

Project Update: March 2012

Project activities started in October 2011 with the identification and selection of four set of new villages to initiate NTFP conservation work. The selected villages are Dhar, Mohal, Supranjala and Banega. As October and November are the main festive and harvesting season and the local farmers have little time to spare from these activities. In December 2011, there was unprecedented snowfall in the area due to which roads were blocked and the selected villages were under 4 to 5 feet snow cover. Due to all these reasons we were not able to carry out village meetings till mid-February 2012. Considering these circumstances an additional period of 4 months would be required to accomplish the project targets.

During the past few months, we met various forest officials relevant to this initiative and reached an understanding with them regarding the forest department supporting the NTFP plantation activities in the villages provided that the villages pass resolutions asking the Forest Department to form Joint Forest Management Committees (JFMCs) in their villages.

We have started conducting village meetings since mid February to facilitate consensus building among the right holders and preparing ground for the passing of the requisite resolution in the village general house. Till now resolution from five villages (4 new and 1 old) have been passed and submitted to the Forest Department. In village Mohal we have planned to develop NTFP nursery for which we have identified the person and provided *Valeriana jatmansi* seeds procured from the NTFP nursery in Pughthala (where the conservation initiative was taken up during the last round of support from RSG).

For the forthcoming three months, the following activities have been planned:

1. Village wise socio-economic and forest dependence survey.
2. Setting up of JFMCs in six villages and formulation of forest management plans (including a plan for the propagation and conservation of NTFPs) in the nearby forests.



Left: Dhar village selected for NTFP conservation work. Middle: Initial meeting in Dhar village, Jadera Panchayt. Right: Paths leading to selected villages under snow cover.