

Newsletter

January 2025



VAN DHAN VIKASH KENDRA (VDVK) AWARENESS PROGRAM FOR COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT



MEGHA-LAMP WESTERN AND EASTERN REGION REVIEW MEETINGS

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PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES

Meghalaya Livelihoods and Access to Markets Project (Megha-LAMP)

Improving farmers' incomes and quality of life in rural Meghalaya

Project for Community Based Forest Management and Livelihoods Improvement in Meghalaya (MegLIFE)

Restoring and conserving natural resources through sustainable forest management, livelihood improvement, and institutional strengthening.

Protection of Vulnerable Catchment Areas In Meghalaya (MegARISE)

Improving water availability and security (productivity) by mainstreaming scientific participatory approaches to sustainable catchment protection and community forest management.

Sustainable Land Management Meghalaya Project (SLM)

Promoting agroecological and natural organic agricultural practices of Meghalaya's farmers.

GREEN Meghalaya Payment for Ecosystem

Supporting villages, communities, clans or individuals that commit to conserve and protect Natural Forests for a minimum period of 30 years.

MEGHALAYA LIVELIHOODS AND ACCESS TO MARKETS PROJECT

Megha-LAMP Western and Eastern Region Review Meetings

The Megha-LAMP review meeting for the Western Region was held at Hotel C&C, Tura, West Garo Hills, on January 21, 2025, and for the Eastern Region at the PRIME Hub, Diengkynthong, East Khasi Hills, on January 27, 2025. The meetings were led by Shri Wankit Kupar Swer, GM, Knowledge Management, Megha-LAMP, and attended by all component heads from the SPMU and project staff from the DPMUs.

The primary focus was on the project's financial status. Discussions also centered on ensuring the efficient use of these funds to meet project deadlines.

Key action points included the submission of utilization certificates, finalization of the IVCS business plan, credit linkage, computerization, and loan mobilization.



Additionally, follow-ups with IVCS, PGs, and SPs were highlighted, along with the completion and initiation of PRIME Hub constructions, operationalization of completed PRIME Hubs and Farmers' Markets, closure of all INRM physical and financial activities by March 2025, and documentation of project activities via Appverse.



MEGHALAYA LIVELIHOODS AND ACCESS TO MARKETS PROJECT

Inauguration of Rongtenabak IVCS Ltd. CMC Building in West Garo Hills



On 28th January 2025, Rongtenabak IVCS Ltd. from Dadenggre C&RD Block, West Garo Hills, inaugurated its CMC building at Rom Agal. Shri Arbinstone B. Marak, Hon'ble MLA of 48-Selsela (ST), graced the occasion as Chief Guest and officially inaugurated the facility. Other dignitaries present included Shri Arbiston A. Sangma, Deputy Chairman of MREGC and Block President of the 46th Phulbari Constituency, Dr. Blessa Ch. Momin, AH & Veterinary Officer, Dadenggre, the MBMA Team, and IVCS members.

The IVCS constructed the CMC building independently through community procurement, an effort acknowledged by the Chief Guest and other dignitaries. In appreciation of its contribution, the Hon'ble MLA awarded ₹1 lakh to the IVCS, while Shri Arbiston A. Sangma extended an additional ₹20,000.

MEGHALAYA LIVELIHOODS AND ACCESS TO MARKETS PROJECT

Dabram IVCS Ltd. Launches "Re'king": First Clinically Produced Sanitary Napkin from Garo Hills

Dabram IVCS Ltd. under MLAMP from Chokpot Development Block has launched "Re'king," the first clinically produced sanitary napkin from Garo Hills. The initiative began with a promotional campaign in December 2024, during which IVCS members and DPMU-South Garo Hills distributed sanitary pads to pregnant mothers and female patients at Baghmara Civil Hospital. Additionally, 50 packets were handed over to the DMHO for further distribution.

On 29th January 2025, the Office of the District Mission Coordinator (DMC), District Hub for Empowerment of Women, organized an exposure visit for students from Government Girls School, Baghmara, to Dabram IVCS Ltd. to observe the sanitary napkin manufacturing process. The Department of Social Welfare provided information on cleanliness and hygiene during the visit. The students showed interest in seeing the production of sanitary napkins in their district and expressed their intention to use the samples they received. "Re'king" is now available in local shops



Review Meeting on Group Facilitators' Work Held in Garo Hills



On 17th January 2025, the ISC&ED Team, along with the FOCUS Team, SPMU, conducted a Review Meeting on the work of Group Facilitators of Garo Hills at SMELC Building, Dakopgre, Tura. The session was attended by 129 Group Facilitators and focused on their roles, responsibilities, challenges, and concerns. Through this interaction several doubts were also clarified.

MEGHALAYA LIVELIHOODS AND ACCESS TO MARKETS PROJECT

Capacity-Building Initiatives for IVCS and Farmers Across Garo Hills



On 21st January 2025, DPMU, West Garo Hills, organized an Interaction Programme on Ginger Harvesting at Chenggaldare IVCS Ltd. for ginger-producing farmers and Farm Managers. The discussion focused on processing ginger and producing dry slices for the season.



On 23rd January 2025, DPMU, West Garo Hills, organized a One-Day Programme on the Planning and Execution of Working Capital and UC Submission for IVCS of Dadenggre Block at EFC Dadenggre. The session was attended by Chairmen and Secretaries who received working capital, with a product-wise briefing on funds provided under MLAMP and LIFCOM. Discussions covered proper utilization of working capital, repayment periods, and timely UC submission.

MEGHALAYA LIVELIHOODS AND ACCESS TO MARKETS PROJECT

Capacity-Building Initiatives for IVCS and Farmers Across Garo Hills



On 24th January 2025, DPMU, West Garo Hills, organized a One-Day Programme at Orchid Hall, Selsela, for IVCS of Selsela Block on planning and execution of working capital. IVCS representatives were briefed on product-wise planning, proper utilization of funds, and UC submission for the zero-interest working capital received under LAMP and LIFCOM.



On 29th January 2025, DPMU, South West Garo Hills, organized a One-Day Workshop on Kisan Credit Card Mobilization for IVCS under South West Garo Hills District. The session was led by resource persons Smt. Rikme Marak, Supervisor, Meghalaya Cooperative Apex Bank Garobadha Branch, and Mr. P. Chetry, Branch Manager, Meghalaya Rural Bank Ampati Branch.

MEGHALAYA LIVELIHOODS AND ACCESS TO MARKETS PROJECT

Training on PACS and IVCS Computerization Held in North Garo Hills



On 29th January 2025, DPMU, North Garo Hills, in collaboration with Meghalaya Cooperative Apex Bank (MCAB), Mendipathar, and the Cooperation Department, conducted a One-Day Training on PACS and IVCS Computerization at MMCS Hall, Mendipathar. The session was attended by Secretaries and IVCS Managers from 17 IVCS, with 50 members trained under Kharkutta Block.

Resource persons Shri Rakban Sangma, BM, MCAB Mendipathar, Shri Rahul Momin, Junior Cooperative Officer, Cooperation Department, and Shri Konteck Marak, Asst. Manager, Rural Finance, DPMU, North Garo Hills, discussed the importance and process of computerization, including the Digital Communication Tool (DCT). The MCAB Branch Manager highlighted how computerization would improve operational efficiency, speed up loan disbursement, and reduce transaction costs.

Participants suggested conducting more technical sessions on DCT and data management within the system.



MEGHALAYA LIVELIHOODS AND ACCESS TO MARKETS PROJECT

Support and Follow-Up Visits for Agricultural Initiatives in Garo Hills



On 27th January 2025, a follow-up visit confirmed that a CM Elevate beneficiary in Rerapara Block completed her pigsty with support from the grant and personal contributions.



On 21st January 2025, a Veterinary Doctor visited Tilgao IVCS to assess the Piggery and Poultry Bokashi. A team from Goat Trust also evaluated Service Providers to select farmers for Artificial Insemination training. The visit included inspecting ongoing construction work, and Team DPMU reviewed the field demonstration plot and the Processing Unit by Field Engineers.



A CM Elevate beneficiary in Rerapara Block with her ongoing pigsty construction during a follow-up visit on 28th January 2025

PROJECT FOR COMMUNITY BASED FOREST MANAGEMENT AND LIVELIHOODS IMPROVEMENT IN MEGHALAYA



SPMU Team Monitors Community Hall Construction in Gasuapara and Rongara Block

On January 27th, 2025, a dedicated team from the SPMU visited six villages within the Gasuapara and Rongara Block, South Garo Hills to engage with local residents and assess the ongoing construction of community halls. The visit provided an opportunity to understand the community's needs, evaluate the progress of the project, and ensure that the developments align with the expectations and requirements of the locals. The team offered valuable guidance and support to ensure the successful completion of the construction in these areas.



Van Dhan Vikash Kendra Awareness Program for Community Empowerment

Empowering tribal communities for a sustainable future! On January 27, 2025, the Van Dhan Vikash Kendra awareness program was held at MFC Zikzak Block, South West Garo Hills, under the MegLIFE-JICA project. With over 200 SHG members, the program focused on sustainable forest resource use, strengthening tribal entrepreneurship, and accessing government support for funding and marketing.

PROTECTION OF VULNERABLE CATCHMENT AREAS IN MEGHALAYA

VLMAP Program Conducted at Mawrashe under Myllem Block, East Khasi Hills



The Umiew CMU team, along with the SPMU and IC teams, conducted a Village Level Micro Action Plan (VLMAP) preparation exercise at Mawrashe on January 21, 2025. The event was attended by VPIC members and the local community. Discussions focused on prioritizing the list of proposed activities put forth by VPIC. Additionally, the team visited the site to review the proposed FPA contest and VLMAP interventions, which include plans for a check dam, fencing for the drinking water source, afforestation, and other initiatives.

VLMAP Program Conducted at Selbalgre under Rongram Block, West Garo Hills



On January 23, 2025, Ganol CMU, in collaboration with SPMU, the IC team, VPIC members, and the local community, conducted the VLMAP at Selbalgre in Rongram Block, West Garo Hills. The session included discussions on the prioritization list for VLMAP, site visits to FPA contest sites, proposed VLMAP sites, and a nursery inspection.

PROTECTION OF VULNERABLE CATCHMENT AREAS IN MEGHALAYA

Site inspection on Financial Participatory Appraisal contest proposals at Rengsanggre Village under Rongram Block



On January 24, 2025, a site inspection was conducted at Rengsanggre village under Rongram block to assess Financial Participatory Appraisal contest proposals and Springshed intervention measures. The inspection was carried out in collaboration with SPMU and the IC team. The team also demonstrated spring mapping to the VCF and identification for implementation measures were undertaken.

PROTECTION OF VULNERABLE CATCHMENT AREAS IN MEGHALAYA

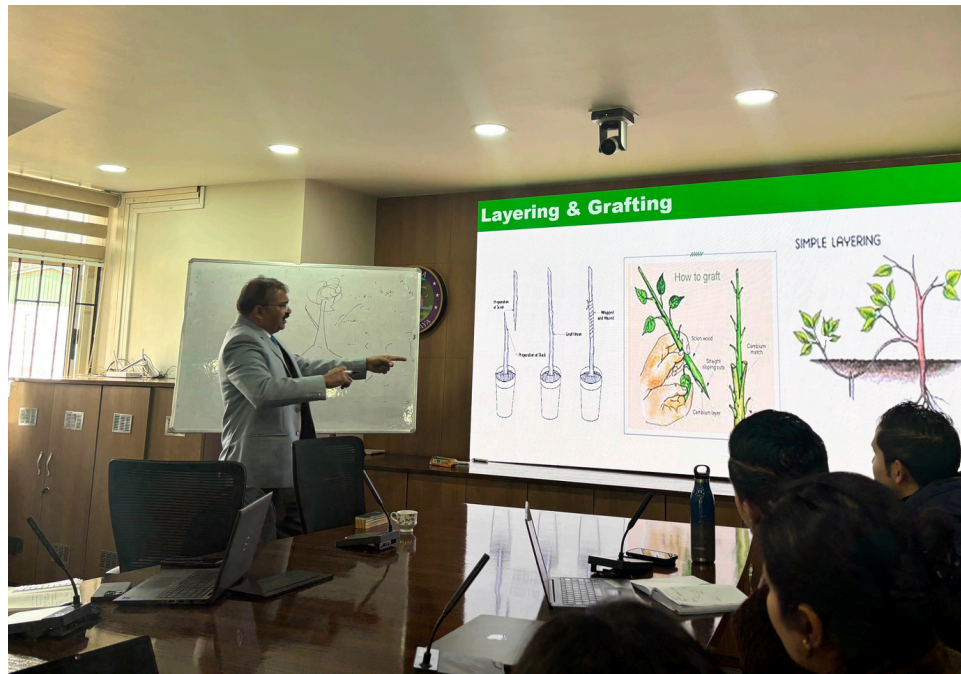
Financial Participatory Appraisal Contest at Mawkohmon Village Under Umiew Catchment



On January 28, 2024, the Umiew CMU team organized the Financial Participatory Appraisal Contest at Mawkohmon Village under the Mawphlang sub-division. The contest saw participation from 15 individuals, including youth and women from the village. The winning ideas are Proposal on Vermi Compost, Proposal on Mushroom Cultivation and Proposal on Pig Farming.

PROTECTION OF VULNERABLE CATCHMENT AREAS IN MEGHALAYA

MegARISE Staff Training on Plantation and Bamboo Propagation Techniques



A three-day training program was conducted for Catchment Management Unit (CMUs) and SPMU MegARISE staff on January 27th, 28th, and 29th, 2025, at the MegARISE office in Shillong. The training covered key topics such as Raising plantations in MegARISE project villages, Nursery development, pest management, and Record keeping on plantations and nurseries including Monitoring of plantations including bamboo, propagation that can be done through methods like seeds, rhizome division, culm cuttings, and tissue culture to produce new bamboo plants. The training was facilitated by IFS, (Retd.), Consultant PM, MegLIFE SPMU, and Technical Specialist, Project Management, MBDA

SUSTAINABLE LAND MANAGEMENT MEGHALAYA



Training Programme for Partner NGOs at MATI

A two-day training programme was organized at the Meghalaya Administrative Training Institute (MATI) on 21 and 22 January 2025 for the recently engaged NGO partners of the SLM Project. The training focused on equipping them with the knowledge and skills necessary for effective implementation of project activities.

The training also sought to enhance their understanding of SLM's goals, strengthened their capacity to engage with communities using participatory approaches, and provided practical tools for monitoring and evaluating project outcomes. This foundational effort aimed to ensure meaningful and sustainable implementation on the ground.

Participants included Shri. Augustus Suting, Additional Project Director (APD), SLM who provided a brief overview of the training programme and the expected outcomes and the MBMA team.

VC Meeting to discuss Loan Phase Preparations

A Virtual Conference (VC) between the Project Management Unit (PMU) of the SLM Project, KfW, and the IMC was held on 21 January 2025. Discussions focused on the preparation of the loan component document, emphasizing the incorporation of KfW's feedback and finalizing deadlines for the submission of crucial information. The agenda for the upcoming KfW Mission scheduled for 3 March 2025, along with other matters pertaining to the project's progress and implementation, was also reviewed. Participants included Shri Augustus Suting, Additional Project Director (APD), SLM and Dr. Florian Wieneke, Senior Portfolio Manager, KfW.

GREEN MEGHALAYA PAYMENT FOR ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

Forest marking and GREEN Meghalaya Payment For Ecosystem Service (PES) awareness in Sder Village



On January 28th, 2025, Green Field Associates held an awareness program in Sder Village, Khatarshnong Laitkroh Block, to introduce the GREEN Meghalaya PES scheme, which supports those committed to conserving natural forests for 30 years.



Forest boundary marking at Raid Nongblai in collaboration with the Forest Department team.

STORY OF THE WEEK

Chesrang S. Marak: Defying the Odds, Nurturing Dreams

Meghalaya's commitment to social inclusion and empowerment has fostered inspiring stories of resilience, like that of Chesrang S. Marak from Watregre village, West Garo Hills . Once a promising footballer with aspirations of following in Neymar Jr.'s footsteps, Chesrang's dreams were shattered by a severe ankle injury that left him unable to walk. Struggling with despair, he turned to farming, reconnecting with his roots and community.

In 2022, Chesrang became involved with the MegLIFE Project, which focuses on restoring natural resources and strengthening local communities. Embracing the project's mission, he took on the role of Secretary of the Village Project Implementation Committee in Watregre, demonstrating that physical limitations do not prevent one from making a meaningful impact.

Today, Chesrang is a key pillar of the project, actively monitoring afforestation activities, assisting in community nurseries, and mobilizing villagers to participate in conservation efforts. His perseverance and commitment exemplify the strength of the human spirit, turning adversity into an opportunity to create a lasting impact on his community and the environment.

His story is a testament to the power of resilience—showing that true champions are not only found on the football field but also in the heart of a community, working tirelessly for a better tomorrow.



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