

Assam State Biodiversity Board
Minutes of 16th Meeting of the Board held on 17th December, 2015

The 16th Meeting of the Board was held at Mathanguri Forest Range, Manas National Park, under the Chairmanship of Shri S. C. Das, IAS, Addl. Chief Secretary to the Government of Assam and Chairman-Assam State Biodiversity Board. A list of members and invitees present is at **Annexure-I**.

The invitees to this Meeting included:

1. Dr. Anupam Roy, IAS, Principal Secretary, BTC
2. Shri Mahadananda Hazarika, Deputy Commissioner, Baksa
3. Shri C. Ramesh, IFS, DFO, Parbatjhora Forest Division, BTC
4. Shri H. K. Sarma, IFS, Field Director, Tiger Project, Manas
5. Shri D. D. Boro, ACF I/C Bansbari Range, Manas NP

At the outset, the Chairman welcomed all the Members and Invitees to the meeting and thanked the Field Director, Manas for making arrangements for the meeting.

Thereafter, with the permission of the Chair, the Member Secretary initiated agenda-wise discussions. Following observations were made and decisions taken in the meeting:

1. The Minutes of the 15th Board Meeting were confirmed.
2. **Action taken Report:** The Board noted that:
 - a. Under the Biodiversity Research Associate Program, ten (10) new and thirteen (13) existing Fellows have been engaged for assisting in PBR preparation at 23 BMCs.
 - b. The following proposals of the Board were still under process with the Government:
 - i. Amendment to the Assam Biodiversity Rules-2010.
 - ii. Organizational structure and draft Service Regulation of the Board.
3. **The Board was informed about the following:**
 - a. **Biodiversity Management Committees (BMCs):**
 - i. A total of 185 BMC notifications out of 189 Anchalik Panchayats have been received and these are being scrutinized for their completeness and correctness.
 - ii. Dima Hasao Autonomous Council: Constitution of 9 BMCs and a District TSG Committee was under process.
 - iii. BTC: Constitution of 21 BMCs at 6 Forest Division was under consideration of BTC.
 - iv. Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council: No Development so far
 - b. **People's Biodiversity Registers (PBR):**
 - i. Final draft received 18 (Eighteen)
 - ii. Works on going 23 (Twenty three)
 - c. Process initiated for translation and TSG vetting of Draft PBR of Mayong and Hajo BMC.
 - d. **Projects Undertaken:**
 - i. Spider Project: Final report under process for publication as a semi-scientific booklet. Board is awaiting ISBN Number.
 - ii. Insect Fauna Documentation Project: Third Quarter progress Report has been received.
 - iii. Wild Edible Bio-resources Project: Final report is expected by end December, 2015.
 - iv. Fish Diversity Project: Third quarter report received and subsequent installment released.
 - e. **Grants received by the Board:**

- i. National Biodiversity Authority: Rs. 6.00 lakh
 - ii. State Government: Allocation 50 lakh, Release, Nil so far
 - iii. Assam Project on Forest and Biodiversity Conservation Society:
 - Rs. 35.75 lakh for 2013-14
 - Rs. 35.75 lakh for 2014-15
4. **Consultancy awarded for the Biodiversity Assessment Study:** Bio-diversity assessment along proposed power transmission line- Dampa TR, Mizoram, the works have been initiated by the Green Initiatives Certification & Inspection Agency, (GICIA) Noida. The 1st preliminary progress report has been received.
5. **Preparation of a documentary/semi-documentary video on implementation of BD Act and AB Rules:** A documentary was commissioned through competitive bidding. The first draft of about thirty minutes of documentary was shown to the Board. It was decided to prepare two compact versions of the same, one of nearly 20 minutes and the other of 10 minutes duration. Once ready these documentaries shall be shared with the Board members for comments before release.
6. **The Board ratified the following:**
- a. **Research Permissions granted to**
 - i. Dr. Jihosua Biswas, Coordinator, Primate Research Centre, NE India: Phylo geographic distribution and variation (traits).
 - ii. Dr. A.A. Mao, Scientist-E & HoO, BSI, Shillong: Botanical Exploration tour to Dullung RF, North Lakhimpur, Assam.
 - b. **Expenditure incurred:**

Expenditure incurred for FY 2015-16:

2nd Quarter Expenditure (01-07-15 to 30-09-15)

 - i. State Grant: Rs 11,43,535/-
 - ii. NBA Grant: Rs 13,30,148/-
 - iii. APFBC Grant: Rs1,41,000/-

3rd Quarter Expenditure (01-10-15 to 16-12-15)

 - i. State Grant: Rs 23,60,702/-
 - ii. NBA Grant: Rs 2,63,296/-
 - iii. APFBC Grant: Rs 4,03,500/-
7. **The Board approved the following:**
- a. Revision of the Annual Work Plan of 2014-15 as proposed (**Annexure-1**)
 - b. Revision of the work plan of 2015-16 as proposed (**Annexure-2**).
8. Regarding application of Mr. Andre Pinto Da Silva for seeking consent (Research Permission) for collection of scat samples of seven Schedule-1 animals namely Jungle

cat, Leopard cat, Rusty-spotted cat, Fishing cat, Golden cat, Marbled cat & Clouded leopard from Laokhowa WLS & Dibru-Saikhowa NP, it was decided that:

- a. The applicant and his the contact person in India Dr. Shomita Mukherjee, Principal Scientist, SACON, Coimbatore will be approached for further details of the research proposal, especially the objectives.
 - b. The other State Forest Departments may be approached to find out what view has been taken by them on similar applications.
9. Regarding filling up two (2) posts created with the Board following observations were made and decisions taken:
- a. In response to the Agenda Note that had been circulated to the Members, Dr. P.C. Bhattacharjee sent an email (**Annexure-3**) to the Chairman of the Board requesting him to consider appointment of current incumbents namely Dr. Oinam Sunandda Devi, Scientific Officer and Ms Binita Dahal Administrative Assistant against newly created posts. He emphasized that both these incumbents have been handling Technical matters of the Board for more than three years and their experience shall be very helpful to the Board in its smooth functioning.
 - b. The three Technical Member of the Board present in the meeting expressed their full agreement with the views of Dr. P. C. Bhattacharjee and recommended that Board shall consider this matter. The other Members and Invitees supported this suggestion.
 - c. In response, the Board took up the candidature of the present incumbents for consideration of their appointment against the regular posts created with the Board. In consideration of the matter, the Board desired to know following facts about the present incumbents:
 - i. in what manner was the original appointments made?
 - ii. what were the nature of the works being handled by these incumbents?
 - iii. whether the incumbents meet the qualifications required for the posts?

In response to these queries, the Board was informed that:

- i. Dr Oinam Sunanda Devi had initially been selected against the post of Technical Officer through a competitive process that involved an open advertisement in the local newspapers followed by interview by a Selection Committee headed by one of the Board Members. The position of Technical Officer was later re-designated as Scientific Officer by the Board.
- ii. As Technical Officer and as Scientific Officer Dr Sunanda has been dealing for past over four (4) years with all the technical matter related to implementation of the Biological Diversity Act. She has been handling the task of:
 - processing of applications of both Indian and foreign nationals for access to biological resources for research and commercial purposes and helping the Board with taking necessary inputs for decision on these applications.

- processing all cases for award of Intellectual property Rights (IPRs), collating related information and putting it up before the Board for taking an objective view.
 - Preparation of Peoples' Biodiversity Registers for conferring ownership rights of the biological resources on the local people (the members of Biodiversity Management Committees)
 - Management of Biodiversity Research Associate Programme (BRAP) of the Board; award of fellowship, evaluation of field works etc.
 - Developing Reports/ publications for awareness generation and capacity building of various stakeholders.
- iii. For the post of Scientific Officer the essential qualification prescribed in the Draft Service Regulation is Post Graduate in Life Sciences and desirable qualification is Ph.D. Dr. Sunanda is M.Sc. in Animal Ecology and Wildlife Biology and has been awarded Ph.D. degree by the Guwahati University.
- iv. Similarly Ms Binita Dahal had initially been selected against the post of Office Assistant through a competitive process that included an open advertisement in the local newspapers followed by interview by a Selection Committee headed by one of the Board Members. The position of Office Assistant was later re-designated as Administrative Assistant by the Board.
- v. In her capacity as Office Assistant and Administrative Assistant Ms Dahal has been dealing for past over four (4) years with the following Technical matters of the Board:
- Formation of Biodiversity Management Committees (BMCs) in the State of Assam.
 - Capacity Building of the BMC members for taking up mandated activities as envisaged in the Biological Diversity Act and Assam Biodiversity Rules.
 - Liaise with the Forest Department (The Nodal Department) for implementation of provisions of the Act and Rules for conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in the State.
 - Formation of Technical Support Groups (TSGs) at district level for finalization and approval of PBRs.
 - Assist the Board in taking up the matters with the Government of Assam and to assist the Member Secretary in day to day functioning of the Board in both technical and administrative matters.
- vi. For the post of Scientific Assistant the essential qualification prescribed in the Draft Service Regulation is Graduate in Science Subject. Ms Binita Dahal is a Graduate with Geography and Post Graduate in Tourism Management from Tezpur University.

- vii. In response to a specific query, it was informed that the Draft Service Regulation prepared by the Board has not been approved as there is a pre-requisite that all those posts for which the Regulation has been drafted shall be created first. Further, no Service Regulation was required to be framed for solitary posts. Thus, the Board was in position to take a view about the eligibility and mode of appointments to the two posts created.
 - viii. The Board considered the above facts, particularly the fact that at present there were no Service Regulations to govern the method of appointment against present posts and that there could not be such a regulation. Therefore, the Board took-up the candidature of present two incumbents and decided that since both the present incumbents had been originally selected through an open competition and by regular Selection Committee; both possess requisite qualifications for the posts and that both have been dealing with the core technical mandate of the Board for over four years, to the full satisfaction of the Board, Dr. Oinam Sunanda Devi be appointed as Scientific Officer and Ms Binita Dahal be appointed as Scientific Assistant against the two regular posts created in the Board.
- d. The Board also observed that since in the proposal of the Board for creation of the posts of Scientific Officer in the Pay Scale of Rs. 12,000/- to 40,000/- two grade pays were proposed, GP-Rs 5900/- for appointment on promotion and GP Rs. 5400/- for Direct Recruitment. The Board therefore recommend to appoint Dr. Oinam Sunanda Devi in a pay Scale of Rs 12,000/- to 40,000/- Grade Pay 5,400/- .
 - e. Similarly in the proposal for creation of posts of Scientific Assistant, there were certain deficiencies as the Grade pay for three different levels had not been mentioned. The Board considered the matter and in view of the fact that the nature of the job of the Scientific Assistant is similar to that of Research Assistant, the following Scale and Grade Pays were agreed to be assigned of the Posts of Scientific Assistant:
 - i. Senior Scientific Assistant- Rs. 8,000/- to 35,000/- GP- 5,100/-
 - ii. Scientific Assistant-Grade-I- Rs. 8,000/- to 35,000/- GP- 4,700/-
 - iii. Scientific Assistant-Grade-II- Rs. 8,000/- to 35,000/- GP- 4,500/-
 - f. Accordingly it was decided to appoint Ms Binita Dahal as Scientific Assistant in the Pay Scale of Rs. 8,000/- to 35,000/- GP- 4,500/-.

10. Any other Issue with the Permission of the Chair:

- a. The Board approved, in-principle, to implement a Project for documentation of Biodiversity of Manas National Park jointly with the Bodoland Territorial Council. A complete proposal with financial details shall be submitted to the Board by the Field Director Manas in consultation and other concerned officers in BTC.
- b. The Principal Secretary BTC informed that the Council has approved the resolution for formation of BMCs in the BTC area. It was informed that soon the process for constitution of 21 BMC at Forest Range level shall be

initiated. The Board assured its full support to the Council in conducting capacity Building Workshops for the newly formed BMCs.

- c. It was also agreed to extend the Biodiversity Research Associate Program to the Council for engaging students for helping the BMC in writing their PBRs.
- d. The Board Members expressed their deep appreciation for the present Chairman of the Board, Shri S. C. Das in whose leadership the Board in the past nearly three years has made significant headways. The Members thanked the Chairman for meeting the Board in getting necessary support of the government. The Board requested the outgoing Chairman for a short interaction before his superannuation on 31st December 2015. It was agreed to meet in the Board office on the 30th of December at 3.00 pm.

The meeting ended with thanks from the Chair to all present.

-sd-

(S. C. Das)
Chairman, ASBB

Annexure-I

List of Members/ Invitees present in the 16th Meeting of Assam State Biodiversity Board 17th December, 2015

Sr. No	Name	Designation	Contact No.	E-mail Id
Official Members				
1	Shri S. C. Das, IAS	Chairman-ASBB & Addl. Chief Secretary, Assam	0361-2237054	subhashdas55@gmail.com
2	Shri Joyprakash Medhi, ACS	Deputy Director, Fisheries Dept.	9435144523	joyprakash_medhi@rediff.com
3	Shri A. K. Johari, IFS	Member Secretary-ASBB	8876565345	johari60@yahoo.com
Ex- Officio Members				
4	Dr. Anil Kr. Goswami	Member- ASBB	9864021714	akgoswami@gmail.com
5	Shri R. C. Goswami, IFS (Retd.)	Member-ASBB	9435044818	rcgoswami37@gmail.com
6	Dr. Aparajita De	Member- ASBB	9435579520	aparajitadehajra@gmail.com
Special Invitees				
7	Dr. Anupam Roy, IAS	Principal Secretary, BTC	9435549477	ak.roy.ias@gmail.com
8	Shri S. S. Rao, IFS	Addl. PCCF(Wildlife) O/o the PCCF (WL) Assam, Basistha	9435347483	pccf.wl.assam@gmail.com
9	Shri Mahadananda Hazarika, ACS	Deputy Commissioner, Baksa District	9435063052	dc-baksa@nic.in
10	Dr. Ramesh. C, IFS	DFO, Pabatjhora Division, Kokrajhar	9435476064	rameshifs@gmail.com
11	Shri H. K. Sarma, IFS	Field Director, Manas Tiger Project	9435111172	fd.manastp@gmail.com hiranya1961@gmail.com
12	Shri Mrinal Borah	Assistant Deputy Commissioner, Baksa District	9854045322	mrinal.borah4@gmail.com
13	Shri Dharani Dhar Boro	SDO (Civil), Salbari	9435734576	
14	Shri Dharanidhar Boro	ACF, I/c Bansbari Range, Manas NP	9435152364	ddbboro@gmail.com

Annexure 1

Revision of Annual Work Plan of 2014-15:

Sl. No.	Heads of Expenditure	Allocation (Rs in Lakh)	Expenditures (Rs in Lakh)
1	Board Functions	4.00	2.59
2	Field/Research Works	38.00	40.85
3	Office Expenses	8.00	6.56
	Total	50.00	50.00

Annexure 2**Revised Plan Scheme of Works for the Assam State Biodiversity Board 2015-16**

Category of Expenditure		Proposed Allocation (Rs in Lakh)	Revised proposed Allocation (Rs in Lakh)	Remarks
A. Board Functions				
1	Board Meetings/ Sitting fee etc	1.00	1.00	As per the Act, the Board has to meet at least four times in a year. In addition there are meetings of Expert Groups. The fund is required to pay sitting fee, travel expenses to Board Members & Experts. <i>*Provision has been kept against Secretarial posts to be created with the Board</i>
2	Salary for the staff*	1.00*	3.00*	
3	TA/PoL	2.00	2.00	
Sub-total		4.00	6.00	
B. Field/Research Works				
1	On-going Projects	15.00	15.00	It is a statutory requirement to constitute Biodiversity Management Committees (BMCs); prepare People's Biodiversity Registers (PBRs); Sensitize of stakeholders; carry out field studies and research for conservation of species requiring intervention.
2	New Projects	5.00	5.00	
3	New BMCs	3.00	3.00	
4	PBR related works	7.00	6.00	
5	Biodiversity Heritage Site Identification & Management	2.00	2.00	
6	Workshops/Publicity/Publications	5.00	5.00	
Sub-total		37.00	36.00	
C. Office Expenses				
1	Rent/Electricity/Water/Postage/ Telephone	5.50	5.50	These include day to day office expenses and rentals for the Board Office
2	Periodical/Journals/Books/ Newspapers/ Magazines	0.50	0.50	
3	Stationary/Fixtures	2.50	1.50	
4	Other Miscellaneous	0.50	0.50	
Sub-total		9.00	8.0	
		GROSS Rs 50.00 (Rupees Fifty Lakh) only		

-sd-

(A.K. Johari)

Member Secretary-ASBB

Shri Subhash Das, IAS

Chairman,

State Biodiversity Board, Assam

date. 8th Dec 2015

Guwahati,

Dear Sir,

Please accept my best wishes and regards.

Sir, It is really heartening that the Board under your dynamic leadership able to make significant progress in implementation of Biodiversity Act in Assam. Your support has enabled the Board to come up as an effective organization in a short period of time.

I have had a privilege of being associated with the Board since its inception. I have seen that its growth is remarkable. In the journey of past 5 years, I have seen the Members Secretary and his staff struggling with huge mandate of the Board and working relentlessly.

I am particularly impressed by the sincerity and dedication of Dr. Oinam Sunanda Devi who has been dealing with Technical matters of the Board for the past 4 years. She is not only qualified, on account of having done her PhD in Life Sciences, but also, and more importantly, has the aptitude and ability to understand the nuances of Biodiversity Act and provide valued input for onward actions. It is in this background, I would suggest that the Board should take this opportunity to regularize her services against the Post of Scientific Officer. This would be more in the interest of the Board than for her.

Similarly, I am also highly appreciative of the caliber and dedication of Ms Binita Dahal, who has been working as an Office Assistant with the Board, nearly since its inception. The manner in which she has handled the tasks of coordinating with various agencies and with the Forest Department for formation of BMCs, capacity building of its members and awareness generation is remarkable. I strongly recommend regularization of her services as well in the Board against the available post of Scientific Assistant.

If we fail to extend this reward to Dr. Sunanda and Ms Binita we may fritter the. It is always better to have the benefit of trained, dedicated and dependable manpower with the Board.

Even if, it requires making any kind of exception, it would be appropriate for the Board to do so for the regularization of their services.

I am extremely sorry that I am not in a position to attend the Board meeting scheduled on 17th December 2015. I would have liked to personally felicitate you for his highly distinguished tenure with the Board and would also have pleaded the case of Sunanda and Binita.

I hope my absence would be excused and my opinion considered.

Thanking you,

Yours most sincerely,

P.C. Bhattacharjee

Member, State Biodiversity Board, Assam

Some photographs of 16th Board Meeting

