

Minutes of the Second Meeting of the Assam State Biodiversity Board
Held on 16th November 2011
At Dispur

The second Meeting of the Assam State Biodiversity Board (ASBB) was held on 16th November, 2011 at 3.00 PM in the Conference Hall, F-Block, Dispur. A list of the participants is enclosed at **Annexure-I**.

1. At the outset the Chairman, ASBB welcomed all the Members and the Invitees to the meeting and then requested the Member Secretary to make his presentation.
2. The Member Secretary made a presentation highlighting concerns about Biodiversity; various international & national Initiatives towards its conservation; significant provisions of the Biological Diversity Act; roles and responsibilities of the National Bio-Diversity Authority and the State Bio-Diversity Boards. A copy of the presentation is at **Annexure-II**. The Agenda-wise discussions ensued as follows:

3. Agenda item 1.

- a. As proposed, a Corrigendum for correction in para- 31 of the Assam Biodiversity Rules 2010, was agreed to be taken up.
- b. For translation of Assam Biodiversity Rules into Assamese it was suggested that the help of Guwahati University/ College may be taken. Proff. Bhattacharjee was requested to help in identification of a suitable person for this purpose. The translation can thereafter be got vetted by the Language Implementation Department before its publication.
- c. It was agreed that some Guidelines may be framed, as per the needs, for conduct of day to day business of the Board. The Chairman suggested that the Board may frame basic guidelines as per present needs which can be modified or enlarged as per the requirements.
- d. Regarding office space the Member Secretary informed that a request has been made to the Assam Tourism Development Corporation, Guwahati. The

Chairman suggested that it may perhaps be better to look for some government building first, to avoid expenditure.

4. **Agenda item 2.** The Board agreed to launch a web site for the Board. The Chairman suggested to take help of NIC for this propose.
5. **Agenda item 3.** The Board agreed to designing of logo of the Board through outsourcing.
6. **Agenda item 4.** The Board agreed, in principle, to engaging minimum contractual support-staff for functioning of the Board as proposed.
7. **Agenda item 5.** The board was of the opinion that in addition to the permanent invitees as provided for in the Rules, the Board should invite as many experts as it feels necessary in the interest of proper conduct of the Business of the Board.
8. **Agenda item 6.** The Board expressed its concern about lack of budget support. Chief Conservator of Forests (RE &WP) and the Chairman State Pollution Control Board, Assam suggested that some funds from the Grants-in-Aid ear-marked for the Pollution Control Board for the year 2011-12 could be utilized after re-appropriation/ necessary approval to facilitate the take-off of Biodiversity Board. Attempts may be made to make provision for grant-in aid during 2011-12 through Supplementary Demand.
9. **Agenda item 7.**
 - a. For constitution of Biodiversity Management Committees in the State, the Chairman suggested that, to begin with, it would be appropriate to constitute BMCs at District (Zila) level. The DFOs can be given a lead role in constituting District Level Committees., Having constituted the Zila Committees, it would be necessary to build capacities of the Committee member for appreciating their

roles and responsibilities. These Committee can thereafter contribute in constituting BMCs at lower levels.

- b. With respect to constitution of Biodiversity Management Committees in the Autonomous Council, the Member Secretary read out provision 2 (h) of the Biological Diversity Act which defines “local bodies” as *“Panchayats and Municipalities, by whatever named called, within the meaning of clause (1) of article 243B and Clause (1) of article 243Q of the Constitution and in the absence of any Panchayats and Municipalities, institutions of self-governance constituted any other provision of the Constitution or any Central Act or State Act”*. The Board was of the opinion that existing institutions of self-governance and the Autonomous Councils of Assam would qualify to be the ‘local bodies’ for the purpose of constitution of BMCs.
 - c. Regarding preparation of Biodiversity Registers the Board was in full agreement with the opinion of the Chairman that even if it takes longer time, these registers must be prepared with full understanding and involvement of the local people.
10. **Agenda item No. 8.** On the issue of giving no objection for applications seeking IPR, the Chairman suggested that the Board Members may like to consult some experts for understanding of all its implications before allowing access to any local biological resources or according no-objection to grant of IPRs involving any local biological resource. The Chairman further suggested that in the next Board meeting this issue can be discussed as the main agenda item. In this context Dr P C Bhattacharjee, Expert- Member informed that he has certain documents that could be of interest to the Board Members in understanding certain contentious issues. The Chairman requested Dr Bhattacharjee to share the information with all Members of the Board through e-mail before next discussions.

11. Agenda item No 9. Other Agenda Items:

- a. Chief Conservator of Forests (Wetlands) suggested that for Capacity Building it would be a useful to organize a State Level Workshop inviting all Divisional Forest Officers and the representatives of Departments like Agriculture, Fishery, Revenue, Panchayat & Rural development, Horticulture, Sericulture and certain experts in the field of Biological Diversity.
- b. Dr Bhattacharje also emphasized on the need for a meeting of all concerned departments represented at policy making level for effective and coordinated approach towards biodiversity conservation and involvement of local people.

Both these suggestions were agreed to.

12. Agenda item No 10. The Board decided to hold the next meeting in the 2nd fortnight of January.

The Meeting ended with Thanks from the Chair.