



FOCUS MIZORAM

NEWSLETTER



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As it has now become common knowledge that the future remains unseen with a high degree of uncertainty associated with its endeavors, we can still, at best, try to increase the probability of a successful outcome by planning well ahead.

Ever since the Covid-19 pandemic SOP imposed on us a replication of in-person workplaces into online activity, conference attendees and organizers have been living out an experiment of digital communication. Often times, we find ourselves trying to cope with technical glitches and less than optimal sounding while keeping in mind that this may well turn out to be the norm for expanding any reach.

STATE AGRICULTURE MINISTER CONVENED VIRTUAL REVIEW MEETING OF FOCUS MIZORAM

With the Covid-19 pandemic, work experience has transitioned to a new paradigm while erstwhile social and physical cues could no longer be put to practice. As such, the Annual Review Meeting of FOCUS, Mizoram was also held remotely, on 13th April, 2021 (Tuesday) at the Office Chamber of Hon'ble Minister for Agriculture, Shri C. Lalrinsanga, who graced the occasion with his presence as Chief Guest. It was seen to it that the attendees for the meeting were kept within the bounds of the State Government's SOP.

The members who attended include Pu H. Biakzaua, MLA & Vice Chairman, Agriculture Development Board, Mr. J. Hmingthanmawia, Secretary to the Government of Mizoram, Agriculture Department and Co-Chairman, SCRAM, Mr. Rohmingthanga Colney, Mission Director, FOCUS & Director of Agriculture, Mr.R.K. Nithanga SPD&CEO, PMU Officers and Staff. Ms.Meera Mishra,

IFAD Country Office, New Delhi also had the opportunity to witness the Review Meeting via video-conference along with all Project staff of Project Districts.

The first session began with a presentation on the Progress & achievements of the Project as well as Messages from Chief Guest and MLA, concluded with vote of thanks from Mission Director.

The second session was chaired by Mr.J. Hmingthanmawia, Co-Chairman, SCRAM who addressed all the District Management Units and urged them to take call on reprioritizing advancement and focus on critical tasks at hand despite COVID-19 pandemic. Address from the chair was followed by Power point presentation from each DMU and were then followed by fruitful discussion amongst the members regarding matters of the annual budget and work plan. The meeting was concluded with closing Remarks from the Chair.



ONLINE MEETING WITH IFAD COUNTRY OFFICE ON AWPB 2021-22

The IFAD Country Office-India conducted online meeting to discuss draft AWP&B 2021-2022 on 25th May, 2021 (1-2pm) with Ms. Esha Singh as host. The meeting began with self-introduction from FOCUS Mizoram and IFAD which encouraged engagement and adaptable work

dynamic between the two teams. Mr. Ulaz Demirag, IFAD Country Director led the IFAD team consisting of Ms.Meera Mishra, Mr. Sriram Sankarasubramaniam and Mr. Frew Behabtu.

The FOCUS team was led by Mr. Rohmingthanga Colney, Mission Director and included all Officers of PMU. Leading up to the session, the need for clarifications in the AWPB and renewed decisive action were thoroughly deliberated upon. The briefing was closed with FOCUS, Mizoram being given the task of submitting the fundamental clarifications in formal writing to the IFAD for further perusal.

The Project followed up the valuable insights of the meeting and submitted the needed clarification on 27.5.2021. IFAD Country office has approved the **AWP&B 2021-2022** and conveyed **No-Objection** on 10.06.2021



PMU STAFF MEETING DURING LOCKDOWN

With the mix of work and personal obligations, the value of our time has increased more than ever as we are pulled in more directions while meetings, a cornerstone of the workplace, have substantively changed during COVID-19 lockdown. Hence, making the most out of the scheduled time in these virtual briefings becomes even more important to maintain a committed work ethic amongst the workforce. In all likelihood, the Project Management Unit held an online staff meeting via Google meets on 21st May, 2021 at 11am to 2.00pm. The meeting lead while distributing a brief outlining of the objectives, also



made it a point to brainstorm various topics relating to office discipline and administration, office upkeep and sanitation, finance and technical matters, responsibility of officers and staff, etc., as far as what the office is responsible for during these crucial times.

VIDEO CONFERENCE WITH ALL DMUS

In corollary to COVID-19 pandemic and compliance to SOP issued by the Government, a virtual meeting was held for all the Staff of FOCUS, Mizoram on 7th May,2021 as a part of remote monitoring of the on-going implementation of the Project activities. The meeting began with opening remarks from Mission Director Mr. Rohmingthanga Colney followed by activity reports from each District Management Units. The meeting discussed on issues arising out of COVID-19 restrictions, particularly restriction on Staff movement from village to village, problems in conducting training and meeting with FIGs, etc. The common obstacle still-at-hand to each DMU is land allocation for longer period to the Jhum FIGs.



VIRTUAL PROCUREMENT PLANNING SESSION

An online meeting was held midday on the 16th June,2021, while rigorously adhering to the issuance of the Government’s SOP. The attendees included the SPD, Procurement officer, four deputy directors as well as the officer-in-charge (CSS). The meeting was headed by Mr.Sriram Sankaraubramaniam, Country Office, IFAD,New Delhi who had counseled the team on the Procurement Plan laid out by them with clarity. His valuable suggestion entails an infinite competence not only for the present Procurement Plan but for any intents in the coming times. Following the session, the team rectified the requisite clauses in the aforementioned Plan and was affirmed with No Objection from the side of the Country Office as on

the 17th June, 2021. On behalf of FOCUS Project, Mizoram we convey our immense appreciation to Mr. Ulac Demirag, Country Director and Mr. Sriram for their prompt action and contributions to the project.

VIRTUAL MEETING ON AGRIL ACTIVITIES, 2021-2022

The Project held talks on the 20th June, 2021 (Sunday), on 12:00 Noon to 03:00 PM using the Google platform. The conference was headed by Mr. R.K. Nithanga, SPD, FOCUS, Mizoram where Agricultural activities based on AWP&B, 2021-2022 were thoroughly discussed. Mr. Rohmingthanga Colney, Mission Director, FOCUS, Mizoram also witnessed the meeting throughout and contributed valuable insights for the project and possible Convergence with the line departments, particularly, Agriculture Department, Govt. of Mizoram.

The meeting was organized on a Sunday despite the time being treated with reverence, since the lockdown has ruled out any Church gatherings with little to no activities to be done in its stead. It is noteworthy to mention that our DMU faculties have risen to the occasion with remarkable zeal towards field days during this approaching Kharif Cropping season. Their hard work is appreciated.

Virtually meeting will carry on for the Horticulture, Land Resources, Soil & Water Conservation and AH & Vety activities in due course of time.

COVID-19 RESPONSE

While assessing the implications of COVID-19 on the farm sector, mitigation measures to ensure a viable food security system in the post-crisis period are also utilized as follows: -

Improved Variety of Potato (var. Kufri Girdhari; Kufri Chandramukhi & Kufri Jyoti) and Paddy (RCM-10&13), of **315.93Qtls** and **120.86Qtls** respectively have been introduced in different FOCUS districts and is seemingly a promising intervention/activity while achievement of food and nutritional security is guaranteed.

As a matter of fact, potato has been indispensable to the dietary habits, to the point that it even holds significance in the culture of Mizoram as much as rice and pulses have. Indeed, despite Mizoram having the privilege of multi-seasonal cultivation capacities, we have not yet been able to harness its benefits and resources have been focused on its import from other states. FOCUS Project, Mizoram has most thoroughly engaged with our socio-economic

implications and complexities while deriving an all-encompassing solution to it as well this economy building and the subsequent assurance of employment generation would turn out to be advantageous not only to the various stakeholders but most of all, the resource poor farmers who bear the bunt of incompetent policies through time and time. Moreover, it is high time that an ingenious and sustainable resort which tackles all the composite institution of food and nutritional security amidst climate change, gender inequality along with other marginalized groups, need to be provided every support needed.

Cassava, cultivated in response to Covid-19 during 2020-21 is all set to be harvested for an emergency relief in case of any crisis in Food Security.

GREEN MIZORAM DAY, 11TH JUNE, 2021

Mizoram State Green Day was observed on 11th June, 2021 throughout the State, where numerous Saplings were handed out from DMU's Nurseries to Commemorate the event. We applaud the efforts of FOCUS team and their fellow collaborators viz, FIGs, YMA (Young Mizo Association- the largest Community Organization in the State), MHIP (Mizoram Women's Association) and MUP (Mizoram Elders' Association) etc. and their unparalleled dedication towards the afforestation is notably praiseworthy.

CRASH PROGRAMME ON MAIZE PRODUCTION

In collaboration with the State Agriculture Department a Crash Programme was launched under current jhum improvement to boost up production of Maize in the State. The program is covering 1900 households in 810Ha. Focus Project provided 114 quintal Maize seed (var. Suraj-251) for the Project Districts. Agriculture Department will provide other inputs like Fertilizers, PP Chemicals etc. Relay crop, Soyabean will follow Maize crop covering 1025 households.

CONSTRUCTION OF CHECK DAMS

Besides all activities, Check dams are proving to be an advanced optimistic endeavor towards protecting downstream agricultural lands-by allowing seasonal monsoon rains to be held extensively, and maximizing availability of natural resources even during dry season. Also, the implementation of check dams at a multitude of sites across FOCUS districts aids the lives of rural farming communities, as it has set up favourable conditions for increasing underground water table. The Project

constructed a good number of Check dams at various location to protect water sources.

ORIENTATION FOR STAFF OF BOAR SEMEN STATIONS

Staff for Boar Semen Stations are recently recruited and appointed to their respective posts. In each 4(four)Project District, a single post of Manager, Lab. Technician and Boar Attendant are appointed. Orientation training was organized for the said new appointees at PMU on 9th April,2021.



PRE-EMINENT PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME

- TPRM (TRIPARTITE PORTFOLIO REVIEW MEETING) - 25th JUNE, 2021 (FRIDAY)
- ISM (IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT MISSION) - 19th – 30th JULY, 2021
- MTR (MID TERM REVIEW) - November, 2021

CURRENT/IMMEDIATE CHALLENGES FACED IN MIZORAM

The agro-food sector as an economic activity has been plagued by logistical constraints of uncertain natural conditions and market risks. This, once again, poses challenge to the resilience of the primary stakeholders, having been aggravated by the pandemic, while the following negative indicators in development could potentially wreak havoc for the ongoing Project, and total Food Security system in short term: -

The border row between Assam-Mizoram since 9th October,2020 had resulted in an economic blockade along National Highway 306 at Lailapur in Cachar district, restricting any vehicular traffic around the area.

Extreme hydrological conditions responding to the unprecedented effects of climate change has caused prolonged dry spell and threatened the water system and infrastructure in Mizoram.

An outbreak of the African Swine Fever (ASF) in nine out of the eleven districts induced tremendous loss to the livestock-supported agrarian sector with reports of the viral disease surging since 21st March. As on 21.06.2021, 7080 Pigs died of this dreaded disease.

The state also witnessed an infestation of standing Maize Crop by Fall Armyworm (FAW) in more than 80 villages, in less than a month’s time which runs the risk of creating irreparable damage to all stakeholders in supply chain.

The common obstacle still-at-hand to each DMU is land allocation for longer period to the Jhum FIGs.

CONGRATULATION

The Mission Director of FOCUS: Mizoram, Mr. Rohmingthanga Colney, was promoted to the Supertime Grade of MAS on 1st April,2021. The FOCUS Project, Mizoram congratulates him with a humble gift as a token of felicitation.



Our State Project Director, Mr. R.K. Nithanga has also been promoted to the Junior Administrative Grade (JAG) of Mizoram Agriculture Service on 23rd April, 2021. All the Project Staff heartily congratulate him.

OBITUARY

The Project was taken aback by the sad demise of the following Project Staff:

- 1. **Mr.Zoramthanga VLW (Vety)** 14.09.2020
- 2. **Mr.Johny Laltanpuia, VLW (Vety)** 02.11.2020
- 3. **Mr. Chanchinmawia, VLW (A&A)** 19.01.2021
- 4. **Mr.S.Pakhaisa, VLW (A&A)** 08.04.2021

With profound grief, we convey our condolence to the bereaved families. May their souls rest in peace.



Action Photo from DMU's

1. Protection of water sources/CheckDam



2. Contour bunding in current jhum



3. Nursery under CCA



4. Bench Terrace under Landless



6. Water Storage and delivery system



7. Maize Production Programme



5. Turmeric and Potato cultivation during Kharif



8. Planting Materials for Orchard



9. Backyard Poultry (20 chicks perHH)



12. Potato Cultivation under jhum: Ngopa, Kawlbem, Ngur and Ngaizaw Villages.



10. Pig Breeding Units



13. Boar Semen Stations.



11. African Swine Fever (ASF)



14. Slaked Lime to Improve Soil Fertility

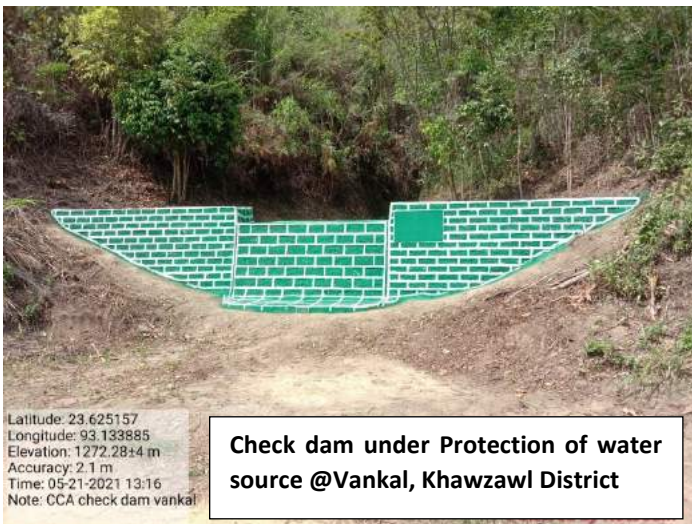




Bench terrace under Landless at N. Khawbung, Champhai District



Logwood bunding under Better Jhum at Khawlian, Saitual District



Check dam under Protection of water source @Vankal, Khawzawl District



Check dam under Protection of water source @N Vanlaiphai, Serchhip district



Irrigation support under Settled Agriculture



Water storage tank @Tualcheng, Champhai District for WRC



Village forest conservation, CCA Nursery at Vankal, Khawzawl District

RCM 10& 13 Nursery bed at Champhai



Upland paddy & Maize cultivation at Kolasib



Champhai Jhum: logwood bunding.



Banana suckers distribution at Khawzawl



Potato seed tubers harvested from Mamit lifted to be cultivated at Ngopa



Latitude: 23.061165
Longitude: 93.078957
Elevation: 1534.39m
Accuracy: 4.2m
Time: 04-06-2021 13:59
Note: Lungkawlh grazing ground

Fencing of Mithun Grazing Areas



Mireral block Demonstration



Shot on OnePlus
By: Mr. Bigman



Latitude: 24.0557
Longitude: 92.679533
Elevation: 517.45m
Accuracy: 1.5m
Time: 04-06-2021 12:40
Note: Gospeha Kampu PF

Pig Breeding Unit



Latitude: 23.929581
Longitude: 92.490915
Elevation: 820.8248m
Accuracy: 16.6 m
Time: 03-08-2021 12:43
Note: Rural backyard poultry farm

Photo credit: Mr. Bigman

