

Minutes of the 4th Meeting of the Assam State Biodiversity Board held at Tezpur University, Tezpur on 12th July 2012

The 4th Meeting of the Assam State Biodiversity Board was held in the Campus of the Tezpur University, Tezpur on 12th July 2012. This meeting had two sessions, the First Session was for the Board Members and some select invitees and Second was an open Session with representatives of the University. List of those who attended the Meeting is at **Annexure- A** and **Annexure-B** respectively.

Following discussions were held and decisions taken agenda-wise:

Agenda Item No. 1: Action Taken Report:

- a. Amendment to the Assam Biodiversity Rules: The Committee recommendations were noted. Comments of members on these recommendations are to be solicited within two weeks time.
- b. The progress in translation of Biological Diversity Act-2002 and the Assam Biodiversity Rules was noted.

As regard to the translation of the Act/ Rules to Bodo, Karbi and Dimas languages, the Board was informed that a single offer was received and that the charges quoted for the translation were very high. The Board suggested that the offers may be considered at a later stage and in the meanwhile consultations with the some Universities, Bar Association, Legal Department and Official Language Department of Govt. of Assam may be held. It was further suggested that:

- i. For translation in Bodo language, efforts may be made to approach University or Bodo Sahitya Academy.
- ii. For and NC Hills and Karbi-Anglong Autonomous Councils the Assamese and Bengali translations will suffice.
- iii. Thus, the Act and Rules may be translated and made available in four languages i. e. English, Assamese, Bengali and Bodo only.

- c. The progress about Website construction was noted.
- d. Engagement of contractual staff was noted.
- e. The proposal for creation of seven (7) posts for the Board was recommended to be pursued with government for approval.
- f. (i) On the proposed vision statement “Bountiful, secured and economically rewarding biological diversity” following observations were made:
 - i. The words ‘economically rewarding’ may not reflect correct connotation and need re-thinking. (Dr P C Bhattacharjee, Member-ASBB)
 - ii. The statement is not cohesive : (Shri P J Vijayakar, CF NAC- Special Invitee)
 - iii. Consider adding the word ‘ecological’ (Dr Anil Goswami, Member-ASBB).
- (ii) The Mission statement “Ownership rights to people for conservation and wise-use of biological resources and equitable sharing of benefits on commercial utilization” was considered appropriate.
- (iii) The Board decided to solicit comments of members on the Vision & Mission Statements within two weeks time, i.e. by 27th of July 2012.
- g. On composition of the Expert Group on Agriculture it was agreed that the names suggested by the Directorate of Agriculture may be accepted. However, following recommendations were made:
 - i. Apart from the names suggested, three more experts, one from ICAR and two experts from other Universities preferably one from Assam University, Silchar and another from Gauhati University can be added.
 - ii. The PCCF & HoFF Assam observed that apart from examination of the application for grant of approval, the Board shall utilize the benefit of technical expertise of the ‘Expert Groups’ for identifying research needs in different domains of biodiversity. He stated there are some very old records indicating prevalence of very large number of varieties of rice and other crops but there is no study on their present status. Such matters needs to be pursued.

- iii. Members expressed need for action on selecting 'Heritage Sites' for conservation of richness of wild varieties.
- h. The logo of the Board released by the Hon'ble Chief Minister on 22nd May, 2012 was presented for viewing by all the Members and Special Invitees.
- i. Progress on constitution of Biodiversity Management Committees was noted. The necessity for early action for forming BMCs emphasized. The Deputy Commissioners of Sonitpur and Nagaon assured their fullest co-operation in this regard. The DFOs present in the Meeting were requested to actively pursue the matter.
- j. The Board desired that the State Level Sensitization Workshop may be held as early as possible.

Agenda Item No. 2:

A Statement showing receipt of Rs. 11.30 lakh of Grants by the Board and expenditure made thereof since its last Meeting was presented before the Board.

Agenda Item No. 3:

The Board ratified an expenditure of Rs 11.00 lakh that has been made since the last Meeting of the board.

Agenda Item No. 4:

- i. Regarding the pending applications, the Board desired to see the recommendations of the concerned Expert Groups, when available.
- ii. The Board desired to know as to whether the applications are being received in the proper format and with the required fee if any.
- iii. Dr. P C Bhattacharjee, Member-ASBB drew attention of the Board at large scale trade into some orchids that are rare and scheduled. It was agreed that position of Rules in so far as the role of Board is concerned be examined thoroughly and discussed in the next meeting.

Agenda Item No. 5:

This agenda item was presented and deliberated during the Second Session, that is, the Open Session, in which the Vice Chancellor, Registrar, Faculty and Research Scholars of the Tezpur University participated. The highlights of this is Session are as under:

1. All distinguished dignitaries were felicitated.
2. The Registrar-TU welcomed everyone to the meeting and touched upon some of the strength areas of the University and their relevance to the mandate of the board
3. Chairman-ASBB in his opening remarks thanked the university authorities for agreeing to the request of the Board for a joint meeting at their campus. He emphasized on the need for collaboration between the Tezpur University and the Board for addressing the most significant task of constitution of the Biodiversity Management Committees (BMCs) and preparation of People's Biodiversity Registers (PBRs). He hoped that in this meeting concrete steps on collaboration would be worked out.
4. Member-Secretary-ASBB made a presentation explaining the purpose of the meeting, highlighting the need for collaboration amongst various stake-holders for preparation of Peoples' Biodiversity Registers.
5. The Vice-Chancellor TU, appreciated the Board decision of involving Universities and working in tandem with them for the cause of conservation of rich biodiversity of the State. He assured full cooperation and active participation of the university human resource. He hoped that there would be frequent interaction to concretize whatever was agreed to in this meeting.
6. After detailed discussions and very active contributions from the faculty, research scholars, special invitees including the two Deputy Commissioners, following recommendations were made and decisions taken:
 - a. For preparation of PBR, a Technical Support Group (TSG) comprising of University representatives, Government Departments, NGOs and some local knowledgeable persons may be constituted.
 - b. The TSG will be headed by a representative of the University.
 - c. In the same manner, 4-5 TSGs may be set up for covering the entire State.

- d. The Board would enter into an agreement with the TU for preparation of a model PBR. The Board shall provide the standard format for PBR to the Universities.
 - e. The TU would design a format, in consultation with the Board for recording in a progressive manner, the biodiversity of the State. Inputs from various field research and survey done by the TU anywhere in the State could flow into this database.
 - f. A joint-team may be selected and notified and a 'University Focal Point' may be nominated for the purpose all collaborative works.
 - g. Sensitization programmes may be taken up for local people and BMCs for involving them into making of PBRs
 - h. A chapter on Lichens be added into PBRs, if not already prescribed.
 - i. The DFOs, in consultations with the Deputy Commissioners concerned, identify knowledgeable persons for inclusion in BMCs and in the team for preparation of PBRs
7. The Board further decided that:
- a. The next meeting of the Board may be held within one month's time specifically for:
 - i. Finalizing Model Format for Biodiversity Database
 - ii. Finalizing Information Broachers in Assamese and English
 - iii. Finalizing Vision and Mission Statement of the Board
 - iv. Preparing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for collaboration between the Board and Universities for the purpose of preparation of PBRs.
 - v. Studying the Orchid trade cases in the State from the biodiversity preservation point of view
8. Memento and Souvenir were presented to dignitaries and copies of Bilingual Book on BD Act & Rules were presented to all present in the meeting.
9. Shri P. J. Vijayakar, IFS, CF (NAC) presented a formal vote of thanks to all.