

RFBDP NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2026, VOLUME 4



Gharial Rearing Centre, Palighat

Message from Project Director

It is my pleasure to present Volume 4 of the RFBDP Quarterly Newsletter, highlighting the continued progress of the Rajasthan Forestry and Biodiversity Development Project in promoting biodiversity conservation, sustainable livelihoods, and strengthened community institutions across the project districts.

This quarter has witnessed significant achievements through enhanced field engagement, focused capacity-building initiatives, and livelihood promotion activities. Efforts towards community mobilisation, strengthening of Self-Help Groups, and promotion of agroforestry-based livelihood models are contributing to improved income opportunities and increased resilience among forest-dependent communities.

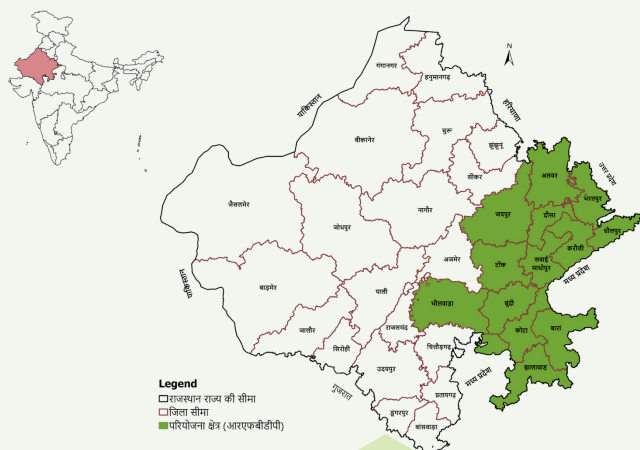
The recent AFD Mission visit further reinforced the importance of participatory planning, institutional strengthening, and collaborative implementation. I sincerely appreciate the dedication and commitment of forest field staff, partner agencies, and community institutions whose efforts continue to drive meaningful outcomes.

As we move forward, we remain committed to conserving Rajasthan's rich natural heritage while enhancing sustainable livelihood opportunities for communities.

Rajesh Kumar Gupta, IFS
Project Director, RFBDP

FROM REFLECTION TO PROGRESS: A QUARTERLY JOURNEY

- ◆ AFD Mission Visit to RFBBDP Project Sites
- ◆ Plant Micro Reserves: Conserving Rajasthan's Botanical Heritage
 - Introduction to Plant Micro Reserves (PMRs)
 - Importance, Benefits, and Selection Criteria
- ◆ RFBBDP Support to Palighat Gharial Conservation Site, Chambal (Rajasthan)
- ◆ Agroforestry under RFBBDP: Cultivating Sustainable Livelihoods
 - Scale, Implementation, and Farmer Impact
- ◆ Highlights of Livelihood Improvement Initiatives
 - Community Mobilisation and SHG Promotion
 - Capacity Building and Training Programmes
 - Agroforestry-Led Livelihood Promotion



Objectives of RFBDP

Protect and develop natural forests in the project area

Promote conservation of threatened species

Restore semi arid grasslands for fodder management and carbon sequestration

Preserve biodiversity and restore habitats, including wetlands

Promote sustainable forest management through improved administration, community engagement, and promote livelihoods

AFD MISSION VISIT TO RFBDP PROJECT SITES

The AFD delegation visited the RFBDP project intervention sites across Alwar, Sawai Madhopur, and Baran, covering Orans, plantation works, Entry Point Activities (EPAs), and nurseries. The mission team – Ms. Laura BUIS, Ms. Nidhi Batra, Ms. Lise Breuil, and Mr. Cyrille Barnerias – visited the sites, and gained insights about the progress across multiple project sites.

**Biodiversity
conservation
initiatives**



**Strengthening of
community
institutions & SHGs**

**Livelihood
enhancement
initiatives**



**The team
was
briefed on**



**Communication
and outreach
activities**



**Promotion of
agroforestry in
project villages**



Another highlight of the visit was the interaction at the GIS lab in Jaipur, where the delegation observed how spatial data, digital dashboards, and monitoring tools are being utilized for better planning and real-time decision-making under RFBDP.

The mission acknowledged the dedication of the field teams who are continuously working to conserve biodiversity and promote community-led forestry across Rajasthan.



PLANT MICRO RESERVES: CONSERVING RAJASTHAN'S BOTANICAL HERITAGE THROUGH RFBDP

Under the Rajasthan Forestry and Biodiversity Development Project (RFBDP), implemented by the Rajasthan Forest Department, the conservation of plant diversity has been prioritised through the establishment of Plant Micro Reserves (PMRs) across eastern Rajasthan. The project provisions the development of 100 PMRs, envisaged as a network of strategically selected sites dedicated to the protection of rare, endangered, threatened, endemic, and locally declining plant species.

WHAT IS A PLANT MICRO RESERVE (PMR)?

A Plant Micro Reserve (PMR) is a small, carefully selected conservation area designed specifically to protect native/ endangered local plant species and their habitats through targeted scientific interventions.

IMPORTANCE OF PLANT MICRO RESERVES IN BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION

Plant Micro Reserves play an important role in strengthening regional biodiversity conservation by protecting critical microhabitats that often remain overlooked in broader planning processes. By conserving these small but significant areas, PMRs help safeguard plant species, maintain genetic diversity, support key ecological processes such as pollination and seed dispersal, and enhance ecosystem resilience to climate change. They also function as ecological refuges, enabling threatened plant populations to survive and regenerate under relatively secure conditions, thereby contributing to overall landscape-level stability.

As of now, around 15 Plant Micro Reserves have been developed in Jhalawar, Kota, and Karauli districts, and the project is actively progressing towards identifying and developing PMRs in the remaining RFBDP districts during the current year. This expanding network reflects a growing commitment to safeguarding Rajasthan's lesser known but ecologically critical plant habitats.

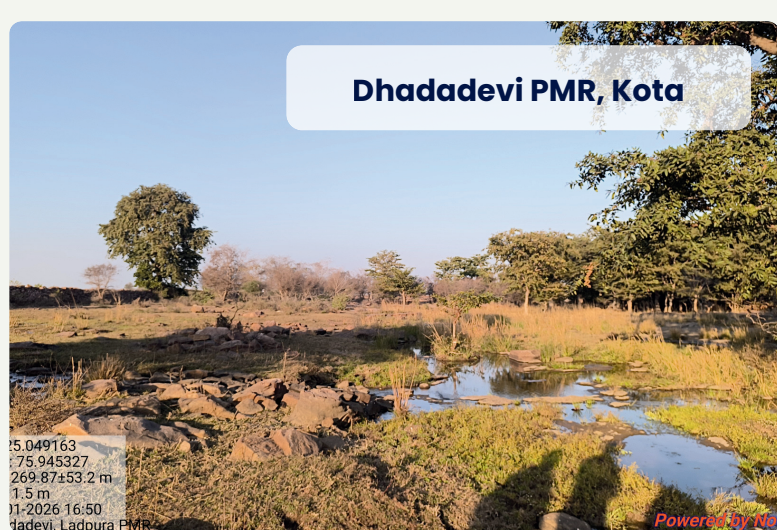


PMR size and boundaries are finalised based on ground realities and conservation needs, ensuring both ecological effectiveness and management practicality.

Mandawar PMR, Jhalawar



Dhadadevi PMR, Kota



Looking ahead

With 100 PMRs envisaged under RFBDP, and 15 already established across eastern Rajasthan, Plant Micro Reserves are emerging as a powerful tool for plant conservation. As the project moves forward with PMR development in remaining districts, this growing network will significantly strengthen Rajasthan's biodiversity conservation framework – protecting not just plants, but the ecological and cultural fabric they support.

RFBDP SUPPORT TO PALIGHAT GHARIAL CONSERVATION SITE, CHAMBAL (RAJASTHAN)

Under the Rajasthan Forestry and Biodiversity Development Project (RFBDP), implemented by the Rajasthan Forest Department, the conservation of plant diversity has been prioritised through the establishment of Plant Micro Reserves (PMRs) across eastern Rajasthan. The project provisions the development of 100 PMRs, envisaged as a network of strategically selected sites dedicated to the protection of rare, endangered, threatened, endemic, and locally declining plant species.



Located along the Chambal River in Sawai Madhopur, Palighat is a crucial habitat for the critically endangered gharial, offering clean water, sandy banks, and minimal disturbance.

Strengthened under RFBDP with support from Agence Française de Développement (AFD), including development of a Rescue and Research Centre.

Site supports rich biodiversity including turtles, crocodiles, and migratory birds, with strong potential for eco-tourism and conservation education.

Key interventions include, controlled rearing, installation of water tanks, building secure enclosures, patrolling support, and development of a water filtration system.

30 gharial hatchlings were scientifically reared with regular health and behavioural monitoring, reaching an average length of 75 cm, and were fed live fish to retain their natural hunting instincts, preparing them for survival in the wild. 10 juvenile gharials released into the Chambal River on 13 November 2025 by Shri Sanjay Sharma, Hon'ble Minister of State (IC) for Forest, Environment & Climate Change and Science & Technology, Government of Rajasthan in the presence of senior forest officers including Smt. Shikha Mehra, Shri. Rajesh Kumar Gupta and other departmental officers.

AGROFORESTRY UNDER RFBDP: CULTIVATING SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS FOR FARMERS

Under the Rajasthan Forestry and Biodiversity Development Project (RFBDP), agroforestry has been piloted as a sustainable livelihood option for farmers facing challenges such as erratic rainfall, low agricultural productivity, and climate variability. With traditional agriculture no longer sufficient to meet household needs, many rural families are compelled to migrate to cities in search of income.

To address this, RFBDP introduced agroforestry as a long-term income-generating intervention, integrating fruit-bearing and multipurpose tree species into existing farming systems. The pilot was implemented in partnership with five Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) across Jaipur district (Bassi, Phagi and Amber blocks) and Dausa district (Lalsot and Lawan blocks).

Scale and Implementation

The pilot reached around 900 farmers, with the distribution of nearly 60,000 saplings of locally suitable, fruit-bearing species. These included Jamun, Mango, Guava, Anjeer, Jackfruit, Lemon, Neem, Ardu and Mausambi. The selected species offer both ecological benefits and the potential for sustained income over time.

The intervention aims to:



Create long-term income opportunities



Enhance resilience to climate risks



Utilise farm boundaries and unused land effectively



Reduce dependence on seasonal agriculture

As the plantations mature, agroforestry is expected to supplement farm incomes, reduce distress migration, and strengthen livelihood security for rural households.

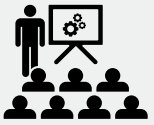


HIGHLIGHTS OF LIVELIHOOD IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVES

A one-day training on Gender Considerations in Soil and Moisture Conservation (SMC) was organized under the Rajasthan Forest and Biodiversity Development Project (RFBDP) to enhance women's participation and technical understanding, with 77 participants from VFPMC/EDC and the Forest Department across three forest divisions of Kota.

Community Mobilization Drive

Conducted 446 village meetings across 271 locations, mobilising 1,338 SHG women and shortlisting 100 SHGs for livelihood promotion. Key IGAs identified include agarbatti making, spice processing, poultry and animal husbandry, with each SHG to receive ₹1 lakh for launching income-generating activities.



Capacity Building Through ToTs

Organised four Training-of-Trainers programmes in Kota, Jaipur and Bharatpur divisions, equipping 150+ trainees with knowledge on livelihood resource mapping, SHG business planning, IGA selection and record management, enabling cascading capacity building across target villages.

Thematic Training Programs

Key Highlights

- CDCB - Total Trainings - 4 (Persons Trained - 172)
- MIG - Total Trainings - 4 (Persons Trained - 172)
- GIS- Total Trainings - 1 (Persons Trained - 147)
- Gender & ESMS - Total Trainings - 3 (Persons Trained - 151)





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