

Guidelines for Implementation of the WAJIB Approach in Ethiopia

***(Based on experiences of the Integrated Forest management Project
Adaba-Dodola (IFMP), Oromia region, Ethiopia)***

(Second Edition)

WAJIB is a Participatory Forest Management Approach and an abbreviation for “Forest Dwellers Association” in Afaan Oromo



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Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH

January 2005

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FOREWORD

This guideline is updated from the previous issue of "WAJIB Implementation Guidelines" that was produced in January 2003. It is an outcome of a practical, field-based process of developing, testing and implementing a new participatory forest management approach, WAJIB, in the Adaba-Dodola forest. It is prepared from lessons drawn from the Integrated Forest Management Project Adaba-Dodola (IFMP) and references from similar guidelines related to community based natural resources management.

It is likely that refinements will continue, leading to further changes and improvements. As the WAJIB approach is now starting to be adopted more widely in the Oromia region and is also expected to be mainstreamed into the regular working practices of the forest service, it is hoped that the guideline itself will contribute to this.

The guideline was written especially with the district level forest experts and development workers in mind and is designed to encourage them to implement the WAJIB approach with due consideration to situation-specific issues related to different forest types. It can serve to provide the user with insights into how to go about implementing a Participatory Forest Management approach. It should be kept in mind that this is not a rigid guidance and one is free to be flexible and creative along the path. Needless to say, that the combination with other aspects of learning by doing (training, exchange of experiences, etc.) will help to make the best use out of such guidelines.

As this second edition of the WAJIB implementation guideline was being prepared, many colleagues provided valuable tips, constructive comments and helpful suggestions. Much of this feedback, as possible, has been incorporated into the guideline. Special thanks in this regard are due to Dr. Antje Fischer, Ato Girma Amante, Ato Aklilu Ameha and Mr Martin Neumann, all of whom, among others, have worked for the realization of WAJIB as a feasible forest conservation approach.

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PREFACE

The continued deforestation and forest degradation has revealed that conventional approaches that are in practice to manage the forests in Oromia have not been able to guarantee the conservation of our forest resources. It has become clearer that natural resources and rural livelihoods are intrinsically connected. As prohibiting resource utilization by local communities and separating rural livelihoods from the multiple uses of local natural resources in the past approaches have not been possible.

It was therefore necessary to consider a management system in which local people in the form of grass roots institutions have defined control with rights and obligations over forest resources leading to sustainable use. The major issue was coming up with appropriate methods under which this can be done legally. Huge efforts have been made by Oromia Agriculture and Rural Development Bureau in partnership with the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) to develop a new concept of forest conservation which is anchored on people's participation giving way to the WAJIB concept. In the process, focus was not only on developing techniques but also on making them feasible in the sense that the approach will be able to be implemented within existing government structures and capacity.

Following the successful achievement of developing a feasible Participatory Forest Management (PFM) approach in the Adaba-Dodola forest, the preparation of this guideline was found necessary mainly for two reasons. First, the approach that has shown positive results in Adaba-Dodola needs to be exposed to further test in a different forest condition and social set-up. Second, the preliminary success obtained so far and the increasing inclination by forestry and other professionals towards PFM has marvellously encouraged the regional government to take the WAJIB idea to other forest areas as quickly as possible, hoping the process will halt further destruction of the forests in the region. Given the success observed, experiences gained so far and most importantly, the favourable policy environment, we can continue expanding this approach.

Some guidance, therefore, is needed for field workers on how to go about the implementation of WAJIB (or a modified version of it, depending on specific conditions). In this connection, the lessons learned through the Integrated Forest Management Project Adaba-Dodola (IFMP) are compiled and made available in the form of necessary phases and steps to be followed.

My deepest appreciation goes to all those involved and worked hard to make the WAJIB approach a reality. I do hope that this guideline will be helpful for district level foresters and community development workers to organize community groups in the context of participatory natural resources management.

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INTRODUCTION

1. The WAJIB approach: what is it?

To get a concept of the WAJIB approach, it is useful to start with a basic definition and purpose: What is the WAJIB approach within the framework of participatory natural resources management and what purpose does it serve?

WAJIB is an abbreviation in the Oromo language for *forest dwellers association*. The WAJIB approach helps to make certain that local people can share the responsibilities and the benefits of forest conservation and can take decisions about forestry issues that affect their lives. The major purpose is to ensure that forest management makes a real contribution to secure local livelihoods thereby securing also the future of the forest resources.

WAJIB recognizes that the resource users (the forest dwellers) are no longer marginal, instead, accepts that they are partners with a right to have a say in the management of the local forests and who expect professional services and assistance from the foresters. The process leads to collaboration and a relationship of equals. Most importantly, it demonstrates that if people can get secure access to the forests that have long been "protected" by the state alone, there is a huge potential for forests to play a substantial role in contributing to food security and transforming people's lives.

Prior to the initiation of the WAJIB idea, the realization of forest conservation was believed to have come through conventional ways including the setting up of village forest protection committees, awareness creation, village development activities (as a means of buying cooperation), enrichment planting, forest guards, area closures, etc. (A case in point is the Adaba-Dodola forest).

Experience later revealed that this was not the case. Rather, the best arrangement was to grant exclusive use rights to the primary stakeholders (the forest dwellers) through consensus by the whole village community (including the non-forest dwellers). This is then formulated as a management agreement to be signed by the partners (the user group and the government). The lesson from this process of building consensus among different interest groups to formulate a viable agreement has begun to get attention in the regional forest conservation undertakings.

The WAJIB agreement contains important aspects about the management of the forest resources in a way that ensures the community's confidence. The agreement confirms the boundaries of the forest resource and specifies who owns it, who uses it and in what condition. The agreement assigns roles and responsibilities (including those of the forest service). Harvesting rules ensure that utilization is kept at sustainable levels and that sensitive areas are protected and degraded areas rehabilitated. In exchange for the use rights granted, the user groups pay forest rent to the government. The revenue from the forest rent is divided between the government and the village administration in a way of benefit sharing. Mechanisms are put in place to resolve conflicts and to provide for action

to be taken against offenders. These mechanisms are based on by-laws, which the forest-user groups develop for their specific situation.

Implementing the WAJIB approach can be time-consuming and tedious, particularly, if it is not supported by local authorities. It is an approach that requires sufficient effort to create a consensus on new institutional arrangements for forest resource management. The forest experts are expected to be the key figures in the consensus-building process. Therefore, community participation in forest conservation should not be taken as an end to the forester's roles and responsibilities. On the contrary, the foresters will come across a lot more duties in moving the process forward.

Given the complexity of ecological and social systems, the best way to follow is one of adaptive management (learning-by-doing). It is advisable to look forward to a positive outcome that, in addition to a proper management of the forest, the whole issue contributes to some important aspects of social life such as democracy, development and equity. Furthermore, it should be noted that the foresters' commitment and determination lies at the centre of a successful WAJIB approach implementation.

2. The Principles

The following points are the underlying principles of the WAJIB approach:

- (a) Local people are capable of managing forest provided they are given proper rights and duties.
- (b) Resources such as forest are not enough for all community members therefore identification of primary target groups in forest conservation is essential.
- (c) In the case of some degraded forests such as Adaba-Dodola, granting exclusive user rights to forest dwellers seems to be the only proper approach to conserve the forest.
- (d) Indigenous knowledge of local people in areas of forest management must be appreciated and respected to bring about necessary changes in forest conservation.
- (e) The user groups (forest dwellers) must derive tangible benefits to actively continue participating in forest conservation.

3. The Objectives

The objectives of the development and implementation of the WAJIB approach are to:

- Empower local people in forest management
- Improve livelihoods of the forest dwellers through sustainable forest utilization
- Increase forest cover in WAJIB managed areas and ensure improved forest condition
- Contribute to institutionalization of PFM as an alternative forest conservation approach

4. The Strategies

The WAJIB approach is based on four strategies to meet its objectives:

- (a) *Regulating access*: forest dwellers are granted exclusive user rights with clearly defined and agreed rights and duties.
- (b) *Reducing pressure*: the non-forest dwellers are encouraged and supported to plant trees for various purposes around their homesteads outside the natural forest area.

- (c) *Making trees profitable*: the forest dwellers are encouraged to harvest wood-resources in a sustainable manner and market the products under controlled conditions.
- (d) *Making forests profitable*: possibilities for non-wood income from forest (e.g. eco-tourism, trophy hunting, etc.) are assessed and forest dwellers are assisted to get a fair share of the benefits gained from the implementation of the identified options.

5. The Purpose of this Guideline

This guideline serves a number of purposes. It helps to:

- give an overview of steps and procedures that need to be followed in WAJIB implementation
- identify issues, problems and opportunities that should be considered in the WAJIB approach
- enable district foresters and development workers to initiate, implement and monitor the WAJIB approach in their respective areas
- assist those interested in working with communities at grass roots levels
- encourage people in Ethiopia to engage in similar undertakings

THE SIX STEPS TO WAJIB IMPLEMENTATION

The whole process is summarized in the steps outlined in the following chapters. The first steps deal with the necessary actions to be taken to start up WAJIB in an area including the identification of the forest and making necessary preparations. The following steps are about negotiation of the details on important issues of the approach together with the stakeholders, planning of the framework, formalization and institutionalization of the system. In the last steps, the necessary follow-up activities of WAJIB implementation and monitoring of changes are described.

STEP I. IDENTIFICATION

1. A possible situation at the beginning

- Different bodies including local communities, government representatives at different levels, elders, user groups within local communities, NGOs, individuals, etc. are concerned about the condition of the forest area.
- Non-local actors are forcing their way into the forest to extract resources with little or no respect to existing regulations or traditional rules.
- An open access situation has resulted in resources being exploited in an unsustainable way.
- Forest conservation efforts by the forest service are not achieving success as intended due to various reasons including lack of enforcement of laws.
- Designated forest areas are more or less inhabited by communities and the pressure on them is high.
- The existing forest resources are diminishing and falling short to meet the demands of the communities that depend on them.
- Unless a proper mechanism is put in place and the forest is conserved, severe negative impacts are expected concerning the local climate and the conditions in the respective watershed.

2. Getting ready to start the WAJIB approach

The first step in the process should be a realistic assessment of the need for WAJIB in the area and the feasibility of the process. The outcome of this exercise is the identification of a potential forest site by the forest experts engaged in WAJIB implementation. Once this has been done, what should follow is to establish a strong working partnership with the local leaders (district and village) and members of the various forest interest groups including those living outside of the forest.

2.1 Identifying a forest site

A new forest area for WAJIB implementation could be self-selecting in the sense that the village leaders will have heard about it and invite the forest experts to work in the area. Or the forest service may come up with a list of potential forest areas in the district for community based conservation. In either case, the forest experts can use certain criteria to determine whether starting WAJIB implementation in the area is viable. The following points provide sample criteria for site selection.

Box 1. Some criteria for forest site selection for WAJIB implementation

About the People

- Do villagers have experience of cooperation among themselves and with the forest service?
- Do people have a sense of ownership of the forest resources?
- Are there examples of previous collective action, such as building a school, feeder road, irrigation systems, revolving credit scheme, etc?
- Are conflicts among the villagers and with others limited to a minimum? Can the WAJIB process be implemented without excessive conflict?
- Have requests been received from the villagers to start a participatory forest management process?

About the Status of the Forest

- Do the local communities depend on the forest for their livelihood?
- Are the forests degraded? Is the degradation continuing?
- Are there problems in meeting the day-to-day needs concerning forest products? Is there a shortage in the supply of forest products?

About Institutions

- Is there a tradition of more positive relationships than conflicts between the responsible institutions?
- Are there local traditional systems of natural resource management? What are their main features and strengths? Are those still valid today?
- Are there community based institutions (forest related or not)?
- Is the government ready and willing to hand over forest lands to communities?

If it is found that your answers to the above-mentioned questions are:

- Mostly positive → start discussion with community members about WAJIB.
- A mixture of both positive and negative → discussion could be initiated but look for other areas that should get priority.
- Mostly negative → better wait until an appropriate situation occurs.

2.2 Meeting the local leaders and community members

In meeting with local leaders, the purpose should be to introduce and explain the objectives of participatory forestry, national or regional forest policy, legislation and strategies. Furthermore, the nature of WAJIB should be explained. The community leaders should be asked if they agree to proceed and which advice they give on how to do so. The forest experts should be aware of the cultural procedures to be followed in such cases. A series of introductory meetings should be scheduled as necessary with the local community leaders. Box 2 indicates examples of issues to be discussed during such meetings.

Box 2. Meeting with local leaders and community members

A general introductory meeting should include the following points:

- An introduction of who the forest experts are and why they are there;
- The changing roles of forest experts from "protectionist" to facilitation and advising;
- An explanation of what participatory forestry means;
- Brief explanation of existing forest policy, legislation and strategies in relation to WAJIB;
- An explanation of the importance of involving local communities;
- An explanation of what the roles of the villagers and the forest service will be; etc.

To make the meeting lively, different approaches such as posters, small group discussions, slides, videos etc. can be used wherever available.

Once the local leaders are comfortable with this process, the forest experts can plan a public meeting to introduce the idea of participatory forest management (WAJIB) and to request local views and opinions. The forest experts should also seek formal agreement about continuing with WAJIB implementation. As a follow-up, smaller meetings for groups who were unable to attend, such as women, should be arranged. Points worth considering during the preparation of village community meetings are given in Box 3.

Box 3. Planning for a village meeting

- Arrange the meeting and inform participants in advance.
- Check that the time is convenient for all.
- Make sure people know the purpose of the meeting, and who is expected to attend (when the meeting has been organized by the forest experts rather than by villagers).
- The day before the meeting is to take place, make sure it is still possible to conduct it.
- Make sure that women are able to attend the meeting and that the meeting is being conducted at a time and place convenient also for them.
- Make sure that necessary materials needed for the meeting are prepared (e.g. illustrative posters, etc.).
- Follow up all the actions agreed at the last meeting before going to the next meeting.
- Make sure that all the necessary forestry experts are able to attend, together with any other government or non-governmental representative.
- If villagers request the presence of a representative from the district administration to a meeting, then this should be arranged.

Sometimes responses could be poor when the forest experts begin to work with local communities to initiate a participatory forest management process. They may find that people are unwilling to turn up for meetings and that representation from groups within the village, particularly women and people living in remote parts of the forest, is low. Persons

who think the process might bring obstacles to their personal benefits from the forest could strongly oppose the whole idea. This can affect the quality and pace of the process. The following points can help in handling community meetings.

2.2.1 When and how to organize meetings

The following questions may be discussed among the staff based on their knowledge of the farming and cultural systems of the area.

- What are the best times to carry out meetings with members of the local community (including separate meetings for women if necessary)?
- What is the peak time for agricultural activities?
- What is the peak time for festivals and other important events?

It should be noted that certain times such as festival or funeral days, market days and harvest or planting periods should be avoided to schedule meetings unless proposed by the communities themselves.

For forest experts conducting meetings for the first time with villagers to discuss their involvement in forest management, it can be a very frightening experience. Necessary preparation for such meetings will bring better results. Following in Box 4 are some points to remember.

Box 4. Facilitating meetings (Things to remember):

- Make sure you are generally accepted by most of those involved
- Be able to listen and try to relate with everyone
- Help the participants to identify and agree on rules and procedures of the meeting
- Make sure that logistics necessary for the meeting are prepared
- Ensure that the process takes place in accordance with the agreed rules and everyone has a fair chance to participate and contribute
- Ensure a comfortable situation in the meeting
- In the case of a meeting of representatives, check that the representatives really represent their "groups" and they are not merely self-appointed
- Promote the best possible communication among the participants by re-phrasing points, asking questions, suggesting the exploration of new ideas
- Be able to pose key questions (for example, on the root causes of forest related problems and what needs to be done to reverse the situation)
- Help a group to be conscious of itself and of its opportunities (if one seems to be marginalized)
- Do not impose your own opinion

After every meeting, the staff may need to make some evaluation of the past meeting to better organize the next one.

2.2.2 Developing relationships with the community

It is important to develop good relationships of mutual trust with the community right from the start. This will help a smooth communication throughout the implementation of the approach. Some points to consider are indicated in Box 5.

Box 5. How to develop a good relationship

- Value people's time.
- Meet with village elders and local officials to avoid suspicion when beginning work in a village. Do not forget that developing relationships should not stop with just meeting these people.
- Begin working with villagers who are more approachable and have less fear of outsiders, such as older people.
- Explain yourself and your reasons for coming to the villagers as clearly as possible.
- Walk around and get to know the geographical setting.
- Talk to people wherever you meet them: in fields, in the forests, in the market or by water points.
- When you first meet people, talk to them about what interests them, such as their children and their work, especially when you first meet them.
- Make sure that men in the village understand your motives for wanting to talk to women.
- Stay overnight if necessary and hold meetings when people have time to attend them.
- Supply your own food and other stuff. Do not place a burden on the people you are working with.
- At the end of any exercise with different groups, it is important to give feed back on the results at a joint meeting with all the groups. This provides an opportunity to discuss any differences that might have been raised, and ensures that the processes are transparent.

It is important not to raise false expectations about the extent to which participatory forest management can resolve problems. If promises are made and not fulfilled, trust is lost and there is potential for conflict and hostility between communities and the forest experts.

3. Identifying primary stakeholders to participate in the WAJIB

In this context, a *stakeholder* may be defined as a community, a public entity or a group that is:

- more related to the forest and depends on it for livelihood
- has some customary rights of forest use that has gained social recognition, and
- willing to assume some task and responsibility for a given forest management unit in partnership with the government.

There can be many "potential stakeholders" in forest management. One has to remember that certain groups have more concerns and realities than others. Moreover, as indicated in the principles, the resources are not enough for everybody. Therefore, *primary stakeholders* that will become partners in forest conservation and implement WAJIB should be carefully identified.

How can the forest experts identify the important stakeholders for the management of the forest? The following checklist may help.

Box 6. Identifying the important stakeholders

- Who has *access* to the forest area? Who is using the forest resources at present? In what ways? Has this changed over time?
- Which communities, groups and individuals are most *dependent* on the forest resources? Is this a matter of livelihood or economic advantage?
- Who has *claims*, including customary rights and legal jurisdiction over the forest area? Are there communities with ancestral and/or other types of acquired rights?
- Are there recent migrants or non-resident users of resources?
- Are there local associations or NGO's concerned with natural resources? Are there development or conservation projects that are active in natural resource management in the area?
- Which communities, groups or individuals are most *knowledgeable* about and capable of dealing with the forest resources? So far, who has a direct experience in managing the forest resources?
- In case the forest in question is a plantation, are there groups of communities affected by the establishment of the plantation (eg. Whether farmlands or communal lands have been taken away from them)
- What are the seasonal / geographical variations in resource use patterns of the users? Are those patterns geographically and seasonally stable? Are there major trends currently affecting local communities and other social actors (e.g. migration, etc.)?

The above exercise may be implemented in two steps. During the first step the local "primary stakeholders" who will become partners with the government in the forest conservation approach that is going to be implemented in the future should be assessed. These could be "forest dwellers" when already some people are residing in the forest for many years. Or it could be "forest adjacent communities" if people are not living in the forest but utilize it by going there to collect forest products. It can also be a "village community" where some kind of arrangement is already in place for communal use of forest resources.

In the next step, those institutions that will implement the approach together with the communities should be identified. The institution responsible for forest administration obviously is a primary stakeholder. Others that are important may include the village administration, the district administration, the district Cooperatives Promotion Office, NGO's if any, etc., depending on their present and future roles, interests and concerns regarding the implementation of WAJIB.

4. Consensus with the village community on WAJIB implementation

In a situation where there are forest dwellers and non-forest dwellers in a given village, and from analysis made so far it becomes apparent that 'forest dwellers' should be taken as primary stakeholders, it is important to reach consensus with the whole village community on WAJIB establishment.

This helps to increase understanding of the concept and to agree that the major responsibility of forest conservation and hence the direct benefits go to the forest dwellers. A forest dweller in this context means a family unit that inhabits in or adjacent to the forest permanently and gains its livelihood directly from the forest.

The process could involve repeated prior meetings with village leaders, elders and influential personalities in the village community. Sometimes district officials may be invited to attend such meetings as the communities wish to hear the "government's view" and tend to be convinced easily. Note that at this stage the forest dwellers might be very much reluctant to express their interest of participating in forest conservation.

STEP II. PREPARATION

1. Familiarization

This is about gathering information together with community members through helping them to reflect on the present state of the forest resource, its impact on their lives and new ways to transform the situation. The conclusions reached during this step may be taken directly into the negotiation and planning step. The forest experts should keep good records of the information collected and conclusions reached.

The forest experts can undertake village forest area mapping to help the communities to identify and produce a sketch map of the potential "community forest" indicating key points of reference (such as rivers, hill tops, religious sites, etc.) and the different types of forest (species and condition). Most of what should be indicated on the map will be observations of the resources as viewed by the communities. The forest experts can also utilize topographic maps from the district Forest Service offices or aerial photographs where available to broaden their understanding of the forest area. Box 7 contains the procedures on how to facilitate participatory village forest area mapping.

Box 7. How to make participatory village forest area mapping

Participatory mapping is a form of a sketch map. It requires forest experts to collaborate with the communities to prepare a simple but informative map that record a variety of information about local physical resources and social conditions. It can be used to record information that is not readily available from secondary sources such as hydrology, land use, land tenure and infrastructure. Participatory maps are first drawn on the ground, a blackboard or a large sheet of paper. These maps are usually prepared by local people with the experts acting as facilitators. Here is how it can be done:

1. Ask the participants to draw a map of their village showing such features as:
 - Where different communities are located
 - Where the forest areas are in relation to the village
 - Which parts are used by outsiders
 - Which forests are used by which community groups
 - Major natural features such as rivers, hills, rock outcrops etc.
 - Village infrastructure - roads, religious sites, schools, water points, etc.
 - Location of farmlands and grazing areas
2. Do this separately in men's and women's groups. (You will need to facilitate and encourage them to draw the maps if they have not done this before)
3. When the maps are complete, get a representative from each group to present to the whole group what they have drawn on their map. Try to get groups to compare their maps.
4. Make sure you keep the maps - they will be required at later meetings.

When it is ready, the forest area sketch map can be presented to a wider audience for debate. The map can be provided in a public meeting place for everyone to see and discuss.

2. Assessing the condition of the forest

If the condition of the forest is deteriorated at present, do not rush to conclude and assume that it is degraded because of the activities of the local community. The reasons for degradation are often complex and may revolve around particular individuals, the forest service's procedures or other external factors. A correct understanding of what has happened is essential if one needs to help people to improve the situation.

The forest experts could decide to take the village forest area map with them to prompt discussion. The best way to proceed is to ask simple, open-ended questions, such as 'Has this area of forest changed in your lifetime?', to listen carefully to the answer and to ask follow-up questions such as 'Why do you think this has happened?' and eventually 'What could be done to improve the situation?' Another option for the forest experts is to work on forest trend diagrams with different groups (Refer to Box 8 on how to make forest trend diagrams). This helps to understand why the forest is in the condition that it is in today and why and how this has happened?

Box 8. How to make forest trend diagrams

Forest trend diagrams are used as part of an individual or group interview and consist of an in-depth discussion of specific issues or phenomena (e.g. tree cover on the hills, crop productivity in the village, etc.). Has the phenomenon changed with time? How is it likely to develop in the future? Is the change desirable? If not, what could be done about it? The main purpose of trend analysis is to assess changes over time, and to raise the awareness of people about phenomena that accumulate slowly (e.g. deforestation, soil degradation, population dynamics, etc.).

The participants in the exercise select the topic/subject to assess and identify one or more accurate indicators of the subject. For instance, if the subject is deforestation, they may list: availability of forest products, extent of the forest land, ownership/control, etc.

The facilitator then asks the participants to say where they think they are now in relation to each indicator, where they were 5, 10, 20 years ago, where they think they will be in 5, 10, 20 years. Together with them, draw a graph of the trend for each indicator, or use some symbolic graph, such as subsequent piles of little stones on the ground (more stones means that the indicator goes up). Once the trends are clear, the facilitator asks the participants to discuss them. (Such questions may be asked. "What is happening? Why? Is that good or bad? Good for whom and bad for whom? Should something be done about it? What? What would be happening then?").

The following topics may arise and need further investigation by the forest experts:

- How has the forest become degraded?
- Are there specially protected areas within the forest? Who has access to such forest areas?

- Are there, or were there in the past, rules for using the forest? Who made the rules?
- Are ecologically sensitive areas (such as steep slopes and stream banks) protected? If so, how are they protected and by whom?
- What is the story behind encroachment and exploitation?
- What are the reasons for the success (or failure) of natural regeneration and plantations?
- Does the forest face any threats from outsiders (such as loggers)?

A more detailed resource assessment can be undertaken in the form of a forest walk. The forest walk provides another opportunity for the forest experts to discuss the condition of the resource. As women generally collect different products from the forest and make use of different areas within the forest (which implies that their knowledge of the vegetation types, uses, availability, propagation, etc. is high), a separate, women-only walk may also be arranged.

3. Identifying forest uses

One should consider that forests have numerous uses beyond such immediately obvious ones like timber and fuel wood. The forest experts can begin by helping the community members to prepare local *forest use maps* (Box 9). Women can produce their own maps. Building from the village forest area map, these maps can be used to discuss in depth how the forest is used, by whom and for which products. Simple, open-ended questions that can be asked include, 'Is it easy to obtain this product?' and 'If not, then why not?' and eventually, 'What do you think could be done to improve the situation?'

Box 9. How to prepare a Participatory Forest Use Map

The objectives of this exercise are:

- To indicate which products are collected and from where
- To draw on local knowledge about forests
- To highlight dependencies on forests

Method:

1. Build on the maps already drawn by villagers (e.g. participatory village forest area map).
2. Add on detailed information about which products are collected from which parts of the forest and their relative proportions.
3. Organize separate groups for men and women for the mapping.
4. At the end of the mapping exercise have a discussion.
5. Ask each group to present its map to the other groups. The discussion should be based on agreeing whether the maps are accurate representations of how the forests are used.
6. If there are differences between the men and women's maps these should be discussed.
7. Discuss different dependencies on forests for different forest products of the various groups in the village.
8. Finally, draw some conclusions on:
 - Dependency of different groups
 - Differences between rich, middle and poor households (if applicable)
 - Differences in priorities between men and women

Identification of the multiple uses of the forest, the relative importance of different products, the main collection sites and gender and age categories of the forest users

should also be made. Some of the questions that may arise and need further investigation by the forest experts include the following:

- How large is the forest area?
- Which forest products are in short supply, and why?
- Which products are marketable, and who benefits from their sale?
- Who controls access to certain areas of the forest, and how?
- Are there any existing rights of collection, and how are they enforced?
- Do migratory users impact on the forest?
- What settlement patterns and population sizes exist in and around the forest?
- What is considered as unwise use?
- What relationship exists between different group/segments of people?
- Does the forest have a clearly demarcated and recognized boarder?
- Which land use types exist in the forest area: farm plots, settlements, pasture, mining, etc.?
- Did people 'came in' to the forest during the change of government in 1991?
- Are there any areas of special interest for bee-keeping, tree seed collection, eco-tourism, trophy hunting, etc.?

4. Analyzing livelihood strategies

Livelihood analysis goes a step beyond forest use patterns. It involves understanding the roles that forest plays in people's efforts to secure a means of survival for themselves and their families. A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both in the present and in the future, without undermining the natural resource base.

Making a full livelihood analysis can take time and will invariably lead the forest experts to find that people face many constraints and problems having solutions that often go beyond the scope of participatory forest management. However, it is important that the forest experts should at least understand how forestry impacts on people's coping strategies and identify any changes that could help improve people's security.

It is also important to understand livelihood strategies as related to occupational group, age, gender and season. Once a basic grasp has been gained, the forest experts can work with different groups to discuss the role that the forest plays in people's general coping mechanisms and especially the relationship between forests, crop farming and livestock rearing.

5. Examining existing local institutions and power relations

This exercise is done for a better understanding of power relationships. It is often best started through informal discussions with key village informants. It helps to identify the most and the least powerful 'groups' in relation to controlling access to the forest, establishing rules and sanctions and solving problems. The analysis can be conducted with different groups in the community, as each will produce a slightly different view of power relations. A venn diagram may be used for such an analysis (Box 10).

Box 10. How to make venn diagrams

Venn diagrams are often drawn to help understand the current formal and informal institutions and the extent of overlap of decision making and cooperation related to the area of interest. They highlight gaps between institutions, opportunities for better communication, cooperation, conflicts and sometimes the need for a new institution. They also identify the locally perceived roles that outside agencies play in the area.

- Make interviews to discover all the institutions and their linkages. Ask about:
 - Traditional institutions
 - Cooperatives
 - Other agencies and NGO's
- Use circles of different size drawn on paper or cut out, each representing a different institution.
- Ask informants to choose large circles for the most important institutions and small ones for the least (to them), and ask them to arrange a pattern of overlapping or distributed circles according to their closeness to the communities (to the extent they do so in the real situation).
- Discuss how things have changed over the last 10-20 years.
- Discuss how the communities would like the situation to be ideally.

While unbalanced power relations may have negative impacts on the forest resources, some local institutions may have the potential to sustain effective forest management in the future. Assessment should be made together with community members so as to find out if there is a potential for building from successful local systems and organizations (such as *Dabo*, *Iddir*, etc.) that are already in place.

6. Identifying the major problems and solutions

At this stage, the forest experts should be able to draw a picture of the key forestry concerns in the community (e.g. unregulated access, overgrazing, illegal logging, negative influence from outsiders, ineffective forest service, etc.). They should also have helped the different community groups to start thinking about possible solutions to these problems (e.g. new rules on forest use, local management plans, sanctions, etc.) and ways in which forestry could help transform their lives (e.g. secure access to marketable products, share of revenue, etc).

The forest experts should report back to the district officials and also draw their attention to issues that are likely to require their intervention to be resolved.

7. Determining carrying capacity

In a situation where people inhabit the forest area selected for a WAJIB, it is necessary to determine the capacity of the forest. Carrying capacity of a forest is an estimate of a forest area necessary for a forest dweller family unit to gain a livelihood from dwelling in the forest if it is managed in a sustainable way.

A given area of forest can only sustain a limited number of inhabitants. The higher the number of inhabitants, the higher is the risk of deforestation leading to environmental degradation. Hence limiting the number of inhabitants in WAJIB managed areas is crucial.

(In the case of Adaba-Dodola forest, for example, the carrying capacity is 12 hectares per homestead).

The carrying capacity can be calculated based on the productivity areas around the forest from which the non-forest dwellers earn their living. In crop productivity terms obviously, degraded forestlands produce less as compared to an agricultural area. Therefore, usually more land needs to be allocated to a forest dwelling homestead than in agricultural land.

As productivity of land varies between different agro-ecological zones, carrying capacity also varies from one area to another. Hence, where WAJIB is initiated there has to be comparative study of different land use types.

It should be noted that the carrying capacity of the forest can be improved when the productivity of the forest is improved through implementation of appropriate management practices. Therefore, the carrying capacity of a given forest may be revised and re-adjusted when there is an increase in productivity of the forest, if necessary. In Box 11, an example of how carrying capacity can be worked out is given.

Box 11. Determining carrying capacity:

The estimation of carrying capacity is done by calculating the approximate forest area that would provide one forest dwelling household with the same cash income (through the sale of wood products and utilization of the forest pasture on a sustainable basis, *including food crops grown on a small farm plot in the forest, if any*) equivalent to a farmer household outside of the forest that makes a living through crops grown on an average area of farmland around the area.

The following points need to be considered to make the estimation:

- Aim at a reasonable average desired income (at least an annual income of ETB 3,000 [ca USD 350])
- The average size of farm plot in the forest
- The average number of livestock
- The major forest products that are produced and marketed
- Calculate the whole range of scenarios, for example,
 - Percentage area of different land uses (farm, grazing area, forest)
 - Percentage volume of forest product types (fire wood, construction wood, etc.)
- Sufficient income to discourage the "forest dweller" from converting forest into other land uses.

STEP III. NEGOTIATION AND PLANNING

1. Definition of boundaries

1.1 The Forest boundary

A committee comprising of community representatives from different settlement areas within the village can be set up to carry out the defining of the forest boundary. Make sure the committee contains both forest dwellers and non-forest dwellers. This committee together with representatives of the district forest service will have the responsibility to demarcate the peripheral forest boundary in the village to decide which areas are to be

included as forest and hence where WAJIB will be implemented. A representative from the district administration may be required as necessary.

Box 12. Why forest boundary demarcation?

Forest boundary demarcation may be necessary due to one or a combination of the following situations:

1. The forest boundary has been demarcated long ago and the boundary has physically changed due to the introduction of other land use types.
2. The community does not acknowledge or recognize the existing boundary.
3. The forest service has no strong hold over the forestland.

There could be two different options for the process of forest boundary demarcation.

- a. A forester proposes a possible forest boundary on a topographic map considering areas that have to be included as forestland. Consensus with the community representatives takes place afterwards when the proposal is presented to them.
- b. Demarcation directly in the field by the district Forest Service representative together with the community representatives without prior proposal by a forester.

Both options have advantages and drawbacks. In the case of forwarding a proposal by the forester, consensus between the district Forest Service and the community representatives could become difficult as the forest experts may suggest to expand the forest area. In the case of demarcation without a proposal from a forester, consensus between the forest dwellers and non-forest dwellers could become difficult as the non forest dwellers want to push the border deep into the forestland, while the forest dwellers want to grab more pasture and farm plots at the periphery. Note that the forest patches that may be left outside of the demarcated area could face increased pressure as it may be considered a "common" resource and hence "owner less". Therefore, small patches of forest are better included as much as possible.

In both cases, the committee and district Forest Service experts walk along the line that has to become forest edge in a given village. A forester registers GPS coordinates, name of conspicuous features that serve for border marking and marks on a topographic map and converts the information from the field to a map indicating outer forest borders. Finally border descriptions and border markings are put in place for further use. Where satellite images and GIS tools are available, the information from the field can easily be converted into a useful map.

1.2 The Village Boundary

In most cases, the village administration and the community know their common boundaries with the adjacent village(s). This may not be true especially in forest areas. Such problem emanates from absence of border demarcation with markings and descriptions.

Therefore, demarcating the village common boundaries should be done right after delineating the peripheral forest boundary. The participants are representatives of villages that share boundaries, the district Forest Service and the district administration. Representatives from the government institutions (the district administration and district Forest Service) will basically act as mediators in case of conflict. In addition, the

representative from the district Forest Service keeps records and prepares a boundary description so that the records can be used for mapping purposes later on.

2. Conducting settlement census

Conducting a settlement census helps to figure out the size of the population of the forest dwellers and also provides information about the settlement pattern. This is useful in the process of forest management block formation.

A forester together with one representative from the forest dwellers walk through the forest and register all kinds of homesteads. The information to be gathered include: name of the owner, size of family (children and other dependants), type of house, year of construction, GPS reading (if available), etc. A convenient record sheet may be prepared for the activity.

3. Identifying preliminary forest management blocks

Based on the information gathered and the analysis made thus far (the size of forest area, human population, settlement pattern and carrying capacity of the forest area), the possible forest management blocks (e.g. a forest patch, a watershed area, etc.) can be identified and proposed. Ideally, these management blocks should make sense from ecological (forest management) and social (for instance they will fall within a given community or specific area) points of view. If this is not possible, the negotiation process may become complex. In addition, it is good if the WAJIB management blocks are not too large (about 500 ha. or less) due to manageability conveniences.

It may be useful to recall that in rural societies one can find a clear relationship between a certain forest area or other natural resources and distinct social units (local communities). In most cases it is advisable to follow this natural attachment of the resources and the people during the identification of management blocks.

The representatives of the forest dwellers are then invited to negotiate and agree among themselves about the proposed forest block. In the case of many settlement areas, the district Forest Service representative in consultation with village leaders may invite at least one person representing the identified settlement areas (depending on the settlement pattern).

The meeting is better conducted in the forest and not at the village administration office. During the meeting a forester explains the proposed forest blocks using a map and border descriptions. Note that the names of places as recognized by the local people are very much important when preparing border descriptions. At this meeting the representatives of the settlement areas should feel free to adjust the forest blocks as it suits the forest dwellers as long as the carrying capacity allows.

The adjustment is mainly carried out on a map during the meeting and it does not involve walking along the borders. The final decision will be made with representatives of the adjacent blocks. Once the adjustment is completed the representatives also take

responsibility to arrange a forest dwellers meeting in their respective forest blocks. The forest experts then prepare border descriptions according to the adjustment.

4. Election of an Initiation Team

A meeting of all forest dwellers is organized by the forest expert to discuss about WAJIB in detail and to conduct the election of an "initiation team" (an initiation team is a small group of people (up to 5 individuals) that are elected in a meeting of forest dwellers and/or are self-selected on the basis of a strong personal motivation and who accepts to be in charge of the launching of WAJIB in their respective blocks. This may be a first opportunity for the forest dwellers to freely express their view. During the election of the initiation team, it has to be made clear to the forest dwellers that they may consider those members who are potentially eligible members. If those who may not become WAJIB members (may not fulfil the criteria) are elected as members of the initiation team, they could prepare eligibility criteria in a way that creates conflict between the forest dwellers.

The duties of the initiation team may include:

- verifying the list of homesteads in the forest block
- in consultation with other members, developing eligibility criteria for WAJIB membership
- selecting eligible members according to criteria
- informing recognized members (those fulfilled the criteria) after selection
- coordinating the forest dwellers to exercise forest conservation until formal handing over of the forest block is made
- participating in final forest block border adjustment
- facilitating between the district Forest Service and the forest dwellers
- organizing a meeting for election of WAJIB leaders .

5. Final Adjustment of Forest blocks boundaries

This is an activity accomplished by the initiation teams of adjacent blocks. The forest expert will facilitate a meeting between the groups. The groups walk along the boundaries of the block and make their final agreements. A record of all necessary information (name of conspicuous land features that serve as border markings and of border lines and points) is kept.

Once the concerned parties reach consensus, preparation of a forest block map takes place in office. This enables to determine the actual size of the block and the carrying capacity. The initiation team will obtain the information about the size of the block and the carrying capacity to help them develop eligibility criteria for selection of members.

Failure to adjust forest block borders usually leads to conflict between the forest dwellers. This problem could happen especially between neighboring villages where WAJIB establishment process has started in one and not in the other. It is necessary to make proper adjustments of block boundaries to avoid any conflict that could arise after formal handing over of the forest block is made.

6. Developing Eligibility Criteria and Selection of Members

The elected initiation team shall develop eligibility criteria that help to select WAJIB members from among the forest dwellers. The forest experts may assist during the process. Eligibility criteria are mainly important where the number of inhabitants of a forest block is more than the accepted carrying capacity (for example, 12ha per homestead for Adaba-Dodola forest).

It could be the case that the initiation team of many forest blocks develop more or less similar eligibility criteria. Those forest blocks with inhabitants less than the carrying capacity do not necessarily formulate strong eligibility criteria similar to the ones that have too many homesteads. Once the eligibility criteria are developed, the initiation team selects eligible members from among the inhabitants of the forest block based on these criteria.

The list of eligible members is then sent to the village administration before informing the recognized members. Then the initiation team calls a meeting of the forest dwellers of the forest block and inform them about the selection process and the recognized members. On this specific meeting the recognized members and the inhabitants that are not recognized are specifically informed. Beginning from this date the non-eligible persons have to prepare to leave the forest block.

The initiation team informs the inhabitants that are not recognized to remove their homestead. If they willingly agree to remove their homesteads and depart, then it is easy. If not the case is brought to the village administration so that necessary measures are taken. The village administration enforces the decision and may provide them with a substitute plot within the village area. The removal of the excess homesteads should normally be done within six months from the date of formal handing over of the forest block.

Box 13. An example of eligibility criteria developed by the initiation team of the *Sulula* forest block in Barisa village of Dodola district:

1. A homestead is permanently occupied by a family.
2. A homestead was established before February 1999.
3. The "would be" member has interest in the establishment of WAJIB.
4. An applicant must be member of the Barsia village.

7. Conducting forest resource assessment

Monitoring the changes of the forest cover is one of the duties of the government in the WAJIB approach. Thus, to be able to make future follow up on the status of the forest after handing it over to communities, it is important to make an initial forest resource assessment before the forest management agreement is concluded. The results of such assessment will serve as a baseline for future monitoring and therefore should be documented.

The forest resource assessment is done by representatives of both the forest service and the WAJIB groups. To carry out such activities, the representatives selected from among the WAJIB groups are given the necessary quick training by a forester. A brief description

of the resource assessment method known as THABO (that is being practised in Adaba-Dodola forest) is shown in Box 14.

Box 14. A brief description of the THABO methodology

- A systematic sampling of circular plots (100 m²) laid at 100m intervals between individual plots and between straight lines is set up (about one plot per ha)
- On each plot, the average "Potential Crop Trees" (PCT's) and "Mature Trees" are recorded on a prepared recording sheet.
- Potential Crop Trees are young and healthy trees that have over 2 m height and spaced at least 4 meters apart with DBH of up to 40 cm for Group 1 species (Hagenia, Podocarpus, Juniperus, Olea and Ekebergia) and up to 25 cm for group 2 species (Pittosporum, Hypericum, Rapania, Erica, and others).
- Mature trees are trees with DBH of > 40 cm and >25 cm for Group 1 and Group 2 species respectively.
- The assessment results are then expressed as "average Potential Crop Trees (PCT's) per ha" and "average Mature Trees per ha".
- THABO is carried out annually or every five years by the district forest service together with representatives of the WAJIB in order to determine the allowable cut, the annual forest rent and to monitor the impacts of the forest conservation activities in the forest block.

The resource assessment can be conducted annually if capacity allows. It can also be done every few years (combined with quick monitoring on the annual work plan in the context of a medium term management plan) depending on the increase of trust on the WAJIB groups.

8. Forest Rent determination

The WAJIB group pays an annual rent that is collected by the district Forest Service in exchange for the exclusive use rights it was granted as an attempt to generate cash needed for provision of technical support by the office in a way of self financing. It can be in the form of forest rent for natural forests or in the form of revenue sharing in the case of plantations. Part of the rent may be retained by the village administration for supporting development initiatives. An example of how forest rent is determined for the WAJIB forest blocks in Adaba-Dodola is shown below:

Box 15. Rent determination for the Adaba-Dodola forest

For natural forest areas, the annual forest rent is based on THABO assessment results indicated in Box 14. From the results, areas are grouped according to the following classes and summed up. For areas of PCT:

- More than 41 (including 41), the rent will be ETB 2.- per hectare
- From 31 to 40, the rent will be ETB 4.- per hectare
- From 21 to 30 the rent will be ETB 6.- per hectare
- Less or equal to 20 the rent will be ETB 8.- per hectare
- For land covered with shrub Erica, rent will be calculated at ETB 0.45 per hectare.

As an incentive to increase forest cover, parts of the forest block that may be designated as conservation areas by the WAJIB shall be exempted from rent payment. If the said conservation areas are not managed properly, the rent payment for these areas will be doubled based on the rent class the specific site was in.

It should be noted that the forest rent is additional to other tax the Village Administration levies. The liability for rent payment is collective.

STEP IV. INSTITUTIONALIZATION

1. Election of WAJIB leaders

Election of WAJIB executive committee for the forest block is conducted democratically in a meeting of all the recognized forest dwellers. The election meeting may be arranged by the initiation team as their final task. The committee comprises of five members namely: Head, Deputy Head, Secretary, Cashier, and one additional Member. A fair representation of both sexes should be made in the leadership. In some cases the same individuals who have been working as members of the initiation team may be elected as WAJIB executive committee.

The forest expert facilitates the meeting. Among the WAJIB leaders the secretary must be capable of reading and writing because he/she is the one who keeps the records for the WAJIB group. This committee takes up lots of responsibilities such as formulation of a management plan (together with the forest service), dealing with cases involving violation of bylaws by individual members, developing measures of protecting and developing the forest, etc.

2. Preparation of a Draft Forest Management Plan

The management plan contains a detailed written consensus on the future management of the forest. The duration of the plan is normally 3 - 5 years. By this stage all the information needed for the plan has been collected and agreed. The key decisions concerning the future of the forest (objectives, users, rules) are agreed by consensus and set down in the management plan. This mechanism ensures that no individual or individuals can take arbitrary decisions about the forest. The forest expert together with the community representatives can compile the plan, to prepare it for final presentation to the whole WAJIB group. Where possible, targets must be quantified. For ease of understanding by the community, local systems of measurement for work tasks, land area, volume of products, etc. may be used.

Once the management plan is ready, the activities to be carried out in the year ahead in order to implement the plan should be worked out. Again, this annual work plan is done jointly by the forest expert and the WAJIB groups. The annual work plan may consist of list of activities, responsibilities, time schedules, costs, indicators of success, etc. The forest service should endorse the plan before it is implemented. An example of what a WAJIB forest management plan could contain is given in Box 16.

Box 16. Example of the contents of a forest management plan

- Forest block name, location, extent, boundaries and sketch map
- Description of the present situation
- Opportunities for improving the situation
- Forest management units
- Rules for forest product harvesting
- Forest development and protection activities
- Annual activity plan
- Monitoring system

3. Forest Block Allocation Agreement (FBAA)

This partnership for forest conservation (WAJIB) is implemented within forest lands owned by the state that grants exclusive use rights to the organized groups. The use right will remain valid as long as the resources are properly managed. This arrangement requires clearly specified rights, duties and obligations in the form of an agreement to be signed between the two parties: the government and the organised groups. The contents of the agreement and the roles of the partners could slightly differ depending on the condition of the forest. A draft FBAA could be prepared by the forest expert together with the WAJIB initiation team and presented for discussion / amendments by the whole WAJIB group and the district Forest service. An example of the contents is shown in Box 17.

Box 17. Example of the content of a forest block allocation agreement

- Description of the forest block
- Result of the resource assessment of the forest block
- Duration of the agreement
- WAJIB membership and mode of organization
- Rights, duties and obligations of WAJIB
- Rights and duties of the forest service
- Rights and duties of the village administration
- Sanctions for breach of agreement by WAJIB

4. Signing of Agreement and Formal Handing Over

It is important to establish a formal written agreement to confirm the terms and conditions of forest use and to create a sense of ownership. The FBAA is a binding agreement that is concluded between a WAJIB group and the district Forest Service. Copies of the agreement will be distributed to relevant institutions (please refer to the document for details). The representatives of both parties and the village administration sign the agreement. The date on which the signing is done is taken as the date of the agreement and the establishment of WAJIB is effective beginning from this date.

5. Elaboration of internal bylaws

Internal bylaws are to be developed by the WAJIB groups with the assistance from the district forest service. It is important to consider local and traditional forms of social control and the variations in people's economic situations during the elaboration. A model bylaw may be prepared to be used as a point of departure. In this case, it is necessary to adapt to local situations so that they are used effectively. The contents of an internal bylaw may look like as one indicated in Box 18.

Box 18. Internal bylaws may contain the following aspects:

- Objectives of the bylaw
- Organizational procedures: how the general assembly, the executive committee and other committees are formed and organized including their organizational structure
- The functions and powers of the various committees
- Rules (general, on forest management, on forest use, etc.)
- Penalties
- Procedures for handling offences

STEP V. IMPLEMENTATION

For a successful implementation of WAJIB, a strong commitment from all concerned is a prerequisite. Taking responsibility for managing a forest that was fully under government control is not something that is learned once and works for ever. People may forget some aspects, new challenges may occur or staff or some committee members may be changed. Such changes should be taken as normal and it is necessary to be ready to make considerations to meet new circumstances. The critical task for the forest experts at this stage is to provide support and to follow up implementation of the management plan, mainly in the following areas:

1. Technical advice and skills development

The kind of support needed and the people who should provide this support needs to be specified. The areas of technical advice or training that are likely to be provided to the WAJIB members may include:

- Silvicultural options for a range of objectives and for different forest types
- Determination of the sustainable yield (allowable harvest) for a range of forest products
- Marketing of forest products, etc.

This can be achieved through organising practical training sessions and field visits on managing regeneration, nursery establishment, thinning, pruning (in the case of plantations), taking care of planted/ regenerated seedlings, book keeping (to enable the WAJIB management to maintain good records, as indicated in Box 19), etc.

In each case, the emphasis should be on providing users with options, together with the understanding needed to decide which is most appropriate, and then allowing them to choose. Technical advice should also be provided to update forest management plans.

Box 19. Example of bookkeeping for WAJIB forest blocks

- **Offences and fines record:** for recording offences, offenders, fines and punishments levied and fines paid
- **Permits record:** for recording permits issued (for permits with or without fee payments)
- **Income and expenditure record:** for recording all income from fines or fees and all expenditure
- **Receipt book:** for receipting each payment received, no matter how small
- **Cash book:** (like a receipt book) for use only when the general assembly decides to make a payment, such as a rewarding of a patrolman for catching a forest offender
- **Patrol book:** for recording patrols undertaken: where, when and by whom
- **Minute book or file:** for recording the minutes of each meeting of the WAJIB members and executive committee

2. Organizational development

The forest experts play a key role in supporting the new WAJIB organization. Their support can help ensure that the WAJIB has the skills and knowledge to:

- Run effective meetings
- Organize the management of the forest (development, protection and harvesting activities)
- Maintain good records and manage any flows of money from collective selling of forest products, fines, etc.
- Solve problems and seek outside assistance when the problem cannot be resolved internally.

The assembly of a number of WAJIB groups under one umbrella in the form of forest management cooperatives (at a village or higher level) should be something to think about already at this stage. This is increasingly becoming important and is an area for collaboration between the forest service and cooperatives promotion offices. The creation of such collective groups, if properly formed could help among other things, to:

- discuss and share experience with other forest user groups
- create better conditions for forest product marketing
- come together on broader land-use concerns, such as the management of a watershed or a village/ district level development issues
- exchange skills and materials, such as seeds or new technologies
- manage conflicts between user groups or between users and the Forest Service
- form pressure groups to safeguard users' rights
- influence government policies
- exchange information on new policies, rules and legislation that affect forest users
- raise awareness among members about particular problems or opportunities.

3. Market Development and Income Generation

In order for the communities to benefit from the forest conservation, markets for the various products should be identified and accessed. The objective must be to reduce the expenses related to getting the products sold. Note that some communities live in remote situations and are disadvantaged as compared to those living next to a road or close to a town. In such cases, a special assistance may be provided to market development and access to it. Such assistance may include:

- Product studies
- Activities that improve the product and add value
- Transportation planning
- Promotional activities, etc.

It is also very important to investigate and develop alternative income generating activities such as eco-tourism, trophy hunting, traditional medicine, bee keeping, etc. The generation of more commercial activity as an alternative income could mean that the livelihood situation of the people will get better. And the forest is developed.

4. Conflict management

During implementation, conflicts between different groups (within forest dwellers themselves and between forest dwellers and non forest dwellers) are inevitable but they can be managed. Conflicts can be minimized by ensuring that everyone is fully informed of what is happening and that all concerned groups are identified at the outset and are brought into the WAJIB process.

Conflicts originate regarding who should manage, use and benefit from the forest resources. There are three options for addressing conflicts: negotiation, mediation and facilitation. The WAJIB management can probably undertake to negotiate between different groups itself, but mediation and facilitation require a neutral intervention, and in these cases the forestry forest experts should be prepared to step in if required to do so. Some issues could even necessitate the intervention by higher level district institutions such as the district administration.

STEP VI. FOLLOW UP AND MONITORING

1. Regular monitoring and evaluation

The learning process does not cease once the WAJIB approach is ready to be implemented after signing of the agreement. The cycle of learning by doing continues. The purpose of monitoring is to generate feedback on ongoing activities in order to assess whether or not the terms of the agreement have been fulfilled, and to take corrective action if necessary. Remember also that the results of a monitoring tool such as THABO will lead to decisions of cancellation of the FBAA in the event of non-compliance.

Monitoring also helps to develop the managerial capacity of the forest service and that of the users. The key tasks for the forest experts, in this regard, are to help the WAJIB:

- understand how the THABO or other monitoring systems are functioning
- to be fully involved in regular reviews of progress on the management plan including settlement census, internal indicators of success for WAJIB, etc.

In the course of implementing the approach, a lot of experience will be gained and new understandings will be developed by the forest experts engaged in facilitation and support as well as by the community members. To develop and make use of such experiences, one needs to keep good records, review them at regular intervals, discuss their causes and effects and decide on directions for the future.

Following the learning by doing approach, it is useful to reflect on the experience gained through monitoring and to see if there is anything that should be done differently. For example, the indicators chosen at first may not be very helpful, they may be too difficult to measure or they may not show clearly whether there is movement towards achievement of objectives. It is always useful to reflect the improved understanding that has resulted over time.

2. Who should monitor what?

Regular monitoring is the responsibility of the WAJIB management. Using the annual activity plan as a basis for monitoring, they should refer back to the plan at every meeting to assess whether or not implementation is on course.

It should be noted that, in the end, it is primarily the user groups who should be able to judge whether there has been progress, and they must be able to assess it, debate on it and find out why the plan worked or failed. Therefore, for each objective or expectation, it should be possible for the groups to identify a means of judging success. This means that some simple indicators need to be worked out. These indicators should show whether the WAJIB group is still on the right direction and what progress has been made. (see example of indicators of success for Adaba-Dodola below).

Box 20. Examples for indicators of success in Adaba-Dodola	
Expectations or objectives	Indicators
Availability of more wood for sellers	Incomes of fuel wood sellers do not decrease
Sufficient regeneration of important species	Regeneration counts indicate an increase in their number
Ability of the WAJIB to make decisions and act on them	Meeting records indicate actions taken
Forest protected from encroachers	Less number of livestock in the forest, less felling of trees, closing up of bushes, reduced pit sawing
Improvement on the forest situation	Re-appearance of wildlife, increased number of healthy seedlings, better availability of grass
Active participation of women	Women are present at all the meetings and are able to speak freely

Remember that good indicators should fulfil three elements: quality, quantity and time. They should show what needs to be achieved, in what quantity, and within what time frame. The users can also think about the way in which the information has to be gathered.

Annual reviews of overall progress towards the forest management objectives, as defined by the indicators of success, including the checking up on implementation of the management plan shall be done by the forest service experts together with representatives of the WAJIB group. A detailed assessment of THABO may be done every five years or whenever the forest service feels to conduct one. Also in this case the assessment shall be conducted by representatives of both partners (forest service and WAJIB members). It is important to ensure that those who are selected have both the time and necessary skills to carry out monitoring by joining the assessors from the government side. The selection should be made at a WAJIB general assembly meeting so that everyone can see who was selected.

Annual reviews can be organized in the following way:

- The timing of the review is determined by the WAJIB management
- All the members of WAJIB are invited to the review meeting
- The results of the regular monitoring are presented

- An assessment of the problems and the causes and effects of these problems is made
- A solutions is discussed
- A new (improved) action plan is developed

Box 21. Achievements to date in the Adaba-Dodola forest on WAJIB implementation

- WAJIB implementation was started in 2000 within the Barisa village of Dodola district.
- Up to March 2005, 56 WAJIB groups covering a forest area of some 40,000 ha with about 1600 member households have been established in the two districts.
- According to the current plan, implementation of WAJIB will cover the whole forest until June 2006.
- 4 Forest Management Cooperatives have been set up in 3 villages.
- According to the 2003 estimates, the vegetation cover in WAJIB managed blocks has increased by 5%.
- Since 2004, the primary role of WAJIB implementation has been handed over to the district counterparts and it is going very well.
- Forest condition has considerably improved: natural regeneration is abundant, illegal tree cutting is reduced, grazing is controlled, etc.
- Technical support is being provided to two districts so that WAJIB implementation is started in other forest areas.

AFTERWORD

We have now reached at the last part of the guideline on implementation of the WAJIB approach. For you, the reader, it is the start of a new thinking as a social forester if you have not been involved in PFM undertakings before. Rural communities may also see you in a different viewpoint. We hope that along the way you were able to pick up some important ideas for developing a situation specific WAJIB approach in forest resources management. If we have succeeded in encouraging you to steer and develop your learning process more consciously than before, then we are very glad.

It is our belief that this guideline will make a substantial contribution to the expansion of Participatory Forest Management (PFM) in the Oromia region. PFM is still developing and hence open mindedness, patience, transparency and commitment are issues to consider from the onset. It is also sincerely hoped that the users of this guideline will help us to improve the contents and the style so that the dynamism we all have witnessed in the PFM implementation process so far will flourish.

Please also refer to additional text such as the Forest Block Allocation Agreement (FBAA), the THABO methodology, internal bylaws, etc. that provide some details on specific actions during the WAJIB implementation. Any comments, suggestions or improvements relating to the guideline may be addressed to the staff of the Forest and Wildlife Department in the Oromia Bureau of Agriculture and Rural Development, SUN Dodola office or the GTZ-SUN program office in Addis Ababa. (The address is: PO Box 12631 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; e-mail: gtz.ifmp@ethionet.et or gtz.sun@ethionet.et).

We wish you courage and the best of luck with your future WAJIB implementation.

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