

Minutes of the 2nd Meeting of reconstituted West Bengal State Coastal Zone Management Authority (WBSCZMA) held on 01.11.2022 at the Conference Room of Environment Department, Govt. of West Bengal.

The 2nd meeting of reconstituted WBSCZMA was held on 01.11.2022 at the conference room of Environment Department, Govt. of West Bengal, Pranisampad Bhawan, 5th floor, Sector –III, Salt Lake, Kolkata, in Hybrid mode.

The meeting was attended by the following WBSCZMA members:

1. Smt. Roshni Sen, Principal Secretary, Environment Department & Chairperson, WBSCZMA
2. Smt. Neelam Meena, Secretary, Environment Department & Member Secretary, WBSCZMA
3. Sri. Aniruddha Raha, Special Secretary, Urban Development & Municipal Affairs Department
4. Sri. Piar Chand, Addl. PCCF & Director, Sundarban Biosphere Reserve, Directorate of Forests
5. Dr. Kalyan Rudra, Chairman, West Bengal Pollution Control Board
6. Prof. Kalyan Kumar Chattopadhyay, Deptt. of Civil Engineering, Indian Institute of Engineering Science and Technology, Shibpur, Howrah
7. Prof. Asis Mazumdar, School of Water Resources Engineering, Jadavpur University
8. Representatives from Sundarban Affairs Department
9. Smt. Ajanta Dey, Ajanta Dey, Joint Secretary & Programme Director, Nature Environment and Wildlife Society (NGO)

The following officials attended the meeting as special invitees:

1. Sri. K. Balamurgan, Chief Environment Officer, Environment Department
2. Dr. Himadri Sekhar Debnath, Chairman, WBBB
3. Smt. Tripti Sah, Senior Environment Officer, Environment Department
4. Sri. Rajarshi Chakraborty, Environment Officer, Environment Department
5. Addl. District Magistrate & DLLRO, South 24Pgs.
6. Sri. Debajyoti Bhowmik, Consultant, IESWM

Following officers were present on behalf of Project Proponent:

1. Smt. Antara Acharya, Secretary, Public Works Department.
2. Sri. Debabrato Dhar, Executive Engineer, South 24Pgs. Highway Division, P.W.(Roads) Directorate
3. Dr. Bibhas Ch. Barman, Dy. Director, River Research Institute (RRI), I & W Department.

Agenda No. 1

CRZ clearance for the proposed project of construction of Bridge over Bidya River connecting Godkhali to Gosaba Bazar, South 24 Parganas District.

The Principal Secretary & Chairman, WBSCZMA welcomed all the participants and recalled the resolutions of the previous two meetings held on 28.7.2020 and 09.11.2020 wherein the project proponent was asked to submit supporting documents to establish that the alternative alignment suggested by it (Alternative 1) has minimum adverse ecological impact in the area. In the meeting held on 09.11.2020, the project proponent has placed 3 alternative alignments and stated that alignment 1 (the northernmost passing over confluence of river Bidya with other tributary river Durgadhuani) was chosen because it was found to be the most environment friendly. While the expert members of the SCZMA were of the view that alignment 2 appeared to be more optimum option rather than alignment 1 because alignment 1 is at the confluence of two rivers where the chance of sand deposition is maximum, hence it was decided that the project proponent would ask River Research Institute (RRI) to submit its comments regarding the optimum alignment of this bridge in this region.

Project proponent during the present meeting informed that it had received report of RRI in the month of September 2021 which was circulated through email to all the expert members by SCZMA for their views. It also stated that members had accepted the alignment number 1, on the basis of the report of RRI and thus the matter of alignment has been already settled.

But the expert members of the newly constituted WBSCZMA were of the view that the alignment 1 still does not seem the optimum alignment. The project proponent could not submit the mathematical modeling study and evaluation report for the two other alignments to the authority. Upon enquiry the RRI informed that it has done mathematical modeling only for the alignment number 1.

After a long discussion it was decided that:

1. The River Research Institute (RRI) has considered only Alignment 1 to run their mathematical model on the basis of available data. Hence it seems that the resolution of the previous meeting was not addressed properly as other alternatives were not explored as per suggestions of the expert members.
2. The proposed project area is very close to the confluence point of two rivers and hence geomorphological impacts need to be given special attention along with other environmental impacts. The damage to the mangrove plantation cannot be single criteria.
3. It was informed to the house that land acquisition process was already completed considering the Alignment 1 and this came into the focal point of this proposed project. ADM&DLLRO, South 24Pgs. explained the land status of the proposed project area.

4. It was pointed out that there are some data mismatching in the report and presentation. It was also mentioned that the basis of analysis and various impact issues were not clearly mentioned in the report.
5. That all the issues raised in the 2nd meeting, held on 09.11.2020, need to be thoroughly reviewed again by the RRI and expert members, under the Chairmanship of Dr. Kalyan Rudra, before placing it in the next meeting.

Agenda No. 2

Definition of Wide River for mainland Sundarban area:

In the 8th Meeting of the WBSCZMA, held on 15.10.2022, it was decided that in the "Mainland Sundarbans", barring the wide River areas there-in, the CRZ extent from HTL for tide influenced water bodies may be kept at 50 meters or width of the creek whichever is less.

The authority was informed that the issue of the definition of Wide River has been taken up with the regional office of the Survey of India at Kolkata and the River Research Institute (RRI). It was informed that there are no such criteria for defining a river as wide river.

After a thorough discussion it was decided that Sri Kalyan Rudra an expert in hydrology and Chairman, WBPCB; the Irrigation and Waterways Deptt. and the River Research Institute (RRI) will discuss among themselves to resolve this issue and inform the authority. This issue is to be settled at the earliest for expediting the CZMP, 2011 updation work in the North 24 Parganas District.

The meeting ended with thanks to and from the chair.

Kashmi Sen 18/11/22
Chairman, WBSCZMA
&
Principal Secretary
Environment Department,
Govt. of West Bengal