

Minutes of REDRH Consultation Workshop

Janta Bhawan on 15th Sept, 2012

A consultation workshop was organized by RM&DD in Janta Bhawan on 15th Sept, 2012 to take stock of the REDRH project. The participants included a team from RM&DD Head Office comprising of Shri D. R. Nepal, Secretary-RM&DD, Shri Sandeep Tambe, Special Secretary (MGNREGA), Shri G. T. Dhungel CE, Shri H. P. Sharma AD(Accounts) and other officers from the RM&DD Head office. It was also attended by MD-STCS, SE(S/W), all the ADC(Dev), BDOs and AEs. The list of participants is enclosed.

The meeting started with a welcome address by the Deputy Secretary (Adm.), Mrs Anupa Tamling. Acknowledging the REDRH project as one of the most challenging projects of RM&DD she informed the house that the objective of the workshop was to take stock of the present progress and to develop a strategy to accelerate the progress of the project as per directions of the State Government and the Planning Commission, Government of India. Shri Sandeep Tambe, Special Secretary made a presentation on the REDRH Project highlighting the deliverables, challenges, SWOT analysis of why traditional houses got damaged, earthquake resistant design of new houses, stock materials, salient features of new houses, stages of progress, preparation of the operational framework, beneficiary selection, why progress appears to be slow, monitoring and evaluation and MIS, physical and financial progress, targets assigned, and placed various issues before the house. He also informed that in the recent meeting held in the Planning Commission, Government of India on 6th Sept, 2012 the Secretary-Planning Commission shared her concerns on the quality of the house construction and also instructed that the whole project has to be completed by March-2014 after which fund flow from Government of India will be stopped.

Shri H. P. Sharma, AD(Accounts) presented the accounting framework and the process for drawing of advance and settling it. The need for detailed and timely financial progress reporting from the districts was also emphasized. He also informed the house that since the funds are from PM's package it is under the scanner of various agencies. The Finance Department and the Office of the AG have informed that the volume of work cannot be a plea for simplification of standard accounting procedures. He also suggested that non-maintaining of measurement books and non-maintaining of vouchers may not be justifiable in this era of enhanced accountability.

This was followed by a presentation by Shri G. T. Dhungel Chief Engineer on the technical framework. He emphasized that in some rare cases, where the beneficiary owns less than the plinth area, vertical extension may be permitted, provided prior technical approval is taken from the DE(Zilla), followed by administrative approval of the District level Committee. In such cases, he suggested that the beneficiaries should be informed and advised that the foundation is for two storied house with top floor having GCI roof. He also informed that the interest accrued can be used for meeting the expenses towards loading, stacking and unloading charges of the stock material. Further, he informed the house about one minor mistake in the Mason Training Handbook which needs to be corrected and accordingly informed to the mason and the

beneficiaries that the centre to centre distance of the 10mm rod is 16 inches apart and not 12 inches apart as indicate in page no 17 of this handbook. He also informed that this is a top priority program and needs to be given maximum importance. Regarding measurement book, he proposed the idea of having a measurement register which will be pre-printed to ensure fast entry and also take care of future enquires and audits. He instructed the field officers to be fully vigilant and ensure proper execution in a timely and qualitatively manner. In case of stores, he informed that the store keeper should take the responsibility of receiving and issuing the material and related record keeping, so that the AE is free to supervise the field construction activities.

MD STCS informed the house on the process of providing quality stock material at subsidized prices to the BLS by STCS. He also informed that STCS has established a Camp Office in Siliguri with one general manager attached to it to ensure closer coordination with the BLS. He requested the BDOs to receive the materials correctly and to instruct the store keeper to sign the weigh bill, challan of the company and challan of STCS. Cement bags received should not be less than 50kg. Steel rod length should not be less than 12m. He requested the field officers that if any material is received short, not to receive the same and indicate in challan the defect. Since weighing facilities are not available in the BLS, the number of pieces of TMT Bars are also specified in the challan so that the store keeper can verify the consignment easily. He requested for coordination from all concerned to make this project successful, and requested the house to contact STCS without hesitation in case of any problem. STCS will also be carrying out district visits shortly. After this the house was opened to presentations by the Districts and Blocks to share their success stories, difficulties and innovations.

ADC(Dev) North informed that he is not getting adequate advance information of the material reaching the BLS. Also some *challans* are raised in the name of the AE, which needs to be clarified, since in our program, the store keeper has been made fully responsible to receive and issue the stock materials. Also quantity of a few cement bags in some cases is less than the permissible limit. MD STCS informed that he was not aware of these issues and will take immediate corrective measures. ADC (Dev) West informed that the financial management involves decision making at all levels and one thing is certain that the fund is fixed at Rs 4.89 lakh. In Joint Implementation Model, he informed that monitoring will be difficult since some exceptions will be there as per the CMRHM experience. Our monitoring has to be stringent since even in Joint Model the accountability will lie with RMDD. He also informed that CMRHM and REDRH if implemented well can become the brand name of the State. He also requested if additional 2 JEs could be provided to Soreng Block since it has 16 GPUs. He also opined that in the Joint Model, we need to make the beneficiary accountable for the responsibility assigned to him and this should be incorporated in the undertaking of the beneficiary. He also supported the idea of having strong financial record keeping, including measurement registers.

BDO Yangang indicated that Joint Model will result in confusion as many houses are already underway and the case to case basis discretion given to the Block may result in undue pressure.

Beneficiaries may opt for houses near the road side while those far away may come under Departmental Model. BDO Martam (East) highlighted whether beneficiaries who are requesting for self funding to make bigger houses can be permitted. Also, funds currently provided for 1st instalment, can be utilized for next instalment. He was facing fund shortage on this account. Also, there is shortage of trained masons and labourers. ADC(Dev) East indicated that guidelines for subsequent instalments needs to be specified by the Head Office. Also, special rare cases of beneficiaries with limited land ownership needs to have vertical extension, and the procedure for obtaining approval for the change in design needs to be provided. He also suggested that the beneficiaries include APL as well and the Joint Model will help immensely to accelerate the program. He also seconded the plan to have adequate financial record keeping which will help in meetings the concerns of Audit. BDO Rakdong shared his CMRHM experience in which in one year the Block could complete about 90-100 houses. He also informed that the *Munshi* of line departments have been engaged for CMRHM and their services can also be utilized for REDRH. He requested for clarifications on whether head office will be providing vouchers / C.B. formats for advance and settlement. He also requested for stronger coordination with STCS in stock material supply. BDO Khamdong informed the house that Joint model will be easier to implement as support of beneficiaries will be easier to garner. He also informed that interest accrued in the Block Bank Account is very less since funds are released immediately. AE Rakdong informed if the cantilever design can be modified, and if iron windows can be permitted. Regarding, Joint Model he was not sure if it is possible since, stock material is being provided by RMDD. BDO Tshungthang informed that roads to Tshungthang and Shipgyer are closed for last 2 months and it is difficult to take up house construction. He requisitioned for some support in unloading and loading. Many of the beneficiaries are in Yakthang area which is at 14,000 feet and will be covered with snow soon. BDO Rhenock informed the issue of AEs/JEs now wanting to go on leave to prepare for the upcoming regular posts of AE/JE opened by SPSC. ADC(Dev) South informed that we are fully immersed in the REDRH project. The following support is needed from head office to expedite the progress. In the Joint Model, it will be difficult to take up houses in remote areas departmentally, since houses near the road side owners will take up in Joint Model. BDO Regu informed that the Joint Model will help in garnering support of the beneficiaries and their contribution. Also in some cases, stock materials are reaching from STCS without demand being raised by the Block.

The District teams also requested for posting of adequate number of staff in the BACs, specific instances raised were lack of accounts personnel in Sumbuk BAC in South and need for additional 2 JEs in Soreng BAC as it catered to 16 GPUs. They also requested for replacement of staff who were not working efficiently.

Secretary-RMDD highlighted the importance of this meeting to convey the gravity of the situation to the field functionaries. Being PMs Package this is a prestigious project and we need to demonstrate excellence to prove our credibility. NC is a sensitive work, since lot of fund is involved and execution should be completed in short periods of time. He also emphasized that

detailed financial record keeping is important for long term safety of all the officers involved. He mobilized and motivated the officers to give their best to this project, which has the potential to make Sikkim a brand name in the rural housing sector in the country. He also emphasized on the need to achieve 50% completion of all the houses by March-2013 and 100% completion of all the houses by March-2014 as instructed by the Planning Commission, Government of India after which fund flow from GoI will be stopped as informed by the Secretary, Planning Commission, Government of India.

The following decisions were unanimously taken:

- 1. Joint implementation model:** In order to accelerate the implementation of this project, it was decided to provide a Joint Implementation Model, in addition to the existing Departmental model to the Block, wherein the role of the beneficiary will be enhanced to adequately involve him in house construction. In this Joint Implementation Model, the stock material will be issued to the beneficiary from the Block Level Stores, unloading, stacking and loading provision of upto Rs 3,000 per house will be provided to the Block and the balance funds provided to the beneficiary in instalments based on physical progress. If this is adopted, then the beneficiary will take the lead in house construction. Greater involvement of the beneficiary in house construction, is in accordance with the implementation mechanism of the national flagship housing programme – Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY) and also the ongoing Chief Minister’s Rural Housing Mission (CMRHM), which is running smoothly. These two implementation models will be provided to the Block, who can decide which model is most suitable on a case to case basis, based on the assessment of the existing manpower, capability of the beneficiary and CMRHM and REDRH experience.

Fund release mechanism to the beneficiary after achieving fixed milestones was decided as follows:

Milestone	Fund release to beneficiary
1. Beneficiary identified	1 st instalment fund release of Rs 60,000
2. Plinth level completed	2 nd instalment fund release of Rs 60,000
3. Roof level completed	3 rd instalment fund release of Rs 60,000
4. House fully completed	4 th and final instalment of fund release of Rs 57,000* ⁺

* Quantum of final instalment will vary from Block to Block and needs to be fixed based on consultation with the RMDD head office.

+ Up to Rs 3000/- is being provided to the Block for meeting the costs associated with loading, stacking and unloading the stock material in the BLS.

2. Relaxations in the design of the house:

- a. Toilet and Kitchen may be permitted outside the house,** provided the size and design of the main house having a plinth of 605 sq. feet conforms to the prescribed design. This is as per the prevalent traditional system as many households use firewood extensively and toilets are not perceived as hygienic inside the house. However, the size of the house constructed should not be reduced.

- b. **Plinth area in two storeys:** Few cases have come to light where the beneficiaries own less than 605 square feet land, in these cases the plinth area is proposed to be compensated by building rooms on the second floor. The AE needs to prepare the revised design of this two storied house and obtain technical sanction from the concerned DE/SE. This revised design should be earthquake resistant. Also, prior administrative approval of the District level Committee is also mandatory in this case.
 - c. **Internal Partition:** The transportation and head load costs of bricks especially for houses located at a distance from the road head will be quite substantial. Hence it was decided that the internal partition of the house be permitted of *ekra* material instead of brick. This relaxation is sought for since the transportation and head load costs involved is not adequately accounted for in the standard unit cost estimate. Prior en-block approval of the Block level committee i.e. the BRHCC is mandatory. However, the external partition has to be of bricks.
 - d. **GCI roof option in select remote areas:** The cabinet had earlier approved GCI roof in Dzungu and Lachen Mangshila Constituencies and two Gram Panchayats in West District namely Karzi Mangnam GPU and Dhoopi Narkhola GPU. Other than these locations, it was decided to also allow the option of GCI roof to beneficiaries in select remote areas in all districts with prior approval of District level Committee.
 - e. **Advisory to the beneficiary:** Provide an advisory to the beneficiary that the house has been designed for maximum two storeys with the roof of the second storey having GCI sheet roof. Any modification of design involving slab roof on the second storey or subsequent storeys will need corresponding modification in the foundation and supporting reinforcement.
 - f. **Cantilever overhang** can be reduced from 2feet 9 inches to 1 feet 6 inches, however material saved needs to be accounted for. This will help in reducing the cost of the house without affecting the overall stability.
 - g. **Parapet wall of brick masonry on the roof** can be replaced with durable material with adequate strength to counter the seismic forces at the expense of the beneficiary.
 - h. **Minor mistake in mason training handbook** needs to be corrected and accordingly informed to the mason i.e. the centre to centre distance of the 10mm rod is 16 inches apart and not 12 inches apart as indicate in page no 17.
 - i. **STCS needs to deliver the material to the store keeper of the BLS strictly as per demand.**
3. **Administrative expenses** needs to be provided to the Blocks and Districts urgently to take care of expenses related to TA/DA, POL, Stationary, Meeting/Training expenses and other Misc activities. Need to indicate that it is for 2012-2013.
 4. **Strengthening Financial record keeping** It was agreed by all concerned to initiate the measurement register, voucher register, cash receipt booklet and Contingent Bill forms to provide evidence of expenditure and measurement. These items will be printed from head

office and provided to the BACs soon.

- 5. Fund release to the AE in Departmental Model:** Currently the guidelines specify that Rs 60,000 advance will be provided as an advance to the AE and subsequent releases will be informed later. Hence, regarding subsequent fund release, it was decided that the funds to the AE will be released in four instalments after achieving prefixed milestones as follows:

Milestone	Funds released to the AE
1. Beneficiary identified	Rs 60,000 as advance
2. Plinth level completed	Submission of expenditure details of Rs 80,000 based on which Rs 60,000 released to the AE
3. Roof level completed	Submission of expenditure details of Rs 80,000 based on which Rs 60,000 released to the AE
4. House fully completed	Submission of expenditure details of Rs 80,000 based on which Rs 60,000* released to the AE

* Quantum of last instalment will vary from Block to Block and needs to be released based on consultation with the RMDD head office.

Based on these decisions, it was also decided to modify the Operational Guidelines of REDRH by obtaining the approval of the Government to implement the project in mission mode.

In the end, the Special Secretary (MGNREGA.), Shri Sandeep Tambe thanked the participants for attending the training and for sharing their views and ideas and for their commitment to this project.



(D. R. Nepal)
Secretary-RM&DD