

F. No. 15-8/2024-NTCA

भारत सरकार
Government of India
पर्यावरण, वन और जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय
Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change
राष्ट्रीय बाघ संरक्षण प्राधिकरण
National Tiger Conservation Authority

Date: As per esign

OFFICE MEMORANDUM

Sub: Summary record of 26th meeting of the National Tiger Conservation Authority held on December 21, 2024-reg.

The undersigned is directed to enclose herewith a copy of the summary record of the 26th meeting of the National Tiger Conservation Authority, as approved by the Hon'ble MEF&CC/ Chairman NTCA, which was held on December 21, 2024 at the Indira Gandhi National Forest Academy (IGNFA), Dehradun for kind perusal and record.

Encl: As above

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Distribution:

1. All NTCA Members.

Copy to:

1. PS to Hon'ble MEF&CC
2. PS to Hon'ble MoS, EF&CC
3. Sr. PPS to Secretary, EF&CC
4. Sr. PPS to DGF&SS, EF&CC
5. PS to ADG (PT) & MS (NTCA)/ PA to IGF, NTCA.
6. Data Analyst (NTCA), New Delhi for uploading of website.

Minutes of the 26th meeting of National Tiger Conservation Authority held under the Chairmanship of Shri Bhupender Yadav, Hon'ble Minister for Environment, Forest & Climate Change on December 21, 2024 at Platinum Jubilee Hall of the Indira Gandhi National Forest Academy (IGNFA), Dehradun

The 26th meeting of the National Tiger Conservation Authority was held under the Chairmanship of Shri Bhupender Yadav, Minister for Environment, Forest & Climate Change on December 21, 2024 at the Platinum Jubilee Hall of the Indira Gandhi National Forest Academy (IGNFA), Dehradun. The list of participants is at **Annexure-I**.

The Chairman welcomed the participants and initiated the deliberations. The ADG (PT) & MS (NTCA) welcomed the newly appointed members of Parliament of the Hon'ble Lok Sabha to the NTCA.

The Chairman, NTCA released the following publication:

- Cheetah landscape in India 2024: Atlas of Kuno-Gandhisagar Landscape for meta-population management of cheetah in India

Details of agenda wise deliberations are as below:

Agenda Item No. 1

Confirmation of minutes of the 25th meeting and observations received from Members

The minutes of the 25th meeting of the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) were confirmed.

Agenda Item No. 2

Action taken on the decisions of the 25th meeting

The NTCA took note of the action taken on the decisions made during the 25th meeting of the NTCA.

Agenda Item No. 3

Updates on activities of the NTCA

1. Ratification of the decisions of the Technical Committee
 - a. 9th Technical Committee held on September 20, 2024
 - b. 10th Technical Committee held on October 3, 2024
 - c. 11th Technical Committee held on November 14, 2024
2. Update on NBWL proposals

The Authority ratified and took note of the updates.

Agenda Item No. 4

Placing of the Annual Report of the NTCA for the year 2023-24

The NTCA approved the Annual Report of the NTCA for the year 2023-24

Agenda Item No. 5

Any other agenda with permission of the Chair

Process of village rehabilitation from tiger reserves:

The Member Secretary, NTCA informed the following:

- Section 38 V (5) of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 prescribes:
 - That village rehabilitation is a completely voluntary process.
 - That informed consent of the Gram Sabha's, and of the people is obtained prior to undertaking village rehabilitation.
 - That an incentivized resettlement package has been made available since 2012 which was revised in 2021.
- The above provisions have been circulated through the NTCA guidelines from time to time for the benefit of all stakeholders.

The Authority decided to reiterate the same

Inputs from Members:

1. Shri Harish Chandra Meena, Hon'ble MP Lok Sabha

Highlighting the recent human tiger conflict at the Ranthambore Tiger Reserve, the Hon'ble member stressed on the need of making available contingency funds with the Field Director to immediately respond to conflict situations. He informed that the tourism associations are willing to contribute to the cause of tiger conservation provided they have a stake in deciding how this contribution is utilized. Further, adequate coordination between the forest, police and administration needs to be strengthened as the forest department is not the sole stakeholder. He emphasized on the vacancies of frontline staff in tiger reserves which needs to be fulfilled rather than adopting stopgap measures of deploying casual temporary workers such as border home guards.

2. Shri Rajiv Pratap Rudy, Hon'ble MP Lok Sabha

The Hon'ble MP Lok Sabha having been reappointed as member of the Authority for a second term requested updates on the following matters:

- a. Leveraging Corporate Social Responsibility for tiger conservation
- b. Enhancement of budget for the ongoing Project Tiger
- c. Disbursement of financial assistance from the Government of India directly to the

statutory Tiger Conservation Foundation.

- d. Status of daily wage workers in tiger reserves
- e. Publication of a water atlas of tiger reserves
- f. Documentation of forest rest houses in tiger reserves
- g. Latest developments in the management of lantana in tiger reserves
- h. Status of the Special Tiger Protection Force in tiger reserves
- i. Re-ploughing revenues/ income of tiger reserves directly into the Tiger Conservation Foundation
- j. Provision of devices for silent communication between nature guides and eco-tourists in tiger reserves
- k. Evolving a format for monthly reporting of happenings in tiger reserves
- l. Compliance of report of patrolling standards.
- m. Reserve wise status of rescue vehicles
- n. Evolving a curriculum for naturalists in the education system
- o. Conflict arising due to right burdened forests
- p. Mapping of carbon sequestration in tiger reserves
- q. Exploring the possibility of hot air ballooning over tiger reserves apart from framing guidelines for eco-tourism in buffer areas
- r. Status of notification of Kaimur Wildlife Sanctuary as a Tiger Reserve
- s. Status of identification of corridors

3. Shri Ravi Singh

The member informed that habitat quality, especially grasslands are deteriorating in most habitats which has resulted in a cascading effect on ungulates, which have reduced, as well as prey species moving out of jurisdictional limits of tiger reserves thereby enhancing the human-wildlife conflict interface.

He suggested that a small group of experts from different landscapes be engaged to strategize and explore the possibility of formulating landscape specific Standard Operating Procedures to address this issue.

4. Shri S. S. Srivastava

Highlighting the example of South Kheri territorial division near the Dudhwa Tiger

Reserve and Bijnor Social Forestry Division near the Corbett Tiger Reserve, the member informed that there are inadequate technical and financial resources with such divisions to manage tigers dispersing outside tiger reserves.

He suggested that support for tigers outside tiger reserves should be enhanced vis-a-vis provision available in the National Tiger Conservation Authority (Normative Standards for Tourism activities and Project Tiger) Guidelines, 2012.

5. Dr. P. K. Malik

Citing the case of the Sariska and Ranthambore Tiger Reserves in Rajasthan, the member informed that capacity building of staff in both these tiger reserves needs to be stepped up in the context of monitoring tiger populations.

He suggested that owing to Sariska's dispensation of being proximal to the national capital as well as its rising tiger numbers, a committee may be thought of for addressing its unique issues.

6. Ms. Madhu Verma

The member informed that the package for voluntary village rehabilitation may not be appealing to all communities living in core/ critical tiger habitats.

Leveraging carbon markets to further incentivise the available relocation package needs to be thought of. In addition, corporates should be encouraged to invest in the carbon markets so that adequate financial assistance is available for restorative inputs in tiger habitats. The supplemental incomes gained by tiger reserves through carbon markets shall also incentivise communities living around tiger reserve as they are the ones who usually bear the brunt of conservation efforts.

7. Shri Roop Narayan Mandwe

The member suggested that the package for voluntary village relocation should be periodically revised based on inflationary trends so as to make it more attractive. He mentioned that people being relocated out of forest areas are usually reluctant to any change which needs to be factored in while incentivising voluntary village rehabilitation through adequate capacity and skill upgradation.

Giving the example of the newly notified Ratapani Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh, he suggested that retrofitting of existing linear infrastructure should be carried out to avoid tiger/ wildlife casualties.

8. Shri Rajan Sehgal, representative of Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment

Representative of the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment suggested that schemes of their Ministry can be dovetailed with tiger conservation efforts in context of addressing the needs of communities living in fringes of tiger reserves.

9. Ministry of Tribal Affairs

Representative of Ministry of Tribal Affairs informed that they had received several representations from organizations after the letter of the NTCA requesting States to undertake voluntary village relocation was circulated. It was pointed out that due

consultation had been carried out and it was directed that the matter raised in the meeting be duly examined by the Division to check if the issues had been examined earlier or not.

10. Chief Wildlife Warden, Uttarakhand

As there is a sizeable presence of tigers in territorial forests of Uttarakhand, the member suggested that assistance to such divisions outside the protected area network should also be provided apart from expanding the use of M-STriPES in such areas.

11. Chief Wildlife Warden, Tamil Nadu

The member suggested that the domain of the tiger conservation foundations should be strengthened in areas beyond the tiger reserve.

12. Chief Wildlife Warden, Rajasthan

Chief Wildlife Warden, Rajasthan informed the Authority that land in respect of voluntary village rehabilitation is not available as per requirement for which there is a need to enhance the cash package available in the existing policy.

13. Chief Wildlife Warden, Odisha

The member apprised the Authority of the inter-state translocation of tigers from Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve in Maharashtra to the Similipal Tiger Reserve in Odisha.

14. Chief Wildlife Warden, Chhattisgarh

The Chief Wildlife Warden informed members present that people residing in core/critical tiger habitat of tiger reserves in Chhattisgarh are not willing to be relocated on forest land. He suggested that a workshop on best practices in tiger reserves be conducted by the NTCA so that experiential learning takes place. Further, the Ministry should explore the option for providing grants to encourage home stays.

15. Director, Wildlife Preservation, MoEF&CC

The Additional Director General of Forests, Wildlife opined that gaps identified in the Management Effectiveness Evaluation of Tiger Reserves should be addressed through periodic engagement with the States. In addition, the policy agenda of addressing invasive alien species as discussed in the standing committee of the National Board of Wildlife was also relevant for tiger reserves.

16. Director General of Forests & Special Secretary, MoEF&CC

The DGF&SS requested the Authority to expedite notifying the Dibang Wildlife Sanctuary as a Tiger Reserve in consultation with the State of Arunachal Pradesh.

In conclusion, the Vice Chairman, NTCA/ Hon'ble MoS, MoEFCC and the Chairman, NTCA/ HMEFCC remarked the following:

Vice Chairman, NTCA/ Hon'ble MoS, MoEFCC

- i. Vice Chairman, NTCA/ Hon'ble MoS, MEFCC reiterated the need to address the issue of invasive alien species using novel methods such as genetic control.

Notification of Suhelwa Wildlife Sanctuary as a Tiger Reserve should be expedited as the same had received in-principle approval in 2012.

Chairman, NTCA/ HMEFCC

- i. The Chairman, NTCA/ Hon'ble MoEFCC stated that the tiger conservation model of the country is unique which is now being replicated across the world. He informed members present that tiger reserve network has increased to 57 and now occupies nearly 2.5 % of the country's geographical area. The Chairman, NTCA emphasized that voluntary relocation of the villages from core/critical tiger habitats of the tiger reserve, which is backed with statutory provisions, should be taken on priority so that a win-win situation for tiger conservation and inclusive growth can be achieved and people living in side forest areas can be brought into main stream.
- ii. He further remarked that green growth has to be achieved through appropriate mitigatory strategies in buffer and corridor areas while the core/ critical tiger habitat should be made inviolate as per the principles of the tiger management. He emphasized that the needs of forest dwellers and their genuine needs should be taken care of while executing voluntary relocations. He stressed on the potential of tiger reserves as an instrument for development of tier II cities in the country

The meeting ended with a vote of thanks by the Member Secretary, NTCA