

Draft Terms of Reference
Hiring a Consultant [Firm] for developing Effective Communication strategy for
Indigenous Communities of Meghalaya to Bring About a Behavior Change

Project: Meghalaya Community-Led Landscape Management Project (Government of Meghalaya, supported by the World Bank)

1. Background

The Government of Meghalaya and the World Bank have entered into an agreement to support selected communities in Meghalaya to plan and implement community-driven landscape management of their natural resources, through the Community-Led Landscape Management Project [CLLMP, 2018-2023] (Project hereafter) which will help restore and sustainably manage forests, land and water resources, and biodiversity in the state.

At present, due to a combination of climate change impacts and anthropogenic activities leading to rampant mis-use of natural resources, forests, land and water resources are rapidly degrading. A majority of Meghalaya's population relies on these natural resources for their livelihood. This degradation, therefore, is a major cause of concern, from socio-economic-ecological point of view. The project seeks to address these issues holistically – by adopting a community-based approach to stem the natural resources degradation.

1.1 Meghalaya Context

Meghalaya is a state located in the northeastern part of India, bounded by Assam in the north, northwest and the east, and by Bangladesh in the south and southwest. The state is divided into three divisions, namely, Jaintia Hills (with two districts), Khasi Hills (with four districts) and Garo Hills (with five districts). About 76% of the state is forested, about ninety five percent of which is under community or private management¹.

Meghalaya has a population of 29.64 lakhs of which 14.92 lakhs are male and 14.71 are female. Meghalaya is predominantly a tribal state. 85.9 percent of the state's total population constitute Scheduled tribes. Khasi, Garo and Synteng are the predominant indigenous tribes of the Khasi Hills, Garo Hills and Jaintia Hills respectively. Other tribes include Hajong, Rabha, Koch, Mikir, Kuki, Lushai, Naga, Boro and Hmar that inhabit the state. Meghalaya is predominantly rural with 79.92 percent of the population residing in the rural area and 20.07 percent in the urban area.² Largely agrarian economy, important crops are potatoes, rice, maize, pineapples, bananas, papayas, spices, etc.

Population by Language (2001)		
Language	Population	Percentage to Total population
Khasi	10,91,087	47.05
Garo	7,28,424	31.41
Assamese	36,576	1.58

¹http://www.megforest.gov.in/forest_cover.html

² India Census 2011

Bengalee	1,85,692	8
Gorkhali/ Nepali	52,155	2.25
Hindi	50,055	2.16
Koch	20,834	0.9
Rabha	22,395	0.97
Other languages	1,31,604	5.68
Total	23,18,822	100

Source: Meghalaya Statistical Handbook 2017

The Southern region of the state is one of the wettest regions in the world, recording an average of 12,000 mm (470 in) of rain in a year. Yet, at the same time, it is challenged by degradation of water bodies, soil erosion and water scarcity in the dry season. While forest cover is high, unscientific coal mining and limestone quarrying and logging are contributing to degradation of the natural resource base. Though there is abundant rainfall, there is very little management for storage. Excessive oil runoff in the upper catchments is also a major concern. Rural communities in the state depend heavily on forests and community lands for livelihoods, food and medicine. A significant proportion of the population depends on jhum or shifting cultivation. However, due to conversion of jhum lands to other land uses such as for raising of plantation crops, the net area available for jhum cultivation has reduced which has forced jhum cultivators to reduce the fallow period, which is the time between the end of previous plantation and beginning of next plantation, to meet their production requirements. Jhum cycles in most parts of Northeastern India have reduced to as little as 3-4 years from 10 years or longer, which has in turn led to drastic reduction in productivity, increase in soil erosion, forest degradation and loss of biodiversity.³

Because of the land tenure system and the private/community ownership, the forests do not receive support from state institutions. This has resulted in the traditional tribal institutions having limited resources to deploy on the natural resources. Their task is made more difficult due to the communities being driven by a preference for immediate gains resulting in over-extraction of minerals and timber resources.

The indigenous Khasi, Garo and Jaintia tribes have a long history of sophisticated management of natural ecosystems. Spiritual connection with land and its biodiversity manifest in their traditions and customs. Traditional practices such as sacred groves and community forests, demonstrate community-based natural resource preservation. Traditionally, community land and forests are classified and named depending on their uses, which is based on administration and religious perceptions. Governance is facilitated through customary laws. This legacy of community management of natural resources is recognized in the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution, which vests the rights over forests and water resources with the Autonomous District Councils (ADCs) established under the schedule.

References towards the overall context, customary rights and traditions, traditional institutions engaged in management of forests and natural resources, and rules and regulations under ADC are shared below:

³<http://www.megplanning.gov.in/circular/WGR/Report%20of%20WG-3.pdf>

- http://cllmp.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/CLLMP_Environmental-Management-Framework-MCLLMP.pdf?x87367
- <http://www.fao.org/forestry/10606-092cc942292e4c41e37055647145704ff.pdf>
- http://khadc.nic.in/acts_rules_regulations_bills/Acts_Rules_arranged/19A_24A_Forest_Act_1958_Rules_1960.pdf

References towards region specific communication approaches, trends, tools, strategies, mediums etc. are shared below. Additional references are given in Annexure 1.

- Khasi Folklorismus - A study of Khasi Phawar, Media and films by Dr. G. Badaiasuklang L. Nonglait
- Around the hearth Khasi legends by Kynpham Sing Nongkynrih
- Articles by Prof. Amena Nora Passah on oral tradition, memories, song, unwritten laws in Jaintia hills
- Forest in the life of the Khasis by Rekha M Shangpliang
- History and Culture of the Khasi people by Hamlet BarehNgapKynta
- Ka Jingsneng Tymmen by Radhon Sing Berry Kharwanlang - translated by Bijoya Sawian
- BalpakramThe land of Spirits Garo Mythology by Julius L R Marak

Recent films film references highlighting the indigenous practices of *jingrwailawbei*:

<https://raifilm.org.uk/films/my-name-is-eeooow/>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y9VuhroVqOM>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CNLe8i39RP4>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ijzIk75bsNM>

Lessons from the communication efforts during the COVID-19 Outbreak

MBMA is engaged in the development of communication material and facilitation of dissemination across all villages in the state. The purpose was to create mass awareness on COVID-19 and to encourage behavior change which is necessary to combat the disease. MBMA was responsible for developing health communication posters for dissemination to all the villages in the state. Given the scale, expected reach and intended target of the posters, they had to be in the local language and designed taking the local context into account. The initial challenge was to design posters that work with most people in the state. Due to lack of past references and restrictions in movement for testing posters, MBMA relied on its own experiences working with indigenous communities and on feedback from community members in the immediate vicinity, to design the posters. Ideally, testing of posters with the community would have enabled MBMA to collect criticisms and further improve the posters to make them more effective. MBMA also created a group comprising doctors, medical workers, administrators etc. who provided medical feedback on each of the materials developed to ensure accurate information is disseminated. The feedback process was continuous, often requiring 5 to 10 iterations before the final poster is made. The final posters were disseminated by various teams setup by the government and though community feedback could have been collected at this stage, to refine the posters, it was ultimately not done due to various constraints.

Accordingly, the Project is focused on supporting Meghalaya's unique community-based natural resource management (NRM) system, which relies primarily on its population – the Khasi, the Garo, and the Jaintia tribes – to manage forests and other natural resources through customary law.

The higher-level objectives of the Project are to:

- (a) Managing and conserving the natural resources, especially forests and water sources, so that it supports balanced economic growth and well-being of every community in Meghalaya.
- (b) Institutionalizing and demonstrating a model for government support to community-led management of natural resources, especially forests, that could be replicated in other parts of India.

The Project implementation is being carried out through community-level planning and implementation in selected communities, preceded by intensive theme-based capacity building of village-level facilitators and committees. All communities in the state will benefit from capacity building and skill training of their members on natural resources management. In this regard, special emphasis is being given to youth and women empowerment, with the focus on creating livelihood and entrepreneurship opportunities. The Project is also supporting small grants to kick-start innovation in natural resources management, including revival of traditional knowledge and practice. Communities will also have access to knowledge management outputs from consultative workshops and IT-based learning initiatives. The Project is also enabling convergence with other government programmes, leading to synergies across the value chain, as well as institutional strengthening and sustainability.

The Project is being implemented by *Meghalaya Basin Management Agency (MBMA)*

More information on the Project activities can be found on www.cllmp.com

2. Objectives of the Assignment

MBMA wishes to hire a Firm to provide support to the Project as outlined below. Since the Project is based on a community-driven development (CDD) approach, effective communication– awareness resulting in behavior change – is a vital part of its activities. Broadly, the goal of MBMA is to carry out empirical research, and subsequently apply the findings as a foundation for developing and implementing an effective communication strategy for indigenous communities of the state to nurture responsible development and positive behavioral change.

The objective of this assignment to meet the above goal is to develop an in-depth understanding of the most effective communications approach for each contextual setting – language, culture, ethnicity, belief systems, social, economic and geographic, context, and limitations brought on by COVID19 outbreak - through empirical research and field based testing, and based on the outcome of the research, to develop a comprehensive communication strategy to generate awareness for the project and its principles, help mobilize communities, bring about behavioral

change and support planning and implementation of natural resource management at the community-level.

3. Scope of Services of the Assignment

The scope of services for the assignment entails the following tasks :

3.1 Conducting field based empirical research on effective communication approaches. The firm will propose an appropriate statistical sample size that sufficiently represents the geographic, lingual, cultural and ethnic diversity of the state, for conducting the research. This sample size would be reviewed and approved by MBMA. The research would comprise mapping and analysis of existing communication approaches of MBMA and other institutions engaged in communications with indigenous community of the state (Health Department, Department of Information and Public Relations, Community and Rural Development Department, Doordarshan Kendra Shillong, All India Radio Shillong/Jowai/Tura, and FM radios – Radio Mirchi, RED FM, Big FM), mediums, tools, techniques used and their impact. Documentation of these existing communication channels, identification of gaps and patterns, further investigation into specific channels/mediums/tools/techniques etc. would constitute part of the research. Based on the outcome of this analysis, the Firm will develop, test and iterate communications approach, through an ethnographic feedback loop, to arrive at what works best with the various indigenous communities of Meghalaya. It is envisaged that this research would take inputs from the fields of semantics, semiotics, syntactics, visual communication, cognition, pedagogy, anthropology and ethnography, to develop an in-depth understanding of the most effective communication approach for the indigenous communities in the state. Additionally, as part of testing and constant feedback loop, public feedback sessions or workshops can be organized at village cluster and District level on a weekly and monthly basis respectively. This research will explore various communication methods, designs and approaches, and iterate based on constant feedback loop to determine the best approach, from process of conceptualization to campaign development and implementation with focus on monitoring and impact evaluation.

3.2 Determine appropriate and effective strategy for documentation, communication and outreach for the purpose of generating goodwill and increasing the visibility of the best practices and innovations related to natural resource management under the project that could also serve as useful resources or lessons for other projects, government, developmental institutions, NGOs, individuals and others engaged in NRM, general public etc.

3.3 Conducting live workshop at regular intervals with industry experts, government officials, NGOs, developmental workers etc. at the state level for further collection of input and feedback on the findings of the research which will aid in the preparation of communication strategy. At least three workshops are envisaged to be conducted during the research described at 2.2.1 and 2.2.2 above.

3.4 Developing a comprehensive Communications Strategy based on the findings of the empirical research mentioned at point 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 above. The strategy and approach will propose an effective mix of mass communications, general and targeted advocacy, community mobilization, and social messaging to address the communications needs of various indigenous

communities. A Recommended Action Plan (RAP) for the next 15 months detailing the strategy’s implementation will be developed. The Strategy and RAP will provide a detailed mechanism for monitoring impact of the communications activities and the behavioral change in the indigenous communities.

3.5 Piloting the Communication Strategy to test and enable live monitoring of efficacy, and to make necessary changes and finalize the strategy. The number of villages to be piloted would emerge from the research in 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3. The firm will be responsible for development of communications products and other resources required for the pilot, as part of the research.

3.6 In case new tools and techniques other than those assessed in 3.1 are required as part of the effective communication strategy, these should be developed and detailed to a reasonable extent for further advancement and field tests

4. Duration of the Assignment

The duration of the assignment is 12 months [1 year] from contract signature date, and may be extended based on need, performance and with mutual agreement.

5. Team Composition and Qualification Requirements for the Key Experts:

MBMA will assess the demonstrated experience and capacity of interested consulting firms applying for this assignment. The assignment requires a firm with experience in engagement with rural and indigenous communities, with specific focus on low income, low literacy groups, and with experience of working in the public sector in the field of Communication Strategy Development for Indigenous People/Rural Sector, and supporting similar projects of the government.

The selected firm will be expected to deploy sufficient amount of manpower required to successfully deliver the tasks to meet the objectives of the assignment. An indicative manpower requirement for the assignment duration of 12 months must include Key Experts of suitable qualifications and experience for the key positions as tabulated below indicating the minimum qualifications and indicative, desired experience of Key Experts.

Position	Desired Qualifications and Minimum Experience	Estimated Staff Months
Key – Expert; K – 1 <i>Designation:</i> Team Leader and Single Point of Contact <i>Number :</i> 1	<i>Desired Experience :</i> Minimum 10 years’ experience in research-based nature-culture communication for low income, rural indigenous communities. <i>Minimum Education:</i> Master’s degree or professional diploma in Communication. <i>Specialization :</i> Communication Research, Research Methods in Design, Indigenous Images, Narratives, Story telling, Music, Socially Relevant Communication, Design for development,	8.5

Position	Desired Qualifications and Minimum Experience	Estimated Staff Months
	Communication for low income, low literacy groups Information Graphics, Media Technology, Representation Techniques, Visual Design, semiotics, Syntactics, Animation, Illustration, Graphic Design, Print design, Visual Ethnography, Experiential learning.	
Key Expert; K – 2 <i>Designation :</i> Applied Communication Specialist <i>Number :</i> 1	<i>Desired Experience :</i> Minimum 10 years’ experience in applied field communication and communication strategy in developing context <i>Minimum Education :</i> Master’s degree or professional diploma in Communication <i>Specialization:</i> Applied Communication, Design strategy, Design management, Strategic design	2.5
Key Expert; K – 3 <i>Designation :</i> Communication Design Specialist <i>Number :</i> 1	<i>Desired Experience :</i> Minimum 10 years’ experience in innovative solutions for communication and behavioral change. <i>Minimum Education:</i> Master’s degree or professional diploma in Communication. <i>Specialization :</i> Design Innovation, Knowledge Network, behavioral change.	5.5
Key Expert; K – 4 <i>Designation :</i> Science Communicator <i>Number :</i> 1	<i>Desired Experience :</i> Minimum 5 years’ experience in science communication with focus on nature science related to tropical and sub-tropical context. <i>Minimum Education :</i> Master’s degree or professional diploma in Communications. <i>Specialization :</i> Science communication, Natural sciences, Social Sciences, Behavioral sciences	5.5
TOTAL		22

While evaluating Technical proposals, CVs of the Key Experts proposed by the Consultant will be evaluated with respect to the indicative qualification and experience specified for each position in the above table. CVs of only key experts will be evaluated. In addition, the selected firm will ensure adequate technical experts and supporting staff with necessary skill sets to enable it to sufficiently perform the assignment.

6. Reporting Requirements, Progress Timelines and Time Schedule for Payments

The Consultant will report to the Project Director, CLLMP; however, will be working with the General Manager, Knowledge Management and 2 Deputy Project Directors (DPDs) and a Technical Specialist on day to day basis;

Deliverables	Presentation Format	From signing of contract, (T)	Payment Percentage of the total contract amount
Orientation Workshop	Power-point	On week 1	
Submission and Acceptance of Inception Report	Editable word or pdf file/s	T + 3 weeks	10%
Starting of research		From 4 th Week onwards	
Completion of Workshop 1 Presentation of findings, potential communication approach and collection of input and feedback from industry experts and government officials, NGOs, developmental workers etc. and submission of workshop report	Firm will submit a power-point presentation along with findings in editable version of word/pdf files. All data (primary or secondary) collected for the study will be submitted to MBMA	T + 13 weeks	20%
Completion of Workshop 2 Presentation of findings, potential communication approach and collection of input and feedback from industry experts and government officials, NGOs, developmental workers etc. and submission of workshop report	Firm will submit a power-point presentation along with findings in editable version of word/pdf files. All data (primary or secondary) collected for the study will be submitted to MBMA	T+25 weeks	
Conclusion of field research		T+36 weeks	
Completion of Workshop 3 Presentation of findings, potential communication approach and collection of	Firm will submit a power-point presentation along with findings / reports in editable	T+39 weeks	25% (submission and acceptance of corresponding report)

Deliverables	Presentation Format	From signing of contract, (T)	Payment Percentage of the total contract amount
input and feedback from industry experts and government officials, NGOs, developmental workers etc. and submission of workshop report and Report on findings of the field based empirical research	version of word/pdf files. All data (primary or secondary) collected for the study will be submitted to MBMA		
Presentation and Submission of draft Communications Strategy and Recommended Action Plan (RAP) development for inputs/feedback from MBMA	Firm will submit a power-point presentation along with findings / reports in editable version of word/pdf files.	T + 44 weeks	20% (submission and acceptance of corresponding report)
Further adaptations and changes of the Communications Strategy and RAP incorporating MBMA's Feedback	Firm will submit reports in editable version of word/pdf files.	T+ 46 weeks	
Submission Final Communications Strategy and RAP	Firm will submit a power-point presentation along with findings / reports in editable version of word/pdf files.	T + 48 weeks	25% (submission and acceptance of corresponding report)

7. Client's Input and Counterpart Personnel including Data and Facilities to be Provided by the Client

Services, Facilities and Property to be made available by the Client to the Consultant is as below:

- Office space to the Consultant upon request addressed to the designated Point of Contact
- Conference hall/meeting rooms. as may be required during the course of the assignment for the purpose of making a presentation, submission of reports, workshops, brainstorming sessions and meetings.
- Necessary project documents such as PIP, COM, etc., under its control and copyright for use and reference of the Consultant to facilitate execution of the assignment.
- Project Personnel of the State and Districts shall provide necessary inputs to the Consultant Agency throughout the duration of the assignment.

8. Composition of review committee and review procedure to monitor consultants work;

The Agency will report to the Project Director, CLLMP; however, will be working with the General Manager, Knowledge Management and Deputy Project Directors (DPDs) on day to day basis. The Technical Team comprising of Project Director, DPDs, the General Manager will provide comments/ final approval on each deliverable within 10 days of submission of deliverable which will also trigger the process of release of payment. GM – KM will be the Single Point of Contact from MBMA for the Consultant. The Consultant will receive a detailed briefing at the beginning of the assignment from the MBMA contact, with regular follow-up discussions via email, phone and in-person as required. All agreements reached with timelines [if any] and the basis thereof will be minuted/recorded and recorded by the party initiating the discussion, and shared for common understanding.

The project may appoint a committee comprising subject matter experts, as required, for the purpose of evaluating the work of the agency under this assignment.

9. Ethical Issues

- The cultural sensitivities, religion, language sensitivities, gender issues, etc., have to be kept in mind while designing, and testing of communication tools and material.
- Designs, scripts, storyboard and any other content, including music/background score developed for the piloting of communication strategy should be original and not copied or duplicated from any other sources.

10. Copyright

All materials and documentation during the assignment will be the sole property of MBMA.

ANNEXURE 1

- Ka Samoijong ka Lyer by Kynpham Sing Nongkynrih
- KibaNgiKhot Ja by S. Khongsit
- Ki Dieng bad ka culture jong ngi by S Khongsit
- Ki Sim Ki Doh bad Ki Jingbamjongki ha lumshillong by S Khongsit
- Articles by Prof. BK Tiwari and other scholars on Sacred groves and community reserves
- The Khasis and their natural environment by Dr. Barnes L Mawrie
- The Philosophy and essence of Niam Khasi by Mr. KerrsinghTariang
- Khasi and Jaintia Tales and Beliefs by I M Simon
- Aspects of Khasi philosophy by Malngiang, P
- Modern developmental philosophy of nature and traditional Khasi ecology; thinking with Heidegger. In Environment-Cultural Interaction and the Tribes of North-East India; Mawlong, B.S., Mitri M.B.
- Khasi hills and Khasi culture: Reconnection. in Kynpham Sing Nongkynrih's The Yearning of Seeds, Chakraborty, S.
- Forest management practices of the tribal people of Meghalaya, North- East India. J Trop For Sci 2010, 22(3), pp. 329-342. Tiwari, B.; Tynsong, H.; Lynser, M.
- Community participation in forest management in Meghalaya. The NEHU Journal 2010, 3(1), pp. 89-98 Cajee, L.; Lyngdoh Tmar, U.; Syiemlieh, H.
- Sacred groves of Meghalaya. In Conserving the Sacred for Biodiversity Management, 1st ed.; Ramakrishnan, P.S.; K. G. Saxena, K.G.; Chandrashekara, U. M. Science Pub Inc: Enfield, N.H., USA, 2011. Tiwari, B.; Tripathi, R.; Barik, S.
- Analysis of local attitudes toward the sacred groves of Meghalaya and Karnataka, India. Conser Soc, 2013, 11(2), pp. 187-197. Ormsby, A.