

F. No. 14-1/2018-PE
Government of India
Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change
Project Elephant Division

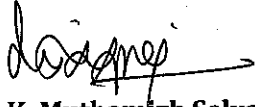
Indira Paryavaran Bhawan,
Jor Bagh Road, New Delhi-110003
Phone No. 24695292
Dated 1st March, 2019

OFFICE MEMORANDUM

Sub: Proceedings of the 1st Meeting of the Central Project Elephant Monitoring Committee (CPEMC) for monitoring the implementation of directions/instructions/guidelines of the Ministry and Court's directions related to conservation and protection of elephant held at 10:30 hrs on 19th February, 2019 at Krishna Hall, Indira Paryavaran Bhawan, New Delhi-regarding.

The undersigned is enclosing herewith the proceedings of the meeting cited in the subject above. This issue with the approval of the Additional Director General of Forest (Wildlife), MoEF&CC. kindly send your comments within one week positively.

Encls. As above


(Dr. K. Muthamizh Selvan)
Scientist 'D' (Project Elephant)
E-mail: km.selvan@gov.in
Telephone No. 011-24365067

Distribution:

1. Director, Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun
2. Shri N. K. Vasu, Retd. PCCF of Assam
3. Shri R. K. Srivastava, Ex-IGF (Project Elephant)
4. Shri Vinod Rishi, EX-ADG (Wildlife)
5. Shri G. Harikumar, Retd. PCCF & CWLW of Kerala
6. Shri Vivek Menon, ED & CEO, Wildlife Trust of India
7. Dr. Prachi Mehta, WCRS, Pune
8. Dr. Surendra Verma, ANCF, Bangalore
9. PCCF (WL), Government of West Bengal
10. PCCF (WL), Government of Karnataka

Copy to:

1. PPS to ADGF (WL), MoEF&CC
2. PPS to IGF (PE)/PPS to IGF (WL)
3. PS to JD (PE/WL)

Proceedings of the First Meeting of Central Project Elephant Monitoring Committee (CPEMC) held at 10:30 AM on 19th February, 2019 at the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change

The first meeting of Central Project Elephant Monitoring Committee was held at 10:30 am on 19th February, 2019 at Krishna Hall, Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change under the Chairmanship of Shri M. S. Negi, Additional Director General of Forests (Wildlife).

List of participants is annexed.

The Member Convenor, Shri Noyal Thomas, IGF (PE) welcomed all participants to the meeting and informed that the Committee has been constituted under the directions of Supreme Court in the matters related to the hearing of Ms. Prerna Bindra vs Union of India and Others to look into the issues related to cruelty inflicted to elephants during human - elephant conflicts. He further highlighted the objectives of the Committee and suggested to review various guidelines, directions issued by the Ministry, monitor the implementation of HEC measures in the field and report to the Ministry on the measures to be adopted to mitigate human elephant conflicts in the elephant range states of India.

The Chair welcomed all the participants to the meeting and highlighted that the methods adopted by different State Forest Departments while handling elephants during human-elephant interface should be humane. He informed this the Committee has been constituted by the Ministry as a single channel to bring about solutions to HEC issues. The committee has an integral role in suggesting actions based on field visit findings on matters related to protection and conservation of elephants holistically. He was of the view that the mandate of the Committee is to review the efficacy of the various measures and actions being taken by the states and Govt. of India in respect of conservation of elephants and guidelines made/directions issued for this purpose. This committee is expected to give concrete solutions to the problem of elephant protection, human -elephant conflict mitigation.

Gist of discussions:

1. Shri R. K. Srivastava felt that Gajah report has become obsolete and suggested to print guidelines that are implementable in the field for circulation to all CWLWs. He suggested the Committee to look into issues of conflict, train hit, corridor and issues of captive and temple elephants of Kerala. He suggested to make focal points for each elephant landscape to report back to Ministry.
2. Shri Hari Kumar, Ex PCCF & CWLW, Kerala however pointed that Gajah is a comprehensive document. However, fund shortage is a constraint for conserving the elephants. He felt India has the best conservation model to protect wild elephants. He suggested there is adequate funds available in CAMPA which could be utilised for securing corridors.

3. Shri Vinod Rishi suggested to create a compendium of guidelines and relevant court orders and circulate it to all Committee members for reference during field visits. Further, he suggested to look into the overlapping tiger and elephant habitat and management issues for suggesting management prescriptions. The existing guidelines should be looked into regarding the implementation in field.
4. Ms. Prachi Mehta suggested members to undertake field visits and collect site specific causes for suggesting possible solutions, especially on man-elephant conflict.
5. Shri R. K. Sinha, CWLW, West Bengal informed that all recommendations, views, reports of field visits are likely to be seen by Steering committee and the Supreme court. Looking at the sensitivity of the human - elephant conflict issues, he urged the Ministry to submit reports to Supreme Court in consultation with the concerned states. Shri Sinha strongly resisted State Forest Departments bringing more captive elephants into captivity and suggested rescue centres to take care of captive elephants. He suggested to keep Gajah report as base document for making strategy for securing corridors, not torturing elephants and giving right publicity to the national heritage of India, the elephants. He emphasized that India has identified seven elephant populations where both terrain and elephant behaviours vary. He suggested to devise strategy elephant populationwise looking into convergence of different departments. It was also suggested to leave the existing captive elephant management guidelines as such as it is beyond the purview of the Committee.

In response to the submission, the Chair suggested to initiate the work on HEC issues in the Eastern - Central landscape of elephants involving West Bengal, Odisha, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Bihar. He also urged the State Govt. to take necessary steps in establishing Elephant Rescue Centre wherever required.

6. Shri Jairam, CWLW, Karnataka informed that Karnataka FD has conducted 2-3 workshops in Banerghatta and Shimoga involving veterinarians to improvise housing facility, training methods and treating sick elephants.

He also informed that in the last 10 years, more than 50 human beings got killed per annum in the state. The State FD has identified areas with high conflict zone from Banerghatta, Cauvery, Madikeri, Hasaan, Chikamangalur and has taken the matter to the Chief Minister of Karnataka. The State FD has found that EPT has been successful in cases where soil stability is good. Solar fencing has not been very effective. However, though expensive, railway barricades have been found very effective for the last 2-3 years. But erecting 600 km rail barricade without impinging into elephant corridor and providing the species the right of passage is a highly expensive project. Karnataka FD has submitted 641 crore project proposal to the State Govt. to install railway barricades which has been approved by the Govt. of Karnataka which already has allocated 100 crores to the State FD.

Karnataka FD has also created a software for real time payment of ex-gratia to victims of incidences of HEC which is now being implemented on a pilot basis and shall be implemented by the state from next year.

The State FD has also radio collared matriarch group in Madikeri and Hasan to generate information on movement of elephants.

CWLW, Karnataka suggested use of immunocontraceptives to restrict the population of problem elephants. However, as a stay has been put by Supreme court, he urged the Ministry to move Supreme Court to vacate the stay for use on restricted elephant population.

CWLW, Karnataka urged the Ministry to include some riders as a first chapter of the document on linear infrastructure developed by WII to avoid mitigative/alternative measures within core critical areas of Protected Areas and suggested alternative routes to be explored outside PA.

CWLW, Karnataka was advised to share the ex-gratia software with other states for replication. It was also suggested to the SFD to send a proposal on rail to the Ministry to facilitate ministry to talk to Railways directly to get concession on scrap rails.

7. After detailed discussions, the following decisions were taken:

- (i) It was decided to discuss the issues in the next regional workshop scheduled to be held on 27th and 28th March, 2019 in Chhattisgarh and conduct the meeting of the Committee and local visit of HEC areas. The meeting thereafter shall be convened in April 2019.
- (ii) It was decided to further to hold meetings in the 4 major elephant population areas in the country for consultation with stakeholders and local people and department officials to arrive at practical and feasible solutions for protection of elephants and mitigation of human - elephant conflict and the efficacy of existing guidelines.
- (iii) It was also decided that whenever need arises the Committee will carry out inspections/visits either with all members or through the subcommittee comprising of some of its members.
- (iv) The MoEF&CC will take up matter with Ministry of railways for getting used rails on concessional rates once the proposal is received from the State Govt.
- (v) The Ministry will take appropriate steps to solve legal tangles regarding use of immunocontraception for tackling the problem of elephant population.

The meeting ended with thanks to the Chair.