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Government of India/भारत सरकार  
Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change/पर्यावरण, वन और जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय  
Project Elephant Division/ हाथी परियोजना विभाग

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Dated 21<sup>st</sup> March, 2023

**OFFICE MEMORANDUM**

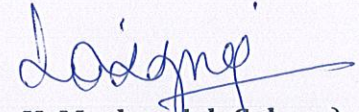
**Subject: Proceedings of the Fifth Central Project Elephant Monitoring Committee (CPEMC) held on 6<sup>th</sup> March, 2023 at Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, New Delhi -reg.**

The undersigned is enclosing herewith the approved Proceeding of the Fifth meeting of the Central Project Elephant Monitoring Committee (CPEMC) held on 6<sup>th</sup> March, 2023 under the chairmanship of Additional Director General of Forests, Project Tiger at Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Indira Paryavaran Bhawan, New Delhi.

2. This issue with the approval of the Additional Director General of Forests (Project Tiger), MoEF&CC.

Yours faithfully,

Encl. As above



(Dr. K. Muthamizh Selvan)  
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Distribution:

- As per list enclosed

Copt to:

1. PPS to Director General of Forests & Special Secretary, MoEFCC.
2. Ps to Additional Director General of Forests, Project Tiger, MoEF&CC.
3. Ps to Inspector General of Forests & Director, Project Elephant, MoEF&CC

**Proceedings of the Fifth Meeting of the Central Project Elephant Monitoring Committee (CPEMC) at 4:00 PM on 06<sup>th</sup> March 2023 at the Ministry of Environment, Forests, and Climate Change, Government of India**

The 5<sup>th</sup> Central Project Elephant Monitoring Committee (CPEMC) of the Project Elephant was held on 06<sup>th</sup> March 2023 at 4:00 PM through Video Conference under the Chairmanship of Dr. Satya Prakash Yadav, ADG (PT) & MS (NTCA), MoEF&CC.

List of the participants is annexed.

The Member Convener Shri. Ramesh Kumar Pandey, Inspector General of Forests and Director (PE Division), MoEF&CC welcomed the committee members and provided a succinct summary update on the action points identified during the fourth CPEMC meeting that was held at Periyar during August 2022.

The updates are as follows:

**Agenda-1: Status update of activities identified during the fourth CPEMC meeting**

1. The IGF (PE) informed that the Agasthiyarmalai Elephant Reserve in Tamil Nadu and the Terai Elephant Reserve in Uttar Pradesh were declared as 32<sup>nd</sup> and 33<sup>rd</sup> Elephant Reserves of India. Presently, the total area covered under the Elephant Reserves has increased to 80776.7 sq.km.
2. The IGF (PE) mentioned that the important task of ground-truthing elephant corridors across India has been going on in different States and being facilitated by the Project Elephant. A total of 63 elephant corridors have been ground validated already. The base document for the corridors is the Gajah - Elephant Task Force (ETF) report (Gajah 2010), which had listed down 88 elephant corridors. Additionally, wherever applicable, the newly identified corridors as informed by the States are also being validated. Currently, the task is nearing completion in Uttarakhand. It is being started in Karnataka, Kerala, and West Bengal and slated for completion in these states by April.
3. With regard to the creation of the genetic database of the captive elephants, the IGF (PE) mentioned that biological sample collection has been completed for 270 captive elephants occurring in the States of Delhi, Haryana, Uttarakhand, Chhattisgarh, Tripura, and Rajasthan. In addition to this, an advisory has been issued on 28.10.2022 for DNA profiling of captive elephants prior to carrying out any transit/transfer from one place to another.
4. As deliberated during the 16<sup>th</sup> Steering Committee of the Project

- Elephant, the SoP for conducting post mortem and disposal of the elephant carcass in a safe manner has been comprehensively prepared with Dr. Parag Nigam, Nodal Officer of the Elephant Cell at WII as the lead. The document is being finalized and would be released possibly during the forthcoming Gaj Utsav event.
5. With respect to the synchronized elephant and tiger population estimation of 2022, the sample collection is in progress. The updates would be provided during the meeting by the WII faculty overseeing the activity.
  6. The IGF (PE) also provided updates on the recently held CoP and CITES conventions. India made intervention on trade in Asian Elephant and underlined the various measures taken to manage captive elephants in the country and the existing legal provisions during the 19<sup>th</sup> CoP to CITES and 75<sup>th</sup> & 76<sup>th</sup> meeting of CITES Standing Committee that was held during 13<sup>th</sup>- 25<sup>th</sup> November, 2022 at Panama. Furthermore, India extended its support to the revised and new draft decision on trade in Asian Elephants.
  7. The IGF (PE) also briefed the committee members about other stakeholder interventions including the inter-ministerial dialogues relevant to elephant conservation and management. It was mentioned that based on the request of MoEF&CC, an advisory on implementation of mitigation measures to address the impact of power transmission lines and other power-related infrastructure on elephant and other wildlife was issued by the Ministry of Power (MoP) to all DISCOMs and TRANSCOs on 16<sup>th</sup> September, 2022. The IGF (PE) also mentioned that regular inter-Ministerial meetings are being held between MoEF&CC and Ministry of Railways (MoR) to deliberate on strategies to prevent the elephant death due to train hits. So far around 100 vulnerable stretches have been identified and forwarded to Ministry of railways for further actions. New technological interventions such as Seismic sensors, OFC etc. are also being explored.
  8. The IGF(PE) also provided an update on the Capacity Building workshops organised by the Project Elephant and the Elephant Cell conducted between the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> CPEMC meetings. This included the three-days exposure workshop for Mahouts organized on 3<sup>rd</sup>- 5<sup>th</sup> December, 2022 at Dudhwa TR, Uttar Pradesh with active support from the Uttar Pradesh Forest Department. A total of 30 mahouts from the northern region of India comprising of 8 states participated in the workshop. Further to this, a major workshop for the serving senior officers of the Indian Railways was conducted during the 1-3<sup>rd</sup> February 2023 at the Wildlife Institute of India. A total of 41 Railway Officers from 9 Railway zones have participated in the workshop. Another workshop on "Mainstreaming Management of the Elephant Reserves" has been planned during

20th-22nd March, 2023 at WII, Dehradun.

9. The IGF (PE) also provided a brief on important meetings pertaining to elephant conservation that were held during the period. (i) The meeting between DGF&SS, MoEF&CC and the Chairman, Railway Board was held during November, 2022 wherein discussions were made on the measures to mitigate rail-elephant conflict. (ii) Regional coordination meeting was held on HWC of the Elephant range States of the East Central Landscape on 19<sup>th</sup> January, 2023 at Kolkata, West Bengal. (iii) 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Captive Elephant Health Care and Welfare Committee (CEHWC) was also held during 17<sup>th</sup> January 2023. (iv) 11<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Asian Elephant Specialist Group in India would be held during 14<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> March, 2023 where the PE Division would also be part.
10. Lastly, the IGF (PE) also mentioned that North East Frontier Railways at Alipur Duars, West Bengal has experimented the Intrusion Detection System (IDS) with the help of specially designed AI-based software and through Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) system. The system was physically verified by a 3 members committee headed by Deputy Inspector General (Wildlife), MoEFCC. The IGF (PE) also mentioned about the experiments conducted at Rajaji TR by CSIO-CSIR in collaboration with Project Elephant, WWF-India, Uttarakhand FD and WII using seismic sensors and also thermal cameras which have been placed along the Railway lines in the Kansrao - Motichur section.

**Agenda-2: All India Synchronized Elephant Estimation 2022 - An update on the progress**

IG(PE) informed that a stocktaking of the progress of the synchronized elephant estimation was done by him during his last visit to WII and he had underlined the importance of the elephant estimation and completion of the task on priority.

It is important to mention that the synchronous elephant and tiger population estimation is being carried out for the first-time ever in India. The task is being steered by the Tiger Cell at WII. The faculty member at WII overseeing the task of conducting the synchronized elephant and tiger census, Dr. Vishnupriya, Scientist-D, WII made a presentation updating the work-in-progress. Dr. Vishnupriya mentioned that the progress towards data collection has been satisfactory and that the Phase-I task involving beat-level data collection has been completed. Out of the 10,892 grids-cells sampled, 1582 grid-cells had elephant presence. Further to this, the encounter rate of the elephants has also been mapped. Based on the findings of the Phase-I and Phase-II, the 22 sites have been identified for Phase-III sampling, which involves DNA sample collection for individual identification and consequent, capture-recapture sampling analysis. Among the 22 identified sites, sample collection has been completed in the two sites of Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve in the Madhya Pradesh and the Bandipur

Tiger Reserve in Karnataka.

The Chairperson ADG (PT) taking note of the progress as updated by Dr. Vishnupriya asked the tentative dates in which the final report would be released. The ADG (PT) further insisted that this is a task of high priority, and that the dates have to be indicated. The final report would provide the population estimate of elephants across India. Dr. Vishnupriya mentioned that the status of the analysis would be evaluated and in consultation with Prof. Qamar Qureshi, senior faculty and the Nodal Officer of the WII Tiger Reserve, the tentative dates for the release of the report would be updated. Dr. Vishnupriya further mentioned that inputs would be taken from the Nodal Officers of the Elephant Cell Dr. Parag Nigam and Dr. Bilal Habib.

**Agenda-3: Facilitating smooth movement of elephants along the interstate boundary thereby minimizing HEC.**

The IGF (PE) mentioned that the elephant habitats often span across state boundaries. There were issues between the states on interstate movement of elephants and thus, there is a need to actively monitor the situation and help the states in ensuring safe elephant passage across the state boundaries. He further mentioned that the coordination meeting of the elephant range States of the east-central region took place on 19<sup>th</sup> January, 2023 at Kolkata, West Bengal wherein the MoEFCC requested the elephant range States in the region to identify, clearly demarcate, communicate and protect the interstate elephant habitats and corridors to ensure free movements of the elephants.

**Agenda-4: Ratification of the Management Effectiveness Evaluation (MEE) for Elephant Reserves.**

IGF (PE) mentioned that the Management Effectiveness Evaluation plan was drawn up and approved by the Hon'ble MEF for implementation during the 16<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Steering Committee of Project Elephant. First meeting of the Committee has been convened and the criteria and indicators of MEE are being developed. IGF (PE) reviewed the progress of works done under the Management Effectiveness Evaluation for Elephant Reserves in a meeting held at WII, Dehradun in January 2023. The MEE criteria/ guidelines as finalized by the Project Elephant and the WII Elephant Cell may be released during the forthcoming Gaj Utsav event.

**Agenda-5: Issues raised by Hon'ble courts on matters pertaining to (i) captive elephants management by Hon'ble High Court of Tripura and (ii) securing elephant corridors of Uttarakhand by the Hon'ble High Court of Uttarakhand**

1. IGF (PE) informed about the Order of the Hon'ble High Court of Tripura in WP(C)(PIL) No.17/2022 directing the States to carry out census of all the captive elephants regardless of whether the elephants occur in government/private ownership. The Hon'ble court also issued directions for creation of inventory of captive

elephants with the details such as name, details of ownership certificate, microchip number and recent high-quality photographs. Further to this, it was also directed that the inspection and verification of certificate of ownerships of all captive elephants should be done. Further directions include conducting proper DNA sequencing for new offspring so as to identify and prevent capture of young elephants from the wild.

2. The IGF (PE) also mentioned about the Order passed by the Hon'ble High Court of Uttarakhand at Nainital in the WP (PIL) 164/2019 wherein it was directed to declare the elephant corridors in the Corbett landscape of the state as Eco-sensitive zones under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.

**Agenda-6 Any other items with the permission of the Chair**

1. CPEMC member Dr. P.Pramod, Senior Principal Scientist, SACON, informed that the report pertaining to the visit of the select committee members to the state of Assam towards assessment of human-elephant conflict would be submitted shortly. The three member internal committee was constituted in the 4<sup>th</sup> CPEMC. Dr. Pramod was one of the committee members.
2. Dr. DigvijaySingh Khati, former PCCF & CWLW, Uttarakhand enquired about the mandates and the scope of the MEE for the Elephant Reserves and that if the field managers can extend the MEE for the existing protected areas as well. It was then clarified by IGF (PE) that presently ERs do not have MEE and the process of developing it is ongoing. Once the contents are fully ready, it would be taken up for discussion in the Steering Committee and the CPEMC as well.

**Decisions taken:**

- The Chairman, ADG (PT) solicited follow-up action from the PE Division on the coordination meeting of the elephant range States of the east-central region that was held on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2023 at Kolkata. He mentioned that as a follow-up issues related to identification, demarcation and subsequent protection of the interstate elephant corridors for ensuing free movements of elephants may be taken up.
- The Chairman of the committee stated that the All India Synchronized Elephant and Tiger Estimation needs to be expedited and the final elephant estimation report should be released at the earliest.
- The Chairman, ADG (PT) said that the PE Division would coordinate with the States to explore the possibility of implementing Intrusion Detection System (IDS) through Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) system in high conflict areas so that the performance of the IDS can be well understood.

The meeting ended with thanks to the Chair and other committee members.

**List of the participants**

1. Dr. Satya Prakash Yadav, Additional Director General (Project Tiger), Member Secretary (NTCA), MoEFCC
2. Shri. Ramesh Kumar Pandey, Inspector General of Forests&Director, Project Elephant MoEFCC and Member Convener
3. Shri. Rakesh Kumar Jagenia, Deputy Inspector General of Forests (Wildlife), MoEFCC
4. Shri. Ganga Singh, PCCF & CWLW, Government of Kerala
5. Shri.Ranjan Kumar Das, Former CCF, Assam
6. Shri. Surendra Kumar, Member - CPEMC and PCCF (retd), Kerala
7. Shri. Digvijay Singh Khati, Member - CPEMC and PCCF (retd), Uttarakhand
8. Shri. Kishor Kumar Bisen, Member - CPEMC and CCF (retd), Chhattisgarh
9. Dr. P. Pramod, Member - CPEMC and Senior Principal Scientist, SACON
10. Dr. Anamitra Anurag, Member - CPEMC and WWF-India, West Bengal
11. Dr. K. Muthamizh Selvan, Scientist E, PE Division, MoEFCC
12. Dr. Parag Nigam, Scientist F, Wildlife Institute of India
13. Dr. Bilal Habib, Scientist E, Wildlife Institute of India
14. Dr. SamratMondol, Scientist E, Wildlife Institute of India
15. Dr. VishnupriyaKolipakam, Scientist D, Wildlife Institute of India
16. Shri Aditya Bisht, Consultant-B, Elephant Cell, Wildlife Institute of India
17. Dr. N. Lakshminarayanan, Project Scientist, Elephant Cell, Wildlife Institute of India
18. Shri. Udhaya Raj, GIS Specialist, Elephant Cell, WII
19. Ms. Aakriti Singh, Senior Research Fellow, Elephant