

## Minutes of First Meeting of Punjab Biodiversity Board held on 18.01.2006

### List of Attendees

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| 1. Sh. Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa,<br>Parliamentary Secretary, Agriculture<br>Govt. of Punjab                        | Vice-chairman, PBB   | Chairman        |
| 2. Ms. Romila Dubey<br>Principal Secretary to Govt. of Punjab<br>Department of Science, Technology &<br>Environment | Ex-officio member  |                 |
| 3. Dr. N.S. Tiwana<br>Executive Director,<br>Punjab State Council for Science &<br>Technology                       | Ex-officio member<br>(representing Director,<br>Environment)                                   | Member Convener |
| 4. Sh. D.S. Saroya,<br>Additional Secretary,<br>Department of Forests & Wildlife,<br>Govt. of Punjab                | Ex-officio Member<br>(representing Financial<br>Commissioner, Deptt.<br>of Forests & Wildlife) |                 |
| 5. Dr. G.S. Kalkat,<br>Former Vice Chancellor<br>PAU, Ludhiana  | Expert   |                 |
| 6. Sh. Sukhjit Singh,<br>(Formerly Maharaja of Kapurthala),<br>The Villa, Kapurthala                                | Expert   |                 |
| 7. Dr. Arun Kumar,<br>Additional Director,<br>ZSI, Dehradun   | Expert   |                 |
| 8. Dr. S. Kumar,<br>Joint Director,<br>BSI, Dehradun  | Expert   |                 |
| 9. Dr. Sat Paul Mehra,<br>Additional Director<br>Extension Education,<br>PAU, Ludhiana                              | Expert<br>(representing Director,<br>Extension Education)                                      |                 |
| 10 Sh. R.L. Mehta<br>Special Secretary,<br>Department of Planning,<br>Govt. of Punjab                               | Special Invitee  |                 |
| 11 Sh. H.S. Dhillon,<br>Dy. Director, Planning,<br>Govt. of Punjab  | Special Invitee  |                 |

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| 12 | Sh. B.B. Sathi<br>Under Secretary,<br>Department of Finance,<br>Govt. of Punjab                         | Special Invitee |
| 13 | Sh. Gurmit Singh,<br>Deputy Chief Wildlife Warden,<br>Govt. of Punjab                                   | Special Invitee |
| 14 | Ms. R. Butter,<br>Dy. Director,<br>Deptt. of Rural Development &<br>Panchayats, GoP                     | Special Invitee |
| 15 | Dr. Neelima Jerath,<br>Joint Director (Environment)<br>Punjab State Council for Science &<br>Technology | PSCST           |
| 16 | Dr. S.K. Saxena,<br>Sr. Scientific Officer (Env)<br>Punjab State Council for Science &<br>Technology    | PSCST           |

The first meeting of the Board was held under the chairmanship of Sh. S.S. Randhawa, Parliamentary Secretary, Agriculture as Hon'ble Chief Minister could not attend due to his other pressing engagements.

Welcoming the members and special invitees, Dr. N.S. Tiwana, Member Convener, presented the background for constitution of the Board and its importance to the state government. He informed that the trade of biological materials from the state of Punjab and neighbouring states was estimated to be over Rs. 200 million per annum with a potential to increase further. More than 10 species from the wild (including wild species growing as weeds in agricultural fields) and cultivated areas were being traded currently. The Punjab Biodiversity Board would not only help to regulate this trade, but would also help to realize its true commercial potential, besides promoting conservation of key species.

Joint Director (Environment), PSCST briefly presented general information on biodiversity of the country, as well as, the state. The following Agenda Items were discussed:

**Agenda Item No. 1. Introduction to Biological Diversity Act, 2002:**

Joint Director (Environment) provided brief information on various sections of the Biological Diversity Act, 2002 which covered biological diversity both, in the wild (restricted to areas outside the Protected Area Network), as well as, in cultivated areas. She briefly informed about the proposed activities of the Board.

Since representative of National Biodiversity Authority (who was requested to participate as a special invitee) could not attend the meeting, information about status of

other Biodiversity Boards in the country was also presented by her. She informed that nine state governments had already established Biodiversity Boards out of which Karnataka & Madhya Pradesh Boards were the most active. They were being supported by their respective state governments for both, secretariat and activities. The Karnataka Board had already been provided funds to the tune of over Rs. 2.00 crore and the Madhya Pradesh Board had been provided Rs. 70.00 lacs to facilitate the functioning of the Board and promote biodiversity conservation activities. The Kerala, West Bengal & Goa Boards had also been provided Rs. 60 lacs, Rs. 35 lacs & Rs. 30 lacs, respectively by their state governments.

Sh. D.S. Saroya, Additional Secretary, Forests & Wildlife suggested that both, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Chief Wildlife Warden be inducted into the Board as ex-officio members. Mrs. Romila Dubey, PS, STE, GoP informed that as per the Biological Diversity Act, 2002, the number of members in the Board could only be ten and CS & FCF were representing the Departments of Wildlife & Forests, respectively. Further, even the Agriculture Department was being represented by Parliamentary Secretary, Agriculture (and not Director, Agriculture). However, she requested Sh. Saroya to write to the Board in this respect for consideration.

## **Agenda Item No. 2. Approval of Punjab State Biodiversity Rules**

Under section 63 of the Biological Diversity Act, 2002, each state is required to notify the Biological Diversity Rules. Joint Director (Env) informed that these draft rules were based on the Biological Diversity Rules, 2004 notified by the Govt. of India and the Biological Diversity Rules notified by the State of Madhya Pradesh.

She informed that:

- 1) Section 1 to 13 of the draft Punjab Biodiversity Rules pertain to title, definitions, appointment & entitlement of chair person, appointment/nomination of ex-officio members, non-official members, Member Secretary, expert committees and their entitlements and procedure for meetings.
- 2) Sections 14, 15, 16 & 17 pertained to general functions of the Board, powers & duties of the Chairman, Member Secretary & Service Rules of the staff, respectively.
- 3) Sections 18, 19 & 20 of the draft Punjab Biodiversity Rules pertained to procedure for access to resources and revocation/restriction/prohibition respectively.
- 4) Section 21 to 23 pertained to approvals to be sought from NBA. Section 24 pertained to benefit sharing (to be taken up as per NBA guidelines). Section 25 & 26 pertained to annual report & accounts. Sections 27, 28 & 29 pertained to establishment of heritage sites, constitution of Biodiversity Management Committees (BMCs) and Local Biodiversity Fund (LBF) (These issues were being discussed as separate Agenda Items). Further, Section 30 of the Punjab Biodiversity Rules pertained to Appeal for Settlement of Disputes.

The following suggestions were made and decisions taken:

- Parliamentary Secretary, Agriculture suggested that the Chairman of the Punjab Biodiversity Board should be a technical expert of eminence as Hon'ble Chief Minister was too busy to find time for routine activities and meetings of the Board. He offered to put up the matter to Hon'ble Chief Minister, Punjab in this regard.

- U/s 7 of the rules, Travelling allowance (as per actuals) and sitting fee of Rs. 750/- for non-official members was approved.
- U/s 18, it was agreed that a fee of Rs. 1000/- and Rs. 5000/-, respectively would be levied for access to biological resources of Punjab for research & commercial use.

Deputy Chief Wildlife Warden was apprehensive that some of these resources may be covered u/s 10 of Wildlife Act (under which certain areas were restricted to public access and certain floral & faunal species were protected under various schedules of the Act, but research was allowed). It was clarified that the Biological Diversity Act was applicable in areas out of the purview of the Forest (Protection) Act and the Wildlife Act. Further, the Central Government had the power to declare that provisions of this Act shall not apply to certain biological resources (including biological resources normally traded as commodities). For this, an expert committee had been constituted by the National Biodiversity Authority and its recommendations would be followed.

- U/s 30 of the Rules pertaining to constitution of Appellate Authority, it was decided that in case of disputes between two Biodiversity Management Committees, an appeal would be preferred to Chairman, PBB. However, in case of dispute between PBB and a BMC/person/party, an Appellate Authority comprising Secretary, Environment; Secretary, Agriculture & Secretary, Forests, GoP be constituted.
- Sh. R.L. Mehta, Special Secretary, Planning suggested that comments on the draft Rules may also be obtained from the Departments of Finance & Personnel, Govt. of Punjab to facilitate creation of posts in the Board.
- Principal Secretary, STE suggested that the representatives of the Departments of Forests & Wildlife may discuss issues pertaining to their departments with JD(Env) and send their concerns in writing in this regard to the Board, so that if required, clarification can be sought from NBA.
- The rules were approved subject to the above and it was decided to finalize the same at the earliest and submit to the Legal Rememberancer for vetting prior to being placed before the State Legislature for approval.

**Action:** O/o Hon'ble Parliamentary Secretary, Agriculture  
: Joint Director (Environment), PSCST

### **Agenda Item No. 3. Establishment of State Biodiversity Fund (SBF)**

Joint Director (Environment) informed that u/s 31 & 32 of the Biological Diversity Act, 2002, the state government was required to constitute the 'State Biodiversity Fund'. The NBA had already released Rs. 10.00 lacs as one time grant to the PBB as seed money for initiating preliminary activities. The activities proposed out of this grant were approved by the Board.

Special Secretary, Planning informed that against the proposal of Rs. 18.65 lacs submitted by the PBB, a token provision of Rs. 0.10 lacs had been made in the state budget under a new scheme titled "SR 1.20: Setting up of Punjab Biodiversity Board" for the financial year 2006-07. Vice-chairman, PBB and Principal Secretary, STE desired that activities of the Board be strengthened by providing adequate funds. The following decisions were taken:

- 1) The PBB would approach the government to make a provision of Rs. 10.00 lacs for secretariat of the Board (for which a revised proposal be submitted to the State Planning Department).

- 2) The PBB would also submit a proposal for a provision of Rs. 10.00 lacs for a massive biodiversity awareness and capacity building program to be initiated throughout the state (to facilitate formation of BMCs subsequently). A proposal to this effect would also be submitted to State Planning Department within a week.
- 3) A token provision for Local Biodiversity Fund may also be made by the state government.

Members approved the above and Special Secretary, Planning and Under Secretary, Finance agreed to the same.

**Action:** PBB  
 Deptt. of Planning, GoP  
 Deptt. of Finance, GoP

#### **Agenda Item No. 4. Creation of Posts**

The following posts were approved:

Member Secretary (Rs. 18,400-22,400)	Director-Environment, PSCST would currently function as ex-officio Member Secretary of PBB
Sr. Scientific Officer/Biodiversity (Rs. 10,000-325-15200)	On contract
Steno-typist-cum-computer operator (Rs. 3300-6200)	On contract

This is, however, subject to approval from Departments of Personnel & Finance for including the budget of PBB under Non-Plan.

**Action:** PBB

#### **Agenda Item No. 5. Constitution of Biodiversity Management Committees (BMCs)**

As required u/s 41 of the Biological Diversity Act, 2002, Biodiversity Management Committees had to be constituted at the village/local body level. It was felt that for BMCs to be effective, wherever possible, members of IWDP, youth groups & ex-servicemen be involved. It was decided that a massive biodiversity awareness & capacity building program be taken up by the Board initially and BMCs be constituted later. The agenda item was therefore, kept in abeyance.

**Action:** PBB

#### **Agenda Item No. 6. Creation of Local Biodiversity Fund**

As required u/s 42 of the Biological Diversity, 2002, the state government requires to create a Local Biodiversity Fund to be utilized for the purposes of the Act by the Biodiversity Management Committees at the local level. It was decided that in view of Agenda Item No. 5 being kept in abeyance, for the time being only a token provision be made in the state budget as approved in Agenda Item No. 3.

**Action:** Deptt. of Planning, GoP

## **Agenda Item No. 7. Activities of PBB**

### **7.1 Actions initiated**

#### **7.1.1. Celebration of World Biodiversity Day**

Noted

#### **7.1.2 Proposal for Northern Zonal workshop for 'Facilitating formation of State Biodiversity Boards & Biodiversity Management Committees in Northern India'**

Noted

### **7.2 Actions proposed**

#### **7.2.1. Identification of Heritage sites outside PAN and constitution of expert committees**

The following expert committees were constituted:

- i) Committee to identify biodiversity rich areas and heritage sites outside PAN to be chaired by Dr. G.S. Kalkat.
- ii) Committee to identify commercially important flora & fauna to be chaired by PCCF.
  - Committee No. i approved, subject to inclusion of Chief Wildlife Warden and Director, Research, PAU (in place of Head Deptt. of Plant Breeding).
  - Committee no. ii approved, subject to inviting of representatives of Bombay Natural History Society and Director-Research, H.P. Agriculture University, Palampur as special invitees.
  - Committee No. i would, besides identifying heritage sites, also identify the number of Biodiversity Management Committees to be set up in such areas, their financial requirement, mechanism of disbursement of funds and their constitution.
  - Committee No. ii would identify commercially important species and their potential commercial value.
  - The short duration project to be taken up by PBB for compiling data on industries using bioresources as raw material (out of funds granted by NBA) was also approved.

**Action:** PBB

#### **7.2.2 Training & awareness on Biodiversity**

Approved. Brig. Sukhjit Singh suggested that PBB may prepare a capsule course which could be got implemented in the field at the block level with the help of district administration and/or youth clubs.

**Action:** PBB

### 7.2.3 Preparation of Peoples' Biodiversity Registers (PBRs)

This has been identified as an important activity of the Board. Members decided that the villages for PBR preparation be identified by Committee No. i constituted under Agenda Item No. 7.2.1. Till then, the activity may be kept in abeyance. Dr. Madhav Gadgil, IISc, Bangalore, who had conducted a massive country wise exercise in this regard would be approached for standardization of procedures.

**Action:** Heritage Site Committee (No. i) PBB

### 7.2.4 Implementation of State Biodiversity Strategy & Action Plan (SBSAP)

JD(Env) informed about the projects identified under SBSAP by PSCST. These included setting up of Biodiversity Cells in key departments, strengthening of nodal department (PBB), development of data bank, setting up of a Centre for Training in Biodiversity, etc. She informed that NBA would be willing to provide funds for training subject to provision of infrastructural facilities by the state government. It was proposed that initially the existing training facility in the state be utilized for the purpose. Additional Secretary, Forests & Wildlife suggested that the infrastructure of Forest Training Centre, Hoshiarpur be utilized for training on wild biodiversity. Dr. G.S. Kalkat suggested that special training also needed to be provided on traditional crop varieties by involving experts of PAU, as a large section of biological diversity of Punjab was available in the agricultural sector and that the Board needed to cover both, wild & domesticated biodiversity aspects in its training programs.

ED, PSCST informed that proposals amounting to Rs. 80 crore had been received from various developmental departments under the SBSAP project. These could be implemented subject to availability of funds by state/central government. It was decided that these proposals be got vetted and prioritized by the committee constituted for identification of heritage sites.

**Action:** Heritage Site Committee (No.i) PBB

### 7.2.5 Studies on Impact on Biodiversity with special emphasis on High Incidence of Cancer cases in cotton belt of South Western Punjab

Noted

8. The meeting ended with a vote of thanks to the chair.