

Operational guideline for Entry Point Activities (EPA) under catchment Area Treatment Plan

Experience has shown that the impact of programs to improve both ecology and community livelihood is greater when the community plays an active role in planning the interventions and participating with the implementation process. Catchment Area Treatment Planning shall besides scientific and policy inputs shall also aim to empower community members to take an active role in improving the health of their watersheds. Work on soil and water conservation is an ongoing process of all land based activity of cultivation and construction. Further, treatment of catchment of water sources is necessary for arresting and controlling the rate of siltation along the course of water flow. Since these nature's system functions with human being, their settlements and activities, the participatory process of treating catchment of water for large dam reservoirs would bring win-win situation for both. Entry Point Activities (EPA) are part of community mobilization process to get more and more participation of the community in the micro watershed planning. Development of micro watershed plan in a participatory process takes around 6-8 months as it involves certain steps. It is difficult for the PIA to get full participation of the community in watershed planning process for long six months or more without doing any activity for the benefit of the villagers. Such activities which may need to be addressed in urgency for the benefit of villagers and some others for the community benefit/welfare are taken before execution of the micro watershed work-plan.

Objectives of Entry Point Activities (EPA)

- To mobilize them for effective and participatory project implementation
- To gain confidence of the target community on the project and their management skills
- To endow tangible assets to target communities;
- To provide short-term financial benefit and incentives to the villagers (wages);

Guiding Principles of Entry Point Activities:

It was difficult for the project implementing agency to identify EPAs with rational, as the project sites are the poorest areas where problems are enormous. However to mobilize villagers an entry point activity identified should not raise any conflict at village level and it should benefit common people of the village. A large investment may always raise expectations of others who are not benefited out of that activity; hence the PIA had developed a rational for any EPA

with large investment. It is always suggested that an EPA should be of low cost investment and should give benefit to larger communities. So some of the general principles of EPA are

- EPA identification should be initiated after mobilisation and formation of watershed association & watershed committee.
- EPA activities should be accomplished within the preparatory phase of the implementation stage.
- EPA may be a bundle of different activities and not necessarily a single activity for a village.
- EPA need not be capital intensive.
- No cost or low cost activities may be achieved through community mobilization and linkages with concerned departments may also be considered as EPA.
- Villagers should not be encouraged for such entry point activity which may disrupt communal harmony at village level.
- Encourage villagers for maximum contribution in physical and financial form.
- Facilitate the process to get maximum participation of villagers at planning stage.
- PIA facilitated the process to create an environment where a group of villagers take initiative to implement the identified EPA.
- The activities undertaken under EPA component shall have prior approval of general body of Watershed Association
- The entry point activities should be the part of the Detailed Project Report.

Implementing Bodies:

The PIA team members would consult the GB for identifying the need of entry point activities with priorities. Interests of dependent people on community resources like forests, gochar, water bodies shall be given high priority, and be taken up. Since the fund for EPA is limited, emphasis should be on activity(ies) that can be fully completed from the available fund, instead of taking up part only of several works. However, if WA members agree to contribute cash, free labour to augment project support, more projects can be taken up. EPAs may include more than one activity. Preference shall be given to those items that will eventually have gainfully utilized by the villagers. The lower priority item could be also implemented if WA can generate fund by way of marketing forest products, or on getting funds from other supports.

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Simultaneously, involvement of users in EPA has significant implications for improving the sustainability of assets created under this component. The user group consists of those who derive direct benefits from a particular EPA work. It is suggested that appropriate level of user group participation may be ensured for implementation of identified EPA. The activities will be supervised by PIA and his WDT team. PIA along with watershed committee should form **EPA Working Group** for each proposed activity to oversee the implementation process. The working groups should implement, maintain and operate the assets created under the EPA. However for implementation purpose, working group shall elect a leader who will act on behalf of the entire user group for implementation of the proposed activity.

General EPA identification procedure:

EPA under CATP will be executed in line with the common guideline and stipulations of the CATP, EPA Operation guideline. Entry-Point Activities are necessary part to orient the community members towards project involvement. Direct dialogue about the intervention can create a negative attitude among them and hence, some innovative method should be applied to bring about a positive air in the project area. However, these activities cannot be implemented blindly. There has to be some need assessment to be carried out initially to identify the community needs. Need assessment should be followed by community mobilization meetings where consultations from the community can be included again. **EPA must create tangible assets of community to support livelihood standard.**

Needs Assessment & Identification of EPA:

- The Entry point activity should solve the pressing problems of the community and benefit larger sections of the society .These activities need to be area and community specific
- Facilitate villagers for identification of EPA through a series of informal discussion in small groups instead of doing in a large group.
- The urgent need of the local as well deprived community should be assessed through Focused Group Discussions (FGD)
- PIA and his team should identify certain critical needs of the community through focus group discussion on certain significant sectors of the area like agriculture, drinking water, health & sanitation etc.
- Using the participatory prioritizing methods PIA and his team will prioritize the community problems & most critical needs and discuss the potential measures (EPA components) towards solving them.