

MINUTES OF 40th ESZ EXPERT COMMITTEE MEETING FOR DECLARATION OF ECO-SENSITIVE ZONE (ESZ) AROUND PROTECTED AREAS (WILDLIFE SANCTUARIES/NATIONAL PARKS/TIGER RESERVES) HELD ON 16TH MARCH, 2020 IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST & CLIMATE CHANGE

The 40th Meeting of the Expert Committee on Eco-Sensitive Zone was held under the Chairmanship of Shri Ravi Agrawal, Additional Secretary on 16th March, 2020 in the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Indira Paryavaran Bhawan New Delhi. List of participants is annexed as **Annexure**.

2. At the outset, the Chairman welcomed the members and the participants from the States of Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, and Karnataka. The representatives of West Bengal and Assam did not attend the meeting in wake of recent COVID-19 outbreak. Discussions on each of agenda item were taken up *ad seriatim*.

3. Following 13 proposals for declaration of Eco-Sensitive Zones, listed in the agenda were taken up for consideration. The representative of respective State Governments presented their proposal for the consideration of the Expert Committee:

| S. N. | State/UT | Protected Area | Status |
|-------|---------------|-------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| (1). | Maharashtra | Mayureshwar Supe, Wildlife Sanctuary | Re-notified draft proposal |
| (2). | Maharashtra | Radhanagari Wildlife Sanctuary | Fresh notified draft proposal |
| (3). | Rajasthan | Ramsagar Wildlife Sanctuary | Re-notified draft proposal |
| (4). | Rajasthan | Mukundra Hills Tiger Reserve | Fresh notified draft proposal |
| (5). | Rajasthan | Mount Abu Wildlife Sanctuary | Re-notified draft proposal |
| (6). | Uttar Pradesh | Soor Sarovar Bird Sanctuary Uttar Pradesh | Notified Final ESZ for clarification on area of Protected Area |

| S. N. | State/UT | Protected Area | Status |
|-------|----------------|--------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| (7). | Uttar Pradesh | Mahavir Swami Wildlife Sanctuary | Fresh notified draft proposal |
| (8). | Odisha | Simlipal-Hadagarh Wildlife Sanctuary | Fresh notified draft proposal |
| (9). | Andhra Pradesh | Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary | Fresh notified draft proposal |
| (10). | West Bengal | Mahananda Wildlife Sanctuary | Fresh notified draft proposal |
| (11). | Karnataka | Adichunchanagri Peacock Sanctuary | Re-notified draft proposal |
| (12). | Assam | Kaziranga National Park, Assam (including 7 PAs) | Under Pre-draft Stage |
| (13). | Assam | Nameri NP and Sonai Rupai Sanctuary, Assam | Re-notified draft proposal |

4.0 Discussion on the ESZ Proposals

4.1 Mayureshwar Supe, Wildlife Sanctuary, Maharashtra

Smt. A. Sreelakshmi, DCF (Pune), Forest Department, Govt. of Maharashtra, made a presentation before the Committee. In the background, it was explained that earlier the draft notification for declaring Eco-Sensitive Zone around Mayureshwar Supe Wildlife Sanctuary which was published on 28th July, 2016. The proposal was considered during the 24th meeting of Expert Committee on ESZ, held on 27th-28th February, 2017 wherein the State Government was asked to submit additional information for publication of Final Notification. However, the draft notification got expired on 03.02.2018 due to non-submission of requisite information by the State Government.

Subsequently, the draft of the Eco-Sensitive Zone of Mayureshwar Supe, Wildlife Sanctuary was republished on 9th December, 2019. The salient features of the draft Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ) are as follows:

Area of PA : 5.14 sq km
Proposed ESZ area : 1.202 sq km

Proposed Extent : zero to 100 metres

On enquiring about zero extent of Eco-Sensitive Zone, the representative of the State Government informed that it has been proposed at certain points due to passing of National Highway near boundary of the protected area. Regarding boundaries of Protected Area, a copy of the Gazette Notification of the Protected Area was provided by the State after the meeting.

The comments/ or suggestions received from the public and stakeholders were duly considered during the meeting.

Based on the presentation made and discussions held, the Committee recommended the draft notification of ESZ for Mayureshwar Supe, Wildlife Sanctuary for its finalisation.

4.2. Radhanagari Wildlife Sanctuary, Maharashtra

Dr. Ben V. Clement, Chief Conservator of Forest (Kolhapur), Government of Maharashtra, made a presentation before the Committee. It was informed that the draft ESZ notification of Radhanagari Wildlife Sanctuary was published on 15.07.2019, The salient features of the draft notification are as under::

Area of PA : 351.16 sq km
Proposed ESZ area : 230.61 sq km
Proposed Extent : 32 metres to 6.01 kms

The notified draft was previously discussed during the 37th meeting of the Expert Committee on ESZ, held on 30.09.2019 and the State Government was asked to revise the proposal by exploring the ESZ extent beyond 32 metres.

The representative of the State Government informed that the **minimum extent of ESZ has been revised from 32 meters to 200 metres with a corresponding increase in ESZ area from 230.61 Sq km to 250.66 Sq km.** The

change in the boundary of the ESZ area has also been made by complete/partial inclusion of 7 villages namely; Piral, Shirol, Bhujawade, Helewadi, Panori, Pharale and Lingachiwadi.

On the issues emerged during the public consultation, the representative of the State responded that all the public objections and related mining issues associated with the ESZ notification have been addressed by the State Government.

Sh. Nishant Verma, DIG, NTCA highlighted the issue of creating Wildlife corridor of Radhanagari Wildlife Sanctuary with Sahayadri Tiger Reserve due to its close vicinity. He further stated that NTCA is currently examining the proposal of the said corridor; however, the views of the State Government are still awaited. After detailed discussions, the Committee asked the State Government to provide their comments to NTCA within a week's time, so that NTCA can provide its recommendation on the proposal accordingly.

After detailed deliberations, the committee recommended for the finalization of the ESZ Notification of **Radhanagari Wildlife Sanctuary** subject to confirmation and consent/agreement from NTCA on the proposed wildlife corridor.

4.3. Ramsagar Wildlife Sanctuary, Rajasthan

Shri. Furkan Ali Khatri, DCF, NCS (Sawai Madhopur), Govt. of Rajasthan, made a presentation before the Expert Committee. It was mentioned that the draft notification was published on 16.11.2015 and was considered during the 23rd meeting of the Expert Committee on ESZ, held on 19.10.2016 wherein the State Government was asked to submit revised map and geo-coordinates. The said draft notification got expired on 17.04.2017, due to non-submission of additional information by the State Government.

Subsequently, the draft of Ramasagar Wildlife Sanctuary was republished on 30th December, 2019. The salient features of the draft Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ) are as follows:

Area of PA : 34.41 sq km
Proposed ESZ area : 27.50 sq km
Proposed Extent : zero to 1.0 Km.

During the presentation, the State Government has informed that no comments/objections were received from the stakeholders/public on the draft notification.

The Committee asked the State Government to submit a copy of the Gazette Notification of the State, for declaration of Ramasagar Wildlife Sanctuary..

Based on the presentation made and discussions held the Committee recommended the draft ESZ notification for **Ramsagar Wildlife Sanctuary** for its finalisation subject to submission of the State Gazette for the Protected Area.

4.4. Mukundra Hills Tiger Reserve, Rajasthan

Shri Furkan Ali Khatri, DCF, NCS, Sawai Madhopur, Government of Rajasthan, made a presentation before the Committee. It was stated that the draft ESZ notification of Mukundra Hills Tiger Reserve was published on 10th January, 2020. The salient features of the draft Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ) are as follows:

Area of PA : 759.99 sq km
Proposed ESZ area : 248.70 sq km
Proposed Extent : 0 (zero) to 1 kilometre

The representative of the State mentioned that a number of objections/suggestions have been received from the stakeholders on the draft notification. The proposal has also been concurred by National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA). However, in view of the numerous public objections received, the

State Government has decided to conduct second round of consultation which may take 1-2 months' time. In this context, the DIG, NTCA mentioned that fresh concurrence may be taken from NTCA for revised proposal before further processing.

In view of above, the committee requested the State Government to complete the public consultation within two months' period and further advised to take concurrence of NTCA on de-lineation of the boundaries of above Tiger Reserve so that ESZ Notification could be prepared in line with NTCA's guidelines.

Based on the presentation made and discussions held, the committee deferred further consideration of the proposal.

4.5 Mount Abu Wildlife Sanctuary, Rajasthan

Sh. Balaji Kari, DCF (WL), Mount Abu, Government of Rajasthan, made a presentation before the Committee. It was informed that the draft ESZ notification of Mount Abu Wildlife Sanctuary was republished on 10th June, 2019. The salient features of the draft Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ) are as follows:

| | | |
|-------------------|---|-------------------------|
| Area of PA | : | 326.09 sq km |
| Proposed ESZ area | : | 125.15 sq km |
| Proposed Extent | : | 100 m to 6.08 kilometre |

It was mentioned that the proposal was discussed during the 37th meeting of the Expert Committee on ESZ held on 30.09.2019. During that meeting, committee asked the State Government to explore the possibility of extending the minimum ESZ to at least 1.0 Km.

Responding to clarification, the representative of the State Government informed that the proposed minimum extent of 100 metres was only at the stretch of

about 1400 meters. He further informed that comments received on the draft notification are being considered and consultation process has also been initiated through District Collector, Sirohi with suitable endorsement from the State Government. Accordingly, the State Government sought deferment of the proposal. The Committee asked State's representative to go for early public consultation so as to facilitate timely finalization of the ESZ Notification.

Based on the presentation made and discussions held, the Committee deferred further consideration of the proposal.

4.6 Soor Sarovar Bird Sanctuary Uttar Pradesh

Shri. Sunil Chaudhary, APCCF(WL), Forest Department, Uttar Pradesh Government of Uttar Pradesh, made a presentation before the Committee. It was informed that the Final ESZ notification of Soor Sarovar Bird Sanctuary was published on 10th October, 2019. The salient features of the final Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ) are as follows:

| | | |
|-------------------|---|---------------------|
| Area of PA | : | 4.03 sq km |
| Proposed ESZ area | : | 10.20 sq km |
| Proposed Extent | : | 1 kilometre uniform |

It was mentioned that the extent of ESZ, area of the PA and ESZ provided in the final notification is based on the information provided by the State Government. Presently, the subject matter of Bird Sanctuary area and ESZ is subjudice in the Hon'ble Supreme Court and National Green Tribunal due to ambiguity in the area of Bird Sanctuary.

The State Government revealed that subsequent addition and removal of area in the Soor Sarovar Sanctuary were amended during the years 1997, 2008 and 2019. Presently, the area of Protected Area is 4.03 sq km. However, after detailed

discussions the Committee observed inconsistency in the Protected Area with boundary description of the Sanctuary cited in the Notification issued by the State Government.

The Committee advised the State Government to provide correct figure of Protected Area after having consultation with concerned stakeholders, which should be in conformity with the ground reality and testimony. The State was also suggested to convey proper and factual statement in the Hon'ble Supreme Court and Hon'ble NGT regarding the correct area of said Sanctuary. The State representative agreed to the suggestion.

Based on the presentation made and discussions held the Committee recommended to keep the final notification on hold and de-notify it as there is ambiguity in the area of the Bird sanctuary.

4.7 Mahavir Swami Wildlife Sanctuary, Uttar Pradesh

Shri. Sunil Chaudhary, APCCF (WL), Forest Department, Government of Uttar Pradesh, made a presentation before the Committee. It was informed that the draft ESZ notification of Mahavir Swami Wildlife Sanctuary was published on 3rd June, 2019. The salient features of the draft Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ) are as follows:

| | | |
|-------------------|---|---------------------|
| Area of PA | : | 5.4108 sq km |
| Proposed ESZ area | : | 6.8592 sq km |
| Proposed Extent | : | 1 kilometre uniform |

It was informed that the estimated area of Mahavir Swami Wildlife Sanctuary also has few ambiguities and State Government is working on it. Additionally, the representative of MoEF&CC asked the State to respond to the VIP references which have already been shared with the State Government. Pending the response of the State Government, the references are not replied.

Based on the presentation made and discussions held the Committee asked the State Government to expedite early rationalization of boundaries of Protected Area with proper ground reality/testimony, in commensurate with ESZ area so that final Notification could be issued on time.

4.8 Simlipal-Hadagarh Wildlife Sanctuary, Odisha

Dr. Pradeep Raj Karat, Regional Chief Conservator of Forest (RCCF, Baripada) Government of Odisha, made a presentation before the Committee. It was informed that the draft ESZ notification of Simlipal-Hadagarh Wildlife Sanctuary was published on 10.07.2018. The salient features of the draft Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ) are as follows:

| | | |
|-------------------|---|--------------------|
| Area of PA | : | 2907.61 sq km |
| Proposed ESZ area | : | 1765.29 sq km |
| Proposed Extent | : | 0 to 21 kilometers |

The proposal was earlier discussed during the 37th meeting of Expert Committee on ESZ held on 30.09.2019 and committee recommended for finalization of draft Notification subject to incorporation of justification for proposing zero ESZ extent, correction in area of the Sanctuary and extent of ESZ. In the meantime, State Government requested the Ministry to put the process of publication of final Notification on hold owing to the objections raised by the public representative of that area.

The RCCF informed that due to divergent views received on the draft notification, the State Government is planning to revise the proposal and presently, working on the proposal in consultation with NTCA. It was requested to defer the consideration of the proposal.

Based on the presentation made and discussions held, the committee deferred the consideration of the proposal in its present form and the State was advised to expedite submission of revised proposal.

4.9 Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary, Andhra Pradesh

Shri. N.N. Ageswara Rao, Conservator of Forests, Forest Department, Government of Andhra Pradesh, made a presentation before the Committee. It was informed that the ESZ draft notification of Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary was republished on 21st January, 2020. The salient features of the draft Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ) are as follows:

| | | |
|-------------------|---|---------------------|
| Area of PA | : | 235.70 sq km |
| Proposed ESZ area | : | 187.14 sq km |
| Proposed Extent | : | 0 to 11.5 kilometre |

The representative of the State informed that minimum extent of ESZ is zero toward Western side of the Sanctuary, where municipal limits of Kakinada city and agriculture field exists. He further requested for few changes in the boundary description of the Protected Area.

The committee discussed the comments/r suggestion received from the public and stakeholders. The Committee thereafter advised the State to further analyze and explore the ESZ area towards land and seaside to commensurate with provisions laid in Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) Notification. The State Government agreed on the suggestions made by the Committee and agreed to review the proposal.

Based on the presentation made and discussions held, the Committee deferred further consideration of the proposal and asked State Government for revision of the proposal for further consideration.

4.10 Mahananda Wildlife Sanctuary, West Bengal

Consideration of the proposal was deferred as no representatives of the State Government were present in the Meeting.

4.11 Adichunchanagri Peacock Sanctuary, Karnataka

Shri. Alexander, DCF, Wildlife Division (Mysore), Government. of Karnataka, made a presentation before the Committee. It was informed that ESZ draft notification for Adichunchanagri Peacock Sanctuary was earlier published on 6th September, 2017 having extent ranging from 0 (zero) to 3.35 kilometres. The said proposal was considered during the 29th meeting of the Expert Committee on ESZ when the Committee sought revised proposal from State Government with partial changes in extent of ESZ and villages list. Due to non-submission of requisite information, the draft was expired on 5th March 2019.

Subsequently, based on the revised proposal received from the State Government the draft of Adichunchanagri Peacock Sanctuary was re-notified on 11.12.2019. The salient features of the re-draft Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ) are as follows:

Area of PA : 0.884 sq km
Proposed ESZ area : 10.15 sq km
Proposed Extent : 1 km to 2.55 kilometers

While enquiring about the biodiversity values of the protected area, the representative of the State illustrated presence of black buck (*Antelope cervicapra*), striped hyenas (*Hyaena hyaena*), pangolins (*Manis crassicaudata*), Indian whitebacked vulture (*Gyps bengalensis*), etc., which are important rare, endangered and threatened (RET) species found in the Sanctuary. It was informed that no

comments/objections were received from the stakeholders/public on the draft notification.

While agreeing to proposal, the Chairman asked the State to provide the a copy of Gazette Notification of the protected area (Adichunchanagri Peacock Sanctuary).

Based on the presentation made and discussions held, the Committee recommended for the finalization of the draft notification for **Adichunchanagri Peacock Sanctuary** subject to submission of the Gazette Notification of Protected Area by the State Government.

4.12 – 4.13 Kaziranga National Park, Assam (including 7 PAs) and Nameri NP and Sonai Rupai Sanctuary, Assam

Consideration of the proposal was deferred on the request of the State Government.

5. Based on the discussion on the draft, re-draft and final Eco-sensitive Zone notification as well as deliberation on the comments/suggestion/objection received from stakeholders/public, the Expert Committee recommended the following:

| S. No. | Protected Area | State | Recommendation of Expert Committee |
|---------------|--------------------------------------|--------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| (1). | Mayureshwar Supe, Wildlife Sanctuary | Maharashtra | Recommended for finalization of the draft. |
| (2). | Radhanagari Wildlife Sanctuary | Maharashtra | Recommended for finalization of draft subject to confirmation & agreement from NTCA on the proposed wildlife corridor. |
| (3). | Ramsagar Wildlife Sanctuary | Rajasthan | Recommended for the finalization subject to submission of the State Gazette for the Protected Area. |
| (4). | Mukundra Hills Tiger Reserve | Rajasthan | Deferred on the request of the State Government. |

| S. No. | Protected Area | State | Recommendation of Expert Committee |
|---------------|--------------------------------------------------|----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| (5). | Mount Abu Wildlife Sanctuary | Rajasthan | Deferred on the request of the State Government. |
| (6). | Soor Sarovar Bird Sanctuary Uttar Pradesh | Uttar Pradesh | Recommended for keeping the notification on hold and denotify. the Protected Area. |
| (7). | Mahavir Swami Wildlife Sanctuary | Uttar Pradesh | Deferred the proposal till the rationalization of the boundary of the Protected Area. |
| (8). | Simlipal-Hadagarh Wildlife Sanctuary | Odisha | Deferfdc on the request of the State Government. |
| (9). | Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary | Andhra Pradesh | Recommended for revision of the proposal. |
| (10). | Mahananda Wildlife Sanctuary | West Bengal | Deferred due to absent of the State's representative |
| (11). | Adichunchanagri Peacock Sanctuary | Karnataka | Recommended for finalization of the draft. |
| (12). | Kaziranga National Park, Assam (including 7 PAs) | Assam | Deferred on the request of SG. |
| (13). | Nameri NP and Sonai Rupai Sanctuary, Assam | Assam | Deferred on the request of SG. |

6. Meeting ended with vote of thanks to and from the Chair.

Annexure

40th Expert Committee Meeting on ESZ held on 16th March, 2020

List of Participants

Members of Expert Committee

1. Shri. Ravi Agrawal, Additional Secretary, Chairperson.
2. Dr. S. C. Garkoti, Adviser, MoEF&CC.
3. Dr. S.A. Hussain, Scientist 'G', WII, Dehradun.
4. Shri. K. Chandra Sekar, Scientist 'E', GB Pant Institute of Himalayan Environment & Development, Almora.
5. Ms. Vishaish Uppal, Director, WWF India.
6. DR. C. RAGHUNATHAN, Scientist-E, Zoological Survey of India, Kolkata
7. Dr. Sarita Jain, RD, NCTO, ICFRE, Dehradun.
8. Dr. Sandeep Kumar Raut, Associate Town & Country Planner, TCPO, Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs.
9. K. Shankar, Director, SACON, Coimbtore

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, GOI

1. Sh. Lalit Bokolia, Director, MoEF & CC.
2. Dr. Shruti Rai Bhardwaj, Additional Director, MoEF&CC
3. Sh. Nishant Verma, DIG, NTCA, MoEF&CC
4. Sh. Rakesh Kr Jagenia , DIG (WL), MoEF&CC
5. Dr. Veenu Joon, Joint Director , MoEF&CC.
6. Dr Shaikhom Inaotombi Singh (Consultant), MoEF&CC.

Officials of Government of Maharashtra

1. Dr. Ben V. Clement, CCF, Kolhapur, Govt. of Maharashtra
2. A. Sreelakshmi, DCF, Pune, Forest Department, Govt. of Maharashtra

Officials of Government of Rajasthan

1. Sudhanst Pant, Pr. Secretary, Forest and Environment, Govt. of Rajasthan
2. Furkan Ali Khatri, DCF, NCS, Sawai Madhopur, Rajasthan, Forest Department, Rajasthan, Govt. of Rajasthan
3. Balaji Kari, PCF WL, Mount Abu, Govt. of Rajasthan

Officials of Government of Andhra Pradesh

N.N. Ageswara Rao, Conservator of Forests, APFD, Govt. of Andhra Pradesh

Officials of Government of Uttar Pradesh

1. Sunil Chaudhary, APCCF, W.L. Forest Department Uttar Pradesh, Govt. of Uttar Pradesh
2. Anand Kumar, DCF, National Chambal Sanctuary, Project, Agra, U.P., Govt. of Uttar Pradesh

Officials of Government of Odisha

1. Dr. Pradeep Raj Karat, RCCF, Baripada, Govt. of Odisha

Officials of Government of Karnataka

1. Alexander, DCF, Wildlife Division, Mysore, Govt. of Karnataka
