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**Minutes of the 5<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Executive Committee, APFBC society**  
**held on 26.06.2014**

In the chair- Shri Davinder Kumar, IAS, Principal Secretary, Government of Assam  
Environment and Forest Department

Members/ invitees present as per List appended.

**Record of proceedings:**

On behalf of the chairperson Shri O. P. Pandey, Member Secretary welcomed all the members, invitees present in the meeting. After a brief self introduction by members and invitees, the Member Secretary with permission of the chair proceeded to present issues listed in the agenda for deliberation.

The Agenda wise discussions and decisions are given below:

**Agenda item – 1:** Validation of the minutes of 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of the EC.

The Member Secretary informed that the minutes of the 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of the EC had been circulated to all concerned and no comments had been received. The minutes of the 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of the EC circulated vide letter No. APFBC/1/ECMEETING/2013/16 dt. 10.04.2014 be taken as validated.

**Agenda item – 2:** Review of progress made since last meeting.

The Member Secretary made a presentation regarding progress made in implementation of Assam Project on Forest and Biodiversity Conservation (APFBC) after 4<sup>th</sup> EC meeting held on 12.02.2014 highlighting the details as below:

- i. “NOC” of the French Development Agency (Afd) to various documents related to procurement of goods and services.
  - NOC to the documents related to procurement of Audit and Monitoring & Evaluation firms was received on 4<sup>th</sup> March/2014. Advertisement could not be taken out because of enforcement of MCC.  
Advertisement is expected to be taken out latest by the middle of July by the PMU, APFBC Society
  - Modified RFP for procurement of Technical Assistance was communicated by the Afd in the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> May, 2014 which is being processed and efforts would be made to prepare comments expeditiously within fortnight's time.

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- Detailed guideline for procurement of goods has also been communicated by the French Development Agency which will be processed too and clarification required / observation made, if any, will be communicated to the AfD within week's time.
  - NOC from French Development Agency is yet to be received for all other documents sent to them.
- ii. Identification of Joint Forest Management Committees/ Eco-Development Committees is underway and the task of identification of JFMCs as well as earmarking of area under each JFMC for creating firewood is expected to be completed soon within 31<sup>st</sup> August, 2014.  
Identification of Eco-Development Committees and PA wise allocation of habitat improvement activity is awaited from the Wildlife Wing. The MS informed the EC that the PCCF (WL) has been provided with all the requisite details in the matter. The EC, after brief discussion, opined that the PCCF(WL) should provide the required details within 15<sup>th</sup> of August, 2014
  - iii. The MS informed the EC that no fund has been released to the Assam Biodiversity Board as the proposal submitted by the Board invited observations from the Chief Secretary and Chairperson, GB which were communicated to the Board for incorporating required modifications in the Board's proposal. The revised proposal of the Board was discussed in the meeting of Senior Forest officers held on 8<sup>th</sup> May, 2014 and was consented for presenting the same to the EC, APFBC Society.
  - iv. The MS informed the EC that estimate submitted by the CCF, CAC for setting up a Bamboosetum at Rani was discussed in the meeting of the Senior Forest Officers held under the chairmanship of the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests & Head of Forest Force, Assam on 8<sup>th</sup> of May, 2014 and the CCF, CAC was directed to submit a revised estimate in consultation with specialists in RFRI, Jorhat.
  - v. Recruitment of contractual staff to PMU is expected to be completed within a week's time.
  - vi. Refurbishing of the office space for PMU is pending. Chief Conservator of Forests, (Research Education and working Plan), Assam has been requested to take necessary action for expeditious execution of the work and if necessary fresh bids may be invited. Considering necessity of office space for the PMU to function properly the EC opined that the CCF (RE&WP) should take necessary action to get the work completed within 20<sup>th</sup> August, 2014
  - vii. a) Division wise details of creation of new plantation in the year 2014-15 against Annual Work Plan 2013-14 was presented to the EC by the Member Secretary. It was informed that fund amounting to Rs. 7,31,00,385.00 has been disbursed to the FIUs for creation of plantation over a total of 8320 ha. area. In addition a sum of Rs. 85,11,300.00 was also disbursed to the FIUs for nursery purpose. Thus, a total sum of Rs. 8,16,11,658.00 was disbursed to the FIUs for creation of plantation and for nursery work in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of the year 2014-15 and details are enclosed and marked **Annexure-I**



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b) Details of maintenance of Plantation created in the year 2013-14 against Annual Work Plan 2012-13 was also presented by the Member Secretary. It was informed that total fund released amounted to Rs.38,60,220.00 for maintenance of 3937 ha. plantation in total created in the year 2013-14 and the details are enclosed and marked **Annexure-II**

c) Achievement of plantation target and balance plantation to be created was presented by the Member Secretary and is enclosed and marked **Annexure-III**.

viii. **Accounting Software**: The Member Secretary informed that NIC has provided Accounting Software and it needs to be trial run which will be done by the Accountant recruited by the PMU.

In case the software developed by the NIC is not able to meet the accounting requirements of the APFBC the MS proposed to procure commercially available accounting software from market. The EC approved the proposal of the MS.

ix. Receipt of Grant- in- aid from the State Government. A sum of Rs. 68.32 crore was received from the State Government as grant- in- aid to the Assam Project on Forest and Biodiversity Conservation Society and was credited to the account of the Society on 24<sup>th</sup> April/2014.

**Agenda item – 3:** Approval of AWP 2014-15.

The Member Secretary presented before the EC details of the activities included in the AWP:14-15 under different Components to be implemented with budgetary support amounting to Rs. 68,07,49,445/- (**Annexure-IV**).

The Principal Secretary, Government of Assam, Environment and Forest Department and Chairperson, EC made following observation w.r.t. AWP:14-15 observed that:

1. Under 'Capacity Building of Staff' the number of officers for overseas visits should be increased from the proposed 10 (ten) officers. He also observed that more officers should be sent for training and attending workshops in reputed forestry institutes in the country.
  - The MS informed the EC that the budget breakdown of the project will have to be revisited for appropriating fund for sending more officers for exposure visits abroad and the exercise would be undertaken once the consultants join the PMU.
  - Regarding training of officers the MS informed the EC that the Project puts emphasis on imparting training to non IFS officers in the rank of DCF, ACF, Range Officer and front line staff in other ranks on both traditional and concurrent themes and all efforts will be made to enlist most of the Officers for training for which resource persons will be invited from reputed forestry institutes.
2. Under the activity 'Rehabilitate and Enhance Existing Infrastructure and equipment' the issue of non availability of land for construction of residential buildings for senior Officers in Guwahati cropped up. One of the constraint is non completion of the Office Building at Panjabari as a result land at Rehabari is not becoming available for the purpose.



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The Chairperson advised that the matter should be highlighted and brought to the notice of the Chief Secretary, Assam

3. Procurement of computers and other accessories/equipment should be completed expeditiously. The MS informed the EC that the PMU has received the AfD Guidelines on procurement of goods recently and with the help of increased manpower in the PMU the target would be achieved as expeditiously as possible.
4. The infrastructure of Forest Training Schools at Makum and Jalukbari should be improved so as to make these two institutes as **Centers of Excellence** for forestry research and training for not only the State of Assam but for all the states in the North East. The MS informed the EC that the two institutes are being upgraded with financial assistance from the JAICA and implementation is being done through the CCF(RE&WP).
5. For enhanced interaction with other departments and partners the number of workshops needed to be increased as more awareness across other departments as well as interaction to sort out bottlenecks and adoption of best and proven practices in successful implementation of activities under the project will be required.
6. Preparation of Working Plans is a much needed management activity which will determine to a large extent flow of plan fund to forestry sector in the state and thus, needs coordinated and expeditious action by the Chief Conservator of Forests (RE & WP) and the concerned Conservator of Forests. A participatory planning approach should be adopted so that the aspirations and ethos of the people are taken into consideration.
7. Under Component 4 i.e. 'Adding value and opening markets /opportunities' the Chairperson enquired if plantation can be raised under PPP mode.  
The MS stated that for raising plantation under PPP mode in Reserved Forests; guidelines under any Central or State Forestry Act/ Regulation does not exist. Further, ecological parameters will have to be determined and defined for plantations that can be raised under PPP mode in Reserved Forests in the State of Assam as it constitutes part of a bio-diverse region.  
After in depth discussion the EC concluded that the matter of raising plantation under PPP mode on non forest land/ community land can provide opportunity for extending tree cover beyond notified forest land in the state besides providing employment opportunity to forest dependent communities. The matter needs to be explored further and suitable initiative in this regard may be taken by the State Government.
8. There was a need to strengthen the JFMCs and EDCs. The services of the teachers and students may be utilized for generating awareness through extensive plantation activities during Van Mahotsava.
9. There was a need for greater coordination between various wings of the Department and the field officers specially the Conservator of Forests and the DFOs have to play a proactive role in identifying appropriate sites for raising plantations and for implementation of other activities.



Agenda Item - 4: Any other issues with permission of chair

The EC discussed issues presented by the Member Secretary and approved the following:

- i. Payment of Rs. 7/dl to labourers as VDA under Minimum Wage Act in accordance with notification issued by the State Government in Labour and Employment Department.
- ii. Repair of hostel at Forest School, Jalukbari. The MS informed the EC that the estimate has been sent to the PWD(Building) for vetting.
- iii. The revised proposal of the Assam Biodiversity Board (ASBB) as per observation of the GB in the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting for transfer of fund from the APFBC. The MS informed the EC that the ASBB, after transfer of fund becomes an Accounting Centre under the APFBC will engage one Account Assistant on contractual basis for preparing accounts and he/she would be paid monthly remuneration at par with Account Assistants engaged on contractual basis by the APFBC Society in other Accounting Centers.

The issue of payment of monthly remuneration at revised rate to CDO/ Account Assistant engaged on contractual basis by the APFBC was discussed by the EC. The EC was informed by the MS that the present rate of monthly remuneration is Rs.10000/- for CDO and Rs. 12000/-for Account Assistant as approved by the GB in the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting. In addition, incentives @ 10% increase in monthly remuneration at the time of renewal of contract, group health insurance cover, EPF as applicable will also be eligible and has been approved by the GB in the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting.


After detailed discussion the members opined that the monthly remuneration to the Computer Data Operator and Account Assistant may be enhanced to an upper limit of Rs 20000/-

The EC further opined that the issue be brought to the notice of the GB for approval in the next meeting.

- iv. Price for RFP documents may be fixed @ Rs.5000/- or 1% of the cost of works whichever is more..
- v. Norms for management of Sal Coppice Regeneration should be discussed within the Department and finalized and approval of the EC be taken.

The Chair Person directed that all information particularly the progress report should be circulated to all concerned well in advance so that the members can come prepared for the meeting.

The meeting ended with thanks from Chairperson to all members and invitees.

  
(Davinder Kumar, IAS)  
Principal Secretary, Govt. of Assam  
Environment & Forest Department and  
Chairperson, Executive Committee  
APFBC Society