



TOP PRIORITY

Government of West Bengal
Directorate of Forests

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No.: 7539/CS/2M-1221/16

Dated: 14.11.2018

To,

All DFOs/DCFs/DFDs.

Sub.: **Meeting.**

Sir,


In continuation of our Notification No. 30-SO/PCCF/18, dated, 01.11.2018, you are requested to make it convenient to attend the said meeting, which will be chaired by the Additional Chief Secretary, Forest Department, Govt. of West Bengal, on the stipulated date, time and venue.

You are also requested to come prepared with all the details according to the Agenda Note.

In this connection, Agenda Note is enclosed for your kind perusal.

This should be given **TOP-MOST PRIORITY**.

Yours faithfully,


(N.K. Pandey, IFS)

Principal Chief Conservator of Forests &
Head of Forest Force, West Bengal


Encl.: As stated above.

No.: 7540/CS/2M-1221/16

Dated: 14.11.2018

Copy forwarded for information & necessary actions to:

1. The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, General, West Bengal.
2. The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) & Chief Wildlife Warden, West Bengal.
3. The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Research, Monitoring & Development, West Bengal.
4. All Staff Officers of PCCF & HoFF's Office, Aranya Bhawan.
5. P.S. to the Additional Chief Secretary, Forest Department.


(N.K. Pandey, IFS)

Principal Chief Conservator of Forests &
Head of Forest Force, West Bengal

1ST INTERACTIVE MEETING WITH DY. CONSERVATORS OF FOREST

AGENDA NOTE

In past few years Forest Department has witnessed major transformation in administrative set up, functioning and up-gradation of technology. Forest Divisions have been restructured and management inputs in Forest Protection, Plantation, Nursery technology, GIS etc. have been designed to match the objectives and targets of various schemes effectively.

The Ranges and Forest Divisions, the public face and pillar of the Forest Dept., are implementing the programmes and managing and administering their territories as per the rules and guidelines. There are four functions of management that span across all organization including Forest Divisions – planning, organizing, leading, and controlling—which may be considered as a process, where each step builds on the others.

It has long been felt that post-transformation of the Forest Divisions, mentioned above, a feedback need be obtained from the field level officers, to assess the pitfalls and gains in management. This provoked the highest administration of Forest Dept to convene the interactive meeting to discuss the following points detailed below:-

1. Status and problems of Forest Protection

Forest Protection, within a limited ambit would include Protection against theft of timber, Poaching, Encroachment, Fire. Two important facets of forest protection are vigilance and legal actions. Vigilance would entail inspection of forest areas including mature plantations, boundaries, Protected Areas, information network, patrolling, which acts as deterrent to wildlife and forest produce related crimes.

Theft of timber *etc.* is a major problem in the North Bengal. To control it effectively therefore, besides proper patrolling, effective network of information is essential. Legal action following raids, seizure of forest / wildlife produce and arrest of offenders proper POR (Prosecution Offence Report) is required to be drawn and submitted to the concerned court on time. Quality of POR and timely submission of the same matters much is forest cases.

Earlier, regular monitoring meeting about the status of forest protection is held by senior level officers. Details of raids conducted, arrest of offenders, seizure of forest produce, seizure of vehicles, POR drawn and submitted, judgment delivered in the cases *etc.* were used to be discussed thoroughly in the monitoring meeting. It was very effective in controlling the theft of forest produce. Disposal of confiscated vehicles is also an important and nagging issue.

Coordination meeting with Police and Judiciary is always very effective, in this respect. It can be institutionalized. Even forest officers may be invited by SP in their monthly crime conference, so that forest related cases can also be discussed. It will expedite the dealing of cases from police side (in some serious offence cases, FIR is lodged with the Police).

Though the problem of theft in South Bengal is not to the extent as in North Bengal, ostensibly due to effective JFMC system, it is nonetheless important to gear up the system to deliver goods.

It is therefore important to discuss on the following points—

- (a) Detection of crime related to Illicit Felling and Wildlife and follow up action--POR/COR/UDOR, production of offender to court
- (b) Seizure and confiscation including status of confiscated vehicles and seized timbers etc. (Format given below)
- (c) Co-ordination with adjacent Forest Divisions, District police and District Courts.
- (d) Efficacy of the Mobile Patrol Parties
- (e) Strengthening of information network.
- (f) Strengthening JFMC including revision of beneficiary list and preparation of survey maps.

1A. Confiscation and disposal of seized produce

Under the relevant section of Indian Forest Act, read with the IFA (West Bengal Amendment) seizure and confiscation of forest produce and vehicles including carts etc. are done by the empowered forest officers. Since forest produce are perishable in nature, their speedy disposal, to the extent possible, should always be aimed at. Section 52 empowers forest officers to seize such articles and vehicles and section 59A of W.B Amendment empowers confiscation of seized vehicles. Since 1988, after the West Bengal Amendment came into force, large no. of vehicles have been confiscated. However, disposal of forest produce and confiscated vehicles have not been done in many cases. These need to be expedited. **In this connection a report in format prescribed below may be submitted -**

Name of Division

| Depot | Vehicle | | Timber | | Poles | | Problems of disposal, if any |
|-------|------------|-----------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|------------------------------|
| | No. Seized | No. confiscated | Seized (m3) | Disposed (m3) | Seized (m3) | Disposed (m3) | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
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2. Forest Boundary Demarcation

Condition of forest boundary demarcation is better in the North Bengal. Though, it can be again properly re-verified with the help of GPS etc and boundary pillars can be fixed at all the strategic locations. In South Bengal, forest is in small patches. At many places, there is no proper boundary demarcation. Thus, it is prone to encroachment. Already huge forest area is under encroachment, since long. Many divisions have taken up this matter with utmost priority and succeeded in recovering in substantial area. But still large area is under encroachment. It is felt that a detailed forest boundary survey with the help of GPS etc. should be taken up and boundaries of South Bengal properly demarcated, and pillars be fixed at all the strategic locations on ground to prevent encroachment of forest land. On this note, it is felt that, we may discuss and obtain suggestions on the following points-

- (a) Recovery of forest land with special ref to South Bengal
- (b) Forest boundary survey and demarcation- procedure and installation of boundary pillars.
- (c) Digitisation of forest boundaries, data storage and retrieval system

3. Land Records

13.52% of the total geographical area of the State is recorded as Forest land—RF, PF and USF. Condition of forest land record is better in North Bengal. In South Bengal, land record of all the forests we have is not in good condition. At many places, there is no ROR. Also at many places, during different times, nature of land and ownership has been changed. Therefore, reconciliation of land records with the Land Dept. at district level, ought to be made a sustained exercise. This has been insisted time and again in the past. On urgent basis, land records have to be properly reconciled at district level and all the RORs should be collected and compiled. Matter has already been taken up recently.

The following indicative points may be deliberated upon—

- (a) Status of land record reconciliation including F.D Holdings and collection of R.O.R.
- (b) Digitization of land records.
- (c) Land diversion cases including updation of its records.
- (d) Distribution of patta under Forest Rights Act—maintenance of records.

4. Human-Animal Conflict Mitigation

This is recognized as a growing problem involving loss and injury to life, crop depredation, damage to property and killing of wildlife. Over the years, steps have been taken to issue SMS alerts, engage Response Teams with Mobile vehicles and other equipment to mitigate the conflicts in shortest possible time. In this regard co-operation of local JFMC members and police authority is very important. Certain issues which was felt should be deliberated upon are given below—

- (a) Management of migration corridors of elephants.
- (b) Rapid Response Team—assessment of performance
- (c) Co-ordination with the JFMCs, especially in South Bengal.
- (d) Payment of ex-gratia and compensation—problems

5. Joint Forest Management (JFM)

JFM is a very important tool in forestry management. In North Bengal, it needs to be strengthened. It will help us in all respect. Since year 2016, sharing of sale proceed of usufructs have been started, but it has to be further improved through proper communication/ meetings, participation *etc.* In South Bengal, JFM is very well established practice and thus able to manage forest in better way. It is still felt that we may try to focus on some of the areas of JFMC which are highlighted below and on which we may deliberate-

- (a) Inter-FPC boundary survey and demarcation.

- (b) Regular meetings and follow up actions
- (c) Community Development schemes
- (d) Disposal of usufruct share in time.

6. Management Information System

Management and policy decisions are always based on analyses of data. Organisation of data is therefore of utmost importance in present day management. Data collection, organisation, storage, distribution, analyses etc are the most crucial facets of Management Information System. A management information system (MIS) is a computerized database of financial information organized and programmed in such a way that it produces regular reports on operations for every level of management in an organization. With this aim a separate wing of MIS was created in the Forest Directorate, headed by CCF. Presently, there are about 8 modules operating within the MIS system of the Directorate—Daily Monitoring, Weekly Monitoring, Monthly monitoring, Online Felling Permission etc. Apart from this the IFMS and HRMS developed in the State are in use. Digital plantation journal and Plantation Monitoring developed under the WBFBC Project have also been developed. Action has been initiated to install computer system with networking in the range level. However, it is felt that, the use of the systems is not being done to the maximum level. Unless used to the maximum, the difficulties, glitches etc in the system would not be revealed. The following points therefore may be deliberated upon and suggestions and observations placed —

- (a) Suggestions regarding input and output of the Monitoring modules.
- (b) Checks on multiplicity of data
- (c) Report generation and analyses of data
- (d) Suggestions about bringing more items under MIS

7. Timely Implementation of development schemes

Development schemes of the State ought to be implemented on time. Since the online budget allocation system has been operative, the idle time between passing of budget, allocation of fund and implementation of development schemes have been greatly reduced. Most of the works are done through e-tenders, to which the implementing units have become accustomed. The utilisation of Plan funds touched approx. 90% in 2017-18. In spite of this, there could be certain schemes where problems of implementation are being faced. There could be areas in forestry operations where some amount of modifications could be necessary to further improve the speed of implementation. It is felt that a review of the system of fund allocation and utilisation may be done. Deliberations on the following points is proposed-

- (a) Schemes funded by other departments
- (b) Tendering process
- (c) Preparation of estimates on time.
- (d) Fund release

8. Social Forestry

Earlier, Social Forestry was an important aspect in North Bengal. Plantations were raised by these divisions along the roads, on community land etc. At

present seems lower priority to this subject. In South Bengal, Social Forestry is almost absent. Social Forestry is an important tool through which, we can increase the "tree cover" in the state. Through it, we can have our presence in public at large. Plantation can be raised along the roads, rails, canals, etc. Also plantation can be done on the community land, in the premises of schools, hospitals, govt. offices etc. Similarly plantation can be raised on the land available with railway, defence etc. Beautification of urban areas /towns is being implemented by Parks and Gardens wing appreciably, but there is still scope of taking up plantation/beautification in govt lands and institutions. The following points may therefore be discussed-

- (a) Initiating projects for Social Forestry
- (b) Incentivization of social forestry schemes

9. Ecotourism

Ecotourism has been a focus area of forest department in recent times. In fact the potential of ecotourism in forest areas is huge. This could also be tagged with the JFM Committees effectively, through proper planning. The following points will be discussed -

- (a) Discussion on report in format prescribed below:-

| Forest R.H Location | No. of rooms | Occupancy (persons/ Yr) | Condition of R.H |
|---------------------|--------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

- (b) Need for standardisation of Ecotourism facilities including cottages. *[Discussion to follow the presentation of Member Secy Ecotourism Advisory Board and MD W.B Wasteland Dev. Corpn.]*

10. Administrative Infrastructure

For implementation of government programmes, it is important to have basic infrastructure of the administration of the department, starting from the lowest unit, the Beats, upto the Ranges, Divisions, Circles. Forest Beats and Ranges have been established in remote areas and over the years, reorganization of beats, ranges and divisions have resulted in addition, deletion or amalgamation of these offices. The Beat and Range offices are very important from the administration point of view, especially with reference to JFMC. **It is therefore urged that a report in the format prescribed given below be submitted.**

Name of Division

(i) **Beat Office**

| Total no. of beats | No. of beats not having office | No. of beat offices in rented house | Total rent paid per month | No. of existing beat offices require thorough repair |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|--|
| | | | | |

(ii) Range Office

| Total no. of Ranges | No. of Ranges not having office | No. of Ranges in rented house | Total rent paid per month | No. of existing Range offices require thorough repair |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|---|
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

(iii) Division Office

| Whether rented (Y/N) | Total rent paid per month | Estimated cost for repairs, if required | Remarks |
|----------------------|---------------------------|---|---------|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

11. Online PAR filing of IFS officers on SPARROW

Online filing of PAR on SPARROW is mandatory for promotion and empanelment (for Central Deputation) and uploading of immovable property returns, or at ifs.nic website, by IFS officers. Repeated e-mails have been issued to all the concerned officers regarding the use of SPARROW system for online filing of PAR. Till date no query has been received in PCCF's office regarding the use of SPARROW. The concerned officers should therefore reflect on the use of SPARROW system for PAR and empanelment.

EXPENDITURE REPORT OF FOREST DIVISIONS

Division.....

Date of Report

| Scheme | Allotment (Rs lacs) | Release (Rs lacs) | Expd. till Oct 2018 (Rs lacs) | Remarks |
|--|------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|---------|
| State Plan - Core Plan (Total figure) | | | | |
| Jaltirtha scheme | | | | |
| RKVY | | | | |
| CSS (Total figure) | | | | |