

Minutes of 4th Meeting of West Bengal State Wetlands Authority (WBSWA) held at the Conference Hall of Chief Secretary to the Government of West Bengal at Nabanna on 31.10.2023 at 5:00 p.m.

The list of attendees is attached.

The Hon'ble Minister-in-Charge, Department of Environment chaired the meeting and welcomed all the attendees. The Chief Secretary, Govt. of West Bengal co-chaired the meeting. Principal Secretary, Department of Environment made a presentation on the following agenda items:

1. Minutes of the 3rd meeting of the WBSWA held on 03.06.2022 was confirmed.
2. The Principal Secretary, Environment Deptt. & Member Secretary, SWA briefed the members about activities of State Wetlands Authority (SWA):

❖ In compliance with the direction of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in the matter of *M.K. Balakrishnan & Ors. Vs. Union of India & Ors.* dated 08.02.2017, the Hon'ble National Green Tribunal (NGT) in matter of *Raja Muzaffar Bhat Vs. State of Jammu and Kashmir & Ors.* dated 25.11.2021, and in the matter of *People United for Better Living in Calcutta & Another Vs. The Union of India & Others* dated 09.05.2022 and Rule 5(4) of the Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017, the following activities have been carried out by the WBSWA:

- Geo-tagging of 8911 wetlands is completed by Fisheries Department. Fisheries Department, West Bengal has carried out the work of assigning Unique Identification Number to all the said 8,911 wetlands of the State.
- **Brief documents** for 23 wetlands having area above 400 ha have been prepared by the Institute of Environmental Studies and Wetland Management (IESWM). Brief documents for 221 wetlands having area above 10 ha are being prepared by Kalyani University. At present, brief documents for 32 such wetlands have been prepared and brief documents for 191 wetlands are under preparation.
- **Geo-mapping:** Fisheries Department, West Bengal is carrying out the work of demarcation of wetlands, their zone of influences and their geo mapping. In the first phase, this task has started with Hooghly districts, North 24 Parganas and Alipurduar.
- **Notifying wetlands:** The members were informed that WBSWA has initiated the process of notifying significant water bodies in different districts of the State.

- a) Dankuni Wetland: Based on the physical survey, brief documents as well as drone survey conducted by the West Bengal Pollution Control Board, an area of approximately 1228 ha in Mouza-Mollarber, JL no. 22; Mouza-Panchghara, JL no. 80; Mouza-Jaykrishnapur, JL no. 69 and Mouza-Jhakari, JL no. 103 in Block Srirampur-Uttarpara, Chanditala-II, under District Hooghly has been found to be free of waterlogging after de-siltation of Dankuni Canal. However, an area of approx. 118 ha continues to remain waterlogged, for a considerable period of time even after de-siltation. Dankuni Wetland including its zone of influence is situated in the above said four mouzas. As per the recommendation of the Technical Committee of the WBSWA, the Gazette publication of Draft Notification of Dankuni Wetland has been issued by the Department of Environment, Government of West Bengal on 16.10.2023, in exercise of powers conferred under Rule 7 of the Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017 wherein 60 days have been given to the general public for submission of any claims and objections.
- b) In compliance with the direction of the Hon'ble NGT, Eastern Zone Bench dated 22.03.2023 in O.A. 30/2023/EZ, Chatra Beel in District Malda is proposed to be declared as a significant wetland under the Wetlands Rules, 2017. Accordingly, the SWA will prepare a brief document of this wetland and demarcate the area of the wetland and its zone of influence.
- c) Five water bodies namely Nayabandh Beel, Mathura Beel, Balli Beel, Shashanka Beel and Beri Panchpota Beel were proposed to be notified on priority basis.
- d) Three water bodies namely Sujanpur, Hasadanga and Naopara in Nadia District were proposed to be notified by considering them together as a wetland complex.

Decision of the WBSWA: The WBSWA decided to initiate the process for notifying these wetlands as per the Wetlands (Conservation & Management) Rules, 2017.

3. Formation of District Level Wetlands Committee:

Keeping in mind implementation of Rule 5(4) of Wetlands Rules, 2017 and in compliance with several orders of the judiciary, it was proposed that District Level Wetlands Committees may be formed for wetlands conservation and protection. These committees shall provide support to the WBSWA in protection, conservation and management of wetlands in the respective districts.

Decision of the WBSWA: The proposal was accepted unanimously by the WBSWA.

4. Merging East Kolkata Wetlands Management Authority (EKWMA) into West Bengal State Wetlands Authority (WBSWA):

Though both the EKWMA and the WBSWA are formed under different Acts and Rules, all members of the EKWMA are also the Members of the WBSWA, except the Expert Members. The Member Secretary, SWA proposed that the EKWMA may simultaneously function under the WBSWA and the office of EKWMA can act as the Secretariat of WBSWA.

Decision of the WBSWA: It is decided that a formal proposal will be initiated for merging EKWMA into SWA.

5. Setting up of Maa Medical College Hospital and Wellness Centre in EKW area:

It was informed to the members that M/s. Greentech Farms & Agro Private Limited has proposed to set up "Maa Medical College Hospital and Wellness Centre" at Mouza-Dhapa, which is within the East Kolkata Wetlands. The project includes setting up of a medical college, residential support for faculty, staff and students, sports complex, an old age home, etc. The tentative cost of the project is Rs. 1,686 crores. However, it is found that the project area mentioned in the initial project proposal differs from the supporting documents submitted by the Project Proponent. As per Record of Rights (RoR), out of the 72.32 acres of the project area, 71.85 acres of land is classified as either water body or its embankment.

The proposal was placed before the Technical Committee of SWA on 28.08.2023. The TC, SWA did not consider the project due to the applicable Rules and Regulations. However, it opined that legal opinion might be taken from the Law Cell, Department of Environment and if the SWA finds merit in the project, it may send the proposal for consideration to the Central Government as a case of omission under Rule 4 of the Wetlands Rules, 2017. The Law Cell has opined that as per section 4(2) of Wetlands Rules, 2017, conversion for non-wetland uses including encroachment of any kind, setting up of industries and any construction of permanent nature within EKW are prohibited activities. However, proviso to Rule 4 states that the Central Government may consider proposals from the State Government for omitting any prohibited activities mentioned in Rule 4(2) of Wetlands (C&M) Rules, 2017 on recommendation of the SWA.

The Project Proponent M/s. Greentech Farms & Agro Private Limited presented their proposal before the WBSWA during the meeting.

- The Project Proponent informed SWA that their project shall be implemented under four sister companies of the Greentech Farms and Agro Private Limited Group for better Management namely;
 1. M/s. Greentech Farms & Agro Pvt. Ltd.
 2. M/s. Lee Greentech Health Education Pvt. Ltd.
 3. M/s. Lee Greentech Medical Pharma Research Pvt.Ltd.
 4. M/s. Lee Greentech Eco-resort and Hospitality Pvt. Ltd.

- The PP spoke about the components proposed under the project area -
 - a) Medical college, nursing school, hospital, super specialty hospital.

b) Dental college, nursing college, paramedical college, college of physiotherapy, college of pharmacology, tele medicine, medical instrumentation and hospital management.

c) Biological test lab, pharmacological test lab, protocol development lab for pharmacological production research lab on trial protocol, facilities for health tourism and residential facilities.

d) Wetland Interpretation Centre, promotion of initiative of Ayush as per the guidelines of Govt. of India in respect of education training, demonstration including promotion of yoga, demonstration and promotion of production of varieties of healthy food, promotion of eco-friendly healthy resort, initiative of health retreat centre for the patients after recovery and promotion of initiative of eco-accommodation for people.

- **Benefit of the Project:**

a) **Public Health related Benefit:** This shall be achieved by integrating with primary health care, integrating hospital with other health care organizations, outreach program like health camps, camp surgery, immunization camps, etc. There shall be reservation of beds for the patients from villages in the EKW area at concessional rate and Swastha Sathi Card facilities will be entertained.

b) The PP also stated that the implementation of the project would provide job opportunity to the local population.

Decision of the WBSWA:

The project falls under the prohibited activity mentioned in Rule 4(2) of Wetlands (Conservation & Management), Rules 2017. The SWA also noted that there is a disparity between the project area mentioned by the PP in the initial project proposal and the supporting documents submitted and that approximately 71.85 acres of the project area is recorded as water body as per RoR. After detailed discussion, the SWA opined that the PP would be requested to submit a revised proposal which does not fall under the prohibited activities under the East Kolkata Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Act, 2006 and Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017.

6. Setting up of Eco-tourism Project in EKW area:

M/s. Kushal Agrigenix LLP has proposed to set up an eco-tourism project in Mouza Tardaha Kapashati within the EKW area. As stated by the Project Proponent, the project would be implemented as per the guidelines of "Amrit Dharohar Scheme" of the Central Government, which allows nature-based tourism in the Ramsar sites. The project will have components like Interpretation Centre, public gathering areas for community function, provision for angling decks and observation point, culinary experience outlets specializing in local cuisine, etc. The tentative budget of the proposed project is Rs. 50 crores.

The proposal was placed before the Technical Committee of West Bengal State Wetlands Authority on 28.08.2023 wherein the project proponent was told to resubmit the proposal incorporating the suggestions of the TC, WBSWA.

The Project Proponent M/s. Kushal Agrigenix LLP then presented the revised project proposal before the authority after incorporating the suggestions of the TC, SWA.

- The aim of the project is to create public awareness and deliver sustainable experience to visitors with facilities such as Interpretation Center, EKW museum, walking trails, bird watch tower, pisciculture orientation, etc. conforming to the EKW objectives.
- Kushal Arigenix LLP proposes to develop Kolkata's 1st project of its kind with 100% green building and net zero emission project under the guidelines laid out in the Amrit Dharoar Scheme and Eco-tourism policy.
- The PP has stated that no water body will be filled up in the proposed project site. This project will recycle 100% waste and the project site will be plastic free zone.
- The PP affirmed that as no construction of permanent nature can come up within EKW area, there would not be any use of concrete and steel for any construction. The resources to be utilized within the project site will also come from EKW area as far as practicable.
- Maximum consumption of electricity within the project will comes from solar power.

The changes in the proposal were accepted by the Chairman, Technical Committee of SWA, the other members present and the Senior Law Officer of the Department.

Decision of the WBSWA:

After detailed discussion and taking the above points in consideration, the SWA decided that the project proponent would be requested to submit Environment Management Plan (EMP) for future course of action.

The meeting ended with vote of thanks.



Chief Secretary to the Govt. of W.B.
& Vice-chairperson, WBSWA.



Hon'ble Minister-in-Charge,
Environment Department, &
Chairperson, EKWMA

The West Bengal State Wetlands Authority meeting on 31.10.2023 was attended by the following persons:

1. Md. Ghulam Rabbani, Hon'ble Minister-in-Charge, Environment Department, the Government of West Bengal and Chairperson, WBSWA & EKWMA
2. Dr. Hari Krishna Dwivedi, Chief Secretary to the Government of West Bengal and Vice-chairperson, WBSWA & Member EKWMA
3. Shri Vivek Kumar, Additional Chief Secretary, Department of Forest and Member, WBSWA & EKWMA
4. Dr. Manoj Pant, Additional Chief Secretary, Department of Finance and Member, WBSWA.
5. Ms. Roshni Sen, Principal Secretary, Department of Environment and Member Secretary, WBSWA & EKWMA
6. Dr. Kalyan Rudra, Chairman, West Bengal Pollution Control Board (WBPCB) & Chairman of the Technical Committee, WBSWA and Expert Member, EKWMA.
7. Dr. Rajesh Kumar, Member Secretary, WBPCB and Member, WBSWA.
8. Shri Debol Roy, PCCF, Wildlife and Chief Wildlife Warden, West Bengal & Member, WBSWA.(online)
9. Shri Prabhat Kumar Mishra, Principal Secretary, Department of Water Resources Investigation and Development & Department of Irrigation & Waterways and Member, WBSWA & EKWMA
10. Smt. Nandini Chakravorty, Principal Secretary, Department of Tourism and Member, WBSWA & EKWMA
11. Shri Binod Kumar, Commissioner, Kolkata Municipal Corporation & Permanent Invitee, EKWMA.
12. Smt. Neelam Meena, Principal Secretary, Government of West Bengal and Director, Institute of Environmental Studies and Wetlands Management.
13. Smt Smaraki Mahapatra, Secretary, Department of Land and Land Reforms & Refugee Relief and Rehabilitation and Member, WBSWA & EKWMA
14. Shri Avanindra Singh, Secretary, Department of Fisheries and Member, WBSWA & EKWMA
15. Dr. P. Ulaganathan, Secretary, Department of Panchayats and Rural Development and Member, WBSWA & EKWMA
16. Ms. Srabani Dhor, Special Secretary, Department of Science and Technology and Biotechnology.
17. Mr. Santhosha G.R., Additional Secretary, Department of Panchayat & Rural Development

18. Smt. Tripti Sah, Chief Environment Officer, Department of Environment and Member Secretary, West Bengal Biodiversity Board and Member, WBSWA and Chief Technical Officer, EKWMA.
19. Shri Sharad Kumar Dwivedi, District Magistrate, North 24 Parganas & Permanent Invitee, EKWMA. (online)
20. Shri Sumit Gupta, District Magistrate, South 24 Parganas & Permanent Invitee, EKWMA. (online)
21. Smt. Pausali Pahari, Senior Law Officer, Department of Environment.
22. Mr. Zulfikar Hasan, PS to MIC, Department of Environment.
23. Ms. Subrata B. Dutta, Sr. Scientist, Department of Science and Technology and Biotechnology.
24. Prof. Gupinath Bhandari, Expert Member, WBSWA.
25. Dr. Srikanta Samanta, Expert Member, WBSWA.
26. Prof. Lakshmi Sivaramakrishnan, Expert Member, WBSWA.
27. Dr. Neera Sen Sarkar, Expert Member, EKWMA.
28. Dr. Saptarshi Biswas, Expert Member, EKWMA.
29. Dr. Debarati Das, Expert Member, EKWMA.
30. Dr. Subhasish Chattopadhyaya, CME (SWM), KMC.
31. Mr. Robert Lee - Representative of M/s Greentech Farms & Agro Private Limited
32. Dr. Nitai Kundu,- Representative of M/s Greentech Farms & Agro Private Limited
33. Mr. Naresh Agarwal - Representative of M/s Kushal Agrigenix LLP
34. Mr. Kushal Agarwal - Representative of M/s Kushal Agrigenix LLP
35. Mr. Aditya Goswami - Representative of M/s Kushal Agrigenix LLP
36. Mr. Sanjay Sharma - Representative of M/s Kushal Agrigenix LLP