



Guidelines

For Community Forest and Non-wood Forest Product Group Networks Formation

Department of Forests and Park Services
Ministry of Agriculture and Forests

2018

Copyright© Social Forestry and Extension Division

Department of Forests and Park Services
Ministry of Agriculture and Forests
Royal Government of Bhutan
Tel: 00975-2-323138/329268, Fax: 00975-2-328394
www.moaf.gov.bt

Foreword

The development of Community Forestry and Non-Wood Forest Products has come a long way in improving the rural livelihood, reducing poverty and sustainable management of forest resources.

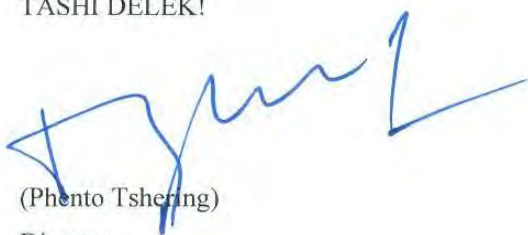
Since the first Community Forest Management plan (Dozam CF in Drametse, Mongar) was approved by the Department and handed over to the Community Forest Management Group in 1997, it took some time for the programme to spread in other Dzongkhags. However, today more than 740 community forests and about 140 non-wood forest product management groups have been established. With the number of CF and NWFP groups increasing, there are advantages in establishing and promoting networks amongst these groups. Networks facilitate peer learning on various aspects of community-based programmes and activities implemented in CFs and NWFPs, provide a platform to share expertise, build capacity and help in marketing of their products as a significant number of groups have potential to produce products for sale. The Forest and Nature Conservation Rules and Regulations 2017 have a specific section to support networks and associations mainly to strengthen good governance, sustainable utilisation of resources, equity, and common market access.

The development of “**Guidelines for Community Forest and Non-Wood Forest Product Group Network Formation**” is timely and undertaken by the Social Forestry and Extension Division (SFED), Department of Forests and Park Services (DoFPS) with support from HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation and Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). The aim is to provide a step-by-step guide to facilitate formation of networks and developing a networking proposal and plan. The guideline is primarily for forestry officials working closely with communities but CF and NWFP groups can also use it.

I hope this guideline will be used where required and will lead to networks that are useful for communities and for the country.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all the contributors who developed this guideline. I would also like to thank our long-time partner HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation Bhutan and SDC, for their technical and financial support, without which CF would not have reached this far in benefiting our communities.

TASHI DELEK!



(Phento Tshering)

Director

Department of Forests and Park Services

Abbreviations

CFs	: Community Forests/Forestry
CFMG	: Community Forest Management Group
CFO	: Chief Forestry Officer
DAMC	: Department of Agricultural Marketing and Cooperatives
DoFPS	: Department of Forests and Park Services
DT	: Dzongkhag Tshogdu
FNCR	: Forest and Nature Conservation Rules
FNCRR	: Forest and Nature Conservation Rules and Regulations
GAO	: Gewog Administrative Officer
GT	: Gewog Tshogde
HHs	: Households
HSI	: HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation
LGs	: Local Governments
MoAF	: Ministry of Agriculture and Forests
NWFPS	: Non-wood Forest Products
PFMP	: Participatory Forest Management Project
SDC	: Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation
SFED	: Social Forestry and Extension Division

Table of Contents

Foreword	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Abbreviations.....	4
CHAPTER I	6
Preliminary.....	6
1. Background	6
2. Objectives of the Guidelines.....	7
3. Who will use the Guidelines.....	7
4. Amendment.....	7
CHAPTER II	8
Process for CF and NWFP Networkformation.....	8
STEP 1 - Initiation of Network Formation.....	9
STEP 2 - Formation of Network.....	9
STEP 3 - Approval of Network.....	10
STEP 4 - Implementation modality of Network Plan.....	11
Annexure 1: Approval Sheets – Chiwog Level	12
Annexure 2: Approval Sheets –Gewog Level	13
Annexure 3: Approval Sheets –Dzongkhag Level	14
Annexure 4: Approval Sheets –Regional/National Level	15
Annexure 5: Template for Proposal.....	16
Annexure 6: Checklist/Assessment for approval process –	17
Annexure 7: List of CFMG Name and Signature of the Chairperson.....	17

CHAPTER I

Preliminary

1. Background

In 1979 His Majesty the Fourth Druk Gyalpo, Jigme Singye Wangchuck, proclaimed, *“the participation of the local community is the key to successful conservation and utilisation of forest resources”*.

This served as the inspiration to kick-start the social forestry programme in Bhutan. In 1985, His Majesty also declared 2nd June, Coronation Day, as the Social Forestry Day. The day is still celebrated in all Schools and Institutions across the country by planting tree saplings.

The community forestry (CF) programme began with the adoption of decentralisation policies of the early 1990s that realised the importance of people’s participation in management of forest. The first CF, Dozam in Drametse Gewog, Mongar Dzongkhag, was handed over to the community forest management group (CFMG) in 1997. Initially, the programme could not progress as desired despite support by many area development projects. Only from 2001 considerable progress was made and this is evident from the impressive increase in the number of functional CFs and CFMGs. This increase has also to with the substantial improvement in the capacity of forestry staff supporting the programme.

Legal instruments became more enabling with more positive changes in the Forest and Nature Conservation Rules, 2006. The inclusion of CF network and associations section in the Forest and Nature Conservation Rules and Regulations, 2017 made it more conducive for CF and NWFP groups to work together.

The National Forest Policy, 2011 “empowers rural communities to manage forests sustainably for socio-economic and environmental benefits, poverty reduction and to contribute to overall sustainable forest management at national level”. Bhutan’s National Strategy for Community Forestry, 2010 describes the community forestry development goal as, “rural communities able to meet the majority of their timber demands from their own community forests and derive economic benefits from the sustainable management of their forests through sale of forest products and services”. Likewise, the National Strategy for the Development of Non-Wood Forest Products in Bhutan, 2008 states, “in order to reach economies of scales, the formation of groups and/ or associations can help to access markets and to bargain for better prices”. It supports formation of association, which could be formation of network, and networking of NWFP groups.

The Forest and Nature Conservation Act, 1995 states “The Ministry may make rules for the establishment of community forests on Government Reserved Forest. The Forest and Nature Conservation Rules and Regulations, 2017 under section 108 provides for formation of CF network and association to strengthen good governance, sustainable utilisation of resources, equity, and common market access.

With favourable forest policy and legislations in place, the growth of CF and NWFP groups have seen considerable progress. This guideline on CF and NWFP group network formation

has been developed at a time when CF and NWFP groups are increasing and the need for appropriate knowledge on networks and networking is felt necessary.

2. Objectives of the Guidelines

- i. The primary objectives of this guideline are;
 - (1) To provide a step-by-step guidance to form networks to fulfil the aspirations of both the network members and the approval requirement of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests;
 - (2) To assist forestry officials to facilitate formation of CF and NWFP networks; and
 - (3) To provide uniformity in preparation of proposals for formation of CF and NWFP networks and networking, and completion of the approval process.

3. Who will use the Guidelines

- ii. This guideline will serve as a guiding tool for the forestry officials at the gewogs, Territorial Divisions and Parks that would be involved in facilitating formation of CF and NWFP networks; including monitoring of the networks.

4. Amendment

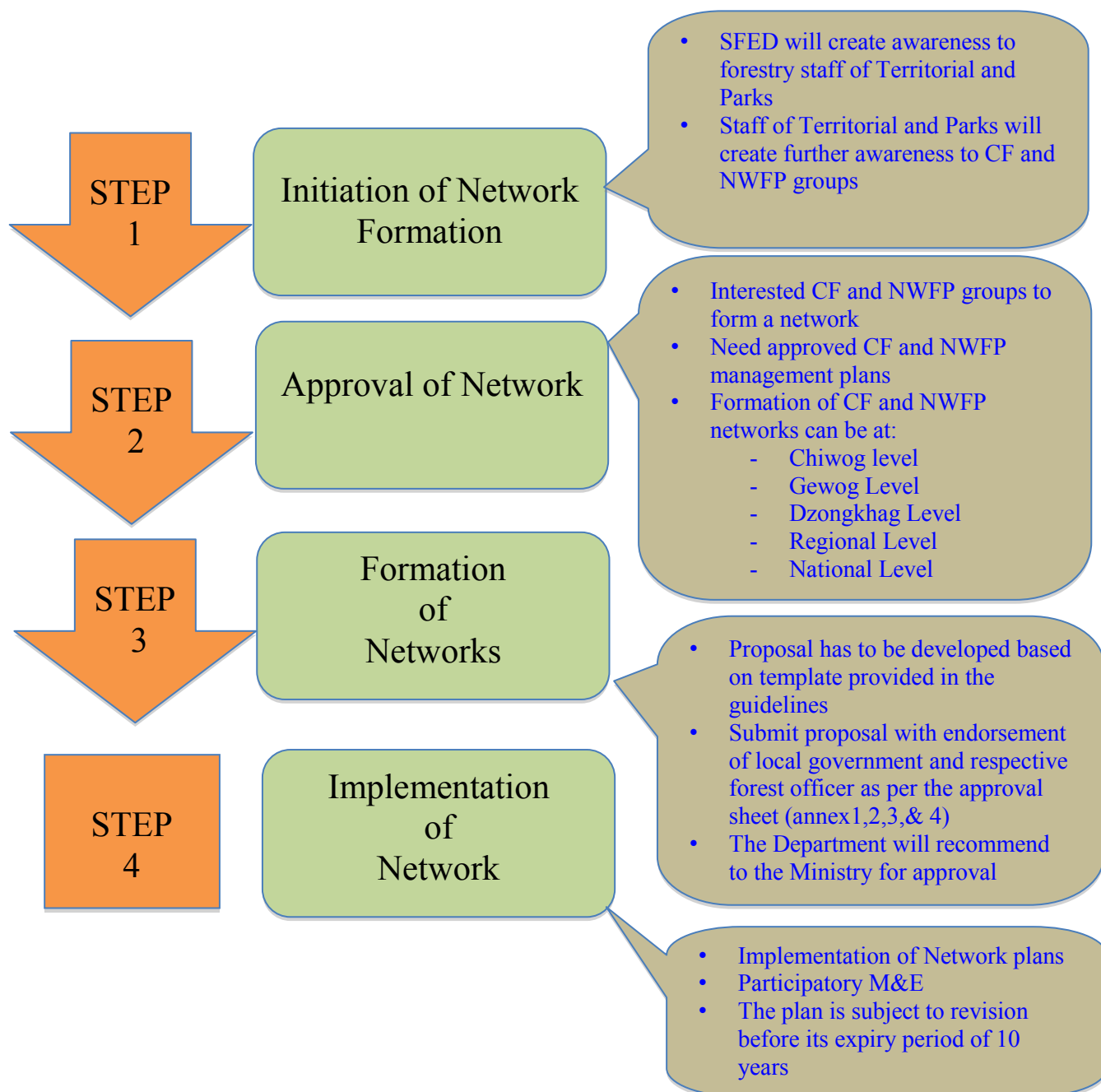
- i. This guideline may be amended by the Ministry on the recommendation of the Department of Forests and Park Services and; as and when necessary.

CHAPTER II

Process for CF and NWFP Network formation

This guideline provides step-by-step suggestions to facilitate formation of networks of CF and NWFP groups to strengthen governance, resources management, access to markets and income generation, and sharing of expertise to build capacity.

The following steps are suggested to provide guidance to establish and manage CF and NWFP group networks:



STEP 1 - Initiation of Network Formation

Awareness

- i. The Social Forestry & Extension Division will be responsible to develop awareness materials and take the lead role in creating awareness among the forestry personnel working in Territorial Divisions and Parks until they are competent enough to facilitate formation of CF and NWFP networks.
- ii. The field staff will further create awareness among CFMGs and NWFP Groups and may also conduct awareness among local governments, local leaders and other relevant stakeholders.
- iii. The Territorial Divisions and Parks shall be responsible to initiate and create awareness to CF and NWFP groups.
- iv. Awareness on network and networking may also be done through mass media.

STEP 2 - Formation of Network

Eligibility to form the network

- i. All CFs and NWFP groups approved by the DoFPS are eligible to join the network.

Formation of network at different levels

- i. For formation of network at different levels, forestry officials in the field should be involved in the process to make the process transparent and instil more sense of ownership.
- ii. Forestry officials may initiate network formation with CF and NWFP groups at the Chiwog, Gewog, Dzongkhag, Regional or National levels (refer Annexes 1,2,3 & 4 for network approval at various levels).
- iii. The CFMGs and NWFP groups should define the purpose of the networks upon clear understanding of the potentials of working in networks and on benefits of networks.
- iv. Some of the suggested objectives of the network, which could be considered while forming the network are:
 - Governance of CFMGs and NWFP groups;
 - Sustainable utilisation of resources;
 - Equitable resources sharing of the CF including fund;
 - Equity and market access;
 - Sharing of experiences and knowledge /peer learning;
 - Common capacity building, etc.

Managing Networks

The setup of networks at different levels may vary depending upon the level of network and purpose; however, an organizational set up is important and required for the network to function smoothly.

- i. A Network Committee should be formed to manage and implement the network.
- ii. The Network Committee may consist of office bearers (suggested positions are Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer) for planning and management of the network.
- iii. The Network Committee should be encouraged to employ school leavers or youth with some payment system. .

By-laws

- i. Each network should frame by-laws for smooth functioning and effective governance of the network group.
- ii. The Network Committee shall be responsible to adopt by-laws and endorse the network plans for approval.

Resource Mobilization

- i. Resource mobilisation is one of the important activities under the networking programme and some of the possible sources for resource are:
 1. Contributions from members of CFMGs and NWFP groups;
 2. Project based funds (in which case approval from the government is required); and
 3. Other sources

STEP 3 – Approval of Network

- i. The proposal for the formation of Network should be made as per the template prescribed under Annexure 5 of this guideline.
- ii. The approval for the formation of network at the chiwog, gewog, dzongkhag, regional and national levels should be accorded in the approval sheet prescribed under Annexure 1, 2, 3 & 4 of this Guideline.
- iii. The DoFPS shall carry out review of the proposal based on the checklist prescribed under Annexure 6 of this Guideline.
- iv. The SFED shall maintain the list of CFMG in the format prescribed under Annexure 7 of this Guideline.
- v. The duration for network plan shall be at least for 10 years at par with the plan period of CF management plans.
- vi. The duration shall be subject to revision or renewal upon the mutual consent of the members three months before the expiry of the current terms.

STEP 4 – Implementation modality of Network Plan

- i. Network and networking plan will be implemented once the proposal is endorsed and approved by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests.
- ii. The Network Committee, CF and NWFP groups and the Department of Forests and Park Services will monitor the implementation of network.
- iii. Monitoring will include plan and progress monitoring, progress report monitoring and adherence to the objectives set by the network.
- iv. Monitoring will also be done through internal or external auditing and review of work plan and reports.

Responsibilities of the Department

The concerned functional division and field offices under the Department of Forests and Park Services will carry out the following responsibilities:

- (a) Technical support, wherever necessary.
- (b) Capacity building of the network executive members to manage the networks
- (c) Encouragement of participatory and multi-stakeholder monitoring of the implementation of plans and activities of the networks.
- (d) Conduct meetings of network members at various levels
- (e) Organizing network forums especially at the dzongkhag, regional and national levels.
- (f) Facilitation of forum at dzongkhag, regional and national level.
- (g) Documentation and sharing outcomes of various forums to reach all stakeholders of networks
- (h) Facilitate approval and review of proposal

Annexure 1: Approval Sheets – Chiwog Level

Name of the Network:	
Number of the CFs/NWFPs groups: Detail name of the groups in annex)	
Proposed/Applied by Signature: Name: Chairperson of the network group	Endorsed by: Signature Name: Chairperson of Chiwog (Tshokpa)Chiwog: Remarks, if any:
Endorsement by: Signature: Name: Chairperson of the Gewog (Gup) Gewog: Remarks, if any:	Technically Reviewed by: Signature: Name: Chief Forestry Officer Division/Parks: Remarks, if any
Recommended by: Director Department of Forests and Park Services Date:	
Approved by: Secretary Ministry of Agriculture and Forests Date	

Full network proposal document attached

Annexure 2: Approval Sheets –Gewog Level

Name of the Network:	
Number of the CFs/NWFPs groups: Detail name of the groups in annex)	
Proposed/Applied by: Signature: Name: Chairperson of the network group	Endorsed by: Signature: Name: Chairperson of the Gewog (Gup) Gewog: Remarks, if any:
Endorsement by: Signature: Name: Dzongkhag Tshogdu Thrizin Dzongkhag: Remarks, if any:	Technically Reviewed by: Signature: Name: Chief Forestry Officer Division/Parks: Remarks, if any
Recommended by: Director Department of Forests and Park Services Date:	
Approved by: Secretary Ministry of Agriculture and Forests Date	

Full network proposal document attached

Annexure 3: Approval Sheets –Dzongkhag Level

Name of the Network:	
Number of the CFs/NWFPs groups: Detail name of the groups in annex)	
Proposed/Applied by: Name: Signature: Chairperson of the network group	
Endorsement by: Signature: Name: Dzongkhag Tshogdu Thrizin Dzongkhag: Remarks, if any:	Technically Reviewed by: Signature: Name: Chief Forestry Officer Division/Parks Remarks, if any
Recommended by: Dzongdag Dzongkhag Administration Dzongkhag:	Director Department of Forests and Park Services Date:
Approved by: Secretary Ministry of Agriculture and Forests Date	

Full network proposal document attached

Annexure 4: Approval Sheets –Regional/National Level

Name of the Network:	
Number of the CFs/NWFPs groups: Detail name of the groups in annex)	
Proposed/Applied by: Name: Signature: Chairperson of the network group	
Technically Reviewed and Endorsement by: Technical Committee of the Department, Department of Forests and Park Services Members: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1.2.3.4.5.6. Remarks, If any	
Recommended by: Director Department of Forests and Park Services Date:	
Approved by: Secretary Ministry of Agriculture and Forests Date	

Full network proposal document attached

Annexure 5: Template for Proposal

1. Cover page
2. Table of content
3. Abbreviations and definitions
4. Approval Sheet
5. Executive summary
6. Introduction
7. Objectives
8. Strategies
9. Management of Networks
 - a. By-laws
 - b. Resources
10. Plan activities
11. Monitoring of Networks
12. Terms of the Network
13. Revision of network plans

Annexure 6: Checklist/Assessment for approval process –

The Department will do this assessment

Sl. No.	Processes	Yes (√)	No (X)
1	Awareness created and members are aware of the needs and benefits of networks and networking		
2	The network members agree to work in networks (documented agreement)		
3	Network members are registered with DoFPS (approved CFMP and CF ownership certificates)		
4	The purpose and objectives of the networks are aligned with National Forest Policy 2011		
5	The purpose and objectives of the networks are aligned with Forest and nature Conservation Rules and Regulation 2017		
6	The By-laws lay down the functioning of the networks consistent with purpose and objectives of the networks		
7	The proposal of network is as per the guideline		
8	Approval sheet is signed by all the agencies as per the standard approval in the guideline		
9	The resources requirement and mobilisation plans are sufficient to implement the planned activities		
10	Appointed Chairperson, Secretary General, Treasure and Coordinator with clear terms of reference for the Network		

Annexure 7: List of CFMG Name and Signature of the Chairperson

Sl. No.	Name of the CF	Name and Signature of the Chairperson



HELVETAS
Swiss Intercooperation

BHUTAN