



**Government of West Bengal
Department of Environment**

Minutes of the meeting of the Committee formed in view of the directions of Hon'ble National Green Tribunal (NGT), Special Bench on 09.05.2022 in O.A. 65 (THC) of 2016/EZ (*PUBLIC-VS-UoI & Ors.*) in the matter of protection of wetlands in West Bengal

Date of the meeting: 03.06.2022

Venue: Conference Room, Nabanna

The list of attendees is annexed.

Chief Secretary, West Bengal chaired the meeting.

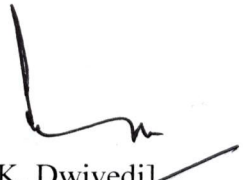
1. ACS, Environment Department briefed the members about the Order of Hon'ble Supreme Court in *M.K. Balakrishnan & Ors. v. Union of India & Ors* passed on 08.02.2017 for protection of wetlands and the Order passed by the Hon'ble NGT, Principal Bench on 22.07.2021 in *Raja Muzaffar Bhat Vs State of J&K & Ors.* on identification of all wetlands in the State, which shall be included in the District Environment Plan.
2. ACS, Environment Department also discussed the case related to filling up of wetlands in Mollarber and Panchghara Mouza in Dankuni, District- Hooghly. This case was transferred to the NGT, Eastern Bench by the High Court, Calcutta (W.P. No.26328 (W) of 2015 on 18.03.2016. Hon'ble NGT disposed of the matter on 09.05.2022 and passed directions, which were discussed at length.
3. ACS, Environment Department also highlighted the actions taken/ progress made on the subject in the recent months, as follows:
 - i. Water Resources Investigation Development Department (WRIDD) has been designated as the Nodal Department for restoration of water bodies vide Notification dated 31.05.2021 in pursuance of the directions passed by NGT, Principal Bench, New Delhi on 18.11.2020 in O.A. 325/2015 in Lt. Col. Sarvadaman Singh Oberoi -Vs- UOI & Ors. Environment Department has requested WRIDD to coordinate with all District Magistrates (DMs) and

inventorise significant wetlands as per the provisions of the Wetlands (Conservation & Management) Rules, 2017.

- ii. Environment Department has provided to WRIDD KML files of 8,911 water bodies in West Bengal that are above 2.25 Ha.
 - iii. As a first step, WRIDD has identified 2,437 water bodies that are more than 10 ha. and shared them with DMs to prepare their Brief Documents.
 - iv. Till date, DMs have prepared a list of 246 wetlands having area 10 ha. and above and submitted factsheets for 153 wetlands. However, due to the technicalities involved, they could not prepare Brief Documents as per prescribed format of National Plan for Conservation of Aquatic Ecosystems (NPCA) Guidelines.
 - v. The Institute of Environmental Studies and Wetland Management (IESWM) under the Environment Department has been entrusted to prepare Brief Documents of the identified wetlands. Considering the time-bound nature of this country-wide exercise and the very large number of water bodies that required to be mapped in the State, IESWM has found the scale and scope of the exercise beyond the capacity of its limited staff and has felt the need to outsource the preparation of Brief Documents to a professional agency or a University / Higher Education Institution.
4. After a detailed deliberation on all aspects of the matter, the following decisions were taken:
- a) In the first phase of action, WRIDD as the nodal Department, will coordinate with the DMs and complete the geo-tagging exercise for waterbodies/ wetlands (assigning them unique number) as per NGT's instructions. Thereafter, demarcation of flood plains and catchment areas is to be done. This, and other exercises related to this work, will be done by WRIDD in association with the Fisheries Department, Science & Technology Department and Land Department since each of these Departments has large data bases/technical expertise related to the subject matter. Principal Secretary, WRIDD will coordinate efforts among these and other Departments/agencies, as may be necessary.
 - b) A Technical Committee will be constituted under the Chairmanship of Dr. Kalyan Rudra along with representatives of Fisheries Department, Land Department, WRIDD, Science & Technology Department, Panchayats and Rural Development Department, Public Health Engineering Department, IESWM, etc. to chalk out the State Action Plan for protection of waterbodies/ wetlands within one month. WBPCB shall provide secretarial and other assistance for the same.

- c) Preparation of Brief Documents of identified wetlands would be approached in two ways: the part relating to maps/ imagery/ land details, etc. of the water bodies shall be provided by the Fisheries Department / Science & Technology Department while the field study/ survey etc. could be entrusted to a State-funded university, such that the entire exercise can be completed in a time-bound manner; funds for this exercise will be provided by WBPCB. Dr. Kalyan Rudra, Chairman, PCB and well-known River Expert agreed to coordinate this exercise.
- d) Chief Secretary reminded all the Departments that highest priority is to be accorded to the above-mentioned exercises as per the orders passed by Hon'ble NGT and stressed upon time-bound implementation.
- e) Minutes of this meeting will be uploaded on the website of SWA and Department of Environment.

The meeting concluded with vote of thanks to and from the chair.



[H. K. Dwivedi]
Chief Secretary
Govt. of West Bengal



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Annexure

The following persons attended the meeting of the Committee formed in view of the directions of Hon'ble National Green Tribunal (NGT), Special Bench on 09.05.2022 in O.A. 65 (THC) of 2016/EZ (*PUBLIC-VS-UoI & Ors.*) in the matter of protection of wetlands in West Bengal:

- 1) Shri H. K. Dwivedi, Chief Secretary, West Bengal and Vice-Chairperson, State Wetlands Authority (SWA) and Member, East Kolkata Wetlands Management Authority (EKWMA)
- 2) Shri Debasish Sen, Chairman, New Town Kolkata Development (NKDA)
- 3) Dr. Kalyan Rudra, Chairman, West Bengal Pollution Control Board and Expert Member, EKWMA
- 4) Shri Vivek Kumar, Additional Chief Secretary (ACS), Environment Department and Member Secretary, SWA & EKWMA, and ACS, Forest Department and Member, SWA & EKWMA
- 5) Dr. Rajesh Kumar, Member Secretary, West Bengal Pollution Control Board and Member, SWA
- 6) Dr. Manoj Pant, Additional Chief Secretary, Finance Department and Member, SWA
- 7) Shri Debal Roy, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) & Chief Wildlife Warden, West Bengal and Member, SWA (Attended through V.C.)
- 8) Shri Prabhat Kumar Mishra, Principal Secretary, Irrigation and Waterways Department and Member, SWA & EKWMA and Principal Secretary, Water Resources Investigation & Development Department and Member, SWA
- 9) Shri Anoop Kumar Agarwal, Principal Secretary, Science and Technology and Biotechnology Department and Member, SWA
- 10) Shri Khalil Ahmed, Principal Secretary, Urban Development and Municipal Affairs Department and Member, SWA
- 11) Shri Binod Kumar, Commissioner, Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) and Invitee Member, EKWMA
- 12) Shri Onkar Singh Meena, Principal Secretary, Public Works Department
- 13) Smt. Neelam Meena, Secretary, Environment Department (Attended through V.C.)

- 14) Smt. Smaraki Mahapatra, Secretary, Land and Land Reforms Refugee Relief and Rehabilitation Department and Member, SWA & EKWMA
- 15) Shri K. Balamurugan, Chief Environment Officer, Environment Department and Member, SWA
- 16) Dr. P. Ulaganathan, District Magistrate, South 24 Parganas and Invitee Member, EKWMA
- 17) Shri Ajoy Sanyamath, Senior Special Secretary, L&LR and RR&R Department
- 18) Smt. Tripti Sah, Member Secretary, West Bengal Biodiversity Board and Member, SWA (Attended through V.C.)
- 19) Shri Sumit Gupta, District Magistrate, North 24 Parganas and Invitee Member, EKWMA
- 20) Smt. Nandini Ghosh, Joint Secretary, UD&MA Department
- 21) Shri Sujay Sarkar, Commissioner, Bidhannagar Municipal Corporation (BMC)
- 22) Smt. Shanta Pradhan, Special Secretary, Tourism Department (Representative of Principal Secretary and Member, EKWMA)
- 23) Shri Supriya Ghoshal, Director, State Urban Development Agency (SUDA)
- 24) Shri Joly Chaudhuri, Additional Secretary, UD&MA Department and Additional Director, SUDA
- 25) Prof. Waikom Viswanath, Member, National Wetlands Committee and representative, MoEF&CC (Attended through VC)
- 26) Shri M. K. Biswas, Regional Director, Central Pollution Control Board (Attended through VC)
- 27) Dr. Subir Ghosh, Member, IUCN and Expert Member, SWA (Attended through V.C.)
- 28) Prof. Gupinath Bhandari, Associate Professor, Department of Civil Engineering, Jadavpur University and Expert Member, SWA (Attended through V.C.)
- 29) Prof. Lakshmi Sivaramakrishnan, Head, Department of Geography, Jadavpur University and Expert Member, SWA (Attended through V.C.)
- 30) Prof. Sumana Bandyopadhyay, Professor, Department of Geography, Calcutta University and Expert Member, SWA (Attended through V.C.)
- 31) Dr. Srikanta Samanta, Head, Riverine and Estuarine Fisheries Division, CIFRI and Expert Member, SWA (Attended through V.C.).
- 32) Shri Prantik Ray, Chief Engineer, Ganga Action Plan, Kolkata Metropolitan Development Authority
- 33) Dr. Tapas Kumar Gupta, Chief Technical Advisor, WBPCB (Attended through V.C.)
- 34) Shri Sukdeb Das, Senior Law Officer, UD&MA Department
- 35) Smt. Paushali Pahari, Senior Law Officer, Environment Department