

**Minutes Of 25<sup>th</sup> Meeting of Expert Committee on Eco-Sensitive Zones (ESZ)  
held on 11<sup>th</sup> April, 2017 in the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate  
Change at Indira Paryavaran Bhawan, New Delhi.**

The 25<sup>th</sup> Meeting of Expert Committee on Eco Sensitive Zones was taken by Dr. Amita Prasad, Additional Secretary, MoEF&CC on 11<sup>th</sup> April, 2017 in the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Indira Paryavaran Bhawan, New Delhi. At the outset, the Chairperson welcomed the participants from the States of Gujarat and Maharashtra. The list of participants is annexed.

The following nine (9) ESZ proposals were appraised during the Meeting.

<b>Sl. No.</b>	<b>Protected Area</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Status of Proposal</b>
1.	Gir NP + Gir Sanctuary + Mitiyala Sanctuary + Paniya Sanctuary (4 Protected Areas)	Gujarat	Fresh Proposal
2.	Barda WLS	Gujarat	Deferred Proposal
3.	Velavadhar Black Buck NP	Gujarat	Deferred Proposal
4.	Anerdam WLS	Maharashtra	Revised Proposal
<b>Additional Agenda Items</b>			
5.	Khijadia WLS	Gujarat	For Reconsideration
6.	Hingolgarh WLS	Gujarat	
7.	Porbander WLS	Gujarat	
8.	Gaga Great Indian Bustard Sanctuary	Gujarat	
9.	Nalsarovar WLS	Gujarat	

**A. Gujarat**

**1. Eco-Sensitive Zone around Gir NP + Gir Sanctuary + Mitiyala Sanctuary + Paniya Sanctuary:**

The Draft Notification of the Eco Sensitive Zone around Gir NP, Gir Sanctuary, Mitiyala Sanctuary & Paniya Sanctuary, Gujarat was published on 11<sup>th</sup> November, 2016.

The Proposal was earlier considered in the 24<sup>th</sup> ESZ Meeting held on 27-28<sup>th</sup> February, 2017. However, the State Government had requested for the deferment of the Proposal.

(i) Shri. R.L. Meena, APCCF gave a detailed presentation on the revised Proposal. It was stated that the Gir National Park, Gir Wildlife Sanctuary, Paniya Wildlife Sanctuary and Mitiyala Wildlife Sanctuary are spread in the Districts of Junagarh and Amreli of Gujarat. It forms the core area supporting the Asiatic Lion Population of about 533 covering a total area of 1469.99 sq. km. The Gir National park is surrounded by the Gir and Paniya Wildlife Sanctuaries. Mitiyala Wildlife Sanctuary is situated at a distance of 8 Kilometres North East of Gir Wildlife Sanctuary; the Gir Sanctuary and National Park and Paniya Sanctuary is the single largest compact tract of forests in Saurashtra region of Gujarat. Natural habitats and wildlife corridors present in the Gir Protected Area constitute a wide range of many endangered, rare and threatened species of flora and fauna.

Giving details of Flora and Fauna, Shree Meena informed that nearly half of the area in Gir forests is occupied by Dry Deciduous Teak Forest. Dry deciduous scrub forests include babul, khair, babarkhair, bili, khakhara, timru, gorad, hermo, bordi, ingor etc. Dry savannah forests constitute of large grassy open blanks with very sparse and poor scrub type vegetation where Shaniyar, Jinjavo and Moshti are some of the good quality palatable grasses growing in these areas. In Gir Coastal Zone Area, there are 14 possible riverine corridors and one non river corridor from Park and Sanctuaries to Coastal areas of Saurashtra peninsula that supports natural landscape features. The forest areas outside Gir, declared as reserve forests, protected forests and unclassified forests are important wildlife habitats for wildlife corridors; while non-forest lands adjoining Gir provides important habitat for the lion and other wildlife.

The Paniya Shetrunjay Hill Zone and the Banks of the River Shetrunji, the Reserve forest as well as Protected forest patches act as important corridors for the Asiatic Lion; the Hilly undulating Forests and Grass Land from Mitiyala Sanctuary to

Hippavadli and Shetrunji Hills is used by animals as effective corridors; The Gir - Girnar Corridor of hilly undulating terrain between Gir and Girnar Pass is used by lions.

The Salient features of the Sanctuary are as follows:

Area of the Sanctuary: 1469.99 sq. km

ESZ Area (Draft): 3328.8139 Sq Km including 291 villages

**Revised ESZ Area:** 1159.28 sq. km covering 120 villages

Extent of ESZ (Draft): 0 to 17.9 kms

**Revised Extent of ESZ:** 0.5 km to 9.4 km

(ii) Comments received various stakeholders and public and views thereon by the Wildlife division were discussed during the meeting. It was informed that most of the apprehensions during the consultation process were regarding seeking permission from the Monitoring Committee even for basic requirement of the villagers such as Construction of houses, schools, colleges, hospitals, wells and roads in ESZ area. Concerns were raised for exclusion of Khamba Taluka from ESZ, Status of agricultural activities within ESZ, etc.

(iii) Representative of Gujarat further informed that due to above objections, the need of rationalising the proposal was felt. Based on the number of representations from various stakeholders, the local consultation has also been done by the State before submission of revised proposal of ESZ. While explaining the reduced extent, the state informed that they have already put in place proper mechanism for development/establishment of Hotels/resorts and farmhouses etc. These are being regulated by the State Government; as a result positive impact on the habitat of areas under the lion landscape is noted. The river bed which is part of Lion movement area has been proposed to be kept under ESZ upto a distance of 9.4 Km or upto the distance where lion movement has been observed.

It was highlighted that towards North-west direction, the rationalization of extent has been done due to Talala town; the Gamtal (areas of villages) have been kept outside the ESZ for local development needs. He further informed that Gir PA is surrounded

by cultivation of Kesar mango and large scale sugarcane. These areas are also excluded from ESZ for local development.

(iii) The Chairperson pointed out that the Gir Sanctuary possesses high visibility and has international recognition and therefore, optimisation of extent proposed by the State should not adversely affect the biodiversity of the Protected Area. While rationalising the extent, it was emphasized that continuity of corridors connecting the above four Protected Areas should be maintained. It was informed by the State that carrying capacity study is being done by the Gir Foundation and its recommendations will be incorporated in the Zonal Master Plan. However, the Chairperson emphasised to maintain minimum distance of 500 meter where zero extent is proposed and map to be revised accordingly.

After deliberations, the Committee recommended the Proposal for Final Notification subject to submission of revised map with minimum distance of 500 meter so as to have minimum adverse affect etc..

## **2. Eco-Sensitive Zone around Barda WLS, Gujarat:**

The Draft Notification of the Eco Sensitive Zone around Barda WLS was published on 2nd November, 2015.

The Proposal was earlier considered in the 23<sup>rd</sup> ESZ Meeting held during 19-20<sup>th</sup> October, 2016, but the State Government sought deferment of the proposal in view of number of objections received from the local stakeholders.

(i) Shri. R.L. Meena, APCCF gave a detailed presentation on the revised Proposal. It was mentioned that the Barda Wildlife Sanctuary is located in Porbandar, Jamnagar and Devbhoomi Dwarka Districts of Gujarat and lies between 21° 40' N and 21° 55' N latitudes and 69° 40' E and 69° 55' E longitudes. It is spread over an area of 192.31 square kilometres. It was mentioned that the Barda Wildlife Sanctuary is one of the richest and compact bio-diversity patches covered on all sides by good quality dry deciduous miscellaneous forests, dry thorn forest, shrub lands and wetland forests along with bamboo patches. It maintains rich bio-diversity comprising 759 species of 430 genera of tree, herbs, shrubs and climber species, 22 mammal species which include some rare species, 26 species of reptiles, 4 species of amphibians, 55

species of butterfly, more than 3000 species of insects and more than 269 species of birds.

The salient features of the sanctuary are as follows:

Area of the Sanctuary: 192.31 sq. km

ESZ Area (Draft): 152.16 Sq Km covering 23 villages

**ESZ Area (Revised):** 65.58 sq. km covering 20 villages

Extent of ESZ (Draft): 0.5 km to 5.6 kms

**Extent of ESZ (Revised):** 0 km to 4.76 km

(ii) Comments received from existing mine operators and industries such as TATA Chemicals, Digvijay Cement, Saurashtra Chemical Ltd. and Nirma Ltd. for exclusion of mining zone adjacent to Protected Area as they have been established long back. Also the comments received from public to meet the local requirements such as construction of canals under 'Gulab Sagar Yojna, erection of electric lines, agricultural development activities and construction of new roads in ESZ. The development needs along with conservation was discussed in detail. The chairperson also desired to have dates of public consultation to be submitted.

(iii) Shree Meena informed that due to above objections, the need of rationalising the proposal was felt. The State Government further informed that based on the number of representations from various stakeholders, the local consultation has also been done by the State at the time of submission of revised proposal.

(iv) The Committee members enquired about the zero extent that has been proposed at various sections of Protected Area towards North-west, South-west and Southern sides. State informed that these areas cover the limestone mining activities together with cement factories. Chairperson pointed out that these mining activities shall be transformed to biodiversity parks after the closure of mining lease and State need to obtain closure plan from the miners and expenditure involved in it shall be met under the CSR activity. State therefore needs to fix closure date as per the mining lease awarded to the miners. It may also ensure that no further mining lease and renewal to be awarded by State after its expiry. Based on the closure plan, area

to be converted into Biodiversity conservation with expert advice. The said stipulation should be suitably incorporated in the notification.

After deliberations, the Committee recommended the Proposal for Final Notification subject to above conditions.

### **3. Eco-Sensitive Zone around Velavadhar Black Buck National Park, Gujarat:**

The Draft Notification of the Eco Sensitive Zone around Velavadhar Black Buck National Park, Gujarat was published on 8<sup>th</sup> January, 2016.

The Proposal was earlier considered in the 23<sup>rd</sup> ESZ Meeting held during 19-20<sup>th</sup> October, 2016, but the State Government sought deferment of the Proposal in view of a number of objections received from the local stakeholders.

(i) Shri. R.L. Meena, APCCF gave a detailed presentation on the revised Proposal. It was mentioned that the Velavadhar Black Buck National Park is spread over an area of 34.52 sq. kms and is located in Bhavnagar District of Gujarat. It was mentioned that the National Park was notified by the State with the prime aim of long-term protection and conservation of Black Buck and endangered biological diversity. The Reserve Forest is categorised as Coastal Grassland Ecosystem. The Rajwada Bio-geographical Province supports rich biodiversity along with a variety of mammals, reptiles, insects and avifauna. It was informed that due to ongoing developmental activities, industrialization and salt farming activities around the National Park, the requirement of proper safeguards and control over such activities for long term wildlife conservation was felt.

The salient features of the Proposal are as follows:

Area of the Sanctuary: 34.52 sq. km

**ESZ Area (Revised):** 43.57 sq. km covering 9 villages

**Extent of ESZ (Revised):** 1 km to 3.7 km

(ii) Comments received from various stakeholders and public were discussed and addressed appropriately during the meeting. Major concerns raised were on proposed industrial activity, exclusion of highway, area covered under salt pan, exclusion of private agricultural land from ESZ, etc.

(iii) To the query of the Committee members on reduced ESZ Area, the State informed that ESZ Area has been rationalised to the larger extent from the draft stage as State highway, industrial areas and outskirts of city etc are excluded from the ESZ. During presentation the State mentioned the actual area of PA is 39.34 Sq Km. in place of 34.52 Sq. Km. The State has requested to include the mobile tower under the regulated category. The committee agreed on the same. Chairperson suggested conducting regular study on migratory birds of the PA.

After deliberations, the Committee recommended the Proposal for Final Notification after incorporating above amendments and keeping in view the larger interest of biodiversity conservation.

## **B. Maharashtra**

### **4. Eco-Sensitive Zone around Anerdam Wildlife Sanctuary, Maharashtra:**

The Draft Notification of the Eco Sensitive Zone around Anerdam Wildlife Sanctuary, Maharashtra was published on 1<sup>st</sup> December, 2015.

The Proposal was earlier considered in the 17<sup>th</sup> Expert Committee meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> May, 2016. During the meeting, representative of the State Government, after due consultations, requested reduction of ESZ Area from 474.87 sq. kms to 69.42 sq. km and with change of extent from 2.25-12 km to 0.1 -3 km. Accordingly, Committee sought for a revised proposal with the new ESZ boundaries along with maps and list of villages, etc for further consideration of the matter.

(i) Representative of the State Government presented the revised Proposal.

(ii) Committee suggested that since PA shares its boundary with Madhya Pradesh and forms a corridor for movement of wildlife to adjacent Protected Area, the same should be reflected in the map. Expert from ZSI pointed out that the list of flora and fauna needs to be updated by the State. Chairperson pointed out that since the proposal is revised extensively, consultation with concerned stakeholders may be conducted and the same should be reflected in the final proposal. It was emphasized to promote green technology for waste management and for sustainable development within the Eco-Sensitive Zone.

After detailed deliberation the Expert Committee recommended the Proposal for Final notification Subject to Submission of following information by the State:

- a. Revised map on above suggested points highlighting the corridor with Madhya Pradesh,
- b. Updated list of flora and fauna,
- c. Response of State on public consultation on the revised proposal.

**C. Additional Agenda Items (Gujarat):**

**5. Eco-Sensitive Zone around Khijadia Wildlife Sanctuary, Gujarat:**

The above Proposal was earlier recommended in the 23<sup>rd</sup> ESZ Expert Committee Meeting held during 19-20<sup>th</sup> October, 2016. However, on the request of the State Government, the proposal is being re considered.

The salient features of the Proposal are as follows:

Area of the Sanctuary: 6.048 sq. km

**Revised Area of ESZ:** 16.55 sq. km including 1 village

**Revised Extent of ESZ:** Up to 1 km from the boundary of the sanctuary

(i) State has informed that there is only one modification in proposal by the State i.e., exclusion of one village (Garmtul village site) for allowing local developmental activities. The Committee informed that for the local development the provisions are already available in the stipulations of the ESZ Notification. Therefore, the Committee was of the view that the Proposal which was earlier recommended shall remain same for Final Notification.

**6. Eco-Sensitive Zone around Hingolgarh Wildlife Sanctuary, Gujarat:**

The above Proposal was recommended in the 23<sup>rd</sup> ESZ Expert Committee Meeting held during 19-20<sup>th</sup> October, 2016. However, on the request of the State Government, it is being re-considered.

The salient features of the Proposal are as follows:

Area of the Sanctuary: 6.54 sq. km

**Revised Area of ESZ:** 31.66 sq. km

**Revised Extent of ESZ:** 1 km to 4.1 km including 6 villages

(i) On the revised Proposal, the State informed that the area covering reserve forest towards the Southern side of the Sanctuary has been excluded from the ESZ. The Committee agreed to the revised Proposal as the excluded area is already regulated under the Forest Conservation Act, 1972.

After deliberations, the Committee recommended the revised Proposal for final Notification.

## **7. Eco-Sensitive Zone around Porbander Wildlife Sanctuary, Gujarat:**

The Draft Notification of the Eco Sensitive Zone around Porbander Wildlife Sanctuary, Gujarat was published on 20<sup>th</sup> November, 2015. The above Proposal has been recommended in the 23<sup>rd</sup> ESZ Expert Committee Meeting on ESZ held during 19-20<sup>th</sup> October, 2016. However, on the request of the State Government, it was re-considered.

The salient features of the sanctuary are as follows:

Area of the Sanctuary: 0.0933 sq. km

**Revised Area of ESZ:** 0.01 sq. km

**Revised Extent of ESZ:** 0 to 25 metres

(i) Representative of the State Government stated that the Sanctuary is located in the midst of Porbandar City. The city area, which was included in the earlier proposal, has now been excluded from ESZ. During presentation, it was informed by the State that the adjoining water body, which is a suitable habitat for birds, has been retained in the revised proposal of ESZ area.

(ii) Committee observed that due to dense population, zero ESZ is proposed in the direction of North, East and South. Further it is noted that boundaries of the Protected Area have been found to be altered from the draft to final stage and clarification on this is required to be submitted by the State. Committee suggested that the balance to be maintained between the rationalization of the extent and

sustainable development. Proper management plan need to be drawn by the State for protection of existing ecosystem around the water body.

After deliberations, Committee recommended the Proposal subject to submission of following information:

1. Clarification on difference of Geo-coordinates of PA from Draft to Revised proposal.
2. Revised map of the PA along with the proposed ESZ covering the entire water body for protection of its wildlife.

#### **8. Eco-Sensitive Zone around Gaga Great Indian Bustard Sanctuary, Gujarat:**

The Draft Notification of the Eco Sensitive Zone around Gaga Great Indian Bustard Sanctuary, Gujarat was published on 10<sup>th</sup> December, 2015. The above Proposal was recommended in the 23<sup>rd</sup> ESZ Expert Committee Meeting held during 19-20<sup>th</sup> October, 2016. However, on the request of the State Government, it is being re considered.

The salient features of the Proposal are as follows:

Area of the Sanctuary: 332.87 sq. km

Area of ESZ: 19.42 sq. km

Extent of ESZ: Uniform width of 1 km all around the sanctuary

(i) As per the submission given by the State Government on the revised proposal vide letter dated 04.04.2017, no village has been proposed within the boundary of ESZ. However during presentation, the State Government confirmed that two villages will fall within the ESZ Area. Therefore to avoid the ambiguity State Government representative finally confirmed that no change may be considered in the Proposal which has been recommended earlier. The same was accepted by the committee.

#### **9. Eco-Sensitive Zone around Nalsarovar Wildlife Sanctuary, Gujarat:**

The Draft Notification of the Eco Sensitive Zone around Nalsarovar Wildlife Sanctuary, Gujarat was published on 10<sup>th</sup> December, 2015.

The above Proposal was recommended in the 23<sup>rd</sup> ESZ Expert Committee Meeting held during 19-20<sup>th</sup> October, 2016. However, on the request of the State Government, the revised proposal has been considered.

The salient features of the Proposal are as follows:

Area of the Sanctuary: 120.82 sq. km

**Revised Area of ESZ:** 317.92 sq. km including 19 villages

**Revised Extent of ESZ:** 1.34 km to 4.84 km

(i) While explaining the revised proposal, the representative of the State Government informed that original proposal was covering the non-significant catchment areas which have no relevance with the wetland. These areas have now been excluded from the ESZ Area in the revised proposal. It was also mentioned that the extreme south areas have also been excluded.

(ii) The Committee agreed to the revised Proposal. However, while discussing, it was suggested to carry out regular study on biodiversity of the Protected Area including migratory birds, the PA being a Ramsar site. It was advised to include one expert from ground water and hydrology in the Monitoring Committee. After deliberations, Committee recommended the above proposal with suggested points.

Based on the Draft Notifications, comments received, presentations made on the proposals and their discussions, the Expert Committee recommended 5 Proposals. 3 proposals were recommended subject to submission of additional information by the State, and 1 Proposal was advised for revision. Summary of the decisions taken is as under:

<b>Sl. No.</b>	<b>Protected Area</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Decision</b>
1.	Gir NP + Gir Sanctuary + Mitiyala Sanctuary + Paniya Sanctuary (4 Protected Areas)	Gujarat	Recommended subject to submission of additional information

			by the State
2.	Barda WLS	Gujarat	Recommended subject to the condition of mining closure plan by the State in the ZMP.
3.	Velavadhar Black Buck NP	Gujarat	Recommended
4.	Anerdam WLS	Maharashtra	Recommended subject to submission of additional information by the State
<b>Additional Agenda Items</b>			
5.	Khijadia WLS	Gujarat	Recommended as per earlier recommendation
6.	Hingolgarh WLS	Gujarat	Recommended
7.	Porbander WLS	Gujarat	Recommended subject to submission of additional information by the State
8.	Gaga Great Indian Bustard Sanctuary	Gujarat	Recommended as per earlier recommendation
9.	Nalsarovar WLS	Gujarat	Recommended

Meeting ended with vote of thanks to the Chair.

**25th Expert Committee Meeting on ESZ held on 11th April, 2017**

**List of Participants**

**Members of Expert Committee**

Dr. Amita Prasad, Additional Secretary, Chairperson.

Shri. Lalit Kapur, Adviser, MoEF&CC.

Shri. B. K. Sinha, Scientist 'F', Botanical Survey of India, Kolkata.

Dr. S. A. Hussain, Scientist 'G', WFF, Dehradun.

Shri. Roy P Thomer, Joint Director (WL), MoEF&CC.

Ms. Suniti Parashar, Scientist 'B', CPCB, Delhi.

Shri Kailash Chandra, Director, Z.S.I.

Dr. Sandeep Kumar Raut, Associate Town Planner, Town & Country Planning Organisation, Govt. of India, MoUD.

**Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, GOI**

Shri Lalit Bokolia, Additional Director, MoEF & CC.

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Shri. R. S. Kadam, CCF (T), Dhule, Forest Deptt., Govt. of Maharashtra.

Shri. M. K. Rao, APCCF (WL), Mumbai, Forest Deptt., Govt. of Maharashtra.

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