

MINUTES OF THE 6TH MEETING OF THE WEST BENGAL STATE COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY (WBSCZMA) HELD ON 1ST MARCH, 2024 AT 3:00 PM IN THE CONFERENCE HALL OF FISHERIES DEPARTMENT, GoWB.

PRESENT:

1. Additional Chief Secretary, Department of Environment, GoWB & Additional Chief Secretary, Department of Fisheries, GoWB.
2. Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Director, Sundarban Biosphere Reserve, Directorate of Forest, GoWB.
3. Director, Institute of Environmental Studies and Wetland Management.
4. Secretary, Department of Fisheries, GoWB.
5. Shri Sagar Chakrabarti, Addl. Secretary, Department of Sundarban Affairs, GoWB.
6. Ms. Supriya Adhikari, Jt. Secretary, UD&MA Department, GoWB.
7. Shri Saibal Thakurala, CTP, UD&MA Department, GoWB.
8. Prof. Asis Mazumdar, School of Water Resources Engineering, Jadavpur University, West Bengal.
9. Ms. Ajanta Dey, Joint Secretary and Programme Director, Nature Environment Organisation and Wildlife Society.

The meeting was chaired by the Additional Chief Secretary, Environment Department, GoWB & Chairperson, WBSCZMA. She welcomed all the members.

The agenda discussed and decided upon were as follows -

Agenda - 1: Ratification of the decision of Technical Committee on draft CZMP, 2019 of North 24 Parganas:

A Technical Committee was constituted as per the decision taken in the meeting held on 19/05/2023 under the Chairmanship of Hon'ble Chief Secretary, GoWB to decide on the issue of re-alignment of High Tide Line (HTL) at places where embankments have been constructed by the Irrigation & Waterways Deptt. in different mouza of North 24 Parganas District. The committee in their meeting dt. 28.07.2023, made some recommendations on the issue of re-alignment of High Tide Line (HTL). However, a second meeting was required to be convened on 17.11.2023 to discuss on the issues encountered during the updation of CZMP work, following the earlier decisions of the Technical Committee and their implications.

The Technical Committee decided that the division of Sundarban into Mainland and Island is not feasible due to frequent changes in the geomorphology of whole Sundarban region because of frequent shifting of river courses, climate change induced severe cyclones and sea level rise. Hence, the CRZ extent from HTL for tide influenced water bodies shall be kept at 100 mts or width of the creek whichever is less, as per the provisions of CRZ Notification-2011, irrespective of new embankments, vulnerable stretches etc. and will be so for the whole Sundarban. This decision is in contrast to the decision taken earlier in the 8th meeting of WBSCZMA held on 15.10.2020.

The Committee had also decided that the draft CZMP-2019 for North 24 Parganas, should be accordingly reworked with updated CZMP report. Accordingly, the CZMP-2019 for North 24 Parganas, has been re-worked and revised. The updated statistics were forwarded to the Consultants in charge of CZMP report writing and they have recently submitted the same on 12.02.2024.

The decision of the Technical Committee was put before the Authority for ratification.

- Decisions:
1. The members of the Governing Body ratified the decision taken by the Technical Committee.
 2. It was also decided that a public hearing would be again called for the draft CZMP of North 24 Parganas prepared as per the decision of Technical Committee.

Agenda - 2: Shoreline Change map and its incorporation in the CZMP:

The WBSCZMA had submitted the draft CZMP, 2019 of Purba Medinipur District to MoEF&CC and NCSCM on 13.01.2023. However, MoEF&CC vide its letter dated 27.02.2023 has stated that the shoreline change data as provided by NCSCM is also to be incorporated in the updated CZMP. NCSCM was accordingly requested to prepare the shoreline change map of West Bengal coast.

A meeting was convened with NCSCM on 19.02.2024 to discuss on some of the issues regarding shoreline change map provided by NCSCM. IESWM is in receipt of the same in both .shp and pdf map layout. Also, they were requested to opine on the prescribed norm of submission of shoreline data for approval from MOEF&CC. NCSCM opined that the shoreline change map may be separately submitted along draft CZMP maps for approval.

Shoreline Change Map provided by NCSCM was placed before the Authority.

- Decision:
- The Authority decided that the shoreline change map may be separately submitted along with draft CZMP maps and LULC maps for approval.

Agenda - 3: Preparation of Integrated Management Plan (IMP) for Critically Vulnerable Coastal Areas (CVCAs):

Critically Vulnerable Coastal Areas (CVCA) include identified Ecological Sensitive Areas (ESA) to be managed by the local community including fisherfolk. As per the CRZ Notification 2011, an Integrated Management Plans (IMPs) is to be prepared for Critical Vulnerable Coastal Areas (CVCA) which includes Sunderbans.

CRZ Notification 2011, Para-8V4c, states *"the process of identifying, planning, notifying and implementing CVCA shall be detailed in the guideline which will be developed and notified by MoEF in consultations with the stakeholders like the State Government, local coastal communities and fisherfolk and the like inhabiting the area"*.

The CVCA for West Bengal as delineated and provided by NCSCM in Dec, 2019 during finalizing of CZMP, 2011 was incorporated as it is, which was approved by

MOEF&CC in June, 2020. It has been observed that almost all the CVCA for West Bengal lies exclusively within the rivers of the Sundarbans and hardly any land area was demarcated, without any rationale or explanation provided.

Draft Guidelines for preparation of Integrated Management Plan (IMP) and Table of Contents for the development of guidelines for IMP, for CVCA has been shared by MoEF&CC. Once the final guidelines are shared by MoEF&CC the process for preparation of IMP would have to be taken up.

WBSCZMA needs to decide whether to engage scientific institutions or to go ahead as a joint venture or otherwise to take up IMP preparation work. Necessary resources and infrastructure is required to be procured accordingly. Draft Guideline shared by MoEF&CC was placed in the meeting.

Decision: The Authority decided that a proper plan to take up the IMP preparation work would be prepared by IESWM and placed before it for final decision in the matter.

Agenda - 4: Preparation of IMP for Islands as per NGT's order communicated by MoEF&CC:

Matter : Hon'ble NGT had taken cognizance of a report in The Hindu on **the sinking islands** of India and constituted a committee to study the impact of Sea Level rise on the islands and frame policy & measures to protect these islands from submergence, erosion, saline ingress, flooding and other adverse environmental aspects. The report also mentions Sagar Island of West Bengal.

Hon'ble NGT's Orders/Reports were placed before the Authority in the meeting. The aim as it seems to be is further comprehensive study into climate change issues and to formulate new policy decisions accordingly. The Authority was informed that an Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan prepared earlier for Sagar Island under the ICZM Project may also be looked into for this purpose.

Decision: The Authority decided that a proper plan to take up the matter would be prepared by IESWM and placed before it for final decision in the matter.

Agenda - 5: Training and Capacity Building of 3 coastal districts of West Bengal:

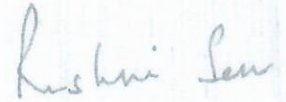
IESWM is conducting training for officials of Purba Medinipur, North 24 Parganas and South 24 Parganas District to enable them in identification of violations in CRZ areas. So far, CRZ Orientation programme has been conducted for the districts of Purba Medinipur and South 24 Parganas.

Decision: It was opined that such training and awareness programmes should be conducted for the govt. officials and if possible for the general public as well on a regular basis to sensitize them about CRZ Regulations, issues etc.

Agenda - 6: Miscellaneous.

Decision: 1) The Authority decided that the Land and Transport Department would be included in the future meetings as Invitee Members.

2) Addl. PCCF & Director, Sundarban Biosphere Reserve requested that for small construction such as jetties, hand pumps and barracks for use of forest staff in 24 Pgs. South Division and Sundarban Tiger Reserve, may be allowed by WBSCZMA without the need of submission of documents such as maps and EIA report etc. It was decided that a proposal in this regard may come from Forest Department, which can be submitted to NCZMA for approval.



Additional Chief Secretary,
Environment Department
&
Chairperson,
WBSCZMA