

**Minutes of the first meeting of the reconstituted East Kolkata Wetlands Management Authority (EKWMA) held on 14<sup>th</sup> July, 2017 in the Chief Secretary's Conference Room, Nabanna**

Members present:

1. Shri Sovan Chatterjee, Hon'ble Minister-in-Charge, Environment Department – Chairman
2. Shri Malay Kumar De, Chief Secretary, Member
3. Shri Sunil Kr. Gupta, Principal Secretary, Fisheries Department – member
4. Shri Atri Bhattacharyya, Principal Secretary, Tourism Department – Member
5. Shri Manoj Pant, Principal Secretary, Land & Land Reforms Department – Member
6. Dr. Kalyan Rudra, Expert Member
7. Dr. Dhrubajyoti Ghosh, Expert Member
8. Shri Soumyajit Das, Managing Director, West Bengal State Fisheries Development Corporation – Expert Member
9. Smt. Baisakhi Banerjee, Expert Member
10. Shri Arnab Roy, Principal Secretary, Environment Department – Member Secretary

Other Participant Present

1. Shri Debasis Sen, CMD, HIDCO
2. Shri Khalil Ahmed, Municipal Commissioner, KMC
3. Md. G. A. Ansari, Project Director, KELIP
4. Shri Kousik Chattopadhyay, Secretary, Irrigation & Waterways Department
5. Shri Sandipan Mukherjee, Chief Technical Officer, EKWMA

Principal Secretary, Department of Forests and Principal Secretary, Irrigation & Waterways Department could not attend the meeting because of prior commitments.

**Agenda No. 1.Reconstituted East Kolkata Wetlands Management Authority**

At the outset Principal Secretary Environment Department & Member Secretary, East Kolkata Wetland Management Authority, welcomed participants to the first meeting of the reconstituted East Kolkata Wetlands Management Authority and briefed on the background and functions of EKWMA.

**Agenda No. 2 Report on Workshop on East Kolkata Wetlands held on 2-3 March, 2017**

The members were informed that a workshop on EKWMA was held in Kolkata on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> March, 2017. The objective of the workshop was to review the present status of the wetland, to evolve wise use plan and to strengthen conservation measures. Members were also informed that Dr. Lew Young, Senior Advisor for Asia-Oceania, Ramsar Secretariat was present in the workshop. Dr. Young emphasized on the preparation of Management Plan/ Wise Use Plan for EKWMA.

All members agreed to the proposal.

**Agenda No. 3 Proposal for preparation of Wise Use Plan of East Kolkata Wetlands**

The authority discussed and approved the preparation of Wise Use and Management Plan for East Kolkata Wetlands (EKW). It was proposed that a steering committee would supervise preparation of Wise Use and Management Plan. An agency well versed in preparation of similar plans would be engaged and would work under supervision of the steering committee. The agency should have experience of work in wetlands. The Steering Committee would comprise the following members :-

1. Principal Secretary, Environment Department – Chairman
2. Dr. Kalyan Rudra – Member
3. Dr. Dhrubajyoti Ghosh – Member
4. Managing Director, WBSFDC – Member
5. Shri Rajendra Jakher, APD, State Project Management Unit – ICZM – Member
6. Shri Sandipan Mukherjee, CTO, EKWMA – Member Secretary

The Chairman, EKWMA advised inclusion of Municipal Commissioner of Kolkata Municipal Corporation in the Committee.

The Authority approved the proposal and composition of steering committee with the inclusion of Municipal Commissioner of Kolkata Municipal Corporation.

#### **Agenda No. 4 Proposal on East Kolkata Wetland Park.**

It was informed that in 2007, the then Kolkata Environment Improvement Project (KEIP) had prepared a DPR by engaging an agency from UK for an East Kolkata Wetlands Park which would be a centre where visitors, students and academicians could learn about East Kolkata Wetlands (EKW). East Kolkata Wetlands Management Authority (EKWMA) had actively participated in the formulation of the DPR. The Kolkata Environmental Improvement Investment Programme (KEIIP) has been asked by EKWMA to develop and recast the earlier DPR so that the Centre for showcasing EKW can take shape. KEIIP gave a presentation on the conceptual plan of the proposal. It was informed that the earlier proposal was under review for preparation of a realistic estimate. The East Kolkata Wetlands Park is planned over land belonging to Kolkata Municipal Corporation. They informed that a fresh DPR will be prepared and agency for preparation of the DPR has already been identified.

The Authority approved the conceptual plan presented by KEIIP and asked them to talk to stakeholders to incorporate other suggestions. Thereafter the Authority would take up the matter for final approval and implementation.

#### **Agenda No. 5 Proposal from KMC on Agro-Interpretation Park (Krishi Beethi) and Eco-Cultural Park (Krishi Vatika) by KMC**

The Kolkata Municipal Corporation had submitted a proposal to the East Kolkata Wetland Management Authority for establishment of an Agro Interpretation Park (Krishi Bithi) and Eco Cultural Park (Krishi Vatika) with the objective of utilizing part of productive farming land under KMC within area of EKW. Representative of KMC gave a presentation on their proposal. They explained that the proposal aims at improving the environmental conditions of the area with restoration of water bodies present in the area and also proposes to create income generating avenues for the local farmers and fishermen. The Authority approved the proposal in principle subject to submission of Form- I and DPR.

#### **Agenda No. 6 : Proposal for construction of elevated corridor connecting EM Bypass and New town by HIDCO.**

HIDCO has submitted a proposal for construction of an elevated corridor through eight water bodies of EKW for easing traffic from EM By pass to Kolkata Airport. Chairman –cum-Managing Director, HIDCO submitted that although there is no provision of EIA in the Central Government circular no. S.O. 1533(E) dated 14<sup>th</sup> November, 2006 for construction of elevated corridors, they had prepared one EIA report and an Environment Management Plan (EMP) from Jadavpur University. EKWMA officials informed that some discrepancies noted in the Form-I submitted by HIDCO needs to be rectified.

After discussion, Chairman, Chief Secretary and other members of EKW decided that due to public interest involved the Authority approves the project in principle. However, environmental safeguards needs to be observed by the project implementing authority and the safeguards and conditions similar to that given to Metro Railways will be communicated by EKWMA to HIDCO when the final proposal and Form-I rectifying the deficiencies is submitted. Compensatory water body equivalent to that affected by the project would be needed to be created.

#### **Agenda No. 7 : Issues relating to Meghnad Saha Institute of Technology**

The Authority was informed that Meghnad Saha Institute of Technology has already constructed their building on piece of land in EKW which is classified as 'Beel' in the land records but urban / rural settlement area in the EKW Schedule. The construction was started prior to EKW notification. The previous EKWMA had held a hearing in the matter following which the Institute had purchased equivalent land



within EKW for developing a compensatory water body. Chief Secretary stated that creation of compensatory water body for the entire extent of wetland diverted should be taken up on a site which is just outside the existing boundary of EKW and is contiguous to it. Representatives of Meghnad Saha Institute of Technology agreed to identify such land for creating compensatory water body. The matter will be reviewed after receiving response from them. Chief Secretary also stated that East Kolkata Wetlands (Conservation & Management) Act, 2006 needs to be amended to the extent to accommodate such changes for creation of waterbody etc. outside the EKW. Water body so created will be subsequently included within EKW by appropriate notification by the Government.

The Authority approved the suggestion of the Chief Secretary and proposal for amendment of the Act accordingly.

**Agenda 8 : Applications received in Form I for change of character or mode of use of the land in EKW under rule 8(1) of the EKW (C&M) Rules, 2006.**

National English School Educational Trust - The applications are currently pending with the Authority for conversion of wetland from shali to bastu. The project proponent has already demarcated the boundary with wall and several concrete pillars were constructed. Since this is a shali land its conversion without prior permission from EKW is not permitted under the existing Acts & Rules. The Authority decided to reject the conversion since conversion of agricultural land for private purpose is not permissible.

The second case pertains to Vedic Dharma Sansthan – wherein shali land has been converted to bastu and construction of a building has already been taken up and completed without any sanction of the Authority. The Hon'ble High Court in W.P. No. 27197(W) of 2016 has ordered EKW to give opportunity of hearing to the PP.

The Authority in compliance of the Hon'ble High Court direction decided that a hearing will be conducted and that CTO will conduct the hearing.

**Agenda No. 9: Proposal for sufficient number of signboards around EKW area for awareness of members of public**

The proposal to spread awareness about EKW land through appropriate signage was unanimously approved by the Authority. Principal Secretary, Tourism Department stated that they could contribute in identifying the agency and designing the campaign material. KMC, District Magistrates North 24 Parganas & South 24 Parganas will identify the sites for putting up the signage.

**Agenda No. 10 : Review of sweeping Order vide No. CTO/EN/2131(186)/11 dated 09.12.2011 by EKWMA prohibiting NOC**

In the 17th meeting of the EKWMA held on 28.09.2011, it had been resolved that

1. No new No Objection Certificate (NOC) for conversion of land shall be granted by the Authority
2. All NOCs granted so far shall be revoked.

Accordingly, the order noted above (CTO/EN/2131(186)/11 dated 09.12.2011) had been issued by the Authority

The Authority reviewed the issue and decided to revoke the sweeping order from date since it contradicted some provisions of the Act & Rules. It was decided that EKWMA would act strictly as per provisions of the Act and Rules.

**Agenda No. 11 : Proposal for invoking provisions of Inland Fisheries Act 1984, and its subsequent amendments for taking over management of water bodies where there are attempts for conversion**

The proposal of declaring all District Magistrates as authorized officer under Inland Fisheries Act 1984 has been moved by the Environment Department. Principal Secretary, Fisheries Department stated that they have already taken up the matter and accordant action will be taken depending on the decision of the

Authority. The EKWMA concurred with the proposal of declaring all District Magistrates as authorized officer under Inland Fisheries Act.

**Agenda No. 12 : Review of existing area and land use with EKW and statutory changes required if any**

The Authority decided that this matter should be addressed in the Wise Use and Management Plan for EKW.

**Agenda No. 13 : Areas of conflict with Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2010 of the then MoEF and decision thereof.**

The Authority decided that this matter may be taken up with the Government of India since implementing the provisions of the Central Rules in toto would lead to drying up of the East Kolkata Wetlands, loss of the unique features of EKW and hardship to citizens residing within EKW.

**Agenda No. 14 : Operation of fund of Authority – Proposal for amendment in EKW (C&M) Rules, 2006.**

The proposal to amend the Rules of EKW, 2006 by replacing the Secretary, Fisheries Department with the Chief Environment Officer, Department of Environment was unanimously approved by the Authority.

**Agenda No. 15 : Separate Audit Report of 2014-15 on the Accounts of EKWMA**

The audit report was placed before the Authority and the Authority approved it.

**Agenda No. 16 : Proposal for permanent Invitee Members**

The jurisdiction of EKW is under District 24 Parganas (South), District 24 Parganas (North), and KMC. It was proposed that the Commissioner, Kolkata Municipal Corporation, District Magistrate, South 24 Parganas, and District Magistrate, North 24 Parganas may be inducted as permanent Invitee Members.

The proposal was approved by the Authority.

The meeting ended with vote of thanks to and from the chair.

Sd/-

(Sovan Chatterjee)

Chairman, East Kolkata Wetlands Management Authority  
&  
Minister-in-Charge, Environment Department

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Date : 21 /07/2017

Copy forwarded for information to :-

1. Shri Malay Kumar De, Chief Secretary, Govt. of West Bengal
2. Shri Saurav Kumar Das, Additional Chief Secretary, Panchayat & Rural Development Department
3. Shri Naveen Prakash, Additional Chief Secretary, Irrigation & Waterways Department
4. Shri Chandan Sinha, Principal Secretary, Forest Department
5. Shri Sunil Kumar Gupta, Principal Secretary, Fisheries Department
6. Shri Atri Bhattacharyya, Principal Secretary, Tourism Department
7. Shri Manoj Pant, Principal Secretary, Land & Land Reforms Department
8. Dr. Kalyan Rudra, Chairman, West Bengal Pollution Control Board - Expert Member
9. Dr. Dhruvajyoti Ghosh, Expert Member
10. Shri Soumyajit Das, Managing Director, West Bengal State Fisheries Development Corporation – Expert Member
11. Smt. Baisakhi Banerjee, Expert Member

( Arnab Roy )

Member Secretary, East Kolkata Wetlands Management Authority  
&  
Principal Secretary, Department of Environment