

MINUTES OF 41st ESZ EXPERT COMMITTEE MEETING FOR THE DECLARATION OF ECO-SENSITIVE ZONE (ESZ) AROUND PROTECTED AREAS (WILDLIFE SANCTUARIES/NATIONAL PARKS/TIGER RESERVES) & ZONAL MASTER PLAN (ZMP) THROUGH VIDEO CONFERENCING (VC) HELD ON 23RD TO 24TH JUNE, 2020.

The 41st Meeting of the Expert Committee on Eco-Sensitive Zone / Eco-sensitive Area was held under the Chairmanship of Shri Ravi Agrawal, Additional Secretary during 23rd to 24th June, 2020 through Video Conferencing. List of participants is Annexed.

Day 1: (23rd June 2020)

2. At the outset, the Chairman welcomed the Expert Committee Members & representatives from the States of Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Haryana, and Punjab. After a brief introduction, Chairman invited States to present their proposals as per Agenda items *ad seriatim*.

3. Following 11 proposals for Eco-Sensitive Zone listed in the agenda were taken up for discussions.

S. N.	State/UT	Protected Area	Status
	Maharashtra	Katepurna Wildlife Sanctuary	Draft proposal
	Maharashtra	Pranhita Wildlife Sanctuary	Draft proposal
	Maharashtra	Chaparala Wildlife Sanctuary	Draft proposal
	Maharashtra	Tamhini Wildlife Sanctuary	Re-notified draft proposal
	Himachal Pradesh	Manali Bird Sanctuary	Re-notified draft proposal
	Himachal Pradesh	Kugti Sanctuary Wildlife Sanctuary	Re-notified draft proposal
	Himachal Pradesh	Kalatop-Khajjiar Wildlife Sanctuary	Re-notified draft proposal
	Himachal	Kibber Wildlife Sanctuary	Re-notified draft proposal

	Pradesh		
	Haryana	Sukhna Wildlife Sanctuary	Proposal at pre-Draft stage
	Punjab	Sukhna Wildlife Sanctuary	Proposal at pre-Draft stage
	Rajasthan	Mukundra Hills Tiger Reserve Sanctuary	Draft proposal

4. The representatives of respective State Governments presented their ESZ proposal for consideration of the Expert Committee. State-wise discussions are summarized below;

MAHARASHTRA

4.1 Katepurna Wildlife Sanctuary, Maharashtra

Shri Vivek Khandekar, CCF, Forest Department, Govt. of Maharashtra, made a presentation on ESZ proposal. It was informed that the draft ESZ notification of Katepurna Wildlife Sanctuary was published on 6th March, 2020. The salient features of the draft Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ) are as follows:

- Area of PA : 73.69 sq km
- Proposed ESZ area : 41.81 sq km
- Proposed Extent : zero to 2.50 kilometre

The Katepurna Wildlife Sanctuary is situated in the Akola and Washim districts of Maharashtra and it has high faunal and floral diversity. Hanuman langur, jungle cat, panther, common mongoose, striped hyena, wolf, wild boar and sloth bear are the major fauna available in the protected area. Zero extent of ESZ has been proposed towards Northern side of PA, where retaining wall and river side of Katepurna dam exist, and also at the location of western side where Akola–Mangrulpir and Devdari - Dhanora road is passing; while zero on south-eastern side of PA is due to existence of Pur village.

It was informed that no comments/objections were received from the

stakeholders/ public on the draft notification.

The experts suggested that the forest patches appearing in the Eastern and Western part boundary of the Sanctuary could also be included in the proposed ESZ. The Committee subsequently asked the State Government to explore the area towards Eastern and Western side of the PA for inclusion in ESZ, wherever feasible, and submit the proposal with revised maps, geo-coordinates, villages list falling in PA as well as ESZ etc. within 15 days to the Ministry.

Based on the presentation made and discussions held, the committee recommended for finalization of the draft Notification. The State Government should submit the above requisite information within 15 days.

4.2 Pranhita Wildlife Sanctuary, Maharashtra

Mr. Chavan Praveen, CCF,(Territorial), Amravati, Forest Department, Govt. of Maharashtra made a presentation on ESZ proposal of Pranhita Wildlife Sanctuary. The draft ESZ notification of proposal was published on 6th February, 2020. The salient features of the draft Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ) are as follows:

Area of PA : 420.0 sq km
Proposed ESZ area : 532.10 sq km
Proposed Extent : zero to 6.300 kilometre

It was informed that Pranhita Wildlife Sanctuary is located in Gadchiroli district of Maharashtra and it provides natural wildlife corridor between Indravati Tiger Reserve of Chhattisgarh State and Pranhita Wildlife Sanctuary in Telangana State. The zero extent of Eco-Sensitive Zone in South-Western side of the PA is due to border with Telangana and Pranhita River, while zero at Eastern boundary is due to Kolamakka Conservation Reserve.

It was informed that no comments/objections were received from the

stakeholders/ public on the draft Notification.

In view of the possibility of connecting wildlife corridors, the Expert Members suggested to include the areas toward the route of Chandrapur forest which is in vicinity of PA in the ESZ. The representative of the State apprehended about ESZ extent, which was proposed upto 2 km in North- Western side of the Sanctuary and overall maximum extent provided upto 6.3 km which is adequate from management point of view. In this regard, the Committee suggested to provide summary note related to ESZ extent vis-à-vis corridor for tiger reserve in consultation with NTCA. In this regard, NTCA may authenticate the note at the earliest. The requisite information has been received from the State Government and sent to NTCA.

Based on the presentation made and discussions held, the committee recommended for finalization of the draft Notification. The NTCA may authenticate/examine the note, as desired by the Committee.

4.3 Chaparala Wildlife Sanctuary, Maharashtra

Shri Pravin D. Chavan, Chief Conservator of Forests (Territorial), Amravati, Government of Maharashtra made a presentation on the ESZ proposal. It was mentioned that the draft ESZ notification of Chaparala Wildlife Sanctuary was published on 13th January, 2020. The salient features of the draft Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ) are as follows:

Area of PA : 134.78 sq km
Proposed ESZ area : 166.555 sq km
Proposed Extent : zero to 5.00 kilometre

It was informed that Chaparala Wildlife Sanctuary recorded the high diversity of fauna and flora which includes Indian giant squirrel, leopard, blue bull, cheetal, sambhar, wild boar, langoor and mongoose, etc. The zero extent of ESZ has been proposed only

at two locations on the North-Western side of the Sanctuary where agricultural areas exists.

It was informed that no comments/objections were received from the stakeholders/ public on the draft.

It was pointed out that as per the published draft Notification, the area of PA is 134.78 sq km, while it was 133.23 sq km in the presentation of the State Government. In view of the ambiguity of PA's area, the Committee asked the State to verify and submit the published Gazette Notification of State for the Chaparala Wildlife Sanctuary. The requisite Gazette Notification has been received from the State.

Based on the presentation made and discussions held, the committee recommended for finalization of the draft notification.

4.4 Tamhini Wildlife Sanctuary, Maharashtra

Shri. Vivek Khandekar, CCF Pune, Govt. of Maharashtra made a presentation on ESZ proposal. It was mentioned that the draft notification of Tamhini Wildlife Sanctuary was re-published on 28th January, 2020. The salient features of ESZ draft of Tamhini Wildlife Sanctuary is given as:

Area of PA : 49.62 sq km
Proposed ESZ area : 52.85 sq km
Proposed Extent : 0.1Km to 3.5 Kms

It was informed that the Sanctuary is located in Pune and Raigad districts of Maharashtra and it supports major wildlife such as leopard, jungle cat, small Indian civet, striped hyena, barking deer, etc.

The representative of the State expressed their apprehensions on the proposed ESZ area, which is also covered under the Western Ghats Eco Sensitive Area (ESA), as

per Kasturirangan Report. The Expert Committee observed that ESZs are declared around the protected areas and it may not be diluted with the elements of Western Ghats ESA. Moreover, it would have been a good idea to include more area as per the Kasturirangan Report since the area has been identified as Eco-Fragile as per the report.

The State Government mentioned that the proposal has been revised and the area of ESZ has been increased by three fold from the previous draft (expired). It was also mentioned that numerous comments/objections and suggestions were received from public/stakeholders in response to the draft Notification which were duly considered.

The Committee further suggested to include water bodies situated in the Northern side of the Sanctuary, as the aquatic environment contiguous with the protected area would be favorable to the wildlife. The representative of the State revealed that the water body is in the private land and owned by Tata Power Co. Ltd. which may affect its further extension. The experts suggested the State Government to convince Tata Power Co. Ltd. to include water body under ESZ with dam, as the operation of these may not be affected by the Notification. The committee suggested to submit revised maps after inclusion of water bodies in consultation with Tata Power Co. Ltd. along with necessary changes in ESZ boundary description and geo-coordinates etc.

Based on the presentation made and discussions held, the committee recommended for the finalization of the draft notification. The State may also explore the feasibility of including private land within 10 days so that notification shall be issued based on draft.

HIMACHAL PRADESH

4.5 Manali Bird Sanctuary, Himachal Pradesh

Shri. R.K. Gupta, PCCF, Forest Department, Govt. of Himachal Pradesh made

a presentation on the proposal. It was informed that the draft notification of the Manali Bird Sanctuary was re-notified on 6th March, 2020. The salient features of the ESZ are given below:

Area of PA : 29.00 sq km
Proposed ESZ area : 15.68 sq km
Proposed Extent : 120 metres to 1.8 kilometre

The representative of the state explained that the Manali Bird Sanctuary act as important catchment area for the tributaries of Beas River and it also harbors important rare & endangered wild animals, which include leopard, leopard cat, jungle cat, Himalayan civet, Himalayan yellow throated marten, black bear and porcupine, etc.

Considering the richness and diversity of fauna in the Sanctuary, the Chairman enquired the adequacy of the proposed ESZ area from management point of view. The expert further urged the State to explore the forest area observed towards South Eastern side of the PA for inclusion in the ESZ. The State however demonstrated that the proposed area was appended after convincing numerous public resistances and therefore further extension of ESZ could take longer time. Further, the Hon'ble, NGT has also instructed for expediting the finalization of the draft Notification

No comments were received from the stakeholders/public in the revised proposal. Upon query, the State has stated that occurrence of human-wildlife conflict has not been reported in past in the region. The experts suggested to re-validate the proposed ESZ extent and submit the justification as the revised extent cited by State is varying drastically from the previous draft (expired),however, area of ESZ has remain unchanged . Hence, State was requested to re-calculating the area of ESZ.

Based on the presentation made and discussions held, the committee recommended for the finalization of the draft notification. The State shall also submit justification on ESZ extent and its area mentioned above.

4.6 Kugti Wildlife Sanctuary Himachal Pradesh

Shri. R.K. Gupta, PCCF, Forest Department, Govt. of Himachal Pradesh made a presentation on the proposal. The draft re-notification of the proposal was published on 6th March, 2020. The salient features of the draft Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ) are as follows:

Area of PA	:	405.49 sq. km
Proposed ESZ area	:	38.67 sq. km
Proposed Extent	:	zero to 1.0 kilometre

It was mentioned that the Kugti Wildlife Sanctuary is located in Chamba District of Himachal Pradesh. The Sanctuary is an ideal habitat for Himalayan brown bear, Himalayan blue sheep, goral, Asiatic black bear, Himalayan Ibex, Himalayan Tahr, leopard, red fox, etc.

The zero extent of Eco-Sensitive Zone on South-Eastern side is due to adjoining Dhauladhar Wildlife Sanctuary, while the North-Western boundary is bordering with Tundah Wildlife Sanctuary. Northern side is district boundary of Lahual – Spiti and due to exhibiting snow bound mountains with glaciers and inaccessible terrains, zero ESZ has been proposed.

No comments were received from the stakeholders/public in the revised proposal.

Considering the available fauna including snow leopard, the Committee urged the State to include more area of snow bound landscape in the Northern boundary of the Sanctuary. The Committee thereafter suggested to revise the Northern boundary of the ESZ and submit the requisite revision within 10 days.

Based on the presentation made and discussions held, the Committee recommended for finalization of the draft notification. The State Government should submit the above requisite information within 10 days.

4.7 Kalatop-Khajjiar Sanctuary, Himachal Pradesh

Shri. R.K. Gupta, PCCF, Forest Department, Govt. of Himachal Pradesh made a presentation on the proposal. The draft re-notification of the proposal was published on 6th March, 2020. The salient features of the draft Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ) are as follows:

Area of PA	:	17.17 sq. km
Proposed ESZ area	:	9.95 sq. km
Proposed Extent	:	500 metres uniform

It was informed that the Sanctuary is primarily a dense forests consisting of mature mixed fir, spruce and deodar with some oak and rhododendron located in Chamba district of Himachal Pradesh. The area supports diverse fauna including endangered Musk deer and Chamba sacred langur and other animals *viz*, leopard, black bear, goral, barking deer, Himalayan weasel, Himalayan red fox, etc.

The Expert Committee enquired about the adequacy of proposed 500 m ESZ extent in view of available fauna like leopard and other endangered species. The State representative mentioned that the proposed area is adequate for the existing fauna as no human-wildlife conflict has been reported in the area. No comments were received from the stakeholders/public in the revised proposal. The committee thereafter asked the State to provide a note on rationalization of ESZ extent with respect to its biodiversity value.

Based on the presentation made and discussions held, the Committee recommended the draft notification for finalization. The State shall also submit justification on rationalization of ESZ extent with respect to its biodiversity value.

4.8 Kibber Wildlife Sanctuary, Himachal

Shri. R.K. Gupta, PCCF, Forest Department, Govt. of Himachal Pradesh made a presentation on the proposal. The draft re-notification of the proposal was published on 20th March, 2020. The salient features of the draft Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ) are as follows:

Area of PA	:	2220.12 sq. km
Proposed ESZ area	:	310.0 sq. km
Proposed Extent	:	zero to 0.160 kilometres

The representative of the State informed that the Sanctuary is considered as an important corridor with Changthang Wildlife Sanctuary of Ladakh in North-Eastern boundaries. The major fauna recorded from the Sanctuary are snow leopard, Himalayan Ibex, blue sheep, red fox, Himalayan wolf, etc. The area of Eco-Sensitive Zone was proposed mainly on Western and South Western sides of PA, while zero extent of ESZ in remaining directions is due to existence of permafrost, inaccessible landscapes. The State mentioned that the area is free from habitation and biotic pressure. No comments were received from the stakeholders/public on the revised proposal.

The committee advised the state to explore and include the additional ESZ area as observed from map in the Northern, North-Eastern, Eastern and South-Eastern and Western sides of the PA. The Chairman asked the state to submit the revised draft along with the requisite changes such as maps, area statement, geo-coordinates etc. within 15 days to the Ministry.

Based on the presentation made and discussions held, the Committee decided to reconsider the proposal on receipt of revised information..

4.9. Sukhna Wildlife Sanctuary, Haryana

Shri. M.L. Rajvanshi CCF (Wildlife), Panchkula, Forest Department, Govt. of

Haryana informed that ESZ proposal for Sukhna Wildlife Sanctuary towards Haryana is being prepared by the Department and currently they are seeking inputs from other Departments. It was also mentioned that the Government of Haryana is proposing 1.0 to 1.5 kilometres ESZ extent around the Shukna Wildlife Sanctuary (Haryana part) as per the directions of Hon'ble High Court of Punjab and Haryana in CWP No.18253 of 2009 & other connected petitions issued *vide* order dated 2nd March 2020.

Based on the presentation made and discussions held, the Committee impressed upon the Government of Haryana for submission of revised ESZ proposal as per the directions of Hon'ble High Court at Haryana and Punjab for Sukhna Wildlife Sanctuary, Haryana within 15 days for consideration of the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change.

4.10. Sukhna Wildlife Sanctuary, Punjab

Shri Basanta Raj Kumar, CCF, Forest Department, Govt. of Punjab, mentioned that the Eco-Sensitive Zone proposal for Sukhna Wildlife Sanctuary Punjab was submitted to MoEFCC in January, 2020 for 100 meters ESZ extent around the protected area. The State Government informed that they want to retain the same extent; therefore, the State Govt. intend to file an appeal in Hon'ble Supreme Court against the order passed by Hon'ble High Court of Punjab and Haryana in CWP No.18253 of 2009 & other connected petitions given *vide* order dated 2nd March 2020.

The Committee was unanimously of the view that till final outcome expected from appeal being made by the State, the Government of Punjab should provide revised proposal of the Eco-Sensitive Zone with minimum extent of 1.0 km following the directions of Hon'ble High Court at Haryana and Punjab by 5th July 2020 so that the Ministry could comply with the Orders of the Hon'ble Court.

Based on the presentation made and discussions held, the Committee asked the Government of Punjab to submit the geo-coordinate and names of villages and maps with minimum 1.0 km of ESZ extent to ensure safeguarding of the protected area, Sukhna Wetland and to comply with the direction of Hon'ble Court by 5th July, 2020.

4.11. Mukundra Hills Tiger Reserve Sanctuary, Rajasthan

The proposal was earlier considered during the 40th meeting of the ESZ Expert Committee held in 16th March 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 Committee in 40th ESZ Expert Committee requested the State Government to complete the public consultation within two months' period and further advised to take concurrence of NTCA on de-lination of the boundaries of Mukundra Hills Tiger Reserve so that ESZ Notification could be finalized in line with NTCA's guidelines.

Sh. Arindam Tomar, PCCF, Rajasthan updated the Committee about the current position of the above proposal. State Government mentioned that they are in a process of holding the public consultation as numbers of representations were received from villagers for reducing the ESZ area.

The Committee was of the view that the proposed ESZ is bare minimum and there is no scope of further reduction in extent. Some experts even pointed out that at one location, it is 300 m from the core; it should be at least one km. On asking about human wildlife conflict Sh. Tomar mentioned that the cases of conflict with sloth bear have been reported, but not with tiger. Since it is a very new Tiger Reserve, the dynamic

of Tiger population has to be seen in future.

The Committee observed that in the last ESZ Committee meeting held on 16th March 2020, additional two months' time was granted to State to complete the public consultation apart from the prescribed time period (60 days) since the issue of draft Notification i.e on 10.01.2020. However, public consultation is still reported to be incomplete by the State. The Committee further noted that in the first plan, the proposal with minimal extent and ESZ area was received from the State Government and it would be inappropriate to further reduce the ESZ area. The proposal has already been examined by NTCA. Therefore, in view of these, no further justification is warranted to keep the proposal under abeyance

Based on the presentation made and discussions held, the Committee recommended the proposal.

Day 2: (24 June, 2020)

In day 2 of the meeting, the Chairman welcomed the members and participants from States of Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Uttarakhand. After brief introduction, Chairman invited the States to present their proposal as per Agenda.

5. Following 6 ESZ proposals and 1 ZMPs as listed in the Agenda were considered for discussion on Day 2.

S. N.	State/UT	Protected Area	Status
	Andhra Pradesh	Nagarjunasagar - Srisaillam Tiger Reserve	Draft proposal
	Assam	Nameri Tiger Reserve and Sonai- Rupai	Re-notified draft

		Wildlife Sanctuary	proposal
Assam		Kaziranga National Park	Revised draft proposal
Madhya Pradesh		Sailana Wildlife Sanctuary	Re-notified draft proposal
Tamil Nadu		Kanyakumari Wildlife Sanctuary	Re-notified draft proposal
West Bengal		Mahananda Wildlife Sanctuary	Draft proposal
Uttarakhand		Zonal Master Plan for Baghirathi Eco-sensitive Area	ZMP under approval stage

The representatives of respective State Governments presented their proposals for consideration of the Expert Committee. State-wise discussions held on the proposal are as under;

ANDHRA PRADESH

5.1. Nagarjunasagar - Srisailam Tiger Reserve, Andhra Pradesh

Shri Rahul Pandey, PCCF (HoFF) & Chief Wildlife Warden, Forest Department, Govt. of Andhra Pradesh, made a presentation. The draft ESZ notification was published on 11th February 2020. The silent features of the Eco-sensitive Zone are as follows:

Area of PA : 3727.82 sq km
Proposed ESZ area : 2149.68 sq km
Proposed Extent : 0 (zero) to 5.0 kilometres

It was informed that Nagarjuna sagar-Srisailam Tiger Reserve comprises two Wildlife Sanctuaries namely Rajiv Gandhi and Gundla Brahmeswaram, which are spread over Prakasam, Kurnool and Guntur Districts of Andhra Pradesh. After

bifurcation of States, Nagarjunasagar-Srisaïlam Tiger Reserve has also been divided into two halves separated by river Krishna. The Southern side of river is Nagarjun sagar - Srisaïlam Tiger Reserve in Andhra Pradesh and the Northern side is Amrabad Tiger Reserve in Telangana State.

The representative of the State informed that zero extent of Eco-sensitive Zone was due to existence of Krishna River and interstate borders with Telangana. It was also intimated that the extent has been erroneously quoted as zero to 5 Km in draft notification and this may be considered rectified **as zero to 26 kilometres**. This is due to error in area calculation while submitting the proposal. There have no changes in area and geo-coordinates of ESZ.

During the meeting, DIG, NTCA informed that while finalizing the notification, State has considered all the suggestions of NTCA, except keeping uniform 1 kilometre additional ESZ cushion all around the buffer zone of the Tiger Reserve which has been mandated by the Tiger Authority. In response, State Government clarified that 1 kilometre uniform cushion has been considered except at two locations where expansion is expected due to establishment of township and agriculture field. After detailed discussion, the Committee asked the State to submit justification for proposing lesser cushion in such points within 15 days. The Committee also pointed out that the ESZ shall be separate entities outside the boundary of buffer zone of Tiger Reserve. State replied that the extent will change, accordingly. No comments/objections has so far been received from the stakeholders/public on the draft proposal.

Based on the presentation made and discussions held, the Committee recommended for the finalization of the draft notification. The State Governemnt should submit the appropriate justification for lesser cushion (required more than 1 km) of ESZ and re-calculate the extent excluding the buffer zone within 15 days.

ASSAM

5.2. Nameri Tiger Reserve and Sonai- Rupai Wildlife Sanctuary, Assam

Shri. M K Yadava, Forest Department, Govt. of Assam made a presentation on the proposal. It was informed that the draft notification was published on 31.01.2019. The salient features of the draft Eco-sensitive Zone (ESZ) are as follows:

Area of PA	: 564.00 sq. km (<i>344 sq km for Nameri TR & 220 sq km for SonaiRupai WLS</i>)
Proposed ESZ area	: 1314.00 sq. km
Proposed Extent	: 0 (zero) to 22.7 km

The representative of the State mentioned that Nameri Tiger Reserve, Sonai-Rupai Wildlife Sanctuary are located in Sonitpur district and partly in Udalguri district of Assam. It was stated that zero extent of Eco-sensitive Zone is due to inter-state boundary with Arunachal Pradesh at Northern side of the Protected Area. No comments were received from the stakeholders/public in the revised proposal.

On examination of maps, the Expert members suggested to include Balipara and other adjoining area located in southern part of the PA under ESZ. It was added that the riverine stretch starting from the Pakke Tiger Reserve to Udmari could also be included in the ESZ. In response, the representative of the State informed that ESZ area has already been revised as per recommendation of Expert Committee held during the 35th meeting and it is increased significantly in the present revised notification both in terms of area and extent.

In this context, the Chairman stated that in last discussions, State had agreed to prepare a concept note/conservation plan, highlighting the conservation strategies of the riverine corridor between Kaziranga NP and Nameri TR keeping in view of their ecological significance. However, the Plan is still awaited from the State. It was advised

to address the concerns of Expert Members with submission and implementation of conservation plan by the State. State was advised to furnish the Plan of protecting the riverine stretches within a month.

Based on the presentation made and discussions held, the Committee recommended for finalization of the draft notification. Separately, State shall submit the Conservation Plan on riverine corridor mentioned above.

5.3 Kaziranga National Park, Assam

Shri. M K Yadava, Forest Department, Govt. of Assam gave the detailed presentation on the proposal. It was informed that ESZ proposal for Kaziranga National Park was submitted to Ministry on 28th July 2015. After subsequent meetings and discussions within the Ministry and by the Expert Committee, State was asked to revise the proposal integrating Kaziranga National Park and its adjoining eight (8) PAs. It was referred that in pursuance to the Hon'ble Supreme Court Order dated 12th April, 2019 in WPC 202/1995, mining activities has now restricted in Karbi Anglong Hills, adjoining to Kaziranga National Park and also new constructions has been banned in 9 identified corridors.

The Committee pointed out that in spite of restrictions & ban imposed by Hon'ble Court the present proposal of ESZ for Kaziranga NP has been submitted in isolated form without integrating with eight adjoining PAs. Further, it was observed that the extent of the ESZ in most of locations are almost zero and it is referred as zero to 6.2 Km in the draft notification. The State Govt representative informed that the standalone ESZ proposal of Kaziranga NP is prepared taking into account the observation of Central Empowered Committee (CEC) constituted by Hon'ble Supreme Court.

The silent feature of the proposal is as given below:

Area of PA : 884.43 sq km
Proposed ESZ area : 1294.56 sq km
Proposed Extent : 0 (zero) to 6.2 kilometres

The Committee members' alongwith NTCA insisted for integrated ESZ proposal with eight (8) PAs together with reserved forests as the present proposal may have long term negative impacts on the entire biodiversity of the area and need protection and conservation at this stage only. The Chairman expressed that views of the Expert Committee may suitably apprise to CEC for making proposal meaningful on the said measures.

It was observed that notifying Kaziranga National Park separately shall result in inconsistencies because the ESZ area of one PA may be contiguous with the other PA as such. This shall add to environmental concerns and disputes.

Based on the presentation made and discussions held, the Committee asked the State Government to formulate integrated proposal including all the eight. The revised proposal should be sent to Wildlife division of MoEF&CC and also seek concurrence of NTCA.

MADHYA PRADESH

5.4. Sailana Wildlife Sanctuary, Madhya Pradesh

The Conservator of Forest, Ratlam, Forest Department, Government of Madhya Pradesh made a presentation. It was informed that the draft ESZ notification for Sailana Wildlife Sanctuary was re-published on 20th March, 2020. The salient features of the draft Eco-sensitive Zone (ESZ) are as follows:

Area of PA : 12.96 sq km

Proposed ESZ area : 3.76 sq km

Proposed Extent : 100 m to 2.00 kilometre

It was mentioned that the protected area is comprised of three parts namely Amba, Sherpur, and Shikarwadi private agriculture and grazing land. The proposed ESZ has covered almost all the reserved forest and other adjoining areas after strong persuasion of local villagers. The Committee suggested to add more green patches ; however, State responded that maximum area of reserve forest has already been included. It was informed that no comments/objections were received from the stakeholders/public on the draft.

The representative of the State further sought few changes in the composition of monitoring committee as given in the draft. The State Govt was asked to submit the specific request in written to the Ministry within 15 days which shall be considered in final notification.

Based on the presentation made and discussions held, the Committee recommended for finalization of the draft.

WEST BENGAL

5.5 Mahananda Wildlife Sanctuary, West Bengal

Sri N.V. Raja Sekhar, Additional PCCF, Wildlife, West Bengal made a presentation on the ESZ proposal. The ESZ draft notification of the Mahananda Wildlife Sanctuary was published on 11th December 2019. The salient features of the draft Eco-sensitive Zone (ESZ) are as follows:

Area of PA : 161.17 sq km

Proposed ESZ area : 405.28 sq km

Proposed Extent : 5.00 kilometre uniform

It was stated that Mahananda Sanctuary is located in the southern part of Darjeeling district in West Bengal. The Sanctuary is an important wildlife corridor for

Teesta and Mechi River of North Bengal and also sustaining population of wild elephants harbouring gaur, sambar, cheetal, and many other herbivores. No comments were received from the stakeholders/public in the revised proposal.

With reference to suggestion of the Committee for integrated proposal, representative of the State informed that no other protected areas exists in the surrounding or border with Mahananda Sanctuary and the proposed ESZ includes most of the adjoining reserve forest. Therefore, uniform extent of 5 kilometres all around the boundary of the PA has been proposed.

Based on the presentation made and discussions held, the Committee recommended for the finalization of the draft notification.

TAMIL NADU

5.6 Kanyakumari Wildlife Sanctuary, Tamil Nadu

ShriThiru. S. Yuvaraj, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests & Chief Wildlife Warden, Forest Department, Govt. of Tamil Nadu made a presentation. The draft notification of the Eco-sensitive Zone was re-published on 20th February 2020. The important features of the re-notified draft as below:

Area of PA	:	402.395 sq km
Proposed ESZ area	:	117.7772 sq km
Proposed Extent	:	Zero to 3.0 kilometre

State informed that the Sanctuary has unique landscape of Southern Western Ghats that formed out of continental drift. The area constitutes a larger contiguous landscape for tiger, elephant, Indian gaur, sloth bear, leopard and large population of Nilgiri Tahr. The zero extent of Eco-sensitive in Northern, North-Eastern and Eastern side of the PA is due to Kalakkad Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve. West and North-West is border with Neyyar WLS of Kerala and in the South is due to Poigaimalai Reserve

Forest.

It was also mentioned that numerous comments/objections and suggestions received from individuals and other stakeholders in response to the draft Notification. All concerns/objections have been reported to be addressed by State. With regards to query by the Chairman on man-wildlife conflicts, the representative of the State informed that villagers are occasionally facing crops damages. It was further revealed that the re-notified proposal is outcome of comprehensive reworking with request to the ground reality and testimony. The representative of Wildlife division present in meeting also opined that given the demographic & geographic profile, the proposed extent of ESZ appears optimal.

Based on the presentation made and discussions held, the Committee recommended for the finalization of the draft notification.

UTTARAKHAND

5.7 Zonal Master Plan of Baghirathi Ecologically sensitive Zone (BESZ)

Shri. Anand Bardhan, Principal Secy., Forest & Environment, Govt. of Uttarakhand briefed about the Baghirathi Eco-sensitive Zone (BESZ). While explaining the background of the matter, it was mentioned that in 2011, an extent of 100 meter on both sides of the Bhagirathi River covering an area of 40 sq km approx. was considered as Eco-sensitive Area. Subsequently, the final notification of the Baghirathi Eco - sensitive Area was issued on 18th December 2012 covering an ESZ area of 4179.55 sq. kms which includes 89 villages. Out of total ESZ area of 4179.55 Sq km, about 4106.9 Sq.km (98.27%) area has been covered in reserved forest and/or protected area (Gangotri Wildlife sanctuary). While remaining ESZ area is under van panchayat i.e. 729.78 hectares. The representatives of the State further deliberated the concerns arising on the BESZ notification and chronological development of ZMP is summarized below:

- a. The notified areas are mostly the National Park, reserve forests, protected forests

which are being regulated under existing Acts/Rules of Forests & Wildlife. The Hon'ble National Green Tribunal (NGT) O.A. 151/2013 of Legal Aid Committee had directed the State Government to implement the notification of BSEZ in letter and spirit. Preparation of Zonal Master Plan is mandated under Baghirathi Ecologically sensitive Zone's Notification.

- b. The draft Zonal Master Plan (ZMP) for Baghirathi Ecologically sensitive Zone (BESZ) submitted by the State Government was discussed during the 21st meeting of the Expert Committee on ESZ held on 31st August 2016. However, the ZMP could not approved by MoEF&CC as most of provisions given in ESZ Notification were not complied in the proposed ZMP.
- c. Separately, as per the direction of the Hon'ble NGT in its order dated 26th July, 2017, a Committee headed by Addl Chief Secretary, Environment and Forest, Government of Uttarakhand comprising eminent experts & members from reputed intuitions (IITs), was constituted to prepare the ZMP and submit a report for approval. The Committee further revised the ZMP and submitted to MoEF& CC by incorporating certain additional provisions in the Notification for exemptions of certain activities. Subsequently, the BESZ Notification was amended by the MoEF& CC on 16th April 2018 with regard to developmental activities in view of slope/stabilization of eco-fragile area.
- d. In the meantime, in Civil Appeal before Hon'ble Supreme Court (Keshar Singh & Ors Vs UOi & Ors), the Hon'ble Supreme Court ordered in the matter that;

"We find that while constituting the aforesaid Committee, the NGT in the impugned order had also given the direction that any such plan that would be prepared by the Committee shall be submitted for approval by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change/Ministry of Water Resources and the report of the Committee shall also be placed before the NGT. Thus, the plan has to be approved by the Ministry of

Environment, Forest and Climate Change as well as the Ministry of Water Resources”.

- e. The draft ZMP submitted by the State Government incorporating amendments/recommendations of the aforesaid Committee (constituted by Hon'ble NGT) was discussed during the 34th meeting of the Expert Committee on ESZ held on 06th March 2019. During the meeting, Committee deferred the proposal for want of compliances/approval from MoWR, RD & GR on the issues related water management in catchment area Ministry of Jal Shakti in March 2020 has scrutinised the ZMP and concurred.

The Principle Secretary, Environment & Forest informed that State is facing hardship in planning and implementation of activities in the area due to pending approval of ZMP for Baghirathi Ecologically sensitive Zone (BESZ) notification. State requested for allowing the mining activities to meet the requirement of local development including road construction. The Chairman opined that in view of flood requirement in the area, only surface clearance of stones could be considered. Further, taking into account of the concerns raised by BRO on National Security as highlighted by state, it was advised that the organization may submit memos to relevant Monitoring Authority signifying the crucial actions to be taken up where impediment activities exists due to non-approval of ZMP.

The Expert Committee of ESZ noted that in preparation of ZMP, there was involvement of experts at Central level (MoJal Shakti) as well as in the State level. However, it was emphasized that features of ZMP has to be seen in light of ESZ notification wherein prime focus has been given to conservation and protection of biodiversity of entire catchment area which supports the Bhagirathi riverine eco-system

including wildlife of the area. Therefore, multiple features of ZMP have to be seen in commensurate with the provisions of ESZ notification for Bhagirathi River.

Based on the presentation made and discussions held, Committee recommended the approval of the ZMP subject to following Conditions for strict compliance by the State Government:

- i. State has to strictly comply the provisions of ESZ notification for Bhagirathi river specifically given under Prohibited and regulated activities.
- ii. State has to fulfil and comply the suggested points and remarks made by Department of WR, RD&GR, Jal Shakti including maintaining the e-flow of the Bhagirathi River.
- iii. Regarding demarcating all the existing village settlements, types & kinds of forests, agricultural areas, fertile lands, green areas, horticultural areas, orchards, lakes, natural heritage sites and water bodies, the clearer map on demarcation of all these features need to be generated so called as Base Map. Further, as agreed by Govt of Uttarakhand as given in the concurrence report of MoJal Shakti, the Geo-morphological & Geological map shall be drawn at micro level planning.
- iv. Regarding conservation, protection and management of natural springs, water bodies including drying up springs, the ZMP shall be extended to prepare the micro level planning, which shall demarcate the catchment area of each stream in catchment of Bhagirathi river, particularly dried up stream. A dedicated micro level plan should also be drawn for rejuvenation of streams and it shall become part of ZMP.
- v. A comprehensive long term plan for conservation on natural boundaries of river bank needs to be drawn by State apart from retaining wall construction and in view of disaster management situation.
- vi. With regard tourism activities, ZMP shall be extended for finalization of

comprehensive long term Eco-Tourism Master Plan and activities shall not be beyond the carrying capacity of catchment area. Tourism Master Plan shall be prepared as per the guidelines of Ministry of Tourism, and shall be followed strictly .In this regard, State Government shall submit its concurrence to MoEF&CC on the Eco-Tourism Master Plan, which is meeting the requirement of ESZ notification as well as fulfilling the carrying capacity of tourist/pilgrims.

vii.No expansion/activities shall be performed above and beyond the carrying capacity of the catchment area.

6. Based on the discussion on the draft, re-draft and ZMP of ESZ / ESA notification as well as deliberation on the comments/suggestion/objection received from stakeholders/ public/ MoWR, RD&GR, the Expert Committee recommended the following:

Day-1

S. No.	Protected Area	State	Recommendation of Expert Committee
1. .	Katepurna Wildlife Sanctuary	Maharashtra	Recommended for finalization of draft notification subject to submission of the revision suggested.
2. .	Pranhita Wildlife Sanctuary	Maharashtra	Recommended for finalization of the draft provided NTCA may authenticate/examine the note by state.
3. .	Chaparala Wildlife Sanctuary	Maharashtra	Recommended for finalization of the draft.
4. .	Tamhini Wildlife Sanctuary	Maharashtra	Recommended for finalization of the draft notification.
5. .	Manali Bird Sanctuary	Himachal Pradesh	Recommended for finalization of the draft provided information submitted by state.
6. .	Kugti Sanctuary Wildlife Sanctuary	Himachal Pradesh	Recommended for finalization of the draft notification subject to submission of revised proposal.
7. .	Kalatop-Khajjjar Wildlife Sanctuary	Himachal Pradesh	Recommended for finalization of the draft notification provided submission of the justification on ESZ extent by state.
8. .	Kibber Wildlife Sanctuary	Himachal Pradesh	Recommended for submission of the revised proposal.
9. .	Sukhna Wildlife	Haryana	Recommended for the submission of

	Sanctuary		revised proposal.
10..	Sukhna Wildlife Sanctuary	Punjab	Recommended for submission of the revised proposal.
11..	Mukundra Hills Tiger Reserve Sanctuary	Rajasthan	Recommended for finalization of draft notification. .

Day-2

S. No.	Protected Area	State	Recommendation of Expert Committee
1. .	Nagarjunasagar - Srisaillam Tiger Reserve	Andhra Pradesh	Recommended for the finalization of the draft notification subject to submission of appropriate justification for lesser cushion (required >1 km) of ESZ at two points and re-calculation of the extent excluding the buffer zone.
2. .	Nameri Tiger Reserve and Sonai- Rupai Wildlife Sanctuary	Assam	Recommended for finalization of draft notification.
3. .	Kaziranga National Park	Assam	Deferred. Integrated revised proposal to be re-submitted.
4. .	Sailana Wildlife Sanctuary	Madhya Pradesh	Recommended for finalization of the draft notification.
5. .	Kanyakumari Wildlife Sanctuary	Tamil Nadu	Recommended for finalization of the draft.
6. .	Mahananda Wildlife Sanctuary	West Bengal	Recommended for finalization of the draft.
7. .	Zonal Master Plan for Baghirathi Eco-sensitive Area	Uttarakhand	Recommended for approval of the Zonal Master Plan of BESZ subject to conditions to be fulfilled by the State Govt.

6. The meeting ended with vote of thanks to the Chair.

Annexure

List of Participants attended 41th ESZ Expert Committee Meeting for the declaration of Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ) around Protected Areas (Wildlife

**Sanctuaries/National Parks/Tiger Reserves) & Zonal Master Plan (ZMP)
through Video Conferencing (VC) held on 23rd to 24th June, 2020 Under
Chairmanship of Additional Secretary, MoEF&CC**

Members of Expert Committee

1. Shri Ravi Agrawal, Additional Secretary, Chairperson, MoEF&CC.
2. Dr. S. C. Garkoti, Adviser, ESZ-Division, MoEF&CC.
3. Shri. Rakesh Kumar Jagenia, DIG(WL), MOEF&CC.
4. Dr. S.A. Hussain, Scientist 'G', WII, Dehradun.
5. Shri. K. Chandra Sekar, Scientist 'E', GB Pant Institute of Himalayan Environment & Development, Almora.
6. Ms. VishaishUppal, Director, WWF India.
7. Dr. C. Raghunathan, Scientist-E, Zoological Survey of India, Kolkata.
8. Shri. S.K. Singh, Assistant Director, Forest Survey of India, Dehradun
9. Shri. B.B. Saikia, Director, Central Water Commission, New Delhi.
10. Shri. W.B. Paasami, Director, Botanical Survey of India, Kolkata.
11. Dr. K. Shankar, Director, SACON .
12. Shri. NishantVerma, DIGF, NTCA, New Delhi.
13. Shri. HitendraPandya, IIRS/ISRO, Dehradun.
14. Shri. Diwakar Sharma

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, GOI

15. Sh. LalitBokolia, Director (SC-'F'), MoEF& CC.
16. Dr. ShrutiRaiBhardwaj, Additional Director (Sc-E), MoEF&CC
17. Dr. VeenuJoon, Joint Director (SC-'D'), MoEF&CC.
18. DrShaikhomInaotombi Singh (Consultant), MoEF&CC.

Officials of Government of Maharashtra

19. Shri. VivekKhandekar Chief Conservator of Forests, Pune, Govt. of Maharashtra.
20. Shri. M.H Chandragu, Chief Conservator of Forest, Govt. of Maharashtra.
21. ShriPravin D. Chavan, Chief Conservator of Forests (Territorial), Amravati, Government of Maharashtra.

Officials of Government of Himachal Pradesh

22.Principle Chief Conservator Forest, Govt. of Himachal Pradesh.

Officials of Government of Haryana

23.Shri. AlokVerma, CCF, Panchkula, Govt. of Haryana.

Officials of Government of Punjab

24.Shri. Basanta Raj Kumar, CCF, Govt. of Punjab

25.Shri. Kuldip Kumar, IFS, Govt. of Punjab.

Officials of Government of Rajasthan

26.Shri. Arindam Tomar, PCCF, Govt. of Rajasthan
