

West Bengal Forest and Biodiversity Conservation Society
Office of the Chief Project Director
Block LB-2, Sector III, Salt Lake City, Kolkata -700098

No.: 2084 / WBFBC / 7-2 (1)/14

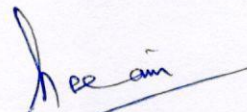
Dated: 28.06.2016

To

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 Shri C. Sinha
Principal Secretary Forest Dept. and
Chairperson | 8 Shri T.V.N Rao,
Addl Principal Chief Conservator of Forests,
Finance - Member |
| 2 Shri P.Shukla,
Principal Chief Conservator of Forests &
HoFF West Bengal - Member | 9 Shri N.V Rajasekhar
Addl. Principal Chief Conservator of
Forests, Human Resources Dev. - Member |
| 3 Shri N.K.Pandey,
Principal Chief Conservator of Forests
General - Member | 10 Shri R. Das,
Managing Director, West Bengal Forest
Wasteland Dev. Copn. - Member |
| 4 Shri S. Dhaundyal,
Managing Director, West Bengal Forest
Development Copn. - Member | 11 Smt. Mita Banerjee,
Addl. Secretary Govt. of West Bengal,
Forest Dept. - Member |
| 5 Shri P.Vyas
Principal Chief Conservator of Forests &
CWLW - Member | 12 Shri Shomit Ghosh,
Spl. Secretary Govt. of West Bengal,
Finance Dept. - Member |
| 6 Shri B.R. Sharma,
Principal Chief Conservator of Forests
Research, Monitoring & Dev. - Member | 13 Shri S. Dasgupta,
Project Director (Finance), West Bengal
Forest and Biodiversity Conservation
Project - Spl. Invitee |
| 7 Shri P.T. Bhutia,
Addl Principal Chief Conservator of Forests,
North Bengal - Member | 14 Shri S. Chaudhuri,
Project Director (M&E), West Bengal Forest
and Biodiversity Conservation Project - Spl.
Invitee |

Sub: Minutes of the 9th Meeting of the Governing Body of the West Bengal Forest and Biodiversity Conservation Society

The Minutes of the 9th meeting of the Governing Body held on 16.06.2016 is enclosed for your perusal and necessary action.



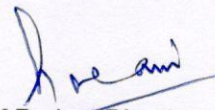
Chief Project Director and
Member Secretary, WBFBC Society

No.: 2085 / WBFBC / 7-2 (1)/14

Dated: 28.06.2016

Copy forwarded to:

- (i) Shri K.L.Ghosh, Addl Project Director, P&R
- (ii) Shri P.K. Pandit, Addl Project Director, Implementation



Chief Project Director and
Member Secretary, WBFBC Society

MINUTES OF
THE 9TH MEETING
OF GOVERNING BODY,
WBFBC SOCIETY
HELD ON 16.06.2016

- (a) Afforestation: The plantation targets are fixed by the PMU in consultation with the DMU heads and Circle in-charges, keeping the available area into consideration. However the balance of target, considering the achievement till 2015 and the committed target of creation in 2016, will be about 8000 ha. (A2 through A6), of which about 1553 ha. is under A2 (Sal in South Bengal). Only A1 (clone) target of 450 ha will be achieved in 2016. It was also suggested that, since the creation has been extended upto 2018 after the mid-term review, the DMUs should try to fulfil the targets of WBFBC Project in the identified FPC as a first priority.
- (b) Training: It was mentioned by the Chief Project Director that the target of training has already been achieved and more field oriented and hands on training will be organised within the allocated fund.

Decision

- (i) *The DMUs should take up the balance of afforestation targets of WBFBC Project as first priority in the FPCs / EDCs selected for the purpose.*
- (ii) *Forest Directorate may work out the modalities to complete the afforestation target of WBFBC Project. For this purpose the DMU wise and model wise figure of balance target may be fixed by the Directorate in consultation with the PMU of WBFBC Project.*
- (iii) *A direction may be issued by the PCCF (HoFF) to the DMUs for the purpose of achieving the targets of afforestation.*

4. Diversion of fund from construction of Siliguri Administrative Building to Expansion of Aranya Bhavan

A communication was received from the PCCF General stating that additional fund of Rs 90,00,000/- (Rupees Ninety Lakhs) only would be required for vertical expansion of Aranya Bhavan. Vide his letter no. 10513/CS/2M-1023(II)/2015 dt 16.03.2016 he has requested for making provision of the additional fund for installation of three elevators for extension of services upto the 8th floor (after vertical expansion). The elevators are 18 yrs old and maintenance of the three lifts has become difficult, since the manufacturer (M/s IBLJI) is almost out of market. Breakdown of the lifts has become a regular feature.

Chief Project Director placed for consideration of the G.B the following moot points:

- (a) The progress of work of the construction of Siliguri Administrative Building has been slow.
- (b) The preliminary estimate for Siliguri Administrative Building is approx. Rs. 8,04,70,000/-, against the project provision of Rs.6,25,00,000/-only including escalation and contingency. Therefore the balance of works, has, most likely to be provided from some other scheme of the Forest Directorate.
- (c) Since both the works are under the Infrastructure Development component of the Project, the possibility of mobilizing fund provision from Siliguri project to Aranya Bhavan expansion project would amount to diversion of fund from one specific work to another post MTR, which will be reflected in the End of Term Review.

Views of the Governing Body

Given that the elevators are 18 years old and maintenance have become difficult, it appears that the replacement of the elevators with new ones is justified.

**MINUTES OF THE 9TH MEETING OF GOVERNING BODY OF WBFBC SOCIETY
HELD ON 16.06.2016**

The 9th meeting of WBFBC Society was held on 16th June, 2016 at Aranya Bharavn Conference Hall on 6th floor. The meeting was chaired by **Shri C. Sinha**, Chairperson of the Society. The following members were present:

1. Shri P.Shukla, PCCF & HoFF West Bengal – Member
2. Shri S. Dhaundyal, Managing Director, WBFBC Ltd. –Member
3. Shri B.R.Sharma, PCCF Research, Monitoring & Dev. – Member
4. Shri N.V Rajasekhar, APCCF, Human Resources Dev. – Member
5. Shri T.V.N Rao, APCCF Finance – Member
6. Shri R. Das, Managing Director, WBWDC Ltd. – Member
7. Smt. Mita Banerjee, Addl. Secretary GoWB, Forest Dept. – Member
8. Shri S. Dasgupta, Project Director (Finance), WBFBC Project– Spl. Invitee
9. Shri S. Chaudhuri, Project Director (M&E), WBFBC Project — Spl. Invitee
10. Dr K.L.Ghosh, Addl Project Director (P&R) WBFBC Project –Spl Invitee
11. Shri P.K.Pandit, Addl. Project Director (Impl.), WBFBC Project –Spl. Invitee
12. Shri S.Barari, Chief Project Director, WBFBC Project— Member Secretary

Shri N.K.Pandey, PCCF General, Shri P.Vyas, PCCF Wildlife and CWLW, Shri P.T Bhutia, APCCF North Bengal took leave of absence. Shri S.Ghosh, Spl. Secretary, GoWB, Finance Dept., was not present. The agenda wise comment sent by Shri N.K Pandey PCCF General was considered in the meeting.

The Chief Project Director, WBFBC Project & Member Secretary of the WBFBC Society presented each item of the agenda following which discussions were made. The Agenda wise presentation and decisions taken are given below:

1. Confirmation of the minutes of the 8th meeting held on 18th March, 2016

The matter was placed before the G.B for confirmation.

Decision: *The minutes of the 8th meeting stands confirmed.*

2. Discussions of the Action Taken Report on the Resolutions of the minutes of the 8th meeting held on 18th March, 2016

The Action Taken Report placed in Annexure 1 of the agenda note was presented before the G.B point by point and discussed.

Decision: *The Action Taken Report was accepted by the G.B*

3. Presentation of the Status Report of the WBFBC Project with special reference to Mid Term Review

The Status Report of the WBFBC Project –post MTR—was presented before the G.B point by point. While presenting the report the following points were highlighted by the Chief Project Director for the intervention of the Governing Body:

Decisions:

- (i) Grant of additional fund of Rs.90,00,000/- (Rupees Ninety lakhs) only for installation of new elevators in Aranya Bhavan is agreed to in principle.
- (ii) The mobilization of additional fund may be explored.

5. Variation of Accounting procedure with regard to Community Development

The project includes two types of funds for Community Development—

- Community Infrastructure Development fund.
- Seed money for Income Generation Activity (IGA) meant for the SHGs.

As per the Accounting Procedure ratified by the Governing Body, the FPC/EDCs have to operate two accounts – for Community Development fund against Infrastructure development and for Revolving fund against Income Generation activities — and account for them separately. The two accounts of the FPC / EDC shall be operated jointly by the Forest Official (Member Secretary, FPC / Joint Convenor, EDC) and a Member of the Executive Committee, duly authorized by the Executive Committee. FPC /EDC will receive fund from DMU by cheque only, through the respective FMUs.

During the recent review meetings held with the DMUs, a number of DMUs insisted that the fund should be released by DMU to the FMU and not FPC / EDC for implementation of the sanctioned works and not as envisaged in the Accounting Procedure (stated above). It was suggested that the fund for Community Development may be released by the DMUs to the FMUs against specific sanctioned works. This fund (Community Development Fund) may not be transferred to the FPCs / EDCs. Instead the work may be implemented by the FMU through the FPC/EDC members. The accounts of Community Development fund should be maintained by the FMU heads.

Based on the deliberations above the following points were placed before the Governing Body for consideration.

- (a) The timely accounting of Community Development Fund by 600 FPC/EDCs, given the existing strength of beat officer in field, will be difficult and this will delay accounts compilation at DMU and PMU levels and therefore the subsequent release of fund. Governing Body may consider whether:

- (i) Community Development Fund may be received by the FMUs from DMU, against specific sanctioned works of each FPC / EDC and implemented through members of FPC/EDCs. FMU may make payment to the labourers based on completed works under its direct supervision.
- (ii) Cluster of 5 FPC / EDCs may be formed in each FMU, based on proximity. APO (with regard to Community Development) may be framed by FMU for each cluster, based on their respective approved microplans. Similar works in a cluster may be clubbed and executed by the FMU through a local tender. The Member Secretary of FPC/EDC where the works would be executed may certify the work completion.

- (b) Since the Revolving Fund is one time grant to the FPCs to carry out works of IGA through the SHGs, the fund release route and accounting may remain same.

However, a monthly / quarterly return may be obtained by DMUs from the FMUs with regard to IGA, in a proforma to be devised by PMU.

- (c) Selected SHGs who are not registered as a society may be first registered under the W.B Societies Registration Act before fund is released to them. The process of registration will be facilitated by the NGO to be selected for this purpose.

Decision

The issues presented before the G.B were discussed at length, but most of the members were not in favour of the proposed variation, since it would not serve the purpose of strengthening of JFM movement ingrained in the MoD. Moreover this will be a violation of the MoD. The decisions are given below:

- (i) *There will be no variation in the accounting procedure of Community Infrastructure Development fund and Revolving fund from the Accounts Manual of the Society at present.*
- (ii) *The allocation and release of Community Infrastructure Development and Revolving fund to the FPCs / EDCs may be done in a limited way by selecting small groups—about 50 FPCs—to start with. Based on the performance of the initial groups further decision for variation of accounting procedure for the purpose of Community Development component will be taken by the Governing Body.*
- (iii) *PMU may seek assistance of NRLM for identification of the SHGs.*
- (iv) *Registration of the SHGs under the Registration of Societies Act for receiving micro-finance through Revolving fund of FPCs/EDCs, is not mandatory.*

6. Inclusion of the Role of Circle Incharges in the Account Manual

Para 2.14 of the Operation Manual of the Society states that the Circle heads, who have been designated as Controlling officers for Project implementation by Forest Dept. vide U.O no. 415/ACSF/13 dt 26.03.2013, will exercise full administrative and financial control over the DMUs. However, in the Accounts Manual of the Society, the role of the Circle heads has not been specified. The Circle in charges play a crucial role in the administration of the DMUs. Since the expenditure of the Society has increased manifold and is expected to touch approx. Rs 60 Crores in 2016-17, intensive monitoring of expenditure and works is necessary.

It was reported that during compilation of the final accounts of 2015-16, excess of expenditure over the fund released have been noticed in some of the DMUs, and the excess amount was drawn from the interest accrued, or security deposits, or from fund of sale of forms, without any consent. This possibly could have been minimized to a large extent had the role of the Circle In charges been defined in the Manual.

The following suggestions were placed before the members of the G.B.

- (i) The role of the Circle In charges in the Project has to be included in the Account Manual, which inter alia should include control of expenditure, monitoring of expenditure, reconciliation of accounts etc.
- (ii) The respective Circle In charge should maintain head wise budget allocation, fund release upto the month and monthly expenditure of each of their DMUs. For any excess of expenditure or very slow progress, the Circle In charge may seek an explanation from the DMU.
- (iii) The DMUs should submit copy of the Trial Balance and Day book for the accounting month to the respective Circle In charges, for monitoring of expenditure and also checking the nature of expenditure.

- (iv) Quarterly reconciliation of accounts to be done by the PMU with the Circle In charges and their DMUs.
- (v) The Project Director Finance may be authorized to revise the Accounts Manual, as may be necessary, based on the role of the Circle In charges finalized by the G.B.

Decision:

The Governing Body appreciated the issue put forward by the Member Secretary of the WBFBC Society and took the following decisions:

- (i) *Circle in charges will exercise full administrative and financial control over the DMUs.*
- (ii) *Circle in-charges should monitor the works and accounts of the DMUs under them as they have been designated as the controlling officers for Project implementation by Forest Dept. For this purpose the DMUs should provide copies of Trial Balance and Day book for each accounting month to respective Circle in charge.*
- (iii) *PCCF (HoFF) may issue a directive to all the Circle heads in this regard.*
- (iv) *The Circle in charges should maintain head wise budget allocation, fund release upto the month and monthly expenditure of each of their DMUs.*
- (v) *The PMU will undertake quarterly reconciliation of accounts with the Circle in charges and their DMUs.*
- (vi) *Based on the decisions above, the necessary revision of Accounts Manual may be done by the Project Director (Finance).*

7. Appointment of Accounts Officer on contractual basis

Vide G.O. No. 1162-For/G/6M-12/12 (Pt.I) dt 13.06.2014 eight posts were formally created in West Bengal Forest and Biodiversity Conservation Society. As per the Operation Manual of the Society, one of the eight posts is Chief Accounts Officer in the pay band of Rs 28,000 – 52,000 + Grade Pay of Rs 7600/- only, which is in the rank of Ex-officio Deputy Secretary, GoWB. The post is to be filled in by officer from equivalent rank from the West Bengal Audit and Accounts Service.

With the increase in the volume of expenditure over the years, the project has almost reached its peak. At this stage a person with sufficient experience in commercial accounting need to be inducted for assisting the PD Finance for proper management of accounts and fund flow. The PMU, has made a request to Forest Dept. to move appropriate authority for placing the services of a competent officer of W.B Audit and Accounts Service.

The Chief Project Director urged, since placement of an officer from the W.B Audit and Accounts Service may take some procedural time, the engagement of a suitable retired person as Accounts Officer, already allowed by the G.B in its 3rd meeting may be done, under the same terms and conditions. The Accounts Officer may be appointed initially for one year, which may be extended based on the performance and requirement.

Decision:

- (i) *Appointment of Accounts Officer may be done by the PMU under the same terms and conditions, which was allowed by the Governing Body in its 3rd meeting.*
- (ii) *The Accounts Officer may be appointed initially for one year, which may be extended based on the performance and requirement.*

8. Deployment of a DCF rank officer in North Bengal

Since the project is growing at a faster rate now, intensive supervision is required at field level. Frequent field visits to North Bengal from PMU is for field supervision is difficult. It was proposed that the post of Joint Project Director Extension created vide G.O No. 1162-For/G/6M-12/12 (Pt. I) dt 13.06.2014, in the pay band of Rs 28,000/- 52,000/- + Grade Pay of Rs.7600/- only, may be filled in by serving officer of equivalent rank from West Bengal Forest Service. He may be posted on deputation to WBFBC Project with headquarter at Siliguri / Jalpaiguri. For facilitation of office work, one computer operator cum office assistant and one attendant may be engaged through WTL and the expenses may be booked under Non-reimbursable fund.

It was also proposed that in addition to the specific jobs defined under the Operational Manual, the officer will do the following:

- (a) Act as a representative of the PMU and facilitate the day to day activities of the Project in North Bengal.
- (b) Co-ordinate the project related activities in North Bengal
- (c) Liaise with the Head of DMUs, Circle Incharges and APCCF of North Bengal for better implementation of the project.
- (d) Inspect the field, nursery and other project activity and take corrective measures within the project guidelines, if necessary.
- (e) Persuade the DMUs of North Bengal for timely submission of Accounts, Returns and Reports sought by the PMU.

Most of the members did not agree with the proposal of posting a WBFS officer in North Bengal as Joint Director. In fact the PCCF General in his communication (in absentia) expressed that it will be very difficult to find an officer in WBFS with grade pay of Rs.7600/-, who could be posted in North Bengal. He suggested to engage retired IFS of WBFS officer, to which many members did not support.

Decision:

- (i) *For the purpose of co-ordination of the project related activities in North Bengal, including persuading the DMUs for implementation of project works, submission of accounts, returns and reports and field inspection etc. the Addl. PCCF North Bengal should be designated as the Nodal Officer.*
- (ii) *A proposal may be moved by the PMU to PCCF (HoFF), for designating Addl. PCCF North Bengal as Nodal Officer WBFBCP for North Bengal.*

9. Organisation of National Seminar in January 2017

The G.B was informed that JICA authorities requested the PMU to organize the next national seminar in West Bengal on behalf of JICA. During the last national seminar held in February 2016 in Sikkim, it was proposed that the national seminar proposed to be held in January 2017, may be combined with a visit to Sunderbans. Since we are in the mid-project stage, the PMU acceded to the request of hosting the national seminar of JICA with a visit to Sunderbans, in January 2017.

Recently, the PMU received a formal letter of request from JICA for organizing the national seminar from 10th to 14th January, 2017, including arrival and departure dates. The PD Finance has already discussed the matter of additional fund allocation for organising the seminar with the JICA authorities and they have tentatively agreed to allocate about additional Rs. 60.0 lakhs for this purpose.

Officials from JICA, MoEF, JICA implementing states (about 13), Forest Dept., GoWB, High Powered Committee etc. are expected to participate.

Considering that January is a tourist season, some of the advanced actions have already been taken, viz: Initial dialogue with hotels for block booking, booking of launches etc. A budget estimate of Rs. 60 lakhs was placed as Annexure III of the Agenda notes for the consideration of the G.B members. It was proposed that organisation of the programme may be done by the PMU in consultation with the Forest Directorate, especially the PCCF Wildlife, for the visit to Sundarbans.

The following were placed before the G.B for acceptance.

- (i) To accept the proposal for hosting the national seminar so that the formal acceptance may be sent to JICA authorities.
- (ii) May approve the budget of Rs 60 lakhs (see Annexure III).
- (iii) The programme may be inaugurated by the Hon'ble MIC Forests, GoWB.

There was unanimous agreement in hosting the national seminar and for the visit to Sunderbans. However, few members suggested that this would be an opportunity to showcase the JFMCs, their culture and endeavour in Community development and Self-help group activity. PCCF General in his mail communication (in absentia) suggested arrangement of stalls etc. may be done and JFMC members invited to run the stalls and for this purpose the fund may be increased to Rs. 1.00 crore.

Decision:

- (i) *The proposal of organization of National Seminar 2017 on behalf of JICA and visit to Sunderbans is accepted.*
- (ii) *The budget of Rs 60 lakhs is approved. However the budget may be re-looked and if necessary revised, for including showcasing of JFMC activities and their participation.*
- (iii) *The Minister in Charge Forests will be approached for inauguration.*

10. Denotification of DMUs

Buxa Tiger Reserve (East), Buxa Tiger Reserve (West), Malda and Wildlife-I DMUs were notified as vide G.O No 2623-For/G/6M-38/12 dt 21.12.2012 read with the matching notification No. 114/WBFBCEP/7-1/13 dt 09.04.2013 issued by the Society.

In the recently approved Mid Term Review, JICA has accepted the abolition of BTR (East), BTR (West), FPC portion of Malda DMUs and the Mahananda WLS part of Wildlife-I DMU. The matter was placed before the GB with the following request:

- (i) PMU may be authorized to formally move Forest Dept. for de-notifying BTR (E) DMU, BTR (W) DMU, FPC portion of Malda DMU and Mahananda WLS portion of the Wildlife-I DMU.
- (ii) The FMUs constituted under BTR (E) DMU, BTR (W) DMU, FPC portion of Malda DMU and Mahananda WLS portion under Wildlife-I DMU may be de-notified by the respective Circle incharges of the DMUs.

Decision:

- (i) *The proposal of de-notification of BTR (E) DMU, BTR (W) DMU, FPC portion of Malda DMU and Mahananda WLS portion of Wildlife-I DMU is approved. Forest Dept. may be moved accordingly.*

- (ii) *The denotification of the FMUs constituted under BTR (E) DMU, BTR (W) DMU, FPC portion of Malda DMU and Mahananda WLS portion under Wildlife-I DMU may be done by the respective Circle incharges of the DMUs, after the DMUs are de-notified by the Forest Dept and matching de-notification is issued by the Society.*

11. Issues with Overseas Training

The members were informed that the matter of organizing Overseas Training by the Project Management Consultant (PMC) is becoming difficult owing to the following reasons:-

- (i) Organizing overseas training for officers would require huge amount of paper works, correspondence and liaison with the government machinery at Centre and State;
- (ii) Such correspondence and paper works would be necessary for issuance of passports, permits / visa, logistics in foreign country, safety and security of the officers in foreign country, assistance of the High Commission etc.,
- (iii) The works mentioned above are specialized jobs, which the PMU is not equipped to handle. Intensive persuasion at Ministry level would be required.

It was therefore proposed that

- (a) the Capacity Building expert of PMC will assist the PMU in preparing schedules and fixing the study tour locations, institutes etc. for in-principle clearance by the Governing Body and/or State govt.;
- (b) the handling of the official formalities viz: correspondence and paper works necessary for issuance of passports, permits / visa, logistics in foreign country, safety and security of the officers in foreign country, assistance of the High Commission etc., may therefore be given to some specialized agency, to be selected by the due process of tender through QCBS (Technical 80: Financial 20) basis.

Decision:

The proposals with respect to the works to be done by the Capacity Building expert and initiating tender process for engaging a suitable organization for handling the official formalities of the foreign tours, are approved.

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

Sd/- (C. SINHA)

Chairperson WBFBC Society and
Principal Secretary, Forest Dept.
Govt. of West Bengal