

Mid Term Evaluation Report of The Project
“Prevention of Land Degradation by Developing Agro Forestry and
Horticulture With Participation of Farmers In Bhiwandi Tahasil of Thane
District, Maharashtra



Conducted by
CENTRE FOR RESEARCH, TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT, CRTD

Submitted to
-Ekatmik Vikas Sanstha- EVS

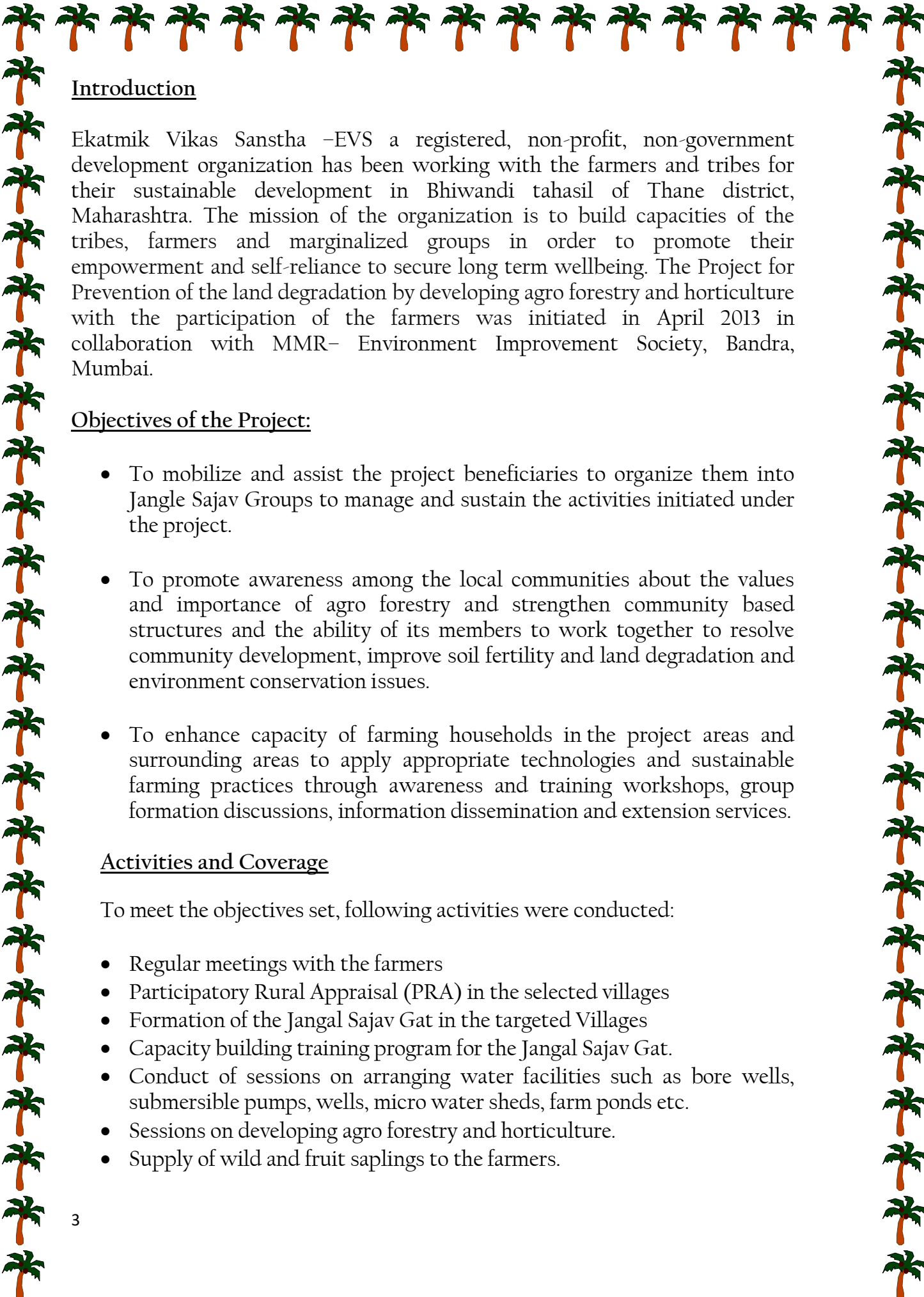
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Introduction

Ekatmik Vikas Sanstha –EVS a registered, non-profit, non-government development organization has been working with the farmers and tribes for their sustainable development in Bhiwandi tahasil of Thane district, Maharashtra. The mission of the organization is to build capacities of the tribes, farmers and marginalized groups in order to promote their empowerment and self-reliance to secure long term wellbeing. The Project for Prevention of the land degradation by developing agro forestry and horticulture with the participation of the farmers was initiated in April 2013 in collaboration with MMR– Environment Improvement Society, Bandra, Mumbai.

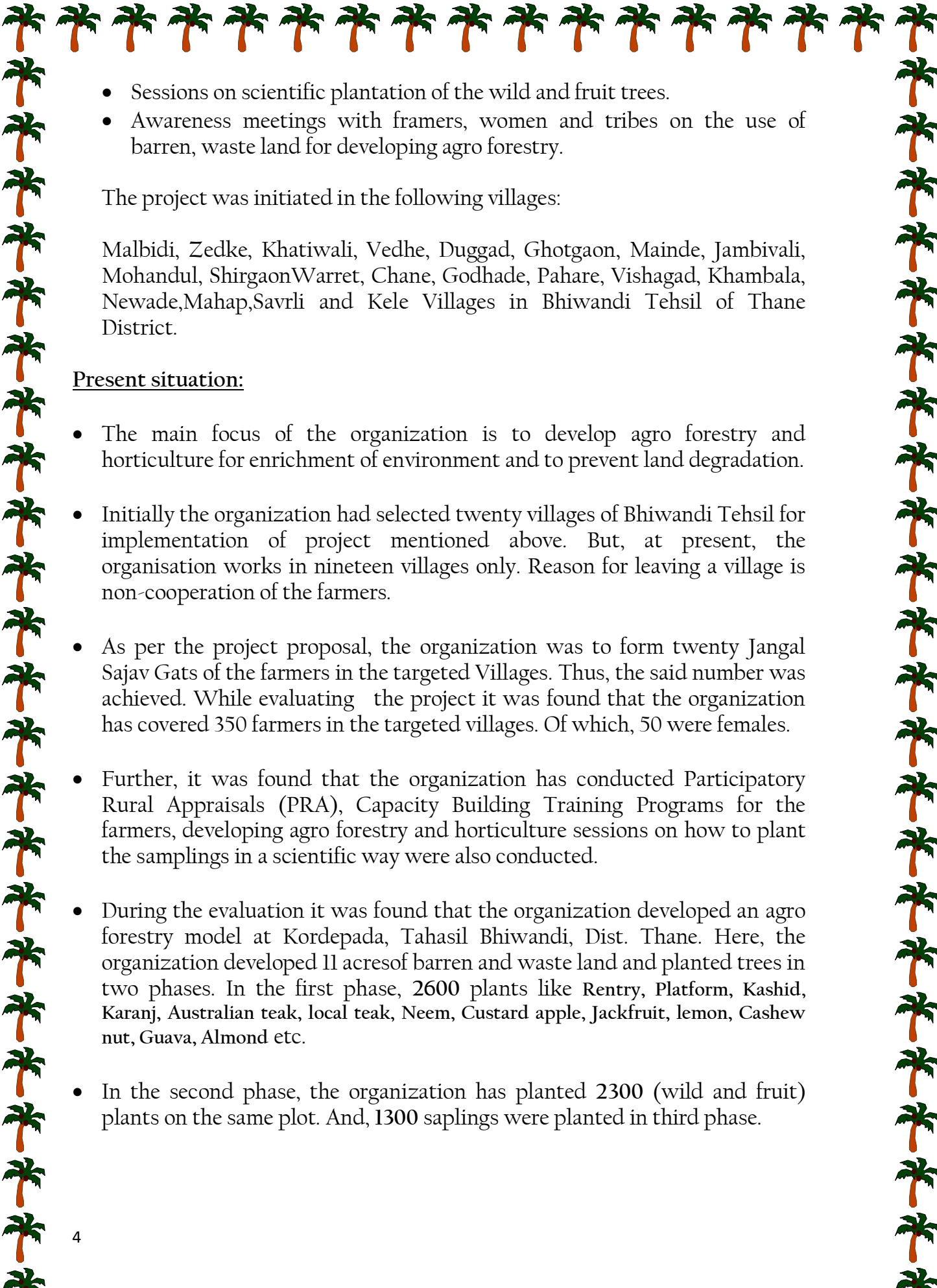
Objectives of the Project:

- To mobilize and assist the project beneficiaries to organize them into Jangle Sajav Groups to manage and sustain the activities initiated under the project.
- To promote awareness among the local communities about the values and importance of agro forestry and strengthen community based structures and the ability of its members to work together to resolve community development, improve soil fertility and land degradation and environment conservation issues.
- To enhance capacity of farming households in the project areas and surrounding areas to apply appropriate technologies and sustainable farming practices through awareness and training workshops, group formation discussions, information dissemination and extension services.

Activities and Coverage

To meet the objectives set, following activities were conducted:

- Regular meetings with the farmers
- Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) in the selected villages
- Formation of the Jangal Sajav Gat in the targeted Villages
- Capacity building training program for the Jangal Sajav Gat.
- Conduct of sessions on arranging water facilities such as bore wells, submersible pumps, wells, micro water sheds, farm ponds etc.
- Sessions on developing agro forestry and horticulture.
- Supply of wild and fruit saplings to the farmers.

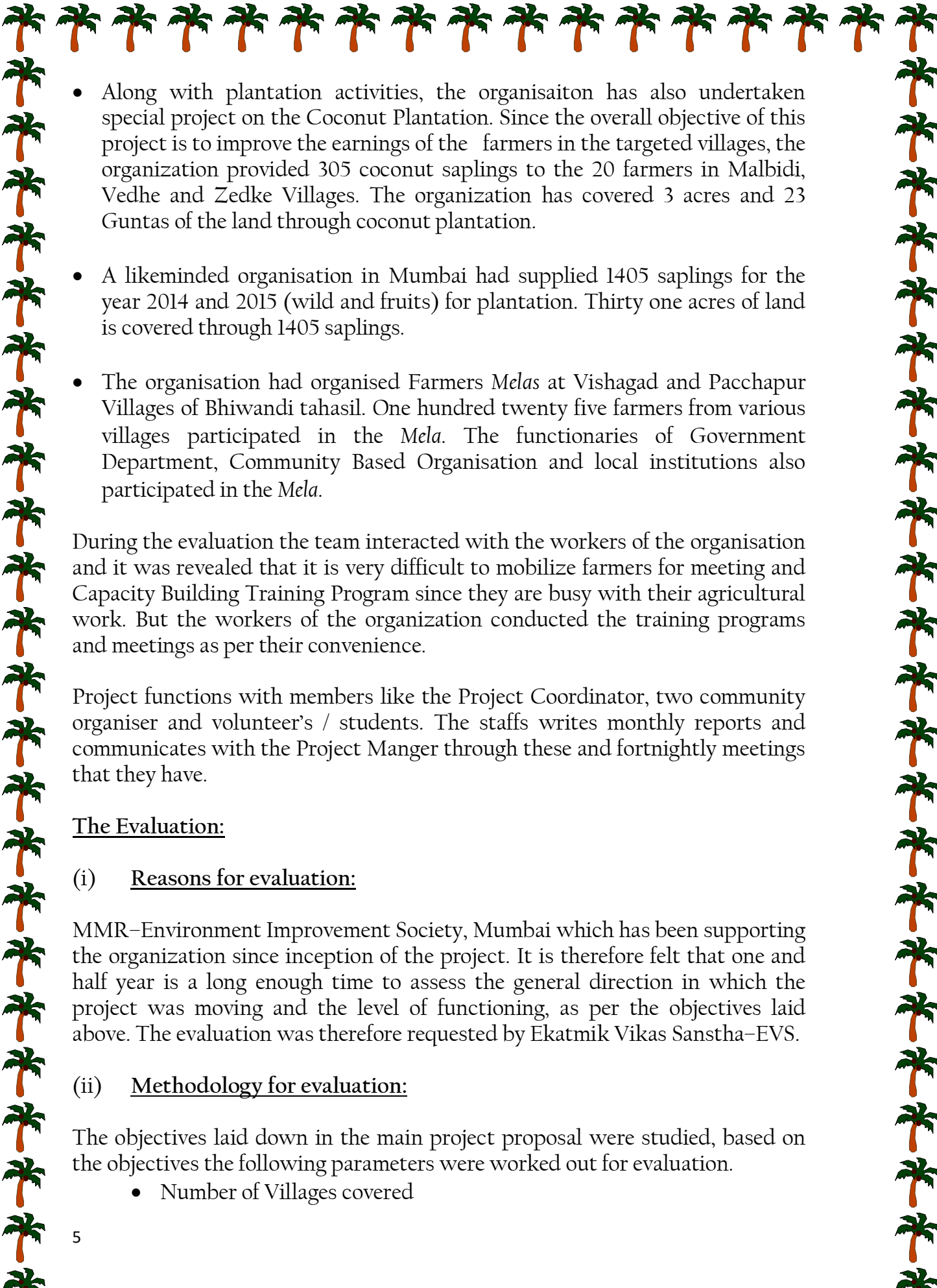
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- Sessions on scientific plantation of the wild and fruit trees.
 - Awareness meetings with framers, women and tribes on the use of barren, waste land for developing agro forestry.

The project was initiated in the following villages:

Malbidi, Zedke, Khatiwali, Vedhe, Duggad, Ghotgaon, Mainde, Jambivali, Mohandul, ShirgaonWarret, Chane, Godhade, Pahare, Vishagad, Khambala, Newade, Mahap, Savrli and Kele Villages in Bhiwandi Tehsil of Thane District.

Present situation:

- The main focus of the organization is to develop agro forestry and horticulture for enrichment of environment and to prevent land degradation.
- Initially the organization had selected twenty villages of Bhiwandi Tehsil for implementation of project mentioned above. But, at present, the organisation works in nineteen villages only. Reason for leaving a village is non-cooperation of the farmers.
- As per the project proposal, the organization was to form twenty Jangal Sajav Gats of the farmers in the targeted Villages. Thus, the said number was achieved. While evaluating the project it was found that the organization has covered 350 farmers in the targeted villages. Of which, 50 were females.
- Further, it was found that the organization has conducted Participatory Rural Appraisals (PRA), Capacity Building Training Programs for the farmers, developing agro forestry and horticulture sessions on how to plant the samplings in a scientific way were also conducted.
- During the evaluation it was found that the organization developed an agro forestry model at Kordepada, Tahasil Bhiwandi, Dist. Thane. Here, the organization developed 11 acres of barren and waste land and planted trees in two phases. In the first phase, 2600 plants like Rentry, Platform, Kashid, Karanj, Australian teak, local teak, Neem, Custard apple, Jackfruit, lemon, Cashew nut, Guava, Almond etc.
- In the second phase, the organization has planted 2300 (wild and fruit) plants on the same plot. And, 1300 saplings were planted in third phase.

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- Along with plantation activities, the organisation has also undertaken special project on the Coconut Plantation. Since the overall objective of this project is to improve the earnings of the farmers in the targeted villages, the organization provided 305 coconut saplings to the 20 farmers in Malbidi, Vedhe and Zedke Villages. The organization has covered 3 acres and 23 Guntas of the land through coconut plantation.
 - A likeminded organisation in Mumbai had supplied 1405 saplings for the year 2014 and 2015 (wild and fruits) for plantation. Thirty one acres of land is covered through 1405 saplings.
 - The organisation had organised Farmers *Melas* at Vishagad and Pacchapur Villages of Bhiwandi tahasil. One hundred twenty five farmers from various villages participated in the *Mela*. The functionaries of Government Department, Community Based Organisation and local institutions also participated in the *Mela*.

During the evaluation the team interacted with the workers of the organisation and it was revealed that it is very difficult to mobilize farmers for meeting and Capacity Building Training Program since they are busy with their agricultural work. But the workers of the organization conducted the training programs and meetings as per their convenience.

Project functions with members like the Project Coordinator, two community organiser and volunteer's / students. The staffs writes monthly reports and communicates with the Project Manger through these and fortnightly meetings that they have.

The Evaluation:

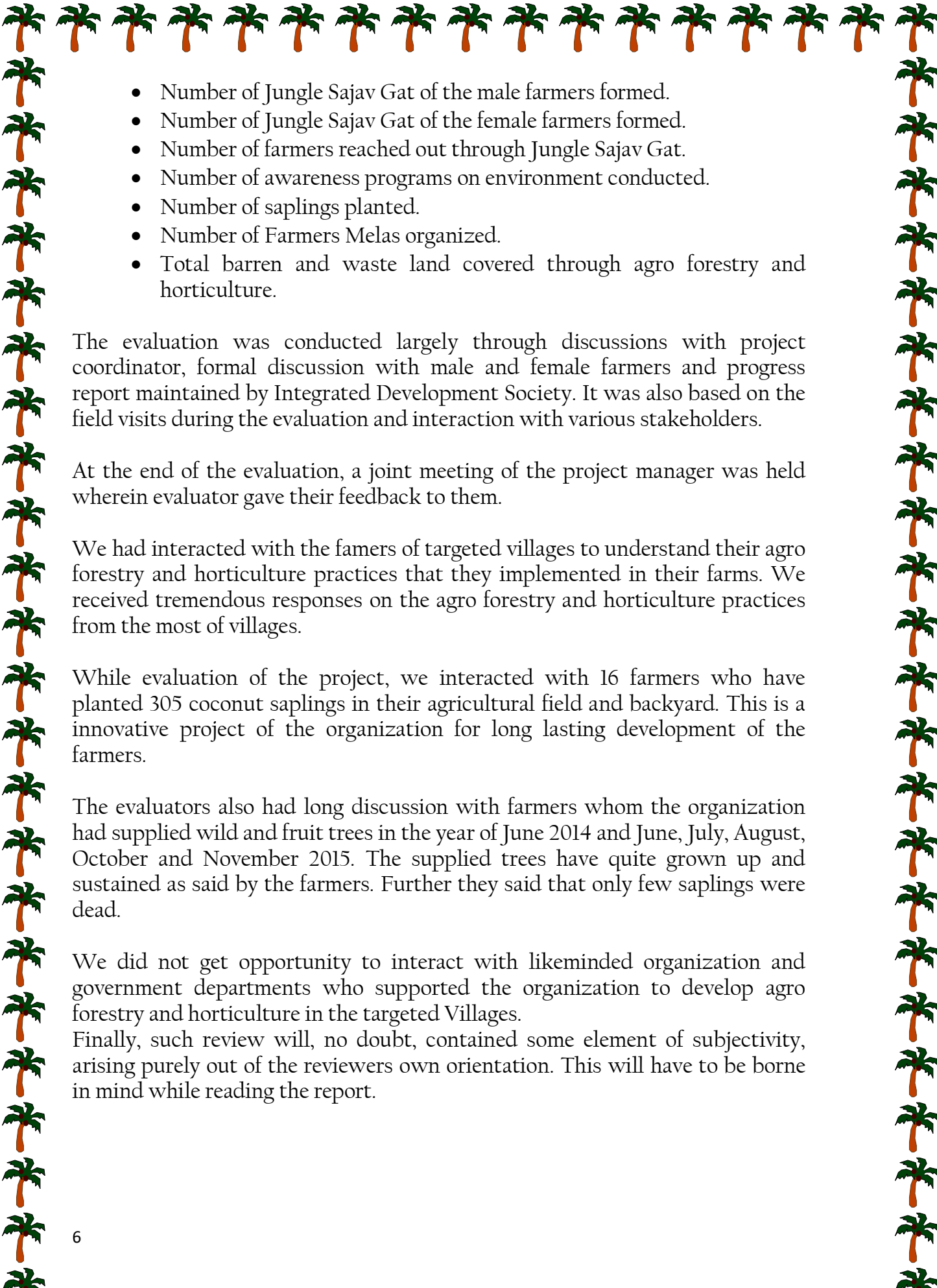
(i) Reasons for evaluation:

MMR–Environment Improvement Society, Mumbai which has been supporting the organization since inception of the project. It is therefore felt that one and half year is a long enough time to assess the general direction in which the project was moving and the level of functioning, as per the objectives laid above. The evaluation was therefore requested by Ekatmik Vikas Sanstha–EVS.

(ii) Methodology for evaluation:

The objectives laid down in the main project proposal were studied, based on the objectives the following parameters were worked out for evaluation.

- Number of Villages covered

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- Number of Jungle Sajav Gat of the male farmers formed.
 - Number of Jungle Sajav Gat of the female farmers formed.
 - Number of farmers reached out through Jungle Sajav Gat.
 - Number of awareness programs on environment conducted.
 - Number of saplings planted.
 - Number of Farmers Melas organized.
 - Total barren and waste land covered through agro forestry and horticulture.

The evaluation was conducted largely through discussions with project coordinator, formal discussion with male and female farmers and progress report maintained by Integrated Development Society. It was also based on the field visits during the evaluation and interaction with various stakeholders.

At the end of the evaluation, a joint meeting of the project manager was held wherein evaluator gave their feedback to them.

We had interacted with the famers of targeted villages to understand their agro forestry and horticulture practices that they implemented in their farms. We received tremendous responses on the agro forestry and horticulture practices from the most of villages.

While evaluation of the project, we interacted with 16 farmers who have planted 305 coconut saplings in their agricultural field and backyard. This is a innovative project of the organization for long lasting development of the farmers.

The evaluators also had long discussion with farmers whom the organization had supplied wild and fruit trees in the year of June 2014 and June, July, August, October and November 2015. The supplied trees have quite grown up and sustained as said by the farmers. Further they said that only few saplings were dead.

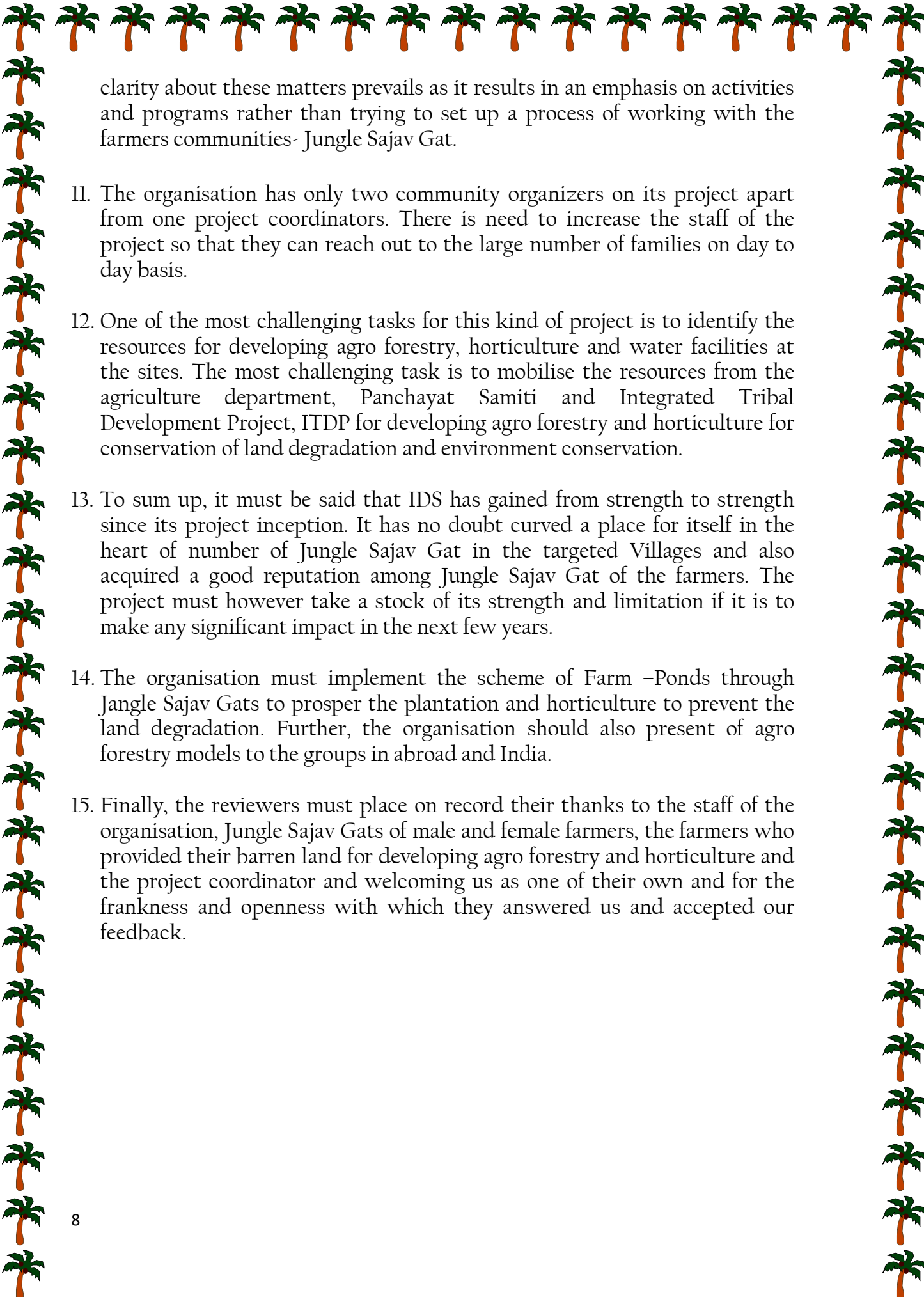
We did not get opportunity to interact with likeminded organization and government departments who supported the organization to develop agro forestry and horticulture in the targeted Villages.

Finally, such review will, no doubt, contained some element of subjectivity, arising purely out of the reviewers own orientation. This will have to be borne in mind while reading the report.



Observation and Suggestions:

1. EVS and its workers have a good rapport among the farmers in the targeted Villages. The project coordinator and community organization have a good rapport with the farmers.
2. The organization seems to make good use of the services offered by other NGOs working for conservation of environment and developing agro forestry and horticulture.
3. Their relationship with other NGOs for example Prasang, CRTD Mumbai and Green Yatra etc seems to be helping this project achieve their goal effectively.
4. The organization has maintained annual progress reports and special documentation on Agro forestry, horticulture and farmers *Mela*.
5. The project coordinator encourages the community organizers to write the monthly reports which he can go through and comment upon and give further guidance. The organization has maintained a separate register of the Jungle Sajav Gat formed in the project areas.
6. The organization has undertaken research project to study the overall situation of the farmers of 19 Villages. They have prepared the research report.
7. The organization has not documented the case study of the farmers whom they have supported for developing agro forestry and horticulture. This results in loss of valuable work of organization.
8. The organization has provided the water pump to the tribal farmer but unfortunately the organization could not document his case study. Though this is great help to the tribal farmer for his socio economic advancement.
9. The organization has developed the photo documentation of the Capacity Building Training Programs conducted for the Jungle Sajav Groups.
10. The annual action plan for the year 2014 – 2015, developed by the organisation with its objectives and indicators to meet its goal have been done very well. It would help if the community organizers were involved in an extensive discussion about the goals and the ways to meet them. The constant reinforcement among the staff about the project vision, its policies, and how to achieve them is a must because otherwise a general lack of



clarity about these matters prevails as it results in an emphasis on activities and programs rather than trying to set up a process of working with the farmers communities- Jungle Sajav Gat.

11. The organisation has only two community organizers on its project apart from one project coordinators. There is need to increase the staff of the project so that they can reach out to the large number of families on day to day basis.
12. One of the most challenging tasks for this kind of project is to identify the resources for developing agro forestry, horticulture and water facilities at the sites. The most challenging task is to mobilise the resources from the agriculture department, Panchayat Samiti and Integrated Tribal Development Project, ITDP for developing agro forestry and horticulture for conservation of land degradation and environment conservation.
13. To sum up, it must be said that IDS has gained from strength to strength since its project inception. It has no doubt curved a place for itself in the heart of number of Jungle Sajav Gat in the targeted Villages and also acquired a good reputation among Jungle Sajav Gat of the farmers. The project must however take a stock of its strength and limitation if it is to make any significant impact in the next few years.
14. The organisation must implement the scheme of Farm –Ponds through Jangle Sajav Gats to prosper the plantation and horticulture to prevent the land degradation. Further, the organisation should also present of agro forestry models to the groups in abroad and India.
15. Finally, the reviewers must place on record their thanks to the staff of the organisation, Jungle Sajav Gats of male and female farmers, the farmers who provided their barren land for developing agro forestry and horticulture and the project coordinator and welcoming us as one of their own and for the frankness and openness with which they answered us and accepted our feedback.