

**MINUTES OF THE  
43<sup>rd</sup> BOARD MEETING OF THE WEST BENGAL BIODIVERSITY BOARD**

Date : 13<sup>th</sup> June, 2023

Venue: Conference Room, Department of Environment, Government of West Bengal

**THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS AND OFFICIALS PARTICIPATED IN THE DELIBERATION:**

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| 1. Dr. Himadri Sekhar Debnath  | : | Chairman, W. B. Biodiversity Board  |
| 2. Sri Sasim Kumar Barai, IAS  | : | Special Commissioner, Environment Deptt.  |
| 3. Mr. Debal Ray, IFS          | : | Principal Chief Conservator of Forests,<br>Wildlife & Chief Wildlife Warden,<br>Department of Forests, GoWB |
| 4. Mr. Subha Mukherjee         | : | Addl. Secretary, Department of Agriculture,   |
| 5. Sri Kallol Panigrahi        | : | Dy. Secy., Department of Fisheries  |
| 6. Dr. (Ms.) Anupama Mitra     | : | Former Dy. Secy., Agri-Horticulture Society of<br>India, Kolkata – Expert Member of WBBB                    |
| 7. Prof. Krishnendu Acharya    | : | Deptt. of Botany, CU – Expert Member of WBBB  |
| 8. Prof. Prasanta Kumar Sarkar | : | State Ayurvedic Medical College<br>& Ex-Director of State Medicinal Plant Board<br>- Expert Member of WBBB  |
| 9. Smt. Tripti Sah, IFS        | : | Member Secretary, W. B. Biodiversity Board  |

**THE INITIATION OF THE PROCEEDINGS**

The meeting was chaired by the Chairman, W.B.B.B.. At the outset he extended a warm welcome to all the members of the Board and provided a brief account of the conservation activities being undertaken by the Board in different districts underlining notification of Biodiversity Heritage Sites. He put stress on the need of marketing of the crop produced in the course of different indigenous crop conservation projects undertaken in pilot modes. He then requested the Member Secretary to brief about the meeting notes to be followed by agenda wise detailed discussion.

Member Secretary then initiated the normal proceedings of the meeting as follows.

**Agenda– 1: Confirmation of the Minutes of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Board Meeting:**

The Member Secretary apprised the Board members on the minutes of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Board meeting and requested for their consent to consider the same as accepted. The members approved and accepted the same.

**Agenda– 2: Confirmation of Action Taken Report on the decisions taken in 42<sup>nd</sup> Board Meeting:**

Member Secretary, WBBB shared action taken by the Board on the decisions adopted in 42<sup>nd</sup> Board meeting.

- i) It was informed that BHS notifications for the identified sites have already been published and circulated to all concerned.
- ii) Member Secretary apprised the Board that engagement of District Coordinators and PBR Monitoring Assistant has been renewed for F.Y. 2022-2023.
- iii) Member Secretary reported to the Board that the file for annual increment of Accountant and Computer Operator-cum-Office Assistant has been sent to

Environment Department for seeking approval. File is now with Finance Department.

- iv) Two personnel have been engaged in the position of Technical Assistant – Conservation and Technical Assistant – ABS, in project mode funded by NBA, after due concurrence from Environment Department.
- v) The account for the F.Y. 2019-2020 has been audited by CAG as authenticated by the board in its 42<sup>nd</sup> meeting.
- vi) The balance project fund after utilization has been refunded back to environment Department.
- vii) Member Secretary informed that the State Board has written to the National Biodiversity Authority (NBA) to allow it to utilise the accrued interest fund for the similar purpose for which the fund was originally allocated but response from NBA is still awaited.
- viii) Separate account for maintaining NBA funds has been opened and the same has been communicated to NBA.
- ix) Member Secretary reported that W.B.B.B. has contacted other State Boards seeking information about the percentage of sharing of benefits based on purchase price. In response, Assam & Madhya Pradesh State Boards have shared that the percentage of benefits shared is 5% for the said mode.  
She also informed that the Board has organized district level capacity building programmes in which a component on ABS has been incorporated for sensitization of the Biodiversity Management Committee (BMC) members and other district officials.
- x) The Board was informed that the guideline for identification of ancient tree is being worked on.
- xi) She reported that regarding post-retirement benefits for the employees of WBBB an e-file was moved to the Environment Department. The file was forwarded to the Finance Department and has come back with comments.

**Agenda– 3: Matter for ratification:**

Member Secretary apprised that the service of District Coordinators and PBR Monitoring Assistant has been renewed with due approval from the Environment Department and the same was ratified by the Board.

**Agenda– 4: Recruitment against the vacant posts:**

Member Secretary informed that for filling up of five vacant posts *i.e.* Research Officer (1), Jr. Research Officer (1), Research Assistant (3) and Stenographer (1) a recruitment procedure has been prepared and tabled the same for approval of the Board. After threadbare discussion the Board requested the Member Secretary to reinitiate the process by submitting all the relevant documents to the Environment Department for obtaining due concurrence from State Government.

Member Secretary informed that the Board has moved an e-file for regularization of two personnel engaged on contractual basis against the posts of Accountant and Office Assistant through open advertisement. As per last report the file is currently under consideration in Finance Department. The members noted the submission.

**Agenda – 5: Post retirement benefits of the employees:** The Member Secretary mentioned that in the 42<sup>nd</sup> meeting it was decided to extend the post-retirement benefits to the regular employees of the Board and an e-file for gratuity was also moved which has come back from Finance Department with some observations. In this regard two separate draft rules on Death-Cum-Retirement-Benefit and General Provident Fund have been prepared and the same were tabled for the approval of the Board for submission of the same to the Environment Department for further proceedings. The Board granted in principal approval in the matter and requested the Member Secretary to take further action in the matter.

**Agenda– 6:**

**6(a) :**

Member Secretary informed about publication of public notice in two daily newspapers for registration of companies with the State Board in connection to ABS agreement. She reported that, so far about 90 such companies have registered with the Board. Chairman mentioned about the important roles played by different regulatory bodies like ISM Drug Control, WBPCB etc.

**6(b) :**

Member Secretary placed the prayer of M/s. Dey’s Medical Stores (Manufacturing) Limited seeking permission to pay 3% on purchase price as ABS contribution for the pending period of 2013-2014 to 2020-2021. After prolonged discussion it was decided that uniform rate of 5% to be maintained for the commercial entities opting for purchase price mode of benefit sharing, both for their past dues as well as for present ABS calculations. The members suggested that the Board may consider to offer instalment options for paying the fund on the merit of the particular case.

**Agenda- 6(b):** On the proposal for engagement of a Financial Consultant for the purpose of calculating the annual turnover, input cost etc. of the companies applying for Access & Benefit Sharing (ABS), the Board permitted to hire the service of a qualified Chartered Accountant, against consolidated service charge, in a need-based manner. The Board requested the Chairman to take a decision on the matter as per requirement.

The issue of non-compliance of some companies was brought to the notice of the Board by the Member Secretary. It was decided to issue a notice to such companies invoking the decision taken in the ABS committee meeting. The Board requested the Member Secretary to list out the names of such companies and initiate further action in the matter.

**Agenda– 7: Green audit of the educational institutions:**

Member Secretary informed the Board that applications for conducting green audit in educational institutions are coming to the Board and requested the members to share their views in the matter. After much discussion it was decided that the Board may provide such service against a specific fee. A rate structure and format may be developed for the purpose in consultation with subject experts. Members suggested that the payment terms may be different for Public and Private institution. The same may be worked out and circulated among the members for ratification.

The proposal was approved in principle by the members. Member Secretary was requested to take further action in the matter.

**Agenda– 8: Engagement of Interns:**

The proposal for engagement of Intern was tabled before the Board. Members suggested to engage a maximum of five Interns, at a time, for a short period of time with specific assignments, which

would be within the mandated activities of the Board, under proper supervision and such engagement should be purely voluntary in nature.

The proposal was approved in principle by the Board.

**Agenda– 9: Authentication of the accounts of the Board for the FY 2020-2021 and 2021-2022:**

The accounts of the Board for the FY 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 was placed for authentication. After prolonged discussion it was decided to collect audit observation before authentication of the accounts and the audit observation along with accounts would be circulated among the members in due course to get it approved before finally placing the accounts for CAG audit.

**Agenda– 10: Any other matter with the permission of the Chair:**

Member Secretary briefly narrated the matter for taking decisions on the issue.

- a) **Promotional matter of Sr. Research Officer (SRO):** Member Secretary of the Board informed the Board members about the prayer received from SRO seeking promotion to the next higher scale, which is long due. The Board members agreed to send a proposal to the Environment Department stating the observations of the Board in a note along with relevant documents.
- b) **Proposed sites for declaration of Biodiversity Heritage Site (BHS):** Member Secretary requested the Research Officer to present the matter before the Board. The following sites were proposed for declaration of BHS and members shared their view on them.

Sl.No	Name of Site	Remarks
1	Tilasan Hijol Forest, Habibpur, Malda	Approved in principle for taking further action.
2	Sarasnakha Dighi, Dantan-I, Paschim Medinipur	Approved in principle for taking further action.
3	Bamni Falls, Bagmundi, Purulia	Approved in principle but the local administration and the stakeholders need to be consulted, convinced and made aware of the matter before taking up further proceedings in the matter.
4	Rabindra Sarovar Lake, Kolkata	Approved in principle but the management authority and other interest groups need to be consulted, convinced and made aware of the matter before taking up further proceedings in the matter.

- c) The representative from the Agriculture Department requested the Board to write to the Principal Secretary, Agriculture Department, GoWB, for holding a discussion to find out a convergence avenue between various crop conservation projects being implemented by the Board and Porompogata Krishi Bikash Yojona (PKBY).  
The Board requested the Member Secretary to take further action in the matter.
- d) Dr. Prasanta Kr. Sarkar, expert member of the Board, requested the Board to direct the medicinal plant cultivators to take up cultivation of medicinal plants as per the requirement of the medicinal plant traders. He suggested that an interaction with the traders may be initiated in this matter. The Board requested Dr.Sarkar to provide the list of such traders and provide necessary planning for taking further action in the matter.
- e) Dr.(Ms.) Anupama Mitra, expert member of the Board raised concern for effective protection measures of the existing roadside trees of Kolkata. The Chairman requested her to share her suggestions in the matter. She agreed and accepted the proposal.
- f) On the issue of tapping the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) fund for conservation activities, the Board suggested to approach Environment Department with a list of potential companies for ratification. After ratification the companies may be approached for sharing CSR fund with the Board specifying the area of activities undertaken by the Board where the companies can collaborate. The members also suggested to obtain tax exemption benefit by the Board to avoid any tax implications. Members requested the Member Secretary to approach suitable authority in the matter.

There being no other issue the meeting ended with a vote of thanks to & from the Chair.



( Dr. Himadri Sekhar Debnath)  
Chairman,  
West Bengal Biodiversity Board