strategic issues only[17]; whilst provision of advice to the highest levels would be a useful function, the Forum (and local fora) should be independent, and structured to avoid its becoming a vehicle for inter-departmental rivalries or grievances. According legal status to the Forum could provide clarity on membership, powers, accountability, and placement within the government structure, thus helping to avoid its co-option by particular interests. Many countries have found the need for statutory status of such bodies. One option is to build towards an ideal, using existing bodies, such as the State Land Use and Wasteland Development Board.

The Forum would benefit from being composed of progressive, expert, respected individuals rather than *ex officio* members. The HPFD could act as its secretariat, but Forum sessions might best be facilitated by an independent body or individual with excellent facilitation skills. At the state level, the Forum will need funds to enable participation of representatives of local forest fora, and procedures to ensure their full participation e.g. use of vernacular language.

It will be noted that such a Forum is central to most of the following other recommendations. In particular, the Forum could be linked to the proposed Forest Information System (see objective no. 9) for information exchange– some of which could be through a website.

2. **Cross-sectoral coherence towards SFM – with a focus on agreeing criteria and indicators of SFM.** Economic development and rural livelihoods in forested areas are the concern of many departments, and not just the Forest Department. The Chief Minister called for greater inter-sectoral coherence at the state level during the November 1999 meeting of the State Land Use and Wasteland Development Board. Such coherence in relation to forest values can be supported by the proposed multi-stakeholder HP Forest Consultative Forum

[17] For example it might review the recommendations of the recent committee considering reform of TD rights

(see objective no. 1), by a transparent information system available to all (see objective no. 9), by 'rulings' by high-level government officials on respective departmental roles, by better coordination between departments at local level, and by experimental collaborative approaches.

There will need to be formal changes in responsibilities and relationships between particular government agencies. For example, it is necessary for clarity to be improved on departmental responsibilities and mandates for forest grazing and biodiversity. Environmental impact assessment (EIA) and rehabilitation guidelines for mining and other developments in forest areas could be formulated. Tourism codes of practice might be needed to promote forest-friendly tourism development. The HP Forest Consultative Forum can advise on what these various forms of responsibilities, codes of practice and guidelines might be. All of these provisions can most easily be developed once a basic set of criteria and indicators for SFM have been established. These might be based on the Bhopal-India provisional set (Appendix 1).

Inter-sectoral coherence and coordination between government departments is equally important at the field/ village level. There is a need for effective and workable mechanisms to be developed and experimented with. This may include regular meetings, experience sharing, and coordination and monitoring of some functions by the existing village level institutions etc.

3. **Strengthen village-level institutions.** There are currently various types of village forest institution. They all hold great promise for fulfilling local needs from forests and – provided the regulations and incentives are right – for contributing to the production of state, national and global forest values. Strong local institutions will also contribute to improving coherence and cooperation between departments, because they will force an integrated look at local needs (objective no. 2). There are five challenges at present.

The first challenge is to address the need for villages to be given wider scope in terms of the land use decisions they can make, and to have increased powers to apprehend violators and insist on their prosecution. For example, village institutions might be empowered with responsibility and appropriate controls to handle TD rights in an equitable manner.[18]

The second challenge is to deal with the proliferation of local/ village institutions. To date, proliferation has been helpful in that it has allowed different approaches to be tried to match different circumstances – although some of the institutions are relatively new and the advantages and lessons of each are yet to be learned. Now there is a need for harmonisation of the many types of local institutions in relation to the recent draft PFM Rules, enabling them to be formally registered as Village Forest Development Societies (and thus to be governed by the PFM Rules). This might include providing minimum criteria for institutions to be recognised as VFDSs – or as 'JFM Committees' as per Government of India (GoI) guidelines dated 21 February 2000.[19] These VFDSs or JFM Committees should, however, allow for local differences and leave room for local innovation and ideas. Criteria might include: representation of all relevant groups including NTFP collectors, pastoralists and women's forest interests (not just TD users and plantation interests); transparency and accountability; conflict resolution provisions; adherence to C&I for SFM; scope of forest activities; specific responsibilities to assist with forest fire avoidance and control; etc. The size of forest institutions is also a criterion to consider; often they seem too large to be managed effectively and ensure full participation of local sub-groups. Village forest institutions would need to be conferred with adequate powers and resources, and linked to the PRIs. A common identity for village forest institutions across the state will reduce confusion at local levels and facilitate planning within HPFD. Further, the basic framework of rights and responsibilities should be common, whilst leaving room for locally negotiated variations. The process of this change in status of VFDC, VDC and VEDC with VFDS needs to be supported in the PFM Rules. However, this should not be at the expense of a flexible approach to local institutions, such that

[18] Provisions for such powers of the VFDSs are given in the PFM Rules.

they are not bound by local administrative units, and such that there is space for recognition of local conditions and institutional structures.

The third challenge is to put in place provisions and institutional arrangements to coordinate between, and resolve conflicts amongst, neighbouring VFDSs or 'JFM Committees' e.g. in relation to pasture use and upstream-downstream issues[20]. Federation of VFDSs has been discussed. These could also form a basis for the local forest fora suggested at objective no. 1. Another option is a divisional or state-level representative group to deal with conflicts (as developed in Andhra Pradesh).

This brings us to the fourth challenge: to clarify the links between village forest institutions and PRIs. There are currently some reservations about such links being formalised, and suggestions that links should be formed gradually as the knowledge, capacity and maturity of the various institutions increase. For example there is contention over the politicisation of PRIs and their lack of knowledge of good forestry practice. Experience in HP has shown that politicisation and lack of forestry knowledge are a dangerous mix. However, PRIs have the potential to deal with forests in a holistic manner in their developmental context – given that (potentially) they can address all issues affecting the *panchayat* area. PRIs are statutory, present everywhere, permanent, and government departments are obliged to work with them. Therefore the challenge is for PRIs to build up their knowledge and experience of local forestry issues – combined with general awareness about forest values – especially the fact that there are state and national values, to avoid the *panchayat* focusing only on local values (see objective no. 9). The best way to build up that knowledge and experience of local forest issues is to build on what works well at present – the work of a variety of local forest and general village institutions of various types. Several years of experiment and consolidation may be required. Ultimately a single village organisation dealing with all issues might be appropriate, and would facilitate convergence of services provided from different government departments. For example, the microplans developed by the forest institutions could be integrated into the panchayat-level micro-plan. A single organisation would, however, need to be supported by a range of groups representing different interests within the village.

Finally, mechanisms are needed for monitoring and safeguarding the interests of marginalised groups – such as landless groups and rural women – within the village institution.

[19] Guidelines for strengthening Joint Forest Management Programme (no. 22-8/2000-JFM (FPD) dated 21 February 2000).
[20] The PFM Rules make some provision for conflict resolution, based on the District Forest Officer's decision.

4. **Liberalise forestry off-reserve, i.e. plantation/ farm forestry on private lands.** It is clear that HP's natural forests will be of increasing value for tourism, biodiversity, water supply and other environmental services. Equally, there is comparative advantage in private planting for wood production, provided the incentives to the landowner are positive. But many of the current controls on private forestry – in terms of cutting cycles, harvesting permission, restrictions on species, and demarcation– act as perverse incentives, so that the potential market incentive is obscured. Laws such as the Land Preservation Act, the HP Forest Produce (Regulation of Trade) Act, the HP Private Forest Act and others create an atmosphere of heavy control of private action. The HPFD needs to move away from this towards more of a technical support/ enabling role, encouraging a thriving private sector.[21] Private sector codes of practice might be encouraged, and forms of independent certification (i.e. proof that timber is produced legally and to adequate environmental and social standards) might ultimately be considered. Preparation of the C&I for SFM, appropriate to HP's forest conditions, can contribute to the structuring of such private sector codes of practice, making it clear what is expected of private forestry but allowing them to achieve such outcomes in ways that best suit them. The private sector should contribute to the design of such C&I, so that they are realistic and practicable. However, certain controls are also essential, to avoid e.g. illicit private sales, and pilferage where wood illegally cut from reserves is mixed with privately produced wood.

5. **Improve investment in the public benefits from forests.** The rationale for state involvement in commercial forestry activities needs to be revisited in light of the social and economic argument to encourage village forestry (see objective no. 3), and the economic argument to liberalise privately owned farm forests to increase timber production (see objective no. 4). In general, state forestry should focus on public benefits. Whilst the revenue and employment generation roles of HPSFC are acknowledged, a case could be made for the HPSFC to invest in improving the quantity and quality of public forest assets. This would mean ensuring HPSFC is a pioneer in best-practice forestry which includes environmental and social benefits. Thus HPSFC should be demonstrators of any new HP criteria and indicators for SFM: improvement in public forest benefits would likely result from such an initiative. Permitting the HPSFC to deal direct with farmers will also improve social benefits – at present, the timber 'mafia' exploit the fact that there are so many permissions required to harvest, and consequently farmers receive very low returns.

   An assessment of the financial flows in the forest sector would be helpful to identify potential sources, entry points and mechanisms for investment (for example the extension of JFM to dense forests might provide opportunities for new forms of investment: (see objective no. 7). In addition to potential state - and national-based sources of investment, the state can also play a role in accessing international funds that are increasingly available to pay for global public benefits e.g. biodiversity conservation (such as GEF) and carbon offsets (bilateral schemes – or multilateral schemes if and when the Clean Development Mechanism agrees on land-based offsets). Where communities play a role in delivering these benefits, equitable benefit-sharing mechanisms will be needed e.g. through JFM/ VFDSs. The various options available for establishment of a forestry development fund in HP - or of a forest investment promotion agency that encourages private sector investment towards SFM – need to be developed and considered. Similar funding arrangements might be set up to encourage innovative NGO/CBO action.

6. **Undertake organisational change and capacity development in the HPFD to support other stakeholders, and especially village-level institutions, to take up sustainable forestry roles.** The HPFD will need continued support to be able to work in partnership with all the institutions (see objectives nos. 2 to 5 above) which should be playing a part in sustaining multiple forest values. The HPFD may shift in its organisational roles towards analysis, advice, national and international links, facilitation amongst HP stakeholders, and monitoring – rather than a heavy field enforcement presence– since local stakeholders will ultimately undertake

[21] 'Private sector' includes individual farmers, community groups, JFM groups, etc. as well as the corporate private sector.

much of their own self-regulation. Capacity is particularly needed for: policy analysis and planning; networking with other institutions; participation and facilitation with VFDSs; understanding different local perspectives and needs, especially of women and other marginalised groups; dealing with grievances from stakeholders; developing partnerships with water, tourism and other sectoral agencies; managing forests for tourism and conservation; organising multi-stakeholder development and use of C&I for SFM. Better awareness of multiple forest values and stakeholders, and of new policies and legal provisions, is needed amongst HPFD staff at all levels. Practical approaches to capacity-building would be best: e.g. exchange visits and 'job-shadowing' to learn of successful policy processes, and different approaches to participatory forestry; developing 'model forests' in association with the International Model Forests Network; and on-the-job training with other partners in trial approaches e.g. to collaborative management.

Within the HPFD itself, systems will be needed to ensure participation within the department at all levels: participation with other groups will be difficult without such an internal shift. There is much potential in giving senior staff clearer roles and authority to take the lead on specific issues e.g. watershed management, biodiversity issues, and tourism (in collaboration with relevant stakeholders). Equally, such senior staff need to be assured of adequate periods of tenure – being transferred before the normal tenure of at least three years is usually counterproductive. Finally, the gender balance within HPFD needs to reflect the reality that a very large proportion of forest stakeholders are women – especially if the focus of the department is to move from forest-first to people-first perspectives.

The Training and Human Resources Development Strategy covers many issues which will contribute to strengthened capacity within the HPFD; it is strongly supported by the FSR findings.

An HPFD Change Management Steering Committee is suggested to help the HPFD through the process of change over the next few years. This would build on the current FSR Core Team. Although internal to the HPFD, the Steering Committee should also report to the HP Forest Consultative Forum, to ensure that changes reflect the principle of the HPFD supporting other stakeholders' needs. It is likely to need professional change management support.

Because the Department's advisory and analytical capacity needs strengthening, a **policy and planning unit** within the HPFD might be considered. To improve cross-sectoral collaboration, secondments to this unit may be considered efficient.

7. **Develop a vision for balanced land use, with adequate legal backing.** The challenge is to ensure a balance at the state-wide level, and at local village/ forest level. Such a balance can, over time, be achieved through a combination of the application of science and analysis, and participatory processes. Many of the issues to be addressed in achieving balanced land use may be discussed through the HP Forest Consultative Forum (see objective no. 1).

   The current legal 'protection' of non-forested land under legal 'forest' categories, irrespective of that land's actual forest cover or potential capability, does not help to optimise land use at either level. Since this reflects neither *actual* forest values, nor *potential* forest values, it can be confusing and counterproductive, leading to unrealistic state-wide targets - notably to ensure an arbitrary 50 per cent of HP under forest cover - and prohibiting changes to better land use in specific localities.

   For balanced land use at the *state* level, it may be helpful to establish what types of forest are needed to meet current and future needs for particular forest goods and services, where they are (whether state or other land), and where to encourage their development if there is not enough. In international terms this would be called a system of **'permanent forest estate'** (PFE) under government, community or private management, whereby legal categories of forest are tied to specific management objectives. Such legal categories could include farm forestry, multi-purpose community forests, pastures with substantial tree cover (silvipasture),

biodiversity conservation forests, etc, and not just 'forest reserves', so that these resources are fully included in forest policy and planning decisions. This would be informed by environmental, economic and social realities, as identified through assessment of actual land use, land capability assessments, valuations (based on multiple land use values and not just agriculture or forestry alone), participatory village plans and future demand scenarios. It should also be informed by legal guidelines or criteria for constituting forest under different forms of management.

The point is that a basic idea of the desirable PFE can be built up (through the State Forest Consultative Forum), state-wide targets can be set, and progress compared to the actual situation. Land use and forest needs are dynamic, however, and PFE should permit some flexibility. In this sense, the PFE is not truly 'permanent' but rather represents a long-term view of the amount and type of all forests required to meet current and anticipated needs for forest goods and services from all forested areas under any kind of ownership. The precautionary principle can then be applied.

This more rational approach would depend upon the institution of procedures for land capability assessments and valuations. The **HP State Land Use and Wasteland Development Board (SLUWDB)** should be empowered to administer such procedures, although other agencies will need to contribute technical work. One option is for the HP-SLUWDB to be a wing of the State Planning Department, to make it multi-disciplinary and give it due authority and status. As noted by the Chief Minister at the November 1999 meeting of the Board, it should meet at least once a year, and could act as a think tank on various matters relating to land use and natural resources, and as an advisory body to the state government.[22]

In due course the SLUWDB should work towards development of a **state land use policy**. The ingredients of such a policy should include: learning from the impact of various previous sectoral policies and policy changes; determination of actual current land use through micro-planning and satellite/ GIS (geographic information system); and acknowledgement of actual local land use (both good and bad) as the basis for policy and planning. Therefore the scope of, and responsibility for microplans needs to be clarified and disseminated. It is suggested that positive moves towards a forest policy, based on the FSR recommendations, will help to set the scope and process for preparing a land use policy. In other words, a forest policy should not wait until (a so far elusive) land use policy is developed, but rather it can encourage a land use policy.

✍✍**Development of criteria and indicators for SFM** – as a way of structuring monitoring, codes of practice, regulations, and debate – should be done by all stakeholders, informed by forestry experts, and with endorsement by the Forest Consultative Forum. There are advantages in building on the Bhopal-India process in the development of such criteria and indicators. By talking about, proposing, testing and reviewing elements of good forestry that are described holistically, we can make a major leap forward in understanding about good forestry. These criteria and indicators can then be applied to 'working plans' in reserves, to give them more holistic coverage, as well as to VFDS operations.

Balanced forest use at the **local level** could also be ensured through two other recommendations:

✍✍**Documentation of local customary practices and codes** may enable local customs, which have often evolved to balance multiple forest values, to be incorporated into JFM, such that local people have the power to make local rules that reflect their customary practices. This depends upon JFM being sufficiently flexible. Social sanctions on unsustainable forest use can be more effective than legal sanctions.

[22] This was the first meeting for three years.

- **Participation of people in a broader scope of land use management** (see objective 3), including negotiated extraction from protected areas and extending JFM/ SVY to dense forests with rich sources of NTFPs, should be considered. There is no fundamental reason why JFM/ SVY should remain confined to 'degraded' forests.[23] Indeed, there are equity and efficiency reasons for extending JFM/ SVY to non-degraded forests close to villages – provided certain conditions and essential controls are in place: drawing up of microplans, SFM codes of practice, based on criteria and indicators, possibly certification, rules for sharing costs and benefits, clarity regarding rights and responsibilities, etc. However this type of extension of management authority should only follow detailed information collection at the local level (see objective no. 9). It will require legal backing; HP has a legacy of local rights to *use* forest products, but far fewer rights to actually *manage* the forest or control access to it.

8. Ensure biodiversity values are factored more into land use. A better system of protected areas is called for, to meet the requirements of the Convention on Biodiversity and to capitalise upon tourism and scientific potentials; this would include certain area rationalisations and links between particular protected areas as noted by the FSR Biodiversity Focus Group. However, biodiversity conservation outside protected areas also needs to be improved. This is because:

   - protected areas are not fully representative of HP's biodiversity – and could never be so, as it would be impossible to move people to create new protected areas
   - inhabited zones harbour different species – those that are associated with agriculture, horticulture, forestry, medicinal plants and cultural uses
   - many traditional village practices can maintain far more species in the landscape than monoculture 'scientific' forestry or agriculture

   Hence there is a challenge to encourage traditional land husbandry practices. This would be complemented by incentives where necessary e.g. rights to collect and trade in medicines and NTFPs, and tourism revenue for active biodiversity stewardship by a community. Ways to encourage local 'inventories' of biodiversity need to be developed: for example, Navrachna, a leading NGO in H.P. has information on local people's knowledge and dependence which could be built up and used.

   For HPFD, HPSFC and private operators who are involved in production forestry, there is a need for guidelines and training in the latest approaches to biodiversity conservation within production. Many production forests are currently degraded from a biodiversity point of view as a result of timber-exploiting practices. New approaches should cover 'coarse-grained' biodiversity conservation (e.g. at the watershed level, such as ecological landscape planning) and 'fine-grained' conservation (e.g. at the stand level, such as specific forest management practices that maintain important habitats or species associations, and changes to inventory procedures to factor biodiversity into the values being assessed).

9. **Develop a transparent information system on forests, to inform stakeholders.** We have concluded that many stakeholders have legitimate roles in forestry: therefore they need good information to act appropriately. It is clear that private management affects the public benefits that are obtainable from forests. Transparency of information about private management is therefore particularly needed. We note that current information is not perfect: therefore we need to update it when new facts come to light. We suggest that policy should continuously improve, depending upon impacts and evolving conditions: therefore we need to keep up to date with those changes. A successful transition to SFM will depend on learning from experience: this requires better information flow and a step-by-step approach, including mechanisms for monitoring and feedback on policy impacts.

[23] The Guidelines for strengthening the JFM programme, issued by the Government of India on 21 February 2000, specifically state that JFM may now be extended to good forest areas.

✍✍**Thus it is recommended that a strategic Forest Information System (FIS)** is required, and should be accessible to all stakeholders. This FIS should ensure a flow of basic, quality information. Its content and structure should reflect the overall vision for HP's forest sector; and it should cut back on unnecessary information. It would give information on the size, quality and use of the actual PFE in relation to the target PFE. It would enable the generation of regular 'State of the Forests' reports for the proposed Forest Consultative Forum to deliberate on. This could include economic information– so the annual flow of forest benefits can be compared to the overall asset values, and the changes in these values noted (as in a 'balance sheet'). This could ultimately form a set of "green accounts". The HPFD would normally be expected to run a FIS, but there would be links to the village microplans, Range Management Information Systems (RaMISs) and other mechanisms for eliciting local perspectives on local forest conditions and needs. An FIS can be built up using a range of information sources, both qualitative and quantitative. The use of Management Information Systems (MIS) and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) can aid this. In addition the development of criteria and indicators for SFM in HP can be used for structuring the information base. Coordination with the Indian Institute of Forest Management (IIFM) is suggested, as it is organising national forest information system development, and is considering ways to link information between sectors.

Transparency and stakeholder interaction can be greatly improved by making information available on-line i.e. on the Internet, so that stakeholders can both access and offer information. For particularly contentious or pressing issues, a further option to consider might be to constitute an independent *Forest Watch Group* which would also make its information freely available. Forest Watch committees might be made up of relatively independent local stakeholders.[24] The goals of transparency and provision of information may need legislative reinforcement, particularly in terms of ensuring freedom of access to relevant government information. In this respect, it might be worth reviewing recent legislative re forms passed in other Indian states (such as Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu), and considering the concerns that gave rise to these laws.

In due course consideration might be given to development of an integrated land information system for Himachal Pradesh. This would enable all branches of Government and civil society to have access to a unified collection of information. As well as the types of benefits described above, this is essential for the coherent and consistent implementation of forest, land and related laws.

10. **Greatly improve efforts to spread awareness of forest values, objectives, rights and responsibilities, thereby increasing political commitment to SFM.** Good stakeholder awareness is critical to any effective policy process, and to the implementation of policy. A lot can be achieved through 'informational instruments' – communications, education and advocacy – thereby enabling stakeholders to take the initiative. The first step is for the findings and recommendations of this FSR to be widely disseminated and feedback sought. As a minimum, stakeholders need to know about any new policies, laws and opportunities that are developed as a result – and their relevant rights and responsibilities. But awareness is a two-way affair, and feedback mechanisms must be developed – linked to the HPFD, HP Forest Consultative Forum, and Forest Information System. Mechanisms for assuring public review and comment on major forest-related government actions would lead to greater public awareness and 'ownership' of new rules and laws, increasing acceptance and improving compliance – as well as ensuring that legal provisions are realistic and practical. (The proposed Forest Consultative Forum and local fora might take the lead in facilitating this).

Experiences of success stories and good practice, especially concerning under-privileged groups, should be documented and communicated. Beyond this, there is a need for advocates

[24] A Global Forest Watch network has recently been established, comprising national/local groups of academics, NGOs and media people. It may be able to provide some guidance, but is primarily aimed at ensuring corporate logging and mining practices are subject to scrutiny where government ability to do so is weak.

of continuing policy and legal change, and improved transparency. This is a potential role for NGOs, and for elected representatives in the political system.

Closely linked to good stakeholder awareness is improved political commitment. This is a key need, but will not be secured automatically. Processes of forest sector change invariably take several years. The one-year period of the FSR has enabled improved debate and awareness, but a continued process is needed to obtain the necessary commitment and institutional changes. Commitment is best achieved through undertaking the above actions at the right pace, and at the right time, paying due attention to political needs and events. The HP and local Forest Fora and the HPFD Change Management Committee will be particularly useful.

4.3 IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Implementing the recommendations contained within these policy objectives will require more detailed planning of 'how to' realise each objective, and consideration of the sequence in which they should be addressed. Some of the recommendations might be implemented relatively quickly; others will require longer timescales. Regular monitoring and feedback, with key 'milestones' or indicators established within the implementation of each recommendation, will help ensure that activities are continually amended and improved, and progress acknowledged. Examples of indicators of progress for each of the ten objectives are given in Table 4.1; these are illustrative only and will require further discussion and elaboration. Responsibility for undertaking each activity should also be assigned.

Table 4.1: Examples of indicators of progress for each policy objective

Recommendation	Indicators of progress	
	Short-term *(e.g. by end 2000)*	**Medium-term** *(e.g. by end 2002)*
1. Constitution of HP Forest Consultative Forum	?? Agree on Forum membership and location ?? Notify Forum for first meeting	?? Convene first meeting to agree terms of reference, scope and procedures ?? Develop terms of reference for local fora
2. Mechanisms for cross sectoral coherence	?? Identify sectors and convene exploratory meetings ?? Develop proposal for SFM C&I development	?? Develop SFM C&I through consultation and field testing (with IIFM?) ?? Other institutions' responses to FSR
3. Strengthen village-level institutions	?? Finalise and notify PFM Rules ?? Registration of all village-level forest institutions as societies ?? Implement GoI guidelines of February 2000	?? Assessment of the operation of PFM Rules ?? Articulate links with PRIs ?? Federate VFDSs and relate to local forest for a
4. Forestry on private lands	?? Review of policy objectives for government intervention in private forestry ?? Assessment of existing regulatory framework for these objectives	?? Revise legislative provisions ?? SFM C&I applied to private lands with leading farmers
5. Investment in public benefits	?? Assessment of financial flows	?? SFM C&I applied to lands under HPSFC
6. Organisational change and capacity development of HPFD	?? Government notification of Change Management Steering Committee ?? Identification of membership, functions, reporting mechanisms ?? Full HPSFC response to the FSR	?? Implementation of HRD strategy ?? HPFD capacity building e.g. Exchange visits
7. Develop a vision for balanced land use, with adequate legal backing	?? Complete legal analysis tasks as suggested by FSR legal review	?? Develop proposal for '*permanent forest estate'* ?? Extend local rights to forest management
8. Factor biodiversity values into land use	?? Plan for local inventories	?? Review of protected area network ?? Training programmes on biodiversity for forest managers
9. Develop transparent information systems	?? Develop proposal for FIS	?? Development of FIS by HPFD and other stakeholders
10. Spreading awareness of forest values, objectives, rights and responsibilities and increased political commitment	?? Collate and review feedback on FSR ?? Initiate policy preparation process	?? New HP Forest Policy prepared and communicated

4.4 DEALING WITH CONTENTIOUS POLICY ISSUES

The four principles and ten objectives recommended above *together* form the basis for an 'SFM institutional system'. This system can plan, implement and monitor progress, It can also be used to resolve contentious issues as they arise. For example:

Green felling ban*:* Here, the ultimate question is what preconditions must be in place before we can assure sustainable green felling, so that the ban can safely be lifted? The development of criteria and indicators for SFM (see objective no. 2) will establish the outcome of forest practice that must be achieved in the field if green felling is to be allowed; it would supplement the silvicultural considerations being emphasised today (i.e. the legitimacy of opening up some conifer canopy by selective felling to allow regeneration) with other ecological considerations. Independent certification (see objective no. 4) that the criteria and indicators have been met in practice is a further guarantee. This would require significant development and operating costs, but which would likely compare favourably against the total asset value and the potential returns from sustainable forest management. A transparent information system (see objective no. 9) would help the HPFD to keep track of green felling. A re-focus of HPSFC work towards sustainability (see objective no. 5) would offer some leadership in sustainable green felling. And the Forest Consultative Forum (see objective no. 1) could keep the situation under review, monitoring each step towards SFM and recommending the point at which the ban might be lifted.

The inconsistencies and misuse of TD rights*:* in recognising the multiple values of forests in sustaining livelihoods (principle no. 1) we are confirming that forests are for people, and it follows that those primarily dependent on forests should retain rights to their use. However in the case of TD rights there is a need to rationalise them, and again the above objectives can help to address this. Village Forest Development Societies may be used to re-negotiate rights on an equitable basis (objective no. 3) whilst local interpretation of criteria and indicators can attach conditions that relate to the 'carrying capacity' of the forest (objective no. 7). Ensuring that the rates are linked to market rates, albeit gradually over a period of time, will be supported by improved inter-sectoral coherence (objective no. 2), whilst development of a Forest Information System (objective no. 9) will facilitate tracking of the extent to which TD rights are exercised.

4.5 PREPARING FORMAL FOREST POLICY

It is recommended that the full formal policy be drawn from the four key principles which underpin the ten policy objectives described above, in order to provide a broad framework within which those objectives can be elaborated. The objectives themselves should not be elaborated in detail within the policy, to allow for adaptation according to changing pressures on resources and livelihoods, new information and changing priorities for the forest sector over time. A policy which provides a broad framework for sustainable forest management, and which adheres to key principles, will remain relevant to changing circumstances and allow for continual improvement in its implementation as information and experience increase. It is unlikely that a fully participatory approach would take less than one year.

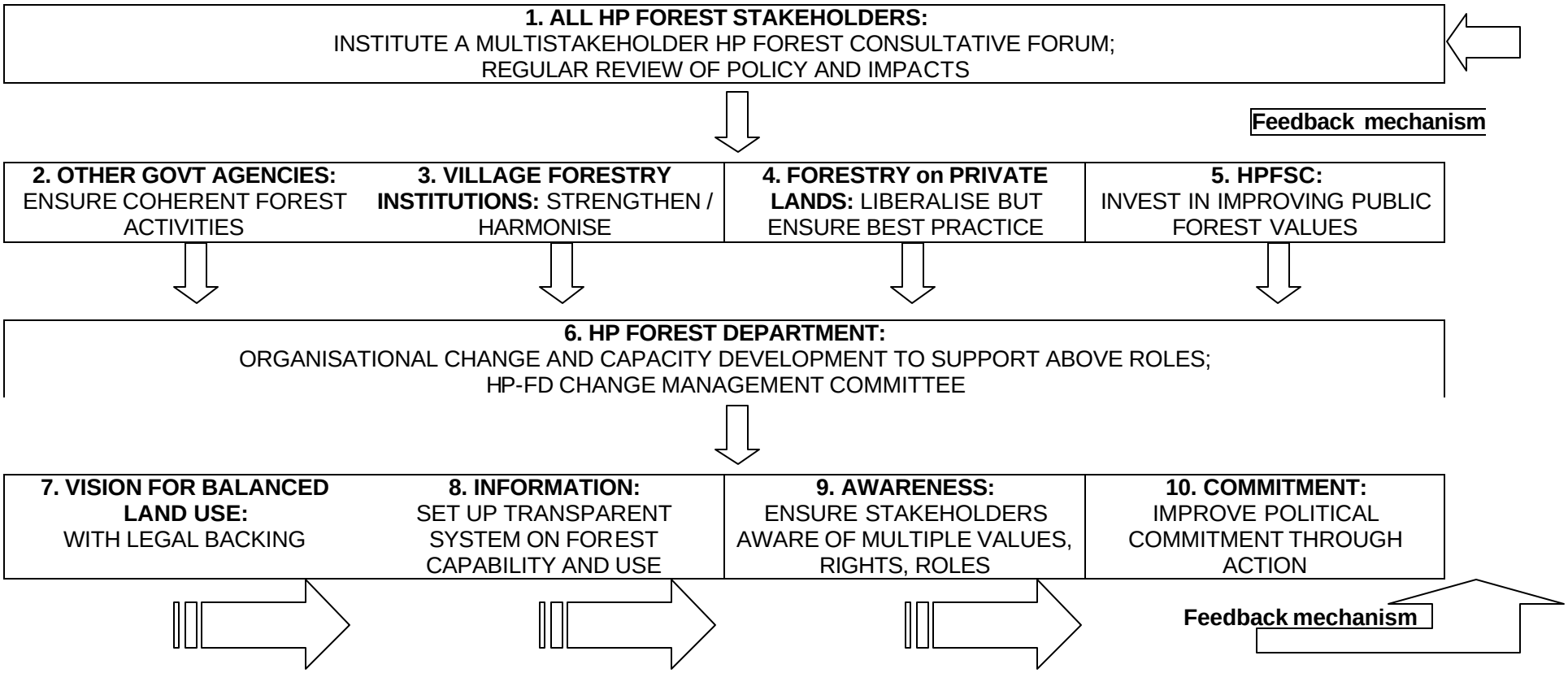
4.6 RESPONSE TO POLICY: STRATEGIC PLANNING

Once the formal policy is formulated, further feedback and consultation will support a process of strategic planning to implement the policy. Practice, feedback, continuous resolution of emerging issues, and learning from experience will be necessary to take the policy forward effectively. It is recommended that for each of the ten policy objectives, detailed activities will be formulated, with indicators of progress as illustrated in Table 4.1.

The process of strategic planning might incorporate responses from other sectoral departments as well as the HPFD. Strategic planning for the forest sector might take place on a regular basis – say every five years - in order to review progress, learn from both successes and failures, and re-align planned activities in order to address the policy goals.

The Forest Sector Review process has paved the way for some of these activities, and indeed has already made some progress towards fulfilling some of the recommendations. Elements of the process may be continued, refined and adapted appropriately to contribute to realisation of the overall goal of achieving sustainable forest management in Himachal Pradesh.

Figure 4.1 A SYSTEM FOR ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT IN HIMACHAL PRADESH



Appendix 1: The Bhopal-India criteria and related draft indicators for SFM in India (the 'Bhopal-India process')

Criteria	Indicators
1: Extent of forest and tree cover	1.1 Area and type of natural and man-made forests 1.2 Forest area under fragile ecosystems 1.3 Area of dense and degraded forest 1.4 Forest in non-forest area 1.5 Area rich in NWFP species 1.6 Forest area diverted for non-forestry use 1.7 Community managed forest areas
2: Ecosystem function and vitality	2.1 Status of natural regeneration 2.2 State of natural succession 2.3 Status of secondary forests 2.4 Weeds, pests, diseases, grazing, fire, etc. 2.5 Maintenance of food chain
3: Biodiversity conservation	3.1 Area of protected and fragmented ecosystems 3.2 Number of rare, endangered, threatened and endemic species including tiger population 3.3 Level of species richness and density 3.4 Canopy cover 3.5 Medicinal and aromatic and other NWFPs 3.6 Level of non-destructive harvest
4: Soil and water conservation	4.1 Soil moisture 4.2 Soil compaction 4.3 Status of soil erosion 4.4 Run-off (water yield) 4.5 Soil pH 4.6 Soil organic carbon 4.7 Nutrient status of soil 4.8 Soil flora, fauna and microbes 4.9 Level of water table 4.10 Sediment load
5: Forest resource productivity	5.1 Growing stock of wood and NWFPs 5.2 Natural regeneration status 5.3 Increment of wood and non-wood products 5.4 Area of afforestation and new plantations 5.5 Level of material and technological inputs 5.6 Extent of protection measures 5.7 Level of intangible benefits
6: Forest resource utilisation	6.1 Aggregate and per capita wood and non-wood consumption 6.2 Import and export of wood and NWF products 6.3 Recorded and unrecorded removals of wood and NWF products 6.4 Direct employment in forestry and forest industries 6.5 Contribution of forest to income of forest dependent people
7: Social, cultural and spiritual needs	7.1 Well-being in terms of livelihood, recreation, cultural, and aesthetic needs 7.2 Degree of economic, social, gender, and participatory equity 7.3 Conflict management mechanisms 7.4 Traditional (indigenous) knowledge application
8: Policy, legal and institutional framework	8.1 Existing policy and legal framework 8.2 Extent of community, NGO and private sector participation 8.3 Investment in research and development

Source: Proceedings of the national technical workshop on evolving criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management in India, 21-23 January 1999

Appendix 2: Forest Sector Review study reports

The following reports and studies were commissioned for the Forest Sector Review, and are available in a separate volume.

1. **Stakeholder analysis of village forest users in Himachal Pradesh.** *ORG Centre for Social Research*. Also referred to as the 'local forest values' study, this study considers local livelihood systems, dependence on forests, and interactions between stakeholders. Based on a participatory survey of 24 villages.

2. **Proceedings of workshop for a shared vision on sustainable management**. The 'Kufri' meeting held in September 1999.

3. **Proceedings of the policy dialogue on cross sectoral issues concerning the forest sector in Himachal Pradesh.** The 'Peterhoff' meeting, held in December 1999.

4. **Land use policy issues.** Land Use Focus Group, coordinated by K.C. Sharma. This report looks at the status and adequacy of existing land use policy provisions in relation to the actual state of forest resources, and to stakeholders.

5. **Village level institutions, their mechanisms and interlinkages with the Panchayati Raj institutions.** Village level institutions focus group, coordinated by Support Initiatives in Development. This focus group was established to examine the proliferation of village institutions, their roles and mandates regarding forests, and their links with *Panchayati Raj* institutions. Consultations included discussions in 12 villages.

6. **Biodiversity, NTFPs and Ecotourism**. Biodiversity, NTFPs and Eco-tourism focus group, coordinated by Dr Virinder Sharma of the State Council for Science, Technology and Environment. This focus group identified values of biodiversity in HP, including its values to local livelihoods, and potential means of conservation. The report includes information on NTFPs and medicinal plants, and considers the potential for eco-tourism development.

7. **Economic valuation of forests in Himachal Pradesh.** Dr Madhu Verma, Indian Institute of Forest Management. This provides the first-ever economic valuation of the range of forest goods and services in Himachal Pradesh, revealing the extremely high potential of environmental services and other non-timber values.

8. **Improving the legal framework for sustainable forest management in Himachal Pradesh.** Jonathan Lindsay, FAO Development Law Service. This explores the adequacy of legal provisions in relation to forest/stakeholder needs, and provides more depth on the legal implications of the policy and institutional recommendations of the FSR

9. **List of participants** in workshops and presentations on the Forest Sector Review.

Appendix 3: Process and timetable of the Forest Sector Review

Note: key 'milestones' are shown in bold

Month/ year	*Activities*	*Main responsibilities*
June 1999	*Preparatory phase*	
	Finalising full workplan and communicating it	Core Team/ IIED
	Securing resources from DFID	DFID/ IIED
	Core team in place	Core Team
June-July 1999	*Scoping the issues*	
	Informal consultations with government, NGOs and other commentators	Core Team/ IIED
	Defining the main issues	Core Team
	Discussion of methodologies and detailed TORs for local forest values and preliminary legal studies; commissioning of studies	Core Team/ IIED/ ORG-MARG/ legal consultant
	Design of questionnaires for local forest values study	Core Team/ IIED/ ORG-MARG
June-September 1999	*Obtaining information*	
	Analysis of existing policies, institutions and documents (using 8 part framework)	Core Team/ IIED
	Completion of local forest value survey and preliminary legal reports	ORG MARG/ legal consultant
	Questionnaire/ consultations with key HPFD informants (staff associations etc.)	Core Team
September - October 1999	*Review and prioritisation of information* Summarise findings of key informant consultations	 Core Team/ IIED
	HPFD workshop to review information and identify priorities (the 'Kufri' workshop)	HPFD/ IIED
October -November 1999	*Synthesis of finding and preliminary recommendations*	
	Prepare Draft 1 Synthesis Document	IIED
November-December 1999	*Multi-stakeholder proposals for policy and actions*	
	Multi-stakeholder 'policy dialogue' based on draft 1 (the 'Peterhoff' meeting)	Core Team/ IIED/ GoHP
	Consultations with Secretaries	IIED
January-April 2000	*Focus group and consultancy work*	
	Establishment of focus groups on biodiversity, village institutions, land use issues	IIED/ Core Team
	Commissioning of consultants on legal issues, economic valuation	IIED/ Core Team
	Focus group and consultancy research	Focus groups and consultants
	Feedback from focus groups and consultants to HPFD	Focus groups/ consultants
	Prepare Draft 2 Synthesis Document, including outcomes of focus group and consultancy research reflecting all stakeholders' views: to include findings; policy proposals; action proposals	IIED
May 2000	*Validation*	
	Discussion of summary of recommodations with multistake holder group, Secretaries, M.L.A's committee on forests (*Van Samiti)*	Core Team/ IIED
June 2000	*Final output: report publication*	
	Publication of final report	IIED
	Publication of summary report (in English and Hindi) for wide distribution	Core Team/ IIED
July 2000 onwards	*Follow-up plans*	
	Plan activities for following year eg. publicity material, further meetings, etc. (to roll over into HPFP Phase II)	Core Team/ DFID

HIMACHAL PRADESH FOREST SECTOR REVIEW

Reader Feedback Form

The Forest Sector Review has produced ten basic policy recommendations, based on an intensive period of analysis and debate. It is now important to move forward with concrete actions. These include preparing a new forest policy, institutional development, and planning new forms of activity on the ground. These actions need to be participatory, too. Therefore feedback is being sought on the main recommendations of the FSR. We would be grateful if you could answer the following questions and post this page back to us:

1. The Forest Sector Review recommends ten policy objectives for HP's forest sector. Please state which you think are the most important?

2. Which policy objectives should be acted upon first?

3. Which policy objectives are wrong, or badly formulated?

4. Can you suggest other policy objectives that are missing?

5. In what other ways might the recommendations of the Review be improved?

6. Are you willing to be consulted again during policy formulation, implementation and monitoring? If so, please provide your address here:

7. Please tick the box which best describes you:

HPFD staff	
HPSFC staff	
Other HP Government staff	
GoI staff	
NGO	
Private sector	
International/donor	
Village forest institution member	
Other (state what)	

Replies to be sent to: The Conservator of Forests (Projects), HP Forest Department, Talland, Shimla, HP 171 002