

F. No. 7-4/2017-NTCA
Government of India
Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
National Tiger Conservation Authority

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Dated the 3rd March, 2017

OFFICE MEMORANDUM

Sub: Summary record of the Chief Wildlife Wardens and Field Directors meeting held on 15.2.2017 and 16.2.2017 at Tagore Hall, SCOPE Complex, New Delhi – reg.

Please find enclosed herewith a copy of the summary record of the meeting of the Chief Wildlife Wardens and Field Directors meeting held on 15.2.2017 and 16.2.2017 at Tagore Hall, SCOPE Complex, New Delhi, for information and necessary action.

This issues with approval of competent authority.



(Dr. Vaibhav C. Mathur)
Assistant Inspector General of Forests (NTCA)

Distribution:

1. All participants of the meeting.
2. All Chief Wildlife Wardens, Tiger Range States.
3. All Field Directors of Tiger Reserves.

Copy for information to:

1. PS to Hon'ble MEF&CC.
2. PPS to Secretary (EF&CC).
3. PPS to DGF & SS, MoEF&CC.
4. PPS to ADG (WL) / ADG (FC), MoEF&CC.
5. PPS to ADG (PT) & MS (NTCA).
6. Regional Offices of NTCA.
7. The ASG, Global Tiger Forum, New Delhi.

Summary record of the Chief Wildlife Wardens and Field Directors meeting held on 15.2.2017 and 16.2.2017 at Tagore Hall, SCOPE Complex, New Delhi

A meeting of CWLWs of Tiger Range States and Field Directors of Tiger Reserves was held on February 15 & 16, 2017 at Tagore Hall, SCOPE Complex, New Delhi. The inaugural session was presided over by the DGF&SS, Gol, ADG (PT) & MS (NTCA), ADG (WL) and ADG (FC).

In his introductory remarks, Shri Sanjay Kumar, DIG (NTCA) outlined agenda for the meeting stressing on the All India Tiger Estimation (AITE) and Management Effectiveness Evaluation of Tiger Reserves (MEETR) due in 2018.

Shri B.S. Bonal, ADG (PT) & MS (NTCA) in his keynote address highlighted importance of AITE and MEETR and requested participants to gear up for the same. He remarked that being flagship programmes of the Government of India, their outcome shall form the basis of all future policy decisions as Project Tiger makes use of concept of an umbrella species/holistic ecosystem approach. The MS (NTCA) also requested the Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun to rectify all existing bugs and other issues in M-STRIPES and launch it at the earliest. While commenting on the landscape approach to conservation, he also remarked on the need to relocate enclaved settlements through the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Project Tiger which though present in the critical tiger habitat, are not notified as part of the tiger reserve.

Shri Anil Kumar, ADG (FC) highlighted the limited resources forest field formations have to work with. He laid emphasis on frontline staff training through the WII, Dehradun and commented on eco-tourism assuming high end proportions and losing its relevance. He suggested that tiger reserves should fix a target of number of school children visiting as eco-tourists every year.

Dr. S.C. Gairola, ADG (WL), opined that the success of Project Tiger and the NTCA should be replicated in other Protected Areas and forest areas bearing wildlife. He also raised issues relating to pending Eco-sensitive Zone proposals.

Dr. S.S. Negi, DGF & SS congratulated the NTCA on its success and highlighted the fact that how a small focused team can achieve good results. He stressed on the need to adopt a landscape approach to conservation which should lay special emphasis on addressing negative human wildlife interactions which have assumed alarming proportions. He highlighted that, we are data deficient on conflict matters which should be improved upon. Further, tourism in garb of eco-tourism is depleting the quality of forests and special attention is needed to restore primacy of forests over tourism concerns. In the context of CAMPA funds, it was stated categorically, that only those activities which are approved in the Tiger Conservation Plan shall be funded. The DGF also spoke of instituting a monitoring mechanism to oversee implementation of mitigation measures besides assessing genetic diversity of tigers on a periodic basis.

**DAY 1: 15.02.2017
TECHNICAL SESSION-1**

Chair: Jitendra Aggarwal, CWLW, MP
Co-Chair: G.V. Reddy, CWLW, Rajasthan

Theme 1: Wildlife Crime

Smt. Tilotama Verma, Addl. Director, WCCB gave a presentation on wildlife crime wherein, emphasis was laid on constitution of specialized wildlife investigation teams for effective prosecution. Further, the need to create wildlife cells in State Forensic Science Laboratories besides setting up of designated courts in areas with high wildlife crime was stressed upon. She mentioned the need to evolve alternative patrolling thinking and organizing centralized criminal data banks.

Case studies of successful busting of tiger crime networks from the Valmiki, Pench, Pilibhit, North Kheri and Nepal landscapes were presented. In conclusion, the need to sensitize other enforcement agencies and the transport sector was highlighted.

Theme 2: MEETR

Dr. V.B. Mathur, Director, WII, Dehradun, gave an overview of the MEE process which is now adopted by 122 countries. The global IUCN MEE framework has been suitably adapted to tiger reserves in India. 5 clusters shall be formed with a 3 member team for each cluster to conduct the MEETR exercise. He highlighted that major changes to the framework should be avoided as that shall render comparability over years redundant.

Comments by the Chair & Co-Chair

While appreciating the presentations made, the need to have range level crime database was emphasized. The importance of having a Special Task Force like Madhya Pradesh was highlighted by the Chair. The concept of Annual MEE was appreciated and it was suggested that significant points from the Conservation Assured Tiger Standards (CA|TS) be incorporated in MEETR.

TECHNICAL SESSION-2

Chair: Sidhanta Das, CWLW, Odisha

Co-Chair: R.K. Singh, CWLW, Chhattisgarh

Theme 1: All India Tiger Estimation (AITE)

Dr. H.S. Negi, IGF (NTCA) gave an introduction to AITE exercise with emphasis on carrying it out with a focused intent in "Election" mode. He presented the schedule and venue of Training of Trainers programme for AITE besides stressing on effective planning to ensure successful implementation of protocols. He mentioned that it was important for States to communicate a nodal officer for the exercise at the earliest.

Dr. Y.V. Jhala of WII, Dehradun outlined the philosophy behind monitoring tigers. He reiterated the Phase wise approach to estimating tigers describing each phase in detail. He requested all Field Directors to submit the latest Phase IV data in a format which was circulated. A suggestion was given in respect of reducing the grid size from 4 sq.km. to 2 sq.km. wherein one camera out of the pair shall be shifted to a distance of 500 m to 2 km after 20 days, for 5 days, to get more captures and document more diversity. He also highlighted incorporating citizen science for greater transparency.

Comments of the Chair & Co-Chair

It was suggested that a letter from the Hon'ble MEF&CC be sent to all Chief Ministers of tiger reserves in context of retaining officials at tiger reserves till the AITE is completed. A final decision on the revised grid size and citizen science should be taken by the NTCA.

DAY 2: 16.2.2017

TECHNICAL SESSION : 1

Chair : B.J. Hosmath, CWLW, Karnataka

Co-Chair : Raghuram Singh, APCCF (PT), Tamil Nadu

Theme 1 : Tiger Mortality

A presentation was made by Dr. Vaibhav C. Mathur, AIG (NTCA) on trends in tiger mortality in India since, 2012 to date. At the outset, he thanked the States for their co-operation in conducting the special drive to close tiger mortality cases which has resulted in closure of 60% of tiger mortality incidents. Tiger mortality as assessed region-wise, age wise, sex-wise, cause-wise, besides number of adult females dying was presented. Further, tigers, which were eliminated by authorities and those dead due to linear intrusions in tiger inhabited landscapes were talked upon, stressing the need to deal with conflict effectively besides ensuring effective mitigation strategies respectively. It was reiterated to submit tiger mortality details at the earliest with PM report, histopathology report, forensic report, coloured photographs alongwith final report as per SOP of this Authority.

Theme 2 : Finance

Shri P.K. Dash, Addl. Secretary cum Financial Advisor, MoEF&CC highlighted that the dispensation of non plan/plan has been done away with and scheme and non-scheme has been started. There shall be greater emphasis on capital and revenue expenditure and vote on account has been dispensed with. There shall be emphasis on Input Output Outcome Impact (IOOI) and digital monitoring by the PMO. For the latter, he emphasized that satellite imagery by dropping pins of work locations on Google Map shall be required. He requested the NTCA to process APOs fast which should be submitted by field units before March. He advised that Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) should be followed for payments. He concluded that Project Tiger was the flagship scheme and a matter of pride for the Ministry.

Theme 3 : MEE outside Tiger Reserves – CA|TS

Dr. S.P. Yadav, Asst. Secretary General, Global Tiger Forum gave a presentation on Conservation Assured Tiger Standards (CA|TS), its genesis and how CA|TS has been suitably adapted from the Indian example. He described the

Pillars and Elements of CAJTS and how this exercise shall be useful in improving the quality of management interventions, outside tiger reserves.

Theme 4 : Human-Wildlife Interactions – A case study

Shri V.K. Singh, Conservator of Forests, Bareilly presented a case study on human-tiger negative interactions at the Pilibhit Tiger Reserve, Uttar Pradesh, which was successfully dealt with, by constituting sector teams.

Theme 5 : Online APO

A team from NIC presented on online filling of APO through the portal www.cssptapo.nic.in. It was decided that tiger reserve level queries shall be addressed individually by contacting nodal person at the NIC, Shri Kundan whose contact details were provided.

Panel Discussion

A panel discussion on management of tigers outside tiger reserves was held with Dr. Debabrata Swain, IGF (NTCA), Nagpur, Shri D.V.S. Khati, CWLW, Uttarakhand and Dr. H.S. Negi, IG (NTCA) on the panel. The major issue of ensuring reciprocal commitments as is ensured by the Tripartite MOU for tiger reserves was discussed. It was informed that the NTCA is working on modalities to find an optimal solution to this issue. The State of Maharashtra highlighted successful use of the Tiger Conservation Foundation to facilitate management interventions in areas outside tiger reserves, citing the Chandrapur example and requested Uttarakhand to do the same in areas around the Corbett Tiger Reserve. The IG (NTCA) assured that till as such time a mechanism is finalised, the NTCA shall continue supporting such areas through its Grants-in-aid to the extent possible.

IN CONCLUSION

Dr. H.S. Negi, IG (NTCA) summed up important discussions held over two days and requested the States for the following:

- (i) Quick responses to Parliament Questions
- (ii) Reporting of human death due to tigers in a manner similar to tiger death
- (iii) Furnishing documents in respect of village relocation
- (iv) Timely submission of tiger mortality reports
- (v) Ensuring unified control of buffer areas with Field Directors
- (vi) Deputing a nodal officer for AITE 2018
- (vii) Gearing up tiger reserve machinery in 'election' mode for AITE 2018
